

The Asian Reporter

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Japan's monkey sensation Punch receives thousands of birthday messages



INTERNET SENSATION. Punch, a young Japanese macaque, plays at Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden in Ichikawa, east of Tokyo, on July 23, 2026. The orphaned monkey that stole many people's hearts by clinging to an orangutan plushie, marked his first birthday with a flood of well-wishing messages from his fans around the world — even though he now has friends and is no longer holding on to the toy. Punch was abandoned by his mother after his birth on July 26, 2025, presumably because of exhaustion. Zookeepers nursed him and gave him the toy to develop his gripping ability, something newborn macaques need to survive. See story on page 2.

(AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



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Science forum shows advances in China’s AI, robotics

BEIJING — China’s leading technology companies showcased hundreds of cutting-edge products at the World AI Conference in Shanghai — from advanced robotics to artificial intelligence systems. The nation’s annual flagship AI event, which was held from July 17 to 20, took place against the backdrop of a heated U.S.-China tech rivalry. More than 1,100 companies participated. Chinese companies have developed more than 400 humanoid robot products, more than half the world’s total, state media said. Open-source AI models from China are increasingly challenging leading American ones as they are more widely adopted globally.

Hong Kong democracy activist allowed to stay in U.K.

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Wu Chi-wai was granted permission to remain in the U.K. as a visitor, his lawyer said in late July, where he has reunited with his family after being locked up in the city’s prison for more than five years. Paul Harris, who represents Wu, told The Associated Press that immigration authorities had sent a letter to his attorneys saying Wu, the former chairman of Hong Kong’s once-biggest pro-democracy party, was being granted permission to remain as a visitor for six months. Wu’s family resides in the U.K. The British authorities’ decision came after Wu’s entry on a seven-day immigration bail raised widespread concerns from rights groups and Hong Kongers living in the U.K. and the Chinese territory. Wu was one of 47 activists charged in 2021 in Hong Kong’s biggest case under a Beijing-imposed security law that crushed a previously thriving democracy movement. He was sentenced in 2024 to four years and five months in prison for conspiracy to commit subversion over his role in an unofficial primary election. Wu said in a video published by online media outlet Green Bean that his heart was heavy over the past few days and he was happy that he eventually was allowed to spend more time with his family. “I hope all Hong Kongers can live well and cherish their loved ones,” he said.

India’s “Cockroach” movement ends protests

NEW DELHI (AP) — India’s “Cockroach” movement has called off its weeks of protests, saying the government accepted all of its demands after the country’s education minister resigned over alleged exam paper leaks and irregularities in the education system. Dharmendra Pradhan announced his resignation in a post on X, handing a major victory to the youth movement that spearheaded nationwide demonstrations, sit-ins, and hunger strikes. His resignation marks the first significant concession by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government to one of the most visible waves of public dissent it has faced in recent years. The government has rarely yielded to sustained public pressure during Modi’s more than 12 years in office. The most notable exception came in 2021, when it was forced to withdraw controversial farm laws after a yearlong farmers’ protest. The “Cockroach” movement began more than a month ago after allegations of leaks in some of India’s biggest entrance exams. It started as a call for education reforms but grew into a broader protest over unemployment, government accountability, and economic opportunities. Students, professionals, families, and activists joined rallies in New Delhi and other cities across India. Following Pradhan’s resignation, movement organizers called off the protests, saying the government had accepted their remaining demands. Those included broader reforms to India’s education system, compensation for families of students who died by suicide following exam paper leaks, and a commitment that no legal action would be taken against those who participated in the protests. News of Pradhan’s resignation sparked celebrations among the thousands of protesters who camped at New Delhi’s protest site for more than a month. Many embraced each other and waved the Indian flag.

SK tech giants to build \$518 billion chipmaking hub for AI

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean tech giants Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix say they will invest a combined 800 trillion won (\$518 billion) in building a new computer chipmaking hub in the country’s southwest region, capitalizing on surging artificial intelligence (AI)-driven demand. President Lee Jae Myung joined the companies’ chairs in announcing the plan, which dovetails with the government’s efforts to expand investment beyond the greater Seoul metropolitan area, the country’s economic center and heart of its semiconductor sector. The southwest has been a particular focus, as it lacks major industrial hubs and has historically trailed in economic development. The region has long been a political base for Lee’s liberal Democratic Party. Samsung and SK Hynix, which together produce about two-thirds of the world’s memory chips, said they will each build two fabrication plants in the southwest, expanding beyond their existing manufacturing complexes in Gyeonggi Province, south of Seoul. Samsung chairman Lee Jae-yong said the company’s new fabs will be built in the southwestern city of Gwangju, where experts have proposed several potential sites, including the grounds of a military air base slated for relocation. The companies didn’t specify when the fabs in the southwest regions would be completed. SK Hynix’s chairman Chey Tae-won said the project would be a complex, large-scale effort requiring “vast sites, along with sufficient power, water, and skilled workers.” He said it took nine years for SK Hynix to establish its major manufacturing cluster in Gyeonggi Province. Still, a significant expansion of manufacturing facilities is needed for the company to keep up with global demand, Chey said. Government officials dismissed questions about whether the southwest has enough power and water to support major semiconductor fabs. They said the region’s strength in renewable energy would give the chipmakers an edge as they face growing global pressure to use cleaner sources of electricity.



PERFECT PUNCH. *Punch, a young Japanese macaque, plays at Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden in Ichikawa, east of Tokyo. Punch is no longer a plump baby with a plushie and he’s hard to distinguish from other monkeys as he mingles and plays with them in his enclosure. He still attracts big crowds and received thousands of birthday cards from inside and outside Japan, according to Takashi Yasunaga, head of the zoo. (AP Photos/Eugene Hoshiko)*

Japan’s monkey sensation
Punch receives thousands of
birthday messages as he turns 1

By Mayuko Ono and Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

ICHIKAWA, Japan — Punch, the orphaned monkey at a Japanese zoo that stole many people’s hearts by clinging to an orangutan plushie, marked his first birthday with a flood of well-wishing messages from his fans around the world — even though he now has friends and is no longer holding on to the toy.

Punch was abandoned by his mother after his birth July 26, 2025, presumably because of exhaustion. Zookeepers nursed him and gave him the toy to develop his gripping ability, something newborn macaques need to survive.

Punch is no longer a plump baby with the plushie and he’s hard to distinguish from other monkeys as he mingles and plays with them at an enclosure at the Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden.

He still attracts big crowds, and had already received some 2,500 birthday cards from inside and outside Japan, according to Takashi Yasunaga, head of the zoo. Many of the cards and other messages filled the walls at an indoor Punch birthday exhibit where visitors also viewed video chronicling Punch from his earliest days.

“As Punch was trying very hard struggling to live each day, his two keepers did everything to live each day, his two keepers did everything they [could] while other staff watched over him,” Yasunaga said, recalling the past year. “It was extremely hot when Punch was born. The memory is still clear to me as the hot



season returns.”

In mid-January, after six months of special care by his keepers, Punch was placed into the zoo’s monkey enclosure to join some 50 other monkeys — a challenge that led to his fame.

In February, images of Punch with his toy posted by the zoo on social media immediately became a sensation and drove tens of thousand of visitors to the zoo, half of them from overseas, Yasunaga said.

When other monkeys shooed the baby away, Punch rushed back to the toy orangutan, hugging it for comfort. Fans cheered him with a #HangInTherePunch tag on social media.

It was not just the cuteness factor of seeing Punch with his toy, but also his lone struggle to be gradually accepted by others that struck a chord, fans say.

Kumi Ishizawa, a Kobe resident who was at the birthday exhibit, said she found Punch on

Continued on page 8

Emi Jean Sakamoto Sanderson


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October 5, 2026 edition:
Space reservations due: Wednesday, Sept. 30 at 1:00pm
Artwork due: Thursday, Oct. 1 at 1:00pm

Asian Currency Exchange Rates	
Units per U.S. dollar as of 7/31	
Bangladesh Taka	123.3
Cambodian Riel	4044.9
China Renminbi	6.7469
Fijian Dollar	2.213
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8418
Indian Rupee	95.371
Indonesian Rupiah	17986
Japanese Yen	160.64
Laos New Kip	22616
Malaysian Ringgit	4.09
Nepal Rupee	152.77
New Zealand	1.7047
Pakistani Rupee	277.74
Papua N.G. Kina	4.415
Philippine Peso	61.432
Russian Ruble	79.26
Saudi Riyal	3.75
Singapore Dollar	1.2838
South Korean Won	1441.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	335.52
Taiwan Dollar	32.303
Thai Baht	33.442
Vietnam Dong	26292

Gold rings around 2,000 years old found during dig at Thailand archaeological site

BANGKOK (AP) — Two gold rings aged around 2,000 years old were discovered during an excavation at a new archaeological site in western Thailand, officials said.

The rings were found with human bones during an ongoing dig at the Don Yai Thong archaeological site in Phetchaburi province in July, the Thai government’s Fine Arts Department said in a statement.

One ring was engraved with characters believed to be Bhrami script, an ancient Indian writing system. An initial assessment by experts identified the script reading as “pusarakhitas,” meaning “the one protected by Pushya,” said to be one of the most auspicious zodiac signs in Indian astronomy, the department said.

The other ring found with the same skeletal remains is a plain gold ring without any pattern. Experts believe the rings’ owner may have been a merchant of the Indian ancient caste system Vaishyas, the department said.

The Don Yai Thong archaeological site, about 80 miles southwest of the capital of Bangkok, was discovered early this year after residents found pieces of ancient bronze drums in a rice field, leading to further excavation.

The site was dated to a late prehistoric era in Thailand, a period of human settlement also known as the Iron Age, established to be around 1,500 to 2,500 years ago.

Since February, archaeologists have discovered eight human skeletons, bronze and gold jewelry, pottery, and other artifacts indicating a ceremonial burial of wealthy people or members of the society’s upper classes.

The excavation is expected to be complete in late August, with plans to showcase the archaeological finds to the public, the Fine Arts Department said.



ANCIENT ADORNMENTS. An archaeologist shows two rings, left photo, with human bones during an ongoing dig at the Don Yai Thong archaeological site in Phetchaburi province, Thailand, on July 2, 2026. One ring was engraved with characters believed to be Bhrami script, an ancient Indian writing system, and the other ring was a plain gold ring without any pattern. The Don Yai Thong archaeological site was discovered early this year after residents found pieces of ancient bronze drums in a rice field, leading to further excavation. (The Fine Arts Department via AP)



Tofu vendor delivers much more than healthy food to an east Tokyo neighborhood

By Stephen Wade
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Akiko Sugaya wheels a cart through the alley-like streets of eastern Tokyo selling tofu, the protein-rich staple favored in much of Asia.

But delivering soybean curd in all shapes and textures is only a small slice of her mission.

And it’s just that. A mission.

□

JAXA conducts first test flight for experimental reusable rocket

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan’s experimental reusable rocket took off and safely landed in a first test flight in July as the country seeks to achieve the technology key to cut launch costs and compete in the global space market dominated by SpaceX.

The RV-X rocket lifted off, hovered, and moved horizontally before landing during its less than one-minute flight at the Noshiro Testing Center of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in northeastern Japan, which was livestreamed by the NVS, a group of space fans.

The rocket flew as planned, rising 36 feet and moving horizontally 52 feet while keeping its upright position before landing, Takashi Ito, JAXA’s reusable rocket project manager, said in an online briefing from the test center.

Japan seeks to catch up with the technology Elon Musk’s SpaceX has been using for several years to cut launch costs of delivering payloads into space.

The flight is a step forward for Japan in achieving the technology needed to develop a lower cost successor to the country’s current mainstay, single-use H3 series.

The flight comes one day after state media in China reported the country achieved its first successful recovery of the first stage of a rocket after a liftoff.

Japan’s H3 rocket is designed to be more cost effective than its predecessor H-2A series, which had a near-perfect success record, but still needs further cost cuts to compete in the global space market.

The Japanese government says a stable, commercially competitive transport capability is key to the country’s space program and national security.

JAXA and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been co-developing the RV-X, which is 5.9 feet in diameter and 23.9 feet long and equipped with an engine with enhanced durability and four shock-absorption landing gear.

The “hardworking” engine has so far withstood 165 combustion tests, Ito said.

JAXA, which is jointly developing reusable rockets with France and Germany, plans to send the RV-X rocket to a higher altitude of about 218 feet in future test flights.

More than simply a vendor of healthy food, she’s also a social conduit who checks on elderly customers as she guides her pink cart, wearing a straw hat and tooting a small brass bugle to signal her arrival.

She knows the habits of many of her customers like family, and they know hers. She’s lost some elderly customers over the years who’ve died alone, which is becoming more common in Japan, which has one of the world’s oldest populations.

“More than once I was the first one to find their bodies,” Sugaya explained, seated in a small store she also runs on a busy shopping street in Tokyo’s Ojima neighborhood.

It’s a largely residential area of small dwellings, layered with occasional strips of sprawling apartment blocks.

“In an area like this, some people just leave their doors unlocked,” Sugaya said. “Or I can get access by asking the landlords.”

Uncollected newspapers and unattended laundry are telltale signs of trouble, easily seen in small houses on the street. But large apartment buildings hide these signs of



CARING DELIVERIES. Akiko Sugaya blows an old-style horn while she peddles tofu, prepared food, and beverages in a cart in Tokyo. (AP Photo/Hiro Komae)

possible distress. Sugaya is a savior for many, and the job — she’s been at it for 23 years — has also strengthened her own self.

Continued on page 14

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A family in India’s Nagaland finds alternate ways to cook food

By Yirmiyan Arthur
The Associated Press

KOHIMA, India — Tovi Murru doesn’t remember exactly when his family started using firewood to cook. “It was sometime in April,” he says.

Housework for him has doubled since. He gathers bits of wood from dead trees in the forest, brings them home, and chops them. He also does most of the cooking now. When they still used liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to cook, it was his wife Atoshi Ayemi, 27, who ran the kitchen. But cooking on fire is too much work for his wife to manage, he feels.

“The common person is really suffering with the rise of fuel prices. And LPG cylinders are no longer available. The few that are available are unaffordable,” he says.

When the United States and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz. Roughly a fifth of the world’s traded oil passes through the strait and its closure has had a significant impact on energy prices.

In India, which imports nearly 90% of



CREATIVE COOKING. Tovi Murru, 32, blows into the fire to fan the flames, with his daughter Azatina, 3, nearby, in Kohima, the capital of the northeastern Indian state of Nagaland. Murru doesn’t remember exactly when his family started using firewood to cook. “It was sometime in April,” he says. Housework for him has doubled since. He gathers bits of wood from dead trees in the forest, brings them home, and chops them. (AP Photo/Yirmiyan Arthur)

“Azatina loves eggs,” he says, gesturing toward his 3-year-old daughter.

More than 2,500 miles from Tehran, the tiny town of Kohima also bears the brunt of the Iran war. Like many people, he doesn’t understand why a war that isn’t theirs is affecting everyday life.

Murru is a Naga, part of an Indigenous group living in northeastern India and areas of Myanmar.

crude oil used in the country, the war has hampered vehicles that need gasoline and millions of homes and restaurants that use LPG.

Murru, 32, a driver by profession, lives with his wife, daughter, and two dogs in a house provided by his employer. He muses that if he had to pay rent then it would be hard to survive in the present times. He

earns \$125 a month. An LPG cylinder, if he is lucky enough to find one, costs almost a quarter of his salary on the black market, more than double what it used to cost before the start of the Iran war.

Murru is dexterous. It took him less than a day to build the hearth. He skillfully starts the fire and boils eggs and some broth that will be eaten with rice.

A look at some of the deadliest fires in bars, nightclubs, and music venues

By The Associated Press

A fire at a music bar in Thailand’s capital, Bangkok, killed at least 30 people and injured dozens, prompting an investigation into its cause and the factors contributing to the casualties, including whether any emergency exits may have been obstructed.

The blaze at the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar in northern Bangkok is one of the deadliest club fires in Thailand since 2009, when 67 people died in a fire at a nightclub on New Year’s Day.

Here is a look at some other nightclub, bar, and music venue fires that have led to significant death tolls:

- **January 2026:** A fire at a bar in the Swiss ski resort of Crans-Montana in the early hours of New Year’s Day left 41 people dead and more than 100 injured.
- **December 2025:** A fire ripped through a popular nightclub in Arpora village, in India’s Goa state, killing 25 people including kitchen workers and tourists.
- **March 2025:** A fire and ensuing stampede at the crowded Pulse club in Kocani, North Macedonia, killed 63 people, most of them young revellers, and injured more



TRAGIC ENTERTAINMENT. Forensic police officers, left photo, inspect the site of a fire in Bangkok, Thailand, on July 13, 2026. A fire at the music bar in Bangkok killed at least 30 people and injured dozens, prompting an investigation into its cause and the factors contributing to the casualties, including whether any emergency exits may have been obstructed. In the right photo, the charred interior of a nightclub is seen in Arpora, in Goa, India, in this December 7, 2025 file photo.

than 200. It was set off by a pyrotechnic flame that engulfed the roof of the club.

