

Oscars’ Rules
For Diversity
Draw Skeptics

Nearly All-White Casts
Still Make the Cut

By JEREMY W. PETERS
and BROOKS BARNES

The national reckoning over racial justice after the killing of George Floyd spurred many of the country’s most distinguished institutions into action, few more so than the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

After years of criticism for overlooking female directors and actors of color, the academy announced a torrent of diversity-oriented changes. One high-profile move involved the academy’s most coveted trophy: To qualify for the best picture Oscar, films had to fulfill a new set of diversity and inclusion standards.

This new rule, enforced for the first time for this Sunday’s ceremony, is complicated and expansive.

A checklist of four categories and nine subcategories cover almost every aspect of the filmmaking pipeline. Diversity in hiring — actors, directors, makeup artists, publicists, interns — is considered. So is the movie’s plot. To qualify, films must show that they meet two of the four main categories of representation: onscreen (actors, plot), offscreen leadership (set designers, makeup artists), training programs and marketing.

Academy leaders light up like theater marquees when talking about the standards, calling them a success and pointing to a 2023 survey of members in which 85 percent of respondents said it was “important” for the organization to lead on representation, inclusion and equity.

But critics from an array of perspectives in the film industry have described the standards as the equivalent of tinsel — flimsy and showy — doing more to gild Hollywood’s image than to help people the movie business has long overlooked.

Executives at some of the major film companies, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to appear anti-inclusion, said that the diversity mandates have changed little about how they make movies, largely because the standards are so easily met.

The director Spike Lee, whose films often explore the country’s tortured history with racism, has

Continued on Page A11



ANDREW SONDERN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The paper SAT fades away as the test goes completely digital. Try a sample exam. Page A11.



DIMITAR DILKOFF/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Women on the March

Members of Les Rosies, a feminist group, were among those who took to the streets of Paris for International Women’s Day.

She’s Wrestling
Ukrainian Art
From Russia

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT

KYIV, Ukraine — Hiding for days in the basement of a kindergarten in Bucha, the Kyiv suburb that became synonymous with Russian war crimes, Oksana Semenik had time to think.

Outside, Russian troops were rampaging through the town, killing civilians who ventured into the streets. Knowing she might not make it out, Ms. Semenik, an art historian, mullied over the Ukrainian artworks she had long wanted to write about — and which were now in danger of disappearing.

That time spent holed up in Bucha was during the early days of Russia’s full-scale invasion, but even then, two years ago, she had already seen reports of destroyed museums. Precious folk paintings by her favorite artist, Maria Primachenko, had gone up in flames. Moscow, she realized, was waging a war on Ukrainian culture.

“They’re destroying artworks. They’re destroying museums. They’re destroying architecture,” Ms. Semenik recalled thinking in the basement. She vowed that if she escaped from Bucha, she would not allow Ukrainian art to fall into oblivion. “It was like: ‘There’s a war. You can die any minute. You should not postpone all this research any longer.’”

Ever since, Ms. Semenik, 26, has been working to fulfill that vow.

After fleeing Bucha on foot, she started “Ukrainian Art His-

Continued on Page A7

Internet Thieves Drain Social Security Accounts

By TARA SIEGEL BERNARD

For the past two decades, Liz Birenbaum’s 88-year-old mother, Marge, has received her Social Security check on the second Wednesday of each month. It’s her sole source of income, which pays for her room at a long-term care center, where she landed last October after having a stroke.

When the deposit didn’t arrive in January, they logged into Marge’s Social Security account, where they found some startling clues: the last four digits of a bank

The Risk Is Pervasive,
and Precautions Are
Seen as Outdated

account number that didn’t match her own, at a bank they didn’t recognize.

“Someone had gotten in,” said Ms. Birenbaum, of Chappaqua, N.Y. “Then I hit a panic button.”

It quickly became evident that a fraudster had redirected the \$2,452 benefit to an unknown

Citibank account. Marge, who lives in Minnesota, had never banked there. (Ms. Birenbaum requested to refer to her mother by her first name only to protect her from future fraud.)

Ms. Birenbaum immediately started making calls to set things right. When she finally connected with a Social Security representative from a local office in Bloomington, Minn., the rep casually mentioned that this happens “all the time.”

“I was stunned,” Ms. Birenbaum said.

Continued on Page A18



JASON GULLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

When Sea Cows Fly

Orphaned manatees found in Florida traveled back home by plane from Cincinnati. Page A10.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Eager to Fight,
A Feisty Biden
Makes a Case

A Message to Doubters
That Age Isn’t an Issue

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — This was not Old Man Joe. This was Forceful Joe. This was Angry Joe. This was Loud Joe. This was Game-On Joe.

In an in-your-face election-year State of the Union address, President Biden delivered one of the most confrontational speeches that any president has offered from the House rostrum, met by equally fractious heckling from his Republican opponents.

It was an extraordinary spectacle that exemplified the raucous nature of modern American politics, one that made clear how far Washington has traveled from the days of decorous presidential addresses aimed at the history books. Mr. Biden again and again assailed his opponent in the fall election and the opposition lawmakers sitting in front of him. Republicans jeered and booed. Democrats chanted, “Four more years,” as if it were a campaign rally.

