

Renville County approves 15-year tax abatement for grain-storage project. **A5.**

Cards advance in playoffs. **B1.**

WILLMAR, MINN.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021

WCTRIB.COM



Lydia Melo, 7, is inoculated with one of two reduced doses of the Pfizer BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine during a trial at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, in this Sept. 28 image from video. In anticipation of approvals expected by the middle of next week, Minnesota officials announced on Wednesday the preparation of over 1,100 providers to quickly administer COVID-19 vaccines to families of participating children ages 5-11.

SHOTS FOR KIDS

Minnesota prepares to vaccinate thousands of children

By Paul John Scott
West Central Tribune
Rochester, Minn.

In anticipation of approvals expected by the middle of next week, Minnesota officials announced on Wednesday, Oct. 27, the preparation of over 1,100 providers to quickly administer COVID-19 vaccines to families of participating children ages 5-11.

"We're anticipating vaccinations could start as early as late next week," Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said during a press call on Wednesday.

"Every 5-11-year-old in Minnesota deserves the protection the COVID-19 vaccine has to offer," Gov. Tim Walz said in a statement. "The state is prepared for this critical moment in the battle against COVID-19 ... We'll be ready to do our



Bridgette Melo, 5, right, prepares for her inoculation of one of two reduced doses of the Pfizer BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine during a trial at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, in this Sept. 28 image from video. Since July 1, there have been more than 45,200 pediatric cases, according to health officials, with more than 300 child hospitalizations related to COVID-19 in Minnesota.

part when the federal government gives us the green light, and I encourage parents to get their children vaccinated when the shots are ready."

Malcolm said there are just under 505,000 Minnesota children in the age group affected by the pending approval. Recent research from the Kaiser

Family Foundation suggests 30-40% of parents of children between 5 and 11 would be motivated to vaccinate their child against COVID-19 quickly, with another group willing after a short wait, and a separate group unwilling entirely.

Should those predictions bear out, the state could see 150,000 to 200,000 children vaccinated in the coming weeks, potentially tens of thousands daily, a significant jump from the 4,000 vaccinations delivered statewide on Tuesday.

State officials made the statement Wednesday to signal they are confident that needed supplies and logistics are in place to absorb such a sudden spike in demand, and to do so equitably, citing the impending arrival of 170,000 doses for providers and another 85,000 for pharmacies.

VACCINES: Page A2

Kleindl performance exceeds expectations

County administrator receives glowing review, especially for response to COVID pandemic

By Shelby Lindrud
West Central Tribune

WILLMAR — The past 12 to 18 months have been a challenge for Kandiyohi County Administrator Larry Kleindl, with the pandemic throwing everything into disarray. However, despite the trials and additional work that presented, the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners is more than pleased with how Kleindl has performed.

"Five county commissioners unanimously think his overall performance exceeds our expectations of a county administrator," said Commissioner Corky Berg, board chairman, at the Oct. 19 Kandiyohi County Board meeting.

Every year the commissioners fill out a lengthy performance review form on Kleindl's ability to run the county. In this year's review, Kleindl received ratings of "exceeds expectations" and "meets expectations" for all of the review criteria.

"We review leadership, supervision, problem-solving, decision-making, goals, job knowledge, communication and customer focus," Berg said.

Berg also felt it was important that the public hear some of the comments made about Kleindl in the review, as well as give Kleindl the opportunity to hear the comments out loud, instead of just reading them on a piece of paper. The review said that Kleindl cares for all of the staff, communicates well and has a great capacity to do his job.

"His strengths include his commitment to his job and Kandiyohi County," Berg read from the review summary. "Larry can cut through the noise and get to the bottom of the issues."

KLEINDL: Page A2

CWD protocol to bring change for hunters

Some regions must prepare for mandatory sampling for brain disease



Contributed / Warden Micheal Hopper, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

A whitetail buck in the final stages of the always-fatal chronic wasting disease.

By Dana Ferguson
West Central Tribune

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Department of Natural Resources officials said they're gearing up for the fall 2021 firearm deer hunting season and urging hunters to make a plan to test for chronic wasting disease before they go out into the field.

Less than two weeks before opening day for the firearm hunting season, DNR Wildlife Section Manager Kelly Straka on Wednesday, Oct. 27, told lawmakers that hunters in some regions of the state will have to prepare for mandatory sampling for the fatal brain disease in deer over opening weekend.

"I realize it is a change for hunters, it may be an insurmountable change for some hunters, but (we recommend) making sure that you make a plan," Straka said.

Hunters can't transport deer carcasses from CWD management areas, where there have been multiple reports of CWD in free-ranging deer until they get a negative test for CWD. The department has provided an exception that allows hunters or others to transport processed parts of the carcass before a test result comes back if they follow DNR guidance. Department officials also advise hunters and others to use designated dumpsters for unused portions.

With state lab test turnaround times running at about seven days, Straka asked Minnesotans to postpone plans for cooking and eating their venison.

"I would love to tell people that we'll have results back in a week but the reality is that we're a little bit at the mercy of the labs and how fast they can operate, so I tell people to plan for longer if you can," she said. "I realize it's hard, I do, but we do recommend not to consume anything until you've got those test results."

And that is likely to push back the timeline for butchering and cooking venison for hunters going out in CWD management zones.

HUNTERS: Page A2

BRIEF

Furniture retailer to pay \$60K to transgender job applicant

MINNEAPOLIS — A major northern Minnesota furniture retailer is paying \$60,000 to a transgender job applicant after a federal investigation concluded that the company refused to hire him as a sales associate out of concern that he would hurt business.

Frizzell Furniture Gallery, with stores in

Bemidji and Walker, also has agreed with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to provide training for its staff and revise company policies regarding discrimination based on sex and gender identity, the agency announced Tuesday, Oct. 26.

An investigation by the EEOC's Minneapolis concluded that Frizzell Furniture rejected the applicant for a sales position because he is transgender. A hiring

official informed him he would not "mix well with the customers," the agency announcement read.

Such conduct violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sex discrimination, including bias based on transgender status. The act also does not allow discriminatory employment decisions based on customer preference.

The agreement with the EEOC also requires Frizzell to report any future complaints of

discrimination to the EEOC for the next three years and adopt more objective criteria for hiring decisions.

Frizzell's website classifies the 29-year-old company as northern Minnesota's largest furniture retailer, with its original location in Walker measuring 25,000 square feet, and its store in Bemidji, which opened in 2019, totaling 42,000 square feet.

— Tribune News Service

VACCINES

From Page A1

"It's a very different situation (in terms of availability) than where it was in December and January," Malcolm said. "There is a very adequate supply of pediatric vaccine."

The new vaccinations would potentially raise the percentage of state residents vaccinated by 5%. With nearly three-fourths of the state now vaccinated, such an influx would push statewide coverage toward 80%, a threshold Walz recently characterized as ideal for reducing community spread.

State access points for child vaccination include over 530 pediatric and family medicine clinics, primary care providers, federally qualified health centers, local public health agencies, tribal health agencies, and Indian Health Service locations. Those sites will be joined by the participation of over 600 pharmacies.

State officials say they plan to partner with school districts and charter schools to host vaccination clinics, while a Community Vaccination Program located at the Mall of America has tripled its capacity, enabling 1,500 shots a day to children 5-11.

"These vaccines have

been shown to be safe and highly effective, and they are our best tools for protecting Minnesotans from COVID-19," Malcolm said in a statement.

"Plan ahead, talk to your family physician, and once your child is eligible, find a vaccine opportunity near you to get your child protected."

Since July 1, there have been more than 45,200 pediatric cases, according to health officials, with more than 300 child hospitalizations related to COVID-19 in Minnesota. Roughly 25% of COVID-19 pediatric deaths nationally have occurred in healthy children, moreover.

Thousands of children have been diagnosed with COVID-19-linked multisystem inflammatory syndrome in the U.S., with almost 100 cases in Minnesota, and all but 17 of the state's pediatric beds were full as of Wednesday.

Also on Wednesday, citing falling participation with tracing and widespread public awareness of isolation and quarantine advice, health officials announced changes to their contact tracing policy.

The department is moving away from contact tracing every diagnosis and toward "targeting situations

where in-depth contact tracing will have more impact," Malcolm said.

While everyone diagnosed with COVID-19 will be sent an online survey, contact tracing will shift towards surveillance of targeted groups that can inform policy, groups that include pediatric cases, breakthrough cases, hospitalizations and new variants.

The health department's web page has been updated to remove outdated graphics as well, including those illustrating the mix of residence types infected, and source of likely exposure.

School cases have also been updated to illustrate age ranges, instead of listings of schools with more than five cases, while reporting related to high risk exposures within health care settings has been adjusted to reflect breakthrough cases in those contexts.

Following are the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 case rates, deaths, hospitalizations and vaccinations as of Wednesday. Because all data is preliminary, some numbers and totals may change from one day to the next.

Statewide case rates

► NEW CASES: 1,810

► SEVEN-DAY, ROLLING AVERAGE OF NEW CASES PER 100,000 PEOPLE: 40 (as of 10/19)

► TOTAL CASES: 781,548

► TOTAL RECOVERED: 756,146

► SEVEN-DAY, ROLLING AVERAGE TEST POSITIVITY RATE: 7.1% (as of 10/19)

In a sign of a weakening wave, as of one week ago, test positivity had dropped a full percentage point over the previous 10 days, and the case rate had fallen from 53 to 40 or roughly 20%.

Hospitalizations, deaths

► ACTIVE HOSPITALIZATIONS: 911

► TOTAL HOSPITALIZATIONS: 40,868

► DEATHS, NEWLY REPORTED: 31

► TOTAL DEATHS: 8,612

Hospitalizations have continued a gradual decline but capacity remains at a high level, according to health officials.

Vaccinations

► FIRST DOSE ADMINISTERED: 3,460,119 and 74.6% of population

► COMPLETED SERIES (2 doses): 3,292,754 and 71.2% of population

Vaccinations have been climbing for the last three months.

KLEINDL

From Page A1

The review touched on the extra work the pandemic caused, which included forming a countywide public health response and allocating multiple rounds of relief funds to various projects, businesses and organizations. There was some concern that

Kleindl might be pushing himself too far and is in need of more help.

"So much extra has been asked of Mr. Kleindl for the last 18 months. I believe it is incumbent of the board to extend to him some grace and some additional help," Berg read from the report. "He needs to be able to let go and turn over some aspects of his position to other depart-

ment heads and staff."

Kleindl was appreciative of the positive review, but said he doesn't operate in a vacuum. He said it is a team process and without the buy-in from county staff, department heads and the county commissioners, he wouldn't be able to do his job well or at all.

"There is no job one person can do by them-

selves," Kleindl said. "If the county does a good job, it is because the people underneath me and those above me provide the tools to do the job, to allow me to do my job."

He thanked the commissioners and the staff for allowing him to be the county administrator.

"It is never boring," Kleindl said.

HUNTERS

From Page A1

"I guess we'll probably be butchering over Thanksgiving break," said Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn, DFL-Roseville,. Becker-Finn noted that she hunts around the Beltrami County area.

DNR officials are run-

ning mandatory testing over the opening weekend to trace chronic wasting disease in areas where it has been previously reported and to prevent its spread. Voluntary testing will continue throughout the hunting season at stations around the state. And hunters can track reported cases of

CWD at the DNR's website.

Firearm hunting season begins Nov. 6.

You can learn more about the department's deer permit areas, CWD

regulations and other guidance at the DNR website, mndnr.com/cwd.

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com

Pumpkin Patch Festival

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www.nelsonfarm.com



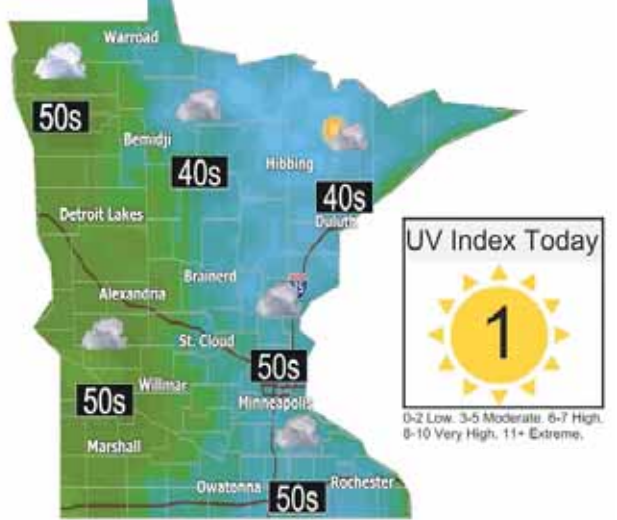
Jared Piepenburg Jesse Ritka Chief Meteorologist John Wheeler Lydia Blume Robert Poynter

StormTRACKER
WILLMAR FORECAST

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
53/37	57/33	58/33	45/26
AM Rain	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy
Wind: N 13 mph	Wind: N 9 mph	Wind: SW 11 mph	Wind: NW 16 mph

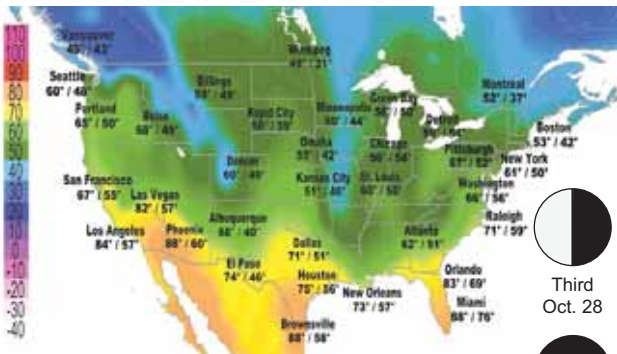
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
44/24	42/22	40/22	39/24
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
Wind: NW 12 mph	Wind: W 12 mph	Wind: N 10 mph	Wind: N 8 mph

*Average wind speed for each day



Regional Weather	Today	Hi	Lo	Tomorrow	Hi	Lo
Bemidji, MN	49	31	55	36	53	36
Duluth, MN	49	42	52	37	50	44
Eau Claire, WI	53	45	56	36	50	43
Fargo, ND	55	32	60	38	56	37
International Falls, MN	47	34	50	37	50	38

Regional Weather	Today	Hi	Lo	Tomorrow	Hi	Lo
Marshall, MN	53	36	55	34	53	36
Minneapolis, MN	50	44	55	35	50	44
Rochester, MN	50	43	52	36	50	43
Sioux Falls, SD	56	37	58	35	56	37
St. Cloud, MN	50	38	56	31	50	38

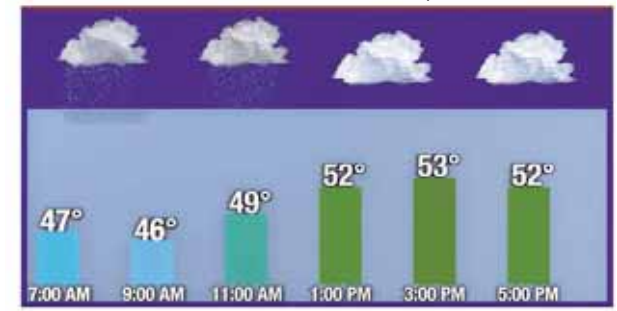


StormTRACKER Forecast

Areas of rain slowly move out today. Sunshine and mid-50s Friday. Mild Saturday and cooler next week.

Almanac Through 6 pm Wednesday	High	Low
Temperature Wednesday	52°	46°
Avg. Wind Direction Wednesday	SE	
Peak Wind Speed Wednesday	23 mph	

Sunrise: 7:53 a.m. Moonrise: 12:09 a.m., Oct. 29 Sunset: 6:13 p.m. Moonset: 3:42 p.m., Oct. 29



TODAY'S INFO

What's happening?

Do you know of something that might make a good story or photograph for the newspaper?

Please call 320-235-1150 or stop by 2208 Trott Ave. S.W., Willmar.

Corrections

If you have a question about accuracy of information in a news story, please call the news department at 320-235-1150.

If any corrections are necessary, they will be published on this page.

Lottery results

Winning numbers drawn Wednesday night are:

Powerball: 3-6-26-35-51

Powerball: 17

Estimated jackpot: \$102M

Daily 3: 2-1-2

Gopher 5: 9-18-24-26-30

Northstar Cash: 8-9-10-22-27

Lucky for Life: 14-23-39-42-44

Lucky ball: 17

For more information, go to mnlottery.com.

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Minnesota working group punts \$250M hero pay decision to Legislature

By Dana Ferguson
West Central Tribune

ST. PAUL — A Minnesota working group has failed to divvy up \$250 million for front-line workers that remained on the job during the pandemic and sent two proposals to the Minnesota Legislature.

The Frontline Worker Pay Working Group held meetings for months and heard from dozens of workers deemed essential during the pandemic before closing out their panel Wednesday, Oct. 27, by voting 8-1 to advance a pair of dueling plans that varied little from those introduced by Democrats and Republicans on the committee in July.

The outcome punts the issue to the Legislature, where divided leadership could face equally difficult footing in reaching a deal. And it extends the wait for frontline workers who'd asked for the support after they were sickened with COVID-19 at work or had to take unpaid time off to quarantine.

Democratic-Farmer-Labor legislators and commissioners who held the majority on the working group said the outcome was a failure for workers. And they lamented that Republicans had held up efforts to reach a compromise. GOP members, meanwhile, held up the outcome as a success and urged Gov. Tim Walz to call lawmakers in for a special session quickly so that the Legislature could set up a program for sending out checks to eligible workers.

"We were left with the Frontline Working Group failing in its mission," House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler, DFL-Golden Valley, who co-chaired the work group, said. "If legislators performed like front-line workers, we would be done with this today. And if front-line workers performed like legis-



Dana Ferguson / West Central Tribune

House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler, DFL-Golden Valley, along with other members of the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group and front-line workers, on Wednesday spoke to reporters at the Capitol after they advanced two proposals for sending out \$250 million to the Minnesota Legislature.

lators, Minnesotans would be in terrible shape today."

Sen. Karin Housley, R-Stillwater, also co-chaired the panel, and she said passing the proposals to the Legislature fulfilled the group's mission and could speed up the process of getting money out to front-line workers.

"We did get our work done today," Sen. Karin Housley, R-Stillwater, said. "The end goal was to get a proposal or two or three to the Legislature. ... It was time to end this political theater. Every week that goes by is another week that these checks aren't into these front-line workers' hands."

At the heart of their disagreement was a dispute over what the term "front-line worker" meant. Democrats said it encompassed a pool of 667,000 health care workers, first responders, meatpackers, grocers and others who couldn't work from home and interacted with others face-to-face on the job. And they said that the group should be able to apply for \$375.

Meanwhile, Republicans

said it covered a smaller group of workers including nurses, corrections officers, nursing home caretakers and first responders who interacted with patients confirmed to have COVID-19. Those workers should be eligible for \$1,200, GOP lawmakers said.

Walz has said the front-line worker pay, aid payments for farmers affected by drought and COVID-19 response measures should all come up as part of a legislative special session. And he drew a red line for Republicans, saying he would refuse to call lawmakers back to St. Paul unless senators agreed not to terminate commissioners or take up vaccine or test mandates for state employees.

Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, R-Winona, has so far rejected those terms and said Republicans would also like to weigh state laws around the executive branch's authority in an emergency if lawmakers come back for a special session.

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com

FOOD & DRINK

Farmers Markets

Litchfield: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, final market of the season Oct. 28, Community Market on Fourth Street on the north side of Central Park.