- **April 2024:** A blaze at the Masquerade nightclub in Istanbul, Turkey trapped workers and employees while the venue was closed for renovations, leaving 29 people dead. It was located on the ground and basement floors of a 16-story residential building.
- **October 2023:** A fire that started at a nightclub in the southeastern Spanish city of Murcia and spread to two other clubs left 13 people dead.
- **January 2022:** A nightclub in Sorong, in Indonesia’s West Papua province, burned after two groups attacked each other inside the building — 19 people were killed.
- **January 2022:** A blaze at Liv’s Nightclub Yaouba in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, set off explosions that killed 17 people. The government linked the blaze to fireworks.
- **December 2016:** A fire broke out at a warehouse in Oakland, California that had been converted into a residence and event space for artists dubbed the “Ghost Ship,” killing 36 people. The blaze, which broke out during an electronic music and dance party, moved so quickly that victims were trapped on the illegally constructed second floor.
- **October 2015:** A blaze that broke out during a rock band’s pyrotechnics display at the Colectiv nightclub in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, killed 64 people and left

some 190 injured.

- **January 2013:** A fire killed more than 200 people at the Kiss nightclub in the city of Santa Maria in southern Brazil. Investigators said soundproofing foam on the ceiling caught fire and released poisonous gasses that quickly killed those attending a university party.
- **December 2009:** Some 152 people died when a blaze broke out at the Lame Horse nightclub in Perm, Russia. It started when an indoor fireworks display ignited a plastic ceiling decorated with branches.
- **January 2009:** An indoor fireworks display after a New Year’s countdown ignited a blaze in the Santika club in Bangkok, Thailand, killing 67 people and injuring many more. Victims died from burns, smoke inhalation, and being crushed.
- **September 2008:** A fire killed 44 people at the jammed King of Dancers nightclub in Shenzhen, China, when a stampede broke out after a fireworks show ignited the ceiling.
- **December 2004:** In Buenos Aires, Argentina, a fire killed 194 people at the crowded Cromagnon Republic club after a flare ignited ceiling foam. Club owner Omar Chaban was sentenced to 20 years in prison for causing the deadly fire and for bribery. Others received lighter sentences.
- **February 2003:** A fire at the Station nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, in the United States, killed 100 people, and injured more than 200 others. Fireworks being used by the band set fire to flammable foam inside the club.
- **January 2001:** A fire at a café in the Dutch town of Volendam where people were celebrating the New Year killed 14 people and injured more than 200.
- **December 2000:** A fire that was blamed on a welding accident killed 309 people at a disco in the central Chinese city of Luoyang.

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

Difficulty level: Hard

#62946

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last issue’s puzzle

Puzzle #91262 (Medium)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

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

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Grieving South Koreans seek comfort in AI videos of deceased loved ones

By Hyung-Jin Kim
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — When he wanted to give a gift to his father who sacrificed much to raise him as a single parent, Lee Geon Hui settled on an unusual idea: an AI-animated video message from his late grandfather, whom his father misses dearly.

Lee wrote a message and hired the Seoul-based tech company Vaice in December to make a short video clip showing a digital likeness of his grandfather delivering it. The virtual character called his father “my most precious son,” and apologized for making him help with farm work when he was a child and for opposing his son’s decision to become a hairstylist.

“My father said he wouldn’t watch the video. But then he did, and he shed tears. So I felt rewarded,” Lee, a 28-year-old office worker, said in a recent interview. “I wrote the script ... as it was what I actually wanted to tell my father.”

A growing number of digitally-savvy South Koreans are experimenting with AI’s ability to produce video re-creations of the dead: a number of startups offering videos featuring AI-produced re-creations of loved ones, while TV shows have featured AI versions of dead pop stars and actors.

This emerging industry is causing both hopes and worries. Some say the practice can comfort grieving people, but others say it raises thorny ethical, psychological, and legal questions.

“It’s a double-edged sword, as it deals with human emotions,” said Yong Man Ro,



an AI expert at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology. “As AI technologies become part of people’s lives, they can also bring about cultural experiences and shocks that we have never experienced.”

Many clients want AI versions of their late parents

Vaice’s CEO, Jeongu Won, said his company serves about 300 customers a month, mainly people in their 40s or 50s who want videos of their late parents. Others request videos of late grandparents as gifts for their own parents.

Won said his company needs a few photos and short voice samples of the deceased to make a likeness. A basic three-to-five-minute video costs 600,000 won (\$390), he said.

Many customers play those AI videos when their family members get together for memorial rituals for their loved ones or major Korean holidays, said Won, adding that his clients typically write scripts. Won said most customers add the words “I love you,” and some reference regrets over unresolved conflicts with their late parents and hopes to overcome them.

Lee’s grandfather died unexpectedly in a car accident before he was born, and Lee said he felt his father regretted he wasn’t able to show his grandfather that he was doing well as a hairstylist and that he has a son.

“I don’t know much about my grandfather. But when I saw tears running down my father’s face, I felt a bit emotional as I realized my father still misses him,” Lee

AI GOODBYES. Lee Geon Hui looks at a computer screen as a video clip shows a digital likeness of his late grandfather speaking at Seoul-based tech firm Vaice, in South Korea. When he wanted to give a gift to his father who sacrificed much to raise him as a single parent, Lee settled on an unusual idea: an AI-animated video message from his late grandfather, whom his father misses dearly. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon) said.

AI grief tech triggers worries about ethical issues

When JL Standard launched a similar service five years ago, said company executive Choi Yu Ha, it was met with suspicion from some bereaved target customers who feared it would open up their grief. But acceptance of AI grief technology is spreading, helped by dead celebrities making simulated appearances on TV.

Won says he hasn’t heard from any customers who said his product made their grief harder to bear.

But observers warn that simulating the dead raises ethical questions, and could put some vulnerable people at risk if it blurs the line between reality and the virtual world.

Choung Wan, an emeritus professor at Seoul’s Kyung Hee University Law School, said laws are urgently needed to protect the dignity and other rights of the deceased. They should ban the creation of an AI-generated version of a dead person if the person opposed it before their death, he said, and put clear limits on commercial use of people’s images and voices.

Questions could grow more complicated as the technology develops

Experts say the ethical issues could be

Continued on page 15

Life jackets are for everyone.



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MY TURN

■ **Dmae Lo Roberts**



MIXED

I didn't immediately embrace the term mixed-race. I usually had called myself biracial; prior to that I said multiracial; and even before that, I said "half-Asian." With each new generation and perhaps even with each new decade, the terminology for our cultural identities undergo change. Identity, after all, is fluid.

The term mixed stirred up some bad connotations regarding race purity and mixed-blood that existed when I was growing up. It really irked me when people trivialized racial identity by calling themselves, or me, a "mutt" or "Heinz 57."

Growing up in a mostly Scandinavian rural town in Oregon, I often felt undercover because people didn't know what being mixed really looked like. To many white people in Oregon, in my experience, I just looked like some exotic and weird not-quite "white-ish" person.

Through the years, I learned to identify myself to people — especially when I heard a racist joke or derogatory Asian comment.

Some of the comments included things such as saying someone looked like a "Japanese houseboy" — meaning subservient — or declaring a "Chinese fire drill" — meaning a situation is chaotic or confusing.

I had to look the latter one up to clarify its *real* meaning. While searching, I discovered a large number of YouTube videos featuring white teens or college-age students getting out of a car stopped in traffic and running around said car in a circle before getting back into it. That's apparently a Chinese fire drill. Uh, funny, right?

I used to jokingly call myself the "Secret Asian Woman" and I even created a radio documentary about it. Through the years, I've met other mixed Asians and we shared our similar experiences. I've often felt a kinship with other mixed-race Americans of any race more than monoracial Asians. For many mixed-race Americans, it can be a challenge to feel acceptance. You're somehow not quite authentic enough. At least, that's how I felt.

The reality is that mixed-race people are one of the fastest growing demographics in the United States. In the 2020 U.S. Census, the largest multiracial combinations were white and some other race (about 19.3 million people). Asian and white mixtures were around 2.7 million people. This data is helpful for me after having felt so isolated

and alone throughout my adolescence and college years in Oregon.

I have spent a lot of creative energy writing and producing plays and essays on the topic of being mixed. For me, this exploration never ends because I still encounter people who want to deny my Asian-ness or want me to prove it somehow. Sometimes I wonder if I should carry around my DNA test that says I'm 44% East Asian and 4%

Polynesian. In fact, I'm less white than people assume. I'm 31% British and 8% Western European. So yeah, I'm pretty proud of those results.

In the last decade or so, I've been fortunate to have had wonderful experiences connecting with other mixed-race people, particularly in theater. I

always wanted to write a play that mixed-race actors of any combination could perform.

Earlier this year, I received an independent artist award from the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC) Artist Grant & Residency Program to create a new play called *MIXED*, a mosaic comedy about our many mixtures.

I enlisted my writing partner from a commission we worked on together during the pandemic called *Troy, USA* to help co-write and co-direct it. Together we found a narrator and cast five talented actors of various mixtures to perform it as an enhanced staged reading.

We really need comedy these days. I hope *MIXED* is a joyful and perhaps a little irreverent experience exploring what it means to be mixed through the years and certainly right now. I'm producing it on my own and offering it for free. I hope that after the one-hour staged reading — with some movement choreographed by veteran artist Chisao Hata — we can stay a little longer to talk about our mixed-race backgrounds and what it means to us.

The staged readings of *MIXED* are scheduled for 7:00pm on August 14 and 2:00pm on August 15 at the IFCC, located at 5340 N. Interstate Avenue in Portland. And did I mention it's free? To place a reservation, please visit <www.eventbrite.com/e/mixed-a-mosaic-comedy-about-our-many-mixtures-tickets-1994912281335>. But really, just come to the beautiful 90-seat IFCC theater. It was my first theater home when I moved to Portland and it feels good to come back and play there again.

To learn about the IFCC Artist Grant & Residency Program, visit <www.ifccfriends.org>.

First of its kind queer museum in San Francisco Chinatown amplifies Chinese LGBTQ+ artists

By Terry Tang and Terry Chea
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — On one side of the world, Xiangqi Chen can be punished for her LGBTQ+ activism. But on the other, the activist and artist is lauded as a trailblazer — the architect behind the first of its kind Chinese queer art museum.

The irony that she left her home in China and found a public platform for her LGBTQ+ artistic expression in San Francisco’s Chinatown — the country’s oldest — is not lost on her.

“Here in San Francisco Chinatown, I still continued my journey and met so many like-minded community members and friends,” Chen told The Associated Press through an interpreter. “It kind of actually encouraged me and gave me lots of strength to do what I know is my mission, my calling.”

The OUT Museum opened with a rainbow-ribbon cutting at the end of May. Situated across from the Chinese Historical Society of America Museum, the bilingual museum is giving recognition to a demographic that has long felt invisible. It seems like an ideal fit in the progressive city at a time when some cities, states, and the federal government are restricting or banning certain LGBTQ+ rights.

To start, the museum is only open on Saturdays and is one room with fewer than a dozen artworks by artists from China and the Chinese diaspora. But there is hope to expand the museum’s exhibits and days of operation.

Museum allows Chinese artists to fully tell their stories

While still living in China, Chen launched a Kickstarter for a proposed museum six years ago — more than 2,000 donated on the platform. But she knew it likely wouldn’t be built there. In 2022, she came to the U.S. on a J-1 visa as a visiting scholar at Georgetown University. By 2024, Chen gained attention in San Francisco for her role in an exhibition at the Asian Art Museum. That led to a residency with the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco.

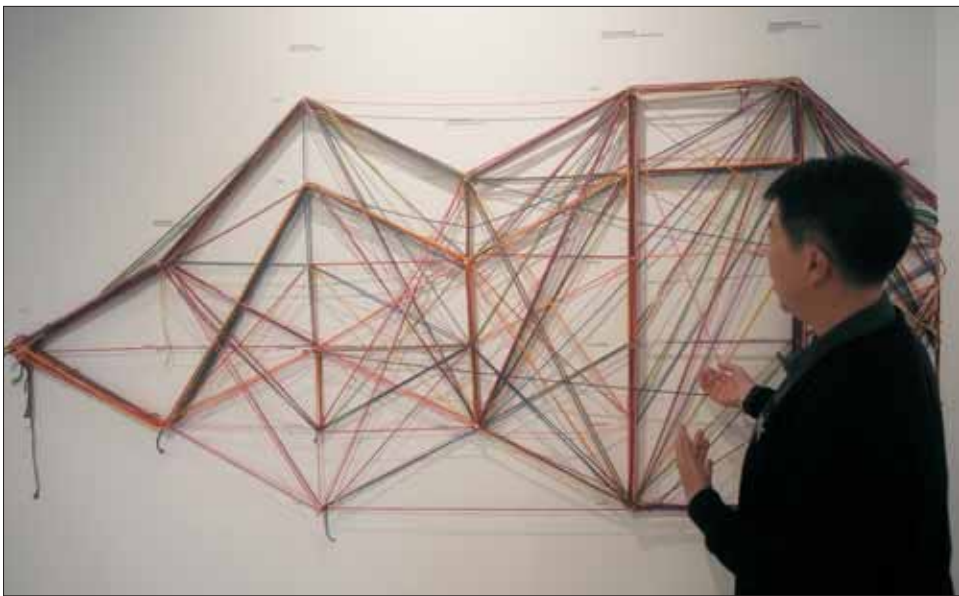
The organization was “proud to be the incubating space for the OUT Museum prototype,” executive director Jenny Leung said in an e-mail.

The level of support that followed amazed Chen.

“I got so many chances to connect with the local Asian American queer community and even the Chinatown community in general,” she said.

Interest soon followed from longtime collaborators and younger artists who reached out via Instagram. They are represented in the inaugural exhibition, which includes photography, zines, and an interactive installation where visitors use thread to trace their self-discovery journey with gender and sexuality.

For Hong Kong-born artist Dixon Ngai, this museum offers an outlet to tell his story as mainstream media typically overlook the Chinese LGBTQ+ community. He contributed a hand-painted, Chinese porcelain wine pot inspired by the Cantonese opera “Di Nü Hua,” or “The Flower Princess.”



Ngai said the OUT Museum, unlike other exhibitions, is very specific to the experience of the Chinese queer community, allowing “more people to see our voice.”

Museum affirms evolving attitudes toward LGBTQ+ presence

Since the museum’s opening, Chen has been “one hundred percent moved” by unexpected feedback from one particular demographic: Chinese immigrants, both queer and straight, who have lived in California for decades.

A 60-year-old transgender man who visited shared how he immigrated to the U.S. in the 1970s for crucial gender-affirming care. There was also a mother looking to connect with her gay adult son.

“She later e-mailed me saying that she’s so grateful for all the events the art museum has organized,” Chen said. “Her son came out to her, and she’s very proud of her son and she wants to express gratitude.”

These reactions are proof the museum is elevating the visibility of Chinese, Chinese American, and Asian American LGBTQ+ people, said author and activist Helen Zia, a museum advisory board member. It also shows how attitudes have shifted, she said, as it would have been difficult to mount even 20 years ago.

“There were Asian churches who would have demonstrations week after week with thousands of people just condemning same-sex couples,” Zia said, recalling the response from the Chinese community in 2008 when she handed out pro-gay marriage flyers in Oakland’s Chinatown.

TRAILBLAZING MUSEUM. OUT Museum founder Xiangqi Chen gestures toward “Collective Notation,” an interactive installation displayed at the Chinatown museum in San Francisco, which opened in late May. In the bottom photo, Chen gestures toward an archival photograph in her art piece, “The Weight of Kindness.” (AP Photos/Jeff Chiu)

grassroots center for lesbians. One of the reasons she left was because during the pandemic the government started cracking down on spaces for LGBTQ+ activism.

She likely could not even put on an art show, let alone a museum.

“From 2013 to 2015, that kind of art exhibition by queer artists (could) exist, but only if you don’t explicitly show or tell the audience that your work or you self-identify as queer or LGBTQ,” Chen said. “But not nowadays.”

That Shanghai center is how Zia met Chen a decade ago. Zia was doing research for a book and toured the center.

“She’s been just incredibly brave in China, creating a center that attracted a lot of state attention,” Zia said.

A key difference Chen has noticed among American-born Chinese LGBTQ+ people versus those in China is they are more educated about gender and sexual identity and have more access to support.

