



WSJ

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What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **Souring consumer** sentiment and hotter-than-expected inflation data sent stock indexes reeling. The Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq dropped 1.7%, 2% and 2.7%, respectively, on Friday. **A1, B11**
- ◆ **CoreWeave's stock-market** debut turned into a stumble for the AI industry and new listings after it priced its IPO below expectations and ended its first day of trading flat. **A1**
- ◆ **OpenAI is finalizing** a \$40 billion funding round, but the nonprofit ChatGPT maker could lose out on half that amount if it fails restructure into an independent for-profit company. **B9**
- ◆ **Chinese leader Xi urged** foreign business executives to defend trade and said globalization was unstoppable, drawing an implicit contrast between Beijing's policies and Trump's tariffs. **A1**
- ◆ **Elon Musk's** artificial-intelligence startup xAI has acquired X, the social-media platform he also owns, in an all-stock transaction. **B9**
- ◆ **A jury found** Charlie Javice guilty of defrauding JPMorgan Chase for misleading the bank in its \$175 million deal for her buzzy startup. **B11**
- ◆ **Metals prices are soaring** as Trump upends the global order in trade. **B11**

World- Wide

- ◆ **Defense Secretary** Hegseth brought his wife, a former Fox News producer, to two meetings with foreign military counterparts where sensitive information was discussed, according to people who were present or had knowledge of the discussions. **A1**
- ◆ **Katrina Armstrong** is stepping down as interim president of Columbia University, according to people familiar with the matter. **A3**
- ◆ **The administration asked** the Supreme Court to let it resume deportation flights to an El Salvador prison. **A3**
- ◆ **The FDA's** top vaccine official has been pushed out, according to people familiar with the matter. **A4**
- ◆ **Trump pardoned** Nikola founder Trevor Milton, who had been convicted of fraud against investors in his zero-emissions trucks. **A3**
- ◆ **Two law firms sued** to block White House executive orders that targeted them while a third firm cut a deal to avoid being targeted. **A4**
- ◆ **Trump issued** an executive order aimed at removing what he considers improper ideologies from the Smithsonian. **A4**
- ◆ **Vance criticized** Denmark's stewardship of Greenland during a visit to the autonomous territory. **A10**

NOONAN

A new administration's Signal failure **A15**

JOURNAL REPORT

Travel: 'Extreme travelers' visit 193 countries. **R1-8**

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Deadly Earthquakes Rock Myanmar and Thailand



DESTRUCTION: Rescuers worked Friday at the site of a high-rise under construction that collapsed in Bangkok when a series of temblors struck Myanmar, where scores of people were killed. For video of the collapse, scan the code with the article on A8.

Hegseth's Wife Joined Sensitive Meetings With Foreign Officials

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who is facing scrutiny over his handling of details of a military strike, brought his wife, a former Fox News producer, to two meetings with foreign military counterparts where sensitive information was discussed, according to multiple people who were present or had knowledge of the discussions.

By Katherine Long, Max Colchester, Daniel Michaels and Lindsay Wise

One of the meetings, a high-level discussion at the Pentagon on March 6 between Hegseth and U.K. Secretary of

Defense John Healey, took place at a sensitive moment for the trans-Atlantic alliance, one day after the U.S. said it had cut off military intelligence sharing with Ukraine. The group that met at the Pentagon, which included Admiral Tony Radakin, the head of the U.K.'s armed forces, discussed the U.S. rationale behind that

decision, as well as future military collaboration between the two allies, according to people familiar with the meeting. A secretary can invite anyone to meetings with visiting counterparts, but attendee lists are usually carefully limited to those who need to be there and attendees are typically

Xi Defends Trade in Rare CEO Meeting

By Liza Lin and Brian Spegele

Chinese leader Xi Jinping urged foreign business executives to defend trade, and said globalization was unstoppable, drawing an implicit contrast between Beijing's policies and President Trump's tariffs.

In a rare meeting, the Chinese president summoned a who's-who list of foreign executives from the likes of Pfizer, Blackstone and Mercedes-Benz to Beijing's Great Hall of the People on Friday.

"Globalization is an unstoppable historical trend," Xi said, according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency. Multinationals shoulder important responsibility in maintaining the world's economic order, he told the room of about 40 executives and business-group leaders from the U.S., Europe and Asia.

He also assured them China was open for business, and eager to help foreign companies thrive.

The charm offensive by Beijing toward Western companies during the past week has included tentative steps at diplomacy with the U.S. On Sunday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang met a Trump ally, Sen. Steve Daines (R., Mont.), and Daines said the meeting laid the groundwork for an in-person summit between President Trump and Xi.

Beijing's recent messaging, including at an annual forum

EXCHANGE



Secrets. Misdirection. Broken trust. The inside story of how—and why—Sam Altman was ousted. **B1**

Ladies' Night Comes to the Gun Range

Luxury complexes cater to the firearm-curious

By Cameron McWhirter

When Jennifer Evans's husband announced he'd purchased a membership for the couple at an indoor gun range near their home in northern Ohio, she protested.

"I was like, 'Why, why, why would you do that?'" said Evans, 55. "Then I went, and the perception just completely changed."

The couple now goes to Lake Erie Arms in Milan, Ohio, four or five times a month.

How Law Firm Trump Targeted Is Resisting

By Dana Mattioli and Erin Mulvaney

When President Trump signed an executive order attacking Perkins Coie, the white-shoe law firm did what most of its rivals have not. It fought back. And so far, its biggest clients and superstar lawyers are standing with it.

"The dishonest and dangerous activity of the law firm Perkins Coie has affected the country for decades," began Trump's March 6 order. It sought to cripple a firm that had deep Democratic ties and

had tangled with Trump. The order stripped Perkins employees of security clearances, limited their access to federal buildings and instructed agencies to end federal contracts that used the firm.

But some of Perkins's oldest and biggest clients, including Boeing, Microsoft, Google, Amazon.com, Intel and the National Football League's Seattle

Two law firms sue to halt orders, a third cuts deal. **A4**
Trump squeezes traditional media..... **B9**

Former Hostage Fights to Stop War

After 505 days in Gaza, Omer Wenkert is pushing to get his friends home

By Anat Peled and Shayndi Raice

GEDERA, Israel—Omer Wenkert had nicknames for his Hamas captors. He called one of them Tznon, which means radish in Hebrew, after its bitter taste.

About eight months into Wenkert's captivity, Tznon turned from bitter to violent. He opened the door to the underground concrete dungeon where Wenkert was being held—less than 6 feet tall and around 3 feet wide—and kicked Wenkert three times in his head and twice in his

back. Tznon told Wenkert it was punishment for looking at him.

The next day, his captor demanded he do push-ups, sit-ups and squats—what felt like hundreds, he said. At some point, Wenkert collapsed from exhaustion. Tznon spit on him and began screaming insults.

"Say you are a son of a

Israel strikes Beirut after rocket fire from southern Lebanon..... **A8**
Hamas's grip on Gaza shows cracks..... **A8**

Soured Outlook, Inflation Rattle Investors

Consumers feel worse about the future; broad selloff drags down markets

By Justin Lahart and Matt Grossman

Worsening consumer sentiment and hotter-than-expected inflation data sent stock indexes reeling on Friday to another weekly decline.

The University of Michigan on Friday said its index of consumer sentiment, which measures people's view of the economy, fell to 57 this month from 64.7 in February, hitting its lowest level since 2022. Respondents' feelings about the current economy were gloomy but relatively stable. Their views about the economy's future got much worse.

Investors are also being hit by President Trump's tariff announcements and inflation picking up, as tracked by the Fed's preferred measure. That figure, excluding volatile food and energy prices, came in at 0.4% for February, or 2.8% compared with a year earlier. Both rates were slightly ahead of forecasts.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell more than 700 points, or 1.7%, on Friday, its largest percentage drop since March 10. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell 2.7%, with

Deregulation hits 'new high water mark' **A2**

Anticipated CoreWeave IPO Falts On Day One

By Corrie Driebusch and Deepa Seetharaman

It was supposed to be one of the splashiest IPOs of the year. Then CoreWeave's stock-market debut turned into a high-profile stumble for both the AI industry and new public listings.

The startup that rents out access to Nvidia chips priced its initial public offering below expectations and ended its first day of trading flat on Friday, a sign of flagging investor enthusiasm for artificial-intelligence companies as well as the chilly state of the U.S. market for new listings.

The showing was a sharp contrast from just last year. Investor mania for all things AI drove up shares of Nvidia, making the chip maker the world's most valuable publicly traded company for the first time (a title it has since ceded). CoreWeave raised money in May at a \$19 billion valuation, nearly triple its price just five months prior. Its backers include OpenAI and Fidelity.

The sheen has since worn off. The New Jersey-based company priced its offering at \$40 a share, well below the \$47 to \$55 range it was targeting for a fully diluted valuation of up to \$32 billion. The

Musk merges his AI company with X..... **B9**
OpenAI faces a \$20 billion investment catch **B9**

U.S. NEWS

Deregulation Hits ‘New High Water Mark’

Administration quickly takes aim at environmental rules and bank oversight

By Scott Patterson
And Amrith Ramkumar

WASHINGTON—President Trump is ushering in one of the most sweeping deregulatory drives in modern U.S. history, moving swiftly to slash environmental rules and bank oversight, remove barriers to cryptocurrencies, and reverse Biden administration restrictions on energy production.

The most aggressive plans for a red-tape rollback have come from the Environmental Protection Agency, which in a single day announced 31 actions to deregulate U.S. environmental policies, including rules for power plants, the oil-and-gas industry, electric vehicles and wastewater.

Venture Global, a liquefied natural gas exporter, in early March announced an \$18 billion investment in a Louisiana project, following the administration’s reversal of President Joe Biden’s freeze on approvals for LNG gas ex-

port plants, which has yielded plans for new projects and expansions.

Perhaps no sector is seeing an early boost of activity more than the crypto industry, where the Trump family is emerging as a bigger player. The number of crypto deals has surged since the election. In recent weeks, the Trump family held talks to invest in the U.S. arm of the crypto exchange Binance. Another crypto exchange, Kraken, struck a \$1.5 billion deal for a U.S. retail futures trading platform.

Trump’s deregulatory moves are widespread: The Securities and Exchange Commission is backing away from Biden’s climate-related disclosure rules; the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. rolled back a Biden-era policy that had stepped up scrutiny of large bank mergers; and the Interior and Housing and Urban Development departments are aiming to streamline regulations to spur the construction of housing on millions of acres of federal land.

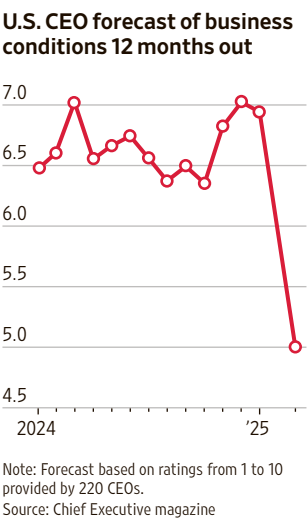
Taken together, Trump’s moves are setting “the new high water mark in terms of the deregulatory agenda,”

said Travis Fisher, who served in the first Trump administration and is now the director of energy and environmental policy studies at the Cato Institute, the libertarian think tank.

Investors, bullish about Trump’s deregulatory agenda, sent stocks soaring after the election. Market participants expected “strong growth from the whole package of Trump policies, and when we talked to clients they’d often cite the deregulatory agenda,” said Julia Coronado, founder of MacroPolicy Perspectives, an economic-advisory firm that surveys investors.

In recent weeks, concern on Wall Street and in corporate boardrooms about the administration’s tariff policies has blunted high hopes for deregulation, economists said. The Federal Reserve’s latest projections point to the prospect that tariffs will send up prices while sapping investment, sentiment and growth. Trade uncertainty adds to other headwinds to cutting red tape, such as legal barriers and Trump’s downsizing of government.

“Tariffs can have a much quicker negative impact on



the economy, whereas the deregulatory efforts take time to flow through the system,” said Mick Mulvaney, who served in the first Trump administration.

Trump has dubbed April 2—the expected date of his planned reciprocal tariffs—“Liberation Day,” marking the end of what he says is a global trade system that takes advantage of the U.S. He also said he would impose tariffs on all imported vehicles. The prospect of more tariffs, in addition to new ones he has already put on

imports from China as well as steel and aluminum, has rattled markets in recent weeks.

CEOs who cheered Trump’s tax and regulatory cuts have grown increasingly pessimistic, though many remain reticent when it comes to speaking out in public because they fear retaliation from the administration, The Wall Street Journal has reported.

“The economic damage caused by the mounting global trade war will overwhelm any benefit from less regulation, certainly anytime in the foreseeable future,” said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s.

Administration officials have dismissed what they say is hand-wringing. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent played down turbulence in the stock market in a recent interview on NBC News’s “Meet the Press.” “If we put good tax policy in place, de-regulation and energy security, the markets will do great,” he said.

In addition to tariffs, Trump’s deregulatory push could meet other obstacles of the administration’s own making, experts said.

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin has said the agency

expects to slash its spending by 65%. That could pose a challenge to its ability to cut or rewrite dozens of complicated environmental regulations.

Changing rules at any agency is a lengthy process involving comment periods and potential lawsuits that can stretch out for years, said Walker Livingston, vice president of energy at Capstone, an advisory firm. “They’re going to run into logistical issues having to put out these rules” at the EPA, he said.

One barrier is the Administrative Procedure Act, a 1946 law that stipulates that federal agencies must provide notice before regulations are adopted or rescinded.

Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency has moved to dismantle a regulatory agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which policed large financial institutions. It has slashed spending and contracts across federal agencies and crafted orders leading to the ousting of tens of thousands of government employees, curbing agencies’ ability to enforce regulations. Many of those moves have been challenged in court.

Consumer Reading Hits Stocks

Continued from Page One

the Magnificent Seven group of stocks erasing about \$505 billion in market value. The S&P 500 tumbled nearly 2%.

For the week, the S&P 500 fell about 1.5%, its fifth weekly decline in the past six. The Nasdaq declined 2.6%, and the Dow lost about 1%.

The Michigan sentiment report follows other surveys showing that the mood among both American consumers and businesses has markedly deteriorated during the first quarter. The Conference Board, a business-research group, on Tuesday reported that its overall index of consumer confidence fell sharply this month. Its measure of future expectations dropped to the lowest level in 12 years.

Worries and uncertainties about the Trump administration’s on-again-off-again tariff plans, government layoffs, immigration crackdowns and spending cuts have thrown off families and businesses.

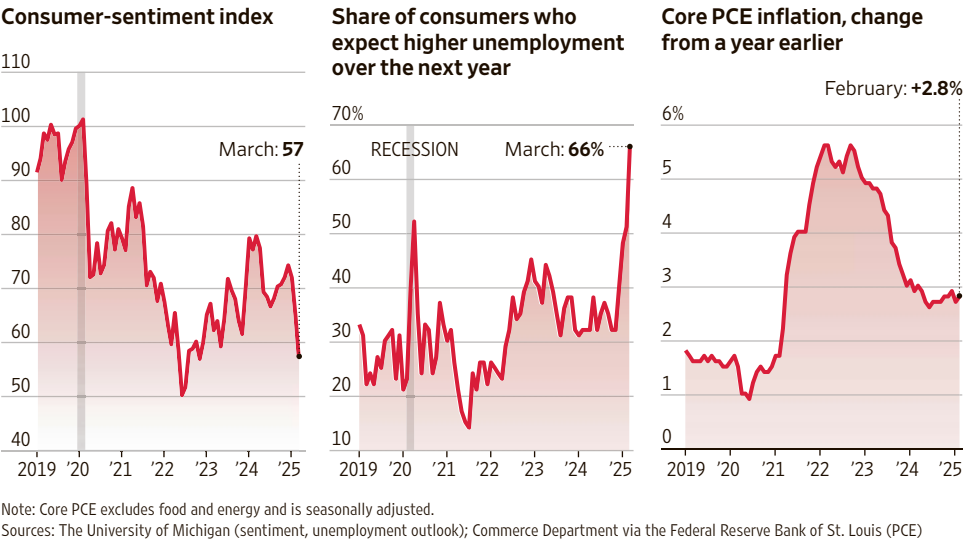
Regional business surveys in the past two weeks from the Federal Reserve banks of New York, Philadelphia and Richmond show that manufacturing and services businesses alike grew more pessimistic.

“Tariff policy is impossible for us to predict and doesn’t have a clear goal,” said one respondent to a quarterly energy-industry survey released by the Dallas Fed on Wednesday. “We want more stability.”

When it comes to the economy, feelings matter. A family feeling skittish about the future might put off a vacation; a company might delay an ex-



Inflation ticked up, as tracked by the Fed’s preferred measure. Above, a store in New York.



pansion. If enough people decide to hold back, they can ripple through the economy. Those feelings can also work as an early warning system, reflecting facts people are seeing on the ground that aren’t yet showing in other data.

Consumer and business surveys are what economists consider “soft” data, driven to an extent not by what people are

experiencing but what they say. Bad feelings don’t always translate into bad news for the economy. The Michigan sentiment index, for example, fell sharply from the middle of 2021 to the middle of 2022 as inflation soared. Yet while Americans felt bad about the economy, they kept spending money.

In contrast, when sentiment

fell sharply over the year leading up to the 2008-09 financial crisis, pinched consumers were reining in spending.

Today, hard data such as sales, industrial production and jobs reports indicate that although the economy has softened, it probably isn’t shrinking. That data can take time to catch up with the reality on the ground, however,

and some measures, such as employment, often don’t turn until the economy is already in trouble. So economists are paying close attention to softer data for clues to where the economy is headed.

Some consumers have said they are pulling back, and sales are starting to soften for airlines and convenience stores. Still, that may not be enough to dent the overall economy.

To Joshua King, headlines about tariffs and Trump layoffs feel far removed from his work at an aircraft-charter company in Tulsa, Okla. A bachelor party in New Orleans this month brought together 11 of his college friends, all with steady jobs.

“No one was pinching pennies,” King said.

Others say that concerns about the economy are leading them to cut back. “I’m definitely not planning any vacations this year,” said Robin Suggs, a community-nonprofit worker in Robbinsville, N.C. Suggs said federal-spending cuts are taking a toll on the rural area where he works.

Consumers appear more cautious. Friday, the Commerce Department reported that its measure of consumer spending rose less than expected in February from January, with January figures revised lower. After the report, economists further lowered “tracking” estimates, which measure available data, for gross domestic product. Morgan Stanley, for example, now estimates GDP will grow at a 0.4% annual rate in the soon-to-end first quarter. GDP grew 2.4% in the fourth quarter.

For many Americans, having a job and money in their pocket matters more for spending than how they feel. When the Michigan sentiment index fell in 2022, “we saw people being really unhappy about the economy, but spend-

ing remained strong,” Joanne Hsu, the survey’s director, noted. People then were confident they would keep their jobs, Hsu said, and they had built up savings during the pandemic.

What is different now is that hiring has slowed, while pandemic savings have been spent down. “Those supports just are weakening or disappearing altogether,” Hsu said.

History shows that sentiment counts for something. Americans’ sentiment fell sharply, according to the Michigan index, after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990. A recession started around the same time.

The incident helped prompt a 1994 paper from Federal Reserve economists Christopher Carroll, Jeffrey Fuhrer and David Wilcox, finding that the expectations component of the Michigan survey, in particular, had some predictive value when it came to consumer spending.

Later work by Carroll found that within the Michigan survey, responses to a question on what unemployment will do over the next year is strongly correlated with spending on big-ticket items, such as cars and appliances, in particular.

Friday’s report showed that the share of survey respondents who expect higher unemployment over next year rose to 66% in March, from 51% in February, bringing it to its highest level since the 2008-09 financial crisis.

The degree to which perceptions on the labor market match reality on the ground is unclear, however. The Trump administration has laid off thousands of federal workers, though for many, jobs have been reinstated. Measures of private-sector layoffs and lay-off plans have also picked up. But unemployment remains low at 4.1%, and initial jobless claims have remained low.

CoreWeave Shares End Flat in IPO

Continued from Page One

lowered price reflects a valuation of approximately \$23 billion. The company also sold fewer shares than planned.

“Obviously there are macro headwinds, AI headwinds,” said Chief Executive Mike Intrator. “Everybody likes a higher price. But at the end of the day we IPO’d.”

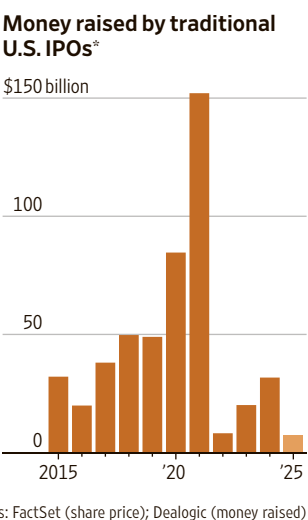
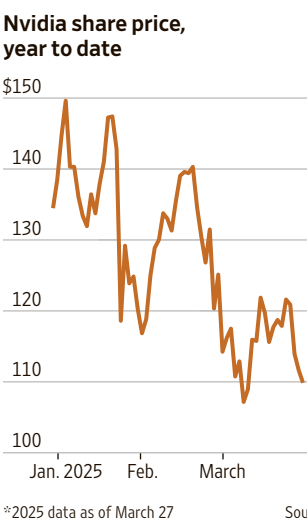
The stock is listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange under the symbol CRWV.

Investors pushed back on the price tag during CoreWeave’s IPO roadshow, citing the company’s high costs and debt load. The uncertainty echoes the broad concerns many hold about the sustainability of the AI boom, for which the world’s biggest companies are spending hundreds of billions of dollars.

Some of the issues are specific to CoreWeave’s business, including its concentrated customer base. Microsoft accounted for nearly two-thirds of the company’s revenue in 2024.

CoreWeave operates a network of data centers that house the chips and equipment the company rents out to clients, who in turn create and deploy AI systems. The company brought in \$1.9 billion in revenue in 2024, yet still lost \$863 million, due in part to high operating expenses.

Its business took off in 2023 when AI startups were taking any route possible to obtain specialized graphics chips, or GPUs, that companies use to build and train AI systems that they then sell to companies. One founder at the time com-



also expected to go public later this year. A poor showing by CoreWeave could delay—or derail—their plans.

It isn’t the first big IPO that hasn’t lived up to expectations this year.

In January, gas exporter Venture Global slashed its price by more than 40% from its initial goal in the biggest offering of the year. Its shares still fell in opening trading. At the time, bankers told clients the poor showing was company-specific and not reflective of broader investor demand for new listings.

The second biggest IPO of the year, cybersecurity firm SailPoint, also fell in its stock-market debut last month.

Both SailPoint and Venture Global stocks remain below their IPO prices, meaning if investors bought shares in those offerings they are sitting on big losses.

Stock-market volatility isn’t helping. Swings in the broader stock market make it tricky for investors to value companies. The up-and-down could give companies cold feet, by sapping confidence about their business prospects.

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U.S. NEWS

Columbia Interim President Steps Down

By Douglas Belkin
And Liz Essley Whyte

Katrina Armstrong has stepped down as interim president of Columbia University amid a high-profile battle with the Trump administration over Columbia’s federal funding.

The university board’s co-chairwoman, Claire Shipman, was named acting president. Armstrong is returning to lead the school’s Irving Medical Center. Armstrong is the second president to exit in seven months as Columbia has navigated a series of crises stemming from pro-Palestinian protests that disrupted campuses last year.

President Trump has targeted the Ivy League school in his bid to rid elite campuses of what he views as left-wing ideology. Earlier this month, the administration canceled \$400 million in federal grants and contracts over campus antisemitism concerns. It laid out a list of demands for the school, located in New York City, to meet as a precondition to begin formal talks about restoring the money.

Last week, the school reached an agreement with the administration that included restricting masks, empowering campus police and appointing a senior vice provost with broad authority to oversee the department of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies.

On Friday, after Armstrong stepped down, the Trump administration’s antisemitism task force said: “The action taken by Columbia’s trustees today, especially in light of this week’s concerning revelation, is an important step toward advancing negotiations as set forth in the pre-conditional understanding reached last Friday between the University and the Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism.”

Armstrong took over Columbia last summer after controversy around the school’s handling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations felled her predecessor, Minouche Shafik. A doctor by training, Armstrong was leading the university’s medical center when she was tasked with bringing stability to the school. Instead, she found herself at the center of controversy with the school in Trump’s crosshairs.

“Dr. Armstrong accepted the role of interim president at a time of great uncertainty for the University and worked tirelessly to promote the interests of our community,” said David J. Greenwald, chair of Columbia’s board of trustees.

Deport Fight Heads to High Court

Administration asks justices to allow it to resume sending people to El Salvador

By Jess Bravin

WASHINGTON—The Trump administration on Friday asked the Supreme Court to let it resume deportation flights to an El Salvador prison, arguing that lower courts that paused the removals were trespassing on the president’s powers.

The case involves President Trump’s invocation of the 1798 Alien Enemies Act to deport suspected Venezuelan gang members without allowing them hearings. Trump has called for impeachment of a district judge, James Boasberg, who ordered a two-week halt to the deportations to consider claims that the administration improperly invoked a wartime power.

Acting Solicitor General Sarah Harris told the Supreme Court that the Trump administration “has an overwhelming interest in removing these foreign actors whom the president has identified as engag-



The El Salvador prison where the Trump administration wants to resume sending people.

ing in irregular warfare and hostile actions against the United States.”

The high court asked lawyers for a group of detained Venezuelans to respond to the administration’s emergency

request by Tuesday.

The Trump administration has several requests pending at the Supreme Court to set aside lower-court orders that have paused policies. The Venezuela case, however, is the

first to test Trump’s assertion of presidential war powers to combat what he considers an especially dangerous strain of illegal immigration.

The Alien Enemies Act has been invoked only three times,

most recently during World War II, and only when the U.S. faced the potential of invasion by a hostile government. To assert the powers the act provides, Trump determined that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was taking similarly belligerent action against American territory through the Tren de Aragua gang.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents the migrants, argues that Trump is abusing the 18th-century measure, because the U.S. isn’t at war and the normal rules of immigration law should apply. In legal papers, the ACLU said the presidential findings misrepresent the relationship between the gang and the Maduro government.

Boasberg has been seeking to determine whether the government complied with his initial order to halt the removal flights. The Justice Department asserts the state-secrets privilege, which allows authorities to avoid disclosure of national-security information, to deny providing additional information.

A federal appeals court in Washington declined this week to lift Boasberg’s order by a 2-1 vote.

Nikola Founder Is Granted A Pardon by the President

By Corinne Ramey
And Ben Foldy

President Trump pardoned Nikola founder Trevor Milton, convicted of fraud for what prosecutors said were his lies to investors about his zero-emissions trucks.

Milton said Thursday he had received the pardon, which the White House confirmed on Friday. “The greatest comeback story in America is about to happen,” he said in a social media video.

A federal jury in Manhattan convicted Milton in 2022 of one count of securities fraud and two counts of wire fraud. Prosecutors portrayed him as a con man who duped investors about the company’s sales and the capabilities of its vehicles. In one instance, prosecutors said, he created a video of what appeared to be a truck driving normally—but it was really an inoperable prototype rolling down a hill.

Milton maintained he had acted in good faith, accusing prosecutors of cherry-picking his public statements. He was sentenced to four years in prison but remained out on bond while he appealed.

Milton said in an interview Friday that he received a phone call out of the blue from



Trevor Milton leaving a New York court in December 2023.

Trump about a week ago. Trump said Friday that Milton had been persecuted. “The thing that he did wrong was he was one of the first people that supported a gentleman named Donald Trump for president,” Trump said.

Milton said his appellate attorney, Alexandra Shapiro, had provided a summary of issues in his case to the Justice Department. One of his trial attorneys, Brad Bondi—brother of Attorney General Pam Bondi—wasn’t involved, he said.

Campaign-finance records show that Milton and his wife

donated more than \$1.8 million to a Trump fundraising committee in October.

Milton, 42 years old, founded Nikola in 2015. He took it public in 2020 at a valuation of \$3.3 billion. He resigned that year after a short seller alleged he made misrepresentations about the status of the company’s vehicles and the production of hydrogen fuel needed to run them.

Nikola, whose market value briefly eclipsed that of Ford Motor, filed for bankruptcy last month. Milton has sold roughly \$400 million in stock in Nikola, which delisted its shares from the Nasdaq a few days ago. Two weeks ago, federal prosecutors asked the judge from Milton’s criminal case to order him to pay back nearly \$661 million to shareholders.

Former media executive Carlos Watson had his sentence commuted Friday, according to White House officials. The founder of Ozy Media was set to start a prison term of nearly 10 years. A New York federal jury had found him guilty last year of defrauding investors and lenders to his Silicon Valley startup. The Brooklyn U.S. attorney’s office, which brought the case, declined to comment. Watson didn’t respond to a request for comment.

SCAN FOR A CLOSER LOOK

Cuban Hoops



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GENIUS AT GIVERNY
CLAUDE MONET



Impressionist maestro. Beloved artist. Expressive composition. Captured from a hilltop overlooking his home, this original oil on canvas *Vue du village de Giverny* by Claude Monet offers a breathtaking view of his beloved French landscape. Monet transforms the familiar scene into a rhythmic interplay of color and texture, showcasing his technical mastery and connection to his homeland. Signed and dated “Claude Monet 86” (lower left). Canvas: 24³/₄”h x 31¹/₄”w. Frame: 35¹/₂”h x 41¹/₈”w. #32-0384



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U.S. NEWS

Two Law Firms Sue to Halt Orders, Another Cuts Deal

By ERIN MULVANEY
AND C. RYAN BARBER

Two law firms filed lawsuits Friday to block White House executive orders that targeted them for their ties to lawyers involved in an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, while a third firm cut a deal to avoid being targeted by the Trump administration.

Jenner & Block and WilmerHale filed separate lawsuits in a Washington, D.C., federal court, both alleging the administration engaged in unconstitutional retaliation that violates the First Amendment. Late Friday, U.S. District Judge John Bates granted Jenner's request for a temporary restraining order blocking most of the executive action against it. Another judge, Richard Leon, subsequently granted a similar request from WilmerHale.

