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CALGARY HERALD

A BABY LION'S WILD STORY

Cub reunited with family after rescue C1





DEVICES GET STRONGER

Wearable tech market grows B1

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026 PROUDLY CALGARY SINCE 1883 POSTMEDIA



Members of Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick, including Madawaska Maliseet First Nation Chief Patricia Bernard, right, are waiting to learn if the top court will hear the title claim appeal. Wolastoqey's lawyers, led by Renée Pelletier, left, argue the case raises issues of national importance. *PHOTOS: JOHN CHILIBECK*

SUPREME COURT SET TO WEIGH IN ON HUGE INDIGENOUS TITLE CLAIM

Justices must decide whether to hear case affecting private property in more than half of N.B.'s territory

JOHN CHILIBECK

The clock began ticking April 7 on what could be one of the most important Supreme Court of Canada cases in New Brunswick's history.

That's the date the country's top court told several law firms involved in the Wolastoqey Nation's landmark title claim it would determine if it would allow "leave for appeal."

Sitting before the black-silk robed justices are eight submitted legal briefs, filed between February and April.

"Leave for appeal" is legal-speak for when the court determines if an appeal should be allowed for a lower court ruling. In this case, there's a lot at stake, more than half of New Brunswick's territory, its western portion and then some.

On one side are First Nations who say they want land restored that was rightfully theirs after colonial doublecrossers stole it.

On the other are logging firms and other private property owners who say they're caught in the middle of a three-centuries-old fight that had nothing to do with them.

The Indigenous nation that includes six Indigenous communities in the St. John River Valley wants the Supreme Court to overturn a New Brunswick Court of Appeal decision last December.

That ruling found the nation would have no chance of success in its lawsuit proving that it has Aboriginal title over privately held lands, including the vast holdings of logging companies in the area, most notably industrial giants J.D. Irving and Acadian Timber, and the smaller sawmill firm H.J. Crabbe and Sons.

Instead, the three justices ruled that the federal and provincial governments, or the Crown (a term that goes back to British colonial times), could be held liable for giving away Indigenous land unfairly, leaving so-called innocent parties alone and free to do what they want with the land that they own according to private property rights, or fee-simple law.

By the Court of Appeal's measure, the Wolastoqey Nation could sue governments for compensation but would have no means to take back control of most of their old territory, now largely in the hands of loggers.

"The New Brunswick Court of Appeal decision that limits our title claim to Crown land is an injustice and stands in sharp contrast to how courts in Ontario and British Columbia are deciding these cases," said Allan Polchies, the chief of Sitansisk or St. Mary's First Nation in Fredericton, in a recent statement released to Postmedia News.

Polchies leads one of the biggest Indigenous communities in the province, home to about 2,000 registered members.

"It doesn't make any sense for First Nations in New Brunswick to have more limited rights than elsewhere in Canada. We look forward to the Supreme Court of Canada setting the law straight."

There have been other Aboriginal title claims in Canada, most notably in British Columbia. The Wolastoqey Nation argues by hearing its case, the Supreme Court could help resolve arguments in those other lawsuits.

The Wolastoqey Nation's lawyers, led by Renée Pelletier of OKT law firm, argue the appeal should be granted, given the case raises issues of national and public importance.

They want the top court to determine two fundamental questions that they say will affect title claims across Canada.

Can Aboriginal title exist over privately held lands?

SEE CLAIM ON A2



Lawyers for the Wolastoqey Nation say by hearing the appeal, the top court could help resolve other title claims.

NEWS

'MEANS OF SURVIVAL'

Street pantries and dumpster diving have become lifelines for many British Columbia families combating high food prices

SARAH GROCHOWSKI

VANCOUVER Across B.C., community food networks — including online food-sharing groups, curbside community pantries, and dumpster-diving meetups — are expanding, as households turn to alternative ways to keep food on the table as costs rise.

In Chilliwack, a free store built on Facebook exchanges and community donations has become a vital lifeline for thousands of families, as soaring grocery prices push more residents to seek help just to get by.

"Right now, demand is extremely high," said Raylene Mumford, who founded the Free Store group in 2019.

What began with Mumford posting her own leftovers in a Facebook group has grown into a wide-reaching community network where Chilliwack residents share surplus food or request what they need. It has now expanded into a physical storefront.

"Items are being claimed much faster than before, and postings go quickly," she said. "It's a contagion of community efforts to try and rescue each other from what's happening right now."

That pressure is part of a broader affordability crunch across B.C.

Recent data from Statistics Canada shows a sharp rise in food prices over the past five years, with ground beef, olive oil, coffee and infant formula all increasing by at least half.

In February 2021, the average price of beef ribs in Canada was $24.85 a kilogram. This February, it was $33.44. Ground beef, a cheaper option, rose to $17.20 from $10. Meatless burgers increased to $7.86 from $5.43.

Foods produced in B.C., such as chicken and dairy, have also become more expensive, as have imported items. Olive oil rose to $11.57 a litre from $7.40 in 2021. Coffee increased to $9.91 for 340 grams from $5.95, while orange juice went to $6.47 for two litres from $3.97. Infant formula saw a steep jump from $29.83 to $50.08 for 500 g.

In a report published last year, Living Wage B.C. found food costs are 28 per cent higher than in 2019, with one in five people now facing food insecurity, and food bank use up 81 per cent. At the same time, Mumford said demand within the Free Store network has continued to climb.

Now connected to more than 13,700 people online, Mumford said the group keeps working as locals keep giving one another a hand up by posting items, donating and responding when someone asks for help.

"I have three children. I understand how quickly life can become overwhelming when the cost of food, rent, gas and household basics keeps rising," said Mumford.

Today, the Free Store supports about 4,700 families and 748 seniors who have signed up for help through the Facebook group, operating entirely by volunteers. It distributes nearly $800,000 in supplies annually.



Donors answer the call for donations at the Free Store in Chilliwack, which is built on Facebook exchanges and community donations and has become a vital lifeline for thousands of families. RAYLENE MUMFORD

"Donations are still coming in, and we are deeply grateful, but the need is moving faster and people are coming forward at a more desperate level," Mumford said. "Even half bags of food or small amounts of supplies are being picked up because people are trying to stretch everything they have."

In North Vancouver, Brendan Olsen set up a free food pantry in March after noticing growing financial pressure in his community. The small wooden box tucked behind garden boxes on a quiet street is drawing attention from residents struggling with rising costs.

"I didn't want anyone to get left behind," Olsen told Postmedia. "There's so much need here."

Funded initially through a GoFundMe campaign that raised about $790, Olsen stocked it in a single Costco trip with essentials, including soups and pasta.

"North Vancouver is the second-most expensive place to buy groceries in the province," he said. "You have to commute off the North Shore to find cheaper groceries."

The pantry is now sustained by community donations, with residents taking and restocking items. In its early weeks, Olsen said, it took time for people to begin using it regularly.

"I put books on the top shelf of the pantry," he said, noting that the books were meant to make the space feel more normal and less shameful.

Olsen said the pantry has changed the rhythm of the street, with increased foot traffic as more locals discover it.

"It's a destination now," he said.

Vancouver's Paddy Sullivan says interest in his group, which salvages food from dumpsters, has grown as more people look for ways to cut grocery costs. He runs a Facebook group called Dumpster Diving in Metro Vancouver, which now has close to 3,000 members and holds regular meetups in supermarket parking lots, where anywhere from five to 25 people gather.

On a typical week, Sullivan's family suits up in gloves and spends about four hours visiting a dozen sites across the region, from North Surrey through Delta, Richmond and Burnaby, searching dumpsters for packaged food, including cheese, bread, flour, rice and sauces.

"For frozen food, we know we need to grab it before it thaws, and we never touch raw meat," he said, adding that most items are near their best-before dates, already expired, or can't be sold in bulk because a single jar or package in a flat or box has been opened or damaged.

At the group's meetups, participants gather around Sullivan's truck as he distributes whatever his family has recovered from behind wholesale food importers.

"Most of what we find is in bulk, so we get to give it away as we won't be using that much," he said. "The reality of dumpster diving is that on some runs you don't come back with much. During others, you see flats of yogurt being thrown away right in front of your eyes."

Sullivan recalls that at a recent gathering, one woman reacted to about 50 bottles of virgin olive oil salvaged from a local dumpster.

"This hasn't expired yet. Why would anyone throw this out?" she asked him.

More people looking to ease pressure on their food budgets have attended group meetups this year.

"Some people, like us, use dumpster diving for food items as a supplement, freeing their family up to be able to afford other things. Others are resorting to it as a means of survival."

'Now is the time for this court to address the issue'

CLAIM FROM A1

Or, quoting the presiding judge in the Court of Appeal decision, is it "plain and obvious" that any claim seeking a declaration of Aboriginal title over privately held fee-simple land is bound to fail?

The Wolastoqey legal team says in their application the potential harm caused by the lower court ruling can't be overstated.

"It means that Indigenous peoples are permanently displaced from fee-simple land. Only this court can decide whether that outcome is correct. Now is the time for this court to address the issue, given that the decision of the court below is demonstratively at odds with how courts in other provinces have chosen to reconcile Aboriginal title and fee simple rights."

They say the confusion created by these different approaches will inevitably impact litigation and reconciliatory negotiations across large swaths of the country, wherever governments have sold Indigenous lands without their say so.

Canada has more than 600 First Nations.

Several interveners have applied in support of the Wolastoqey, including Elsipogtog, New Brunswick's biggest Indigenous First Nation an hour's drive north of Moncton, and eight other Mi'kmaq communities on the province's eastern side. They have their own Aboriginal title claims making their way through the courts.

JDI, which has hired a big legal team to bolster its case, argues in its brief that the Wolastoqey Nation's case isn't the right one for the Supreme Court to hear.

Instead, the firm's lawyers, led by experienced litigator Paul Steep of McCarthy Tétrault in Toronto, say it would make more sense for the top court to wait until the Cowichan Tribes case in Richmond, B.C., and others come before the nine justices.

The Cowichan case is already under appeal to the B.C. Court of Appeal, after a lower court last year gave the First Nation Aboriginal title over some of Canada's most expensive private property, worth more than $2 billion, including a port terminal, airport jet fuel facilities, several other businesses and residential properties, all on Lulu Island in the city just south of Vancouver.

The decision after the longest trial in Canadian history created shock waves in British Columbia, with private property owners howling they could be robbed.

B.C. Premier David Eby has promised to fight it all the way on behalf of private owners.

The JDI lawyers argue the Wolastoqey Nation's case is still in its early days, and the decision of the New Brunswick Court of Appeal was a procedural ruling before a full-throated defence had even been mounted.

They say it's much too soon for the Supreme Court to weigh in on the merits of the Aboriginal title claim.

"The issue that Wola-stoqey Nation seeks to raise — specifically whether Aboriginal title can exist over privately held lands — was not decided by the Court of Appeal," they wrote in their legal brief, adding the Dec. 11 judgment "was a simple exercise of error correction by a provincial appellate court, applying uncontroversial principles of procedural fairness."

Legal experts say the Supreme Court normally takes between one or two months to decide whether it will hear a case in the "leave for appeal" process.

However, depending on how complicated or controversial the topic is, it can take longer. A screening panel of three of the nine justices on the court will determine if the case should be heard or not.

They typically don't give reasons for the decision.

If the appeal goes ahead, the full Supreme Court could hear the case as early as this fall or more likely next year.

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NOTE TO READERS

Due to a production schedule change, the weather map was not available for this edition.

AN EDITION OF NP in the CALGARY HERALD

> "I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO GAUGE WHETHER I WOULD ACCEPT WITHOUT ... TOO MANY QUESTIONS. WHICH I DID — I LET THINGS STAY VAGUE SO I WOULDN'T COME ACROSS AS DIFFICULT. — *JULIETTE G.*



MARTIN BUREAU / AFP

Jeffrey Epstein died in custody in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges involving minors.

Ex-model accuses French scout of grooming her

SHE SAYS EPSTEIN TOOK HER PASSPORT IN NEW YORK

Clara Wright
in Paris, France

Former French model Juliette G. says it took her years to make sense of how she ended up in a New York bedroom with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The 43-year-old is one of two ex-models who have accused Daniel Siad, a French modelling scout with close ties to the late U.S. financier, of having groomed them with the aim of introducing them to potential abusers.

Their stories come as part of a wider reckoning with rape and sexual assault in the wake of the global MeToo movement in recent years that has seen a number of accusations in France and beyond.

"I identified quite a few stages that led me there," Juliette told AFP.

"These men, through manipulation, conduct tests to see how far a young woman will give in."

For Juliette, who has asked to withhold her surname to protect her privacy, it all started in 2004, when she was 21.

Siad — who denies the accusations against him — approached her in a Paris avenue. She calls this the "targeting" stage.

He asked her if she was a model and if she would be interested in "professional opportunities" in the United States.

"I think he was trying to gauge whether I would accept without asking too many questions. Which I did — I let things stay vague so I wouldn't come across as difficult," she said.

She was soon sent a plane ticket to New York and an address in the city. She had no other information, but she felt reassured when her modelling agency said they knew Siad.

In New York, she headed to an address on Madison Avenue, where she briefly met Epstein, whose name Siad had not mentioned until then.

The financier would be convicted in 2008 of soliciting sex from girls as young as 14.

'IN HIS DEBT'

Epstein asked for her passport.

This, she explained, was the second stage of her grooming — "hostage taking." Without her passport, she could not leave.



Juliette G.



Ebba Karlsson

Epstein then announced he did not have time to see her that day, but gave her $120 and said she could use his limousine to go shopping.