Under the second Trump administration, LGBTQ+ rights are increasingly under threat. President Donald Trump’s administration has targeted gender-affirming care and sought to ban transgender people in the military. Some anti-Pride lawmakers recently proposed “Nuclear Family Month.”

San Francisco also recently dealt with shifting LGBTQ+ attitudes after Giants baseball players wrote Bible verses on Pride Night hats.

Nevertheless, the Chinese artists say the social landscape here is a breath of fresh air.

“Here in San Francisco, in California, we enjoy the air of freedom, there is equal human rights, there is security,” Ngai said. “So, we are very proud to be ourselves.”

In late July, Chen proudly walked in her first San Francisco Pride Parade. She plugged the museum while dressed fittingly as a woman warrior from a Cantonese opera.

“I think completing this opening will be a start for me. It’s not the end,” Chen said. “We still have a long way to go.”

Tang reported from Phoenix.

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Americans rewire their grocery shopping routines while digesting the biggest price jump in 50 years

By Dee-Ann Durbin,
Terry Tang, Maggie Scales,
Sandy Guatibonza, and
Hikari Mae Hida
*The Associated Press and The
Lexington Observer, La Esquina,
and Honolulu Civil Beat*

What's for dinner? Lately, at Apral Jack's house, it's whatever is on sale.

Jack scouts an app for deals at her local supermarket before she buys groceries. When she reaches the store, she grabs the weekly circular to look for coupons she might have missed. If the shelf prices look too high, she scratches items off her list or tries to find lower prices someplace else.

"The apples went up here, the ones I eat, so now I'm not going to get them here. I'll go to Market Basket, where I can get them cheaper," Jack, 50, said as she pushed a cart into a Stop & Shop near her home in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Couponing, comparison shopping, and cutting back on favorite foods are new habits for her and millions of other Americans as they absorb the biggest jump in grocery prices in a half-century. Buying food to eat at home has gotten 33% more expensive in U.S. cities since the beginning of 2019, according to government figures. In the 7 1/2 years before that, prices rose 6.4%.

The historic increase happened for numerous reasons. The coronavirus pandemic snarled supply chains and raised labor and transportation costs. Droughts, hurricanes, and diseases like bird flu drove down production. Tariffs raised prices on foreign products like coffee, tomatoes, and chocolate. Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine disrupted oil and fertilizer supplies.

With a fresh conflict in the Middle East accelerating food price inflation again this year, the cost of filling their refrigerators, freezers, and pantries has become a frustration for Americans and made affordability a central issue in the fall midterm elections.

By some measures, Americans are better equipped to handle the higher prices, if only slightly. The average weekly earnings of people with full-time jobs have gone up a bit faster than the cost of groceries since 2019, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

But consumers have long memories when it comes to food shopping, and they know their dollars aren't going as far as they used to, said Jared Bernstein, a senior policy fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy.

Wages grew much more quickly than grocery prices before the pandemic, Bernstein said. Even if a typical worker's paycheck still outpaces supermarket receipts by a small



AP Photo/Juliana Yamada



Hikari Mae Hida/Honolulu Civil Beat via AP

margin, consumers may feel stressed and aggrieved because other costs, like housing and electricity, have climbed significantly as well, he said.

"People have a well-honed sense of those prices, just as much as gas and maybe more so," Bernstein, who served as chair of the Council of Economic Advisers under former President Joe Biden, said. "You need groceries to live."

An economic indicator like median wages does not capture the capacity of family budgets to accommodate additional price hikes. Americans spent an average of 12.9% of their pretax incomes on eating out and at home in 2024, but the share was 33% for the one-fifth of U.S. households with the lowest earnings, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Prices also can vary substantially by region. In St. Louis, food for home use cost 2% more in June compared to a year earlier; in San Francisco, it was 6%, the consumer price index showed.

In interviews, residents of four urban areas where food price inflation has exceeded the national average shared how steadily rising prices are changing the way they shop. They described hunting for discounts, switching brands, and feeling grateful for food banks. Some are more cautious about buying nonessentials like takeout coffee. Others are buying less meat or less food overall.

"It's almost like a strategy, a household strategy, where finan-

cial pressure just hasn't disappeared, so consumers are really developing their own playbook on how to navigate it," said Sally Lyons Wyatt, a global executive vice president at market research company Circana.

Meat has become a luxury for a family in Texas, the nation's top beef producer

Beef epitomizes out-of-control grocery prices for many Americans. The price of a pound of ground beef reached \$6.82 in June, which is 79% more than at the beginning of 2019, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Contributing factors include a shrinking U.S. cattle herd, drought in the west, and the costs of feed and fuel.

Demand for ground beef is falling as a result, according to market research company NielsenIQ. Ada Torres, 60, is one of the people no longer buying it: with five pounds of ground beef costing almost \$20, meat has become a luxury for her family of five, she said.

Torres lives 45 miles northeast of Houston in Cleveland, Texas, where she shares a home with her 36-year-old daughter and three grandchildren. Her daughter, who works for a mobile car-



AP Photo/Juliana Yamada

BUDGET BLUES. Jack Chang, top left photo, cuts the hair of Isaac Obamehinti while holding his 2-year-old son Cairo Miu at his studio in San Francisco. Couponing, comparison shopping, and cutting back on favorite foods are new habits for millions of Americans as they absorb the biggest jump in grocery prices in a half-century. In the top right photo, Lien Chang feeds her 2-year-old grandson Cairo Miu a bowl of rice next to his dad, Jack Chang, in her home in San Francisco. In the bottom left photo, pastry chef Amanda Tabadero pours milk into a plastic container while preparing ingredients for maritazzi at Creature Coffeeshop in Kane'ohe, Hawaii'i.

washing service, is the family's main provider. Torres does the grocery shopping and cooking.

"Prices are sky-high. One hundred dollars' worth of groceries these days is nothing. Maybe you can bring home seven family-size items, if you manage to find a good deal," she said.

Swapping Goya canned beans and Hunt's tomato sauce for products from Walmart's Great Value range is one way Torres tries to cut costs. Chicken and cold cuts are now the family's main source of animal protein, she said.

Torres worries that too much deli meat will be bad for the health of her grandchildren, ages 12, 15, and 16. They miss beef dishes that were once staples on their table, like lasagna with ground beef, beef fajitas, and steak with plantain chips, she said.

Torres' daughter's work dwindles during the rainy season in Texas, and the family only can afford one complete meal a day. Breakfast and dinner consist of simple fare like eggs and generic cereals.

Shopping outside Boston takes research, multiple stores, and chicken recipes

Apral Jack's grocery-shopping trips included going to Whole Foods until recently. She liked the selection and has fewer mouths to feed now that her three daughters are adults.

"I don't have to worry about buying for them anymore," Jack said with a smile, noting that her days of loading up a cart at Costco and BJ's Wholesale Club are in the past.

But she spends more cautiously than she once did. She buys steak only if she can get it at a

discount. Her weekly menu planning starts at home with an app that displays special offers and digital coupons. She builds her shopping list around what's on sale.

"Typically, I'll try to pick the meals based on that. So like chicken fajitas: there was a three-day sale on chicken. I'll sauté chicken with vegetables and rice," Jack said.

Her list includes fewer canned goods. Nabisco's Ginger Snaps and Nilla Wafers are off it completely because she thinks

Continued on page 9

Punch receives thousands of birthday messages

Continued from page 2

social media earlier this year. From then on, overcoming her illness to come see him had become her goal.

"He moved me ... I kept on telling myself that I'm going to get well and come visit to see Punch," said Ishizawa, who has since recovered and dropped by the zoo after wrapping up a business trip. "And here I am, I made it. I'm very happy I could finally see him in person."

Yeye Lights, a longtime resident in the city, had never visited the zoo until she became a Punch fan and now has an annual visitor pass. She was hooked by Punch after her daughter in the Philippines told her about the monkey.

"I have a cake for Punch-kun, I'm celebrating with my friends," Lights said, using an affectionate Japanese honorific for boys. She thanked the monkey's two carers for taking good care of him.

Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo.

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There are already more U.S. measles cases this year than in all of 2025

By Devi Shastri
The Associated Press

The number of measles cases in the U.S. has surpassed the record-breaking tally for all of 2025, with five more months of 2026 still to come.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) logged 2,318 cases of measles as of July 23, according to an agency update.

The nation had 2,289 cases in 2025, the worst year for measles in more than three decades. Now, 2026 has easily become the U.S.'s worst year for measles since 1991, as major outbreaks in South Carolina, Utah, and Arizona have sickened hundreds and smaller clusters of cases sparked in other states.

In November, international health officials will meet to determine if the U.S. and Mexico have lost their measles-free status. The U.S. eliminated local measles spread in 2000 by maintaining high vaccination rates, which have fallen in recent years to below the 95% coverage needed to prevent outbreaks.

Measles cases are undercounted

While measles cases in the U.S. are climbing, it may be impossible to say exactly how far-reaching the spread is.

Americans rewire their grocery shopping routines while digesting the biggest price jump in 50 years

Continued from page 8

they cost too much. She doesn't buy store-brand replacements; to Jack, they don't taste the same.

Matt Hamory, who leads the global grocery practice at the consulting company AlixPartners, said consumers generally have an amount they're comfortable spending on food each week. They will go to a more expensive store or splurge on a treat if prices fall below that. But if prices seem unreasonable or the economic outlook is uncertain, they'll look for cheaper alternatives or cut back.

"I'm going to spend \$250 a week, so if I'm shopping at Stop & Shop and they're getting more expensive, then I'll start splitting my trips with cheaper places and eventually maybe I'll lose Stop & Shop entirely," Hamory said.

Three generations stretch their dollars and share canned food, eggs, and produce to get by in San Francisco

San Francisco has a reputation as a great city for foodies. Food preoccupies 33-year-old Jack Chang for other reasons. The self-employed barber has three young children and a partner who is unemployed. The money he makes cutting hair five or six days a week sometimes doesn't go far enough.

"Since I have five mouths I have to feed, basically — and then sometimes my mom, too — it's a lot on me financially," Chang said.

They are not a family that goes out for boba milk teas or artisanal ice cream, both of which abound in San Francisco. They visit Round 1 Bowling & Arcade, a Japanese entertainment center with \$1 ice cream cones.

Like a lot of Bay Area residents, Chang has felt surrounded by rising costs in the last year. The rent for his barbershop increased 10% as he was losing clients laid off from their tech jobs, he said. He bought a used minivan, so now he has a monthly car payment.

"I look at my credit card every month and I'm like, 'Wow, how am I going to pay this?' So I'm a little behind on bills, honestly," Chang said.

Chang and his partner, Tina Chhous, try to economize by buying generic brands of food and medicine. They buy organic milk but otherwise stick to conventional products.

When their 4-year-old daughter's preschool has leftover lunch items like meat or bread, Chhous offers to take it.



ELIMINATION STATUS AT RISK. Health department staff members, left photo, enter an Andrews County, Texas, Health Department measles clinic carrying doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine in this April 8, 2025 file photo. The number of measles cases in the U.S. has surpassed the record-breaking tally for all of 2025, with five more months of 2026 still to come. (AP Photo/Annie Rice, File)

Public health departments and disease researchers have long acknowledged that official counts are incomplete, because some people get sick and don't seek out treatment — something not unique to measles.

She also receives monthly food assistance through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

"Without that, I don't know what I would do," Chang said.

Fewer people have the same buffer after the Trump administration tightened SNAP eligibility requirements last year. As of April, 37 million Americans were enrolled in the program, a 12% decline from a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Chang's 77-year-old mother, Lien, receives SNAP aid, too, and visits two different food banks each week. She shares the canned food, eggs, and produce she gets with the rest of the family.

Chang loves doting on his children, and acknowledges that money would be less worrisome if he were single.

"But I try to be optimistic and do what I have to do in order to support my family," he said. "Failure is not an option for me."

Prices in the Honolulu area keep a pastry chef from shopping and eating local

High grocery bills come with living in Hawai'i. The state gets nearly all its food from cargo ships that have travelled thousands of miles, making prices and the selection at stores vulnerable to oil market spikes.

Prices for local products also took an upswing this year. The cost of shipping goods between the Hawaiian Islands has sky-rocketed amid rising fuel prices tied to the Iran conflict and financial instability within the company that has a near-monopoly on interisland shipping.

Amanda Tabadero, 28, a pastry chef from Kane'ohe, a community on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, remembers buying Maui-grown strawberries and blueberries for \$7.99 per pound in 2024. Now that they cost \$11, she buys berries grown in California or Mexico at Costco for \$5 when she needs a bulk supply for baking.

Tabadero also doubts she will buy lychee fruit again anytime soon. Kaimana lychee, the variety grown in Hawai'i, mostly comes from the Big Island. Tabadero said an iced coffee and a bag of lychee she recently bought in the Chinatown section of Honolulu came to \$30.

"It makes me sad," Tabadero said. "I want to use local stuff."

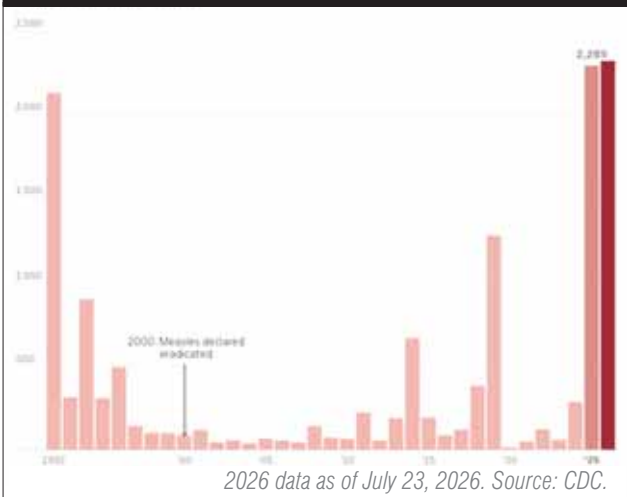
One of her favorite sweets is butter mochi, a chewy dessert made from rice flour. But even that simple recipe has gotten harder to make. One essential ingredient, milk, now costs \$9 a gallon at a locally owned supermarket chain, Tabadero said.

"Foodland is not affordable" for locals, she said, referring to the chain known for its poke and which has a central Honolulu location that is popular with tourists. Tabadero has switched to shopping at Target or Times Supermarket, another Hawai'i-based chain.

At home, where she lives with her parents and younger sister, three cats, and a dog, making dinner has required adjustments. Chuck roast for Hawai'i-style beef stew, a local staple, crept up last year to roughly \$10 a pound from \$7.99 or less before the pandemic. Unless she snags a \$5 Friday deal at Safeway, "we do have to find substitutes, even if we're craving it," Tabadero said.

This report is a collaboration between The Associated Press and The Lexington Observer in Massachusetts, La Esquina in Texas, and Honolulu Civil Beat in Hawai'i. AP Video Journalist Terry Chea contributed from San Francisco.

Confirmed U.S. Measles Cases



Furthermore, experts say the spread might be greater than what's known because the virus is one of the most contagious known to medicine and vaccination rates nationwide have declined. National vaccination rates for measles, mumps, and rubella — which dropped to 92.5% among kindergartners in the 2024-2025 school year, from 95.2% in 2019-2020 — obscure even lower rates in certain communities.

In Utah, where public health officials have fought measles for more than a year, the virus has sickened more than 700 people during that time, according to the state health department. Experts relying on mathematical modelling and genetic analyses indicate that a large outbreak on the Utah-Arizona border could be around three to four times bigger than what's currently known, state epidemiologist Dr. Leisha Nolen said.

The picture is muddier in South Carolina, which had the nation's largest outbreak in 35 years. There, the 997 total is likely an undercount, the state health department has said, but it doesn't know by how much.

Dr. Brannon Traxler, acting director of the state department of health, said the undercount is "impossible to know and may vary during the course of an outbreak."

Data gaps can make it hard to reliably estimate an outbreak's true scope. Experts say hospitalization rates can be a good barometer, but measles hospitalizations are not required to be reported in every state.

"If we really had some kind of solid gold standard for the percentage of all cases that have hospitalization or some measure of severity, then that would be another way of estimating the outbreak size that we could see if it's consistent with these other methods," said Damon Toth, an applied mathematician at the University of Utah's medical school who is working on one of the Utah outbreak analyses.

Researchers are still analyzing the 2025 Texas outbreak

In Texas, researchers are still working to estimate the size of the state's 2025 outbreak and early findings show it might have been nearly twice the size of the 762 known cases.

Rémy Pasco, a mathematical epidemiologist at the University of Colorado Boulder who is working on the analysis, said the undercounts were unsurprising. In the absence of an adequate community vaccination rate — 95% according to health experts — "there's just not much you can do about measles once you have it," he said.

