

Disney workers protest Florida 'Don't Say Gay' bill

Company needs to do more to stand against harmful legislation, employees say. **In Money**

Trades, signings, salaries: MLB's winners and losers

A look at two weeks of offseason transactions, from the Blue Jays to the Yankees. **In Sports**

USA TODAY

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$2 | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022



Another dramatic role shift for Jared Leto

From businessman with rock-and-roll star charisma to vampire antihero, actor says, "I love a good transformation." **In Life**

ROBERT HANASHIRO/USA TODAY

WAR IN UKRAINE



Displaced Ukrainians on a Poland-bound train bid farewell in Lviv on Tuesday. BERNAT ARMANGUE/AP

Refugees have advantages over previous generations

Aid system has improved, countries are more welcoming

Dennis Wagner
USA TODAY

As beleaguered Ukrainian refugees crossed their nation's border, destination uncertain, an aid worker addressed them via a megaphone:

"Welcome to Poland. You are safe."

The scene reflects the end of one ordeal for millions who escaped a war zone, but the beginning of another as they confront life without homes, jobs or any idea about the future.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi declared Ukraine's exodus "the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II."

As Russian munitions destroy cities and troops tighten a stranglehold, more displaced persons leave each day. They arrive at the border with only a bag of possessions and clothing, mostly women and children queuing in bitter cold for shelter, food and transport to destinations unknown.

See REFUGEES, Page 3A



Refugees from Ukraine stand in line for free train tickets in a railway station in Przemysl, Poland, on Sunday. WOJTEK RADWANSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

New sanctions expected as Biden travels to Europe

Next round to include enforcement, national security adviser says. **2A**

Column: Time for men's coaches to pony up cash

Women's NCAA coaches lead effort to help Ukraine. Where are the men? **1C**

Jackson defends her legal decisions

Judges' power is limited, high court nominee says

John Fritze
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson fought back Tuesday against Republican criticism that she is soft on crime while parrying thorny questions about how she would rule in the culture war battles that frequently appear on the docket of the nation's highest court, from abortion to LGBTQ rights.

Jackson, who would replace retiring Associate Justice Stephen Breyer, repeatedly sought to define herself as an independent jurist who respects the "limited power" of judges under the Constitution. The appeals court judge dodged questions about expanding the size of the Supreme Court's nine-member bench or allowing cameras into its courtroom.



Jackson

In a marathon first day of questioning from members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Jackson avoided missteps that might threaten Democratic support for her historic confirmation as the first Black woman picked to serve on the Supreme Court. Republicans asked probing questions about her record and judicial philosophy, but there were few theatrics as Jackson repeatedly delved deeply into her approach to the law.

"I am acutely aware that as a judge in our system, I have limited power," said Jackson, a Harvard-educated lawyer who has served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit since June. "And I am trying in every case to stay in my lane."

Several Republicans focused on Jackson's near-decade tenure as a trial court judge and roughly a dozen cases involving child pornography and other sex crimes in which she handed down sentences below guidelines recommended by the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Speaking for the first time on the issue, Jackson said that she understood "how damaging, how horrible" those crimes are but that her

See JACKSON, Page 6A

WOMEN OF THE YEAR HEATHER COX RICHARDSON

Historian's work entertains, empowers

Videos encourage engagement, sense of community



Suzette Hackney
National columnist
USA TODAY

ties the day's news to the events of the past. She is a historian and professor of American history at Boston College. She recently was invited to the White House to interview President Joe Biden.

"I was talking to my publicist, and she was throwing her hands up in the air: 'What are we going to do?' Cox Richardson said. "My answer was simple. 'Listen, everybody who reads me is sitting at home, and they're bored, and they're frightened. And I'm going to just entertain.'"

Cox Richardson started doing Facebook videos that were initially designed to serve as a virtual book tour. As the pandemic spread into a second year, she began another tour, but her faithful audience informed her they didn't really care about the book. They were worried

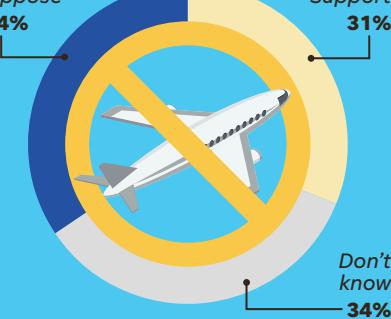


Heather Cox Richardson is guided by a belief in human self-determination.

MICHAEL SEAMANS FOR USA TODAY

USA TODAY Snapshots No-fly opinions are up in the air

Americans are split on the prospect of a no-fly zone over Ukraine that could draw the U.S. and allies into military conflict with Russia:



NOTE: Numbers rounded
SOURCE: ABC News/Ipsos poll, March 11-12
AMY BARNETTE, TIFFANY CLEMENS/USA TODAY

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USA TODAY Snapshots
No-fly opinions are up in the air

Americans are split on the prospect of a no-fly zone over Ukraine that could draw the U.S. and allies into military conflict with Russia:

Opinion	Percentage
Oppose	34%
Support	31%
Don't know	34%

NOTE: Numbers rounded
SOURCE: ABC News/Ipsos poll, March 11-12
AMY BARNETTE, TIFFANY CLEMENS/USA TODAY

WAR IN UKRAINE

Ukraine, Russia natives seek unity

Congregation in Plano, Texas, reflects diversity of opinions, experiences on war

Andrea Ball

USA TODAY

PLANO, Texas – They came from Ukraine, Russia, Uzbekistan. Some spoke in Russian, others English.

But in this North Texas church, they were united against the Russia-Ukraine war, their shaking voices and heavy sighs echoing across the sanctuary.

I can't describe the pain.

My heart is broken.

This is a nightmare that I can't wake up from.

Pastor Leo Regheta lifted his glasses, wiped his eyes and prayed.

He lived under Soviet rule. He knows the fear.

Since the conflict began Feb. 24, the pastor of River of Life – an evangelical Christian church whose members include native Russians and Ukrainians – has tried to hold his flock together through compassion, comfort and prayer for both nations.

Regheta also is trying to keep peace as political tensions bubble up among his diverse congregation. Several families have left the 100-member church because they didn't like their Ukrainian pastor talking about the war. Others warned him against being too political.

Russians, Ukrainians and Eastern Europeans struggle to cope with what they see on the news: bodies thrown into mass graves, blasted apartment buildings, starving adults and children walking to borders.

Most fear the decades-gone oppression of Soviet rule will return to Ukraine, stealing personal and religious freedoms. Others echo Russian propaganda that Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to protect nearby Russian republics from Ukrainian aggression.

"I'm torn right now," Regheta said. "I'm trying to be a pastor for everybody."

The fourth-generation pastor refuses to look away from the carnage in his home country. He brands the war "craziness," calls out political propaganda and voices more than a few critical thoughts on Putin.

He has used connections to help people escape both his homeland and Russia. His phone constantly rings and dings with calls and texts about the war. He has shepherded donation drives and helped raise money for Ukrainian and Russian refugees. He has hosted three prayer vigils for the war-torn country.

The 47-year-old married father of four children is up at all hours, running on adrenaline to



Pastor Leo Regheta, a native of Ukraine, urges the River of Life Church to act through prayer and donations. USA TODAY NETWORK

"I'm torn right now. I'm trying to be a pastor for everybody."

Leo Regheta

Pastor, River of Life Church, and a Ukraine native

talk to those on the front lines despite the eight-hour time difference.

"He's tired all the time," said Regheta's 17-year-old daughter, Linnea. "He's up all the time. It takes a toll."

When he went to a dentist in early March, his blood pressure was 180/93 – far higher than it had ever been. For the first time in his 12 years as a pastor, he's thinking about taking a sabbatical.

But not now. There's too much to do.

Things can change

As a child growing up in Berdychiv, Regheta was terrified of the city's administration building.

It was massive, with gray stone, heavy front doors and, worst of all, a 29-foot-tall statue of Vladimir Lenin in front. The architect of the Soviet Union rose from the red stone, representing everything Regheta feared from the communist regime.

Pain. Violence. Control.

"I think that was the purpose of that thing, with that building with the heavy doors," he said. "It was to make you feel sub-human."

In the 1980s, Ukraine was a Soviet republic. Regheta's evangelical Christian family was always in danger because of their religion. Their church was shunned and could not rent space for services, so

members met in homes.

Neighbors were ordered to call the authorities when the Christians met. The police would break up gatherings, arrest homeowners and heavily fine the rest of the group. Regheta's grandfather and great-grandfather were jailed, he said.

Though Regheta loved his homeland, the persecution was too much. When he was 15, Regheta's family fled to the USA as religious refugees.

Regheta said he felt called to return to that part of the world. He went to St. Petersburg for some of his college studies and has done missionary work in Eastern Europe and Russia for nearly 25 years.

Regheta has been back to Ukraine 10 times.

On a trip a few years ago, he and a fellow pastor had lunch in a cafe near the city administration building. Regheta was taken aback.

"Look!" he said. "There's no Lenin!"

The statue was destroyed by a free Ukraine in 2014. His childhood monster was gone.

That wasn't the only surprise. His friend told him that the churches once shunned now partnered with the mayor on social matters and other community issues.

"It was quite a switch," Regheta said.

On Feb. 24, Regheta was scrolling through Facebook on his iPhone, when he stopped

short. People posted that they'd seen planes heading from Russia toward Ukraine in the dead of night.

Regheta called his family together to pray. Then he got a text from a friend in Ukraine.

The invasion has started. This is terrible. This is horrific.

Since the war began, more than 3 million people have fled the country, more than half of them running to Poland. The world has largely sided with Ukraine. Countries send money, medical supplies and military aid. They levied sanctions against Russia, and big corporations cut ties with the nation.

Regheta spent the first night of the war scouring news sites for updates until 3 a.m. After three hours of sleep, he climbed out of bed and immediately started texting his friends in Russia and Ukraine.

Is it true? What are these explosions? Tell us what's happening.

On the second day of the war, Regheta – who has a full-time job in marketing for a radiology clinic – used his connections to help church members' relatives escape bomb shelters and basements in Ukraine.

On the third day, he wrote a letter to his congregation. He asked members to pray for the end of the war, to rise above politics and to be compassionate to all people, no matter their beliefs. He made it clear that he thought the war was wrong.

"The fact that he is not turning to hate and wants to unite us in the love of Christ – I think that was a very powerful thing to say," said Amy Kim, an American-raised church member who volunteers in Romania to help refugees.

One woman suggested he pray for peace and forgiveness. He said it wasn't time for forgiveness. It was better to help people suffering. She took offense and left the church. So did several others.

Regheta promised his congregation he wouldn't dive deep into politics, with a caveat: "I will call what is black, black and what is white, white," he said.

Challenge denial

Across the country in Manhattan, Pastor Ivan Belets of First Ukrainian Assembly of God works to keep his diverse congregation unified. He has both Russian and Ukrainian natives in his 90-member church. When someone posted a political video on the church chat group, he took it down.

Emotions are high, even for

him. Belets, raised in western Ukraine, fights to remind himself that not everything Russian is about Putin.

The pastor tries to channel church members' anxiety into prayer and acts of charity. Over a few days, the church raised \$16,000 and works with its contacts in Ukraine to help refugees.

He knows people are grieving, and he urges the congregation to take solace in God.

He refuses to ignore the fact that some Russians stand by Putin.

"I don't judge Russians who are convinced in propaganda," Belets said. "But we must challenge denial of the facts."

A fearless church

Regheta stood in front of his congregation and repeated the words of American pastor and author A.W. Tozer: "A scared world needs a fearless church."

This is not the time to be an ostrich, he said in Russian, as a member translated for English speakers wearing an earpiece. Don't stop coming to church. Don't stay home because the war has made things awkward or painful. We need each other. We face a test of faith.

"We want to pray for Russia and the Russians, but mostly we want to pray for the Ukrainians because it is so much worse," he said.

Black is black. White is white.

Across the rented auditorium, members nodded in agreement.

As Regheta spoke, a man slipped through the entrance carrying several gray plastic bags. He placed them in front of the stage near overstuffed suitcases and boxes filled with donated crayons, markers, coloring books, toys and vitamins for children. All would go to child refugees in Romania.

A few minutes later, a woman quietly walked through the same door, dropped off two Trader Joe's paper bags of donations on the floor and left.

Since announcing the donation drive for mothers and children days earlier, the River of Life Church had been flooded with offerings not just from members but from strangers in the community. People showed up at Regheta's house with piles of supplies.

The little church is known for its community outreach. Since the war, its profile has skyrocketed.

"This," Regheta said, placing his hand on a suitcase of donations. "This is our worship to God."

NEWS BRIEFING

New sanctions on Russia to be unveiled during Biden's trip to Europe

Additional sanctions will be imposed on Russia by President Joe Biden and the trans-Atlantic alliance when Biden travels to Europe for a series of meetings this week, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday.

A key part of the next round of sanctions will focus on enforcement, including stopping attempts by countries to help Russia evade the economic penalties.

"The West has been united," Sullivan said. "The president is traveling to Europe to ensure that we stay united."

Biden also will announce joint actions to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian gas and will discuss with NATO allies the levels of troops needed on Europe's eastern flank in the longer term. And Biden will outline new humanitarian as-

sistance from the U.S. to help the Ukrainians under attack as well as the growing number of refugees, Sullivan said.

Zelenskyy wants to deal directly with Putin

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is prepared to negotiate a deal directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin to end a war that he said has left cities across his country bombed beyond recognition.

Authorities in Kharkiv said the Russian assault in that area has been intensifying with 84 artillery strikes reported in 24 hours. In beleaguered Mariupol, Russian aircraft dropped two more heavy bombs Tuesday, the City Council said in a social media post.

Since the war began fewer than four weeks ago, about

3,780 residential buildings have been partially damaged, and 651 homes destroyed across the country, the Ukraine Emergency Service said.

In an interview with Ukrainian television channels, Zelenskyy said he would be willing to discuss a commitment from Ukraine to not seek NATO membership in exchange for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Russian troops and a guarantee of Ukraine's security.

"It's a compromise for everyone," Zelenskyy said. He also repeated his call for direct talks with Putin – without them, it remains unknown whether Russia even wants to stop the war, Zelenskyy said.

Contributing: John Bacon, Tom Vanden Brook, Jorge L. Ortiz, Celina Tebor and Maureen Groppe, USA TODAY; The Associated Press

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TODAY'S BONUS CODE

WAR IN UKRAINE

Russian opposition leader Navalny is sentenced to nine years in prison

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was convicted of fraud and contempt of court and sentenced to nine years in a maximum security prison on Tuesday, in a trial Kremlin critics see as an attempt to keep President Vladimir Putin's most ardent foe in prison for as long as possible.

A judge also ruled that Navalny would have to pay a fine of 1.2 million rubles (about \$11,500). Navalny can appeal the ruling.

Navalny, who already is serving 2½ years in a penal colony east of Moscow, had been accused of embezzling money that he and his foundation raised over the years, and of insulting a judge during a previous trial.

The politician has rejected the allegations as politically motivated. The prosecution had asked for 13 years in a maximum security prison for the anti-corruption crusader and a 1.2 million-ruble fine.

The trial, which opened about a month ago, unfolded in a makeshift courtroom in the prison colony hours away from Moscow, where Navalny is serving a sentence for parole violations.



Alexei Navalny was convicted of fraud and contempt of court by a Russian court.

PROVIDED BY SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

Navalny's supporters have criticized the authorities' decision to move the proceedings there from a courthouse in Moscow, saying it has effectively limited access to the proceedings for the media and supporters.

Navalny, 45, has appeared at hearings wearing prison garb and made several elaborate speeches during the trial, decrying the charges against him as bogus.

Navalny was arrested in January

2021 immediately upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months convalescing from a poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin, a claim Russian officials vehemently denied. Shortly after the arrest, a court sentenced him to 2½ years in prison over the parole violations stemming from a 2014 suspended sentence in a fraud case that Navalny insists was politically driven.

Following Navalny's imprisonment, authorities unleashed a sweeping crackdown on his associates and supporters.

His closest allies have left Russia after facing multiple criminal charges, and his Foundation for Fighting Corruption and a network of nearly 40 regional offices were outlawed as extremist — a designation that exposes people involved to prosecution.

Last month, Russian officials added Navalny and a number of his associates to a state registry of extremists and terrorists.

Several criminal cases have been launched against Navalny individually, leading his associates to suggest the Kremlin intends to keep him behind bars for as long as possible.

Holocaust survivor, 96, killed by shelling in Ukraine

Jordan Mendoza

USA TODAY

A 96-year-old Holocaust survivor was killed last week in a Russian bombing in his home city of Kharkiv, Ukraine.

The victim, Borys Romanchenko, survived the Nazi concentration camps at Buchenwald, Peenemünde, Dora and Bergen-Belsen during World War II. The Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation confirmed Romanchenko's death Monday.

The foundation said Romanchenko's granddaughter reported that the multi-story building he was living in was hit by Russian shells, adding it was "deeply disturbed" by the news of his death.

Romachenco was deported to the German city of Dortmund in 1942 and was assigned to forced labor, the Washington Post reported. He was sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1943 after trying to escape, and he was held in other concentration camps until 1945.

The foundation said Romanchenko "worked intensively on the memory of Nazi crimes," and he was vice president of the Buchenwald-Dora International Committee.

In 2015, he was at the Buchenwald camp memorial site to commemorate the anniversary of the camp's liberation in 1945 by the U.S. Army. At the ceremony, he read the Buchenwald oath "Creating a new world where peace and freedom reign," the foundation said.

The Blue Card, a nonprofit organization in the U.S. dedicated to providing financial assistance to Holocaust survivors, estimated that about 10,000 Holocaust survivors live in Ukraine.

It is unclear how many people have been killed as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but the United Nations said 925 civilians had been killed as of Sunday, most of which were caused "by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area, including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes."

Ukrainian officials condemned the attacks that killed Romanchenko, alluding to the comments Russia President Vladimir Putin made at the beginning of the war when he said the purpose of the invasion was the "denazification" of Ukraine.

"He lived his quiet life in Kharkiv until recently. Last Friday a Russian bomb hit his house and killed him. Unspeakable crime. Survived Hitler, murdered by Putin," Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba said.

Refugees

Continued from Page 1A

Now is their moment of truth — a threshold where they leave relatives, friends, homes, jobs, schools, pets and everything else that has been their lives. And where they confront uncertainty.

Historians, relief advocates and displaced persons stressed that trauma and anxiety are common denominators.

Though it may afford little solace, the uprooted Ukrainians may have advantages over millions who fled World War II and other military conflicts.

An international refugee aid system developed at the end of World War II is more coordinated than at any other time in history. Nonprofit relief agencies are bigger and more organized. At least for now, the Ukrainians are welcomed into neighboring nations.

"It might have been worse in World War II," said Mary Brown, archivist with the Center for Migration Studies, a think tank in New York. "But the little Ukrainian mother with a couple kids in tow — she doesn't know that."

Peter Gatrell, author of "The Unsettling of Europe: How Migration Reshaped a Continent," said it's important to remember that although refugees face tribulation, they've escaped death and devastation.

"Sometimes," Gatrell noted, "refugees are the lucky ones."

This is not like World War II, but ...

In January, Ukraine's ambassador to Britain, Vadym Prystaiko, presciently warned that a Russian invasion would unleash a human wave of his countrymen across Europe.

"Imagine you start seeing pictures of Ukrainians killed, bodies lying in the road, cities bombed by the Russians looking like Grozny and Chechnya, and millions of immigrants fleeing," Prystaiko said. "I'm not threatening people with this. We will have to face this."

Two months later, those images are on YouTube and across social media, rather than in people's minds.

The scenes are reminiscent of World War II. But historians who studied Europe's displacement in the 1930s and '40s stressed that the scope and circumstances were strikingly different.

The Ukraine exodus stems from fighting for a few weeks in one country. World War II saw combat for six years in dozens of nations, involving perhaps 40 million European refugees during the violence and its aftermath.

Gatrell said those migrants included Jews and others fleeing the Holocaust; residents of conquered nations trying to escape the rule of Adolf Hitler; laborers who were enslaved by the Nazis but released after the war; non-Russians deported from Soviet bloc countries or who fled the communist regime at the start of the Cold War; and Palestinians left stateless by the formation of Israel.

Brown said the world did not even have a common definition for "refugee" during World War II. Displaced persons in Europe fled through battlegrounds in multiple countries, nearly always amid

broken governments and chaotic relief efforts.

Some of those migrations were epic. Records document how the Red Cross helped ship several thousand starving Greek children to India in 1941, and thousands of Poles were transported to Tanzania, Kenya and other destinations in Africa.

Then, as now, historians said, the struggle begins with survival. Once refugees escape a war zone, their plight hinges on politics, economics and racial-religious discrimination in host nations.

Put simply, nations chronically feud over the number and type of displaced persons they'll accept.

David Nasaw, author of "The Last Million," a chronicle of displaced civilians after World War II, said the last refugee camps did not close until the 1950s, when the creation of Israel provided haven for 250,000 stateless Jews.

"It might have been worse in World War II. But the little Ukrainian mother with a couple kids in tow — she doesn't know that."

Mary Brown

Center for Migration Studies

"It took five years to settle the last million," he said.

Political resistance is greatest, according to analysts, during economic hard times or when refugees are culturally and ethnically different from domestic populations.

That phenomenon is playing out among Africans and Middle Easterners living in Ukraine and struggling to exit.

Ironically, Ukraine itself has been a part of the world's anti-immigrant backlash. As the United Nations tried to find homes for Syrian and Afghan refugees in 2016, Ukrainian protesters warned that migrants would bring disease, crime and terrorist attacks to the homeland.

"Ukraine is not a safe country for asylum seekers," Maksym Butkevych, coordinator of the No Borders Project, was quoted as saying in the Kyiv Post.

'The end is not in sight'

Even before Russia invaded Ukraine, the U.N. refugee agency estimated there were 84 million forcibly displaced persons globally — about 1 out of every 95 people.

The exodus from Ukraine has added about 3 million refugees, and 7 million are displaced internally, according to the United Nations.

Poland had absorbed the bulk of Ukraine's refugee surge as of March 15, taking in 1.9 million refugees, according to the United Nations. Romania was second with 468,000, followed by Moldova, Hungary and Slovakia with more than 200,000 each.

Those nations, mere stop-offs for many of the travelers, pleading for inter-

national assistance with short-term housing, food, medical care and other services.

As the bureaucratic process of finding more permanent homes gets underway, Kathleen Newland, co-founder and senior fellow with the Migration Policy Institute, said refugees face a multistage gauntlet: navigating the war-ravaged homeland; crossing the border to temporary shelter; and finding an accepting destination for resettlement, acclimation and assimilation.

Ukraine was an epicenter for migrations in two World Wars, and generational refugee stories have passed down through families.

It is too early to say what lies ahead for the current wave, but experts told USA TODAY that displaced Ukrainians seem to have some advantages over predecessors.

Among them:

- Although fleeing Ukrainians risked becoming war casualties, the escape was less perilous for some, thanks to evacuation corridors. "That didn't exist in World War II," Brown said. "Everybody was taking their chances."

- Unlike other refugees in history, Ukrainians hold visas that allow them to travel freely in Western Europe, and the European Union for the first time adopted a Temporary Protection Directive granting displaced Ukrainians asylum for a year or more. The latter decision "was stunning and marks a very different degree of welcome" from what's been offered to other populations in Europe, said Michelle Mittelstadt, communication director for the Migration Policy Institute.

- Surrounding nations and their citizens have been uncharacteristically helpful to displaced Ukrainians — including Poland, which has shunned refugees from Africa and the Middle East. In England, where anti-immigrant politics are entrenched, the government offered a reward to anyone who opens a home to Ukrainian families. More than 100,000 Brits signed up within days.

- The global relief system eight decades ago was feeble and disorganized. Today, the United Nations, European Union and national governments interact according to global protocols developed after chaotic and painful failures during World War II.

- Nonprofit relief agencies are better coordinated and have greater resources. Amid the surge of Ukrainians, religious and humanitarian groups rallied with volunteers to provide relatively smooth processing and to supply food, shelter and transportation.

The outlook for Ukraine's refugees remains unclear as the war and its ramifications unfold.

"What happens after the initial period is, I think, the real question now," Newland said. "That's particularly true if the numbers continue to grow."

Brown said, "It's in flux. World War II was what, six years long? This could become a much bigger issue."

Nasaw's advice to Ukrainian refugees: "The end is not in sight. ... Speak loudly and continuously. Don't let the world forget you're there."

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Finland is again world's happiest country

Jordan Mendoza

USA TODAY

Finland was voted the happiest country in the world for the fifth straight year, and it is joined by other European countries in the annual World Happiness Report.

The 10th edition of the report, a publication of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, ranked 146 countries in their overall happiness. Researchers say past data has looked at how citizens' trust in government and large institutions has played a major factor in a country's level of happiness.

"The World Happiness Report is changing the conversation about progress and wellbeing. It provides important snapshots of how people around the world feel about the overall quality of their lives," Christopher Barrington-Leigh of McGill University in Quebec, a researcher involved in the report, said in a statement.

Top 10 happiest countries

Using results from the Gallup World Poll, Finland was in first: It had an overall score of 7.821 out of 10, which was "significantly ahead" of all other countries. Northern Europe appeared to be one of the happiest regions in the world: All five Nordic countries – Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Norway – ranked in the top eight.

The top 10 countries and their score:

1. Finland: 7.821
2. Denmark: 7.636
3. Iceland: 7.557
4. Switzerland: 7.512
5. Netherlands: 7.415
6. Luxembourg: 7.404
7. Sweden: 7.384
8. Norway: 7.365
9. Israel: 7.364
10. New Zealand: 7.200

The 10 least happiest countries

The unhappiest country was Afghanistan, with a score of 2.404. Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, director of the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford in England, said recent conflict in the country played a vital role in its ranking. In August, the Taliban took over the country after the U.S. military withdrawal.

"At the very bottom of the ranking we find societies that suffer from conflict and extreme poverty," De Neve said. "This presents a stark reminder of the material and immaterial damage that war does to its many victims and the fundamental importance of peace and stability for human well-being."

The data was collected well before Russia began its invasion of Ukraine in February, but both countries were in the bottom half of the rankings. Russia ranked 80th and Ukraine 98th.

Here are the 10 countries ranked at the bottom, along with their score:

1. Afghanistan: 2.404
2. Lebanon: 2.955
3. Zimbabwe: 2.995
4. Rwanda: 3.268
5. Botswana: 3.471
6. Lesotho: 3.512
7. Sierra Leone: 3.574
8. Tanzania: 3.702
9. Malawi: 3.750
10. Zambia: 3.760

The U.S. may not be in the top 10 happiest countries, but it's not far off, ranking 16th with a score of 6.977, just behind Canada and ahead of the U.K. Canada is the happiest country in the Americas, according to the data.

The ranking also is the best ranking for the U.S. since 2017, when it was the 14th happiest. It's also a big jump from the 2021 report, when the U.S. ranked 19th with a score of 6.951. The rankings for the United States:

- 2022: 16th
- 2021: 19th
- 2020: 18th
- 2019: 19th
- 2018: 18th
- 2017: 14th
- 2016: 13th

COVID-19 has taken its toll on nearly every country for more than two years, but researchers said people appeared to be more happy in 2021 than in 2020, when the pandemic began. Global worry and stress levels also were down from 2020.

Storms target the South after tornadoes rip through Texas

Weather could affect 50M in a dozen states

Christine Fernando

USA TODAY

A storm system that caused at least one reported death, several injuries and widespread damage in Texas and Oklahoma on Monday was expected to shift east and bring severe thunderstorms and possibly tornadoes to millions across the South.

At least 50 million people were under threat of severe storms, the Storm Prediction Center said.

The weather could affect more than a dozen states from the southern Plains to the southeastern coast, including "violent and life-threatening thunderstorms" and tornadoes such as those that ripped through Texas and parts of Oklahoma on Monday, according to AccuWeather.

The storms may produce flash flooding, damaging hail as large as baseballs and powerful winds with gusts of 80 to 90 mph. Southern Louisiana, much of Mississippi and western Alabama face the most significant tornado threats with a moderate risk of severe thunderstorms, according to AccuWeather.

AccuWeather forecasters warned of "extremely dangerous" "rain-wrapped tornadoes" that occur when heavy rain reduces the visibility of a tornado, making it difficult for residents to spot a twister and see where it's headed.

Wednesday, the risk of thunderstorms will shift farther east, bringing the potential for tornadoes to areas from northern Florida to eastern Virginia, AccuWeather forecasters said. Weakened storms could reach the Atlanta area by early Wednesday morning.

The National Weather Service forecast a "lessening threat" of flooding and severe weather Wednesday.

The spate of tornadoes began in Texas on Monday afternoon, causing catastrophic damage to homes, businesses and power lines.

More than 48,000 Texas households were without power Tuesday morning, according to poweroutage.us. Several Houston area schools opened late Tuesday as thousands of residents faced power outages and a flash flood warning.

One person died after a tornado whipped through Sherwood Shores, Texas, injuring several people, the



Men push an overturned car out of the way after a tornado hit a shopping center in Round Rock, Texas, on Monday. PHOTOS BY JAY JANNER/USA TODAY NETWORK



Michael Talamantez was in his Round Rock, Texas, house when a tornado hit. "I thought I was going to die," he said.

Texas Department of Public Safety said.

Farther south, three people were severely injured in Houston County after two mobile homes were destroyed. In Elgin, a suburb of Austin, three people were injured, including two who were rescued Monday night after they were trapped in a collapsed structure.

Four people were rescued Tuesday after they were trapped under flattened buildings in the town of Bowie about 70 miles northwest of Fort Worth, Fox 4 News reported. No injuries were reported, according to the news station.

Confirmed tornadoes caused damage in Round Rock, Texas; Granger, Texas;

Taylor, Texas; and the Oklahoma town of Kingston, according to National Weather Service centers.

"I thought I was going to die," Michael Talamantez told the Austin American-Statesman, part of the USA TODAY Network, after a tornado destroyed his house in Round Rock. Neighbors scrambled to cover their damaged roofs with tarps before more rain moved in.

A storm ripped the wall and roof off parts of Jacksboro High School and left debris scattered in the city about 60 miles northwest of Fort Worth.

Sixty to 80 homes, as well as Jacksboro's high school and elementary school were damaged, WFAA-TV reported. Minor injuries were reported, but all students and staff members were safe, officials said.

Jacksboro High School Principal Starla Sanders told WFAA the damage was hard to process.

"It brought tears to my eyes," she said. "It's hard to see. I've lived here for 15 years. I love this place."

The storms caused damage across much of Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott said Monday night at a news conference.

"We know there are many people whose lives have been completely disrupted and people who've lost their homes," Abbott said.

Contributing: Roberto Villalpando, Claire Osborn and Tony Plohetski, Austin American-Statesman; The Associated Press

N.C. voting case raises larger issues

Justices mull states' role in highly political cases

Bart Jansen

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Who represents a state?

That's the question the Supreme Court grappled with Monday in a case about whether Republican North Carolina lawmakers should be able to help the Democratic attorney general defend a contentious voting law in federal court.

The case could set a new framework for who represents the state when a law is challenged in federal court while the legislative and executive branches are controlled by different parties.

Several justices sounded reluctant to prevent the lawmakers from lending a hand. Chief Justice John Roberts said it would be tough for federal judges to pick who gets to argue the sides in highly political cases, such as this one involving voting rights.

"That's a pretty difficult, eyebrow-raising thing for a federal court to do, when you have a political controversy with two different entities, each one having the right to intervene under state law," Roberts said. "I don't see federal courts doing that as a general matter. If we do ask them to do that, that's putting them in an intensely political position."

The case is one of several in which somebody sought to intervene in the challenge of a controversial law or policy. Other cases involved a Kentucky ban on an abortion procedure and a Trump administration policy to deny permanent residency to immigrants who receive benefits such as rental assistance or food stamps.

The 2018 North Carolina law at

stake deals with voting regulations, which enacted an identification requirement, expanded the number of partisan poll observers and expanded grounds to challenge a voter's ballot.

Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed the bill, but the Republican-led Legislature overrode his veto. The Supreme Court case involves Republican legislative leaders – Sen. Philip Berger and House Speaker Timothy Moore – arguing they should be allowed to help defend the law because of suspicions Cooper and Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein wouldn't defend it effectively.

"That's a pretty difficult, eyebrow-raising thing for a federal court to do, when you have a political controversy with two different entities, each one having the right to intervene under state law."

Chief Justice John Roberts

David Thompson, a lawyer for the lawmakers, said they have an interest in simply defending the law, while the executive branch also must consider how it will be administered. Thompson noted that Cooper called the law "unconstitutional."

"Gov. Cooper has been an implacable foe of this law," Thompson said. "He would not be an adequate representative."

The lawmakers claim a North Carolina law designates legislative leaders to defend laws in certain cases. When a state law is challenged in federal court, the statute calls for "both the legislative branch and the executive branch of the State of North Carolina to participate in any such action as a party."

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor

asked how the legislative and executive interest in law were different. Associate Justice Elena Kagan asked whether opening the door to two lawmakers could open it to all 170 in the state.

"Doesn't the executive branch represent the state writ large?" Kagan asked.

The North Carolina Conference of the NAACP sued the state to halt enforcement of the law. The NAACP argued the law discriminated against Black and Latino voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

But the Supreme Court case isn't about the NAACP claims or the merits of the case, just about who will be arguing on behalf of the state.

Associate Justice Samuel Alito asked what lawmakers should do if the attorney general assigned a junior lawyer or declined to spend money on the case.

"What if at some point, the attorney general says, 'Look, this is costing too much, we should settle,'" Alito said.

Elisabeth Theodore, representing the NAACP, opposed allowing the lawmakers to intervene because the attorney general already is defending the case. She said allowing lawmakers to intervene would complicate lawsuits and raise costs substantially.

"This case is the poster child for why federal law puts a thumb on the scale against intervention," Theodore said.

Sarah Boyce, deputy attorney general for North Carolina, said her office was defending the law vigorously. She said that if the court rules that lawmakers can join the case, it should be after a court decision, not automatically.

"Petitioners have identified no daylight between their legal position and ours," Boyce said. "Their evidence is duplicative with our evidence. And we have prevailed in litigation thus far, and are confident we will ultimately prevail through final judgment."

Honoree

Continued from Page 1A

about COVID-19, the political landscape and news events – they wanted her to expound on the daily musings she quietly had begun sharing in 2019.

"So every Tuesday, I started a video where I began explaining modern politics, here's what's in the news," she said. "And then on Thursdays, I'd say, 'Here's some stuff about history.' So now, for I guess it's almost two years, I've tried to entertain people twice a week, with good solid material. It's been wonderful. We've built a real community, and the incredible excitement that people feel, first of all over understanding their world."

Cox Richardson's work empowers readers, especially members of marginalized groups such as women and people of color. And while she agrees with some experts and academics who believe that democracy is in a crisis moment, Cox Richardson finds unique optimism in the American response. People are asking questions about the Constitution. People are engaged about foreign affairs. People are paying attention, a fact that Cox Richardson said she didn't experience five or 10 years ago.