This, she said, was the third step. Now, despite never having asked for money, she was "in his debt."

"I was ashamed for a long time. Years later, I even thought about paying him back," she added.

The following day, she returned to the Madison Avenue building, hoping for a professional interview.

Instead, he showed her around the premises, walking through a gym decorated with "photos zooming in on women's intimate body parts."

"Was it a subtle test of tolerance?" she said. "To see whether I would leave or accept being in such a surprising environment?"

Then he led her to a bedroom.

"My internal alarm went off," she said.

"I felt the need to say, 'I'm warning you, I'm not going to do anything.' "

She said he told her not to worry, but that he needed to see her body — including her breasts — to be able to recommend her to modelling agencies.

"I hesitated, but I'd just spent seven hours on a plane and they'd paid for my ticket ... I did it," she said.

'GET BACK INTO SHAPE'

Epstein groped her, she said, then declared her body was not up to standard and she would need three months to "get back into shape."

He said that if she needed money, he could set her up to work as a party "escort."

Juliette pretended to mull the offer, but demanded he give her back her passport. She said he rummaged around in a pile of "some 20 passports" and returned it to her.

Juliette escaped.

Epstein died in custody in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges involving minors.

But Juliette said she was speaking out to help investigators looking for the convicted offender's accomplices.

Siad, who is under investigation in France, is just one of several French men who have been accused of aiding Epstein to traffic and abuse women.

French authorities in late 2020 arrested modelling agent Jean-Luc Brunel after allegations he procured women for the U.S. billionaire. He was found dead in prison in 2022.

And 15 women in March urged France to investigate Gerald Marie, the former European head of Elite, a modelling agency known for managing supermodels Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer and Cindy Crawford.

Among them, former Swedish model Ebba Karlsson has accused Siad of grooming her for Marie.

'YOU COULD GO SO FAR'

Karlsson, now 56, said Siad approached her in Sweden in 1990. She was 20 years old.

"He was very talented," she said, describing how he would push a person to see how vulnerable they were.

"He would attach to their desires, their longings, and portray himself as some kind of saviour," she said, promising he could make them "a very famous model."

"And they were hooked," she said.

Karlsson said she followed Siad to Monaco and then to France, but the modelling jobs he had promised never materialized. Without money, she "became more and more dependent on him."

Karlsson said that one evening, in a pool house near Cannes, Siad raped her.

In the days that followed, she said, he announced he had found her a job with Elite.

Siad, via his lawyer Menya Arab-Tigrine, rejected the accusations. She said she hoped her client was not being made to "bear responsibility, because he is still alive, for the actions of other men who have died."

Karlsson then met Marie in his office to discuss working for Elite.

"Why is he closing the blinds?" she said she thought.

He flattered her.

"You're so beautiful," she said he told her. "You could go so far," she said he added, introducing the idea of her starring in a movie.

Then suddenly "he put his fingers into me," she said.

"It was to remove my power," she added.

Karlsson said she later attended an audition at his home, where she was one among "about 10 girls" — most appearing younger and speaking little English or French — to be told to parade braless.

She pretended to accept the job, but flew back to Sweden and never returned.

Marie's lawyer Celine Bekerman denounced what she called "unfounded attacks" against her client.

She said a rape probe against Marie had been dropped in 2023. She accused Karlsson and other plaintiffs of choosing to ignore this and establish "far-fetched links between Gerald Marie and cases he has nothing to do with."

Karlsson said she was speaking up about the grooming and abuse so "we can stop that behaviour and teach young people" how to avoid it.

AFP

FORMER RUSSIAN INSIDER SAYS FEAR PUSHED ELITES TO EMBRACE PUTIN WAR

Anna Smolchenko

PARIS, FRANCE • Fear and distrust took hold in Moscow soon after Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Some officials and businesspeople started removing their smartwatches ahead of sensitive meetings, fearing possible surveillance or eavesdropping by security services, or leaving their cellphones in briefcases.

"The level of paranoia people are forced to live under is such that they are essentially afraid even to think — let alone to speak," Alexandra Prokopenko, a former Russian central bank official, said in an interview in Paris.

"It's fear of an absolutely paranoid, Stalinist kind."

Prokopenko, a former insider and the author of a recent book about the Russian elites, said some officials resorted to unorthodox methods to protect themselves against listening devices.

One young deputy minister was so afraid of surveillance that he sat on his phone during a meeting in a chic café in 2022.

When it rang, he blushed — the muffled ringtone came from under his backside.

He pulled out the iPhone, glanced at the screen, muttered, "In a meeting," silenced the device and sat back on it again, according to Prokopenko's book, whose English-language edition will be published later this year.

From Sovereigns to Servants. How the War Against Ukraine Reshaped Russia's Elite is based on in-depth interviews with Russian officials and businesspeople, and examines how elites embraced and enabled Putin's war despite their initial shock.

'NOT AN IDIOT'

Prokopenko, 40, served as an adviser to the first deputy chairman of the central bank before the invasion.

Before that, she was a member of the tight-knit Kremlin press pool, including for Vedomosti, a then respected business newspaper, for nearly a decade until she lost her accreditation in 2017 as Moscow began tightening the screws.

She granted all sources anonymity to allow them to speak candidly.

Few believed Putin would invade Ukraine despite troops massing on the border.

"The old man is of course a psycho, but not an idiot," Prokopenko quoted one source as saying.

The start of the war came as a shock, with Putin undoing decades of efforts to create a Western-style market economy in Russia.

"Thousands of people spent decades building businesses," one critical voice was quoted as saying. "Putin tore everything apart in just a few months."

Early on, unsuccessful attempts were made to persuade Putin to stop the hostilities, but soon after the elites embraced the war.

Igor Shuvalov, previously seen as a top liberal government figure, was among the first to support the war.

The chairman of state development bank VEB showed up at a birthday party wearing a T-shirt featuring the letter Z, a symbol of Moscow's invasion, according to Prokopenko's account.

She said none of the people she spoke with supported the war, but none risked saying so publicly.

"It won't change anything and it won't help anyone," she quoted a source as saying. "And besides, it's scary."

While some, like Prokopenko, resigned and left the country, there were no mass resignations in the state sector. Some officials were placed under sanctions, while others did not want to lose their cushy jobs and felt their expertise was needed at a critical time for Russia.

'SYCOPHANTS AND FLUNKIES'

According to Prokopenko, members of the elite do not see themselves as responsible for "the catastrophe in the country brought about by Putinism". But they also lack agency to enact change.

Fearful for their assets, freedom and life, they have become "sycophants and flunkies, attuned to the autocrat's moods."

Prokopenko said the upper classes were tired of the conflict, uncertainty and repression.

"Everyone very much wants the war to end," she said.

Perceptions of Putin have shifted.

Whereas many referred to him as the "boss" in earlier years, the 73-year-old Kremlin chief, who has been in power since 2000, is now called the "old man."

"Putin has massively mortgaged the future," she said.

Prokopenko said elites were "deeply resentful toward the West" and reviving ties with Moscow after Putin would not be easy.

"The chances of democratic, liberal change are not very high," she said.

Prokopenko left Russia in March 2022. She went to Kazakhstan and then Serbia before arriving in Germany where she now studies Russian government policy-making at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre.

In 2025, Moscow declared her a "foreign agent," a label reserved for Kremlin critics.

Prokopenko said she cannot visit Russia but has no regrets.

"For me, the war became a transformative event," she said. "It brought about a major crisis of self-identity."

AFP



LUCIAN PERKINS / THE WASHINGTON POST

President Boris Yeltsin, left, resigned from office Dec. 31, 1999, and was replaced by his hand-picked successor Vladimir Putin, who pulled Russia back from the West.

> NO ONE CAN PENALIZE ME FOR SHOWING MY ... LIFE. TO SAY THAT I WENT THROUGH 30 HOURS WITHOUT POWER ISN'T A LIE; IT'S THE REALITY I'M LIVING. TO SAY I EARN $20 A MONTH, WHICH ISN'T ENOUGH FOR ANYTHING, ISN'T A LIE. — *RACHELY CARMENATES, DOCTOR IN CUBA*



YAMIL LAGE / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

As Cuba suffers through its worst crisis in decades due to the U.S. embargo on fuel, a growing cohort of young mothers is turning to TikTok and Instagram to document the harsh realities of their day-to-day lives. While they avoid talking politics, the reels and videos give them a way "to raise our voices" and maybe make a little money, says one influencer.

CUBA'S MOM INFLUENCERS SHARE RARE VIEW OF STRUGGLES UNDER U.S. FUEL EMBARGO

Social media offers chance to 'show our reality'

SAMANTHA SCHMIDT

Another morning arrived without power, and without phone reception, but Ana still had about 15 per cent of phone battery left from the night before. In her nightdress, with the curtains still closed, she got out of bed and began to record.

The young Cuban mother recorded video as she drank her coffee. She had brewed it the night before and kept it in a Thermos so she wouldn't need to fire up her coal- and wood-burning stove first thing in the morning. She recorded — in five-second clips, to conserve battery — as she swept the tile floor of her modest kitchen, in her small town.

"I live in Cuba, and this is how my morning began," Ana said. "Without electricity, but with enthusiasm." She would eventually edit the video and post it on her Instagram account once the power came back hours later. Ana spoke on the condition that her last name be withheld for fear of retaliation.

U.S. President Donald Trump's effective embargo on fuel to Cuba has plunged the island into its worst crisis in decades. Cubans are suffering recurring power outages in a fuel shortage that has stilled transportation, suspended trash collection and required hospitals to ration care.

But under a Communist government that tightly controls international media's access to the country, only a trickle of journalists have been able to show the realities of life on the ground. Restrictions on phone data and some social media platforms add to the challenges of posting online from the island of 10 million people.

Ana is part of a growing cohort of women on Instagram and TikTok who are breaking through all of that, using VPNs and help from contacts abroad to provide a rare, unmoderated window into daily life in Cuba. They avoid talking politics or placing blame for the blackouts. But by speaking — relatively — freely for thousands or tens of thousands of followers, they are showing the power of individual Cubans to reach the outside world from an island that was, until recent years, cut off from it.

A mother shows how she cooks potato stew over a coal stove on weekends when the electricity arrives for a total of only three hours and "the days are dark, with lots of smoke." A hairdresser gives a balayage colour treatment during a power cut, her salon chair on the street, washing and reusing tin foil because it's so hard to find on the island. Mileydi Barrionuevo shows her followers how to use coal to clean and polish pots left "as black as the heart of your ex" after the last national electric grid collapse.

Many of these women became content creators only in the past few months, during the island's energy crisis. Rachely Carmenates, a 24-year-old doctor, began in early March with a video showing how she got ready to work a 24-hour shift after 30 hours at home without power. The video has been viewed more than two million times; the new medical resident has more than 71,000 followers.

While it's difficult to monetize social media accounts in Cuba, she's received donations from followers, which she said she gives to the infants she cares for in her job. The appeal of her videos, Carmenates said, is how normal they are. Rather than selling brands and an aesthetically pleasing lifestyle, like other influencers, she's showing the everyday challenges of the average Cuban woman. She once received criticism for applying MAC foundation in a video. A follower asked her how, if she was struggling financially, she could afford luxury makeup. The powder, Carmenates said, was clearly a knock-off, purchased in Cuba.

As her following grows, Carmenates said, she understands the need to be careful about what she says and how she says it. But Carmenates doesn't want to sugar-coat her struggles.

"No one can penalize me for showing my day-to-day life," she said. "To say that I went through 30 hours without power isn't a lie; it's the reality I'm living. To say I earn $20 a month, which isn't enough for anything, isn't a lie."

Cuba is one of the world's final frontiers for access to social media. After years in which internet access was mostly limited to the government elite and vetted professionals, Cuba in 2018 and 2019 began rolling out a 3G mobile telephone service. This access to social media played a key role, in 2021, in the spread of the largest antigovernment protests in decades in Cuba.

In the years since those protests, regular Cubans have gone from becoming content consumers to creators, said Norges Rodríguez of YucaByte, a Miami-based website on Cuban affairs. Now, months into their worst crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union deprived Havana of its most important patron, Cubans are dealing with "accumulated fatigue, the lack of possibilities to leave and the hope that something could happen" to the government.

The government this year arrested two young men who created a popular YouTube channel, El4tico — meaning "the little room" — on which they openly criticized the government.

The women posting reels about their daily lives don't appear to have an overt political agenda.

"That may not matter that much," said Ted Henken, a professor of sociology and anthropology at Baruch College in New York who follows Cuba closely. "If they are unfiltered and showing the reality, it can easily become political. All it takes is for them to go on camera asking who's to blame."

Ana grew up in the eastern village of Birán, the birthplace of Fidel and Raúl Castro, where her father was a vegetable farmer. She was a teenager when Cubans began getting better internet access on their phones. It wasn't until about a year ago that she was able, with help from friends, to buy a Chinese Xiaomi Redmi phone to access social media accounts.

She studied nursing but didn't think a career in the field made sense — the wages for medical professionals in Cuba are simply too low to make ends meet. After the birth of her son, she was looking for new ways she might make money. She came across La Flor Cubana, a Cuban influencer who said she had made $1 million in sales on TikTok.

Ana began posting videos on Instagram last year. She tried promoting a few products — supplements and purses — but it cost too much money for her to pay for the free products to be shipped to Cuba. She's made a bit of money on Facebook, and recently used a VPN to create a TikTok, where she hopes she might earn more easily.

"It's also a way to raise our voices and show our reality, because here, well, reality is a bit difficult, and you can't always express things the way they are," she said by phone during a brief window of connectivity. Posting videos, she said, allows her to vent alongside other problem-solving Cuban mothers who are often forced to find creative solutions to the daily challenges of life without power or fuel.