Montevideo: 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, final market of the season Oct. 28, Smith Park, across from City Hall.

Willmar: 7 a.m. to noon Saturday, final market of the season Oct. 30, Uptown Willmar parking lot, next to Aldi's.

Montevideo: 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, final market of the season Oct. 30, Smith Park, across from City Hall.

Glenwood: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, final market of the season Oct. 30, parking lot south of Pope County Museum on state Highway 104.

Milan Village Arts

MILAN — Milan Village Arts classes have been scheduled for the next year. To register or for more information, call 320-734-4807 or visit the website at milanvillageartsschool.org; email: mvas@fedteldirect.net.

Christmas cookie sampler: Dec. 4. 1 to 5 p.m., with instructor Maureen Hark. Forbeginner and above; ages 12 and under must be accompanied by a parent. Make krumkake, kransekake and more. Tuition of \$70 includes supplies. Registration deadline is Nov. 20.

Willmar Community Education

WILLMAR — Advance registration is required for all the classes, register online at www.cewillmarmn.com or in person at Jefferson Learning Center.

Let's Make Lefse: Nov. 18, 6 to 8 p.m., Willmar Senior High School, cost of \$25 with instructor Samantha Johnson. Hands-on class will walk you through the entire lefse process from scratch and you will go home with 10-15 rounds of lefse.

Cookie art: Two different Tuesday sessions available, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 23 and Dec. 14 at Willmar Senior High School, cost of \$20 per class with instructor Stacy Holwerda. Registration deadline is two weeks before each class.. Hands-on class during which you will create your own edible masterpieces. All items provided and you will leave with six cookies. Bring a flat container, preferably 6 by 9 inches or larger as your frosting may still be wet. The themes for each class are Thanksgiving for Nov. 23 and holiday for Dec. 14.

Holiday essential oils: Dec. 2, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Willmar Middle School, cost of \$7 with instructor Kayla Brandt. Learn how to make homemade nontoxic gifts including bath salts, sugar scrubs, scented room sprays and roller balls. Your first product is included in the course fee, additional products are \$5 each (no limit) and can be paid to the instructor during the class.

Essential oil make-and-take: Dec. 13, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Willmar Middle School, cost of \$7 with instructor Kayla Brandt. Class will discuss the 10 most popular oils and Brandt will share her personal tips and tricks. Class will make and take some roller balls to bring home. First roller ball is included in the course fee, additional rollers are \$5 each (no limit) and can be paid to the instructor during the class.

Italian cookies bake-along: Dec. 18, 10 a.m. to noon, online class for \$30 with instructor Laura Schek. Virtual presentation through Zoom making six-layer rainbow cookies and Italian lemon cookies. Tips on improving your cookie game, including proper measurement, egg separation and better understanding of methods like creaming and tempering.

Food and drink classes conducted by area groups and businesses for the general public are included in this listing each Thursday. To have a class in this list, send the information in an email to news@wctrib.com. The cost of the class must be included.

11th Annual

Red Carpet Event

2 KILLER VOICES
2 DUELING GUITARS
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SONGBLAST

Friday, November 5th

Willmar Conference Center

5:30pm Doors Open 7:30-9pm - SongBlast Performance

Please join us for our annual fundraising event and take advantage of this first-rate entertainment and great food.

Prepare to laugh, sing, and rock and roll!

Tickets on Sale NOW through November 4th! Purchase now, before they're gone!

COVID INFORMATION: Our goal is to be a good corporate citizen. Your Chamber continues to monitor the safety recommendations made by the MDH and CDC. Please monitor your registered email for communications on health considerations regarding this event. Masks are encouraged but not mandated. Tickets are non-refundable unless the event is canceled.

Contact the Chamber for Tickets | (320) 235-0300

Police: Priest riding bike was killed by driver with revoked license

By Kristi Belcamino
St. Paul Pioneer Press

ROSEMOUNT, Minn. — A bicyclist struck and killed in Rosemount on Monday, Oct. 25, was a newly installed Burnsville priest, and authorities said the motorist who hit him had been previously convicted nine times for driving without a license. Police said that Dennis Keith Dempsey, 73, was riding his bicycle on the shoulder of Dakota County Road 42 when he was fatally struck Monday afternoon. According to a Tuesday post on its Facebook page, the Church of the Risen Savior in Burnsville said that Dempsey,

who served the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis for 41 years, was the new parish priest there. “We learned Monday evening that Father Denny Dempsey had been riding his bike in Rosemount, as he so loved to do. He was struck by a motor vehicle and did not survive the impact,” the post said. Rosemount Police Chief Mikael Dahlstrom said Dempsey’s death was especially difficult for the police department to handle because the priest had baptized the children of a several staff members, including one of the officers who responded to the scene of the collision.

“It’s a tragic story,” Dahlstrom said. “He’s very well connected and had done a lot of charity work in this area.” The chief said that Dempsey and the driver who struck him were both traveling westbound on County Road 42 (145th Street) near Auburn Avenue in Rosemount when the 3:30 p.m. collision occurred. Dempsey was riding his bike on the far shoulder of the road when he was hit, Dahlstrom said. The driver, Trejean Derrell Curry, 26, was detained and formally arrested Monday night and is being held without bail in the Dakota County Jail on suspicion of criminal vehicular homicide.

Curry has been convicted nine times for driving without a license, Minnesota court records show. His license is currently revoked, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Curry’s most recent conviction was Sept. 21 for driving 100 mph in a 70-mph zone. His license had been revoked in July in Alexandria, Minnesota. At the time, he listed a Minneapolis address. He owed \$515 in the case as of Tuesday, according to a court record. Dempsey had been at the Church of the Risen Savior since July. Before that, he spent 15 years at the Church of St. Dominic in Northfield.



Contributed / via St. Paul Pioneer Press
Police said that Dennis Keith Dempsey, 73, was riding his bicycle on the shoulder of Dakota County Road 42 when he was fatally struck Monday afternoon.

The Church of the Risen Savior had planned an event this weekend to welcome Dempsey as their new priest. “A previously planned welcome event for Father Denny this coming weekend, October 30 & 31, will shift to an opportunity for us to gather and remember our beloved pastor,” the church’s Facebook post said, noting that Twin Cities Archbishop Bernard Hebda was working to find an interim pastor for the church. In a Tuesday post on its Facebook page, St. Dominic’s shared the news of Dempsey’s death and said, “We know this news will be devastating to many who know and so loved him. Our hearts are broken.”



Chris Polydoroff / St. Paul Pioneer Press
More than 2 feet of snow and winds gusting to 50 mph prove too much, at least temporarily, for this car in Washington County, Minnesota, on Nov. 2, 1991. This weekend marks the 30th anniversary of the infamous Halloween blizzard, which brought the largest snowfall in a single storm in history. The two-day storm dropped 28.4 inches of snow in the Twin Cities and nearly 37 inches in Duluth.

Have you heard of the Halloween Blizzard?

Sunday is the 30th anniversary of the infamous blizzard in Minnesota

By Nancy Yang
MPR News

Minneapolis
Say, have I ever told you about the time it snowed here in Minnesota on Halloween? It. Was. Epic! Oh, you’ve heard the story before? At least a hundred times? Well, I’m sure you won’t mind if I pull up a chair and tell you about it again anyway, right? Yes, Sunday, Oct. 31, marks the 30th anniversary of the infamous Halloween Blizzard, a storm so powerful it spawned towering where-you tales that have only snowballed in the three decades since. “Oh no, we have to brag that, in Duluth, we skied to the grocery store and shoveled for hours to get our vehicles free only to have the plow bury them again,” one person replied to our story callout on MPR News’ Instagram account. “Minnesotans are proud to be Minnesotan and that storm is a truly Minnesota moment in history,” said another. However, for those who either weren’t here back then — or who were dragged outside for pictures in tiny snowsuits simply to document the size of snowdrifts — the perpetually retold stories of the ‘91

blizzard can feel glazed over. “What’s happening to the quality of our small talk that not only are we talking about the weather, we’re talking about the weather 30 years ago?” MPR News associate producer Aron Woldelessie said on TPT’s “Almanac.” “I moved here the year AFTER the notorious blizzard and every time I hear the same stories retold, it reminds me of a High School football player who peaked and has to rehash stories of his glory days returning a fumble or backing up the back-up quarterback to feel good about themselves,” one Instagram commenter said. “I moved here in 1992. I have heard these stories for 29 long years. It snowed a lot. On Halloween. I get it,” another said, adding the hashtag #getoverit. ‘Perfect storm’ for memory People tend to remember distinctive experiences in their lives that are sensory, emotionally positive and bring people together. That’s why people who lived through the Halloween Blizzard continue to talk about it 30 years later, said University of St. Thomas psychology professor Greg Robinson-Riegler. “I liken it to ... a ‘perfect storm’ for memory,” said

Robinson-Riegler, who researches memory and emotion. “Everything that would make something memorable was happening at that time.” The storm certainly checked those boxes, reinforcing Minnesotans’ self-identity as a hardy people — trick-or-treating through the snow, helping dig out neighbors, swapping stories of wind and drifts. And it definitely smashed weather records. In the Twin Cities, snow started falling on Halloween morning. By midnight, the storm had dumped 8.2 inches of snow at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, breaking the record for the most snow on that date, fourth-tenths of an inch. By the time it was all done three days later, the storm had dumped more than 2 feet of snow in the Twin Cities and 3 feet in Duluth. The North Shore city’s 36.9-inch snowfall set a record at the time as the largest single snowstorm total for Minnesota. October snow is not an entirely new thing in Minnesota — a snowstorm last year shattered some early season records, but “we don’t get big snows in October very often,” said Ted Krause, a National Weather Service meteorologist in the Twin Cities.

“There just hasn’t been that many blizzards in October in Minnesota,” Krause said. The Department of Natural Resources’ State Climatology Office says that “heavy accumulating snow is harder to come by” during the month because the air typically isn’t cold enough yet nor is the ground. And measurable snow on Halloween is itself rare. In the Twin Cities, “Since 1872 there’s been enough snow to measure only six times: 0.6 in 1884; 0.2 in 1885; 1.4 in 1932; 0.4 in 1954; 0.5 in 1995; and of course 8.2 inches, with the opening round of the Halloween Blizzard in 1991,” according to the climatology office. So if you trick-or-treated through the snow, shoveled for days or skied through thigh-high snow banks to check on your neighbors, you’re going to remember that, and keep talking about it. “[That] repetition and rehearsal, the more you tell the story, the stronger it gets, the more likely you are to think of it again,” Robinson-Riegler said. ‘Part of our childhood story’ Meagan and Sean Nelson of south Minneapolis were both just a year old when the

storm hit in ‘91. “It’s part of our childhood story, even though we were so young,” Meagan Nelson said. “It’s always a reference point for Halloween growing up.” The couple recently launched a design company, Hoydado, and the timing was so that they decided to make and sell a T-shirt in honor of the storm’s 30th anniversary. It’s a conversation-starter, whether you love it or hate it, Sean Nelson said. “There’s people on both sides of the fence.” Their son, Magnus, is 1 this year, the same age they were when the storm hit three decades ago. They’re almost hoping for another major storm so that Magnus can have his own Halloween Blizzard story to share. Sadly, it doesn’t look like he’ll get the chance. The Halloween forecast isn’t looking too scary at the moment. In the meantime, we’ll just say sorry now to all the folks who are going to have to listen to our never-ending stories this week — and for the rest of all time. “Minnesota, we don’t have a lot of big moments that we like to brag about,” Meagan Nelson said. “But I feel like the Halloween blizzard is sometimes that big historical moment that we get to brag about in the fall.”

Facebook slams media for its own practices

By The Sacramento Bee Editorial Board
Tribune News Service

What exactly is Facebook trying to hide? There are just so many options to choose from. Perhaps it's the new whistleblower claims that dropped Friday, alleging that Facebook constantly chooses growth and profits by ignoring hate speech and widespread misinformation. How about the claims that the company knowingly created a toxic environment for teen girls, leading to significant mental health problems and body image issues for one in three users?

Maybe Facebook is feeling spooked over the testimony of former Facebook data scientist Frances Haugen, the first whistleblower who unveiled the company's lax policies around security safeguards immediately following the 2020 election — which allowed the undemocratic lunacy that inspired a riot and the storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 to fester.

It would be naive to expect Facebook's reaction to this reporting to be one of regret, but it's still revealing that its response to multiple whistleblower revelations was to deflect and attack.

Last week, the Facebook Newsroom posted a series of tweets questioning a wave of upcoming stories being pursued by "30+ journalists ... finishing up a coordinated series of articles based on thousands of pages of leaked documents."

As these tweets were being sent, The Sacramento Bee's Editorial Board was in contact with Facebook about a meeting, at Facebook's request — and, as company officials were clearly hoping, at their whim.

Our editorial board interviews policymakers, public officials, corporate executives, and thought leaders on the record and uses the interviews to develop official editorial positions. However, Facebook's representatives insisted that no one they would make available could be quoted about their "perspective on the legal and regulatory issues involving Facebook and the tech industry." We told Facebook we weren't interested.

They profess to want internet regulation, but it's no secret that Facebook money pours into D.C. politics. Last year, Facebook spent nearly \$20 million on its lobbying efforts in Congress, the most of any tech giant. Does anyone really believe they'll willingly allow themselves to be regulated in a way that they cannot manipulate?

Facebook officials say they "expect the press to hold us accountable, given our scale and role in the world," yet they cry foul and push back against data-driven journalism and important questions — questions that many of their 2.9 billion users would like to see answered.

"As long as Facebook is operating in the dark, it is accountable to no one," said Haugen when testifying before Congress. U.S. Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., compared Facebook to Big Tobacco in that it targets kids and young adults with products it knows are harmful.

Thanks to Haugen, the revelations about how Facebook platforms can spread misinformation and undermine democracy keep coming. Among the latest is how the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol was fed by "Stop the Steal" zealots who used Facebook's platforms to organize those who believed the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

"Because we were looking at each entity individually, rather than as a cohesive movement, we were only able to take down individual Groups and Pages once they exceeded a violation threshold," according to a Facebook postmortem on its Jan. 6 response reviewed by CNN. "This approach did eventually change, according to the analysis — after it was too late," wrote CNN.

These internal Facebook documents contradict what Facebook executives said when questioned by journalists in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 insurrection.

Every day, Facebook inspires more hard questions it continues to duck. The company clearly can't be trusted.



Border rhetoric is not reality

By Mario H. Lopez
The Fulcrum (TNS)

The weekslong headlines citing the number of migrant encounters by the U.S. Border Patrol routinely venture into the sensational. And certain activist segments, including extremist anti-immigration organizations, are all too eager to amplify the news and add their own false narratives into the public sphere.

The hyperbolic narrative was further complicated by the recent feverish rush out of Afghanistan and the spike of Haitian refugees that resulted in many stories about their makeshift camp in Del Rio, Texas, and the response from border authorities.

The common thread in the misleading claims is the desire by anti-immigrant voices to deceive average Americans, causing alarm by insinuating that millions of people are coming to our shores. Even worse, that migrants are making our country into a "cesspool of humanity," as former President Donald Trump recently claimed.

What the data shows is that numbers for monthly encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border have fluctuated for years. Reasons vary, and are often cyclical, but also driven by factors in the home countries of those who come to America just as many generations of migrants have in the past.

The pandemic, of course, resulted in very few people traveling in 2020. An increase in 2021, with conditions improving and the economy moving toward recovery, was inevitable. The numbers for border encounters also skyrocketed twice under Trump — first in April 2019 and again during the summer of 2020.

The principal factor driving the statistics for border encounters is something called Title 42, an obscure statute that allows the government to close the border if the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention believes that there is a serious public health danger.

The invocation of Title 42 started in March of 2020, under Trump's administration, citing public health concerns despite objections from the CDC's top doctors.

Other public health experts weighed in, agreeing with the CDC. Dr. Anthony So, of the School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, wrote to then-CDC Director Robert Redfield: "The decision to halt asylum processes 'to protect the public health' is not based on evidence or science."

The Title 42 rationale for turning away refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants has been kept in place by the Biden administration.

Prior to the implementation of Title 42, migrants encountered by authorities were supposed to be processed through established procedures, according to U.S. law, that may include removal or detention — or worse if someone has a criminal record, for example.

Under Title 42, everyone is blindly turned away, with no processing, and with no screening for COVID-19, despite the purported rationale. Border Patrol agents expel the vast majority of crossers immediately, sometimes within hours of being apprehended.

The immediate expulsions not only run counter to our own laws and established procedures, but they



John Moore / Getty Images / TNS
Illuminated by the lights of a National Guard vehicle, immigrants walk through a migrant camp next to the U.S.-Mexico border Sept. 21 in Del Rio, Texas. The immigrants, mostly from Haiti, have numbered as high as 14,000 at the camp located near the international bridge.

allow for migrants to repeatedly attempt crossings within a short period of time, creating backlogs of people waiting to be processed, applying for asylum, etc.

The reality is that while Title 42 drives the statistical number of encounters up, the actual number of people crossing and attempting to cross does not necessarily fluctuate wildly over time. For example, without the repeat crossers who can make multiple attempts thanks to Title 42, the numbers for the first few months of fiscal 2021 would look nearly identical to fiscal 2019, before the pandemic.

The rising number of "encounters" spurs the attention-grabbing and often sensationalistic headlines of record-setting border apprehensions that often serve as an excuse to tack on additional demonstrably false claims that we have "open borders" or that illegal immigrants are flooding the entire country.

But facts prove otherwise. The truth is, by far the most important factor that contributes to the problem of illegal immigration is the lack of suitable options for legal immigration, a point to which most Americans are oblivious since they, thankfully, never have to deal with an immigration regime so opaque and bureaucratic that it can take over 20 years to immigrate legally.

But even that only applies to a select few. Immigration policy expert David Bier sheds much needed light, explaining that "under U.S. immigration law, it is illegal for anyone in the world to travel or immigrate to the United States unless they fall into very narrow exceptions." Bier continues: "Effectively, if they don't qualify as a select few high skilled workers or family members of U.S. citizens, they can't come legally."

While the root is easy to identify for anyone who looks beyond the headlines, the solution is complicated by politicians who lack the courage and will to work constructively toward a modern and streamlined process for legal immigration. Until then, the misleading headlines and nasty rhetoric are likely to continue.

Mario H. Lopez is president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, a nonpartisan public policy advocacy organization that advances liberty, opportunity and prosperity for all. The Fulcrum covers what's making democracy dysfunctional and efforts to fix our governing systems. ©2021 The Fulcrum. Visit at thefulcrum.us. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Democrats, kill this bad bill

By Nolan Finley
The Detroit News (TNS)

Every week that goes by with Democrats unable to bully or bribe their two recalcitrant Senate colleagues into signing on to one of the worst pieces of legislation in modern history is a good week for America.

Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona are still holding out against passage of their party's \$3.5 trillion socialist spending bill, despite relentless attacks from their colleagues.

Democrats have thrown overboard key pieces of the package, including free community college, to lighten the cost enough to win over the two dissidents. They've also backed off somewhat on weaponizing the IRS to squeeze more revenue out of working Americans.

But then Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who is the driver of the legislative package that would turn America into a full-on welfare state, penned an op-ed recently that ran in Manchin's home state — one of the poorest in the nation — accusing him of opposing help for the working class. It clearly ticked off Manchin.

In a heated face-to-face meeting between the pair, Manchin reportedly shouted at Sanders, "How about zero?" when pressed for an amount of spending he'd support.

Zero is a fine number. The best number, in fact.