The CDC defines an outbreak as three or more linked cases. But by the time three such cases are identified in communities with low vaccination rates and less disease surveillance, "either you missed the previous ones or you're going to have a lot more," he added.

Dr. Varun Shetty, Texas' chief state epidemiologist, said there were instances where people tested positive for measles but health officials couldn't confirm who else was in the person's household or if they were sick.

"What we're able to count and report is almost always an underestimate of what actually occurred, because it relies on people being willing to be able to get tested, to share information with healthcare providers and with public health," Shetty said. "Sometimes that just doesn't happen."

The state health department previously reported that 182 probable measles cases went unconfirmed in March 2025 among minors in Gaines County — the epicenter of the outbreak — due to a lack of information. The confirmed case count for the western Texas county for the whole outbreak is 414.

Shetty expects to keep seeing measles cases and even outbreaks because so many people are unprotected.

"It's really critical, not only for individual people, but for communities, to have high vaccination coverage," he said.

Continued on page 14

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Women’s leagues in Canada, U.S., aim to take advantage of men’s World Cup

By Lexie Linderman
The Associated Press

TORONTO — A throng of fans packed into York Lions Stadium on the outskirts of Toronto shortly after the start of the World Cup.

As drums beat, a girls soccer team chanted, “Two, four, six, eight! Who do we appreciate? Not the king, not the queen, just our favorite football team!”

The team on the receiving end of the enthusiastic support that day was AFC Toronto, part of the Northern Super League (NSL), Canada’s professional women’s league. The club drew about 2,500 fans to see Toronto take on the Montreal Roses the day after the Canadian men’s national team played Bosnia-Herzegovina to a 1-1 draw in the first World Cup match ever on home soil.

While other leagues in North America took long breaks during the World Cup, the NSL — in just its second year — continued play.

The National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) returned to play in early July, Major League Soccer (MLS) started back up July 16, and the Canadian Premier League (CPL) had a 16-day break before returning June 26.

“It’s a whole other level when you’re hosting (the World Cup),” said Christina Linz, president of the NSL. “And so you can already see an interest in soccer in a way that you don’t always see as much.”

Seizing the moment

While their strategy was different, the ultimate goal for women’s soccer is the same all over North America: Seize this moment to build excitement for the game.



And that’s even more crucial for the fledgling NSL.

“The fact that [we were] one of the few leagues playing in the world right now, those tickets that are relatively expensive for the World Cup, I think we are more affordable, and fans can catch a game,” AFC Toronto coach Marko Milanovic said. “Obviously the level is not the same, but the sport is. We just hope it brings more eyes to football, and football in this country.”

NSL players across the league agreed that having the World Cup co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico is an opportunity for casual fans to discover there’s professional soccer — both men’s and women’s — they can watch year-round in their home cities.

“I hope that after the World Cup games they can be like, ‘Wow, that was really fun. I wonder if maybe there’s a local team I can go and watch?’ And that’s us, and we’re so fun to watch,” Vancouver Rise midfielder Nikki Stanton said.

The NWSL had a different approach, with watch parties and special matches like the Challenge Cup. Gotham FC hosted The Queen’s Classic against the Washington Spirit on July 15 at Citi Field. The match drew a sellout crowd of 42,175 fans and Gotham defeated the Spirit 1-0. Ahead of the game, fans were able to watch a World Cup semifinal match in Atlanta on big screens at the ballpark.

“We’re anywhere and everywhere,” said Gotham spokesman Jeff Greer. “We’ve been able to find other ways to get involved.”

Chicago Stars marketing chief Kay Bradley said her NWSL club benefitted from the city hosting the U.S. men in a send-off match against Germany, but the main goal was to use this World Cup as a springboard for the Women’s World Cup in Brazil next year, the 2028 Olympics in Los

SOCCER SPRINGBOARD. Vancouver Rise FC’s Anais Oularbi, middle, left, celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal during a Northern Super League (NSL) match against Toronto AFC in Burnaby, British Columbia, on June 28, 2026. During World Cup 2026 in North American, the main goal for women’s leagues in Canada and the U.S. has been to use this World Cup as a springboard for the Women’s World Cup in Brazil next year, the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, and the 2031 Women’s World Cup. (AP Photo/Abbie Parr)

Angeles, and the 2031 Women’s World Cup.

“That is what’s really exciting, kind of coming from the club side,” Bradley said. Their partners were engaging and figuring out how they could best work with us and partner with us to engage fans.

Continued growth

While the World Cup being in North America helped plenty, the NWSL and NSL are also benefitting from soccer becoming more popular in both the United States and Canada.

Jonathan Lintner, vice president of marketing and communications for Racing Louisville, said he felt as though soccer was much more isolated when he was growing up, but he’s seen more access to the sport now.

“Every time we have a World Cup, we reach a percentage more of people into acceptance of soccer as a big sport here in the United States, and so much is made of, like, ‘It’s the biggest sport in the world — why is it not more popular in the U.S.?’ he said. “But that gap has closed, I think, more than we’re all maybe noticing.”

Lexie Linderman is a student in John Curley Center for Sports Journalism at Penn State. AP Sports Writer Anne M. Peterson in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributed to this report.

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World Tofu Day created the best excuse to finally cook tofu right

By **Kristen Wood**
The Associated Press

World Tofu Day, which is observed every July 26, shines a spotlight on one of the world’s most versatile proteins. Once associated mainly with vegetarian diets, tofu now appears everywhere from homemade stir-fries and grain bowls to restaurant menus and supermarket meal kits, prized for its affordability, versatility, and ability to absorb bold flavors.

Tofu consumption in the United States continues to climb as Americans embrace affordable, protein-rich foods that fit into both meatless and flexitarian diets. Analysts valued the global tofu market at nearly \$6.93 billion last year and project it will more than double to \$13.8 billion by 2034.

What many once dismissed as a bland or intimidating protein has become one of the most versatile ingredients in modern home kitchens. World Tofu Day offers a reminder that good tofu does not require elaborate techniques or strict dietary labels. Sometimes all it takes is learning how to cook it right.

Tofu finally fits modern eating habits

Tofu’s appeal goes far beyond vegetarian circles. According to a recent *Fortune* Business Insights report, soy-based protein has become a cornerstone of plant-forward eating thanks to its high protein content, affordability, and adaptability in countless cuisines. Growing numbers of vegetarian, vegan, and flexitarian consumers have helped move tofu into the mainstream, while manufacturers continue to expand its presence in ready meals, meat alternatives, and other convenience products.

Health concerns also play a role. The report notes that rising awareness around nutrition, increasing lactose intolerance, and concerns about the environmental impact of animal agriculture are fuelling demand. Companies are responding with flavored tofu, improved textures, and value-added products that appeal to western consumers who may have once viewed tofu as unfamiliar.

The shift aligns with the American Heart Association’s updated dietary guidelines, which emphasize eating more plant-based options such as beans, lentils, and tofu and minimally processed foods while reducing saturated fat



TASTY TOFU. World Tofu Day, which is observed every July 26, shines a spotlight on one of the world’s most versatile proteins. Once associated mainly with vegetarian diets, tofu now appears everywhere from homemade stir-fries and grain bowls to restaurant menus and supermarket meal kits, prized for its affordability, versatility, and ability to absorb bold flavors. Pictured are a plate of fried tofu, left, and a Thai peanut veggie and tofu bowl, right.

and highly processed options.

It’s the technique, not the tofu

Many tofu skeptics react to poorly prepared tofu rather than the ingredient itself. Tofu World notes that common mistakes such as skipping the pressing step, underseasoning, using the wrong variety, or expecting tofu to mimic meat can leave it watery, bland, or unpleasantly textured.

Experts increasingly emphasize that texture and flavor come from technique, not from the ingredient alone, and the appeal lies in its versatility rather than any single flavor profile. In a recent Simply Recipes feature, chefs agreed that one of the best ways to cook tofu is in an air fryer. Cookbook author Erin Clarke dips air-fried tofu cubes in peanut sauce; recipe developer Kat Marris seasons hers with tamari, garlic powder, and nutritional yeast. Meanwhile, food writer Jeanine Donofrio uses crispy tofu in grain bowls and vegetable-forward meals.

Different varieties also serve different purposes. Choosing the proper type of tofu and understanding how it behaves during cooking makes a dramatic difference in the final dish. Firm and extra-firm tofu work best for grilling, pan-frying, and roasting, while softer varieties shine in soups, sauces, and desserts.

Once seasoned and cooked correctly, tofu readily absorbs marinades and aromatics, allowing it to take on bold flavors from cuisines around the world. That versatility explains why chefs often describe it as a blank canvas with undeniable culinary strengths. Understanding that role helps explain why tofu performs so well in everything from curries to stir-fries and grain bowls, absorbing surrounding flavors while maintaining a texture that holds up across a wide range of cooking methods.

Social media teaches a new generation how to cook tofu

Social media has played a major role in tofu’s revival. TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are filled with creators who demonstrate simple techniques that remove much of the mystery surrounding the ingredient. From crispy air-fried cubes to spicy tofu bowls and creamy sauces, short videos have helped transform tofu from an intimidating grocery item into a weeknight staple, alongside dishes like zesty butter beans and other high-protein plant-based favorites.

Creators often emphasize the same lessons professional chefs have shared for years: prep it right, season generously, and embrace texture. In her Instagram reel,

Continued on page 14

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The spice rack explains how American cooking changed

By Shruthi Baskaran-Makanju

The Associated Press

In late March, spice maker McCormick and consumer giant Unilever agreed to a \$44.8 billion deal to combine their operations around a single category: flavor. It is one of the largest food deals in years and a wager on how Americans cook and eat now. The same shift these companies bet on has been building for a while, both on restaurant menus and in home kitchens.

Packaged food has lost ground as shoppers move away from processed meals they no longer consider healthy. The food product merger would bring Unilever’s Hellmann’s and Knorr under the same roof as McCormick’s existing lineup of French’s, Frank’s RedHot, Cholula, and Old Bay. That allows Unilever to shift away from prepackaged dinners and lean heavier on spices that enhance all meals.

A record-size bet on flavor

McCormick, the company behind the red-capped jars in most American spice cabinets, agreed to merge with Unilever’s food business, a combination Bloomberg reports values the food unit at \$44.8 billion. According to CNN, the combined company would generate roughly \$20 billion in annual sales. That would rank it among the largest flavor and condiment companies in the world, and the deal is expected to close in mid-2027.

The logic behind it is plain: seasoning has not lost ground. When McCormick reported second-quarter results in June, net sales rose 16.7% to \$1.94 billion, but most of that increase came from a Mexico



acquisition and higher pricing rather than from shoppers buying more spice. Organic growth was 1.7%.

From the menu to the pantry

The consumer side of the shift shows up first on restaurant menus. The National Restaurant Association’s 2026 What’s Hot forecast, based on a survey of hundreds of chefs and released in November, named comfort food reimagined through global flavors as a defining trend for the year, with dishes such as Caribbean curry bowls moving from specialty menus into the mainstream. Chad Moutray, the association’s chief economist, called comfort and value the twin pillars shaping American menus.

That momentum is measurable. Hot honey now appears on 11% of U.S. menus after growing nearly 200% over four years,

according to the food research firm Datassential, and Korean gochujang ranks among the fastest-growing condiments in terms of consumer awareness. Both trade on the same sweet-and-spicy profile, now common enough to carry its own name, swicy. These are not niche restaurant flourishes, but flavors people then look for at the grocery store.

What the spice cabinet now holds

The home spice cabinet has followed the menu. A rack that a generation ago held garlic powder, paprika, and dried oregano now often carries za’atar, garam masala, gochugaru, berbere, Tajín, and furikake. The change is less about cooking fully traditional dishes from scratch than about borrowing flavor systems: za’atar over roasted vegetables, garam masala stirred

into a pot of lentils, chili-lime on grilled corn, furikake on a bowl of rice. A spoonful of gochugaru is the difference between plain broth and a Korean tofu soup.

The approach travels across cuisines and price points. A few dollars’ worth of spices turn the same beans, rice, or eggs into a different meal, which matters at a time when grocery prices remain elevated. Curry powder and a cup of red lentils become a pot of mulligatawny, the Anglo-Indian soup adapted from a South Indian pepper broth. A handful of tomatoes and a box of pasta become a penne pomodoro.

A shelf that keeps getting more personal

What the spice rack records, in the end, is a kitchen that has grown less standardized. Immigration and diaspora cooking, restaurant trends, social media recipes, and wider grocery store shelves have each added jars. Budget cooking and the steady rise of vegetarian and flexitarian meals have added more. The result is that two American spice cabinets increasingly look nothing alike.

The companies now spending billions are counting on exactly that. The McCormick and Unilever deal would place roughly \$20 billion in annual sales under one company built entirely around flavor, on the premise that seasoning is the part of the meal Americans are least willing to give up.

Shruthi Baskaran-Makanju is a food and travel writer and a global food systems expert based in Seattle, Washington. She has lived in or travelled extensively to more than 60 countries, and shares stories and recipes inspired by those travels on Urban Farmie.

Why losing weight isn’t just about counting calories — and what to do about it

By J.M. Hirsch

The Associated Press

BOSTON — When it comes to losing weight, it turns out the simple math of counting calories doesn’t always add up.

Fad diets come and go, but the underlying message almost always follows a simple equation. If you consume fewer calories than you burn, the weight will melt away.

In principle, it’s true. And counting calories can be a useful tool for managing weight. But it only works if you know what numbers you’re counting. And what’s been billed as basic math can sometimes look more like Einstein’s theory of relativity.

That’s because a complex web of factors influences how or even if our bodies process calories. And it turns out diet quality is just as important as quantity, and possibly more.

“Different foods have very different effects on the brain, liver, fat cells, muscle function, pancreas, and all organs related to metabolism and body weight,” said Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, a cardiologist and director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University.

Counting calories could burn you

A calorie is the unit of energy used to count what the body can get from carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. That sounds simple, but the complexity of counting calories went mainstream recently, when a lawsuit accused the maker of David protein bars of affixing labels that misrepresent how many calories and how much fat the products contain. The lawsuit has since been dropped.

The allegations were based on an analysis of the bars using bomb calorimetry, which measures calories by burning food and calculating the amount of heat released, a method that counts every potential calorie. But our bodies aren’t combustion chambers and don’t treat all calories the same. The company’s numbers, like many food labels, are based only on the calories our bodies can actually



use. Technically, both are correct, but only the latter matters for diet.

“You could put sawdust into a bomb calorimeter and you would get basically 4 calories per gram,” said Dr. David Ludwig, an endocrinologist and researcher at Boston Children’s Hospital. “If you’re a termite, yes, you’ll get calories from it. But humans won’t.”

The calorie counts on most nutrition labels reflect the total our bodies are likely to metabolize, not their burn rate. But they still can be misleading. Because of permitted rounding, the tallies can be off by as much as 20%. Additionally, the digestibility of an ingredient, whether and how it is cooked, to what extent it was processed, variations in processing, even quirks in our own DNA — all of these things influence whether and how our bodies use the calories we eat. Even that is just the start of the complications.

Calories are simple.

How your body uses them is not.

Our bodies determine how to process calories — either burning them or storing them — depending in part on our energy needs. But the quality of the calories matters, too. High-glycemic foods, such as white breads, pastas, and sugars, are easily converted to usable energy and trigger our bodies to store calories, Ludwig said.

Foods containing resistant starches, including some beans, whole grains, and seeds, resist easy conversion into usable energy and don’t trigger that same storage response. They also are more difficult to process, so we absorb fewer of the total calories contained in them.

“Having a snack of 8 ounces of sugary beverage, 100 calories, should be better for your weight than 1 ounce of nuts at 200 calories, right?” Ludwig said. “That’s the opposite of what actually happens because those 100 calories, even if they’re fewer at that moment, they shift your body toward storing fat and leave you hungrier sooner.”

Which of course triggers you to eat more, well, calories.

Even cooking and ripeness influence the equation. The calories in cooked foods are more easily absorbed than from raw ingredients, while the calories in unripe produce, such as bananas, are less easily absorbed. This means the number of calories you get from eating a medium banana, which is listed at 105 calories, can depend on how ripe it is.

Processing, including something as simple as grinding a food, can change caloric impact.

“One classic example is that the calories in whole almonds are absorbed substantially less well than the calories in almond butter,” Ludwig said. “Just

CALORIE CONSIDERATIONS. A customer shops at a Grocery Outlet store in Pleasanton, California, in this September 15, 2022 file photo. Fad diets come and go, but the underlying message almost always follows a simple equation. If you consume fewer calories than you burn, the weight will melt away. In principle, it’s true. And counting calories can be a useful tool for managing weight. But it only works if you know what numbers you’re counting. And what’s been billed as basic math can sometimes look more like Einstein’s theory of relativity. (AP Photo/Terry Chea, File)

processing the almonds into almond butter causes a change in how much they will be absorbed.”