In one of her videos, Ana shows her followers how she took advantage of the moment when "the culprit, my friend, the current" returned to her home. The power was back on, and she couldn't waste a minute.

"I washed, organized, did everything all at once," she said. "Because here, you can't wait for things to be perfect to get ahead."

The Washington Post

Tourism in Jordan's ancient city craters, Mideast war to blame

MUSSA HATTAR

PETRA, JORDAN • Ukrainian tourist Ruslana Novak and her friend had Jordan's ancient city of Petra almost entirely to themselves as they marvelled at the massive edifice carved into pink sandstone.

Since the Middle East war erupted in late February, the famed Rose City has been all but abandoned by the usual crowds of tourists that flock to the site every year.

"Of course, we heard about the war ... It is not a problem because I am from Ukraine, and we know about war," Novak, an insurance agent, told AFP under a blazing sun.

"This country is surrounded by countries that have war, but Jordan is ... very calm," she said, describing it as safe and beautiful.

Nearby, Mexican tourist Constanza Venian said she was delighted to avoid the usual crowds at the UNESCO World Heritage site: "I was lucky I chose the right time."

Yet she had considered cancelling her trip after Israel and the United States launched their strikes against Iran, plunging the region into conflict.

"I was afraid in the beginning, but I was reading about Jordan and entered Facebook groups and asked questions ... Everyone said Jordan is safe," the 33-year-old said.

At the site's entrance, Khalid al-Saidat and his fellow souvenir sellers killed time in front of their stalls, cigarettes dangling from their lips. The donkeys and horses usually popular with tourists also stood idle.

The site embodied "the collapse of tourism" in Jordan, the 36-year-old shop owner told AFP.

While "the war in Gaza had led to an 80 to 90 per cent drop in tourism," the Iran conflict reduced the number of foreign visitors to "almost zero," Saidat said.

"We open every day without knowing whether we'll earn enough to live on."

According to official figures, tourism accounts for 14 per cent of Jordan's gross domestic product (GDP), with 60,000 people directly employed in the sector.

Last year, more than seven million visitors generated C$10.6 billion in revenues.

Beyond Petra, Jordan is home to many major sites, including the Dead Sea and the famed archeological site of Jerash.

The year had begun well, "with 112,000 foreign visitors in the first two months, which is very good," said Adnan al-Sawair, chairman of the board of commissioners of the Petra tourism authority.

But everything changed with the war, which Sawair said had an immediate effect: the number of visitors to Petra in March and April dropped to between 28,000 and 30,000.

The wave of cancellations has even led some hotels to consider closing.

The authorities have launched a scheme to boost local tourism, but its impact remained "negligible," Sawair said.

The situation is no different in Jerash, around 50 kilometres north of Amman.

"We were hoping for the best season since 2020, after the pandemic, but there's no tourism anymore," said local guide Amer Nizami.

Some 5,000 foreign visitors used to flock to the site every day, the 47-year-old said. Today, they can be counted on one hand.

A guide usually "does at least two tours a day during a good season. The last time I did a paid tour in Jerash was about 20 days ago," he added.

With every regional crisis, "tourism stops here, even though Jordan doesn't have any problems," Nizami said.

Since the beginning of the war, drone and missile debris has fallen on the kingdom, which does not host any foreign military bases but does have limited contingents from several countries under collective defence and co-operation agreements.

Given the lack of customers, souvenir seller Ibrahim al-Atmeh decided to pack up his wares earlier than usual.

"We were hoping for an excellent spring season, but ... our hopes are gone," the 31-year-old said.

AFP

> THE TREATMENT IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THE VACCINE. IT'S THE BEST BANG FOR YOUR PUBLIC-HEALTH BUCK — THIS IS FOR PEOPLE THAT COULDN'T BE VACCINATED.
>
> *— ERICA OLLMANN SAPHIRE, LA JOLLA INSTITUTE FOR IMMUNOLOGY*



TONY CALDWELL /POSTMEDIA NEWS

Dropping vaccination rates have sparked large measles outbreaks in multiple American states and parts of Canada.

As measles roars back, scientists find antibodies that could offer protection

CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

Using the blood of a 56-year-old woman vaccinated against measles, scientists have isolated a fighting force of four potent virus-blocking antibodies that could pave the way toward a treatment for people exposed to the highly contagious respiratory disease making a comeback in the United States and parts of Canada.

A safe, highly effective vaccine for measles has been available since the 1960s, and the U.S. officially eliminated the disease in 2000, with sporadic cases and outbreaks. But dropping vaccination rates have sparked large outbreaks in multiple states, and the country is edging closer to the virus spreading freely again, which puts more people at risk.

New ways to block or treat measles would be particularly important for people who are immunocompromised and babies under the age of 1, because they are not eligible for the vaccine, leaving them unprotected amid a growing number of cases.

"Measles was a problem that was solved. Until it wasn't solved anymore," said Erica Ollmann Saphire, president of the La Jolla Institute for Immunology who led the study published Thursday in the journal Cell Host & Microbe. But she and other scientists stressed that this approach was not a substitute for a vaccine.

"The treatment is always going to be more expensive than the vaccine. It's the best bang for your public-health buck — this is for people that couldn't be vaccinated," Saphire said.

The new work is a basic science study. In rodents, the experimental antibodies knocked down the amount of virus in their lungs when given one to two days after infection. If further testing and refinement show the approach is safe and effective in people, it could be used after exposure — analogous to giving antivenin after someone has been bitten by a venomous snake, Saphire said, or as a preventive therapy similar to the RSV antibody used to protect babies.

Today, when scientists want to create countermeasures against a new virus, they deploy an arsenal of sophisticated tools to decode the 3D shape of the proteins that viruses carry on their surface. Those surface proteins can act like homing devices and molecular crowbars that allow viruses to break into cells.

Scientists also study the structure of antibodies generated by the immune system to block those viral proteins, to help them design vaccines or lab-generated antibody drugs called monoclonal antibodies.

Saphire had focused on using these tools against emerging threats such as Ebola and Lassa fever, but she also became fascinated by what scientists still did not know about measles. For decades, scientists had no need to do this basic science. The measles vaccine is a live, weakened strain of the virus that is remarkably effective at teaching people's immune systems how to defend against a real infection.

Saphire and colleagues searched in the blood of a vaccinated person and found dozens of antibodies that stuck to two different proteins crucial for measles infection — the H protein that allows the virus to latch on to cells, and the F protein that helps it fuse to cells.

The F protein is a spring-loaded molecule that morphs its shape once it receives a signal from the H protein to help the virus invade a cell. They selected four extremely potent candidates that target both proteins — two that lock the F into one shape, and two others that bind to the H protein to block its ability to latch on to cells.

Roberto Cattaneo, a biochemist who has studied measles virus for 40 years and was not involved in the new study, said that a detailed understanding of the virus has been lacking in part because of the existence of a highly effective vaccine.

"It's wonderful to know how it works. It may be relevant for emerging viruses. I find it very interesting because I've worked on measles for decades now, and this is all quite impressive — the detail in which we can now sort out how the entry of the virus (into cells) works," Cattaneo said.

But because the measles virus makes copies of itself inside lymph nodes and transmits from cell-to-cell, he said there could be challenges in finding ways to deliver a lab-generated antibody so that it blocks infection.

The Washington Post

'Super El Nino' raises fears for Asia reeling from Middle East conflict

MAY, JULY FORECAST

SARA HUSSEIN

BANGKOK • Already reeling from the effects of conflict in the Middle East, Asia is now facing the prospect of strong El Nino conditions that could spike energy demand, sap hydropower, and damage crops.

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure, and rainfall patterns.

Recently, the United Nations' weather and climate agency said El Nino conditions could develop as soon as May to July.

The World Meteorological Organization, meanwhile, said early signs indicated the event could be particularly strong, with some dubbing the impending event a "super El Nino," although the term is not used by scientists.

That is not good news for Asia, parts of which are traditionally heavily affected by the heat waves, drought and heavy rains that El Nino can bring.

The phenomenon essentially shifts traditional weather patterns around, for example moving rain that normally falls over Indonesia out to sea, leaving the country vulnerable to drought and wildfires.

El Nino occurs around every two to seven years and is forecast based on sea temperatures.

"The subsurface anomaly that we're seeing so far is pretty strong," said Peter van Rensch, a climate scientist at Australia's Monash University.

"It does look a little bit like what we saw in the 1997/98 event, and that was probably the strongest El Nino," he told AFP.

There are still plenty of uncertainties, and van Rensch cautioned it was possible an El Nino might not develop at all.

But the 1997 El Nino brought catastrophic impacts, including extreme drought and devastating wildfires in Indonesia that burned through millions of hectares and created regional air pollution.

Authorities there have already identified peatlands at risk, and warned the country could see its lowest rainfall in 30 years.

The warnings come with Asia buckling under the strain of an energy supply crunch and fears over shortages of fertilizer and other industrial and agricultural components which pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has effectively closed the strategic waterway since the United States and Israel launched attacks on the country on Feb. 28, disrupting global fuel supplies.

Hotter weather will strain energy grids already experiencing fuel shortages, as populations seek to cool homes and workplaces, warned Haneea Isaad, energy finance specialist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

"For countries that are highly dependent on the Strait of Hormuz for oil and gas deliveries and other trade, strained supply will lead to further fuel rationing, demand-side management and a reduction in economic activities ... impacting overall GDP growth," she told AFP.



ARIF ALI / AFP FILE

Farmers already facing high fertilizer and fuel costs could face drought or floods caused by El Nino.

The droughts that El Nino can bring to parts of the region also pose a threat to countries that are highly dependent on hydropower, said Dinita Setyawati, senior energy analyst for Asia at the Ember think tank.

"Most ASEAN countries use a lot of hydropower," she warned, highlighting Mekong countries, Nepal, and parts of Malaysia as particularly vulnerable because of their dependence on the sector.

The risks were laid bare in 2022, when a heat wave in China saw hydropower generation in Sichuan fall over 50 per cent, creating shortages that affected households and industry alike.

Hotter, drier conditions will also create fresh risks for agriculture, already under pressure as the ongoing conflict raises the costs of fertilizer and fuel needed for farming equipment.

"If crop prices do not rise enough to offset these higher input and shipping costs, producer margins will be squeezed, raising the likelihood of lower fertilizer application and weaker yields," warned BMI, a unit of the Fitch Solutions research company.

"This would intensify food price inflation and worsen food insecurity, especially in import-dependent and climate-vulnerable markets."

For some parts of Asia, an El Nino can bring bouts of intense rain and provoke flooding, which could impact sectors like southern China's late-season rice harvest, added Isaad.

AFP

Mysterious, tiny world could have atmosphere

6B KM FROM EARTH

DANIEL LAWLER

PARIS, FRANCE • A tiny, little-known world beyond Pluto appears to have an atmosphere, Japanese astronomers say, defying what had been thought possible for icy objects in our cosmic backyard. If confirmed, the roughly 500-kilometre-wide rock would become just the second world past Neptune in our solar system to host an atmosphere — after only Pluto itself.

Formerly classified as a planet, Pluto was demoted to dwarf planet status in 2006, in part because astronomers were discovering other similar objects in a distant region called the Kuiper Belt.

While NASA has floated the idea of restoring Pluto's planet status, the discovery of another atmosphere nearby could undermine the argument for its reinstatement.

For the new discovery, Japanese researchers and an amateur astronomer pointed their telescopes at an object with the unwieldy name of (612533) 2002 XV93.

The icy world is nearly 40 times further from the sun than Earth — or roughly six billion kilometres away.

These dark objects can only be seen when they pass in front of a distant star.

When this happened in January 2024, the astronomers observed that the starlight did not immediately reappear, suggesting a thin atmosphere was filtering some of the light.

They estimate that the world has an atmosphere five million to 10 million times thinner than Earth's, according to a new study in Nature Astronomy.

"This is important because, until now, Pluto was the only trans-Neptunian object with a confirmed atmosphere," lead study author Ko Arimatsu of the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan told AFP.

Such small worlds had not been thought capable of hosting an atmosphere.

"This discovery therefore challenges the conventional view that small icy worlds in the outer solar system are mostly inactive and unchanging," he added.

The researchers could not say for sure what created the atmosphere, which is nowhere near thick enough to support life.

But they suggested it could have been made by gas being shot out from the world's interior by erupting ice volcanoes.

Or it could have been kicked up by a comet smashing into the world, which would mean it will gradually disappear.

Jose-Luis Ortiz, a Spanish astronomer not involved in the research who studies dwarf planets beyond Neptune, said the results were interesting, but urged caution.

"I still doubt that it is an atmosphere. We need more data," he told AFP.

An alternative explanation for the observations could be that the object has a ring close to its body, Ortiz said.

The astronomer called for further observations to reveal more about this strange world — particularly with the James Webb space telescope.

AFP

FINANCIAL POST

FP

financialpost.com

SWITCHING TO BIOGAS IN DR CONGO. *PAGE NP5*

ROLLING OUT

EUROPE'S FIRST COMMERCIAL ROBOTAXI SERVICE IS PICKING UP PASSENGERS IN CROATIA. *PAGE NP5*



CANADA'S BUSINESS VOICE, MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026



PEDRO PARDO / AFP

Chinese factory workers are worried about their jobs as the manufacturing industry faces higher costs for raw materials and shipping due to the Middle East war. The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz has choked Asia's oil supply.