During a hearing, Bates, who like Leon was appointed to the federal bench by former President George W. Bush, called the executive order "disturbing" and "troubling," saying that, on its face, it was retaliation against Jenner for its political viewpoints and its pro bono work on behalf of immigrants and transgender people.

"Our legal profession as a whole is watching and wondering whether their courtroom

activities, in the best tradition of lawyering, will cause the federal government to turn its unwanted attention to them next," the judge said.

Leon's ruling said of the WilmerHale order: "There is no doubt this retaliatory action chills speech and legal advocacy, or that it qualifies as a constitutional harm."

Their lawsuits follow a raft of executive orders against several prominent law firms that stripped security clearances, limited access to federal buildings, and directed agencies to remove government contracts from firms and their clients. The temporary blocks put in place by the court Friday largely froze those measures against the two firms, but excluded the president's moves on security clearances.

Meanwhile in the Oval Office, President Trump announced he had reached an agreement with another top law firm, Skadden. Skadden will provide \$100 million in pro bono work for causes approved by the administration, including helping veterans and fighting antisemitism; commit to merit-based hiring practices and eschew "illegal DEI discrimination and preferences"; and pledge not to deny its services to "members of politically disenfranchised groups who have not historically received legal



Jenner's complaint called a White House executive order 'an unconstitutional abuse of power.'

representation from major national law firms"; among other items, according to Trump.

"This was essentially a settlement," Trump said. "We appreciate their coming to the table."

Skadden executive partner Jeremy London said the firm had "engaged proactively with the president and his team in working together constructively to reach this agreement."

"We firmly believe that this outcome is in the best interests

of our clients, our people, and our firm," he added.

Firms hit with the orders have had to decide whether to fight back against the administration's demands, or take a deal to protect their business. Perkins Coie, sued and won a temporary restraining order.

An executive order against Paul Weiss was rescinded after the firm reached an agreement with the White House. Another firm, Covington & Burling, has

largely kept a low profile after being hit with a more narrow order.

So far five big firms have been targeted, most recently WilmerHale, the former law firm of Robert Mueller, who led the Russia interference investigation.

Mueller worked at Hale and Dorr from 1993 to 1995, before it merged to create WilmerHale. He later rejoined in 2014 as a partner before his appointment as special counsel in 2017, during Trump's first term, to investigate any possible ties between Russia and the president and his campaign. That investigation infuriated Trump, who called it a witch hunt.

"Mueller's investigation epitomizes the weaponization of government," the executive order said.

A Mueller deputy, Andrew Weissmann, is a former Jenner partner who led the group that investigated Paul Manafort, who served as chairman of Trump's presidential campaign in the summer of 2016.

Trump's order against Jenner cited Weissmann by name, as well as the firm's pro bono work backing lawsuits challenging the administration's policies, including on behalf of transgender individuals and asylum seekers.

Jenner's complaint said the order "is an unconstitutional abuse of power against lawyers, their clients, and the legal system. It is intended to hamper the ability of individuals and businesses to have the lawyers of their choice zealously represent them."

WilmerHale's lawsuit said the executive order "makes no secret of its intent to punish" the firm for the clients it has represented. It describes the order as "unprecedented and unconstitutional."

Law Firm Fights Order By Trump

Continued from Page One

Seahawks, have stuck by the firm so far, according to people familiar with the matter. And more important, so have its top lawyers, including litigators Michael Huston, Katie O'Sullivan and David Perez.

The White House order and similar ones against other elite firms have upended the clubby U.S. legal industry, sparking internal debates about how to respond and setting off a scramble for corporate clients.

To rescind an order against New York firm Paul Weiss, its chairman cut a deal with Trump soon after it was targeted. Skadden Arps, another Wall Street powerhouse, is in talks with the White House to strike a similar deal.

Perkins was the first firm that filed a lawsuit challenging Trump's actions. On Friday, Jenner & Block and WilmerHale filed their own lawsuits seeking to block White House sanctions against them. Their survival is at stake.

"At the heart of the order is an unlawful attack on the freedom of all Americans to select counsel of their choice without fear of retribution or punishment from the government," Perkins managing partner Bill Malley wrote on LinkedIn on

March 11, when Perkins filed its suit. "We were compelled to take this action to protect our firm and our clients."

Perkins has lost some business in the wake of Trump's order. Honeywell dropped the firm from some cases, said people familiar with the matter. The industrial company was a relatively new client and had limited work.

In its lawsuit against Trump, Perkins described other clients that had fled—without naming names. It lost a government contractor that had been a client for more than 35 years. It also lost a group of four clients that needed Perkins lawyers to deal with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Justice Department.

The firm has received cards and notes from clients who support its decision to sue. Some clients have even said they are looking for ways to send more work Perkins's way.

To the surprise of staff, after Trump's order, a big bouquet of flowers arrived at the firm's headquarters in Seattle. The anonymous gift had a note signed by the "American people" that read: "Thank you for everything you do."

James F. Williams, the Seattle office's managing partner, sent a photo of the display to the 600 people who work in the office.

Perkins is one of the country's biggest law firms, with more than 1,100 lawyers who generate north of \$1.2 billion in total annual revenue. The partnership dates back more

than a century, and its roots in the Seattle area are deep. It represented Boeing founder William Boeing a century ago at the dawn of the aerospace industry and then helped Amazon founder Jeff Bezos usher in the e-commerce era and take his startup public in 1997.

As the technology industry blossomed, so did its business. The firm took on startups and titans such as Google and Intel. Its 15 biggest clients racked up more than \$340 million in legal bills last year. Amazon alone spends tens of millions of dollars a year on the firm—and has given Perkins more work since the executive order.

But it is the firm's work for political clients that drew the ire of Trump. Former Perkins partner Bob Bauer was a pioneer in political legal work, representing mostly Democratic candidates and the Democratic National Committee. Bauer later served as then-President Barack Obama's White House counsel, and the practice was taken over by Marc Elias.

Elias worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign and hired the research firm Fusion GPS, which compiled a later-discredited dossier against Trump. That history was highlighted in the first paragraph of Trump's executive order.

In March 2022, Trump sued Perkins, Elias, Fusion GPS and

others, alleging they conspired to create a false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia to interfere with the 2016 election. The case, which sought at least \$24 million in damages, was dismissed by a federal court in September 2022.

In its lawsuit against the executive order, Perkins sought to play down its political work, saying that it was viewed as a Republican firm when Bauer started his group and that the political practice shrank in 2021 when Elias left to start his own firm and took 50 lawyers with him. "It currently accounts for about 0.5% of the firm's revenue," according to the complaint.

Still, the firm has tangled with the president. In early February 2025, Perkins filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration on behalf of service members challenging an executive order against transgender people serving in the military. It was a pro bono case.

Bauer, who is now a law professor at New York University, said firms will have to decide whether to fight the Trump orders in court or to take the route Paul Weiss did.

"The executive orders are exercises in intimidation," Bauer said. "We are at a critical moment. Which way is this legal profession going to go?"

The future of what is left of Perkins's political practice is in

It is Perkins's work for political clients that drew the ire of Trump.

doubt. The firm continues to work with existing clients, but there are cases that Perkins would like to file that haven't been approved, some of the people said. Malley has spoken with some senior partners, telling them the firm needs to walk a line because of the pressure: They have lost some clients, but also need to stay true to their principles, he said.

After Paul Weiss struck its deal with Trump, some Perkins partners emailed Malley saying that Perkins shouldn't consider a similar deal, according to people familiar with the matter.

Perkins has said it filed the lawsuit against Trump's order reluctantly, but lawyers familiar with the discussions said they felt the ability to operate was under direct attack. "Perkins Coie cannot allow its clients to be bullied," Perkins said in its lawsuit.

Perkins lawyers depend on access to federal agencies. For example, its patent lawyers are representing hundreds of clients with applications before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. And its white-collar defense group relies heavily on interacting with prosecutors.

On March 12, Perkins found itself in a familiar place: a federal courthouse in Washington, D.C. But it wasn't representing a client. It was the client—suing the U.S. government.

Perkins hired the litigation powerhouse Williams & Connolly to represent it. The filing was signed by more than a dozen Williams & Connolly lawyers, which many read as a wider vote of support from the

firm for the route Perkins had chosen. The arguments were led by Dane Butswinkas, a trial lawyer and former chair at Williams & Connolly. He had, for a few months in 2019, left the firm to serve as general counsel at Tesla.

Flanked by Malley and other Perkins brass, Butswinkas told U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell that the executive order "is truly life-threatening. It will spell the end of the law firm."

Butswinkas also said the reach of the order was unclear. Did it mean that the more than 2,000 staff and lawyers at Perkins couldn't enter a post office? Would lawyers be blocked from federal court?

Howell, an Obama appointee who has served as the chief judge of the Washington courthouse, hardly held back her feelings. "I'm sure many in the legal industry are watching in horror what Perkins Coie is going through here," she said. She granted Perkins's request to temporarily block the executive order.

Reading her order from the bench, Howell said Trump's order was likely unconstitutional. "By punishing Perkins Coie for accepting work from those who want to challenge government actions," it sends a clear message, she said. "They engage in this at their peril."

An amicus brief supporting Perkins Coie, written by lawyers at Munger Tolles, has been circulating in recent weeks. Some smaller law firms have committed to sign on, people familiar with the effort said, but larger ones have been wary.

Trump Alleges 'Divisive' Ideology at Institution

By JOSEPH DE AVILA

President Trump issued an executive order aimed at removing what he considers improper ideologies from the Smithsonian Institution, the administration's latest move to exert control over federally controlled cultural institutions.

Trump's order, signed Thursday, tasks Vice President JD Vance, who serves on the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, and other officials with ensuring future programs don't divide Americans based on race, or promote programs or ideologies inconsistent with federal law and policy.

Created by the U.S. government, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 21 museums, 14 education centers and the National Zoo.

The order criticized the Smithsonian, saying it has "come under the influence of a divisive, race-centered ideology" in recent years. "Museums in our Nation's capital should be places where individuals go to learn—not to be subjected to ideological indoctrination or divisive narratives that distort our shared history," the order said.

The order said that the coming American Women's History Museum wouldn't



The order cites the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

"recognize men as women in any respect," suggesting the mention of transgender women would be prohibited.

The Smithsonian didn't respond to a request for comment.

David Skorton, former secretary of the Smithsonian, defended the institution, saying, "The Smithsonian professionals always base their work on the best traditions of research and scholarship and remain

among the most respected in the world."

The Trump administration's targeting of what it perceives to be divisive content at the Smithsonian draws parallels to its efforts to weed out diversity, inclusion and equity programs in the federal government.

"First Trump removes any reference of diversity from the present—now he's trying to remove it from our history," said

Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a Texas Democrat. "Let me be PERFECTLY clear—you cannot erase our past and you cannot stop us from fulfilling our future."

The executive order cites the National Museum of African American History and Culture as an organization promoting divisive, race-based ideology. Established by an act of Congress and approved by President George W. Bush, it opened in 2016.

Top Vaccine Official Is Forced Out at FDA

By LIZ LESLEY WHYTE

The Food and Drug Administration's top vaccine official has been pushed out, according to people familiar with the matter.

Dr. Peter Marks, who played a key role in the first Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed to develop Covid-19 vaccines, stepped down Friday. He submitted his resignation after a Health and Human Services official earlier in the day gave him the choice to resign or be fired, people familiar with the matter said.

"It has become clear that truth and transparency are not desired by the Secretary, but rather he wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies," he wrote in a resignation letter referring to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

The letter was addressed to acting FDA Commissioner Sara Brenner. His resignation takes effect April 5, the letter said.

"If Peter Marks does not want to get behind restoring science to its golden standard and promoting radical transparency, then he has no place at FDA under the strong leadership of Secretary Kennedy,"

an HHS official said.

Marks, who had been with the FDA since 2012, oversaw its division responsible for overseeing vaccines, biotech drugs and blood products since 2016.

Part of the division's role was making sure vaccines worked and were safe.

During the pandemic, he was a key member of the Operation Warp Speed team that streamlined regulations and pooled government funding to speed development of the Covid-19 vaccines.

He was hoping to stay in his position, though his support of immunizations conflicted with the skepticism of Kennedy, people familiar said.

Marks offered to work with Kennedy on holding a series of public meetings on vaccines with the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and he sent a memo to Kennedy proposing listening sessions on immunizations, one of the people said.

"My hope is that during the coming years, the unprecedented assault on scientific truth that has adversely impacted public health in our nation comes to an end," he wrote in the letter.

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U.S. NEWS

Trump’s National-Security Policies Fuel Debate Among U.S.’s Veterans

By Kris Maher
And Cameron McWhirter

Veterans overwhelmingly supported President Trump’s election and anticipated big changes once he took office. And many of the issues that have dominated his first weeks—including veterans’ services, foreign alliances and national-security leadership—are ones veterans care deeply about.

Now, these developments are animating VFW halls, veteran Facebook pages, card games and other gatherings of U.S. service members.

James M. Crain, an 82-year-old Vietnam veteran and lawyer in Knoxville, Tenn., voted for Trump in November and applauds the president’s domestic policies.



FROM LEFT: NATE SHALWOOD FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; JAMES M. CRAIN

Ebby Phillips, left, remains a Trump backer, while Trump voter James M. Crain, above, said the president’s foreign-policy positions are causing him to re-evaluate his support.

But lately the self-described “staunch Republican” says the president’s foreign-policy positions are causing him to re-evaluate his support.

In an interview, Crain said he learned about Trump’s contentious meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky from Fox News. His concern mounted with the news that Germany could pursue its own nuclear defense. He fears Trump will weaken America’s long-standing alliance with Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

“I can see it coming apart, and if it does, we will be in much more danger than we are now,” he said.

In the 2024 presidential election, 57% of military veterans voted for Trump, compared with

41% for Democrat Kamala Harris, according to AP VoteCast, a large survey of people who cast ballots that year. In general, recent events aren’t likely to erode that support, said pollster David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center. As a group, veterans fall into Trump’s longtime demographic sweetspot—overwhelmingly male and many without college degrees, “so it’s going to take a sequence of negatives to jolt these voters off track,” Paleologos said.

Mike Evock, 55, an Army Special Forces veteran and three-time Trump voter in Roxboro, N.C., said the president is headed in the right direction, including by reducing spend-

ing. “Some people don’t see the big picture,” he said.

Still, Evock expressed some disappointment about the Signal incident, in which Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth shared mission details. Although Evock doesn’t believe the information put military personnel at risk, he noted of the group: “What a bunch of boneheads.”

Although most veterans back the president, those now vocally dissenting at town halls and state houses create a particular public-relations challenge for politicians. “They’ve protected us, they have that entitlement,” said Paleologos.

In recent weeks, a video of an Army veteran being escorted out of a Republican con-

gressman’s town hall went viral, and veterans have demonstrated in dozens of cities nationwide.

T.J. Demetriou, 41, a Navy veteran and registered Republican, helped organize a Harrisburg, Pa., protest and another planned there for early April. He voted for Trump in 2016, abstained in 2020 and backed Harris in November.

“Cuts to the VA is the No. 1 issue,” said Demetriou, a family-medicine physician who lives in Hershey, Pa. He also worries about a breakdown with allies. “If the countries we work with can’t trust us, we can’t do our mission.”

Chris Walker, a former Air Force brigadier general with

the pro-Trump organization Veterans for America First, said veterans will realize the president is making the right shifts in foreign policy and cuts to federal bureaucracy.

“Right now, we have a lot of heavy emotions fomenting,” he said. “They don’t understand the strategic endgame.”

Vietnam veteran Barry Andrews, an 80-year-old registered Democrat who didn’t vote for Trump, is directing his frustration partly at Congress, which he wants to do more to serve as a check on the president. Congress needs to “grow some balls and stand up for the veterans,” he said.

Andrews spoke from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 191 in a county south of Pittsburgh. He belongs to the post’s honor guard, which had just returned from a military funeral at the National Cemetery of the Al-

leghenies.

The honor guard put their rifles in a closet and settled around a U-shaped bar. “Night Moves” played on the jukebox. It was a Friday during Lent, and the aroma from the fish fry in the banquet hall drifted into the bar.

Ebby Phillips, 60, a post member who marches with the honor guard in parades, said he would vote for Trump again if he could.

“I think the economy is great. Ukraine has been taking advantage of us for years,” said Phillips, who works at a gasket company.

Kenneth Ray Ward, 77, a longtime honor-guard member who voted for Harris, felt differently. “The government told us we earned this,” he said. “I just hope this administration does not take away anything from the veterans.”

U.S. WATCH

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Bank Regulators Undo Biden Rules

U.S. banking regulators said they were rescinding a major update by the Biden administration to rules that seek to ensure fair access to loans for low-income borrowers.

A prior version of the rules had scored banks on their low-income lending based on the proximity of borrowers to physical branch locations. In 2023, the Biden administration revamped those rules, saying the previous ones were outdated because so much financial activity happens online.

Industry groups sued last year, arguing that Biden’s regulators had gone beyond what the Community Reinvestment Act allowed them to do.

The 1977 law was created to end discriminatory lending practices against low-income neighborhoods, known as

redlining.

On Friday, the Federal Reserve and other banking regulators pointed to the continuing lawsuit as one reason for withdrawing the update.

The latest move by regulators comes after years of back and forth on how best to update the law. The effort to modernize the prior version, which stretches back to 1995, initially was taken up under the first Trump administration.

Under the CRA, banks are typically graded every three years on their lending to low- and moderate-income communities.

A bad grade can prevent banks from merging.

Banks opposed the Biden administration’s effort to revamp the redlining regulations because they said the old rules worked well, and that the update proposed by regulators was overly complicated and burdensome.

—Dylan Tokar

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Judge Orders CFPB To Rehire Workers

A district court judge in Washington ordered Trump officials to resume work at a consumer finance watchdog and rehire its fired workers, another setback for the Trump administration’s efforts to radically downsize the federal government.

The ruling by District Judge Amy Berman Jackson also orders Trump officials to refrain from deleting or destroying any of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s records or data. A freeze on changes to the agency had been in place since a union representing CFPB employees challenged the administration’s actions.

A Trump appointee had ordered a halt to essentially all supervisory and other work at the agency, which oversees large banks and other

consumer lenders.

Representatives for Russell Vought, the head of the Office of Management and Budget who has been temporarily running the agency, didn’t respond to a request for comment. The administration is likely to appeal the judge’s order.

The decision is the latest legal rebuke for President Trump in his effort to drastically shrink the size and scope of the federal government.

The order comes after weeks of legal briefings and an evidentiary hearing where the judge was presented with emails and testimony from a CFPB official about the Trump administration’s stated intentions for the agency.

Vought and other Trump officials engaged “in a hurried effort to dismantle and disable the agency entirely,” Jackson said.

—Dylan Tokar

UTAH
Fluoride Is Banned In Public Water

Utah has become the first state to ban fluoride in public drinking water, over opposition from dentists and national health organizations who warn the move will lead to medical problems and disproportionately affect low-income communities.

Republican Gov. Spencer Cox signed legislation Thursday that bars cities and communities from deciding whether to add the mineral to their water systems.

Fluoride strengthens teeth and reduces cavities by replacing minerals lost during normal wear and tear, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Utah lawmakers who pushed for a ban said putting fluoride in water was too expensive. Cox, who grew up and raised his own children in

a community without fluoridated water, compared it recently to being “medicated” by the government.

The ban, which takes effect May 7, comes weeks after Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has expressed skepticism about water fluoridation, took office.

The American Dental Association sharply criticized Cox and Utah lawmakers, saying the ban showed “wanton disregard for the oral health and well-being of their constituents.”

Opponents say the ban will disproportionately affect low-income residents who might rely on public drinking water having fluoride as their only source of preventive dental care. The law’s sponsor, Republican Rep. Stephanie Griccius, acknowledged fluoride has benefits, but said it was an issue of “individual choice” to not have it in the water.

—Associated Press

Hegseth’s Wife Joined Meetings

Continued from Page One

cally expected to possess security clearances given the delicate nature of the discussions, according to defense officials and people familiar with the meeting. There is often security near the meeting space to keep away uninvited attendees.

Hegseth’s wife, Jennifer, is not a Defense Department employee, defense officials said. It isn’t uncommon for spouses of senior officials to possess low-level security clearances, but a Pentagon representative declined to say whether Jennifer has one. Jennifer didn’t respond to requests for comment.

Jennifer Hegseth also attended a meeting last month at North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Brussels where allied defense officials discussed their support for Ukraine, according to two people who attended the meeting. Hegseth’s brother Philip has also been traveling with him on official visits, the Pentagon said.

The Brussels meeting, which took place on the sidelines of a February conference of NATO defense ministers, was a gathering of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, a U.S.-led forum of some 50 nations that periodically meets to coordinate on production and de-

livery of weapons and other support for Ukraine. At the closed-door discussions, national representatives routinely present confidential information, such as donations to Ukraine that they don’t want to be made public, according to officials.

Some foreign attendees at the meetings didn’t know who Jennifer Hegseth was, according to people familiar with both gatherings. Others were surprised by her presence but proceeded without raising objections, the people said. It’s not clear whether her presence affected what was discussed at either session.

Members of Congress from both parties have raised concerns about Hegseth’s handling of sensitive military information following revelations that he and other administration officials used a group chat on the Signal messaging platform that included a journalist to discuss and execute a strike on Houthi militants in Yemen.

Sen. Roger Wicker (R., Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, its ranking Democrat, in a letter Wednesday asked the Defense Department Inspector General to launch an inquiry into the chat.

High-ranking Defense officials occasionally bring their spouses on official travel and to ceremonial functions. At a press conference during the NATO conference in Brussels, Hegseth told reporters that Jennifer had joined him and had “been meeting with families of U.S. troops” in Belgium and Germany.

But it’s rare for spouses, who are private citizens, to sit



Jennifer and Pete Hegseth in Warsaw, Poland, in February.

OWAN MARQUES/GETTY IMAGES

in on national security meetings, according to current and former defense officials.

“When you have meetings with ministers or high level NATO officials, those meetings almost always include sensitive security conversations,” said Chuck Hagel, a former Republican senator who served as defense secretary under President Barack Obama. “If you are going to discuss top secret, national security issues, you have to be very selective. What’s the relevancy of the person you are inviting?”

For a secretary’s wife to be present in such conversations, Hagel said, “It sends a message to the department: Why is the secretary doing that? It puts staff on guard over what to say and to whom. It introduces an issue you don’t need to introduce.”

A high-ranking former official in the Obama administration said former President Bill Clinton never attended any

meeting with then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, though he did go to North Korea to secure the release of a reporter. The person knew of no instance in which a spouse attended any official meeting.

“That would be strange,” the former official said, “and would not make any sense.”

Sean Parnell, a spokesman for the Defense Department, said in an email response to a detailed request for comment that it is “pretty clear to me that your story is going to be filled with inaccuracies and will not be written in good faith.” Parnell didn’t clarify what the inaccuracies were.

Representatives for NATO and the U.K. Ministry of Defense declined to comment.

In the previous Trump administration, Mike Pompeo drew scrutiny over his wife Susan’s role while he was the head of the Central Intelligence Agency and later the State Department. Susan Pompeo was involved in CIA so-

cial events, held an honorary role on a board supporting agency family members, and often worked near her husband on the CIA’s seventh floor, a spokesman for the agency acknowledged in 2018 in response to reporting by media outlets. She also delegated work to State Department employees on behalf of her husband, including some work of a personal nature that a 2021 Inspector General report found to be inappropriate.

For Hegseth, a second family member is also getting involved. His younger brother, Philip, a podcast producer for the conservative think tank Hudson Institute and the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, recently joined the Department of Homeland Security as a liaison to the Defense Department, according to Pentagon spokeswoman Kingsley Wilson.

Philip and Pete Hegseth traveled to Guantanamo Bay together last month and met with the Irish martial artist Conor McGregor at the Pentagon in March, according to photographs published on the Defense Department website. Philip is currently traveling with Hegseth on a tour to visit American allies and bases in Asia, Wilson said. DHS didn’t respond to a request for comment. Philip Hegseth didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

Jennifer, who has spent her career in television news, met Pete Hegseth when she was a producer on Fox & Friends, which Hegseth hosted on weekends. The two married in 2019. She later became a vice president at Fox Nation, the

network’s streaming service, but is no longer an employee at the company, according to Fox News spokeswoman Irena Briganti.

Fox News parent Fox Corp. and The Wall Street Journal’s parent company, News Corp, share common ownership.

Both Jennifer and Philip were near-constant fixtures at Hegseth’s side during his contentious confirmation process for defense secretary. Photographs show them flanking him through the hallways as he courted senators during one-on-one meetings on Capitol Hill.

Some senators were surprised that Hegseth invited Jennifer to sit next to him in their private meetings, making it awkward to ask questions about allegations related to infidelity and sexual misconduct, said people familiar with the senators’ thinking.

Photos and videos from a brief press conference that directly preceded the March meeting with the U.K.’s Healey show Jennifer filing into the conference room and taking a seat behind her husband. Other attendees, who numbered in the teens, included high-ranking military and diplomatic officials.

Healey hoped to discuss America’s changing involvement in the war in Ukraine, he said in response to a reporter’s question before the meeting.

“It’s the detail of those discussions, which are rightly behind the scenes, that the Defense Secretary and I will now pursue this afternoon,” Healey said.

The media departed. Jennifer Hegseth stayed.

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RELENTLESS LITIGATION THREATENS FUTURE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

American agriculture is approaching a breaking point. Farmers are already facing a number of challenges, including low commodity prices and trade uncertainty. And farm bankruptcies were up 55% last year. Threatening to make matters worse is a campaign of meritless lawsuits, activist state regulators, and false attacks on the tools farmers depend on most to grow the food, fuel, and fiber we all need.

The wave of litigation targeting agriculture is based on a single discredited report by a World Health Organization subagency that has been refuted by more than 1,500 safety studies and every leading health regulator in the world. While trial lawyers make a fortune, farmers are about to be hung out to dry. That’s why it’s time to take action.

Absent legislative or other interventions to reinforce existing product labeling rules, America’s food security and rural economies will be under even more pressure that will be felt at every supermarket, restaurant, gas station, and dinner table in America. Farmers simply cannot keep their yields high and their costs low without weed-fighting tools like glyphosate. Think grocery prices are high now? Research shows that food inflation could more than double if these tools are allowed to be litigated away.

This is a real crisis, but we have the power to fix it. We urge elected officials to stand with farmers over the litigation industry and anti-ag activists.

The Modern Ag Alliance is a coalition of **more than 100 agricultural organizations** advocating for U.S. farmers’ access to essential crop protection tools to ensure a stable, affordable food supply.



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WORLD NEWS

Scores Killed in Myanmar Earthquakes

A 7.7-magnitude temblor hit Mandalay, and smaller quakes rattled Thailand

By FELIZ SOLOMON
AND PATRICK BARTA

BANGKOK—A series of earthquakes rocked central Myanmar on Friday, killing scores of people, causing widespread destruction in some of the war-torn country’s biggest cities and shaking skyscrapers hundreds of miles away in neighboring Thailand.

An initial, 7.7-magnitude quake struck in the early afternoon with an epicenter just west of Mandalay, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor was followed by a 6.4-magnitude quake 11 minutes later, and several smaller aftershocks, the USGS said.

The USGS said that an estimated 3.7 million people lived in areas affected by violent shaking and an extra 2.9 million in areas hit by severe shaking. Its early modeling suggests that the number of deaths could exceed 10,000 or even 100,000 and that economic losses might surpass the value of Myanmar’s gross domestic product.

Myanmar authorities said 144 people were confirmed dead and more than 700 were injured as of Friday evening, adding that the toll is expected to rise. Thai officials said at least three people were killed in the capital, Bangkok, and dozens were injured when a high-rise building collapsed at a construction site.

In Myanmar, videos on social media showed buildings reduced to rubble, crumbled roads and a bridge that had collapsed into a river. Another showed panicked travelers



Medical workers treat an earthquake survivor at a hospital in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. Officials said more than 700 people were confirmed injured as of Friday night.

crouching on the pavement outside Mandalay’s airport with idle planes behind them. Myanmar’s military junta declared a state of emergency in parts of the country, including the capital, Naypyitaw, and the second-largest city, Mandalay, state media reported. Myanmar’s National Unity Government, a shadow administration formed by politicians ousted in a 2021 coup, said the quakes caused extensive damage to religious sites and heritage buildings, and warned that further destruction, such as a dam breach, could lie ahead.

Myanmar’s junta leader, Min Aung Hlaing, made a rare appeal for international support. “We are opening the way to allow international aid,” he said in a television address.

President Trump said the U.S. would assist Myanmar in responding to the earthquakes.

Streams of wounded sought treatment at Naypyitaw’s main hospital, which itself was damaged in the quake.

“I’ve never seen anything like this before,” said a representative of a local charity who was helping at the hospital. He said he saw some fatalities and many injuries but was unable to provide an estimate.

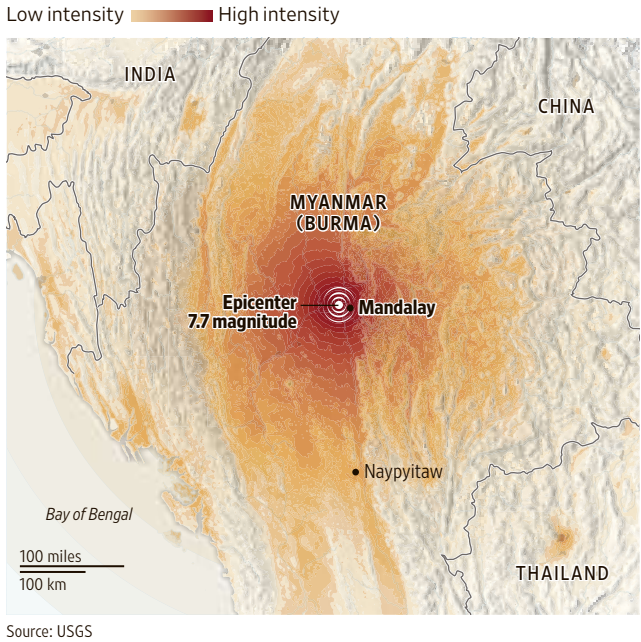
The earthquakes struck one of Asia’s poorest countries, which has been ripped apart by a civil war that followed the 2021 coup. The epicenter is in an area controlled by the junta, which since the start of the war has tightly controlled access of international aid groups. Healthcare and other emergency facilities have been

hollowed out by the fighting.