Ultra-processed foods introduce another challenge. Diets high in such foods have been found to decrease the number of calories we burn at rest, Mozaffarian said. That means a higher proportion of those calories will stick to your ribs.

Then there’s just plain old variation between people. Genetics lead our bodies to treat calories differently, said Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford, a Harvard Medical School obesity specialist. Even something as simple as a bad night’s sleep can change how the body processes calories. So you might absorb more or fewer calories from the same food on different days.

Should you even bother to count calories?

So what’s a weight watcher to do? Calorie counts can be a rough guideline; many people otherwise struggle to make healthy choices or determine appropriate portions, Ludwig said.

But the evidence indicates people should focus on diet quality, not just calorie quantity. Avoid ultra-processed foods, particularly refined starches, and build your diet around whole, minimally processed foods with an emphasis on plant-based ingredients rich in fiber.

“We need to think about calories in a much more sophisticated fashion than the number on the package,” Ludwig said. “The number on the package can do more harm than good by misleading people into thinking that it’s simply an accounting problem.”

J.M. Hirsch is a food and travel journalist and the former food editor for The Associated Press.

People have been fermenting food for millennia. Here’s why more people are focused on gut health now.

By Devi Shastri and Mary Conlon
The Associated Press

More people are focusing on their gut health, as fibermaxxing goes mainstream, colorectal cancer rises among young adults, and personalized gut microbiome treatments become increasingly popular.

Now, a generation- and culture-spanning way of preserving food is in the spotlight: fermentation. The federal government’s latest dietary guidelines specifically encourage Americans to eat more fermented food.

The foods have been further popularized by followers of U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement. And while other diet fads championed by MAHA have been questioned by health experts — like unproven claims about raw milk and seed oils — there’s some science behind the benefits of eating fermented foods.

Fermented foods go back thousands of years in human history, to the days when we needed to keep food from spoiling but didn’t have refrigerators. Many cultures have traditional fermented foods: yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, South Indian idli, and dosa.

Dietitians and doctors say they’re a great addition to almost anyone’s diet, but they warn against new, mass-produced products.

Here’s what to know.

Not all fermented foods are made equal

Fermentation is a process by which naturally occurring microbes including bacteria and yeast break down and preserve food.

The foods are a hot research topic, though many of their health benefits are already clear, experts say.

“We’ve been doing this for ages and we just found out more recently that it’s actually helped our gut health,” said Dr. Lisa Ganjhu, a gastroenterologist with New York University Langone Health.

Still, it doesn’t automatically mean something is healthy if it’s fermented.

“Beer and wine are fermented foods, but they’re not necessarily probiotics,” she



said. “If anything, they influence our own microbiome in more of a negative way.”

Barbara Olendzki, director of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School’s Center for Applied Nutrition, said she recommends people focus on “whole fermented foods” like fermented beets or green beans in addition to foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, and tempeh.

Fermented foods feed the gut in two main ways

The microbes in fermented foods help predigest it, breaking it down and changing the compounds available in it. The bacteria themselves also help keep the gut in balance, by competing with other bacteria — some of them less beneficial — already in your intestines.

“What is it that makes the fermented foods so healthy? The answer is we’re still working on it,” said Dalia Perelman, a Stanford University research dietitian.

Some fermented foods, like yogurt, give you the live probiotics while you’re eating them. Others, like sourdough bread, give you few, if any, because they’ve been baked or otherwise processed in ways that kill the microbes. But there’s evidence that some fermented foods are beneficial even without the live microbes, Perelman said.

Beware of marketing hype

Experts warn against sodas, chocolate,

or other processed foods that market themselves as probiotic. Even probiotic supplements are essentially trying to replicate the combinations of beneficial bacteria that naturally grow in many fermented foods, Perelman said.

“Consumers are getting excited about it and trying to choose products that are fermented and with the idea that it’s very ‘gut healthy,’ which is not a clinical definition,” she said. “And then the marketing is running with this trend.”

Avoid sugary items, too, Ganjhu said. Extra sugar feeds negative bacteria as opposed to the positive bacteria in fermented foods, she said.

And look for items that say “live cultures,” not just that they’re probiotic.

“The best yogurt you can have is just plain, fermented milk with culture,” she said. “Let it do its business.”

Can fermented foods be risky?

While the category of fermented foods is broad, experts say they’re generally safe for most people. And not just for health reasons — they also add interesting and diverse flavors to your plate.

Perelman said people who have weakened immune systems and those with irritable bowel disease may want to talk to their doctors before incorporating the foods into their diet. Some people could experience different reactions depending

GUT HEALTH. Kimchi, sauerkraut, and yogurt are displayed on a kitchen table in New York. A generation- and culture-spanning way of preserving food is again in the spotlight: fermentation. The federal government’s latest dietary guidelines specifically encourage Americans to eat more fermented food. (AP Photo/Mary Conlon)

on which type of fermented food they’re eating.

Olendzki said some people might experience bloating, gas, and other discomfort when introducing more fermented foods, especially as their gut adjusts.

“If you feel good, keep drinking it. You don’t feel good? Stop,” Ganjhu said. She noted that the same foods affect people differently.

Eat a diverse mix of fermented foods consistently

So which fermented food is the best? You’ll be hard-pressed to find a scientifically backed ranking that puts sauerkraut over kimchi, or tells you to eat a bowl of yogurt and call it a day.

The best way to eat fermented foods is to eat lots of different kinds, and to make them a regular part of your diet, experts say.

Ganjhu recommended thinking about the foods in categories, like milk-based yogurt and kefir, and fiber-based ones such as kimchi and sauerkraut.

Researchers are also still exploring if it matters how much fermented foods people eat. Just like so many things with diet, the answer is likely very different person to person, experts said.

“We can hedge our bets and just get a variety,” Perelman said. She suggested aiming for two servings a day.

And the foods should be one part of a well-rounded diet, so the good bacteria you’re introducing to your gut have things they like to eat, like fibrous prebiotics. They feed the probiotics, which are the live bacteria themselves.

“Just go slow and drink a lot of water. It also matters what the rest of the diet looks like,” Olendzki said. “It’s not just one thing.”

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for content.

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Kaylee Hottle, deaf *Godzilla* actor, killed in car crash at 18

By Rebecca Boone and Larry Lage
The Associated Press

Kaylee Hottle, a deaf actor best known for her starring role in two *Godzilla* films, died in a car crash in Maryland in the early morning on July 21, the Frederick County Sheriff’s Office said. She was 18 years old.

Hottle was one of two passengers in the car when it went off the road and hit a culvert in Ijamsville before 3:00am. The driver was taken to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, and the other passenger declined medical treatment, according to a news release from the sheriff’s office. Excessive speed is believed to be a factor in the crash, which is under investigation, the sheriff’s office said.

Hottle was a native signer of American Sign Language, and her family members are also deaf. Her parents, Joshua and Ketsi Hottle, shared emotional video statements about her death on social media sites.

“Kaylee’s mom and four siblings are crushed,” her father said in ASL in a post from an airport. “They are together at home, grieving. I am on my way to Maryland to bring Kaylee’s body back home.”

Hottle’s heart stopped before she arrived at a hospital, transported by air from the scene of the accident, her father said. “Very grateful for the 18 years we had together — and wish we had more,” he said.

Joshua Hottle also reached out to the driver, described by the sheriff’s office as a 19-year-old Frederick man.

“I have forgiven you,” her father said. “Don’t let this incident ruin the rest of your life.”

“I still feel Kaylee is with us,” her mother said in ASL in a post.

In *Godzilla vs. Kong* and the sequel, *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*, Hottle played an orphaned girl named Jia who sees beyond Kong’s threatening appearance and forms a special bond with the monster, communicating with him using sign language.

“I’m so devastated to hear this. You will be deeply missed Kaylee,” her *Godzilla* co-star Millie Bobby Brown posted on Instagram.

Co-star Alexander Skarsgård, who learned ASL to communicate with Hottle, told the pop culture website *Junkee* in 2021 that he and others were impressed by the



Photo by Richard Shotwell/Invision/AP



Warner Bros. Entertainment via AP

TRAGIC PASSING. Kaylee Hottle, left photo, arrives at the premiere of *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* on March 25, 2024, in Los Angeles. In the image on the right, Hottle is seen in a scene from *Godzilla vs. Kong*. Hottle played an orphaned girl named Jia who sees beyond Kong’s threatening appearance and forms a special bond with the monster, communicating with him using sign language.

of “Magnum P.I.” She was listed as appearing in the upcoming film *What Doesn’t Kill Us*.

“I’m so heartbroken. My heart goes out to her family during this unimaginable time,” Alaqua Cox, her co-star in that film and fellow deaf actor, wrote on Instagram.

Other prominent deaf actors also shared messages of grief online.

“I am absolutely gutted about the passing of sweet Kaylee Hottle. May her beauty and talent be a memory for eternity,” Oscar winner Marlee Matlin wrote on Instagram.

Fellow Oscar winner Troy Kotsur, who starred in the film *Coda*, wrote that Hottle’s death made him think of his own daughter, and reminded him not to take time for granted.

“I have no words to express on what happened this morning,” Kotsur wrote, offering his “deepest condolences” to the Hottle family.

Officials with the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin also announced Hottle’s death on Facebook, writing that counselling and support services would be available to her classmates and friends.

“Please keep Kaylee’s loved ones in your thoughts as we mourn this tremendous loss together,” the school wrote.

Boone reported from Boise, Idaho.
Lage reported from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Tofu vendor delivers much more than healthy food

Continued from page 3

worth. She feels that the job saved her.

She says she was bullied in school and fired from several jobs until she found that delivering high-quality, healthy food also nourished her own mental health and offered value to others.

“Selling tofu on a cart made me think I am OK to be myself,” Sugaya explained. “I used to be repeatedly put down, but through cart-selling I built up my self-esteem.”

“I was still nervous with women around my age,” she added. “But I felt safe when surrounded by the elderly whose smiles are warm and kind.”

Shinji Saito comes by Sugaya’s shop daily. Saito, who has epilepsy, calls her accepting personality “magical.”

She’s also a link to a time when vendors walked through neighborhoods selling ramen, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and other items.

“Delivery of newspapers or tofu, what used to be part of our daily lives, have been replaced by delivery apps or smart phones,” Sugaya said. “One can easily

spend a day without having any verbal conversation with others.”

“When you go to a convenience store, you hit a button on a screen and don’t even say hello to anyone. It leaves you empty.”

Sugaya makes her rounds three days per week, a three-hour walk in the afternoon.

Her route twists through maze-like streets, and there are sporadic sales — and frequent conversations. A woman walks from her house to buy tofu, chats about her unruly cat, and shows off a strand of wild vine growing in her garden. Another woman reminds Sugaya that cart-selling is a disappearing craft.

“Even when I’m in need of tofu, I tell myself I’d better wait for Ako-chan,” said customer Toshi Niiyama, using Sugaya’s nickname. “We used to have someone coming to sell vegetables, but he stopped coming.”

Sugaya has no such plans to stop.

“I go this way on Mondays, that way on Saturdays, and that way on Thursdays,” she explained. “I go even if it’s raining because my customers expect to see me — or just because they want to have a talk.”

World Tofu Day created the best excuse to finally cook tofu right

Continued from page 11

food content creator Jasmine Briones says, “2026 is the year we rebrand tofu. It’s not gross, it’s just misunderstood!” and shared quick recipes like marry me tofu, tofu karaage, and tofu bacon. Ahmad Noori, also known as Dr. Vegan, garnered thousands of likes on his recent Korean-style popcorn tofu video. These platforms have turned what was once considered a health-food niche into the ultimate foundation for quick meals and vegetarian weeknight dinners.

This digital enthusiasm has also encouraged experimentation, introducing younger home cooks to flavors that extend far beyond basic stir-fries. Rather than treating tofu as a niche food, many creators present it as just another versatile ingredient alongside beans, vegetables, and grains. In the process, social platforms have helped a new generation discover that cooking tofu well is less about following strict rules and more about understanding how to bring out its strengths.

World Tofu Day celebrates that spirit of curiosity. What once seemed intimidating now feels approachable, thanks in part to millions of home cooks sharing techniques,

recipes, and small victories one video at a time.

World Tofu Day is the perfect time to revisit a classic

World Tofu Day is a reminder that some of the most flexible ingredients in the kitchen are also the most overlooked. Whether pan-fried until crisp, blended into sauces, or folded into saucy curries, tofu rewards simple technique with an impressive range and depth.

Instead of defaulting to familiar staples, this is the perfect moment to try a new tofu recipe, whether that’s a bold stir-fry, a crunchy air-fried version, or a globally inspired bowl that pushes flavor in a new direction. It can also be as simple as experimenting with a different marinade or swapping tofu into a dish you already love. However it’s used, tofu proves that versatility isn’t about limitation but about possibility.

Kristen Wood is a photographer, food writer, recipe developer, and creator of *MOON and spoon and yum*. She is also the author of the *Vegetarian Family Cookbook*, *Fermented Hot Sauce Cookbook*, and *Hot Sauce Cookbook for Beginners*. Her work has been featured in various online and print publications, including *NBC*, *The Seattle Times*, *Elle*, *Martha Stewart*, *Forbes*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and more.

U.S. has more measles cases this year than in all of 2025

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Vaccination is about protecting others, physician says

Dr. Mark Roberts, retired director of the Public Health Dynamics Lab at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, worries most for the people he calls “innocent bystanders.”

Research and measles modelling by his team shows those who cannot get vaccinated — young babies, people with weak immune systems, and those who rarely don’t get robust immunity from the vaccine — bear the brunt of outbreaks

early on.

Some people see skipping vaccination as like deciding not to wear a seat belt in a car, Roberts said.

“Not vaccinating your kid is like saying, ‘I don’t want my car to have brakes,’” he said. “Because it’s other people that you can hit. It’s not just you in your car. It’s other people.”

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Department of Consumer & Business Services



Occupational Safety and Health Division – Oregon OSHA

What you need to know about workplace safety and health

Under the Oregon Safe Employment Act, workers have a right to safe and healthy working conditions and employers must make that right a reality.

Workers have a right to raise concerns about hazards free of retaliation. Employers must understand the Oregon OSHA requirements that apply to their jobsites, educate and train their workers, and comply with specific rules that apply to their workplace.

Oregon OSHA enforces workplace safety and health requirements. The division also offers employers free, nonenforcement resources to help comply with requirements. Resources include free and confidential consultation services.

Contact Oregon OSHA at
1-800-922-2689 or use free educational resources at
<https://osha.oregon.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

dcbs.oregon.gov

A decade in, Studio Ghibli Fest keeps growing as new generations flock to *Totoro*, *Ponyo*, and more

By Jake Coyle
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Whenever the calendar comes out, Amanda Mendoza VanCleave circles the dates.

Studio Ghibli Fest, the long-running theatrical revivals of Ghibli movies, has taken on a special meaning for her, her 3-year-old daughter, and her mother, Araceli. Every year, they go to see each Ghibli rerelease in theaters.

“Right when she sees the opening Totoro logo, she screams ‘Totoro!’” VanCleave, 34, says of her daughter. “Everyone in the theater started laughing, and I was like, ‘Oh, gosh, sorry.’”

Though the family discovered the Ghibli movies on HBO Max, the outings to their favorite theater in Austin, Texas, became a tradition. In early July, when they went (again) to see Hayao Miyazaki’s 1988 anime classic, *My Neighbor Totoro*, they were matching Totoro jammies.

“It’s been our thing,” says VanCleave. “Us three girls together.”

The passionate fandom Ghibli tends to inspire is well-documented. Yet the consistency of the Japanese animation studio’s films in theaters — years, even decades after their release — is without parallel in movies. Every year, longtime Ghibli fans as well as new, little ones, flock to cinemas.

Sporadically dated from June through October, Ghibli Fest has been running for a decade. Movies like *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Spirited Away*, and *Ponyo* have become not occasional rereleases but practically theatrical mainstays. Ghibli Fest is more like an ongoing movie marathon: cinema’s answer to Bob Dylan’s Never Ending Tour.

And, remarkably, it keeps growing. When GKids, the North American distributor for Ghibli, and Fathom Entertainment launched Ghibli Fest in 2017, its five titles accounted for \$5 million in ticket sales. But the festival’s biggest box-office years have been the last three — all after Ghibli titles became easy to stream on HBO Max in 2020.

“I’d be lying if I thought the program when we conceived it would be going as long as it has,” says Dave Jesteadt, GKids president. “It does defy conventional wisdom. We keep waiting for the year that people tire of going to the films, but that’s



not what’s happening. Every single year, we see records being set. The grosses are going up, not down.”