"My theory is you can't make good choices about your life unless you understand the facts of your life," she said. "I'm a firm believer in democracy and on the incredible importance of a lot of different perspectives on different issues. But unless people are operating from the same basis of fact, they can't make good decisions about their lives or about their country. If you can't figure out what's up and what's down, your only answer is to shrink and to hope that somebody makes good decisions for you. And that's a real burden to carry."

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

What role do women play in regard to social change and progress?

There are a couple of things that seem to be really interesting about the moment that we're in right now. And one of them is that American women are in, again, a unique position right now.

We are now looking at a new genera-



MICHAEL SEAMANS FOR USA TODAY

"I'm a firm believer in democracy and on the incredible importance of a lot of different perspectives on different issues. But unless people are operating from the same basis of fact, they can't make good decisions about their lives or about their country. If you can't figure out what's up and what's down, your only answer is to shrink and to hope that somebody makes good decisions for you. And that's a real burden to carry."

Heather Cox Richardson

About this project

This is the eighth of 11 profiles honoring USA TODAY's Women of the Year, trailblazers across the country who have made a significant impact. The annual program is a continuation of Women of the Century, a 2020 project commemorating the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. Meet this year's honorees at womentheyear.usatoday.com.

tion of women who have worked for their lifetimes outside the home, who have strong support networks, who are accustomed to having a say in the world and who are probably in a position to have some space of their own for a change. Maybe their children have left home, or they have a knowledge base and a sense of an ability to do something. And rather than sort of winding down the clock, a lot of us are looking at 20-30 more years of being able to speak up and change the world.

I think that's an enormously, enor-

mously powerful force. Another thing is that women and people of color right now have for at least a generation been accustomed to recognizing that they have something to contribute to the world and that they are starting to be able to find space to do that.

From your perspective, does a sense of community still exist?

Yes, of course. People are people. I wonder, in fact, if we're moving more toward it. It's just a different kind of community than my generation knew. I think television has made a huge difference in the way people interact, in part, because instead of going out, people can sit home and be entertained. And we have different technologies. But I think we'll continue to make the same human connections that we always have – they're just going to be different human connections.

It's worth remembering always that every single generation from probably the first Indigenous person who splattered a handprint on a wall has lamented about how the next generation is really messing up. And it's kind of a truism. I just think it is cool to stand back and see what the next generation does.

Is there a guiding principle or mantra you tell yourself?

There is a guiding principle for sure. And that is that I believe fervently in human self-determination. I firmly believe that humans have the right to decide how they are going to live their lives, and that democracy is the system of government that is most likely to enable us to do that. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. Do people make good decisions all the time? Absolutely not.

But I believe we have the right to make those decisions. And that what is most important to me is preserving people's right to make their own decisions about their own lives based in reality, and to try and support democracy as part of that system to enable people to have self-determination.

How do you overcome adversity?

It's the same way you become a hero or that you demonstrate courage: You just put one foot in front of another. And literally, sometimes that's one of the

hardest things to do. Just putting one foot in front of the other can be such an incredible triumph. And that's always worked for me – just one freaking step at a time. One word at a time. One project at a time. That's how you get through anything.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Here's the one that I can never do, even though I am now 59 years old, and that is trust to time. I have a friend who always says that to me when I'm like, "No, no, I want it now." They encourage me – trust to time. Then I would say living; you really only get one shot.

The things that have been best for me in my life are the things I have done that were quirky, weird. I started doing what I do now because a friend offered me an opportunity to write for a children's magazine. I was on the tenure track at a university, when you're supposed to be focusing all the time on your scholarly work. And I said, "Sure, I'd love to write for a children's magazine." And people were like, "Why are you doing that?" I said, "Well, it sounds like fun."

I think as you age, if you're lucky enough to be one of those people who gets to age, it creates a different way of looking at the world and perhaps a different skill set that then makes you feel like you are truly you.

How do you relax? What do you do to psych yourself up?

In order to think, I need repetitive motion. So I walk a lot, and as soon as I can get a boat in the water – I wear a wetsuit so I do it most of the year – I kayak. Because being outside is really creative time for me. I always walk with paper and pen, and I kayak with paper and pen quite frequently as well.

When I'm working on a project, I have a certain sort of music for each book. It runs heavily on classic guitar – Mark Knopfler and all the greats. Billy Strings is a big one for me right now. I like really good, classic Americana or rock music, and I know I'm really writing well if I can't hear it. But it's got all the great, old stuff from Motown and Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne, right up through Led Zeppelin and Cream – all the stuff that somebody who was born in 1962 would listen to.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Americans can finally grow hair so thick "It will cover up your bald spots," says top US Doctor

Clinical trials show a new hair loss breakthrough can both help men and women naturally regrow a thick, full head of hair – without drugs, surgery, or side effects

Thousands are rushing to get a new hair restoration method based on surprising new studies from the University of California.

It is the world's first and only hair loss solution that revives dead hair follicles. And studies confirm it helps men and women regrow a thick, full head of hair, even after years of balding.

Now, with news of this breakthrough spreading like wildfire — the manufacturers are struggling to keep up with overwhelming demand.

That's because, unlike other methods, it is prescription-free, drug-free, and has no side effects. And while hair transplants can cost \$4,000 or more, this new approach costs pennies on the dollar and doesn't involve going to the doctor's office.

Instead, it leverages cutting-edge technology to prevent hair loss, fill-in embarrassing bald spots, and nourish thinning hair — with results you can see and feel in 30 days or less.

As Jeanne F. from San Diego, CA reports: "When my husband began to use this product, all he had on top of his head was fuzz. His hair began to grow after 30 days and now it is about 2 to 3 inches long!"

Surprising Truth About Hair Loss

It is commonly believed that hair loss is hereditary.

Unfortunately, most people think there is nothing they can do to stop it. However, while many doctors will tell you that thinning hair, a receding hairline, and bald spots are due to your genetics, this is not the whole story.

"While genetics play a role, it's not the main reason you lose hair," says Dr. Al Sears, the nation's top anti-aging doctor. "And surprisingly it's not just your age,

thyroid, hormones, stress, or a vitamin deficiency, either."

The latest scientific research reveals that hair loss is primarily caused by the stem cells in your hair follicles dying.

"This discovery is a true breakthrough because by reviving these stem cells on your scalp, you can stop hair loss dead in its tracks and trigger new hair growth, even in areas that have been thinning for years," explains Dr. Sears.

Now, at his world-famous clinic, the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida, Dr. Sears and his team have used this game-changing discovery to develop a brand-new hair restoration formula that is taking the country by storm.

Sold under the name Re-Nourish, it is flying off the shelves with men and women of all ages raving about the results it delivers.



"I have seen a significant improvement in hair growth. Previously, you could see thinning areas at the back of my head and now hair has grown over it," says Peter W. from Ontario, Canada.

And Susan D. from Fort Pierce, Florida reports, "My hair was thinning. So, I began to use Re-Nourish every day on the front part of my scalp. Now I have thicker hair."

Regrows Hair In Just 30 Days

Scientists now know that stem cells are the lifeblood of your hair

Research from the University of California shows they're the reason you're able to grow hair. However, these stem cells aren't always active. In fact, studies reveal they're only active during certain phases of the hair growth cycle.

"Your hair grows in three phases," explains Dr. Sears. "First, you have the anagen phase, the hair growing phase. Then the catagen phase, when hair gets ready to shed. And finally, the telogen phase, where your hair is pushed from the follicle and falls out."

As you get older it becomes harder for your hair follicles to complete this three-phase cycle. The results? Your hairs get stuck in the telogen phase. This is when they start falling out and stop regrowing, no matter what you try.

This process doesn't happen overnight, says Dr. Sears.

"At first, your hair dries out, becoming brittle, thin, and harder to style. Then, you start finding hairs on your pillow and down the drain. Finally, you're left with bald spots that age you prematurely."

Fortunately, Re-Nourish puts a stop to this. It revives the dead stem cells in your hair follicles and reactivates your hair's three-phase cycle, triggering new growth in as little as 30 days — even in areas that've been balding for years.

Reawakens Dead Hair Follicles

For years, scientists couldn't figure out why hair follicle stem cells died.

However, a study from the University of California finally found the answer.

It has to do with T-cells — an important immune cell in your body. The researchers discovered these T-cells are the only way to command hair follicles to grow new hair.

More importantly, they showed

that T-cells helped revive the stem cells in your hair follicles — spurring new growth, filling in bald spots and natural hairline.

Re-Nourish uses a unique blend of all-natural ingredients. By spraying it on your hair once per day, scientific studies show you can revive dead stem cells and improve the appearance of thicker, fuller hair.

For example, the key nutrient of Re-Nourish was tested on a group of severely balding women.

After 6 months, nearly 70% of the women saw significant improvement in hair growth. Their hair was noticeably fuller, thicker, and healthier looking. Most exciting of all, they grew new hair on parts of their scalp that had been bald for years.

In another study, Italian researchers gathered a group of both men and women with thinning hair and applied the core ingredient of Re-Nourish. After 12 weeks, they reported a staggering 74% increase in hair growth.

"It's really mind-boggling that my hair started growing back," says Zan R., another Re-Nourish customer.

With results like this, it's no

surprise that demand for Re-Nourish is soaring. Thousands of men and women are scrambling to get their hands on the limited-supply available.

Re-Nourish is not currently available in any store at any price. But we've secured a small batch for our readers.

Try Re-Nourish 100% Risk-Free

For the next 48-hours, Dr. Sears is offering readers a risk-free trial of Re-Nourish.

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product that he is backing every order with a risk-free, 100% money-back guarantee. To take advantage of this special offer, simply call the Sears Toll-Free Health Hotline at **1-800-510-7468** now. Use Promo Code **USAREN1** when you call in.

[EDITOR'S NOTE]: Due to recent media exposure for Re-Nourish, the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine is experiencing unprecedented demand. If the phone line is busy when you call, please try again to avoid missing this special one-time-only offer.



Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson answers questions from the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday. JARRAD HENDERSON/USA TODAY

Jackson

Continued from Page 1A

sentences were fair.

"These are some of the most difficult cases that a judge has to deal with because we're talking about pictures of sex abuse of children," Jackson told the committee. The guidelines were just one factor she considered in sentencing, along with the nature of the offense and the "history and characteristics" of the person convicted of the crime, she said.

Under Supreme Court precedent, those guidelines are not mandatory.

Jackson defended her representation of Guantanamo Bay detainees after the Sept. 11 attacks as a federal public defender and later as a private attorney who filed several friend-of-the-court briefs on behalf of outside organizations. Some critics, including the National Republican Committee, blasted out news releases that accused Jackson of "defending terrorists."

Jackson described her work for the detainees as serving the constitutional requirement that criminal defendants receive legal representation.

"We couldn't let the terrorists win by changing who we were fundamentally, and what that meant was that the people who were accused by our government ... were entitled to representation – are entitled to be treated fairly. That's what makes our system the best in the world."

Jackson declined to get pinned down on questions about legal controversies that have tripped up other nominees to the Supreme Court. Pressed on her opinions about abortion, Jackson said the landmark Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 that established a constitutional right to the procedure remained "settled as precedent." She didn't discuss the fact that the high court is considering a case that could unsettle it, potentially upending the reproductive rights framework that's been in place for decades.

In another topic playing out in federal courts, Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, pressed Jackson for her view about the conflict between LGBTQ rights and freedom of religious exercise claims. The Supreme Court has repeatedly resolved disputes involving religious entities or individuals that oppose providing services to same-sex couples.

Cornyn noted that many of those cases have followed the court's blockbuster decision in 2015 legalizing same-sex marriage.

"You see that when the Supreme Court makes a dramatic pronouncement about the invalidity of state marriage laws, that it will inevitably set in conflict between those who ascribe to the Supreme Court's edict and those who have a firmly held religious belief that marriage is between a man and a woman?" Cornyn asked.

"These issues are being litigated," Jackson responded. "I'm limited in what I can say."

Jackson offered glimpses into her judicial philosophy throughout the hearings. The Miami native told Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, that she didn't believe there is a "living Constitution" in the sense that the meaning of the words in

"We couldn't let the terrorists win by changing who we were fundamentally, and what that meant was that the people who were accused by our government ... were entitled to representation – are entitled to be treated fairly. That's what makes our system the best in the world."

Ketanji Brown Jackson
Supreme Court nominee

the founding document changes with time or is "infused with my own policy perspective."

Instead, she said, "the Supreme Court has made clear that when you're interpreting the Constitution, you're looking at the text at the time of the founding, and what the meaning was then as a constraint on my own authority. And so I apply that constraint."

Jackson veered around a number of other controversial questions, declining to say whether she supported the idea of expanding the nine-member court. That, she noted, was a decision for Congress, not judges. Asked what she thought of allowing cameras to record the Supreme Court's oral arguments, Jackson said she would prefer to discuss the issue with other members of the high court before taking a position.

Even some of her critics have acknowledged Jackson probably already has the votes needed for confirmation. The temperature of her hearings has remained low in part because she would not upset the conservatives' 6-3 advantage on the Supreme Court. Jackson, if confirmed, would replace Breyer, who was nominated by President Bill Clinton and is a reliable vote for the court's liberal wing in many high-profile cases.

One of the more tense moments in Tuesday's hearings didn't involve Jackson at all but rather a debate between Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin, D-Ill. Durbin asserted that 39 detainees remain at Guantanamo Bay and that the cost of housing them would be dramatically less if they were transferred to a supermax federal prison in Colorado.

The two squabbled over the recidivism rate and policy of detention at Guantanamo Bay before Graham fumed that the cost of housing prisoners shouldn't matter if there is the possibility they could kill Americans while the country is "at war."

"I hope they all die in jail if they're going to go back to kill Americans," Graham said, his voice raised, before he left the room. "It won't bother me one bit if 39 of them die in prison."

Contributing: Courtney Subramanian, Dylan Wells, Ella Lee, David Jackson, Phillip M. Bailey, Rick Rouan, Chelsey Cox

Defense secretary orders review of military suicides

Austin's committee will focus on nine bases

Tom Vanden Brook

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday ordered the creation of an independent panel to review suicides in the military focusing on nine bases, including three in hard-hit Alaska.

Congress required the Pentagon to create the committee, independent of the Defense Department, to review suicide prevention programs and find ways to improve them. The announcement, and the inclusion of bases in Alaska, comes after USA TODAY reported this year that there were 17 suspected or confirmed suicide deaths in 2021 among the 11,500 soldiers based in the state. That was more suicides than the previous two years combined for U.S. Army Alaska.

"It is imperative that we take care of all our teammates and continue to reinforce that mental health and suicide prevention remain a key priority," Austin wrote to Pentagon leadership. "One death by suicide is one too many. And suicide rates among our service members are still too high."

The committee will visit the nine bases, interview troops and officials and conduct a confidential survey, Austin's memo said. The bases include three in Alaska: the Army's Fort Wainwright, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and the Air Force's Eielson. The others are Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; Naval Station North Island, California; Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada; Camp Humphreys, South Korea; and the North Carolina National Guard.

Austin directed the committee's members to be named within 60 days and a timeline for their visits established. Their work will begin no later than May 14, and they will have to file an initial report to him by Dec. 20. Findings and recommendations are due to Congress by Feb. 18, 2023.

"As I have said many times, mental

health is health – period," Austin wrote. "I know that senior leaders throughout the Department share my sense of commitment to this notion and to making sure we do everything possible to heal all wounds, those you can see and those you can't. We owe it to our people, their families, and to honor the memory of those we have lost."

Toxic leadership and high stress were among the factors in selecting some of the bases, according to a senior defense official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the committee. Other bases were chosen for what they're doing right to prevent suicide. The Pentagon relied in part on data from troop surveys to guide the base selections.

Each service, except for the Space Force, has an installation on the list.

Members of the committee will be selected for their expertise in mental and physical health and experience with military communities, according to a second senior defense official who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The Pentagon's latest annual report on suicide from 2020 found that for active-duty troops, the rate of suicide increased from 20.3 per 100,000 in 2015 to 28.7 per 100,000 in 2020. The report noted that after adjusting for age and sex, the suicide rate for all troops, active and reserve, was comparable to the U.S. population in 2019, the last year for which there is similar data.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., who chairs the personnel panel of the Armed Services Committee, amended the National Defense Authorization Act to require the commission.

"I have spoken to many spouses and family members who have lost their children or spouses to suicide in the military," Speier said. "The numbers have painfully grown by 40% over 5 years. I will not rest until we change this tragic trajectory."

If you are a service member or veteran in crisis or having thoughts of suicide (or know someone who is), call the Military Crisis Line/Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1; text 838255; or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

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OPINION

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Reform America's medical data access

COVID-19 shows faults in public health response



Dr. Jerome Adams

Former U.S. surgeon general

I remember being at the White House in March of 2020. We were frantically trying to figure out how close the U.S. health care system was to collapse. How many people were actually in the hospital with COVID-19? How many intensive care unit beds did we have available? How many ventilators?

"We don't really know," was the answer from top health officials.

"Why the (bleep) not?" bellowed President Donald Trump, as I recall.

Well, the truth was, we didn't have the authority to compel hospitals and health care institutions to report that information to the government — so most didn't.

We've come a very long way since then. From the president of the United States being unable to get this information to make significant national crisis response decisions, to most Americans now being able to get local data via real-time dashboards from their state health departments. But the problem is, the government's authority to continue collecting this information — and the public's ability to access it — may disappear.

Authority at risk

At the beginning of the pandemic, data like SARS-CoV-2 test results and hospital capacity assessments were literally inaccessible to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Thanks to the efforts of countless individuals during the prior administration, these issues were temporarily ameliorated — in large part by a national public health emergency declaration.

The declaration gave Department of Health and Human Services the authority to require reporting of the testing and hospitalization data that local, state and federal public health officials use to guide our collective pandemic response. Once the emergency declaration is lifted, however, these federal authorities and the data flows could go away.

The pandemic has revealed many faults in our public health response capabilities. The CDC now has no direct legal authority to lead and coordinate what or how much of our national public health data is collected. The result is a fragmented system with inconsistent reporting across 50 states and thousands of jurisdictions. Moreover, to access that data, CDC must negotiate data use agreements with each jurisdiction and for each public health matter.

Our national public health operating picture is inefficient and unable to support the modern, interoperable data sharing environment that we need to prepare for, and respond to, future and ongoing public health threats.

These issues significantly hampered our ability to respond to the pandemic, as we were not only building the plane as we were flying it, we were also doing it blindly.

Fortunately, there is a bill being debated in the Senate, the bipartisan Pan-

demic and Public Health Preparedness Response Bill. This legislation intends to "strengthen the nation's public health and medical preparedness and response systems in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Unfortunately, there doesn't so far seem to be a full acknowledgment that the ability to collect and analyze data is the very foundation of our national ability to strengthen our hand as we continue to deal with COVID-19 and new coronavirus variants that are sure to come our way.

Further, for those who do hope that we are soon able to transition to a new phase of the pandemic — one where we aren't in a perpetual state of emergency — lack of authority through federal legislation means the White House either gives up the ability to track and report pandemic data, or it's forced to extend the emergency indefinitely to ensure health officials can continue getting said data.

Hospitals, clinics and labs that report to public health face a multiplicity of reporting requirements that vary by jurisdiction. A federal ability to coordinate reporting could reduce this unnecessary burden on providers by streamlining requirements.

State authority ends at the state border, but health threats don't. A nationally led and coordinated approach to data sharing, access and stewardship can enable essential data for public health threats and surveillance, reducing blind spots for everyone.

The ability to coordinate what is reported and set basic standards for public health reporting will give the U.S. government a national, integrated situational awareness of health threats that would enable local action, and robust national coordination and response.

Unifying data around the nation

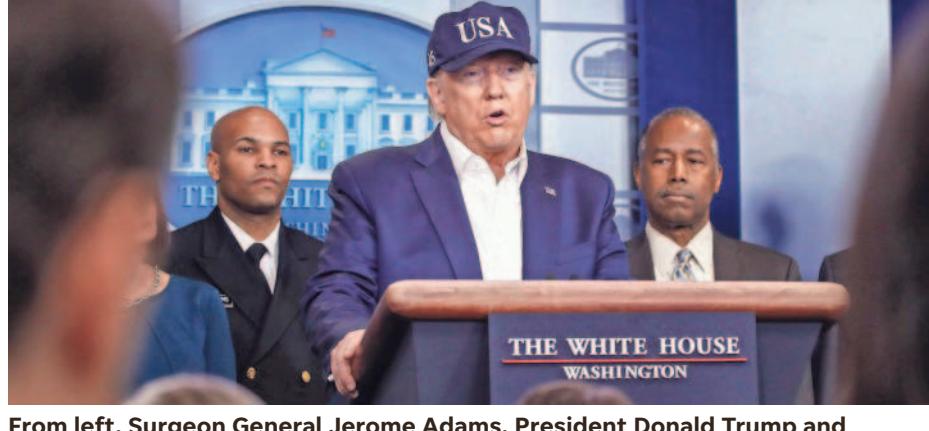
Put simply, Congress must give the CDC and the HHS the authority to lead and coordinate data reporting, stewardship and sharing across our complex public health ecosystem. Those agencies should receive that data synchronously with state, local, tribal and territorial partners.

Unifying the nation around a common approach to data collection and sharing will benefit the entire public health ecosystem. This will support public health data infrastructure that is timely, representative, attendant to privacy standards and accessible to public health partners at the local, state and national levels.

We've learned a lot during this pandemic about where our response systems are inadequate, and we've made substantial progress in addressing those inadequacies.

Now is not the time to go backward on an issue as important as our ability to see, collect and share critical public health data. Health officials, governors and the president of the United States should never again have to ask why the (bleep) don't we know what's going on in a health emergency.

Dr. Jerome Adams, a former U.S. surgeon general, is a distinguished professor and executive director of health equity initiatives at Purdue University. Follow him on Twitter: @JeromeAdamsMD



From left, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, President Donald Trump and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson in 2020. ALEX BRANDON/AP



Rapper Pusha T, here performing in 2018 in Philadelphia, has issued a new diss track on Arby's behalf in the fish sandwich wars. ZACHARY MAZUR/FILMMAGIC

New hip-hop beefs are focused on fast food

Pusha T is fishing for a battle with McDonald's



Austin Bogues

Commentary editor

USA TODAY

And sometimes there has been blowback, as when former Fox News personality Bill O'Reilly lambasted Pepsi for running commercials with the rapper Ludacris.

Let's be honest, hip-hop has always been driven by a competitive hyper-capitalism, and the fish sandwich wars are being launched in the middle of Lent, where market demand for seafood might be at its peak.

Fish sandwich wars ahead?

So Pusha T is looking to cash in.

As Walter D. Greason, a professor and economic historian at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, said, "More people, in and out of hip-hop, need to understand the value of their creativity in ways similar to Pusha T's growth from McDonald's to Arby's."

For years, some of the biggest fast-food chains, including Chick-fil-A, Popeyes and KFC, have been embroiled (or fried) in the chicken sandwich wars, waging big dollar campaigns for supremacy at drive-thru lines.

As the battle moves toward the sea, there's ample reason to believe Pusha T might be well versed in good seafood.

He hails from the Hampton Roads region of Virginia, along the Chesapeake Bay, where a staple of any summertime cookout is fresh fried fish, usually generously appointed with hot sauce and served on sliced white bread.

So he saves some of his spiciest rhymes for aim at McDonald's: "Drowned in tartar that Filet-O-Fish is tasteless/ see Arby's only deals in the greatness/ I bet the house on it like it's Vegas."

Pusha T acknowledges his marketing ability on the track. "I could sell water to a whale/ How could you ever think I'd fail?" he raps.

Will this be the beginning of a boom for Arby's to the top of the charts or an anchor that sinks the chain?

Only time will tell.

Austin Bogues is a member of USA TODAY's Editorial Board. Follow him on Twitter: @AustinBogues

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MONEY

USA TODAY | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022 | SECTION B

MONEYLINE

KROGER AND WALMART PANCAKE MIXES RECALLED

Continental Mills is voluntarily recalling select boxes of pancake and waffle mixes sold under Walmart and Kroger private label brands due to "a potential foreign material contamination." The Walmart recall is for a single lot of Great Value Buttermilk Pancake & Waffle Mix distributed to stores nationwide. The Kroger Buttermilk Pancake & Waffle Mix was distributed in 17 states.

TELSA FACTORY TO TAKE ON GERMAN AUTOMAKERS

Electric car manufacturer Tesla opened its first European factory Tuesday on the outskirts of Berlin in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf. The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Economy Minister Robert Habeck attended the opening ceremony in Gruenheide, southeast of the German capital, with Tesla boss Elon Musk.



EVAN AGOSTINI/INVISION/AP

SCOTT DONATES \$436M TO HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

MacKenzie Scott has donated \$436 million to Habitat for Humanity International and 84 of its U.S. affiliates – the largest publicly disclosed donation from the billionaire philanthropist since she pledged in 2019 to give away the majority of her wealth. Jonathan Reckford, Habitat for Humanity International's CEO, said the group will use Scott's donation to increase the supply of affordable housing, especially in communities of color. Aside from an occasional blog post, Scott, an author and philanthropist, doesn't discuss her donations, which exceeded \$8 billion in the past two years after her divorce from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Dow Jones Industrial Avg.



TUESDAY MARKETS

INDEX	CLOSE	CHG
Dow Jones Industrial Avg.	34,807.46	254.47
S&P 500	4,511.61	50.43
Nasdaq composite	14,108.82	270.36
T-note, 10-year yield	2.385	0.091

USA TODAY SNAPSHTOS ©

Mortgage rates

Rates reported Tuesday.

	Current	Week ago
30 yr. fixed	4.53%	4.43%
15 yr. fixed	3.83%	3.57%
5/1 ARM	3.15%	2.94%
7/1 ARM	3.89%	3.63%
30 yr. jumbo	4.54%	4.46%
30 yr. FHA	3.80%	3.63%



BANKRATE.COM

If job is not as described, get everyone on same page fast

Human relations expert says talk to manager, HR about expectations and offer solution. **Page 2B**

Boeing model in China crash has a long, safe track record

The 737-800 has been in use for nearly 20 years with hundreds in U.S. airlines' fleets. **Page 3B**



TRAVEL SAFE WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Plan well with help from apps and online menus, ease anxiety

Cortney Fries
FamilyVacationist.com

Traveling with someone who has food allergies takes a bit of extra planning, whether that person is you or your child. But don't let that limit your family vacation ideas. With the right precautions, your family can travel safely even when food allergies and food sensitivities are a concern.

Whether your child is allergic to peanuts or seafood or has a gluten sensitivity, there are ways to pull off a safe family vacation that doesn't end with a trip to the emergency room.

If you or someone you care about is concerned about food allergies while traveling, here's how to plan, prepare and enjoy your trips.

Planning a trip when your child has a food allergy

When traveling with food allergies, look for hotels and vacation rentals that have refriger-

ators and microwaves on hand. That way you'll always have the option to prepare some meals yourself. Locate grocery stores that stock foods you typically purchase and pack, or buy a cooler on your trip if you'll need to refrigerate anything while you're away from your room.

Research restaurant menus at your destination in advance, too. Many chain restaurants include allergen information online.

When flying with kids (or anyone) with an allergy, read the airline's allergy policy online before you book. You can typically find these on the airline's website by searching for terms like allergies or peanuts.

"Many airlines still serve peanuts and tree nuts, or foods that contain them," says Dr. Wendy Sue Swanson, a pediatrician and chief medical officer for SpoonfulONE, an allergen introduction and maintenance line of food products. "However, it is rare that children have inhalation risks from food."

See FOOD ALLERGIES, Page 2B



GETTY IMAGES

Disney workers walk out, list demands

Support sought for LGBTQ employees

Eve Chen
USA TODAY

Disney employees around the country are calling on their company to live up to its expressed ideals when it comes to showing support for LGBTQ employees following The Walt Disney Company's response to what critics have called Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill.

If signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, the Parental Rights in Education bill would restrict classroom discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grades, prohibiting instruction on it through third grade in public schools. DeSantis said he plans to sign the bill soon and accused Disney of painting false narratives around the legislation.

After initial public silence on the matter, Disney CEO Bob Chapek apologized for not being a "stronger ally in the fight for equal rights" and an-

nounced a number of supportive measures, including donations to advocacy groups and reevaluating political giving.

Some employees don't think that's enough. They staged walkouts across Disney properties Tuesday, with a list of demands.

Why are Disney employees protesting?

"We want action," said Nicholas Maldonado, an Orlando-area Disney employee who had always loved working for the company but now won't even watch Disney+.

"Be the fighter that you say you are," he added Tuesday. "I challenge you, Mr. Chapek, that you stand with us."

Chapek said Disney would pause political donations in Florida amid a restructuring of the framework for such giving, but walkout organizers and supporters want the company to permanently cut off donations to lawmakers who backed the bill.

They also want Disney to stop relocating employees to the state and stop



Disney CEO Bob Chapek apologized for not being a "stronger ally in the fight for equal rights" for the LGBTQ community. **EVE CHEN/USA TODAY**

construction and investment there until the bill is off the books. Construction is currently underway for two attractions at Walt Disney World, Guardians of the Galaxy Cosmic Rewind at Epcot and TRON Lightcycle/Run at Magic Kingdom.

Other demands include outlining spending and plans for content that in-

See WALKOUTS, Page 2B

ASK HUMAN RESOURCES

If job is not as described, start conversation

Get everyone on same page, offer a solution



Johnny C. Taylor Jr.
Columnist
USA TODAY

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. tackles your human resources questions as part of a series for USA TODAY. Taylor is president and CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management, the world's largest HR professional society and author of "Reset: A Leader's Guide to Work in an Age of Upheaval."

The questions are submitted by readers, and Taylor's answers below have been edited for length and clarity.

Question: I was offered a new job without travel listed on the job description and never discussed in the interview. In my profession, travel is not unheard of so I expected occasional travel. I voiced my desire to one of the interviewers to be local with no interest in frequent travel. I left my job of 15 years for this position, where they are now pressuring me to travel frequently. I do have medical issues, but I would prefer not to discuss them if possible. Suggestions? – Anson

Johnny C. Taylor Jr. While any number of scenarios could have led to this unfortunate disconnect, certainly, somewhere within the exchanges between the interviewer, manager, and yourself, the expectations were lost. Miscommunication, whether accidental or intentional, erodes trust and dam-

ages the employer/employee relationship. To turn things around and improve communication, you should start a conversation with your manager and/or Human Resources as soon as possible.

While there is no requirement to disclose your medical condition, should your travel limitations rise to the level of medical disability, you may need to disclose it. Your employer will then need to assess if your condition meets the criteria for disability under The Americans with Disabilities Act. If your medical condition is determined to be a qualifying disability, they are obligated to provide you with a reasonable accommodation, absent undue hardship. Reasonable accommodations may include meeting with clients/customers virtually, less frequent travel, or adjusting modes of travel.

If you aren't comfortable with this approach or this matter is more of personal preference, it is reasonable to discuss this with your manager and/or HR. Do not assume they understand your perspective. Let them know that you specifically requested limited occasional travel and accepted the position on this understanding. Be prepared to offer a solution. Outline the parameters for the frequency and duration of travel you are willing to accommodate. Understanding your needs can help them form a viable work plan.

If there are any reservations about job requirements or conditions, it is always best practice to ask and verify. Also, it can be helpful to clarify ongoing work expectations for communicating changes in travel requirements going forward. I hope this works well for you.



If your job does not match its description, you may want to address the issue with management or HR as soon as possible. TEMPURA/GETTY IMAGES

Q: I am considering joining the National Guard Reserves. I am concerned some of my work benefits will be suspended. Are employers required to retain benefits for employees on military leave, like holding the accumulation of time for vesting qualifications? – Clarissa

Taylor: It's great to hear that you are considering serving your country by joining the National Guard Reserves. Thankfully, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act offers significant job and benefits protection when you voluntarily or involuntarily leave a job to perform military service in any military branch, the National Guard or Reserves.

Retention of health benefits will depend on the length of your military leave. If an absence is less than 31 days, your employer is obligated to continue your health insurance and continue to pay their portion of it. For absences of 30 days or greater, your health benefits

end with an option for you to continue coverage for up to 24 months or for the period of military service, whichever is shorter. You may be required to contribute the full cost of health benefits plus a 2% administration fee. When you return to your employer, your regular health benefits are immediately reinstated.

For employers with retirement benefits, there are protections available as well. You are entitled to all accrued pension benefits. However, your employer is not required to continue to make contributions to your 401(k) while you are on military leave. Keep in mind, contributions to 401(k)s can be made up when you return from service, and your employer is obligated to match any catch-up contributions.

Paid time off, vacation, or sick leave also have protection under uniformed services act as well. The ability to continue to accrue leave during military leave is subject to your employer's company policy, so your paid time off accruals may be suspended during your leave. However, if the policy continues to accrue for any employee on a leave of absence, an employee on military leave is also entitled to continued accruals.

Another key benefit is reinstatement. Employers are required to reinstate employees into their same position with all seniority, status, pay and benefits as if they had been actively working during their military service. The vesting of employment rights occurs on reenrollment. In other words, if you do not want to be reemployed upon your return from military leave, your employer is not responsible for those obligations.

I hope this will assist you in making the best decision.

Food allergies

Continued from Page 1B

Still, if you are concerned about a severe peanut allergy or other potentially dangerous anaphylactic reaction, you can ask for a nut-free buffer zone, wipe down tray tables and avoid potential areas of concern like airline food, pillows and blankets.

The first flight of the day will generally have the cleanest airplane. If you can book the early flight, it might help put your mind at ease.

What to do before you travel with a food allergy

Melanie Carver, chief mission officer of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, whose food allergy division specializes in kids with food allergies, recommends checking your health insurance policy so that you know in advance whether your plan will cover doctor or emergency visits in other states or countries. Discuss travel-related risks with your allergist or doctor and refill prescription medications before you go.

"Check the expiration dates on epinephrine auto-injectors before you leave and bring extra," Swanson advises. "Practice with an auto-injector trainer and review an emergency plan with all those in your travel group so you feel an extra layer of confidence."

What to pack if your child has food allergies

Always pack your health insurance card and a list of medical conditions, medicines, prescribing physician and dosages. It's best to make sure your

medications have their original labels on them and are with you at all times in a carry-on bag or backpack. If the food allergy is severe, wear a medical identification bracelet as well.

Print and carry an allergy avoidance list to help with ordering foods from restaurants. Allergy translation cards are available in 50 languages from Equal Eats, which can help avoid errors or misunderstandings when you're traveling internationally.

Hand wipes and hand sanitizers are great tools to clean your seating area, trays and hands when you eat out. Pack plenty of food and snacks for your travels, too – even more than you think you might need, because you never know if there will be delays, restaurant closings, or other unexpected situations that pop up along the way.

Swanson recommends Allergy Amulet, a portable food allergen sensor that can quickly tell whether some of the most common allergens are present in your food. (This tool should be available for peanut and soy allergies later this year, with detection for additional common allergens to come.)

How to ease your allergy anxieties while traveling

Managing the food allergies of children is all about making sure you know exactly what's in every single thing that goes into your kid's mouth, which is a big reason why leaving your usual bubble can cause anxiety.