San Thein, a 56-year-old Mandalay resident, said the earthquake and its aftermath were “the worst situation I have ever experienced in my life.”

In Bangkok, buildings swayed and thousands of panicked people poured into the streets. Photos showed rescuers searching through rubble at a construction site in the capital. The National Institute of Emergency Medicine said 70 of the site’s roughly 320 workers were unaccounted for as of Friday evening, and that 20 workers were trapped in an elevator shaft.

Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said on social media that she ordered health authorities to prepare for medical emergencies in high-risk areas.



Israel Strikes Beirut After Rocket Fire From Lebanon

Israel launched an airstrike Friday on Beirut for the first time since a U.S.-backed cease-fire took effect in November,

By Adam Chamseddine,
Jared Malsin
and Anat Peled

responding to rocket fire from southern Lebanon amid growing frustrations among some U.S. officials about the Lebanese government’s slow prog-

ress in disarming Hezbollah in the country’s south.

The truce, which stopped more than a year of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, required Lebanese security forces to increase their deployment in southern Lebanon to ensure the U.S.-designated terrorist group withdrew its fighters and weapons from areas near Israel’s border by the end of January. But two months after the deadline, Lebanon’s military, starved

of funds since the country’s 2019 financial crisis, has struggled to recruit enough soldiers to deploy across the south.

Militants fired rockets from Lebanon toward Israel on Friday for the second time in a week. One of the rockets was shot down by the Israeli military, and another fell in Lebanese territory. Hezbollah has denied responsibility for the attacks.

The Israeli military said it targeted a drone-storage facil-

ity used by Hezbollah’s aerial unit. The Lebanese military said it found the site of the militants’ launch and was investigating the incident.

Israel and Lebanon have indicated they want to maintain the cease-fire, but Friday’s exchange underscores the fragility of the deal, which, if fully enforced, would allow populations on both sides of the border to return to their homes.

Managing the agreement,

which was struck during the last days of the Biden administration, is a diplomatic test for the Trump White House. Officials have sought to contain the violence, while backing Israel’s decision in January to keep military forces at five points on high ground in southern Lebanon over the objections of the Lebanese government.

In Beirut, the strike was an ominous reminder of months of war in which hundreds of

Israeli attacks reduced buildings to rubble and pushed hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes nationwide.

More voices inside Lebanon are expressing concern, echoing U.S. frustration over the lack of progress in dismantling Hezbollah’s military presence. Former Deputy Prime Minister Ghassan Hasbani recently warned: “If the army doesn’t disarm Hezbollah—willingly or not—then Israel will.”

As a Veteran, when someone raises their hand for help, you’re often one of the first ones to respond. But it’s also okay to get help for yourself. Maybe you want or need assistance with employment, stress, finances, mental health or finding the right resources. No matter what it is, you earned it. And there’s no better time than right now to ask for it.

Don’t wait. Reach out.

Find resources at [VA.GOV/REACH](https://www.va.gov/reach)

Hamas’s Grip on Gaza Shows Cracks

Hamas used a series of hostage handovers during a two-month cease-fire to put on a show of strength, with its fighters donning the group’s signature green headbands and hold-

By Summer Said,
Abeer Ayyoub and
Rory Jones

ing assault rifles. But as Israel has resumed airstrikes and ground operations in Gaza, Hamas’s grip on the enclave has appeared more fragile than ever.

It took days for the militants to respond to Israeli attacks this past week that killed hundreds of Palestinians. The rockets that eventually were fired at Israel were intercepted. Protesters recently took to the streets in rare displays of defiance against the group that has held sway over Gaza for two decades.

“Out, out, Hamas out,” crowds chanted.

The protests were partly an expression of frustration among Palestinians, who were just beginning to enjoy a semblance of normalcy, over the return of war. But they also were the most public sign of the weakening of Hamas’s popularity and hold on Gaza. Hundreds of demonstrators on Tuesday and Wednesday across the enclave called for a cessation of fighting and an end to Hamas’s rule.

Before the conflict with Israel, Hamas repeatedly used brute force to put down dem-



Palestinians demonstrate against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, demanding an end to the militant group’s war with Israel.

onstrations against its rule. But the war has significantly degraded the group, leaving its leadership fractured and ranks diminished, and hampering its ability to suppress dissent.

Israeli officials openly concede that Hamas remains a potent force in Gaza, and that it won’t be deposed without a major ground offensive. Israel estimates Hamas has recruited thousands of new fighters—though untrained and inexperienced—and that any alternative administration likely would succumb to a bloody insurgency from Hamas. The group has indicated it is willing to hand governance to another Palestinian administrator, but has refused to disarm. Hamas still has thousands of

fighters it can deploy to the streets, but the group’s officials have appeared reluctant to quell protests among Palestinians who are suffering through a brutal conflict and facing a dire humanitarian crisis.

The militants instead have taken a softer approach, warning that outward dissent plays into Israel’s hands. “Beware of becoming a weapon aimed at your own people,” they said.

“They are trying to wait and see if things will calm,” said Ghassan Khatib, a lecturer at Birzeit University in the West Bank. Hamas could use force, he said, but wants to “counter the arguments of the protesters by suggesting that this serves only the interest of Israel.” Arab intelligence officials say

the group for weeks has been trying to re-install discipline among its fighters after many deserted during the initial phase of the war. Hamas has been reluctant to punish their own fighters over fears that the group needs as many of them as possible to meet another potential major offensive by Israel, the intelligence officials said.

Hamas’s internal-security force, which specializes in counterespionage and silencing critics, has been hollowed out by the Israeli military, the intelligence officials said. They also believe that Hamas has just 10% to 15% of the 20,000 projectiles it had when it attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, limiting its ability to launch wide-scale attacks on Israel.

Israel has targeted senior Hamas political figures, killing at least six along with several senior and midrank military officials in more than a week.

Though the group’s response to Israel’s renewed attacks has been muted, analysts believe that in part reflects a strategy of waiting for the right time, while portraying Israel as the aggressor. Hamas still very much remains the dominant Palestinian security actor in Gaza, said Hugh Lovatt, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, “There is no potential for the protesters to overthrow it,” he said. “For now, it appears to be tolerating them.”

WORLD NEWS

Ukraine Likely Will Reject U.S. Economic Plan

Draft of accord gives Washington first pick of country's natural resources

By JANE LYTUVYENKO AND ALEXANDER WARD

KYIV, Ukraine—The Trump administration expects Ukraine to quickly sign a new agreement that gives Washington sweeping powers over its ally's economy. The problem is that Ukraine almost certainly can't accept the terms.

The mismatch in expectations threatens to set up the U.S. and Ukraine for a new conflict over what President Trump can get in return for supporting Kyiv in its fight against Russia's invasion. A previous, less-expansive economic deal underpinned a blowup in the White House between Trump and Vice President JD Vance on one side, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the other.

"Ukrainians feel that they cannot give up their entire

economic sovereignty for nothing," said Daniel Bilak, a lawyer and a partner in the Kyiv office of Kinstellar.

What started out with Trump saying in February that he would like to get his hands on Ukraine's "rare earths"—minerals used in modern technologies from cellphones to electric cars—has developed into a plan for the U.S. to draw profits from Ukrainian economic projects across metals, oil, gas, and other natural resources, as well as infrastructure projects including ports and pipelines.

The 55-page draft, a copy of which was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, is aimed at fulfilling Trump's demand to claw back billions in military and financial aid from Ukraine that has sustained its resistance to Russia since 2022. Trump has put the U.S. contribution at \$350 billion; Ukraine says it is roughly \$100 billion.

The draft, sent to Kyiv by the Treasury Department this past week, proposes a limited partnership registered in Delaware, and called the "United



A worker controls the extraction of ilmenite, a key element used to produce titanium, in an open-pit mine in Ukraine.

States-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund." The draft is unusual for a deal between states as it resembles a commercial agreement, said Tymofiy Mylovanov, president of the Kyiv School of Economics and a former Ukrainian economy minister. "I don't know how you can write an inter-governmental commercial agreement," Mylovanov said.

Investment from the European Union, World Bank and

the International Monetary Fund, among other entities, would be incompatible with this agreement, he said, adding that the Ukrainian parliament would never pass it.

The White House has presented the deal as mutually beneficial and a way to boost ties.

"The mineral deal offers Ukraine the opportunity to form an enduring economic relationship with the United States that is the basis for

long term security and peace," said National Security Council Spokesman James Hewitt.

Ukraine has responded cautiously, and is working on an official response. The draft lacks security guarantees that Kyiv has been seeking, and reopens the question of whether Ukraine should repay the U.S. for the military aid it has been providing since 2022—a question that wasn't in a previous plan.

"It is very important to note the following: Any public discussions about the text of this agreement at this stage only harm the negotiations and hinder constructive dialogue with our American partners," Yulia Svyrydenko, Ukraine's economy minister, told Parliament on Friday.

Analysts said many of the emerging details would be hard for Ukraine to swallow. The fund would have the right of first refusal on all natural resource and infrastructure projects in Ukraine that the country is seeking investors for, both new and existing.

Those projects would pay profits into a fund managed by

a board of directors consisting of three U.S. and two Ukrainian representatives, essentially giving Washington control of the fund's management. The fund's projects would have to avoid exporting critical minerals to strategic U.S. competitors.

The document states that the money from the fund would go toward repaying assistance the U.S. provided to Kyiv since Russia's invasion. The document doesn't say what money would go toward much-needed rebuilding—even as Ukraine struggles to maintain its essential services as Russian attacks continue.

If the document is signed, Ukraine would have 45 days to come up with a list of resource projects licensed by Ukrainian authorities.

Even if Kyiv wanted to find other investors for its vast mineral and natural resources, it would first have to present the project to the fund's board. If the fund declined to take it on, Ukraine couldn't offer other potential investors better economic terms in the following year.

In Greenland, Vance Slams Denmark's Stewardship

Vice President JD Vance, speaking at a U.S. Space Force base in Greenland, criticized Denmark's stewardship of the autonomous territory, and encouraged Greenlanders to em-

brace U.S. efforts to exert more control over the island.

"Our message to Denmark is very simple: you have not done a good job by the people of Greenland," Vance said at the Pituffik Space Base, with U.S. troops behind him. "You have underinvested in the people of Greenland, and you have underinvested in the security architecture of this incredible, beautiful landmass filled with incredible people. That has to change."

Vance called on the people of

Greenland to reject Denmark's oversight, arguing that the U.S. is better positioned to protect the territory from China and Russia. He said the U.S. had seen "very strong evidence" that Beijing and Moscow are interested in Greenland because of its strategic location.

"I think that you'd be a lot better coming under the United States' security umbrella than you have been under Denmark's security umbrella," Vance said.

The trip shows how serious the administration is about taking control of Greenland. Trump offered to buy Greenland from Denmark in his first term, but didn't campaign on the issue. After he was elected in 2024, he began talking about expanding the U.S. by acquiring Greenland—although it isn't for sale—making Canada the 51st state and regaining

control of the Panama Canal.

But Vance, who praised Greenlanders during his remarks, ruled out taking the island by force. "We think we're going to be able to cut a deal Donald Trump-style," he said.

Vance said there were no immediate plans to expand the U.S. military presence on the island. But he said he expects the U.S. to invest in additional ice breakers and naval ships that would have a greater presence in Greenland.

Under normal circumstances, a U.S. vice president visiting American soldiers in Pituffik would be uncontroversial—or perhaps celebrated as Vance is the first vice president to visit the island—but the current climate makes the trip explosive. The short notice before the visit, only days, and the lack of coordination between Washington and Copen-



JD Vance and his wife, Usha Vance, visited the Pituffik Space Base in Greenland on Friday.

hagen, illustrate how strained relations have become between two countries that for decades enjoyed some of the firmest ties in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance.

The White House initially announced the visit as a cultural sojourn by second lady Usha Vance that would include

a trip to watch the biggest dog sled race in the region. Danish and Greenlandic officials said they warned the Trump administration in the run-up to the trip that a high-level U.S. delegation visit to the island would damage fraying ties between Washington, Copenhagen, and Nuuk, the Greenland capital.

Friday's visit has unsettled many Greenlanders. "Mr. Trump's continuous talk about 'getting Greenland one way or the other' is very upsetting to the people of Greenland," said Grace J. Heindorf Nielsen, a retired teacher in Nuuk. "We do not wish to be American citizens or a part of the U.S."

WORLD WATCH



FRIDAY PRAYERS: At a mosque in Kolkata, Muslims attended prayer on the final Friday of the holy month of Ramadan.

SOUTH CHINA SEA
Japan, Philippines, U.S. Drill Together
The U.S., Japan and the Philippines on Friday staged joint naval drills to boost crisis readiness off a disputed South China Sea shoal as a Chinese military ship kept watch from a distance. The Chinese frigate attempted to get closer to the waters where the three countries warships and aircraft were undertaking maneuvers off the Scarborough Shoal, but it was warned by a Philippine frigate by radio and kept away.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea. A 2016 international arbitration ruling invalidated those claims, but Beijing refused to participate in the arbitration, rejected the outcome and continues to defy it.

—Associated Press

MIDDLE EAST
Syria and Lebanon Reach Border Deal
Meeting in Saudi Arabia, the defense ministers of Lebanon and Syria signed an agreement on border demarcation and to boosting coordination regarding security along their tense frontier, the Saudi Press Agency reported Friday. Clashes in border areas this month left several dead and dozens wounded.

The ouster in early December of Syria's Bashar al-Assad led to tensions along the frontier, where Lebanon's Hezbollah group had been active during Syria's 14-year civil war, fighting alongside Assad.

In recent weeks, authorities on both sides of the nearly 250-mile border have been closing smuggling routes along the unmarked frontier.

—Associated Press

RUSSIA
Putin Pushes U.N.-Run Vote in Ukraine
Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed temporarily putting Ukraine under external governance. He reaffirmed his claim that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, whose term expired last year, lacks the legitimacy to sign a peace deal.

Ukraine's constitution bars national elections during times of martial law.

Putin said new elections could be held under United Nations auspices. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry answered by suggesting a "temporary UN governance in Russia," saying that "locals would benefit greatly from any governance other than Putin, who spends billions of dollars on his criminal war against Ukraine."

—Associated Press

MALAWI, ZAMBIA
Charity Threatened With Elephant Suit
Rural farming communities on the border between the Malawi and Zambia are seeking damages and threatening to sue the International Fund for Animal Welfare over the relocation of more than 260 elephants to their area, which their lawyers say have killed at least 12 people and destroyed crops and property.

British law firm Leigh Day said it is representing 10 people living near the park where the elephants were meant to be contained.

IFAW said it was deeply saddened by any human-wildlife conflict, but said its role in the relocation project was to provide financial and technical support to the government of Malawi.

—Associated Press

Carney Call With Trump Appears to Ease Tensions

By VIPAL MONGA

TORONTO—In the two weeks since Mark Carney became Canada's prime minister, he has issued warnings that President Trump's threats on trade and making Canada the 51st state had broken the relationship between the close allies.

"It is clear that the United States is no longer a reliable partner," he said Thursday. "There will be no turning back."

Then on Friday, Carney and Trump spoke and things were surprisingly civil. "It was a very productive call, we agree on many things," Trump wrote on his Truth Social site.

The Canadian government said Carney and Trump had "a very constructive conversation," and the leaders agreed to begin negotiating a new economic and security relationship after an April 28 election in Canada.

Of all the world leaders confronting Trump's rewriting of the global-trade system, Carney, and his predecessor, Justin Trudeau, have taken the harshest line with the president. Canada has retaliated with its own tariffs, doubled down on relationships with other allies and openly criticized the White House.

The tough approach—which most countries have forsworn in hopes of striking a better deal with Trump—is now facing its most crucial test as Carney begins negotiating directly with the president. Trump just announced 25% tariffs on cars and auto parts made in Canada, and promised to announce Wednesday a new suite of tariffs on much of the goods imported into the U.S.

Carney told Trump on Friday that Canada would retaliate against any new tariffs, according to the Canadian government's readout of the call.

For Carney, the challenge is stark. There is no country as

geographically dependent on the U.S. as Canada. The two countries share a 5,500 mile border, and have for a long time built cross-border ties that have bound their cultures and economies. Since Canada signed its first free-trade deal with the U.S., the 1965 Canada-U.S. auto pact, much of the Canadian economy has been geared toward selling goods into the world's biggest market.

Canada sends more than 75% of its exports to the U.S., and the prospect of a drawn-out trade war prompted the Bank of Canada to warn that the Canadian economy could suffer lasting damage.

Carney, who is campaigning for an April 28 election, is trying to tap in to Canada's anxiety about Trump to make the case that he is best suited to take on the president. He has said Canada must retool its economy to become less dependent on trade with the U.S.

Carney also has said Canada needs to renegotiate its broader trading and security relationship with the U.S., but he won't sit down with Trump until he stops talking about annexing Canada. "There has to be respect for our sovereignty as a country," he has said.

Carney's election challenger, Pierre Poilievre, the populist leader of the right-leaning Conservative Party, on Friday said he was glad Carney and Trump spoke, but blamed Carney's Liberal Party for leaving Canada so vulnerable.

"It was a mistake over the last lost Liberal decade to weaken our economy and become more dependent on the Americans," Poilievre said.

Trump said he and Carney agreed to meet after Canada's election to "work on elements of Politics, Business, and all other factors, that will end up being great for both the United States of America and Canada."

Former Hostage Speaks Out

Continued from Page One
bitch, say you are a dog,” Wenkert recalled his captor saying.

After Wenkert thought he was finally alone, he lifted his head, only to realize Tznon was still there. “Why are you looking at me?” his captor screamed, as he brought a crowbar down on Wenkert’s head, shoulders and legs. The violent attacks continued, including on Wenkert’s 23rd birthday.

During that beating, Wenkert learned what had sparked the violent turn: An Israeli military operation had killed his captor’s father, Tznon told him.

Wenkert is one of 38 hostages released after Hamas and Israel agreed to a cease-fire in January. The truce collapsed last week, when Israel resumed airstrikes and ground incursions aimed to pressure Hamas to release the remaining hostages. With the war raging again, those who were recently released have found themselves thrust into the role of public figures, pleading with their fellow citizens, their government and the U.S. to make the return of the last hostages the priority and end the war.

Of the 251 people taken on Oct. 7, 2023, both dead and alive, 59 remain in Gaza, including 24 believed to be alive. Forty-one hostages who were taken alive have been killed since the start of Israel’s offensive in Gaza, including at least 14 from Israeli military activity such as airstrikes.

‘Our fate’

The recently released hostages have just begun telling their stories—about being held underground with no light or fresh air; being held in chains with no medical treatment for the wounds they suffered on Oct. 7; being subject to starvation, beatings and humiliation. Many of the male hostages in particular emerged pale, thin and weak.

When Wenkert returned to Israel in February, he had lost more than 80 pounds from before his capture. He and other recently released hostages say Israel’s military campaign directly affected how they were treated. “There needs to be an understanding among all of our government and military brass that every decision, sentence and word they utter has a direct and clear influence on our fate,” Wenkert said of the hostages remaining in Gaza. “I say ‘our fate’ because we are still there.”

Several of the recently released hostages said the plight of those left behind have spurred them to tell their stories. They have spoken to Israeli media and at rallies calling to free the hostages. Some met with President Trump to urge him to continue the cease-fire. Wenkert has met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s wife and lawmakers, and has spoken on the phone to members of the Israeli negotiating team.

Wenkert said he’s plagued by guilt over two young men, Evyatar David and Guy Gilboa



Above, Omer Wenkert at home. Below, hostage posters at the entrance to the Wenkerts’ home read: ‘Do not leave me behind.’

Dalal, who were held with him for half of his time in captivity and remain in Gaza.

“What reason is there that I should be here and Evyatar and Guy aren’t with me right now?” he said, sitting in his family’s living room in Gedera, a small city in central Israel. His parents walked in and out, as neighbors intermittently arrived with food for the family. He had returned home four weeks earlier, but he still looked scrawny compared with the hostage posters of him plastered around his block.

Polls show that a large majority of Israelis support an end to the war in exchange for the freedom of all the remaining hostages, living and dead. But Netanyahu’s right-wing coalition and its supporters have said the focus must be on the military defeat of Hamas—and that military pressure is the best way to force the group to free the hostages.

“Military pressure is a necessary condition for releasing more hostages,” Netanyahu said earlier this month. “Military damage to Hamas and freeing the hostages aren’t opposing goals—these are goals that go hand in hand.”

Wenkert was kidnapped from the Nova music festival near the Gaza border. He was there for less than two hours when a stream of rockets punctured the air. He ran into a mobile bomb shelter along the road along with about 40 others. Only 12 would emerge alive.

Soon Wenkert heard shooting. Militants started to throw grenades into the packed shelter. Panic ensued. He covered himself with dead bodies.

The militants started pouring gasoline. “They’re burning us!” someone screamed. The shelter grew hotter. Wenkert climbed out from under the weight of the bodies on top of him and ran through the fire. His body went numb, he said.

When he emerged, the militants were waiting for him. They stripped him down to his underwear, tied his hands behind his back and threw him into a white pickup truck.



Soon after arriving in Gaza, Wenkert was taken underground into Hamas tunnels. He wouldn’t come out for 505 days.

Those first few days were a blur, he said. “I remember on the first day someone hovering over me and a punch to the face, losing consciousness, and then another person waking you, another one stepping on you, losing consciousness, and another one waking you and losing consciousness,” Wenkert recalled.

At first, he was with a group of Thai hostages and 18-year-old Israeli Liam Or, who was kidnapped from a kibbutz near the border. Or and the Thai hostages were freed in a short cease-fire in November 2023. Wenkert was transferred to a narrow corridor made of concrete closed off by a blast door, with a pit in the ground for a toilet that he would cover with sand after every use. He remained there until his release.

For roughly half that time, he was alone—197 days, by his count. He kept track of the days by the number of times his captors entered his cell and brought him food.

“I was sure that after two weeks I would completely lose my mind,” he said.

To pass the time, Wenkert established a routine. He walked for several hours a day

up and down the corridor, which was about 30 to 40 feet long. He often spoke to himself or sang Israeli rap songs out loud. Wenkert, who had worked as a restaurant manager before the war, tried to think about things that made him happy, imagining his family or the restaurants he wanted to open one day.

He also talked to God. Although he hadn’t grown up in a particularly religious home, he somehow recalled the words to Psalm 23: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” he chanted in Hebrew. “Though I

walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear not, for thou art with me.”

He forced himself to cry at times, thinking it might help him prevent any uncontrollable outbursts.

In May, Israel entered the southern Gaza city of Rafah, and his captors began beating him more fiercely. His mental state deteriorated, he said.

Two days later, the tunnel door opened and militants entered the room with three men. “Hey bro, what’s up?” one of them said in Hebrew.

‘I promised them I would do everything I can to make sure they get home.’

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More beatings

The three men were hostages—Dalal, 23, David, 24, and Tal Shoham, 40—who had been held together since their capture. They became like brothers, Wenkert said.

They convinced their captors to give them a deck of cards, which they’d also use to play chess. They took turns exercising, because the air in the tunnel became too hot if they all moved at the same time.

“If they wouldn’t have brought them down, I would have ended up in a catatonic state,” Wenkert said.

By October, Israel cut back on the aid going into Gaza. The men got much less food. David and Shoham became so weak that they couldn’t move, Wenkert said.

Wenkert’s worst fear, he said, was that the Israeli military would try to rescue them. His captors had placed a bomb in his shelter, so if the troops came, he knew they’d never make it out alive.

Other hostages have told similar stories. It underscores their point, they say, that a negotiated deal is the only way to free those remaining in captivity.

After the new year, Wenkert and the other men noticed how their captors spoke more frequently about a possible cease-fire. The hostages were skeptical, having heard the back and forth before. Then all of a sudden, the amount of food they were given went up dramatically.

One day, they got a bar of chocolate, something Wenkert hadn’t seen in more than a year and a half. The label said it had been manufactured the month before, a sign to him that Israel had reopened the spigot to aid. The hostages now believed a cease-fire was in effect.

The violence didn’t stop, though. One of the guards told Wenkert he was mad that the press and world leaders commented on how the hostages being released one week appeared weak and thin. His captor told him no matter how well they treated the Israeli hostages, Hamas would always be deemed villains. Then he beat Wenkert.

Separated

Wenkert learned from his captors that he and Shoham would be released—but David and Dalal would stay in Gaza. The four men prepared themselves to be separated. They talked about it. They made plans to meet for burgers at a favorite Tel Aviv joint once a second stage of the cease-fire was reached. They thought it would be soon.

When the moment came, they had barely two minutes to say goodbye. They embraced each other the whole time.

“I promised them I would do everything I can to make sure they get home as soon as possible,” Wenkert said.

Wenkert was freed on Feb. 22 in the Gazan city of Nuseirat. Shoham was released from a different location. While Wenkert was being paraded on a stage by Hamas, he looked out and saw David and Dalal in a car nearby. They waved to each other. Hamas later released a video of the men watching Wenkert’s release and pleading for their freedom.

Those last moments have haunted him. “It is a situation that can be shattering for them—to see someone who was with you for 250 days go home and you stay behind and don’t know what will happen to you,” he said.

As he recovers from his experience, he’s also focused on fighting for their return.

“The top priority is the return of the hostages alone—not the destruction of Hamas, not to destroy infrastructure, not nonsense like that,” Wenkert said. “The return of the hostages—this is where the success of the return to war will be measured for me.”

Ladies’ Night at The Range

Continued from Page One

They like to shoot, but often go just to eat at the club restaurant, hear live music or take cocktail-making classes.

Evans recently attended an euclre night. The humane society where she volunteers held its holiday party there.

She started shooting a small .22 pistol, in part to placate her husband. Now the couple own several firearms, including a shotgun to use for glow-in-the-dark clay shooting. Evans is thinking of joining the range’s all-women shooting league called Lethal Ladies. “I never thought I would be a gunslinging girl,” she said. “But now I get it.”

High-caliber shooting ranges are expanding their niche thanks to a new wave of gun-curious Americans, including women, minorities, liberals and the apolitical. About 26.2

million people became first-time gun owners in the past five years, catalyzed by the pandemic and subsequent social unrest and crime spikes, according to annual surveys of gun retailers by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a gun-industry trade group.

“You want a place where they feel comfortable coming in and shooting,” said Oklahoma-based gun-range consultant Jeff Swanson. He tells prospective clients that old-school ranges—what he calls “stale, pale and male”—had better evolve so as “not to become the next RadioShack or Linens ‘n Things.”

Some shooting sports businesses have tried for years to lure a broader clientele with more high-tech, upscale offerings. Now, with the sharp influx of new gun owners, more businesses are moving quickly to transform. Some appear to be hitting the target.

This new breed is reimagining ranges as something akin to Topgolf for guns: modern, brightly lit complexes replete with gourmet food, date nights, babysitting services and more. They champion safety classes and, notably,



Dawn Williams shoots at Lake Erie Arms in Milan, Ohio.

decouple guns from politics. Memberships are available, and include privileges, but aren’t necessary to walk in and shoot. In many ranges, staff are prohibited from carrying guns—because customers can find it intimidating.

Jim West, co-owner of Lake Erie Arms, opened the large indoor shooting complex in September 2023 as an alternative to the typical “smoky gun ranges where you can taste the lead,” he said. The 94,000-square-foot facility has hosted

weddings, baby showers and a “Bonnie and Clyde” night.

The goal was “to appeal to everybody, not just one tiny demographic,” West said. The complex opened with about 1,800 members and now has some 3,800. He estimates that a little over half of those who come into the complex are women.

The Centennial Gun Club in Denver has made a concerted push in recent years to attract more women and stress customer service, said managing

partner Matt Grosjean. Monthly women-only training classes fill up fast, and the club has established a women’s non-competitive shooting league.

When Guntry launched in suburban Baltimore in January 2020, it primarily hosted training for law enforcement, said co-founder Brian Wolf, a former Baltimore County detective. While training remains a large part of its revenue, the indoor shooting complex now touts “the comforts and amenities of a country club.” It features a Ladies’ Night, a VIP area with a cigar lounge and a cafe serving crab cakes—which have all helped grow membership.

On Valentine’s Day, Guntry hosted a steady stream of couples, many of them novices.

“I’m trying to be the cool wife,” Jen Olson said. The boom-boom-boom of gunfire pulsed through the room as she spoke.

It marked Olson’s first time at a gun range, and the 39-year-old wasn’t there for mere date-night novelty. Her husband, Andrew Olson, served in the Army Reserve and keeps a gun locked in a safe at their home. “Guns are definitely something I am less familiar

with,” said Olson, who works in teacher development for a public-school system.

She wanted to understand firearms herself and appreciated Guntry’s receptiveness to novices. A range safety officer monitored as she fired handguns at paper targets.

But it’s the amenities at these newer ranges that are often the main draw, even for experienced shooters.

For the first six months that Scott Bruns, 55, and Heather Bruns, 50, were at Lake Erie Arms, they rarely used the range. “We were mainly going to the Caliber Club for dinner,” from wild-game nights to farm-to-table specials, said Scott Bruns.

The couple has started shooting together in a league once a week. “Monday night has kind of become our date night,” he said.

The socializing is “almost as fun as the shooting” for Alan Gresh, who often finds himself at the Caliber Club. The restaurant offers a weekly “beastloaf,” a special recipe that includes various types of game meat including bison and elk. “I live for that stuff,” the 55-year-old said.

SPORTS

BY ROBERT O'CONNELL
AND ANDREW BEATON

Newark, N.J.

Before Alabama took on BYU in the Sweet 16 on Thursday, coach Nate Oats gathered his back-court and offered a strange prediction for a team whose best player had been mired in a miserable shooting slump. “We’re gonna rain them,” Oats said.

What even Oats couldn’t have predicted was the downpour of 3-pointers his team would precipitate. By the time the scoreboard stopped spinning, Alabama had hit 25 triples en route to a 113-88 victory.