Ghibli expands its footprint

The biggest year for Ghibli Fest was 2024, when 14 movies accounted for \$16.4 million in sales. Last year, eight movies grossed \$10.6 million. This year, both *Ponyo* and *My Neighbor Totoro* have already played for popular five-day stints.

Shannah Miller, vice president of marketing for Fathom, a company owned by the country’s top theater chains, has watched demand keep expanding.

“When we started, I think our theatrical footprint was about 640 locations,” Miller says. “This year, we’re crossing over 1,100 locations. We started with two, maybe three playdates for a particular title, but due to fan demand, we have five-day runs for some titles.”

When GKids first got the Ghibli library in 2011, the Japanese studio emphasized how important theatrical was to them. First GKids hosted retrospectives, mostly in major markets and at arthouses. But Ghibli Fest moved the movies into multiplexes where a new generation of kids might stop before a cardboard cutout of Kiki (from *Kiki’s Delivery Service*) or No-Face (from *Spirited Away*) and wonder if there might be animated movie worlds beyond Disney.

“One of the worst things that can happen to classics is that they’re perceived as classics and kept in amber,” says Jesteadt. “We wanted to move to a nationwide celebration that really treated these as equivalent to any new Hollywood film.”

While North America moviegoing is up more than 10% this year, theaters have learned over the last decade that they can’t always depend on a steady stream of new Hollywood releases. There tend to be soft spots in the schedule, and early weekdays are always slow, anyhow.

Older movies have, increasingly, filled in the gaps. Ghibli Fest, though, predates more recent repertory trends. And the long-term effects have paid dividends, helping foster new Ghibli lovers. While an earlier generation might have been introduced first through Miyazaki’s 2001 masterpiece *Spirited Away*, GKids now sees younger moviegoers indoctrinated by *Ponyo* or *Howl’s Moving Castle*.

“When we introduced the catalog to streaming in 2020 for the first time, we thought, ‘OK, surely, this is maybe the moment,’” says Jesteadt. “But if anything, that just brought in a new audience that wanted to see these films in theaters for the first time.”

“More fun than HBO Max”

This year’s fest continues with *Tales of Earthsea* (August 8 & 10), *Only Yesterday* (August 9 & 11), the 40th anniversary of the first Ghibli release, 1986’s *Castle in the Sky* (August 22 to 26), a 4K remastered *Princess Mononoke* (September 26 to 30), and finally a 25th anniversary for *Spirited Away* (October 17 to 21).

While some of these movies are revived in other countries, Ghibli Fest is so far a strictly U.S.-based phenomenon.

“We are equally in awe of and proud of what we’re building and the opportunity to celebrate instead of all the doom and

PERSISTENT POPULARITY. *Ghibli Fest*, long-running theatrical revivals of Ghibli movies, launched in 2017. The screenings are places for Ghibli fans, new and old, to congregate and immerse themselves in the natural splendor of the films. Pictured is an image from *Ponyo*, celebrated animator Hayao Miyazaki’s tale about the adventures of a five-year-old boy and a goldfish princess who longs to become human. (Image courtesy of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)

gloom, ‘Is theater dead?’ conversations,” Miller says. “We have a different story to tell with Studio Ghibli.”

Studio Ghibli is such a cultural powerhouse that there are countless opportunities to reconnect with its stories. The Academy Museum is hosting a new “Ponyo” exhibit. The composer, Joe Hisaishi, is touring the music of many of the films, including a seven-night residency at New York’s Radio City Music Hall this month.

But the movies, themselves, on the big screen, are the eternal flames of Ghibli. The screenings are places for Ghibli fans, new and old, to congregate and immerse themselves in the natural splendor of the films.

Angela Lector, 27, has attended *Howl’s Moving Castle* dressed as its hero, Sophie, and met Japanese film students at a showing of *Princess Mononoke*, a favorite from when she was a kid.

“Being in the theater is so much more fun than being on HBO Max,” says Lector. “Being in your home, you can make your own popcorn and cuddle up with your dog. But being in the theater you can actually talk to people you don’t know about the movie.”

Ghibli fans’ only gripes are usually that the festival doesn’t feature more deep cuts from the library. Lector would love to see 1984’s pre-Ghibli *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* brought back.

“The Ghibli films are timeless. There’s something for everyone in them,” Lector says. “Everything feels human. No one is too powerful or too small.”

That can go for audience members, too. VanCleave recently noticed a classmate of her daughter’s wearing a bow like Kiki’s.

“I saw her mom and asked about it. We got to talking, and she also had watched Ghibli movies at home,” VanCleave says. “So, we invited her to *Ponyo*, and it was her first movie theater experience. It was cute. The two 3-year-olds shared a recliner.”

Grieving South Koreans seek comfort in AI videos of deceased loved one

Continued from page 5

much harder to manage as they look ahead to the possibility of so-called “griefbots” or “deathbots,” which simulate two-way conversations between bereaved people and AI versions of dead loved ones. Startups are already experimenting with such products.

“Psychologically, a healthy mourning involves a process to acknowledge the absence of the deceased and pass through the pains of their losses,” Choung said. “But speaking with an AI system simulating a living person could undermine the process of accepting deaths and rather cause a negative effect of leaving bereaved families trapped in a fantasy.”

Won said he’s cautious about launching an AI chatbot service because real-time conversations with people could not be supervised by company officials and may cause unexpected ethical problems.

Still, both the technology and acceptance of it are moving quickly.

Choi said technological advances make it possible to replicate even the wrinkles and skin pores of a deceased person in remarkable detail, and that customers now say their loved ones’ AI likenesses

really look like them.

Ro said interactive chatbots have technological hurdles to overcome, such as a mismatch between their verbal comments and their facial expressions. They also tend to seem less human when conversations get longer.

“Some people ask why we can’t have an hour-long conversation with chatbots, though we can talk with them for five minutes. There are efforts to develop the technology to make an hour-long conversation possible,” Ro said.

Ro said he made a one-minute video with AI likenesses of his own parents after they both died last year and played it at a gathering with his siblings. When the family saw digital versions of their parents saying “Don’t worry” and “Take care,” they were all very moved.

But Ro said he and his siblings didn’t watch it again. “One time was enough to watch it to honor our late parents who were quite elderly. We moved on,” he said.



Along with asbestos and tobacco, alcohol is in the highest risk group for cancer.



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Events calendar

“Oregon’s Nikkei: An American Story of Resilience”

Currently on view, 10am-4pm (Wed-Sat), 11am-4pm (Sun), Japanese American Museum of Oregon at the Naito Center (411 NW Flanders St, Portland). View “Oregon’s Nikkei: An American Story of Resilience,” an exhibit that highlights the discrimination, resilience, and identity of the Japanese American community in Oregon. The display begins in rural Oregon and the streets of Portland’s Japantown where Japanese immigrants embraced American ideals. What they built was abruptly taken away during World War II when people of Japanese descent were imprisoned in American internment camps. From early immigration through current day, the exhibit explores the Japanese American experience and includes the rebuilding of communities and the ongoing fight for justice. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-1458 or visit <www.jamo.org>.

“A Tale of Portland’s Historic Chinatowns”

Currently on view, 11am-3pm (Thu-Sun), Portland Chinatown Museum (127 NW Third Ave, Portland). View “Beyond the Gate: A Tale of Portland’s Historic Chinatowns,” a display of rare objects such as Chinese opera costumes, theatrical sets, bilingual text, audio-visual media, and more that tell a sprawling transnational story of contact and trade between China and the west, focusing on Portland’s Old Chinatown (1850-1905) and New Chinatown (1905-1950). For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-0008 or visit <www.portlandchinatownmuseum.org>.

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

Through Aug 15, Keller Auditorium (222 SW Clay St, Portland). Watch *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, a play about Harry Potter’s head-strong son Albus, who befriends the son of his fiercest rival, Draco Malfoy. The journey includes spells, an epic battle, and a mind-blowing race through time that has the power to change the past and future forever. The production, which is presented by Broadway in Portland and is recommended for attendees age 8 and above, runs 2 hours, 55 minutes with one intermission. The show contains strobe lights and other visual and sound effects. For info, showtimes, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 248-4335, or visit <www.portland5.com> or <www.broadwayinportland.com>.

Free Lunch + Play

Through Aug 21, 10am-2pm (Mon-Fri), Portland area parks. Free meals and activities for kids are held at nearly two dozen Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) parks. Free Lunch + Play is a drop-in program held on weekdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm. PP&R staff are on-site serving free lunches and offering games and activities to youth in the community. The program is provided in partnership with Portland Public Schools and the Centennial, David Douglas, and Parkrose school districts. Most sites are open through August 21. Schedules translated into multiple languages are available online. For info, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov>. To view a full schedule of events, visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

Free open swims at PP&R outdoor pools

Through Aug 23; Mon, 6:30-8pm, Creston Pool (4454 SE Powell Blvd, Portland); Tue, 1-3:45pm, Peninsula Pool (700 N Rosa Parks Way, Portland); Tue, 6-8pm, Montavilla Pool (8219 NE Glisan St, Portland); Wed, 1-3pm, Grant Pool (2300 NE 33rd Ave, Portland); Wed, 6:30-8pm, Sellwood Pool (7951 SE Seventh Ave, Portland); Thu, 1:30-3:30pm, Pier Pool (9341 N St. Johns Ave, Portland). Attend free open play and swimming at Portland Parks & Recreation outdoor pools. Sessions are open to all and no registration is necessary. Peninsula Outdoor Pool closes on Monday, September 7; all other outdoor pools close August 23. For info, or to verify free swim times, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

PP&R Summer Free For All

Through Aug 29, Portland area parks. Portland Parks & Recreation’s (PP&R) Summer Free For All (SFFA) program is offering family-friendly festivals, concerts, qigong, yoga, tai chi, zumba, and special events for people to attend. For info, or to obtain park addresses, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov/parks>. To view a full schedule of events, visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.



“Mixed Flock: 30 Years”

Through Aug 29, 10am-5pm (Tue-Sat), PDX Contemporary Art (1881 NW Vaughn St, Portland). View “Mixed Flock: 30 Years,” a group exhibit featuring works by Yamamoto Masao, Amjad Faur, D.E. May, Storm Tharp, and many others. For info, call (503) 222-0063 or visit <www.pdxcontemporaryart.com>.

PP&R Movies in the Park

Through Aug 29, 7:30pm (events), dusk (films begin), Portland area parks. Portland Parks & Recreation’s (PP&R) Movies in the Park program is offering many family-friendly films this summer. Pre-movie events begin at 7:30pm. Film screenings begin at dusk and/or when it is dark enough to see the screen. The 2026 season includes: *A Minecraft Movie* (2025) (Aug. 7, Mill Park); *How to Train Your Dragon* (2025) (Aug. 13, Wilshire Park); *The Princess Bride* (1987) (Aug. 15, Irving Park); *Drumline* (2002) (Aug. 16, Lillis-Albina Park); *Lilo and Stitch* (2025) (Aug. 20, Farragut Park); *Ratatouille* (2007) (Aug. 28, Luuwit View Park); *Wicked* (2024) (Aug. 29, Hamilton Park); and more. For info, or to obtain park addresses, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov/parks>. To view a full schedule of films, visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

“The Yasui Family: An American Story”

Through Sep 6, 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat), noon-5pm (Sun), Oregon Historical Society Museum (1200 SW Park Ave, Portland). View “The Yasui Family: An American Story,” a display that tells the story of the Yasui family, who were among the millions of immigrants who came to the United States seeking new opportunities during the late 1800s and early 1900s. They established roots in Oregon, started families and businesses, and shaped the social and economic fabric of the communities where they lived. Through photographs, personal journals, documents, and objects, the exhibit explores how one Japanese American family’s story reflects the complexity of the American story. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 222-1741 or visit <www.ohs.org>.

“Behind the Shoji” marketplace

Through Sep 7, 10am-5:30pm (Wed-Mon), Portland Japanese Garden (611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). Attend the “Behind the Shoji” show and sale of Japanese and Japan-inspired wares, including textiles, prints, clothing, ceramics, home décor, and more. Located behind the shoji (sliding screens) of the Pavilion Gallery, visitors are able to peruse a variety of curated items often unavailable short of a visit to Japan. For info, call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

“Lost & Found: Searching For Home”

Through Sep 14, 10am-5pm (Wed-Sun), Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (719 S King St, Seattle). View “Lost & Found: Searching For Home,” an exhibit with paintings, video, and installations by Eric Chan, Lauren Iida, Ravleen Kaur, and Kyler Pahang that explore the complex relationship between place and belonging through the lens of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) identity. The display features the artists unpacking attempts to reconnect with their cultural homelands through both physical and emotional journeys to answer the timeless question: where and what defines “home?” For info, or to purchase tickets, call (206) 623-5124 or visit <www.wingluke.org>.

“TITANIC: The Artifact Exhibition”

Through Oct 18, 9:30am-5:30pm (Mon-Fri), 9:30am-7pm (Sat), 9:30am-5:30pm (Sun), Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (1945 SE Water Ave, Portland). View “TITANIC: The Artifact Exhibition,” a display of more than 100 authentic artifacts recovered from the wrecksite of the famous ship that embarked on her first and final journey in April of 1912. The exhibit reveals science and engineering in the early 20th century; a glimpse into the lives of the people whose journeys were forever changed by her voyage; and the contemporary effort to recover artifacts and conserve the wrecksite. In a first for West Coast audiences, the exhibit features a sweeping Immersive Gallery that brings the ship to life by pairing cinematic visuals with audio reenactments of passenger and crew accounts of *Titanic*’s grandeur, society, and tragedy. An optional VR tour immerses guests in the sights, sounds, and emotions of *Titanic*, including historically accurate views of previously unseen areas of the ship. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 797-4000 or visit <www.oms.edu>.



STANDING FOR JUSTICE. “*Standing for Justice: The Japanese Americans Shaping Oregon*,” an exhibit reflecting on two milestones in U.S. history — the nation’s 250th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the termination of Executive Order 9066 — and what does democracy mean when it is denied, challenged, and ultimately restored, is on view through October 25 at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in northwest Portland. Pictured on the right is an image of Minoru Yasui, a legendary Japanese American in Oregon. The image was created by Saya Tipton, a tenth-grader at Grant High School in Portland at the time, and was the winning entry in the 2024 Minoru Yasui Student Contest. On the left is Kenji Namba at the Fort Snelling Military Intelligence Service Language School in St. Paul, Minnesota (date unknown). Namba’s family story contains many trials and triumph.

“Standing for Justice:

The Japanese Americans Shaping Oregon”

Through Oct 25, 10am-4pm (Wed-Sat), 11am-4pm (Sun), Japanese American Museum of Oregon at the Naito Center (411 NW Flanders St, Portland). View “Standing for Justice: The Japanese Americans Shaping Oregon,” an exhibit reflecting on two milestones in U.S. history — the nation’s 250th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the termination of Executive Order 9066 — and what does democracy mean when it is denied, challenged, and ultimately restored. On August 15 at 1:00pm at the annex, a panel discussion with Tiffany Koyama Lane and Elisa Dozono is scheduled. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-1458, or visit <www.jamo.org> or <www.oregon250.org>.

State of Washington Primary & Special Election

Aug 4, 8pm. Ballots for the 2026 Primary & Special Election in Washington State are due August 4 by 8:00pm. For info, or to locate an official ballot drop box, visit <www.sos.wa.gov/elections> or <https://clark.wa.gov/elections>.

National Night Out

Aug 4, 7 & 14, 4-7pm; Aug 4, Ed Benedict Park (SE 100th Ave & Powell Blvd, Portland); Aug 7, Normandale Park (NE 57th Ave & Halsey St, Portland); Aug 14, Lillis-Albina Park (N Flint Ave & Russell St, Portland). Join National Night Out (NNO) events, a chance to meet first responders, build relationships, increase transparency, and strengthen connections between community members and Portland’s public safety systems. For info, call (503) 823-4064, e-mail <safeblocksprogram@portlandoregon.gov>, or visit <www.portland.gov>.

Hiroshima & Nagasaki remembrance

Aug 6, 6-7pm, Japanese American Historical Plaza (NW Naito Parkway near NW Couch St, Portland). Attend “Remembering Hiroshima & Nagasaki,” a commemoration of the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. The family-friendly program honors lives lost to nuclear weapons. For info, call (503) 274-2720, or visit <www.oregonpsr.org> or <www.jamo.org/event/hiroshima-day-2026>.

“From Hiroshima to Hope”

Aug 6, 6-9pm, Green Lake, Northwest Shore, near the Seattle Public Theatre at the Bathhouse (7312 W Green Lake Drive N, Seattle). Commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at “From Hiroshima to Hope.” The free family-oriented program features the personalization of lanterns and koto music beginning at 6:00pm. Performances, speakers, taiko drumming, and more start at 7:00pm. The lantern-floating ceremony and lantern floating begin at dusk. The event is held in remembrance of those who perished in the atomic bombings and all victims of war and violence worldwide. For info, call (206) 623-5124, or visit <www.wingluke.org> or <www.fromhiroshimatohope.org/event-2>.

