

SPORTS

Johnson to be inducted into Medina Sports Hall of Fame, **B1**

U.S.-IRAN CONFLICT

Senate OKs war powers resolution, **A3**

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WEDNESDAY, June 24, 2026

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MEDINA SIDEWALK REPAIR RESPONSIBILITY FROM PROPERTY OWNERS

Revised program advances

Kellyn Flohr
The Gazette

MEDINA — Medina City Council advanced a revised sidewalk program this week that would shift sidewalk repair responsibility from property owners to the city, while officials continue refining language on funding, liability and jurisdiction before final approval.

The proposal would establish a city-

run "safe sidewalk program" intended to improve accessibility and address long-standing maintenance issues across the city.

Council President John M. Coyne III said the ordinance would maintain property owners' responsibility for driveway maintenance and for clearing sidewalks of snow and ice, but shift responsibility for repairing and replacing damaged sidewalk panels to the city.

"The sidewalks themselves, the duty to repair currently is on the property owner," Coyne said. "It's suggested that the city of Medina be responsible to repair all sidewalks within the city."

Coyne said the program would rely on inspections and mapping, potentially using GIS technology, to identify damaged areas and group repairs into bid packages for contractors. He also said the city could explore limited use of in-house equipment for minor

sidewalk "shaving" where height differences are minimal.

Officials also discussed funding options, including whether the city's 108 fund could be expanded to include sidewalk repairs, which would require voter approval to expand eligible uses.

Council members expressed broad support for treating sidewalks as a public asset but raised concerns about cost, implementation and long-

term sustainability.

Council member Bill Lamb said sidewalks function as shared infrastructure used by all residents.

"I think City Council, the majority anyway, has determined that we want the city to be walkable," Lamb said. "We feel like we are responsible for the condition of the sidewalks in order to make it walkable."

See **SIDEWALK, A2**

BUCKEYE WOODS PARK

Playground being replaced



SAM RUSS / GAZETTE PHOTOS

ABOVE and BELOW: Construction crews work on the new playground at Buckeye Woods Park on Monday.

Sam Russ
The Gazette

MEDINA — A new playground is being installed at Buckeye Woods Park as the Medina County Park District replaces equipment that has been a fixture at the park for more than 27 years.

Work began last Wednesday on the playground on the west side of the park near the ball fields and is expected to take about two weeks.

The previous playground was installed in 1998 and was nearing the end of its lifespan, park planner John Kleshinski said.

"We conduct an annual full inspection of every playground and then more frequent inspections based upon usage. Recent inspections showed it was kind of declining with age and starting to rust out in some areas," Kleshinski said.

The project includes the removal of the existing playground equipment, installation of the new equipment and the placement of new engineered wood fiber surfacing. The total project cost is \$124,941 and is being funded through the park district's capital improvement budget.

The park district budgeted \$125,000 for the project and received a \$34,593 discount through Ohio's cooperative purchasing program.

The new playground was selected after reviewing different proposals and choosing a design that offers features similar to the old structure, which had become a favorite among park visitors.

"We heard the community loved this



playground, so we wanted to get something comparable in height and features to keep at that playground facility," he said.

The new playground, designed for children aged 5 through 12, includes four slides at different heights, several climbing features and a rope tunnel leading to the tallest slide. One slide will also feature an ADA transfer platform.

The playground will stand at a height of 22 feet and 2 inches, with the existing freestanding swings remaining in place.

Once construction is complete and

inspections are done, the park district will announce the playground's official opening.

No additional playground replacement projects are planned for this year, though other aging playgrounds are being evaluated for future replacement.

"We have a couple of playgrounds that are at that stage where they're 20 to 30 years old, but the board will ultimately decide which one we go for next," Kleshinski said.

Contact reporter Sam Russ at (330) 491-6962 or sruss@medina-gazette.com.

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP

Construction to begin on Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic

Madysyn Woodring
The Gazette

MONTVILLE TWP. — Veterans who live in the Medina County area will be able to get their healthcare from a Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Montville Township starting next year.

Dave Chmielewski is the chief of community outpatient services for the VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System. He said around two years ago, the VA Central Office gave formal approval to move forward with the project and planning started about four years prior.

"(It will be a) 20,000-square-

foot fully functioning outpatient clinic," he said. "It will be primary care, behavioral health, optometry, podiatry and laboratory. Then, there will be specialty care services on site, but we're still determining what we're going to bring here in terms of specialty care."

The clinic will be built near Cobblestone Drive. Chmielewski said the plot of land has been cleared, and the goal is to open the facility in late spring or early summer 2027.

Currently, Medina County veterans have to travel to places like Akron, Mansfield or Parma to receive care.

See **CLINIC, A2**

MEDINA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Group seeks to flesh out new club for young historians

Madysyn Woodring
The Gazette

MEDINA — The Medina County Historical Society wants to flesh out its new Medina County Young Historians Club to get high schoolers involved in the historical society to eventually pass the torch on to them.

Lisa Pettry from the Medina County Historical Society said the mission of any historical society is to try to engage youths as a succession plan to allow the next generation to oversee the organization.

"Fast forward to the last six or seven years, the acquisition of the McDowell-Phillips House has really hastened that emphasis because now we're doubling our public proper-

ties between the John Smart House that has been the home for a number of years for the historical society collections and public programming," she said.

The club aims to give its young historians opportunities to research, participate in community activities and help with public programming. Pettry said the Medina County Historical Society is open to everyone in the county.

"On a basic level, the invitation is for members of the Young Historians Club to serve as docents or junior docents," she said. "It's an open invitation to come to any of our open houses, shadow a docent and then increasingly take on a public facing role."

See **CLUB, A2**

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FROM PAGE ONE

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Today
Granger Township Board of Zoning Appeals, regular meeting, 6:30 p.m., administration building, 3717 Ridge Road.
Hinckley Township Board of Zoning Appeals, public hearing, 7 p.m., administration building, 1410 Ridge Road. Log onto www.hinckleytpw.org/zoom for Zoom option.
Montville Township Zoning Commission, regular meeting, 7 p.m., town hall, 6665 Wadsworth

Road.
Spencer Village Council, regular meeting, 7 p.m., Spencer Municipal Building, 109 N. Main St.
Thursday
Westfield Center Village Council, special meeting to discuss the Westfield Fire and Rescue District, 7:30 a.m., village hall, 6701 Greenwich Road.
York Township trustees, regular meeting, 7 p.m., township office, 6609 Norwalk Road.

ALMANAC

The Associated Press
Today is Wednesday, June 24, the 175th day of 2026. There are 190 days left in the year.

Today's history

In 1509, Henry VIII was crowned king of England; his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was crowned queen consort.
In 1812, French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's Grande Armee began crossing the Niemen River, embarking on a campaign to invade Russia. (Napoleon's forces would enter Moscow in early September, but failing to decisively defeat the Russians, would retreat with staggering losses to disease and desertion as winter set in.)
In 1939, the Southeast Asian country of Siam changed its name to Thailand. (It reverted to Siam in 1945, then became Thailand once again in 1949.)
In 1948, Communist forces cut off all land and water routes between West Germany and West Berlin, prompting the Western allies to organize the Berlin Airlift.
In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Roth v. United States, ruled 6-3 that obscene materials were not protected by the First Amendment.
In 1973, President Richard Nixon concluded a summit

with the visiting leader of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, who hailed the talks in an address on American television.

In 2010, in the first round of the Wimbledon Championships, American John Isner won the longest professional tennis match in history, defeating Nicolas Mahut of France 6-4, 3-6, 6-7, 7-6, 70-68; the match was played over the course of three days and lasted a total of 11 hours, 5 minutes.

Today's birthdays

Author Anita Desai is 89. Cinematographer Vittorio Storaro is 86. Actor Michele Lee is 84. Actor-director Georg Stanford Brown is 83. Musician Mick Fleetwood is 79. Actor Peter Weller is 79. Golf Hall of Famer Juli Inkster is 66. Actor Iain Glen is 65. Musician Curt Smith (Tears for Fears) is 65. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum is 64. Singer Hope Sandoval (Mazzy Star) is 60. Actor Sherry Stringfield ("ER") is 59. Actor-producer Mindy Kaling is 47. Actor Minka Kelly is 46. Singer Solange Knowles is 40. Soccer player Lionel Messi is 39. Actor Beanie Feldstein is 33. Actor Harris Dickinson is 30. Actor Liana Ramirez is 28. Actor Coy Stewart is 28.

WEATHER

TODAY: Sunny 78/60
THURSDAY: Evening thunderstorms 79/61
FRIDAY: Showers 75/62
SATURDAY: Partly cloudy 78/61

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

The Medina Gazette is committed to providing accurate news coverage. Call us at (330) 721-4060 to let us know about factual errors.

LOTTERY

Ohio (Tuesday)
Midday Pick 3: 8-8-0, Pick 3: Not available at press time.
Midday Pick 4: 7-2-9-0, Pick 4: Not available at press time.
Midday Pick 5: 2-9-2-5-7, Pick 5: Not available at press time.
Rolling Cash 5: Not available at press time.
Rolling Cash 5 jackpot is \$120,000.
Classic Lotto jackpot is \$6.9 million.
Millionaire for Life
MONDAY: 7-8-20-24-42, Millionaire Ball: 5.
TUESDAY: The numbers were not available at press time.
Mega Millions
TUESDAY: The numbers were not available at press time.
Next Mega Millions jackpot is an estimated \$467 million.
Powerball
MONDAY: 17-19-21-45-48, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 2.
Next Powerball jackpot is an estimated \$327 million.
Ohio (Monday)
Pick 3: 1-5-2,
Pick 4: 8-4-4-7,
Pick 5: 7-9-6-0-7,
Rolling Cash 5: 10-16-19-23-35,
Classic Lotto: 13-16-28-35-41-44, Kicker: 7-6-2-8-1-3.

THE GAZETTE

Wednesday, June 24, 2026, No. 153
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ROUNDUP

Medina County students place at National Speech and Debate Tournament

Connor McNeill from Wadsworth Schools won the national championship in commentary in the National Speech and Debate Tournament last week.
The National Speech and Debate Tournament is the world's largest academic competition. More than 7,000 students from 48 states, the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories and eight countries traveled to Richmond, Virginia, to compete last week.
Commentary is a five-minute public speaking event in which students respond to a prompt drawn on a topic of societal, political, historical or popular interest. Students have 20 minutes to prepare their speech, during which they may consult articles and evidence they have gathered in advance, and the final speech is delivered from memory.
Alysia Aldea from Medina High School

received second place in congressional debate — House.
Congressional debate is a group debate event simulating the U.S. legislative process. Students meet in chambers and debate legislation over a session typically lasting two to three hours.

Medina Community Band concert Friday

Medina Community Band will present its fourth concert of the 2026 Summer Concert Series at 8 p.m. Friday in the Uptown Medina Square Gazebo. The social hosts for the evening will be United Church of Christ Congregational Church.
This concert does not have an indoor backup location. If weather conditions prevent an outdoor performance, the concert will be canceled. Cancellation notices will be posted on the Medina Community Band website and Facebook page, and an email will be sent to newsletter subscribers.

Road closures in Medina

In Medina, East Union Street from North Broadway Street to North Court Street and East Homestead Street from North Broadway Street to North Court Street will be closed until Monday.
The closures are in conjunction with the city's U.S. 42 resurfacing project. The concrete pavement within the intersections of East Homestead Street and North Court Street and East Union Street and North Court Street are being replaced.
Local access for all properties within the closure limits will be maintained throughout the closure period.
Detours and barricades will be set up and maintained throughout the closure period.
The work is weather dependent, and the closure may be postponed if weather conditions dictate it.

— from staff reports

BLOTTER

Medina Police

Saturday, June 20
9:09 p.m. — Lafayette Road and Baxter Street; traffic stop for driving over a curb. Driver was arrested for operating a vehicle under the influence.
Sunday, June 21
10:51 a.m. — N. Jefferson St. and E. Homestead; graffiti reported in the roadway.
Monday, June 22
8:58 a.m. — 877 Branch Road, B11; property reported taken from an unlocked vehicle.
12:23 p.m. — 321 Howard St.; suspicious circumstances involving a neighbor reported.
11:03 a.m. — 7176 Westfield Road; assisted another agency with a trailer fire.
Tuesday, June 23
4:12 a.m. — 357 W. Union St., Apt. 1; reported disturbance.
4:30 p.m. — 997 Chadwick

Lane; identity fraud reported after a vehicle was purchased in the victim's name.

Medina Township

Friday, June 12
1:30 p.m. — Granger Road and Weymouth Road; a 2025 Kia K4 struck a deer crossing Granger Road near Lake Forest Drive. Damage was consistent with a deer strike. Photos were taken and no OH-1 crash report was required.
Saturday, June 13
12:33 p.m. — 3700 Pearl Road; no-injury crash reported when a Mazda attempted to pass a slowing Nissan as both lanes merged. The Nissan then turned into 3721 Pearl Road without signaling, causing a collision. A 1 crash report was completed and the Mazda was towed by Transcounty.

12:58 p.m. — 4914 Grande Blvd.; a parked Volvo was struck in a private property crash between noon and 12:47 p.m. Investigation is pending. Surveillance footage is being requested from Home Depot.
4:53 p.m. — 4141 Pearl Road; larceny reported. A 49-year-old female was issued a citation/funnals.

Montville Township

Saturday, June 20
11:17 p.m. — Wooster Pike; suspicious person reported near the rear of a business. Caller reported someone attempting to get into vehicles behind the building. Officers searched the area by foot and drone but were unable to locate anyone.
Sunday, June 21
3:40 p.m. — Montville Drive; suspicious circumstances

reported after a caller stated two males entered a room and attempted to access a bathroom. Officers responded and determined no intruders were present. The residence was found secure, and the male involved had ended his stay earlier and left in officers' presence.
8:20 p.m. — Wooster Pike; suspicious person and vehicle reported near an antique shop. Caller reported a male in a dark sedan with silver striping following her around the back of a building. Officers responded, but the vehicle was gone on arrival.
10:37 p.m. — River Styx Road; loud party/noise complaint involving loud music. Caller reported ongoing loud music and unusual sounds from a nearby residence. Officers responded and issued a warning for loud music.

CLUB

From A1
The historical society is reaching out to youth organizations to find out the needs and interests of young people to try and meet them where they are, Pettry said.
"We're all adults, and so we can think back to activities that we participated in during our middle school and high school years, but it may not meet the current need," she said. "We're not only listening, but we are being able to pivot and really dig deep into what we have to offer, and then also see what the youths have to offer us."
Pettry said the plan is to launch the club in the fall and have more structured plans for the organization next year. Those who are interested can contact mchs@zoom-internet.net for more information.
"Right now, it's an open invitation to come to our open houses, which would be our set meeting time," she said. "That's where we gather with other adults to get involved in the real work of the museum spaces and the historical society."



GAZETTE FILE

The Medina County Historical Society wants to flesh out its new Medina County Young Historians Club to get high schoolers involved in the historical society to eventually pass the torch on to them.

SIDEWALK

From A1
Council member Edward Isabella also supported the concept, citing accessibility concerns for residents, including those with mobility devices who may be forced into the street due to uneven sidewalks.
Other Council members raised concerns about cost burden and whether responsibility should remain with property owners, noting that similar programs in other cit-

ies still rely heavily on private maintenance models.
During public comment, Sarah Gardner of Medina asked whether sidewalks in homeowners associations would be included in the program. Coyne said the city would only maintain sidewalks within its jurisdiction.
"If it's a private road, the city doesn't maintain it," Coyne said. "If it's a private sidewalk, the city won't maintain that either because that's not ours."
Former Mayor Dennis Hanwell also addressed Council,

noting that sidewalk repairs were previously implemented in phases beginning in older areas of the city and expanded outward. He said delays in recent years were often due to staffing, weather and project sequencing rather than a lack of action.
Administration officials echoed that several sidewalk projects have been delayed in recent years due to utility conflicts, tree root mitigation work and weather interruptions.
Mayor Jim Shields said some projects have carried

over multiple seasons as crews addressed underlying issues such as tree damage before sidewalk replacement could be completed.
The ordinance was advanced on first reading, subject to review and approval of updated language by the city law director. Officials said they expect additional revisions over the next several weeks before returning for a final vote.
Contact reporter Kellyn Flohr at (330) 591-5392 or kflohr@medina-gazette.com.

CLINIC

From A1
He said the VA wanted to be a part of the Medina County community.
"Being that Medina County is the fastest growing county within Northeast Ohio, it just made perfect sense," Chmielewski said. "Knowing that our veteran population of current users who were making those drives, it was just an opportunity that we couldn't let go any longer."
There are more than 4,300 people from the Medina County area who currently use the VA healthcare system, he said.
"I think we're going to see a lot more veterans within the area who come out and start using VA healthcare, which is wonderful and great for us and wonderful and great for them," Chmielewski said. "I think that's really what it boils down to is that we just want veterans to have access to healthcare at a place that is convenient to them."
He encouraged any veteran who is interested in receiving healthcare services in Montville Township's VA outpa-



MADISYN WOODRING / GAZETTE

Construction has started on a Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Montville Township which aims to open next year.
tient clinic in the future to get in the system ahead of time and contact the VA if they have questions.
"That doesn't mean that they couldn't walk through the doors on day one of this building being open," Chmielewski said. "We'd love to get them in the doors

"I think we're going to see a lot more veterans within the area who come out and start using VA healthcare, which is wonderful and great for us and wonderful and great for them. I think that's really what it boils down to is that we just want veterans to have access to healthcare at a place that is convenient to them."
Dave Chmielewski, chief of community outpatient services for the VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

REBUKE TO TRUMP OVER U.S.-IRAN CONFLICT

Senate OKs war powers resolution

Lisa Mascaro
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate for the first time approved a war powers resolution Tuesday seeking to block U.S. military action against Iran, as lawmakers warily watch President Donald Trump's efforts to resolve a conflict that the administration launched on its own and now needs Congress to fund.

It was the 10th time the Senate has tried to stop the war, and the outcome, on a vote of 50-48, was a stunning turnaround from past efforts. While the resolution is largely symbolic, and does not carry the full force of law, it reflects the growing concerns from a number of Republican lawmakers in both the House and Senate over both the war and the deal Trump struck with Iran to end it. The House approved the resolution earlier this month.

"Time after time, the vast majority of Senate Republicans sided with Trump and his war instead of the American people," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

Schumer said Americans have paid the price for "Trump's historic blunder in Iran. It'll go down in the history

books as one of the worst foreign policy forays America has ever made."

In the past, as many as four GOP senators have voted for the war powers resolutions, and they did so Tuesday — Republicans Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana. One Democrat, Sen. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, voted against.

On this vote, the absence of two Republicans, including Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who was admitted to the hospital recently for an undisclosed matter, left the GOP without a full majority to halt the effort. Sen. Dave McCormick, R-Pa., also missed the vote.

The vote comes as the Pentagon is seeking \$80 billion from Congress mostly for the Iran war as it backfills munitions and stockpiles.

Trump himself is headed to the Capitol today to meet with GOP senators after Vice President JD Vance was overseas working to negotiate with Iran to end its nuclear ambitions — which had been among the stated rationales for the war.

The president is not pleased with the Republicans who have been critical of the deal he struck with

Iran, according to one GOP senator granted anonymity to discuss the private dynamics.

The terms of the Iran deal are spelled out in a memorandum of understanding that Trump signed last week, starting a 60-day clock for the sides to reach a broader agreement over ending Iran's nuclear program.

But Republicans have particularly objected to the \$300 billion fund to help Iran rebuild, which is far greater than the \$1.7 billion then-President Barack Obama refunded the country under his administration's 2015 Iran deal.

"I believe President Trump is getting very poor advice on Iran," Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said last week on his podcast after the deal was made public.

Democrats have repeatedly forced Iran votes

Over and over again, Democrats have been forcing votes on the Iran war, almost since the U.S. and Israel launched missile strikes on Iran on Feb. 28.

Nearly each week they're in session, the Senate Democrats have put forward war powers resolutions, but they have failed to amass the major-

ity needed for passage in the narrowly split chamber, where Trump's Republican Party holds the majority. Trump would almost certainly veto any measure that passed.

The House pushed its own version to passage earlier this month, with four Republicans joining all Democrats in approving the war powers resolution, over the objections of House Speaker Mike Johnson and the GOP leadership.

While the House- and Senate-passed resolution does not go to the president for his signature, passage stands as a powerful, if symbolic, statement from Congress and a rebuke of the administration's military actions.

Sen. Tim Kaine, the Democrat from Virginia who has led his party's efforts, said the pause in warfighting, as Trump's team works to shore up a fragile ceasefire, provides the perfect time for Congress to step back and assess "what should the next chapter be."

Hegseth seeks \$80B from Congress for the Iran war

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is on Capitol Hill this week, seeking roughly \$80 billion in supplemental funding to shore up defense supplies in the aftermath of the Iran war, which is drawing scrutiny when

many Americans are reeling from high gas prices and costs of living.

The Pentagon early on had estimated the war cost \$11.3 billion during its first week, and senators said experts put the overall price tag of Operation Epic Fury higher, at some \$100 billion.

The Defense Department's funding request is part of a broader beef-up of military money the White House wants as part of its budget request this year.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Tuesday, "We should not spend another dime of taxpayer dollars on Operation Epic Failure."

The Trump administration is seeking \$1.5 trillion in defense funding this year — a nearly 50 percent increase — including \$350 billion that it wants in a so-called budget reconciliation package. Johnson and GOP leaders are working to pass that package on their own, over the objections of Democrats, much the way they approved Trump's big tax cuts bill last year.

The 2025 tax cuts package also included a sizable increase for the military.

U.S., Iran in dispute over nuclear inspections

Munir Ahmed, David Rising
and Jon Gambrell
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The U.S. and Iran were in dispute Tuesday over whether Tehran had agreed to allow U.N. inspections of its nuclear sites. As officials negotiated over how to permanently end the war in Iran, a separate plan emerged to break the shipping bottleneck through the Strait of Hormuz.

The disagreement over nuclear inspections came as Iran's president met with Pakistani mediators and technical teams from the U.S. and Iran continued talks in Switzerland.

A United Nations agency said Tuesday that a plan was underway to move stranded ships and their thousands of crew members through the strait — a vital passage for global energy supplies that Iran had blocked after the U.S. and Israel launched the war on Feb. 28.

Earlier in the day, a spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, Esmail Baghaei, told reporters in Tehran that U.N. inspectors were not scheduled to examine nuclear sites bombed by the U.S. last year, rejecting comments made a day before by U.S. Vice President JD Vance.

President Donald Trump told reporters Tuesday that if Iran had not agreed to inspections, he would cut off talks with Tehran immediately. But he added there was no rush for those inspections to begin.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has not responded to requests for comment over its possible role. It has been in and out of Iran since Israel's 12-day war in 2025, but has not been granted access to bombed enrichment sites targeted by the U.S.

Iran maintains that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, though it has highly enriched uranium that could be used to build atomic bombs, should it choose to do so, the IAEA has said.

Plan to evacuate stranded seafarers through Strait

The plan to evacuate 11,000 crew members stranded on ships is being done in cooperation with Iran, Oman, all other coastal states in the region, the United States and the maritime industry, according to the secretary-general of the International Maritime Organization, Arsenio Dominguez.

"We have secured the nec-



A man walks past a welcoming billboard featuring Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, center, with Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, right, and Shehbaz Sharif along a roadside in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Tuesday.

essary safety guarantees and have thoroughly verified the conditions for safe navigation to support these operations," he said in a statement.

The organization said moving the ships will be done gradually to avoid any risk of collision.

A shipping insurance executive cheered the development. "That can only be good news for all concerned," said Marcus Baker, global head of marine, cargo and logistics for Marsh in London.

But the uneasy ceasefire already has been tested by Iran saying it closed the strait again over fighting between Israel and the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah in Lebanon. Violence again broke out in Lebanon Tuesday.

The U.S. has said that negotiators have discussed "mechanisms" to ensure that the strait remains open. Ship traffic is increasing but questions remain about who controls the passageway.

Data and analytics company Kpler confirmed 39 ships crossed through the strait Monday, after about 92 cross-

ings between Friday and Sunday. Prior to the war, roughly 100 ships a day made the journey.

Two U.S. aircraft carriers were continuing to operate in the Middle East, the U.S. military's Central Command said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday discussed a range of issues, including regional peace and economic cooperation, according to a statement from the presidency in Islamabad.

It was the Iranian president's first visit since the U.S. and Israel launched war on Iran. He said during a news conference after their meeting that there was no mention of Iran's missile program in the memorandum of understanding signed between the U.S. and Iran.

"If it was not for Iran's missile capabilities, our country would have been plundered and destroyed," Pezeshkian said, vowing to "never compromise or negotiate our missile capabilities."

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif afterward pledged that his country would

continue to play a role in ensuring peace in the region. Sharif also said he will attend the Tehran funeral of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, who was killed in the war's opening airstrikes.

Iran: Negotiations focused on sanctions relief, nuclear issues

At the start of a 60-day window to reach a permanent deal to end the war, Iran and the U.S. agreed to create a "de-confliction cell" to address the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

Iran said the talks in Switzerland led to the creation of negotiation groups focused on

sanctions relief, nuclear issues, reconstruction, and monitoring, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. The report quoted Kazem Gharibabadi, a deputy foreign minister leading the talks there, as saying the countries also formed a way to discuss ships moving through Hormuz.

In southern Lebanon Tuesday, Israeli soldiers opened fire and killed two people. That followed two days of calm after a ceasefire brokered Saturday. Any renewal of heavy fighting could threaten the broader diplomatic talks, since Iran has demanded that a full truce in Lebanon be part of any comprehensive deal.

Israel occupies part of Lebanon and insists it must be able to attack militants launching attacks into northern Israel.

The Israeli military said troops fired at four Hezbollah members who were riding a bulldozer and a motorcycle and had entered a security zone and failed to stop despite warning shots. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that the two men were killed next to a bulldozer clearing a road.

No Israeli airstrikes or shelling have been reported since Sunday and Hezbollah has not claimed any attacks in what has been the longest halt in the fighting since the latest Israel-Hezbollah war erupted in March.

Discrepancy on Iran's use of unfrozen funds

Following the talks in Switzerland, Vance, who helped lead the negotiations, said if Iranian financial assets were

unfrozen, they would be used to buy American-grown corn, wheat and soy.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Tuesday that Tehran's decisions on what to import would be based on "prices and quality."

Netanyahu raises new questions over fragile Lebanon ceasefire

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that his military still has "full freedom of action" in Lebanon to thwart any threats.

Neither Israel nor Hezbollah is a signatory to the U.S.-Iran deal. Netanyahu has vowed to keep his forces in southern Lebanon until threats to Israel are eliminated. Hezbollah has refused to halt attacks unless Israel commits to withdrawing.

When asked about Netanyahu's comments, Trump said "we're going to take a look at it," adding that the situation would "get solved."

The main highway leading south from Beirut was jammed Tuesday with people displaced from southern Lebanon returning to their homes. Among them was Hawraa Nour El-Din, from the village of Khirbet Selm.

"We don't want the negotiations done by the government," she said. "We want Iran to negotiate on our behalf, and we are returning victorious, whether everyone likes it or not."

In Washington, the State Department said a new round of Israel-Lebanon talks began on Tuesday with both political and security issues on the agenda.

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CUBA

U.S. slaps new sanctions on companies

Danica Coto

The Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The U.S. hit Cuban state companies on Tuesday with new sanctions that analysts say are expected to spook foreign investors and deepen a severe economic crisis.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the sanctions target five Cuban entities, including three linked to Grupo de Administración Empresarial S.A., a business conglomerate run by Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Best known as GAESA, it is believed to command nearly 40 percent of Cuba's gross domestic product. As of early 2024, it held \$14.5 billion in liquid reserves.

"The situation in Cuba is devolving as the island's corrupt, brutal and anti-American Communist regime continues to prioritize its own total control over the freedom, opportunity and basic well-being of the Cuban people," Rubio wrote on X.

Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, accused "regime elites" of using GAESA to "steal the island's few resources, diverting them for repression, anti-American subversion and spying instead of schools, power plants, and

basic necessities for the Cuban people." Bruno Rodríguez, Cuba's foreign affairs minister, rejected the sanctions, calling Rubio "dishonest and mendacious."

"Cuba has proven stronger, more capable, and more effective than he anticipated in the face of the ruthless aggression and collective punishment inflicted upon its people and their living conditions," he wrote on X. "What this individual is promoting from the world's greatest power is a crime."

Anyone that provides services to the targeted Cuban entities risks being sanctioned and cut off from the U.S. financial system.

"By designating specific entities, they're making it clear to foreign investors: 'If your business in Cuba touches any of these folks, you risk being banned,'" said Michael Bustamante, a professor and chair in Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami.

"For most of these companies, it's a bridge too far," he said of the impact of the new sanctions.

Almacenes Universales S.A., or AUSA, is among the entities sanctioned. As the government's main logistics and ware-

housing company, it holds up Cuba's export and import system and is the main logistics operator at the port of Mariel, west of Havana. It's also the main storage company used by the state, Cuba's private sector and foreign investor partners.

Last week, Cuba announced a series of economic reforms, including allowing the private sector to bypass the state when importing goods. But Bustamante said he doesn't believe that measure is operational yet.