INDUSTRY

IRAN WAR JOLTS CHINA'S WELL-OILED FACTORIES

MANUFACTURING HIT HARD AS PRICES OF PLASTIC, COPPER AND OTHER RAW MATERIALS BALLOON

Mary Yang and Tommy Wang
in Foshan, China

Vacuum cleaners and vapes could get more expensive if the Iran war drags on for much longer, Chinese factory owners and traders warn, as the world's manufacturing hub reels from "crazy" costs.

Weeks of U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz have choked Asia's oil supply, stymieing the production of plastic — derived from oil — across the region.

Manufacturing giant China has been comparatively sheltered from fuel shortages thanks to oil reserves and renewable energy, but local factories are picking up a ballooning raw materials bill.

"Basically, we've been losing money on all our orders," said Bryant Chen, a manager at vacuum cleaner factory RIMOO in southern Guangdong province's Foshan.

The price of plastic has risen roughly 50 per cent since before the Iran war, Chen told AFP as workers behind him fastened suction tubes to metal tanks.

"The costs of the products that we are making are being very greatly affected," the 42-year-old said, listing plastic, copper for the vacuum's motor and raw materials in its power cords.

"Typically at this time we'd be entering peak season, but compared to the same period previously, shipment and production data aren't very optimistic."

Two hours away, plastic traders in storage hub Zhangmutou said price fluctuations were the worst they've seen in decades.

"It has never been this crazy," said Li Dong, 46, who entered the industry two decades ago.

The plastic, rice-sized pellets he buys for local phone case and EV battery factories jumped wildly in March, triggering days of panic that jammed the small town's roads as factories rushed to stock up.

'MUTUAL STATE OF DECLINE'

Exporters in Zhangmutou showed AFP a vast range of products their pellets would become, including drones and badminton birdies.

One trader sifted through pink, green and purple beads that she said would be moulded into e-cigarette casings sold in the Middle East.

The Iran war has hit plastic production even harder than bottlenecks caused by the COVID pandemic, when ships could not come and go from China, Li said.

Some sellers cashed in on the plastic panic, he added, fighting to take advantage of surging costs.

Li said the price of plastic had dropped around 10 to 20 per cent from its height, but he cautioned against further oil holdups.

"The factories we supply to will suffer the most because their direct costs will rise," he said.

For exporters, the Middle East crisis has added to the hangover still lingering from Donald Trump's sweeping global tariffs last year.

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down those levies as illegal, but tolls on Chinese goods entering the U.S. still sit at around 20 per cent.

On the outskirts of Guangzhou, one garment factory owner lamented the chaos triggered by the U.S. president's trade war.

Overseas clients are afraid to place orders, while Chinese manufacturers cannot pin down changing costs.

"As a result, everyone is in a mutual state of decline," garment boss Zhou, 55, said.

While 80 per cent of his clients have returned, the fabrics scattered on his factory floor made into sweatpants headed for Europe and North America have risen 10 to 20 per cent in cost due to the Middle East war.

As overseas orders dropped, seamsters went months without a job.

'TENSIONS RISE, ORDERS DISAPPEAR'

Migrant worker Jingjing returned to her hometown in Hubei province for two months, where she made half the 400 yuan (C$80) she now earns in Guangzhou's garment factories.

"When tensions rise ... orders suddenly disappear," the 42-year-old said.

But this year she said she always has something to do.

In a damp back alley, Jingjing joined jobseekers milling about leisurely, haggling for higher wages while garment bosses perched on scooters brandished hiring signs, desperate for day labourers.

Chen, the vacuum factory manager, said he was "still worried" about surging shipping costs should the Iran war drag on: "If shipping costs rise, it will cause the final costs for our customers to increase sharply."

They "will have no way to sell normally, because the costs are just too high".

Chen said RIMOO plans to expand to other markets beyond the Middle East where around 60 per cent of its customers are based.

"We are still optimistic," he said. "The market demand still exists."

But analysts warn the war's impact on costs will be felt for months.

"The problem is all of these costs will filter through the supply chains for the rest of the year," said supply chain consultant Cameron Johnson.

"The longer it goes on, that kind of cascades into much bigger problems, particularly if there's not enough oil in general to run stuff."

AFP

"BEFORE, I USED TO BUY ONE BAG OF CHARCOAL FOR A MONTH. (WITH) THE RISE IN THE PRICE OF A SACK OF CHARCOAL, GAS IS LESS EXPENSIVE HERE. — ROMAINE KANYERE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

TELECOM

North Korea shows off own brand of phones

THE JINDALLAE

SEOUL • North Korea welcomed foreign visitors and firms to a trade fair last week, showcasing homegrown products, including the latest model of its sleek Jindallae smartphone.

Diplomatically isolated and under biting sanctions over its nuclear and weapons programs, North Korea has an aging manufacturing base which analysts doubt has the ability to make high-quality consumer technology.

Still, Pyongyang has touted Jindallae — "azalea" in Korean — as a convenient way for citizens to stay connected, albeit through a strictly controlled domestic network.

The devices, which come in a range of colours and feature a large circular camera module with multiple lenses, have been on display at the Pyongyang Spring International Trade Fair, the country's largest.

AFP images showed visitors browsing stalls at the event last Monday, with state media saying "more than 290 enterprises and companies" from North Korea, Russia, China, Mongolia, Switzerland and Thailand were represented. There was no information on how many people attended or where they had come from.

Jindallae was first unveiled in 2017, and the latest model appeared to be similar to the version released last year, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing a pro-Pyongyang newspaper in Japan.

The vast majority of North Korea's 25 million people cannot access the global internet, with phones instead connecting to a highly restricted national intranet.

Mobiles can also help authorities in North Korea — one of the world's most tightly surveilled societies — keep tabs on people. Reporting by the BBC has suggested devices can periodically capture screenshots, which are stored in hidden folders accessible to authorities.

Pyongyang has released few details of how the devices are produced.

A 2024 report by North Korea scholar Martyn Williams suggested many phones are produced by Chinese firms and rebranded for the North Korean market. United Nations sanctions formally prohibit the import of mobile phone hardware to North Korea.

North Korea had 6.35 million mobile phone subscriptions at the end of 2022, the most recent year for which data is available, according to the International Telecommunications Union.

Beyond Jindallae, other local brands include Arirang — named after a traditional song — and Phurunhanal, meaning "blue sky."

South Korean authorities said last month that they believe the North's long-moribund economy is recovering thanks partly to strengthening ties with Russia.

Pyongyang has sent troops and ammunition to aid Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Analysts say North Korea is receiving economic, military and technical assistance in return.

AFP



KIM WON JIN / AFP

Pyongyang has touted Jindallae as a convenient way for North Koreans to stay connected, albeit through a strictly controlled network.

FUEL

Biogas helps cut bills, deforestation in east DR Congo

Cheap, ideal solution to reuse farm waste

GOMA, DR CONGO • Julienne Mukelenge no longer worries about toxic fumes or power cuts when cooking at her home in Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, after switching to biogas, a renewable energy source that is cheaper and locally produced.

"Electricity is expensive, but with biogas it's very economical," she said, standing in her kitchen, where blue flames licked the sides of a bubbling pot of that night's supper.

Most of the city's nearly one million people cannot afford to use electricity and mostly depend on charcoal, called makala, for cooking and heating.

But the cost of a bag of charcoal has shot up after Goma, a strategic regional capital in the east, fell to the M23 armed group in January last year after fierce fighting with government forces.

The Rwanda-backed M23 was long dormant, but took up arms again in late 2021, capturing swaths of eastern DRC and sparking a mass displacement of people.

After seizing control of Goma, the M23 banned logging in Virunga National Park near the city on the grounds it helped fund pro-Kinshasa militias, leading to the rise in the price of charcoal.

"Before, I used to buy one bag of charcoal for a month," said mother of two Romaine Kanyere.

But with "the rise in the price of a sack of charcoal, gas is less expensive here," she added.

A six-kilogram cylinder of biogas, costing US$8, covers the needs of a household of three to five people for nearly two weeks, compared to US$30 a month for charcoal.

ECO-FRIENDLY FERTILIZER

Biogas is produced by the decomposition of organic matter.

It has been made in Goma since 2016 by Umoja, a local company whose stated aim is to offer an alternative to firewood, which destroys forests.

Yves Rubarura, an Umoja employee wearing overalls and safety goggles, collects "30 cartloads" of droppings every week from chicken coops belonging to the company and local partners to fill the biogas digesters.

These are cement pits where the waste is converted into methane before being bottled.

He said Umoja had constructed around 50 biogas digesters, which are easy to build and operate, in the region.

The firm says it distributes 720 kilograms of biogas to its customers every month.

Production remains small-scale and limited for the time being.

In Goma, residents lack the space and resources to install their own biogas digesters, said Umoja director Victor Materanya.

Storage is also an issue, given the lack of suitable equipment to pressurize the bottles.

He nevertheless hopes to roll out the technology in rural areas, where farmers who supply the compost can then recover the fertilizer produced at the end of the anaerobic digestion process.

Serge Bashonga, an environmentalist in Goma, said producing this type of natural fertilizer can reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and the environmental damage they cause.

Biogas also helps to reduce the "toxic fumes from waste incineration" that pollute the air in the city and affect the daily lives of its inhabitants, he said.

AFP



JOSPIN MWISHA / AFP

Umoja's Victor Materanya hopes to roll out the biogas technology in rural areas.

TECHNOLOGY

Verne rolls out Europe's first robotaxi service in Zagreb

Limited routes and human backups to start

LAJLA VESELICA

ZAGREB • For nearly a month, a Croatian company has been rolling out what it says is Europe's first robotaxi service on the streets of Zagreb, with an AFP reporter among the first journalists to try it last Tuesday.

Backed by Uber and powered by Chinese self-driving firm Pony.ai, Croatia's Verne has operated 10 automated vehicles for a select number of customers in the city since April 8.

Despite similar services being available in China and the United States for years, multiple companies are still competing to bring autonomous taxi services to European roads.

Verne's service is intended to be fully autonomous, with a human "operator" temporarily behind the wheel during the current phased rollout, in case intervention is needed.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

During AFP's ride with the service, which the company says is used by 300 people, the operator — a Verne employee named Deni Link — never had to step in.

The mostly smooth ride was only interrupted when an oncoming vehicle veered into the wrong lane, forcing the car to stop suddenly.

"Sorry, we had to brake," a calm woman's voice told AFP and the other passengers.

Despite the often chaotic Croatian traffic and complicated intersections, Verne's head of country operations, Filip Cindric, said most rides are completed "without any intervention."

According to Cindric, who accompanied AFP during the ride, 90 per cent of riders gave the service four or five stars, with no reported collisions over tens of thousands of kilometres.

GRADUAL EXPANSION

Although the service was first announced in early April, sightings of the vehicles on Zagreb streets have been rare.

For now, the vehicles operate in the city centre, parts of the south, and around the airport, Verne chief executive Marko Pejkovic told AFP.

"Expansion is gradual, with each new zone introduced only after detailed validation and once the system is proven reliable in real-world conditions," Pejkovic said in a statement.

According to the company, interest in the automated service, which costs 1.99 euros (US$2.32) per ride, has been strong, with around 4,000 people currently on the waiting list.

Pejkovic said the low price was aimed at enticing users and encouraging feedback, with prices expected to rise as the service grows.

MORE CITIES TO COME

Ordered through Verne's app like any ride-share service, the automated vehicles are equipped with multiple cameras, lidar lasers and radars to help navigate the streets.

Verne, founded in 2019, said discussions were underway in 11 cities across the European Union, the U.K., and the Middle East.

In Zagreb, it aims to transition to fully driverless operations by the end of the year, subject to regulatory approvals.

With 30 additional cities now being considered, Cindric said he was proud that Zagreb was the first to make it happen.

"If it were that easy, it would already exist in London or some other major European city," he said.

AFP

FITNESS

GATORADE TO FOCUS ON WOMEN

Only six per cent of global sports science research focuses exclusively on women, but Gatorade is closing that gap. The company's new multi-year global research project "Body of Science" is analyzing women's hydration and nutrition needs throughout life.

The work is led by the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI), and ambassadors include Venus Williams and Lisa Billard. Billard, shown, an F1 Academy driver, has undergone individualized sweat testing and adjusted her hydration plan based on the data. She'll race May 24 at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal.



"Single-seater racing pushes your body to the limit," said Billard. "You can lose up to 4kg of fluid, burn huge amounts of calories, and race in hot temperatures. So, working with a brand like Gatorade and GSSI to understand my hydration and recovery couldn't be more important."

Melissa Hank



The addition of health features has caused the wearable tech market to expand beyond the exercise community. *GETTY IMAGES*

SMART TIPS

Be astute when you finally decide to enter the wearable tech market





Fitness wearables have come a long way since the days of being a slim wrist band that counted steps. Now a multibillion dollar industry, its reach has expanded into watches, rings, sunglasses, swim goggles, necklaces, clothing and sophisticated fitness and health monitoring tech. *ADOBE STOCK*



JILL BARKER

Wearable tech has exploded into a multibillion-dollar industry that has yet to reach its peak. What started out as a simple wrist band that tracked daily steps, technology designed to monitor movement and health is now found in watches, rings, sunglasses, glasses, swim goggles, necklaces and clothing.

Fitness fanatics were early adopters with most second- and third-generation wearables expanding their features to include detailed training metrics for runners, swimmers and cyclists.

But it's the addition of health features that has caused the wearable market to expand beyond the exercise community. Today's wearables track heart rate, sleep, blood pressure, oxygen levels, blood oxygen, test hearing, perform an electrocardiogram and provide fall detection.

But the true benefit of wearable technology isn't only in the accumulation of daily health and fitness metrics, but in the information offered when those metrics are converged and tracked over time, giving a big-picture overview of lifestyle habits and health markers.