Manchin and Sinema hope to help their party and country avoid the disaster this bill would bring.

They understand pouring additional trillions of dollars of government spending onto the trillions already spent would send inflation through the roof.

Its vast new cradle-to-grave welfare programs would provide further disincentive to work for a labor force that is too comfortable staying at home.

The massive tax hikes on the wealthy and corporations that are supposed to pay for this boondoggle will slow investments and job creation, and provide renewed incentives for companies to move their business overseas.

The American people aren't cheering all the giveaways the bill would shower on them. Rather, they are wary of their government becoming so much bigger and more intrusive. A poll this month from the bipartisan PAC No Labels found 60% of Americans agree with Manchin's plea for a "strategic pause" on the bill that would provide more time to weigh its impact.

Washington Post's left-leaning editorial board chided Democrats for attempting to abuse their slim majority in Congress "to stage a revolution."

That's a good description of what's going on. Democrats are trying to radically reshape America without building the broad consensus that should precede such a consequential transformation.

They had hoped to shove it through a month ago. The longer their ambition is denied, the better the chance it will be derailed.

This is a bad bill, and not just because of its tremendous cost. Even a much smaller version would position the federal government as the most dominant force in American life, making nearly every individual dependent on its largesse.

God bless Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema for standing in the path of their own party's bulldozer. Here's praying they'll hang tough.

Nolan Finley is the editorial page editor at The Detroit News. ©2021 The Detroit News, www.detroitnews.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

BBE beats the Benson Braves 3-0

In front of a packed house, Jaguars move into the Section 6A quarterfinals



Matthew Curry / West Central Tribune
BBE sophomore Brooklyn Fischer rejects a block attempt by Benson in the second round of the Section 6A-South tournament Wednesday in Brooten.

By Matthew Curry and Joe Brown
West Central Tribune
BROOTEN — Bel-grade-Brooten-Elrosa swiftly advanced to the quarterfinals of the Section 6A volleyball tournament with a sweep of Benson on Wednesday. The Jaguars seemed to be clicking on all cylinders against the Braves, limiting their errors and making good use of each scoring possibility, winning the match 25-10, 25-9, 25-8. “Our girls are finding their rhythm and it’s the perfect time to do that,” BBE coach Tiffany Breitbach said. “Their hits

and serves were phenomenal tonight and both of those things were goals for this team.” BBE (21-7) plays Parkers Prairie at 7 p.m. Friday at the BBE Elementary School in Brooten. Parkers Prairie, the fifth seed in the South, advanced with a 25-23, 23-25, 27-25, 17-25, 15-12 victory over No. 4 Brandon-Evansville. Benson ends its season with a 6-23 record. With a home-court advantage and a packed house, including a full student section, the Jaguars were determined to not let up against the

Braves. “We just sat down and reminded them of the goals that they’ve had all season,” Breitbach said regarding the pre-game discussion. “They had the goal of being conference champions. They did that. Now they’re focused on being section champions and hoping to battle for a state championship.” The Jaguars locked down the front of the net, forcing Benson to make difficult scoring plays, resulting in errors. BBE, meanwhile, converted its scoring opportunities. The Jaguars took the

first set 25-10, the closest set of the night. BBE quickly took control of the second set with a 15-5 lead, resulting in a timeout. The Jaguars continued their run following the timeout to take a 19-7 lead and eventually a 25-9 win. BBE played arguably its best volleyball in the third set, starting with a 10-0 run and taking a 17-2 lead. Benson had its largest run of the match near the end, scoring five straight points, forcing BBE to call a timeout with a 19-8 lead. **JAGUARS:** Page B2



Photos by Joe Brown / West Central Tribune
Willmar senior Marissa Rosen (6) takes a swing at the ball against the New Ulm defense during a Section 2AAA quarterfinal match Wednesday at the Big Red Gym in Willmar.

A TOUGH WIN

Willmar needs 4 sets to beat New Ulm in Section 2AAA playoffs

By Joe Brown
West Central Tribune
Willmar
New Ulm proved to be no easy out for the Willmar volleyball team. In the opening round of the Section 2AAA tournament Wednesday, the seventh-seeded Eagles built up a six-point lead in the first set that the second-seeded Cardinals had to climb out of. Then after New Ulm won the third set, the two teams fought tooth-and-nail with a potential fifth set looming. Ultimately, Willmar was able to secure the four-set victory, 25-23, 25-13, 20-25, 28-26. “I don’t want to say I didn’t expect it,” said Cardinals senior outside hitter Marissa Rosen, “but they were really good tonight.” Said Cardinals head coach



Mackenzie Knofczynski (8) and the Willmar volleyball team celebrate after scoring a point in a Section 2AAA quarterfinal match against New Ulm at the Big Red Gym in Willmar. Leah Ruter, “They’re a good, tough team and they fought for their lives. They played hard and gave us a run for our money.” In the opening set, the Eagles went ahead 17-11 following a pair of attacking errors by Willmar. But the Cardinals managed to tie it at 18-all, thanks to outside hitter Sydney Schnichels getting three kills in Willmar’s 7-1 run. The two teams were tied at 23-all until the Cardinals scored two straight on a Gretchen Volk ace serve and a New Ulm attacking error. “We all came together in the middle and were like, all right, guys. We looked each other in the eye and were like, ‘Let’s go. We

got this,’” Schnichels said of the team’s first-set turnaround. “We’ll take one deep breath, we’ll get one pass, Lydia (Larson) is going to take the ball and we’re going to side-out right here. Just have confidence in each other.” “When we’re looking each other in the eye,” Schnichels continued, “we’re thinking that we got this. We have confidence in one another and we’re going to do it.” The second set was a dominant showing for Willmar as it led by as much as 13 to get the 2-0 lead. “They just kept up the energy,” Ruter said of the second-set turnaround. “We talked about some of our matches this year going on a roller-coaster ride. For us, being consistent is a big thing. The bench helps out with that (and) the crowd helps out with that.” **WILLMAR:** Page B2

GIRLS TENNIS
Litchfield delighted with 2nd place finish
Dragons fall to Breck in the final, but equal their best state finish

By Tom Elliott
West Central Tribune
MINNEAPOLIS — The Litchfield girls tennis team came into the season with a stretch of four straight section championships, but also with the loss of six seniors. In tennis, where the lineup includes 10 players, that’s a lot of seniors. The season ended, however, as well as any in school history. The Dragons bring home a second-place trophy from the state Class A team tournament Wednesday at the Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center. Litchfield lost to Breck 7-0 in the final after beating Providence Academy 6-1 in the semifinals. “It’s an amazing feat,” Draeger said. “It’s real hard to put into words. “The amount of improvement our kids have made this year is incredible. “To come back with pretty much a whole new lineup and do this is incredible.”

On Tuesday, Litch edged Pine City 4-3 in perhaps the closest, toughest victory of the season. Though Draeger points out there were a lot of close, tough victories this year. “It (the Pine City match) was absolute stress,” Draeger said. “It was two hours of highly intense, stressful tennis.” All three doubles matches went three sets in that one, with Litchfield winning two. The winning point was by fourth singles player Isla Dille, a seventh-grader. Litchfield also has a ninth-grader, Karlee Prahll in the lineup. “Again, that (Pine City win) was a credit to our kids,” Draeger said. “We’ve handled these situations better than I could ever have imagined.” **TENNIS:** Page B2

Vikings vs. Cowboys game could be a ‘shootout’

By Chris Tomasson
St. Paul Pioneer Press
MINNEAPOLIS — When they met in a 2019 game, the Vikings and Dallas Cowboys combined for 52 points. In a 2020 game, they rang up 59. The teams meet again Sunday night at U.S. Bank Stadium, and it would be no surprise if even more points are scored between the two high-powered offenses. “I think it’s going to be a high-scoring game, I really do,” said hall of fame coach Tony Dungy, who as an NBC studio analyst will have a lot to say about the Sunday Night Football game before, during and after the broadcast. “I think it’s going to be a shootout.” The Cowboys (5-1) lead the NFL in both total offense and scoring offense. The Vikings (3-3) are No. 5 in total offense and No. 14 in scoring. Both teams feature highly rated quarterbacks, with Dallas’ Dak Prescott being fourth in the NFL in passer rating and Minnesota’s Kirk Cousins eighth. Cousins is rated tied for third among NFL quarterbacks by Pro Football Focus while Prescott is No. 12. Both teams also have top-notch running backs. Minnesota has Dalvin Cook, who has missed two games due to a sprained right ankle but has averaged 91.5 yards in the four he’s played, and Dallas **FOOTBALL:** Page B2

Cruz named Roberto Clemente Award winner

By Betsy Helfand
St. Paul Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS — When Nelson Cruz re-signed with the Twins in February, the team was coming off of back-to-back division championships, and the veteran slugger spoke highly of the Twins’ chances to win the World Series.

Cruz, who played in two World Series with the Texas Rangers previously, did wind up making it back to the Fall Classic this October — just not in the way he envisioned. Not with the Twins, which was his hope originally, and not with his new team, the Tampa Bay Rays, who had the American League’s best record in the regular season but were ousted in the ALDS.

No, Cruz made it back to the World Series as the 2021 winner of the prestigious Roberto Clemente Award, given to the player who “best represents the game of baseball through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions,



Andy Marlin / USA Today Sports
Tampa Bay Rays designated hitter Nelson Cruz (23) hits a solo home run against the New York Yankees during the first inning Oct. 1 at Yankee Stadium.

both on and off the field.”

“It’s just a privilege and an honor,” Cruz said. “Like I said in the past, we put a lot of work into the community never thinking to be really recognized. Most players do because we think it’s the right thing to do, but it’s always nice to be recog-

Roberto Clemente Award nominee even after being traded, honored for his philanthropic efforts both in the Dominican Republic and in the Twin Cities.

Cruz has worked tirelessly to help those in his hometown of Las Matas de Santa Cruz over the years. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cruz has helped feed and provide financial support to nearly 1,200 families that have been affected.

He has donated a fire truck, ambulance and firefighter uniforms to first responders in his hometown, and every year he brings in dentists and optometrists to see and help patients in town.

Currently, he is working on building an education and technical center in Las Matas de Santa Cruz, which will serve as a place where young athletes can complete their high school degrees and learn new technical skills. Once that project gets off the ground, the hope is to then build more around the country.

“It’s been two incredible

years from Muhammad Ali to Roberto Clemente. It’s just been a blessing and pushed me to work harder for my community and for the things that I believe, that I can help others to have a better life,” Cruz said.

Cruz previously was nominated twice (2018, 2020) for the Roberto Clemente Award, named for the hall of famer who died in a plane crash while delivering aid to Nicaragua following an earthquake in 1972. He becomes the fourth Twins player to win the award, joining a trio of hall of famers: Rod Carew (1977), Dave Winfield (1994) and Kirby Puckett (1997).

He was selected for the award by a panel that included Commissioner Rob Manfred, Clemente’s children, former players, journalists and a fan vote.

“It seems like every year, our goal is to reach more people and help more people,” Cruz said. “... We’re going to keep building on what we’ve been doing the last few years.”

WILLMAR

From Page B1

Schnichels pounded the ball all across the court on the way to 23 kills. Mackenzie Knofczynski was a force in the middle with 13 kills and two blocks while Marissa Rosen found space down the sidelines for eight kills.

“The middles were doing a really great job of being loud and drawing the block,” Schnichels said. “I think when we run the slide and then go to the outside, it really opens (the court) up. Marissa

had line and she did a really good job hitting that. For me, there was a huge hole. It was perfect. Lydia sets perfectly, the passing was perfect. They couldn’t stop us.”

Turns out, that cushion was important. The Eagles (14-10) weren’t ready to have the season end yet.

The Cardinals had the lead just once, at 18-17, in the third set as New Ulm cut the deficit to one after scoring the last three points.

New Ulm was on the verge of sending the game to a decisive fifth set with a 24-23 lead in the fourth.

During a timeout

tyied at 23, Ruter told the team, “It’s zero-zero, we don’t change anything that we do. We just do what we can control and (go) one point at a time.”

The two teams traded points until Schnichels had back-to-back kills to put Willmar up 27-26.

The Eagles hit the ball out of bounds on the next point, sending Willmar into the semifinals.

“It was a thriller,” Rosen said with an exhale. “We were on the edge of our seats on the bench. We were working our butts off and not letting anything drop. (New



Joe Brown / West Central Tribune
Willmar junior Hannah Stark (right) bumps the ball toward the net while teammate Sydney Schnichels looks on during a Section 2AAA quarterfinal match against New Ulm on Wednesday at the Big Red Gym in Willmar.

Ulm) did really well against us; it was good competition.”

On Friday, the Cardinals will be back at the Big Red Gym

to take on No. 3 seed Mankato West. The Scarlets advanced with a 3-0 win over Mankato East on Wednesday.

Elsewhere in Section 2AAA, top-seeded Marshall swept No. 8 Worthington 3-0. Hutchinson, the No. 4 seed, beat No. 5 St. Peter in three sets.

Willmar 3, New Ulm 1

New Ulm (14-10)	23	13	25	26
Willmar (21-7)	25	25	20	28

New Ulm
Stats not available

Willmar
Serving (aces): Sydney Schnichels 2, Mackenzie Knofczynski 2, Gretchen Volk 2, Hannah Stark 1, Allie Rosendahl 1 ... **Set assists:** Lydia Larson 51 ... **Hitting (kills):** Schnichels 23, Knofczynski 13, Marissa Rosen 8, Bella Mulder 5, Dena Mathison 2, Larson 1 ... **Blocking (aces):** Mulder 3-1/2, Knofczynski 2, Mathison 1, Larson 1/2 ... **Digs (5 or more):** Schnichels 12, Stark 8, Volk 8, Rosendahl 7, Knofczynski 5

JAGUARS

From Page B1

The Jaguars finished with a six-point run to take the 25-8 win.

Breitbach says BBE is prepared for what could be a close match Friday.

“They’re not going to roll over for us,” she said. “We’ve got to control the match. If we control the match like we did

tonight, limiting our turnovers and taking advantage of our offense, we’ll be in a good position to advance.”

Section 6A-South

BBE 3, Benson 0

Benson (6-23)	10	9	8
BBE (21-7)	25	25	25

Benson
Serving (aces): Libby McGeary 1, Lilly Slaughter 1 ... **Set assists:** Adysen Himley 11 ... **Hitting (kills):** Slaughter 5, Kyra Gronseth 3, Ellie Krusemark 1, Isabella Wolter 1, Kaylin Grube 1 ... **Blocking (aces):** Himley 1, Ellie Krusemark 1, Grube 1 ... **Digs (5 or more):** McGeary 7, Wolter 6, Himley 5, Emma Krusemark 5.

BBE
Serving (aces): Emily Kern 3, Ava Mueller 2,

Brooklyn Fischer 2, Paige Rupp 2, Kylie Winter 1 ... **Set assists:** Kailey Fischer 31, Emily Kern 1, Mueller 1 ... **Hitting (kills):** Mueller 12, B. Fischer 9, Abby Berge 8, Rupp 7, Allison Dingmann 3, K. Fischer 1, Winter 1 ... **Blocking (aces):** B. Fischer 2, Berge 2 ... **Digs (5 or more):** Kern 13, Winter 9.

Wheaton/H-N 3, KMS 0

Wheaton/Herman-Norcross was able to avenge a loss to Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg in the regular season, sweeping the Fighting Saints in the Section 6A-South quarterfinals at Wheaton.

The Warriors won the match 28-26, 25-20, 25-19.

In their previous matchup, KMS knocked off Wheaton/H-N in three sets in the Underwood invitational on Oct. 21.

On Wednesday, Julia Carlson led the Fighting Saints with 10 kills along with two ace serves. Setter Grace Collins had 29 assists and five digs. Shakira Olson finished with seven kills and a pair of ace blocks.

The Warriors will take on No. 6 seed Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley Friday in

Wheaton. The Wolverines advanced on Wednesday following a four-set win over No. 3 seed Hancock.

The Fighting Saints conclude the season with an 8-21 record.

KMS (8-21)	26	20	19
Wheaton/H-N (18-9)	28	25	25

KMS
Serving (aces): Josie Gjerde 3, Taylor Haats 2, Julia Carlson 2, Elsa Gjerde 1, Grace Collins 1, Karli Jensen 1 ... **Set assists:** Collins 29 ... **Hitting (kills):** Carlson 10, Shakira Olson 7, Emily Wagner 6, Haats 3, Savannah Peterson 2, J. Gjerde 1, Collins 1 ... **Blocking (aces):** Olson 2, Peterson 1/2, Wagner 1/2 ... **Digs (5 or more):** E. Gjerde 10, Collins 5

Wheaton/H-N
Stats not available

TENNIS

From Page B1

Providence Academy produced a more comfortable final score, but Draeger said that was close and hard-fought, too.

Kylie Michels won in three sets at No. 2 singles, beating Gabriella Noren 1-6, 6-1, 6-2. At No. 3 singles, Karlee Prah! beat Koralyn Horstman 7-5, 4-6, 10-5.

Then came the Breck match. Breck won its first state championship since 2013 and its third

in school history. The Mustangs also won state in 1996. Breck advanced by beating Fairmont 7-0 in its semifinal.

Against Litchfield, the Mustangs won in straight sets except at No. 2 doubles. There, the Dragons’ Taylor Draeger and Olivia Olson fell to Emily Lin and Amelia Bras 2-6, 6-0, 14-12.

It’s the second time Litchfield has finished second. The Dragons were second in 2018, losing to Blake in the final. Blake is now in Class AA. Litchfield finished third in 2019 and won the consolation

championship in 2017.

Draeger credits a supportive community and hard-working, talented athletes.

“We have a real good community that supports tennis,” Draeger said.

He said that former players came in to play the Dragons in order to get them ready for state.

“We have the kind of girls that people like to be around,” Draeger said. “It’s a very good culture.”

In the third-place match, Providence Academy defeated Fairmont 4-3. In the fifth-

place match, Rochester Lourdes beat Pine City 5-2. Lourdes beat Morris/Chokio-Alberta 6-1 and Pine City beat Crookston 6-1 in the consolation semifinals.

The state Class A individual tournament gets underway at 8 a.m. Thursday at the Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center.

In singles, Litchfield’s Ryanna Steinhaus plays Wadena-Deer Creek’s Madison Packer in the first round and Montevideo’s Emily Brace faces Lydia Delich of Eveleth-Gilbert Area.

In doubles, the Benson/Kerkhoven-Mur-

dock-Sunburg duo of Hannah Helms and Elise Duncan face Belle Plaine’s Courtney Eppen and Josie Schmidt. New London-Spicer’s Izzy Schmiesing and Delaney Hanson play Ellie Pirtle and Petra Lyon of Breck. And, Litchfield’s Kylie Michels and Britney Prah! play Katelyn Torrel and Anna Beaudette of Eveleth-Gilbert Area. Play concludes with the championship rounds on Friday.

Class A final

Breck 7, Litchfield 0

Singles
(1) Ellie Pirtle, B. def. Ryanna Steinhaus 6-2, 6-1 ... (2) Aditi Nadkarni, B. def. Kylie

Michels 6-4, 6-3 ... (3) Ava Warford, B. def. Karlee Prah! 6-3, 6-0 ... (4) Margot Gagerman, B. Isla Dille 6-2, 6-2

Doubles
(1) Petra Lyon/Witt Mehbod, B. def. Britney Prah!/Lauren Erickson 6-2, 6-1 ... (2) Emily Lin/Amelia Bras, B. def. Taylor Draeger/Olivia Olson 2-6, 6-0, 14-12 ... (3) Ava Jeffe/Christiana Radichel, B. def. Kaitlyn Palmer/Sophie Stilwell 6-2, 6-3.