If people or companies avoid doing business with the storage entities, he said, that could disrupt the flow of goods and lead to humanitarian consequences.

Also sanctioned was Rafin S.A., which Bustamante described as a "very opaque" company that he believes operates as the corporate financial arm within GAESA. He said it's not a bank but holds capital from the government and GAESA and may be a player in financial deals.

"That would also seemingly throw more cold water on the foreign investors that are already there," Bustamante said.

The third GAESA-related entity that

was sanctioned is Banco Financiero Internacional S.A., a commercial bank that Bustamante said serves as a key institution for foreign investors. "If you don't have a bank where you can go as a foreign investor, it makes your operations logistically quite difficult, to put it mildly."

Max Meizlish, a former U.S. Treasury sanctions enforcement officer, said the bank was targeted because it's "a key nexus" for GAESA-related funds: "This is significant."

Also sanctioned were Geominera S.A., a state-owned mining company, and Empresa Siderúrgica Jose Martí, which the U.S. described as Cuba's largest raw steel producer.

The final sanction was slapped against Annalie Lilliam Rueda Cardero, daughter-in-law of former President Raúl Castro.

The sanctions are the latest in a recent string that have targeted GAESA itself and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

"It's very, very hard to suss out what's going on here," Bustamante said. "Is this setting the table for the great sale of Cuba state assets to the highest bidder or the lowest bidder?...Is this part of the

recipe of a hostile takeover?"

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump keeps pressuring for a change in Cuba's political and economic model, accusing the island of representing a threat to the U.S. because of its ties to U.S. adversaries. The Cuban government has repeatedly denied it's a threat.

Meanwhile, Cuba unveiled economic reforms last week that Bustamante described as "potentially the most significant liberalization of the Cuban economy in 60 years," though he said questions and doubts remain.

On Tuesday, a U.S. State Department spokesperson said the reforms "are modest, long overdue and ultimately superficial smoke signals from the Cuban regime. This is part of the dictatorship's handbook: announce a cycle of supposed reforms to insinuate a desire for change, then quickly roll back any changes the moment the regime's total control is at all threatened."

"The U.S. administration is going to continue applying pressure on the regime until the regime is a different beast entirely," said Meizlish, a research fellow with the U.S.-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies.



A mother pushes a stroller past a damaged building covered with street artist paintings and a big city marketplace that was destroyed recently by Russian missiles in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Monday.

Afghan Taliban hold talks with EU on deportations

Sam McNeil and Abdul Qahar Afghan
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — A delegation from the Afghan Taliban met Tuesday with European Union staff in Brussels for closed-door talks that focused on diplomatic services and the "dignified returns" of Afghans to the isolated and war-ravaged nation, a Taliban official said.

Afghans make up one of the largest groups of migrants seeking asylum in the EU, but a growing number of governments in the 27-nation bloc want to speed up and increase deportations for those whose claims are rejected or who commit crimes in their host countries.

Abdul Qahar Balkhi, a spokesperson for the Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called the visit "historic," noting it was the first time a delegation from the Islamic Emirate held talks with the EU and EU nations in Brussels.

Balkhi, who led the delegation of five, said talks focused on "trust-building measures," the Taliban's diplomatic presence in the EU and a "dignified return process."

The meeting was held in an undisclosed location in the Belgian capital, where both the EU and NATO are headquartered.

The Commission said it co-chaired the meeting with Sweden and that representatives from 15 of the EU's 27 nations participated in discussions focused on easing deportations of criminals and security threats.

Afghan authorities have imposed draconian restrictions on rights, particularly for women and girls, since the Taliban seized power in the country in 2021 in the wake of the chaotic withdrawal of U.S.-led forces.

Rights groups said Tuesday's meeting undercuts the EU's human rights obligations and could endanger people in Europe and Afghanistan.

"Any engagement with the Taliban needs to prioritize protecting human rights and accountability — not deporting people to danger there," said Fereshta Abbasi, a researcher at Human Rights Watch. "EU countries are undermining their credibility by condemning Taliban abuses and pursuing accountability on one hand, while cooperating with the Taliban to forcibly return Afghans on the other."

With not a single EU nation recognizing the Taliban, the meeting in Brussels symbolizes a small crack in the group's diplomatic isolation since seizing power five years ago. Most nations around the world — including the entire

EU — cut off diplomatic relations at the time. The Taliban has been quietly expanding its access to diplomatic missions in Europe ever since.

Afghan activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai said Monday that she was "deeply shaken" that the EU was talking with the Taliban.

"Europe must not legitimise a regime responsible for one of the worst human rights crises in the world. Any engagement with the Taliban must begin and end with the rights of Afghan women and girls," she wrote on X.

Members of the Taliban delegation were issued visas after security screening with limited territorial validity, giving them 24 hours in Belgium and no access to other countries in the Schengen border-free travel zone.

Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot said Belgium complied with EU requests to grant the Taliban delegates visas.

"Making a meeting possible in the framework of our host-state policy does not amount to recognition, does not amount to legitimacy, and does not constitute an invitation by the Belgian government," Prévot said in a statement.

Since neither Belgium nor the EU officially recognizes the Taliban government, the meeting did not take place at official sites belonging to either.

A spokesperson for the European Commission said the meeting was a response to pressure from a clear majority of the 27 EU member states — 20 of whom signed a letter in October calling for stronger migration policies, including a ramp-up of deportations.

Spokesperson Markus Lammert said the Commission had been asked to coordinate "technical talks" on returns.

"This does not mean recognition," he said.

While it was the first meeting of the Taliban in the EU, the first meeting between the two sides was held in Afghanistan in January when the Commission sent a mission to Kabul. It also maintains staff there.

The October letter was drafted in part by Belgian Migration Minister Anneleen Van Bossuyt, who said then that "we can no longer afford a standstill. It is high time for a firm and joint approach, so that Europe can regain control over migration and security."

Bossuyt said that across the EU, only 2 percent of the 22,870 Afghans told to return had done so.

Ukraine says its forces hit a railway bridge to Crimea

Illia Novikov

The Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine said Tuesday its forces struck a railway bridge, a power plant and other key infrastructure targets in Crimea as Kyiv's military seeks to isolate the vital Russian-held peninsula in the latest stage of the 4-year-old war.

The drone attacks added to the woes on the Black Sea peninsula, where Russian authorities have had to suspend gasoline sales to civilians as Ukraine has intensified its recent campaign to disrupt supply lines and the electrical grid at the height of the summer tourist season.

The peninsula was seized by force and illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014. Ukraine's increasing use of long-range strikes has highlighted its ability to inflict painful damage on Russia and put added pressure on the Kremlin while Moscow's advances recently have ground to a near halt, Western analysts and officials say.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said last week that his forces are "isolating Crimea with drones."

"It looks like in the nearest

time, Crimea will become an island. This could lead to some very unexpected consequences for Russians," Fedorov said on a blogger's YouTube channel.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow had been warned that Ukraine aimed to disrupt energy supplies and Russia's tourism industry. He didn't say who gave the warning.

Ukrainian drones "coming in a huge stream" seek to "destabilize" Russian society, Putin said.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak told Putin on Tuesday that officials were considering suspending diesel fuel exports to protect the country's motorists, adding to ongoing bans on the export of jet fuel and gasoline, according to the Tass news agency. Novak also said scheduled maintenance at refineries had been postponed.

Ukraine also has hit targets near to the Kremlin in Moscow and in St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city this month.

Parts of Crimea are without power

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said drones struck an oil stor-

age depot at the Kerch thermal power plant in eastern Crimea, an electrical substation in the west, and a liquefied natural gas distribution station in Simferopol, the peninsula's second-biggest city.

In addition, Ukraine's Special Operations Forces said their units, working with what it said was the resistance movement in Crimea, destroyed a rail bridge over the North Crimean Canal near the village of Rozdolne.

The military described the span as a key logistics route used to supply Russian forces in southern Ukraine and said drones began hitting the structure late Sunday to Monday, collapsing part of it. A second strike early Tuesday targeted railway repair equipment deployed at the bridge and its remaining sections, it said on Telegram.

It was not possible to independently verify the Ukrainian claims, and Russian officials made no immediate comment.

Parts of Crimea were without power Tuesday, the area's energy supplier said. But it attributed the outages to "technical malfunctions" in local electrical grids and said it expected power to be restored within 24 hours.

The diamond-shaped peninsula is important because of its naval bases and beaches, as well as its strategic location in the Black Sea. Russia has spent centuries fighting for it.

Russian-appointed officials in Crimea have appeared reluctant to discuss attacks on the peninsula, but new security measures suggest deepening tension.

Its Ministry of Sport on Tuesday canceled all sporting events, competitions, and training sessions for children through Sept. 1. It described the measures as "aimed solely at ensuring the safety of our

children, athletes, and anyone who is involved with sport."

On Monday, Gov. Sergei Aksyonov said that for security reasons, all summer camps in the region had stopped accepting children and new bookings until Sept. 1.

On the front line in eastern Ukraine, where Russia's war of attrition has made slow and costly advances since Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has deployed cutting-edge drone technology to keep the enemy pinned down.

Meanwhile, its medium-range drones have also disrupted Russia's supply lines to the front, and its long-range strikes have increasingly damaged Russian oil facilities that provide vital revenue for the Kremlin's war effort.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry said Monday its forces have hit more than 800,000 enemy targets with drones since the beginning of the year and that 95 percent of drones used by the armed forces are domestically produced.

The successes have boosted Ukrainian confidence, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says sustained foreign support is locked in to help stop Russia.

Officials have shown renewed vigor in talking about the war.

Ukraine's U.N. Ambassador Andrii Melnyk said Monday that Kyiv remained ready for direct talks with Russia to achieve a "just and lasting peace" based on the U.N. Charter, but warned that Ukraine's willingness to compromise was not open-ended.

Melnyk said at a U.N. Security Council meeting that a ceasefire along the current front line already represented a major concession and urged Russia to withdraw from occupied Ukrainian territory.

WHATZIT?

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

SIDE SADDLE

SOLUTION UNDER: FURNITURE

THE GAZETTE

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SCOTT MAHONEY
Managing Editor

ANOTHER OPINION

How to enjoy America's 250th birthday

As the nation's 250th celebration approaches, many Americans don't feel much like celebrating. We empathize. Unlike at previous landmark anniversaries of the country's founding, we have a narcissistic president who wants to make the day more about him and his endless grievances than the enduring principles and ideals on which most Americans still agree.

The spectacle of a series of Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts a week ago on the South Lawn of the White House, replete with a military flyover, surely was a thrill to many partisans of President Donald Trump. For those of us who harbor the quaint notion of the White House grounds as a unifying place, the reaction not just to the event but to the divisive and inflammatory rhetoric spoken there was, frankly, one of sorrow.

Today, the president will conduct a rally on the mall in Washington, D.C., featuring himself (naturally) — a pivot he decided to make after a series of musical performers such as the Commodores, Young MC and Martina McBride opted not to appear once it became clear to them the celebration would be a nakedly partisan affair.

"We should have a giant MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN RALLY, for 250, instead of having overpriced singers, who nobody wants to hear, whose music is boring, and yet who do nothing but complain," Trump grumbled on Truth Social. Yes, there will be more flyovers.

And, just to reinforce the theme, Trump posted last week that he will hold yet another rally on the Fourth of July itself, again on the mall. That one, he wrote on Truth Social, will be "the most spectacular TRUMP RALLY of them all, a 'Tribute to America.'"

Which will it mostly be? A TRUMP RALLY? Or a Tribute to America? Surely the capitalization choice is a clue.

That Trump would make this event mainly about himself should come as a surprise to no one, of course.

For those old enough to do so, think back to the nation's bicentennial in 1976. Gerald Ford was the president, having attained the office via the dramatic resignation two years earlier of Richard M. Nixon. Ford was running for election to the office in his own right at the time, but his remarks on July 4 of that year didn't reference the coming November contest. Instead, he offered a well-told history lesson on the American Revolution and spoke to how America had evolved.

Never renowned as a speech giver, Ford rose to the occasion that day in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

"It is fitting," Ford said, "that we ask ourselves hard questions even on a glorious day like today. Are the institutions under which we live working the way they should? Are the foundations laid in 1776 and 1789 still strong enough and sound enough to resist the tremors of our times? Are our God-given rights secure, our hard-won liberties protected?"

If anything, these questions are more bracing today than they were back then, and consider that Ford was speaking during a tumultuous era in American history.

Just two years earlier a president had resigned in disgrace after what had been one of the nation's toughest constitutional challenges, putting immense pressure on Congress and the Supreme Court to respond to a rogue executive branch. The pall of Vietnam hung over the nation; the bicentennial came a little over a year after the fall of Saigon, which marked the end of an era every bit as divisive as the one we experience now.

But those of us who were around for America's 200th likely don't recall much about Ford's address. We may well remember the grand sight of the tall ships in New York Harbor. But, mostly, we'll recall the celebrations in our hometowns, be those cities, suburbs or small towns, and how our family, friends and neighbors came together as fellow Americans simply to have a good time. To have fun. To celebrate all that is good about our country.

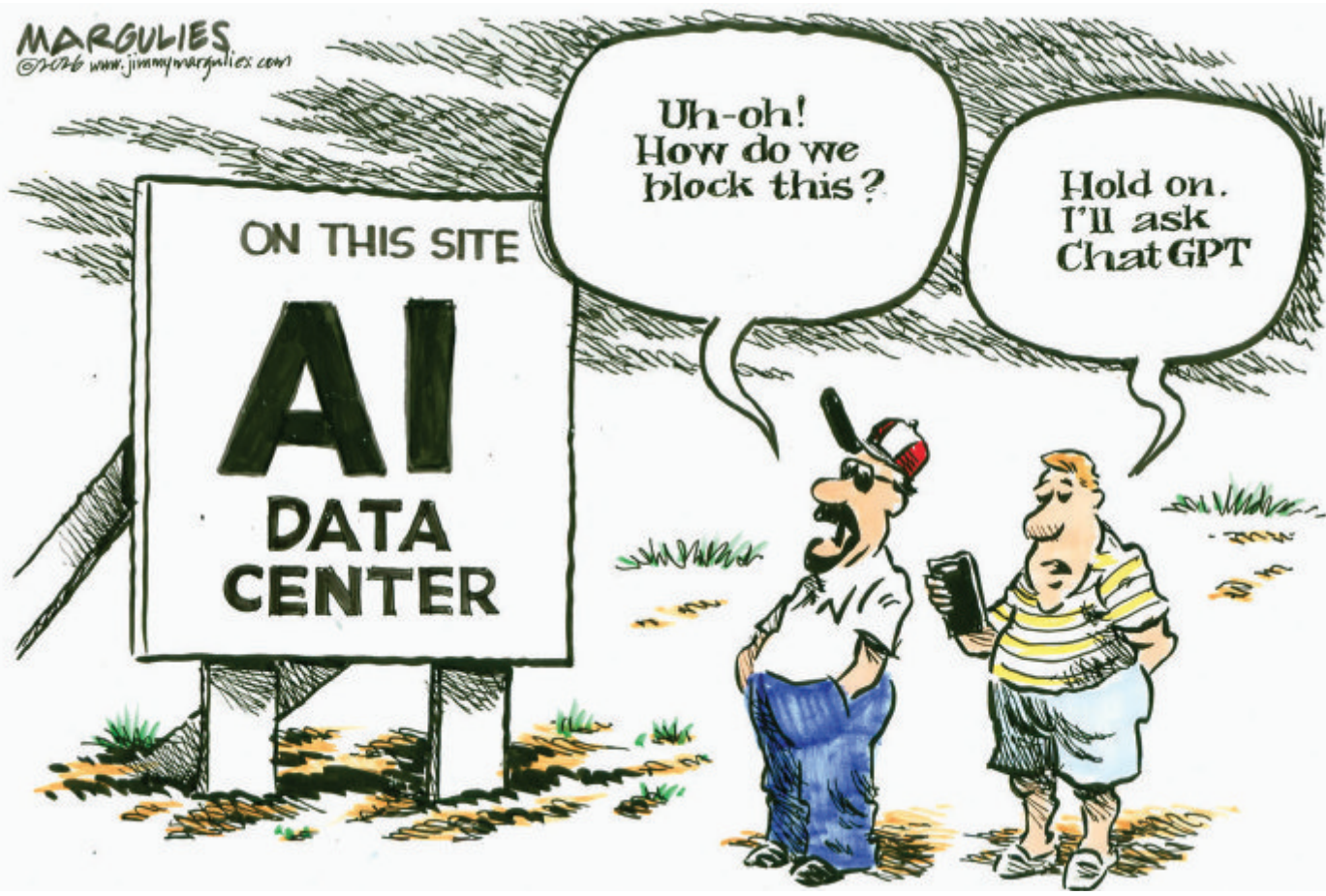
The nonstop attention-seeking of our current president threatens to intrude on the day. Don't let it happen.

Fly your American flag and be proud to do so. Enjoy the day with the people you love. Be hospitable to the people who think differently from you.

Eat hot dogs and burgers. Watch fireworks. Be grateful for the opportunities America affords to you and yours.

On the coming Fourth, while we surely will contemplate the important questions Ford asked, we mostly will enjoy the day along with those around us and will tune out unnecessary noise — 250 years after more than 50 brave signatories put their lives and fortunes at great risk in the cause of converting an idea into a nation, we will celebrate America, knowing more great chapters are to come.

— *The Chicago Tribune*



Iran has a different view of peace deal

President Trump and Vice President Vance spent most of last week trying to convince Americans the "Memo of Understanding" (MOU) with Iran is a good deal for the United States and world peace. That's not what Iran believes.

Hassan Khomeini, the grandson of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, has hailed the MOU as a major "victory" for Tehran. The "greater jihad" would now begin, he promised, according to a speech aired by Iranian state media last week. You read that correctly. The greater Jihad.

To some this might sound like the same propaganda we have heard from Iran since the start of the president's bombing campaign ("War is peace" wrote George Orwell in his novel "1984" in which he creates "Doublethink," the act of holding two completely contradictory beliefs in one's mind at the same time, and accepting both as true). In this case, the Iranians appear more believable than the administration.

Last Friday, a delegation headed by Vance that was supposed to go to Switzerland to sign the MOU, delayed the trip after reports that Iran had closed the Strait of Hormuz, blaming Israel's refusal to leave Lebanon and the ongoing presence of U.S. forces in the region. Conflicting statements about the status of the Strait compounded the confusion. The formula for Iran, which



CAL THOMAS

has worked for them in the past, is that they demand everything and the U.S. thinks it can appease those who want to destroy Israel and us by giving them more than we get.

Here's how they think as expressed in a statement read over maritime radio channels by the Revolutionary Guard Corps, now, apparently, put on hold, at least temporarily:

"Since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, the complete lifting of the naval blockade, and the withdrawal of American terrorist forces from the Persian Gulf and the region are among the main conditions of the agreement between Iran and the United States, the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until these conditions are met. All ships are requested, for the sake of their security and safety, not to approach the Strait of Hormuz. Any vessel that defies this directive will be targeted."

Trump and Vance have said Iran will get nothing from the MOU or any subsequent peace until they meet our conditions. If the Strait is closed again, gas prices will go back up and stocks will

go back down. And the midterms would again look problematic for Republicans, not that Democrats could do any better.

Writing last week on Truth Social before the latest developments, the president again displayed his gift of overstatement and name calling: "These fools, who think I haven't been tough enough on Iran, when the Stock Market just Hit A RECORD HIGH, and Oil prices are 'tumbling' down, are either jealous, bad people, or stupid."

Without the deal, he wrote, "the alternative would be a world-wide depression." At a Wednesday news conference the president, noting a Wall Street Journal editorial, seemed to admit that the Iranians had him over a barrel — of oil. If he had fought on, he said, the market "would go down at levels that nobody ever saw before, maybe except for 1929. ... So rather than possibly going into a depression, rather than having your favorite president be Herbert Hoover, he was always the one I didn't want to be."

Once again, it's all about him and not the greater good.

What to do now? The president has said repeatedly that if Iran refuses to live up to the MOU, he could start bombing again. If previous bombing didn't work, what will more bombing achieve?

What a mess.

Readers may email Cal Thomas at caeditors@tribpub.com.

The farm crisis demands action

Something is breaking in farm country, and the warning signs are growing harder to ignore.

The clearest indicator arrived this spring, when farm bankruptcies reached their highest level in six years. For many Americans, it was just another sad statistic. In rural communities, it was something far more ominous.

Risk and uncertainty have always been involved in farming. Weak prices, bad weather and rising costs come with the territory, and farmers can weather those setbacks. What makes this moment different is that several challenges, both old and new, are hitting at once, resulting in a squeeze that leaves few paths to recover when something goes wrong.

The current predicament has been years in the making. During COVID, commodity prices surged. But when the pandemic boom ended, so did the gains. Today, prices for major crops are down as much as 40 percent from their recent highs. At the same time, President Donald Trump's tariff battles — especially with China, Canada and Mexico — continue to upend key export markets, shrinking the number of buyers for American crops.

Some problems are newer. The war in Iran has driven up the price of fuel, fertilizer and other farm costs. Meanwhile, immigration enforcement has shrunk the population of undocumented immigrants, who are sometimes the only workers willing to fill agricultural jobs.

This cumulative burden is pushing some producers into insolvency.

One clear sign is the rising size and dollar volumes of operating loans, the credit that farmers use to pay for essentials such as seed, fertilizer and fuel. As production costs have risen, many farmers have had to borrow more heavily. Higher interest rates have made that debt increasingly expensive to repay.

In Minnesota, the nation's leading state for farm bankruptcies during the first quarter of 2026, there were nearly 700 requests for farmer-lender mediation in the first four months of the fiscal year; that's a big jump from the 524 total



ADAM MINTER

requests seen in 2025.

Those requests suggest the farm crisis runs deeper than bankruptcy numbers alone indicate, and the strain is not confined to farmers themselves.

Agriculture is the economic foundation on which community banks, equipment dealers, retailers and other businesses often depend. Farm distress sets off a domino effect, turning a farm problem into a Main Street problem.

In a recent survey of community banking presidents and CEOs, nearly half said that financial conditions had deteriorated compared with 2025. Farms and lenders aren't the only ones feeling the squeeze. In Minnesota, it's starting to show up in small-town business districts, as well.

Last year, Thom Petersen, the state's agriculture commissioner, noticed a troubling development: Several farm implement dealers were closing. "That was a real telltale sign that farmers weren't buying equipment," Petersen told me from his farm in Pine City. Instead, farmers are opting to repair what they have. "When you see that happening, it's a real concern."

The cutbacks don't stop there. Petersen says that farmers are "dialing back," even reducing the amount of fertilizer they use. This pain echoes from small businesses to the major corporations that supply them. Over the last two years, for example, major farm equipment manufacturers, including the iconic Deere & Co., have cut thousands of workers. Weak demand is among the cited reasons.

Older residents of farm country have seen this movie before. High interest rates and weak prices in the 1980s helped create the worst farm financial crisis since the Great Depression. Between 1980 and 1988, hundreds of

thousands of farmers went through bankruptcy, foreclosure and restructuring.

Downstream, businesses suffered and closed, rural populations shrank, and civic institutions — like schools — contracted or shut down. The damage was generational, and many rural communities still haven't recovered.

Fortunately, today's crisis hasn't yet reached that scale. Land values remain strong, and farm support programs have kept many farmers afloat.

But those programs are not enough. Many resources, including those championed by the Trump administration, were designed to bridge difficult periods, not fix them. And as the current crisis drags on, farmers are forced to contemplate what happens if the support runs out. "I had a farmer tell me today that his bridge payment was in his account for 15 minutes," recalled Petersen, when asked how he's seeing the crisis play out.

Recent surveys of American farmers across the U.S. show pessimism about the future and economic anxiety about the present. Meanwhile, many of the tools used to arrest past crises — new trade agreements that expand markets, for example — are politically unrealistic in today's Washington.

But Congress still has the power to provide farm country with something it really needs: certainty. To do so, lawmakers should finally pass the long-delayed Farm Bill (the last version expired in 2023), the massive, once-every-five-years legislation that authorizes federal farm programs. Doing so would give farmers and rural communities an idea of what kind of support they can count on in the years ahead.

Without it, farmers are left to navigate one of the toughest periods in years, unsure of what support, if any, they can count on. For an industry built on long-term planning, that uncertainty is a burden of its own.

Adam Minter is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering the business of sports. He is the author, most recently, of "Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale."

LETTERS GUIDELINES

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Ideas to break up long road trips

Metro Creative

Few getaways can feel as liberating as taking to the open road. Road trips have long held a spot in travel lovers' hearts, and many a book and film have helped to romanticize the idea of getting behind the wheel and heading off for parts unknown.

As scenic as the open road can be, it's easy to get a little antsy when taking long trips in a car. Having some built-in breaks to get out of the car and even enjoy a little entertainment along the way can help to make road trips more enjoyable.

- **Take in a ballgame.** When traveling in summertime, a mid-trip stop to a minor league ballpark can provide a relaxing respite from the road. A summer afternoon or evening taking in America's pastime provides an affordable and family-friendly activity. Some in-game strolls around the ballpark offer a chance for travelers to stretch their legs before returning to their seats to enjoy some refreshments and the action on the field. Many minor league stadiums are located in cities with affordable lodging options, making this an ideal overnight pitstop option in the midst of a long trip.

- **Visit a historical site.** There's not only adventure on the open road, but lots of history as well. History buffs can find a wealth of historical sites to visit regardless of which direction they're heading. Many historical sites offer informative and kid-friendly tours, making a mid-trip visit to a historical site a great way to break up a long road trip.

- **Take to the water.** Whether you devote a day to visiting a beach or water park along the way to your ultimate destination, some water-based fun can be just what weary travelers need to recharge their batteries. A beach day or a day at a water park might be especially fun for travelers who hit the road before the sun came up. Simply drive until lunchtime and then take to the water for some well-earned fun and relaxation.

- **Get out in nature.** The natural beauty travelers encounter along a scenic road trip need not be viewed exclusively through a car window or windshield. A break devoted to spending time in nature can revive travelers' spirits and get



Getting out of the car to enjoy a leisurely hike can be a great way for travelers to stretch their legs and enjoy some fresh air on a long road trip.

them some much-needed time in the fresh air. When planning a trip, travelers can identify hiking trails or other natural attractions they can experience firsthand. A roadside campground can be an ideal place to make some great memories, while an adventure in nature like kayaking, canoeing or a

simple hike can make for a great way for travelers to fully immerse themselves in the regions they're driving through.

There's no shortage of options for travelers to get out of the car and enjoy a little entertainment when taking long road trips.

Shining light on sunscreen use



Metro Creative

The sun is vital for life on Earth. But the sun also poses a threat to human beings, particularly when they don't prioritize sun protection. Ultraviolet rays of the sun can cause damage to the skin, eyes and more, leading to premature aging, sunburn and even cancer.

Wearing sunglasses while in the sun and routinely applying sunscreen are some simple ways people can protect themselves from sun damage. Johns Hopkins Medicine says proper sunscreen use helps prevent most of the poor effects of sun exposure. Sunscreen needs to become a part of one's daily routine rather than just something to apply before a visit to the beach. The American Academy of Dermatology Association offers these tips from board-certified dermatologists regarding the proper use of sunscreen.

- **Use SPF 30 or higher.** Choose a sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, and look for one that is water-resistant and provides broad-spectrum coverage, which handles UVA and UVB rays.

- **Try tinted iron oxide.** Sunscreens that are tinted with iron oxide offer better protection for the skin against the development of dark spots. Iron oxide protects the skin from the sun's visible light.

- **Apply ahead of time.** It takes approximately 15 minutes for the skin to absorb sunscreen and provide protection. Therefore, it's best to apply it well before heading outdoors.

- **Don't be stingy.** It's important to use enough sunscreen. Most adults need about one ounce, at a minimum, of sunscreen. That's about enough to fill a shot glass. This will help fully cover skin that is not protected

by clothing. When applying sunscreen to the face, at least one teaspoon is needed. Always rub sunscreen thoroughly into the skin to ensure it is absorbed and evenly distributed.

- **Recognize order doesn't matter.** As long as the sunscreen is at least SPF 30, water-resistant and broad-spectrum, the order it is applied does not matter. It can be applied before or after other skin care products and makeup. It's best for a person to figure out what works for their routine.

- **Know that most ingredients work.** Sunscreens are often grouped into two categories: chemical and mineral. Chemical sunscreens use ingredients like octisalate or homosalate to work, while mineral sunscreens use either zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. Both chemical and mineral sunscreens are effective, but people with sensitive skin may want to go with mineral sunscreens, which often leave a noticeable white cast on the skin.

- **Reapply frequently.** It's important to reapply sunscreen every two hours, and immediately after swimming or sweating. People who get sunburned often use too little sunscreen or didn't reapply the product enough.

- **Check the expiration date.** Sunscreen expires and can become ineffective. If the sunscreen has been sitting around for awhile, it's probably best to toss it and buy a new bottle.

Skin is exposed to harmful UV rays every time a person goes outside - even on cloudy days and in winter. It is essential to make sunscreen application part of a daily wellness routine.



Traumatic experiences like being involved in a car accident can cause PTSD in some people.