"If anxiety about food allergies, navigating travel, or even concerns about teasing or bullying come up with your child, don't ever hesitate to reach out to your pediatrician for support and ideas to improve your child's mental health," Swanson advises. "Oftentimes, we rec-



"Check the expiration dates on epinephrine auto-injectors before you leave and bring extra," advises pediatrician Dr. Wendy Sue Swanson. "Practice with an auto-injector trainer and review an emergency plan with all those in your travel group so you feel an extra layer of confidence."

CARRIECAPTURED/GETTY IMAGES

ommend both parents and children see a psychologist to learn more about coping mechanisms."

Meditation, cognitive behavioral therapy, and having your food allergy emergency care plan in place are great ways to ease anxiety.

As the mother of a child with food allergies, I understand how challenging it must be for her to be unable to dine at a restaurant and eat anything with ease like everyone else. When we travel together, if there's something she wants that everyone else is eating and she can't have it, I sit with her and don't eat it either. The solidarity is some consolation. Often, I'll try to find something else she really enjoys or bring indulgences along that I know she can have just in case. Special surprises always help.

Food allergy safety while traveling

As always, check restaurant menus

and food labels to make sure there are safe choices that your little one will eat. When alerting servers of food allergies, presenting an Equal Eats chef card or allergy avoidance list can help ensure there is no confusion when ordering.

Apps and online resources for traveling with food allergies

You can find all sorts of allergen awareness tools and online communities for swapping tips and information about dealing with food allergies. Swanson recommends following NoNutTraveler on Instagram, a food allergy advocate and international speaker, as well as FARE, an organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life and health of individuals with food allergies.

Food allergy apps are helpful, especially when traveling, because you can look up restaurants by your location. One example is AllergyEats, a guide created by and for the food allergy community that crowdsources reviews on restaurants' ability to accommodate food allergies.

Swanson recommends Spokin, an app that enables you to look up restaurants, recipes and food brands.

"It's an awesome resource that provides a combination of content, community and tools with the common goal to make it easier, faster and safer to manage food allergies," she says.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America and its Kids with Food Allergies division are also robust food allergy resources for understanding your rights, reducing your risk of allergic reactions on flights, tips for holiday travel with food allergies, and both U.S. airline policies and TSA policies related to food allergies while traveling.

Walkouts

Continued from Page 1B

creases LGBTQ representation.

In an internal memo to employees obtained by USA TODAY, Chapek initially said, "I believe the best way for our company to bring about lasting change is through the inspiring content we produce, the welcoming culture we create, and the diverse community organizations we support."

In another memo sent days later, following the bill's passage, he acknowledged the need to promote good "by telling inclusive stories, but also by standing up for the rights of all."

Who's protesting Disney?

Walt Disney Company employees at Walt Disney World in Florida, Disneyland in California, Disney Cruise Line, ABC, FX, National Geographic, Hulu,



Nicholas Maldonado says he's always loved working for Disney but calls the company's response to what's been called Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill "incredibly shameful."

PROVIDED BY
NICHOLAS
MALDONADO

Walt Disney Studios, Pixar Animation Studios, Marvel Studios, LucasFilm, 20th Century Fox, Searchlight Pictures and Disney's various other properties were invited to take part in Tuesday's walkout.

Numerous employees took part in smaller walkouts over the past week and spoke out on social media.

On air, ESPN announcers Elle Duncan, Carolyn Peck, Courtney Lyle, Stephanie White and Pam Ward have observed moments of silence live during broadcasts, in solidarity with their colleagues.

Maldonado said he was "incredibly nervous" about protesting, but had to speak up on behalf of his identity and

community.

"I want them to hear not just me, but many other LGBTQ cast members that are part of this company," he said. "I cannot be any more proud to be part of the community. ... I hope again I can be proud to be part of The Walt Disney Company."

How has Disney responded?

Without specifically addressing walkouts, a number of Disney brands, like Disney+, ESPN and National Geographic posted supportive statements on social media Tuesday morning.

"We oppose any legislation that infringes on the basic human rights, and stand in solidarity and support our LGBTQIA+ cast, crew, guest and fans who make their voices heard today and every day," Walt Disney World posted in Instagram.

USA TODAY sent multiple requests to Disney for further comment but did not receive a response.

Desert hike shows off valley vistas



Switchbacks ease the climb to the Dynamite Trail saddle at San Tan Mountain Regional Park in Queen Creek, Ariz.

PHOTOS BY MARE CZINAR/SPECIAL TO USA TODAY NETWORK

Soak up the beauty on this moderate loop route near Phoenix

Mare Czinar

Special to Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

San Tan Mountain Regional Park in Queen Creek is a 10,198-acre mountain-bound property that anchors the far southeast reach of the 10 Maricopa County Regional Parks that circle metro Phoenix. The park's nine nonmotorized trails plus a short interpretive loop provide options for trail users of every level of experience.

Situated in a hilly expanse bolstered by Goldmine Mountain in the north and the Malpais Hills in the south, the park's 20-plus miles of trails wander among lush desert vegetation, scoured washes and high points with valley vistas.

One moderate route to try uses parts of the Littleleaf, Goldmine and San Tan trails to connect with the park's northwest classic – the Dynamite Trail. All three trails are also part of the 315-mile, Valley-circumnavigating Maricopa Trail.

The 2.5-mile Dynamite Trail may be accessed by way of connecting routes from either the main park trailhead or the Goldmine trailhead at the park's northwest end. With extra amenities like real restrooms and a visitor center, the main trailhead is a good place to start.

Begin with an easy 0.7-mile walk on



Mountain and desert vistas on the Littleleaf Trail in San Tan Mountain Regional Park in Queen Creek, Ariz.

the Littleleaf Trail. While it gains only 85 feet in elevation, it's enough to serve up appetizer vistas of distant Tonto National Forest and Mazatzal Wilderness mountain peaks.

This warmup segment is followed by a 0.4-mile hike on the Goldmine Trail, which undulates through drainages and cholla forests before arriving at the junction with the San Tan Trail, where Goldmine begins its strenuous uphill haul.

For this trip, head left on the San Tan Trail and continue 0.4 mile to link up with the destination route – the Dyna-

mite Trail. It's along this segment where the mountainous nature of the park becomes headily apparent. The Malpais Hills jut abruptly on the near horizon while the green valleys of the Gila River Indian Community peek out to the southwest.

The Dynamite Trail starts out by tracing the western foothills of Goldmine Mountain, ducking through ironwood-cluttered washes, acres of creosote shrubs and many impressive stands of saguaros and cholla cactus.

At 2.4 miles from the trailhead, the route takes on a series of switchbacks

Hiking in San Tan Mountain Regional Park

Length: 4.1 miles one way or 8.2 miles round trip as described here. Use the Goldmine trailhead for a car shuttle hike.

Rating: Moderate.

Elevation: 1,617-1,894 feet.

Getting there: From the south, use the San Tan Mountain Regional Park main trailhead at 6533 W. Phillips Road, Queen Creek. From U.S. 60 in Mesa, take Ellsworth Road (Exit 191). Go south to Hunt Highway and continue east to Thompson Road. Go south on Thompson Road to Phillips Road and follow the signs to the park entrance. The park has restrooms, water, a visitor center, equestrian staging area and picnic tables.

From the north, use the Goldmine trailhead: From Hunt Highway north of the main park entrance, go 1.2 miles west on Empire Boulevard to Wagon Wheel Road, turn south and follow the road 1 mile to the Goldmine trailhead. If no attendant is on duty, pay the entry fee in cash at the metal kiosk with payment envelopes. Follow the Goldmine Trail 0.2 mile to connect with the Dynamite Trail. There are portable restrooms at the trailhead but no other amenities.

Admission: \$7 per vehicle or \$2 per person walk-in/bike-in fee.

Hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. daily.

Details: San Tan Mountain Regional Park, www.maricopacountyparks.net.

that ease the climb to a mountain saddle. On the breezy divide, a fresh set of views open up over sprawling East Valley suburbs that stretch into the Superstition Mountains and, on clear days, all the way to the New River Mountains to the far north.

Viewing benches placed at scenic overlooks throughout the route, including on the saddle, invite trail users to sit awhile and soak up the beauty. From the saddle, the trail spirals downhill over long, lazy curves, passing by historic gravesites before reconnecting with the Goldmine Trail near the Goldmine trailhead on Wagon Wheel Road.

Unless you parked a car-shuttle vehicle there, return the way you came. Or, for a more difficult return route, loop it up with the 2.5-mile Goldmine Trail for a challenging climb to the park's highest point and even more outstanding views.

Boeing model in China crash has long, safe track record

Jordan Mendoza

USA TODAY

A Chinese airplane with 123 passengers and nine crew members crashed on Monday in the southern province of Guangxi, and officials started conducting rescue efforts at the site of the downed aircraft.

Data from the flight tracking website FlightRadar24.com shows the China Eastern flight was traveling at about 30,000 feet at a cruising speed of 523 mph before it dropped.

The crash ignited a fire near the city of Wuzhou in Teng county, and hundreds of firefighters and rescuers were sent to the scene and the fire was extinguished, according to the state-run China Daily. The outlet reported a village official with the surname Zhou said that the plane had "completely disintegrated" and that he did not see any remains.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for an "all-out effort" in rescue operations and urged that any safety hazards that could have caused the crash to be investigated.

The aircraft was a Boeing 737-800. Though Boeing has come under fire for crashes in recent years, it was the company's Boeing 737 Max that generated some of the harshest criticism.

There are differences in the aircraft, and Aerovise aviation expert Josh Verde told USA TODAY the Boeing 737-800 is a "tremendously safe airplane." Most accidents involving the plane have been runway-related.

In 2010, an Ethiopian Airlines flight, a Boeing 737-800, crashed into the Medi-

terranean Sea, and 98 people were killed.

Here's what we know about the Boeing 737-800:

How many Boeing 737-800 planes are in use today?

The Boeing 737-800 has been in use for nearly 20 years, and Verde said the plane is one of the most common used around the world, primarily in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Southwest Airlines, the nation's largest domestic carrier, flies Boeing 737s exclusively and had 728 in its fleet at the end of 2021. That included 207 Boeing 737-800s with an average age of 6 years.

American Airlines had 267 737-800s; United had 141 and Delta had 77. In total, the four major U.S. airlines have nearly 700 of the jetliners in their fleets.

Verde estimates that there are about 200 Boeing 737-800s in the air in the U.S. at any given time.

What's the difference between a Boeing 737-800 and 737 Max?

The Boeing 737 Max was heavily scrutinized after two international planes crashed in 2018 and 2019, resulting in 346 deaths. The plane was grounded worldwide and wasn't allowed to fly until several changes were made and it was recertified by the Federal Aviation Administration, which it did in December 2020.

The aircraft is used in the United States, but David Yu, a finance professor specializing in aviation at New York

University in Shanghai, told The New York Times the planes are not back in service in mainland China yet.

Anthony Brickhouse, associate professor of applied aviation sciences at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, told USA TODAY the key difference in the Max is that its engines are located in a different spot and the Max is more fuel-efficient.

"I would encourage people not to automatically connect the dots between what happened today and what happened back in 2018 and 2019," Brickhouse said.

Is the Boeing 737-800 safe?

The 737-800, part of Boeing's next-generation family, has had some issues in recent years. In 2019, the FAA ordered the inspection of heavily used 737 NGs for cracks in wing supports, which found several planes had wing cracks.

But Verde said the planes "don't have any ongoing areas of concern" and have had long, safe track records, alluding to how many airline companies use them today. He added the Boeing 737 Max was the first time he had seen the company cause a public scare.

"They're tremendously safe airplanes, and so the public certainly shouldn't have any concerns about getting on board one," Verde said.

Brickhouse said it's normal for people to feel uncertain about flying after a passenger plane crashes but said the jetliner is still reliable and safe, and investigations into the crash will lead to any changes being made.

What could have caused the Chinese plane to crash?

Video taken of the flight showed the plane in a straight nosedive moments before its impact, something Verde said could indicate the flight crew lost control of the plane. He said the impact would have been "tremendous," and there's no guarantee anything on the plane, including the black box, would survive.

"Systems problems or a failure of some type is typically the only time you would see a plane in that nose-down dive of attitude when you're talking about an airliner," Verde said.

"The cause of the plane crash is still under investigation, and the company will actively cooperate with relevant investigations," the airline said in a statement Monday. "The company expresses its deep condolences to the passengers and crew members who died in the plane crash."

Brickhouse, a former student trainee at the National Transportation Safety Board, said one thing that caught his attention was the aircraft's sudden drop. The plane dropped from 30,000 feet to about 9,000 feet in under three minutes.

"That's not your typical descent rate for an aircraft," he said.

There is no timetable of when it will be known what caused the crash, but Brickhouse said investigators don't focus on one piece of evidence alone, and the evidence and data will help determine what caused the crash.

Contributing: Ryan Miller, Dawn Gilbertson

AMERICA'S MARKETS

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE
+254.47
Closing: 34,807.46
Change: +.7%
YTD % Chg: -4.2%

S&P 500 • STANDARD & POOR'S
+50.43
Closing: 4,511.61
Change: +1.1%
YTD % Chg: -5.3%

MARKET PERFORMANCE BY SECTOR

Sector	Close	Chg.	4wk ¹	YTD ¹
Energy	75.57	-0.56	+12.9%	+36.2%
Financials	39.44	+0.63	+1.1%	+1.0%
Utilities	70.91	+0.10	+7.2%	-0.9%
Industrials	103.29	+0.56	+6.1%	-2.4%
Health care	136.49	+0.03	+7.3%	-3.1%
Consumer staples	74.50	+0.55	-1.2%	-3.4%
Materials	86.96	+0.47	+5.2%	-4.0%
Telecom	74.49	+1.51	+1.8%	-9.4%
Consumer discret.	184.55	+4.47	+5.6%	-9.7%
Technology	156.71	+2.22	+3.8%	-9.9%

S&P 500'S BIGGEST GAINERS

Company (ticker)	Price	\$ Chg.	% Chg.	YTD
Tesla Inc (TSLA)	993.98	+72.82	+7.9	-5.9
EPAM Systems (EPAM)	303.54	+19.49	+6.9	-54.6
Moderna Inc (MRNA)	186.72	+11.34	+6.5	-26.5
Align Technology Inc (ALGN)	457.03	+24.56	+5.7	-30.5
Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	53.39	+2.25	+4.4	+11.3

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Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	53.39	+2.25	+4.4	+11.3

S&P 500'S BIGGEST LOSERS

Company (ticker)	Price	\$ Chg.	% Chg.	YTD
Wayneheuerer (WY)	38.20	-.99	-2.5	-7.2
Mosaic Co (MOS)	65.68	-1.52	-2.3	+67.2
Hess Corp (HES)	101.59	-2.26	-2.2	+37.2
Occid Petl (OXY)	59.64	-1.32	-2.2	+105.7
Pfizer Inc (PFE)	53.04	-1.15	-2.1	-10.2

Company (ticker)	Price	\$ Chg.	% Chg.	YTD
Wayneheuerer (WY)	38.20	-.99	-2.5	-7.2
Mosaic Co (MOS)	65.68	-1.52	-2.3	+67.2
Hess Corp (HES)	101.59	-2.26	-2.2	+37.2
Occid Petl (OXY)	59.64	-1.32	-2.2	+105.7
Pfizer Inc (PFE)	53.04	-1.15	-2.1	-10.2

ALABAMA Clanton: A man who called a tow service asking to have a 70-ton crane pulled out of the woods is charged with stealing the heavy machinery, sheriff's officials said.

ALASKA Anchorage: The late Rep. Don Young, the longest-serving Republican in House history, will lie in state in the U.S. Capitol on March 29, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

ARIZONA Phoenix: The top county prosecutor in the metro area is resigning amid criticism of her performance, including the dismissal of 180 misdemeanor cases because charges were not filed in a timely fashion.

ARKANSAS Little Rock: State Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said Monday that she would appeal a judge's ruling that struck down four new voting laws as unconstitutional.

CALIFORNIA Antioch: A man who was trapped 15 feet underground for two days in a 16-inch-wide storm pipe was rescued in an effort that lasted hours and involved at least 50 firefighters, police officers and rescue personnel, officials said Monday.

COLORADO Boulder: With flowers and a public remembrance for those who died and those still grieving, residents marked the one-year anniversary Tuesday of a shooting at a busy supermarket that left 10 dead.

CONNECTICUT Hartford: A legislative task force found that roughly two-thirds of 1,000 schools statewide lack on-site mental health centers.

DELAWARE Dover: A bill, introduced Monday, aimed at police transparency would keep past complaints and disciplinary findings against officers accused of wrongdoing a secret.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine is suing delivery service Grubhub, citing lack of transparency and misleading tactics, WUSA-TV reports.

FLORIDA Miami Beach: City officials declared a state of emergency Monday and an upcoming curfew, bidding to curb violent incidents at spring break that recently saw five people wounded in two separate shootings.

GEORGIA Atlanta: The justices on the state's highest court have unanimously selected Presiding Justice Michael Boggs as the next leader of Georgia's judicial system.

HAWAII Honolulu: Two men died after a small plane crashed in steep, mountainous terrain on Kauai's northwest side, officials said Monday.

IDAHO Boise: Lawmakers in the state House on Monday approved legislation to boost reading skills by funding optional full-day kindergarten for school districts.

ILLINOIS Springfield: Gov. J.B. Pritzker and fellow Democrats who lead the General Assembly have pledged to push legislation to penalize Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

INDIANA Indianapolis: Gov. Eric Holcomb on Monday vetoed a bill banning transgender female athletes from girls' school sports. Opponents argued it was a bigoted response to a problem that doesn't exist, with the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana saying it planned a lawsuit against the "hateful legislation."

IOWA Des Moines: GreenState Credit Union has announced a goal of loaning \$1 billion to people of color in Iowa and neighboring states to help close a wide homeownership gap.

MARKET NOTEBOOK

	NYSE	NASDAQ
Advancing	1,562	2,634
Declining	898	886
Unchanged	59	271
Total	2,519	3,791

ISSUES AT

	Issues
New 52 Week High	81
New 52 Week Low	47
Total	4,229,409,991
Advancing	2,912,830,688
Declining	1,284,639,034
Unchanged	31,940,269
	27,320,061

	Share Volume
Total	4,693,341,379
Advancing	3,790,121,131
Declining	875,900,187
Unchanged	27,320,061

TOP 10 EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS

ETF, ranked by volume	Ticker	Close	Chg.	% Chg.	% YTD
ProShs UltraPro QQQ	TQQQ	55.91	+3.12	+5.9%	-32.8%
ProShs UltPro ShtQQQ	SQQQ	35.53	-2.21	-5.5%	+19.6%
SPDR S&P 500 ETF Tr	SPY	449.59	+5.20	+1.2%	-5.3%
Invesco QQQ Trust	QQQ	356.96	+6.88	+2.0%	-10.3%
iShares Emerging Mkts	EEM	45.47	+0.81	+1.8%	-6.9%
SPDR Financial	XLF	39.44	+0.63	+1.6%	+1.0%
iShares China Large Cap	FXI	33.18	+1.40	+4.4%	-9.3%
iShares Boxx HY CpbD	HYG	82.00	+0.42	+0.5%	-5.8%
Direx SOX Bull 3X	SOXL	39.59	+0.59	+1.5%	-41.8%
SPDR Energy	XLE	75.57	-0.56	-0.7%	+36.2%

	Foreign Currencies
British pound	.7545
Canadian dollar	1.2583
Chinese yuan	6.3664
Euro	.9073
Japanese yen	120.74
Mexican peso	20.2813
Close	Prev.
.7545	.7598
1.2597	1.2782
6.3560	6.4623
.8553	.8374
109.89	108.80
20.0620	20.5474

	Commodities

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SPORTS

USA TODAY | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022 | SECTION C

In men's Sweet 16, it's time again to count on experience

March Madness reseeding: Ranking men's teams left based on national title ability. **Page 5C**

Latest news, results, opinion 24/7 at [sports.usatoday.com](#)

See who won and who lost last night in the NBA and the NHL as the regular season winds down



Matt Chapman rounds second after hitting a two-run homer for his new Blue Jays team. NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/USA TODAY SPORTS

Blue Jays, Twins soar as elites scuffle

MLB winners, losers after furious two weeks of transactions

Gabe Lacques

USA TODAY

The labor acrimony is over, and now, after nearly two weeks of furious transactions, MLB's unprecedented offseason nearly is, too.

With just more than two weeks until opening day on April 7, every elite free agent has found a home and almost every trade chip has been cashed in. There are still impact players available, and as the final days draw near, a flurry of waiver claims and minor trades and probably a couple of major ones will pop off.

Yet the landscape is largely reset after the 99-day lockout finally ended and a 2022 season is finally taking form.

Who best leveraged this hot stove spring training setting? Which players and teams, with the benefit of hindsight, maneuvered most deftly in the pre- and post-lockout landscapes?

Presenting our winners and losers of this two-week flurry of musical chairs:

Winners

Blue Jays: As other clubs piece together rotations or lineups and scavenge for spare parts, the Blue Jays are perhaps the most complete team this side of Dodger Stadium after signing Yusei Kikuchi to be their fifth starter and trading for All-Star third baseman Matt Chapman. Yes, Kikuchi is their No.

5 and Chapman will hit sixth in a loaded lineup that revolves around MVP runner-up Vladimir Guerrero Jr. In this abbreviated run-up to the season, the energy in Toronto camp was palpable as a 91-win team gears up for what Guerrero calls the "movie" after the trailer. Get your popcorn.

Corey Seager: Sure, Seager agreed to terms with the Texas Rangers way back on Nov. 29, but in light of recent events, his decision to sign before the lockout proved genius. It didn't hurt that the Rangers dropped a 10-year, \$325 million deal on the table, a pact that guarantees him twice as much money and long-

See TRANSACTIONS, Page 7C



Lindsay Schnell
Columnist
USA TODAY

Women's coaches giving to Ukraine

Tara VanDerveer walked by the statue, a man riding triumphantly on a horse, and turned to her assistant Nell Fortner.

It was February 1996, and VanDerveer and Fortner were in Kyiv, Ukraine, with the Olympic women's basketball team, playing in tournaments all over the country to prepare for the Summer Games in Atlanta. VanDerveer asked what the statue represented. Fortner shrugged, then told VanDerveer her interpretation was, "it's the Ukrainian people saying, 'Party on!'"

Throughout their trip, VanDerveer remembered, the U.S. women partied and danced with the Ukrainian people, awed by their hospitality.

Fast-forward a month, and the team was outside its hotel at 3:30 a.m. boarding a bus for the airport. As they walked out, they passed a group of destitute women, begging for anything the Americans could spare. The U.S. team, VanDerveer recalled, "emptied out their suitcases, their wallets," giving away everything they had.

Generosity had been a theme that trip. Dawn Staley, the point guard on the '96 team and now the coach at South Carolina, recalled that for that entire tour "any stops we made where we felt like we could help someone, we did." Multiple times, Staley said, they gifted personal items to the Cuban national team.

Last week in Maples Pavilion, when VanDerveer, coach of defending national champion and No. 1 seed Stanford, met up again with Fortner, coach of ninth-seeded Georgia Tech, the former Olympic coaches looked at each other solemnly as VanDerveer remarked, "They're not partying now."

She was talking, of course, about war that's broken out on the other side of the world. Since Feb. 24, when Russia invaded Ukraine and Ukrainians started fleeing their country in search of safety, media coverage has been awash in horrifying images, from sobbing children to crumbling cities to slain families killed by Russian bombs.

Ukrainians are 'suffering and it is front and center'

Typically in March, coaches and players in search of championships – like VanDerveer, who is on the hunt for her fourth NCAA title – tune out everything not related to basketball. But that's impossible to do right now, said VanDerveer, and it should be.

"I don't want to be celebrating something when other people are suffering," she told USA TODAY

See SCHNELL, Page 7C

Frightful future awaits Falcons after Ryan trade



Jarrett Bell
Columnist
USA TODAY

Congratulations, Matt Ryan.

It might not be good for the ego to get dumped by the team that you gave up those prime years for, but Lord knows that landing in a better place is a cause to jump for joy.

The Atlanta Falcons did Ryan a huge favor in dealing him to the Indianapolis Colts on Monday, days after their failed bid to land Deshaun Watson blew up as an embarrassment.

Never mind that the Falcons provided Ryan with an everybody-is-expendable NFL reality check as they pursued Watson.

He joins a team built for a playoff run and can hand the football off repeatedly to reigning rushing champ Jonathan Taylor. Conceivably, he can stay upright a lot more than he has the past few years in Atlanta, now working behind a solid offensive line anchored by standouts Quenton Nelson and Ryan Kelly.

And there's balance in the DNA of the team that Colts GM Chris Ballard and coach Frank Reich have built, complete with playmakers on defense, including



In 14 seasons with the Falcons, quarterback Matt Ryan earned over \$300 million.

RICH BARNES/USA TODAY SPORTS

See BELL, Page 7C

Rahm at peace despite putting stats

World No. 1 'not worried about it' at Match Play

Steve DiMeglio

Golfweek | USA TODAY Network

Heading into Wednesday's start of the World Golf Championships-Dell Technologies Match Play at Austin Country Club in the Lone Star State, world No. 1 Jon Rahm has gone three PGA Tour starts without recording a top-10 finish.

The last time that happened? The tour was coming out of its COVID-19, 13-week hibernation. In fact, since turning pro in 2015, the Spaniard hasn't registered a top-10 result in three to five consecutive starts on the tour just six times.

So Rahm is hardly worried when asked about his current form.

In fact, he gets a touch irritated, especially if you bring up his putting.

"I'm kind of getting tired of answering the same question every single week," Rahm said. "When you're No. 1 off the tee and top 10 in strokes gained approach, my putting stats are not going to be top 20. It's absolutely impossible unless I'm winning every single week by eight. Kind of how it goes."

While the reigning U.S. Open champion ranks No. 1 in strokes gained: off-the-tee, No. 1 in greens in regulation (75.74 percent); and No. 4 in strokes gained: tee-to-green, he's No. 139 in SG: putting.

"Is it as good as it could be? No, but I think it shows in the stats worse than it actually feels just because I'm hitting so many greens and hitting it so good," Rahm said. "Again, I feel like I've said it a few times. It's not as bad as it looks. It feels a lot better than it looks."

"Maybe I haven't gotten the results yet, but I'm not worried about it."

Why should he be? The last time he went three starts without a top-10, he won the Memorial in his next start.

And he loves match play.

In 2020, he teamed with Ryan Palmer to win the Zurich Classic of New Orleans featuring foursome and four-ball play. In the Ryder Cup, he's 4-3-1 in two contests, including a singles win over Tiger Woods in 2018.

And in four starts in the Dell Technologies Match Play, he lost in the final to Dustin Johnson in 2017 and lost to Scottie Scheffler in the quarterfinals in 2021.

"It's a tournament I always look forward to," Rahm said. "It's a nice break in the thick of the season. When things are



In four Dell Technologies Match Play starts, Jon Rahm lost in the 2017 final to Dustin Johnson and in the 2021 quarterfinals. CHERYL EVANS-CHOW/ARIZONA REPUBLIC

starting to get a little bit more intense, to have an event in which it's match play, it's fun, it's a lot more exciting, at least for me.

"A little bit different vibe, where you can just play one-on-one golf and just take care of the guy in front of you instead of a four-day grind."

Rahm, the No. 1 seed in the tournament, has to get through U.S. Ryder Cup hero Patrick Reed, Cameron Young and Sebastian Munoz in pool play the first three days of the tournament. After that, the field, which features seven of the top-10 players in the world, including No. 2 Collin Morikawa, No. 3 Viktor Hovland, No. 4 Patrick Cantlay and No. 5 Scheffler, is whittled down to 16 players who will begin single-elimination play on Saturday.

His approach to match play is simple: never give up.

Example No. 1: In the 2017 final, Rahm lost five of the first six holes to Johnson and was 4 down with six holes to play. But he won holes 13, 15 and 16 but Johnson held on.

"I know it sounds so cliche, but if you're 5 down, six holes to play, try to win all six," Rahm said. "It's never over until it's over, and momentum is a massive thing. One swing can change it all, and it can happen. You don't need to play perfect."

"You don't need to do anything special; you just need to play golf and beat the man in front of you. If you just keep that mindset of being aggressive and just fighting for every shot, you should probably do fine in match play."

Stat

16 Matches won by Kevin Kisner and Matt Kuchar since the World Golf Championships-Dell Technologies Match Play moved to Austin Country Club in 2016, the most of any player. Kuchar, who finished third in 2021, second to Kisner in 2019 and won in 2013, is not in the field. Kisner defeated Kuchar in the final in 2019, lost in the final to Bubba Watson in 2018 and fell to Kuchar in the final round of pool play in 2021 when both were 2-0-0.

Tee times

Golf Channel coverage on Wednesday features opening-round action of pool play including matches between long-hitting Bubba Watson and short-hitting Abraham Ancer (12:32 p.m. EDT), as well as two-time 2021 winner Scottie Scheffler facing Ryder Cup hero Ian Poulter (1:38). Second-day pool play features matches between Collin Morikawa and Sergio Garcia, Bryson DeChambeau and Lee Westwood, Dustin Johnson and Matthew Wolff, and Jordan Spieth and Justin Rose.

FedExCup leaders

Sam Burns' win in last weekend's Val-spar Championship – his third PGA Tour title in less than a year – put him into the top 10 in the world rankings for the first time and into second place in the FedExCup standings. The FedExCup consists of 48 events – 45 in the regular season and three in the FedExCup playoffs, which culminates Aug. 25-28 at the Tour Championship at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta. Patrick Cantlay is the defending champion.

1. Scottie Scheffler	1,620
2. Sam Burns	1,390
3. Cameron Smith	1,354
4. Hideki Matsuyama	1,321
5. Tom Hoge	1,162
6. Talor Gooch	1,093
7. Viktor Hovland	1,027
8. Sungjae Im	946
9. Joaquin Niemann	835
10. Max Homa	808

WGC-Dell Match Play

Course: Austin (Texas) CC.

Yardage: 7,108. Par: 71.

Prize money: \$12 million.

Winner's share: \$2.16 million.
TV (EDT): Wednesday-Friday, 2-8 p.m. (Golf); Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Golf) and 2-6 p.m. (NBC); Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Golf) and 3-7 p.m. (NBC).

FOR THE RECORD

All times ET

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	44	27	.620	
Boston	45	28	.616	—
Toronto	40	32	.556	4½
Brooklyn	38	34	.528	6½
New York	30	41	.423	14

Southeast Division

	L	Pct	GB
y-Miami	47	.25	.653
Charlotte	37	.35	.514
Atlanta	35	.36	.403
Washington	30	.41	.423
Orlando	19	.53	.264

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	44	27	.620	
Chicago	42	29	.592	2
Cleveland	41	31	.569	3½
Indiana	25	47	.347	19½
Detroit	19	53	.264	25½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	49	23	.681	—
Dallas	44	28	.611	5
New Orleans	30	42	.417	19
San Antonio	28	44	.389	21
Houston	18	54	.250	31

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	45	27	.625	—
Denver	42	30	.583	3
Minnesota	42	31	.575	3½
Portland	27	44	.380	17½
Oklahoma City	20	52	.278	25

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Phoenix	58	14	.806	—
Golden State	47	24	.662	10½
L.A. Clippers	36	37	.493	22½
L.A. Lakers	31	41	.431	27
Sacramento	25	48	.342	33½

climbed

division

Mondays' Games

L.A. Lakers 131, Cleveland 120

Charlotte 106, New Orleans 103

Portland 119, Detroit 115

Brooklyn 114, Utah 106

Philadelphia 113, Miami 106

Chicago 113, Toronto 99

Houston 115, Washington 97

Boston 132, Oklahoma City 123

Dallas 110, Minnesota 108

Tuesday's Games

Golden State at Orlando

Atlanta at New York

Chicago at Milwaukee, 7 p.m.

Phoenix at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Houston at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

Philadelphia at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.

San Antonio at Portland, 10 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Cleveland at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.

Chicago at New Orleans, 8 p.m.

Indiana at Memphis, 8 p.m.

Washington at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.

Phoenix at Denver, 9 p.m.

US team medal no longer a priority

At world championships, focus turns to Ukrainians



Christine Brennan
Columnist
USA TODAY

It was just a month ago that ice dancer Evan Bates, co-captain of the silver medal-winning U.S. figure skating team that was deprived of a medal ceremony at the Beijing Olympics, spoke emotionally about leaving the Winter Games "empty-handed," calling the aftermath of the Russian doping scandal "extremely disheartening."

Now, as the international figure skating community gathers again for the world championships this week in Montpellier, France, those concerns have faded, at least for the time being, Bates and his ice dance partner and fellow team co-captain Madison Chock said last week over Zoom.

While there have been no new developments on the status of the medal ceremony, they said, their focus is no longer on a sports controversy that once seemed so vitally important, but on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the horrors that Vladimir Putin has unleashed on the Ukrainian people, including two of their friends and competitors, ice dancers Alexandra (Sasha) Nazarova and Max Nikitin.

"I have been thinking a lot about Russia and Ukraine but it has not at all pertained to our personal involvement in our situation," Chock told journalists gathered on the call. "I think what's happening right now is really devastating and I just think about our Ukrainian friends who just had the biggest highlight of their life (at the Olympics) and then they go home to a war-torn country. It breaks my heart. It's hard to think about anything else. An Olympic medal seems like really not a big deal in light of all of that."

Nazarova and Nikitin, who finished 20th at the Olympics, announced Monday they are going to compete at worlds, according to a post on a Ukrainian sports resistance Instagram account.

"The main factor in making such a decision was that we have to show and tell about the crimes that are taking place in our country," Nikitin said in a video. "This is no longer politics, this is genocide, this is murder, this is the destruction of peaceful cities. ... We saw it all with our own eyes. We saw rockets over our houses. We saw planes dropping bombs on Kharkiv directly with our own eyes. We also heard all this while hiding in the basements."

The Instagram account said they were able to leave Kharkiv and train in Poland for the past week. They were expected to arrive in France on Tuesday.

"It puts things in perspective," Bates said last week. "We trained with the Ukrainian dancers, Sasha and Max, back in Michigan (before the 2018 Olympics). We saw them in Beijing, have never seen them happier, and then we come back, and just in trading messages with them, it's difficult to comprehend and grapple with having a very similar experience shared in Beijing, and then leaving to such a different world and life experience. That's been hard for us to digest and be OK with."

Chock said she was messaging Nazarova on Instagram early in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "I just can't imagine how she must be feeling and what she must be going through," Chock said.

Eventually, the American ice dancers and their teammates will receive their medals at a ceremony of some sort, somewhere, but first there will be a thorough investigation of the positive drug test of 15-year-old Russian skater Kamila Valieva.

One of two outcomes is expected: if Valieva is suspended, Russia would likely lose the gold medal to the United



Alexandra Nazarova and Max Nikitin of Ukraine perform during the rhythm dance during the Beijing Olympics. ROBERT DEUTSCH/USA TODAY SPORTS

States, with Japan winning the silver medal and Canada the bronze. If Valieva is not suspended, but receives a reprimand or no punishment at all due to her age, Russia would keep the gold, followed by the United States with the silver and Japan the bronze.

Hubbell said in Beijing that IOC President Thomas Bach offered "the (medal) ceremony of our dreams when the time comes."