If you're new to the wearable market, deciding which product suits your lifestyle is becoming harder as the number of options increase. From big players like Apple, Fitbit and Garmin to Samsung, Google, and Oura, there are plenty of features and price points to choose from. Here are some suggestions on how to narrow down the choice.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TRACK?

Make a checklist, in order of importance, of the metrics you want to track and compare your list to the features provided by any of the devices you're considering. Some wearables are best known for tracking health and wellness, and some for tracking fitness/exercise habits. But even within those two large categories there are products that specialize in sport-specific stats (running, cycling, swimming, scuba diving), while others offer a good mix of both fitness and health features.

Take a look at the apps that are compatible with the device, as you'll likely want to take advantage of a wide selection of non-proprietary apps that track additional activities and/or health metrics.

Be forewarned the more features the device offers the higher the price tag, so be as specific as you can as to what metrics you want better insight.

STYLE, COMFORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

To get the most from your wearable you need to wear it 24/7, so find a style that fits comfortably and suits your lifestyle. The largest selection of wearables come in the form of smartwatches, but you can also opt for rings and bands (display only — no watch).

Larger watch/display faces are easier to read, but don't blend as well with work attire. And some feel bulky, especially at night. Make sure all the buttons and dials are easy to use (I'm a lefty so I appreciate that my smartwatch is set up so I can use my left hand to toggle between applications).

Battery life is also important, keeping in mind the more features a wearable offers, including the number that run continuously in the background, the shorter the battery life.

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU WITH TECHNOLOGY?

Navigating among all the features on a wearable can be tricky as can configuring any health status notifications and customizing the item so you can see and access the features you use the most. And as enticing as some of the features are if you struggle activating them, turning up the volume of music while on the run, checking your heart rate while in the pool or starting a timer or checking your pace or step count, they'll be of little use.

If you struggle with technology, some brands such as Apple offer in-store tutorials, but in the absence of one-on-one assistance there are plenty of tutorials online. The best rule of thumb for first-timers in the wearables market is to start with a basic model and upgrade only if you grow out of your starter unit.

AFFORDABILITY AND COMPATIBILITY

Wearables sync your workout and health stats with a phone app, so you need to buy a unit that is compatible with your phone. The Apple Watch works only with an iPhone, some units only work with Androids and some are compatible with both systems.

Most of the popular brands have a few price points to choose from, so explore all your options. You can expect to get several years of wear out of most of the higher-end models, so don't think you need to upgrade every year, or every other year. Also, some wearables offer services only available through a monthly or annual subscription, so keep that in mind when looking at your budget.

PRIVACY AND ACCURACY

Wearables collect your personal data, so it's worth looking into how they secure that information.

Check out any privacy statements on the product's website. If there isn't any information available, consider what that means when it comes to all your health and lifestyle data.

Also important to consider is how that data is interpreted. Most health and fitness metrics are derived based on proprietary algorithms that aren't shared, but some of the products have independent studies verifying the accuracy of their metrics. That matters. Most manufacturers of wearable tech products warn they are not medical devices, but are purchased based on the expectation the user will make lifestyle changes based on the interpretation of their health and fitness data.

If you're going to make decisions based on your sleep score, VO2 max, heart rate variability, stress rating etc., you better have faith in their accuracy.



The entrance to the Packard Campus theatre at the Library of Congress' National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Va.

WHERE THE MOVIES STAR

Inside the special fireproof vault housing much of U.S. film history


Periodicals and historical items line the shelves in the office area.


Nitrate film vault leader George Willeman holds film as he explains how the different functions of the vault work at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center. *PHOTOS: KENT NISHIMURA/AFP/VIA GETTY IMAGES*


Nitrate film vault technician Courtney Holschuh uses a viewing loupe to view the film from Georges Melies's 1897 French short silent film Gugusse et l'Automate in a workspace at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center.

MATTHEW PENNINGTON

CULPEPER, VA. Once upon a time in the golden days of Hollywood, the movies were bigger, the stars brighter and the celluloid they were filmed on was, well, explosive.

Which is why the U.S. Library of Congress maintains a special, fireproof vault in Virginia, near Washington, D.C.

There, the highly combustible nitrate film used from the dawn of cinema in the 1890s until the early 1950s has a permanent home, rarely accessed by the public but recently toured by Agence France-Presse.

Lost movies on the volatile but durable medium are still being discovered and preserved in the facility. And thanks to digitization, the lost treasures can also be safely viewed for the first time in decades.

Some 145,000 film reels are stored in strictly fireproof conditions in a vast, chilly vault at the library's National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Va.

It is crammed with cinematic treasures that rekindle warm memories of an era when movies ruled.

The vault's leader, George Willeman, reeled off the names of classics with negatives there: Casablanca, Frank Capra-directed films such as Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, and the granddaddy of all action movies, The Great Train Robbery from 1903.

Down a spartan corridor so long it seemed to recede into the distance, he unlocked a series of cell-like steel doors.

Inside each of the 124 cells — there's one dedicated just to the Disney archive — were floor-to-ceiling cubby holes.

Each one held film canisters containing negatives and prints, all arranged meticulously: packed tight to prevent canisters from opening, but far enough apart to prevent any fire from spreading.

Since being set up in 2007 in a former U.S. Federal Reserve building in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the vault has maintained a perfect no-fire record.

Nitrate film is just part of the centre's collection of more than six million items of moving images and recorded sound. They also have supporting scripts, posters and photos.

Willeman, who sports a button badge with the invocation to "Experience Nitrate," said the Library of Congress began preserving the medium when in the 1960s, "it was discovered that so much film was being lost" due to fires and defunct companies throwing negatives away.

With the American Film Institute, the library began collecting and copying nitrate film, including the holdings of big Hollywood studios — RKO, Warner Brothers, Universal, Columbia and Walt Disney.

They also tapped the personal collections of film icons like movie impresario and silent era star Mary Pickford and motion pictures inventor Thomas Edison, whose early studio produced hundreds of films.

"We're 50 some years in, and it (the collection) just keeps growing," Willeman said.

With the arrival of digital media, the mission has expanded beyond preservation for purists and cinema historians — who say movies just look better on nitrate footage — to putting old films online.

"Now we can make them available for everybody, which to me, being the film nerd I've been since, like, third grade, is just amazing."

Nitrate film made by early artisans often preserves better than the later safety film, said Courtney Holschuh, nitrate archive technician.

At a workstation with no light bulbs or exposed batteries — either of which could ignite dust or gas from vintage film — Holschuh recounted how last September she carefully peeled apart a cache of 10 vintage reels donated by a retired school teacher.

There were 42 different titles on the reels — only 26 of which have been identified. They included a lost film, Gugusse and the Automaton, by French cinema pioneer Georges Melies.

"So much of our early film history is still out there for us to see and to experience," Willeman said.

Agence France-Presse

A HOME RUN

Granddaughter saved up for years to buy her grandmother's house back

MAGGIE PENMAN

The day that Jailynn Dickerson closed on her house in Canton, Ill., she and her mom picked up her grandmother. Once they were all in the car, Dickerson started filming on her phone.

"Grandma, I have a secret. I'm moving back to Canton," Dickerson said in the video, smiling at the camera. Her grandmother, Susan Rilea, applauded from the back seat. Then, Dickerson revealed that she had already bought a house and suggested they drive by it.

As they pulled up outside a white ranch house with green trim, Rilea realized what was happening.

"It's my house? Are you kidding?" Rilea squealed.

Rilea's 21-year-old granddaughter had saved up to buy back the family home that Rilea had been forced to sell three years earlier.

When Dickerson was a child, her grandmother's house was the place where she and her extended family always congregated.

"Every holiday was there, every birthday was there," Dickerson said. "It was, like, the centre of the family, honestly."

Her grandmother always went overboard with cooking and baking for these family celebrations, Dickerson recalled.

"I had three girls, and then they had kids," Rilea said. "We all just bumped butts together. We all had fun."

For several years after her parents split up, Dickerson, along with her mother and brother, lived with Rilea, and Dickerson's first memories are in the house.



Jailynn Dickerson, left, and her grandmother Susan Rilea outside the house that Dickerson bought and Rilea sold years earlier. *JAILYNN DICKERSON*

Rilea, who loves to garden, planted irises, roses, pansies, hostas and lilies, and put Dickerson and her brother to work pulling weeds in the yard. Rilea was proud to own her own home and to offer a place to land for her daughters, grandchildren and aging mother, who lived with Rilea during the last few years of her life.

Then in 2023, the nearly 80-year-old house needed repairs, and Rilea couldn't afford to make them and listed the house for sale.

Dickerson was devastated. She wanted to buy it at the time, but she couldn't afford to. So she decided, at just 18, that she would buy it back someday.

For the past few years, Dickerson has lived about an hour from her family, saving up by working three jobs, at a Dunkin' Donuts, an Aldi (supermarket chain) and as a tattoo artist.

She knew she wanted to buy a house in Canton near her family, and though it was her dream to buy her grandmother's former home, she didn't expect it to be for sale any time soon. But when she started looking at houses online, it was among the first to pop up.

"I jumped right on it and viewed the house two days after that, got preapproved and was closing two weeks after," Dickerson said.

She kept her plan a secret until she had closed on the house.

"For about two months, I was ghosting my grandma because if I sat and talked to her, then I would get talking and spoil the surprise," Dickerson said.

Finally, on March 31, she picked up the keys and hatched a plot to film the moment she told her grandmother.

The Washington Post

CAMERON AND DISNEY FACE LAWSUIT

Actress claims filmmaker used her likeness for Avatar character without permission

ANNE BACANI

James Cameron and Disney are facing a lawsuit from actress Q'orianka Kilcher, who claims the filmmaker used her likeness without permission as the basis for Neytiri, the Na'vi character played by Zoe Saldana in the blockbuster Avatar franchise.

According to the complaint, filed in the U.S. district court for the Central District of California and obtained by Variety, Kilcher says Cameron first became interested in her appearance when she was 14 years old and starring as Pocahontas in The New World directed by Terrence Malick.

The lawsuit alleges Cameron saw a promotional photo of Kilcher published in the Los Angeles Times and instructed his design team to use her facial features "as the foundation for the character of Neytiri."

The filing claims Kilcher never gave consent for her likeness to be used "either in Avatar or in any related product or promotion." It also alleges Cameron's production team directly referenced Kilcher during the design process.

According to NBC News, the complaint includes excerpts from interviews with Cameron and members of the production team that mention Kilcher by name and discuss how her face inspired the look of Neytiri.

The complaint claims that Kilcher's facial features were digitally extracted, sculpted into maquettes, laser-scanned into detailed digital models and then distributed to visual effects companies in order to create Neytiri's final appearance.





20TH CENTURY STUDIOS/DISNEY VIA AP

Q'orianka Kilcher in the 2005 movie The New World, at left, claims that her image was the basis for Avatar character Neytiri, who was played by Zoe Saldana, at right.

The suit argues that her image ultimately appeared across the franchise, including in the films themselves, promotional posters and merchandise — all without her knowledge.

"This case exposes how one of Hollywood's most powerful filmmakers exploited a young Indigenous girl's biometric identity and cultural heritage to create a record-breaking film franchise — without credit or compensation to her — through a series of deliberate, non-expressive commercial acts," the suit alleges.

Kilcher, a Native Peruvian actor and activist, says the situation feels especially hypocritical given the themes of the Avatar films, which have often been praised for their pro-Indigenous and anti-colonial messages.

"The result was a hugely lucrative film franchise that presented itself as sympathetic to Indigenous struggles, all while silently exploiting a real Indigenous youth behind the scenes," the complaint alleges.

Kilcher's lawyer, Arnold P. Peter, of Peter Law Group, was even more direct.

"What Cameron did was not inspiration, it was extraction," Peter said. "He took the unique biometric facial features of a 14-year-old Indigenous girl, ran them through an industrial production process, and generated billions of dollars in profit without ever once asking her permission. That is not filmmaking. That is theft."

Kilcher says she had no idea her likeness had allegedly been used until after Avatar was released in 2009. She later met Cameron at a charity event, where he invited her to visit his office.

When she arrived about a week later, Cameron was unavailable, but a staff member reportedly handed her a framed sketch of Neytiri with a note from Cameron that read: "Your beauty was my early inspiration for Neytiri. Too bad you were shooting another movie. Next time."

The lawsuit claims despite that message, Cameron never actually attempted to cast Kilcher in Avatar, even though her agent had tried to arrange an audition for her, according the The Guardian.