The basics of PTSD

Metro Creative

Being involved in a traumatic event can be a harrowing experience. Such situations can elicit a range of reactions, some of which may linger for quite some time. When that occurs, people may be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

What is PTSD?

The American Psychiatric Association characterizes PTSD as a psychiatric condition that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event or series of such events, which are viewed by the individual as emotionally or physically harmful or life-threatening. The APA notes that symptoms must last for more than a month and cause significant distress or problems with a person's ability to function each day in order to be diagnosed as PTSD.

Can anyone develop PTSD after a traumatic event?

Yes. The APA notes PTSD is not exclusive to any particular ethnicity, nationality, culture, or age group. However, the APA also points out that

most individuals who experience traumatic events do not go on to develop PTSD.

What are the symptoms of PTSD?

The National Institutes of Mental Health reports that symptoms of PTSD are broken down into four categories:

- **Re-experiencing symptoms:** Flashbacks in which the event is relived, including its physical symptoms; recurring memories or dreams related to the event; distressing thoughts; and physical signs of stress are considered re-experiencing symptoms.

- **Avoidance symptoms:** These symptoms may cause people to change their routines, such as avoiding being in a car after a traffic accident. Avoidance symptoms include staying away from places, events or objects that remind individuals of their traumatic experience. Symptoms also may involve avoiding thoughts or feelings related to the event.

- **Arousal and reactivity symptoms:** The NIMH notes these symptoms are often constant and can lead to feelings of stress and anger that interfere with daily activi-

ties like sleeping, eating or concentrating. Being easily startled; feeling tense or on edge; irritability and angry or aggressive outbursts; and engaging in risky, reckless or destructive behaviors are some examples of arousal and reactivity symptoms.

- **Cognition and mood symptoms:** These symptoms can cause people to feel detached from loved ones. People experiencing cognition and mood symptoms may have negative thoughts about themselves or the world; ongoing negative emotions, including fear, guilt or shame; feelings of social isolation; and difficulty feeling positive emotions like happiness.

Can PTSD be treated?

Yes. The APA lists cognitive behavioral therapy and medication among the options doctors may consider to help people overcome their PTSD. More information about PTSD treatment can be found at psychiatry.org.

PTSD does not affect most people who experience a traumatic event. But the APA urges individuals who develop PTSD to recognize they are not to blame and that treatment is available and effective.

Americans are feeling pain of inflation

Augusta Saraiva and Maya Prakash
Bloomberg News

Whether they work in restaurants, offices or warehouses, Americans have seen their paycheck eaten up by a surge in everyday costs recently. Inflation has outstripped wage growth in key private-sector industries for two straight months, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The sharp drop in buying power for employees in sectors ranging from healthcare to finance and retail was largely the result of a surge in energy prices driven by the Iran war, but the dynamic is likely to stick even as gas-

oline gets cheaper. Gas prices, which have dropped since the U.S. and Iran agreed to an interim peace deal, are still almost \$1 a gallon higher on average than they were before the conflict started at the end of February, based on American Automobile Association data. But war-driven inflation in other parts of the economy, like food and transportation, has yet to fully materialize. And with wage growth already slowing, that means many households probably will continue to tap into savings and take on debt to support spending, even after inflation peaks. "I don't think it's going to be a

great year for real disposable income growth," said Stephen Stanley, chief U.S. economist at Santander U.S. Capital Markets LLC. "And not everybody has the luxury of being able to maintain their spending patterns without getting into trouble." The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure probably accelerated in May on a monthly and annual basis. Economists in a Bloomberg survey anticipate a 3.4 percent increase in the personal consumption expenditures price index excluding energy and food, which would mark the fastest year-over-year pace since October 2023.

Meanwhile, the government report set to be published Thursday probably will also show that consumers continued powering ahead, even after three months of declines in real disposable income. Credit-card usage has been on the rise despite high interest rates, and the saving rate is currently at an almost four-year low. Higher-than-usual tax refunds thanks to President Donald Trump's signature tax legislation have provided a temporary cushion. At the 2026 Morgan Stanley U.S. Financials Conference in New York City this month, Marianne Lake, who leads JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s consumer and

community bank, said she's monitoring the small but increasing number of people for whom wage growth isn't keeping pace with price increases. The recent drop in real wages at the national level was largely the result of the energy shock and the consumer continues to be surprisingly resilient, Lake said. But there are fewer buffers to future shocks, she added. "It's possible that, if inflation were to be higher for longer, that this sort of trend of wages keeping up with inflation could be at some risk," she said. Even before inflation picked up recently, wage growth had slowed from the highs of a few years ago.

Big Tech puts big drag on Wall Street

Damian J. Troise and Alex Veiga
The Associated Press



AP

Wall Street gave up more of its recent gains Tuesday after a sell-off in big technology stocks spread from Asia back to the U.S. over worries about potentially higher interest rates by the end of the year. The S&P fell 1.4 percent. The benchmark index is coming off 11 weekly gains out of the last 12, led largely by technology stocks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which is less influenced by tech stocks, gave up an early gain and closed just 0.1 percent lower. The Nasdaq composite fell 2.2 percent. Markets throughout Asia fell. South Korea's Kospi index, a big winner in the AI boom, sank 10 percent. Stocks in Europe also fell. The selling largely targeted companies that have seen their values surge amid the frenzy over artificial intelligence

Options trader Anthony Spina works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on June 16. technology. Their pricey stock values give them more influence over the broader market's direction. On Tuesday, more stocks gained ground within the S&P 500 than fell, but tech companies overpowered gains elsewhere. Micron Technology slumped 13.2 percent and Nvidia fell

money through a bond offering, partly to fund AI development. The growing likelihood of interest rate hikes later this year has helped deflate the massive run-up in AI-related stocks in recent days as traders worry that the higher rates could hamper economic growth. Those Big Tech gains have been significant, sending major indexes on record-setting runs throughout 2026. Within the S&P 500, the tech sector alone is up 25.5 percent just over the last three months and 16.6 percent for the year. In Asia, South Korea's Kospi has nearly doubled so far in 2026, even after Tuesday's plunge. Analysts have been warning that high-flying technology stocks could be due for a downturn. "Viewed through this lens, a period of consolidation is reasonable, in our view, after such a sharp move higher," wrote

Brock Weimer, investment strategy analyst at Edward Jones, in a research note. Many technology companies have been spending heavily on AI technology. The potential for higher interest rates can stifle future spending and hurt prices for investments. The Federal Reserve has signaled that it could raise interest rates at least once before the end of the year. Wall Street sees an 85 percent chance that the central bank will raise its benchmark interest rate this year, according to data from CME Group. That's compared to 60 percent a week earlier. The yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 4.50 percent from 4.51 percent late Monday. The yield on the 2-year Treasury fell to 4.20 percent from 4.24 percent late Monday. Bond yields remain high, though, amid worries about inflation. Inflation has been heating up

throughout the year. The impact from tariffs helped halt and reverse what had been an easing of inflation growth. The U.S. war with Iran quickly pushed energy prices higher, including gas prices. Higher energy costs have also made shipping more expensive for a wide range of goods, and that has been weighing on businesses and households. A report due Thursday with an inflation measure that is preferred by the Fed is expected to show that inflation rose to 4.1 percent, in May. Oil prices have eased amid negotiations between the U.S. and Iran to end their war. The price for a barrel of U.S. crude for August delivery fell 0.9 percent to settle at \$73.21. The September delivery price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 0.9 percent to settle at \$76.80.

Senate passes bill to ease nation's housing crunch

Michael Casey and Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed a bipartisan housing bill on Monday that aims to reduce federal regulations and expand local control, one of the most sweeping efforts in recent decades to increase supply and bring down prices. The bill, which passed 85-5 and now heads to the House, has been the focus of intense negotiations in recent weeks as lawmakers in both parties try to address housing costs in an election year. The final version of the legislation bans corporate investors from buying single-family homes but doesn't include a Senate provision that would have required investors to sell newly constructed homes within seven years. The measure was the result of years of work to "lower costs, expand housing supply, cut red tape, protect taxpayers and help more Americans achieve the dream of homeownership," said Senate Banking Committee Chairman Tim Scott, R-S.C., who worked with Democrats to get the bill passed. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, the top Democrat on the banking panel, said it is the most significant housing bill to pass Congress since 1990, when the average home in America was sold for \$150,000. Now it costs more than \$500,000, she said. The bill "acknowledges that the federal government has a role to play in lowering housing prices," Warren told The Associated Press. "For the first time ever, private equity will be blocked from buying into single-family homes and trying to turn housing into one more Wall Street investment."

Senate passage of the bill shapes up as a rare bipartisan legislative achievement when much of Republicans' agenda has stalled. The House is expected to give final approval later this week and send the bill to President Donald Trump, who has signaled his support. Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters of California, who helped negotiate the legislation, said it was a "huge step toward finally addressing the affordable housing and homelessness crises in this country." Republicans and Democrats have embraced the bill as a way to show they are addressing the nation's affordability crisis, driven in part by rising home prices due to a shortage of affordable housing. The U.S. housing market has been in a slump dating back to 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes have been hovering close to a 4-million annual pace going back to 2023 — well short of the 5.2-million annual pace that's historically been the norm. Sales slowed last year to a 30-year low and have remained sluggish so far this year, declining in January and February versus a year earlier. The Economic Report of the President in April found a shortage of 10 million homes, while a report this month from the Joint Center For Housing Studies at Harvard University found sales of existing homes were at three-decade lows and inventories were rising due to high home buying costs. "Cost burdens for both renters and owners continue to climb, while assistance remains profoundly underfunded," the report said.

U.S. funds 10 nuclear plants

Jennifer Mcdermott and Matthew Daly
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is providing \$17.5 billion to speed the development of 10 new large nuclear reactors to meet the skyrocketing power demand from massive data centers. Energy Secretary Chris Wright cited "tremendous interest" among developers of data centers that would buy the power, as well as utilities and energy companies. The nuclear plants could begin construction by 2030 and become operational in the mid-2030s, Wright and other officials said Tuesday. "This is the start," Wright said on a call with reporters. "We're going to move with the players that are ready to stand up and move quickly. Once that supply chain is up and running, do we think there will be dozens of these built going forward? I'd be very surprised if there were not." Most U.S. nuclear plants were built between 1970

and 1990. Only two new large reactors have been built from scratch in the United States in recent decades. Those two reactors, at Georgia Power Co.'s Plant Vogtle, were completed years late and billions of dollars over budget. The 10 new reactors will use the same design, Westinghouse's AP1000. Wright said the Plant Vogtle project struggled because of bad planning, supply chain problems and the COVID-19 pandemic. But, he said, the reactor design is "robust and sound." "By building in volume and at multiple locations, we think we will create and stand up a large supply chain and build a lot of construction expertise," Wright said. "We expect the timing and cost of these plants to well outperform what was done on Vogtle." Seven utilities and energy companies signed letters of intent that identified sites, the Energy Department said. The agency plans to pick five, which would host two reactors at each site. The federal financ-

ing would be used to purchase nuclear components with long lead times, and are not construction loans. The department declined to name the utilities involved or the states they are in, calling it premature until the selections are made. It did not give a timeline for making those selections. President Donald Trump set a goal of quadrupling domestic production of nuclear power within the next 25 years, and he has signed executive orders to speed development. The administration is working to advance new nuclear technologies, such as small modular nuclear reactors. Dan Sumner, president and chief executive officer of Westinghouse, said industrialized nuclear power needs to be built at fleet scale, in order for the United States to lead in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the industries that will define the next century.

The Market In Review

Local Stocks						
NAME	DIV	YIELD	P/E	CLOS	CHG	YTD
AMD	...	...	173	519.85	-31.78	+305.69
AMD Holding N.V.	12.67	+0.7%	55	1778.46	-150.79	+708.60
AT & T Inc.	1.11	+4.9%	8	22.81	+7.1	-2.03
AbbVie Inc.	6.92	+2.9%	116	234.76	+4.75	+6.27
Abbott Laboratories	2.52	+2.8%	25	90.53	+2.70	-34.76
Accenture PLC	6.52	+5.1%	10	127.01	+2.18	-141.29
Adobe	...	...	11	197.43	+2.53	-152.56
Alphabet A	0.88	+0.3%	26	346.13	-3.55	+33.09
Alphabet C	0.88	+0.3%	26	346.08	-2.70	+32.28
Amazon	...	...	28	234.11	+1.32	+3.29
American Express Co.	3.80	+1.1%	21	337.78	-0.29	-32.17
Apple	1.08	+0.4%	36	294.20	-2.71	+22.44
Avient Corp.	1.10	+3.1%	21	35.77	-1.51	+4.53
Bank of America Corp.	1.12	+1.9%	14	57.91	+5.4	+2.91
Berkshire Hathaway Inc.	...	...	15	492.81	+4.12	-9.84
Caterpillar Inc.	6.52	+0.7%	49	984.24	-38.04	+411.37
Chevron Corp.	7.12	+4.0%	30	175.98	+9.2	+23.57
Cisco Systems Inc.	1.68	+1.4%	40	121.15	-0.38	+44.12
Coca-Cola Consolidated Ir	1.00	+0.5%	25	183.01	+4.1	+29.75
Costco Wholesale Corp.	5.88	+0.6%	48	957.68	+6.33	+94.98
Darden Restaurants Inc.	6.00	+2.8%	22	210.59	-1.41	+26.57
Diebold Nixdorf Inc.	...	...	28	62.69	-0.19	+14.80
Dine Brands Global Inc.	0.76	+2.3%	33	33.28	-0.10	+1.14
Eli Lilly and Company	6.92	+0.6%	39	1107.08	+5.00	+32.40
Emerson Electric Co.	2.22	+1.6%	33	143.14	-7.07	+10.42
Exxon Mobil Corp.	4.12	+2.9%	24	139.73	+1.26	+19.39
Fifth Third Bancorp	1.60	+2.9%	18	54.67	+1.06	+7.86
FirstEnergy Corp.	1.86	+3.9%	26	47.45	+6.9	+2.68
GE Aerospace	0.60	+4.3%	14	14.00	-0.11	+8.8
Goldman Sachs Group Inc	18.00	+1.6%	20	1094.44	-11.93	+215.44
Homedepot Inc., The	9.32	+2.9%	23	324.45	-2.17	-19.65
Honeywell International Inc	4.76	+2.1%	35	222.37	-5.74	...
Huntington Bancshares In	0.62	+3.6%	13	17.40	+3.5	+0.5
Intl Business Machines Cc	6.78	+2.6%	23	264.94	+12.72	-31.27
Intuit Inc.	4.80	+1.9%	16	258.05	+2.8	+04.37
Inventiv Surgical Inc.	...	...	49	403.18	+2.3	-163.18
J.M. Smucker Co.	4.40	+4.0%	...	110.47	+3.28	+12.66
JPMorgan Chase & Co.	6.00	+1.8%	16	334.14	+2.66	+11.92
Johnson & Johnson	5.36	+2.2%	28	239.08	+7.79	+32.13
Keycorp	0.82	+3.6%	14	23.02	+1.9	+2.38
Linde plc	6.40	+1.2%	34	512.26	-4.45	+85.87
Lockheed Martin Corp.	13.80	+2.7%	24	503.67	+10.07	+20.00
Lowe's Companies Inc.	5.00	+2.3%	18	213.54	-0.86	-27.62
Lumen Technologies Inc.	...	...	7.84	-0.25	+0.7	...
Mastercard Inc.	3.48	+0.7%	28	488.07	+3.98	-82.81
McDonald's Corp.	7.44	+2.7%	22	271.66	+1.56	-33.97
Merck & Co. Inc.	3.40	+2.8%	34	119.60	+4.12	+14.34
Meta Platforms Inc.	2.10	+0.4%	20	562.20	-1.65	-97.89
Microsoft Corp.	3.64	+1.0%	22	373.94	+6.60	+109.68
Morgan Stanley	4.00	+1.8%	20	226.03	-1.06	+48.50
NISOURCE Inc.	1.20	+2.5%	24	47.26	+0.37	+5.50
NVIDIA Corp.	1.00	+0.5%	31	200.04	-8.61	+13.50
Netflix Inc.	...	...	24	72.82	-0.06	-20.94
Nordson Corp.	3.28	+1.1%	31	291.07	-3.99	+50.64
Northrop Grumman Corp.	6.88	+1.9%	16	513.22	+5.89	-56.99
Oracle Corp.	2.00	+1.2%	30	165.16	-9.91	-29.75
PRC Financial Services Gr	6.80	+2.8%	14	238.67	+3.96	+29.94
PalmTrn Technologies Inc.	...	...	131	116.70	-2.80	-61.05
Parker-Hannifin Corp.	8.00	+0.8%	35	947.58	-14.56	+68.62
PepsiCo	5.92	+4.2%	22	142.05	+1.34	-1.47
Philip Morris Internat. Inc.	5.88	+3.3%	25	178.69	+5.52	+18.29
Procter & Gamble Co., The	4.35	+2.9%	22	150.86	+3.18	+7.55
QUALCOMM Inc.	3.68	+1.8%	22	204.13	-17.77	+33.08
RPM International Inc.	2.16	+2.0%	20	106.04	-1.52	+2.04
RTX Corp.	2.92	+1.6%	35	186.39	+4.56	+2.99
Royal Bank of Canada	7.04	+2.5%	13	202.93	+4.19	+32.44
Salesforce Inc.	1.76	+1.1%	18	153.42	-3.30	-111.49
Sherrill-Williams Co.	3.20	+1.0%	31	322.90	+6.00	-1.13
Six Flags Entertainment C	...	...	23.15	+4.4	+7.81	...
T-Mobile	4.08	+2.2%	20	184.57	+5.41	-18.47
Tesla Inc.	...	...	390	381.61	-23.44	-68.11
Texas Instruments	5.68	+1.9%	52	304.36	-27.92	+130.92
United Parcel Service Inc.	6.56	+2.6%	17	105.83	-1.41	+6.64
UnitedHealth Group Inc.	9.28	+2.3%	31	409.25	+2.57	+79.14
VISA Inc.	2.68	+0.8%	29	328.48	+1.88	-22.23
Verizon Communications I	2.83	+6.1%	11	46.73	+1.37	+6.00
Walmart	0.99	+0.8%	42	119.42	+2.24	+8.01
Walt Disney Co., The	1.50	+1.4%	17	103.53	+1.08	-10.24
Wells Fargo & Co.	1.80	+2.1%	13	84.13	+2.9	-9.07
Wendy's	0.56	+9.0%	8	6.26	+0.8	-2.08

Stock Market Indexes

INDEX	CHANGE	% CHG
Dow Jones Industrials	-45.87	-0.09%
Nasdaq Composite	-52.00	-1.24%
S&P 500	-107.33	-1.44%

Stocks Recap

INDEX	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	CHG	% CHG	WK	MO	QTR	YTD
DOW	51,972.58	51,301.77	51,666.84	-45.87	-0.09%	▲	▲	▲	+7.90%
DOW TR	21,926.38	21,600.40	21,631.52	-164.31	-0.75%	▲	▲	▲	+24.63%
DOW IRI	1,140.41	1,122.02	1,136.33	+49.45	+0.84%	▲	▲	▲	+6.41%
NASDAQ	25,882.57	25,513.28	25,587.04	-97.56	-2.2%	▼	▼	▼	+10.80%
NASDAQ COMP	7,425.17	7,347.60	7,365.46	-107.33	-1.44%	▼	▼	▼	+7.30%
S&P 500	3,748.18	3,740.24	3,735.24	-39.45	-1.04%	▼	▼	▼	+13.80%
DOW WTR	7,675.18	7,289.76	7,319.52	-101.33	-1.33%	▼	▼	▼	+19.80%
New High	34	56	2,995.66	2,991.03	-39.92	0.96%	▲	▲	+19.80%
New Lows	19	111	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Interest Rates

TREASURIES	LAST	PVS	CHG	WK	MO	QTR	AGO
3-month Tbill	3.79	3.79	0.00	▲	▲	▲	3.68
6-month Tbill	3.95	3.97	-0.02	▲	▲	▲	3.59
1-year Tbill	4.01	4.04	-0.03	▲	▲	▲	3.50
2-year T-note	4.20	4.23	-0.03	▲	▲	▲	3.51
5-year T-note	4.27	4.29	-0.02	▲	▲	▲	3.70
10-year T-note	4.50	4.51	-0.01	▲	▲	▲	4.14
Treasury note	4.95	4.94	0.00	▲	▲	▲	4.80

CONSUMER RATES

	NAT'L AVG	WK	6MO	1YR	
72 month new car loan	6.17	-	6.17	6.10	6.61
Money Market Account	0.43	▲	0.43	0.40	0.44
1 year cd	1.94	▲	1.94	1.89	1.99
\$30K Home equity loan	7.08	▲	7.65	7.98	8.62
30 year fixed mortgage	6.57	▲	6.56	6.26	6.87
15 year fixed mortgage	5.96	▲	5.97	5.67	6.11

Commodities

	CLOSE	PVS	CHG	%YTD
FUELS				
Crude Oil (bbl)	73.21	73.86	-0.65	+27.5
Heating Oil (gal)	3.09	3.19	-0.10	+49.0
Natural Gas (mm btu)	3.15	3.25	-0.10	+14.6
Unsweet Gas (gal)	2.96	2.99	-0.03	+72.5
METALS				
Aluminum (ton)	3,488.75	3,610.75	-122.00	+20.0
Copper (lb)	6.14	6.36	-0.22	+9.1
Gold (oz)	4,129.80	4,161.90	-32.00	+4.5
Platinum (oz)	1,689.90	1,670.30	+19.60	-18.4
Silver (oz)	62.02	65.53	-3.51	+11.6
AGRICULTURE				
Lumber (1,000 bd ft)	624.50	636.00	-11.50	-5.74
Cattle (lb)	2.55	2.56	-0.01	+10.2
Coffee (lb)	2.77	2.75	+0.02	-16.6
Corn (bu)	4.10	4.12	-0.02	-6.9
Cotton (lb)	75.21	76.05	-0.84	+13.9
Orange Juice (lb)	1.55	1.58	-0.03	-28.0
Soybeans (bu)	11.17	11.16	+0.01	+8.4
Wheat (bu)	5.87	5.97	-0.10	+15.7

Mutual Funds

FAMILY	FUND	OTL ASSET	NAV	CHG	YTD	1YR	5YR
American Funds	AmronBIA	287,605B	40.78	-1.4	+9.4	+23.4	+9.7
	CptMktGrnC	159,528B	82.12	-0.5	+15.6	+33.0	+11.4
	CplncBktrA	127,978B	81.68	+0.4	+7.5	+17.8	+8.6
	FdmItrvSA	192,575B	103.11	-5.			

Obituaries & Memoriams

Avanell M. Sturgill

Avanell M. Sturgill, born Avanell M. Van Gilder on October 25, 1937 in Czar, West Virginia, passed away Sunday, June 21, 2026 at Wooster Community Hospital.



(Tim) Whitenack of Polk, Nelda Sturgill of Indianapolis, Indiana, Mark Sturgill (Teresa) of Hamilton, Ohio, and Paul (Tonia) Sturgill of West Salem. She is also remembered by her twelve grandchildren; twenty-seven great-grandchildren; and nine great-great-grandchildren, whose lives have been shaped by her warmth and guidance. Avanell is survived by her brothers, Margel (Rosalia) Van Gilder of Spencer, Ohio and Roger (Pat) Van Gilder of Alabama; and a daughter-in-law, Jennifer Sturgill.

Throughout her life, Avanell was known for her dedication as a homemaker, a role in which she found both purpose and fulfillment. She was committed to her family, lending her kindness and care to every endeavor in her household. Avanell's marriage to Robert Sturgill on November 24, 1955, marked the beginning of a partnership rooted in love and mutual support. Together, they built a family that was always at the center of her heart.

Beyond her devotion at home, Avanell nurtured a variety of interests that enriched both her life and the lives of those around her. She was especially talented in sewing for others, a skill she used generously to provide comfort and joy. Her passion for making quilts was renowned among family and friends, and many cherished the handiwork she so lovingly created. Avanell was also an enthusiastic member of her bowling team, finding friendship and camaraderie at the lanes. She enjoyed the spirit of adventure found in going on bus trips, relishing new experiences and the community they fostered.

A woman of strong faith, Avanell attended Ashland Nazarene, where she contributed her voice to the church choir. Her commitment to her church community reflected her caring and dedicated nature, traits she expressed in all areas of her life.

Avanell's legacy lives on through her children, Donna

en great-grandchildren; and nine great-great-grandchildren, whose lives have been shaped by her warmth and guidance. Avanell is survived by her brothers, Margel (Rosalia) Van Gilder of Spencer, Ohio and Roger (Pat) Van Gilder of Alabama; and a daughter-in-law, Jennifer Sturgill.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Robert Sturgill, Sr., who passed in 1992; and her son, Robert Sturgill, Jr., who passed in 2020. She is also preceded by her brothers, Harold, Donald, Gene, Willis, and Larry.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects at a visitation to be held Saturday, June 27, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon in Truth Baptist Church, 12457 Elyria Road, West Salem, Ohio. A funeral service will follow in the same location from 12 Noon to 1 p.m. Burial will follow the services in Hazzard Cemetery.

Avanell M. Sturgill's life was one of loving service, quiet strength, and steadfast faith. She will be remembered with deep respect and enduring affection by all who knew her.

The staff at Matteson Funeral Home in West Salem is honored to serve the Sturgill family as we honor Avanell's memory.

If you have a photo or memory of Avanell to share, please share one on the Matteson Funeral Home website at mattesonfh.com

DEATH ELSEWHERE

Alan Greenspan, former Federal Reserve chairman, dies at 100

Paul Wiseman and Christopher Rugaber
The Associated Press



Greenspan in 2013

WASHINGTON — Alan Greenspan, the jazz-playing U.S. Federal Reserve chair who was celebrated for engineering a decade of prosperity but later shared the blame for a devastating financial crisis, died Monday. He was 100.

Greenspan died from complications of Parkinson's disease, said his wife of 29 years, NBC News correspondent Andrea Mitchell.

"To me he was my husband, who shaped my life from our very first date in 1984," Mitchell wrote. "He had 'irrational exuberance' for baseball, the Washington Commanders, tennis, golf, and music, especially jazz. He will be remembered for his brilliance and his kindness. Being his life partner was the joy of my life."

The Fed said Greenspan helped to cement trust in the Fed during a time of economic uncertainty.

"Under his leadership, the Federal Reserve achieved a sustained era of price stability that supported economic growth and helped anchor the public's confidence in the institution," the central bank said in a statement Monday.

In 18 1/2 years at the Fed, Greenspan presided over a breathtaking surge in stock prices and a 10-year economic boom that started in March 1991. He was celebrated as "Maestro" and "Oracle" — an economic virtuoso whose every utterance was dissected for clues on where interest rates and the economy were headed.

The intense scrutiny of Greenspan's intentions gave birth to new Fed folklore:

the "Briefcase Indicator." A stuffed briefcase carried into Fed meetings implied changes might be afoot because Greenspan carried with him charts and research to make his point.

But his reputation began to suffer almost as soon as he left the Fed in 2006. American housing prices tumbled rapidly, causing huge losses for banks that had repackaged mortgage loans into a dizzying array of complex securities. The growing financial crisis pushed the U.S. economy into the Great Recession of 2007-2009 — the deepest downturn since the 1930s.

Critics blamed the devastation on Greenspan's easy money policies and his support for deregulated financial markets. Greenspan himself later acknowledged "I made a mistake" in assuming that banks could essentially regulate themselves.

For almost two decades, it seemed that Greenspan could do no wrong. Not only in the United States but across the world, he was regarded with a mixture of reverence and awe. Many openly dreaded the day when he would leave the Fed.

Investors hung on his sometimes inscrutable observations. In the most well-known such remark, Greenspan sent financial markets reeling on Dec. 5, 1996, when he suggested with just two words — "irrational exuberance" — that stock prices were too high.

Mindful of his power to move markets, Greenspan typically resorted to obfus-

cation. At times, he even joked about his habit of doing so. "I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant," Greenspan once told a befuddled congressional committee.

Greenspan was one of the few Fed chairs that Kevin Warsh, chosen by Trump to lead the Fed, praised at his swearing-in last month. Warsh has said one of his goals is to dial back the Fed's communications, particularly the guidance it gives financial markets, an approach closer to Greenspan's than to Warsh's immediate predecessors as chair.

Yet for all his circumspect comments, Greenspan did make the Fed more transparent. He was the first chair to issue a statement explaining the Fed's interest-rate decisions. Before Greenspan, investors had to divine the Fed's intentions from market changes. Greenspan also began to release minutes and even full transcripts of meetings, though those changes were in response to pressure from Congress.

Born in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, the young Greenspan was a math whiz who was trotted out by his mother to show off for visitors.

"I was a prop at parties," he said in a 2007 interview with PBS NewsHour. A Julliard School dropout, he worked as a professional musician in his teens, playing clarinet and saxophone alongside the future jazz great Stan Getz. It was a humbling experience that persuaded the young Greenspan to seek another line of work.

TEXAS IMMIGRATION CENTER

Eight convicted in shooting, protest are sentenced to decades in prison

Jamie Stengle and Philip Marcelo
The Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Eight protesters accused by the Justice Department of having ties to antifa were sentenced Tuesday to decades in federal prison over a shooting outside a Texas immigration detention center that wounded a police officer and prosecutors called an act of terrorism.