Not that it will be coming quickly. The invasion of Ukraine likely ensures that whatever the outcome of the investigation, a medal ceremony won't happen anytime soon, especially if Russia remains on top of the podium. The optics of rewarding Russia as it wages war on a sovereign neighbor would be terrible.

"I'm sure it will delay things," Bates said, "but it's not of importance to us at this point."

When the day comes, the IOC will have a wonderful opportunity to do the right thing for the skaters who were deprived of their Olympic ceremony. Bach

should give out the medals to the athletes at IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, on the shores of Lake Geneva, with the Alps rising in the distance. The IOC should fly in family members, friends and coaches of each of the skaters from the U.S., Japan and either Canada or Russia, however things turn out. This will give the skaters an opportunity that never existed for medal winners in Beijing: to celebrate with those who were not allowed to go to China due to COVID-19 protocols.

The IOC should make a weekend out of it. Olympic officials from each country should be in attendance. So should some of the biggest names in the sport and include them in the ceremony.

The IOC never should have allowed Russia to continue to compete in the Olympics and flaunt the rules with its state-sponsored doping schemes, but it did. Now it has to try to make things right. It must put on the most elaborate Olympic medal ceremony ever held. It owes that to these athletes.

Pro day video shows football's brutal side

Treatment of injured LB part of cold-blooded NFL



Mike Freeman
Columnist
USA TODAY



Michigan defensive lineman David Ojabo does drills during the NFL scouting combine. KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

By now you may have seen the video of Michigan linebacker David Ojabo tearing his Achilles during a pro day workout. The video (which has almost 9 million views) is devastating, and even now, days later, it remains an intensely discussed topic among some teams for one huge reason: it shows just how brutal the NFL really is.

After Ojabo falls, he is essentially alone for a handful of seconds, with some of the only immediate action you see on the video being an assistant coach walking by him, picking up the football Ojabo was holding, and moving it.

In fairness to the coach, he may not have wanted want to assist Ojabo, out of fear of possibly making the injury worse. The coach, and others around Ojabo, also probably felt medical help was on the way.

In fact, what you don't see in the clip, but do in another, is that medical personnel did get to Ojabo. He wasn't alone, on the ground like that, for an extended period of time.

Still, there remains myriad questions about why a player who crumbled to the turf had no one immediately (and that's the key word) move to comfort him.

When Danish soccer player Christen Erikson collapsed last summer, for example, because of a cardiac arrest, he was immediately surrounded by team-

mates and others offering medical attention and support.

At best, the very best, what happened to Ojabo is a bad look. A really, really bad look. The whole scene is.

It may not be typical of the NFL to treat players like widgets, but it sure seems like it is. Many NFL owners care more about the quality of fabric on the sofas in their yachts than they do the minds and bodies of the players on their teams.

It's true that treating players like an old iPhone with a cracked cover isn't new. It does seem, however, worse now. The entire league has become more callous and greedier. As the money has increased, so has the callousness.

It's not just on the field. It's the Washington organization's, and the NFL's, disgraceful treatment of victims of sexual harassment. It's the almost gleeful pursuit of Deshaun Watson by teams despite the quarterback being accused of sexual misconduct by 22 women. Or how the league not only didn't care about a social protest movement, it tried to stop it, and then punished its organizer.

And it's not just the NFL. Parts of the country spent years celebrating cruelty and indecency. There's been a dramatic rise in authoritarianism across the world. There are the selfish people who won't get vaccinated or have long refused to wear masks.

Former NFL quarterback Chris Simms on Profootballtalk.com stated the football part of this phenomenon perfectly.

"It's a brutal business. It's as brutal a business as there is in this country. As far as stuff like that, how cutthroat it is, loyalty. ... We just talked about Matt Ryan and the Atlanta Falcons. Hey, the greatest quarterback in franchise history. Done all these great things. What? Another quarterback wants to come in here? Hey, we might get you the hell outta here. So what all those great things you did in the community."

In fact, not only was Atlanta prepared to dump Ryan in favor of Watson, the Falcons on Monday traded Ryan, the team's 2008 first-round draft pick who has started all but three games for the franchise, to Indianapolis.

"Guys that get hurt in practice?" Simms added. "You're going to have to put me (as) a coldhearted guy, too. Guy gets hurt in practice, I'm in the middle of an offensive period, I'm the starting quarterback. 'Damn, he's hurt. But what's the next play, coach?'

And count me as coldhearted as well. When you watch an NFL practice, and I've seen this at least a dozen times while covering three separate NFL teams over the years as a beat writer, and other practices while a league writer, teams will do exactly as Simms described. They'll sometimes simply move the drills around an injured player and keep going.

When I first saw it, I couldn't believe it. There was a sort of matter-of-factness to the sheer coldness of it. I remember speaking to a Pro Bowl offensive lineman after one Giants practice about it and he seemed surprised at me being surprised. This is how the NFL works, he told me.

Later, like Simms, I'd become anesthetized to the violence, and when players got hurt in practice or games, I'd just take notes, like I was writing a grocery list. Later in my career, I'd catch myself whenever that lack of empathy would set in.

Just the fact Ojabo was again working out for teams is an indication of how little the league cares about the health of its players.

Ojabo worked out at the combine and teams have plenty of Michigan film to watch.

There's absolutely no need for him to have a second massive workout, but teams want to make sure they get as many looks as possible at their widgets.

The NFL, for years, has used a massive PR campaign emphasizing how football is family. That was never really true because of how the sport would discard its battered players in the crudest ways, and fail to take care of a significant number of them.

Football was never family. It's a business.

An ugly one.

Former Pack linebacker Smith links up with Vikings

Kassidy Hill

Packers News | USA TODAY Network

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Green Bay Packers will be playing against Za'Darius Smith twice a year now that the free agent outside linebacker has landed with the NFC North rival Minnesota Vikings.

NFL Network reported that Smith agreed to a three-year, \$42 million deal with the Vikings.

The veteran pass rusher was released

by the Packers ahead of the new league year. He originally looked poised to return to the Baltimore Ravens, the club that originally selected the Kentucky product in the fourth round of the 2015 draft. But the deal fell through and Smith returned to the open market last week.

According to Ian Rapoport of NFL Network, the contract is worth up to \$47 million with incentives. Smith will make \$14 million per year on average.

Smith alluded to the signing Monday,

tweeting the phrase, "Meet me at the quarterback." It was a phrase made famous by the "Purple People Eaters," the legendary Vikings defensive line unit from the 1960s and '70s. Now, at least twice a year, that quarterback will be Aaron Rodgers.

Smith played in two games for the Packers during the 2021 season: the season opener against the New Orleans Saints and the Packers' playoff matchup against the San Francisco 49ers. A back injury suffered during training camp

limited Smith's playing time.

During his three seasons (37 games) with the Packers, Smith accumulated 121 tackles, 30 sacks and five forced fumbles. He was named to the Pro Bowl twice (2019 and 2020), earned second-team All-Pro honors from The Associated Press (2020) and was named to the All-NFC team by the Pro Football Writers of America (2020).

Facing a precarious salary-cap situation, the Packers elected to move forward without Smith.

More women's Madness, please

Early round games need to be at neutral sites



Lindsay Schnell
Columnist
USA TODAY

It's fitting, really, that the women's NCAA Tournament finally gets to slap the "March Madness" logo on its courts, and chaos breaks loose. Two double-digit seeds, Creighton and South Dakota, are headed to the Sweet 16 after beating higher-ranked seeds on those teams' home courts. Monday night, sixth-seeded Ohio State led for almost 35 minutes in knocking off third-seeded LSU on the Tigers' home floor.

Those upsets, coupled with ever-growing parity in the women's game, raise the question: Is it time to move the first- and second-round women's games to neutral sites?

At the very least, after years of playing first-round games at on-campus sites, first at schools that guaranteed to bring a good crowd and most recently at the top 16 seeds, it's time to seriously consider it.

It turns out, home-court advantage isn't what it used to be. The latest evidence: 10 seeds Creighton and South Dakota advancing to the Sweet 16 over the raucous home crowds at Iowa and Baylor, respectively.

First on Sunday, using a five-out-of-defense and 52-27 rebounding edge, the Bluejays slayed the giant that is Caitlin Clark and the Hawkeyes, surviving two late shots from Iowa to hold on for a 64-62 win. The victory sealed Creighton's first trip to the Sweet 16.

Then South Dakota, eager to prove its mid-major mettle, turned 19 Baylor turnovers into 20 points, jumped out to an 11-0 lead and managed to deny the Bears their 14th consecutive trip to the Sweet 16, winning 61-47 in Waco. It is also South Dakota's first time advancing to a regional semifinal.

In her postgame comments, Iowa coach Lisa Bluder credited former Hawkeye Lauren Jensen, who transferred to Creighton before this season and nailed the go-ahead 3 with 12 seconds to play. But Bluder also criticized the officiating, saying the game was more physical than what the Hawkeyes



South Dakota's Hannah Sjerven (34) celebrates during her team's upset win over Baylor in Waco, Texas. LM OTERO/AP

were used to. That's probably true, especially at home, where Clark typically gets the benefit of whistles, and spends a good chunk of games at the free throw line.

Would Bluder had expected better calls if she weren't at home? It's hard to say for sure, but probably not. But what is for sure: the majority of those 14,382 fans who packed Carver-Hawkeye Arena would have traveled to watch Clark & Co.

The women's game has grown exponentially in the last decade. Especially in the last few years, we've seen the game explode in popularity, partially because the country's top high school players have decided going to already-dominant programs isn't the only way to win a title; the last five tournaments, we've had five different champions. With more games on ESPN, and more overall exposure – not to mention the social media video seen 'round the world last March that spotlighted inequities and brought a lot of attention to the women's tournament as a whole – the game will only continue to grow.

The next natural step: neutral courts for every round.

"I do think it would cause more upsets," said Baylor coach Nicki Collen. "But I also would want to know that the

student-athlete experience was going to be really, really good, too, and that they were going to be creative in finding ways to fill the stands. Because I know that when I played I would rather play in front of 10,000 people screaming against me than 500 people (total)."

For as much noise as mid-majors already have made this year, imagine how much more it could have been if they didn't have to play in front of home crowds. Maybe Belmont and Princeton, whose games at Tennessee and Indiana, respectively, went down to the wire, would still be dancing if they'd been in a neutral setting.

The women's tournament has done a few unconventional things in the name of generating good crowds. Besides playing at home sites, next year the women's tournament will feature two super regionals – one in Seattle and one in Greenville, South Carolina, each featuring eight teams. There's a concentrated effort to play postseason games in front of packed houses. And that doesn't have to change, even if we move first-round games to neutral sites: as Oregon coach Kelly Graves pointed out after being upset by Belmont, if you're a high seed you're going to play close to home no matter what.

Look at the men's tournament for an

example. One of the first-round sites was in Portland, Oregon, and featured top-seeded Gonzaga, fourth-seeded UCLA, fifth-seeded Saint Mary's and eighth-seeded Boise State. That's an easy trip for all of those fans. It would be similar in the women's tournament.

It's also worth pointing out that while the home team typically gets a big bump in crowd attendance, there isn't necessarily one for the other game at the site. If we scheduled sites ahead of time on neutral floors, local women's basketball fans – who are growing in number every season – could plan ahead and show up.

For some coaches, moving to neutral sites isn't a slam-dunk.

"I'm conflicted," said Gonzaga coach Lisa Fortier, who lost 68-59 to Louisville on the Cardinals' home floor Sunday. "I think it's something to look at. I know a lot of times you think you want one thing or you do one thing, and then you think you want something else, then you realize the first thing wasn't so bad."

Of course, life is about tradeoffs.

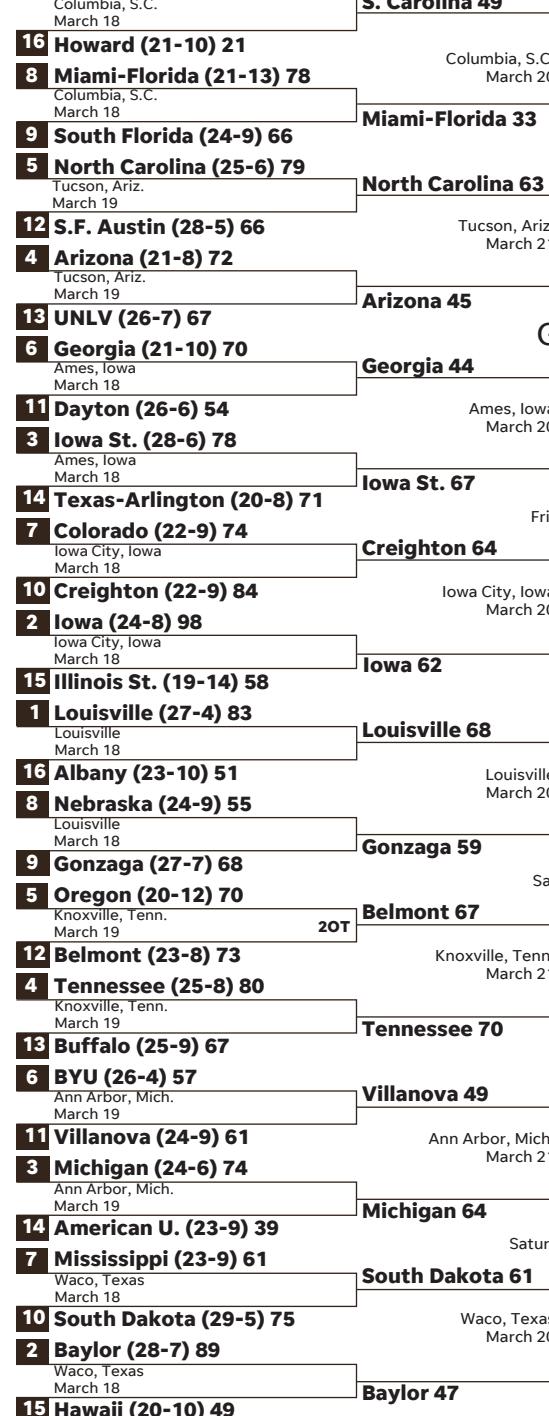
Yes, the NCAA has to hustle to sell tickets ahead of time and put the marketing dollars to good use. But that's how you grow.

Over the last few years, people bought tickets specifically to get an up-close look at superstar college players like A'ja Wilson (South Carolina), Sabrina Ionescu (Oregon) and Iowa's Clark. But then they get hooked on the women's game and keep coming back, long after those players are gone.

Cost is likely to be a factor, particularly one brought up by the detractors. Renting out arenas would almost certainly be more expensive than playing at home sites. But that's just one more reason for ESPN to separate the women's tournament from all of its other NCAA championships and sell the women's tournament – estimated to be worth between \$81 million and \$121 million – separately.

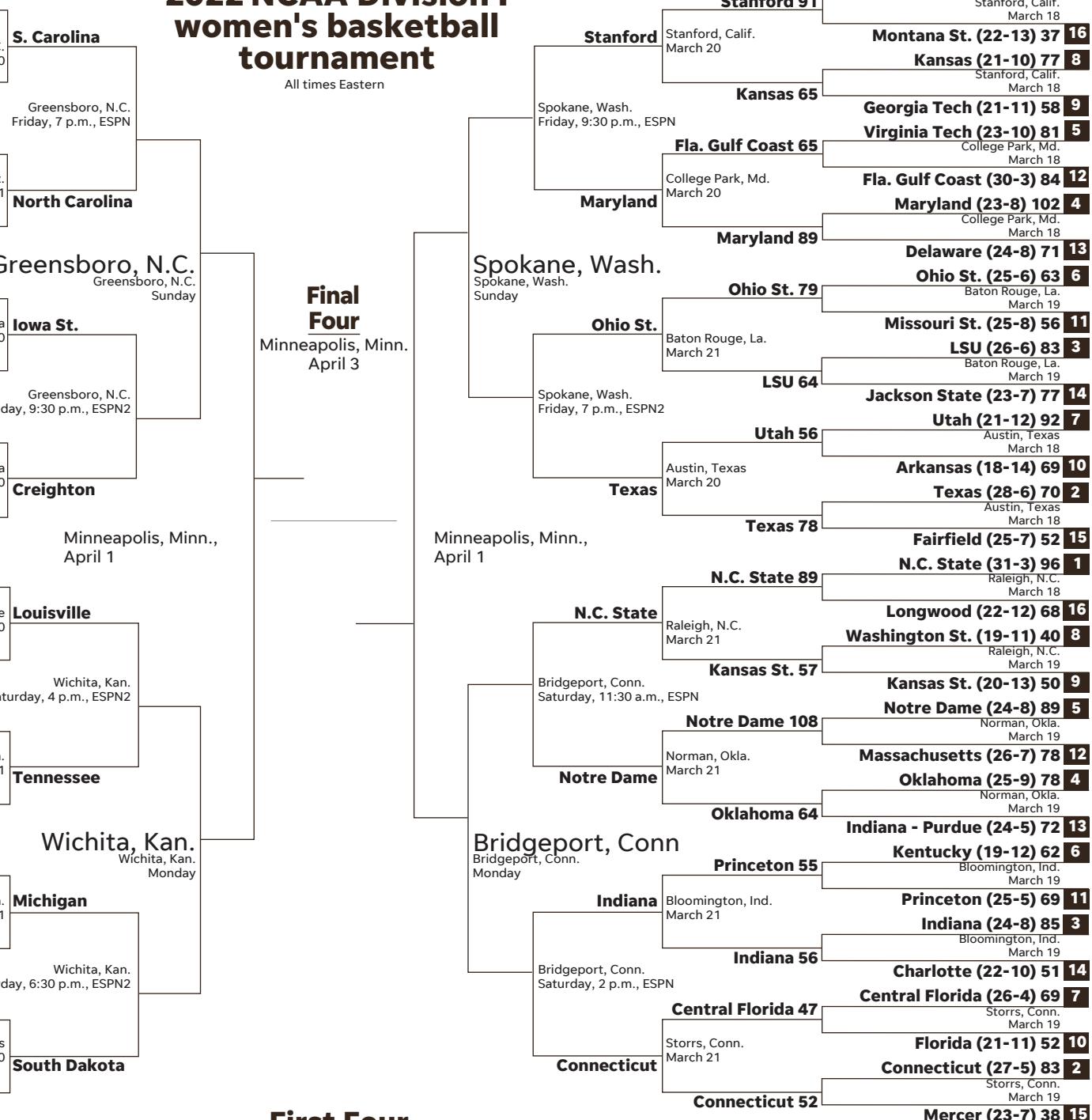
ESPN analyst Debbie Antonelli likes to say that in the women's game "the product is the narrative." The tired storylines we often hear about women's basketball – that it's boring, that it's predictable – are just that, tired. The product, already exciting, is improving every year. Fans are increasing in number and their investment.

If we want more Madness in March, we've got to treat women's basketball like the sport it's become, one worthy of neutral courts.



2022 NCAA Division I women's basketball tournament

All times Eastern



First Four

Howard 55

Final

Incarnate Word 51

Longwood 74

Final

Mount St. Mary's 70

Dayton 88

Final

DePaul 57

Missouri St. 61

Final

Florida St. 50

Source: USA TODAY Sports

In Sweet 16, count on experience

UCLA on top in reseed of remaining men's teams

Scott Gleeson
USA TODAY

The Sweet 16 is set.

The first two rounds of the men's NCAA Tournament trimmed the 64 teams to 16, and there were several bracket-busting upsets that have added chaos.

Now, those survivors will square off Thursday through Sunday in the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight with a slot in the Final Four on the line.

Which of these teams are cut out for the second weekend of March Madness? Which of them has the best chance to cut down the nets in New Orleans?

USA TODAY Sports ranks the Sweet 16 teams based on the potential of winning the national championship.

1. UCLA

The Bruins (27-7) unexpectedly reached the Final Four last year, bowing out in a thrilling semifinal to Gonzaga. Virtually every player on that roster returned to set up high expectations for 2021-22, but UCLA spent a majority of the season overshadowed in the Pac-12 by Arizona. Now in the NCAA Tournament, coach Mick Cronin's group has found that extra gear that propelled it on that deep run last March. UCLA's quartet of guards – Johnny Juzang, Jaime Jaquez Jr., Tyger Campbell and Jules Bernard – is as dangerous as any remaining in the tourney. • **No. 4 seed.**

2. Villanova

Coach Jay Wright has arguably the most seasoned team of this tournament, with the Wildcats (28-7) a main beneficiary of the extra COVID-19 year of eligibility. It starts with two-time Big East player of the year Collin Gillespie, in his fifth year running the point for the Wildcats; Gillespie (16 points per game, 41.6% from the 3-point arc) was on the roster the last time 'Nova won the national title in 2018. Another fifth-year senior is Jermaine Samuels, who had 17 points and eight rebounds versus Ohio State in the second round. • **No. 2 seed.**

3. Duke

The Blue Devils (30-6) have seemed to find their identity and team chemistry at the right time, finding an extra gear in their second-round win over Michigan State, particularly in the final five minutes. Paolo Banchero has always been this team's most talented player, but the supporting cast is starting to step up, with five players in double digits for Duke versus the Spartans. Guard Jeremy Roach has taken over the starting point guard position, and this Duke team is playing inspired in trying to keep coach Mike Krzyzewski's final season alive. • **No. 2 seed.**

4. Gonzaga

The Bulldogs (28-3) aren't nearly as talented and dynamic as they were on last year's national runner-up team, but they still have all the pieces to win it all and become coach Mark Few's first team to cut down the nets. Drew Timme (18.2 points, 6.7 rebounds) is having an excellent NCAA Tournament – going for 32 points and 13 rebounds versus Georgia State and 25 points and 14 rebounds versus Memphis. The 'Zags lead the nation in scoring (87.8) and field goal percentage (53%). Guard Andrew Nembhard has been an unsung hero for this group, while freshman standout Chet Holmgren, who has yet to fully hit his



Johnny Juzang (3) and UCLA have been overshadowed by Arizona in the Pac-12.

CHRIS CODUTO/USA TODAY SPORTS

potential, has the ability to change the game if he's playing physical on the interior. • **No. 1 seed.**

5. Texas Tech

The Red Raiders (27-9) have an elite defense behind first-year coach Mark Adams, ranking first in the nation in KenPom's defensive efficiency ratings. It was on display in the closing minutes versus Notre Dame in the second round as well as in a bundle of close Big 12 victories. There aren't any elite offensive players on this team, but Bryson Williams (13.9 points) leads a group with five players averaging nine points or more. • **No. 3 seed.**

6. Kansas

The No. 1-seeded Jayhawks (30-6) have benefited from an added dimension to their already potent offense with the emergence of Remy Martin, an Arizona State transfer who took more of a back seat this year but has broken out as a lethal scorer in this NCAA Tournament. Martin led KU in scoring in both of its games. Ochai Agbaji (19.4 points) is Kansas' All-American guard and Christian Braun is a glue guy who does the little things (blocks, clutch buckets). • **No. 1 seed.**

7. Arizona

The Wildcats (33-3) got 58 points from their two best players, Benedict Mathurin (30 points) and Christian Kolo (28 points) in a second-round overtime win over TCU. Mathurin and Kolo scored Arizona's final 15 points, but if point guard Kerr Kriisa, recovering from an ankle injury, can provide more offense (he was 1-for-10 in the TCU game) along with others, Arizona can be more of the full package in the second weekend. • **No. 1 seed.**

8. Purdue

The Boilermakers (29-7) have made it further than some of their Big Ten counterparts and have all the pieces to get coach Matt Painter to his first Final Four. It starts with Jaden Ivey (17.6 points), a dynamic playmaker who can carry the team offensively. Ivey and the rest of this veteran cast have the second-most efficient offense in the country, per KenPom. Purdue's strength is also on the glass, second nationally in

rebounding margin. • **No. 3 seed.**

9. North Carolina

The No. 8-seeded Tar Heels (26-9) found another gear and discovered their identity when they embarrassed Duke in Krzyzewski's final home game March 5. The team's backbone is Armando Bacot (16.4 points, 12.5 rebounds), whose play on the interior gives UNC an advantage. But it's been the guard play of Caleb Love (23 points versus Marquette in the first round) and R.J. Davis (30 points in the win versus Baylor). Brady Manek is North Carolina's X-factor. If the 6-foot-9 senior big man is hitting from beyond the arc, Hubert Davis' team is really hard to stop. • **No. 8 seed.**

10. Houston

The Cougars (31-5) lead the nation in field goal percentage defense and their smothering approach was on full display in their second-round win over Illinois. Coach Kelvin Sampson's team often feeds off its defense to generate offense, which leads to Houston controlling the game's tempo and taking opponents out of their offensive rhythm. The backcourt trio of guards Taze Moore (21 points against Illinois), Jamal Shead (18 points) and Kyler Edwards (15 points) can be lethal in the Sweet 16. • **No. 5 seed.**

11. Arkansas

The Razorbacks (27-8) are back in the NCAA Tournament's second weekend for consecutive years. Coach Eric Musselman has a dangerous team that was overshadowed in the SEC by teams like Kentucky and Tennessee that are no longer dancing. JD Notae (18.4 points, 3.6 assists) is a game-changer with his ability to create for himself and his teammates off the bounce and Jaylin Williams (10.5 points, 9.8 rebounds, 1.1 blocks) ignites this team in the front-court. • **No. 4 seed.**

12. Providence

The Friars (27-5) defeated Richmond in the second round by 28 points after silencing a dangerous South Dakota State team. Coach Ed Cooley believes his Big East regular-season champions can extend this deep run with Providence in its first Sweet 16 in 25 years. If the Friars can shoot well from three the

NCAA Sweet 16 games

Eastern Daylight Time

Thursday

Arkansas vs. Gonzaga, 7:09 p.m. (CBS)

Michigan vs. Villanova, 7:29 p.m. (TBS)

Texas Tech vs. Duke, 9:39 p.m. (CBS)

Houston vs. Arizona, 9:59 p.m. (TBS)

Friday

Saint Peter's vs. Purdue, 7:09 p.m. (CBS)

Providence vs. Kansas, 7:29 p.m. (TBS)

North Carolina vs. UCLA, 9:39 p.m. (CBS)

Iowa State vs. Miami, 9:59 p.m. (TBS)

way they did against Richmond (12-for-22), they have a shot at beating anyone in this tournament. • **No. 4 seed.**

13. Saint Peter's

The Peacocks (21-11) have a chance to do what no other 15 seed has done in reaching the Elite Eight. Coach Shaheen Holloway has gotten this team to play inspired, stunning No. 2 Kentucky in the first round and then No. 7 Murray State. The formula has included a poised offense and relentless defensive effort. KC Ndefo is a spark plug on both ends, evidenced by his stat line of 17 points, 10 rebounds and six blocks versus Murray State. In both wins, Doug Edert has come off the bench to provide clutch shot-making, which will be needed in the Sweet 16. • **No. 15 seed.**

14. Miami (Florida)

The No. 10-seeded Hurricanes (25-10) stunned No. 2 Auburn to get to the Sweet 16 and took down a solid Southern California Trojans team in the first round. Coach Jim Larrañaga has a team that's peaking at the right time after playing itself off the bubble in February. Guard play is what Miami is good at, with seniors Kameron McGusty (17.5 points) and Charlie Moore (12.7 points, 4.6 assists) giving the Hurricanes a fighting chance against just about any team. • **No. 10 seed.**

15. Iowa State

The Cyclones simply being here is an epic storyline considering this program was 2-22 last season and 0-18 in the Big 12. Getting this team to the bubble and even in March Madness was an accomplishment for coach T.J. Otzelberger. Can ISU advance further? It's unlikely. But one thing this team has going: Its two best players were horrible in a second-round upset of Wisconsin, and the Cyclones still won. Leading scorer Izaiah Brockington had 10 points on 4-for-15 shooting, while Tyrese Hunter, Iowa State's hero versus LSU in Round 1 with 23 points, had four points on 1-for-10 shooting. If either of those players play up to their ability, look out. • **No. 11 seed.**

16. Michigan

The Wolverines (19-14) have gone from a team on the NCAA Tournament bubble to one in the Sweet 16. After a season of struggles, Michigan is finally playing like the team it was expected to be as a preseason No. 6. Hunter Dickinson, a 7-1 big man with a great touch and passing ability, had 27 points and 11 rebounds in Michigan's upset of Tennessee. But the X-factor may be guard play, where Eli Brooks and Devante' Jones can cause havoc on both ends. Jones wasn't at full strength in the Tennessee win so having him healthy will be a must. • **No. 11 seed.**

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This entire document may be viewed by internet at:

<https://national-assembly.net/blog/index.php/na-blog/georgia-general-jural-assembly-public-notice>

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ROUNDUP

College athlete group files complaint over pay rules

From Staff Reports

A group that advocates for college athletes on Tuesday announced it has filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, claiming the NCAA's limits on compensation for athletes has a disproportionate impact on Black athletes.

The complaint, made by the National College Players Association (NCPA), asks the department to end the NCAA's compensation rules. Those restrictions also are under attack in federal courts and through filings with another federal agency.

"The limit on compensation is a violation of current civil rights law," NCPA executive director Ramogi Huma told USA TODAY Sports, "and the Department of Education has the authority and jurisdiction and power and legal authority to address these violations."

The new filing centers on how it says the NCAA's rules impact Black athletes playing football at Football Bowl Subdivision schools and those playing men's basketball and women's basketball at Division I schools. It also claims that the NCAA's limits result in "an abuse of Pell Grant funds" because this money — which the federal government awards to low-income students based on need — would not have to be provided to football and basketball players if they were "compensated fairly."

The complaint seeks as its remedy: "The elimination of these civil rights violations and the abuse of Pell Grant funds by ending collusive athlete compensation limits among Division I colleges that deny fair market compensation to college athletes."

While the complaint specifies FBS football, men's basketball and women's basketball, Huma said: "We're fighting for fair compensation for athletes in all sports as an organization. And if we are successful then the blanket cap on compensation will be lifted for athletes of all sports."

Tuesday's filing is the latest effort by the NCPA to further loosen the NCAA's rules on compensation for athletes, who, over the past nine months have started being allowed to make money from the use of their name, image and

likeness. This followed numerous state laws being passed to allow this activity and the Supreme Court unanimously ruling against the NCAA in the Alston antitrust case.

The NCPA and another athlete advocacy group, the College Basketball Players Association, have filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board on behalf of football players and men's and women's basketball players.

"The big picture here is that we are looking to push the envelope with federal agencies," Huma said. "There are agencies that already have legal authority to bring forward reform in NCAA sports that will benefit players. We don't need a new labor law. College athletes are employees. We just have to have college athletes recognized as employees under existing laws."

Meanwhile, there is an ongoing lawsuit in federal court in Pennsylvania that is seeking to have college athletes declared school employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act. A pending suit in California that is related to the Alston case not only seeks to have the NCAA's compensation rules ended, it also seeks what would be an enormous damages claim based on amounts that the suit alleges past athletes would have received but for the NCAA's rules.

The new complaint relies heavily on a 2019 study by the Center for American Progress, a Washington-based group that describes itself as "an independent, nonpartisan policy institute." The study showed that among schools in the Power Five conferences, Black scholarship athletes comprise a disproportionate percentage of the schools' populations of all Black degree-seeking undergraduates, compared to their white counterparts.

— Steve Berkowitz and Erick Smith

Report: Four women allege sexual misconduct by snowboarding coach

Four women have filed SafeSport complaints against former U.S. snowboarding coach Peter Foley alleging sexual misconduct, according to a report from ESPN.



Peter Foley, US Snowboarding head coach, looks on at the snowboard cross at the LG Snowboard FIS World Cup in 2010 in Telluride. DOUG PENSINGER

the condition of anonymity, and O'Malley were among those who told ESPN of an old boys' club in which partying and shared lodging enabled Foley.

"He's frothing over young girls and says crude comments," the Olympian told ESPN. "It was the culture. It was what guys did."

"We had drunk guys busting into your room, getting in your bed, humping your leg, grabbing bras out of the drawer and running down the hall with them."

Olympic snowboarder Callan Chythlook-Sifsof posted about that culture and Foley's conduct in Instagram posts last month during the Beijing Olympics. A 2010 Olympian, Chythlook-Sifsof wrote that Foley had "taken naked photos of female athletes for over a decade," among other allegations about the culture of the program.

Foley denied the allegations to USA TODAY Sports following the final snowboardcross competition in Beijing.

After that competition, in which the Americans won mixed team gold, three-time Olympic medalist Lindsey Jacobellis confirmed that Foley had been barred from accessing the Athletes Village during the Games.

Howard Jacobs, Foley's attorney, denied the allegations against Foley to ESPN and told USA TODAY Sports on Monday that "any allegations of sexual misconduct being made against him are false."

Jacobs said SafeSport had not yet contacted Foley.

Last month, U.S. Ski & Snowboard President and CEO Sophie Goldschmidt told USA TODAY Sports that the organization was conducting its own investigation meant to run in parallel to the outside investigation.

A former employee of U.S. Ski & Snowboard also came forward in the ESPN report to say that Foley coerced her into taking nude photos and later sexually assaulted her.

Lindsey Sine Nikola, who worked for the organization from 2006 to 2010 starting in the communications department, told ESPN that Foley asked to stay with her for a World Cup event in Beaver Creek, Colorado, during the 2008-09 season

— Rachel Axon

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TODAY'S FORECAST

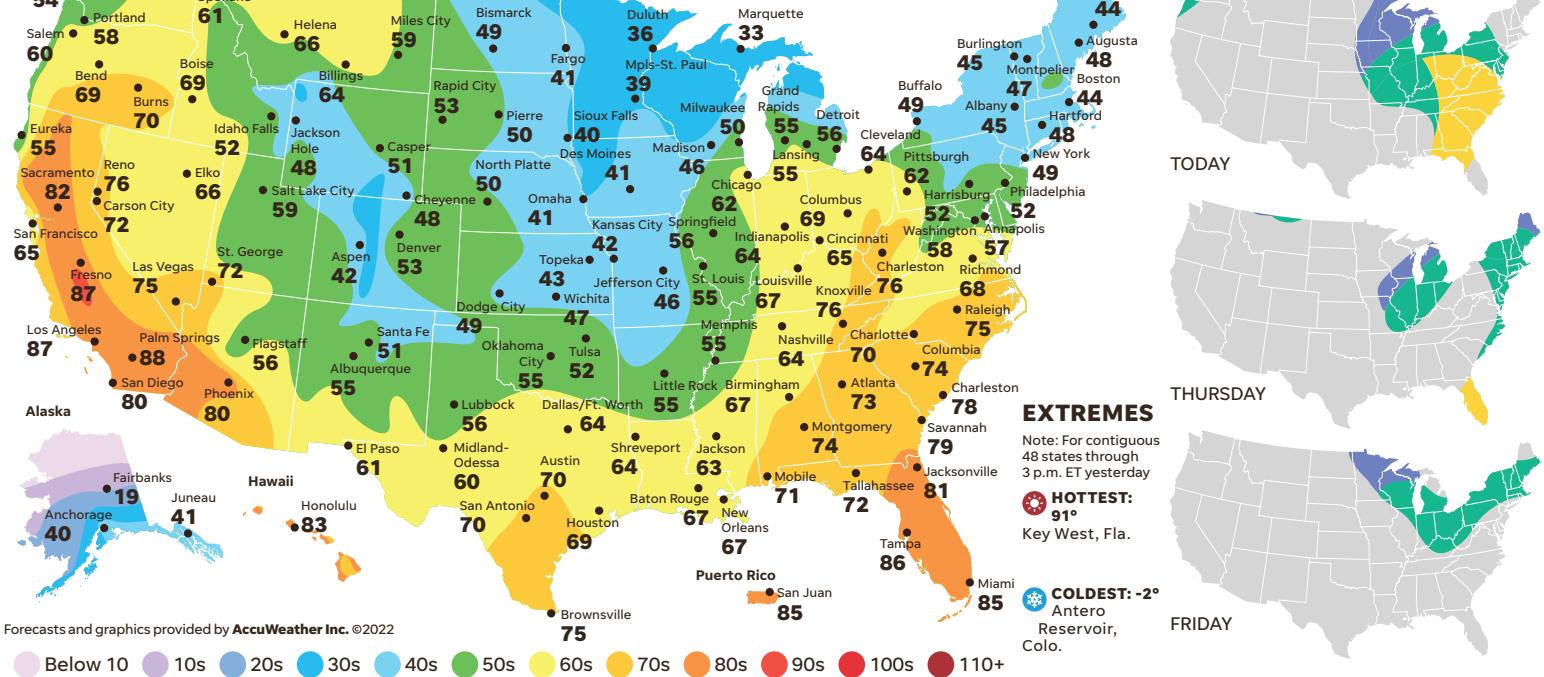
A major storm that affected the middle of the nation from Monday to Tuesday will shift eastward today. Two areas of severe thunderstorms are foreseen with one zone over the Ohio Valley and the other centered along the southern Eastern Seaboard. The main threats from the severe weather will be from strong wind gusts, but isolated tornadoes, hail and flash flooding are also concerns.