The Crimson Tide hadn’t just broken the slump. They’d authored the greatest shooting display in the history of the NCAA Tournament, breaking a record that had stood since Loyola Marymount hit 21 treys in 1990.

They’d also shown why Alabama has a chance to stun one of the most statistically dominant college basketball teams in decades, when it faces Duke with a Final Four berth on the line Saturday.

“Once I seen the first 3 fell in,” guard Mark Sears said, “I felt the basket was as big as an ocean.”

The curious thing about the Tide’s onslaught was that Sears, their leading scorer, hadn’t been able to hit the broad side of a barn in weeks. Over his last six games, he’d tried 35 shots from behind the arc and made just five of them—a dismal 14%. But Oats, a former high school math teacher, told Sears to take comfort in a core tenet of statistics.

“There’s a thing called regression to the mean,” Oats told him.

His calculations proved prophetic. Sears started the game with a left hand so hot you could hear it sizzling, connecting on five of his first six shots from long range. In all, he made 10 3-pointers on the night, on the way to a team-high 34 points.

Alabama’s willingness to fire away from deep was strikingly reminiscent of another team comfortable chucking up long shots in the most important games of the season. The Boston Celtics won last year’s NBA championship by turning high-stakes playoff games into 3-point shooting contests, attempting by far the most 3s of any team in the league.

Alabama put even the Celtics to shame. The Crimson Tide took 66 shots on Thursday, and 51 one of them—a mind-boggling 77%—came from behind the arc. That’s a higher rate than Boston shot in any game of the NBA Finals.

All season long, Alabama has been among the most 3-point-happy teams in college basketball. But when Sears went freezing cold recently, Oats wondered if those lousy numbers might be a blessing in disguise. Would BYU give him room to pull up and fire away, providing his star with an opportunity

The Math Teacher Who Shattered March Madness 3-Point Record

Alabama coach Nate Oats taught his team to keep firing away from deep—and was rewarded with a mind-boggling 25 triples on Thursday. Now the Crimson Tide has Duke in its sights.



Alabama coach Nate Oats, below, has encouraged guard Mark Sears, above, to keep shooting 3-pointers.

to blow a game open? Sears answered that question in epic fashion. He also showed why Alabama might be better equipped than any team left in the tournament to take down Duke.

There isn’t much data on how to topple the Blue Devils, considering they have lost only one game since November and blew out most of their ACC opponents. But the three teams that have managed to beat them have had one thing in common: they were efficient from beyond the arc. In Duke’s three losses, its opponents have shot over 42% from distance.

What’s more, the team whose record Alabama broke on Thursday night once showed just how potent a weapon that narrow strip of paint marking the 3-point arc can be in March. When Loyola Marymount brought its own 3-point barrage down on Michigan all those years ago, it blew away the defending champion Wolverines by



34 points—one of the most stunning upsets in March Madness history.

Oats—then a freshman in high school, taking math classes of his own—took notice. “I loved watching them play,” he said. “They got

up-and-down. Maybe part of the reason we coach the way we coach. It’s a little more fun that way.”

Now the fun of Alabama meets the season-long dominance of Duke with a Final Four spot on the line. The Blue Devils have the stronger

pedigree, the starrier roster and, in freshman phenom Cooper Flagg, the best all-around player in the sport.

But the Tide have math on their side. And that just might be enough.

ROBERT O'CONNELL/REUTERS; PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

Decision to Tackle Basketball Pays Off for Gators’ Star

BY LAINE HIGGINS

San Francisco

BACK WHEN WALTER CLAYTON JR. was a sophomore in high school, he already seemed destined for sports stardom.

He was one of the most promising recruits in Florida. He had scholarship offers from powerhouse schools like Georgia, Notre Dame and Penn State. He was well on the road to becoming a big-time college athlete.

Then that road took a sudden detour. In the summer of 2019, Clayton decided to give up on football—where he was a highly touted safety prospect—and commit to playing a sport in which he had exactly zero scholarship offers.

He wanted to become a college basketball player.

“He stopped cold turkey,” said Terrence McGriff, Clayton’s coach at Bartow High School in Florida. “It was a heckuva gamble.”

It was also not universally admired. In the weeks after quitting football, Clayton was called crazy and told he was a fool—and those were just the things that people said to his face.

But now, six years on, Clayton’s gamble has paid off handsomely. He’s a first-team All American point guard leading Florida’s run to the Elite 8. And as far as his current coach is concerned, he’s answered any doubts about his choice to focus on knocking down shots instead of knocking down ball carriers.

“A lot of people questioned his ability,” said Florida coach Todd Golden. “In my humble opinion, he is playing like the best guard in America right now.”

It’s not uncommon for gifted teenagers to play multiple sports

in high school and pick up scholarship offers in both. Patrick Mahomes was a standout pitcher in high school. LeBron James might have been the No. 1 football prospect in Ohio before he went No. 1 in the NBA draft.

That wasn’t quite the case for Clayton.

At 6-foot-3 and 190 pounds, there was no question about his football talent. He was a rangy defensive back and a skilled wide receiver. He even played some quarterback for Lake Wales High School.

“He was really good,” said Mike Singer, a recruiting analyst for On3 who scouted Clayton. “There’s definitely a chance that he could have

gone on to be—who knows—a four-star or five-star recruit.”

When it came to basketball, however, it was a slightly different story. Clayton loved to pass circles around his opponents—but often wound up passing up his own shots. Following his sophomore year, when he transferred to Bartow to focus on hoops, he hadn’t received a single scholarship offer in basketball.

“It was hard to give up all the offers at the time,” Clayton said. “It was kind of more like a straighter path, a clearer path, you could say, if I would have played football.”

The problem is that path kept running smack into the one obsta-

cle that Clayton simply couldn’t overcome. He absolutely hated getting hit.

“That part,” he said, “is not fun.”

And the funny thing about basketball is that you don’t have to tackle anyone.

It took a few months for McGriff, the Bartow basketball coach, to see his new point guard’s potential. He soon started stumping for Clayton with major college coaches in the state.

He called Florida and Florida State, but they weren’t interested. He tried Central Florida and South Florida, but still came up empty. When Bartow won a state championship during Clayton’s junior sea-

son, McGriff was sure the offers would start rolling in.

Then came the pandemic, which all but shut down recruiting.

Clayton finally got his first offers when a bunch of college assistants watched a Zoom feed of him playing in a small showcase in Orlando. One of those was from Iona, a tiny school in New York that had just hired a new coach. His name was Rick Pitino.

“He didn’t really know anything about Iona,” McGriff said. “He chose Rick Pitino.”

At Iona, Clayton got the basketball crash course he needed. He came off the bench as a freshman, then blossomed into the conference player of the year with the highest free throw percentage in the nation.

“He taught me a lot about daily habits, getting up and chasing something every day,” Clayton said of Pitino. “My game improved a lot.”

When Pitino left for St. John’s following the 2022-23 season, Clayton decided to test the waters in the transfer portal—and discovered that Golden’s newly hired staff at Florida had been eying him from afar.

After two East Coast winters, it didn’t take much convincing to get Clayton back to the Sunshine State.

Under Golden, Clayton took more shots and refined his stroke. He also found a way to put his football skills to good use—by finally learning to love bashing into people.

“Walter is a physical guard,” said Gators teammate Alijah Martin. “He shows his dominance every night.”

—Rachel Bachman contributed to this article



Walter Clayton Jr. had football scholarship offers from powerhouse schools but he wanted to play basketball.

MARCO JOSE SANCHEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

OPINION

THE WEEKEND INTERVIEW with Jessica Tisch | By Tunku Varadarajan

Can Democrats Govern Big Cities?

New York’s police commissioner is adamant. Jessica Tisch won’t run for mayor. She says no despite being urged to run by many business and civic leaders. A great deal of money, it would appear, is waiting to get behind her if she does. A registered Democrat, she even has the backing of the New York Post’s conservative editorial page. “Allow us to dream,” they wrote last month.

In an interview in her office at One Police Plaza, Ms. Tisch shuts down all talk about the mayor’s job. “I am a public servant. I am certainly not a politician,” she says, almost hissing the word “certainly.” “I enjoy the work of running agencies. So no, I am not a mayoral candidate.” Pesky journalists tend to ask the same question twice, and her second response echoes the first: “I’ve made my career as a public servant, and I have lots more to do as a public servant. I’m not interested at this time in being a politician.”

Which is a pity. Ms. Tisch, 44, is a Democrat who shows that you can run key parts of blue cities competently. She could be an an-

New York’s top cop shows that it’s possible to do so competently. But she insists she won’t run for mayor of the Big Apple.

swer to her party’s governance problem. It’s a problem that worries voters enough for there to have been a shift to the right in the election in November. Kamala Harris’s citywide margin over Donald Trump was more than 650,000 votes narrower than Joe Biden’s in 2020.

This year’s mayoral race offers little hope. Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa has a lock on the GOP line and no chance of winning. Which leaves the city with motley Democrats. Incumbent Eric Adams could well exit the race: The Justice Department dropped corruption charges against him, but the stigma persists. Most alternatives are hard-core leftists—except for presumptive front-runner Andrew Cuomo, the former governor, who is discredited by his handling of the Covid pandemic, his capitulation to the Albany left on criminal justice, and his #MeToo downfall.

The silver lining is that even if Ms. Tisch won’t run, she offers a template for governance that could inspire her party to get its act together. In the four months since Mr. Adams appointed her commissioner, she has wrought a minor miracle. February marked the third straight month of double-digit declines in citywide index crime—the seven categories of serious crime that include murder, rape and ag-

gravated assault. Crime “is down across every city borough,” she says, and down “by 28% below ground, in our subways.”

These gains in safety have been achieved through innovations that make for more effective and rational policing. Ms. Tisch has tweaked CompStat—the daily counting of crime statistics by precinct, introduced by Commissioner William Bratton in 1994—into a computation of crime by “zones.” Precincts are too big, she says, with an average area of 4 square miles. There is an additional focus now on “pockets of crime, or pockets of violence, or trouble spots,” where cops are dispatched in concentration. She calls it “a scalpel approach to fighting crime”—one that has yielded declines of 40% to 50% in such zones as Roosevelt Avenue in Queens, 125th Street in Manhattan and the Fulton Street corridor in downtown Brooklyn.

Another welcome Tisch obsession is with New York’s quality of life—scourges such as abandoned vehicles, unruly vending, out-of-control scooters or e-bikes, vagrant encampments and drinking on the subway that “affect the livability of the city and your ability to enjoy the streets and the streetscape,” as she puts it. New York “is the safest big city in America. You can go your whole life, if you’re lucky, without being a victim of crime. But you can’t really go a day without seeing or experiencing some quality-of-life issue that is irksome.”

The New York City Police Department now tracks quality-of-life complaints in the way CompStat tracks crime. “We’re excellent at responding to 911 calls for service—truly extraordinary,” she says. “But the department still has a lot of progress that it can make in how we respond to 311 jobs”—i.e., nonemergency calls for help.

Ms. Tisch, a graduate of Harvard and a onetime intern for these pages, has been a prominent administrator in the city since February 2014, when she became the NYPD’s deputy commissioner for information technology. “I’ve never been someone who will accept the status quo when the status quo doesn’t serve New Yorkers,” she says. When she was deputy commissioner of IT, “the status quo was no technology for our cops, no basic tools that you and I use day in and day out to do our work.”

Her examples should make jaws drop: “A phone, a voicemail, an email address, apps—the cops had nothing.” The way the police communicated in the field “hadn’t changed in 50 years. The radio, that was it. So we gave every cop a smartphone, an email address, tablets in every vehicle, body cameras, apps for their 911 jobs, apps to search a name, and completely revolutionized or rethought the way policing could be done in New York City.”

In 2019 Ms. Tisch became the city’s commissioner for informa-



BARBARA KELLEY

tion technology and telecommunications. Less than three years later, she got her “dream job”: sanitation commissioner. A scion of one of New York’s wealthiest families was responsible for collecting garbage, managing waste and fighting literal rats. “I am so proud of the trash revolution,” she says.

Growing up in the city, Ms. Tisch found it “utterly disgusting that we dump 44 million pounds of trash directly on our sidewalks every day, and also ridiculous that we then wonder why we have a rat problem in the city.” Her solution: “basically do what every other city and the rest of the world does, and put New York’s garbage in containers.” She is a garbage nerd. “I was walking around the city on Saturday and I was seeing all the containers. And I was like, ‘This is glorious.’” An aide seated nearby chips in to say that she often gets out of her car to photograph trash cans.

Four months into the top-cop job, she’s still “incredibly proud” about her rodent record: “The only thing better than my crime numbers are my rat numbers.” She quickly corrects herself: “I mean the city’s rat numbers. They’re down 25% year to date. That’s incredible. And historically rat numbers only go in one direction, and that is up.”

The equivalent of rats in her new job—in other words, the menace she targets with the greatest passion—is recidivist criminals. On the day we meet, Ms. Tisch has spent the morning at a service to mark the first death anniversary of Jonathan Diller, a 31-year-old NYPD detective who was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Far Rockaway, Queens. His killer, Guy Rivera, had 21 prior arrests. “Jonathan’s killer should never have been on the streets that night,” Ms. Tisch said at the service, directing her words at Diller’s widow and young son. “A broken criminal justice system failed him.”

At our interview, Ms. Tisch speaks with impressive bluntness of New York state criminal-justice “reforms,” most of which went into

effect in 2020. They “have rendered the criminal justice system in New York City a high-speed revolving door for recidivists,” she says. These reforms eliminated cash bail for misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies, introduced a presumption of release unless a judge deemed the accused a threat to public safety, raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18 from 16, and radically skewed discovery laws in a direction that works to the advantage of defendants. These changes, she says, “prioritized criminals over victims. They need to be addressed. In New York City, we do not have a surging crime problem, we have a surging recidivism problem. It’s a travesty.”

She offers what she calls “a generous definition” of recidivism: a person committing the same crime at least three times in the same year. “If you use that definition and you compare 2018 to 2024”—i.e., before and after the criminal-justice reform—“the increases are off the charts. It’s a staggering 147% increase for something like felony assault, and an 83% increase for robbery.” Her aide nearby has more stats: 61% for burglary, 64% for shoplifting, 71% for grand larceny, 119% for auto theft.

What should the Legislature do? “The way we can take the biggest swing at the problem is by focusing on the discovery law”—the process by which prosecutors are obliged to disclose evidence to the defense. “The discovery law, as it sits, is weaponized by the defense bar. Oftentimes, violent repeat offenders get their cases dismissed on technicalities that have absolutely no bearing whatsoever on the ultimate outcome of the case.” The executive director of the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York wrote recently that cases have been dismissed for failure to disclose such irrelevant details as information on the battery life of body cameras, duplicative police reports and rosters of police officers on duty on a given day.

Judges have no discretion on whether information would have had any bearing on the outcome of a case. “If a piece of information is

not produced by the DA and the clock tolls and it comes out after [the deadline mandated by the law], the case is dismissed, no matter what the information is.” For domestic violence cases, the dismissal of a case also results in the loss of an order of protection. Ms. Tisch sits in her conference room with “a number of our chiefs every morning, and they go over the big cases of the day, and it is maddening. You hear about another recidivist committing another heinous crime in another neighborhood in the city.”

Ms. Tisch she has “worked very closely with all five DAs, with the mayor, who’s led the charge, and the governor, and we all agree and have proposed changes to the discovery law.” The law has to be narrowed, urgently. “Right now it is written so broadly as to be unfeasible . . . infeasible . . .” She turns to her aide, puzzling over the right word. He says: “Not feasible.”

She’s also alarmed about a bill before the New York City Council that would shut down the Criminal Group Database, which keeps track of gang members in the city. She couches her words diplomatically: “I actually believe that many members of the City Council don’t want to shut down the database.” She pauses, then rephrases her point: “I hope that many members don’t want to shut it down. But I also don’t want to speak for them. I think it would be a very bad idea—tragic, really—to shut down a database that’s designed to help cops address gang violence.”

Sixty percent of the shootings in New York, she points out, are gang-related. “It defies common sense to take a tool like that away from the Police Department, especially when we use it in an incredibly responsible way. We need our City Council to start legislating in support of our cops rather than against the police.”

She laments that people “don’t want to be cops in the numbers that they used to want to be cops anymore.” The problem isn’t limited to New York: “It is across the country. The antipolice movements have really hit the profession quite hard.” She asks me to “imagine how frustrating it must be to be a cop. You work a case, you make a great arrest . . . a violent offender. Before you’re done with your work that day, the perp could be back in your precinct picking up their property to go home. Imagine how demoralizing that is. And dangerous for our communities.”

“Some of the rhetoric hurled against our police, it’s vile,” she says. “We need to treat the police like the noble profession that they are.” Sounds as if she could have a future as a politician.

Mr. Varadarajan, a Journal contributor, is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and at New York University Law School’s Classical Liberal Institute.

California’s War on Oil Finally Prompts a Response



CROSS COUNTRY By Will Swaim

California officials love to blame oil companies for wildfires caused by bad government policies. Exxon Mobil has had enough. On Jan. 6 the company filed a defamation lawsuit in federal court alleging that an Australian mining company, California environmental nonprofits, a major law firm and Attorney General Rob Bonta engaged in a “smear campaign” to destroy Exxon Mobil and the global oil business. Big oil, at last, is acting big.

In 2022, following several wildfires in California, Gov. Gavin Newsom blamed “corporate greed” and “climate change”—everything but environmental policies that have reduced the state’s forests to kindling. Mr. Newsom declared he would punish oil companies by prohibiting the sale of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035. Bans on oil drilling and gas appliances followed. When the next year brought more fire, Mr. Bonta sued Exxon Mobil, Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips and BP for allegedly causing the damage through climate change. In September 2024, Mr. Bonta sued Exxon Mobil again, this time for oil’s role in the production of plastics.

Exxon Mobil’s defamation suit, filed in federal court in Beaumont, Texas, reads like a Hollywood thriller. It begins with Andrew Forrest, the Australian founder of Fortescue, one of the world’s largest iron ore producers. A few years ago

Mr. Forrest decided his company would decarbonize by 2030 and transform itself into a renewable energy powerhouse producing enough “green hydrogen” to power the globe. But green hydrogen uses massive amounts of electricity to separate hydrogen from water. To produce that electricity, Exxon Mobil says, Fortescue officials considered electricity-generation projects

Exxon claims the state’s attorney general is working with a bevy of nonprofits to ruin its reputation.

that sound anything but green—“damming the Congo and developing hydropower in Afghanistan, all with the objective of creating enough renewable energy to make affordable hydrogen.”

At the same time, Exxon Mobil alleges, Fortescue went on offense against its competition, developing a “novel strategy” of “smear campaigns and lawfare” against oil companies.

To accomplish that mission, Exxon Mobil says, Mr. Forrest established a foundation called Minderoo and funded it with some \$5 billion. Exxon Mobil claims that Minderoo made grants to a nonprofit called the Intergenerational Environment Justice Fund, which allegedly hired San Francisco-based Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy “to recruit and enlist” the Sierra Club, Surfrider, Heal the Bay, and Baykeeper as plaintiffs in a suit against

Exxon Mobil. Exxon Mobil alleges that Cotchett attorneys “developed deep financial ties to Attorney General Bonta” and that the firm’s partners “donated tens of thousands to Mr. Bonta’s political campaign at almost the exact same time as the firm received as much or more in fees for ‘legal services’ from the Foreign Interests.”

Minderoo, IEJF and the environmental groups deny Exxon Mobil’s allegations. A Cotchett spokesman called the lawsuit an effort to distract from the environmental harm allegedly caused by the oil company.

California’s first heard about all this on Sept. 23, 2024, when Cotchett sued Exxon Mobil on behalf of the environmental groups and Mr. Bonta sued the oil company on behalf of California. “There can be no question that Cotchett, through its NGO lawsuit, and Bonta, through his lawsuit . . . are working together,” Exxon Mobil says. “The two lawsuits were filed on the same day, within hours of each other.”

Though neither Fortescue nor Mr. Forrest is named as a defendant in Exxon Mobil’s suit, Mr. Forrest says he is “personally delighted” that the company “has . . . opened themselves up to cross-examination” in a U.S. court.

Exxon Mobil’s lawsuit touches only briefly on Mr. Bonta’s troubles with political contributions from ostensibly “clean energy” interests. In 2021, the attorney general declared he wouldn’t prosecute Southern California Edison for its alleged role in a 2018 Los Angeles fire. Days before that announcement, Politico reported, his campaign received \$72,500 from Hueston Hen-

nigan attorneys, “including partners at the firm who directly represented SoCal Edison on the case.” Hueston Hennigan and Mr. Bonta denied any quid pro quo, but his campaign says Mr. Bonta returned the money “to remove even any appearance of a question around the donations.” A spokesperson for the utility says it had no involvement in the contributions.

Last summer evidence surfaced that Mr. Bonta had accepted \$155,000 in campaign contributions from a recycling firm at the center of a Federal Bureau of Investigation probe into political corruption in Oakland, Calif. Mr. Bonta, who represented Oakland in the state Legislature, had allegedly attended Golden State Warriors games and travelled to the Philippines as a guest of the firm’s owners, one of whom called the attorney general “my brother” in social-media posts featuring a photo of the pair in the back of a limousine.

Notable & Quotable: Maher

Katherine Maher, now CEO of NPR, in a Jan. 20, 2020, tweet thread: “America begins in black plunder and white democracy.” I appreciate the day off today to finally fully read The Case for Reparations. . . . I grew up feeling superior (hah, how white of me) because I was from New England and my part of the country didn’t have slaves, or so I’d been taught. . . . Yes, our original collective sin and unpaid debt. Yes, reparations. Yes, on this day.

Ms. Maher under questioning from Rep. Brandon Gill (R., Texas) in a

Mr. Bonta’s staff says the attorney general has returned the contributions. His spokesperson dismissed the latest lawsuit as “another attempt from ExxonMobil to deflect attention from its own unlawful deception.” Mr. Bonta, the spokesperson said, is “proud to advance his lawsuit against ExxonMobil and looks forward to vigorously litigating this case in court.”

Californians are financing this war on oil. They pay the highest fuel prices in the nation and watch as state officials who can’t clear tinder-dry brush from a single hillside claim they’re working to control the planet’s weather. Meanwhile, California burns and American taxpayers are asked to provide relief.

Mr. Swaim is president of the California Policy Center and a co-host of National Review’s “Radio Free California” podcast.

House Oversight Committee hearing, March 26, 2025:

Gill: Do you believe that America believes in black plunder and white democracy?

Mahe: I don’t believe that, sir. I don’t know where that statement comes from.

Gill: You tweeted that in reference to a book you were reading at the time, apparently, “The Case for Reparations.”

Mahe: I don’t think I’ve ever read that book, sir.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Republicans for the Green New Deal

An iron law of entitlements is they become harder to reform as they grow. The Inflation Reduction Act’s green hand-

outs are proving to be another regrettable case in point. President Trump campaigned on repealing the IRA’s Green New Deal, but the renewables lobby won’t give up its iron rice bowl without a fight. Some Republicans have bought their line that rolling back the subsidies will raise energy prices. If you believe this, California Gov. Gavin Newsom has a \$120 billion bullet train to sell you.

Like other entitlements, the green subsidies have outgrown their original purpose. Congress established the wind production tax credit in 1992 and the solar investment tax credit in 2005 to support these “infant” industries. They are now creating huge distortions in electricity markets and will add trillions of dollars to the deficit if not checked.

Start with the costs, which were vastly underestimated by the Congressional Budget Office when the IRA was debated. The Cato Institute now estimates that these two subsidies could cost \$130 billion annually by 2034 and all of the subsidies \$4.7 trillion through 2050.

In other words, Republicans could pay for the entire cost of extending the 2017 tax reforms based on CBO’s scoring by eliminating the tax credits. Doing so would also save taxpayers from having to subsidize more backup power, as they do in Texas and California.

Then there are the market distortions that raise prices for consumers. Subsidies can make solar and wind cheaper than fossil fuels and nuclear power, and they have fueled over-expansion in places like the Texas Panhandle that sometimes causes wholesale power prices to go negative—that is, producers pay the grid to take their power. The renewables lobby says this lowers prices for consumers. Alas, no.

Solar and wind producers can turn a profit when prices fall below zero thanks to subsidies. But other power plants can’t. Nor can they make money running only when they’re needed to back up solar and wind. Hence many have been shutting down even as power demand increases from AI and manufacturing.

The result is power shortages and prices that can spike 100-fold in a few hours when renew-

ables aren’t producing power. These price spikes more than offset savings to consumers from negative prices. Utilities and grid operators must also spend heavily to strengthen their systems against fluctuations in power frequencies and loads.

This is a large reason Texas’s residential power prices have risen some 40% over the last seven years and rank as the second highest in the south and central states. To prevent power outages, state lawmakers passed legislation in 2023 to subsidize gas-power plants to back up renewables.

Government subsidies and distortions beget more of the same. Bloomberg News recently reported that Interior Secretary Doug Burgum is considering using emergency powers to revive closed coal-fired plants and to keep others online. This could involve paying coal plants to run on standby. Why not instead eliminate the subsidies causing them to close?

The IRA’s sweetened tax credits let solar and wind offset as much as 70% to 80% of their costs. Democrats deviously tied the expiration of these tax credits to CO2 power emissions falling 75% below 2022 levels, which isn’t projected to happen in the next three decades.

The IRA’s tax credits for carbon capture, hydrogen and nuclear are no more defensible. The nuclear tax credit will mainly benefit tech companies that are striking deals with nuclear plant owners to power their data centers so they can claim to run on clean energy.

Big oil and gas companies are fighting to keep the hydrogen and carbon capture credits to support their unprofitable investments. But these will mostly benefit foreign companies. Three European firms last week announced plans to build in Texas the world’s first plant to capture CO2 from the air that will also rely on wind.

Many projects subsidized by the IRA are in Republican districts and states where they are easier to permit. This has GOP Members defending subsidies. Twenty-one House Republicans—many of whom voted against the IRA—recently warned House leaders against ending this corporate welfare.

But other energy projects like gas plants and pipelines don’t need subsidies. If Republicans are going to ratify Joe Biden’s Green New Deal, what is the point of electing a GOP Congress?

Mr. Trump responded by noting that “after causing catastrophic inflation, Comrade Kamala announced that she wants to institute socialist price controls.”

Well, now Mr. Trump seems to be imitating Comrade Kamala to prevent catastrophic price increases from his auto tariffs. It’s hard to predict the magnitude of the

price impact, though Ford Motor CEO Jim Farley warned last month that “long term, a 25% tariff across the Mexico and Canada borders would blow a hole in the US industry that we’ve never seen.”

Lower-priced sedans, which are mostly imported from Mexico, South Korea and Japan, will be hit hardest by the tariffs. But auto makers may spread the tariff costs across other vehicles, including popular pick-ups and SUVs made in the U.S. If higher prices reduce demand, the companies may lay off workers. Will Mr. Trump threaten those that do?

Businesses were optimistic when Mr. Trump returned to the Oval Office because they thought he understood how markets work. They may have been mistaken.

Some want to keep Biden subsidies despite their harm to consumers and energy markets.

Businesses can be forgiven for asking if ‘Comrade Kamala’ won.

Turkey Knows How to Get F-35s

Turkey has been making a push to rejoin America’s F-35 fighter-jet program. Between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s phone call with President Trump this month and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan’s trip to Washington this week, the Turks sense opportunity. But why should the U.S. asking price change?

Mr. Trump canceled the shipment of F-35s in 2019 after Turkey, a NATO member, purchased Russia’s S-400 air-defense system despite U.S. warnings. The S-400 was built to target NATO planes, and its radar could be used by the Russians to gain intelligence on the F-35 stealth fighters to help shoot them down in other theaters. The effect would be to compromise the integrity of NATO defense systems, which operate together.

It isn’t complicated: If Turkey wants the best-in-class F-35s, it can hand over or destroy its S-400 batteries. But nothing is simple with Ankara under Mr. Erdogan. Rumors abound that Turkey would like a compromise—could it disable one critical component of the S-400s instead? Or set the batteries aside?

Not good enough. If Turkey is committed never to use the S-400 system, it has no reason to resist destroying it. The point of halfway measures would be for Mr. Erdogan to keep Russian air defenses for a rainy day, and he could threaten to activate them down the road.

Shipping the F-35s before Turkey has junked its S-400 system would be an invitation to blackmail as well as an unnecessary risk for the Western alliance. Mr. Trump may already have

moved on mentally to developing next-generation F-47 fighters, but those are years off.

Asked if he would sell those F-47s, by the way, the President replied that allies can expect to receive toned-down versions. “We like to tone them down about 10%, which probably makes sense because someday maybe they’re not our allies,” Mr.

Trump said.

That wary note won’t go over well in the U.K., but it’s apt for Turkey, whose geography and ideology of late have led it to play both sides. Turkey helps Russia evade sanctions, and for nearly two years it prevented Finland and Sweden from joining NATO.

Only weeks after the Oct. 7 massacre, Mr. Erdogan said, “Hamas is not a terrorist organization, it is a group of *mujahideen* defending their lands.” His foreign minister welcomed a Hamas delegation the weekend before he met Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington.

The timing, as Mr. Erdogan cracks down on the Turkish opposition, including Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu and many protesters, is also inauspicious for U.S. concessions. But the Turks may be looking to parlay their rising regional power, especially in Syria.

Not working with Turkey—one of the few states in the Middle East able to project power beyond its borders—isn’t an option. Ankara’s strategic competition with Tehran may also yield a confluence of interests with the U.S.

There’s a delicate relationship to be massaged. The Trump Administration can do that—as soon as Turkey gives up on the S-400.

Erdogan can hand over or destroy his Russian S-400 air defenses.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ignoring the Court? We’ve Been There Before

When discussing her fear of a constitutional crisis brought on by President Trump possibly ignoring an adverse Supreme Court decision, Peggy Noonan claims that Andrew Jackson was the last president to do so (“The Courtroom and the Splash-down,” Declarations, March 22). “What happens then?” she asks. “Nobody knows. Jackson got away with it, but no president has tried it since.”

Not quite. The last president to do so was Joe Biden, who ignored the court’s decision in *Biden v. Nebraska*, which struck down his student-loan forgiveness program. As he said of the justices afterward: “They didn’t stop me.” The president wouldn’t suggest that he ignored the court; all he did, the thinking goes, was implement another program that didn’t violate the court’s objections.