TV TIMES TONIGHT - MONDAY, MAY 11

MOVIES TALK SPORTS KIDS

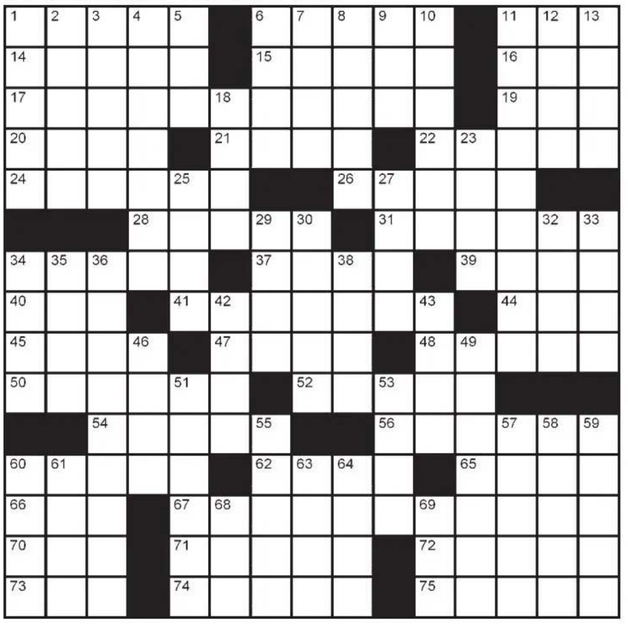
C	B	5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
3	4	CTV	News (N)	News (N)	CTV News Calgary at 6 (N) Live		etalk (N)	Big Bang	The Rookie		Big Bang	Hockey Fan (N)	The Quiz With Balls		News-Omar (N)	News (N) Live
4	38	OMNI	News (N)	Celebrity (N)	Celebrity (N)	News: Arabic	News (N)	Punjabi (N)	News (N)	News: Arabic	OMNI News (N)	Cantonese (N)	News (N)	Cantonese	News-Punjabi	Focus Punjabi
5		ABC	4 News Now on KXLY+ (N)		4 News Now (N)	World News (N)	4 News Now (N)	4 News Now (N)	Inside (N)	ET (N)	American Idol The Top 3 finalists give their all; Alicia Keys performs. (N) (SF)					
6	9	CBC	NHL Hockey Second Round: Teams TBA (N) Live					4 News Now (N) Live	To Be Announced Programming to be announced.			Son of a Critch	The National (N)		News (N) Live	Still Standing
7	2	Global	News (N)	Global (N)	Global News Hour at 6 (N)		The Goldbergs	ET (N)	CIA (N)		Neighbor (N) (F)	DMV (N) (F)	FBI (N)		Global News at 11 (N)	
8	5	CITY	Judy Justice	Judy Justice	CityNews at 6 Calgary		Family (N)	Family (N)	American Idol The Top 3 finalists give their all; Alicia Keys performs. (N) (SF) Live						CityNews (N)	(:35) J.Kimmel (N)
9		CBC-F	(4:00) On va se	Silence	TJ Alberta (N)	Téléjour.	Question (N)	Lakay Nou (N)	Mont-Rouge (N)		Bonsoir bonsoir! (N) En direct		Le téléjournal (N)		Sports (N)	Doute
11		CMT	Fresh-Boat	Housewife	The Office	The Office	Mom	Mom	Neighbor	Neighbor	Becker	Becker	Wings	Wings	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H
12		CBS	KREM 2 News at 4 (N)		News (N)	CBS-News (N)	KREM 2 News at 6 (N)		Dateline		Neighbor (N) (F)	DMV (N) (F)	FBI (N)		CIA (N)	
13		CTV2	Seinfeld	News (N)	Primetime (N)	How It's Made	Big Bang	etalk (N)	Suits		Suits		Criminal Minds		Primetime	(:35) J. Fallon
14		PBS	Odd Squad	Xavier Riddle	America	History	PBS News Hour (N)		Civics Bowl (N)	Alice's (N)	Antiques Roadshow (N)		Antiques Roadshow		Independent Lens (N)	
15		NN	Hanomansing Tonight (N) Live				The National (N) Live		The National (N) Live		The National		The National		The National	
16		NBC	NonStop (N)	NonStop (N)	NBA Basketball Detroit Pistons at Cleveland Cavaliers Eastern Conference Semifinal, Game 4. (N) Live						NonStop Local Primetime		Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel (N)	Dateline NBC	
17		TREE	Gabby's	Max & Ruby	(:15) Superbuns	Ready,	PeppaPig	(:45) Batwheels	BugsBunny	(:35) Binky	Rubble & Crew	Hamsters	Sesame Street	Sesame Street	Various	Max & Ruby
18		HOME	Love It or List It Vancouver		Love It or List It Vancouver		Space Invaders (N)		Dream Home	Dream Home	House Hunters	House Hunters	Space Invaders		Dream Home	Dream Home
20		YTV	Be Cool	Be Cool	Looney/ Looney	Jellystone!	★★★ Paddington ('14) Sally Hawkins, Hugh Bonneville.				Scooby-Doo	Scooby-Doo	Be Cool	Be Cool	Looney/ Looney	Jellystone!
21		TSN	(4:00) Sports (N)	SC	NBA Basketball Detroit Pistons at Cleveland Cavaliers (N) Live					NBA Basketball Oklahoma City Thunder at Los Angeles Lakers (N) Live					SportsCentre (N) Live	
22		FOX	Two Half Men	Last Man	Modern Family	Big Bang	Young Sheldon	Young Sheldon	Family Feud	Family Feud	The 1% Club		The Quiz With Balls		4 News Now (N)	(:35) Family (N)
23		W	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	Abbott	DMV	Ghosts	Outlander (N)		(:10) Elsbeth	
24		TLC	90 Day: The Single Life		90 Day: The Single Life (N)				(:05) 90 Day: The Single Life (N)		(:05) 90 Day Diaries		90 Day: The Single Life			
25		FLAV	Baking Show-Pros.		Baking Show-Pros.		Baking Show-Pros. (N)		Baking Show-Pros.		Baking Show-Pros.		Baking Show-Pros.		Baking Show-Pros.	
26		A&E	Live PD: Greatest Shifts		Live PD: Greatest Shifts		Live PD: Greatest Shifts (N)		Live PD: Greatest Shifts (N)		(:05) Live PD: Greatest Shifts		(:05) Live PD: Greatest Shifts		(:05) Live PD: Greatest Shifts	
27		SNW	NHL's Best	NHL's Best	NHL in 30	NHL in 30	NHL in 30	Central (N)	Stanley Cup Playoffs (N) Live					Sportsnet (N)	Sportsnet Central (N) Live	
29		CNN	Erin Burnett OutFront (N) Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (N) Live		The Source With (N) Live		CNN NewsNight (N) Live		Laura Coates Live (N) Live		Story Is- Elex (N) Live		Story Is- Elex (N) Live	
30		SN360	TNA in 60		NHL in 30	NHL in 30	NHL in 30	Central (N)	NHL Hockey Second Round: Teams TBA (N) Live					NHL's Best	Blue Jays in 30	NHL in 30
32		SHOW	NCIS		NCIS		★★★ The Terminal ('04) Catherine Zeta-Jones, Tom Hanks.						NCIS		NCIS	
33		SLCE	Superstore	Superstore	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Below Deck Down Under (N)		The Office	The Office	The Daily Show (N)		The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Superstore	Superstore
34		STZ2W	Movie	★★ Dennis the Menace ('93) Walter Matthau.			(:10) ★★★ Father of the Bride ('91) Diane Keaton, Steve Martin.				★★★ Fools Rush In ('97) Salma Hayek, Matthew Perry.				(:55) ★★ The Ugly Truth ('09)	
35		USA	Borderforce USA: The Bridges		Borderforce USA: The Bridges		Borderforce USA: The Bridges		Borderforce USA: The Bridges		Caught on Dashcam (N)		Caught on Dashcam		Borderforce USA: The Bridges	
36		CTVDR	Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire		The Gathering (N)		(:05) Godfather of Harlem (N)		(:15) Godfather of Harlem (N)			(:25) Chicago Fire		(:25) Chicago
37		BRAVO	(4:00) Below Deck		Top Chef		Watch What (N)	Top Chef (N)		(:45) Top Chef		(:45) Top Chef			Top Chef	
38		TOON	Beyblade X	Total	Steven/ Steven	Steven/ Steven	Adventure	Adventure	Pokémon	Beyblade X	Adventure	Adventure	Total/ (:15) Total	Total/ (:45) Total	Steven/ Steven	Steven/ Steven
40		PCH	Last Man	Last Man	Sullivan's Crossing (N)		Wild Cards		Atlanta News First at 10pm (N)		Inside (N)	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Neighbor
41		CTVCo	Laughs: Gags	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	The Conners	The Conners	King	King	King	King	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Late Bloomer
42		TCM	(3:00) ★★★ Raintree County		★★★ All of Me ('84) Steve Martin.			(:45) ★★★ Parenthood ('89) Mary Steenburgen, Steve Martin.					★★★ Father of the Bride ('91) Diane Keaton, Steve Martin.			
45		HIST	Ancient Aliens		M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	History's Greatest Mysteries		History's Greatest Warriors		The Curse of Oak Island		History's-Mysteries (N)		Ancient Aliens: Origins (N)	
46		CTVSci	Star Trek		Star Trek		Star Trek		Dark Winds (N)		The Librarians		The Librarians		Star Trek	
47		AMC	(3:00) ★★★ Die Hard With a Ve...		★★★★ The Shawshank Redemption ('94) Morgan Freeman, Tim Robbins.						★★★ True Lies ('94) Jamie Lee Curtis, Arnold Schwarzenegger.					
49		DTOUR	Chuck		Rizzoli & Isles		Rizzoli & Isles		The West Wing		The West Wing		Chuck		Rizzoli & Isles	
51	32	YESTV	(4:30) MacGyver	Mike & Molly	Feud	Feud	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Madam Secretary		Huntley (N)	Huntley (N)	James Robison	Hagee	Murdoch Mysteries	
65		TLN	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Neven's	Our Food, Our	Millionaire Holiday Home Swap		M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Spaghetti And	Dream of Italy	Neven's	Cooking Italy
119		MUCH	Icons Unearthed: Harry Potter		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Futurama	Krapopolis	Krapopolis	Fear Factor USA		The Simpsons	Futurama	Icons Unearthed: Harry Potter	
122		VISN	Murder, She Wrote		Father Brown		Ageless	Ageless	theZoomer		Murdoch Mysteries		★★★ Cold Mountain ('03) Nicole Kidman, Jude Law.			
126		TV5	Opération Louxor (N)		Secrets d'Histoire "Anne Boleyn: la reine décapitée" (N)				Les combattantes		C dans l'air (N)		(:15) Afrique (N)	(:45) Journal (N)	(:15) C'est (N)	(:45) Demain
127		APTN	Wild Rose Vets	One Dish, (N)	Wild Rose Vets	Coastal	Canada's Got Talent		Horse Warriors	Searchers	APTN News (N)	APTN	Little Big	Michif Country	Wild Rose Vets	Coastal

PAY-TV• MONDAY, MAY 11

MOVIES TALK SPORTS KIDS

C		5 PM	5:30	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
54		E!	The Rookie		New Girl	New Girl	Project Runway Canada		Project Runway "Archive Edit"		etalk	TMZ	TMZ Live		Project Runway "Archive Edit"	
55		CRVM1W	Movie	(:35) ★★★ My Penguin Friend ('24) Jean Reno.			(:15) ★ Borderlands ('24) Kevin Hart, Cate Blanchett.				★ Gunner ('24) Luke Hemsworth.			(:50) ★ White Men Can't Jump ('23)		
56		CRVM2W	(4:20) ★★★ For Your Eyes Only ('81)			Transplant	(:20) Corner Gas	(:45) Corner Gas	(:10) Law & Order		★ Whistle ('25) Dafne Keen.			(:45) ★★★ One Battle After Another ('25)		
57		CRVM3W	(4:25) Aurora	(:50) ★ Under the Boardwalk ('23)			(:20) ★★★ For Your Eyes Only ('81) Carole Bouquet, Roger Moore.					Transplant	(:20) Corner Gas	(:45) Corner Gas	(:10) Law & Order	
58		HBO2	Movie	(:50) ★ Frankie Freako ('24) Conor Sweeney.			(:15) There's Something Wrong With Aunt Diane				The Comeback	(:45) Rooster	(:15) Euphoria "This Little Piggy"		(:15) Veep	(:45) Veep
59		WSBK	Big Bang	Big Bang	WBZ News 8p (N)		48 Hours		Perfect (N)	Perfect	Flip Side (N)	Flip Side	Jeopardy!	People Puzzler	People Puzzler	Big Bang
60		KTLA	KTLA 5 News at 4 (N)		KTLA 5 News at 5 (N)		News at 6 (N)	KTLA News (N)	News (N)	Unscripted	Sullivan's Crossing (N)		Wild Cards		News (N)	(:45) Sports (N)
61		WGN	News (N) Live	(:45) The Point	Sullivan's Crossing (N)		Wild Cards		WGN News at Nine (N) Live		News (N) Live	GN Sports (N)	Young Sheldon	Big Bang	Two Half Men	Last Man
62		WPIX	Seinfeld	Big Bang	Sullivan's Crossing (N)		Wild Cards		PIX11 News at Ten (N)		New York	Seinfeld	Friends	Two Half Men	Big Bang	Young Sheldon
63		STARZ1W	(4:45) ★★ Ghostbusters ('16)			(:45) ★★★ Pacific Rim ('13) Diego Klattenhoff, Charlie Hunnam.					★★★ The Matrix ('99) Laurence Fishburne, Keanu Reeves.				(:20) Power Book III	
93		NGEO	To Catch a Smuggler		Port Protection Alaska (N)		Cat Smug Cont (N)		Lawless Island		Port Protection Alaska		Cat Smug Cont		Lawless Island	
97		H2	Pawn Stars		Skinwalker	Skinwalker	Skinwalker Ranch		Skinwalker Ranch		Skinwalker	Skinwalker	Skinwalker Ranch		Skinwalker Ranch	
99		MYS	JAG		JAG		CSI: Miami		Scorpion		So Help Me Todd		NCIS		CSI: Miami	
101		MTIME	(4:00) ★★ Yours, Mine & Ours		Face to Face	Face to Face	★★★ Django Unchained ('12) Christoph Waltz, Jamie Foxx.							★★ Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back ('01)		
102		ADSM	King of the Hill	American Dad!	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers	Family Guy	Family Guy	King of the Hill	King of the Hill	Rick and Morty	Chicken	Family Guy	Family Guy	Bob's Burgers	Bob's Burgers
103		LIFE	S.W.A.T.		Scorpion		Dr. Pimple Popper (N)		CSI: Miami		S.W.A.T.		Dr. Pimple Popper		CSI: Miami	
110		DOCU	Heaven's	Heaven's	The Fifth Estate		The Killer Within		The Real Prime Suspect		The Real Prime Suspect		The Killer Within		The Real Prime Suspect	
134		AP	Wicked Tuna		Aussie Gold Hunters		Aussie Gold Hunters		Wild Fish		Chasing Monsters Impalers		Biggest & Baddest		Hobo	Hobo
28		BBCW	BBC News	Newscast	BBC News	Talking	Newsday	Business	Newsday	Business	Newsday	Business	BBC News	Business	BBC News	Business
138		DJV	Spin City	Spin City	Wings	Wings	Dave's World	Dave's World	Spin City	Spin City	Wings	Wings	Cheers	Cheers	Spin City	Spin City
143		CNBC	Squawk Box Asia (N) Left in progress Live						The China Connection (N) Live		Inside India (N) Live		Access Middle East (N) Live		Europe Early Edition (N) Live	
144		GOLF	Live From the PGA Championship (N) Live				Live From the PGA Championship				PGA (N) Live	PGA TOUR (N)	Live From the PGA Championship			
161		SCH	(:05) ★ This Time Next Year ('24) John Hannah, Golda Rosheuvel.				(:05) Don't Open the Door (N)		★ Bif Naked ('25) Jann Arden, George Stroumboulopoulos.				Don't O		(:45) ★ This Time Next Year ('24)	