Cool rain is forecast to spread over the Northeast and linger from northern Missouri to southern Michigan and northern Ohio.

Snow will fall in the cold air from Nebraska to Minnesota and the northern parts of Wisconsin and Michigan.

Much of the Plains and West can expect a dry day with sunshine, although clouds and rain will skirt western Washington and Oregon.

TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES



TOP TRAVEL CITIES Air quality index (AQI)

ATLANTA	BALTIMORE	BOSTON	CHARLOTTE	CHICAGO	DALLAS/FT. WORTH	DENVER	DETROIT	HONOLULU	HOUSTON	LAS VEGAS	LOS ANGELES
WED Heavy t-storm 73/48	WED Rain, cooler 53/50	WED Incr. clouds 44/37	WED T-storms 70/59	WED Rain 62/40	WED Breezy, warmer 64/40	WED Very windy 53/33	WED Rain, breezy 56/45	WED Showers 83/71	WED Mostly sunny 69/61	WED Sunny, warm 75/55	WED Very warm 87/61
THU Partly sunny 66/47	THU Rain 69/49	THU Rain 45/40	THU Clearing 71/43	THU Cooler 46/36	THU Mostly sunny 69/39	THU Warmer 65/36	THU A few showers 53/40	THU Windy 83/70	THU Mostly sunny 73/44	THU Sunny, warm 84/60	THU Very warm 85/60
FRI Breezy 63/46	FRI Incr. clouds 62/42	FRI Cloudy, milder 52/42	FRI Partly sunny 67/43	FRI A.P.M. shower 51/34	FRI Sunny, nice 74/47	FRI Partly sunny 63/41	FRI Rain, snow 48/35	FRI A few showers 82/69	FRI Good	FRI Very warm 88/63	FRI Very warm 87/61
AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good
MIAMI	MPLS-ST. PAUL	NEW ORLEANS	NEW YORK	ORLANDO	PHILADELPHIA	PHOENIX	SALT LAKE CITY	SAN DIEGO	SAN FRANCISCO	SEATTLE	WASHINGTON
WED Breezy 85/77	WED Rain, snow 39/32	WED Not as warm 67/49	WED A little rain 49/41	WED A.P.M. t-storm 89/70	WED A little rain 52/47	WED Breezy 80/55	WED Sunlit, milder 59/40	WED Sunny, warm 80/57	WED Fog to sun 65/50	WED Rain 53/38	WED Rain 58/56
THU T-storm 85/70	THU Mostly 45/33	THU Partly sunny 71/51	THU Rain 50/46	THU T-storms 81/59	THU Rain 65/50	THU Sunny, warm 86/58	THU Mostly sunny 67/56	THU Mostly sunny 76/56	THU Fog to sun 65/48	THU Incr. clouds 55/41	THU Rain 71/49
FRI Not as warm 77/61	FRI Shower 43/23	FRI Sunny, nice 70/51	FRI Warmer 61/45	FRI Partly sunny 77/55	FRI Breezy 61/44	FRI Hot 92/62	FRI Mostly sunny 75/52	FRI Fog 72/57	FRI Then sun 63/50	FRI Mostly cloudy 58/45	FRI Incr. clouds 62/43
AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Moderate	AQI Good	AQI Unhealthy s/g	AQI Good	AQI Good	AQI Good

U.S. CITIES

TODAY	THU	TODAY	THU	TODAY	THU	TODAY	THU	TODAY	THU	TODAY	THU
Akron, Ohio	64/47t	56/42p	Cincinnati	65/45t	54/40c	Hartford, Conn.	48/36pc	46/41r	83/71t	77/61t	75/59pc
Albany, N.Y.	45/35pc	47/40r	Portland	64/48t	56/39h	Indianapolis	64/42sh	46/36sh	79/62t	67/47t	75/58pc
Albuquerque	55/33pc	67/40s	Boise	51/31w	66/39s	Helena	66	59	84/75s	78/68s	88/75s
Allentown, Pa.	47/41r	59/46r	Burns	69	69	Miles City	59	53	85/73s	80/67s	89/79s
Amarillo, Texas	51/30pc	65/38s	Elko	66	66	Bismarck	49	41	86/74s	81/74s	89/79s
Anaheim, Calif.	87/58s	88/55s	Jackson Hole	48	51	Fargo	41	36	87/75s	82/75s	89/79s
Anchorage, Alaska	40/31pc	42/31sh	Salt Lake City	59	59	Fargo	41	36	88/76s	83/76s	89/79s
Aspen, Colo.	42/21s	50/27s	Aspen	70	64	Fargo	41	36	89/77s	84/77s	90/80s
Atlantic City, N.J.	51/48r	62/52r	Des Moines, Iowa	41/31r	43/34s	Fargo	41	36	90/78s	85/78s	91/81s
Augusta, Ga.	73/57t	66/41p	Duluth, Minn.	36/28sn	43/29s	Fargo	41	36	91/79s	86/79s	92/82s
Austin, Texas	70/39s	73/38s	Durham, N.C.	70/63t	70/44sh	Fargo	41	36	92/80s	87/80s	93/83s
Bakersfield, Calif.	88/59s	89/59s	El Paso, Texas	61/37c	74/42s	Fargo	41	36	93/79s	88/79s	94/84s
Baton Rouge, La.	67/42pc	70/43s	Fairbanks, Alaska	19/3pc	35/10s	Fargo	41	36	94/81s	89/81s	95/85s
Billing, Mont.	64/45s	61/34s	Flagstaff, Ariz.	56/24s	64/31s	Fargo	41	36	95/82s	89/82s	96/86s
Birmingham, Ala.	67/43pc	65/43pc	Dayton, Ohio	74/46s	52/40sh	Fargo	41	36	96/83s	89/83s	97/87s
Bismarck, N.D.	49/25s	61/32pc	Dayton Beach, Fla.	85/68s	76/54t	Fargo	41	36	97/84s	89/84s	98/88s
Boise, Idaho	69/41s	69/44pc	Des Moines, Iowa	42/31r	43/34s	Fargo	41	36	98/85s	89/85s	99/89s
Buffalo, N.Y.	49/44r	56/39c	Daytona Beach, Fla.	85/68s	87/56s	Fargo	41	36	99/86s	89/86s	100/90s
Burlington, Vt.	45/36pc	45/40r	Fargo, N.D.	41/29pc	50/34s	Fargo	41	36	100/87s	90/87	

Transactions

Continued from Page 1C

term security that fellow shortstops Carlos Correa and Trevor Story did not.

Oh, Correa (three years, \$105.5 million with the Twins) and Story (six years, \$140 million, Red Sox) may yet recoup as large a guarantee as Seager, provided they perform well and exercise opt-out clauses, although Story will have to maintain his value by playing second base for at least one season. But for this vaunted shortstop class, only those fortunate enough to sign early, such as Seager, Javy Baez (six years, \$140 million) and Marcus Semien (five years, \$175 million), reached their free agent ceilings immediately.

AL Central: It would be rude to call this baseball's flyover division, but it's also somewhat accurate given that no Central team has won a playoff series since Cleveland advanced to the 2016 World Series. Yet the post-lockout landscape provided compelling surprises, most notably the Twins' signing of Correa and their acquisition of catcher/DH Gary Sanchez and third baseman Gio Urshela from the Yankees.

Meanwhile, they're giddy in Kansas City over Zack Greinke returning home to where his fascinating 18-year career began. Greinke will bring a much-needed glue guy presence to an emerging rotation that needs someone to reliably eat innings. And the Royals, Twins and Tigers should provide more than token resistance to a White Sox team that won the division by 13 games last season but lost Carlos Rodon.

NL DHs: Gotta love the approach in Philadelphia, where the Phillies are stacking slugger upon slugger and worrying about defense later. The signings of Kyle Schwarber and Nick Castellanos gives the club five feared sluggers at the top of the lineup and an eight-deep alignment that may suffocate pitchers.

Defense? Hey, they'll figure that out later, even if it means the adventurous Castellanos in left and Schwarber perhaps pulling the occasional stint at first.

Meanwhile, the Dodgers with Freeman can get even more creative with their famously flexible lineups, what with Freeman, Muncy, Chris Taylor and a cast of many floating through first base, second base, DH and the outfield. Nelson Cruz will make the Nationals far more watchable, providing crucial line-up protection for the great Juan Soto.

Borderline big leaguers in Oakland: Athletics fans already punished by their club president's clumsy attempts to hold them hostage for Las Vegas saw the latest generation of young stars shipped away as Chris Bassitt, Matt Olson and Chapman were dealt to the East Coast.

A bummer for fans, but a godsend for veterans hanging on and young players. Infielder Kevin Smith, acquired in the Chapman deal, might get 500 at-bats after being ticketed for platoon duty, at best, in Toronto. Right-hander Paul Blackburn, who has a 5.74 ERA in parts of five seasons, is now in the rotation.

Losers

Freddie Freeman: Fantastic deal (six years, \$162 million) with a fantastic team (Dodgers), but Freddie deserved a better departure from Atlanta than vir-

tual radio silence. The Braves love their budgets and largely stick to them; acquiring Matt Olson and signing him to an eight-year extension that will pay him less (\$21 million to \$27 million, not counting deferrals) than Freeman does allow them to do other things (Hello, Kenley Jansen).

Kris Bryant: Oh, Bryant wins in so many ways by joining the Rockies. He received a \$182 million guarantee and a no-trade clause, perhaps lighter than you imagined when he was a second-year MVP for the Chicago Cubs, but a great haul for a 30-year-old star in today's game. It's just unfortunate that such a unique talent and charismatic fellow has to spend the back nine of his career with a Rockies franchise that lurches forward and back, devoid of vision. Quality of life should be strong for Bryant and his young family; hopefully the baseball matches it one day.

Giants: After three years of occasionally painstaking rebuilding that yielded a stunning, 107-win season, Giants fans were giddy that one of the game's coastal superpowers would once again fire up the checkbook and add a superstar (or at least retain Bryant or No. 2 starter Kevin Gausman).

Alas, baseball ops chief Farhan Zaidi stayed true to his disciplined game, loading the rotation with returnees Anthony DeSclafani and Alex Wood, bounce-back veteran Alex Cobb and a \$44 million splurge on Carlos Rodon.

While the Giants figured to stay out of the high-end shortstop market after extending Brandon Crawford at the end of 2021, the hindsight that Story signed for a mere \$140 million stings; he and Crawford would have formed a tremen-

dous pairing up the middle while adding a power-speed element to a lineup that will instead bank on returns to form from guys like Mike Yazstrzemski, continuing magic from "Late Night" LaMonte Wade and hopeful bets on veterans Brandon Belt and Joe Pederson.

It worked wonderfully in 2021. It looks a bit more daunting in 2022.

Yankees: It is stunning that in a winter Correa received just \$105.5 million guaranteed and Story just \$140 million that the Yankees' big move would be taking on the \$50 million of Josh Donaldson's contract while plugging in the respected but not elite Isiah Kiner-Falefa at shortstop. The Yankees were not bluffing in their determination to cling closely to shortstop prospects Anthony Volpe and Oswald Peraza. But the Blue Jays adding a rejuvenated Chapman to boost a deep rotation and the Red Sox's massive improvements in all phases with Story means the price of poker went way up in the AL East. In 2021, the Blue Jays won 91 games – and finished fourth. It's not hard to imagine the Yankees meeting that fate this season.

COVID-19: The global pandemic rumbles on. Yet the industry's resumption revealed that at least a handful of players opted to get vaccinated during their downtime, most notably Red Sox shortstop Xander Bogaerts. Others seemed to indicate they had, in so many words. Meanwhile, New York's inclusion of baseball clubhouses as "indoor workplaces" may force the Yankees and Mets – the latter with many unvaccinated players – to capitulate if they wish to be eligible to play in their home ballparks come April 7. (Or play in Canada, at all).

Schnell

Continued from Page 1C

Sports. "I want to acknowledge that I have so much, I am so fortunate, and other coaches are, too. These people right now, they're suffering and it is front and center. They need help. They need an assist."

So last week the Hall of Fame coach pledged to donate \$10 for every made 3 in the women's NCAA Tournament. Then she challenged other coaches, from both the men's and women's tournaments, to join her.

"Pony up," she said after Stanford dispatched 16-seed Montana State 78-37 in the first round.

In truth, this shouldn't surprise us. For years, the women involved in women's sports have led on and off the floor, from the WNBA standing up to hateful politicians to the U.S. women's soccer team fighting for pay equity. Even in the women's NCAA Tournament, VanDerveer isn't the only one bringing attention to other causes. UConn star Paige Bueckers had promised to donate 10,000 dimes, which translates to \$1,000, for every "dime" she drops in March Madness, promising the money to Youthprise, a Minnesota organization that works with Indigenous, low-income and racially diverse youth. (So far, Bueckers has handed out seven assists.)

When asked if she'd be joining VanDerveer's challenge, Staley said she'd be happy to – but she wants to make sure everyone remembers issues in our own backyards, too. She proposed coaches donate \$1 for every tournament rebound and put the funds toward inner city youth. (In 2013 Staley co-founded InnerSole, a nonprofit that gifts new sneakers to homeless youth.) VanDerveer has also recruited and received verbal commitments from her sister, Heide, Fortner, Utah's Lynne Roberts and Montana State's Tricia Binford, among others.

But uh, guys, where you at?

Men's coaches, in case the obvious



Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer celebrates from the bench against Kansas during the NCAA Tournament. KELLEY L COX/USA TODAY SPORTS

needs to be stated, typically make considerably more money than their women's counterparts. An average of four times as much, in fact, a gap that was highlighted recently in a USA TODAY Sports salary survey.

Bruce Pearl, Randy Bennett pledge their support

Thus far, only two men's coaches have expressed enthusiasm about the challenge. Auburn's Bruce Pearl, who knows VanDerveer from his days as an assistant at Stanford in the mid-'80s, declared he was "all-in." When asked by a reporter if he'd be joining the challenge, Saint Mary's Randy Bennett said, "Have Tara call me" – then walked up to the reporter and shared his cellphone number, with the understanding it would be passed on to VanDerveer.

Other men's coaches have said they support her cause and have alluded to "making a donation," including Penny Hardaway from Memphis and Tommy Lloyd from Arizona. UCLA's Mick Cronin quipped, "Tell Tara to send me a bill."

But I want to see the receipts. I want

every NCAA Tournament coach, many of whom make at least 23 times the median income in America, to pledge a donation and post a copy of their receipt on social media, as VanDerveer plans to do.

And it doesn't stop at coaches. VanDerveer said everyone – administrators, fans, student-athletes cashing big NIL checks – can contribute, whether it's "a nickel a 3, a dime a 3, \$10 or \$100." In a dire situation, she pointed out, every little bit helps.

"We're all capable of something," she said. "Think about, what could we do as a basketball community? Could we hit \$100,000? That seems like a layup. What about \$1 million?"

Sports, VanDerveer knows, provide her a platform unlike many others. For her, giving back isn't new, though she often does it quietly. In 2018, VanDerveer teamed with Billie Jean King and the Women's Sports Foundation to start the Tara VanDerveer Fund, which provides fellowship money for aspiring female coaches in all collegiate sports. In December 2020, after becoming the all-time winningest coach in women's college basketball with 1,099 wins, she

pledged \$10 for every win to local food banks in desperate need of help because of COVID-19.

She wasn't trying to draw a lot of attention to either of those causes. But this is different, and more personal to her. The scene outside the bus has been imprinted on her mind and heart for 26 years, and was the first thing she recalled when Russia began its unprovoked invasion.

VanDerveer remembers Kyiv as "such a beautiful city." She found herself humbled by the way the Ukrainians "always gave us their best – their best food, their best effort on the court, all of it." The Americans played the Ukrainians so many times that month, they started referring to each other as sisters and cousins.

Made 3s in the women's tournament are being tallied by Her Hoop Stats, a website that tracks advanced analytics. Every night, Stanford sports information director Wilder Treadway updates VanDerveer on how much she owes. After the first two rounds, she's on the hook for \$6,290. She's decided to split her donations among three charities: Save the Children, Americares and Global Giving. (Her Hoop Stats has offered to compile any stat coaches want to claim as their own, like assists, blocks, etc.)

But why stop after this year or with this cause?

Cronin had a terrific suggestion: The NCAA should take \$1 from every ticket sold for first round men's and women's games and donate that money to one or two causes each March; coaches associations could pick the charities. This year alone, the NCAA sold just under 500,000 first-round tickets. Think about how much that could help.

But good ideas, as Cronin certainly knows from all the plays he's drawn up in huddles, don't mean anything without good execution. It's time for the true winners to step up.

The women's coaches and players are already coming through in crunch time. Can the gentlemen of the men's tournament do the same?

Bell

Continued from Page 1C

DeForest Buckner and Darius Leonard.

Ryan can be the missing link for the Colts that Carson Wentz wasn't. It's a stretch to envision Ryan will duplicate what a couple of other veteran quarterbacks did the past two seasons, when Tom Brady and Matthew Stafford switched locations and led their new teams to Super Bowl triumphs – especially when considering Ryan might be the eighth-best quarterback in the galaxy of star quarterbacks in the AFC.

But at least the Colts have a fighting chance.

Had Ryan, who turns 37 in May, stayed in Atlanta, the chances were better that he would have absorbed the type of brutal beatings that send quarterbacks limping into retirement. In

each of the past four seasons, Ryan was sacked at least 40 times behind a woeful offensive line that is just one of the areas in need of an overhaul during this undeniably rebuilding phase.

Last season, it was hard to watch Ryan getting pummeled with regularity as the walls caved in around him. It's a credit to Ryan that the Falcons won seven games in the first season with Arthur Smith as head coach and Terry Fontenot as general manager. Even though Ryan had his lowest passer rating (90.4) since 2015, at least the Falcons had a quarterback – if they could protect him.

So, good for you, Mattie Ice. You've been spared a certain type of pain and punishment that is now part of the reality Marcus Mariota can deal with during his fresh opportunity to be a starting quarterback again. Beyond the offensive line issues, the cupboard is rather bare with the Falcons in the wide receiver department (Russell Gage, gone as a

free agent; Calvin Ridley, not coming back soon, if ever, with a gambling suspension layered on top of his mental health sabbatical). And that defense needs a lot of work. Throwing for 4,000 yards, or even 5,000, wasn't going to cover for all of the ills and turn the team into a contender.

Maybe this can be chalked up as a gesture of appreciation. After all, Ryan, the most successful quarterback in Falcons history, provided stability and productivity over 14 seasons, plus a whole lot of credibility as the face of the franchise that was left reeling following the Michael Vick dogfighting fiasco.

In one sense, Ryan, drafted third overall in 2008, deserved this break of an exit door, which usually doesn't happen in a league that uses, abuses, chews up and spits out commodities. Sure, he was a consummate pro who was paid well. Ryan earned over \$300 million during his Falcons tenure.

Yet for all that, the Falcons pretty much gave Ryan away, getting a third-round pick and taking what is believed to be the largest "dead-money" salary cap hit ever, in excess of \$40.5 million.

Good luck, Mariota. While the Falcons have an enormous talent in second-year tight end Kyle Pitts and utility man Cordarrelle Patterson just re-upped for two years, the Falcons will be hard-pressed to quickly fill the holes. Factoring in the \$15.5 million in dead money the team absorbed from last year's trade of Julio Jones, Atlanta has over \$60 million in dead money against the \$208.2 million cap.

Fontenot and Smith must have a plan. No, they couldn't sell that in going all-in for Watson, who might have scratched the Falcons after seriously considering the supporting cast.

Going all-out on Ryan, though, is at least good for one quarterback – the one who's leaving.

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LIFELINE

THEY SAID WHAT?
THE STARS' BEST QUOTES

“Our son's name isn't Wolf anymore. We just really didn't feel like it was him. Just wanted to share because I keep seeing Wolf everywhere.” - Kylie Jenner via Instagram Stories on Monday, notifying fans that she and Travis Scott had a change of heart about their newborn baby's name. The couple welcomed a son on Feb. 2, originally named Wolf Webster. They did not share his new name.



SAMIR HUSSEIN/POOL VIA WIREIMAGE

MAKING WAVES
WILLIAM AND KATE'S VISIT

Dozens of well-known leaders in Jamaica including professors and politicians are demanding an apology and slavery reparations as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited the former British colony. The group rejected the visit of Prince William and Kate scheduled for Tuesday, part of a larger trip to the Caribbean region that coincides with the 60th anniversary of Jamaica's independence and the 70th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. “We see no reason to celebrate 70 years of the ascension of your grandmother to the British throne because her leadership, and that of her predecessors, have perpetuated the greatest human rights tragedy in the history of humankind,” read a letter published Sunday ahead of the couple’s visit and signed by 100 Jamaican leaders.

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY
WHO'S CELEBRATING TODAY

Randall Park is 48. Catherine Keener is 63. Chaka Khan is 69.

USA TODAY SNAPSHOTS ©

USA TODAY Best-sellers

Top selling titles for week ending March 20. Full list in tomorrow's USA TODAY.

1. **The War of Two Queens**
Jennifer L. Armentrout
2. **Run, Rose, Run**
Dolly Parton, James Patterson
3. **The Match** Harlan Coben
4. **The Great Reset**
Glenn Beck with Justin Trask Haskins
5. **It Ends With Us**
Colleen Hoover



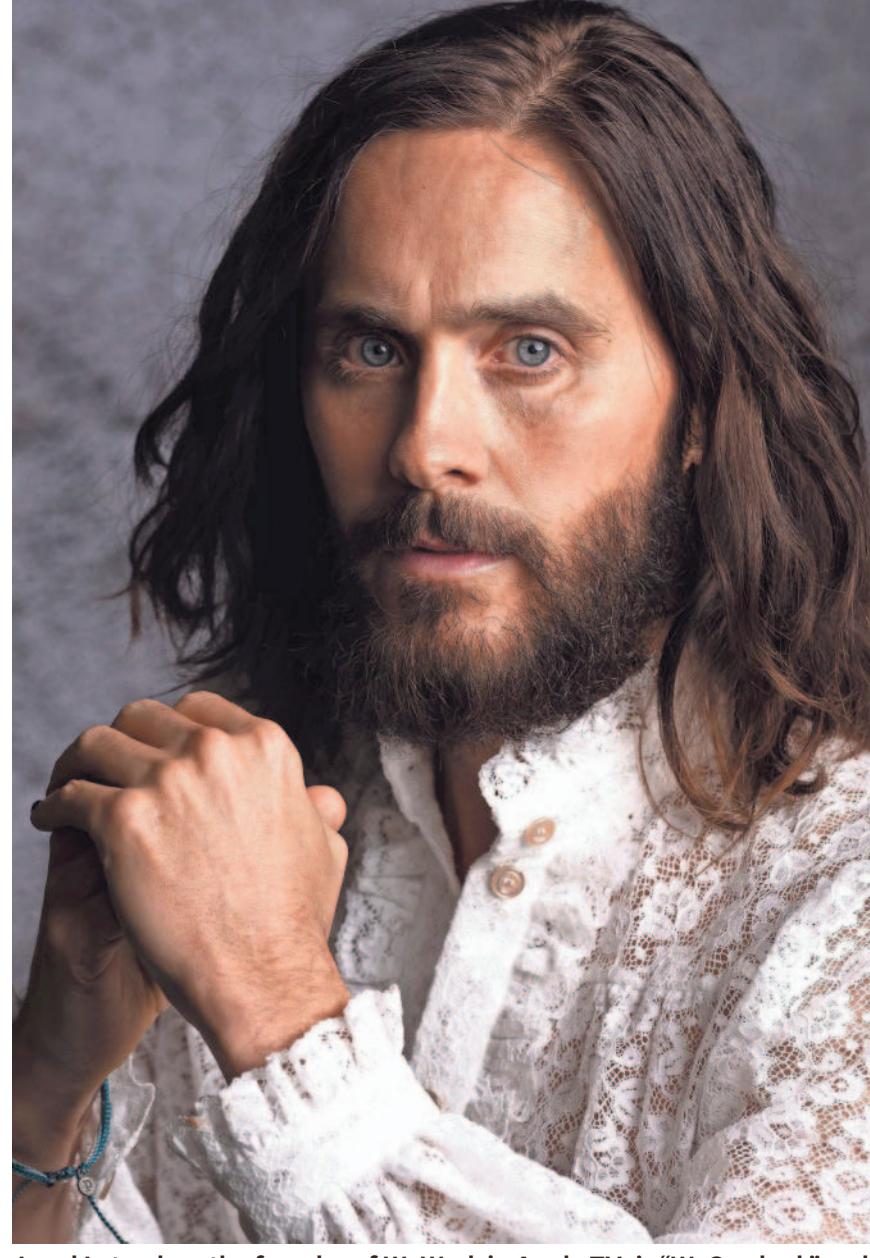
Behind the scenes – and pages – of HBO's 'Minx'

The series takes a fictional look at female erotica amid women's liberation. **Page 2D**

Amy Schumer draws on her life for Hulu's 'Life & Beth'

Her husband is the model for her love interest in the semi-autobiographical series. **Page 3D**

STREAMING



Jared Leto plays the founder of WeWork in Apple TV+'s "WeCrashed," and vampire antihero Dr. Michael Morbius in the upcoming film "Morbius."

ROBERT HANASHIRO/USA TODAY

Leto again transforms to work the human angles

Bryan Alexander USA TODAY

For Jared Leto, 2022 picked up where 2021 left off, with a passionate debate over Leto's love-it-or-hate-it performance in "House of Gucci." • Unrecognizable under prosthetics and the heavy Italian accent of Paolo Gucci, Leto earned peak peer praise with a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination in January, followed by a Razzie Award nomination that mocked the same performance.

When asked about the disparate responses Leto, 50, shrugs off the comments while staring unblinkingly into the iPhone he's holding in the back of his parked SUV during a Zoom chat.

"I don't really think about that stuff," he says. "I just stay in my lane and I listen to that voice inside."

That voice inside has propelled Leto into unleashing two more distinctive characters over a matter of weeks — Adam Neumann, the Israeli businessman and WeWork founder with rock-and-roll star charisma, in the AppleTV+ limited series "WeCrashed" (now streaming); and the vampire antihero Dr. Michael Morbius in the pandemic-delayed "Morbius," the third film in Sony's Spider-

Inside

Apple TV+'s "WeCrashed" gives Jared Leto a chance to go way over the top. **Preview. Page 4D**

Man Marvel universe (in theaters April 1).

"I'm interested in the sharp angles of humanity," Leto says. "This is a chance to see what you're made of and go for this ride. And I love a good transformation."

Leto, a native of Bossier City, Louisiana, broke out as Jordan Catalano, Claire Danes' teen obsession in ABC's 1990s high school drama

See LETO, Page 3D



Anne Hathaway and Leto star as Rebekah and Adam in Apple TV+'s "WeCrashed." PROVIDED BY PETER KRAMER

94TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Oscar hosts can use our tips on how to win the big night

Marco della Cava
USA TODAY

Oscar's fluctuating ratings aside, the televised glam-fest remains for its hosts an unparalleled opportunity to either showcase their impeccable wit or bomb on the biggest stage in the world.

The list of hosts for the Academy Awards, whose 94th edition airs live Sunday (ABC, 8 EDT/5 PDT), is long and legendary, including nine-time master of ceremonies Billy Crystal as well as two-time hosts Chris Rock, Ellen DeGeneres and, most recently, Jimmy Kimmel.

Yet Kimmel's 2018 show was the last to have a host, when 2019's choice, Kevin Hart, stepped down after his past homophobic tweets were resurfaced. This year, the position has been reinstated and it falls to three talented women, only the second time a trio has done the honors: Amy Schumer, Wanda Sykes and Regina Hall.

While there is no guaranteed route to Oscar Hosting Fame, there are guidelines for avoiding Oscar Hosting Infamy. We offer up some do's and don'ts for this year's quick-witted stars:



After a number of years without a host, the 2022 Academy Awards returns with three: Regina Hall, from left, Amy Schumer and Wanda Sykes. AP

DO: Something wildly unexpected

The possibilities are endless, as long as you add a pinch of good taste.

In 2014, DeGeneres minted an Oscars Moment by cramming a gaggle of beaming stars, including Bradley Cooper and Meryl Streep, into her wide-angle phone lens for a selfie.

During a number of hosting gigs, Crystal created a clip reel, popping himself into iconic movies and mind-reading what the stars were thinking. (In 2000, Jack Nicholson's face loomed on a large screen as Crystal mimicked: "You know what? I'm still the coolest guy in the room.")

And in 2017, Kimmel surprised out-of-towners on a Hollywood bus tour by bringing them into the Dolby Theatre during the telecast. He told one dazzled fan from Chicago: "This is Ryan Gosling. He's very handsome. Don't look into his eyes!"

DON'T: Offend the celebrities in the room

Walking that tightrope between being saying clever and offensive things to A-listers requires a deft mix of room-reading acumen and your own Hollywood star power.

There are been a number of uncomfortable moments, many courtesy of fearless comedian Rock, who in 2005 took a swing at Jude Law ("Who is Jude Law? You want Tom Cruise and all you can get is Jude Law? ... Why is he in every movie I have seen in the last four years?").

But the all-time most offensive moment award goes to Oscar host and "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane, who in 2013 tried to hitch his brand of racy humor to a classic Hollywood musical — and failed.

His song-and-dance number "We Saw Your Boobs," in which MacFarlane runs down a painfully long list of female stars who bared their breasts in movies, was intercut with images of none-too-amused stars.

See OSCAR HOSTS, Page 3D

STREAMING

Schumer's life and husband inspire 'Life'

Erin Jensen

USA TODAY

Amy Schumer has performed stand-up in front of sold-out crowds, produced her own sketch show, directed comedy specials and starred in films.

But writing, she says, is her favorite: "I love to lose myself in it."

While pregnant with her son Gene Fischer, who turns 3 in May, Schumer, 40, flipped through old journals and visited places where she spent her childhood. And she thought, "I'd really like to examine that time in my life, the teenage years when these big moments happen for you that can traumatize you or change you, and how that affects you as long as you let it."

The result is Hulu's comedy "Life & Beth" (now streaming all 10 episodes), which Schumer stars in, writes, executive-produces and sometimes directs. She estimates the series is about 50% autobiographical.

"A lot about me personally was reflected, but then I took liberties with the other characters," she says. "Beth" is Schumer's middle name, and like Schumer, the character has a younger sister and divorced parents. Her on-screen dad also falls on hard financial times, just as Schumer's did.

She says writing about her trauma offers "therapeutic benefits" and allows her to process what she went through.

At the time, "you just keep movin', keep growing up, and you know the things that happened to you," she says. "But I wanted to really give it the time and attention that I feel like I never did, to just be more gentle with myself in general and feel a little less guilty or ashamed, because I did have a rough time."

The series splits its time between the life of adult Beth — a wine sales rep living in New York in an unsatisfying relationship — and adolescent Beth (Violet Young). The teen Beth struggles with the awkwardness of growing up and a mother (Laura Benanti), who bounces among romantic relationships, imparting wisdom to her young daughters, such as "Men want to feel needed, so the



John (Michael Cera), a very direct farmer, intrigues Beth (Amy Schumer) in "Life & Beth." PROVIDED BY MARCUS PRICE/HULU

best way to flirt is to ask for help." And telling Beth, "If you put in just a little bit of effort, you are such a pretty girl."

A big event in the series premiere acts as the catalyst for Beth to reexamine her life.

"She's forced to make some changes and evolve," Schumer says. "She goes from not expressing any of her feelings to really saying what she wants, and that feels revolutionary for her."

Adult Beth ends her relationship and decides to move back to Long Island, where she grew up. She reconnects with her childhood friends and becomes charmed by farming life after meeting John (Michael Cera), the very direct and intriguing groundskeeper of a Long Island vineyard.

Schumer says the "Arrested Development" actor was her "dream" castmate, even if his texting habits leave something to be desired. After exchanging



Schumer says John is inspired by her husband, Chris Fischer, a farmer and chef. WALTER MCBRIDE/WIREIMAGE

phone numbers at the Tony Awards in 2018, Cera says he ignored the "Trainwreck" star's messages because he didn't recognize the number.

"Apparently, it was Amy, but I only figured this out years later, so I just ignored them," he says. "And then Amy texted me, I don't know, a couple months before we did this show, and she was like, 'How come you never responded to me?' And, I was like, 'Who is this?' And she goes, 'It's Amy.'" Schumer propositioned Cera with the role and sent scripts, which he thought were "amazing."

In writing the role, Schumer borrowed "a whole lot" from her real-life husband, farmer, chef and James Beard Award recipient Chris Fischer, whom she wed in 2018. There is no mention of John having autism in "Life & Beth," but Schumer says "he's most likely on the spectrum." Fischer was diagnosed a few years ago at 39.

Schumer spoke about Fischer's autism diagnosis in her 2019 Netflix stand-up special "Growing."

"Once he was diagnosed, it dawned on me how funny it was because all of the characteristics that make it clear that he's on the spectrum are all of the reasons that I fell madly in love with him," she said in the special. "He says whatever is on his mind. He keeps it so real."

Similarly, Cera says Beth is attracted to John's tendency to be "very direct and honest."

Schumer says her husband loved serving as the inspiration for John and visited the set daily in upstate New York and Long Island.

"He would bring our baby, and it was very sweet and supportive," she says. "And we wanted him there to make sure that we were making the farming look accurate."