Class A semifinal

Litchfield 6, Providence Academy 1

Singles
(1) Ryanna Steinhaus, L. def. Annika Harberts Ott 6-3, 6-4 ... (2) Kylie Michels, L. def. Gabriella Noren 1-6, 6-1, 6-2 ... (3) Karlee Prah!, L. def. Koralyn Horstman 7-5, 4-6, 10-5 ... (4) Isla Dille, L. def. Delaney Flanigan 6-1, 6-2.

Doubles
(1) Britney Prah!/Lauren Erickson, L. def. Emma Speier/Elizabeth Langhus 6-3, 6-3 ... (2) Olivia Eck/Katelyn Clements, PA. def. Taylor Draeger/Olivia Olson 6-4, 6-2 ... (3) Kaitlyn Palmer/Sophie Stilwell, L. def. Ella Flynn/Marie Heyda 6-0, 6-1

FOOTBALL

From Page B1

has Ezekiel Elliott, who is averaging 86.8 yards per game.

Meanwhile, both teams have been inconsistent on defense. The Cowboys are No. 23 in the NFL in total defense while the Vikings are No. 16.

“We’ve got to make (Prescott) feel our presence, because if we don’t, he’ll kill us,” Vikings co-defensive coordinator Andre Patterson said Wednesday. “He’s a great quarterback, he knows where to go with the ball. He has a strong arm, he can make plays with his legs, and he’s got a great amount of receivers that can make plays. Their tight ends make plays. So, the (Vikings) front

has to do a great job of making them feel our presence.”

Prescott suffered a calf injury while throwing the winning touchdown pass in the Cowboys’ 35-29 overtime victory at New England on Oct. 17, then used last week’s bye to rest. He participated only in individual drills in Wednesday’s practice, but Dallas owner Jerry Jones has expressed optimism about him playing Sunday. And Patterson said he does not expect Prescott to be limited.

The Vikings also are coming off their bye week, and that gave Cook some extra time to rest. He missed two of three games because of his ankle injury before he returned to rush for 140 yards in a 34-28 overtime win Oct. 17 at Carolina. He said after the game he still wasn’t fully

healthy.

“I feel good,” Cook said Wednesday. “That bye week was necessary.”

Cook will be going against Elliott’s team for a third straight season. In Minnesota’s 28-24 win at Dallas on Sunday Night Football in November 2019, he rushed for 97 yards on 26 carries while Elliott was held to 47 yards on 20 carries. In the Cowboys’ 31-28 win last November at U.S. Bank Stadium, Cook ran for 115 yards on 27 carries while Elliott gained 115 on 27 attempts.

“Always playing against a guy like Zeke, my mindset and his mindset probably is, I want to out-rush him and he wants to out-rush me,” Cook said. “That’s the nature of competitiveness, so it ain’t going to be a personal thing

between us, you go do what you do and I do what I do. It should be a fun matchup, two good running backs on the field looking to make plays.”

Cousins has played against Prescott’s team five times, the first four with Washington in 2016 and 2017 and then with the Vikings in 2019. Prescott missed last November’s game at Minnesota after suffering a season-ending ankle injury in October, and was replaced by Andy Dalton.

In last year’s game against Dallas, Cousins completed 22 of 30 passes for 314 yards and three touchdowns, and his passer rating of 140.1 remains the fourth-best he’s had in 53 games as a Vikings starter. So is Cousins expecting it could be a shootout on Sunday?

“You have to be aware of the team you’re playing, which includes the offense and the special teams, and just be aware of the whole picture,” Cousins said when asked if the Vikings might not be able to afford settling for field goals.

Dungy was the Vikings’ defensive coordinator from 1992-95 before going on to be a hall of fame coach with Tampa Bay and Indianapolis from 1996-2008. But he believes Sunday it will be a night for the offenses to shine.

“I think it’s going to be a high-scoring game, but it will be interesting to see which defense is going to be able to come up with a takeaway or a stop at a key time,” Dungy said. “But I think it’s going to be an offensive show.”

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL

Postseason Baseball Glance
WORLD SERIES
(Best-of-7; x-if necessary)
Houston 1, Atlanta 1
Tuesday, Oct. 26: Atlanta 6, Houston 2
Wednesday, Oct. 27: Houston 7, Atlanta 2
Friday, Oct. 29: Houston at Atlanta, 7:09 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 30: Houston at Atlanta, 7:09 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 31: Houston at Atlanta, 7:15 p.m.
x-Tuesday, Nov. 2: Atlanta at Houston, 7:09 p.m.
x-Wednesday, Nov. 3: Atlanta at Houston, 7:09 p.m.

BASKETBALL

Professional NBA				
Eastern Conference Atlantic				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	3	1	.750	—
Philadelphia	2	2	.500	1.0
Toronto	2	3	.400	1.5
Brooklyn	2	3	.400	1.5
Boston	2	3	.400	1.5
Central				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	4	0	1.000	—
Milwaukee	3	2	.600	1.5
Cleveland	2	2	.500	2.0
Indiana	1	4	.200	3.5
Detroit	0	3	.000	3.5
Southeast				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	4	1	.800	—
Miami	3	1	.750	.5
Washington	3	1	.750	.5
Atlanta	3	1	.750	.5
Orlando	1	4	.200	3.0
Western Conference Northwest				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	3	0	1.000	—
Minnesota	3	1	.750	.5
Denver	2	2	.500	1.5
Portland	1	2	.333	2.0
Oklahoma City	1	4	.200	3.0
Pacific				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	4	0	1.000	—
L.A. Lakers	2	3	.400	2.5
Phoenix	1	2	.333	2.5
L.A. Clippers	1	2	.333	2.5
Sacramento	1	2	.333	2.5
Southwest				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	2	1	.667	—
Memphis	2	1	.667	—
Houston	1	3	.250	1.5
San Antonio	1	3	.250	1.5
New Orleans	1	4	.200	2.0

Tuesday's Games
New York 112, Philadelphia 99
Golden State 106, Oklahoma City 98
Dallas 116, Houston 106
L.A. Lakers 125, San Antonio 121, OT
Utah 122, Denver 110
Wednesday's Games
Charlotte 120, Orlando 111
Washington 116, Boston 107
Miami 106, Brooklyn 93
Toronto 118, Indiana 100
Atlanta 102, New Orleans 99
Minnesota 113, Milwaukee 108
Oklahoma City 123, L.A. Lakers 115
Sacramento at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Memphis at Portland, 9 p.m.
Cleveland at L.A. Clippers, 9:30 p.m.
Thursday's Games
Detroit at Philadelphia, 6 p.m.
Atlanta at Washington, 6 p.m.
New York at Chicago, 7 p.m.
Utah at Houston, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.
Memphis at Golden State, 9 p.m.
Friday's Games
Orlando at Toronto, 6 p.m.

LOCAL CALENDAR

Thursday, Oct. 28
Volleyball
Section 2A-North: Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop at BOLD, 7 p.m.
Cross-Country
Section 8AA championship, 3:30 p.m. at Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria
Section 3A championship: 4 p.m. at Madison Golf Course
Section 5A championship: 4 p.m. at Pierz Golf Course
Section 6AA championship: TBD at Collinwood Regional Park, Cokato
Boys Soccer
Class AA state tournament: Willmar vs. Worthington, 5:30 p.m. at Waconia
Girls Tennis
Class A singles/doubles tournament, 8 a.m. at Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center, Minneapolis
Friday, Oct. 29
Volleyball
Section 2AAA: TBD
Section 3AA-North: ACGC at Paynesville, 7 p.m.
Section 3AA-North: West Central Area at Litchfield, 7 p.m.
Section 3AA-North: Morris/CA at New London-Spicer, 7 p.m.
Section 3AA-North: Minnewaska at Eden Valley-Watkins, 7 p.m.
Section 3AA-South: Montevideo at Pipestone, 7 p.m.
Section 3A-North: Dawson-Boyd at Minneota, 7 p.m.
Section 3A-North: YME at CMCS, 7 p.m.
Section 3A-North: RCW at MAC-CRAY, 7 p.m.
Section 6A-South: TBD
Cross-Country
Section 6A championship: 4 p.m. at Minnewaska Golf Club, Glenwood
Girls Tennis
Class A singles/doubles tournament, 8 a.m. at Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center, Minneapolis
Girls Swimming
West Central Conference champion-

ship, 3 p.m. at Montevideo
Saturday, Oct. 30
Football
Section 5AA: Paynesville at Royalton, 2 p.m.
Section 4A: KMS at Upsala/Swanville, 2 p.m.
Section 4A: Browerville/Eagle Valley at BBE, 2 p.m.
Section 2AAAA: Faribault at Willmar, 3 p.m.
Section 5A: Dawson-Boyd at Minneota, 3 p.m.
Section 5A: Lakeview at BOLD, 3 p.m.
Section 2 9-Man: Sleepy Eye St. Mary's at RCW, 3 p.m.
Section 2AAA: Litchfield at Providence Academy, 7 p.m.
Section 6AAA: New London-Spicer at Albany, 7 p.m.
Girls Swimming
Central Lakes Conference championship, 10 a.m. at Sartell
Wright County Conference championship, noon at Hutchinson
Junior Hockey
Minnesota Loons at Willmar, 7:10 p.m.

SPORTS ON TV

Thursday, Oct. 28
Basketball:
Detroit at Philadelphia, 6 p.m., NBATV
Football:
College football: South Florida at East Carolina, 6:30 p.m., ESPN
College football: Troy at Coastal Carolina, 6:30 p.m., ESPN2
NFL: Green Bay at Arizona, 7 p.m., FOX
Golf:
Ladies Euro Tour: Omega Dubai Moonlight Classic, 9 a.m., GOLF
PGA Tour: Butterfield Bermuda Championship, 12:30 p.m., GOLF
Hockey:
NHL: Wisconsin at Michigan, 6 p.m., BTN
Soccer:
CONCACAF Champions League:

Monterrey vs. Club America, 9 p.m., FS1
Friday, Oct. 29
Auto Racing:
NHRA Drag: Las Vegas Qualifying, 6 p.m., FS1
Baseball:
MLB: World Series Game 3, 7 p.m., FOX
Basketball:
NBA: Charlotte at Miami, 6:45 p.m., ESPN
NBA: Dallas at Denver, 9:05 p.m., ESPN
Football:
College football: Navy at Tulsa, 6:30 p.m., ESPN2
Golf:
Ladies Euro Tour: Omega Dubai Moonlight Classic, 9 a.m., GOLF
PGA Tour: Butterfield Bermuda Championship, 12:30 p.m., GOLF
Volleyball:
College volleyball: Illinois at Rutgers, 5:30 p.m., BTN
Saturday, Oct. 30
Auto racing:
NASCAR Camping World Truck Series: Martinsville (Va.) Speedway, noon, FS1
NASCAR Xfinity Series: Playoff Race at Martinsville, 5 p.m., NBCSN
Baseball:
MLB: World Series Game 4, 7 p.m., FOX
Basketball:
NBA: Atlanta at Philadelphia, 6:30 p.m., NBATV
NBA: Denver at Minnesota, 8 p.m., BSN
Curling:
Mixed doubles U.S. Olympic Trials, noon, NBCSN
Football:
College football: Texas at Baylor, 11 a.m., ABC
College football: Michigan at Michigan State, 11 a.m., FOX
College football: Iowa at Wisconsin, 11 a.m., ESPN
College football: Cincinnati at Tulane,

11 a.m., ESPN2
College football: Bowling Green at Buffalo, 11 a.m., CBSSN
College football: 11 a.m., BTN
College football: Georgia at Florida, 2:30 p.m., CBS
College football: Texas Tech at Oklahoma, 2:30 p.m., ABC
College football: 2:30 p.m., FOX
College football: Florida State at Clemson, 2:30 p.m., ESPN
College football: Purdue at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m., ESPN2
College football: Minnesota at Northwestern, 2:30 p.m., BTN
College football: Louisiana Tech at Old Dominion, 2:30 p.m., CBSSN
College football: Washington State at Arizona State, 2 p.m., FS1
College football: Mississippi at Auburn, 6 p.m., ESPN
College football: 6 p.m., ESPN2
College football: Kansas at Oklahoma State, 6 p.m., FS1
College football: Boise State at Colorado State, 6 p.m., CBSSN
College football: Penn State at Ohio State, 6:37 p.m., ABC
College football: North Carolina at Notre Dame, 6:30 p.m., NBC
College football: Virginia at BYU, 9:15 p.m., ESPN2
College football: 9:30 p.m., ESPN
College football: Washington at Stanford, 9:30 p.m., FS1
College football: Fresno State at San Diego State, 9:30 p.m., CBSSN
Golf:
PGA Tour: Butterfield Bermuda Championship, noon, GOLF
Soccer:
Premier League: Leicester City vs. Arsenal, 6:25 a.m., NBSSN
Premier League: 8:55 a.m., NBCSSN
Premier League: Newcastle United vs. Chelsea, 9 a.m., USA
Premier League: Tottenham vs. Manchester United, 11:30 a.m., NBC
Volleyball:
College volleyball: Nebraska at Minnesota, 7 p.m., BTN

Indiana at Brooklyn, 6:30 p.m.	Jacksonville	1	5	0	.167	116	172
Charlotte at Miami, 6:30 p.m.	Houston	1	6	0	.143	97	203
Sacramento at New Orleans, 7 p.m.							
L.A. Clippers at Portland, 9 p.m.							
Cleveland at L.A. Lakers, 9:30 p.m.							

Atlanta	3	3	0	.500	135	176
Carolina	3	4	0	.429	146	146

New England at L.A. Chargers, 3:05 p.m.	Illinois	2-3	3-5	144	190
Jacksonville at Seattle, 3:05 p.m.	Northwestern	1-3	3-4	138	176
Washington at Denver, 3:25 p.m.	Nebraska	1-4	3-5	246	155
Tampa Bay at New Orleans, 3:25 p.m.					
Dallas at Minnesota, 7:20 p.m.					

FOOTBALL

Professional NFL						
American Football Conference East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	4	2	0	.667	203	98
New England	3	4	0	.429	179	140
N.Y. Jets	1	5	0	.167	80	175
Miami	1	6	0	.143	127	207
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	5	2	0	.714	193	164
Indianapolis	3	4	0	.429	169	149

National Football Conference East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	5	1	0	.833	205	146
Philadelphia	2	5	0	.286	159	185
N.Y. Giants	2	5	0	.286	139	180
Washington	2	5	0	.286	146	210
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	6	1	0	.857	233	147
New Orleans	4	2	0	.667	140	101

College Big Ten Conference East Division						
	Conf	All	PF	PA		
Michigan	4-0	7-0	264	100		
Michigan St.	4-0	7-0	240	131		
Ohio St.	4-0	6-1	345	130		
Penn St.	2-2	5-2	188	103		
Maryland	1-3	4-3	196	208		
Indiana	0-4	2-5	141	215		
Rutgers	0-4	3-4	169	158		
West Division						
	Conf	All	PF	PA		
Iowa	3-1	6-1	196	102		
Minnesota	3-1	5-2	186	137		
Wisconsin	2-2	4-3	148	129		
Purdue	2-2	4-3	155	114		

HOCKEY

College Big Ten Conference East Division			
Conf	All	PF	PA
Michigan	4-0	7-0	264
Michigan St.	4-0	7-0	240
Ohio St.	4-0	6-1	345
Penn St.	2-2	5-2	188
Maryland	1-3	4-3	196
Indiana	0-4	2-5	141
Rutgers	0-4	3-4	169
West Division			
Conf	All	PF	PA
Iowa	3-1	6-1	196
Minnesota	3-1	5-2	186
Wisconsin	2-2	4-3	148
Purdue	2-2	4-3	155

Professional NHL			
Tuesday's Games			
Calgary 5, New Jersey 3	Tampa Bay 5, Pittsburgh 1	Vegas 3, Colorado 1	Nashville 3, San Jose 1
Minnesota 3, Vancouver 2	Winnipeg 4, Anaheim 3	Seattle 5, Montreal 1	
Wednesday's Games			
Florida 4, Boston 1	Detroit 3, Washington 2, OT	Toronto 3, Chicago 2, OT	Vegas 3, Dallas 2, OT

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Twins position breakdown: Starting pitching

By Betsy Helfand
St. Paul Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Twins’ offseason needs are crystal clear: starting pitching, starting pitching and more starting pitching. Sure, they have other areas that must be addressed, but rebuilding their rotation will be the most important focus this offseason.

It’s not an unfamiliar position for this front office. Last year, the Twins went into the offseason with two rotation spots to fill. The year before that, the only starter they had under contract at the very beginning of the offseason was José Berríos. They ended up filling that rotation by bringing back Jake Odorizzi on a qualifying offer, swinging a trade for Kenta Maeda and adding veterans in free agency.

“This feels a little deja vu-ish,” president of baseball operations Derek Falvey said at the end of September. “... That doesn’t make it easy. Naturally I would love to be able to line up five to seven guys and tell you that we are good and we don’t have to spend any time on that this offseason. We know we do. It’s an area we are going to spend a lot of time focusing on and trying to be creative and think about ways, via free agency or trade, we can impact there.”

2021 recap

The Twins went into the 2021 season with a rotation consisting of Maeda, Berríos, Michael Pineda, J.A. Happ and Matt Shoemaker. At one point during the second half of the season, they rotation was entirely different.

While Berríos turned in one of the best seasons of his career, he did so in part for the Toronto Blue Jays after



Minnesota Twins starting pitcher Bailey Ober delivers a pitch against the Toronto Blue Jays during the first inning at Target Field on Sept. 24.

being traded away in July. Maeda, coming off a 2020 season in which he was runner-up for the Cy Young Award, pitched through elbow discomfort for most of the year and eventually underwent Tommy John surgery. Pineda, the only member of the group to make it to the end of the season, required three separate stints on the injured list.

Happ, like Berríos, also was traded, the Twins somehow finding a taker in the St. Louis Cardinals for the veteran lefty who had a 6.77 earned-run average at the time. Shoemaker was even less effective. His journey with the Twins saw him get demoted to the bullpen, designated for assignment and pitching briefly in Triple-A before his eventual release.

Shoemaker’s struggles paved the way for rookie Bailey Ober to

come in and grab hold of a spot, of which he took full advantage. Ober, a bright spot in an otherwise relatively bleak season, posted a 4.19 earned-run average in 20 starts and importantly, considering his injury history, did not have any arm issues as the Twins closely managed his innings.

Other rookies also got extended tryouts, to varying results. Griffin Jax finished the year with a 6.37 ERA, maintaining his hold on a rotation spot after the trade deadline. Lefty Charlie Barnes got a look, too.

So did Joe Ryan, acquired in the Nelson Cruz trade with Tampa Bay, and he showed the Twins plenty to like in five starts. In the second game of his career, he took a perfect game into the seventh inning against Cleveland.

Randy Dobnak, Lewis Thorpe and Devin

Smeltzer, considered the Twins’ primary depth options heading into the year, all spent a majority of their seasons on the injured list, and the Twins didn’t get a chance to look at some of their top pitching prospects like Jhoan Duran or Josh Winder, either, because of injuries.

2022 outlook

If Berríos was still in the organization and Maeda wasn’t going to miss most, if not all, of next season, this would be a much different story for the Twins.