One of the defendants, a former U.S. Marine Corps reservist convicted of opening fire during the July 4 demonstration outside the Prairieland Detention Center near Dallas, was sentenced to 100 years in prison, the maximum punishment.

The lengthy sentences were condemned by family members and supporters in a news conference outside the federal courthouse in Fort Worth.

Hope Song, whose son Benjamin Song received the heaviest sentence, disputed prosecutors' claims that her son shot the officer and said he didn't intend to hurt anyone.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor, one of two judges overseeing the proceedings, said what happened wasn't a protest but "an assault on democracy."



AP

Supporters of protesters convicted over a shooting outside a Texas immigration detention center display signs in support of the defendants outside a federal courthouse in Fort Worth, Texas, on Tuesday.

"The need to deter this type of conduct is high," O'Connor said.

The seven other protesters received prison terms ranging from 30 to 70 years.

Prosecutors said the eight are members of antifa, a decentralized anti-fascist organization and a target of the Trump administration. Antifa is not a single organization but rather an umbrella term for far-left militant groups that confront or resist neo-Nazis and white supremacists at demonstrations.

President Donald Trump last fall signed an executive order designating antifa a

domestic terrorist organization, even though there is no domestic equivalent to the State Department's list of foreign terror organizations.

The defendants deny any affiliation with antifa and maintain they attended the demonstration in support of detained immigrants.

Prosecutor Frank Gatto urged the judge to impose stiff penalties.

"People with that kind of extremist beliefs need extra time in prison," Gatto said. "They believe violence is justified."

Phillip Hayes, Song's attorney, said outside the court-

house that he takes issue with the idea that the protesters are extremists.

"This is a bunch of kids and young adults who really have a really big heart and really wanted their voice to be heard," Hayes said. "It was never intended that anybody get hurt. It was never intended that any shots would be fired."

Prosecutors said in court that Song had yelled "get to the rifles" and opened fire, striking a police officer who had just pulled up to the center.

Hayes argued that Song's shots were "suppressive fire" and that a ricochet bullet hit the officer after he arrived on the scene and "aggressively" pulled out his firearm. He said his client will appeal the 100-year sentence.

"Song, aside from this day, has had an impeccable life. A former Marine. A good student," Hayes said. "He had a lot of good qualities that were just ignored. The judge went ahead and gave as much as he could."

Other defendants and their family members pleaded for leniency in court.

Autumn Hill said the gathering "seemed more like a party to me than anything else" and that she and others who participated "didn't expect or want any violence or destruction of property to occur."

Amber Lowrey told the judge that her sister, Savanna Batten, is a compassionate person with dreams of opening a bakery. She said Batten's activism started with animal rights and evolved into anti-war and human rights advocacy.

"She's the best person I know," Lowrey said.

Hill and Batten both received 50-year sentences.

Other defendants previously pleaded guilty to providing material support to terrorists rather than take their case to trial.

Critics warn the case could have wide-reaching impact on protests given that organizations operating within the U.S. are supposed to be protected by First Amendment free-speech rights.

Judith 'Judy' Ann Cejer

Judith 'Judy' Ann Cejer, 88, passed away peacefully Friday, June 19, 2026, following a recent period of declining health.



TOGETHER AGAIN

Ploucha of Westfield Center. She was a cherished grandmother to Alex (Danielle) Cejer, Rachel (Ryan) Butler, Haley Ploucha, Kelley Cejer (fiancée, Kailey Meyers), and Connor (Makala) Ploucha. She was also a loving great-grandmother to Adeline and Callum Cejer, Natalie Butler, and to be born in August, great-grandson, Butler. Judy will also be missed by her nieces, nephews, cousins, and many dear friends.

Judy was born in Cleveland on April 25, 1938, to the late Jack and Olga (Domagalski) Armour. She grew up in Cleveland's Slavic Village neighborhood and was a proud graduate of South High School, where she met her future husband, Tony Cejer. Judy and Tony shared 60 years of marriage prior to Tony's passing in 2020.

Together, Judy and Tony built a beautiful life and raised their family in Newburgh Heights and later in Brunswick. They relocated to Greenville, South Carolina later in Tony's career, and then returned to Medina during his retirement to be closer to family and friends.

Judy will be remembered for her unwavering love for her family. She enjoyed hosting parties, attending social gatherings, singing in the choir, playing bingo, and creating memories with the people she loved. She also had a fondness for jewelry and ice cream.

Judy had a special gift for friendship; she connected easily with others and cherished the relationships she built throughout her life.

Judy will be deeply missed by her son, Mark (Sherry) Cejer of Granger Township; and daughter, Erin (Patrick)

In addition to her husband, Tony, Judy was preceded in death by her sister, Nancy Abramowski; sister-in-law, Sr. Claire Cejer; brother, Chuck Armour; and sister-in-law, Carol Armour.

The family welcomes friends and relatives to a Funeral Mass in Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 606 E. Washington St., Medina on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. Interment to follow in Saint Francis Xavier Cemetery, Weymouth Road, Medina.

In lieu of flowers, our family welcomes donations in Judy's memory to the Cleveland Sight Center, 1909 East 101st Street, Cleveland, OH 44106.

The Cejer Family thanks the devoted staff at St. Edward's Assisted Living in Fairlawn for their amazing care and support.



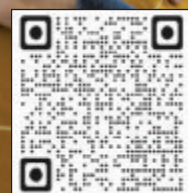
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NBA
 Giannis
 Antetokounmpo is
 traded to the Heat.
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MEDINA COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME



RON SCHWANE AND ASHLAND UNIVERSITY PHOTOS / TRISHA KRAKOWSKI ILLUSTRATION

Former Wadsworth basketball and volleyball standout Jodi Johnson will be inducted into the Medina County Sports Hall of Fame.

The twist of fate

Playing at Ashland allowed Johnson to develop a new outlook on life

Albert Grindle
 The Gazette

The competitiveness, totally chill personality and complete lack of ego remain, but the 2012-16 version of Jodi Johnson would be 100% convinced her 2026 counterpart was from Mars.

A decorated Ashland women's basketball career that featured an NCAA Division II national championship, national player of the year award and two undefeated seasons wouldn't have made sense because 2014-15 Johnson wanted to play volleyball elsewhere.

A 6-foot-5, 250-pound husband, No. 1 fan and farm boy from Kenton named Austin Phillips would have been even weirder because 2016 Johnson had zero interest in a

"dude" who she felt would have been an unnecessary distraction from her athletic success.

A soon-to-be 1-year-old son named Landon who is "a perfect little angel" wouldn't compute, either, because 2016 Johnson was overwhelmed at the endless energy of her students at Wadsworth youth basketball camps.

It's funny how certain aspects of life feel meant to be.

The 2016 Wadsworth graduate and star of the state championship girls basketball team needs little introduction to local high school sports fans, yet they'll be reacquainted anyway when she is inducted into the Medina County Sports Hall of Fame during Thursday ceremonies at the Galaxy Banquet Center in Wadsworth. Johnson

remains in the conversation regarding the county's Mount Rushmore of female athletes and had a contract to play basketball professionally in Australia before that was nixed by COVID-19.

She'll never, ever understand what the fuss is about. That's how she's always been wired, but the soon-to-be 29-year-old is grateful that Ashland remained patient during a recruiting process that the nonchalant 2016 version of herself nearly sabotaged.

Landing at Ashland helped her rediscover a passion for basketball that had fallen to a clear No. 2 behind volleyball, the sport she initially preferred to play in college after earning two D-I All-Ohio awards as an outside hitter for the Grizzlies.

Landing at Ashland helped her strengthen her faith and grow as a young woman through the leadership of the Eagles coaching staff, particularly when she was baptized by now-head coach Kari Pickens.

Landing at Ashland also landed her first (and only) true boyfriend through a love story built around mutual friends, a mission trip to the Dominican Republic and, of all things, injury rehabilitation. Johnson and Phillips became wife and husband on Jan. 21, 2023 and Mom and Dad on July 2, 2025.

Every step of Johnson's journey since she last donned the Wadsworth red and white has come in ways she never would have expected.

"Ever since I truly connected to (Austin), he's been such a positive light for me and he is the most

patient person ever," she said. "I've never seen him mad or frustrated ever. He's genuinely the most positive person I've been around. He's very selfless. It takes a lot for me. I never wanted to be around dudes, and for me to want to hang around him every day felt weird. This guy had something to him that's special."

"Even now, (Austin and Landon) make me so emotional. I'm an emotional person now, and I was never like that. I'm more sappy because they truly have my heart. Motherhood is such a gift, and it helps when your kid is a perfect little angel. He's so fun to be around and gives you a perspective on life."

Johnson? Emotional at Wadsworth or Ashland? Never.

See **JOHNSON, B3**

COMMENTARY: WORLD CUP

Messi is just another athlete in U.S.

Mac Engel
 Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Michael Jordan has not played a basketball game since 2003, and he could not go anywhere in the world without being recognized while his equivalent in soccer continues to play, and he could walk up and down most streets in the United States without being stopped.

Argentinian Lionel Messi is the most beautiful player the beautiful game has ever seen, and on his third visit to Dallas-Fort Worth broke one of those impossible records that "will never be broken."

Messi's two goals in Argentina's 2-0 win over Austria on Monday in group play of this World Cup gives him the most career goals — 18 — in the history of the tournament. He did this two days before he will turn 39.

Watching his native Argentines lose their collective minds at his goal was like watching an entire family celebrate their youngest son winning a gold medal and an Academy Award. This record is theirs as much as it is his.

To reach a milestone this high requires not just cosmic alignment but a degree of lottery-winning luck, and God-given skill that is not wasted.

The irony is that he is the most popular athlete in the world, and all of that power and fame still only gets you so much here in America. Football has



ED ZURGA / AP

Lionel Messi is the World Cup's career scoring leader.

come so far in the last 30 years in the United States, and it's still not within a T-shirt cannon's shot of the other football that rumbles from sea to shining sea.

Messi's record will not register here

like Jerry Rice's career mark for most touchdowns in NFL history or Nolan Ryan's mark for strikeouts by an MLB pitcher because it's soccer.

See **ENGEL, B3**

GOLF: JUNIOR PGA

Coleman qualifies for championship

Recent Highland graduate Elizabeth Coleman is headed to Frisco, Texas, after winning the Northern Ohio Junior PGA Section Championship on Monday.

The two-time Gazette MVP fired back-to-back rounds of 67 at Glenmoor Country Club in Canton for a 10-under-par score that was a whopping 14 strokes ahead of the field. It also qualified her for the prestigious Junior PGA Championship — the one held at Westfield Country Club until 2007 — at the PGA headquarters in Frisco in late July.

Coleman was never threatened after her opening 67 built a five-shot lead over Brunswick's Ellie Gonzalez-Ribble. Coleman bogeyed the first hole but birdied three of her final six on the front to make the turn at 7 under.

The Ball State recruit added

another birdie on the 10th hole, made three straight pars then birdied Nos. 14 and 15 before suffering her first bogey on 16, ending a streak of 14 bogey-free holes. She parred No. 17 and finished in style, rolling in an 18-footer for her seventh birdie of the day and 13th for the tournament.

Coleman made birdie putts of six, four, 12, 15, 15 and 18 feet. She also two-putted for birdie on the 480-yard 10th.

Fairview Park's Calli Reed finished second with a 148 (77-71), while Gonzalez-Ribble fell to fourth with a 183 (72-81). Highland graduate Kate Vickerman (21st, 177), Brunswick's Rylee Roth (22nd, 180) and Wadsworth's Jillian Jones (33rd, 211) also competed.

Coleman made four Division I state tournament appearances, finishing 22nd, 25th, second and seventh as Highland placed fourth, fourth, fourth and fifth. She also owns Medina County records for lowest 18-hole score (9-under 62) and season average (35.2).



Coleman

NBA

Antetokounmpo traded to Heat in blockbuster deal

Tim Reynolds
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Giannis Antetokounmpo wants more championships. So do the Miami Heat.

And the Heat finally have another superstar.

Ending a marathon watch for the next great Miami get, the Heat landed Antetokounmpo — a two-time NBA MVP and 10-time All-Star — from the Milwaukee Bucks on Monday night in exchange for a massive haul of players and draft picks.

The terms, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the move has yet to receive the required league approval: Antetokounmpo and Bobby Portis are heading to Miami for Wisconsin native Tyler Herro, Jaime Jaquez Jr., Kel'el Ware and Kasparas Jakucionis. Milwaukee also gets at least four picks, including the No. 13 selection that will be made in Tuesday night's NBA Draft.

It ends a wild back-and-forth in the final days of the saga, with the Bucks considering offers from both Miami and Boston for Antetokounmpo — who led Milwaukee to the 2021 NBA title, was on the NBA's 75th anniversary list of its greatest players ever, is a nine-time All-NBA selection and is coming off an injury-shortened season where he averaged 27.6 points per game.



MARTA LAVANDIER / AP

Giannis Antetokounmpo, shown on the Bucks last season, was acquired by the Heat on Monday night in exchange for a massive haul of players and draft picks.

There has been no secret that this is what Miami has sought, because this is what Miami usually seeks. The Heat pulled off similar moves by landing Shaquille O'Neal in 2004 (helping lead to the 2006 NBA title) and by getting LeBron James and Chris Bosh to play alongside Dwyane Wade in 2010 (leading to four NBA Finals runs in four seasons together, along with the 2012 and 2013 NBA titles).

Now, it's Antetokounmpo's turn. At 31, the Heat clearly believe he still

has many good years left — and it's generally presumed that by making this deal they'll give the Greek superstar a massive extension later this year.

He was a perennial MVP candidate in Milwaukee, getting votes for that award in nine consecutive seasons before 2025-26 when too many missed games left him ineligible.

He has averaged 24.1 points and 9.9 rebounds per game in his career, with 10 consecutive seasons of aver-

aging at least 22.9 points — with three years in there of averaging more than 30 points per game.

Only seven current players have more points in their careers than Antetokounmpo, who has totaled 21,531 to this point.

The Bucks, who fired Doc Rivers as coach after the season, don't have a roster that would be considered a championship contender. By trading Antetokounmpo, they can essentially start over with four players (and the Heat were high on all of them) along with draft capital.

"I just think before the draft is a natural time, right, because if Giannis does play somewhere else we're going to get a lot of assets. ... You've got to get it right," Bucks co-owner Jimmy Haslam said in May, when the team introduced new coach Taylor Jenkins — who was told that Antetokounmpo may or may not be with the franchise when next season starts.

Jenkins and the rest of the NBA now has the answer: Antetokounmpo won't be there.

Antetokounmpo had spoken highly of Miami many times over the years, even when the Heat and Bucks were going head-to-head in the playoffs. He also shares an agent with Heat star center Bam Adebayo, who was the only player that Miami clearly was not willing to part with in order to make this deal happen.

T'wolves trading Randle to Nets in three-team deal

The Minnesota Timberwolves are trading Julius Randle and a first-round pick to the Brooklyn Nets as part of a three-team deal that also includes the Chicago Bulls, a person with knowledge of the terms said Monday night.



Randle

The Timberwolves are sending the 28th pick in Tuesday's draft to the Nets and will be receiving the No. 33 pick that will be made in the second round tonight, said the person who spoke to The AP on condition of anonymity because the deal has not received the required approvals from the league office.

ESPN, which first reported the deal, also said the Bulls would be receiving Nic Claxton from Brooklyn in the trade. For Minnesota, the trade opens up a slew of financial possibilities. It creates a \$33 million trade exception, plus gave the Timberwolves room they can use to re-sign Ayo Dosunmu — which ESPN said later Monday would happen in the form of a five-year deal that could be worth \$112 million — and target more players in free agency.

Dosunmu had a 43-point game off the bench during the opening round of this year's playoffs, when Minnesota ousted Denver.

Randle, a three-time All-Star, will be moving to his fifth team after stints with New York, the Los Angeles Lakers, New Orleans and the Timberwolves. He averaged 21.1 points this past season, though shot just 39% from the field and 24% from 3-point range in Minnesota's 12 playoff games.

Claxton just finished his seventh NBA season, all with Brooklyn. He averaged 11.7 points this past season.

TV & RADIO

Australian Rules Football (men)

5:30 a.m. (Thurs.), FS2 — AFL: Sydney at Brisbane

Baseball

12:10 p.m., MLB — MLB: Texas at Miami

2:10 p.m., Guadians.TV; WOBL 107.7-FM, 1320-AM, WTAM 1100-AM — MLB: Cleveland at Chicago White Sox

3:10 p.m., MLB — MLB: Boston at Colorado

6:40 p.m., PRIME VIDEO — MLB: N.Y. Yankees at Detroit

7:10 p.m., MLB — MLB: Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets or Milwaukee at Cincinnati

10 p.m., MLB — MLB: Athletics at San Francisco (joined in progress)

Basketball

7:30 p.m., USA — WNBA: Phoenix at Indiana

8 p.m., ESPN — NBA Draft: Second round, from New York

10 p.m., CNBC, USA — WNBA: Atlanta at Golden State

Soccer (men)

3 p.m., FOX — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, Switzerland vs. Canada, from Vancouver, British Columbia

3 p.m., FS1 — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, Bosnia-Herzegovina vs. Qatar, from Seattle

6 p.m., FOX — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, Scotland vs. Brazil, from Miami Gardens, Fla.

6 p.m., FS1 — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, Morocco vs. Haiti, from Atlanta

8 p.m., ESPN2 — USL Championship: San Antonio at Colorado Springs

9 p.m., FOX — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, Czech Republic vs. Mexico, Group A, Mexico City

9 p.m., FS1 — FIFA World Cup: Group stage, South Africa vs. South Korea, Group A, Monterrey, Mexico

Softball

8 p.m., CBSN — Athletes Unlimited: Bandits at Volts

Tennis

5 a.m., TENNIS — Eastbourne-ATP/WTA, Bad Homburg-WTA, Mallorca-ATP: Early rounds

5 a.m. (Thurs.), TENNIS — Eastbourne-ATP/WTA, Bad Homburg-WTA, Mallorca-ATP: Quarterfinals

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

REINTEGRATED

BOSTON RED SOX — Sent 18 Romy Gonzalez and LHP Patrick Sandovol on rehab assignments to Worcester (IL). Agreed to terms with C Andrew Knizner on a minor league contract.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with C Jostiel Veras on a minor league contract.

DETROIT TIGERS — Transferred RHP Burt Smith to the 60-day IL. Optioned CF Trey Cruz to Toledo (IL). Selected the contract of CF Ben Malgeri from Toledo.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Placed 3B Maikel Garcia on the 10-day IL. Recalled 3B Josh Rojas from Omaha (IL).

MINNESOTA TWINS — Selected the contract of RHP Austin Voth from St. Paul (IL). Optioned RHP Cody Lawryson to St. Paul.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Placed C Ali Sanchez on the paternity list. Recalled C J.C. Escarra from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated LF Randy Arozarena from the 10-day IL. Optioned RF Connor Joe to Tacoma (FL).

TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with C Austin Wynns and LHP Marco Gonzales on minor league contracts.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Sent 2B Lenny Sosa on a rehab assignment to Dunedin (FSL). Designated RHP Hayden Juenger for assignment.

Reinstated RHP Shane Bieber from the 60-day IL. Optioned RHP Lazaro Estrada to Buffalo (IL).

Reinstated SS Ely De La Cruz from the 10-day IL. Optioned RF Will Benson to Louisville.

MIAMI MARLINS — Agreed to terms with RHP Davidxon Lara on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlanta 12 4 .750
Las Vegas 12 4 .750
Indiana 11 6 .647 1%

Washington 8 7 .533 3%
Toronto 8 9 .471 4%

Chicago 4 12 .250 8%
Phoenix 5 13 .278 8%

Portland 3 15 .167 10%

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Minnesota 13 4 .765
Las Vegas 12 4 .750 1%

Dallas 11 6 .647 2%
Golden State 10 7 .588 3%

Los Angeles 8 8 .500 4%

Portland 8 9 .471 5%

Phoenix 5 13 .278 8%

Seattle 3 15 .167 10%

Monday's games

Atlanta 94, Toronto 87
Indiana 86, Phoenix 77
Dallas 112, Seattle 110 (OT)

New York at Las Vegas, late

Minnesota at Washington, 7:30 p.m.

Phoenix at Indiana, 7:30 p.m.

Portland at Chicago, 8 p.m.

Atlanta at Golden State, 10 p.m.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

BOSTON BRUINS — Signed G Simon Zajack to a one-year contract.

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Acquired two conditional first-round draft picks, a 2026 second-round draft pick and D Etienne Morin from Calgary in exchange for D Simon Nemec and F Lenny Sosa.

San Jose Sharks — Signed D Nolan Allan to a two-year contract.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

VANCOUVER WHITECAPS — Transferred D Joeldrick Pupo to Sint-Truidense VV (Belgian Pro League).

BASEBALL

American League

East Division

New York 46 31 .597 —
Tampa Bay 43 32 .573 2

Toronto 39 39 .500 7½
Baltimore 38 42 .475 9½

Boston 31 45 .408 14½

Central Division

Cleveland 41 38 .519 —
Chicago 40 37 .519

Minnesota 38 42 .475 3½
Detroit 34 44 .436 6½

Kansas City 33 46 .418 8

West Division

Seattle 40 39 .506
Athletics 38 40 .487 1½

Texas 38 40 .487 1½
Houston 37 43 .463 3½

Los Angeles 32 48 .400 8½

Monday's games

Kansas City 2, Tampa Bay 1
Detroit 5, N.Y. Yankees 3

Texas 4, Miami 3
Toronto 4, Houston 2

L.A. Dodgers 2, Minnesota 1
Chicago White Sox 6, Cleveland 5

Colorado 3, Boston 2
Baltimore 6, L.A. Angels 1

Tuesday's games

Cleveland at Chicago White Sox, late
L.A. Dodgers at Minnesota, late

Boston at Colorado, late
Baltimore at L.A. Angels, late

Athletics at San Francisco, late

Today's games

Texas (deGrom 6-4) at Miami (Perez 3-6), 12:10 p.m.

Cleveland (Bibee 2-8) at Chicago White Sox (Folde 2-5), 1:10 p.m.

Boston (Suzuki 3-3) at Colorado (Freeland 1-7), 3:10 p.m.

Baltimore (Gibson 1-2) at L.A. Angels (Soriano 8-4), 4:07 p.m.

Kansas City (Cameron 4-4) at Tampa Bay (Jax 2-5), 6:40 p.m.

N.Y. Yankees (Weathers 2-5) at Detroit (Skubal 3-3), 6:40 p.m.

Seattle (Woo 6-5) at Pittsburgh (Ashcraft 6-3), 7:10 p.m.

Houston (Burrows 3-8) at Toronto (Yessavage 3-3), 7:07 p.m.

L.A. Dodgers (Ohtani 7-2) at Minnesota (Prielp 2-5), 7:40 p.m.

Athletics (Jump 3-1) at San Francisco (Mahle 1-7), 9:45 p.m.

MONDAY

Angels 6, Guardians 5

Cleveland Chicago ab r h bi

Bazzana 2b 3 2 1 0 Antonacci lf 4 1 2 3

Fry lf 2 0 0 Vargas 1b 4 0 1 0

Watson ph 1 0 0 Switzer dh 2 0 1 1

Ballew c 1 1 1 Gichuk ph-dh 2 1 1 1

Roccos ss 5 0 3 0 Teel c 4 0 0 0

Hoskins 1b 4 0 1 1 CMingmay 3b 4 0 0 0

Manzanora dh 0 0 0 0 0

Chicago 5 0 0 0 BMingmay 3 2 2 1

Fairchild r 2 0 0 0 Peters cf 4 1 1 0

Kwan ph-If 0 0 0 Acuña ss 3 0 1 0

Hedges c 2 0 0 0 Gonzalez ph 1 0 0 0

Schinnier ph 2 1 0 0

Halpin cf-r 4 0 0 0

Totals 34 5 8 5 Totals 35 6 10 6

Cleveland 000 000 32 — 5 8 0 0

Chicago 011 001 102 — 6 10 0 0

LOB: Cleveland 0, Chicago 5, 2B—Roccho (12), B—Montgomery (2), Peters (17), HR—Gichuk (8), SB—Acuña (13), Watson (1), Antonacci 2 (1), SF—Manzanora (2).

Cleveland W L R ER BB SO

Williams 5 2 2 1 8

Herrin 1 1 1 1 0 1

Armstrong 1 2 1 0 1 0

Smith L 2-1 1/2 2 0 1 0

Chicago W L R ER BB SO

Kay 6 3 0 0 2 8

Taylor BS, 2-4 1/2 3 3 3 2 2

Hudson 1/2 0 0 0 1 3

Dominguez BS, 12-17 1/2 2 2 1 1

L.A. Dodgers at Minnesota, late

HBP—Kay (Hoskins), WP—Tay, Dominguez. T—3:03. A—23,151 (40,241).

National League

East Division

Atlanta 48 29 .623 —

Philadelphia 42 36 .538 6½

Washington 41 38 .519 8

Miami 40 39 .506 9

New York 31 46 .442 14

Central Division

Milwaukee 47 29 .618 —

St. Louis 42 34 .553 5

Chicago 40 37 .519 7½

Pittsburgh 39 39 .500 9

Cincinnati 37 40 .481 10½

West Division

Los Angeles 50 29 .633 —

Arizona 47 37 .519 9

San Francisco 31 46 .403 18

Colorado 31 48 .392 19

Monday's games

Washington 4, Philadelphia 1

Texas 4, Miami 3

Milwaukee 2, Cincinnati 1 (10)

L.A. Dodgers 2, Minnesota 1

St. Louis 3, Arizona 2

Colorado 3, Boston 2

San Diego 1, Atlanta 0

Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, ppd.

Tuesday's games

Seattle at Pittsburgh, late

Philadelphia at Washington, late

Chicago Cubs at N.Y. Mets, late

Milwaukee at Cincinnati, late

L.A. Dodgers at Minnesota, late

Arizona at St. Louis, late

Boston at Colorado, late

Atlanta at San Diego, late

Athletics at San Francisco, late

Texas (deGrom 6-4) at Miami (Perez 3-6), 12:10 p.m.

Chicago Cubs (Mananga 4-6) at N.Y. Mets (Senga 0-5), 1:10 p.m., 1st game

Boston (Suzuki 3-3) at Colorado (Freeland 1-7), 3:10 p.m.

Seattle (Woo 6-5) at Pittsburgh (Ashcraft 6-3), 6:40 p.m.

Philadelphia (Nola 3-4) at Washington (Cavallari 4-4), 8:45 p.m.

Chicago Cubs (Assad 5-1) at N.Y. Mets (Manaea 1-2), 7:10 p.m., 2nd game

Milwaukee (Doran 3-2) at Cincinnati (Lowe 3-4), 7:10 p.m.

L.A. Dodgers (Ohtani 7-2) at Minnesota (Prielp 2-5), 7:40 p.m.

Arizona (Brett 0-0) at St. Louis (Liberatore 3-4), 7:45 p.m.

Atlanta (Perez 6-3) at San Diego (Vásquez 6-5), 8:40 p.m.

Athletics (Jump 3-1) at San Francisco (Mahle 1-7), 9:45 p.m.

WORLD CUP

Group play schedule

GROUP A

GP W D L GF GA Pts

Mexico 2 2 0 0 3 0 6

South Korea 2 1 0 1 2 2 3

Czechia 2 0 1 1 2 3 1

South Africa 2 0 1 1 1 3 1

Today's games

Czechia vs. Mexico, 9 p.m.

South Africa vs. South Korea, 9 p.m.

GROUP B

GP W D L GF GA

JOHNSON

From B1

Wadsworth

Born June 28, 1997 six minutes after bubbly twin sister Jenna, Johnson has always been built differently. She dominated boys on the youth football field — one of her coaches was Wadsworth girls basketball boss Andrew Booth — and still laughs off the non-stop “what’s being a twin like?” because her and Jenna have such a tight bond that it is all they know.

Johnson dabbled in a little bit of everything growing up. Soccer, softball, gymnastics and dancing were first, followed by basketball and the few years of football.

Volleyball wasn’t on Johnson’s radar heading into seventh grade because, frankly, she missed intercepting passes while playing football, a sport she was encouraged to play by father Rick but could no longer take part in for safety reasons.

Mother Carol suggested a volleyball summer camp. Daughter stubbornly refused. Mom kept encouraging. That attitude flipped and Wadsworth reaped the benefits.

Johnson never won a Gazette MVP in the sport because she played in the same era as Brunswick’s Gabrielle Bulic (Michigan) and Ally Badowski (Indiana) and Wadsworth’s Kacie Evans (Georgia), but she amassed 403 kills, 400 digs and 66 blocks to earn second-team All-Ohio in 2014-15. Her stats fell as a senior due her reputation and Evans’ dominance — opposing teams almost always served directly at Johnson to make attacking more difficult — but Wadsworth still went 18-5.

The 5-11 Johnson finished her volleyball career with a personal 79-23 record, three district championships and three Suburban League titles. She was the first county player to record 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs in a career.