But if one bothered to read the court’s decision, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, that wouldn’t pass muster. The essence of *Biden v.*

Nebraska is that the executive branch overstepped and usurped Congress’s power of the purse. Justice Roberts quoted then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to emphasize this point: “People think that the president of the United States has the power for debt forgiveness. He does not. He can postpone. He can delay. But he does not have that power. That has to be an act of Congress.” Mr. Biden continued to believe he had the power anyway.

BRUCE KLEINMAN
North Riverside, Ill.

As glad as I was to see Ms. Noonan celebrate the SpaceX splash-down, and for her to marvel at the man-made beauty of its parachutes, it’s too bad she neglected to mention the dolphins who came to play with the capsule. They brought the joy of nature and reminded me of a classic of the science-fiction genre: “So long, and thanks for all the fish . . .”

SIMON TURNER
Trabuco Canyon, Calif.

Education That ‘Every Child of God’ Deserves

Andy Kessler’s column “Make America Smart Again” (Inside View, March 17) rings all too true here in Pennsylvania. You simply need to change the narrative from Chicago to Philadelphia.

In 2023, Gov. Josh Shapiro struck a budget agreement with Senate Republicans that included a modest \$100 million voucher program. Pennsylvania public schools spend more than \$10 billion a year, but that concession was evidently too much to bear, as teachers unions lined up against it. The governor, like Mayor Rahm Emanuel, caved in to the unions’ pressure.

Gov. Shapiro seems sincere and has repeatedly voiced his support for educational reform: “Every child of God,” he says, “deserves a shot” at a quality education. But each year goes by under the status quo, and thousands of children of God have lost their chance at a quality education, sent out into a workforce with underdeveloped skills in a global economy.

I hope that Gov. Shapiro will see the light and support with courage, resolve and action his intentions. To borrow a phrase from Ronald Reagan,

a governor turned president, “Tear down that wall!”

JOHN A. RODA
Lancaster, Pa.

I about jumped out of my skin in protest when I saw Mr. Kessler’s paean to artificial intelligence in the classroom. For more than two decades schools have been throwing screens in front of struggling students at the expense of forming relationships with engaged, savvy teachers. In reading on, however, I found my dismay to be premature. The primary focus of the Alpha School in promoting “life skills” is precisely what is called for, particularly in serving those young people coming from dysfunctional, chaotic family settings.

Too often, they arrive in the classroom devoid of a “readiness to learn.” These students are in desperate need of the adult intervention so described. Academic achievement is possible only once the socialization piece is addressed. Would that more of our schools followed this template.

RICHARD H. LEE
Jamestown, R.I.

Why Can’t We Send the U.N. to the Suburbs?

David Small objects to my op-ed on terminating or renegotiating the U.N. headquarters agreement (“America Should Not Evict the United Nations,” Letters, March 22). He claims that the U.N. isn’t ripping off the U.S. and cites as evidence a 2016 study, which found that its presence contributes to New York’s economy. But Mr. Small seems to assume that in my proposal the U.N. would be replaced with 18 acres of a black hole, as opposed to private enterprise, housing or other attractions, all of which would also contribute to the economy. It isn’t clear what about the U.N.’s operations requires the most prime Manhattan real estate rather than a dull corporate campus in the suburbs.

Mr. Small also argues that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties—to which the U.S. isn’t a party—bans withdrawal from the agreement because “a right of denunciation or withdrawal” isn’t “implied by the nature of the treaty.” But Mr. Small never says what it is about the agreement’s “nature” that makes it obviously terminable, unlike most treaties. There is nothing logically or physically impossi-

ble about terminating what is at bottom a real-estate arrangement. Many large organizations at some point must seek new premises. Other international headquarters agreements, like the Netherlands’ with the International Criminal Court, or Austria’s with the International Atomic Energy Agency, specifically prohibit unilateral termination, provisions conspicuously absent from the U.N.’s HQ agreement. Still others, like the Swiss Federal Council’s with the International Committee of the Red Cross, expressly allow it, proving there is nothing “natural” about an eternal freehold for an international organization.

EUGENE KONTOROVICH
George Mason University
New York

A Lesson in Hoosier History

Daniel Lee’s “Southern Indiana Has a Long History as a Tornado Alley” (Cross Country, March 22) is excellent. That slice of the state, however, isn’t the only one with a long tornado history. Northern Indiana has had its share of tornado outbreaks too, most notably the Palm Sunday tornadoes of 1965. The image of the double tornado that hit Midway, Ind., made national news after that event, nearly 60 years ago. As my late grandfather, a long-time northern Indiana resident, advised me: Hoosiers learn to “keep an eye on the sky” in spring and summer.

WILLIAM W. GROSS
Pittsburgh

Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



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OPINION

A New Administration’s Signal Failure



DECLARATIONS
By Peggy Noonan

The Signal mess is a real mess, not something that will fade away quickly, because it’s one of those scandals that give the world a picture of a new administration. At just about this time in John F. Kennedy’s presidency (April 17-20, 1961) came the Bay of Pigs disaster, the failed invasion of Cuba by U.S.-backed and trained exiles who had been assured of American air support but learned on the beach it wouldn’t be forthcoming. It shadowed JFK for a long time. The Soviets concluded he was a dilettante and inferred from his actions an ambivalence about the use of force, which led Premier Nikita Khrushchev to rough him up at their first summit, that June in Vienna. JFK

The national-security communications snafu shows a government in the hands of immature bros.

wasn’t prepared for such treatment. He confided to the journalist James Reson that it was “the worst thing in my life”; Khrushchev “savaged me.” In August the Soviets erected the Berlin Wall; a year later they put missiles in Cuba. Kennedy’s mastery in the latter crisis, in October 1962, had a reordering effect on his international reputation. Good things followed, including his American University address in which he felt free, having proved himself, having established a more grounded relationship with the Soviet government, to unveil a new plea for nuclear arms control. His speechwriter, the great Ted

Sorensen, told me years later that of all the speeches they worked on—the Inaugural Address, the announcement of the missile crisis—the one at American University was the most important. An opposite example: It was at almost exactly this point in the new administration of Ronald Reagan, on March 30, 1981, that the president was shot outside the Washington Hilton. His aplomb, the warmth of his gallantry as he joked with doctors and nurses—“I hope you’re all Republicans”—even though his wound was nearly fatal, also carried immense implications. Among world leaders: This cowboy star is both tough and lucky. (Some of them hated a lucky American president, but all saw the luck as a major factor: Politicians are among the most superstitious people on earth.) The shooting also cemented Reagan’s relationship with the American people. Even Democratic House Speaker Tip O’Neill’s Massachusetts voters were impressed: *Tip, don’t be too tough on my Ronnie*. That was the beginning of serious bipartisan progress between the White House and Congress, when O’Neill realized you can’t ignore this guy or try to roll him every day, you’d better play ball. The Signal mess lacks the size and depth of both these events. But it too will have implications for the reputation of this White House because, again, it gives a picture that is not so forgettable. Every government in the world, even those with the best intelligence services, has wondered exactly what it’s like in there, how exactly it works. To see the transcripts of the now famous “Houthi PC small group” is to conclude it’s pretty ad hoc. Pretty messy. The word jejune comes to mind. So does callow. There’s a lot of freelancing. The vice president questions what appears to have been a presidential decision, and the debate is conducted on a publicly avail-



able encrypted app. No one on the 19-person call said, “Guys, should we be doing this on Signal?” They don’t come across as steely-eyed pros, and often express themselves in ways that are emotional. JD Vance: “I just hate bailing Europe out again.” It made me think of a 1950s housewife in a Rinso commercial: “I just hate those stubborn stains!” Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth: “I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It’s PATHETIC.” There was also a lot of drama: “We are a GO for mission launch. . . . (1st strike package),” Mr. Hegseth texted. A Trump-supporting congressional veteran referred to this privately as the defense secretary’s communicating “in his chesty, boastful way.” The effect will be to push tensions with Europe more toward estrangement. None of this will go unnoticed in any foreign capital. I found myself startled but not entirely disapproving of the use of emojis. I’m glad they’re not above it all, that they’re happy team America successfully moved on some serious bad guys. Then again I’m not sure Xi Jinping was impressed, or Vladimir Putin;

I’m quite certain they’re sprinkling their texts with clown emojis in Beijing and Moscow this week. There was a real bro-culture feel to some of the texting. The young are constantly texting, with different threads going—the fraternity thread, the Vegas Buds texts, the groomsmen at the wedding threads. We just saw the government bros thread. They should have admitted the blunder from the moment the first batch of texts were published in the Atlantic. Instead they denied the obvious and attacked the character of the reporter who unearthed it. What a mistake! They misread their position and misread what Jeffrey Goldberg would do if they challenged his accuracy or interpretations: He published the whole lot. Which made them look stupid twice. They didn’t look like clever folk who are good strategists. Sometimes the truthful path is also the practical and pragmatic one: Completely admit you did something stupid, take it in the face, absorb the abuse, and keep walking. This administration’s character, in the aggregate, is too proud, and its personality too snot-nosed, to take that right route.

Everyone sounded like himself. Mr. Vance griped about Europe in a shallow way, Mr. Hegseth came across like an excitable morning-news anchor with a lot to prove. Chief of staff Susie Wiles was reticent, and had the good sense not to hold forth in front of 18 people. Stephen Miller, who tends to conduct himself with Saturnian authority, had the authority to shut down debate, and did. “As I heard it, the president was clear: green light, but we soon make clear to Egypt and Europe what we expect in return.” It’s not a scandal of hypocrisy but of indiscretion, dumbness, and denial. They are obsessed with messaging. Every White House is. But the central conceit of this White House has been “he-men do what’s right whatever the cost.” The president acts as if he doesn’t care. It was startling to see how much they care. Mr. Vance: “Let’s just make sure our messaging is tight here.” Mr. Hegseth: “I think messaging is going to be tough no matter what—nobody knows who the Houthis are—which is why we would need to stay focused on: 1) Biden failed & 2) Iran funded.” The semantic tap dance over “war plans” or “attack plans” is absurd. They were talking about the policy and operational aspects of a U.S. military attack on a terror haven in a sovereign nation halfway around the world. If that isn’t classified, what is? They should take it as a gift that this happened so early, and they can learn from the embarrassment. Advice? Stop acting like kids, like bros, like the last honest man. You are the top officials of the government of a great nation in a dramatic and crucial era. You can conduct yourselves the way John Fetterman wears clothes, loosely and sloppily, or you can grow up, control your mouth, and lean on forms and processes that have gotten this lost old ship through many gales.

Herbert Hoover’s Plan for Palestinian Refugee Resettlement

By Richard Hurowitz

Donald Trump isn’t the first businessman-turned-president to try to make peace in the Middle East via real-estate development. Eight decades ago, Herbert Hoover, by then a private citizen, twice put forward his own such ideas. His proposals were informed by deep engineering knowledge and a heartfelt humanitarian concern for the plight of persecuted Jews. Born in modest circumstances in Iowa and orphaned at age 9, Hoover graduated from Stanford University as a member of its first-ever class and embarked on a dazzling career as a global mining engineer, amassing a fortune by the time he was 40. He then rose to even greater fame man-

Like Trump, the 31st president backed Israel and sought peace through real-estate deals.

aging humanitarian relief during World War I, using his prodigious organizational skills to save tens of millions of people from starvation. During that time, he saw the persecution of Jews firsthand, intervening against Polish attempts to block humanitarian relief to Jewish communities. When Hitler came to power in January 1933, President Hoover agreed to Jewish leaders’ request that he make a joint statement with President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt denouncing Nazi persecution. When Roosevelt declined, Hoover instructed his ambassador to Germany “to exert every influence of our government” on the Nazis to stop mistreating Jews. A few months later, President Roosevelt effectively reversed the order, the beginning of his administration’s years of indifference toward the doomed Jews in Europe. But Hoover continued to press their cause. He denounced Nazism in a 1938 speech in New York, decrying its suppression of liberty, destruction of civil society and creation of concentration camps. “Its darkest pic-

ture,” he declared, was “the heart-breaking persecution of the Jews.” That November, Hoover condemned the violence of Kristallnacht on national radio: “This rise of intolerance today, the suffering being inflicted on an innocent and helpless people, grieve every decent American. . . . It makes us fearful for the whole progress of civilization.” In 1939 Hoover formally endorsed the Wagner-Rogers Bill, which would provide 20,000 visas for Jewish children from Germany. He strongly lobbied the House Immigration Committee to pass the bill—without success. Meanwhile, Roosevelt’s State Department actively delayed and denied visas to Jewish refugees, often failing to fill even the country’s modest refugee quotas. In 1943 Hoover supported the activist Bergson Group in its efforts to bring attention to the persecution of the Jews. He was the most prominent member of the sponsoring committee for the Bergson Group’s protest pageant, “We Will Never Die,” which publicized the mass murder of Jews in Europe and was seen by hundreds of thousands in the U.S. That May, Hoover signed a full-page ad in the New York Times denouncing the Bermuda Conference—during which the U.S. and British governments met to discuss the Jewish refugee crisis but formed no concrete plans—as a “cruel mockery.” In July he spoke at an emergency conference called by the Bergson Group to demand real action to rescue European Jews. At the end of the conference, Hoover gave a national radio address declaring that “no language” was adequate to describe the “agonies” of the Jews, and “to find relief for them is one of the great human problems of today.” He called for “refugee stations” to be established for Jews in neutral European countries and farther-flung locations, and for negotiations to free those still trapped—something Roosevelt had refused to entertain. He then unveiled a proposal for significant infrastructure investment in Africa so that it could become a place to settle all refugees, including Jews—something of an annex to the British Mandate for Palestine.

Hoover also criticized the Roosevelt administration for imposing obstacles to humanitarian relief. He had been working for two years, he said, to get food to millions of starving Jews and others in occupied nations, only to be blocked “on the ground that such action would aid the Germans.” As he wrote to Secretary of State Cordell Hull in 1941, “History will never justify the Government of the United States aiding with the starvation of these millions.” Hoover closed his address by boldly challenging the morality of Roosevelt’s position that the only way to save the Jews was to win the war, arguing that their plight couldn’t wait for the end of hostilities. “The time has arrived when we should demand that a real solution be found,” he declared. After the war, with large numbers of Jews languishing in displaced-per-

sons camps, the question of a Jewish homeland was urgent. As president Hoover affirmed America’s commitment to the Balfour Declaration, and in 1944 he helped push for a GOP platform that supported Jewish nationhood. In 1945 he proposed an ambitious plan to invest about \$150 million in irrigation in Iraq, which he said would allow the Fertile Crescent to triple its population to levels last enjoyed during the kingdoms of Babylon and Nineveh. The additional 2.8 million acres of arable land, Hoover believed, would be a place for resettled Palestinian and other Arabs to prosper, allowing the Holy Land to be set aside for the Jews. Hoover recognized his plan would challenge the limits of statesmanship and goodwill, but he believed it could be a “model migration” at a time when population transfers were common geopolitical settlements. It

would be, he declared, “a solution by engineering instead of by conflict,” a “method of settlement with both honor and wisdom.” Although his plan was never implemented, the idea of a Jewish homeland he supported came true in 1948 with the State of Israel. Hoover was determined to help the desperate, and few were more desperate than the Jews of his era. He spoke out against the Holocaust when something could still be done. Tragically, his voice was a lonely one and was largely ignored. Yet he remained on the right side of history. For this, he deserves to be held up as an example of the best in our nation.

Mr. Hurowitz is CEO of Octavian & Co., an investment firm, and author of “In the Garden of the Righteous: The Heroes Who Risked Their Lives to Save Jews During the Holocaust.”

Leak Scandal Can Be GOP Lemonade



BUSINESS WORLD
By Holman W. Jenkins, Jr.

The Trump administration’s military strikes on Yemen’s Houthi pirates were successful. Now its scandalous planning of those strikes on an insecure app can be a twofer. The leak isn’t the end of the world; it didn’t endanger U.S. forces. But if a GOP House and Senate want finally to gain some influence over the Trump administration, it can be a godsend. Sen. Roger Wicker, the GOP chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has put his name to a letter calling for the Pentagon inspector general to conduct an expedited investigation of the lapse. This is a start. Polls show concern even among the Trumpiest voters. Congressional Republicans should parlay the controversy into increased sway over the remaining 1,394 days of the administration. Yes to targeted trade sanctions on military technologies vital to China. No to chaotic tariffs that harm U.S. businesses and antagonize allies. Yes to pro-growth tax and regulatory policy. No to hopeless fights over small-potato spending programs that aren’t Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security. The moment could also be ripe for Mary Barra and Bill Ford of the Detroit automakers to summon some belated chutzpah to challenge the administration’s still-hidden “finding” that auto imports are a national-security threat. Ditto the bipartisan legislative effort to rein in President Trump’s trade ad hocery, which could now resurrect itself from his first term. Let’s back up for a minute. In an irony, the executive was once more trusted than Congress to rise above

parochial vote-buying in trade matters. That’s why Congress during the Cold War delegated much of its constitutional trade authority to the White House. Unfortunately, parochial vote-buying and related forms of special-interest gouging are exactly what Mr. Trump likes about the trade club Congress put in his hands. Something else also changed in the 80 years since the Cold War began. Our allies matured into settled democracies, with long-lived domestic arrangements designed to purchase harmony and appease various interest groups and voting blocs.

Trump’s tariffs are a textbook excess of the sort that constitutional checks are designed to curb.

Some of these arrangements—Europe’s Airbus subsidies, Canada’s lumber policies, agriculture hand-outs on both sides of the Atlantic—are gross offenses to free trade. What Mr. Trump definitely doesn’t understand: As in war itself, countries will sometimes endure and even subject themselves to surprising amounts of punishment to protect these arrangements, which means the trade war he’s inviting could be a lot more damaging to the U.S. than he anticipates. The U.S. should understand as much from its own experience with the idiotic 25% tariff Lyndon Johnson imposed on imported pickups in 1964. Try getting rid of it now. No matter how much it would benefit U.S. consumers, it would cut the legs out from under the powerful United Auto Workers. It would upend the business models the Big Three adopted to compete with transplant auto factories in the U.S.

South. It would undermine the inflated pickup profits the Big Three use to pay for the exorbitant electric-vehicle mandates Democrats have foisted on them. Mr. Trump’s alternative this week? Doubling down on folly by extending the 25% preference to all vehicle categories. Yet the long-term result will be exactly the opposite of the one he touts. As the U.S. auto market shrinks relative to the global whole, the U.S. will fall down the priority list for investment by global automakers. Americans will end up with lagging technology and fewer choices compared with consumers in other countries. Lesson: The Cold War-era system Mr. Trump is dismantling wasn’t just about cementing Western togetherness. Relatively free trade also augmented Western strength against the closed Soviet system, which itself became a hopeless technology and consumer backwater. The larger the market, after all, the more specialization it allows; the more innovation and technological development it will permit. Some in Trumpland speak now of Fortress America but even a unified-but-closed North American trading bloc would likely be too cramped to support investment in today’s technologies of the future, such as artificial intelligence, high-end chip-making, aerospace and rocketry. The U.S. would only impoverish itself by trying and still end up in an inferior position relative to its global adversaries. Recognizing opportunity can be a great gift. This week’s collision of the leakgate snafu with the White House’s over-the-top auto tariffs is such a moment. It’s an invitation for House and Senate Republicans to do something useful in the national interest. And that’s restart the check-and-balance machine to curb the executive’s excesses, especially its trade excesses.

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Second Ring
The market for
used smartphones
heats up **B9**

EXCHANGE

Hot Topic
Companies face
climate suits from
polar opposites **B10**



BUSINESS | FINANCE | TECHNOLOGY | MANAGEMENT

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, March 29 - 30, 2025 | B1

DJIA 41583.90 ▼ 715.80 1.69%

NASDAQ 17322.99 ▼ 2.7%

STOXX 600 542.10 ▼ 0.8%

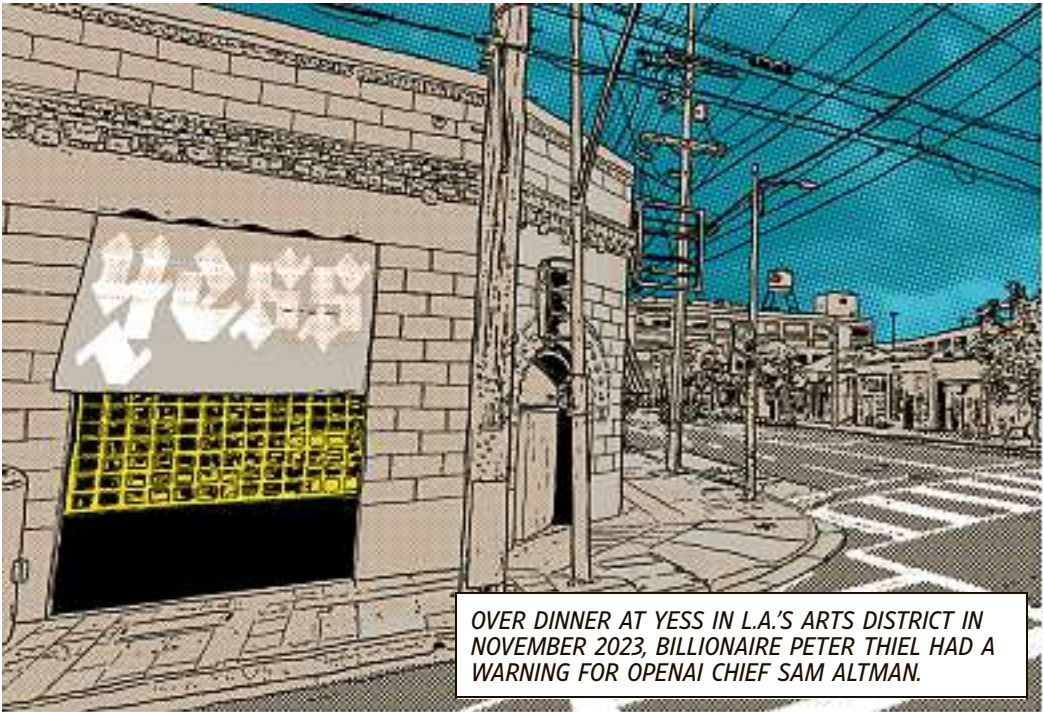
10-YR. TREAS. ▲ 30/32, yield 4.254%

OIL \$69.36 ▼ \$0.56

GOLD \$3,086.50 ▲ \$25.50

EURO \$1.0828

YEN 149.84



OVER DINNER AT YESS IN L.A.'S ARTS DISTRICT IN NOVEMBER 2023, BILLIONAIRE PETER THIEL HAD A WARNING FOR OPENAI CHIEF SAM ALTMAN.



On a balmy mid-November evening in 2023, billionaire venture capitalist Peter Thiel threw a birthday party for his husband at YESS, an avant-garde Japanese restaurant located in a century-old converted bank building in Los Angeles's Arts District. Seated next to him was his friend Sam Altman. Thiel had backed Altman's first venture fund more than a decade before, and remained a mentor to the younger investor when Altman became the face of the artificial-intelligence revolution as the chief executive of OpenAI. OpenAI's instantly viral launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 had propelled tech stocks to one of their best years in decades. Yet Thiel was worried. Years before he met Altman, Thiel had taken another AI-obsessed prodigy named Eliezer Yudkowsky under his wing, funding his institute, which pushed to make sure that any AI smarter than humans would be friendly to its maker. That March, Yudkowsky had argued in Time

◆ **OpenAI is closing in on \$40 billion in new funding. It comes with a catch.....** **B9**

THE REAL REASONS SAM ALTMAN GOT FIRED

Secrets, misdirection and broken trust. The inside story of how the CEO of the hottest tech company in the world was ousted and, just as quickly, resurrected.

By KEACH HAGEY

magazine that unless the current wave of AI research was halted, "literally everyone on Earth will die."

"You don't understand how Eliezer has programmed half the people in your company to believe in that stuff," Thiel warned Altman. "You need to take this more seriously."

Altman picked at his vegetarian dish and tried not to roll his eyes. This was not the first dinner where Thiel had warned him that the company had been taken over by "the EAs," by which he meant people who subscribed to effective altruism. EA had lately pivoted from trying to end global poverty to trying to prevent runaway AI from murdering humanity. Thiel had repeatedly predicted that "the AI safety people" would "destroy" OpenAI.

"Well, it was kind of true of Elon, but we got rid of Elon," Altman responded at the dinner, referring to the messy 2018 split with his co-founder, Elon Musk, who once referred to the attempt to create artificial intelligence as "summoning the demon."

Nearly 800 OpenAI employees had been riding a rocket ship and were about to have the chance to buy beachfront second homes with

Please turn to page B5

How Hard Can It Be to Name A Sports Team?

A Boston soccer club is trying out a new brand after its first attempt to name the team was an epic failure

By RACHEL BACHMAN AND KATIE DEIGHTON

BOSTON

THE MORNING OF OCT. 15 was supposed to be a banner day for Boston sports, the culmination of a year's work to add a new pro team to the city's illustrious roster. With a one-minute introductory video, an upstart outfit in the National Women's Soccer League was about to unveil the name that would sit alongside the Patriots, Red Sox, Bruins and Celtics as Boston's newest home team. Around 9 a.m., a social-media manager named Siobhan Richards hit the button. The clip went live. Then all hell broke loose. One of the most disastrous brand launches in modern sports had begun. The video, titled "Too Many Balls," featured a cameo by NFL great Tom Brady. It was meant to poke fun at the city's male-centric pro sports cul-



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, left, with Jennifer Epstein of the city's new soccer club. The team, initially called BOS Nation, is now Boston Legacy FC.

ture. Instead, it completely bombed. Some fans hated the double-entendre. Others fumed that it ignored Boston's existing women's teams. But most of all, fans turned on the team name itself: BOS Nation. Conceived as an anagram of "Bostonian," the name came off as gimmicky at best and downright offensive at worst. Plenty of fans thought the "nation" element invoked a macho culture that had long sneered at women's sports.

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SCIENCE OF SUCCESS | BEN COHEN

An Oscar Winner's Newest Hit Movie Is About...Investing



David Booth went to graduate school because he wanted to get a Ph.D. and become a professor. What he learned was how to make a fortune as an entirely new kind of investor. When he was a student at the University of Chicago a half-century ago, his teachers were future Nobel Prize winners whose curious ideas about financial markets would transform the way people think about money. Their lectures were rough drafts of the papers that showed how ordinary investors who barely touched their boring portfolios could outperform professional managers and famed stock pickers after fees and expenses. And that innovative and counterintuitive research on market efficiency would one day fuel the rise of passive investing. It would also change Booth's life. His decision to apply those intoxicating academic ideas was the be-

ginning of a wildly successful investment firm called Dimensional Fund Advisers. And ever since, the billionaire has wanted to explain zen-like investing the way he was taught it. "You know, probability theory and regressions and all that," says

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A new Errol Morris documentary has millions of YouTube views.

EXCHANGE

KEYWORDS | CHRISTOPHER MIMS

It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's Your Burrito Bowl!

We were promised drone delivery a decade ago. Now, it's actually coming.



Sandy Button of Pea Ridge, Ark., was born in 1952, grew up watching black-and-white television, and got her first computer in the 1980s. Now?

She makes half a dozen orders a week on her smartphone, and minutes later packages come from the sky.

"It's so cool," says Button, who has worked as the city clerk for 48 years. "It's like something out of the future, but I guess we are the future."

This modern-day manna from heaven, including takeout meals and treats for neighborhood kids, is enabled by drone delivery startup Zipline. A dark horse in the flying delivery race—competitors include Amazon and Google parent Alphabet—Zipline has emerged as a front-runner. Last week it pulled back the curtain on its system to bring what it calls "teleportation" to backyards, driveways and parking lots across the U.S.

What cheap, ubiquitous drone delivery could enable is mind-boggling. No more soggy fries delivered in two-ton vehicles by humans. And seniors and people with disabilities could have increased access to medications and other necessities on short notice.

For now, initial commercial testing in the U.S. is happening in Pea Ridge and Mesquite, Texas, just outside Dallas. Walmart is the only retail operation Zipline delivers for in the U.S. at present. For future partners, Zipline has designed a small pickup kiosk that can be installed just outside any building. The company will also soon be delivering for Chipotle, and has signed contracts with dozens of other retailers, restaurants and health systems.

Alphabet's Wing drone service is already in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, delivering from 18 Walmarts to 40 nearby towns and cities within



the drones' six-mile range.

Amazon is operating its drone delivery service in College Station, Texas, and an area near Phoenix, but in terms of scale, the online retail giant remains a distant third.

Engineers at Zipline recently gave me a virtual tour of the facilities where the company is scaling up production of its drones. In its South San Francisco facility, the company can manufacture a drone in a few hours, and projects that by year's end, it will make one every hour.

Alex Blake, director of drone technology and operations at Walmart, says that the company has had "tremendous success" in its delivery programs with both Zipline and Wing. "We can't speak to which is better—time will tell," she adds. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said on March 14 that the Federal Aviation Administration will soon announce new rules that will make it easier for automated drone delivery services to launch.

While drone delivery could eat into the delivery-driver labor market, the upside could be more deliveries overall. Already, Americans spend an estimated \$120 billion a year on app-based food delivery alone, according to data from DoorDash and Bloomberg Second Measure.

Until recently, Pea Ridge was best known for something that happened in 1862—a pivotal Civil War battle. But thanks to its proximity to Walmart's Bentonville headquarters, it is now ground zero for the megaretailer's high-tech battle against Amazon.

"At nighttime, it's the coolest thing, the skies are just lit up with these drones," says Button.

Locals sit in the parking lot of the nearby Walmart from which they take off just to watch them, she adds. That Walmart includes a launch station for Zipline's new five-rotor drones, which are able to de-

Packages are loaded into Zipline's delivery units, above. Zipline's drone, right, can fly up to 70 mph and makes deliveries by lowering a small cooler on a 300-foot cable. Staying high keeps noise to a minimum.

liver to what the company says is an area no bigger than a dinner plate, on just about any flat surface visible from the sky.

Since its founding in 2014, Zipline has raised more than \$500 million from investors, and has made more than 1.4 million drone deliveries in seven countries.