But right now, they’ve entered an offseason in which Ober and Ryan — who have a combined 25 games of major-league experience — appear ticketed for rotation spots to begin the season and the rest will need to be filled.

How they do that — free agency, trades, internally — will be the story to watch this off-

season.

While the Twins have plenty of internal options who have started at the major-league level, including many of those mentioned above, none besides Ober and Ryan appear to have shown enough to have earned a spot heading into 2022. While Dobnak would seem to be the closest, he struggled last year and then had his season sidetracked by a finger issue.

In the past few seasons, the Twins have filled rotation spots by bringing in veteran free-agent starters — Happ, Shoemaker, Rich Hill, Homer Bailey, Martín Pérez among them — on one-year deals.

It wouldn’t be surprising to see the Twins bring back Pineda, who has expressed interest in remaining in Minnesota and certainly wouldn’t break the bank in free agency, but even

if they did, they will still need to address the top of their rotation.

Dodgers ace Max Scherzer, though 37, heads this year’s class of free-agent starting pitchers. Robbie Ray, who could be this year’s American League Cy Young Award winner, Kevin Gausman and Marcus Stroman, are among other top starters. All, of course, would require a hefty financial investment.

The Twins also have enough position player depth — or even prospect capital — to weather a trade from those ranks to help fill out the rotation.

In the pipeline

The Twins have a stable of young arms that they’ve been developing in the minors, though those in the group that make it to the majors in 2022 likely won’t be starting the season there.

Top pitching prospect Jordan Balazovic, the club’s No. 3 prospect per Baseball America, spent his season in Double-A, as did Simeon Woods Richardson, just 21, who was acquired for Berríos and is the team’s sixth-ranked prospect.

Winder (No. 4) and Duran (No. 9) are closer than those two, both having spent time in Triple-A last season. Their seasons were cut short due to injuries, so the Twins didn’t have a chance to see them at the major-league level. Drew Strotman, the team’s No. 12 prospect per BA, who was acquired with Ryan in the trade for Cruz, could also get a look at some point next season after spending 2021 at Triple-A.

Highly touted righty Matt Canterino (No. 7), who also dealt with injury during the 2021 season, is further out, but the Twins are excited about his future.



Minnesota Golden Gophers kicker Matthew Trickett (95) celebrates with punter Mark Crawford (96) against the Nebraska Cornhuskers on Oct. 16 at Huntington Bank Stadium.



Minnesota Golden Gophers wide receiver Chris Autman-Bell (7) and Nebraska Cornhuskers linebacker Cam Taylor-Britt (5) in a game Oct. 16 at Huntington Bank Stadium.

Why Gophers received one vote in this week’s AP Top 25 poll

By Andy Greder
St. Paul Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS — After the Gophers beat Maryland for a third straight Big Ten win on Saturday, Associated Press Top 25 voter Marc Weiszer put Minnesota in his poll for Week 8 of the college football season.

Weiszer, the Georgia Bulldogs beat writer for the Athens (Georgia) Banner-Herald, was the only one of 63 pollsters to give Minnesota a vote. He had them at No. 25, so overall the Gophers got one overall tally to get a mention in the “receiving votes” fine print.

“It’s usually tougher to determine teams near the bottom of the poll than near the top,” Weiszer said in an email to the Pioneer Press. “I also considered Fresno State, BYU, Louisiana and N.C.

State. I went with Minnesota because it seems to have picked up steam with three straight wins.”

Minnesota improved to 5-2 overall and 3-1 in the Big Ten with last week’s 34-16 victory over the Terrapins, and the outcome would have been more one-sided if not for a Terps touchdown with 1:31 left in the game.

Weiszer might be alone in picking Minnesota for his Top 25 poll, but ESPN’s advanced analytic model SP+ backs up Weiszer’s vote, slotting Minnesota at No. 23.

Minnesota’s defense and rushing offense have led the way upward. The Gophers’ defense is allowing only 85.7 yards per game on the ground (fifth in the nation) and 19.6 points per game (26th). Their rushing attack is averaging 210 yards (24th). Their

passing offense averages 149 yards per game (121) but has been efficient when called upon.

The obvious blemish on Minnesota’s resume is their loss to Bowling Green on Sept. 25 when the Gophers were 31-point favorites. Without that 14-10 loss, the Gophers might be seeing themselves somewhere in the poll, maybe even in the teens.

Maryland and Purdue, two 4-3 teams the U has beaten this season, have had brief previous stints in the Top 25 either before or after playing the Gophers. It shows how close the U might be to a ranked position, if not for the faceplate against Bowling Green.

Weiszer responded to a question on that topic: How much did the loss to Bowling Green factor into your vote?

“The loss to Bowling Green is certainly a strike against the Golden Gophers,” he wrote. “But the only other loss being to a surging Ohio State offsets that some. And Purdue upsetting (then-second-ranked) Iowa helps.”

Gophers in NFL

Antoine Winfield Jr. returned to the Buccaneers on Sunday, and the Tampa Bay defense did a “Row The Boat” celebration just like they did during the former Gophers safety’s rookie year in 2020.

When the Bucs defense forced and recovered a fumble from Chicago quarterback Justin Fields, they gathered in the end zone for a choreographed moment.

“They’re having a good time,” CBS commentator Tony Romo said.

Winfield, who missed the previous two games with a

concussion, had three tackles and a forced fumble in his return.

Other former U players who stood out: Packers linebacker De’Vondre Campbell tied a season high with 13 tackles and forced two fumbles; Jets linebacker Blake Cashman had his first tackles (3) of the season; Falcons cornerback Chris Williamson had three tackles in his first NFL start, and Ravens receiver Rashod Bateman had six targets and three receptions for 80 yards.

Elsewhere in the NFL: Bucs receiver Tyler Johnson had two grabs for 16 yards; Washington cornerback Ben St-Juste had three tackles; Texans safety Eric Murray received his first defensive snaps in three weeks and had two tackles, and Giants linebacker Carter Coughlin made a tackle.

Gophers among nation’s top 2022 recruiting classes

By Michael Rand
Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — The Gophers women’s basketball team plays an exhibition game Sunday and starts its real season in less than two weeks.

So it’s not really fair to be thinking ahead to the 2022–23 season when this one is just about to start.

That said, this is college sports — where recruiting is the lifeblood of programs and dominates headlines, all while running concurrently with seasons.

It’s OK to think about the present and the future

at the same time. In the here and now, Lindsay Whalen’s fourth season as head coach could bring a return to the NCAA tournament with 12 players coming back from a team that finished better than it started in last year’s pandemic season.

A year from now, things could get even better. That’s because Minnesota’s incoming recruiting class of 2022 is loaded — good enough as of now to be ranked No. 7 nationally by ESPN.

The Gophers might slide down a bit on the final list once signing day arrives because some blue chip prospects have

not yet made their commitments to other programs.

But Minnesota will still be very high in the rankings — as high as I can remember a Gophers basketball (men’s or women’s) or football team being in these types of rankings. The only comparison that springs to mind is the Gophers men’s class of 2009 that included Royce White, Rodney Williams and transfer Trevor Mbakwe.

It’s justified based on three players in the top 55: guards Mara Braun (28) and Amaya Battle (38) and forward Mallo-ry Heyer (54). All three

players are from Minnesota, which bodes well for Whalen winning future in-state recruiting battles as well.

At No. 7, it should be noted that the Gophers have the highest-ranked class in the Big Ten. They are only three spots below UConn and two spots below defending NCAA champion Stanford.

Whether the Gophers can transform potential into sustained progress remains to be seen, but it does appear Whalen has the program headed in the right direction.

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David Joles / Star Tribune / TNS
Gophers coach Lindsay Whalen gave instruction to guard Alexia Smith (1) during Thursday’s practice at the Athletes Village.

ADVANTAGE VICTORIA?

Host state won’t seek permits for unvaccinated Australian Open players

By Ian Ransom
Reuters

Melbourne

The world’s best tennis players look to be caught in the middle of a simmering standoff between the Australian government and the host state for January’s Australian Open after Victoria’s premier said he would not apply for permits to allow unvaccinated athletes to enter the country.

Daniel Andrews drew his line in the sand on Wednesday after Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison had earlier opened the door for unvaccinated players, saying they could come into the country providing they underwent a two-week COVID-19 quarantine.

The sting in the tail was that Victoria would need to apply for permits to allow the tennis players to compete in the year’s first grand slam tournament in Melbourne, and Andrews quickly made it clear that would not happen.



Asanka Brendon Ratnayake / Reuters / File photo
Serbia’s Novak Djokovic reacts during his final match against Russia’s Daniil Medvedev during the Australian Open on Feb. 21 in Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. Some top players, including defending champion Djokovic, have declined to disclose their vaccination status.

lockdown ended on Friday, but only for fully vaccinated adults.

Blow for Tennis Australia

Unvaccinated adults remain banned from pubs, restaurants, sporting events and other parts of the economy, and may be shut out until well into 2022.

Victoria’s position is a blow for the Grand Slam’s organizers, Tennis Australia, who want a strong field for the tournament in January.

Some top players, including defending champion Novak Djokovic, have declined

to disclose their vaccination status. Serbia’s world number one said last week he might not play at the tournament.

Morrison had earlier told the Seven Network that unvaccinated players would need to quarantine for two weeks.

“All the same rules have to apply to everyone,” he said.

“Whether you’re a Grand Slam winner, a prime minister or a business traveler, a student or whoever. Same rules.”

Morrison’s comments contradicted those of his immigration minister Alex Hawke,

who said last week that tennis players and other athletes would have to be double vaccinated to enter the country.

Professional athletes in Victoria are under a vaccine mandate, which also covers coaches, officials, media and other staff involved in elite competition.

Andrews said tennis players should be held to the same standard as everyone else at the event.

“I’m not going to require people sitting in the grandstand, people working at the event, to be vaccinated while players aren’t,” he said.

Currently around 70% of the top 100 men and



Loren Elliott / Reuters / File photo
A view during the final between Serbia’s Novak Djokovic and Russia’s Daniil Medvedev at the Australian Open in Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, on Feb. 21.

women tennis players are vaccinated.

If Djokovic does play at Melbourne Park he will be favorite to win a record 21st men’s Grand Slam singles title — moving him out of a tie with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal.

Cleveland team sued over name change

By Jonathan Stempel
Reuters

CLEVELAND — Major League Baseball’s Cleveland Indians, which is changing its name to the Guardians, was sued for trademark infringement on Wednesday by a local roller derby team also named the Guardians.

The lawsuit was filed three months after the Indians announced it would change its name following the 2021 season in response to years of pressure from Native American groups and human rights activists that viewed the Indians name used since 1915 as

racist and degrading.

“Two sports teams in the same city cannot have identical names,” the roller derby team’s lawyers said in the complaint filed in Cleveland federal court.

“There cannot be two ‘Cleveland Guardians’ teams in Cleveland, and, to be blunt, the plaintiff was here first.”

Spokespeople for the Indians did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The coed roller derby team said it has used the Guardians name since 2013, and registered it with Ohio in 2017.

It wants an injunc-



David Richard / USA Today Sports
A view of the Cleveland Indians logo in center field at Progressive Field.

tion and damages for the alleged confusion and loss of goodwill.

There have been occa-

sions when teams in the same city shared names, even at the professional level.

For example, New York had baseball and football teams named the Giants from 1925 to 1957, while St. Louis had teams in those sports named the Cardinals from 1960 to 1987.

Trademark lawyers said Wednesday’s lawsuit was not frivolous but would likely be settled, with the Indians paying money to the roller derby team to use the Guardians name.

“There is no blanket rule in trademark law that two teams, even in professional sports, cannot have the same name,” said Michael Hobbs, a partner at

Troutman Pepper Ham-ilton Sanders.

Andrew Skale, a partner at the Mintz law firm, said that for the Indians, “an advisable move would be to buy the roller derby team’s name from them.”

Talks to resolve the dispute broke down on Tuesday.

“As a nonprofit organization that loves sports and the city of Cleveland, we are saddened that the Indians have forced us into having to protect the name we have used here for years,” roller derby team owner Gary Sweatt said in a statement.

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Puzzle Corner

Conceptis SUDOKU by Dave Green

	9			2		3	
1				5			6
		4	7		9		
	4				7		
3							2
		5				4	
		3			1	8	
5			6				9
	2			4		5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

10/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

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Yesterday's answers:

6	8	3	2	5	9	1	4	7
9	7	4	6	3	1	8	5	2
5	2	1	4	7	8	6	3	9
2	3	6	8	9	4	5	7	1
8	5	7	3	1	6	9	2	4
4	1	9	7	2	5	3	8	6
3	9	2	1	8	7	4	6	5
7	4	5	9	6	3	2	1	8
1	6	8	5	4	2	7	9	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

10/27

CRYPTOQUIP

N L A L N L H O L R V G D T L

B W R W H B G V S Q V A A E O S Q E J V D S

E O L N S E W H S N L L E H K W S Q

L K W J G L H D S Q: E H E G T V H K E O.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN SOME DELI EMPLOYEES ARE ACTING MELODRAMATICALLY, WOULD YOU SAY THEY'RE HAMMING IT UP?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals R

CROSSWORD By Eugene Scheffer

ACROSS

1 Branch

5 Ninny

9 Big bird of Australia

12 Wicked

13 Portnoy's creator

14 Cover

15 Quick bucks

17 Spanish gold

18 Complex

19 Massenet opera

21 "That's a laugh!"

22 Fulton's power

24 Quaker pronoun

27 "— good deed"

28 Embraces

31 Candy-heart word

32 Granola grain

33 Mermaid's home

34 Grouch

36 Financial pro

37 Distort

38 Pandemic cover-ups

40 Apt. cooler

41 "The Bell Jar" author

43 Alpine home

47 Corn spike

48 Deli sandwich order

51 Slugger's stat

52 "Star Wars" royal

53 Get ready, briefly

54 Employ

55 Kermit, for one

56 RSVP enclosure

2 Terrible guy?

3 Japanese soup

4 Actress

5 Helen's home

6 Triumphed

7 Mineral suffix

8 Minty herb

9 SpaceX founder

10 Surrealist

11 Japanese noodle

16 Kingston Trio

20 "That feels so good!"

22 Shower bars?

23 "Toodle-oo!"

24 Pampering, for short

25 "Ben- —"

26 Saint of

37 Rapsca-lions

39 Book keeper

40 "Now I get it!"

41 Lima's land

42 "CSI" settings

43 Rocky outcrop

44 Zhivago's love

45 Spuds' buds

46 Hit the bottle

49 Boomer's kid

50 Uncle (Sp.)

Solution time: 24 mins.

D	A	D	S		S	O	S		A	L	P	S
I	B	E	T		E	A	T		C	I	I	T
V	E	N	E	R	A	T	E		A	B	U	T
A	L	S	A	C	E		A	C	C	E	S	S
				D	A	E		L	A	I	R	
P	E	G		S	L	O		N	A	A	C	P
A	M	E	R		S	U	B		S	T	A	T
D	U	N	E	S		R	E	F		E	D	S
						E	M	I	T		Q	E
E	U	R	O	P	E		U	N	I	S	O	N
A	N	A	T		E	M	I	G	R	A	T	E
S	I	T	E		T	A	E		G	L	O	W
E	T	E	S		H	O	T		E	K	E	S

Yesterday's answer 10-28

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
18								19	20			
			21			22	23					
24	25	26			27				28		29	30
31					32					33		
34			35		36					37		
		38		39				40				
41	42						43			44	45	46
47					48	49	50					
51					52					53		
54					55					56		

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Horoscope | Eugenia Last

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nolan Gould, 23; Julia Roberts, 54; Bill Gates, 66; Annie Potts, 69.

Happy Birthday: Organize your thoughts. It's important to understand the ramifications of every move or decision you make. Take a positive approach to life, love and happiness, and it will help you avoid getting trapped in drama that wastes your time and energy. Engage in gaining experience, knowledge and hope for a better future. Your numbers are 5, 12, 17, 28, 32, 35, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Rest, rejuvenate and start all over again. How you handle events and activities that are physically challenging will affect your emotional well-being. Aim to do things that are conducive to putting your mind at ease, not stirring things up. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't throw caution to the wind. Know what you are up against, and do whatever it takes to stay on top of your game. Stability, consistency and adjusting to whatever is right and best for you is the route to take. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Leave nothing to chance or undone. Trace your steps as far as you must go to ensure you get things right moving forward. Trust in you and the facts you verify. Your dedication and loyalty will help you advance. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's up to you to get the ball rolling. Don't wait for someone to beat you at your own game. Take a lead position, follow through with your plans and pursue what makes you happy. Make an adjustment that suits your budget. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Keep the peace at home and when dealing with peers. A change someone makes may not align with your plans, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't follow the path that suits you. Do your own thing, and pursue what matters to you. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Money matters will escalate if someone pressures you to donate to something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Take the initiative and decline. Put your money into something that will benefit you directly, like education, equipment or gaining experience. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be tactful in handling situations that deal with colleagues or someone who can put a dent in your reputation, status or position. Offer a positive, upbeat attitude along with generosity, truth and a helping hand. Choose peace over discord. Romance and passion are encouraged. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A debate will disrupt a friendship or cause a family feud. Think before you share your point of view. Be a good listener, and you'll be able to sidestep a situation that can lead to a change that doesn't favor you. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Tighten up your finances to save for something unique. Build your future on concrete plans, and you'll make an impression on someone who recognizes your experience and values your input. An opportunity will fund your wish list. Romance and self-improvement are favored. ★★★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A request an older associate offers will not line up with your vision. Take the high road, and find a way to incorporate the old with the new. Your insight and adaptability will win favors and ward off a dispute. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep your eye on the ball, and be willing to accommodate someone you need in your corner. A change may not be welcome, but with a bit of finagling, you'll find a way to get what you want without interference. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Emotions will surface over shared expenses and responsibilities. Take care of your fair share, then move on to more enjoyable tasks. Connect with someone who can make a difference in your life and the way you live. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are powerful, outspoken and unpredictable. You are helpful and streetwise. Eugenia Last may be reached at 1-900-451-5571 or www.eugenialast.com.

I need direction for college

Dr. Wallace: I'm a senior in high school and am trying to decide which major I should pursue in college. Attempting to make this decision has been extremely stressful for me.

Most of my friends already know the careers they want to pursue, and I can't help but feel incredibly behind. I wish someone would point me in the right direction and tell me where to go and what to do. I don't want to start college this way.

— Need Direction

Need Direction: Selecting your college major may feel like a huge decision right now, but I assure you that in the long run, it is not as critical as it may seem. No choice you make will be definitive or irreversible. In fact, many college students change majors several times throughout the course of their academic careers.

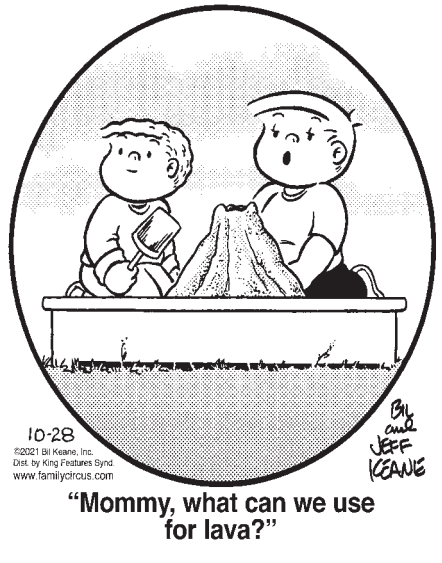
The initial selection of your major

is simply a point from which to start. It allows you to center your courses on a subject that may interest you and ultimately discover whether that interest is genuine. That being said, the best advice I can give you is to explore. College is a great time and place to get curious not only about what you want to do in life, but also about the person you want to be. Take classes in these areas, and better yet, try out different internships in the fields that interest you so that you can get a true sense of what it is like to work in those fields.