While Schumer borrows from her personal life, she doesn't subscribe to Oscar-nominated screenwriter/author Nora Ephron's belief that "everything is copy," or potential material.

"Everything would be good copy, yeah, but there is a line if you want to continue your personal relationships," Schumer says.

"It doesn't seem worth it to me to write an essay that'll burn a bridge or ruin someone's life."

Leto

Continued from Page 1D

"My So-Called Life." He's known for his dramatic screen transformations when not living the rocker life as the frontman of 30 Seconds to Mars, the band he formed with older brother Shannon.

Leto lost more than 40 pounds and shaved off his eyebrows for his Oscar-winning role as an HIV-positive drug addict in 2013's "Dallas Buyers Club," and made similarly noticeable weight loss to portray a heroin addict in 2000's "Requiem for a Dream." On the other end of the spectrum, Leto ate junk food to gain 67 pounds to portray John Lennon's assassin Mark David Chapman in 2007's "Chapter 27."

"I've been 207 pounds and I've been about 109 pounds for films. So I've run the gamut," says Leto, who says he's never going to attempt "traumatic" weight gain again. "It's just really not something you should do to your body, ever. Just bingeing, eating really bad food. I have people call me up and ask me for advice on how to do it. I spend the whole time talking them out of it."

For Gucci, Leto had his makeup team construct a physical overhaul in a six-hour daily process to portray Gucci, a gray side-burned, bald-domed designer. The final result was so extreme that on the first day of filming, Al Pacino (who played his father, Aldo Gucci) didn't recognize him in conversation, Leto says.

"He thought I was just some Italian guy," Leto says. "The beautiful thing is, if I can stand face to face with Al Pacino and he can believe in my accents and my behavior, that's all I need. That carried me for the rest of the film."

He moved directly from Gucci's heavy accent to Neumann's challenging Israeli dialect alongside Anne Hathaway, who plays his wife and chief brand officer, Rebekah Neumann.

Neumann "has this tempo and an assertive way of speaking, with a lot of passion," says Leto, who worked for six months perfecting the accent.

On the set, Leto stayed in character as Adam, who convinced the world that his shared office-space company could be worth \$47 billion.

"During the shoot, we spent about four months speaking only to Adam Neumann," says executive producer Lee Eisenberg.

The actor says he sought out a "secret" meeting with Neumann before his warts-and-all portrayal of the man whose lavish spending and unorthodox behavior got him ousted as head of the company, which was spiraling out of control. During the meeting, he told Neumann not to watch the series.

"I did tell him I'm never going to be him," Leto says. "That it was an interpretation. I hoped to capture some spirit of who he was at that time."

Others may be curious whether Leto can pull off the larger-than-life character.

"These transformations to this extent, that's a high-wire act he performs. People have a real fascination with that," says executive producer Drew Crevello. "But the fact is, Jared gets up on that wire, time after time."

The wire work continues with the new screen superhero Dr. Morbius, a change in the dark spectrum from Leto's outlandish Joker (last spotted in the 2021 director's cut, "Zack Snyder's Justice League"). Unlike the Joker, this is the rare comic-book character that's never appeared on film.

"With so many great characters interpreted already, it's fun to portray (one) for the first time," Leto says.

We first meet the brilliant Dr. Morbius frail and requiring crutches due to a lifelong rare blood disease. He experiments mixing human with bat DNA in a search of a cure. It works, but his permanent Mr. Hyde personality is a vampire bat/human mix — with super speed, strength, flight and enhanced echolocation. The protruding bat ears are just the beginning.

Leto's physical transformation is digital, a major discussion between Leto and director Daniel Espinosa.

"Paolo is one thing, with the wigs and the prosthetics," Leto says. "But with a creation like this that's so otherworldly, you really don't want to have limitations."

There are big plans for Dr. Morbius, who might join onetime nemesis Spider-Man to fight darker forces. Leto won't discuss specifics, but he's game to plunge into the next challenge with his brand of oddball enthusiasm.

"I love taking work seriously, to dive in and be committed," Leto says. "But even if I commit to gaining weight or losing weight, or learning to speak an accent for six months, people might think it's a crazy commitment, but the fact is, it's a blast."

Oscar hosts

Continued from Page 1D

BUT DO: Poke fun at Hollywood in general

In the early days of the Academy Awards, there was a palpable sense of reverence if not self-congratulation for the craft of moviemaking.

That hasn't vanished, but in recent decades hosts have viewed the entire Tinseltown machine as fair game. "By the way," joked host Steve Martin as the 2003 show opened, "the proceeds from tonight's Oscar telecast, and I think this is so great, will be divvied up among huge corporations."

But no one was more pointedly merciless about Hollywood's shortcomings than host Rock, whose apex tell-it-like-it-is moment was his opening monologue in 2016, when #OscarsSoWhite was trending and the lack of people of color in movies was being acknowledged as an addressable failure.

"I'm here at the Academy Awards — otherwise known as the White People's Choice Awards," Rock cracked. He added that Black actors were pushing back only now because in the '60s, "we had real things to protest at the time, you know? ... We were too busy getting raped and lynched to care about who won best cinematographer."

DON'T: Be lazy (Hint: Viewers expect you to do more than just show up)

James Franco teamed up to host with Anne Hathaway in 2011, and that resulted in what many critics dubbed the worst Oscar hosting job ever.

The problem was the vast disconnect between the two actors. Hathaway looked almost too excited to be there, but at least everyone loves someone who tries. Franco, on the other hand, seemed at best like he was doing a dress rehearsal of the show, and at worst like he had just been woken up from a dead sleep.

DO: React to what just happened

Kimmel had perhaps the most difficult job ever as host in 2017, when the final award of the night — best picture — was given to the wrong movie.

Chaos unfolded as the producers of



Nine-time host Billy Crystal was at the helm of the Oscars for many of the show's most memorable moments.

KEVIN WINTER VIA GETTY IMAGES

"La La Land" graciously informed the audience that they had not won: The real winner was "Moonlight." While stunned, Kimmel immediately riffed. "Personally, I blame Steve Harvey for this," he said, referencing the time Harvey infamously crowned the wrong Miss Universe. "Why can't we just give out a whole bunch of them?"

DON'T: Persist with a joke that falls flat

In 1995, a nervous David Letterman thought he had a solid gag in hand when he peered into the famous crowd. He found Oprah Winfrey and said "Oprah." She waved at the camera. Then he walked over to the other side of the stage, spotted Uma Thurman, and said, "Uma." Then, "Uma, Oprah. Oprah, Uma." Then, "Have you kids met Keaton?"

The faux introduction joke fell flat, but Letterman carried on with it throughout the show. Ultimately, that did make "Uma, Oprah" a well-known gag but one synonymous with a failed effort.

DO: Use your superpowers for good

The Academy Awards notoriously run long, putting pressure on hosts to keep the festivities moving along at a clip.

That's why it was all the more surprising when 2008 host Jon Stewart went off-script and brought back a winner who had been played off before saying a word. Later in the show, Stewart surprised the crowd by giving Marketa Iglova, who shared the Oscar for best original song with Glen Hansard for "Falling Slowly" (from "Once"), her moment at the microphone. Classy.

STREAMING PREVIEW

Leto gets wild in thrill ride/trainwreck 'WeCrashed'



Kelly Lawler
Columnist
USA TODAY

Jared Leto is an actor with an infamous reputation for getting into his roles too deeply, for going over the top in his quest to turn into the Joker or a member of the Gucci clan.

So it feels natural to cast the actor as Adam Neumann, the enigmatic, erratic and egomaniacal former CEO of co-working startup WeWork. At least, that's how Leto presents Adam to the world in Apple TV+'s "WeCrashed," a new series about Adam; his wife, Rebekah (Anne Hathaway); and the rise and fall of the company.

Leto comes to dominate "WeCrashed" (streaming Fridays, ★★★★), which details how the company became

a failed "unicorn," going from a \$47 billion valuation to near bankruptcy in just six weeks. It's already been the subject of a 2021 Hulu documentary, "WeWork: Or the Making and Breaking of a \$47 Billion Unicorn," and the fictionalized Apple series takes its inspiration from the Wonder podcast.

Created by Lee Eisenberg and Drew Crevello, "WeCrashed" differentiates itself by focusing on Adam and Rebekah's love story, their shared delusions and how the fate of WeWork often was determined by their moods and impulses.

"WeCrashed" opens at the moment when Adam – filthy rich and more frustrating and selfish than ever – walks into a meeting with a board of directors that wants his head but quickly flashes back to his far more humble beginnings.

A serial entrepreneur (as he calls himself), Adam has several miracle businesses going at once, from baby clothes with knee pads to high heels

that convert to flats. He's not finding much success, but his penchant for charming and manipulating people still gets him most of what he wants, including free dinner from his neighbor or a date with Rebekah Paltrow, a yoga instructor and cousin of Gwyneth (as she'll tell anyone and everyone) who rejects him at a party but whom he pursues relentlessly.

At business school, Adam meets Miguel (Kyle Marvin), an unhappy architect who is just as taken with Adam as everyone else is. The two plot a business (with Miguel doing much of the work) and soon turn their single Brooklyn co-working space into a multibillion-dollar enterprise. Along the way, Adam marries Rebekah, raises (and quickly loses) millions, taking advantage of staff, losing friends and closing himself off from sense and reason.

Leto has the flashy, boisterous role that often sees him screaming, running

around barefoot, or sticking his tongue out. And he's well-suited to it. But Hathaway has a much more nuanced role, as a more stoic personality, frustrated by being shunted to the side by her attention-grabbing husband. The two have surprising chemistry and easy command of the screen.

Yet at eight episodes, "WeCrashed" is bloated and tiresome. Leto and Hathaway have the slightly unenviable task of playing characters who neither learn nor grow, but rather regress.

It's a shame that sometimes the writers get so into the weeds following the WeWork journey that they miss opportunities to highlight more than just Adam's manipulations and crazy ideas.

It's hard to look away from "WeCrashed" – although there are cringe-worthy moments that may make viewers avert their eyes. Even if you know how the story ends, it's an enthralling ride to the inevitable implosion.

TONIGHT ON TV

NETWORK	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
ABC	The Goldbergs College roommates. (N)	The Wonder Years (N)	The Conners (N)	Home Economics (N)	A Million Little Things Maggie's beliefs do not align with the radio station owners. (N)	Local Programs	Jimmy Kimmel Live (N)	
CBS	Survivor (N)		Beyond the Edge (N)		Good Sam (N)		Local Programs	The Late Show with Stephen Colbert
Fox	The Masked Singer Two of the three remaining singers from Group A are unmasked. (N)		Domino Masters Four new teams compete in a time travel themed challenge. (N)		Local Programs			
NBC	Chicago Med Stevie's mother is her patient; Dylan's past interferes with his judgment.		Chicago Fire Casey makes a decision that changes his life; an interview and a photo shoot.		Chicago P.D. Atwater discovers he has a personal connection to a deadly shooting.	Local Programs	The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon (N)	
PBS	Nature Abilities and migration of butterflies.		NOVA The strange intelligence of slime molds.		Expedition with Steve Backshall: Unpacked		Amanpour and Company (N)	
CW	The Flash Murder suspect. (N)		Kung Fu A move against Russell Tan. (N)		Local Programs			
ION	Blue Bloods Frank takes a case personally.		Blue Bloods Frank attempts to vindicate a detective.		Blue Bloods Former officer complains about pension.	Blue Bloods Jamie and Frank disagree on issue.		
Telemundo	Exatlón Estados Unidos (N)		Hercái, Amor y venganza (N)		Pasión de Gavilanes	Noticias Telemundo	Noticias Telemundo (N)	
Univision	Soltero con hijas		Mi fortuna es amarte		Madre (N)	Noticiero Univisión (N)	Noti. Univ. Ed. noc. (N)	
CABLE								
A&E	Court Cam	Court Cam	Court Cam (N)	Court Cam (N)	Neighborhood Wars (N)	Neighborhood Wars (N)	Court Cam A teary judge.	Court Cam
AMC	Die Hard A New York cop battles a gang of ruthless terrorists in a high-rise building. Bruce Willis, Alan Rickman (1988)						Die Hard 2 John McClane battles airport terrorists.	
Animal Planet	River Monsters: Deadliest Man-eaters (N)				Mysterious Creatures with Forrest Galante (N)		Mysterious Creatures with Forrest Galante	
BBC America	Law & Order Sister accused of murdering sister.		Law & Order Hitman kills man suspected of murder.		Law & Order Two cops linked to teen girl's murder.		Law & Order Victim's wife suspected of bombing.	
BET	Nutty Professor II: The Klumps Eddie Murphy (2000)		House of Payne (N)	Assisted Living (N)	The Ms. Pat Show (N)	House of Payne	Assisted Living	The Ms. Pat Show
Bravo	The Real Housewives of Orange County (N)		The Real Housewives of Orange County (N)				The Real Housewives of Orange County	Real Housewives
Cartoon	King of the Hill	King of the Hill	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers	American Dad!	American Dad!	American Dad!	Rick and Morty
CMT	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Mom Christy is sick.	Mom Dean's List.	Mom Rowdy friends visit.	Mom Jill's test results.	Mom Date is off-limits.	Mom Surprise pot cookie.
CNBC	Shark Tank A father discusses paint storage.		Shark Tank A footwear brand is introduced.		Shark Tank A pricing tool is pitched.		Shark Tank Jimmy Kimmel presents his invention.	
CNN	Anderson Cooper 360° (N)		CNN Tonight (N)		Don Lemon Tonight (N)		Don Lemon Tonight (N)	
Comedy	South Park	Fairview (N)	South Park	South Park Casa Bonita.	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park
Discovery	Moonshiners Daniel's big milk-based liquor run. (N)		Moonshiners: Master Distiller Hard seltzer.		Bee Czar Removal calls go through the roof. (N)		Moonshiners: Master Distiller Apple Pie moonshine.	
Disney	Big City Greens	Big City Greens	Bazaarvark	Bazaarvark	Big City Greens	Big City Greens	Miraculous: Ladybug	Miraculous: Ladybug
DisXD	The Ghost Odd jobs.	The Owl House	The Owl House	The Owl House	Gravity Falls	Gravity Falls	Gravity Falls	Big City Greens
E!	Superbad Nerdy high schoolers go to great lengths to buy liquor for a party. (2007)		The Waterboy A simple-minded waterboy becomes a football star with his unique ability. Adam Sandler (1998)				Nightly Pop (N)	
Food	Guy's Grocery Games (N)		Guy's Grocery Games Outrageous dishes.		Guy's Grocery Games Elevated classic.		Guy's Grocery Games Classic duo dish.	
Fox News	Tucker Carlson Tonight (N)		Hannity (N)		The Ingraham Angle (N)		Gutfeld! (N)	
Freeform	The Office Jim's failure.		The Office	The Office	Good Trouble (N)		The 700 Club	
FX	Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw A cyber-genetically enhanced criminal. Dwayne Johnson (2019) (7:00)				Snowfall Franklin & Gustavo look for an escape. (N)		Snowfall Franklin & Gustavo look for an escape.	
FX	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy Lost shirt.	Family Guy Bonding time.	Family Guy Back in time.	Family Guy Trip to Paris.	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers
GSN	America Says Club Mom. America Says		America Says	Family Feud	Family Feud	Family Feud	Family Feud	Family Feud
Hallmark	Love and Sunshine A woman fosters a retired military dog while healing from a broken engagement. (2019)				The Golden Girls	The Golden Girls	The Golden Girls	The Golden Girls
HGTV	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Home Inspector Joe Rye, N.Y., home. (N)		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters
History	Forged in Fire J. Neilson issues a unique challenge.		Forged in Fire Dave Baker's unique challenge.		Forged in Fire Billhook knives.		Forged in Fire Trials from judge Doug Marcaida.	
HLN	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files	Forensic Files
ID	See No Evil Man shot at a nightclub in Wisconsin.		The Murder Tapes Dead in the shower.		Signs of a Psychopath Girlfriend's killed. (N)		Evil Lives Here Woman's boyfriend.	
IFC	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond
Lifetime	Married at First Sight (N)		The Proposal Publisher from Canada forces assistant to marry her to avoid deportation. Sandra Bullock, Ryan Reynolds (2009)				Married at First Sight	
Magnolia	Fixer Upper: Welcome Home Abandoned house.				Fixer Upper: Welcome Home Tuscan oasis.		Fixer Upper Modern loft in downtown Waco, Texas.	
MotorTrend	Texas Metal		Restoration Garage (N)	Restoration Garage (N)	The Fastest Cars In The Dirty South (N)		Faster With Finnegan A 1985 GMC S-15.	
MSNBC	All in with Chris Hayes (N)		The Rachel Maddow Show (N)		The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell (N)		The 11th Hour (N)	
MTV	Ridiculousness (N)	Ridiculousness (N)	Ridiculousness (N)	Ridiculousness (N)	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness	Ridiculousness
NatGeo	To Catch a Smuggler: Brazil Bleaching powder.		To Catch a Smuggler: Brazil A truck with meth. (N)		To Catch a Smuggler: Brazil False compartments.		To Catch a Smuggler: Brazil Bleaching powder.	
NatGeo Wild	Running Wild with Bear Grylls Heli-ski ride.		Running Wild with Bear Grylls Iceland highlands.		Running Wild with Bear Grylls Champion racer.		Running Wild with Bear Grylls Heli-ski ride.	
NewsNation	NewsNation Prime w/Marni Hughes		Dan Abrams Live		Banfield		NewsNation Prime: Special Report	
Nick	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends Joey uninsured.
NickJr	PAW Patrol	Blaze Machines	Peppa Pig	Peppa Pig Construction.	Peppa Pig	Peppa Pig	PAW Patrol	PAW Patrol
OWN	Love It or List It A quandary over city or country life.		Love It or List It Five children.		Love It or List It Bachelor pad reconsideration.		Love It or List It Couple considers selling its home.	
Oxygen	Dateline: Secrets Uncovered (N)		Dateline: Secrets Uncovered	Toxicology report finds sedative in man's system after he died in his car.			Dateline: Secrets Uncovered Social media clues.	
Paramount	Independence Day An alien mothership launches a fleet of spacecraft which destroy entire cities. (1996) (7:00)				Top Gun A cocky jet pilot in training seems to lose his nerve after a tragic accident. Tom Cruise (1986)			
Pop	NCIS: New Orleans NCIS asks for help from FBI.		NCIS: New Orleans Copycat kills again.		NCIS: New Orleans Vanished JAG lawyer.		NCIS: New Orleans Manhunt for special ops Marine.	
Science	Black Files Declassified		Black Files Declassified (N)		Secrets of the Celtic Grave Ancient chariot.		Black Files Declassified	
Sundance	Criminal Minds Agents are trapped in a cult.		Criminal Minds Car accidents disguise serial killer.		Criminal Minds Killer uses railroad to find victims.		Criminal Minds Reid's childhood memories resurface.	
Syfy	Captain America: Civil War Captain America and Iron Man divided. Chris Evans (2016) (6:45)				Astrid & Lilly Save the World Beast & school play. (N)	Jennifer's Body Teen nerd befriends fatal popular girl.		
TBS	All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite (Live)				Wipeout Teams return to compete again.	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	
TCM	Harvey A friendly drunk claims his best friend is an invisible six-foot-tall rabbit. James Stewart (1950)				Lust for Life A painter's obsessive pursuit of art puts him on a path of self-destruction. Kirk Douglas (1956)			
TLC	Dr. Pimple Popper Recurring growth. (N)		Dr. Pimple Popper Large neck growth. (N)		Dr. Mercy Woman in so much pain she cannot stand.	My Feet Are Killing Me Large bump on foot.		
TNT	NHL Hockey Pittsburgh Penguins at Buffalo Sabres from KeyBank Center (Live)						NHL Hockey Chicago Blackhawks at Anaheim Ducks from Honda Center (Live)	
Travel	Ghost Adventures Virginia City, Nev.		Ghost Adventures Zak and the group explore the dark side of Hollywood while in Hollywood Hills. (N)				Ghost Adventures West Haven, Utah.	
TruTV	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical: Inside Jokes	Impractical Jokers	Impractical Jokers
TV Land	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	Loves Raymond	The King of Queens	The King of Queens
USA	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit An old case.		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Temptation Island (N)		The Courtship	Suitors prove romantic abilities.
VH1	Boo! A Madea Halloween Madea watches teenagers on Halloween. (2016) (7:00)		Boo 2! A Madea Halloween Madea, Bam, Hattie & their families fight monsters in a haunted campground. Tyler Perry, Cassi Davis (2017)					
Viceland	I Survived ... Hurricane Sandy takes a man out to sea.		60 Days In Sewer line repaired; more dangers faced.		60 Days In Tensions rise with participants.		VICE News Tonight (N)	
WE	NCIS NCIS looks into death of war veteran.		NCIS Hunt for terrorist continues.		NCIS Teenage girl sees her friend get taken.		NCIS Gibbs teams up with FBI Agent Fornell.	
Weather	Highway Thru Hell Colin works alone.		Highway Thru Hell Two big wrecks.		Highway Thru Hell New recruits tested.		Ice Pilots: NWT Buffalo helps the RCMP deliver toys.	
MOVIE NETWORKS								
Cinemax	Robin Hood When a former crusader and his Moorish commander attempt to fight against the corruption of the English crown by taking on the persona of a hooded rebel. Taron Egerton, Jamie Foxx (2018)				Snitch After his son is framed in a drug deal and imprisoned, a father goes undercover for the DEA in an effort to help free his son before it is too late. Dwayne Johnson, Barry Pepper (2013) (9:58)			
Encore	The American President The widowed president of the United States romances a pretty lobbyist. (1995)		The King's Speech After being forced into the crown and on the radio, George VI seeks the help of an unorthodox speech therapist, who helps him overcome his speech impairment. Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush (2011)					

HUD to send out nearly \$3B in disaster relief grants

Ashraf Khalil
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is allocating nearly \$3 billion in disaster relief funding to cover recovery efforts by multiple state and local governments.

The Community Development Block Grants, announced Tuesday, include \$2.2 billion to 10 local governments and 13 state governments for 16 major disasters that took place in 2021. These include wildfires in California and Colorado, ice storms in Texas, and damage wrought by Hurricane Ida in multiple states from Louisiana to New Jersey.

An additional \$723 million is being sent to five previously announced recipients of disaster relief grants for incidents dating back to 2020 — including Hurricane Sally in Alabama and Florida, and Hurricane Zeta in Mississippi. The extra money, according to a statement from HUD, will cover a “higher level of need than previously calculated for disasters in those states.”

Tuesday’s announcements finish the original \$5 billion in disaster relief funding provided by Congress last year. Marcia Fudge, secretary of the Department of Housing and Development, said in a statement that the new allocations “will strengthen recovery efforts and improve long-term, inclusive resilience to future disasters and climate impacts.”

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear expressed gratitude for the nearly \$75 million his state will receive to cover flood and tornado damage.

“After two years of devastating tornadoes, flooding and ice storms, we are looking forward to seeing how this funding can help make an impact in our long-term recovery efforts,” Beshear said in a statement.

Under guidance issued by HUD in January, the state and local agencies receiving the block grants are instructed to prioritize climate-change mitigation and equity for underserved communities in deciding how to disperse those funds.

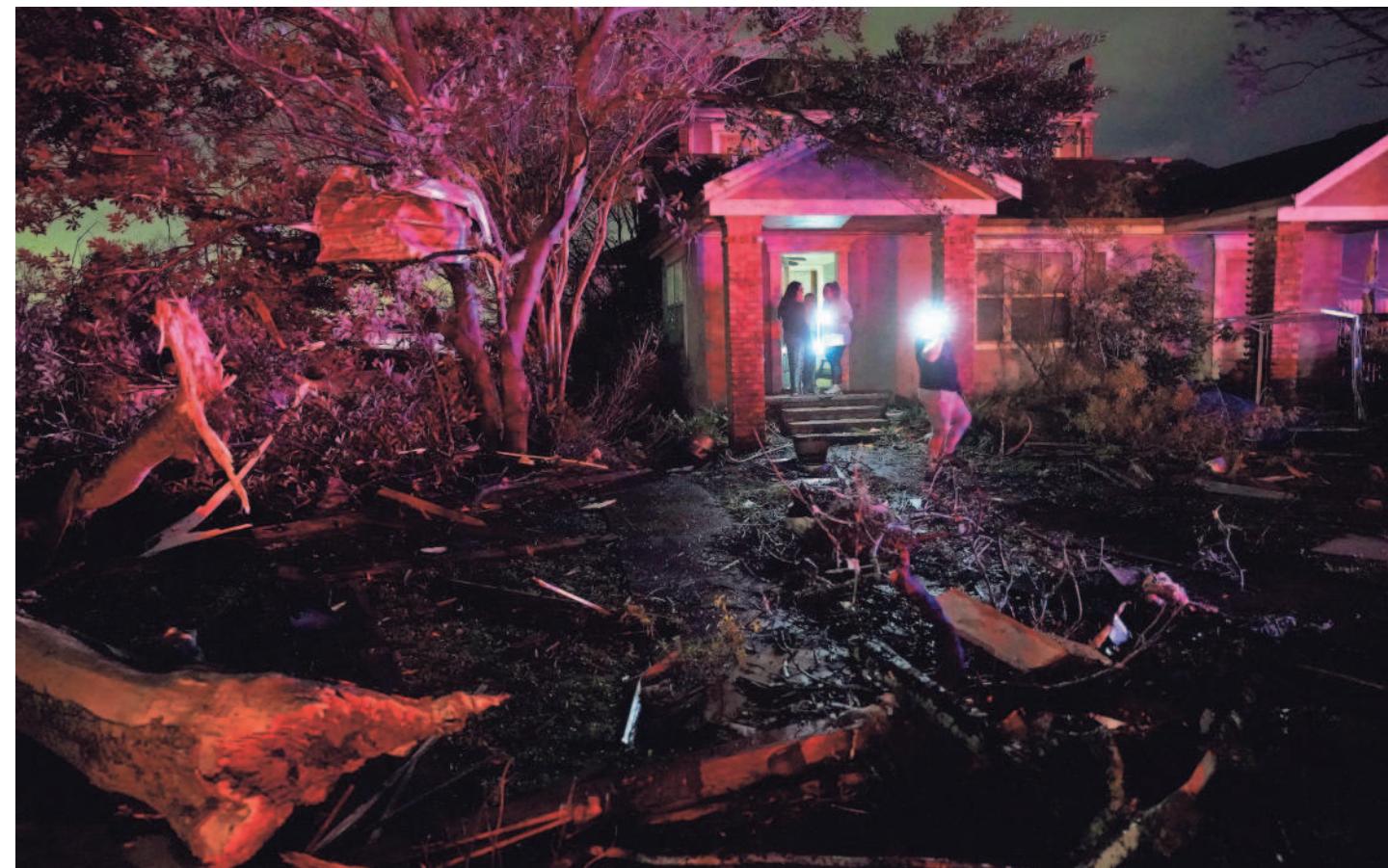
These block grants traditionally come with a great deal of flexibility for local authorities and recipient agencies to decide where best to target the funds depending on the nature of the disaster.

Wildfires tend to largely destroy buildings and residences, while storms and hurricanes often do the most damage to infrastructure like bridges, sewers and electrical grids.

Most of that flexibility remains, but HUD is now directing recipient agencies to prioritize long-term environmental resilience and serving traditionally marginalized populations.

All new construction funded by the grants will need to be built to green standards that emphasize energy efficiency and resilience against similar disasters down the line.

“Communities will have greater resources and focus to ensure equitable outcomes for underserved households that too often bear the brunt of climate-related disasters,” Fudge said. “With these funds, we are sending a strong message that equity and forward-looking mitigation are priorities of HUD and this administration’s disaster recovery work.”



People survey damage Tuesday in Arabi, La. A tornado tore through parts of New Orleans and its suburbs Tuesday night, ripping down power lines and scattering debris in a part of the city that had been heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina 17 years ago. GERALD HERBERT/AP

Tornado slaps New Orleans; Texas, Oklahoma walloped

Acacia Coronado and Jill Bleed
ASSOCIATED PRESS/REPORT FOR AMERICA

NEW ORLEANS — A tornado tore through parts of New Orleans and its suburbs Tuesday night, ripping down power lines and scattering debris in a part of the city that had been heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina 17 years ago.

Other tornadoes spawned by the same storm system hit parts of Texas and Oklahoma, killing one person and causing multiple injuries and widespread damage.

A video taken by a local television station showed a large black funnel visible in the darkened sky looming among the buildings in the eastern part of New Orleans.

The tornado appeared to start in a New Orleans suburb and then move east across the Mississippi River into the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans and parts of St. Bernard Parish — both of which were badly damaged by Katrina — before moving northeast.

Reggie Ford was nearby when the tornado struck. He drove from the area, only to return once it passed, to offer help to anyone who needed it. So far, he says, the streets are eerily quiet, only filled with fresh devastation from the twister.

“I see downed powerlines. A church is completely destroyed. Three businesses are completely destroyed. There are eight blocks of houses missing their roofs,” the New Orleans resident said. Video he posted on Instagram shows debris cluttered streets and shredded buildings. A battered car lies on its roof.

Debris was spread across an area covering multiple blocks east of New Orleans.

In the New Orleans suburb of Arabi, there was a strong smell of natural gas in the air as residents and rescue personnel stood in the street and surveyed the damage. Some houses were destroyed while pieces of debris hung from electrical wires and trees. An aluminum fishing boat in front of one house was bent into the shape of a C



A house in Elgin, Texas, was damaged Monday as multiple tornadoes whipped through Texas and Oklahoma, killing at least one person. JAY JANNER/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN VIA AP

with the motor across the street. Power poles were down and leaning over, forcing emergency workers to walk slowly through darkened neighborhoods checking for damage.

About 13,000 homes and businesses were without power in the three parishes around New Orleans after the storm.

Guy McGinnis, president of St. Bernard Parish, told WWL-TV that the parish had “widespread damage” in parts of the parish that borders New Orleans to the east. Search and rescue teams were going through homes looking for people and responding to at least two calls from people who said they were trapped in their homes in their bathrooms.

It wasn’t immediately known whether anyone was injured. While the metropolitan region is often struck by severe weather and heavy rains, it’s rare that a tornado moves through the city.

High winds uprooted trees in Ridgeland, Mississippi, as a possible tornado passed the Jackson-area city Tuesday afternoon, but there were no immediate reports of any injuries or serious damage to buildings. Campus police at Mississippi State University, in Starkville, shared a photo of a large hardwood tree lying across a street.

Many schools were closing early or canceling after-school activities Tues-

day in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi to allow students to get home before the weather deteriorated. Shelters opened for residents who needed a place to stay while the storms traveled through.

High water posed a threat to motorists early Tuesday in Louisiana on several roads, including a stretch of Interstate 20 and several state highways after rains overnight, authorities said. Deputies in Caddo Parish, which includes Shreveport, rescued three drivers from high waters during the night, the sheriff’s office tweeted before dawn.

The storms were expected to intensify throughout the day as temperatures rise, increasing the threat of tornadoes, hail and strong winds. Forecasters predicted intense tornadoes and damaging winds, some hurricane-force with speeds of 75 mph or greater, in much of Mississippi, southern and eastern Louisiana, and western Alabama. Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi, were among the cities at risk for bad weather.

In Texas, several tornadoes were reported Monday along the Interstate 35 corridor, particularly in the Austin suburbs of Round Rock and Elgin, as well as in northern and eastern Texas and southern Oklahoma.

In Elgin, broken trees lined the rural roads and pieces of metal — uprooted by strong winds — hung from the branches. Residents stepped carefully to avoid downed power lines as they worked to clean the remnants of broken ceilings, torn down walls and damaged cars.

J.D. Harkins, 59, said he saw two tornadoes pass by his Elgin home.

“There used to be a barn there,” Harkins said, pointing to an empty plot on his uncle’s property covered with scattered debris. He said the building was empty when the first tornado hit Monday, and that his family is thankful nobody was hurt.

The tornadoes came on a wild weather day in Texas — wildfires burned in the west and a blizzard warning was issued for the Texas Panhandle, where up to 9 inches of snow fell.

IN BRIEF

US agrees to lift taxes on British steel, aluminum

The United States agreed to lift tariffs on British steel and aluminum, mending a rift that dates back to the Trump administration.

At a meeting Tuesday in Baltimore, the U.S. and the U.K. announced a deal that would remove taxes on British steel and aluminum that comes in below new quotas on the imports. The British agreed to lift retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports, including whiskey.

In 2018, President Donald Trump imposed tariffs of 25% on imported steel and 10% on aluminum, calling the foreign metals a threat to U.S. national security — a move that outraged the British, Europeans and other longstanding American allies. President Joe Biden was slow to undo the metals tariffs, popular in the steel-producing states.

From wire reports

Jackson

Continued from Page 1NN

her boss at the time, A.J. Kramer. She continued work on one of the cases when she moved on to private practice, she said Tuesday, but it was because her firm was assigned to represent the man.

At the time, the Guantanamo detention center was still new. It had opened in 2002, and Jackson’s assignments came after a Supreme Court decision that those held at Guantanamo had a right to challenge their detention in court, bringing a flood of litigation. At the time Jackson’s brother was an Army infantryman deployed in Iraq, she has said, making her “keenly and personally mindful” of the circumstances that led to the men’s detention.

In one case, Jackson’s representation did not last long. Court records say she was assigned Khudai Dad’s case in November 2005, but he was sent back to Afghanistan within three months. Jackson also represented Tariq Mahmoud

Ahmed Al Sawah, whom the U.S. government has described as an explosives expert for al-Qaida, the terrorist group that carried out the 9/11 attacks.

Another client was Jabran al Qahtani, who traveled from his home in Saudi Arabia to train and fight against American forces and others in Afghanistan. It was the one case she continued in private practice.

Another lawyer who worked on his case, John Kolakowski, has said Qahtani was “young and foolish,” traveling to undertake what he thought was a religious calling. He quickly regretted his decision and then “tried to get out of Dodge,” Kolakowski said.

Jackson has written that she considers the work she did on behalf of a different detainee, Khi Ali Gul, some of her most significant as an attorney. The work Jackson did on behalf of Gul, who has been described as a Taliban intelligence officer, included writing a brief challenging his classification as an enemy combatant and his detention at Guantanamo.

Graham, who was a defense lawyer in

the Air Force, said it wasn’t Jackson’s work as a public defender he took issue with.

“The American people deserve a system where everybody’s represented, whether you like them or not. And anybody that takes up that cause, no problem with me. You’re just doing your job and I think you make our country stronger,” he said.

But, Graham and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, took issue with some of the words Jackson used in court documents involving Guantanamo Bay, saying she had called the government and Bush and Rumsfeld “war criminals.”

Jackson actually never referred to anyone as a war criminal, but she did allege that the treatment of the detainees constituted torture and violated federal law.

The brief she helped write said the federal government, including the president and defense secretary, was ultimately responsible.

The government is still holding 39 men at Guantanamo. Most have never been charged.

INVASION IN UKRAINE

Refugees have more advantages now

Aid system has improved, countries more welcoming

Dennis Wagner
USA TODAY

As beleaguered Ukrainian refugees crossed their nation's border, destination uncertain, an aid worker addressed them via a megaphone:

"Welcome to Poland. You are safe."