UNIVERSAL CROSSWORD



When in Rome by Matthew Luter, edited by Anna Gundlach

ACROSS

1 Punctuation mark with an Oxford variety
6 Simple earrings
11 Spinning toy
14 Academic fields
15 Tubular pasta
16 "___ you OK?"
17 *Tiny collectible toy vehicle
19 Gen ___
20 State with five national parks and part of Four Corners
21 "Now YOU'RE betraying me??"
22 Spaceship Earth's theme park
24 One-named Tejano singer
26 High male voice
28 Sacred symbol
31 Nobel Prize-winning Mother
34 More prudent
37 Bamboo, for a panda
39 Wax-coated cheese
40 Versatile blackjack card
41 *Tailless feline
44 Little rascal
45 "Another customer, please!"
47 ___1 (speed of sound)
48 Detests
50 Mexican beer brand
52 Wooden rod
54 Saudi's neighbor
56 Assistant
60 "Iliad" poet
62 Back of the neck
65 Draped garment
66 Prez on coins that stopped being minted in 2025
67 When the internet exploded in popularity ... or what ancient Romans might see in the starred clues' answers
70 Fish-and-chips fish
71 1979 sci-fi thriller
72 Jousting spear
73 A minor, for example
74 Grabbers in Japanese "UFO catcher" arcade machines
75 Worries

DOWN

1 "The Stranger" author Albert
2 Speechify
3 Judas Priest genre
4 Large agricultural knife
5 Fire residue
6 Dalmatian marking
7 Message with emoji, maybe
8 Not abridged
9 "CSI" molecule
10 Peaceful
11 *Incentive for energy-efficient home renovation
12 Sweet sandwich
13 Shampoo brand with a green bottle
18 Defeat
23 Dermal opening
25 Social expectation
27 "At Last" singer James
29 Poet St. Vincent Millay
30 *Custom set of burned songs
32 "Me too!"
33 Rock band gear
34 Long for
35 Frozen treat brand
36 *Movie built around racy humor
38 Reverberate
42 "You said it!"
43 An older you?
46 Domesticate
49 Elite athlete
51 Touchdown site
53 Timing question
55 Nation on the Bay of Bengal
57 "Common Sense" author Thomas
58 Construct
59 Starts the day
60 Uncreative comedian
61 Clarinet relative
63 From the start
64 Wrestlers' wins
68 Ailing
69 Keebler mascot

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

AGRARIAN LIVING — Solution: 9 letters

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

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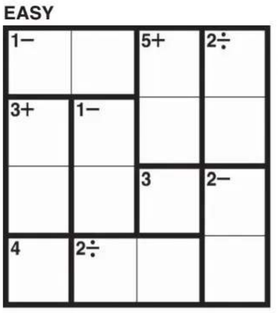
Agriculture, Barn, Beans, Climate, Corn, Crop, Dirt, Eggs, Environment, Farm, Fiber, Field, Forage, Fruits, Garden, Gather, Grain, Grass, Green, Grow, Harvest, Honey, Hunt, Land, Local, Lumber, Maize, Market, Milk, Moral, Nation, Peas, Plant, Rural, Share, Sheep, Simple, Soil, Solar, Soup, Spring, Straw, Summer, Tool, Tractor, Tradition, Trees, Water, Wheat, Wood

KENKEN®

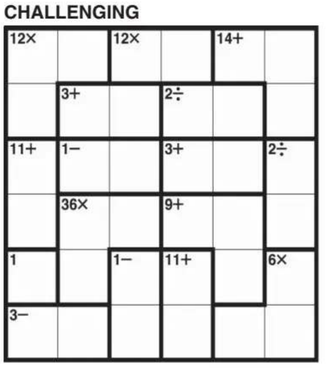
THE LOGIC PUZZLE THAT MAKES YOU SMARTER.

Instructions: Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners. Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

EASY



CHALLENGING



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UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

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

5/11

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

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

"EP QVC BV TWUIW MIQEJX EJ UJ UIXCNFJW ... QVC MUJ UHZUQT TUQ, 'E'N LCTW MIQEJX SFMUCTF VP DVZ ZIVJX QVC UIF.'" — UNQ AVFDHFI

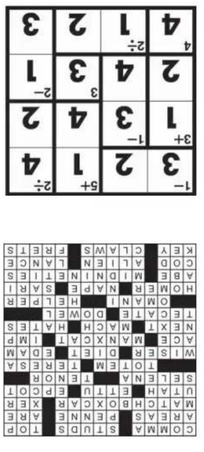
Solution: "If you do start crying in an argument ... you can always say 'I'm just crying because of how wrong you are.'" — Amy Poehler

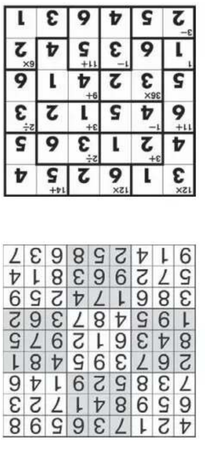
TODAY'S CLUE: F equals E

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TODAY'S SOLUTIONS:

WONDERWORD: LIFESTYLE





7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 considerably (5)	
2 twinge (4)	
3 talents (5)	
4 more rash (7)	
5 fretful (7)	
6 qualm (9)	
7 words of greeting (10)	

ITE	QU	NG	ST	FTS
GI	IER	ING	LU	ISH
TI	TA	PA	PE	MIS
ON	GIV	SA	EV	HA

© 2026 Blue Ox Family Games, Inc., Dist. by Andrews McMeel

Answers: 1. QUITE 2. PANG 3. GIFTS 4. HASTIER 5. PEEVISH 6. MISGIVING 7. SALUTATION

5/11

LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

HOROSCOPE FOR MAY 11



BY EUGENIA LAST

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Opportunities come from within. The changes you make at home and to your lifestyle will encourage new beginnings and greater comfort and convenience.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Pay attention, enforce discipline and say no to those trying to sell you something you don't need. Avoid signing up for subscriptions. Put your energy into activities that don't cost you. 3 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Keep the momentum flowing. Share your thoughts, and reach out to help someone who will repay the favor. A home improvement project will cause some friction, but in the end, it will bring you closer to the ones you love most. 4 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Concentrate on research and discovering new ways to use your skills and experience to get ahead. Use your energy, connections and imagination to make a difference or to cultivate relationships with people who can offer something in return. 2 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll have mixed emotions regarding some rules and regulations. Don't sign anything without reading the fine print. Having an open mind and being honest will help solve differences you have with a colleague or someone in a position of authority. 5 stars

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take care of responsibilities. Be direct and accommodating, and show dedication and a willingness to do your part. Physical activities that encourage you to flourish and do your best will be worth doing on a regular basis. 3 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Reflect, ask questions and get answers and a signature to protect your interests. If you start something without being given the go-ahead, you'll end up with a disadvantage that can cost you your reputation. Emotional situations will be exhausting if you aren't willing to meet in the middle. 3 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Dig in, finish what you start, present what you can do and get yourself moving in a direction that promotes networking and expanding your interests and skills to meet the demands you encounter. Set high standards, but only take on what is detrimental to achieving your expectations and success. 3 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Explore the possibilities of learning and engaging in interest groups, travel and taking care of unfinished business. How you project your skills to accommodate demands will be impressive and help you gain support and interest in what you can do. 5 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22- Dec. 21): Share less and observe more. Be direct when presenting ideas, and you'll gain momentum. A romantic relationship will require patience and understanding. Put your energy where it will have the greatest effect and help you keep your emotions under control and your feelings to yourself. 2 stars

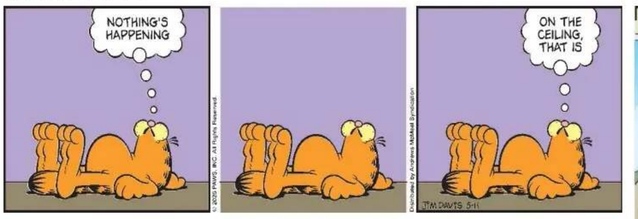
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll accomplish more if you work from home. Expect someone to renege on their promises. Be ready to recover any loss by stepping in and taking over. A romantic attraction to a professional associate will be met with mixed emotions. 4 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Plant your feet firmly on the ground and map out a plan. Put more time and effort into building your own brand. Additional courses and skills will help you attract positions that will assist you in maintaining a comfortable lifestyle. 3 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Represent yourself. Knowing what you can do and how you want to use your skills will help you share your insight into how you can assist others with achieving their plans. Smart thinking, coupled with developing a technique that makes you unique, will be well-received. 3 stars

BIRTHDAY BABY: You are kind, capable and resourceful. You are energetic and outgoing.

GARFIELD



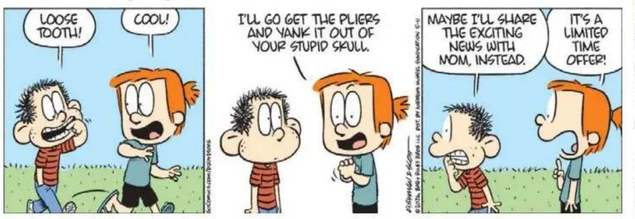
BIG NATE



PEANUTS



BABY BLUES



PICKLES



CRABGRASS



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



ROSE IS ROSE



OFF THE MARK



THE ARGYLE SWEATER

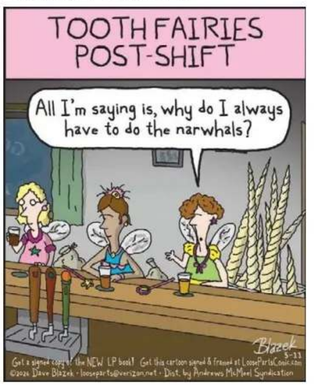


CORNERED



Next, he drew some smaller pie charts behind the bigger pie charts – which helped put things into perspective.

LOOSE PARTS



ADAM@HOME



SHERMAN'S LAGOON



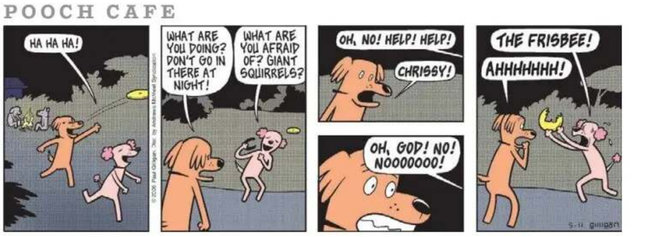
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



LUANN



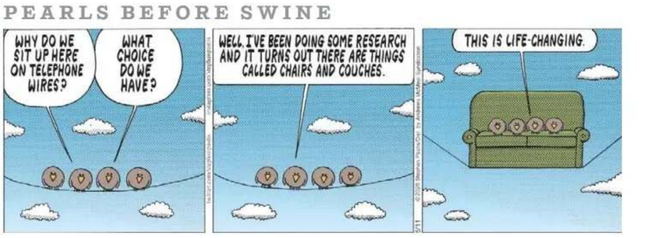
POOCH CAFE



CRANKSHAFT



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

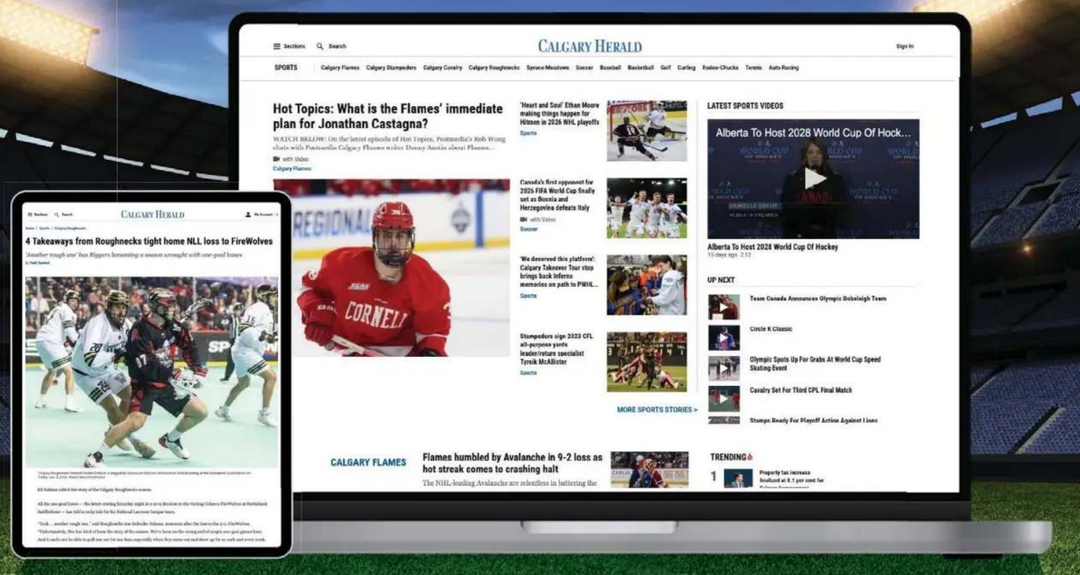


LIO



GAME ON, CALGARY

Todd Saelhof and Daniel Austin bring you the latest news, scores and commentary, giving you the inside line on the Flames, Stampeders, Roughnecks, and all your favourite teams.