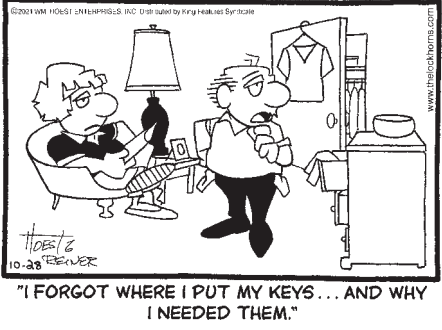
I understand that once you have selected a major in college, changing it is not always an easy process, but it is possible. You are young, and nothing can stop you from making changes in your life that you are determined to make. Even after graduating, it is not uncommon for people to pursue careers outside of their college majors. Life is unpredictable, but that is what makes it worth living.

Dr. Wallace may be reached at rwallace@thegreatestgift.com.

Family Circus | By Bil Keane



Lockhorns | By Bunny Hoest & John Reiner



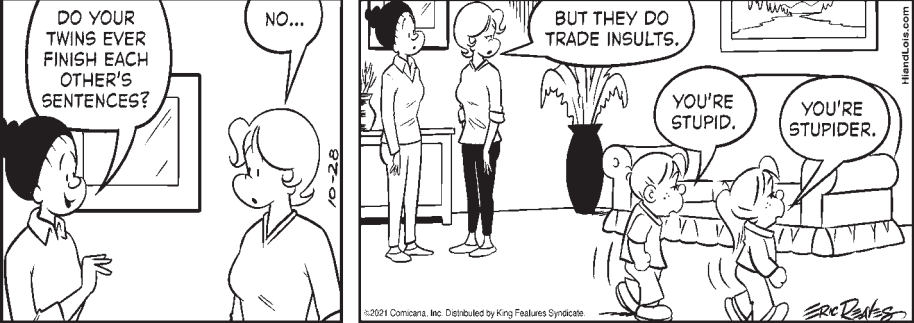
Marmaduke | By Brad Anderson



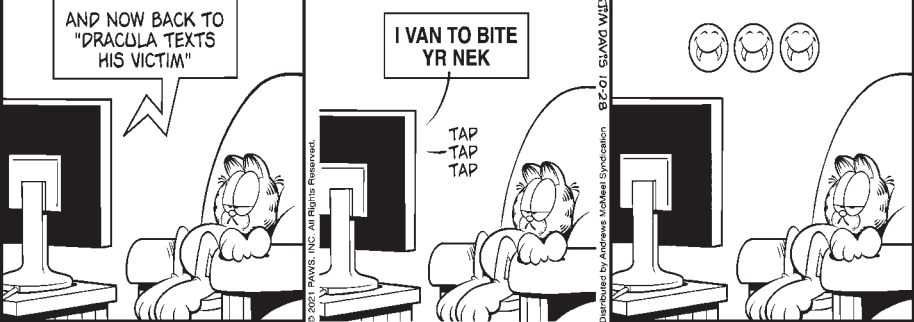
Non Sequitur | By Willey Miller



Hi and Lois | By Brian and Greg Walker and Chance Browne



Garfield | By Jim Davis



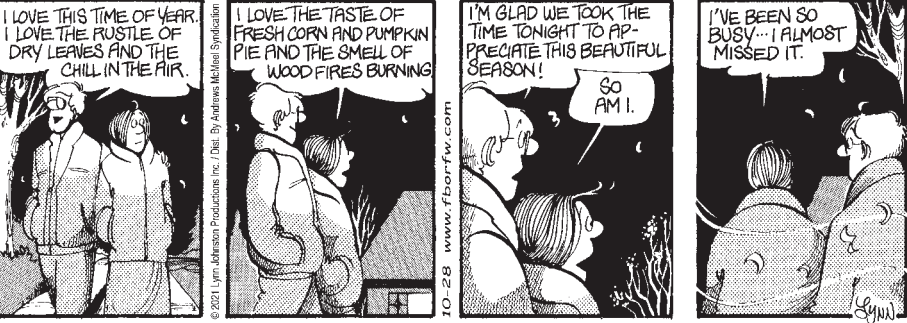
Dilbert | By Scott Adams



Hagar the Horrible | By Chris Browne



For Better or for Worse | By Lynn Johnston



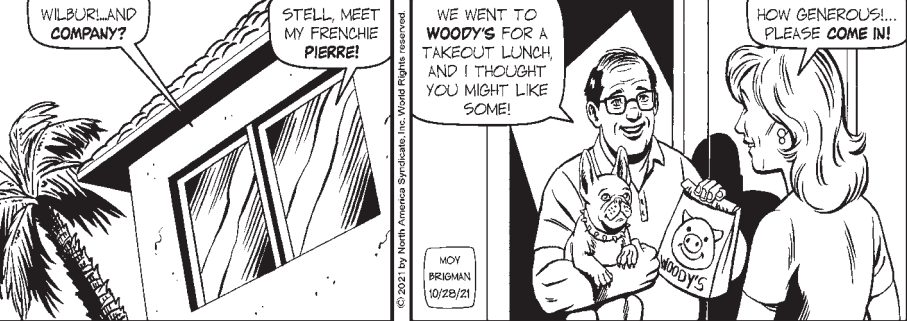
Zits | By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

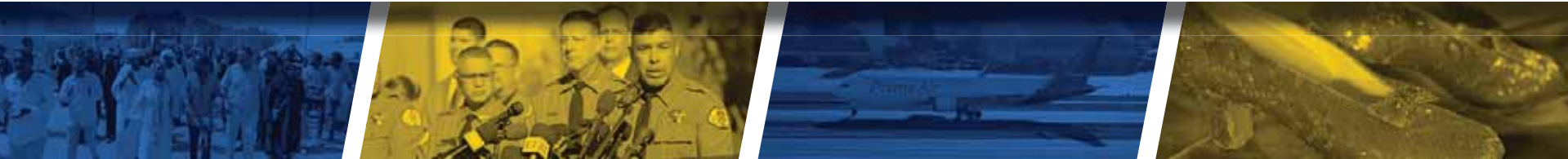


Beetle Bailey | By Mort Walker



Mary Worth | By Karen Moy and Joe Giella





World bank halts Sudan operations
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Gun not thoroughly checked before fatal shot
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FAA flags potential safety problem in Boeing planes
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Dorothy's missing slippers
Page 6

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021 | NATION PLUS - A FORUM COMMUNICATIONS EXTRA

Dems at odds over ‘billionaires tax’

By Richard Cowan
and David Morgan
Reuters

Washington

Senior Democrats in the U.S. Congress were at odds on Wednesday over a proposal to tax billionaires’ assets to help pay for President Joe Biden’s social and climate-change agenda, leaving it unclear if the idea had enough support to become law.

The Senate’s top tax writer, Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden, unveiled the idea early on Wednesday, but by afternoon his House of Representatives counterpart, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, said the idea appeared to be too complex to succeed.

Biden’s Democrats are struggling to reach consensus on the scope of a pair of bills worth about \$3 trillion to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure, boost social spending and fight climate change. With the narrowest of margins in Congress, and unified Republican opposition, they need near 100% agreement within the caucus to pass anything.

Biden and Democratic congressional leaders have been scaling back their ambitions in order to keep skeptical centrists on board. Several media outlets reported that they dropped a provision on Wednesday that would have provided up to 12 weeks of paid family leave.

Aides in Congress said the billionaires tax, affecting roughly 700 taxpayers with over \$1 billion in assets or \$100 million in annual income for three consecutive years, would impose a 23.8% tax rate for long-term capital gains on tradable assets, whether or not they have been sold. It would also allow taxpayers to take deductions for losses on assets.



Elizabeth Frantz / Reuters

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks to reporters Wednesday after a meeting with White House officials at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

Neal, along with other Democrats had backed Biden’s original proposal, which would raise tax rates on companies and the wealthy, but that idea faces an uphill fight in the Senate.

Referring to the billionaires tax, Neal said: “It will be very difficult because of its complexity.”

He added that Democrats are discussing imposing a 3% surtax on taxpayers earning more than \$10

million.

Senator Bernie Sanders, a leading progressive, said the billionaires tax was a “step in the right direction” but not nearly enough. “Every sensible revenue option seems to be destroyed,” he told reporters. Sanders met with Biden on Wednesday, a White House aide said.

The billionaires tax plan was put forth after Senate moderates voiced

opposition to the idea of raising corporate tax rates.

“The president supports the billionaire tax,” said White House spokesperson Jen Psaki. “He looks forward to working with Congress and Chairman Wyden to make sure the highest-income Americans pay their fair share.”

Two other revenue proposals also enjoy backing from the White House and congressional Democrats.

Caravan of hundreds of migrants travelling north across Mexico

By Jose Torres
and Lizbeth Diaz
Reuters

HUIXTLA, Mexico - Hundreds of migrants from Central America and the Caribbean trekked across Mexico on Wednesday, the latest in a series of caravans that have sought to reach the U.S. border in recent months.

The United States has registered record levels of migration this year, with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents apprehending or expelling more than 1.7 million migrants over the last 12 months.

The majority of the latest caravan members were families with young children, according to a Reuters witness, who estimated that about 2,000 migrants were gathered on Tuesday in Huixtla in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas to rest and receive medical attention before resuming their journey north.

Among them was Arleth Chavez from Guatemala, who had walked with the caravan for about 28 miles since it departed the southern city of Tapachula over the weekend.

“My feet are burning and in pain from the blisters,” said Chavez. “I’ll make it as far as God permits.”

Migrants have denounced the lengthy asylum process in Tapachula, located near Mexico’s southern border



Jose Torres / Reuters

Migrants from Central America walk on a highway Sunday in a caravan headed to the Mexican capital to apply for asylum and refugee status, in Tapachula, in Chiapas state.

with Guatemala, and thousands have departed the city in a series of caravans this year, including many families from Haiti.

Some members of the most recent caravan aim to reach Mexico City, where they hope the asylum process might be faster, while others aim to press on to the U.S. border.

The U.S. government has put pressure on Mexico to contain migrants before reaching the U.S. border.

Last week, Mexico’s conference of Catholic bishops, which operates about a hundred shelters across Mexico, urged the country’s authorities to end militarized immigration enforcement efforts that, the group said, has caused an increase in human

rights violations against transiting migrants.

The caravan’s slow movement across Mexico comes as U.S. President Joe Biden has been facing increasing criticism from Republicans over the current high levels of migration, which comes amid widespread violence and growing hunger in Central America and parts of the Caribbean.

On Tuesday, Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell blasted Biden for the “record-shattering” number of unlawful migrants detained along the U.S.-Mexico border over the past year, laying blame on what he described as an “intentionally unsecure border.”

Biden vows to stand with Asia on freedom

US concerned by China’s ‘coercive’ actions

Reuters

WASHINGTON/BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN - President Joe Biden told Southeast Asian nations on Wednesday the United States would stand with them in defending freedom of the seas and democracy and called China’s actions towards Taiwan “coercive” and a threat to peace and stability.

Speaking at a virtual East Asia Summit attended by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Biden said Washington would start talks with partners in the Indo-Pacific about developing a regional economic framework.

Southeast Asia has become a strategic battleground between the United States and China, which controls most of the South China Sea, and Beijing has turned up military and political pressure on fiercely democratic Taiwan.

Biden reiterated that the United States had a “rock-solid” commitment to Taiwan. “We are deeply concerned by China’s coercive ... actions,” Biden said, charging that they “threaten regional peace and stability.”

Li Keqiang told the summit, which brought together leaders of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations with regional partners, that upholding peace, stability, freedom of navigation and overflight in the

South China Sea was in everyone’s interest. “

Biden last week said the United States, which is obliged by a 1979 law to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself, would come to Taiwan’s defense if it was attacked by China. Those comments caused a stir because they appeared to depart from a long-held U.S. policy of “strategic ambiguity” as to how Washington would respond to such a scenario.

The White House said Biden was not signaling a change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

Tensions between Taiwan and China have escalated in recent weeks as Beijing has staged repeated air missions over the Taiwan Strait.

China expressed displeasure at Biden’s comments last week, urging Washington “not to send the wrong signals to the forces of Taiwan independence, to avoid seriously harming Sino-U.S. ties and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

Biden joined Southeast Asian leaders in rebuking Myanmar’s junta.

“In Myanmar, we must address the tragedy caused by the military coup which is increasingly undermining regional stability,” he said, calling for the release of political prisoners and a return to democracy.

ASEAN began three days of summits on Tuesday without a representative from Myanmar following its top general’s exclusion for ignoring peace proposals.

US: Assange can safely be extradited

50-year-old Australian WikiLeaks founder is wanted on 18 criminal charges

By Estelle Shirbon
Reuters

LONDON - Lawyers for the United States launched a fresh attempt on Wednesday to have Julian Assange extradited from Britain, arguing that concerns about the WikiLeaks founder's mental health should not prevent him from facing U.S. justice.

The 50-year-old Australian is wanted in the United States on 18 criminal charges, including breaking a spying law, after WikiLeaks published thousands of secret U.S. files and diplomatic cables in 2010.

The United States is appealing against a Jan. 4 ruling by a London District Judge that Assange should not be extradited because he would likely commit suicide in a U.S. prison.

Lawyer James Lewis told the court the United States had addressed the District Judge's concerns by making assur-



Tom Nicholson / Reuters

ances to Britain regarding how Assange would be treated if extradited.

These included that he would not be subject to a set of strict detention conditions

known as Special Administrative Measures and would not be detained at a maximum security penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, known as ADX.

The U.S. authorities had also assured Britain that they would consent to Assange serving in Australia any custodial sentence imposed by a U.S. court, Lewis said.

Assange is being held at Belmarsh Prison. In the morning, the court was told he felt too unwell to appear via video link, but later in the day he did appear on the screen.

In a court document circulated to media, Assange's lawyers rejected the U.S. assurances, saying he could be held in another maximum security facility under oppressive conditions that would drive him to suicide.

They said Australia had given no indication it would consent to Assange being transferred there to serve a U.S. sentence, and he would be at high risk while awaiting a transfer.

The appeal hearing is scheduled to last two days.

'Free Julian Assange'

Supporters of Assange gathered outside the court building early on Wednesday, chanting "free Julian Assange," before his father and Stella Morris, his partner and mother of his two children, arrived.

Another subject of dispute in the appeal is whether the evidence of a psychiatric expert called by Assange's defense team in the original extradition hearing was reliable.

The U.S. lawyers argue the evidence should be dismissed because the expert initially failed to disclose that Morris was Assange's partner and that the pair had children — information they said was highly relevant to the issue of his suicide risk.

Assange's lawyers said the District Judge had been right to take into account the expert's evidence.

Wildfires, logging turn protected forests to carbon emitters

By Oliver Griffin
Reuters

BOGOTA - Some of the world's most protected forests are emitting more carbon than they absorb, driven by things like logging and wildfires, a new report said on Wednesday, with researchers alarmed that protected areas are contributing to climate change.

At least 10 forests designated World Heritage sites have been net carbon emitters over the last two decades, the report said.

"That even some of the most iconic and best protected forests such as those found in World Heritage sites

can actually contribute to climate change is alarming and brings to light evidence of the severity of this climate emergency," Tales Carvalho Resende, report co-author and project officer for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said in a statement.

Forests are considered vital for curbing climate change due to their ability to work as so-called carbon sinks.

All 257 forests together do act as a net carbon sink, according to the research which analyzed a period from 2001 to 2020. Still, human activities like logging

and intense climate-related events such as wildfires are hindering their ability to capture and store more carbon than they emit, which experts say is a cause for grave concern.

As well as in the United States, forests found to be net carbon emitters were also located in Indonesia, Australia and Russia, among other countries.

UNESCO investigators and researchers from advocacy groups the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) combined satellite data with on-site monitoring and found

that together the heritage sites saw net absorption of 190 million tons of CO2 annually over the 20-year period.

Over the course of centuries the forests have stored some 13 billion tons of carbon, equivalent to Kuwait's proven oil reserves, the report said.

The findings drew on data published by the journal Nature Climate Change in January, which mapped greenhouse gas emissions and absorption by forests globally.

The researchers used this data and on-the-ground monitoring of the heritage sites to understand what is putting forests at risk,

including logging, agricultural incursions, droughts and shifting temperatures.

"I would expect all of them to be removing carbon for the atmosphere, and not to be sources of carbon," Carlos Sanquetta, a forestry engineering professor at the Federal University of Parana in Brazil, told Reuters.

Though it produced important findings, the report could have presented its methodology in greater depth, he said.

While just 10 of the UNESCO-protected forests were found to have been carbon emitters, the report said other sites also showed clear upward trajectories in emissions.

BRIEFS

Paris' Gare du Nord station reopens after evacuation

PARIS (Reuters) - Paris' Gare du Nord rail station re-opened on Wednesday after having been temporarily evacuated while police probed a suspicious item of baggage, a Reuters witness said.

Reuters journalist Kevin Coombs, whose Eurostar train to London was delayed by the security alert, said the station reopened after the earlier evacuation, which had left hundreds of people waiting outside.

The Gare du Nord is a busy rail hub serving northern France as well as international services to London and Brussels.

US issues first passport with 'X' gender marker

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. State Department said on Wednesday it had issued the first U.S. passport with an "X" gender marker, designed to give non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming people a marker other than male or female on their travel document, according to a statement.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced in June that the X marker would be offered as an option on passports, following other countries including Canada, Germany and India who already offer a third gender on documents.

State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement that the United States was moving toward adding the "X" gender marker as an option for those applying for U.S. passports or Consular Reports of Birth Abroad.

"We look forward to offering this option to all routine passport applicants once we complete the required system and form updates in early 2022," Price said.

Portuguese parliament rejects budget bill

LISBON (Reuters) - Portugal's parliament rejected the minority Socialist government's 2022 budget bill on Wednesday as the hard left sided with the conservative opposition, in a move likely to trigger snap elections in coming months.

Lawmakers voted 117-108 with 5 abstentions to throw out the bill that envisaged income tax cuts for the middle class and increased public investment to spur post-pandemic recovery, while reducing the deficit to 3.2% of gross domestic product from 4.3% in 2021.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa's hard-left former allies, the Communists and Left Bloc, had demanded more benefits and protections for workers, improvements in the social security system and more public investment in the health service.

University of Toronto to divest fossil fuel investments

(Reuters) - The University of Toronto will sell off all fossil fuel investments from its C\$4 billion (\$3.2 billion) endowment fund and aim to create a "climate-positive" campus by 2050, the university said on Wednesday.

The endowment fund, beginning immediately, will divest from all direct investments in fossil fuel firms within the next 12 months. It will divest from indirect investments by 2030.

"The growing severity of the climate crisis now demands bold actions that have both substantive and symbolic impact," University of Toronto President Meric Gertler said.

Pakistan Islamists clash with police

LAHORE, Pakistan (Reuters) - Four Pakistani police were killed and hundreds wounded when armed activists from a banned Islamist group clashed with security forces at a anti-blasphemy demonstration near the eastern city of Lahore, officials said.

The clash broke out at a rally of the banned Tehrik-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) on a highway in Sheikhpura, just outside Lahore, as the group prepared to march on the capital Islamabad, a spokesman for the Punjab police said on Wednesday.