“Just the athletes in general, we had a lot of crossover between sports, especially volleyball and basketball (Evans, Peyton Booth, Jenna Johnson, Olivia Chaney), and that builds a lot of chemistry on and off the court,” she said while also mentioning Haley Witschey, Sophia Chirumbole and Jenna Oplinger. “You don’t see that often where you can say six or five athletes on the court are true athletes, and I think we had that.

“The connection I had with my teammates, honestly we were friends on and off the court and volleyball brought us together. We had a different type of chemistry. The way you celebrate each moment through a volleyball game makes it stand out from an energy and fun perspective. That was part of why I thought I enjoyed it more than basketball.”

While basketball may have been the secondary sport at the time, that’s what she’ll be remembered for in Wadsworth.

The résumé is nuts: the state championship, three regional runner-up trophies, 1,541 career points in a county-record 112 games (102 wins), two first-team All-Ohio awards, a Ms. Basketball nomination as a senior and one of the greatest career finishes in state history.

The right-hander who specialized in acrobatic finishes, free throws and offensive efficiency that makes analytic nerds geek out scored 25, 29, 24 and 28 points in the final wins over Magnificat, Whitmer, Reynoldsburg and Mason while shooting a combined .509 from the floor (28-for-55),

.900 from the foul line (45-for-50) and .455 from 3-point range (5-for-11). Even crazier, she had 12 points in the first quarter against the Blue Streaks — the outcome wasn’t in doubt after that — then 11, 11 and 12 in fourth quarters against the Panthers, Raiders and Comets.

At Value City Arena in Columbus, the ginormous Wadsworth student section chanted “M-V-P! M-V-P!” all 27 times Johnson stepped to the foul line. No sane human could argue that claim.

“When you put up those numbers against that competition on that stage, I’ve never had the privilege to witness something like that,” Booth said. “I have a picture from the state championship game. I have my hands on her shoulder and her hands are on my arm. Nose to nose, I see Jodi and said, ‘I need you to score.’ She then said, ‘Coach, I’m not going to force shots.’ Even then, she was such a team player. There were times we needed her to take over, and she certainly did that.”

To Johnson, those moments weren’t about taking over. Not a charismatic leader by any stretch of the imagination, she stayed true to herself yet also came up with the catchphrase “Strictly business” for the postseason.

To this day, her teammates and coaches point out unprovoked that it was a turning point along with the regular-season loss to Mason.

“From the grand scheme of things and even playing collegiately, it makes you look back and you’re like, ‘Wow,’” Johnson said. “This is just high in school in general, but you play with kids you spent your life growing up with, growing relationships with and doing different activities. The bond you’re able to gain over time allows that moment to be more special, but also, too, it makes the journey more exciting and more memorable.

“Big picture for me, especially obviously being a part of a national championship, nothing really compares to winning a state championship with people you grew up with from your hometown.”

Ashland

While motherhood has changed Johnson, what remains distinctively the same is her level-headedness. The finer details were challenging and often missing when reflecting on her athletic achievements, simply because focusing on the moment was what made her an elite competitor when the stakes were at their greatest.

Her disdain for the recruiting process — an attitude she now regrets — turned out to be her greatest blessing because, first of all, Johnson hated attention that came with being a star. Media interviews, congratulations from fans and being noticed around town felt awkward because there was no ego to feed. She just wanted to compete with her friends, no strings attached.

When college basketball coaches tried their sales pitches, Johnson was aloof. She visited D-III Mount Union and D-II Seton Hill (Pa.) for volleyball and cared so little about basketball at the time that she couldn’t recall who was initially interested outside of Ashland, though most coaches in the area pegged her as a high-end Mid-American Conference talent.

On advice from Booth, the Eagles staff of Sue Ramsey, Robyn Fralick and Pickens remained patient — “That’s what I needed, unfortunately,” Johnson said — and attended numerous Wadsworth games before finally giving Johnson

an ultimatum. A further push from 2009 Gazette MVP Lindsay Tenyak of Wadsworth, who won a national championship with Ashland in 2013 and was an assistant under Booth during Johnson’s career, helped seal the deal.

Of course, Johnson accepted the scholarship offer in the same manner as when she decided to play volleyball after badgering from her mother.

On the very last day. “Once I knew it was basketball, I knew it was Ashland,” she said. “It was a no-brainer.”

The fit was perfect. Ashland was a 45-minute drive from home, played with full-court tempo, had a loyal fan base, went 31-2 in 2015-16 with All-Americans Laina Snyder (West Holmes) and Andi Daugherty (Warsaw River View) and also brought in twitchy point guard Renee Stimpert, who scored a dizzying 2,305 points at neighboring Ashland Crestview, would quickly become one of Johnson’s closest friends and is now a successful head coach at Ashland High.

Johnson didn’t need to be a star, but she became one anyway.

Playing in front of sellout crowds at virtually every home game, the Eagles hit 100 points 10 times in the regular season. They then won each tournament game by double digits heading into the national quarterfinals at Ohio Dominican, where the pro-Ashland crowds were deafening.

Johnson took a momentum-swinging charge in a quarterfinal win over West Texas A&M. She then ignited the game-changing run with an assist against Harding (Ark.) and scored a team-high 19 points on a fittingly efficient 5-of-6 field goals, 4-of-5 3-pointers and 5-of-6 free throws in the title-clinching 93-77 win over Virginia Union.

“That was in Columbus, Ohio. What are the odds of that happening?” she said. “Sold-out gym, it was the roar. It was unbelievable. Again, the whole community is behind us and that final buzzer going off, you think, ‘This is what you work for all year.’ To be able to experience that in my first year at Ashland, you wanted more every single year. I knew what it took to be a part of something like that and work toward a national championship day in and day out.”

Johnson, Snyder, Daugherty and Stimpert returned the next winter, and Johnson had the best statistical season of her career with averages of 18.7 points, 5.7 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 3.7 steals and an unathletic shooting line of .603 from the floor, .581 from 3-point range and .848 at the line to earn national player of the year.

Ashland was upset by Central Missouri in the national championship game to halt Johnson’s personal winning streak at 87 games, dating to her final 14 at Wadsworth.

“It’s weird because when you’re in the moment, it’s very nonchalant,” she said. “I sit here now 10 years removed from high school and a couple removed from college and it’s like, ‘Dang, that’s crazy.’”

Johnson led Ashland in scoring and was third-team All-America as a junior, when the Eagles went 29-3 and fell in the regional quarterfinals, but Johnson, Stimpert and Sara Loomis (Malvern) came back with a vengeance by winning the first 31 games of 2019-20.

They all know what happened next, as COVID-19 canceled the season as the Eagles were practicing for regionals at Drury (Mo.). John-

son also had verbally agreed to a contract with a professional team in Australia that was to be signed immediately following her collegiate career, and that fell apart, too.

“I tell people, ‘What better way to go out if you’re going to go out like that?’” said Johnson, who again was named first-team All-America. “We had an undefeated season in my senior year and we came off beating Grand Valley (State) in the (Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference) championship game on our own court. With those circumstances, you can’t beat that scenario.”

Johnson remains third in school history with 2,181 points, first with a .471 3-point percentage, second with an .849 free throw percentage, third with 464 assists and third with 355 steals.

The Eagles had a 133-4 record with Johnson on the roster.

“It was so close to home and the community was very similar to that of Wadsworth, which felt like a sense of home in that you had true relationships with that community,” she said. “You were able to connect, and it’s more the off-court stuff that really draws you in.

“The coaches are truly invested in you as a player and person, and you know at end of the day your career is going to end at some point and we’re developing to become better people.”

Family

As already established, Johnson never went to Ashland in search of love. She had basketball, a major in supply chain management and minors in marketing, business administration and sports management, so she was busy enough.

Ashland, however, is smaller than Wadsworth. The same faces pop up. “What’s up, Jodes?” was a common greeting when Phillips passed her around campus. Johnson’s roommate, Allison Brooks, was dating Phillips’ roommate, Ashland quarterback Austin Brenner (Copley). They all lived on the same floor.

The burn was slow, but there certainly was a connection.

“I was absolutely amazed watching the women’s basketball team,” Phillips said. “They were scoring 100 a game, never lost and they were really fun to watch. Sophomore year, my buddies and I started to watch and, of course, that was the year Jodi took Ashland by storm. I thought, ‘That No. 21 moves a little different ... and she’s pretty cute, too.’”

Everything changed when Phillips, who is a year older, blew out his knee during spring football practice in 2019. There was only one other athlete rehabbing at the same time — Johnson, who had a hamstring strain — with trainer Kate Bruning, who likes to take credit for playing matchmaker, though to what extent remains debatable among friends.

Johnson was impressed by Phillips’ positivity, as he was still determined to return to the field after already losing other seasons to a redshirt and shoulder injury. Phillips almost immediately fell head over heels when he concluded that Johnson genuinely cared about his progress, something he didn’t expect considering she was arguably the biggest name on campus athletically.

They already had a friendship forged through a mission trip to the Dominican Republic and constantly seeing each other through Brenner and Brooks. Witnessing how each other handled adversity — Johnson’s injury was the only real one of

her athletic career — set them into motion for something more.

Not long after, they went with Brenner and Brooks — those two are now married as well — on a double date to Honey Haven Farm in Ashland. They’ve been together ever since.

“(Brooks) was like, ‘Would you ever date him?’” a grinning Johnson said. “I said, ‘Oh, no. I don’t know. Whatever.’ We were always hanging out, and obviously I got to the point where I was like, ‘OK, I kind of like this dude.’”

In case you haven’t noticed, that was the second time Johnson used to the word “dude.” She’s a tomboy — another big plus for Phillips after growing up on a 350-acre beef/sheep farm — but what Phillips also learned about Johnson was something everyone in Wadsworth already knew: Her selflessness, especially considering her athletic notoriety, sets her apart.

“The No. 1 thing for me in the early stages when I didn’t know her very well was the zero ego,” he said. “That says a lot about the person when they are able to have success in life, whether it’s that stage of life academically or athletically, that’s all they’re really doing. To be as humble and grateful as she was stuck out to me.

“My Mom every day before school — kindergarten through senior year — told us, ‘Be patient, be humble, be kind.’ It was almost meant to be as I got to know her a little more. While I have held true to myself, she has leaps and bounds more than anything I could have. I wasn’t looking to date. I was looking to find a wife, a life partner and a partner in Christ. That was the first thing that caught my eye.”

When Johnson and Phillips married, Jenna Johnson, Stimpert, Brooks, Loomis, former Wadsworth point guard Sophia Fortner and Bruning were members of Jodi’s party and Brenner and Curtis Roupe (Black River) were among those in Austin’s.

Husband and wife remain in Ashland and now fuel their competitiveness by remaining in physical shape. Austin is a technical sales representative for Charger Next Generation, which produces plastic food packaging, while Jodi is an inventory analyst for Emerson, which among other things manufactures valves for oil and gas pipelines.

They would have never found each other had Johnson not been so flaky with college coaches as a high school junior. Her plan was volleyball — not basketball, a greater bond with her faith and stumbling upon a future husband — and a college degree.

She’s no longer Jodi Johnson, basketball star.

She’s now Jodi Phillips, devoted wife, doting mother and a quintessential example of how there always will be a new life to live after years of dedication to athletics.

“Her tenderheartedness for Landon is incredible,” Austin said. “When people who’ve known her see her with Landon, they’re like, ‘Man, I never would have guessed the Jodi I knew would be this cuddly, soft and mushy with a kiddo.’ She is absolutely the best mother in the world, and I couldn’t be more blessed to have Jodi as the mother of our children.”

And Jodi couldn’t feel more blessed with how her journey has turned out.

“It’s crazy,” she said. “The timing of it all was meant to be.”

Contact Albert Grindle at (330) 721-4043 or agrindle@medina-gazette.com.

ENGEL

From B1

To score 18 career goals in the World Cup is just as impressive as anything an athlete can do because of the number of moving parts that must work over a sustained period of time.

- The team has to qualify for the World Cup. Argentina is consistently one of the best teams in the world, and it’s always “around it.” If they weren’t good, Messi would not be near this mark.

- The player must be picked to be on the team. In the last year or two, there was chatter and debate whether Messi would actually be selected to join the national team again. It’s hard to be

great at 38.

Most players are fortunate to play in three World Cups. This 2026 World Cup is Messi’s sixth.

- The team must advance in World Cup matches. There is no way Messi hits this mark without the team consistently advancing out of the group stages to play enough games, thus giving him more opportunities to score.

- The player must stay healthy. When a player crosses 30, health increasingly becomes the hardest target to hit. Thanks to advances in nutrition, strength and physiology-based training, top-end players are doing things in their late 30s and into their 40s that were previously only for the 20-somethings.

Messi is now in the same chat room as Tom Brady, LeBron James and Novak Djokovic as pro athletes who can still do it late in their athletic lives.

- The player must finish. If and when a player hits all of these criteria, they must actually score when the chance is there. He has not lost the touch.

Messi nearly notched the record early in the win against Austria when he took a penalty kick, but that one sailed just to the right of the goal.

No matter, he scored it later in the first half when he chipped in a cross from teammate Facundo Medina to send the natives into euphoria. Messi added his second goal with a few minutes remaining in the match,

which prompted the fans to chant “Mess-i! Messi-i!”

Where does Messi rank in America?

Put Messi in a restaurant in America, and there’s a decent chance he can eat in peace, whereas Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes could not.

If Messi is walking down the street in downtown Phoenix and Steph Curry is across the block, one of these two is far more apt to be stopped than the other. It’s the shorter one. Do the same thing in Paris, London, Tokyo, Mexico City or Beijing, and this is a different conversation.

Soccer has a viable home, and a secure footprint in the United States, which was the goal when FIFA plopped its World Cup here for the first

time in 1994. Major League Soccer now has 30 clubs, and Americans now are part of the fabric of following the English Premier League, Germany’s Bundesliga, Italy’s Serie A, Spain’s La Liga, et al.

Whatever a naysayer of the sport in this country wants to say about it, professional soccer and expectations for the national teams are part of the American sports culture now.

There is also a reason why a player like Messi now plays for Inter Miami CF of MLS as opposed to playing the final years of his career at a top league in Europe.

He can keep playing, make good money and enjoy a degree of privacy and solitude he cannot virtually anywhere else on earth.

Messi is the rare instance of a player who can control the world with his feet, but not America.



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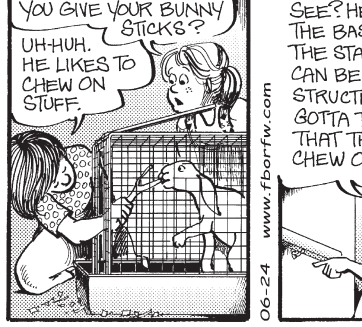
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COMICS

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



ARLO AND JANIS



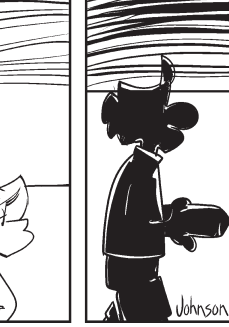
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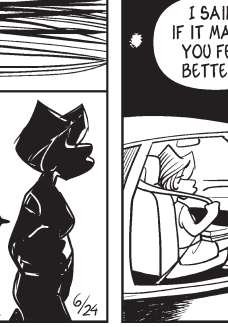
GARFIELD



HI AND LOIS



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



THE BORN LOSER



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM



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DUSTIN



OVER THE HEDGE



THE GRIZZLETS



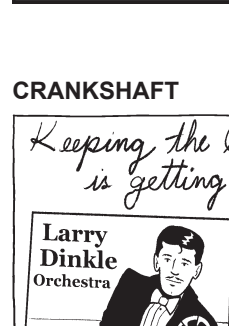
ALLEY OOP



MONTY



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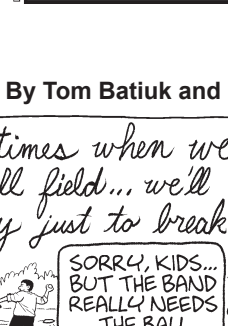
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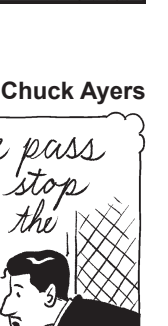
DENNIS THE MENACE



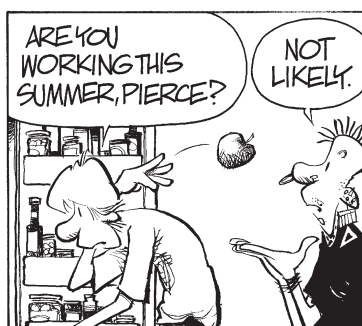
THE FAMILY CIRCUS



CLOSE TO HOME



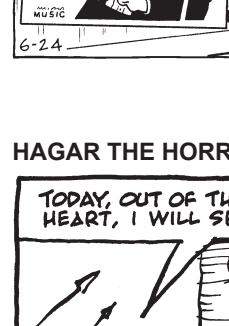
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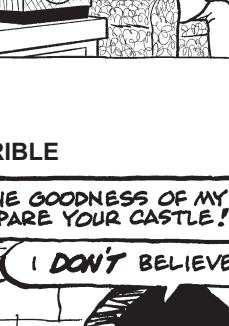
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



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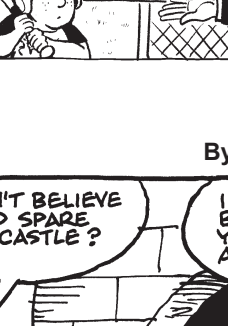
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GARFIELD



HI AND LOIS



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THE BORN LOSER



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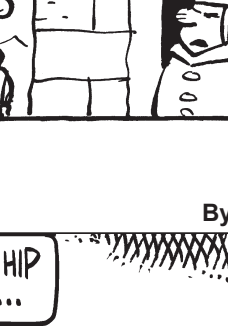
MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM



FRED BASSET



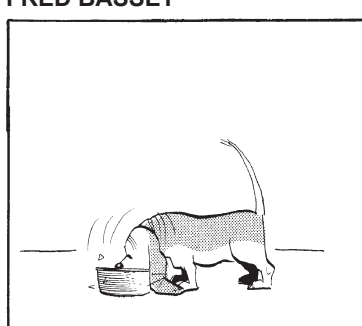
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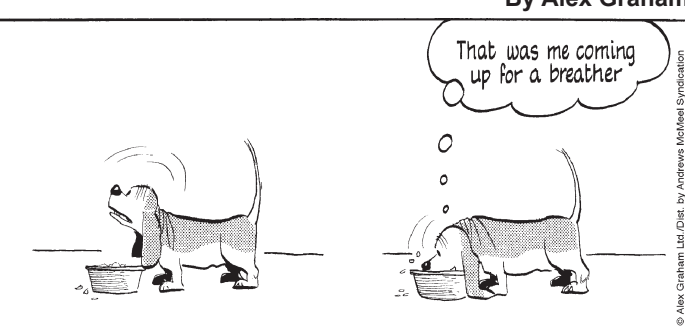
OVER THE HEDGE



THE GRIZZLETS



ALLEY OOP



MONTY



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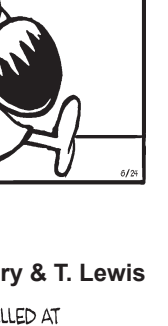
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS



CLOSE TO HOME



SPECTICKLES



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



ARLO AND JANIS



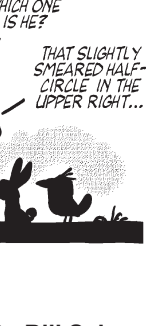
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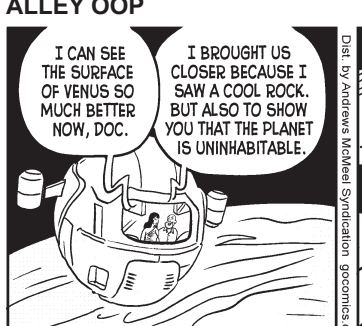
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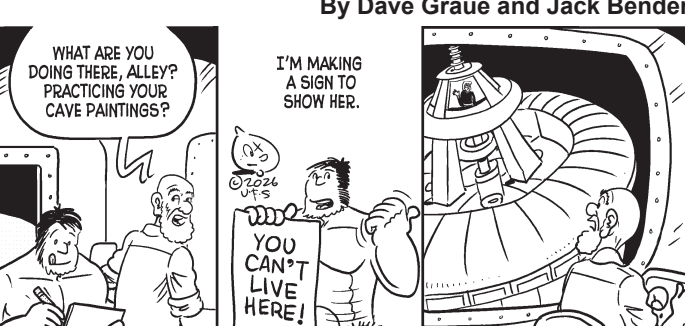
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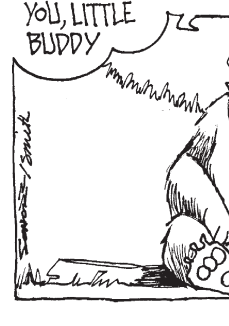
ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



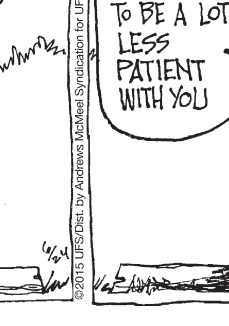
THE BORN LOSER



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM



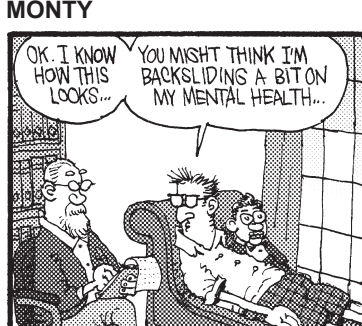
FRED BASSET



DUSTIN



OVER THE HEDGE



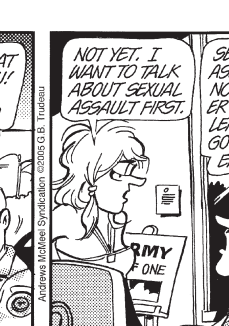
THE GRIZZLETS



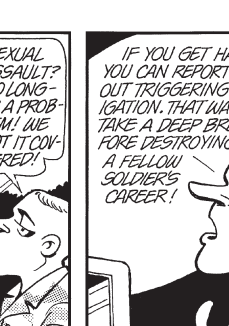
ALLEY OOP



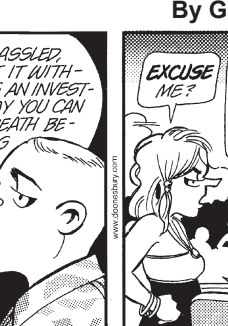
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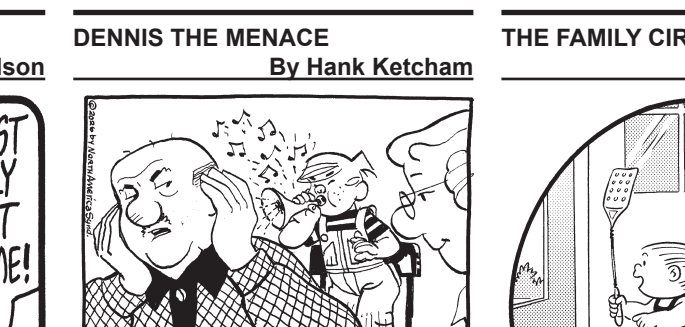
DENNIS THE MENACE



THE FAMILY CIRCUS



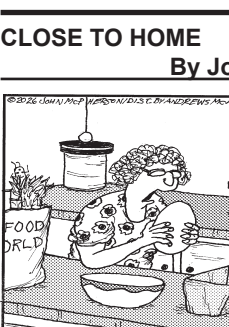
CLOSE TO HOME



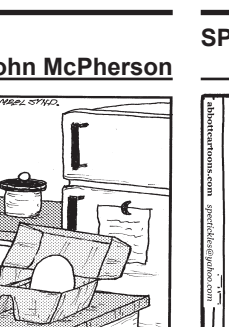
SPECTICKLES



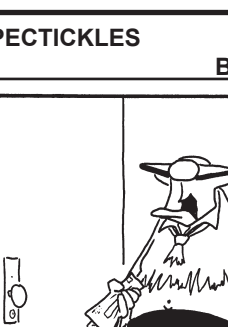
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



ARLO AND JANIS



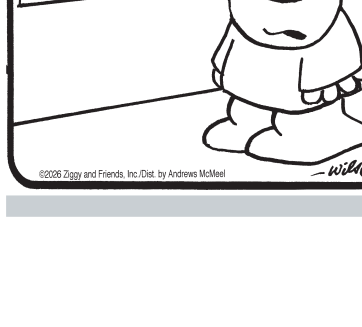
FRANK & ERNEST



GARFIELD



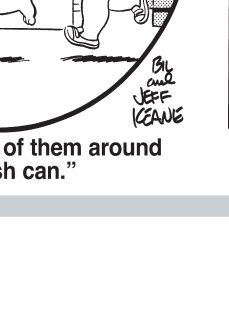
HI AND LOIS



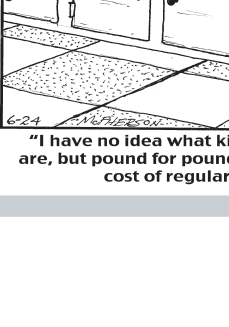
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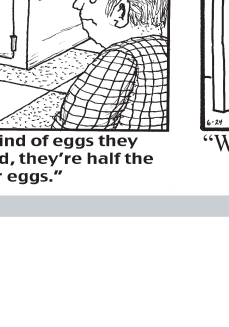
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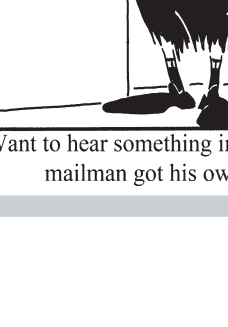
THE BORN LOSER



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM

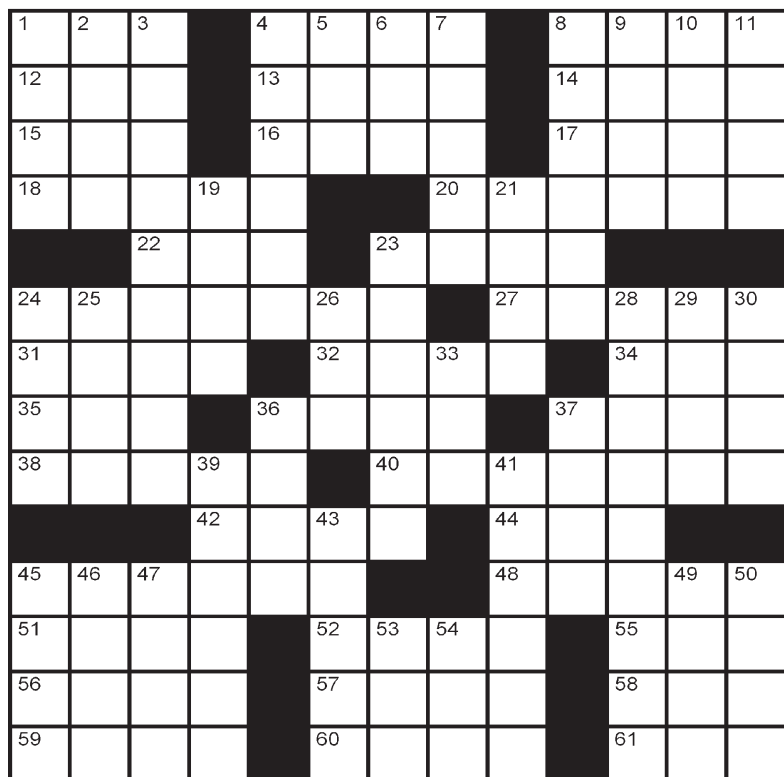


FRED BASSET



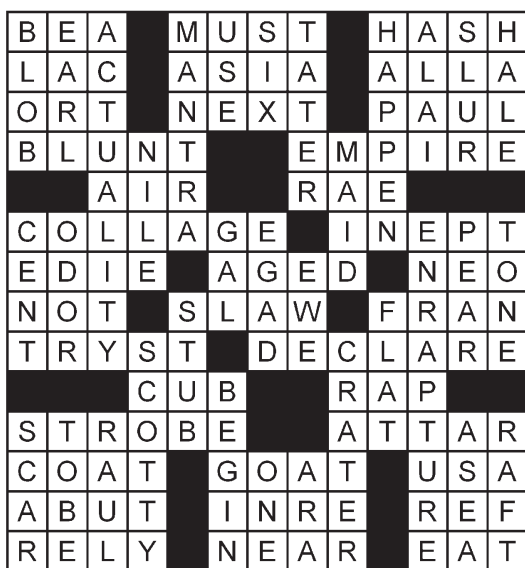
CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Business card abbr.
 - 4 Where Havana is
 - 8 Secure
 - 12 “— was saying ...”
 - 13 Related
 - 14 Walk with heavy steps
 - 15 Take it on the —
 - 16 Dimple
 - 17 Saturn feature
 - 18 Raised to the third power
 - 20 Narcotic
 - 22 Sea urchin
 - 23 Soon
 - 24 Stinging insects
 - 27 Different
 - 31 Breakfast fare
 - 32 Fall birthstone
 - 34 Exist
- DOWN**
- 1 Soapstone
 - 35 Charge for service
 - 36 Agents (Hyph.)
 - 37 — qua non
 - 38 — Haute, Indiana
 - 40 Laughed
 - 42 Coup d’—
 - 44 That fellow’s
 - 45 Below accepted standards
 - 48 Available (2 wds.)
 - 51 Margarine
 - 52 Composer — Satie
 - 55 Mine find
 - 56 Humdinger
 - 57 Inlet
 - 58 Nothing
 - 59 Bakery item
 - 60 From the U.S.
 - 61 Stop a fast



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Answer to Previous Puzzle



- 2 Jacob’s elder brother
- 3 Smelly cheese
- 4 Duffer’s helper
- 5 Banjo cousin
- 6 Container
- 7 Writer — Chekhov
- 8 Run
- 9 Inter —
- 10 Typeface
- 11 Brink
- 19 River in Austria
- 21 Lake
- 23 Side
- 24 Weight
- 25 Gothic arch
- 26 Male animal
- 28 Falling ball of ice
- 29 Sea eagle
- 30 Woodwind need
- 33 Literary collection
- 36 “I — — kick out of you”
- 37 Peel
- 39 Bit of news
- 41 Necklace
- 43 Betel palm
- 45 Urban dirt
- 46 Arm bone
- 47 Lager
- 49 Diva’s song
- 50 Hit again and again
- 53 —-com
- 54 “— Got a Secret”

CELEB NEWS

Savannah Guthrie says family remains ‘in agony’ over missing mom, begs the public for tips

“Today” show host Savannah Guthrie made an emotional appeal to viewers Tuesday to come forward with any information about her missing mother, a day after news organizations said a ransom note received months ago had indicated that she was dead.