The scene reflects the end of one ordeal for millions who escaped a war zone, but the beginning of another as they confront life without homes, jobs or any idea about the future.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi declared Ukraine's exodus "the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II."

As Russian munitions destroy cities and troops tighten a stranglehold, more displaced persons leave each day. They arrive at the border with only a bag of possessions and clothing, mostly women and children queuing in bitter cold for shelter, food and transport to destinations unknown.

Now is their moment of truth – a threshold where they leave relatives, friends, homes, jobs, schools, pets and everything else that has been their lives. And where they confront uncertainty.

Historians, relief advocates and displaced persons stressed that trauma and anxiety are common denominators.

Though it may afford little solace, the uprooted Ukrainians may have advantages over millions who fled World War II and other military conflicts.

An international refugee aid system developed at the end of World War II is more coordinated than at any other time in history. Nonprofit relief agencies are bigger and more organized. At least for now, the Ukrainians are welcomed into neighboring nations.

"It might have been worse in World War II," said Mary Brown, archivist with the Center for Migration Studies, a think tank in New York. "But the little Ukrainian mother with a couple kids in tow – she doesn't know that."

Peter Gatrell, author of "The Unsettling of Europe: How Migration Reshaped a Continent," said it's important to remember that although refugees face tribulation, they've escaped death and devastation.

"Sometimes," Gatrell noted, "refugees are the lucky ones."

This is not like World War II, but ...

In January, Ukraine's ambassador to Britain, Vadym Prystaiko, presciently warned that a Russian invasion would unleash a human wave of his countrymen across Europe.

"Imagine you start seeing pictures of Ukrainians killed, bodies lying in the road, cities bombed by the Russians looking like Grozny and Chechnya, and millions of immigrants fleeing," Prystaiko said. "I'm not threatening people with this. We will have to face this."

Two months later, those images are on YouTube and across social media, rather than in people's minds.

The scenes are reminiscent of World War II. But historians who studied Europe's displacement in the 1930s and '40s stressed that the scope and circumstances were strikingly different.

The Ukraine exodus stems from fighting for a few weeks in one country. World War II saw combat for six years in dozens of nations, involving perhaps 40 million European refugees during the violence and its aftermath.

Gatrell said those migrants included Jews and others fleeing the Holocaust; residents of conquered nations trying to escape the rule of Adolf Hitler; laborers who were enslaved by the Nazis but released after the war; non-Russians deported from Soviet bloc countries or who fled the communist regime at the start of the Cold War; and Palestinians



Refugees from Ukraine arrive at a newly built center on the tarmac of the former Tegel airport in Berlin on Sunday.

STEFFI LOOS STEFFI LOOS/AP

left stateless by the formation of Israel.

Brown said the world did not even have a common definition for "refugee" during World War II. Displaced persons in Europe fled through battlegrounds in multiple countries, nearly always amid broken governments and chaotic relief efforts.

Some of those migrations were epic. Records document how the Red Cross helped ship several thousand starving Greek children to India in 1941, and thousands of Poles were transported to Tanzania, Kenya and other destinations in Africa.

Then, as now, historians said, the struggle begins with survival. Once refugees escape a war zone, their plight hinges on politics, economics and racial-religious discrimination in host nations.

Put simply, nations chronically feud over the number and type of displaced persons they'll accept.

David Nasaw, author of "The Last Million," a chronicle of displaced civilians after World War II, said the last refugee camps did not close until the 1950s, when the creation of Israel provided haven for 250,000 stateless Jews.

"It took five years to settle the last million," he said.

Political resistance is greatest, according to analysts, during economic hard times or when refugees are culturally and ethnically different from domestic populations.

That phenomenon is playing out among Africans and Middle Easterners living in Ukraine and struggling to exit.

Ironically, Ukraine itself has been a part of the world's anti-immigrant backlash. As the United Nations tried to find homes for Syrian and Afghan refugees in 2016, Ukrainian protesters warned that migrants would bring disease, crime and terrorist attacks to the homeland.

"Ukraine is not a safe country for asylum seekers," Maksym Butkevych, coordinator of the No Borders Project, was quoted as saying in the Kyiv Post.

'The end is not in sight'

Even before Russia invaded Ukraine,



A woman and a child wait at a passport control office at the main railway station in Przemysl, southeastern Poland, on Sunday. Ten million people – more than a quarter of the population – have fled their homes in Ukraine since Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, the United Nations refugees chief said. WOJTEK RADWANSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

the U.N. refugee agency estimated there were 84 million forcibly displaced persons globally – about 1 out of every 95 people.

The exodus from Ukraine has added about 3 million refugees, and 7 million are displaced internally, according to the United Nations.

Poland had absorbed the bulk of Ukraine's refugee surge as of March 15, taking in 1.9 million refugees, according to the United Nations. Romania was second with 468,000, followed by Moldova, Hungary and Slovakia with more than 200,000 each.

Those nations, mere stop-offs for many of the travelers, pleading for international assistance with short-term housing, food, medical care and other services.

As the bureaucratic process of finding more permanent homes gets underway, Kathleen Newland, co-founder and senior fellow with the Migration Policy Institute, said refugees face a multi-stage gauntlet: navigating the war-ravaged homeland; crossing the border to temporary shelter; and finding an accepting destination for resettlement,

"What happens after the initial period is, I think, the real question now. That's particularly true if the numbers continue to grow."

Kathleen Newland
Co-founder and senior fellow with the Migration Policy Institute

acclimation and assimilation.

Ukraine was an epicenter for migrations in two World Wars, and generational refugee stories have passed down through families.

It is too early to say what lies ahead for the current wave, but experts told USA TODAY that displaced Ukrainians seem to have some advantages over predecessors.

Among them:

- Although fleeing Ukrainians risked becoming war casualties, the escape was less perilous for some, thanks to evacuation corridors. "That didn't exist in World War II," Brown said. "Everybody was taking their chances."

- Unlike other refugees in history, Ukrainians hold visas that allow them to travel freely in Western Europe, and the European Union for the first time adopted a Temporary Protection Directive granting displaced Ukrainians asylum for a year or more. The latter decision "was stunning and marks a very different degree of welcome" from what's been offered to other populations in Europe, said Michelle Mittelstadt, communication director for the Migration Policy Institute.

- Surrounding nations and their citizens have been uncharacteristically helpful to displaced Ukrainians – including Poland, which has shunned refugees from Africa and the Middle East. In England, where anti-immigrant politics are entrenched, the government offered a reward to anyone who opens a home to Ukrainian families. More than 100,000 Brits signed up within days.

- The global relief system eight decades ago was feeble and disorganized. Today, the United Nations, European Union and national governments interact according to global protocols developed after chaotic and painful failures during World War II.

- Nonprofit relief agencies are better coordinated and have greater resources. Amid the surge of Ukrainians, religious and humanitarian groups rallied with volunteers to provide relatively smooth processing and to supply food, shelter and transportation.

The outlook for Ukraine's refugees remains unclear as the war and its ramifications unfold.

"What happens after the initial period is, I think, the real question now," Newland said. "That's particularly true if the numbers continue to grow."

Brown said, "It's in flux. World War II was what, six years long? This could become a much bigger issue."

Nasaw's advice to Ukrainian refugees: "The end is not in sight. ... Speak loudly and continuously. Don't let the world forget you're there."

US hospital welcomes first Ukraine child cancer patients

Kimberlee Kruesi

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Four Ukrainian children with cancer and their families arrived Tuesday at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, marking the first hospital in the U.S. to receive patients from Ukraine, officials announced.

According to St. Jude, the families travelled aboard a U.S. government medical transport aircraft from Krakow,

Poland. Some of the children held white unicorn stuffed animals and Ukrainian flags as they walked into the hospital, according to video provided by St. Jude.

"Our promise to children with catastrophic diseases extends around the globe, and we are honored to play a part in helping these families move to safety to continue their children's treatment," St. Jude President and CEO James R. Downing said in a statement.

More than 400 Ukrainian children

with cancer have been evacuated to a clinic in Poland. Doctors are rapidly working to place them in one of some 200 hospitals in 28 countries. Evacuations began immediately after Russia attacked Ukraine on Feb. 24 and is a joint effort of St. Jude, the Polish Society of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology, Poland's Fundacja Herosi (Heroes Foundation), and Tabletochki, a Ukrainian charity that advocates for children

with cancer.

"While there is more work ahead, we are committed to doing as much as we can as fast as swiftly as possible," said Carlos Rodriguez-Galindo, director of St. Jude Global.

The young patients who arrived in Memphis range from nine months to nine years in age. They will receive complex medical care, as well as trauma-informed psychosocial therapy. St. Jude is also developing school curriculum for the patients and their siblings.

INVASION IN UKRAINE

Putin's propaganda bubble targeted

But communicating with Russian people is difficult

Colleen Long, Amanda Seitz and Nomaan Merchant

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The U.S. and Ukraine have knocked back Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to frame the narrative of his brutal war, but they are struggling to get a more accurate view of the Kremlin's invasion in front of the Russian people.

While the Russian military suffers thousands of deaths and fails to capture key cities, Putin is intensifying his two-decade crackdown on information. The Kremlin has shut down Russia's last three independent media outlets, barred major social media platforms, created new laws against journalists who defy its propaganda and insisted on calling the war a "special military operation."

The result is a Russian public with little to no access to any alternative to Putin's own anti-Ukraine, anti-Western narrative. It's a heat shield for Putin against any backlash to the war and Western sanctions that have crippled Russia's economy.

Breaking through Putin's propaganda bubble is a key strategic goal for Ukraine and its Western allies. They have tried a series of actions, overt and subtle, to reach ordinary Russians, from encouraging the use of software that circumvents internet blocks to having government briefings for TikTok influencers. The hope is independent voices still operating in Russia, those from the West, and direct pleas from Ukrainians can convince the masses that they're being lied to about the war next door.

The question is no longer "what we do to stop disinformation," former U.S. ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul said, it's how to promote information inside Russia. "Very hard question," he added.

Among the most important steps, he said, is to "fund Russian independent media working outside of Russia."

The Associated Press spoke to half a dozen current and former officials in the U.S. and Ukraine about the challenge. American officials acknowledged that any direct rebuttals of Russian disinformation could be quickly dismissed by Moscow as American propaganda.

Instead, they said, the Biden administration is trying to foster the flow of outside information and make it easier for ordinary Russians to learn the truth about the war themselves. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy.

Many Western companies have stopped doing business in Russia. Quietly, though, U.S. officials have encouraged internet service providers to stay, calculating that Russians need to have the means to find outside information online. Celebrities already well-known in Russia, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, have used Twitter and Telegram to share messages and videos speaking of the atrocities of the war.

McFaul called the Schwarzenegger bit "brilliant," adding: "Those kinds of pieces, though, should be happening every day."

Ukraine has shaped much of the West's perception of the war with videos and social media posts highlighting Russian attacks on civilians and destruction of Ukrainian neighborhoods. And President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has won admiration around the world for his direct-to-camera speeches that



A crowd gathers around a giant peace sign with the message "Stop Putin's Oil," put up by demonstrators before an EU and NATO summit in Brussels on Tuesday. Protesters on Tuesday called on EU leaders to impose a full ban on Russian fuels and to hold one minute of silence to honor the victims of war. GEERT VANDEN WIJNGAERT/AP

are posted and shared online. Zelenskyy, in his last speech before the invasion pleading for peace, noted, "I know that they won't show my address on Russian TV."

The Biden administration has continued to declassify intelligence findings about what it says are Putin's war plans to undercut his ability to carry them out. The U.S. is also increasing funding for its traditional means of reaching audiences in Eastern Europe, adding \$25 million this month for the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America.

Voice of America posted online instructions on how to access its site using a virtual private network, or VPN, or through other means of circumventing Kremlin barriers. The broadcaster's internal statistics suggest thousands of Russians are using those methods.

And the White House met recently with influencers on TikTok, a meeting that sparked some eye-rolling but that a handful of participants said they found helpful.

"The idea of having a White House press briefing with TikTokers who are sharing news ... it's a brilliant idea," said Kahil Greene, who describes himself on TikTok as a "Gen Z Historian Follow for History and Politics" and has 550,000 followers. "There's an understanding that TikTok is expansive beyond borders. Some of these people have millions of followers that cross outside of the U.S."

But TikTok this month barred new uploads and livestreaming from Russia. In a further crackdown Monday, Russia banned Facebook and Instagram entirely. Twitter, meanwhile, has been difficult for Russians to access. The Kremlin also suspended the BBC Russian service, German broadcaster Deutsche Welle and Latvia-based website Meduza.

za. And, on Tuesday, international news channel Euronews said it had been blocked from broadcasting in Russia.

Some social media platforms and news organizations have worked around the bans and government surveillance, using a privacy-protected "onion" service. Russian users can access a version of Twitter if they download the Tor browser, which allows people to access sites on what is also referred to as the "dark web." Instead of .com, onion sites have a .onion suffix. The Russian authorities have had some success blocking those sites, however, too.

It's hard to measure whether any of those efforts are working, but research done in other nations shows that these type of barriers to information make it just hard enough to deter people from persevering.

"It's not impossible to jump the great firewall," said Shelby Grossman, a research scholar at the Stanford Internet Observatory on Russian disinformation on social media. "But the fact that you have to install a VPN to do it could deter people. These tiny frictions have real effects on people."

Another problem is reaching those who don't want to be reached, which is also an issue for Americans. Millions in the U.S., for example, wrongly believe the 2020 election was stolen despite an untold number of efforts to debunk falsehoods about voter fraud.

It's a misinformation environment that the Kremlin relishes, and has helped promote with influence operations against Russia's adversaries.

Russian state media continues to echo false and unsupported claims about Ukraine's government and alleges that it requires "de-Nazification." It has lied about the Russian military's attacks on civilian targets and its destruction of entire neighborhoods.

Thomas Rid, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and expert on disinformation, noted that the U.S. "doesn't really have a great track record" on countering false narratives.

"The way I would play this is via Ukraine," he said. "It has the proximity, the language skills, the family links. We need to help them first and foremost to win and retain access to information."

Zelenskyy came to the presidency with skills well-suited for an information war. He was a showman who played a president on television and founded a successful production company. Shortly after he took office, Ukraine became the focus of former President Donald Trump's first impeachment, an international story that ended up giving Zelenskyy's team valuable training for global information challenges.

Ukraine also has three decades of history as a former Soviet republic that has long had to defend against Moscow's political influence campaigns and cyberattacks.

"We have way more experience and way more practice," said Igor Novikov, an expert on information tactics who served as a Zelenskyy campaign adviser and remains close to members of the president's inner circle. On some aspects of countering disinformation, Novikov said, "the U.S. is five years behind us."

Novikov said he believes celebrities already respected in Russia, like Schwarzenegger, and people trained on how to talk to their relatives will have more success than sending mass text messages or using other less tailored tactics.

"When you're dealing with somebody that's been dealing with an alternate reality, it's a bit like working to plant a conspiracy theory in a good way," Novikov said. "You need to break the bubble with trust and choice."

FBI sees growing Russian hacker interest in US energy firms

Eric Tucker and Jake Bleiberg

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The FBI is warning that it has seen increased interest by Russian hackers in energy companies since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine, though it is offering no indication that a specific cyberattack is planned.

An FBI advisory obtained by The Associated Press on Tuesday says Russian hackers have scanned at least five energy companies for vulnerabilities and at least 18 other companies in sectors including the defense industrial base and

financial services. The advisory does not identify any of the companies.

Scanning a network for flaws or vulnerabilities is common and does not indicate that an attack is forthcoming, though the activity can be a precursor. Still, the warning by the FBI, dated Friday, underscores the Biden administration's heightened cybersecurity concerns due to Russia's war with Ukraine.

On Monday, the White House said there was "evolving intelligence" indicating that Russia was considering launching cyberattacks against critical infrastructure in the U.S. Anne Neuberger, the White House's deputy na-

tional security adviser for cyber and emerging technologies, expressed frustration at a White House press briefing that some critical infrastructure entities have failed to fix known software flaws that could be exploited by Russian hackers.

Meanwhile, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency convened a call Tuesday with more than 13,000 industry stakeholders to warn about the potential for future cyberattacks and to reinforce the need to act now to protect themselves.

The FBI advisory shares 140 internet protocol, or IP, addresses that it says

have been previously associated with the scanning of critical infrastructure in the U.S. since at least March 2021. That scanning has increased since the start of the war last month, the alert says, "leading to a greater possibility of future intrusions."

The advisory says that though the FBI recognizes that scanning activity is common, the IP addresses are associated with cyber actors who have previously "conducted destructive cyber activity against foreign critical infrastructure." In this instance, the advisory said, the scanning activity "likely indicates early stages of reconnaissance."

Disney workers walk out, make demands

Support sought for LGBTQ employees

Eve Chen

USA TODAY

Disney employees around the country are calling on the company to live up to its expressed ideals when it comes to showing support for LGBTQ employees after The Walt Disney Company's response to what critics have called Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill.

If signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, the Parental Rights in Education bill will restrict classroom discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grades, prohibiting instruction on it through third grade in public schools.

DeSantis said he plans to sign the bill soon and accused Disney of painting false narratives around the legislation.

After initial public silence on the matter, Disney CEO Bob Chapek apologized for not being a "stronger ally in the fight for equal rights" and announced a number of supportive measures, including donations to advocacy groups and reevaluating political giving.

Some employees don't think that's enough. They staged walkouts across Disney properties Tuesday, with a list of demands.

Why are Disney employees protesting?

"We want action," said Nicholas Maldonado, an Orlando-area Disney employee who had always loved working for the company but now won't even watch Disney+.

"Be the fighter that you say you are," he added Tuesday. "I challenge you, Mr. Chapek, that you stand with us."

Chapek said Disney would pause political donations in Florida amid a restructuring of the framework for such giving, but walkout organizers and supporters want the company to permanently cut off donations to lawmakers who backed the bill.

They also want Disney to stop relocating employees to the state and stop construction and investment there until the bill is off the books. Construction is currently underway for two attractions at Walt Disney World, Guardians



Disney CEO Bob Chapek apologized for not being a "stronger ally in the fight for equal rights" for the LGBTQ community. EVE CHEN/USA TODAY

of the Galaxy Cosmic Rewind at Epcot and TRON Lightcycle/Run at Magic Kingdom.

Other demands include outlining spending and plans for content that increases LGBTQ representation.

In an internal memo to employees obtained by USA TODAY, Chapek initially said, "I believe the best way for our company to bring about lasting change is through the inspiring content we produce, the welcoming culture we create, and the diverse community organizations we support."

In another memo sent days later, following the bill's passage, he acknowledged the need to promote good "by telling inclusive stories, but also by standing up for the rights of all."

Who's protesting Disney?

Walt Disney Company employees at Walt Disney World in Florida, Disneyland in California, Disney Cruise Line, ABC, FX, National Geographic, Hulu, Walt Disney Studios, Pixar Animation Studios, Marvel Studios, LucasFilm, 20th Century Fox, Searchlight Pictures and Disney's various other properties and Disney's various other properties were invited to take part in Tuesday's walkout.

Numerous employees took part in smaller walkouts over the past week and spoke out on social media.

On air, ESPN announcers Elle Duncan, Carolyn Peck, Courtney Lyle, Stephanie White and Pam Ward have observed moments of silence live during broadcasts, in solidarity with their colleagues.

Maldonado said he was "incredibly nervous" about protesting, but had to speak up on behalf of his identity and community.

"I want them to hear not just me, but many other LGBTQ cast members that are part of this company," he said. "I cannot be any more proud to be part of the community. ... I hope again I can be proud to be part of The Walt Disney Company."

How has Disney responded?

Without specifically addressing walkouts, a number of Disney brands, like Disney+, ESPN and National Geographic posted supportive statements on social media Tuesday morning.

"We oppose any legislation that infringes on the basic human rights, and stand in solidarity and support our LGBTQIA+ cast, crew, guest and fans who make their voices heard today and every day," Walt Disney World posted in Instagram.

USA TODAY sent multiple requests to Disney for further comment but did not receive a response.

Biden

Continued from Page 1NN

bled its regular troop presence of more than 4,000 U.S. troops. Currently, there are about 10,000 U.S. troops in Poland.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania have also called for a greater NATO or U.S. military presence in recent weeks.

Sullivan suggested that could be coming soon as Biden plans to have talks "on longer term adjustments to NATO force posture on the eastern flank."

"We feel that it is the right place for him to go to be able to see troops, to be able to see humanitarian experts and to be able to meet with a frontline and very vulnerable ally," Sullivan said of Biden's visit to Poland.

Talks on troop adjustments are already underway.

Last week, at NATO's Brussels headquarters, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his counterparts weighed what defenses to set up on the organization's eastern flank, from Estonia in the north through Latvia, Lithuania and Poland down to Bulgaria and Romania on the Black Sea.

The aim is to deter President Vladimir Putin from ordering an invasion of any of the 30 allies; not just for the duration of this war but for the next 5-10 years. Before launching it, Putin had demanded that NATO stop expanding and withdraw its forces from the east. The opposite is happening.

In just the past two months, the U.S. presence in Europe has jumped from about 80,000 troops to about 100,000, which is nearly as many as were there in 1997 when the United States and its NATO allies began an expansion of the alliance that Putin says threatens Russia and must be reversed. By comparison, in 1991, the year the Soviet Union dissolved, the United States had 305,000 troops in Europe, including 224,000 in Germany alone, according to Pentagon records. The number then dropped steadily, reaching 101,000 in 2005 and about 64,000 as recently as 2020.

Biden and NATO have said repeatedly that while the U.S. and NATO will provide weapons and other defensive support to non-NATO member Ukraine, they are determined to avoid any escalation on behalf of Kyiv that risks a broader war with Russia.

Polish leaders have called for a Western peacekeeping mission to intervene in Ukraine, a step that the U.S. and other allies worry could lead to a broadening of the war.

Sullivan added that Biden will also announce joint action on enhancing European energy security and reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas.

Holmes looms over trial of former lover, partner

Balwani depicted as an instrumental accomplice

Michael Liedtke

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Although she wasn't in the courtroom, Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes loomed over the opening day of a trial that will determine whether her jilted lover and former business partner Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani was also her partner in crime.

In opening statements Tuesday, a federal prosecutor depicted Balwani as an instrumental accomplice who helped Holmes pull off a huge scam tied to Theranos' blood-testing technology.

Balwani's lawyer countered by casting Balwani as a savvy and well-meaning executive who poured millions of his own dollars into Theranos because he so fervently believed the Silicon Valley company would revolutionize health care.

Balwani's trial began 2½ months after another jury found Holmes guilty on four counts of investor fraud while acquitting her on four other charges accusing her of duping patients about the effectiveness of Theranos' blood tests. The latest trial was supposed to start last week, but got postponed because someone in the court room had been exposed to COVID-19.

Although Balwani is getting a separate trial on similar criminal charges, it quickly became clear Holmes' specter is likely to loom in the background.

Holmes' name came up repeatedly during federal prosecutor Robert Leach's roughly 50-minute opening statement to the jury, as did her picture on screens placed around the courtroom, including displays in front of Balwani.

"You will see how they were partners in everything, including their crimes,"

Leach said of the romantic and business alliance between Holmes, now 38, and Balwani, 57.

Balwani's lawyer, Stephen Cazares, also made multiple references to Holmes during his 90-minute presentation, but mostly in ways meant to cast Balwani as an already successful entrepreneur who left the company in better shape than when he joined it while providing a desperately needed infusion of cash.

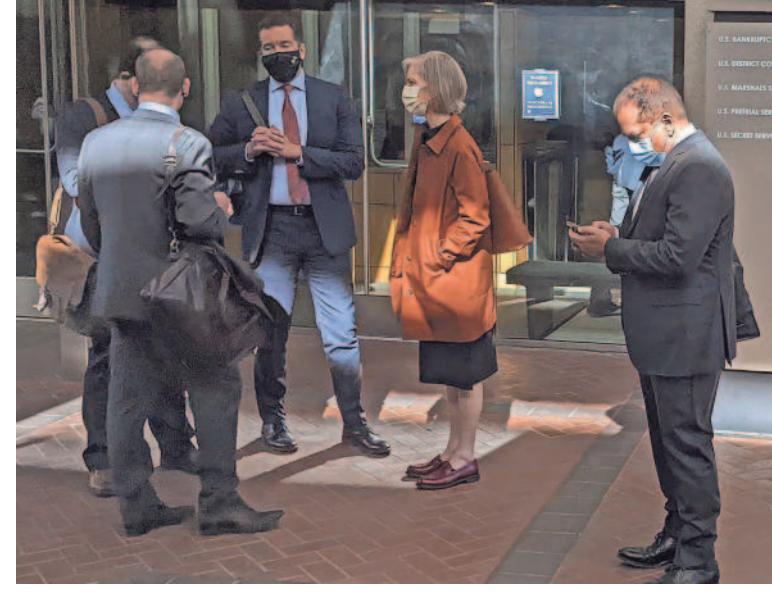
Although Balwani became romantically involved with Holmes around the same time she founded Theranos after dropping out of Stanford University in 2003, Cazares emphasized Balwani didn't begin working at the company until 2009. At that point, Cazares said Balwani he put up \$10 million of his own money to guarantee a loan for Theranos before investing another \$5million to buy a stake in the company. That stake eventually became worth \$500 million on paper.

"Sunny believed in Theranos, its technology and its mission," said Cazares, a former federal prosecutor.

In 2010, Balwani became Theranos' chief operating officer, a job he held until May 2016 when Holmes dumped him amid revelations about serious flaws in a technology that they had boasted could scan for hundreds of potential health problems with just few drops of blood. Those audacious and ultimately bogus claims helped Theranos raise nearly \$1 billion and strike lucrative deals with Walgreens and Safeway before it all unraveled and the company collapsed.

Before Theranos downfall, Holmes was being celebrated as a visionary who was sitting on a personal fortune of \$4.5 billion – nine times more than Balwani's stake in the company.

While Cazares told the jury Balwani got the job at Theranos the because of his past successes, Leach sought to por-



In 2010, Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani, right, became Theranos' chief operating officer, a job he held until May 2016. MICHAEL LIEDTKE/AP, FILE

tray him as someone unqualified to be overseeing a company attempting to develop a medical device.

"What he did have is a connection to Elizabeth Holmes," Leach said of Balwani.

The close relationship between Holmes and Balwani came up frequently during Holmes' trial too, including text messages between the two former lovers. Leach indicated some of those same texts will be submitted as evidence during Balwani's trial. He also telegraphed that many of the same witnesses called to testify against Holmes are likely to resurface in these proceedings.

Holmes' trial also included a dramatic afternoon when she tearfully accused Balwani of being a sometimes domineering figure in her life who subjected her to emotional and sexual abuse. One of Balwani's other attorneys vehemently denied those allegations during Holmes' trial and Cazares urged jury members in the current trial to discard

anything they may have recalled reading or hearing about them.

"The headlines and sensational stories about Elizabeth Holmes have no place in this trial," Cazares said.

Holmes faces up to 20 years in prison, but is free on \$500,000 bail while awaiting her sentencing scheduled for September. That has raised speculation that Holmes might agree to testify against Balwani in exchange for a recommendation of leniency, although that is considered a remote possibility.

Without an appearance by Holmes, Balwani's trial seems unlikely to attract the intense attention of her trial, which lasted from last September to her January conviction. That was evident early Tuesday, with only a few people lined up to get into the courthouse about an hour before it opened.

That was in stark contrast to Holmes' trial, which attracted queues of people lining up more than five hours before the San Jose, California, courthouse opened.

BUSINESS

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE
+254.47 Closing: 34,807.46
 Change: +.7% YTD % Chg: -4.2%

S&P 500 • STANDARD & POOR'S
+50.43 Closing: 4,511.61
 Change: +1.1% YTD % Chg: -5.3%

NASDAQ COMPOSITE
+270.36 Closing: 14,108.82
 Change: +2.0% YTD % Chg: -9.8%

RUSSELL 2000
+22.41 Closing: 2,088.34
 Change: +1.1% YTD % Chg: -7.0%

MARKET PERFORMANCE BY SECTOR

Sector	Close	Chg.	4wk ¹	YTD ¹
Energy	75.57	-0.56	+12.9%	+36.2%
Financials	39.44	+0.63	+1.1%	+1.0%
Utilities	70.91	+0.10	+7.2%	-0.9%
Industrials	103.29	+0.56	+6.1%	-2.4%
Health care	136.49	+0.03	+7.3%	-3.1%
Consumer staples	74.50	+0.55	-1.2%	-3.4%
Materials	86.96	+0.47	+5.2%	-4.0%
Telecom	74.49	+1.51	+1.8%	-9.4%
Consumer discre.	184.55	+4.47	+5.6%	-9.7%
Technology	156.71	+2.22	+3.8%	-9.9%

S&P 500'S BIGGEST GAINERS

Company (ticker)	Price	\$ Chg.	% Chg.	YTD
Tesla Inc (TSLA)	993.98	+72.82	+7.9	-5.9
EPAM Systems (EPAM)	303.54	+19.49	+6.5	-54.6
Moderna Inc (MRNA)	186.72	+11.34	+6.5	-26.5
Align Technology Inc (ALGN)	457.03	+24.56	+5.7	-30.5
Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	53.39	+2.25	+4.4	+11.3

MARKET NOTEBOOK

Issues	NYSE	NASDAQ
Advancing	1,562	2,634
Declining	898	886
Unchanged	59	271
Total	2,519	3,791
Issues at		
New 52 Week High	81	67
New 52 Week Low	47	66
Share Volume		
Total	4,229,409,991	4,693,341,379
Advancing	2,912,830,688	3,790,121,131
Declining	1,284,639,034	875,900,187
Unchanged	31,940,269	27,320,061

S&P 500'S BIGGEST LOSERS

Company (ticker)	Price	\$ Chg.	% Chg.	YTD
Weyerhaeuser (WY)	38.20	-.99	-2.5	-7.2
Mosaic Co (MOS)	65.68	-1.52	-2.3	+67.2
Hess Corp (HES)	101.59	-2.26	-2.2	+37.2
Occidental Petrol (OXY)	59.64	-1.32	-2.2	+105.7
Pfizer Inc (PFE)	53.04	-1.15	-2.1	-10.2

IN BRIEF

Stocks gain ground on Wall Street, oil prices ease lower

Technology companies led a rally for stocks on Wall Street on Tuesday, as the market more than made up for a modest pullback to start the week.

The S&P 500 rose 1.1%, with more than 70% of stocks in the benchmark index notching gains. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.7% and the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite climbed 2%.

The rise in stocks came a day after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said the central bank was prepared to move more aggressively in raising interest rates in its fight against inflation, if it needs to do so.

Powell said the Fed would raise its benchmark short-term interest rate by a half-point at multiple Fed meetings, if necessary.

"Maybe investors are feeling that with the Fed taking more of a proactive approach early on, it won't have to slam on the brakes later," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA.

The S&P 500 rose 50.43 points to 4,511.61, and the Dow gained 254.47 points to 34,807.46. The Nasdaq rose 270.36 points to 14,108.82.

Smaller company stocks also bounced back. The Russell 2000 index added 22.41 points, or 1.1%, to 2,088.34.

General Motors recalls 740K SUVs; headlights are too bright

General Motors is recalling more than 740,000 small SUVs in the U.S. because the headlight beams can be too bright and cause glare for oncoming drivers.

The recall announced Tuesday came after U.S. safety regulators turned down a request from the Detroit automaker to avoid the recall.

The company is recalling GMC Terrain SUVs from the 2010 through 2017 model years. Documents posted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said reflections caused by the headlight housings can illuminate some areas with too much light. The agency said this can reduce visibility for other drivers, increasing the risk of a crash.

"We are still finalizing an actual remedy for the affected vehicles," spokesman Dan Flores said.

GM expects to notify owners by letter starting April 23.

Ford recalls F-150 pickups, SUVs to fix brake fluid leak

Ford is recalling nearly 215,000 pickup trucks and large SUVs in the U.S. and Canada because brake fluid can leak, causing longer stopping distances.

The recall covers the F-150 pickup from 2016 through 2018, as well as Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator SUVs from 2016 and 2017. All have 3.5-liter turbocharged six-cylinder engines.

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in documents released Tuesday that fluid can leak from the brake master cylinder. That can increase brake pedal travel, requiring greater effort and longer stopping distances.

Documents said dealers will replace the master cylinder and front brake booster if needed. Owners are to be notified by letter starting April 25.

From wire reports



BuzzFeed News is unprofitable but has won awards, including its first Pulitzer last year, and its staff has been regularly poached by traditional news organizations. TED SHAFFREY/AP, FILE

BuzzFeed chopping jobs, top editors leaving news division

Tali Arbel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BuzzFeed is shrinking and shifting the focus of its Pulitzer prize-winning news division as the digital media company, best known for its light-hearted lists and quizzes, strives to increase its profitability.

The New York-based company is offering voluntary buyouts in its high-profile, 100-person newsroom and some top editors are leaving. They include Mark Schoofs, the editor in chief of BuzzFeed News, and deputy editor in chief Tom Namako, who announced a move to NBC News Digital on Tuesday. Ariel Kaminer, the executive editor for investigations, is also leaving.

BuzzFeed News is unprofitable but has won awards, including its first Pulitzer last year, and its staff has been regularly poached by traditional news organizations. BuzzFeed spokesman Matt Mittenthal said about 35 people were eligible for the buyouts, but the company doesn't expect all of them to take one.

Buyouts will be offered to news

staffers on the investigations, inequality, politics and science teams, as BuzzFeed focuses more on big breaking news and lighter content.

"We've had freedom to chase wild, impossible stories," tweeted Rosalind Adams, an investigative reporter at BuzzFeed News. "It's a sad day to watch @BuzzFeedNews move away from valuing that work."

Beyond the newsroom buyouts, the company also said it is cutting 1.7% of its staff. In a January filing with securities regulators, BuzzFeed said it had 1,524 U.S. and international employees, so the cuts would amount to roughly 25 people.

BuzzFeed's shares have dropped more than 40% since the company went public in December via what's known as a SPAC, merging with a company that already trades, rather than an IPO.

The company had a solid year in 2021, it reported Tuesday in its earnings release. Its revenue rose 24% to \$397.6 million, thanks to increases in e-commerce and ad revenue, and its profit more than doubled, to \$25.9 million.

But it expects revenue to drop in the

current quarter if it includes the acquisition of Complex Networks, a group of pop culture sites BuzzFeed acquired last year. The layoffs separate from the news division will come from BuzzFeed Video and the editorial side of Complex.

BuzzFeed also acquired HuffPost in early 2021, and laid off several dozen of its staffers shortly after.

On BuzzFeed's earnings call Tuesday, CEO Jonah Peretti said the company is accelerating its investment in vertical video, the smartphone format used on the increasingly popular video sharing site TikTok.

As for the news division, it "will need to get smaller," and "prioritize the areas of coverage our audience connects with most," Peretti said in a memo to employees.

On the earnings call, he said that the company needs to make BuzzFeed News "a stronger financial contributor to the larger business," and doing so will involve focusing on big breaking news, culture and entertainment, celebrities, and "life on the internet."