Police said TLP activists armed with pistols and automatic weapons including AK-47 rifles opened fire on security forces controlling the demonstrators.

World bank halts Sudan operations

Thousands take to the streets to oppose takeover

By Khalid Abdelaziz
Reuters

KHARTOUM - The World Bank halted disbursements for operations in Sudan on Wednesday in response to the military's seizure of power from a transitional government, while state oil company workers, doctors and pilots joined civilian groups opposing the takeover.

Thousands of people have taken to the streets since Monday's coup led by armed forces chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and several have been killed in clashes with security forces.

Burhan has dismissed the joint civilian-military council set up to steer the country to democratic elections following the overthrow of autocrat Omar al-Bashir in a popular uprising in April 2019.

He said he acted to stop the country slipping into civil war, but the World Bank decision to pause payments and stop processing new operations is a setback to his plans for one of Africa's poorest countries.

After isolation from the international financing system across three decades of Bashir's rule, Sudan achieved full re-engagement with the bank in March and gained access to \$2 billion in financing.

"I am greatly concerned by recent events in Sudan, and I fear the dramatic impact this can have on the country's social and economic recovery and



Ebaid Ahmed / Reuters

Sudanese demonstrators march and chant Wednesday during a protest against the military takeover in Atbara, Sudan, in this social media image.

development," World Bank President David Malpass said in a statement from Washington.

Abdalla Hamdok, prime minister in the deposed transitional government, had touted World Bank re-engagement as a major accomplishment and was depending on the funding for several large development projects.

The government had instituted harsh economic reforms that succeeded in achieving rapid arrears clearance and debt relief and renewed financing from the World Bank and IMF.

An IMF spokeswoman said the fund was monitoring developments but it was "premature" to comment.

Hamdok, who was detained on Monday and is under guard at his home, was in good health when visited by envoys from France, Germany, Norway, the UK, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, the U.N. mission in Sudan said on Twitter on Wednesday. The West has called for restoration of the council

and the release of civilian leaders.

Hamdok says any retreat from the path to democracy threatens stability and development in Sudan and he warns against the use of violence against protesters, a source close to him said.

Scattered protests took place in Khartoum on Wednesday and intensified at night across the capital, although no new bloodshed was reported.

In Bahri across the river, witnesses told Reuters protesters were met with tear gas and heard gunshots on Wednesday evening as protesters came out across the capital's three cities.

In the northeastern city of Atbara, protesters marched and chanted, "Down with the military regime."

Neighborhood committees announced plans for protests leading to what they said would be a "march of millions" on Saturday.

Pilots from national carrier Sudan Airways have gone on strike, their union said, as have pilots from local carriers Badr and Tarco Airlines.

COVID infections higher than previous estimates

House subcommittee: Cases at meatpacking plants 3 times higher than thought

By Leah Douglas
Reuters

Cases and deaths from COVID-19 among workers at the leading U.S. meatpacking plants were three times as high as previously estimated, according to a report by the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis seen by Reuters.

The subcommittee surveyed major meatpackers Tyson Foods, JBS USA, Cargill, National Beef, and Smithfield Foods, which together control over 80% of the beef market and 60% of the pork market in the United States.

At those companies' plants, worker cases of COVID-19 totaled 59,147 and deaths totaled 269, based on counts through January of this year, according to the report which was expected to be released later on Wednesday.

That is far higher than a previous estimate by the Food and Environment Reporting Network (FERN), which had been used by government agencies and media throughout the pandemic, according to the report. FERN had counted 22,694 cases and 88 deaths among workers at the five companies as of Sept. 8, primarily drawing on data from news reports and public health agencies.

The meatpacking industry was especially hard hit by COVID-19 in part because its workers tend to be in close proximity for long hours in often messy conditions.

The new data comes from company calculations of worker cases primarily based on testing done within company facilities, meaning some infections identified through other health providers could have been excluded.

Cases were especially high at certain plants, including JBS's

Hyrum, Utah, beef plant and Tyson's Amarillo, Texas, beef plant, where around 50% of workers contracted the virus, according to the report.

The report also included new details of lax safety protocols at some of the plants.

In May 2020 at Tyson's Amarillo plant, for instance, workers wore masks "saturated" with sweat, were not socially distanced, and were separated by "plastic bags on frames" instead of CDC-compliant barriers, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) memo obtained by the Subcommittee.

Both Tyson and JBS said in statements on Wednesday that they have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on COVID-19 health and safety efforts.

Cargill said in a statement that it was "saddened by the tragic impacts of this virus on our colleagues and the communities in which we operate."

Officials from National Beef and Smithfield were not immediately available for comment.

The subcommittee report also suggested that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration had not done enough to protect workers in the meat industry from the virus.

OSHA staff told the subcommittee that under Trump, the agency's leadership made a political decision not to issue an emergency temporary standard (ETS) that would have required meatpackers to take certain safety precautions, the report said.

"Without being held to any specific standard, meatpacking companies were left with largely unchecked discretion to determine how to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, to the detriment of meatpacking workers," the report said.

Israel moves ahead with settler homes

Settlements a thorny issue for new Israeli government

By Jeffrey Heller and Maayan Lubell
Reuters

JERUSALEM - Israel moved forward on Wednesday with plans to build some 3,000 homes for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, defying the Biden administration's strongest criticism to date of such projects.

A senior Palestinian official said the decision showed that Israel's new government, led by far-right politician Naftali Bennett, was "no less extreme" than the administration of the veteran leader he replaced, Benjamin Netanyahu.

An Israeli defense official said a planning forum of Israel's liaison office with the Palestinians gave preliminary approval for plans to build 1,344 housing units and its final go-ahead for projects to construct 1,800 homes.

It will be up to Defence Minister Benny Gantz, a centrist in Israel's politically diverse government, to give the nod for construction permits to be issued, with further friction with Washington looming.

"This government is trying to balance between its good relations with the Biden administration and the various political constraints," a senior Israeli official told Reuters.

The United States on Tuesday said it was "deeply concerned" about Israel's plans to advance thousands of settlement units. It called such steps damaging to prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Washington desisted from such criticism when Donald Trump was in office.



Ammar Awad / Reuters

A view shows the Israeli settlement of Har Homa on Wednesday in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

A senior U.S. State department official said Secretary of State Antony Blinken had discussed the issue with Gantz on Tuesday. Their phone call was first reported by the Axios news website, which cited Israeli officials as saying the chief U.S. diplomat voiced U.S. opposition to the settlement plan.

The latest projects, as well as tenders published on Sunday for more than 1,300 settler homes, amounted to the first major test case over settlement policy with the Biden administration that took office in January.

"The behavior of the Israeli government under Bennett is no less extreme than what it had been under Netanyahu," Bassam Al-Salhe, a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, told Reuters.

"The U.S. administration has words, and no deeds, to change the policy that had been put in place by Trump," Salhe said.

Tightrope

Walking a political and diplomatic tightrope, Bennett has been facing calls from settler leaders to step up construction. Such projects are likely to be welcomed by his ultranationalist constituents, who share his opposition to Palestinian statehood.

But along with the prospect of straining relations with Washington, Bennett could also alienate left-wing and Arab parties in a coalition governing with a razor-thin parliamentary majority, if they view settlement plans as too ambitious.

Most countries regard the settlements Israel has built in territory it captured in a 1967 Middle East war as illegal.

Israel disputes this and has settled some 440,000 Israelis in the West Bank, citing biblical, historical and political ties to the area, where 3 million Palestinians live.

Gun not thoroughly checked before fatal shot

No criminal charges have been filed against anyone on movie set

By Lisa Richwine
Reuters

SANTA FE, N.M. - A .45-caliber Colt pistol used on the set of the film "Rust" was not thoroughly checked before being given to actor Alec Baldwin, who fired a live lead bullet in an accidental fatal shooting last week in New Mexico, according to officials and a new court filing.

New details about the incident emerged on Wednesday during a news conference by Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza and District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies and in an affidavit filed by the sheriff's department. Mendoza told reporters there was a complacent attitude toward safety on the set before last Thursday's shooting that killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal.

Hannah Gutierrez, the crew member in charge of weapons on the set, told inves-



Adria Malcolm / Reuters

Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza speaks at a news conference Wednesday after actor Alec Baldwin accidentally shot and killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the film set of the movie "Rust" in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

tigators she had checked guns there but found no "hot rounds" - apparently meaning live ammunition - before the shooting, according to the affidavit.

Dave Halls, the film's assistant director, told investigators he "should have checked all" the rounds in the gun before handing it to Baldwin

but had not done so, according to the affidavit. Authorities said previously that Baldwin was handed what he thought was a "cold," or safe, gun by Halls, who took it from a cart used by Gutierrez.

Mendoza and Carmack-Altwies said while no criminal charges have been filed, they are not ruling out that possibility.

Gutierrez, whose job is formally called the film crew's armorer, said ammunition was not secured on the set during a lunch break before the shooting, the affidavit showed. It quoted her as saying that firearms were secured inside a safe kept on a white truck during the break.

"Only a few people" had access to the safe and knew the combination to open it, Gutierrez said, according to the affidavit.

A judge approved a request by investigators to search the

truck on Wednesday.

Authorities have collected 600 pieces of evidence including three firearms, 500 rounds of ammunition and several pieces of clothing and accessories in the ongoing investigation, Mendoza said.

Authorities have the firearm used in the shooting and recovered the bullet from the shoulder of director Joel Souza, Mendoza said. It appears the same bullet struck Souza and Hutchins, Mendoza added.

Mendoza said the gun used by Baldwin was an Italian-made Pietta Long Colt revolver.

"We would consider it a live round - a bullet, live - because it did fire from the weapon and obviously caused the death of Ms. Hutchins and injured Mr. Souza," Mendoza said.

Mendoza said Baldwin, Halls and Gutierrez all are cooperating with the investigation.

Iran: Nuclear talks with 6 powers to resume by end November

By Parisa Hafezi
Reuters

DUBAI - Iran's talks with six world powers aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear deal will resume by the end of November, its top nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday, as Western concerns over the Islamic Republic's nuclear advances grow.

"Had a very serious & constructive dialog with @enriquez_mora on the essential elements for successful negotiations. We agree to start negotiations before the end of November," Ali Bagheri Kani wrote on Twitter after meeting EU officials in

Brussels.

"Exact date would be announced in the course of the next week," he added.

In April, Tehran and six powers started to discuss ways to salvage the 2015 nuclear pact, which three years ago then-U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned. Trump then reimposed harsh sanctions on Iran.

But the talks have been on hold since the election of Iran's hardline President Ebrahim Raisi in June, who is expected to take a tough approach if the talks resume in Vienna.

Raisi, like Iran's Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, wants results-oriented talks aimed at bringing Tehran and Washington back into full compliance with the pact.

In response to Trump's pressure, Tehran has gradually breached the deal by rebuilding stockpiles of enriched uranium, refining it to higher fissile purity and installing advanced centrifuges to speed up output.

For months, Western powers have urged Iran to return to negotiations and said time is running out as Tehran's nuclear program advances well beyond the limits set by the deal.

U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley said on Monday that efforts to revive the pact were at a "critical phase" and Tehran's reasons for avoiding talks were wearing thin.

After six rounds of talks in Vienna, Tehran and Washington still disagree on which steps need to be taken and when, with the key issues being what nuclear limits Tehran will accept and what sanctions Washington will remove.

"America's return to the deal does not matter to us. What is important is that the outcome of talks be in Iran's favor," Iranian Foreign Min-

ister Hossein Amirabdollahian said in a televised news conference.

He repeated Iran's demand for the release of its assets frozen because of U.S. sanctions.

"(U.S. President Joe) Biden has to put his goodwill into practice by for instance releasing \$10 billion of Iran's blocked assets," Amirabdollahian said.

Iran has been unable to access tens of billions of dollars of its assets in foreign banks, mainly from exports of oil and gas, due to U.S. sanctions on its banking and energy sectors.

Museum, college return African artifacts

Hundreds of Benin Bronzes were taken by British troops in 1897

By Estelle Shirbon
Reuters

LONDON – A Cambridge University college and Paris museum will on Wednesday hand back cultural artifacts that were looted from West Africa during the colonial era, setting a precedent that will pressure other institutions to return stolen works.

Jesus College, Cambridge, will return a sculpture of a cockerel taken by British troops in 1897, one of hundreds of Benin Bronzes that were pilaged from the once mighty Kingdom of Benin, located in what is now Nigeria. They are among Africa’s most culturally significant artifacts.

“This is the right thing to do out of respect for the unique heritage and history of this artifact,” said Sonita Alleyne,

Master of Jesus College.

After being looted, the cockerel was given to Jesus College in 1905 by the father of a student. The college announced in 2019 it would return it to Nigeria.

The handover marks a milestone in the years-long fight by African countries to recover works pillaged by Western explorers and colonizers, at a time when numerous European institutions are grappling with the cultural legacies of colonialism.

Some 90% of Africa’s cultural heritage is believed to be in Europe, French art historians estimate. The Quai Branly Museum in Paris alone holds some 70,000 African objects; London’s British Museum possesses tens of thousands more.

Germany has agreed to start returning Benin Bronzes held

in its museums next year. Britain’s University of Aberdeen said it would return a Benin Bronze that depicts the head of an Oba (king) on Thursday. It had purchased the sculpture at an auction in 1957, it said.

French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017 told Burkinabe students that “African heritage can’t just be in European private collections and museums.”

In a ceremony to be presided over by Macron, the Quai Branly museum will hand over to the republic of Benin 26 artifacts that were stolen from the Kingdom of Abomey in 1892. They are among 5,000 works requested by the West African country.

“We really need this, it’s only the beginning,” said Eusebe Dossou, a Benin national visiting the Quai



Courtesy of Chris Loades / Jesus College, Cambridge / Handout via Reuters

A looted Benin Bronze artifact is pictured in this undated social media image obtained Wednesday as Cambridge University announced it will return the sculpture to Nigeria.

Branly Museum. “We want everything returned.”

Nigeria’s government thanked Jesus College for

being a “trailblazer” and said it looked forward to the return of other artifacts by other institutions.

Beginning of the end?

Wild monkey population may dwindle with new home

By David Fleshler
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

A colony of wild monkeys in Dania Beach soon may get a permanent home, complete with fences, medical care and regular meals.

But the creation of a monkey sanctuary east of the Fort Lauderdale airport may mark the beginning of the end of a bizarre wildlife population that has survived on a wedge of swampy forest for more than 70 years.

Dania Beach Vervet Project, a nonprofit organization, is negotiating with Hertz Corp. to lease 3.75 acres next to a rental car facility to house 17 of the 45 or so African Vervet monkeys in the group. With a fenced facility, they could legally take care of the monkeys, providing them with food and veterinary care.

“The idea is to keep the monkeys from going out into the urban spaces,” said Deborah “Missy” Williams, a biologist who wrote about the monkey colony in her Ph.D. dissertation at Florida Atlantic University and heads the group.

The monkeys, descendants of a group that escaped from a breeding operation in the 1940s, can be seen at the fringes of a mangrove forest between U.S. 1 and Port Everglades.

The 17 monkeys that would go to the sanctuary are one of four groups in the population. The plan calls for placing them in a quarter-acre enclosure, with travel tubes that allow them to explore the full sanctuary site.

The plan also calls for them to be sterilized. Williams said that’s not ideal, and some members of her group aren’t happy at the impending decline of the colony. But she said it would be impossible to find a home for any additional monkeys, since it’s illegal to release them into the wild.

“If we ended up with a sur-



Joe Cavaretta / South Florida Sun Sentinel / TNS

A member of the Dania Beach, Florida, colony of Vervet monkeys, which might soon get a permanent home.

plus of animals, it would be difficult to place them,” she said. “They want the monkeys to be in Dania forever. And I appreciate that. It’s just the welfare issues outweigh that.”

“If they can live out the rest of their lives in this habitat that’s now their own, that would be ideal,” said Julie Abolafia, managing director of Meridian Commercial, a real estate firm, who volunteered to help the monkey organization obtain the lease.

Hertz has agreed in principle to a long-term lease, Williams said, and they’re now negotiating the details.

The sterilization policy means that the population in the sanctuary inevitably will dwindle. The other bands of monkeys eventually may go in too, Williams said, although not for years.

“There will be three other social groups that will still be free ranging there,” she said. “There’s still the possibility for this group to exist in the future. It’s just the ones we put into the sanctuary won’t be contributing to the future generations.”

Even without the sterilization of the monkeys in the sanctuary, Williams said, the colony’s long-term prospects are pretty bleak. Computer

programs that assess a population’s viability, looking at factors such as age distribution and mortality rates, predict the colony’s extinction over the next 100 years.

For the monkeys, however, the future of the colony may not be all that important. Their ancestors escaped from the Dania Chimpanzee Farm, which imported monkeys to the United States for use in laboratories. Although they had no way of knowing their original fate, they presumably would prefer life in the Florida sunshine.

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Poland fined 1M euros per day

EU: Country must pay for maintaining a disciplinary chamber for judges

Reuters

WARSAW – Poland must pay 1 million euros (\$1.16 million) a day for maintaining a disciplinary chamber for judges, the European Union’s top court said on Wednesday, in the latest episode of a clash over the rule of law with implications for Warsaw’s future ties with the bloc.

The long-running conflict over Poland’s judicial reforms that the bloc says undermine the independence of the courts deepened this year.

“In the ruling issued today, the Vice-President of the Tribunal obliged Poland to pay...a penalty payment of EUR 1 million per day, counting from the date on which this ruling was delivered to Poland,” the statement from the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) read.

Poland has said it will abolish the chamber as part of broader reforms.

The Court of Justice of the European Union has already fined Poland 500,000 euros a day for defying a court ruling to halt operations at the Turów coal mine on the Czech border.

Poland has vowed to continue operations and has said it will not pay the penalties related to the mine.

Spokesman Piotr Muller wrote on Twitter: “The path of punishments and blackmail towards our country is not the right one.”

Wednesday’s decision drew a furious response from Deputy Justice Minister Sebastian Kaleta.

“The CJEU completely disregards and ignores the Polish constitution and the judgments of the Constitutional Tribunal,” he wrote.

Ruling nationalists Law and Justice (PiS) say the European Union executive, the European Commission, is overstepping its mandate by trying to stop its judicial reforms.

At the request of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland’s Constitutional Tribunal examined whether certain elements of the EU treaties were compatible with the Polish constitution.

Earlier this month, the Tribunal said they were not, in a ruling critics said created an existential problem for the bloc by questioning the primacy of EU law, a tenet of European integration.

Taliban government offers Afghans wheat for work

Reuters

KABUL – For Kabul day laborer Khan Ali, struggling to feed a family of six since losing his job as a market trader, life has become so hard that he jumped on an offer by the cash-strapped Taliban government to pay him in wheat rather than the local afghani currency.

“For now this is good, at least we will not die of hunger,” the 43-year-old told Reuters.

In a country where U.N. agencies estimate only 5% of households have enough to eat on a regular basis, the government is giving him 22lb of

unmilled wheat a day to work on strengthening the city’s water and drainage systems.

“It is not enough of course, but in this situation where all Afghans are complaining about lack of work and poverty this is good,” said Ali, a former market trader.

International aid has largely disappeared following the Taliban’s victory over Afghanistan’s Western-backed government in August, and long queues form outside banks.

For those with bank accounts and money in them, withdrawals have been rationed to 20,000 afghani or \$200 a week to help manage a dwindling

money supply.

Bypassing a financial system that is close to collapse, officials on Sunday announced a public works program under which 66,000 tonnes of wheat will be distributed to laborers filling 44,000 jobs/44,000 laborers.