“We are in agony, and we cannot be at peace. ... We love our mom. We’ll never stop looking for her,” Guthrie said at the “Today” desk in New York, holding a tissue in her left hand.

Nancy Guthrie, 84, who lived alone, was reported missing from her Tucson-area home on Feb. 1. The FBI released video more than a week later from a camera outside her front door showing a masked stranger. Her blood was found on the porch, but the case remains unsolved.

Some media outlets had previously reported receiving ransom notes in the days after Guthrie’s disappearance but had not disclosed the details while the investigation was at an early stage. Guthrie’s family was aware of the notes.

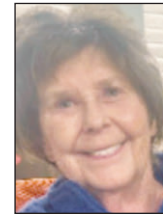
Tucson TV station KOLD said Monday that it had received two notes, one demanding millions in Bitcoin in exchange for Guthrie’s return and another that said she had died. Separately, CNN cited law enforcement sources in reporting on the contents of the notes.

CNN said a note indicated that those who kidnapped Guthrie did not mean to kill her but that she died shortly after her disappearance.

“I don’t have any comment on this story. I’m not involved in our coverage,” Savannah Guthrie said Tuesday, referring to NBC News. “But I can’t pretend I’m not here. And since I am, I want to just take the opportunity to ask people — really to beg people — to come forward. Somebody knows something.”



S. Guthrie



N. Guthrie

Man charged in killing of actor James Handy found mentally incompetent for prosecution

A judge found Monday that a man charged with murder in the stabbing of actor James Handy is not mentally competent for criminal court proceedings.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Maria Cavalluzzi ruled that 44-year-old Michael Gledhill cannot understand the case against him and cannot rationally assist his lawyer in his own defense.

Handy, the 81-year-old actor whose credits include “Jumanji” and “Top Gun: Maverick,” was in a relationship with Gledhill’s mother, and was found stabbed in the chest and lying unconscious outside her home on June 3, police and prosecutors said. He was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Gledhill was arrested after telling police he was the person they were looking for. Officers had responded to the home after a 911 caller said, “I am the son of man, I just killed the man of sin,” police said.

Gledhill has not entered a plea and has not appeared in court in the case. At his scheduled arraignment on June 5, a judge paused his prosecution and sent the case to a court that specializes in mental health evaluation.

That court ruled promptly after psychiatric evaluations that he was not competent. Cavalluzzi also found at a hearing Monday that Gledhill cannot make proper medication decisions. She signed an order saying he could be involuntarily medicated for one year, citing a psychiatrist’s determination that his mental health could be hugely helped by proper drugs.

She ordered him to appear in court on July 14 for a hearing on his long-term placement. His case will head to trial if he is later found to be competent.

Emails seeking comment from attorneys for both sides were not immediately answered.

Brian Delate, a longtime friend and fellow actor of Handy, told The Associated Press soon after Handy was killed that Gledhill’s mother had fixed up her garage so her son could live there. Handy had his own home, but spent much of his time there, his friend said. Delate said Handy had mentioned in passing that his girlfriend’s son had mental health problems.

— from wire reports

ASTROGRAPH

Newspaper Enterprise Association

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today offers the best odds/highest score thus far for 2026. It could be awesome for a one-day splash if your individual cycles are strong. However, it’s not suited for something that needs to last, personally or professionally.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A focus on partnership or on someone close could prevail for the next month or so. It’s important to believe in a significant relationship if you’re in one but always keep eyes open for patterns.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): An interest in building your financial future could continue for the next few weeks and could put you onto a positive path forward. Learn hacks but use caution with online advisors — be sure to read the fine print.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Belief opens windows that cynicism never can — don’t shut yourself off from miracles and glimmers. The magic of life is there to be perceived but it’s your mindset that determines if you can breathe it all in.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The door to your dreams rests in your shadow — self-work underlying success makes you solidly confident. Fix it inside and it naturally manifests outside. Better than fronting and always being afraid of exposure.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The power of your belief could come through as you speak or write, and your audience should be fairly receptive. Friends who are ahead of you in life can bring more value than just the pleasure of their company.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Believe in being OK, in life working out just right. It does — when you have the starlight perspective of trusting your destiny. Amor Fati means love of your fate, it’s a road to security and a release from fear.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It’s safe to be vulnerable when you choose the right room and boundaries stay tight, but not everyone deserves all of your tea. Choose the safe ones and never self-abandon to keep someone around.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You are only as self-aware as your unhealed shame can allow — healing shame makes the rest of your work possible. Continue on a path of cooperation with others, reciprocity lets all rise together.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Relationships need watering just like a garden. Weeding too. The next month could be a great time to feed your relationships that help you thrive. It could also be a time to weed out anyone that drains you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take hold of responsibilities, getting organized could mean everything feels lighter. Instead of expecting that things should always be fast and easy, be real-

istic — not everything is. The best attitude is letting that be OK.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Trust should be earned and boundaries never discarded. It could be easy to believe in an influencer with lots of rizz but give it a little time and listen to your gut-level intuition. Create art, sing, dance, play music.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Many of 2026’s worst moments should be behind you now — deep breath. Your personal new year starts big, the next few weeks could bring a new opportunity or expansion of a previous or current situation. From the astrology side it looks like a great fit for growth and putting you on your right path but be sure to check it from the worldly side and do all appropriate research. About early August, you could have an extreme opinion or feelings that might seem over the top in retrospect, it’s probably better not to act at the height of the intensity. Later August brings a chance to step in it, with an ‘I don’t care I’m doing it anyway’ vibe. Better not to. September could bring a nice surprise. October brings higher wisdom. Late in the month you’ll probably really, really want to believe in something. Be sure it’s for real before you leap.

PARDON MY PLANET By Vic Lee



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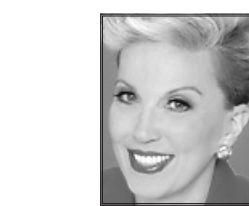
DEAR ABBY

Dear Abby: Years ago, my wife and I were separated. During that time, we still spent time together, had marital relations and went on many trips with our kids. During that period, two individuals who were supposed to be my friends started talking to my wife behind my back. Because they had crossed a line, I ended my friendships with them. They knew I was going to try to win my family back, but they said things calculated to make her angry.

Fourteen years passed, and I bumped into one of them. I was with my wife at the time. I wanted to quash our differences, so I spoke to him. I noticed something weird between him and my wife, and that stuck in my head.

When we got home, I asked if something happened between them, and she said no. But then she confessed that she had gone out with him a few times. She said he wanted to have sex with her, but it didn’t happen. The way she said it sounded weird to me, and I had the feeling she wasn’t being truthful.

Seven years later, she admitted something DID happen. Now I feel betrayed and angry that she allowed something to go on with someone who was my enemy. I no longer see her as my wife. I feel I can’t trust her. She told me she is sorry



ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

for what happened and said she had been afraid to tell me about it. She doesn’t want to separate or divorce. She says she loves me. I can’t think. Can you tell me what you think about all this?

Broken Trust in New York

Dear Broken: I think your friends added fuel to the fire when you and your wife were having marital difficulties. I also think she was emotionally vulnerable, was taken advantage of and was afraid to level with you. I do not think you should automatically end your long marriage over something that might be able to be resolved by working with a licensed marriage and family therapist. Please give it serious consideration.

Dear Abby: My 31-year-old son lives with us. He has had an on-again, off-again drinking problem since his 20s. He is kind-hearted, has an associate’s degree and is back in college again, but he’s never had a full-time steady job. We

buy his clothes and give him room and board. He studies, helps around our house with cleaning, washing, etc., but I don’t know how to help him stop drinking.

He sometimes gets mean when he’s drunk. He doesn’t drink every day, but, mostly, about 12 days out of the month, he gets really drunk at home. He doesn’t seem to be finding a job, although he has applied for some. Please give me advice.

Stressed Mom in New York

Dear Mom: You and your husband need to find an Al-Anon meeting (al-anon.org/info) and go. When you do, you will find emotional support for what I am suggesting next. Tell your kind-hearted, sometimes mean, functional alcoholic son you and his father are giving him a deadline to get into an alcohol rehabilitation program and find a full-time job, or he will have to move out. Then stick to it. Your kindness and understanding have enabled your son to continue his unproductive and unhealthy lifestyle, which isn’t good for any of you.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

SENSE AND SENSITIVITY

Dear Harriette: An old manager of mine recently reached out to me and offered me a job. It’s a department store-esque luxury makeup beauty adviser position in an upscale neighborhood in New York City. The job aligns with my interests and would give me money that I desperately need, especially since I didn’t get a summer internship.

My only fear with taking the job is that I’ll trap myself in retail when I should be networking and trying to get industry exposure. I also don’t want to run into scheduling conflicts during the school year when classes resume, causing me to have to quit the job and let down my former manager. What do you think I should do? Should I take the job for now and see whether anything changes or becomes available in the future?

The Job Hunt Drama

Dear The Job Hunt Drama: Your old manager knows you and respects you enough to invite you to take this position. That is excellent. Now it’s your turn to be mature and clear. Explain your schedule — not the desire to network. You have to figure that out in between work and the rest of your life. Talk about your upcoming school schedule,



HARRIETTE COLE

and find out if he is willing to have you work full time now and change your schedule to accommodate school in the fall.

Dear Harriette: Recently, I started seeing this guy, and I am really into him. We have known each other for a week and have already seen each other twice. It’s safe to say that I am falling fast, but I am worried that I’m being love-bombed. He brought me my favorite drinks and seashells from his walk on the beach, and he talked about our futures while also bringing up his ex-girlfriend, other people he’s seeing and how he’s too busy for a relationship at the moment. I feel like he’s giving me things and making empty promises to make up for the fact that this will probably end with me getting hurt.

After our second hangout, he said, “Love you,” while leaving. I was caught off guard and didn’t know how to respond, and I still don’t know how to feel. Do you think that I’m being love-

bombed, or am I reading too much into the situation? Is it possible that he just says he loves people casually?

Love or Lies

Dear Love or Lies: Slow down and take a deep breath. This guy sounds like a charmer. Flinging “love you” around like an air kiss may be fun for him, but you are considering it seriously. Don’t. In two dates, yes, you have had fun and he seems both romantic and attentive, but that does not a long-term relationship make. If you can just enjoy the moment, continue to see him — he has told you that he isn’t ready for commitment. Believe him.

Suggesting that this man is love-bombing you implies that you think he is duping you; I think he is just having fun with you. If you can go along and casually enjoy his flirtations and attentiveness, enjoy yourself. If you feel the need to cling to him with hopes of a relationship, you are setting yourself up for heartbreak.

Harriette Cole is a lifestyleist and founder of DREAMLEAPERS, an initiative to help people access and activate their dreams. You can send questions to askharriette@harriettecole.com or c/o Andrews McMeel Syndication, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106.

CELEBRITY CIPHER

By Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

“ C W H E G T Y A P O P N A L I A B P T N E G O
P Z T B J Y A V P B E P P N O B E C O P A C O ,
E L Q B P M Q W P N O C B A C M X P E L O T M B X W
A L P N O U A P J N O L . ” — J N Y A B P T V N O Y
Z E X U O L

Previous Solution: “You can’t go wrong by writing what you know. Even if you’re a horrible writer, your own knowledge and experience is unrivaled.” — Issa Rae

TODAY’S CLUE: N sɪɒnbə ɹ

GREAT BRITAIN

Burnham prepares for leadership contest

Jill Lawless
The Associated Press
LONDON — Newly elected British lawmaker Andy Burnham met the man he hopes to replace, Prime Minister Keir Starmer, on Tuesday as he prepares for a leadership contest in which he may be the only contender.

Burnham is the strong front-runner to succeed Starmer, who announced Monday that he would step down within weeks after two years in office marred by missteps and judgment errors that eroded his standing with his party and the public.

Burnham, a former Cabinet minister who served since 2017 as mayor of Greater Manchester, won a special election last week for a seat in Parliament with the express aim of challenging Starmer for leadership of the Labour Party and the country.

Burnham's chances got a big boost on Monday when former Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who was considered his main rival, announced his support.

Starmer and Burnham met Tuesday for the first time since last week's special election. Neither side released details of what was discussed. Burnham was also meeting Labour lawmakers as he seeks to build momentum for his bid.

The U.K. parliamentary system allows governing parties to change leaders — and thus prime ministers — without the need for a national election. The next general election doesn't have to be held until 2029.

Nominations for the Labour leadership will open on July 9 and close a week later. If Burnham is the only contender, he could be prime minister by July 17. If



YUI MOK / PA VIA AP

Andy Burnham poses with colleagues from the Parliamentary Labour Party in Westminster Hall at the Houses of Parliament in central London on Monday as he returns to the House of Commons to take up his seat after winning the Makerfield by-election.

there is a contest, the winner should be in place by the time Parliament returns from its summer break on Sept. 1.

Starmer told the weekly meeting of his Cabinet on Tuesday that he will try to make the transition to his successor as easy as possible. He told ministers that he wants an "orderly transition" and for whoever replaces him to succeed, his office said.

He is also keeping up a busy schedule, trying not to look like a lame duck during his final days in office. But while Starmer wants to carry on with business as usual, he's not allowed to make new major policy announcements or spending commitments during what remains of his time in office.

The European Union says a key U.K.-EU summit scheduled for July 22 will be postponed because of the uncertainty in Britain.

The British government is still expected to publish a long-awaited defense investment plan — which sparked the resignation of Defense Secretary John Healey on June 11 — before a NATO summit in Turkey on July 7 and 8 that Starmer is likely to attend.

Burnham's economic plans aren't yet known

Burnham was a popular mayor of Greater Manchester, overseeing a period of rapid regeneration for the city in northern England where the Industrial Revolution was forged. He has pledged to repeat his signature brand of "Manchesterism" on a national scale.

Many Labour members hope Burnham's people skills and charisma can connect with the public more than the stolid, managerial Starmer could ever

do. But Burnham's policies in many areas are unknown and untested. Some Labour lawmakers want to see a party election contest where he would face public debate and scrutiny.

Burnham is expected to make a speech next week outlining some of his economic plans.

Former Armed Forces Minister Al Carns, who quit this month to protest what he saw as inadequate defense spending, said that "we need to have a clear and concise discussion about what this country wants to be."

He has suggested that he might run for the leadership, but told broadcaster ITV that "I'm not ready to make a decision on this in any way, shape or form."

Others have suggested Darren Jones, a senior Cabinet minister and Starmer ally, should run, though he has yet to

comment. Potential candidates need the support of at least 81 Labour lawmakers, a fifth of the parliamentary party, to run. Many argue that a leadership contest will only focus attention on the party's internal divisions and extend a period of political uncertainty.

Starmer won a landslide but stumbled in office

Starmer resigned on Monday after a weekend considering his future, acknowledging that the Labour Party no longer thinks "I am best placed to lead us into the next general election."

He was the sixth prime minister in a decade to stand outside No. 10 Downing St. and announce a departure. It comes as Britain marks the 10th anniversary of its vote to leave the European Union, a decision that still roils the country's economy and politics.

After weeks of insisting that he would fight to keep his job, Starmer conceded to growing pressure to hand over to a new leader who can try and revive the government's flagging fortunes. He led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024, but his popularity and that of the party have plummeted since then.

Starmer has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living. He has been hamstrung by repeated missteps, including his decision to appoint Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tarnished friend of Jeffrey Epstein, as U.K. ambassador to the United States.

Labour is losing liberal voters to the growing Green Party and facing a rising Reform UK, the Nigel Farage-led anti-immigration party that consistently leads in nationwide opinion polls.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Suspect, 18, arrested in shooting that killed 2

Christopher Weber and Olga R. Rodriguez
The Associated Press

A shooting at a library in Northern California left two people dead and an 18-year-old suspect under arrest, police said Tuesday.

Chico Police Chief Billy Aldridge said gunshots and screams could be heard on a 911 call Monday evening from the Chico branch of the Butte County Library. Chico, a city of about 100,000 people, is 150 miles northeast of San Francisco and home to California State

University, Chico. The suspect fled out the back of the library as officers entered, but additional law enforcement personnel behind the building took the man into custody, Aldridge said during a news conference.

"The incident this evening was obviously very sad, traumatic for a lot of people. Very traumatic for our community," Aldridge said.

A video from the scene shows police patrol cars surrounding the one-story, brick building and officers pointing their rifles

at the building. Another video shows a man face down on the ground being handcuffed by a police officer who then picks him up and hands him to another officer who walks him away from the building.

The streets around the library were closed temporarily and a family reunification center was set up for the people who were inside the building.

A child was also taken to the hospital with a minor injury.

Police later determined the suspect acted alone and identified him as Bradley Scott Sayer

of Chico. He was booked into the Butte County Jail on suspicion of two counts of murder. There was no indication he had any prior relationship with or connection to the victims, police said in a statement. Authorities have not released the victims' names.

Jeannie Lee Schroeder was on a city bus that stopped near the library when she noticed the large police presence. As officers carrying guns marched toward the street, the bus driver started driving away. Schroeder began recording video on her phone.

"And as we were driving, and

I'm filming, I see a person in a light-colored shirt running toward the street, toward where the bus was at," Schroeder said Tuesday. "And then there was an officer behind him, and another officer coming at the side of him, and that's when they tackled him down. And then they apprehended him."

A police department dispatcher and a jail representative said Tuesday they did not know if Sayer has a attorney. A search of Butte County court records did not show Sayer's name and a phone number could not be

found for him. Sayer is scheduled to make his first court appearance Thursday.

Police said the Butte County Sheriff's Office and the FBI are assisting in the investigation.

All Butte County library branches will be closed Tuesday, officials said.

In a Facebook post, the county offered its "deepest condolences to everyone affected, including the victims, their loved ones, library staff, and all those impacted by this heartbreaking incident."

NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK'S HARLEM

The Rev. Al Sharpton locks in foothold for the long haul

Aaron Morrison
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Rev. Al Sharpton's staff and advisers stood around him just outside the doors of a cozy theater, where some of his most fervent supporters waited to greet him in the newly renovated headquarters of the National Action Network.



Sharpton

When doors flung open, Sharpton entered to a standing ovation that continued until he was perched behind a lectern, on a stage decorated with a floor-

to-ceiling video screen.

The audience was not anticipating a call for justice. Instead, the rabble-rousing youth minister turned go-to national advocate was there to declare his organization was officially an owner, no longer a renter, in the historically Black Harlem neighborhood it has called home for more than two decades.

"I want to make something permanent," Sharpton said recently to the gathered crowd of NAN board members, local clergy and other allies. "When people see that you've bought

a building, they say, 'Wait a minute, they're not going nowhere.'"

NAN's new permanent home is the former Faison Firehouse Theater on Hancock Place, near the intersection of 124th Street and Manhattan Avenue. George Faison, a Tony Award-winning choreographer known for his work in the original 1970s Broadway staging of "The Wiz," had bought the firehouse in 1999 and converted it into a community theater.

When Faison had a choice between selling the former firehouse in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood to a large developer or selling it to NAN, he chose the latter, according to Sharpton.

"I'm 71 years old — if I was just trying to do it as an Al Sharpton personal fan club, I could just keep renting," Sharpton told The Associated Press during an interview in his new private office, with large windows overlooking central Harlem.

"I'm buying it to show I want this to be an institution. I want it to last beyond me."

Although the renovation is structurally complete and its rooms are functional, Sharpton said he expects his weekly Saturday rallies to resume in

the new headquarters this summer.

Founded in 1991, NAN began meeting at P.S. 175, a Manhattan elementary school, during the tenure of the late David Dinkins, New York City's first Black mayor. Next, NAN rented a space at 125th Street and Madison Avenue. In 2006, Sharpton moved NAN into a rented space at 145th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard, where it operated until January. NAN's headquarters had been named the "House of Justice" by his late mentor, the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.

Often organizing from his Harlem headquarters, Sharpton became known staging direct-action protests on behalf of Black men killed, brutalized or persecuted by police in New York City: Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo, the exonerated men formerly known as the Central Park Five, and Eric Garner, among others.

"Harlem means home," Sharpton told the AP.

The new NAN headquarters now carries the name "House of Justice Rev. Jesse Jackson's Workshop," following the multimillion dollar purchase and renovation of its five floors. Sharpton said he will invite artists to hold salons, poetry readings and jazz nights, as a callback to the Black cultural and intellectual movement of the Harlem Renaissance.

Looking out at his supporters during the invite-only reception for the new space, Sharpton reflected not just on the NAN's past, but on the current cultural and political environment.

"We are in trouble," he said in reference to redistricting fights set off by a recent

Supreme Court decision on the Voting Rights Act and the rolling back of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

"We don't have, in my opinion, the luxury of not nailing down and working together," Sharpton said.

Over the years, the NAN headquarters has become a "can't skip" campaign stop for Democratic candidates seeking everything from the presidency and Congress to state and local offices. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the House of Justice is typically standing room only for the dignitaries who show up.

After the death of his childhood hero James Brown in 2006, the horse drawn carriage carrying the Godfather of Soul's golden casket stopped outside NAN's 145th Street headquarters.

The organization's weekly Saturday rallies have also been a venue for families grieving loss through police violence, or for celebrities to speak out and unfairness in the entertainment industry.

Ashley Sharpton, the youngest of the reverend's two daughters, grew up around the House of Justice. She and her older sister, Dominique Sharpton-Bright, were there on the day the late pop icon Michael Jackson visited and spoke at the invitation of their dad.

"The magic was palpable," Ashley recalled.

Now, as founder and director of NAN's youth initiatives, Ashley feels deeper stake in the organization's future.

"It's time for us to step in and take ownership, literally, of what is needed to maintain the legacy, and to continue the fight," she told the AP.

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WORLD

COLOMBIA

Populist poised to become next president

Regina Garcia Cano and Astrid Suarez
The Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia — Eccentric, ostentatious and artistic, Abelardo de la Espriella is also a political neophyte who is poised to become Colombia's next president after leaning into everything that makes him different from the conventional politician to win people's support.

The businessman and lawyer, whose ventures include a clothing line, wine and rum brands, and a restaurant, earned U.S. President Donald Trump's endorsement despite never having run for office and on Monday led the presidential runoff race by 1 percentage point, or nearly 251,000 votes, with all but a fraction of the votes counted.

De la Espriella's victory, which electoral authorities are expected to declare this week, will add Colombia to a growing list of countries that have turned to political outsiders in search for solutions to complex social, security and economic challenges.

The self-proclaimed representative of "the never-before-seen" promised voters fearful of renewed internal conflict to combat violent crime with an iron fist, pledging a strategy that includes ending outgoing President Gustavo



AP

Colombian presidential candidate Abelardo de la Espriella speaks to supporters from inside a bulletproof booth at a celebration rally in Barranquilla, Colombia, on Sunday.

Petro's attempts to establish dialogue with multiple armed groups — an effort that has largely failed — and building mega-prisons, emulating those of Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele.

Progressive candidate Iván Cepeda, Petro's protégé, is challenging the results.

"I don't like either of them, but I'm terrified of continuity," retiree María del Rosario



Cepeda

Villaveces, 66, said after voting Sunday in the capital, Bogota.

Villaveces, 66, added she is concerned that de la Espriella "has

no idea about politics," but she said that his running mate, former finance minister José Manuel Restrepo, gives her "a little peace of mind" because "he does know (politics) and is well organized."

More than 26 million people voted in the runoff. Of those, over 426,000 people chose a third, no-name option on the ballot that allows voters to express dislike of both candidates. About 29,000 people cast blank ballots.

Will Freeman, a fellow for Latin American Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, said most voters do not perceive lack of political experience as a risk even though plenty of outsiders have failed to get much done.

"They wanted a candidate who would decisively break with Petro and the left," he said. "Part of the country was voting as much against Petro and the left as for de la Espriella, associating the left with erosion of security, economic stagnation, etc., whether or not that's fair."

De la Espriella, nicknamed "The Tiger," told thousands of supporters that he will "govern for all Colombians." But as he spoke behind a bulletproof glass Sunday night, he also echoed the frustration of many eager to see the end of Petro's presidency.

"Pack your bags and prepare to become the opposition," he told Petro's camp. "Make no mistake, Mr. Cepeda. You already know how fiercely the tiger roars."

Cepeda on Monday responded to the remarks, warning de la Espriella against threats, veiled or otherwise.

"Don't come threatening us," Cepeda said in the capital, Bogota. "Neither your roars nor your screams frighten us."

He also asked supporters to remain calm and maintain "exemplary behavior." Hours earlier, people in the western city of Cali took to the streets, damaging a public bus, several surveillance cameras and an ATM.

Sunday's winner will begin a four-year term Aug. 7.

The candidates pitched vot-

ers widely different strategies to prevent the South American country from the nonstop violence, such as car bombs, kidnappings, disappearances and forced displacements, that Colombians lived with in previous decades.

Yolanda Hernández, who recycles trash for a living, voted for Petro in 2022 but cast her ballot for de la Espriella this time. While she acknowledged that Petro was unable to deliver on promises meant to help the poor because of congressional gridlock, she said Colombia cannot afford another four years under his vision for the country.

"We want change in Colombia because it's always the same violence, always the same thing," Hernández, 49, said. "(Petro) said he was going to lower the cost of services, that he was going to lower the price of food, and everything is more expensive."

Last year, authorities recorded 14,780 homicides, the most since at least 2015, driven by clashes among illegal armed groups. Among those killed was conservative presidential hopeful Miguel Uribe. Colombia's illegal groups have more than 27,000 members.

De la Espriella, 47, pitched a heavy-handed approach to crime-fighting, including drug trafficking, with tactics that draw from Bukele's playbook.

Those tactics have lowered homicide rates in the Central American country but have fueled accusations of human rights abuses.

De la Espriella managed to defeat more experienced conservative politicians in May's first-round vote, including Sen. Paloma Valencia, who represented the party of the influential former President Álvaro Uribe. For Yann Basset, a professor of Political Science at the University of Rosario, De la Espriella's feat marks a "new stage for the Colombian right."

"There is perhaps a weariness among political figures that contributes to the success of this outsider populism against the political class," Basset said.

In Latin America, several presidents have achieved electoral victories with little political experience.

In Argentina, Javier Milei, a television commentator, formed a party, rose to fame and served as a congressman shortly before becoming president. In Ecuador, Daniel Noboa, an heir to a fortune built on the banana trade, entered a snap election with only months of experience as a National Assembly member and won.

De la Espriella holds dual Colombian and U.S. citizenship. He's a Trump supporter and a member of the Republican Party.

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Legals

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

1. Sealed Bids for Lodi, Ohio "Krause Substation Construction" will be received by the Village of Lodi, Ohio, at the office of the Clerk-Treasurer Municipal Building, at Village of Lodi, 108 Ainsworth St., PO Box 95, Lodi, OH 44254-1303 until

2:00 PM, Local Time July 2, 2026

and at that time and place will be publicly opened and read aloud.

2. The proposed Work consists of furnishing all labor, supervision, tools, materials and equipment to complete the project scope as follows:

The Village is seeking proposals for the rebuild of their existing 69 kV to 4.16 kV Krause Substation. The substation will consist of the following major equipment that will be furnished by the Village to be installed by the contractor: (1) 69kV Structures, Bussing and Switching, lot of 15kV Structures, Bussing and Switching. The existing 69kV to 4.16kV power transformer, (3) 167kVA Voltage Regulators, and two (2) circuit reclosers will remain and be reused in the rebuilt substation. The contractor shall furnish all labor to install the Village furnished equipment, and the contractor shall furnish and install all other material and

Legals

labor to provide for a complete substation as listed in the specifications and as shown on the contract drawings.

