



Commentary: Wrap your head around Fall TV

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Marshfield News Herald

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026 | MARSHFIELDNEWSHERALD.COM PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Central Wisconsin Book Festival returns

Nida Tazeen
Wausau Daily Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

The Central Wisconsin Book Festival will mark its 10th year with a week of author talks, writing workshops, family activities and literary events across Wausau, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids from Sept. 23-27.

The festival’s programming includes nationally recognized authors, local writers, poetry readings and hands-on activities, according to a community announcement. All events are free and do not require registration or book purchases. Books will be available for purchase from local booksellers at select events for those interested in author signings.

Festival information is available at <https://mcpl.us/cwbf>. Additional updates can be found through the Central Wisconsin Book Festival’s Facebook and Instagram accounts. The celebration begins with a launch party from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 23 at The Wausau Club, 309 McClellan St. in Wausau. The event will feature a poetry showcase, vintage typewriters, food

and a retrospective on the festival’s first decade. Award-winning Wisconsin novelist Amy Pease, cookbook author and content creator Saeng Douangdara, fantasy author Nghi Vo, birder and educator Dexter Patterson and children’s author Margi Preus are among the featured

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Voting by mail has decreased in recent years, but nearly 30% of voters still cast a ballot that way in the 2024 elections. ROBYN BECK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

USPS mail ballot changes blocked

Supreme Court backs states, cites inadequate time for implementation

Maureen Groppe and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Supreme Court on Sept. 14 declined to let the U.S. Postal Service tighten the use of mail-in ballots ahead of the November midterm elections that will decide control of Congress. The ruling was a loss for President Donald Trump, who has challenged the security of mail-in ballots. He’s also pushed for greater federal control over elections, which are administered by states – many of which said the changes can’t be implemented in time. The administration had asked the high court to suspend a judge’s ruling that paused Trump’s new role for the Postal Service. A majority declined to do so. Justice Brett Kavanaugh, in an opinion agreeing with the court’s finding, wrote that allowing the Postal Service to make the changes Trump called for so soon before the midterm elections would be “arbitrary and capricious.” “Local election officials do not have sufficient time to reasonably implement

the rule before the elections,” the Trump-nominated justice wrote. Two of the court’s five other conservative justices – Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito – dissented. Under the controversial order Trump signed in March, states must give lists of verified voters to the Postal Service and use a specific design for ballot envelopes that includes unique voter bar codes. The Postal Service can refuse to deliver ballots that don’t meet the new rules. U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani in Boston put the changes on hold, finding that they are probably unconstitutional and could be impossible to carry out in time for the November elections. Some states have already begun distributing absentee ballots. “The Constitution does not grant the President any specific powers over elections,” Talwani wrote. She also said the Postal Service was acting outside its authority from Congress. In a brief and unsigned opinion, the Supreme Court’s majority said that the administration is unlikely to win its challenge to Talwani’s ruling and that

the potential harm in letting the changes proceed in the meantime are greater than pausing them would be. Voting by mail has decreased since its peak during the COVID-19 pandemic. But nearly 30% of voters still cast a ballot that way in the 2024 elections. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to vote by mail, according to the MIT Election Data & Science Lab. The 23 blue and swing states challenging Trump’s order said allowing the changes to take effect before the midterms would be an “unmitigated disaster.” Millions of voters would be unable to vote by mail and some would not be able to vote at all, the states told the Supreme Court. “USPS’ unprecedented experiment with our Nation’s most cherished franchise – the right to vote – is unlawful,” the states said in a filing. Voting rights groups and the Democratic Party have also sued to stop the new requirements. The top election officials in seven GOP-controlled states told the Su-

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U.S. confirms weapons are deployed in space

Eric Lagatta
USA TODAY

The United States confirmed in a landmark revelation that the nation has deployed operational weapons in space. Air Force Secretary Troy Meink became the first U.S. official to publicly acknowledge the orbital defense capability in what is widely being interpreted as a clear message of deterrence to both China and Russia. “Today, we continue to ensure we remain ready to meet the challenges of evolving threats wherever they exist,” Meink said Sept. 14 in prepared remarks at the annual Air, Space and Cyber Conference. “This is why the United States now has on-orbit space control weapons capable of defending the joint force against hostile adversary action.” The comments come as President Donald Trump has made clear that U.S. superiority in space is one of his top priorities for the United States. Meink’s announcement came during an annual gathering hosted by the Air & Space Forces Association in National Harbor, Maryland, according to a news release from the Air Force. While Meink did not provide specifics on the weapons or when they were deployed to orbit, the news alone marked a significant moment amid a time of global conflict. China and Russia have continued to remain powerful adversaries seemingly racing with the United States to expand military might to space. “It is critically important that we maintain our dominance not only in the air but in space, and so we’ve had to take steps to make sure that when we’re threatened, we can take care of that,” Meink said at the conference. Trump has made it a priority of his second administration to bolster U.S. superiority in space. For example, a new policy Trump signed Aug. 20 calls for the United States to support more than 1,000 launches and reentries per year by 2030. Meeting the ambitious bench-

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