Zipline previously specialized in fixed-wing delivery drones—little autonomous airplanes—that parachuted medical supplies and other items into big open spaces. The company serves more than 5,000 hospitals and health facilities worldwide, including delivering blood to hospitals in Rwanda. The company's experience in harsh conditions has helped his team understand how to make drone delivery work, says CEO Keller Rinaudo.

Its new design is meant to address the safety and convenience needs of densely populated U.S. neighborhoods. Its features include a tilt rotor, so the drones can fly like a plane *and* hover like a helicopter, says Joseph Mardall, head of engineering at Zipline.

Zipline's electric drone can fly up to 70 mph and makes deliveries by lowering a small cooler on a 300-foot cable.

By staying high in the air, the system makes less noise, an issue that some have cited as an issue with other delivery systems, including Amazon's.

"Since launching the new MK30 drone—which we purposefully designed to be even more quiet than our previous drone—we haven't received any community complaints and the feedback from local officials



has been positive," says Amazon spokesman Av Zammit.

Zipline's delivery unit also has its own propellers, so it can steer its 8-pound payload around to make a precise delivery, even in gale force winds.

The FAA certified Zipline's 55-pound drone—which is 6 feet wide and 7 feet long—for fully autonomous flight. It can fly if two of its five rotors are knocked out, has backup flight computers and even an emergency parachute.

Zipline's drones have flown 100 million miles autonomously, with zero safety incidents, says Rinaudo. The company showed me its extensive testing regimen, including systems that violently shake its drones to simulate rough weather and chambers that freeze and bake parts to simulate long-term wear and tear. On a recent busy weekend, Alphabet's Wing delivery drones completed more than 1,200 deliveries for Walmart in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, where the company has also partnered with DoorDash, says a spokeswoman. The company will soon expand to Charlotte, N.C., and has already made more than 450,000 deliveries in the U.S., Europe and Australia.

Wing's latest electric drone, unveiled in early 2024, is much larger, and can carry packages twice as heavy as the previous model—up to 5 pounds. It lacks a steerable delivery cooler like Zipline's, however, instead using disposable, Happy Meal-like boxes.

Amazon, arguably the company that kicked off the race, is lagging. Its latest electric drone hovers 13

feet above the ground when it drops packages, kicking up dust and even jostling packages after they land. (And yes, it means everything inside has to survive a 13-foot drop.)

Amazon's drones are designed specifically for superfast delivery of about two-thirds of the items the company typically offers for fast delivery, says a company spokesman. All items are tested to survive the drop and placed in specially padded packages that hold up to 5 pounds. Amazon avoided using a tether system to ensure a simple and robust design, he adds.

Amazon may be in third place, but it isn't to be counted out, given its ability to develop slowly then quickly ramp up—as it has with robot systems in fulfillment centers. The company's goal is to have Prime Air drones deliver 500 million packages globally by the end of the decade.

As with other forms of package delivery, this isn't necessarily a winner-take-all market. It is just too big and too varied. It isn't clear that the optimal platform to deliver a burrito from Chipotle or a T-shirt from Walmart is necessarily the best one to deliver same-day Amazon packages. And even as these drones make their first deliveries to paying customers, the evolution of their design and capabilities has only just begun.

"My take here is that it's 12:01 a.m. in this industry, and everything has yet to be built," says Zipline's Rinaudo. "I often joke with my team that we're going to look back in eight years, and think, 'Oh, my God, can you believe what idiots we were?' "

FROM TOP: POPPY LUNCH FOR WSJ (2); SANDY BUTTON

THE SCORE | THE BUSINESS WEEK IN 6 STOCKS

An IPO Fizzles, Tariffs Hurt Car Companies

COREWEAVE

Uncertainty over the artificial-intelligence boom cooled demand for what had been expected to be one of the hottest initial public offerings of the year. CoreWeave, a New Jersey-based company that rents out access to Nvidia chips, priced its IPO at \$40 a share Thursday, well below the \$47 to \$55 range it was targeting. The company also sold fewer shares than planned. The muted debut reflects growing concern among investors about the sustainability of the AI boom, for which the world's biggest companies are spending hundreds of billions of dollars. When trading began Friday, shares fell as low as \$37.46 before recovering and ending the day **unchanged**.

DOLLAR TREE

Dollar Tree agreed to sell its Family Dollar business to private-equity investors for about \$1 billion, an underwhelming coda to a hard-fought merger battle a decade earlier. The discount-retail chain is set to be acquired by Brigade Capital Management and Macellum Capital Management. Back in 2015, Dollar Tree bested rival Dollar General for the Family Dollar chain, paying roughly \$9 billion after a monthslong tug of war. Dollar Tree poured money into the brand, but sales sputtered. It has been closing Family Dollar stores, and started a strategic review of the business in June. On Wednesday, Dollar Tree shares **rose 3.1%**.

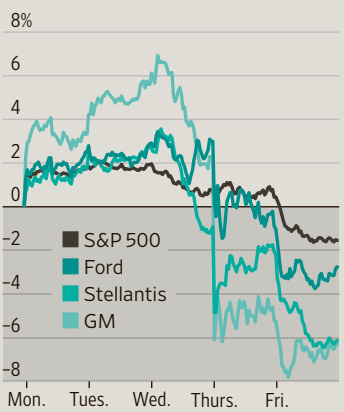


GM and Ford could see a 30% profit drop this year, analysts said.

GENERAL MOTORS

President Trump on Wednesday announced a 25% tariff on all imported vehicles and parts starting April 2, a move that could force U.S. carmakers to raise prices. Most automakers depend on parts and materials from other countries to make cars, including vehicles assembled in the U.S. Ford and GM could face a 30% profit drop this year, according to Bernstein analysts. Jeep maker Stellantis may be a relative winner because vehicles it assembles in Mexico have a higher share of U.S. parts. Of the three, shares of GM fell the most, **dropping 7.4% Thursday**.

Performance this past week



Source: FactSet

LULULEMON ATHLETICA

Americans are feeling stretched, but not in the way that activewear mainstay Lululemon wants. The company expects sales growth to slow this year, hurt by cautious consumers who are limiting their spending amid an uncertain economic environment. Its estimate of 5% to 7% sales growth in 2025 would be down from 10% growth last year—and would be the company's slowest growth rate on record, according to FactSet. Lululemon's outlook includes an expected headwind from recent tariffs imposed on China and Mexico, Chief Financial Officer Meghan Frank said. Shares **fell 14% Friday**.

BAYER

Bayer was ordered to pay \$2.1 billion by a jury in Georgia, the latest legal defeat for the company in a case about its Roundup weedkiller. Critics have argued that glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, causes cancer—though Bayer has long maintained it is safe. The verdict "conflicts with the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence," Bayer said. The decision marks the latest legal setback for a company that has been fighting lawsuits stemming from its \$63 billion acquisition of U.S. agrochemical firm Monsanto, which developed Roundup. Bayer's American depositary shares **fell 7.1% Monday**.

23%
The decline in Lululemon shares so far this year.

'Consumers are spending less due to increased concerns about inflation and the economy.'
Lululemon Chief Executive Calvin McDonald

23ANDME

The outgoing chief executive of 23andMe wants to keep it in the family. The genetics firm that convinced millions of people to spit into test tubes to determine their ancestry filed for bankruptcy Sunday after burning through more than \$1 billion and laying off more than half its staff. CEO and co-founder Anne Wojcicki stepped down from her post. She had been trying to take the business private by buying it herself, though her prior efforts had been rejected by her handpicked board. Wojcicki said that she still aims to buy the company's assets. 23andMe shares **fell 59% Monday**.
—Erik Holm

EXCHANGE



The Self-Help Guru Selling Millions Of Books and Topping Podcast Charts

Mel Robbins has built a lucrative media empire, and she’s even challenging Joe Rogan’s podcast reign

By Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg and Isabella Simonetti

Mel Robbins knows you have problems. Whether it’s depression, career pivots or family strife, she has been there too. Now, her pithy life advice and tough love have made her a bestselling author and a podcaster who regularly jostles with Joe Rogan at the top of the charts. She peppers “The Mel Robbins Podcast” with chummy expressions such as “your friend Mel.” She helps people talk about their feelings and encourages her audience to change themselves for the better, even when it isn’t easy. In a recent episode about how childhood trauma ripples across a lifetime, she asked listeners to reflect on their own pasts. “It’s not your fault, but it is your responsibility to yourself to do the work that you need to do in order to heal, to grow, to become healthier and happier,” she said. The 56-year-old former lawyer, wife and mother of three became a blockbuster brand by delving into her own personal trauma—her relationship with alcohol, her dyslexia, bouts of depression and a period of deep debt. Robbins has translated her bite-size advice into one of the most popular podcasts in the country, bestselling books, audio specials, paid speaking engagements and a devoted social-media following. Her latest book, “The Let Them Theory,” which expounds on

the basic notion that you can’t control the people around you, has sold more than 3 million copies in all formats. “I’m obsessed with trying to make the complex simple,” says Robbins. “If something’s too complex, you’re not going to use it.” Robbins has an almost cultlike following. Her podcast, which is produced by Robbins’s 143 Studios and shares ad revenue with SiriusXM, the show’s distributor, regularly competes with “The Joe Rogan Experience” for the No. 1 spot on Apple’s and Spotify’s lists of top podcasts. Readings for “The Let Them Theory” at stores in New York, New Jersey and California sold out in 24 hours, according to her publisher. Tickets at the Barnes & Noble in Los Angeles were for sale on the secondary market for \$300, 10 times their face value. “I am absolutely the single best female speaker in the world,” Robbins said. She is part of a literary lineage that stretches from Dale Carnegie (Win friends! Influence people!) to Stephen R. Covey (Be highly effective!) and James Clear (Break those bad habits!). “Focusing on the controllable aspects of our lives is a very old, powerful message,” says Stephen Schueller, a clinical psychologist and professor at the University of California, Irvine. Self-help print book sales dropped 9% in 2024 from the prior year, according to book tracker Circana BookScan. But Robbins’s book has bucked that trend. “The Let Them

Mel Robbins, author of ‘The Let Them Theory,’ greeted fans at an event in Boston in January.

Mel Robbins

- **Breakthrough:** 2011 TEDx Talk ‘How to Stop Screwing Yourself Over’ with more than 33 million views on YouTube
- **Setback:** Daytime talk show ‘The Mel Robbins Show’ premiered in 2019 but wasn’t renewed
- **Popular catch phrase:** The 5-second rule. When inspiration strikes, count 5-4-3-2-1 and then move
- **Pets:** Two dogs, Yolo and Homie, and a cat named Mr. Noodle
- **Audio podcast downloads:** More than 245 million

Theory” was released in late December, and its 2025 print sales trail only Rebecca Yarros’s blockbuster romance novel “Onyx Storm.” “The Let Them Theory,” which she co-wrote with her daughter, Sawyer Robbins, urges readers to take control of their lives and not be consumed by the actions or attitudes of others. Your mother-in-law makes a passive-aggressive comment about your hair? Let her. The guy you’re dating ghosts you? Let him. Your employer is laying people off? Let them. A second part of the message, “Let me,” is intended to ward off apathy. Let me leave a relationship, try a new hobby or otherwise take charge of aspects of my life. “No matter what’s happening out there,” Robbins said. “Your power is in how you respond.” Tracey Jackson, a 66-year-old Manhattan-based screenwriter and author, follows Robbins on Instagram, listens to her podcast in the car and bought a copy of “The Let Them Theory.” She even put the “Let Them” slogan on her phone’s lock screen. When she’s on a slow-moving line at the bank, or in a taxi where loud music is giving her a headache, a quick glance at her phone reduces the tension, she said. “We don’t have power over other people even if we are married to them or give birth to them,” Jackson added. “You have to let them.” Robbins was raised in North Muskegon, Mich., where her father was a doctor and her mother co-owned a gourmet kitchen store. She graduated from Dartmouth College and Boston College Law School. Today she lives in southern Vermont. In the 1990s, Robbins says, she

worked as a defense attorney at a legal-aid society and then as a litigator in Boston. Later she pivoted to digital marketing. In the early 2000s, she recast herself as a life and small-business coach. The decade would prove chaotic. Robbins’s husband lost his job and went into the restaurant business, but the venture later failed. When the recession hit, her family “went into free fall,” she says, at one point racking up \$800,000 in debt. Robbins says she started doing whatever she could to pay the bills. Her first book, “Stop Saying You’re Fine: Discover a More Powerful You,” was published in 2011. That same year, she made a TEDx Talk that later went viral and led to speaking engagements. CNN hired her as a legal analyst until she hit the speaker circuit full-time, getting paid for motivational talks at big companies such as AT&T. “In my attempt to try to figure out my life, I’ve had like 19 different careers,” Robbins said. Near the end of her 2011 TEDx Talk, Robbins mentioned her five-second rule: People who don’t act within five seconds of their latest impulse or inspired thought lose the opportunity to make it happen. “Your problem isn’t ideas,” she lectured. “Your problem is you don’t act on them.” The video has more than 33 million views on YouTube. Robbins adopted the approach—get moving by counting down from five and then blasting off—when she was struggling to get out of bed during a particularly dark stretch. “I learn everything that I share the hard way, by first screwing up my own life,” she says. Some wonder if her advice is too simplistic. Jim Taylor, who has a Ph.D. in psychology and is the author of 18 books on performance and well-being, is wary of the proliferation of untrained gurus offering quick fixes. “You get people who have no qualifications,” he said. “You wouldn’t go to a surgeon who never went to medical school.” Early on, Robbins took the rare step of retaining ownership of her audiobook rights, letting her lock in a higher royalty rate. With audiobooks now the fastest-growing segment of publishing, the move proved lucrative. She struck a production partnership with Audible, Amazon’s audiobook service, leading to six Audible Originals between 2018 and 2024. The relationship helped expand her listener base between new hardcover titles, said Marc Gerald, her agent. “When we released the ‘Let Them’ audiobook, it increased the sales of her other Audible titles by more than 100%,” said Rachel Ghiazza, Audible’s chief content officer. Hay House, an imprint of Penguin Random House, saw potential in Robbins’s appeal—even if the publisher couldn’t acquire her audiobook rights. Reid Tracy, Hay House’s chief executive, snapped up her self-affirmation book “The High 5 Habit,” publishing the hardcover and ebook in 2021. Late last year, Hay House published “The Let Them Theory” and hit the jackpot. In roughly three months, the title is already the bestselling book in Hay House’s 38-year history. “We’re going to reach our profit goal for the year by the end of March,” said Tracy.



If you’d bought the leading exchange-traded fund investing in long-term U.S. Treasury bonds at its peak in August 2020, you’d have lost 41.3% by now—even after reinvesting your interest income. Two ETFs that amplify the daily returns on long-term Treasuries make that wild performance look tame. Over the same period, the Direxion Daily 20+ Year Treasury Bull 3X Shares ETF, which seeks to triple the daily return of a long-term Treasury bond index, lost 90.2%, according to FactSet. Its mirror-image fund, Direxion Daily 20+ Year Treasury Bear 3X Shares, which aims to deliver three times the *opposite* of the long-term bond’s daily return, gained 266.6%. Even if you are an adrenaline addict, you’d better understand what you’re in for before you try funds like these. Officially, “ETF” stands for exchange-traded fund—a tool that makes investing simple. This subset of ETFs, though, is so sensitive to market moves that the acronym should stand for “extra-touchy funds.” They are anything but simple. Extra-touchy funds come in two basic forms: leveraged and inverse. As of the end of February, according to Morningstar, 316 leveraged or inverse ETFs held a total of \$115.6 billion in assets, up from 183 such funds with \$54.4 billion at the end of 2020. Leveraged funds use total-return swaps or other derivatives to amplify the daily returns of an index, a basket of securities or even a single stock. Leveraged ETFs can aim to deliver twice or even triple the daily return of the underlying asset, turning a 1% market rise into a 2% or 3%

THE INTELLIGENT INVESTOR | JASON ZWEIG

How to Make 267%, Or Lose 90%, on Treasuries

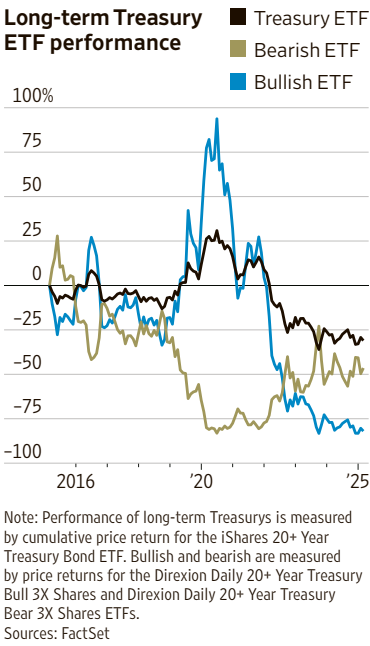
Be careful with funds that magnify market swings



gain; they also magnify losses the same way. Inverse funds seek the opposite of an asset’s daily return. Depending on how they’re structured, they can turn a 1% daily loss into a 1%, 2% or 3% gain; conversely, they can turn a 1% market gain into a loss of 1% or more. How touchy are leveraged and inverse funds? As of the end of February, according to data from LSEG Lipper, the bullish Direxion long-term Treasury ETF finished dead last among all domestic long-term fixed-income funds for the trailing three months and the past one, two, three, five and 10 years. But it also topped the charts for the prior month and the year to date. For the prior month and the year to date, its bearish sibling finished last among all domestic long-term bond funds. But the bearish Treasury fund beat every other competitor over the trailing three and five years. Over different measurement periods, funds like these can generate explosively different results. What drives this wild volatility? Imagine two ETFs. One tracks an index directly, without leverage. The other, which is leveraged, seeks to triple the daily return of the index.

You’ve invested \$100 in each fund, although the leveraged fund gives you \$300 in exposure. Now, to use an extreme example, let’s say the index gained 5% yesterday and loses 5% today. Your stake in the first fund would have been worth \$105 at yesterday’s close. After today’s 5% loss, you’ll have 95% of \$105, or \$99.75. The leveraged fund tripled yesterday’s 5% gain, pushing the value of your position up to \$115 and your exposure to the index up to \$345. That means today’s 5% drop in the index takes \$17.25, or 5% of \$345, off yesterday’s closing value of \$115. That leaves you with \$97.75. To get back to your \$100 starting point, you need a 0.25% gain in the unleveraged fund but a 2.3% gain in the leveraged fund. Of course, if the market went up 5% two days in a row, you’d be far ahead in the leveraged fund. Depending on the path of the market’s changes from day to day, the leverage can enrich you or leave you surprisingly deep in the hole. That example ignores expenses, which are much higher on leveraged funds. Also, the more volatile the underlying index is and the longer the volatility lasts, the wider the gap is likely to grow between the index’s returns and the performance of the leveraged fund. In a “trending” or repeatedly rising (or falling) market, you can make a ton of money on such funds. In a jagged market with uneven ups and downs, anything can happen. Here’s why all that math matters: Getting double or triple the *daily* return of an index doesn’t mean you will outperform the index twofold or threefold in the long run. “If somebody doesn’t understand that longer holding periods are unpredictable, they shouldn’t be trading these funds,” says Douglas Yones, chief executive of Direxion.

“The volatility of holding longer term is extremely amplified, both up and down,” he adds. To manage that risk, “you need to look at it every single day.” No one really knows whether individual investors are significant buyers of extra-touchy funds, or whether all the financial advisers using them in so-called tactical portfolios fully understand how they work. “If you get a whipsaw market, you could find a lot of your profits eaten away or your losses amplified because of the pattern of returns,” says Elisabeth Kashner, director of ETF research and analytics at FactSet. “You have to get the overall direction right, and you have to get the path of travel right.” Good luck with getting both those things right. And, if you turn out to be wrong, leveraged funds will magnify your mistake.



EXCHANGE

A Second Try at a Team Name

Continued from page B1

It was less than two years earlier that the Boston owners had purchased the right to start a franchise in the country's top women's soccer league for \$53 million. Now, the team was in danger of alienating its own fan base before it had ever kicked a ball.

Within 24 hours, the team had taken down the video and apologized. Within weeks, it announced it was considering rebranding entirely.

"It was absolutely crushing," said Stephanie Connaughton, a team founder and former Procter & Gamble branding executive. The club's founders, four prominent local women, had worked on the brand launch as though preparing for the Super Bowl. And then, she said, "We lost 49-0."

The team's owners and staff have spent the five months since that debacle figuring out where they went wrong—and how not to mess up again. For one, they needed to consult many more fans. More importantly, they needed to scrap the BOS Nation name and start again from scratch.

On Wednesday, the owners announced the team's new identity: Boston Legacy FC.

The new name is actually an old name, one first discussed by club founders back in 2003, long before the BOS Nation fiasco. In recent months, it was resurfaced by fans and signed off by a team of 31 brand consultants.

"We aspire to create something enduring, something that will span generations," said Jennifer Epstein, the controlling owner and one of the club's four founders.

The team had arrived at the name BOS Nation after consulting with marketing agencies and testing it with about 25 people. None of them had raised any issues with what the executives felt was a fresh, edgy spin on traditional team monikers. They kept the group small to prevent anyone from revealing their choice ahead of time.

"We prioritized confidentiality," Connaughton said. "You have to try on a lot of names to see what's going to work, and we didn't really want those to get out there."



Founders Ami Kuan Danoff, Stephanie Connaughton, Jennifer Epstein and Anna Palmer rebranded their team after a first attempt, right, offended would-be fans.

The team began to sense something was wrong the night before that launch day last October. As the name leaked out, despite the team's best efforts, people on social media thought it was a hoax. Once Richards unleashed the video, they discovered it was all too real.

"You launched a team with a testicle joke?!?!?" one Instagram user wrote. "It's not even a good one. You're announcing a sport literally played with a ball!?"

"I will never be caught dead with merch featuring that name," posted another. A petition on change.org that garnered nearly 2,000 signatures called BOS Nation a "cringey name completely devoid of regional identity."

As the 25-year-old Richards worked from the Medford, Mass., house she shares with six roommates, her phone was flooded with so many notifications that it grew hot to the touch. Epstein, meanwhile, was in New York under the lights of a CBS studio, sharing the team name on live TV.

Epstein, a trained lawyer and daughter of longtime Boston Celtics co-owner Robert Epstein, told the program hosts that the NBA-champion team was a "phenome-



nal example to learn from." Actress and Massachusetts native Elizabeth Banks joined via video and said she wanted investing in the women's soccer team, which will begin play in 2026, to be part of her legacy. Banks later that week was due to kick off a scavenger hunt for BOS Nation scarves around Beantown.

Boston's three other founders, who had also been in New York for media interviews, joined a makeshift carpool when team investor Alan Chhabra offered them a lift back to Boston. Piling into his SUV were Connaughton, tech investor Ami Kuan Danoff and Anna Palmer, a longtime soccer fan whose idea to bring an NWSL team to Boston had set the whole enterprise in motion.

Connaughton was the one who

had steered the team's naming process. Years earlier, she had led the hugely successful launch of the Venus women's razor at Boston-based Gillette. But now, as she and the other founders scrolled through their phones on the four-hour drive, a feeling of dread settled in.

The dissent over the name and campaign wasn't coming from a few anonymous posters on social media. BOS Nation was being taken to task by hundreds of fans, including the team's own official supporters' group, Boston ISA.

The car was barreling toward a launch party at a flagship sporting goods store near the team's Boston office when the founders reached out to the supporters' group and asked for an impromptu meeting. On the second floor of a

Dick's House of Sport, surrounded by shelves of cleats, BOS Nation executives huddled with a handful of members to hear what they had to say. It made for painful listening.

The "balls" campaign was juvenile at best and transphobic at worst, the supporters said. Plus, no one in the city calls Boston "BOS," which evoked an outdated form of "girlboss feminism." The name wasn't chantable either.

At one point Vanessa Bruce, the founders' first hire, looked so stricken that one supporter gave her a hug.

The team felt there was only one thing to do. While hundreds of partygoers milled around the store's main floor, several team members were upstairs, sitting on the floor and hunched over laptops, drafting the statement that would undo their months of work.

Executives in the corporate world don't like to apologize, and they certainly don't enjoy bending to public pressure. Canceling ad campaigns and rebranding companies is costly, causes confusion, and can damage a company's value. But the Boston team's founders saw themselves less as the owners of a brand and more as stewards of a cultural institution.

The next day, the team posted an apology.

"While we had hoped to create a bold and buzzworthy brand launch campaign, we missed the mark," it read. "We fully acknowledge that the content of the campaign did not reflect the safe and welcoming environment we strive to create for all."

The team vowed to do better. The Elizabeth Banks scavenger hunt was called off.

Richards, the social-media coordinator, and Bruce knew that the torrent of criticism and abuse was also a trove of feedback that would guide the team's next steps. So Richards stayed up past 1 a.m., screenshotting and saving every comment—thousands of them—in case they were lost when posts were deleted.

At the team's offices on Boylston Street, the founders went back to the drawing board. Among the feedback they received in the aftermath were suggestions to adopt the Legacy name that the owners had kicked around a year earlier.

This time, there would be no star-studded video, no launch party, just the hard work of building a team.

"This isn't a victory lap," Epstein said. "We haven't won anything yet."

FROM TOP: ERIN CLARK/THE BOSTON GLOBE; GETTY IMAGES; BOSTON UNITY SOCCER PARTNERS

An Oscar-Winner's New Hit Film About Investing

Continued from page B1

Booth, DFA's chairman. "I realized you don't touch very many people that way."

So he financed a documentary from one of the world's most renowned filmmakers and put it on the world's most popular entertainment platform.

The result is Academy Award-winning director Errol Morris's new film, "Tune Out the Noise," a nerdy and genuinely engrossing documentary about investment strategy.

To make sure it touched as many people as possible, they made the whole thing available for free on YouTube this month. It's an 88-minute film about the science of markets—and it has already racked up millions of views.

"Who would have thought?" Booth said.

But once you think about it, it makes perfect sense. "Tune Out the Noise" is the story of radical ideas that became powerful enough to move trillions of dollars, and the main characters are renegade investors and unlikely titans who created the revolutionary financial products that we have come to depend on. The material is as rich as all the people Morris interviewed.

"They're the people who created the world around us," Morris told me.

The stars of his documentary include David Booth and Rex Sinquefeld, who met at Chicago in the 1970s before they founded DFA.

At the time, the notion that asset prices incorporated and reflected all available information might as well have been heresy. It would take decades for people to wrap their minds around the concepts that doing nothing was better than doing way too much, and that owning the market was usually smarter than trying to beat the market.

But as they accepted the wisdom of buying and holding a diversified portfolio of assets, rather than picking stocks themselves or paying investors to find winners for them, huge sums of money have migrated from active to passive management—far and away the biggest

shift in the history of investing. In the war of philosophies, the passivists have won.

In fact, passively managed U.S. equity mutual funds and exchange-traded funds have recently overtaken active funds and now control more than \$10 trillion, according to Morningstar Direct.

But as my colleague Jason Zweig has explained, DFA isn't strictly a passive or active investor. It's both.

The company traces its roots back to the early 1980s, right after the invention of the low-cost index fund. DFA's founders believed that markets were mostly efficient—and more efficient than most in finance believed. But they also believed that basic index funds were too mechanical and left too much money on the table. They decided they could do better by combining a respect for efficient markets with the latest, wonkiest financial theories and their own judgment.

In the early days, they couldn't afford office space and worked out of a spare bedroom in Booth's apartment in Brooklyn, a few miles and an entire galaxy away from Wall Street. These days, DFA is one of America's largest fund managers and oversees nearly \$800 billion of assets. And the University of Chicago's business school is named for Booth after he donated hundreds of millions back to the place responsible for his wealth.

Now he's made it a priority to spread the gospel of what he learned there.

He feels that people would be happier if they had a deeper understanding of markets. They would let the market work for them instead of trying to outwork the market. They would keep calm in times of volatility and find comfort in the order beneath chaos. They would turn down the volume of financial discourse and tune out the noise.

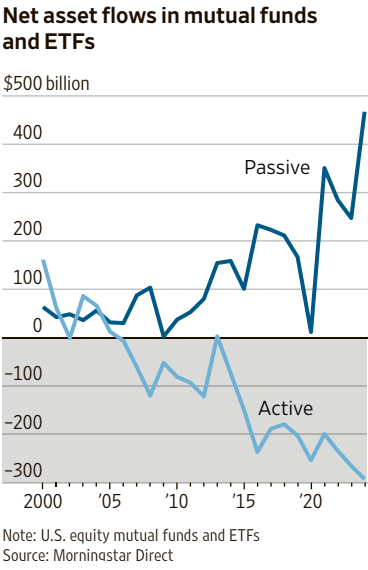
If only he could get them to listen.

"We thought Errol could be of help," Booth said.

Of course, hiring Errol Morris to direct a movie about your company is a bit like getting Van Morrison to



Documentarian Errol Morris, left, and billionaire investor David Booth rang the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange this month to mark the premiere of their film about passive investing, 'Tune Out the Noise.'



sing at your company's holiday party.

But when DFA approached the Oscar winner five years ago to make a film about the birth of modern finance, he was intrigued. After all, he's made films about true crime, John le Carré and everything from U.S. defense secretaries to pet cemeteries. And he knew from personal experience that finance could be thrilling.

"I don't know if this is relevant," he told me. "But before I became a filmmaker, I was a private detective. I worked in the financial industry." And what exactly did he do?

"I investigated various different alleged financial crimes."

The way he sees it, this job wasn't so different from that job.

"For me, the film was actually an investigation—a really compelling investigation into the nature of what makes sense for an individual investor," said Morris, who thought this approach made so much sense that he became a DFA investor himself.

As it turns out, it's not even the first time that his work inspired an investment.

A legend of the advertising business, Morris has directed a thousand commercials, including a campaign for Apple in 2002 about converts who switched from PCs to Macs.

"As a result," he says, "I put a very small amount of money into Apple stock—and I've never touched it."

Since then, Apple stock is up 500-fold.

One takeaway from his documentary is recognizing the importance of chance—and taking advantage of it. Almost everyone who played crucial roles in the evolution of invest-

ing happened to be in the right place at the right time only because of forces beyond any of their control. The only thing they could control was what they did with that random stroke of luck.