3. The contract documents and Specifications are on file at the office of the Clerk-Treasurer, 108 Ainsworth St., PO Box 95, Lodi, OH 44254-1303, and at the office of the Engineer, GPD Group, 520 South Main Street, Suite 2531, Akron, Ohio 44311-1010. To obtain an official set of the documents and become a Registered Bidder, contact Ashley Howarter at the Engineer's Office by emailing ahowarter@gpdgroup.com. Contract Documents and Specifications are available in PDF format and can be sent via e-mail. A hardcopy set may be obtained by sending a non-refundable check for \$40.00 to the Engineer's Office, attention Ashley Howarter. Additional copies of bid documents may be purchased for \$40.00 per set. For technical questions contact Billy Santry at bsantry@gpdgroup.com. Interested parties must contact the Engineer's Office to be a registered bidder. Only proposals submitted by registered bidders will be accepted.

4. All bids shall be signed and submitted in duplicate on the proposal form blanks, which are provided separately with the Specifications. Bids shall state the price by item and shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked (electronic submittals will not be accepted). Bid for Lodi, Ohio Krause Substation Construction

and addressed to the attention: Clerk-Treasurer Village of Lodi 108 Ainsworth Street P.O. Box 95 Lodi, Ohio 44254

5. Each bid shall contain the name of every person, firm or corporation interested in the same, and must be accompanied by either a bid guaranty bond to the satisfaction of the Village, or a certified check drawn on a solvent bank in the sum of 10% of the bid, made payable to the Village of Lodi, Ohio, as a guaranty that if the bid is accepted, a contract will be entered into and its performance properly secured.

6. The Village of Lodi, Ohio, reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities in bidding.

7. No bidder may withdraw his bid for a period of 60 days after the scheduled closing time for the receipt of bids.

By Order of the Village of Lodi, Ohio, Board of Public Affairs MG 6/17, 6/24/26 20762094

NOTICE OF BID

Bids are requested for T.H. 398 EDGEWOOD DRIVE BRIDGE NO.1 REPLACEMENT PROJECT IN MEDINA TOWNSHIP OPWC PROJECT NO. C142C (REBID)" in Medina County as detailed in the bid documents.

The Notice of Bid can also be obtained at the Medina County Engineer web page https://engineer.medinaco.org/bids.html

Legals

Bids must be submitted electronically through the www.bidexpress.com web service until 9:00 AM on July 10, 2026 at which time all bids will be received and read aloud at the Medina County Engineer's Office.

The Engineer's estimate is \$304,750.00. No contract shall be awarded at a price of more than twenty percent in excess of the Engineer's estimate. The plans and specifications or itemized list of supplies, facilities, or equipment and estimated quantities can be obtained or examined anytime on www.bidexpress.com or at the Medina County Engineer's Office, 791 W. Smith Road, Medina, Ohio 44256, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Work shall be completed no later than November 1, 2026. The road shall be closed for a maximum of 60 calendar days.

Each bidder shall be required to file a bid guaranty with the bid in the form of either: (1) a Bid Performance Bond in the amount of one-hundred percent (100%) of the amount bid; or (2) a certified check, cashier's check or letter of credit in an amount equal to ten percent (10%) of the amount bid, conditioned that the bidder shall, if their bid is accepted, execute a contract in conformity with the bid, plans, details, specifications, and bills of material. A letter of credit shall be revocable only at the option of Medina County.

All contractors and subcontractors involved with the project will, to an extent practicable, use Ohio products, materials, services, and labor in the implementation of their project. Additionally, contract compliance with the Equal Opportunity requirements of Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 123, the Governor's Executive Order of 1972, and the Governor's Executive Order 84-9 shall be required. Contractor compliance with the equal employment opportunity requirements detailed in the Bid Documents.

Contractors and Subcontractors must comply with the prevailing wage rates requirements detailed in the Bid Documents.

The bid will be awarded to the lowest and best bidder. The Medina County Board of Commissioners reserve the right to reject any and all bids.

Andrew J. Conrad, P.E., P.S. Medina County Engineer M.G. 6/24; 7/1/26 20762334

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS MEDINA COUNTY, OHIO

CASE NO. 2026 CIV 0281 JOHN A. BURKE, MEDINA COUNTY TREASURER vs

THE ESTATE OF LINDA L. ROZELL, et al To the following named defendant(s) The Estate of Linda L. Rozell whose last known address is: 5738 Overlook Drive Chippewa Lake, Ohio 44215

Legals

And whose present whereabouts are unknown and Unknown Spouse, if any, of Linda L. Rozell whose last known address is: 5738 Overlook Drive Chippewa Lake, Ohio 44215

And whose present whereabouts are unknown and Unknown Heirs, devisees, Successors and/or Assigns of Linda L. Rozell whose last known address is: 5738 Overlook Drive Chippewa Lake, Ohio 44215

You have been named defendant(s) in a COMPLAINT filed in Medina County Court of Common Pleas, Medina County Courthouse, Medina Ohio

By: JOHN A. BURKE, MEDINA COUNTY TREASURER

The object of the COMPLAINT is for: FORECLOSURE OF REAL PROPERTY PARCEL NUMBER 020-10D-52-105, complete legal description of which may be obtained from the Medina County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

You are required to answer the COMPLAINT within twenty-eight days after the last publication of this notice, which will be published once a week for THREE (3) successive weeks.

If you fail to appear and defend, judgement by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. MG. 6/17, 6/24, 7/1/26 20762145

PROBATE COURT OF MEDINA COUNTY, OHIO

ESTATE OF: ABBIE L. BROWN, DECEASED

CASE NO: 2026-01-ES-0012

PUBLIC NOTICE OF HEARING ON INVENTORY AND APPRAISAL

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF ABBIE L. BROWN, DECEASED (MEDINA COUNTY PROBATE COURT, MEDINA, OHIO, CASE NO. [02026-01-ES-0012]:

You are hereby notified that an Inventory and Appraisal of decedent's assets has been filed, and the hearing on inventory will be held on July 17th, 2026 at 11 o'clock A.M. The court is located at: Medina County Probate Court, 225 East Washington St., 4th Floor, Medina, Ohio 44256.

Exceptions to inventory must be filed in writing at least five days prior to the date set for hearing.

Robert A. Molnar #0091951 Attorney for John C. Oberholzer, Guardian of the Person and Estate of Barbara Koppes, an Adult Oberholzer & Monar, LPA 39 public Square, Suite 201 Medina, OH 44256-2297 Phone: 330-725-4929 Fax: 330-723-4929 EMAIL: rmolmar@medinalaw.com M.G. 6/17, 6/24, 7/1/26; 20762104

Legals

LEGAL NOTICE

The City of Medina has prepared the annual Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report to provide information to you, the consumer, on the quality of our drinking water. Included with this report is general health information, water quality test results, how to participate in decisions concerning your drinking water, and water system contacts.

This report is available for review at Medina City Hall, 132 N. Elmwood Avenue, Medina, Ohio, or on the City of Medina's website at: https://medinaoh.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/2025_CCR.pdf

For further information you can contact the Water Office at (330) 722-9081.

Nino Piccoli Service Director M.G. 6/24/26 20762217

Public Hearing

The Village of Lodi Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., to consider a Conditionally Permitted Uses and a Variance request from Robert Furr, 605 Medina St., Lodi, OH 44254.

This request is to consider a Conditionally Permitted Uses, Section 1272.03(g), Automotive and truck service repair shop to include the towing and storage of vehicles as an incidental use to the primary use, in a C1 District, and a Variance, Section 1278.03(c)(8). The use should be located adjacent to nonresidential uses such as churches, parks, utility stations and Industrial and Commercial Districts, as it will be next to a residential use. Anyone interested in this application is invited to attend. MG 6/24/26 20762267

Public Hearing

The Village of Lodi Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., to consider a Conditionally Permitted Uses request from Katherine Debottis, 113 Harris St., Lodi, Ohio 44254.

This request is to consider a Conditionally Permitted Uses, Section 1272.03(a), Nonprofit professional and charitable organizations, in a MU District. Anyone interested in this application is invited to attend. MG 6/24/26 20762269

PUBLIC HEARING

The Village of Lodi Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., to consider a Variance request from Elizabeth & Brian Casto, 309 Young Dr., Lodi, OH 44254.

This request is to consider a Variance, Section 1250.04(e), in Residential Districts, one story detached garages or other accessory buildings shall be located at least five feet from side and rear property lines when located in back of the principal building. Anyone interested in this application is invited to attend. M.G. 5/26/26 20762306

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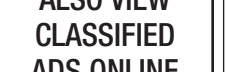
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Troubled Reflecting Pool faces fresh scrutiny

Matthew Daly
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The saga over the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool took a turn as President Donald Trump said Tuesday that six people have been arrested over recent damage. The president's troubled \$14-million-plus rehabilitation project has become a visceral flashpoint over law enforcement, aesthetics and environmental concerns ahead of the country's 250th anniversary celebrations.

In a social media post, Trump claimed without supporting evidence that there had been a "350-foot gash" in the paint as the administration faces a self-imposed deadline to fix the botched renovation before the nation's 250th anniversary celebration next week. He has also said, including again on Tuesday, that the federal government would release images to substantiate his claim.

Trump pledged to beautify the century-old Reflecting Pool ahead of the anniversary celebrations, draining its water and having the bottom painted a color he dubbed "American flag blue." But since the site was restored, its water has been plagued with algae bloom and pieces of the new coating appeared to be peel-

ing off the bottom.

Trump, without evidence, has repeatedly blamed the peeling paint on vandalism.

"It was purposefully and criminally done, and somebody had to work very hard, probably in the dark of night, to create such a condition," Trump wrote Tuesday, adding that another seven people were cited for allegedly damaging the pool.

The U.S. Park Police and the Interior Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the arrests or Trump's claim of vandalism.

The Associated Press verified that one man was arrested after touching the already-peeling paint. He said he wanted to examine the new coating, touching a still-attached chunk briefly then letting go shortly after a park worker told him to.

Maintenance problem morphs into a law enforcement issue

National Guard members and Park Police have been patrolling the deck around the pool after Trump insisted over the weekend that vandals were responsible for damage to the liner, without providing evidence.

Trump said Tuesday that

the Interior Department will release images of alleged vandalism at the pool. Pressed by reporters after Air Force One landed in Pennsylvania for a visit to a trucking company, Trump said Interior is "going to share" photos and videos of the alleged vandalism, which remains unverified.

The president had said on Monday that the images existed and the federal government would provide them. No photos were made public as of Tuesday afternoon.

The arrests highlighted what's expected to be tightened security in the capital ahead of and during the 250th anniversary celebrations, which are set to draw large crowds to the National Mall and other tourist sites.

Trump also said Tuesday that "some of the water" will be drained from the pool "either immediately before or after the Fourth of July, to do the permanent repair."

It was unclear from his post what the scale, scope or cost of the permanent repair would be.

Atlantic Industrial Coatings, a contractor on the pool project, said it has identified some areas in the Reflecting Pool that require repairs. "These areas are a very small part of the massive 7-acre project,



A duck swims in the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool on Friday in Washington.

and do not indicate a failure of the liner," the company said in a statement. The company said it expected to make the repairs to the pool once it is drained, as part of the warranty.

Environmental group wades in after duckling found dead

Adding to the controversy swirling around the pool, an environmental group called on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to investigate after a Mallard duckling carcass was photographed floating in the algae-filled pool, and two other ducks were found dead nearby. The Center for Biological Diversity said Tuesday

that the Wildlife Service must enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects migratory birds.

"Wasting taxpayer money turning the reflecting pool into a giant duck death trap just in time for America's 250th birthday party is as Trump as it gets. Cruel, stupid and selfish," said Tara Zuardo, a senior campaigner at the Arizona-based group.

City Wildlife, a Washington-based rescue and rehabilitation non-profit that also conducts necropsies on birds found in the city, said they could not comment on the cause of the death of the duckling because its carcass "wasn't recovered for examination."

Renovation project plagued ahead of the 250 celebrations

Trump pitched the original improvements as intended to clean, beautify and reinforce an iconic site that he said had become dilapidated and dirty because of previous presidents' neglect. Algae has plagued the pool for a century, and Trump insisted that the newly installed "American flag blue" coating, which he selected himself, would turn the pool into a gleaming expanse along the National Mall.

Yet within weeks of Trump declaring the rehabilitation completed in time for Independence Day, the water was plagued by a vivid green algae bloom that clouded the pool's coating. A piece of liner, about 4 square feet, was observed on Friday, partially floating in the pool. The Associated Press saw additional pieces in the water on Monday.

Workers were seen in recent days pouring hydrogen peroxide into the pool in an attempt to kill the algae. Hydrogen peroxide can act as a paint remover.

Experts say the dark lining can add to algae growth by absorbing more sunlight than lighter surfaces. That raises the surrounding water temperature, allowing algae to thrive.



A man drinks on Westminster Bridge in London as a heat wave is predicted Tuesday.

France records its hottest day ever as Europe withers in early heat wave

Samuel Petrequin
The Associated Press

PARIS — France recorded its hottest day ever Tuesday as an early heat wave gripped Europe, prompting the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre museum to restrict visiting hours and disrupting school and transportation schedules in multiple countries.

Punishing temperatures extended to the United Kingdom and Spain, where weather agencies issued red alerts — like France — about the risks of extreme heat for tens of millions of people.

The record of 85.6 F for France's national thermal indicator — an average of temperatures measured at 30 weather stations — was only the latest in a series of never-before-registered highs heaped on Europe's largest country. The conditions were likely to persist at least until the weekend.

"Further record-breaking temperatures are expected, including some that could surpass all previous records, regardless of the time of year," the Meteo France weather service said.

France's previous hottest days were recorded during heat waves of August 2003 and July 2019, with an average temperature of 84.9 F.

Temperature records also tumbled at individual weather stations and on consecutive days in some towns as daytime highs climbed well above 104 F, Meteo France said.

In the French capital, Gin Dujardin said the heat forced him to halt his work fixing roofs, which in Paris often have galvanized zinc coverings.

"It's very, very hard because the zinc is very hot. The welds don't hold," he said. "It's Dubai temperatures. It's impossible."

France has recorded 40 fatalities from drowning in the past week as people seek relief in rivers and other bodies of water, despite authorities' warnings about unsupervised swimming. Most of the drownings involved young people, Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said.

Meteo France said the heat wave has reached what it described as a "plateau of severity," with unrelenting heat, day and night. A growing number of regions will tip into the red again today as the heat spreads across more than half of the country, including the northernmost tip of France, the weather service said.

Human-caused climate change is tied to increasingly extreme weather, and U.N. climate agency projections say the next five years are likely to shatter more heat records.

The Louvre and the Eiffel Tower close early

In a country without widespread air conditioning, schools, public transportation and sporting events have been affected. In Paris, the Eiffel Tower closed in the afternoon instead of late at night, as it usually does. The Louvre museum said it would close two hours earlier than normal from today through Saturday.

"Although parts of its historic building are naturally resilient, the museum remains vulnerable and is not sufficiently adapted to climate change," Louvre officials said. "Heat buildup is greatest toward the end of the day and is further intensified by high visitor numbers."

This heat wave, coming early in the summer, has already been compared to the August 2003 heat wave that roasted France with the highest temperatures in over half a century. It caused an estimated 15,000 deaths, many of them among older people in apartments and retirement homes without air conditioning.

Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent, with temperatures increasing twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service. Over the last four years, more than 200,000 people across Europe died from heat-related causes, and most of those deaths were preventable, the World Health Organization's Europe office said this month.

The above-average temperatures can

cause heat exhaustion and life-threatening heat stroke.

Rail systems are strained by high temperatures

Hundreds of British schools planned to close or close early this week because of the heat, while many train services were reduced to avoid heat-related problems on the rail lines.

The Met Office, the U.K. weather agency, issued a heat warning for today and Thursday, with forecasts suggesting June's all-time daily temperature record could be broken.

Temperatures of around 98.6 F are expected in southern England, with up to 95 F in southeast Wales. The peak of the heat wave is now forecast for today and Thursday, when highs could reach 102.2 F in London or southern England.

Conditions are expected to ease by Friday, the Met Office said.

On Tuesday, multiple U.K. train operators, including the express train serving London Gatwick Airport, said they were canceling or reducing services. Railway operators urged people to travel only if "absolutely necessary" today and Thursday.

Further south, Spain faced a heat wave across parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

Spain's national weather service, Aemet, issued red alerts Tuesday for temperatures of 111 F in southern Andalusia as well as warnings of thermometers hitting 104 F in the normally temperate Cantabria and the Basque Country regions along the country's northern Atlantic coast.

Aemet meteorologist Rubén del Campo said Spain, which has experienced increasingly torrid summers, is only going to get hotter because of climate change as heat waves become more frequent, longer and occur outside the traditional window of July and August.

Of the dozen heat waves Aemet has recorded in June since it started tracking them in 1975, half have occurred since 2015, del Campo said.

STUDY

Mexico and others see up to two more months of heat stress than in the 1970s

Alexa St. John
The Associated Press

Mexico, Kenya, Italy and other nations around the world are experiencing one to two more months of heat stress than they were several decades ago, new research published Monday says, and some areas even more so. Regions previously untouched by heat stress are now feeling it, too.

Extreme feels-like temperatures, heat stress days and tropical nights have all become dramatically more frequent, long and severe over the past six decades as the planet's warming intensifies — a result of the burning of fossil fuels coal, oil and gas — according to a new study published in the journal Nature Climate Change on Monday.

The researchers went beyond just temperature, which is frequently studied, and used feels-like temperatures, to understand more of the impact on people. They assessed heat stress on individual humans, influenced by temperature, humidity, wind speed and more. They used what's called the Universal Thermal Climate Index to analyze those factors and model the human body's response to the environment.

The combination of heat and humidity can be dangerous for humans, because humidity impacts how sweat evaporates, and that's a cooling mechanism. Heat waves that are humid can be more fatal than dry heat waves as humans don't cool down as easily.

Past studies have looked at the extent to which human-driven climate change has sent temperatures soaring, especially in recent years. One study says people globally suffered an average of 41 extra days of dangerous heat in 2024. Some research says that the world is on track to add nearly two months of superhot days each year by the end of the century.

Here, researchers looked at heat stress at three levels: strong index temperatures of greater than or equal to 89.6 degrees Fahrenheit; very strong index temperatures of greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit; and extreme index temperatures of greater than or equal to 114.8 degrees Fahrenheit.

Places that might see around 50 more days per year of at least strong heat stress compared with the 1970s include parts of Southern Africa, such as in Namibia and Angola; Eastern

Africa, including parts of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda; and parts of Mexico and Central America.

In Southern Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey, some areas will see up to 40 additional days with strong heat stress compared with the 1970s. Much of Southern Europe is seeing almost a full month of additional strong heat stress days from decades ago.

In the U.S., much of the country sees 15 or more days of at least strong heat stress, and southern parts, including Texas and Florida, are seeing close to 25 or more days with very strong heat stress.

Those heat stress seasons are also lasting longer.

The study's lead author Rebecca Emerton, also a senior scientist at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts in the United Kingdom, said it was striking "to see heat stress not only intensifying in those places that we already consider as being hot or used to experiencing heat waves ... but also to see this, we call it, expanding footprint of heat stress expanding into regions where it's historically been rare or non-existent."


According to the study, the feels-like temperatures on the ten warmest nights of each year have also increased faster — 0.58 degrees Fahrenheit per decade — than the ten warmest days, 0.49 degrees Fahrenheit per decade.

For tropical nights, the researchers considered minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit. This means people might not be recovering properly from daytime heat in the overnight hours.

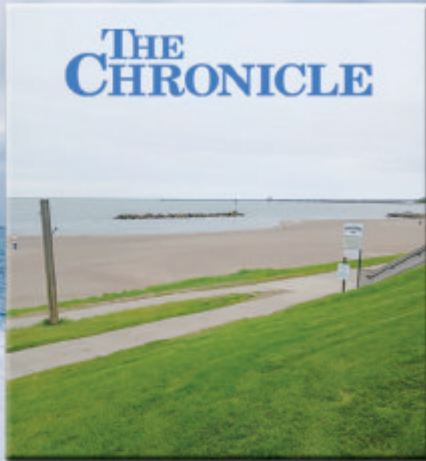


And now, one billion more people face at least one day of extreme heat stress each year than they did in the 1970s.

The world has known that adding heat-trapping gases to the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels and cutting down forests will warm the globe, said Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center on Cape Cod, who was not involved in the research.

"This study adds stark details about increasing dangers to billions of humans," Francis said. "This analysis shows not only is temperature rising, but so is humidity, which makes high temperatures more deadly because our body's air conditioning system — sweating — struggles to keep up."



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Much has changed since 1877 when Hans Pader Nielsen came to Lorain and established the modern-day Nielsen Jewelers on the west bank of the Black River. Yet for more than 145 years at Nielsen's, the old-fashioned traditions of quality, service and value have remained the same.

Founded in 1694 in Ballum, Denmark, Nielsen Jewelers has been passed down from generation to generation for more than 328 years, establishing a centuries-old tradition of fine jewelry and trusted jewelers.

Today Nielsen Jewelers is at 753 Broadway in the heart of downtown Lorain. Offering a wide variety of jewelry to browse, one of the area's largest loose colored gemstone collections on display, custom designs made in Lorain and expert repairs done on location, it's easy to see why Nielsen Jewelers is your trusted one-stop shop for all your jewelry needs.

For more information, call (440) 244-4255 or visit www.nielsenjewelers.com.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Carl Nielsen, left, and Carl Gregory Nielsen in their store at 753 Broadway, Lorain.



PHOTO PROVIDED

This room's window treatments are an example of Gotcha Covered's work.

Get local advice to make indoor and outdoor spaces more comfortable in Lorain

When the weather warms up, many of us look forward to opening the windows, enjoying the patio, and letting more natural light into the house. But for many, summer comfort can be tricky: afternoon glare on the TV, rooms that heat up too quickly, and outdoor spaces that feel too bright to enjoy for long.

That's where local advice makes a real difference, especially here in Lorain. At Gotcha Covered, we've been serving the Lorain community for over a decade, and we truly love it because it's such a diverse and vibrant community. Homes here have character, and comfort matters just as much as style. Instead of guessing online, you can get guidance tailored to your home, your comfort, and the way you live day to day.

Comfort inside: Better light control, privacy

The right shades or blinds can help you enjoy natural light without harsh glare. Light-filtering shades soften bright sunshine, while room-darkening options can make bedrooms more restful. If certain rooms get uncomfortably warm, insulating styles like cellular (honeycomb) shades can help keep indoor temperatures steadier.

Local guidance also helps you choose the right level of privacy, especially for street-facing windows or homes with close neighbors, without making rooms feel closed in.

Comfort outside: Enjoy the patio longer

Outdoor living is one of the best parts of the season, but direct sun can make a porch or patio feel

unusable. Outdoor shades can add shade, reduce heat, and cut down on glare so you can read, visit with family, or simply relax outside more often.

A local pro can recommend options that hold up to our weather and help you decide what works best for your space, whether you want more shade, more privacy, or both.

Ready for local, no-pressure guidance? If you'd like to make your indoor or outdoor spaces more comfortable, start with a free in-home consultation. You'll get local advice, see samples in your own lighting, and receive recommendations that fit your style and budget, so you can finally get the shades you've always wanted, without a big renovation.

For more information, call (440) 709-8249 or visit www.GotchaCovered.com/Avon.

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International Festival returns this weekend

Celebrate your culture at the International Festival!

The weeklong festival will be this Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with numerous separate events taking place mainly in downtown Lorain. Various nationalities and cultures as well as the Lorain community are celebrated with the sharing of gifts from participants' many homelands through food, music, costume and tradition.

The three-day bazaar takes place along the scenic Black River at Black River Landing and features a multitude of foods with a wide variety of ethnic cuisine to sample. It's joined by the Slovak community and the Lorain Community Music Theater as the spotlight nationality and organization.

The festival will have live music, cultural performances, ethnic cuisine and kids activities.

Admission is \$3 per person at the north and south gates. Credit cards are now accepted at the gates. Kids 12 and under are free of charge. No group rates. Anyone under 18 needs to be accompanied by an adult after 6 p.m.

The festival's hours will be 5 to 11 p.m. Friday, noon to 11 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Parking can be found along Broadway and around the festival site.

Wristbands will be provided for the 21-and-up beer tent near the north side of the festival.

Friday

The festival begins with the opening ceremonies 5:15 p.m. Fri-



CHRONICLE FILE

Lorain International Festival Queen and Court in the 2025 International Festival Parade on Broadway in Lorain.

day where the new International Festival queen and her court will be introduced.

Then Slovak folk dancers and African royalty dancers will perform at 6 and 6:15 p.m., respectively.

Later that evening, The Ladies Night will perform at 8 p.m. until 11.

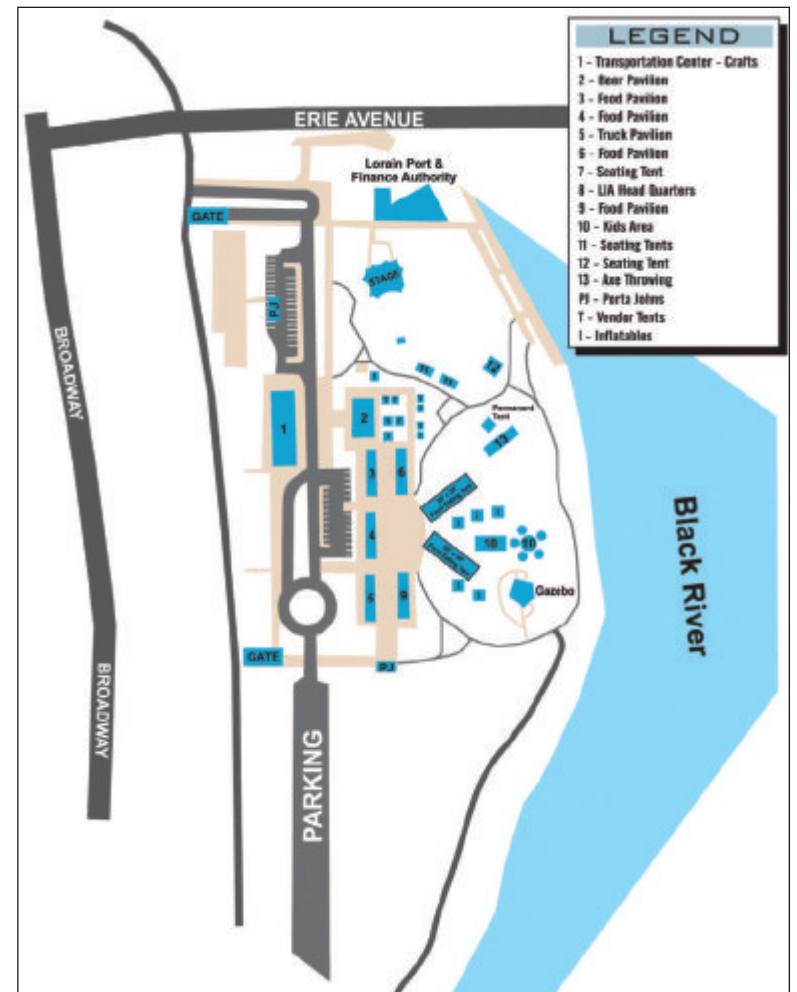
"The Ladies Night" is the ultimate rocking tribute to Pop Divas, with an emphasis on the '90s through 2000s. These five dudes aren't afraid to wear their love for singers like Britney Spears, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Miley Cyrus on their pink glittery sleeves as they rock their way through these guilty pleasure singalongs, often

in the original key.

Since 2018 "The Ladies Night" has been bringing their rocked up pop hits to the Midwest and growing their fanbase with regular appearances all around Northeast Ohio. Get ready to bop along to some great harmonies and musicianship!

Saturday

There will be cultural performers all day starting at 12:30 p.m. with the North Coast Prost followed by Candelitas at 2:30, chamberlain Irish dancers at 3, Sharonda Hall Praise Dance at 3:20, African royalty dancers at 3:30, The Hive Studio at 4, Filipino American Foundation of Ohio at



4:30, Esencia Boricua Cultural de Lorain at 5 and Lorain Hungarian dancers at 5:30.

The Back 2 The Future will take the stage at 8 p.m. until 11 p.m. Are you ready to hop into our musical DeLorean and journey back to the raddest decade of all time? Buckle up and get ready to

relive the '80s like never before with Back 2 The Future — the ultimate '80s tribute band.

Experience the ultimate blast from the past as B2TF transports you back to the neon-soaked, leg-warmer-wearing, hair-teasing days of the 1980s. From synth-pop

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Enjoy great views of Lake Erie, the Lorain lighthouse, the second-largest bascule bridge in the world and the Black River.

Ariel Broadway Hotel's provides easy access to the Palace Theater,

Lakeview Park Beach, One-Mile Pier, Oasis Marina and Lorain Metro Parks. Enjoy on-site fine dining, a gift shop, bakery, chocolatier and sports bar.

Situated between Cleveland and Cedar Point in Sandusky, the hotel can serve as your home away from home while exploring the North Coast.

For more information, call Ariel Broadway Hotel at (216) 548-9605, email events@arielbroadwayhotel.com or visit www.arielbroadwayhotel.com.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ariel Broadway Hotel in Lorain.