Most of the work will involve building defenses against the flash flooding that plagues Kabul in the rainy season and digging ditches to channel water into its badly depleted water table.

Neighbouring countries have donated thousands of tonnes of wheat to help Afghanistan deal with a humanitarian crisis

that is slipping out of control, but the use of wheat as a means of payment underlines the extent of the economic meltdown.

Some \$9 billion in central bank reserves are frozen outside the country and key trade crossings have been blocked for weeks.

“There is no big hope left for life in Afghanistan,” said another man, Abdul, who had also found work paid for in wheat but who preferred not to give his full name. “Our world is destroyed anyway, now all that’s left for us is survival.”



Tolga Akmen / AFP / Getty Images / TNS

A demonstrator poses with an installation depicting Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg surfing on a wave of cash and surrounded by distressed teenagers, during a protest Monday opposite the Houses of Parliament in central London as Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen was set to testify to British lawmakers.

Protests growing

Social media workers aren’t afraid to take complaints public

By Brian Contreras
Los Angeles Times

Silicon Valley has a powerful new adversary: its own workforce. Attracted by high salaries, world-class perks and the promise of being able to make a positive difference in the world, employees of the biggest tech and internet companies have long ranked high on measures of job satisfaction and loyalty. But with their companies frequently at the center of contentious political and cultural struggles, they are increasingly concluding that doing good requires breaking with the corporate line — often publicly.

Recent episodes at Facebook and Netflix have seen tech workers taking problems with their employers outside the building — to the media, to the streets and to Capitol Hill — in ways that were rare just a few years ago.

“We are experiencing a major shift in work norms,” said Catherine Bracy, founder and chief executive of TechEquity Collaborative, an organization focused on mobilizing the tech sector to address economic inequity. “Executives and upper management often come from a tradition that expects workers to check their personal lives and opinions at the door. Rank-and-file workers, especially millennials and Gen Z-ers, aren’t willing to make those kinds of compromises.”

“We’re seeing that difference in expectation play out very publicly these days,” Bracy added via email.

The shift has been on full display in the “Facebook Papers,” a large-scale journalism project based on reams of previously internal Facebook documents made available by whistleblower Frances Haugen, a former product manager for the company. Haugen’s leaks have led to revelations about Facebook’s hesitancy to stifle the flow of anti-vaccine misinformation, its lack of local language content moderators and concerns flagged by Apple that it was being used to buy and sell Middle Eastern maids.

And Haugen isn’t the only Facebook worker who’s grown disillusioned; as the leaked documents reveal, employees have been taking to the company’s internal message board to voice concerns over the social network’s role in the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection and other matters.

At Netflix, comedian Dave Chappelle’s latest stand-up special — a platform exclusive in which Chappelle made remarks many have condemned as transphobic — sparked the streaming giant’s first major public protest by employees.

Last week, transgender Netflix employees and their allies protested in Los Angeles with an organized walkout. Some staff members have also released a list of demands and (in a move that mirrors Haugen’s actions) one employee allegedly leaked finan-

cial data about Chappelle’s special to the media, resulting in the employee’s firing.

Google employees have agitated against company projects they disapproved of, and several hundred unionized. Amazon workers have spoken out against the company’s environmental and labor practices. Smaller, more under-the-radar tech companies — Hootsuite, Basecamp, Coinbase — have dealt with their own internal reckonings over conflicts between what workers want and what management demands.

Tech workers turning to external channels to agitate for change represents a significant cultural shift for Silicon Valley, which has long prided itself on internal transparency and empowering individuals, and where rank-and-file workers once largely accepted the notion that frictionless internal collaboration and candid leadership required a commitment to keeping company secrets.

Those norms might have held when the companies employed a few thousand workers, said Adam Fisher, author of “Valley of Genius: The Uncensored History of Silicon Valley.” “But now that these are some of the biggest companies that have ever existed on the planet — at least by value, and probably by size; other measures too — it’s just harder to keep stuff secret.”

The value proposition has changed as well, with the companies’ need for talent giving tech workers “a lot of economic power,” Fisher said. “These companies don’t run themselves, and we’re at a place [where] you’ve got million-dollar signing bonuses for some of the hottest young engineers, literally, so you need to care about what they think, no matter what it is.”

Forrest Briscoe, a professor of management at Penn State, said that whistleblowing and demonstrations are “close cousins, with lots of theoretical overlaps” — but that the two strategies also have some differences.

“Activism more often involves collective action (but not always),” Briscoe said via email, whereas “whistleblowing more often involves misconduct/rule violation allegations (but not always).”

One can lead to the other, said Arunima Krishna, an assistant professor of public relations at Boston University whose work has explored employee activism.

“I think the major difference between what’s happening at Netflix versus Facebook, and why I’m less optimistic about the latter is that ... Facebook’s situation to my mind is a failure to respond to employee activism, thus taking such activism to the next level, whistleblowing,” Krishna said via email. “Whistleblowing typically is a result of employee pushback against policies being ignored, forcing (former) employees to go public with allegations of wrongdoing.”

Just as employees have a spec-

trum of responses to choose from when faced with concerns or frustrations about their bosses, executives also have flexibility in how they respond to pushback.

Camille Reyes, an associate professor in the communication department at Trinity University, said the decisions that organizations make in crises exist along a “contingency continuum.”

At one end of that continuum is “accommodation,” Reyes said, when a company apologizes unequivocally or capitulates fully to employee-activist demands. At the other end is “advocacy,” wherein “the organization is going hard defending themselves.”

In its initial response to the protests over Chappelle, Netflix was on the advocacy end of the continuum, Reyes said, with corporate leadership sending out a memo saying the comedy special didn’t “directly translate to real-world harm.” Subsequently, Netflix has gradually shifted closer to the middle, “trying to build empathy” but still not fully embracing employee concerns, she said.

Facebook, by contrast, has “gone hard on the advocacy side.”

“They continue to attempt to discredit Haugen,” Reyes said. “In addition to attacking her as just a disgruntled ex-employee, their primary talking point with the mainstream media seems to be that the data points alleging Facebook misdeeds are cherry-picked, painting a false picture.”

Facebook has been cagey about whether it will retaliate against Haugen for whistleblowing.

It’s a risky strategy, however, and one which — more so than Netflix’s wavering but increasingly conciliatory approach — could hurt Facebook’s reputation in the long run.

“Based on our research of employee activism at Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Wayfair, being dismissive of employee demands and retaliating against employees are not the most effective tactics,” said Ed Carberry, associate professor and chair of the management department at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Nishi Gautam, Carberry’s advisee and a doctoral candidate researching tech employee activism. “Generally, companies need to be careful to take these issues seriously, trust their employees when they say they have a problem and listen to them.”

It’s a dynamic that tech companies are having to think more and more about as their employees become increasingly comfortable airing dirty corporate laundry in public.

“Listen to your employees, listen to what’s important to them,” said Krishna, the Boston University assistant professor. “They want to have a voice in their organization, and are not afraid to use that voice against the organization if they believe that the organization’s values are not being followed.”

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FAA flags some potential safety problems in 2 Boeing planes

Concern for 767, 757 models comes after 2019 crash in Texas

By Dominic Gates
The Seattle Times

The Federal Aviation Administration has issued a safety alert to all operators of Boeing 767 and 757 airplanes flagging a potential problem that led to the 2019 crash in Texas of an Amazon Air cargo plane and the deaths of the three pilots onboard.

Although the first officer flying the plane was faulted in the investigation into the crash, the alert points to a potential flaw in the way the pilot controls are laid out in the flight deck that initiated the chain of events.

Crash investigators believe that the first officer inadvertently hit a switch that was too close to a handle he was holding, then reacted incorrectly to the plane’s sudden change in the flight mode.

Just 32 seconds after the inadvertent activation of that switch, the plane slammed into the ground, killing the captain, the first officer and a third pilot who was hitching a ride in the jump seat.

On Feb. 23, 2019, Atlas Air Flight 3591 — a Boeing 767 cargo flight operated for and in the colors of Amazon Air — was en route from Miami to Houston when it crashed into a shallow marsh near Trinity Bay, Texas.

On board were Captain Ricky Blakely, 60, of Indiana; First Officer Conrad Jules Aska, 44, of Antigua; and Mesa Airlines Captain Sean Archuleta, 36, of Houston, who was traveling home before beginning new-hire pilot training with United Airlines.

The flight data recorder showed that as the plane descended from 6,000 feet toward a planned 3,000 foot level on the approach to Houston airspace, the pilot flipped a switch that shifted the plane to “Go-Around” mode.

This is the mode used when a pilot close to the ground and slowing down on approach decides abruptly that it’s unsafe to land. The go-around signal immediately increases the engine thrust so that the plane can climb away from the runway.

The altitude and trajectory of Flight 3591 at that moment was “inconsistent with any scenario in which a pilot would intentionally select go-around mode” the National Transportation Safety Board concluded after investigation.

And neither the captain or first officer announced a go-around, as they would have if it were an intentional activation.

What happened next doomed the plane.

The sudden acceleration from the engine thrust would have pushed the first officer’s body back into his seat. If there are limited visual cues to the contrary, this can make a pilot think a plane is pitching up, a recognized phenomenon known as a “somatogravic illusion.”

In fact the plane was already on a downward slope. Investigators believe that under the influence of that illusion, the first officer pushed the controls forward to point the nose further down.

That “forced the airplane into a steep dive from which the crew did not recover,” the NTSB report states.

Crash investigators re-creating what happened in a simulator observed that, when the first officer flying in the right seat kept his left hand on the speedbrake lever during the descent, as is normal procedure, “his left hand and wrist could be under the thrust levers and close to the left go-around switch.”

They concluded that this was the likely cause of the unintentional go-around activation.

“The NTSB demonstrated in a full flight simulator, that light turbulence could reasonably cause a pilot flying that is holding the speedbrake lever to move his or her arm enough to hit the go-around switch inadvertently,” the FAA stated.

The FAA issued the safety alert to make sure pilots of both the 767 and the 757, which has a similarly configured flight deck, are aware of this potential hazard.

Boeing declined to comment.

The Flight 3591 crash investigators separately raised questions about the first officer’s competence.

He had a “long history of training performance difficulties” and tended “to respond impulsively and inappropriately when faced with an unexpected event during training scenarios at multiple employers.”

They found that he had also repeatedly provided inaccurate information on resumes and job applications that were “deliberate attempts to conceal his history of performance deficiencies.”

In response to NTSB requests for data from Boeing, Atlas, another U.S. airline and NASA’s Aviation Safety Reporting System, none identified any prior reports of inadvertent go-around activation in 767s or 757s.

The NASA database contained 11 reports of such events between 1990 and 2017 involving other airplane models, including the Boeing 737-, 747- and 777-series and the Airbus A320.

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Dorothy's missing slippers

Podcast dives into disappearance of ruby slippers from museum in 2005

By Neal Justin
Star Tribune

Actor Melissa McCarthy freaked out over them in a recent TV special promoting the opening of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. During his concert at Treasure Island Casino in Red Wing earlier this month, singer Christopher Cross joked that he contemplated stealing them from Liza Minnelli's house. But few have been as obsessed with the ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz" as the two journalists behind a new podcast. "There's No Place Like Home," an eight-part series from C13 Originals, focuses on the pair that went missing from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, in August 2005. The shoes then mysteriously reappeared 13 years later during an FBI sting operation. Seyward Darby, editor-in-chief of the Atavist Magazine, was mesmerized when she heard about the recovery and wanted to dive deeper. "I was looking for a true crime story that didn't involve murder and dead girls," Darby said a few weeks ago from her home in Brooklyn, New York. "There's nothing really salacious in the slipper story and yet, it still has the cat-and-mouse qualities that lend itself to storytelling." She quickly reached out to freelancer Ariel Ramchandani. Three weeks later, the reporter was making her maiden voyage to Minnesota. "It was a really great reporting trip," Ramchandani said. "I'm a real New York City kid. I don't even drive. I really had to rely on the kindness of sources." Over the course of three years of reporting, Ramchandani and Darby discovered enough suspects to fill an Agatha Christie thriller. Did memorabilia owner Michael Shaw arrange the theft to collect on the insurance? Was the late Kent Anderson, brother of Emmy-winning comic Louie Anderson, among the burglars? What role, if any, did high-powered Minneapolis attorney Joe Friedberg play? The podcast doesn't provide



Judy Garland's ruby slippers were recovered 13 years after they went missing from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

any concrete answers — but it does reveal a lot about our fascination with certain aspects of pop culture. The series often wanders off the trail to educate listeners about the legacy of Judy Garland, who spent the first four years of her life in Grand Rapids, 180 miles north of Minneapolis. Her superstar life eventually unraveled under the influence of drugs and alcohol. "It's interesting that this came out around the time Britney Spears is in the news," said Darby. "Judy was Britney before there was Britney. She was so famous when she was so young and had her life scripted and directed for her. All these people are making money off her talent and drive." Early episodes also explore the enduring popularity of "The Wizard of Oz" and how the shoes became so iconic. There are actually four sets of shoes in circulation that are believed to have been used in the 1939 film. The pair at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.,

is among the most asked about artifacts in the entire Smithsonian collection. The one at the newly opened Academy Museum, which was donated for display by Steven Spielberg and Leonardo DiCaprio, is expected to draw the faithful. "I think of those slippers as the Mona Lisa of our museum," Jacqueline Stewart, chief artistic and programming officer of the museum, said during a special that aired earlier this month on ABC. Experts believe that the slippers in Grand Rapids are the ones Dorothy Gale used to click her way back to Kansas as she recited "There's no place like home." They are back on display, along with a carriage from the movie and an original script. "People here still hold the ruby slippers dear to their heart," said Brian Mattson, an investigator for the Grand Rapids Police Department who was interviewed for the podcast. "The slippers came to symbolize a lot of different things for a lot of different

people." Other Minnesotans who pop up in the podcast include Grand Rapids Mayor Dale Christy and John Kelsch, former executive director of the Judy Garland Museum. Ramchandani, who made three trips to Minnesota during the course of her reporting, conducted many of her interviews at local breweries and coffee shops. She was struck by the beauty of Pokegama Lake and the cooperation of Grand Rapids residents. "I really liked the intimacy you get in a small town. Everyone knew each other," said Ramchandani, who ended up exchanging family photos by text with sources during the pandemic. "You'd be talking with someone, and they'd say, 'Oh, you should interview blah, blah, blah. Just go across the street.'" Mattson said the response in his town has been mostly positive. Some of his fellow officers listened to episodes during their breaks at the station. No arrests have been

made in connection with the theft. Mattson said the case is now in the hands of the FBI. C13 Originals won't reveal how many people have tuned in throughout the rest of the country, but it's safe to say that the story has all the ingredients of a hit podcast. According to Edison Research, three of the top 10 podcasts of the past year were "Serial," "Crime Junkie" and "My Favorite Murder," all of which fall under the true crime genre. At the very least, the podcast may inspire people to go back and watch "Wizard of Oz" for the umpteenth time. That's exactly what Darby did this past July. "My husband fell asleep, but my mother-in-law and I were singing along to all the songs," she said. "One of the fascinating things about the movie is that it always feels a little different. It's the gift that keeps on giving." ©2021 StarTribune. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Thompson, Negga star in complex 'Passing'

Rebecca Hall's drama brings Nella Larsen's 1929 novel to life

By Justin Chang
Los Angeles Times

The closing shot of "Passing," Rebecca Hall's sleek and transfixing adaptation of Nella Larsen's 1929 novel, peers down from a great height at a courtyard on a cold December night, a vision partially obscured by falling snow and set to the graceful tinkling of piano chords. The image has a hushed loveliness that feels faintly unreal. That society is 1920s New York, a world that Larsen rendered in deft, economical strokes but which emerges here in a blur of cloche hats and flapper dresses. Against this backdrop, Irene Redfield (Tessa Thompson) and her husband, Brian (Andre Holland), are the very picture of Black upper-middle-class propriety. They have two young sons, a stately Harlem brownstone and a stable marriage, though not too stable to be knocked off-balance by Clare Bellew (Ruth Negga), an old friend whose reappearance in Irene's life dredges up long-hidden anxieties and closely guarded secrets. The most obvious of these secrets is kept by Clare herself, a Black woman who has been passing as white. So convincing is this particular imitation of life that when they reunite by chance on a sweltering hot day, Irene doesn't even recognize Clare, and not just because of her blond bob. It



From left, Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson in the film "Passing."

has more to do with the dazzling effrontery of her manner as she firmly seizes Irene's attention. It's not exactly the behavior of someone with something to hide. Clare likes to play with fire: She's concealing the truth from John (Alexander Skarsgard), her rich, racist husband and the father of their daughter. But regardless of her fear of exposure, she also longs to recover a sense of kinship, of regular communion with Black women and men — something that Irene, a pillar of her community, is able yet reluctant to provide. A more obvious version of this story might have centered on Clare, perhaps with an eye toward

rebuking the "tragic mulatto" stereotypes indulged by the Hollywood subgenre of passing narratives. But "Passing," a Netflix-acquired standout of this year's Sundance Film Festival, has something subtler and more complicated in mind. Hall seems less intrigued by Clare's motives than by the contradictory feelings they awaken in Irene — a mix of irritation, pity, envy and inescapable curiosity. For Irene, Clare's longing for Black companionship smacks of a kind of twisted exoticism fetish, something Irene muses about with her famous novelist friend, Hugh. At the same time, Irene can't help but admire and envy

Clare's self-made status, even if it's predicated on a troubling and unsustainable lie. But then perhaps that status is, as Clare describes it, "entirely worth the price." And Irene may agree more than she lets on. She's no stranger to the social advantages of perceived whiteness, as we see in the opening scenes of her shopping for her children and enjoying an afternoon tea. And those advantages seem to loom ever larger as she and Clare rekindle their friendship. You see Irene's privilege in the authority she casually wields over her darker-complexioned housemaid, Zulena (Ashley Ware Jenkins). Clare's regular presence in the Redfield household has a way of both soothing and inflaming those tensions, and Negga invests her with an elfin glamour that seduces everyone in her orbit. At times "Passing" takes on the quality of an infidelity drama in which no infidelity is actually committed and you're not entirely sure who the potential participants are, given Clare and Brian's mutual affection and the subtler sparks that occasionally ignite between Clare and Irene. The two women attract and repel each other like emotional magnets. Hall, who's spoken of her own experience as a white-presenting woman of mixed-race ancestry, is as in sync with her two leads as you might expect from an

actor of her caliber. She picks up on their contrasting energies. But what's most striking about Hall's direction is her visual acuity, her gift for composing images that are gorgeous, disorienting and strangely intuitive. She's also fond of blurring the focus in the background of a shot, as if to suggest the limitations of perception. And those limitations may affect the unsuspecting viewer as well. "We're all of us passing for something or other, aren't we?" Irene wonders in one of the script's few nudge-nudge lines, though it does raise the intriguing possibility that "Passing" might itself be passing for something else. You start to wonder if the movie's ostensible subject, the complexities and contradictions of racial identity, might in fact be something of a smokescreen. The idea is fascinatingly underlined by Grau's monochrome images, in which stark black-and-white differences are both the whole point and somehow beside the point. "Passing" ends with the shock and sorrow that have beer foreshadowed from the beginning, but also with a kind of puzzlement. It's a beautifully chiseled vision of an uglier world, an artifact of a vanished reality that you're grateful — and yet strangely reluctant — to leave behind. ©2021 Los Angeles Times. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.