"Gosh, if you look at all the great inventions in many fields, it really is just happenstance," Booth said. "The main thing is not letting it slip through your fingers."

Technically, the documentary is considered advertising by U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission marketing rules, but you won't come away from it feeling like you've just watched a commercial. Booth hopes people will see it, hear the once-contrarian ideas that captivated him and think: *That makes complete sense.* I asked Morris if they make complete sense to him now.

"Nearly complete sense," he said. "There's no amount of rational persuasion that could convince me never to speculate in the market again. But I have evidence to know better—and to know that if that's all I'm doing, I'm doing myself an enormous disservice."

Not that he's tempted by meme stocks, crypto, sports betting or typical means of speculation.

"No, I have a much, much worse and more dangerous habit," Morris said. "It's called filmmaking."

WORTHY MEDIA

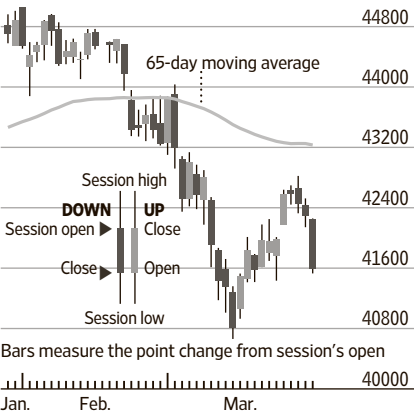
MARKETS DIGEST

Dow Jones Industrial Average

41583.90
▼ 715.80
or 1.69%
All-time high
45014.04, 12/04/24

Trailing P/E ratio 24.94 27.70
P/E estimate * 19.69 19.16
Dividend yield 1.96 1.81

Current divisor
0.16268413125742

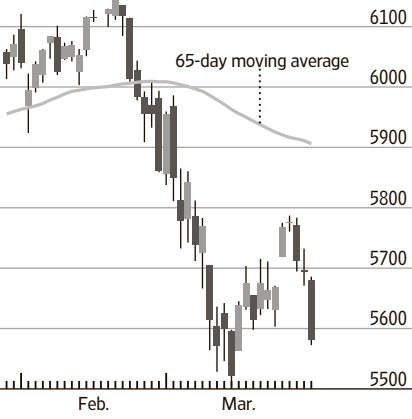


Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc. * Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

S&P 500 Index

5580.94
▼ 112.37
or 1.97%
All-time high
6144.15, 02/19/25

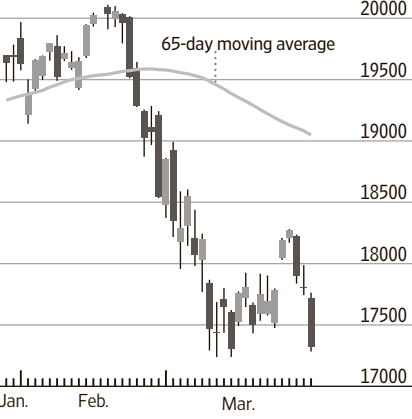
Trailing P/E ratio 23.15 23.55
P/E estimate * 21.10 21.57
Dividend yield * 1.34 1.35



Nasdaq Composite Index

17322.99
▼ 481.04
or 2.70%
All-time high:
20173.89, 12/16/24

Trailing P/E ratio *1 29.27 30.92
P/E estimate ** 25.25 27.36
Dividend yield ** 0.78 0.82



Track the Markets: Winners and Losers

A look at how selected global stock indexes, bond ETFs, currencies and commodities performed around the world for the week.

Index	Currency, vs. U.S. dollar	Commodity, traded in U.S.*	Exchange-traded fund
		Comex silver	3.97%
		Comex gold	2.15
		Nymex RBOB gasoline	1.79
		S&P 500 Consumer Staples	1.65
		Nymex crude	1.58
		Soybeans	1.31
		Nymex natural gas	1.02
		S&P/BMV IPC	0.95
		S&P 500 Energy	0.77
		Lean hogs	0.67
		BSE Sensex	0.66
		Norwegian krone	0.66
		S&P/ASX 200	0.64
		Indian rupee	0.53
		Nymex ULSD	0.50
		Comex copper	0.50
		iSh TIPS Bond	0.50
		Bloomberg Commodity Index	0.45
		S&P 500 Real Estate	0.45
		VangdTotIntlBd	0.33
		Australian dollar	0.26
		Swiss franc	0.24
		Canadian dollar	0.23
		U.K. pound	0.19
		FTSE 100	0.14
		iSh 1-3 Treasury	0.11
		iSh 7-10 Treasury	0.07
		Euro area euro	0.06
		S&P 500 Consumer Discr	0.05
		WSJ Dollar Index	0.01
		VangdTotalBd	unch.

Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	YTD	3-yr. ann.
Dow Jones										
Industrial Average	42258.15	41530.00	41583.90	-715.80	-1.69	45014.04	37735.11	4.5	-2.3	6.0
Transportation Avg	14871.63	14586.24	14592.61	-291.31	-1.96	17754.38	14397.68	-10.0	-8.2	-4.0
Utility Average	1015.06	1005.94	1011.41	10.53	1.05	1079.88	835.53	14.6	2.9	-0.3
Total Stock Market	56176.04	55035.51	55134.64	-1123.79	-2.00	61024.05	49376.46	5.2	-5.6	6.0
Barron's 400	1208.36	1182.23	1186.55	-22.92	-1.90	1356.99	1092.05	1.7	-5.2	4.7

Nasdaq Stock Market										
Nasdaq Composite	17763.28	17283.06	17322.99	-481.04	-2.70	20173.89	15282.01	5.8	-10.3	6.5
Nasdaq-100	19752.45	19241.54	19281.40	-517.22	-2.61	22175.60	17037.65	5.6	-8.2	8.8

S&P										
500 Index	5685.89	5572.42	5580.94	-112.37	-1.97	6144.15	4967.23	6.2	-5.1	6.8
MidCap 400	2965.53	2900.70	2915.07	-54.31	-1.83	3390.26	2825.94	-4.3	-6.6	2.4
SmallCap 600	1296.68	1263.84	1271.75	-27.77	-2.14	1544.66	1241.62	-5.4	-9.7	-1.4

Other Indexes										
Russell 2000	2063.31	2013.00	2023.27	-42.42	-2.05	2442.03	1942.96	-4.8	-9.3	-0.9
NYSE Composite	19534.72	19227.11	19270.30	-264.42	-1.35	20272.04	17388.09	5.2	0.9	4.7
Value Line	580.26	566.75	568.67	-11.59	-2.00	656.04	560.48	-7.7	-6.9	-3.8
NYSE Arca Biotech	5784.75	5693.93	5710.93	-67.29	-1.16	6318.63	4861.76	8.1	-0.6	4.3
NYSE Arca Pharma	980.57	972.93	978.20	5.27	0.54	1140.17	912.71	-4.7	4.7	5.4
KBW Bank	124.33	120.21	120.99	-3.01	-2.43	140.59	96.78	15.4	-5.1	-2.3
PHLX® Gold/Silver	182.28	176.15	176.64	-2.02	-1.13	178.66	127.00	39.1	28.8	4.2
PHLX® Oil Service	67.95	66.12	66.71	-1.14	-1.68	95.25	62.70	-26.8	-8.1	-5.5
PHLX® Semiconductor	4411.66	4259.93	4284.91	-130.34	-2.95	5904.54	4284.91	-12.6	-14.0	6.5
Cboe Volatility	22.18	18.92	21.65	2.96	15.84	38.57	11.86	66.4	24.8	3.3

§ Nasdaq PHLX Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners

	NYSE	NYSE Amer.
Total volume*	1,043,193,624	15,394,840
Adv. volume*	145,597,187	506,848
Decl. volume*	893,156,034	13,160,630
Issues traded	2,834	292
Advances	591	63
Declines	2,187	218
Unchanged	56	11
New highs	40	4
New lows	137	1
Closing Arms*	1.83	8.30
Block trades*	5,301	177

	Nasdaq	NYSE Arca
Total volume*	7,015,413,432	349,749,012
Adv. volume*	1,567,477,999	93,082,054
Decl. volume*	5,367,953,380	256,414,593
Issues traded	4,494	2,135
Advances	849	518
Declines	3,520	1,609
Unchanged	125	8
New highs	66	41
New lows	415	83
Closing Arms*	0.83	0.72
Block trades*	48,959	1,548

* Primary market NYSE, NYSE American NYSE Arca only. (TRIN) A comparison of the number of advancing and declining issues with the volume of shares rising and falling. An Arms of less than 1 indicates buying demand; above 1 indicates selling pressure.

Percentage Gainers...

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
Portage Biotech	PRTG	9.60	4.89	103.82	23.01	2.10	-14.8
DBV Technologies ADR	DBVT	6.20	2.29	58.57	8.32	2.20	-17.2
NeOnc Technologies Hldgs	NTHI	16.55	4.55	37.92	25.00	10.88	...
Lixiang Education ADR	LXEH	17.65	4.32	32.41	23.42	1.95	328.1
Defiance Dly Tgt 2x Sh	SMST	4.06	0.70	20.83	118.40	3.01	...
Alumis	ALMS	5.64	0.94	20.00	13.53	3.18	...
Argan	AGX	138.12	22.89	19.86	191.46	48.85	173.3
Janover	JNVR	5.50	0.91	19.83	10.64	3.37	-42.7
OneConstruction Group	ONEG	3.18	0.52	19.55	4.05	1.96	...
Guild Holdings	GHLH	15.93	2.31	16.96	18.26	11.21	8.0
NextNRG	NXST	3.45	0.40	13.11	7.55	2.19	-19.3
ProSh UltSh Ether ETF	ETHD	51.68	5.99	13.11	85.54	15.46	...
BK Technologies	BKTI	36.00	4.00	12.50	38.70	11.67	146.6
Baiya International Group	BIYA	7.18	0.79	12.36	7.80	3.75	...
QuantaSing Group ADR	QSG	3.42	0.36	11.76	6.22	1.47	-16.4

Percentage Losers

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
Milestone Pharm	MIST	0.88	-1.37	-60.89	2.75	0.75	-50.8
Wolfspeed	WOLF	2.59	-2.79	-51.86	30.86	2.54	-91.2
XTI Aerospace	XTIA	1.23	-1.23	-50.00	1270.00	1.20	-99.7
Splash Beverage Group	SBEV	1.55	-1.26	-44.82	20.83	1.49	-91.6
RedCloud Holdings	RCT	2.41	-1.49	-38.21	5.00	2.30	...
ECARX Holdings	ECX	1.50	-0.76	-33.63	3.25	0.96	-23.5
Impact BioMedical	IBO	1.52	-0.76	-33.33	6.17	0.51	...
SAIHEAT	SAIH	3.87	-1.85	-32.34	26.98	3.07	-77.8
Knightscope	KSCP	2.94	-1.16	-28.29	31.50	2.82	-88.2
Regenell Bioscience	RGC	25.67	-9.20	-26.38	69.00	3.03	470.4
GRI Bio	GRI	4.37	-1.50	-25.61	172.49	4.33	-97.4
Venus Concept	VERO	2.75	-0.90	-24.66	17.49	2.33	-63.8
Tonix Pharmaceuticals	TNXP	20.17	-6.50	-24.37	672.00	6.76	-96.6
SeaStar Medical Holding	ICU	1.70	-0.50	-22.73	20.70	1.50	-90.7
AXIL Brands	AXIL	5.42	-1.55	-22.20	13.24	3.54	-57.5

Most Active Stocks

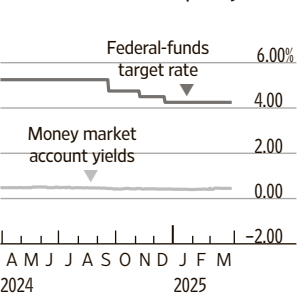
Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	Low
Lexicon Pharmaceuticals	LXRX	402,962	6356.0	0.57	64.13	2.45	0.28
NVIDIA	NVDA	228,285	-15.5	109.67	-1.58	153.13	75.61
Damon	DMN	209,135	782.8	0.03	-23.09	4.95	0.03
Sharps Technology	STSS	208,329	1302.5	0.04	-72.30	18.15	0.04
Direxion TSLA Bull 2X	TSLX	196,785	79.5	9.85	-7.25	41.50	4.94

* Common stocks priced at \$2 a share or more with an average volume over 65 trading days of at least 5,000 shares. † Has traded fewer than 65 days

Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

U.S. consumer rates

A consumer rate against its benchmark over the past year



Selected rates

Money Market/Savings Accts

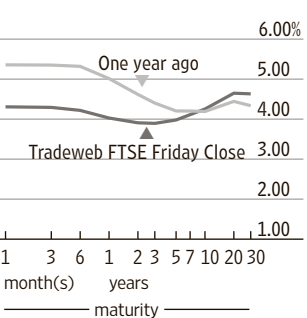
Bankrate.com avg:	0.45%
Quontic Bank	4.25%
Astoria, NY	800-908-6600
VirtualBank	4.25%
Miami, FL	877-998-2265
KS StateBank	4.30%
Manhattan, KS	785-587-4000
CFG Community Bank	4.32%
Baltimore, MD	888-205-8388
Vio Bank	4.41%
Oklahoma City, OK	888-999-9170

Interest rate	Yield/Rate (%) Last	52-Week Range (%) Low	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Federal-funds rate target	4.25-4.50	4.25-4.50	4.00
Prime rate*	7.50	7.50	8.50
SOFER	4.36	4.29	4.08
Money market, annual yield	0.45	0.45	0.51
Five-year CD, annual yield	1.68	1.67	1.69
30-year mortgage, fixed†	6.76	6.75	7.72
15-year mortgage, fixed†	6.12	6.10	7.11
Jumbo mortgages, \$726,200-plus†	6.86	6.82	7.79
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM)†	6.23	6.16	7.28
New-car loan, 48-month	7.52	7.62	7.94

Bankrate.com rates based on survey of over 1,500 online banks. *Base rate posted by 70% of the nation's largest banks. † Excludes closing costs. Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; Bankrate.com

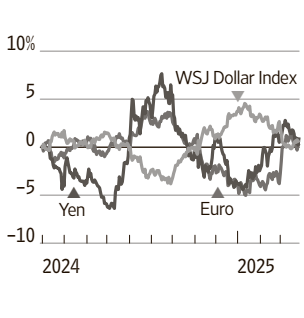
Treasury yield curve

Yield to maturity of current bills, notes and bonds



Forex Race

Yen, euro vs. dollar; dollar vs. major U.S. trading partners



Sources: Tradeweb FTSE U.S. Treasury Close; Tullett Prebon; Dow Jones Market Data

Corporate Borrowing Rates and Yields

Bond total return index	Close	Yield (%) Last	52-Week High	Low	Total Return (%) 52-wk	3-yr
U.S. Treasury Bloomberg	2250.570	4.140	4.150	4.880	3.630	4.224
U.S. Treasury Long Bloomberg	3159.090	4.670	4.630	5.050	3.990	4.433
Aggregate, Bloomberg	2144.710	4.620	4.620	5.310	4.100	4.637
Fixed-Rate MBS, Bloomberg	2125.170	4.940	4.930	5.570	4.340	5.206
High Yield 100, ICE BofA	3847.828	6.959	6.649	7.871	6.208	7.260
Muni Master, ICE BofA	590.017	3.665	3.517	3.760	3.074	0.872
EMBI Global, J.P. Morgan	917.963	7.463	7.302	8.073	7.084	6.690

Sources: J.P. Morgan; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; ICE Data Services

Sources: FactSet (indexes, bond ETFs, commodities), Tullett Prebon (currencies).

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Methodology
Performance reflects price change (except DAX, Bovespa, and Tel Aviv 35, which reflect total returns). Commodities are represented by the continuous front-month futures contract. Bond exchange-traded fund performance may diverge from that of their underlying index. Bond categories are represented by the following ETFs: U.S. Bonds Total Market: Vanguard Total Bond Market; 1-3 Yr U.S. Treasuries: iShares 1-3 Year Treasury; U.S. 7-10 Yr Treasuries: iShares 7-10 Year Treasury; 20+ Yr U.S. Treasuries: iShares 20+ Year Treasury; Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS): iShares TIPS; Investment Grade Corporate Bonds: iShares iBoxx \$ Investment Grade Corporate; High Yield Corporate Bonds: iShares iBoxx \$ High Yield Corporate; Municipal Bonds: iShares National Muni; International Bonds: Vanguard Total International; Emerging Market Bonds: iShares J.P. Morgan USD Emerging Markets.



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Currencies

U.S.-dollar foreign-exchange rates in late New York trading

Country/currency	in US\$	Fri per US\$	US\$/US\$	YTD chg (%)	Country/currency	in US\$	Fri per US\$	US\$/US\$	YTD chg (%)
Americas					Thailand baht	.02946	33.940	-1.1	
Argentina peso	.00091070	8936	3.9		Vietnam dong	.00003910	25575	0.4	
Brazil real	.1736	5.7604	-6.9		Europe				
Canada dollar	.6983	1.4320	-0.5		Czech Rep. koruna	.04341	23.034	-5.4	

Futures Contracts

Metal & Petroleum Futures							
	Contract			Contract		Open interest	
	Open	High	Low	Settle	Chg		
Copper-High (CMX) -25,000 lbs.; \$ per lb.							
April	5,104.0	5,129.5	5,063.0	5,112.5	0.0140	6,101	
May	5,119.5	5,167.5	5,062.0	5,130.0	0.0105	124,989	
Gold (CMX) -100 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
April	3,069.70	3,094.90	▲ 3,066.80	3,086.50	25.50	61,242	
May	3,084.50	3,108.70	▲ 3,081.80	3,100.00	24.20	3,538	
June	3,099.30	3,124.40	▲ 3,096.30	3,114.30	24.30	377,352	
July	3,110.10	3,131.50	▲ 3,110.10	3,126.80	24.00	152	
Aug	3,123.80	3,148.80	▲ 3,120.00	3,139.40	23.60	41,276	
Sept	3,137.10	3,159.30	▲ 3,137.10	3,152.00	23.60	21	
Platinum (NYM) -50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
April	965.00	970.00	▲ 965.00	974.30	-0.30	3	
June	986.50	1,004.00	972.00	984.80	-0.30	20,214	
Platinum (NYM) -50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
April	989.50	994.30	969.70	977.70	-6.70	6,394	
July	1,005.80	1,012.00	987.30	996.10	-4.50	69,200	
Silver (CMX) -5,000 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
April	35.265	35.265	▲ 34.560	34.644	-0.261	2,172	
May	35.325	35.495	▲ 34.645	34.814	-0.269	126,498	
Crude Oil, Light Sweet (NYM) -42,000 bbl.; \$ per bbl.							
May	69.91	70.09	68.87	69.36	-0.56	330,240	
June	69.48	69.63	68.62	68.90	-0.59	213,407	
July	68.98	69.13	67.92	68.35	-0.65	138,250	
Sept	67.93	68.07	66.83	67.23	-0.72	119,932	
Dec	66.65	66.78	65.65	65.92	-0.74	181,257	
June 26	65.46	65.49	64.34	64.66	-0.74	105,320	
NY Harbor ULSD (NYM) -42,000 gal.; \$ per gal.							
April	2,282.9	2,294.1	2,264.1	2,260.9	-0.238	11,884	
May	2,253.6	2,258.0	2,220.5	2,228.8	-0.054	103,937	
Gasoline-NY RBOB (NYM) -42,000 gal.; \$ per gal.							
April	2,248.2	2,258.2	2,223.7	2,234.7	-0.117	12,123	
May	2,253.6	2,266.9	2,233.0	2,243.5	-0.110	139,136	
Natural Gas (NYM) -10,000 MMBtu.; \$ per MMBtu.							
May	3.915	4.100	3.836	4.065	-1.40	295,410	
June	4.065	4.222	3.988	4.185	-1.13	103,070	
July	4.305	4.442	4.232	4.401	-0.90	119,627	
Sept	4.342	4.467	4.274	4.426	-0.79	125,382	
Oct	4.372	4.498	4.304	4.458	-0.74	133,173	
Jan 26	5.312	5.400	5.264	5.365	-0.36	129,508	

Agriculture Futures							
Corn (CBT) -5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
May	450.25	454.00	▼ 442.00	453.25	3.25	646,262	
July	458.00	460.75	▼ 450.50	460.00	2.00	505,044	
Oats (CBT) -5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
May	358.25	358.25	348.50	350.25	-6.75	2,191	
July	357.00	358.50	350.25	351.75	-6.75	456	
Soybeans (CBT) -5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
May	1,015.00	1,023.50	1,009.00	1,023.00	6.25	363,463	

Exchange-Traded Portfolios

wsj.com/market-data/mutualfunds-etfs

Largest 100 exchange-traded funds. Preliminary close data as of 4:30 p.m. EDT									
Friday, March 28, 2025					ETF				
ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg	YTD (%)	ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg	YTD (%)
CommSvnsSPDR	XLC	95.74	-2.95	-1.1	ISH1-5YIGCpBd	IGSB	52.34	0.19	1.2
CnsmnDiscSel	XLV	197.04	-3.11	-12.2	ISH1-3YTreBd	SHY	82.67	0.18	0.8
DimerUSCoreEq2	DFAC	32.80	-1.94	-5.2	ISHRusMkt	IWR	84.63	-1.66	-4.3
FinSelSectorSPDR	IEIG	92.43	-0.47	7.9	ISHRuss1000	IWB	305.03	-2.00	-5.3
FinSelSectorSPDR	XLIF	49.21	-1.93	1.8	ISHRuss1000Grw	IWF	360.45	-2.58	-10.2
HealthCRSctSel	XHL	144.52	-1.81	5.1	ISHRuss1000Val	IWD	186.27	-1.36	0.6
IndSelSectorSPDR	XXL	130.15	-2.06	-1.2	ISHRuss2000	IWM	200.45	-2.03	-9.3
InvsncInd100	QQM	193.08	-2.60	-8.3	ISHS&P500Grw	IWN	92.55	-2.44	-8.8
InvsncQQQ	QQQ	468.94	-2.63	-8.3	ISHS&P500Value	IVE	188.79	-1.49	-1.1
InvsncS&P500EW	RSP	171.80	-1.54	-2.0	ISHStoxxDiv	DVY	132.74	-0.81	1.1
ISHBitcoin	IBIT	47.56	-3.80	-10.3	ISH1-10YTreBd	IEF	95.09	0.81	0.9
ISHCoreDivGrowth	DGRO	61.15	-1.16	-0.3	ISHShortTreBd	SHV	110.45	0.03	0.3
ISHCoreMSCIEAFE	IEFA	76.40	-0.91	8.7	ISH20+TreBd	TLT	90.14	1.38	3.2
ISHCoreMSCIEAF	IEWG	54.09	1.78	3.6	ISHUSTech	IYW	140.66	-2.77	-11.8
ISHCoreMSCITotInt	XKUS	70.28	-1.24	6.3	ISHUSTreasuryBd	GOVT	22.93	0.61	-0.2
ISHCoreS&P500	IIV	558.12	-2.02	-5.2	ISH0-3MTreBd	SGOV	100.67	0.03	0.3
ISHCoreS&P MC	JH	58.21	-1.80	-6.6	JPMNasdEqPrem	JEPA	51.81	-2.21	-8.1
ISHCoreS&P SC	JR	104.01	-2.16	-9.7	JanusHendersonAAA	JEP	56.68	0.02	0.1
ISHCoreS&PTotUS	ITOT	121.39	-1.99	-5.6	JPM EqPrem	JEP	56.68	0.02	0.1
ISHCoreS&PUSGrw	IUSG	127.02	-2.35	-8.8	JPM UltShlcm	JPST	50.62	0.06	0.5
ISHCoreS&PUSVal	IUSV	91.42	-1.50	-1.3	OWZ S&CashCows	COWZ	54.34	-1.38	-3.8
ISHCoreTotUSDBD	USDB	45.98	0.72	1.4	ProStoUHPrMQT	BIL	57.34	-7.96	-27.5
ISHCoreUSAggBd	AGG	98.73	0.58	1.9	SPDRBtgi-3MTrb	QQQ	91.73	0.03	0.3
ISHEdgeMSCIMinUSA	USMV	92.74	0.78	4.4	SPDR DJIA Tr	DIA	454.06	-1.73	-2.3
ISHEdgeMSCIUSAQual	QUAL	169.61	-2.00	-4.8	SPDR GLD Tr	GLD	284.06	0.74	17.3
ISHGoldTr	IAU	58.13	0.78	17.4	SPDR S&P500	SPY	366.73	-1.05	-6.6
ISHiBoxxIGCpBd	LQB	108.48	0.60	1.5	SPDRSP500Value	SPV	50.63	-1.48	-1.0
ISHiBoxxIGCpBd	MDD	108.48	0.60	1.5	SPDRSP500Grwth	SPYG	80.12	-2.48	-8.9
ISHMSCIEAFE	EFA	82.46	-0.89	9.1	SPDR S&P500	SPY	555.66	-2.01	-5.2
ISHMSCIEAFEValue	EFV	59.47	-0.72	13.3	SchwabIntEquity	SCHF	19.96	-1.04	7.9
ISHNatMunBd	MUB	105.19	0.46	-1.3	SchwabUS BrdMkt	SCHB	21.44	-1.92	-5.6
					SchwabUS Div	SCHD	27.58	-0.61	1.0

Borrowing Benchmarks

wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Money Rates

March 28, 2025

Key annual interest rates paid to borrow or lend money in U.S. and international markets. Rates below are a guide to general levels but don't always represent actual transactions.

Inflation				Week				-52-WEEK-			
	Feb. index	level	Chg From (%)	Latest	ago	High	Low	Latest	ago	High	Low
U.S. consumer price index											
All items	319.082		0.44	2.8							
Core	325.252		0.44	3.1							
International rates											
	Latest	Week ago	-52-Week-								
			High	Low							
Prime rates											
U.S.	7.50	7.50	8.50	7.50							
Canada	4.95	4.95	7.20	4.95							
Japan	1.875	1.875	1.875	1.475							
Policy Rates											
Euro zone	2.65	2.65	4.50	2.65							
Switzerland	0.75	0.75	2.00	0.75							
Britain	4.50	4.50	5.25	4.50							
Australia	4.10	4.10	4.35	4.10							
Overnight repurchase											
U.S.	4.45	4.36	5.45	4.00							
U.S. government rates											
Discount											
	4.50	4.50	5.50	4.50							
Federal funds											
Effective rate	4.3300	4.3300	5.3400	4.3300							
High	4.5500	4.5500	5.6500	4.4700							
Low	4.3200	4.3200	5.3300	4.3000							
Bid	4.3200	4.3200	5.3300	4.3200							
Offer	4.3300	4.3300	5.3600	4.3300							
Treasury bill auction											
4 weeks	4.220	4.215	5.285	4.215							
13 weeks	4.190	4.205	5.255	4.190							
26 weeks	4.085	4.100	5.170	4.075							
Other short-term rates											
	Latest	Week ago	-52-Week-								
			high	low							
Call money											
	6.25	6.25	7.25	6.25							
Notes on data:											
U.S. prime rate is the base rate on corporate loans posted by at least 70% of the 10 largest U.S. banks, and is effective December 19, 2024. Other prime rates aren't directly comparable; lending practices vary widely by location; Discount rate is effective December 19, 2024. Secured Overnight Financing Rate is as of March 27, 2025. DTCC GCF Repo Index is Depository Trust & Clearing Corp.'s weighted average for overnight trades in applicable CUSIPs. Value traded is in billions of U.S. dollars. Federal funds rates are Tullett Prebon rates as of 5:30 p.m. ET.											
Sources: Federal Reserve; Bureau of Labor Statistics; DTCC; FactSet; Tullett Prebon Information Ltd.											
Commercial paper (AA financial)											
90 days	4.28	n.a.	5.37	4.26							
Secured Overnight Financing Rate											
	4.36	4.29	5.40	4.27							
	Latest	Value Traded	-52-Week-								
			High	Low							
DTCC GCF Repo Index											
Treasury	4.383	60.250	5.471	4.286							
MBS	4.410	62.706	5.526	4.294							
Weekly survey											
	Latest	Week ago	Year ago								
Freddie Mac											
30-year fixed	6.65	6.67	6.79								
15-year fixed	5.89	5.83	6.11								

New Highs and Lows

The following exchanges apply to the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market stocks that hit a new 52-week intraday high or low in the latest session. % CHG-Daily percentage change from the previous trading session.

Friday, March 28, 2025											
Stock	52-Wk %			Stock	52-Wk %			Stock	52-Wk %		
	Sym	Hi/Low	Chg		Sym	Hi/Low	Chg		Sym	Hi/Low	Chg
Highs											
AGNC InvPfdC	AGNC	26.99	-0.4	OracleCulture	OCG	2.90	30.2	AppleHospREIT	APLE	127.6	-0.9
Air Transportation	ATIR	10.00	-0.1	OsgoldGold	OG	21.34	-1.1	AppMaterials	AMAT	141.12	-0.8
ATAF	T	28.51	-0.1	PPL	PPL	35.29	-2.1	ApresTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
Avista	AVA	41.01	2.4	PPL	PPL	35.29	-2.1	ArnsTherap	ARNT	1.12	-10.4
AevaTech	AEVA	70.07	5.2	PrimorBonds	PRMB	35.39	2.5	ArbeRobotics	ARBE	1.08	-8.5
AgriGenesys	AGN	18.38	-0.4	QuartaQuestAcc	QQA	10.11	0.1	ArchutrusTherap	ARCH	10.11	-0.1
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	RibbonAccn	RIBU	10.13	0.1	ArmadilloTherap	ARMF	1.58	-4.2
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArmataBioPharm	ARMF	1.58	-4.2
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArmourResREIT	ARR	16.96	-3.0
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArnsTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArnsTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArnsTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
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AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArnsTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
AlignIntHlth	ALHC	114.04	0.9	SandozGenAccpt	SGA	10.13	0.1	ArnsTherap	APRE	2.09	-0.0
AlignIntHlth	AL										

BIGGEST,000 STOCKS

How to Read the Stock Tables

The following explanations apply to NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market listed securities. Prices are consolidated from trades reported by various market centers, including securities exchanges, financial information communication networks and other broker-dealers. The list comprises the 1,000 largest companies based on market capitalization.