Argenti Auto Body has been in business for 64 years

The late Bill Argenti founded the business in 1962 after coming to Lorain County from Pennsylvania. According to his son, Greg Argenti, "Focusing on the customer has kept people coming to 4381 Elyria Avenue in Sheffield Township, and once you get them through the door, you have to respect them and their needs because you have to go beyond just the repair of the vehicle."

The business has had three generations of Argentis working at the shop, including Greg's son, Dominic. The auto body shop has evolved since its creation to stay relevant in a world where business can no longer do only one job. Thus, the business has expanded its range of services. While still focusing on collision repair, they now also do detailing and sanitizing, lower body protection, spray on bedliners and also other accessory items.

"The majority of the shop's work comes from insurance companies," Greg Argenti said, although the shop continues to refuse to be



PHOTO PROVIDED

a Direct Repair Program shop with any insurance company because they feel the requirements from most insurance companies are not beneficial to them or their customers.

"You have to agree to certain concessions, discounts and gratis work," Greg Argenti said. "In order to do that, the insurance company would require us to have to cut corners. We refuse to compromise

the quality of our work! We owe our longevity to the fact that our customers believe in us and we believe in making our customers happy."

Argenti Auto Body is about 1 mile north of North Ridge Road at 4381 Elyria Avenue in Sheffield Township. For more information, call (440) 233-5012 or visit www.argentiautobody.com.

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Advertorial

No More Clogged Gutters or Ice Dams

Family-run and locally based Gutter Cover Company offers innovative solutions to stop clogged gutters and damaging ice dams.

Jim Carbone

Special to The Chronicle

This winter produced many below-freezing days interspersed with quick thaws creating the perfect storm for large icicles and ice dams.

And when the warmer weather came, the melting snow and ice was backing up and leaking into many Northeast Ohio homes. The damage done to ceilings, walls, windows, and gutters was widespread. These problems could have been avoided with the proper protection.

Family-run and locally based Gutter Cover Company offers innovative solutions to protect your gutters from future damage and help them operate at peak performance.

"This is the most severe ice damage we've seen in the past decade," says owner Jim Carbone. Since 1998, Jim and his crews have made a point to only work with advanced products and systems that are made in the USA and are engineered for freezing climates.

Ice Protection:

To help prevent ice buildup in winter and spring and protect your gutter system in summer and fall, Jim offers two unique solutions: the Heater Cap and Gutter Topper.

The innovative Heater Cap is an advanced gutter heating system and is ideal for combating ice dams.

It emits the perfect amount of heat to melt ice, and your gutters and downspouts will flow freely all year long. Perfect for problem areas, it

can be installed with or without gutter covers and also attach to many existing gutter guards.

Leaf Protection:

Made from durable solid aluminum and installed over your existing gutters, the high-performance Gutter Topper keeps leaves, debris and birds out while allowing water to flow freely through. No more clogs or worrying about cleaning

your gutters. The guards are designed with a smooth slope to make the system self-shedding. And best of all? They are backed by a lifetime transferable performance warranty.

Call Gutter Cover Company at 440-366-0688 to schedule a complimentary gutter inspection. The company has thousands of satisfied customers, an A+ rating with the BBB,

and many impressive Google reviews. The products used by Gutter Cover Company are manufactured in the USA. For more information, visit GutterGuard1.com.

For more information call (440) 366-0688. View short videos of Gutter Topper and Heater Cap at; www.gutterguard1.com.

Save \$400 off any Heater Cap or Gutter Topper installation when you schedule a free, no-obligation gutter system analysis by Saturday July 24, 2026. Additional discounts are available for senior citizens and veterans.

Jim Carbone is owner of Gutter Cover Co.

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One of the finished projects from DiFranesco Garage Doors.

Get the best quality garage doors from DiFranesco

DiFranesco Garage Doors has spent 54 years serving customers by using the very best in American-made products. It's where Lorain County turns for anything from residential doors to all commercial doors, from box truck doors to garage door openers. They can do it all.

Their technicians and company president Mitch Witherell will help with any and all customer needs. They have decades of knowledge regarding both residential and commercial garage doors.

And DiFranesco offers only all-American products for the best quality for their customers.

"Our doors are from Haas Corp, which is from right here in Ohio," Witherell said. "They are a family company like ours and they support our state and our workers, keeping all our money here in our state, and they also use American steel for their products."

DiFranesco offers only American-made Chamberlain/LiftMaster garage door openers in both residential and all commercial lines.

They are also the only LifeStyle screen dealer for garage door screens in Northeast Ohio. They turn your garage into a screened-in porch at a very reasonable cost, allowing you to use your garage as a livable area for a low price.

The springs DiFranesco uses come from another Ohio-based company, Service Spring Corp. It's the world's largest manufacturer of springs in the world and they only use American steel, which guarantees that customers get the longest lasting springs possible.

Witherell has owned DiFranesco Garage Doors for more than a decade but has been a business owner for 37 years, many of those spent in the garage door profession.

"I will say it has been the best experience of my life providing a great living and wonderful opportunity to meet great people," Witherell said.

Not only does he employ two members of the military, he also offers discounts to all customers who are military members, first responders and senior citizens.

"My family are all medical professionals — as was I — so we are caregivers," Witherell said, "and I bring that training here each and every day to serve my customers to the highest degree possible at a different level than I think most people are not used to."

Witherell is a working owner who runs DiFranesco's service department. He's out in the field each and every day with his guys on call to provide service and estimates, meeting customers and helping them with their needs.

"We have an awesome service and install team made up of the best men I know," Witherell said. "The guy with the least experience has 12 years of service time. Two others are both over 20-plus each, so customers know they are getting the very best with all the products we install and service."

DiFranesco Garage Doors is at 3300 Oberlin Avenue in Lorain. Their hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, visit www.Difranescogaragedoors.com or call (440) 282-6187.

Ray Gidich Heating, Air Conditioning: It's a family affair

Ray Gidich Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. is a family-owned and -operated business that has proudly served families, businesses and communities since 1980.

Embedded in the heart of the community, Ray Gidich Heating & Air Conditioning is not just a business but a cherished family legacy.

It all began back in 1980, when Ray and his wife Kris embraced the spirit of entrepreneurship and embarked on a journey that would not only shape their future, but also the comfort of homes around them.

With just himself, Kris and one other committed individual, and with the unwavering support of his father, Ray founded his own HVAC company, a venture that was to grow far beyond his initial dreams.

Throughout its evolution, the couple's guiding principles — honesty, integrity and relentless pursuit of unparalleled service — have been the compass steering the business' course.

The couple's passion for quality HVAC service proved contagious. Their son, Matt, following the trail blazed by his parents, joined the company as an installation technician. Through years of hands-on experience and deep-seated learning, Matt immersed himself in every facet

of the business.

Ascending the ranks, he eventually assumed the role of company president, a testament to his dedication and a legacy to his parents' vision.

Today, Matt continues to uphold their original mission: to serve customers with unmatched service and product quality, treating them with the same respect and care they would want to be treated.

In their commitment to delivering excellence, they cultivate a culture of professionalism and top-tier workmanship. Each member of the service and installation teams contributes to maintaining high standards of quality, ensuring every project leaves customers with satisfaction that lasts.

Their workforce comprises seasoned experts, some of whom have stood by the company's side for an astounding 39 years, their expertise matched only by their passion for what they do.

Ray Gidich Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. has the privilege of serving Lorain, eastern Erie — including the picturesque islands — western Cuyahoga and northern Huron counties. As a symbol of their commitment to their craft and community, they stand licensed, bonded and insured.

See **GIDICH**, 11

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International Festival Princess Pageant

This year's International Festival Princess Pageant will be 7 p.m. Thursday at the Lorain High School Performing Arts Center, 2600 Ashland Avenue, culminating with the crowning of the 2026 International Festival Queen and her court by the end of the evening. It will be an exciting evening of international pageantry with the princesses representing their heritages through music and dancing.

Tickets will be available at the door of the event — cash, check or via online sales. Tickets purchased the day of the event will cost \$12. Children 12 and under receive free admission to the event.

In total, there are 29 princesses representing seven heritages in this year's International Festival pageant — read on to meet them all.



Sophia Alamo

Age: 18

Nationality: Puerto Rican

Sponsor: The Queens Corner

Parents: Brenda and Orlando Alamo

School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: My ethnic outfit is inspired by the Taino Native Americans that make up about one-third of our heritage. I have on a nagua, a traditional skirt, decorated with symbols of the coqui, Puerto Rico's native frog, el sol, representing the sun, and the spiral, symbolizing water.

Favorite family tradition: Going on chinchorros with my family, where we visit different restaurants around the area and try a variety of foods and beverages.

Favorite native dish: Mofongo Al ajillo con carne frita.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: Because sharing my culture and history is something I am honored to be able to do. I hope to carry this on to generations after me.



Joscelyn Alvarado

Age: 18

Nationality: Vietnamese

Sponsor: Operation Care Package

Parents: Jessica and Adam Fichtel

School: Vermilion High School

Ethnic dress: My áo dài is a traditional Vietnamese outfit that is usually made from silk, cotton or other soft fabrics. It has a long dress-like top with loose pants underneath, and it is known for looking elegant and beautiful.

Favorite family tradition: Eating dinner as a family to eat my grandparents' home-cooked Vietnamese dishes.

Favorite native dish: Bún riêu (crab noodle soup).

Why she wanted to be an international princess: I want to be an International Princess because I wanted to try something different that I would never have imagined that I would do. I also take a lot of pride and joy in the nationality I have, so being able to represent it feels good.



Ayisah Bolarinwa

Age: 16

Nationality: Nigeria (Yoruba)

Sponsor: NCNW Lorain County Section

Parents: Tawio and Candace Bolarinwa

School: Early College High School and Elyria High School

Ethnic dress: My ethnic dress is called "Iro and Buba with Gele." The Iro is a wrapper worn around the waist, the Buba is the blouse worn on top, and the Gele is the traditional head wrap. It is a Yoruba cultural outfit.

Favorite family tradition: My family and I enjoy watching is Okebadan (Ibadan cultural festival). This festival lasts for an entire week, during which people dress up in traditional clothing, eat, dance and play traditional games.

Favorite native dish: Ila Alasepo with Amala and meat.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: I enjoy representing my culture. I'm happy to be a princess because it allows me to connect with people from different cultures.



Janelle Bonty

Age: 17

Nationality: English

Sponsor: Walls of Love

Parents: Vanessa Bonty and Brandon Young

School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: Light blue dress with a flower pattern.

Favorite family tradition: Hearing the stories from my grandmother.

Favorite native dish: Fish and chips.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: I thought that it would be a fun experience. It is a great opportunity to make new friends, get out of my comfort zone and, most of all, learn new things about my heritage. I've always loved going to the festivals, so I knew I would enjoy being a part of the entire experience.



Ja'Fayijah Brown

Age: 17

Nationality: African American

Sponsor: Open Door Season Organization

Parent: Faith Mathis

School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: My Kente skirt that has vibrant and geometric patterns that symbolize milestones and celebrations. The gold represents royalty, green for growth and renewal, red for sacrifice and black for maturity. It reflects a deep cultural connection and respect for our roots.

Favorite family tradition: Every spring, my family travels to Georgia to connect with relatives and learn more about our ancestry and roots.

Favorite native dish: Mac and cheese.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I want to step out of my comfort zone and to connect with other girls who are just as enthusiastic about sharing their cultures.



Grace Elano

Age: 17

Nationality: Filipino

Sponsor: Filipino American Foundation of Ohio

Parents: Donald and Joy Elano

School: Early College High School

Ethnic dress: The dress is a traditional Mestiza dress, known for its elegance and beauty and typically worn during significant occasions. I chose the color red because, in our culture, it represents strength, passion and resilience, which are values that reflect Filipino women and our culture. The butterfly sleeves symbolize grace and strength.

Favorite family tradition: Mañanita is a tradition in the Philippines, where all your loved ones wake up really early and sing special songs for you to wake you up on your birthday.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: Past princesses inspired me to use my voice to make a real difference in the community like they have.



Ellora Feliciano

Age: 16

Nationality: Puerto Rican

Sponsor: Sacred Heart Chapel

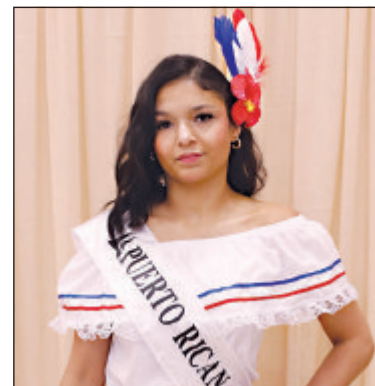
School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: My outfit represents traditional Puerto Rican culture, featuring the bright colors of the Puerto Rican flag and flowing fabrics that reflects the island's vibrant spirit. The dress is inspired by folk styles often worn during cultural dances, like bomba and plena.

Favorite family tradition: Celebrating holidays together by cooking traditional food and listening to music.

Favorite native dish: Arroz con gandules with pernil.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: I love representing my culture and sharing it with others. Growing up, I admired the confidence and pride of the princesses in the festival, and I wanted to be a part of that and inspire others the same way.



Andrea Garcia

Age: 17

Nationality: Puerto Rican

Sponsor: El Centro

Parents: Tatiana Melendez and Javier Garcia

School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: My jibaro dress from Puerto Rico is special because it represents the island's history and the everyday people who worked hard in the countryside. It shows pride in Puerto Rican culture and traditions, especially during festivals and dances.

Favorite family tradition: Our family gatherings, which are important in Puerto Rican culture because they bring people together to celebrate, share food and stay connected.

Favorite native dish: Mofongo or papas relleno.

Why she wanted to be an international princess: I wanted to experience something new and challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone.



Karina Garcia Leon

Age: 19

Nationality: Puerto Rican

Sponsor: Main Street Lorain

Parents: Melvin Garcia and Yeisha Leon

School: Lorain High School

Ethnic dress: This outfit represents my Puerto Rican culture through the colors and style. The red, white and blue match the Puerto Rican flag. The off-the-shoulder top and long skirt are inspired by traditional jibaro dresses. I like how the lace and layers make it look nice but still keep that cultural feel.

Favorite family tradition: Celebrating together as a family, especially during holidays.

Favorite native dish: Mofongo.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: It's something I've always dreamed about since I was younger. I love the idea of representing who I am and where I come from, and this gave me the chance to do that while also growing as a person.

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Sunday

The International Festival parade will step off 11:30 a.m. Sunday on Broadway. It will travel north on Broadway from the staging area, then west on West Erie Avenue and

north onto Washington Avenue.

The parade will take place rain or shine and there will be no admission charged.

At 1 p.m., the Lochaber Pipe Band will perform. Then at 1:30 p.m., there will be visiting royalty

introductions. After that, at 2 p.m., Lorain Hungarian Dancers will perform, followed at 2:30 p.m. by Shoji Japanese dancers, then Living Traditions Filk Ensemble at 3 p.m., then Harmonia Band at 4 p.m.

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Wayne and Lena's oldest son Keith returned to Lorain from California to rejoin the family business in 1979. He had his father's passion for the plumbing and heating business. He worked along with his siblings Shelly and Brian for 40 years and grew the business after his father's death in 1986.

Keith taught at Lorain County Joint Vocational School and Lorain County Community College. He also held key positions in local HVAC associations. Keith, like his father, was admired by friends, peers and business associates.

In January 2023, Raymond Plumbing Heating & Air Conditioning changed hands, with new owner Mike Sherrill, a long-time work associate of Keith's. Together, Keith and Mike had collaborated on a variety of projects for more than 20 years.

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Jasmine Gonzalez

Age: 17
Nationality: Mexican
Sponsor: Mexican American Citizens Club
Parents: Veronica and Andrew Gonzalez
School: Elyria Catholic High School
Ethnic dress: My dress is a traditional white Mexican outfit named after the state of Veracruz. It's light and elegant and made to be flowy for folkloric dances. My ethnic dress has bits and pieces that are very sentimental to me.
Favorite family tradition: On Christmas Eve each year, we stay up till midnight spending so much time together while each of my family members would prepare and make the ingredients for the Mexican dishes pozole and tamales.
Favorite native dish: Carne asada street tacos, Mexican rice and beans, and tortas.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: It is an amazing opportunity to represent my heritage and to show I'm proud to be a Mexican.



J'Me Hood

Age: 17
Nationality: African American
Sponsor: The Promise Organization
Parents: Jasmine and Daniel Hood
School: Lorain High School
Ethnic dress: The outfit I am wearing is inspired by kente cloth from Ghana, known for its bright colors and meaningful patterns that represent heritage. The headwrap and bold accessories also reflect African traditions, where headwraps have historically symbolized status.
Favorite family tradition: I love when we all go over to my Yaya's home for holidays, and she cooks my favorite meals and desserts.
Favorite native dish: Collard greens and candied yams.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: As I watched my big sister Gracie participate last year it inspired me to take the opportunity to show my African American roots.



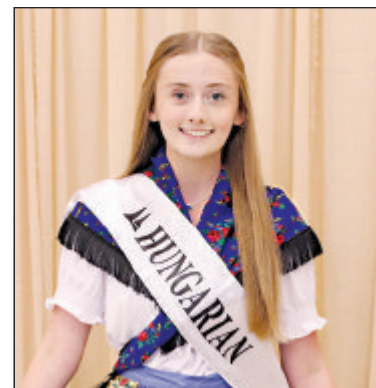
Emmalina Jones

Age: 17
Nationality: German
Sponsor: Good Knights of Lorain County
Parents: Robert and Tamala Kuehne
School: Lorain County Joint Vocational School
Ethnic dress: My ethnic outfit is a traditional dirndl. It is traditionally worn by German women and girls. The word dirndl can mean "young woman," "girlfriend" or "dress."
Favorite family tradition: Going to Oktoberfest every year with my grandfather and parents. I love listening to the German music and watching the dancers.
Favorite native dish: Schnitzel.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: To show pride and learn more about my culture. What makes this special to me is being able to show my Opa (grandpa) how proud I am to be German and how much it and he means to me.



Annabella Kubasak

Age: 18
Nationality: Scottish
Sponsor: The Lochaber Pipe Band
Parents: Denise and Todd Kubasak
School: Amherst Steele High School
Ethnic dress: It's a traditional Scottish Highland dance ensemble, featuring an Aboyne dress with a Highland vest and red ball-bearing jig shoes. My tartan is the Wild Rose Lennox color. The Aboyne dress is worn in the Highland dance world for dances that emphasize grace, posture, and movement. The Highland vest represents discipline, strength, and pride in Scottish culture.
Favorite family tradition: Celebrating St. Patrick's Day.
Favorite native dish: Empire Biscuits.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I have always been taught about my culture. My mother was in the 1992 Lorain International Princess Pageant, and she encouraged me to participate.



Evangeline Markus

Age: 17
Nationality: Hungarian
Sponsor: The Hungarian Reformed Church of Lorain
Parent: Christine Markus
School: Elyria Catholic High School
Ethnic dress: My folk dress is inspired by the Sárköz region, located in southern Hungary. The bright, rich colors of my skirt reflect the vibrancy of Hungary. The floral pattern on the skirt, apron and shawl all demonstrate the Sárköz women's attention to detail. Hungarians display this costume with pride and respect to honor the intricate devotion put into the costume.
Favorite family tradition: Performing different folk dances on Hungarian Day.
Favorite native dish: Lángos and Paprikás Csirke (chicken paprikash).
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I met the 2012 Lorain International Queen, Taylor Cawthon. She was my first inspiration to become a Hungarian princess.



Mahogany Milton

Age: 16
Nationality: Belizean
Sponsor: WAMOR
Parents: B'Lon Calloway and Travis Milton
School: Elyria Catholic High School
Ethnic dress: Flowers, classy and colorful.
Favorite family tradition: Dancing to music.
Favorite native dish: Chicken and rice.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I wanted to become a Lorain International Princess to learn more about Belizean heritage than what I already knew. I also wanted to honor my ancestors who allow me to share my heritage.



Leila Minnich

Nationality: African American
Sponsor: African Royalty Dancers
Parent: Rebecca Barlow
School: Horizon Science Academy
Ethnic dress: My traditional Dashiki represents the elegance and creativity that is deeply connected to African American traditions. The design was originally rooted in West Africa, with similar tunic designs found in Mali dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. They showcase many colors. Dashikis are worn for weddings, church, festivals and cultural events.
Favorite family tradition: Multi generational vacations.
Favorite native dish: Corn bread.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: Because every year the Lorain International Festival showcases different cultures. I'm honored to represent my African American heritage in the International Festival because it shows how strong and connected each culture is.



Elena Nieto

Age: 16
Nationality: Mexican
Sponsor: Sacred Heart Chapel
Parents: Evan and Christina Nieto
School: Elyria Catholic High School
Ethnic dress: My skirt is hand-painted by a dear family friend and made with green and red fabric symbolizing hope and the blood of the soldiers. The eagle on the front of the skirt, like on the Mexican flag, represents the courage and strength of the Mexican people. The shirt reflects colors of the flag as well. The off-the-shoulder design is for comfort in warm climates.
Favorite family tradition: Praying the novena for Our Lady of Guadalupe.
Favorite native dish: Tamales and flautas.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I have wanted to be an International Princess since I was a little girl coming to the festival and seeing all the princesses dressed up.



Samara Nixon

Age: 17
Nationality: African American
Sponsor: Harrison Cultural Community Centre
Parents: Danyelle Wright and Raymont Nixon
School: Lorain High School
Favorite family tradition: The Fourth of July is my favorite gathering of the year because of the fireworks, line dances, laughter, games, and food. This is the time when the family can cherish one another.
Favorite native dish: Milkyway Cake, a recipe special from my grandmother
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I wanted to be an international princess to inspire girls my age to believe that anything is possible, no matter their circumstances or hardships. I also want to encourage them to stay proud of where they come from and to honor the strength and legacy of the ancestors before them.



Arabella Ortíz

Age: 18
Nationality: Puerto Rican
Sponsor: Achievement through Community Education and Support
Parents: Rosemary and Daniel Ortíz
School: Oberlin Senior High School
Ethnic dress: My ethnic outfit is a Jíbaro-style dress that is white with a red sash and was handmade in Puerto Rico. This dress is blending influences from Spanish colonial fashion, African heritage and Indigenous Taino culture.
Favorite family tradition: Going to different Puerto Rican festivals to see such an amazing display of pride and just a good time.
Favorite native dish: Pastes and papas rellenas.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: Because growing up I never really saw much Puerto Rican influence in the media and especially not in the Disney princesses, so when I saw the opportunity to be a Puerto Rican princess I was excited.

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Arianna Rodriguez

Age: 18
Nationality: Mexican
Sponsor: Mexican Mutual Society
Parents: Griselda Reyes and Javier Rodriguez
School: Horizon Science Academy
Ethnic dress: The traditional Chiapas ethnic outfit, specifically the traje de chiapaneca, is a two-piece outfit hand-embroidered with colorful flowers on black or white tulle/satin. Originating from Chiapa de Corzo, this ensemble consists of an off-the-shoulder blouse and a flowing skirt, often worn for folk dances and celebrations.
Favorite family tradition: On Dec. 16 Las Posadas is a tradition when my family and I re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for lodging before Jesus' birth, going house to house singing carols.
Favorite native dish: Tamales verdes.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: My titi who just passed away wanted me to become an International Princess.



EvaLesa Serrano

Age: 17
Nationality: African American
Sponsor: Nami Lorain County
Parents: Cieria Ramon and Noel Serrano
School: Elyria Catholic High School
Ethnic dress: Garments like the one I'm wearing have a lot of history and meaning across Africa and the African diaspora. Ankara fabric, with its bold colors and detailed patterns, is a wax-printed cotton material that became popular in West Africa and now represents identity, culture and pride.
Favorite family tradition: As a family, we celebrate community accomplishments by supporting minority- and women-owned businesses and attending cultural holiday programs like Juneteenth and Kwanzaa.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I want to be an International Princess to represent my culture, my community and inspire others to be confident in who they are.



Ehlaia Simmons

Age: 17
Nationality: African American
Sponsor: Start With Art
Parents: Edward Simmons and Letoshia Howard
School: Elyria High School
Ethnic dress: I am wearing an off-the-shoulder long red dress with a black and green pattern.
Favorite family tradition: At every holiday or family event my family has a form of cheesecake. It's not something huge, but it's important that it's always there!
Favorite native dish: My Mema's pound cake.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: Because I don't do much with my nationality, so this is a good opportunity to be able to learn more about mine and others. It's also a nice place to go to meet other girls my age and make new friends.



Jonique Strother

Age: 18
Nationality: African American
Sponsor: Greater Victory Christian Ministries
Parents: Monique King and John Strother (deceased)
School: Lorain High School
Ethnic dress: My ethnic outfit is a mixed-color African-inspired look with purple, orange, green and blue. The colors are really vibrant and meaningful to me because they represent pride, creativity and unity within African heritage. The bold patterns reflect strength, identity and the beauty of my culture.
Favorite family tradition: Family gatherings, especially Sunday dinners.
Favorite native dish: Macaroni and cheese, and collard greens.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: Because I love the idea of representing my culture with pride while also building confidence and meeting other people from different backgrounds.



Carleigh Taylor

Age: 18
Nationality: Irish
Sponsor: Operation Lean On Me
Parents: Ariane Smith and Sherman Smith
School: Lorain High School
Ethnic dress: My dress is a white liente with a green overdress.
Favorite family tradition: I love spending time with my family during the holidays and baking/cooking with them.
Favorite native dish: One of my favorite dishes is shepherd's pie.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I have always wanted to be an International Princess since I was a little girl. I went to the festival with my grandma and papa every year, and it was one of my favorite things we did together. It is definitely the reason I am a princess now.



Sophia Vicens

Age: 17
Nationality: Puerto Rican
Sponsor: Amherst Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 1662
Parents: Michelle and William Vicens
School: Amherst Steele High School
Ethnic dress: My traditional Puerto Rican folkloric outfit reflects the island's blend of Spanish, African and Indigenous Taino roots. The off-the-shoulder top and full skirt come from Spanish influence, while the bright colors connect to African traditions, especially in native dances like the Bomba y Plena.
Favorite family tradition: My favorite family tradition is simply our family reunions.
Favorite native dish: Arañitas, pastelitos and rellenos de papas.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: To explore my heritage in a way that puts me into history itself. I have learned so much from my family and even through my dress itself.



Isabella Volpe

Age: 18
Nationality: Mexican
Sponsor: Walls of Love
Parents: Jennifer Reyes-Volpe and Michael Volpe
School: Amherst Steele High School, Lorain County JVS and LCCC
Ethnic dress: It's a traditional Mexican-style folkloric dress worn during cultural festivals and dances, showcasing tri-color palette of red, white and green inspired by the Mexican flag, with the bottom of the skirt embroidered with repeating patterns of the Mexican National Shield, featuring the eagle on a cactus and the word "Mexico."
Favorite family tradition: Celebrating Día de los Muertos (day of the dead).
Favorite native dish: Tostadas and tamales.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: To carry the family tradition as the sixth princess participant from my family, and to share my culture and pride with others.



Arianna Wysocki

Age: 17
Nationality: German
Sponsor: Lorain Historical Society
Parents: Brandon J. Wysocki and Channele Wysocki
School: Lorain High School
Ethnic dress: It represents the region my Uroma (great-grandmother) is from: Baden-Württemberg. I am wearing a traditional Schwarzwald tracht. Central to the outfit is the Bollenhut, adorned with large red pom-poms that traditionally signify marital status, while the arrangement forms a cross symbolizing devotion to Christ.
Favorite family tradition: Baking and celebrating Christmas.
Favorite native dish: Pork schnitzel, spätzle and kartoffelsalat.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: Through this pageant, I hope to honor my Uroma while also connecting more with my family's ancestry, my community and my love for my city.



Peyton Zakrajsek

Age: 17
Nationality: Croatian
Sponsor: Croatia Fraternal Union Lodge No. 136
Parents: Mark and Sarah Zakrajsek
School: Amherst Steele High School
Ethnic dress: The costume I'm wearing is over 65 years old and was hand-made in Croatia. It is my grandmother's costume that she got when she was 16 years old. She wore it to Croatian functions like the Lorain International parade, picnics and dancing.
Favorite family tradition: On every major holiday, we have large family gatherings. We enjoy ethnic food like stuffed cabbage and playing games.
Favorite native dish: Chicken paprikash.
Why she wanted to be an international princess: To carry on family tradition and to be able to wear my grandmother's costume. I have had several cousins who have been Croatian princesses, but I am the first to wear my grandmother's costume.



LillyAnne Zilko

Age: 17
Nationality: Slovak
Sponsor: American Slovak Club
Parents: Leonard and Christina Zilko
School: Amherst Steeles High School
Ethnic dress: My Kroj is that of the Nitra Region of Slovakia, where part of my family is from and still lives. The Nitra Kroj typically are rich in florals and colors and include a starched white blouse with wide, puffy sleeves, a vest, a gathered skirt and an apron.
Favorite family tradition: I love celebrating the Christmas holidays with a traditional Slovak Vilija dinner. We eat it on Christmas Eve. It is typically a "meatless" meal consisting of kapustnica, fish, potatoes and bobalky.
Favorite native dish: Haluski
Why she wanted to be an international princess: I have wanted to be a Slovak princess for as long as I can remember. My great-grandmother was one of the founding members of the American Slovak Club in Lorain.

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