Shares in BuzzFeed Inc. rose 32 cents, or 6.5%, to close Tuesday at \$5.27.

Seattle Starbucks unionizes in coffee giant's home city

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — Baristas and other employees at a Seattle Starbucks voted to unionize, the first such vote in the city where Starbucks originated and the latest in a nationwide push to organize the coffee shop chain.

The unanimous vote announced Tuesday by the National Labor Relations Board is also an especially symbolic win as Howard Schultz returns as interim chief executive officer, The Seattle Times reported.

The store in the Capitol Hill neighborhood will become the seventh in the country where employees have voted in favor of unionizing with Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union. At least 140 more stores in 27 states filed petitions for union elections.

Starbucks announced March 16 that CEO Kevin Johnson was retiring. The company picked former longtime CEO

Schultz as interim leader until it finds a permanent replacement by this fall. In his previous time with the company, Schultz, 68, successfully fought attempts to unionize Starbucks' U.S. stores and roasting plants.

In a November letter to employees, posted just before the first unionization votes at three stores in Buffalo, New York, Schultz said he tried to create the kind of company that his blue-collar father never had the chance to work for.

He recalled the "traumatic moment" his family had no income after his father suffered a workplace injury, and said that's why Starbucks has benefits like health care, free college tuition, parental leave and stock grants for employees.

Last year, the national labor board found that Starbucks unlawfully retaliated against two Philadelphia baristas who were trying to unionize. The board said Starbucks monitored the employees' social media, unlawfully spied on

their conversations then fired them. It ordered Starbucks to stop interfering with workers' right to organize and offer reinstatement to the two workers.

Last week, the board issued a complaint against Starbucks alleging that district and store managers in Phoenix spied on and threatened workers who supported unionizing. The complaint says Starbucks suspended one union supporter and fired another.

Sydney Durkin, who works at the Seattle store, told the newspaper that in the past these may have been jobs people only stayed in for a few years, but increasingly they are becoming people's livelihood.

"This is a signal for the larger food industry that it is changing and it is building toward something hopefully more sustainable," Durkin said.

"We will respect the process and will bargain in good faith ... We hope that the union does the same," a Starbucks company spokesperson said.

INVASION IN UKRAINE



A couple kisses in downtown Lviv, western Ukraine, Tuesday. BERNAT ARMANGUE/AP

DAY 27

Ukraine war forces more unwanted goodbyes

Tears fell, hands waved and voices uttered unwanted goodbyes again Tuesday as the ceaseless Russian war on Ukraine forced more refugees to flee their homes.

Images captured by photographers for The Associated Press on Day 27 of the conflict reflect the pain and heartbreak of those leaving and those left behind.

In the southern city of Odesa, a woman and her young child, struggling not to break down, look out the window of a departing train as the woman's grandmother, a tissue pressed up against her face, bids them goodbye from the platform. In the western city of Lviv, a bearded man places his hand up to the outside of a train window, while a young child sobs from the other side moments before they are to part from one other.

A woman who has fled Ukraine sits amid throngs of other refugees after arriving at a train station in Poland, her head in her hand and her eyes staring resignedly into space.

For many of the displaced, their first stop inside Ukraine is Lviv, a western city with a rich cultural heritage that so far has remained far from the fighting. Residents of the city have extended a warm welcome to the migrants and encouraged them to become more acquainted with their new home. On Tuesday, the Lviv National Philharmonic presented a live performance by a chorus in the city's downtown. In one of the city's bars hangs a well-used punching bag bearing the face of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Most of the more than 3.5 million refugees fleeing Ukraine have been women and children, because men ages 18 to 60 – fighting age – are forbidden from leaving the country.

One AP photograph from Tuesday shows a camouflage-clad fighter sitting at his post in the hard-hit northeastern city of Kharkiv. A long weapon lies on his lap, and one of his hands rests near the trigger as the other brings a cigarette up to his mouth. Elsewhere in Kharkiv, several fighters can be seen lying in a row of beds with their shoes off and guns set aside, some occupied on their cellphones and others taking naps during a well-deserved break.

Associated Press



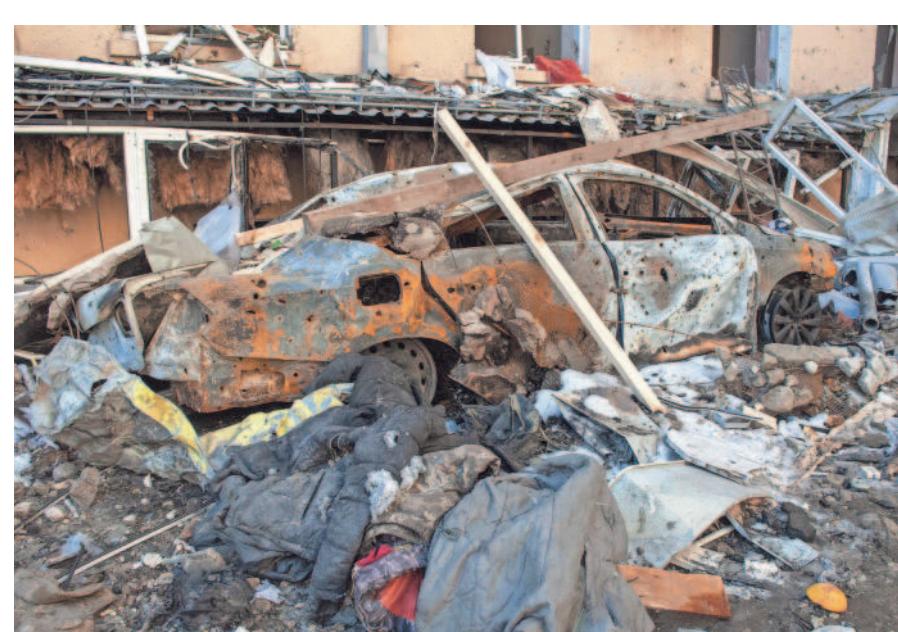
Ukrainian servicemen rest in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. ANDREW MARIENKO/AP



Ludmila, left, says goodbye to her granddaughter Kristina, who with her son Yaric were leaving the train station in Odesa, southern Ukraine, on Tuesday. The U.N. refugee agency says more than 3.5 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion. PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/AP



A boxing bag with a drawing of Russian President Vladimir Putin's face hangs inside a bar in downtown Lviv, western Ukraine, on Tuesday. BERNAT ARMANGUE/AP



A car destroyed by shelling is seen in a street in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. ANDREW MARIENKO/AP

INVASION IN UKRAINE

They pray, but can they unite?

Ukraine, Russia natives in Texas try to keep peace

Andrea Ball

USA TODAY

PLANO, Texas – They came from everywhere. Ukraine. Russia. Uzbekistan. Some spoke in Russian, others English.

But in this North Texas church, they were united as they spoke into a microphone against the Russia-Ukraine war, their shaking voices and heavy sighs echoing across the sanctuary.

I can't describe the pain.

My heart is broken.

This is a nightmare that I can't wake up from.

Pastor Leo Regheta lifted his glasses, wiped his eyes and prayed.

He lived under Soviet rule. He knows the fear.

Since the conflict began Feb. 24, the pastor of River of Life – an evangelical Christian church whose members include native Russians and Ukrainians – has tried to hold his flock together through compassion, comfort and prayer for both nations.

Regheta is also trying to keep peace as political tensions bubble up among his diverse congregation. Several families have left the 100-member church because they didn't like their Ukrainian pastor talking about the war. Others warned him against being too political.

What's happening in River of Life Church mirrors tensions playing out at home and overseas. Russians, Ukrainians and Eastern Europeans struggle to cope with what they see on the news: dead bodies thrown into mass graves, blasted apartment buildings, starving adults and children walking toward borders.

Most fear the decades-gone oppression of Soviet rule will return to Ukraine, stealing personal and religious freedoms. Others echo Russian propaganda that Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to protect nearby Russian republics from Ukrainian aggression.

Regheta tries to walk the line between rallying and ostracizing his congregation.

"I'm torn right now," he said. "I'm trying to be a pastor for everybody."

The fourth-generation pastor refuses to look away from the carnage in his home country. He brands the war "craziness," calls out political propaganda and voices more than a few critical thoughts on Putin.

He has used connections to help people escape his homeland and Russia. His phone constantly rings and dings with calls and texts about the war. He's shepherded donation drives and helped raise money for Ukrainian and Russian refugees. He's hosted three prayer vigils for the war-torn country.

The 47-year-old married father of four children is up at all hours, running on adrenaline to talk to those on the front lines despite the eight-hour time difference.

"He's tired all the time," said Regheta's 17-year-old daughter, Linnea. "He's up all the time. It takes a toll."

When he went to a dentist in early March, his blood pressure was 180/93 – far higher than it had ever been. For the first time in his 12 years as a pastor, he's thinking about taking a sabbatical.

But not now. There's too much to do.

As a child growing up in Berdychiv, Regheta was terrified of the city's administration building.

It was massive, with gray stone, heavy front doors and, worst of all, a 29-foot-tall statue of Vladimir Lenin in front. The architect of the Soviet Union rose up from the red stone, representing everything Regheta feared from the communist regime.

Pain. Violence. Control.

"I think that was the purpose of that thing, with that building with the heavy doors," he said. "It was to make you feel subhuman."

It was the 1980s and Ukraine was a Soviet republic. Regheta's evangelical Christian family was always in danger because of their religion. Their church was shunned and could not rent space for services, so members met in homes.

Neighbors were ordered to call the authorities when the Christians met. The police would break up gatherings, arrest homeowners and heavily fine the rest of the group. Regheta's grandfather and great-grandfather were jailed, he said.

But Regheta loved his homeland. There were huge family gatherings with



Leonid Regheta, Pastor of River of Life Church, prays with his family before a meal at their home in Plano, Texas, on March 12. While Regheta is from Ukraine, his wife, Leanna, second from right, is from Russia. Before their meal, the Reghetas included prayers for Ukrainian and Russian people, asking God to have his order over Eastern Europe.

PHOTOS BY SARA DIGGINS/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN VIA USA TODAY NETWORK



Members of the River of Life Church congregation pray for Amy Kim, who volunteered to travel to Romania to deliver the congregation's donations and work with Ukrainian refugee children. "They need help," said Kim. "I'm willing to go. It's hard to sit on the sidelines."

cabbage rolls and tomato paste, pierogi and cottage cheese; soccer games and tag in the park; walks in the forest to collect flowers and leaves that were dried and sold to pharmacies.

Ultimately, the persecution was too much. When he was 15, Regheta's family fled to the USA as religious refugees.

Regheta said he felt called to return to that part of the world. He went to St. Petersburg for some of his college studies and has done missionary work in Eastern Europe and Russia for almost 25 years. His wife, Leanna, is Russian. His children know both cultures.

Regheta has been back to Ukraine 10 times.

On a trip a few years ago, he and a fellow pastor had lunch in a cafe near the city administration building. Regheta was taken aback.

"Look!" he said. "There's no Lenin!"

He had forgotten the statue was destroyed by a free Ukraine in 2014. His childhood monster was gone.

That wasn't the only surprise. His friend told him that the churches once shunned now partnered with the mayor on social matters and other community issues.

"It was quite a switch," Regheta said.

On Feb. 24, Regheta was scrolling through Facebook on his iPhone, when he stopped short. People posted that they'd seen planes heading from Russia toward Ukraine in the dead of night.

Regheta called his family together to pray. Then he got a text from a friend in Ukraine.

The invasion has started. This is terrible. This is horrific.

Since the war began, more than 3 million people have fled the country, more than half of them running to Poland. The world has largely sided with Ukraine. Countries send money, medical supplies and military aid. They levied sanctions against Russia, and big corporations cut ties with the nation.

Regheta spent the first night of the



Leonid Regheta, pastor of River of Life Church, tells his church that "a scared world needs a fearless church." He has urged the Russian-speaking church to take action through prayer, compassion and donations.

war scouring news sites for updates until 3 a.m. After three hours of sleep, he climbed out of bed and immediately started texting his friends in Russia and Ukraine.

Is it true? What are these explosions? Tell us what's happening.

On the second day of the war, Regheta – who has a full-time job in marketing for a radiology clinic – jumped into action, using his connections to help church members' relatives escape bomb shelters and basements in Ukraine.

On the third day, he wrote a letter to his congregation. He asked members to pray for the end of the war, to rise above politics and to be compassionate to all people, no matter their beliefs. He made it clear that he thought the war was wrong.

"The fact that he is not turning to hate and wants to unite us in the love of Christ – I think that was a very powerful thing to say," said Amy Kim, an American-raised church member who volun-

teers in Romania to help refugees.

Others didn't see it that way. One woman suggested he pray for peace and forgiveness. He said it wasn't time for forgiveness. It was better to help people suffering. She took offense and left the church. So did several others.

Regheta promised his congregation he wouldn't dive deep into politics, with a caveat.

"I will call what is black, black and what is white, white," he said.

Across the country in Manhattan, Pastor Ivan Belets of First Ukrainian Assembly of God works to keep his diverse congregation unified. He has both Russian and Ukrainian natives in his 90-member church. When someone posted a political video on the church chat group, he took it down.

Emotions are high, even for him. Beliefs, raised in western Ukraine, fights to remind himself that not everything Russian is about Putin.

The pastor tries to channel church members' anxiety into prayer and acts of charity. Over a few days, the church raised \$16,000 and works with its contacts in Ukraine to help refugees. He knows people are grieving, and he urges the congregation to take solace in God.

He refuses to ignore the fact that some Russians stand by Putin.

"I don't judge Russians who are convinced in propaganda," Belets said. "But we must challenge denial of the facts."

Regheta stood in front of his congregation and repeated the words of American pastor and author A.W. Tozer: "A scared world needs a fearless church."

This is not the time to be an ostrich, he said in Russian, as a member translated for English speakers wearing an earpiece. Don't stop coming to church. Don't stay home because the war has made things awkward or painful. We need each other. We face a test of faith.

"We want to pray for Russia and the Russians, but mostly we want to pray for the Ukrainians because it is so much worse," he said.

Black is black. White is white.

Across the rented auditorium, members nodded in agreement.

As Regheta spoke, a man slipped through the entrance carrying several gray plastic bags. He placed them in front of the stage near overstuffed suitcases and boxes filled with donated crayons, markers, coloring books, toys and vitamins for children. All would go to child refugees in Romania.

A few minutes later, a woman quietly walked through the same door, dropped off two Trader Joe's paper bags of donations on the floor and left.

Since announcing the donation drive for mothers and children days earlier, the River of Life Church had been flooded with offerings not just from members but from strangers in the community. People showed up at Regheta's house with piles of supplies.

The little church is known for its community outreach. Since the war, its profile has skyrocketed.

"This," Regheta said, placing his hand on a suitcase of donations. "This is our worship to God."

OSCAR CEREMONY



Oscar statuettes will be handed out on Sunday at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. The ceremony is set to begin at 8 p.m. ET and will be broadcast live on ABC. MATT SAYLES/INVISION/AP, FILE

Burning questions before Sunday's Academy Awards

Jake Coyle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK – The Academy Awards have always loved a comeback story. This year, the Oscars are attempting to star in one, too.

On Sunday, the Academy Awards will try to bounce back from a 2021 ceremony that was plagued by pandemic restrictions, a botched ending and record-low ratings. The 94th Academy Awards will return to their usual home, Los Angeles' Dolby Theatre, and be broadcast live on ABC beginning at 8 p.m. EDT. (It's also possible to stream it live on services like Hulu Live TV, YouTubeTV and on ABC.com with provider authentication.)

How much of the Oscars' downturn should be chalked up to COVID-19? How much is it the new normal? These are just some of the questions that hang over an Academy Awards that feels like a crossroads for one of America's most enduring pop-culture institutions, and still the most-watched annual show outside the Super Bowl.

Can the Will Packer-produced awards shrug off the pandemic, reverse years of declining ratings for network TV award shows and coalesce a big-tent event for a fast evolving movie landscape?

Will the Oscars' latest makeover work?

The biggest drama heading into Sunday revolves around a broadcast that has been substantially retooled to stem the ratings slide. As if making up for several host-less years, this time there are three: Amy Schumer, Regina Hall and Wanda Sykes. Will their combined star power move the needle at all?

Facing pressure from ABC, the academy will also first present eight categories – production design, editing, sound, score, makeup and hairstyling, and the three short film awards – before the telecast begins. Clips of their wins and speeches will be edited into the show. Critics throughout the industry, though, have lined up to decry the change. The largest union representing behind-the-scenes workers, IATSE, on Monday called the decision detrimental to the "fundamental purpose" of the Oscars.

So what will Packer do with the extra time? Beyoncé and Billie Eilish will

Can the Will Packer-produced awards shrug off the pandemic, reverse years of declining ratings for network TV award shows and coalesce a big-tent event for a fast evolving movie landscape?

reportedly perform their nominated songs. An eclectic group of presenters has also been announced, including some unexpected names like DJ Khaled, Tony Hawk, Sean "Diddy" Combs and Shaun White – so this could finally be the year that Judi Dench learns how to perform a "McTwist."

Will a streamer take home best picture?

The two favorites both hail from streaming services, which have never won best picture. The lead nominee, Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog," up for 12 awards, had long been the presumed frontrunner, and possibly Netflix's best chance yet to win Hollywood's top award. But after back-to-back wins with the Screen Actors Guild and the Producers Guild, Sian Heder's deaf family drama "CODA" may have the edge. The film's deep-pocketed backer, Apple TV+, has spent big to push a feel-good underdog indie to the front of the pack. If "CODA" wins, it will be the first time since 1932's "Grand Hotel" that a film with fewer than four nominations ("CODA" has three) took best picture. Some predictions this year have been wildly off, though, so other nominees like Kenneth Branagh's "Belfast" could still pull off an upset.

How much will COVID drag down the party?

Last year's Oscars decamped to Union Station for an intimate show with a small number of attendees and lots of social distancing. This year, a full stage show and red carpet is planned, albeit with uneven COVID-19 protocols. Attendees are required to submit two negative tests and proof of vaccination. Those presenting or performing don't have to be vaccinated but need recent negative tests. Masks will be in the mix, too, for attendees sitting outside the orchestra at the Dolby and for media on the red carpet. After numerous attendees contracted the virus after attending the March 13 BAFTAs in London, several nominees have been

quarantining, including Branagh and "Belfast" co-star Ciarán Hinds. With infection and hospitalization rates way down, Los Angeles County is set to lift many virus restrictions for indoor events on April 1, five days after the Oscars.

Will Will Smith win his first Oscar?

Nominated twice before for best actor (for "Ali" and "The Pursuit of Happiness"), Will Smith appears a lock to win his first Academy Award. Smith's performance as Richard Williams, father to Venus and Serena, in "King Richard" has remained the most likely choice throughout the season. And the speech by the exuberant 53-year-old star should be one of the most lively of the night. A win, though, will have to come over some formidable competition – including the actor who bested Smith's "Ali" performance 20 years ago: Denzel Washington, a winner then for "Training Day" and a threat this time for "The Tragedy of Macbeth."

Who's set to make history?

Many of the top awards could feature some major milestones. Ari Wegner, cinematographer of "The Power of Dog," may become the first woman to ever win that award. Her director, Jane Campion, is also poised to make history. Campion, the first women ever nominated twice for best director, is set to become only the third woman to win the category. It would mark the first time the directing award has ever gone to women in back-to-back years, after "Nomadland" filmmaker Chloé Zhao won last year.

Troy Kotsur of "CODA" is in line to be the first deaf male actor to win an Oscar. His widely expected win would make him and his "CODA" co-star Marlee Matlin the only deaf actors to land Academy Awards. And supporting actress, which Ariana DeBose seemingly has sown up for her breakthrough role in Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story," may see the first Afro-Latina and openly LGBTQ actor win in the category. A win for DeBose would come 60 years after Rita Moreno won for the same role, Anita, in the 1961 original. That would be the third time that two actors have won for playing the same role, following Heath Ledger and Joaquin Phoenix as the Joker, and Marlon Brando and Robert DeNiro as Vito Corleone. But we'll have to wait and see if DeBose's "West Side Story" co-star Rachel Zegler is there to cheer her on.

Nygard to face US extradition after Canada case completed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORONTO – Canadian fashion mogul Peter Nygard is set to be extradited to the United States to face sex-related charges there, but only once his criminal case in Canada is completed.

Federal Justice Minister David Lametti said he issued an order to that effect Tuesday.

"It is important that our Canadian legal process is completed so that all parties, including victims, have an opportunity to see justice served," he said in a tweet.

Nygard, 80, was first arrested in Winnipeg in 2020 under the Extradition Act after being charged with nine sex-related counts in New York.

Authorities in the U.S. allege he used his position in the fashion industry to lure women and girls.

The extradition request from the U.S. laid out allegations from seven complainants who are expected to testify at his trial in that country.

The complainants allege they were coerced into having sex with Nygard through financial means or physical force.

Nygard, who has denied the allegations through his lawyer, had agreed to be extradited to the U.S. to face a charge of sex trafficking.

The former head of a multimillion-dollar clothing company also faces a class-action lawsuit in the U.S. involving 57 women with similar allegations.

Last fall, Nygard was also charged in Toronto with six counts of sexual assault and three counts of forcible confinement in alleged incidents dating back to the late 1980s and mid-2000s. He has denied those allegations as well.

Earlier this year, a Toronto court rejected his bid to be released on bail. The evidence and reasons presented in court are under a publication ban.

Nygard was previously denied bail in the extradition case, meaning he would not have been released even if he received bail in Toronto, according to the federal Department of Justice.

Calif. governor signs law making abortions cheaper

Adam Beam

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a new law on Tuesday that will make abortions cheaper for people on private insurance plans, the first of more than a dozen bills the state's Democratic leaders plan to pass this year to prepare for a potential U.S. Supreme Court ruling that could overturn Roe v. Wade.

The new conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court is weighing whether to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 ruling that banned states from outlawing abortion.

If they do, at least 26 states are likely to either ban abortion outright or severely limit access, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization that supports abortion rights.

That would force lots of women to travel to other states to get abortions, prompting Democratic-led states like California to propose and pass new laws to prepare for them.

Last week, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a law aimed at banning legal action against people who aid or receive an abortion, a measure responding to a law in Texas that lets people sue abortion providers or those who assist them.

Oregon lawmakers included \$15 million in their state budget to help pay for people to travel to the state to get abortions.

Sheeran awaits verdict over copyright court battle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

An 11-day trial over the copyright of Ed Sheeran's hit song "Shape of You" concluded in London on Tuesday, with the judge saying he would take some time to consider his ruling.

The British pop star and his co-writers, Snow Patrol's John McDaid and producer Steven McCutcheon, deny accusations that the 2017 song copies part of a 2015 song called "Oh Why" by Sami

Chokri, who performs under the name Sami Switch.

Lawyer Andrew Sutcliffe, representing the "Oh Why" co-writers, argued there was an "indisputable similarity between the works" and suggested the chances of two songs that "correlate" appearing within months of each other was "minutely small."

The lawyer claimed that Sheeran had "Oh Why" "consciously or unconsciously in his head" when "Shape of You" was

written in 2016. He also alleged that Sheeran, who attended the hearing throughout, was dishonest and evasive in giving evidence to the trial.

Sheeran and his co-writers say they have disclosed material to the trial and do not remember hearing "Oh Why" before the court case. Justice Antony Zarcari said Tuesday he would deliver his judgment "as soon as I can."

"Shape of You" was the biggest selling song in the U.K. in 2017.



Musician Ed Sheeran arrives at the Rolls Building, High Court in central London on Tuesday. FRANK AUGSTEIN/AP

Supreme Court weighs representation in NC voting rights case

Bart Jansen
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Who represents a state?

That's the question the Supreme Court grappled with Monday in a case about whether Republican North Carolina lawmakers should be able to help the Democratic attorney general defend a contentious voting law in federal court.

The case could set a new framework for who represents the state when a law is challenged in federal court while the legislative and executive branches are controlled by different parties.

Several justices sounded reluctant to prevent the lawmakers from lending a hand. Chief Justice John Roberts said it would be tough for federal judges to pick who gets to argue the different sides in highly political cases, such as this one involving voting rights.

"That's a pretty difficult, eyebrow-raising thing for a federal court to do, when you have a political controversy with two different entities, each one having the right to intervene under state law," Roberts said. "I don't see federal courts doing that as a general matter. If we do ask them to do that, that's putting them in an intensely political position."

The case is one of several in which somebody sought to intervene in the challenge of a controversial law or policy.

Other cases involved a Kentucky ban on an abortion procedure and a Trump administration policy to deny permanent residency to immigrants who receive benefits such as rental assistance or food stamps.

The 2018 North Carolina law at stake deals with voting regulations, which enacted an identification requirement, expanded the number of partisan poll observers and expanded grounds to challenge a voter's ballot.

Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed the bill, but the Republican-led Legislature overrode his veto. The Supreme Court case involves Republican legislative leaders – Sen. Philip Berger and House Speaker Timothy Moore – arguing they should be allowed to help defend the law because of suspicions Cooper and Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein wouldn't defend it effectively.

David Thompson, a lawyer for the lawmakers, said they have an interest in simply defending the law, while the executive branch must also consider how it will be administered. Thompson noted that Cooper called the law "unconstitutional" and said it "should never go into effect."

"Gov. Cooper has been an implacable

foe of this law," Thompson said. "He would not be an adequate representative."

The lawmakers claim a North Carolina law designates legislative leaders to defend laws in certain cases. When a state law is challenged in federal court, the statute calls for "both the legislative branch and the executive branch of the State of North Carolina to participate in any such action as a party."

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor asked how the legislative and executive interest in law were different. Associate Justice Elena Kagan asked whether opening the door to two lawmakers could also open the door to all 170 in the state.

"Doesn't the executive branch represent the state writ large?" Kagan asked.

The North Carolina Conference of the NAACP sued the state to halt enforcement of the law. The NAACP argued the law discriminated against Black and Latino voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

But the Supreme Court case isn't about the NAACP claims or the merits of the case, just about who will be arguing on behalf of the state.

Associate Justice Samuel Alito asked what lawmakers should do if the attorney general assigned a junior lawyer to the case or declined to spend money on the case.

"What if at some point, the attorney general says, 'Look, this is costing too much, we should settle,'" Alito said.

Elisabeth Theodore, a lawyer representing the NAACP, opposed allowing the lawmakers to intervene because the attorney general is already defending the case – and is winning in early skirmishes. She said allowing lawmakers to intervene would complicate lawsuits and raise costs substantially.

"This case is the poster child for why federal law puts a thumb on the scale against intervention," Theodore said. "There is just no need for intervention here."

Sarah Boyce, deputy attorney general for North Carolina, said her office was defending the law vigorously. She said that if the court rules that lawmakers can join the case, it should be after a court decision rather than happen automatically.

"Petitioners have identified no daylight between their legal position and ours," Boyce said. "Their evidence is duplicative with our evidence. And we have prevailed in litigation thus far, and are confident we will ultimately prevail through final judgment."

The high court is expected to rule on the case by June.

Ukraine

Continued from Page 1NN

Explosions and bursts of gunfire shook Kyiv, and heavy artillery fire could be heard from the northwest, where Russia has sought to encircle and capture several of the capital's suburban areas.

Early Tuesday, Ukrainian troops drove Russian forces from the Kyiv suburb of Makariv after a fierce battle, Ukraine's Defense Ministry said. The regained territory allowed Ukrainian forces to retake control of a key highway and block Russian troops from surrounding Kyiv from the northwest.

A video posted by Ukrainian police showed them surveying damage in Makariv, including to the town's police station, which an officer says took a direct hit to its roof.

The police drove by destroyed residential buildings and along a road pocked by shelling. The town appeared all but deserted.

Still, the Defense Ministry said Russian forces partially took other northwest suburbs, Bucha, Hostomel and Irpin, some of which have been under attack almost since Russia invaded nearly a month ago.

A Western official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military assessments, said Ukrainian resistance has brought much of Russia's advance to a halt but has not sent Moscow's forces into retreat.

"We have seen indications that the Ukrainians are going a bit more on the offensive now," Kirby told reporters separately in Washington. He said that was particularly true in southern Ukraine, including near Kherson, where "they have tried to regain territory."

Asked on CNN what Russian Presi-

dent Vladimir Putin had achieved in Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Well, first of all, not yet. He hasn't achieved yet." But he insisted that the military operation was going "strictly in accordance with the plans and purposes that were established before-hand."

Putin's aims remain to "get rid of the military potential of Ukraine" and to "ensure that Ukraine changes from an anti-Russian center to a neutral country," Peskov said.

Russia's far stronger, bigger military has many Western military experts warning against overconfidence in Ukraine's long-term odds. Russia's practice in past wars in Chechnya and Syria was to grind down resistance with strikes that flattened cities, killed countless civilians and sent millions fleeing.

But Russian forces appeared unprepared and have often performed badly against Ukrainian resistance. The U.S. estimates Russia has lost a bit more than 10 percent of the overall combat capability it had at the start of the fight, including troops and tanks and other materiel.

Western officials say Russian forces are facing serious shortages of food, fuel and cold weather gear, leaving some soldiers suffering from frostbite.

The invasion has driven more than 10 million people from their homes, almost a quarter of Ukraine's population, according to the United Nations.

Thousands of civilians are believed to have died. Estimates of Russian military casualties vary widely, but even conservative figures by Western officials are in the low thousands.

On Monday, Russia's pro-Kremlin Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, citing the Defense Ministry, reported that almost 10,000 Russian soldiers had been killed. The report was quickly re-

EXPLAINER

What is known about the China Eastern plane crash?

ASSOCIATED PRESS

and Ethiopia.

BEIJING – The crash of a Boeing 737-800 passenger jet in China's southwest started a fire big enough to be seen from space and forced rescuers to search a rugged, remote mountainside.

One day after the China Eastern Airlines flight plunged from the sky, there were more questions than answers.

What caused the crash?

The cause is unknown. Flight 5735 was at 29,000 feet on Monday afternoon when it went into a dive about an hour into its flight, according to flight-tracking website FlightRadar24.com.

The plane plunged to 7,400 feet before regaining about 1,200 feet (360 meters), then dived again. It crashed into the side of a mountain in a remote, forested area outside the city of Wuzhou.

State media and Chinese regulators gave no indication the pilot reported trouble or other information that might shed light on the cause of the disaster. The plane stopped transmitting data 96 seconds after it started to fall.

Rescue workers planned to use drones in the search for the plane's black boxes, which should contain information from instruments and sound from the cockpit.

Confirming the cause of a plane crash sometimes takes months or years due to the need to gather badly damaged debris and examine specialized technical factors.

Did anyone survive?

The plane was carrying 123 passengers and nine crew members from the city of Kunming in China's southwest to Guangzhou, an export hub in the southeast.

No survivors have been found as rescuers search the rugged, charred mountainside in the semitropical Guangxi region.

No foreigners are believed to have been on board. Two Chinese companies said their employees were on the flight, including the CFO of Guangzhou-based Dinglong Culture Co. whose interests range from mining to TV and movie production.

Is this the same Boeing model involved in earlier crashes?

No. The plane that crashed Monday was a Boeing 737-800, not the Boeing 737 Max, a newer model that was temporarily grounded worldwide following two deadly crashes in Indonesia

and has an excellent safety record, said Hassan Shahidi, president of the Flight Safety Foundation. They have been involved in 22 accidents that damaged the planes beyond repair and killed 612 people. Boeing NG or Next Generation 737s, including the 737-800, have flown more than 116 million flights.

In 2019, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration ordered inspections of 38 Boeing 737 NG planes, including 737-800s, because of cracks found in a part that connects wings to the fuselage. The FAA did not ground the planes.

After this week's crash, China Eastern grounded all of its 737-800s, China's Transport Ministry said.

Boeing 737 Max jets, which first flew in 2017, were grounded after crashes in 2018 and 2019. In each case, flight-control software pushed the nose down shortly after takeoff, and pilots couldn't regain control. That software is not on 737-800s.

Airlines were allowed to resume using the 737 Max after Boeing redesigned the system in a process overseen by regulators from the United States, Europe, China and the Middle East.

What will investigation look like?

China will lead the investigation, which will include a representative from the U.S. crash investigator, called the National Transportation Safety Board, plus representatives from Boeing and CFM, the General Electric-Safran joint venture that made the engines on this plane.

Key to the investigation is recovering the so-called black boxes – they are usually painted orange for visibility, but the longtime name has stuck. One device, called the flight data recorder, captures information about the plane's airspeed, altitude, direction up or down, pilot actions, and performance of all key systems. The cockpit voice recorder captures sounds including conversations and background engine noise during the flight.

moved, and the newspaper blamed hackers. The Kremlin refused to comment. The Western official said the figure is "a reasonable estimate."

Putin's troops are facing unexpected stiff resistance that has left the bulk of Moscow's ground forces miles from the center of Kyiv, and they are making slow progress on apparent efforts to cut off fighters in eastern Ukraine. The Russians are increasingly concentrating their air power and artillery on Ukraine's cities and civilians.

Talks to end the fighting have continued by video. Zelenskyy said negotiations with Russia are going "step by step, but they are going forward."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he saw progress in the talks.

"From my outreach with various actors, elements of diplomatic progress are coming into view on several key issues," and the gains are enough to end hostilities now, he said. He gave no details.

The Western official, though, said that there were no signs Moscow was ready to compromise.

In the last update from Mariupol officials, they said March 15 that at least 2,300 people had died in the siege. Accounts from the city suggest the true toll is much higher, with bodies lying uncollected. Airstrikes over the past week destroyed a theater and an art school where many civilians were taking shelter.

Zelenskyy, in his address, said more than 7,000 people were evacuated from Mariupol on Tuesday. But about 100,000 remain in the city "in inhuman conditions, under a full blockade, without food, without water, without medicine and under constant shelling, under constant bombardment," he said.

Before the war, 430,000 people lived in Mariupol.

Like Zelenskyy, the Red Cross said a

humanitarian aid convoy trying to reach the city with desperately needed supplies had not been able to enter.

Perched on the Sea of Azov, Mariupol is a crucial port for Ukraine and lies along a stretch of territory between Russia and Crimea. The siege has cut the city off from the sea and allowed Russia to establish a land corridor to Crimea.

But it's not clear how much of the city Russia holds, with fleeing residents saying fighting continues street by street.

A senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to give the Pentagon's assessment, said Russian ships in the Sea of Azov have now joined in the shelling of Mariupol. The official said there were about seven Russian ships in that area, including a minesweeper and a couple of landing vessels.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said that troops defending the city had destroyed a Russian patrol boat and electronic warfare complex.

Those who have made it out of Mariupol told of a devastated city.

"They bombed us for the past 20 days," said 39-year-old Viktoriya Totzen, who fled into Poland. "During the last five days the planes were flying over us every five seconds and dropped bombs everywhere – on residential buildings, kindergartens, art schools, everywhere."

Beyond the terrible human toll, the war has shaken the post-Cold War global security consensus, imperiled the world supply of key crops and raised worries it could set off a nuclear accident.

As part of a series of addresses to foreign legislatures, Zelenskyy urged Italian lawmakers to strengthen sanctions against Moscow, noting many wealthy Russians have homes in the country.

"Don't be a resort for murderers," he said from Kyiv.