Portland Taiko free concerts

Aug 7 & 9; Aug 7, 7pm, Roseway PBOT Plaza (NE 72nd Ave & NE Mason St, Portland); Aug 9, 11am, Montavilla PBOT Plaza (7900 SE Stark St, Portland). Attend free concerts by Portland Taiko in the Roseway neighborhood and during the Montavilla Farmers Market. For info, call (503) 28TAIKO (288-2456), e-mail <info@portlandtaiko.org>, or visit <www.portlandtaiko.org>.

Vancouver Arts & Music Festival

Aug 7-9, 10am-9pm (Fri-Sat), 10am-8pm (Sun), Esther Short Park (605 Esther St, Vancouver, Wash.). Attend the Vancouver Arts & Music Festival, a three-day event celebrating music, dance, art, culture, and food. For info, call (360) 735-7278 or visit <www.vancouverartsandmusicfestival.com>.

Swapna Mukhopadhyay

Aug 7-Sep 12, 9am-9:30pm (Mon-Thu), 9am-5pm (Fri-Sat); Aug 20, 6-8pm (reception); Multnomah Arts Center (7688 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland). View hand-built functional and sculptural porcelain works by Swapna Mukhopadhyay, whose pieces are often small in scale and characterized by what she calls their “putting togetherness.” Delicate drawn elements adorn many of the ceramic surfaces, and several recent works incorporate textiles and found objects. Also on view are large-scale
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一圖千字

STUNNING PHOTOGRAPHY

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Events calendar

Continued from page 16

wood sculptures by Philip A. Robinson Jr. and a group exhibit featuring bronze pieces. For info, call (503) 823-ARTS (2787) or visit <www.multnomahartscenter.org>.

API Health and Wellness Fair

Aug 8, 9am-3pm, Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Lorenzen Conference Center (2801 N Gantenbein Ave, Portland). Attend the API Health and Wellness Fair, an event featuring free health screenings and blood pressure checks; talks and seminars with health professionals; health and wellness booths providing resources, support, and services to participants; nutrition education; giveaways; bike helmets; and more. The fair, which is free and open to the public, is presented by numerous community partners. To register (recommended), visit <www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-aapi-health-and-wellness-fair-tickets-1988230609274>.

Beaverton Night Market

Aug 8, 5-10pm, The Round (12600 SW Crescent St, Beaverton, Ore.). Attend the Beaverton Night Market, a free multicultural celebration featuring international food, arts, crafts, and cultural performances. For info, call (503) 526-2503 or (503) 526-2559, or visit <www.beavertonoregon.gov/NightMarket>.

Tibet Fest

Aug 8-9, Seattle Center, Armory Food & Event Hall (305 Harrison St, Seattle). Learn about Tibetan cultural heritage at Tibet Fest, a free event presented by Seattle Center Festal in partnership with the Tibetan Association of Washington. The event features traditional and contemporary Tibetan art, music, dance, and more. For info, or to obtain event times, call (206) 684-7200 or visit <www.seattlecenter.com>.

Washington Park Summer Festival

Aug 8-9, 6pm, Washington Park, International Rose Garden Amphitheater (410 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). Attend the two-day Washington Park Summer Festival, part of Portland Parks & Recreation's (PP&R) Summer Free For All (SFFA) program. Saturday features the Time Sound Big Band and Sunday highlights original soul music with Ural Thomas and the Pain. Attendees are encouraged to take TriMet or catch the free Explore Washington Park shuttle to the concert to avoid the packed parking area. The last shuttle leaves the International Rose Test Garden at 8:30pm on both nights. For info, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>. For shuttle info, visit <www.explorewashingtonpark.org/free-shuttle>.

Portland Timbers 2

Aug 8 & 30, Sep 7 & 14, 1pm, Providence Park (SW 18th Ave & SW Morrison St, Portland). Watch Portland Timbers 2 (T2), the Timbers' MLS NEXT Pro affiliate, take on LAFC 2 (Aug. 8), Austin FC II (Aug. 30), Whitecaps FC 2 (Sept. 7), and St. Louis City 2 (Sept. 14). Attendance to T2 games is free. Tickets (required) are available through SeatGeek. For info, or to reserve tickets, call (503) 553-5555 or visit <www.timbers.com/t2>.

Providence Bridge Pedal

Aug 9, 6:30am-12:30pm, various locations (Portland). Take part in the Providence Bridge Pedal, an event at which thousands of cyclists of all ages gather in Portland to ride across the city's bridges. Rides start as early as 6:30am. Walkers are invited to participate in the 5-mile Bridge Stride. For info, or to register, call (503) 281-9198 or visit <www.providence.org/bridgepedal>.

Portland Classic

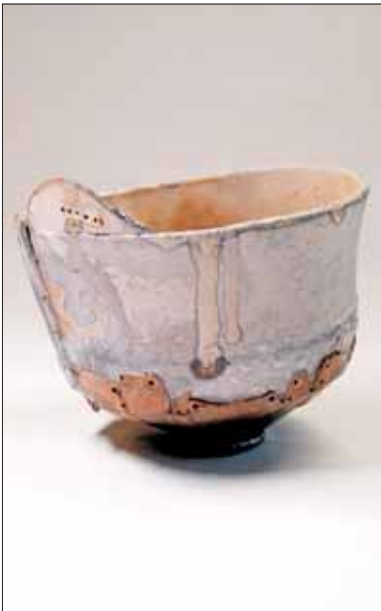
Aug 13-16, Columbia Edgewater Country Club (2220 NE Marine Dr, Portland). Attend the Portland Classic, the longest running non-major Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tournament and the only professional tour in the Pacific Northwest. For info, or to purchase tickets, e-mail <info.portlandclassic@gmail.com> or visit <www.portlandclassic.com>.

MIXED

Aug 14-15, 7pm (Fri), 2pm (Sat), Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (5340 N Interstate Ave, Portland). Witness *MIXED*, a one-hour staged reading of a mosaic comedy about what it means to have mixed heritage, created by Dmae Lo Roberts and Don Wilson Glenn. The free event includes movement choreographed by artist Chisao Hata and a discussion following the reading. For info, or to reserve a ticket (highly recommended), visit <www.eventbrite.com>.

O-Bon, The Spirit Festival

Aug 14-15, 7:30-9pm, Portland Japanese Garden (611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). Attend *O-Bon*, The Spirit Festival.



PORCELAIN PIECES. Hand-built functional and sculptural porcelain works by Swapna Mukhopadhyay are on view at the Multnomah Arts Center in southwest Portland from August 7 through September 12. Pictured (L-R) are a cup, bag, and vase. (Photos courtesy of Swapna Mukhopadhyay and the Multnomah Arts Center)

O-Bon is a Japanese Buddhist festival that honors ancestors and prays for the souls of the departed. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

“Steep & Paint”

Aug 14 & 28, Sep 11 & 25, 2-5pm, Lan Su Chinese Garden (239 NW Everett St, Portland). Attend the “Steep & Paint” series at Lan Su. In partnership with Oregon Botanical Artists (OBA), the immersive afternoon experience invites guests to slow down, look closely, and connect with plants through tea, conversation, and hands-on art-making. Each session weaves together horticulture, tea culture, and botanical art. All materials are included. For info, or to purchase tickets (required), call (503) 228-8131 or visit <www.lansugarden.org>.

Portland Thorns FC

Aug 15 & 22, Sep 6; Aug 15, 5:45pm; Aug 22, 5:45pm; Sep 6, 1pm; Providence Park (SW 18th Ave & SW Morrison St, Portland). Watch Portland Thorns FC take on the Orlando Pride (Aug. 15), the Denver Summit (Aug. 22), and the Washington Spirit (Sept. 6) in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). The Thorns FC squad features Sam Hiatt and others. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 553-5555 or visit <www.thorns.com>.

Nikkei community picnic

Aug 16, noon-5:00pm, Oaks Amusement Park, Dance Pavilion (7805 SE Oaks Park Way, near the east end of the Sellwood Bridge, Portland). Participate in the Nikkei community picnic, an afternoon of fun, food, prizes, a performance by Portland Taiko, a Shoringi Kempo demonstration, and rides. The event is sponsored by organizations and businesses of the Nikkei community, which are providing the main dish (fried chicken and a vegan entrée), watermelon, shave ice, water, plates, napkins, and eating utensils. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share or make a monetary donation to help defray costs. Ride bracelets for kids age 18 and younger may be reserved in advance (no later than August 10) by e-mailing <youth@pdxjacl.org> or leaving a voice message at 1-877-843-6914. Parking at Oaks Amusement Park is \$5.00 per car. The Dance Pavilion is the white building near the main entry. For info, or to sign up to volunteer, e-mail <contact@pdxjacl.org> or call 1-877-843-6914.

Portland Festival of Cinema, Animation & Technology

Aug 18-23, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (1945 SE Water Ave, Portland). Attend the Portland Festival of Cinema, Animation & Technology, an event featuring screenings, panels, presentations, parties, and an award ceremony. The festival highlights a variety of genres as well as films and animations created by visionary filmmakers across the globe. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 797-4000, or visit <www.oms.edu/events/pfcacat> or <www.pdxfestofcinema.com>.

PACCO rooftop networking event

Aug 20, 5-8:30pm, Ecotrust Building, Rooftop (721 NW Ninth Ave, Portland). Join the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) for an in-person networking event held on the Ecotrust Building rooftop. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages are provided. For info, or to register, call (503) 862-6853 or visit <www.pacco.org>.

Summer Festival

Aug 22, 10am-12:30pm, Portland Japanese Garden (611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). Attend a Summer Festival at the Portland Japanese Garden. A highlight of summer festivals in Japan is the *bon-odori*. Each region in Japan has its own version of the dance as well as different music. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition, *bon-odori* is a way to entertain and send off the spirits of ancestors and celebrate life. Dancers circle the *yagura*, which is a high wooden bandstand for musicians and singers. At the garden, dances are taught by Chris Dart and demonstrated by dancers from the Oregon Buddhist Temple. Participants learn the dances, see people dressed in *yukata*, and hear and feel the sound of the taiko drums. For info, to obtain the performance schedule, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

Kintsukuroi

Aug 22, 2pm, Clinton Street Theater (2522 SE Clinton St, Portland). Watch *Kintsukuroi*, a new historical drama from

**For timely information
about upcoming events, visit
<www.facebook.com/
TheAsianReporter>.**

director Kerwin Berk. The film follows members of the Ito family from their pre-war life in San Francisco's Japantown to the concentration camps of the American West to the battlefields of Europe while enduring one of the most shameful periods in American history. The film's Portland debut includes a panel discussion with director Berk and several members of the cast and crew. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-1458 or visit <www.jamo.org/event/kintsukuroi>.

India Festival

Aug 23, 10:30am-8pm, Pioneer Courthouse Square (701 SW Sixth Ave, Portland). Attend India Festival 2026, the India Cultural Association of Portland's celebration of the sounds, tastes, and sights of India. The free event features a wide range of Indian music and dance; authentic food from local restaurants; and more. Items participants should bring include water bottles, hats, shades, sunscreen, and a portable mist fan. For info, call (503) 645-7902 or visit <www.icaportland.org>.

Marianas Festival

Aug 28-29; Aug 28, 5-8pm, Heritage High School (7825 NE 130th Ave, Vancouver, Wash.); Aug 29, 9am-7pm, Blue Lake Regional Park (21224 NE Blue Lake Road, Fairview, Ore.). Attend the Marianas Festival, a two-day event presented by the Marianas Alliance for Growth of Islanders (MAGI) featuring workshops, craft vendors, resources, hands-on exhibitors, an information booth, music entertainment, Chamorro cultural dancers, and more. Attending the festival is free; parking at Blue Lake Regional Park is \$5.00 per car. Registration by August 19 is required for the workshops. For info, to register, or to obtain festival and park information and rules, e-mail <info@marianasfestival.com> or visit <www.marianasfestival.com/marianasfestival2026>.

Jade International Night Market

Aug 29, 4-10pm, Portland Community College (PCC), South-east Campus (2305 SE 82nd Ave, Portland). Attend the Jade International Night Market, a summer event celebrating and recognizing the diversity and culture of the communities who live and work in the Jade District. The event features international cuisine from local businesses, cultural performances, activities for children, and more. For info, call (971) 340-4861, e-mail <jade-info@apano.org>, or visit <www.jadedistrict.org>.

Southwest Neighborhood Bike Fair

Sep 3, 3-5:30pm, Multnomah Arts Center (7688 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland). Attend the Southwest Neighborhood Bike Fair. The free, family-friendly event features activities such as learn-to-ride coaching for adults and children, a quick-fix bike repair station, helmet fitting, bike safety stations, a Bike Skills Course, guided community rides in the neighborhood, and more. Participants are welcome to bring their own bikes or borrow one during the event. There will be different bike sizes available for children and adults. For info, call (503) 823-7699, e-mail <timoforsberg@portlandoregon.gov>, or visit <www.portland.gov>.

Time-Based Art Festival

Sep 9-13, several venues in Portland. Attend the 2026 Time-Based Art Festival (TBA:26), a gathering of artists and audiences from around the world featuring contemporary performances, exhibitions, music, and movement. For info, to purchase tickets, or to obtain a full schedule of events, call (503) 242-1419 or visit <www.pica.org>.

I-5 South 24/7 closure

Sep 11-Oct 16, I-5 South near the Rose Quarter. Starting on Friday, September 11, I-5 South though the Rose Quarter corridor will be closed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for safety and congestion improvements where I-5, I-84, and I-405 converge and for the reconnection project of the Albina neighborhood. The construction closure is expected to continue for up to five weeks (roughly October 16). (The actual I-5 closure dates are subject to change.) For info, call ODOT at (503) 470-3127, e-mail <i5RoseQuarter@odot.oregon.gov>, or visit <www.i5rosequarter.org>. To submit noise complaints, call (503) 276-7808.

Sunday Parkways: Downtown Portland

Sep 13, 11am-4pm, the Cart Blocks, Darcelle XV Plaza, Director Park, Main Street Plaza, PSU Park Blocks, Lovejoy Fountain Park, Pettygrove Park, Pioneer Courthouse Square (Portland). Walk, bike, rollerblade, skateboard, and more around downtown Portland without motor traffic during a Sunday Parkways event. Entertainment, live music, bike education and repair, activities for both adults and children, vendor marketplaces, and more take place in the parks and along the route, which has no start or finish. For info, call (503) 823-7599 or visit <www.portland.gov/sunday-parkways/2026>. To receive event updates, text “Downtown” to 1-888-520-0526.



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The Asian Reporter's advertising sections can be viewed online at:

<www.asianreporter.com/nwjobmarket.htm>

<www.asianreporter.com/notices.htm>

FULL-TIME ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF NEURORADIOLOGY

Oregon Health and Sciences University seeks applicants for a full-time Assistant Professor of Neuroradiology position at our facility in Portland, Oregon. The appointee will provide instruction in the incumbent's area of expertise. Active involvement in the educational activities of the department is expected. Clinical duties will include interpretation of all aspects of neuroradiology including brain, spine, ENT, pediatric neuroimaging, fMRI, DTI and perfusion studies. Participation in interdisciplinary conferences and tumor boards is expected.

Minimum Requirements: The position requires a Doctor of Medicine degree or foreign equivalent and an Oregon Medical License. Candidates must be ABR board certifying eligible after passing the ABR Core Exam and successful completion of an ACGME-accredited residency. International Medical Graduates are eligible for the position provided they have a valid ECFMG certificate, have completed an ACGME-accredited residency and ABR Core Exam, or are otherwise board-eligible through the ABR IMG Alternate Pathway program. Please e-mail résumé to Emily Nada, <nada@ohsu.edu>.

Apprenticeship Opportunities!



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BIDS, SUB-BIDS & PUBLIC NOTICES

CALL FOR BIDS

CITY OF CAMAS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

GRASS VALLEY FIRE STATION 42 MEP IMPROVEMENTS

CITY PROJECT NO. FAC23008G • Engineers Estimate \$907,000

The improvement for which bids will be received follows:

Bid opening on Tuesday **August 11, 2026, at 10:00am** at the Camas City Hall Council Chambers located at 616 NE 4th Avenue, Camas, Washington 98607. Sealed bids in clearly marked envelopes (including Bidding Company's Name, Contact information, Project Number and Project Title) will be received by the City of Camas Administrative Services (in front of City Hall), 616 NE 4th Avenue, Camas, Washington 98607, **until 10:00am**.