But that was the point. Frus-



MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden used his speech to exhibit his stamina.

trated by all the talk about his age and determined to dispel voter doubts, Mr. Biden, 81, used the most prominent platform of this election year, with what is likely the largest television and internet audience he will address before November, to exhibit his stamina, his vitality, his capacity and, yes, his umbrage. Defiant and feisty, he dispensed with the conventions of the format to directly take on former President Donald J. Trump and attempted to make the election a referendum on his predecessor rather than himself.

While he did not use Mr. Trump’s name, Mr. Biden referred to “my predecessor” 13 times and unabashedly denounced “you in this chamber” for being the former president’s lackeys by blocking security aid to Ukraine and a bipartisan border deal for political reasons. Every time they hooted or interrupted, he gave as good as he got, mocking their points and challenging them to pass important legislation.

He was so pumped up, so eager to get started, that he rolled right over House Speaker Mike Johnson, opening his

Continued on Page A13

For Gilgo’s Other Dead, Wait for Justice Drags On

By COREY KILGANNON

When the authorities announced the arrest of Rex Heuermann last summer in four of the Gilgo Beach serial killings, the relieved families of the slain women stood with them.

But along that desolate stretch of Long Island beach, at least 10 bodies were found. And loved ones of the other victims await answers more than a dozen years later.

Police Hope Fresh Leads
Can Close Cold Cases

“The Gilgo case is still mostly unsolved,” said Lorraine Paulino, 54, who said she met one of the six victims, Karen Vergata, shortly before she disappeared.

To crack the cold case, the task force that formed in early 2022 focused on the so-called Gilgo Four,

the most immediately solvable cases, which led to the arrest last summer of Mr. Heuermann, 60.

“When you start a puzzle, you have to start with the most obvious pieces,” the Suffolk County district attorney, Ray Tierney, said in an interview.

The uniform way the bodies were treated bore the hallmarks of a serial killer. Investigators had a strong set of clues including DNA and mobile phone data link-

Continued on Page A19

Baffled Londoners Start Spreading the Schmeat

By JENNY GROSS

LONDON — “What’s an ‘everything bagel’?”

It’s a question that Georgia Fenwick-Gomez, a co-owner of Papo’s Bagels in the East London neighborhood of Dalston, hears a lot, as customers stare blankly at a menu with words including “schmeat,” “scallion” and “lox.”

Papo’s is part of a wave of new shops in Britain selling New York-style bagels, distinct for being big-

New York Flavor in the
Home of the ‘Beigel’

ger, doughier and more heavily seasoned than their London counterparts. The shops have prompted both curiosity and innovation, adding to London’s long history of bagels — or “beigels,” as they were originally known here. Many of the new shops have

similar stories: During the coronavirus pandemic lockdowns, homesick New Yorkers in London started experimenting with bagel baking at home. Ms. Fenwick-Gomez and Gabriel “Papo” Gomez, the other co-owner of Papo’s, moved to England from New York in 2018. Once the pandemic hit, Mr. Gomez, missing New York and dreaming of bagels, started watching bagel-making videos on YouTube and testing out recipes.

Continued on Page A9

NATIONAL A10-19

\$91.6 Million Bond Posted

Donald J. Trump staved off a potential legal and financial disaster just days before a deadline to secure the deal in his defamation case. PAGE A14

Pushback on Subway Security

Gov. Kathy Hochul’s plan was meant to show how Democrats can take action on crime, but the response reflects how the issue divides her party. PAGE A19

Partial Shutdown Is Averted

Mere hours before a midnight deadline, the Senate cleared a \$460 billion spending bill to fund about half of the federal government through the fall. PAGE A17

BUSINESS B1-6

Economy Adds 275,000 Jobs

A stronger than expected February increase continued a trend that has lasted for 38 months. PAGE B1

How China Dominated Solar

Beijing is set to boost its mastery of the renewable energy industry as it seeks to wean itself from imports. PAGE B1



INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Iranians Use Vote to Vent Rage

Whether handing in blank ballots or voting for fringe candidates in a parliamentary election, citizens registered their frustration with elites. PAGE A4

Further Curbs in Hong Kong

Officials are moving fast to enact a long-shelved measure that would target political offenses. PAGE A9

TRAVEL C7-9

Naked? With Strangers?

At resorts popular in Austria and Germany, taking a sauna may require a lack of self-consciousness. PAGE C7

ARTS C1-6

Verdict on Film Set Shooting

The armorer on “Rust” was convicted of involuntary manslaughter, a charge the actor Alec Baldwin is facing. PAGE C1

Aiming for the Senses

A museum inspired by the experiences of blind people is set to officially open this month in Manhattan. PAGE C1



SPORTS B7-10

Out of His Father’s Shadow

The adoption of Michigan State Coach Tom Izzo’s son wasn’t secret, but his path to self-discovery has only begun. PAGE B7

Video Game Updates Lineup

MLB The Show 24 will feature a career for gamers to create a female player and steer her journey to the majors. PAGE B8

OPINION A20-21

Frank Bruni

PAGE A21



0 354613 9