Get the inside line on all your favourite teams at calgaryherald.com/sports

CALGARY HERALD

People talk. When you see a wildcat walking down the street on a leash, it becomes a topic of discussion. It's really through people telling other people that eventually somebody picks up that phone and calls enforcement, and that's when good people intervene.
Rebecca Aldworth, executive director of Humane World for Animals Canada

THE CAT CAME BACK

Missing lion cub reunited with family after being rescued

ANDREA SACHS



Kiros was lost to illegal pet trade before being seized by the Quebec government and placed in the care of a zoo. *PHOTOS: WILDCAT SANCTUARY*

The life of Kiros, a lion cub separated from his family by a dubious zoo owner, could inspire a Disney film — animals in peril, a heroic rescue, a missing baby, a happy ending. Kiros was born in 2023 at Zoo Animalia, a roadside animal attraction in Quebec. The newborn lived in a dank and dilapidated enclosure alongside seven other lions, including his parents, Kim and Carl, said Rebecca Aldworth, executive director of Humane World for Animals Canada, whose organization helped shut down the zoo and rescue the lions.

Only, when rescuers arrived, Kiros wasn't there. Shortly before Humane World showed up, Aldworth said, the young lion had been lost to the illegal pet trade.

Though the likelihood the cub would ever see his family again was slim, animal welfare groups on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border held out hope. They tracked clues — a Facebook post, a cub sighting in a Quebec neighbourhood — like paw prints in the Serengeti.

The Quebec zoo had been on Humane World's watch list long before Kiros was born.

In 2019, Humane World helped the Montreal SPCA close the facility and rescue more than 250 exotic animals including zebras, camels, bears, wolves, tigers and kangaroos. Sanctuaries and accredited zoos across North America took custody of the animals.

The zoo owner later pleaded guilty to four animal welfare offences, then rented the property to a new proprietor.

The new management "started the same loop of breeding and selling big cats as pets and for exhibits, and having substandard care for the animals," said Tammy Thies, founder and executive director of the Wildcat Sanctuary in Minnesota.

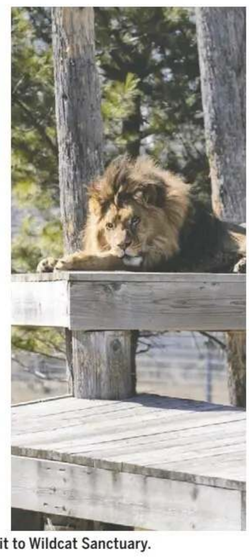
When the operator eventually declared bankruptcy in 2023, the zoo rehomed all of the animals except seven lions, which included the mother of Kiros's half sister Mango. The trustee threatened to euthanize the lions unless a rescue organization took possession of them, according to Aldworth. Humane World mobilized, constructing a lion habitat at an Ontario sanctuary in 2025 and applying for permits to move the cats to accredited sanctuaries in Minnesota and Arkansas.

Meanwhile, a parallel drama starring Kiros was unfolding.

Staff members at the Wildcat Sanctuary saw images of a cub on Facebook that, based on the time and location of the posts, led them to believe they had found Kiros. In one video, a cub clambers out of a blue packing crate set on a car passenger seat. Emitting a stream of baby grunts, the tawny cat bites the pinky of an unidentified hand. In another image, he appears to be licking a pacifier-like object.

On the streets of Quebec, Aldworth said concerned citizens noticed a resident parading a tethered cub around the neighbourhood. They tipped off the authorities.





Kiros in his transport crate with a caretaker; the lion would eventually make it to Wildcat Sanctuary.

"People talk. When you see a wildcat walking down the street on a leash, it becomes a topic of discussion," she said. "It's really through people telling other people that eventually somebody picks up that phone and calls enforcement, and that's when good people intervene."

The Quebec government seized Kiros, then known as Oscar, in 2023 and placed him in the care of an accredited zoo in the same province.

At the time, the Wildcat Sanctuary was focused on moving Kim, Carl and Mango from their temporary accommodations to their permanent home, a 89-hectare, refuge 144 kilometres north of Minneapolis.

The journey involved two road trips to Canada totalling about 26 hours of driving. Thies said once they confirmed with the Quebec zoo staff that Kiros was the son of their newest residents, she knew they had to reunite the family, even if it took years to accomplish.

"It was this bittersweet moment, because I can't tell you how many times we do rescue work, and we hear about a cub that's been mistreated or not cared for or is in the pet market, and we never find them again," Thies said.

On March 16, after more than two years of planning the first rescue, a team from the sanctuary drove the 3,669 km round trip from Sandstone, Minn., to Quebec to pick up Kiros, whose years in captivity prevented him from living safely in the wild. The once kittenish cub was now a regal teen with a cascading mane, intense almond-shaped eyes and a chiselled face. Thies said Kiros, whose African name translates to "lord," initially made a ruckus during the transport but eventually settled down.

"He's a handful," she said. "A teenage lion will put a teenage boy to shame any day."

Because Kiros was raised by humans, the sanctuary staff is helping him acquire the social skills necessary to live with other lions before they can fully unite the family. The first step is for Kiros to join a social group. If all goes well, they can integrate him into a larger pride, a process that can take up to a year.

Though Kiros has not yet seen or interacted with his parents, he is in proximity to Mango.

When he first arrived, his sister behaved as many siblings do when presented with a surprise addition to the family: She was a touch jealous and somewhat miffed.

"Mango did not really appreciate Kiros the first couple days because he was getting all the attention she was used to getting," Thies said.

The pair, similar in personality, has moved on from sibling rivalry to becoming playmates.

Thies said Kiros and Mango have been communicating through a wall separating their enclosures, much like a brother and sister who whisper between their respective bedrooms when parents are out of earshot.

The Washington Post



A death doula, played by Lesley Boone, talks to a medical student Victoria Javadi, played by Shabana Azeez, in a recent scene from The Pitt. HBO MAX

BRINGING LIFE TO DEATH

What to know about the end of life, according to death doulas

ASHLEY ABRAMSON

In a recent episode of the popular HBO Max medical drama The Pitt, an emergency department nurse moonlights as a death doula for a woman with terminal cancer. While birth doulas have become a familiar part of modern health care, the idea of a death doula — someone who supports people through the dying process — may be less familiar.

"A death doula is a calm, compassionate presence who can be there for dying people and their loved ones in their final moments," said Kristen Patterson, a death doula and end-of-life planner in Northern Virginia. From advocating for patients with medical providers to offering emotional comfort through reading or playing music, death doulas can support both the dying person and their caregivers.

Death doulas are not medical professionals, and their level of training can vary. There's no national board or official certification, but there are a few respected programs that provide baseline training. Patterson suggested interviewing a few options to find someone who shares a similar approach and communication style — and cultural and religious values, if that's important to you.

You can hire a death doula any time after a terminal diagnosis, but it's more common during hospice care, which is end-of-life care for people with a life expectancy of six months or less that focuses on providing comfort and quality of life rather than a treatment or cure. "People don't always realize hospice isn't 24/7," said Patterson. "A death doula can be there as much as you want them to."

Given their close work with dying people and their families, death doulas have a unique perspective. Below, they share insights into what they've learned about the end of life.

1. Dying can be peaceful

While it can be uncomfortable to think and talk about, death is an everyday, shared human experience — one that the body is equipped to do. "Just like the body knows how to be born, it knows how to die," said Diane Button, a death doula in Northern California, author of What Matters Most: Lessons The Dying Teach Us About Living and an instructor at the University of Vermont.

For people with terminal diagnoses, the transition may even feel like a much-needed reprieve: "Many people are relaxed in the end, because they've been living in (sick), bodies and it feels better to die than keep living," said Jill Schock, founder of Death Doula L.A.

Whether it means apologizing to a friend you've wronged or finding closure with an estranged relative, prioritizing important conversations while you're healthy can also put you at ease when your time comes. In the end, Button said, most people aren't concerned about vacations they didn't take or money they didn't earn, but many express regrets about things they left unsaid. "If you are at peace with your life when you're dying, the death process can be more peaceful," she said.



Death doulas help the dying and their families cope with the transition from diagnoses to death, which some may even feel is a reprieve after living with illness. GETTY IMAGES



Even if you're spending your final days in a hospital, you can play your favourite music or fill the room with things and people you love (sometimes, even pets). GETTY IMAGES

2. You can personalize your death experience

When you have a terminal illness and are on hospice care, you can plan your dying experience. Even if you're spending your final days in a hospital, you can play your favourite music or fill the room with things and people you love (sometimes, even pets). This can be comforting to both the person dying and their loved ones.

Erica Reid Gerdes, founder of Waxwing Journeys in Chicago, explained how one client's husband found comfort in the fact they could play music from his wife's favourite musical, Hamilton, and read her favourite books to her in her final days. "She was so clear about what she wanted, and though she was unresponsive, we knew she could still hear," said Reid Gerdes.

3. It doesn't need to be painful

When a person is in hospice, medication is meant to manage symptoms — including pain. "People may have witnessed the painful death of a loved one decades ago, but medication can do a great job of minimizing suffering," said Button. Part of a doula's job is to help make sure a dying person has sufficient pain medication and is not hurting during this time.

Medication can also create a calmer experience for the dying and their families. It's common for dying individuals to experience agitation; they may pick at their clothing or claw at their bedsheets. This is called terminal agitation and can happen as organs shut down and affect brain function. Medicine can "help the dying person relax and feel at ease during the process," said Schock.

It's normal to stop eating and drinking near the end of life because the body needs less energy, and swallowing may be too taxing. In other words, Schock says, you don't have to encourage someone who's actively dying to eat or drink.

4. A sudden, final surge of energy and lucidity is normal

Dying people frequently experience a sudden surge of energy, typically a few days before death. Sometimes called an "end-of-life rally" or "terminal lucidity," this happens when, after not eating or talking much, someone perks up and begins acting like "themselves" for a short period of time. Loved ones may mistake this as a sign the person has suddenly started improving, but in reality, it can mean the body is moving toward death.

This temporary surge can be a great opportunity for loved ones to connect and create memories. "I was with my grandmother when she was dying, and she suddenly opened her eyes, and we had two days of lovely conversations," said Patterson.

5. Dying people may feel or see loved ones who have passed

A few of the death doulas we spoke with recounted that some of their dying clients have reported seeing deceased loved ones in the days before they died. Button recalled seeing clients reach out for someone who died decades ago, or calling out a passed relative's name.

Some people believe these are hallucinations, said Reid Gerdes, while others believe previously lost loved ones are visiting to welcome the dying person to the afterworld. If it happens while you're with a dying loved one, Reid Gerdes said, welcome it, no matter which camp you fall into. "Listen to them talk about it, because for them, it is real." This is a way to honour their experience and show respect during the dying process.

6. Hearing is often the last sense to go

In the days before death, there will probably be signs that a person's body is slowly shutting down. First, they may refuse food and drink because the process is too tiring. Most people begin "sleeping" and are unconscious about 48 hours before dying, Schock said. A few hours before death, the sound of someone's breathing may become rattly because they aren't strong enough to clear throat congestion.

"It doesn't hurt the dying person, but it can be disturbing to hear," said Reid Gerdes.

Speaking of hearing: This sense usually remains until the very end. Button said she has seen an unconscious, dying person smile upon hearing a loved one's voice. "It can comfort people to let them know you're there with them and you love them," she added. "Often, they need permission to leave, so it can help to let them know you'll be OK."

After someone dies, they may let out a sigh. "That's just air moving around their body," said Schock. Sometimes, the body may leak fluid. It's also relatively common for people to die with their eyes partially open because they were too weak to fully open and close them before death. If needed, a loved one can gently close the person's eyes.

7. Thinking about death while you're alive can make it less scary

Many cultures see death as a positive experience or transition, not something to be feared. While your own end of life can be hard to think and talk about, death doulas encourage doing both. One of the best ways to experience a peaceful death — and a fulfilling life — is to contemplate your own mortality regularly. "The more we allow ourselves to talk about death in every way, the logistical realities and emotional connotation, the less scary it is," said Reid Gerdes.

While everyone's death is different, Button said most people have the same concerns: Did I love well? Did I make a difference? Did my life matter? She encourages people to picture themselves at the end of their lives and imagine what they'll be thinking "so they can understand some of what will matter to them at that time," she said. "Remember, you're living and have opportunities to experience meaningful everyday moments up until your last breath."

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