All Bid Proposals shall be accompanied by a Bid Proposal deposit in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or surety bond in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the amount of such Bid Proposal. Should the successful Bidder fail to enter into such contract and furnish satisfactory performance bond within the time stated in the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) 2026 Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction (standard specifications), the Bid Proposal deposit shall be forfeited to the City of Camas.

Free-of-charge access to project bid documents (plans, specifications, addenda, and Bidders List) is provided to Prime Bidders, Subcontractors, and Vendors by going to Builders Exchange of Washington (BXWA) at www.bxwa.com and clicking on "Posted Projects", "Public Works", and "City of Camas". This online plan room provides Bidders with fully usable online documents with the ability to: download, view, print, order full/partial plan sets from numerous reprographic sources, and a free online digitizer/take-off tool. It is recommended that Bidders "Register" in order to receive automatic email notification of future addenda and to place themselves on the "Self-Registered Bidders List". Bidders who do not register will not be automatically notified of addenda and will need to periodically check the on-line plan room for addenda issued on this project. Bids from Bidders who are not listed on the self-registered bidders list may be returned to bidders unopened. Contact Builders Exchange of Washington at (425) 258-1303 should you require assistance with access or registration. Hard copies of the bid documents can be purchased using the BXWA Online Print Ordering System.

Statement of Work:

The city of Camas owns and operates the Fire Station 42 At 4321 NW Parker St. The building was originally constructed in 2000. The buildings mechanical equipment and plumbing fixtures are at the end of serviceable life and will be replaced with new equipment per the Drawings and Specifications. A new source capture exhaust system is to be Installed. A new Energy Recovery Ventilation System with Distribution to new Air Handlers is to be

Installed. A new Building Automation System is to be Installed to Allow the city to access, Control, and Monitor all Mechanical Equipment within the Building. Electrical Scope to consist of Disconnection/Reconnection of replaced Mechanical Equipment and Upgrade to circuits and wiring as necessary to accommodation the new Equipment. In addition to MEP-Related Scope of Work we have specified demolition of existing Half-Height Mezzanine Wall within the fire stations apparatus bay to reconstruct the wall providing an fully enclosed mezzanine space. The City has included added alternate for siding review and repairs within scope of work.

Non Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting:

A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for Thursday , July 23, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. The meeting will be held at the Grass Valley Fire Station 42 located at 4321 NW Parker St , Camas, Washington. Bidders are strongly encouraged to attend. This is an opportunity to review existing conditions, verify equipment sizing, and ask questions regarding scope of work and bid submittals.

Equipment Substitutions:

Requests to use equipment from manufacturers not listed within the technical specifications will be allowed but must match quality, performance, and maintenance expectations of basis design equipment. Substitutions to be submitted no later than **5:00pm PST Tuesday, July 28, 2026. A response will be provided by Friday August 7, 2026.**

For questions, please contact Justin Monsrud (Project Manager) at (360) 817-7232 or <jmonsrud@cityofcamas.us>.

The Contractor is obligated to pay the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Prevailing Wages, Rates for Clark County, effective August 11, 2026 (date of bid opening)

Civil Rights Act:

The City of Camas is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. This Information is available in an alternate form by request by contacting (360) 834-6864.

Spanish:
La información está disponible en un idioma alternativo a pedido.

Chinese Simplified:
kě gēn jù yào qiú tí gòng tì dài yù yán de xìn xī,

Japanese:
Rikuesuto ni ôjite,-betsu no gengo de jôh o nyûshu dekimasu,

Korean:
jeongboneun yocheong si daeche eon-eolo jegongdoebnida,

Vietnamese:
Thông tin có sẵn bằng ngôn ngữ thay thế theo yêu cầu,

Romanian:
Informațiile sunt disponibile într-o limbă alternativă la cerere,

Russian:
Informatsiya dostupna na drugom yazyke po zaprosu, and

Ukrainian:
Informatsiya dostupna inshoyu movoyu za zapytom.

BIDS, SUB-BIDS & PUBLIC NOTICES

WAIT LIST OPENINGS



Notice is hereby given that Vancouver Housing Authority will open the following HUD Multi-Family waitlist on Tuesday, August 4, 2026 through August 26, 2026.

CROWN VILLA

HUD Multi-Family
Located at 1529 Division St., **Camas**, WA 98607

These 1-bedroom units are in non-smoking buildings that are designated for person(s) age 62 and older. This split level property does not have an elevator, which may present challenges for individuals with mobility limitations.

Income limits for households must be less than \$44,950 for a family of one or \$51,350 for a family of two.

Applications will be accepted online beginning August 4, 2026 at 9:00am ending on August 26, 2026 at 4:00pm. You can access our applicant portal by going to our website at <www.vhausa.org>.

Paper applications are available upon request at our office located at 2500 Main Street, Vancouver Washington Tuesday August 4, 2026 until August 26, 2026. Our offices are open Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm. You can drop off completed applications at our office or mail them to us at the address listed above.

Units are offered to qualified applicants based on the date and time of application. For more information, visit our website at <www.vhausa.org> or call (360) 694-2501.

Vancouver Housing Authority welcomes qualified individuals/families of diverse backgrounds and, in accordance with various Federal and State laws or regulations, does not discriminate against anyone based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, familial status, creed, veteran's or military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Vancouver Housing Authority will make reasonable accommodations for individuals whose disabilities require accommodation in order to enjoy full and equal access to our programs and services. This includes the application process, the informal hearing process and the residency period. Please contact a staff member if you need reasonable accommodation.



Equal Housing Opportunity

Need to place a classified advertisement? Send your request to our Advertising Department!

Phone: (503) 283-4440 • Fax: (503) 283-4445 • E-mail: <ads@asianreporter.com>

COMMUNITY CLASSIFIEDS

THE ASIAN REPORTER CAN BE PICKED UP ON THE FIRST MONDAY EACH MONTH AT MANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING:

Uwajimaya 10500 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy., Beaverton	Nam Phuong 6834 NE Sandy Blvd. Portland	H Mart 13600 SW Pacific Hwy., Tigard	Lily Market 11001 NE Halsey St. Portland	Lao Vieng Market 1032 N Killingsworth St., Portland	Hong Phat Supermarket 11655 SW Pacific Hwy., Tigard
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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

SURFING THE WEB?
Check out our last two issues, jobs, news, lists of community groups, past stories, and more:
<www.asianreporter.com>

FOR SALE

Farm-raised livestock

PORK FOR SALE
Pigs raised on our family farm in Newberg, Oregon, are for sale. Meat is available in half or whole pig and processed by our butcher in Portland, Oregon.
For pricing & details, please call (503) 980-5900.

GRASS-FED BEEF
Cattle raised in Yamhill County at our family farm in Newberg, Oregon. Beef is available in ¼, ½, or whole cow & processed by our butcher in Portland. For pricing & details, please call (503) 980-5900.

FOR SALE Washing Machine

G.E. WASHING MACHINE FOR SALE
Only 2 months old.
Has 10-year warranty. \$500.
Includes free Amana dryer. Near 122nd & N.E. Sacramento Street.
Please call Hill at (510) 390-6070.

Home Theater Installation

HOME ENTERTAINMENT INSTALLATION
Need stereo & HDTV set-up for the perfect home theater surround sound? We can do it! Great prices, expert service!
Please contact
Digital Connections at
(971) 853-2576.

FREE Packing Material

PACKING MATERIAL
FREE used-once packing material. 6" plastic bubble pockets available. Please leave a voice message at (503) 283-4440, ext. #, or e-mail <news@asianreporter.com>.

REAL ESTATE

For Rent/Sale/Lease

KEIZER HOME FOR SALE
\$379,000 home for sale on a never-sprayed 70' x 130' lot for growing organic food. MLS listed. 651 Wayne Drive N, Keizer, OR 97303. Please call Amelia at (971) 720-0740.

REAL ESTATE For Rent/Sale/Lease

INDIAN CREEK COURT Apartments
in Hood River, an affordable housing community, is now accepting applications for our 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom waiting lists.
Income restrictions apply.
Professionally managed by Guardian Real Estate Services.
This institution is an equal opportunity housing provider and employer.
Apply online at:
<www.indiancreekcourt.com>



BIDS, SUB-BIDS & PUBLIC NOTICES

INVITATION TO BIDS

METRO AND OREGON CONVENTION CENTER
GENERAL CONTRACTING –
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS
ITB 4619

The Oregon Convention Center and Metro, a metropolitan service district organized under the laws of the State of Oregon and the Metro Charter, located at 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, OR 97232-2736, is hereby requesting sealed bids for General Contracting to be used at multiple Metro sites and facilities.

Sealed bids are due no later than 2:00pm, August 26, 2026, at BidLocker <https://bidlocker.us/details/6315_ltb_4619_General_Contracting__Maintenance_And_Repairs>.

Voluntary pre-bid site walks for all potential contractors are scheduled on July 31 and August 4. Details and RSVP at BidLocker. Interested sub-contractors are also invited. A voluntary pre-bid conference will be held on Zoom at 1:00pm on July 31, 2026 at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81509878590?pwd=OB6eNzCWyAut3gMBAeB6ObIkx40Sb.1>

Meeting ID: 815 0987 8590
Passcode: ITB4619

Services are requested on a scheduled basis and may be requested on an emergency basis if needed. This will include sites and venues owned by Metro.

Maintenance and repairs services would include, but are not limited to:

- Patching
- Carpentry
- Masonry
- Sign installation
- Light interior fix-up work
- Finish carpentry
- General metal work
- Build/repair/install concessions upgrades
- General building maintenance
- Wood paneling maintenance
- See complete list in ITB document

Metro intends to utilize each contract awarded equally, however, there is no guarantee of work on any contract. Task/Project award will be based on several factors, including but not limited to capacity/availability, individual project quotes, appropriate scope fit to individual contractors, and on-going performance assessment.

Bidding documents/RFP documents can be viewed and downloaded from BidLocker at <https://bidlocker.us/details/6315_ltb_4619_General_Contracting__Maintenance_And_Repairs>.

Metro may accept or reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, or waive irregularities not affecting substantial rights if such action is deemed in the public interest.

Metro extends equal opportunity to all persons and specifically encourages minority, women-owned, emerging small businesses and service disabled veteran owned businesses to access and participate in this and all Metro projects, programs and services.

Metro and its contractors will not discriminate against any person(s), employee or applicant for employment based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, political affiliation or marital status. Metro fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, see <www.oregonmetro.gov>.



2026 ADVERTISING RATES & ORDER FORM:

Phone: (503) 283-4440 * Fax: (503) 283-4445 * E-mail: ads@asianreporter.com

Display Space (Asia, Opinion, Community, A.C.E. sections)

\$25.00 per column inch; Reservation deadline: Wednesday prior to the next issue by 1:00pm

Special "Business Card" Display Ad:

\$90 per issue (1 month) \$240 for 3 consecutive issues (3 months) \$420 for 6 consecutive issues (6 months)

Northwest Job Market/Bids & Public Notices section

\$25.00 per column inch; Text/Fax deadline: Friday prior to the next issue by 2:00pm

Community Classified Page

Boxed Ad

\$25.00 per column inch; Text/Fax deadline: Friday prior to the next issue by 2:00pm

Line Ad (up to 35 words):

\$24 per issue \$51 for 3 consecutive issues \$90 for 6 consecutive issues

Name Listing (4 lines maximum ~ about 10 words):

\$14 per issue \$30 for 3 consecutive issues \$51 for 6 consecutive issues

- Prepayment required with Line Ad, Name Listing & Business Card.
- Add \$1.00 per issue per line for bold headings (Line Ad & Name Listing).
- Add 25¢ per word per issue after 35 words (Line Ad).
- All advertisements must be submitted in writing; no phone ads accepted.

The Asian Reporter

Main classification:	Run date(s):	Total ad cost:
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Card Number:		Security Code:	

VR and gaming are adding a kick to taekwondo

By Eileen Ng
The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — When Vietnamese athlete Nguyen Thanh Hien Linh stepped into her first virtual taekwondo competition in Singapore in 2024, she had little idea what she was doing.

“I was just kicking into the air,” recalled the 21-year-old. Despite her background as an elite national taekwondo champion, she struggled in the virtual arena with no clue on strategy, skills, or how the technology worked.

Two years later, she won a gold medal at a recent virtual taekwondo competition in Malaysia and was part of a growing community of the gamified combat sport across Southeast Asia.

Once unfamiliar and experimental, virtual taekwondo is now emerging as a structured competitive discipline. Co-developed by World Taekwondo and Singapore-based technology company Refract Technologies, it combines virtual reality technology with traditional taekwondo techniques to woo tech-savvy young athletes.

Competitors wear VR headsets that transport them into a digital 3D arena, and strap motion-tracking sensors on their spine, thighs, and shins. They use their bodies to control digital avatars in noncontact virtual matches, where every fast and well-timed strike depletes the opponent’s virtual health bar.

Unlike conventional taekwondo where competitors are separated by age, weight, and gender, virtual taekwondo places everyone in the same digital arena.

It was showcased at Singapore’s Olympic Esports Week in 2023 and held its first World Championships in Singapore in 2024. This year, the sport will make its debut at the Asian Games in Japan, and it is expected to be included in the 2027 Southeast Asian Games in Malaysia.

A physically demanding sport without injury risk

During the recent Malaysian competition, athletes and coaches described how the discipline is reshaping perceptions of both martial arts and gaming.

Singapore national athlete Brian Peh, 46, said he was not into gaming but joined the 2024 championship with his son out of curiosity. Both won gold and have since participated in many other local and regional games.

Peh now also trains students in virtual taekwondo in his dojang, or training hall.

“I always tell parents: your kids love games. Do you want them using their hands to play, or using their legs?” he said. “When they put on the headset and start to fight, wow, their energy is so high. They can play and play and they love it.”

Cambodian coach Vandy Yiv said more children and parents in his country are showing interest due to the low risk of injury. In a local tournament earlier this year, he said there were more participants for virtual taekwondo than traditional segments.

Many initially thought it was a video game but quickly realized it was a physically gruelling combat sport. “Your whole body is moving. There is action, but no injury,” he said. Vandy said he hopes virtual taekwondo can become a medal



event in the Olympic Games in the near future.

Some athletes described their initial experiences as disorienting, reporting dizziness before they adjusted to the virtual environment. Many teen players, however, were immediately attracted to the gamified experience. Matches consist of intense and fast-paced rounds, only a minute for each bout, and requires continuous offensive pressure.

For Nguyen, success came after she learned that virtual taekwondo requires far more than simply throwing kicks. “You have to guess first where your opponent is and move” before they do, she said.

Athletes need excellent spatial awareness

While matches take place in an immersive arena, coaches say success depends on physical conditioning as much as technical ability. Athletes still execute front kicks, turning kicks, and spinning techniques, with success hinging on speed of execution rather than impact force.

“So our training is first stamina, muscle endurance, flexibility. Then we go toward the skills, the strategies, how to fight,” Malaysian coach Henry Lee said during a recent training session at a club. “Strength ... is about how fast your leg can lift and strike. Speed becomes your power.”

Lee, who is also an elite national taekwondo athlete, said he scouts for players with a strong physique and a good “game sense” — the ability to read movement and make split-second decisions inside the virtual environment.

One of his students, Victoria Siow, 12,

said the challenge lies in judging space she cannot physically see.

COMPETITIVE DISCIPLINE. Victoria Siow, 12, top photo, calibrates motion-tracking sensors and virtual reality controllers during a virtual taekwondo competition event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Once unfamiliar and experimental, virtual taekwondo is now emerging as a structured competitive discipline. It was co-developed by World Taekwondo and Singapore-based technology company Refract Technologies. In the bottom photo, a virtual taekwondo athlete practices at a training center in Puchong, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. (AP Photos/Vincent Thian)

“You have to work on your mind — when to kick, how far to move,” she said during a training session. “It feels like a game and like a dream at the same time.”

For Raja Mardiah Idris, 45, who trains at the same club, virtual taekwondo has opened doors that traditional sparring no longer could. It allows older athletes and women to compete safely and on equal footing, she said. Her young daughter has also embraced the sport, in a healthy alternative to a digital device.

“When you wear the VR, everybody is the same,” said Raja, a member of a state royal family. “You win through your technique, your strategy, and your fitness.”

Raja said she plans to quit full-contact kyorugi sparring to focus on virtual taekwondo. She runs and trains in the gym to stay strong, and hopes to represent Malaysia in virtual taekwondo in the SEA Games next year.

Malaysia’s national virtual taekwondo coach, Tony Lee, said the sport is still in its infancy. While equipment cost is high and access may be limited in the region, he said growing interest will push clubs to invest. Malaysia has national programs and coaching certification courses now in place.

“Virtual taekwondo is our future because young people like gaming,” he added.

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