Underlined quotations are those stocks with large changes in volume compared with the issue's average trading volume.

Boldfaced quotations highlight those issues whose price changed by 5% or more if their previous closing price was \$2 or higher.

Footnotes:

!-New 52-week high; !-New 52-week low; dd-Indicates loss in the most recent four quarters.

Stock tables reflect composite regular trading as of 4 p.m. ET and changes in the official closing prices from 4 p.m. ET the previous day.

Friday, March 28, 2025										YTD 52-Week					Yld					Net				
FUND					CHG					SYM					CHG									
ABC					ABC					ABC					ABC									
%	CHG	52-Week	Hi	Lo	Stock	Yld	%	PE	Last	Net	CHG	Hi	Lo	Stock	SYM	%	PE	Last	Net					
-13.37	118.56	92.28	AEOM	ACM	10.26	92.54	-2.03																	
-3.57	122.1	88.85	AES	AES	5.7	124.01	-0.02																	
-6.15	115.03	79.31	Aflac	AFI	21.1	110.89	-0.98																	
3.37	10.85	8.92	Affinity	AFN	0.32	10.82	-0.04																	
-6.06	36.33	28.92	Arista	ANSS	-4.8	31.69	-0.50																	
-9.40	36.05	17.66	APA	APA	4.8	20.92	-0.28																	
-12.61	12.82	10.84	ASX	ASX	2.6	10.84	-0.08																	
-2.67	110.05	65.45	ASX	ASX	0.9	65.45	-0.18																	
-40.08	39.08	1.97	AST	ASTS	-4.0	24.06	-1.74																	
23.76	28.15	15.94	AT&T	T	3.9	28.10	-0.02																	
1.29	101.42	60.97	AT&T	T	3.9	101.42	-0.02																	
15.66	141.23	99.71	Abbott Labs	ABB	1.8	117.03	-0.53																	
5.15	218.65	155.18	AbbVie	ABBV	3.8	206.25	2.57																	
13.49	398.35	278.69	Accenture	ACN	1.9	394.33	-4.20																	
2.32	245.30	191.79	Acadia	ACA	0.3	191.79	-0.85																	
-13.26	587.75	354.00	Adobe	ADBE	-2.5	358.71	-10.44																	
-6.39	184.27	90.40	AdVantageSys	WMS	0.6	108.12	-0.22																	
-14.55	187.28	147.73	AdVantageSys	WMS	0.6	108.12	-0.22																	
-12.28	6.96	5.92	AEG	AEG	4.8	6.61	-0.12																	
6.75	107.36	81.93	AER	AER	1.0	102.16	-0.60																	
-14.23	82.52	22.55	Affirm	AFRM	0.4	22.55	-0.18																	
1.94	155.35	116.45	Affirm	AFRM	0.4	22.55	-0.18																	
37.27	110.38	60.15	AgnicoEagle Mines	AME	1.5	28.07	-0.47																	
8.77	78.39	54.96	Agricore	AGRI	4.0	54.96	-0.73																	
0.77	341.14	227.53	Air Products	APD	2.4	227.53	-2.85																	
-2.00	130.14	92.25	Alexander's	ALX	0.3	92.25	-0.11																	
16.95	148.63	68.36	Alibaba	BABA	0.7	139.42	-0.20																	
-23.64	33.63	15.57	Alight	ALIG	-0.1	28.59	-1.02																	
-1.83	164.10	113.73	Alkermes	ALK	0.2	113.73	-0.28																	
1.32	66.54	47.28	Alliant	ALLT	3.2	47.28	-0.64																	
-11.10	122.53	71.41	Allison Transm	ALSN	1.1	71.41	-0.06																	
7.99	212.91	156.66	Allstate	ALL	1.9	156.66	-2.84																	
4.00	45.46	31.95	Ally Financial	ALLY	0.4	31.95	-0.11																	
14.09	394.19	141.97	Alyria	ALYR	-0.1	141.97	-0.06																	
-18.47	207.15	142.27	Alpha	ALPH	0.5	142.27	-0.01																	
-18.5	208.70	148.20	Alpha	ALPH	0.5	142.27	-0.01																	
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BUSINESS & FINANCE

OpenAI Faces a \$20 Billion Catch

The ChatGPT maker could lose that much if it fails to meet key ask in latest funding

By BERBER JIN AND DEEPA SEETHARAMAN

OpenAI is finalizing a \$40 billion funding round in what would be one of the largest startup financings of all time. The catch: The ChatGPT maker could lose out on half that amount if it fails to meet a key condition.

In order to receive the full sum, OpenAI has to successfully restructure into an independent for-profit company by the end of the year, according to people familiar with the situation. If it doesn't, its lead investor—SoftBank—can pare back the funding round's size to \$20 billion.

The funding stipulation adds pressure to OpenAI's ongoing restructuring talks, which require the blessing of its largest shareholder, Mi-



SoftBank's CEO Masayoshi Son and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman.

crosoft. It is also subject to review by the California attorney general.

SoftBank is expected to contribute up to \$30 billion to the round and is syndicating the rest to other investors, including Microsoft, some of the people said. The funding round would value OpenAI at up to \$300 billion, the Journal previously reported.

The OpenAI funding is divided across two tranches. The company will initially receive \$10 billion and can receive up to an additional \$30 billion at the end of the year if it completes the for-profit change, the people said. The second tranche would be dialed back to \$10 billion if the restructuring doesn't take place by then.

Investors started to de-

mand that OpenAI transition to a for-profit company after Sam Altman was briefly removed as chief executive in late 2023. The board said at the time that Altman had failed to be consistently honest in his communications but didn't elaborate, leading OpenAI's investors to argue that the unconventional non-profit structure carried too many risks. He was reinstated days later.

OpenAI told investors in its fall funding round that it would return their money if the restructuring wasn't completed within two years. The change faces major hurdles, including fending off a lawsuit from rival Elon Musk trying to block the restructuring. OpenAI also needs approval from its largest shareholder Microsoft, and the tech giant has made clear that it won't do so without a fight.

Should OpenAI fail to become a for-profit, it would be difficult for the company to continue raising the billions

of dollars needed to fund its money-losing operations. Investors are so far backing OpenAI with the expectation that their current stake—in the form of convertible notes—will turn into traditional equity after the restructuring.

Only receiving half of the \$40 billion would squeeze OpenAI's already strained finances.

The startup is losing billions of dollars a year to train and operate its AI systems and pay for top-notch researchers, and it has committed \$18 billion for Stargate, a separate data-center construction project blessed by President Trump. SoftBank has separately committed another \$18 billion to Stargate.

In addition to its computing costs, OpenAI has content-licensing deals with companies like The Wall Street Journal's parent company, News Corp, that give it data that can be used to train its models.

Musk Merges AI Company, Social-Media Platform X

Elon Musk's artificial-intelligence startup xAI has acquired X, the social-media platform he also owns, in an all-stock transaction that fuses two of the billionaire's biggest technology bets and assigns the new enterprise a lofty value.

By Lauren Thomas, Berber Jin and Meghan Bobrowsky

The combination values xAI at \$80 billion and X at \$33 billion, Musk said in a social-media post announcing the acquisition. The new valuations were determined during negotiations between the two Musk arms, which both had the same advisers, people familiar with the matter said.

The deal combines a Musk-controlled AI company racing to create powerful new tools that could transform the economy, and a social-media platform that holds a fire hose of chatter from around the globe. X can serve as a powerful distribution tool for xAI's products, including its AI chatbot Grok, and provide a valuable feed of real-time data to power the startup's models.

Executives at the companies, which share personnel, believe it will be easier to raise money for the combined businesses under xAI than it would be separately, a person familiar with the matter said. They worked on the combination for several months.

"Today, we officially take the step to combine the data, models, compute, distribution and talent," Musk said. He announced the deal to xAI staff around the time his X post was published, sources familiar with the company said.

All shares of X and xAI will be exchanged for shares in a new holding company, named xAI Holdings Corp, according to materials shared with investors. A new xAI entity was registered in Nevada on Thursday, listing Musk as president.

There won't be any change in control of X's existing debt, the people added.

Musk has combined two of his companies before. He used his Tesla stock in 2016 to buy his solar-energy company SolarCity. Musk's other closely held businesses include SpaceX, the rocket startup; Neuralink, the brain-implant chip firm; and Boring Co., the tunnel maker.

FCC Probes Disney for DEI Practices, Chair Says

By JOSEPH PISANI

The Federal Communications Commission is investigating Disney for its diversity, equity and inclusion policies, the regulator's chairman said.

"While Disney started as an iconic American company, it recently went all in on DEI," FCC head Brendan Carr said Friday in a post on X.

A Disney spokesman said it is reviewing the FCC's letter. "We look forward to engaging with the commission to answer its questions," the spokesman said.

President Trump has made battling diversity programs a pillar of his administration, signing executive orders to end policies and killing DEI-related jobs in the federal government.

Last month, Disney said it was scrapping some of its diversity projects.

Carr, in a letter addressed to Disney Chief Executive Bob Iger, said he was concerned that even though Disney made changes to its DEI programs, the company might still be promoting DEI "in a matter that does not comply with FCC regulations." Carr said that Disney's policies led to hirings that excluded certain people, and led to shows being rejected for not being diverse enough.

The investigation also includes Disney's TV network ABC, Carr said.

Emboldened Trump Squeezes Traditional Media

President Trump's chief of staff wanted the Associated Press to compromise.

By Josh Dawsey, Jessica Toonkel and Isabella Simonetti

After barring the AP from media events over the outlet's refusal to change its style guidance on the Gulf of Mexico, White House chief of staff Susie Wiles met with AP Executive Editor Julie Pace to discuss the standoff, people familiar with the matter said. "You have to give us something," Wiles said at the February meeting.

She asked if the AP could refer to the body of water along the U.S. southern border as the Gulf of America and note with a comma that it was called the Gulf of Mexico elsewhere, the people said.

Pace told her that the AP wasn't going to change its posture, and later sued. The White House continues to ban the outlet from Air Force One and the Oval Office, and on Tuesday an administration official accused the outlet in a court filing of a "sustained commitment to misinformation." A spokesman for the Associated Press declined to comment.

News organizations were accustomed to Trump's public criticisms during his first term. With more Americans turning to emerging formats like podcasts for news, legacy media outlets have become easier for the president to sideline. They are quickly learning that any perceived misstep or past gripe can come at a cost.

When Fox News anchor Bret Baier expressed support for the AP at a recent lunch between network TV correspondents and Trump, he noted that the outlet had taken the iconic photo of the president lifting his arm into the air after being shot in Butler, Pa. One of Trump's staffers reminded the president that the AP hadn't given the White House or the



Some media observers say legacy outlets were ill-prepared for Trump's more combative approach.

campaign the rights to the photo, people familiar with the gathering said.

Trump was noncommittal about whether he would change course on the ban, and reiterated that the administration hadn't been given the rights to the photo.

The administration has developed a playbook for dealing with foes at a range of institutions, from the press to universities, entertainment companies and law firms. It is using litigation to exact settlements, threatening federal funding and forcing rollbacks in diversity, equity and inclusion practices using the power of the Federal Communications Commission.

"President Trump has changed the media game, and we are just following his lead," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said. "We are proud of the historic changes we have made to the outdated traditional press coverage of the White House to better reflect the media habits of the American public."

Some media observers say legacy outlets were ill-prepared for Trump's new, more combat-

ive approach, even though much of the administration's plan was laid out in the conservative policy agenda Project 2025—including taking charge of the White House press corps.

Mathias Döpfner, CEO of Axel Springer, which owns Politico and Business Insider, held prospective meetings with three Republican lobbyists recently, seeking help navigating the new administration, people familiar with the meetings said. Döpfner and other executives have discussed hiring a firm close to Trump after Elon Musk, who runs the Department of Government Efficiency, called government subscriptions to Politico "wasteful expenditure."

Nancy Gibbs, who runs the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University, helped orchestrate a dinner Thursday night of top news executives and others to discuss the current media environment. In an interview, Gibbs said she was pondering what a "collective defense" might look like for news outlets.

"Would collective action be effective? What form would it take with what goal? The first question is what would work," said Gibbs, the former top editor at Time Magazine.

In January, a group of about 60 news media executives and risk experts gathered in New York City to strategize about how to cover Trump's second term. Attendees at "The Safety Summit" said they felt covering the Trump administration warranted measures beyond standard newsroom training for journalists.

Attendees brainstormed how to handle newsroom raids by law enforcement and what to do if journalists in the U.S. on green cards are arrested while covering protests. Some executives discussed what to do if journalists were subpoenaed by Congress over stories they wrote. Journalistic work is typically protected by the First Amendment.

The Washington Post legal team brought lawyers from Williams & Connolly to talk to the reporting staff late last year about how to communicate with sources, handle docu-

Market for Secondhand Smartphones Is Taking Off

By STU WOO

KC Lau wanted Samsung Electronics' folding phone, but not at \$1,900. So she found an increasingly popular work-around: the secondhand market.

Lau bought a used Samsung for \$500 on eBay three months ago. It's working well. "I honestly don't see why everyone doesn't do this," said Lau, a 55-year-old nanny in Phoenix. "I can have this phone and feel like I can still pay rent."

More and more shoppers are saving money with secondhand phones—and their experiences can guide anyone looking to replace their current one. While most buyers still want a new device, those looking for an alternative will find that mobile carriers, retailers and even Apple and Samsung themselves are stepping up their used-phone offerings.

More than 208 million used phones were shipped worldwide in 2024, up 7.1% from a year

earlier, according to market research company IDC. The market is valued at \$75 billion, with North America accounting for more than a third.

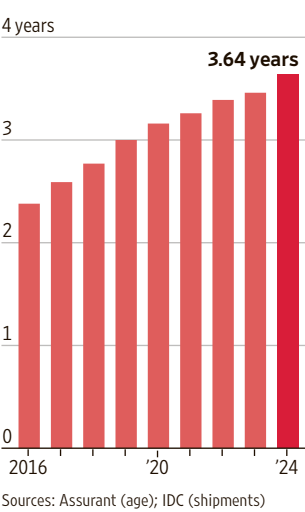
Used devices represented 14.4% of global phone sales last year, and IDC projects that figure will reach 16.6% by 2029.

Driving the trend are people such as Lau, who want a premium experience without the price tag. Top-end Apple iPhone and Samsung devices that are a generation or two old are popular, said IDC analyst Anthony Scarsella.

"Instead of buying a new Honda Accord, you buy a BMW 3 Series that's a couple of years old," he said. While a new iPhone 16 Pro Max starts at \$1,199, a secondhand iPhone 14 Pro Max can go for \$500.

Another reason: "Phones are flat out lasting longer," said Sean Cleland, an executive at B-Stock, a big platform for secondhand phones. "The glass is less likely to crack. The soft-

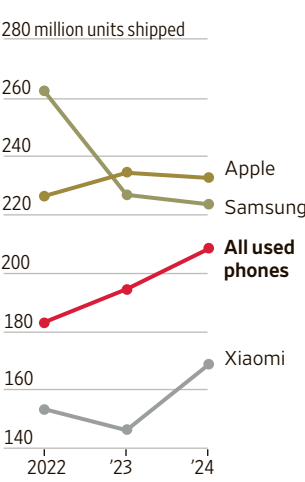
Average age of U.S. phones at trade-in or upgrade



ware, the operating system is getting longer support."

In 2016, Americans held on to their phones for an average of 2.38 years before trading them in or upgrading, according to trade-in provider Assurant.

Worldwide smartphone shipments



That figure has crept up, to 3.64 years last year.

The used-phone industry has matured, with companies inspecting and testing devices before resale. Shoppers can access Carfax-like reports detailing a

phone's test results and ownership history.

Instead of nudging shoppers toward new devices, mobile carriers, phone makers and retail chains including Best Buy have embraced the trend. Apple wants to keep people on Apple devices, Scarsella said, while a carrier could lure a customer from a rival with a deal that includes a secondhand phone.

People looking for deals on used phones should monitor promotions from carriers, Scarsella said, because they can subsidize the device's cost with a service plan. Big retailers and phone companies offer warranties and returns, and shopping from known brands also minimizes the risk of buying a stolen phone.

Lau prefers buying used phones on eBay that aren't tied to a carrier, to give her greater flexibility. Her advice to shoppers: Examine the seller's reviews and return policy. "Do your research," she said.

MARKETS & FINANCE

Stocks Skid on Inflation Data

U.S. stocks sold off on Friday, with investors jolted by hotter-than-expected inflation data, souring consumer sentiment and President Trump's tariff announcements.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell about 700 points, or 1.7%, its largest percentage drop since March 10.

The worrisome signs included inflation picking up, as tracked by the Fed's preferred measure. That figure, excluding volatile food and energy

prices, came in at 0.4% for February, or 2.8% compared with a year earlier. Both rates were slightly ahead of forecasts.

Consumer sentiment also worsened, which investors fear could slow spending. The University of Michigan's survey showed a drop in the headline index to 57, the lowest level since 2022.

The somber mood was reflected in the stock market. The tech-heavy Nasdaq fell 2.7%, with the Magnificent Seven group of stocks erasing

about \$505 billion in market value. The S&P 500 tumbled nearly 2%, with 10 out of the 11 sectors finishing in the red.

Some investors view next week—when the U.S. is expected to further detail major reciprocal tariffs and implement auto tariffs announced by Trump—as a potential turning point for the direction of markets.

Lululemon Athletica shares sank, after the activewear maker said more economically cautious consumers could drag down sales growth this year.

Elsewhere

◆ The 10-year Treasury yield dropped to 4.254%.

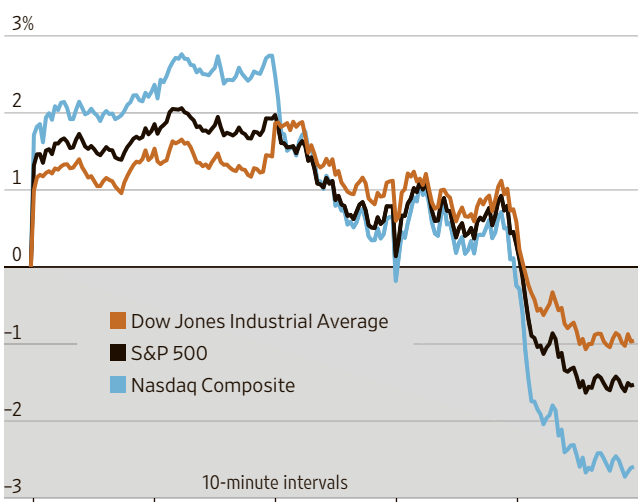
◆ Gold notched a record, rising 0.8% to \$3,087 per troy ounce.

◆ Bitcoin's traded around \$84,000, down more than 2%.

◆The Stoxx Europe 600 fell 0.8%. Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 1.8%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index lost around 0.6%.

—Caitlin McCabe and Vicky Ge Huang

Index performance this past week



Source: FactSet

Entrepreneur Is Guilty of Defrauding JPMorgan

By ALEXANDER SAEEDY

A jury found Charlie Javice guilty of defrauding **JPMorgan Chase** when the young entrepreneur misled the bank about how many customers her buzzy startup had when selling it for \$175 million.

The jury of 12 New Yorkers found Javice and one of her co-executives, Olivier Amar, guilty on three counts of fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit fraud. Both could go to jail for decades.

Javice was arrested in 2023 on charges that she defrauded JPMorgan when she sold her company, Frank, a startup focused on helping students get access to financial aid. Months after the sale, JPMorgan learned the number of people with Frank accounts was around 300,000—far less than the four million users Javice had said it had.

Javice's lawyers are likely to appeal the verdict. They have argued that her trial has been improper because her co-executive's lawyers have acted as a "second prosecutor" against her.

While in talks with JPMorgan about a potential sale, Javice helped create a data set to convince it her startup had the millions of users she had told the bank Frank had. At first, she tried to enlist her company's head of engineering to create the list, but he testified in court that he refused. She then paid a mathematics professor \$18,000 to create a synthetic data file of four million fake people.

That file was provided to a third-party company that essentially counted the number of data fields and told JPMorgan that it showed she had four million customers. Current executives who were involved with the deal said their investment in Frank relied largely on Javice's statements to them.

When JPMorgan later tried to launch a marketing campaign to Frank customers, only 28% of the emails were successfully delivered.



Sen. Elizabeth Warren warned of 'an extraordinary conflict of interest' in a letter sent Friday.

Democrats Press Regulators On Trump's Crypto Project

By VICKY GE HUANG

Sen. Elizabeth Warren and four other Democrats warned U.S. financial regulators they might soon confront "an extraordinary conflict of interest": overseeing a cryptocurrency entity controlled by the sitting U.S. president and his family.

In a letter sent early Friday to the Federal Reserve's vice chair of bank supervision, Michelle Bowman, and the acting comptroller of the currency, Rodney Hood, the senators pressed for answers on how they intend to regulate **World Liberty Financial**, the Trump family's crypto project, and the stablecoin the company said this week it plans to launch.

Legislation advancing in Congress would create a regulatory framework for stablecoins, which function as digital dollars used widely to store cash or pay for purchases of other crypto assets. It would give the Fed and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency oversight responsibilities

and specify rules on reserves and customer protections.

The Senate's measure, the Genius Act, was already working its way through Congress when World Liberty unveiled its plans on Tuesday to issue its own stablecoin, USD1. Earlier this year, President Trump signed an executive order requiring all federal agencies, including financial regulators, to submit their rules and actions to the White House for approval. The confluence of these events, the senators wrote, "presents an extraordinary conflict of interest that could create unprecedented risks to our financial system."

"We have received the letter and plan to respond," a Fed spokesman said. A spokeswoman for the White House declined to comment. Spokespeople for the OCC didn't respond to requests for comment.

Stablecoins aim to maintain a 1:1 exchange ratio with government-issued currencies, and store reserves in cash or cash-like assets such as Treas-

surys to keep the peg in place.

USD1 is the Trump family's latest foray into crypto through World Liberty, an entity it launched in October as a decentralized finance, or DeFi, project. DeFi is an umbrella term that refers to financial services such as borrowing, lending and trading automated by software rather than human intervention, and that operate outside the mainstream financial system.

This month, Trump told executives at a crypto summit that he hoped lawmakers would send stablecoin legislation to his desk before Congress's August recess.

The Senate Banking Committee approved the Genius Act with an 18-6 vote, including the support of five Democrats. Three of the five Democratic senators who signed Friday's letter to the bank regulators, Sens. Warren of Massachusetts, Chris Van Hollen of Maryland and Jack Reed of Rhode Island, voted against the bill in the banking committee.

Metals Prices Soar Amid Tariff War

By KIRK MALTAIS

Metals prices are soaring as President Trump upends the traditional global order in trade.

Both base and precious metals are among the top-performing assets as the end to the first quarter nears, and the momentum is expected to continue as long as the trade war lasts. Gold and silver are increasingly attractive financial hedges as the whipsaw tariff drama continues, while copper is rising to record highs as manufacturers scramble to make sure they don't experience interruption to their supply chains.

Trump last month targeted steel and aluminum imports with 25% tariffs, and copper is expected to be up next. The president announced new automotive tariffs this past week, charging a 25% tariff on vehicles imported to the U.S. Goods subject to the tariffs include vehicle components manufactured outside of the U.S.—engines, transmissions, powertrain parts. These parts are mostly made from steel and aluminum, two metals already subject to tariffs levied last month.

Car parts, such as engine blocks and spark plugs, are also made using copper. And copper is the latest industrial metal speculated to be targeted by the president's tariff push.

This past week, news reports of Trump's eagerness to launch a new copper tariff sent the futures contract trading on the

New York Mercantile Exchange to a record \$5.24 a pound, making for an over-25% gain since the start of the year. Copper has since given back some of those gains, with the contract settling at \$5.13 a pound Friday.

Buyers are scrambling in an effort to get more copper before tariffs drive prices higher, said Ewa Manthey of ING Economics. "We think there is a further upside risk to copper prices in New York, if tariffs are applied," she said.

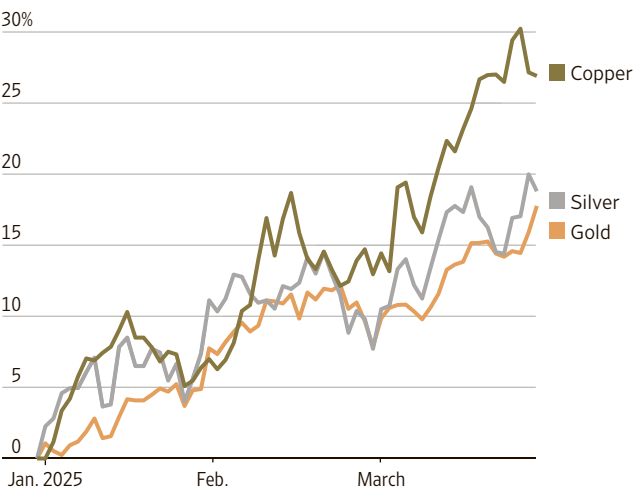
Nervous investors also have been flocking to precious metals such as gold as a haven for their money, and that pushed prices to a record-high of \$3,124.40 a troy ounce on Friday. Year to date, gold has risen 17%, according to FactSet data.

Silver also has jumped as investors look for places to weather the storm, with those futures up over 19% year to date. At \$34.81 an ounce, silver is trading near its highest level since 2012.

Hedging for uncertainty isn't limited to individual investors, as central banks around the world are stepping up their purchasing of gold for their own stockpiles.

In the last quarter of 2024, the central banks of developing nations were buying gold—with Poland leading the way, purchasing 28.5 metric tons of gold, followed by India, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, according to data from the World Gold Council.

Performance of metal futures prices this year*



*Continuous contracts

Source: FactSet

Private-Equity Job Market Faces Critical Test in 2025

By CHRIS CUMMING

Demand for private-equity workers has remained strong through a yearslong slump in the industry's fortunes, but 2025 will be a make-or-break year for firms under pressure to attract the best talent, recruiters say.

The ongoing private-equity downturn, now entering its fourth year, has reshaped the industry's talent market. Big firms with multiple lines of business have held up the best, extending their lead over smaller, single-strategy buyout shops, which have found it harder to add and keep top employees.

Despite the slump, demand from the biggest firms has kept private-equity salaries and bonuses afloat. A March report from Wall Street pay consultant Johnson Associates said bonuses last year rose 5% to 10% at bigger firms from the year before, and were flat to 5% up at smaller firms.

But 2025 is a key test for an industry that thus far—with a few exceptions—hasn't had to resort to layoffs, said Chris Connors, a Johnson Associates

principal. Unless they start selling assets and raising new funds, many firms will be hard pressed to maintain their current staff levels, he said.

"We're at an inflection point entering the fourth year of the fundraising downturn," Connors said. "If [general partners] can't deliver liquidity, they can't raise money, and their next fund will be smaller. Then you will have to do layoffs."

Private equity's golden decade of rising asset prices and fund sizes ended on March 17, 2022, when the Federal Reserve began raising interest rates for the first time since 2018. That ushered in a period of lower asset values, slower dealmaking and weaker fundraising that has persisted until now.

The new landscape has both winners and losers. Counterbalancing workers whose pay has stagnated are those whose skills are in high demand: specialists in private credit, secondaries and infrastructure; operating partners; and fundraising experts of all stripes, especially those with a background in the booming private-wealth channel.

As raising private-equity



Sasha Jensen

money has become more difficult, people who do it well have become more valuable, said Sasha Jensen, founder of Jensen Partners, a recruiting firm that specializes in private-capital fundraising professionals.

"Because [limited partner] money has been so tricky to raise, there has been a real push to find a certain caliber of business-development professional who really knows the LP and the relationship," Jensen said.

Pay ticked up last year

among all private-equity employees, reversing the trend of recent years. Sixty-two percent of North American private-equity professionals reported an increase in salary last year, according to a survey by recruiting firm Heidrick & Struggles.

The sore point, however, is carried interest, or employees' portion of deal profits. That is often the richest part of a private-equity professional's compensation. In the post-downturn landscape, firms that aren't selling assets and paying out carry are losing employees to those that are, said John Rubinetti, a partner in Heidrick & Struggles' private-equity practice.

"There are good people at underperforming firms," and for the top firms, "it's pretty easy to make a compelling case why they should move," said Rubinetti. "The firms that are doing well are expanding, adding strategies, taking this time to prune certain [employees] and replace them with higher-performing talent."

Private-equity employees are keen to distinguish between firms whose projected carried-interest payouts look good on

paper but may not be realized—a major risk in an industry where asset valuations are widely seen as inflated—and those that are actually selling assets and making payments to investment staff.

When firms pay out carried-interest checks, "the seats are stickier. People want to stay," said Connors. "Until then, it's Monopoly money."

During the past three years there has been especially high demand for senior-level employees who specialize in one of the areas into which private-equity firms are expanding, such as private credit, infrastructure or secondaries. About 25% of all hiring is tied to firms' efforts to diversify from being primarily buyout managers to multiasset managers, Rubinetti estimated. The market is extremely active at the partner level, less so at the junior ranks, he added.

The busiest area of all may be private wealth, a fundraising channel into which private-equity firms have poured resources in the past three years as institutional investors have pulled back from making new commitments.

Notable private-wealth hires

by alternative-asset firms since the beginning of 2024 include Peter Aliprantis, whom EQT tapped last year to run its Americas private-wealth business; Dan Parant, whom Vista Equity Partners hired from KKR to head its private-wealth division; Rosamond Price, hired by Blue Owl Capital from Brookfield to head private wealth in Europe, the Mideast and Africa; and Daniel Tauber, who moved to Blackstone Group from Macquarie Group as a managing director in the private-wealth solutions business.

Overall hiring of fundraising professionals was up about 2% last year from 2023, although the rise was uneven, according to the Jensen Partners data. Hiring was down for private-equity specialists and slightly up for private-credit specialists. For private-wealth, it was up by 40%—by far the largest one-year increase for any specialty.

Jensen says that about half of all the searches she hears about are for private-wealth specialists, up from 10% in 2022. Growth in private-wealth hiring is "the headline difference between now and three years ago," she said.

HEARD ON THE STREET

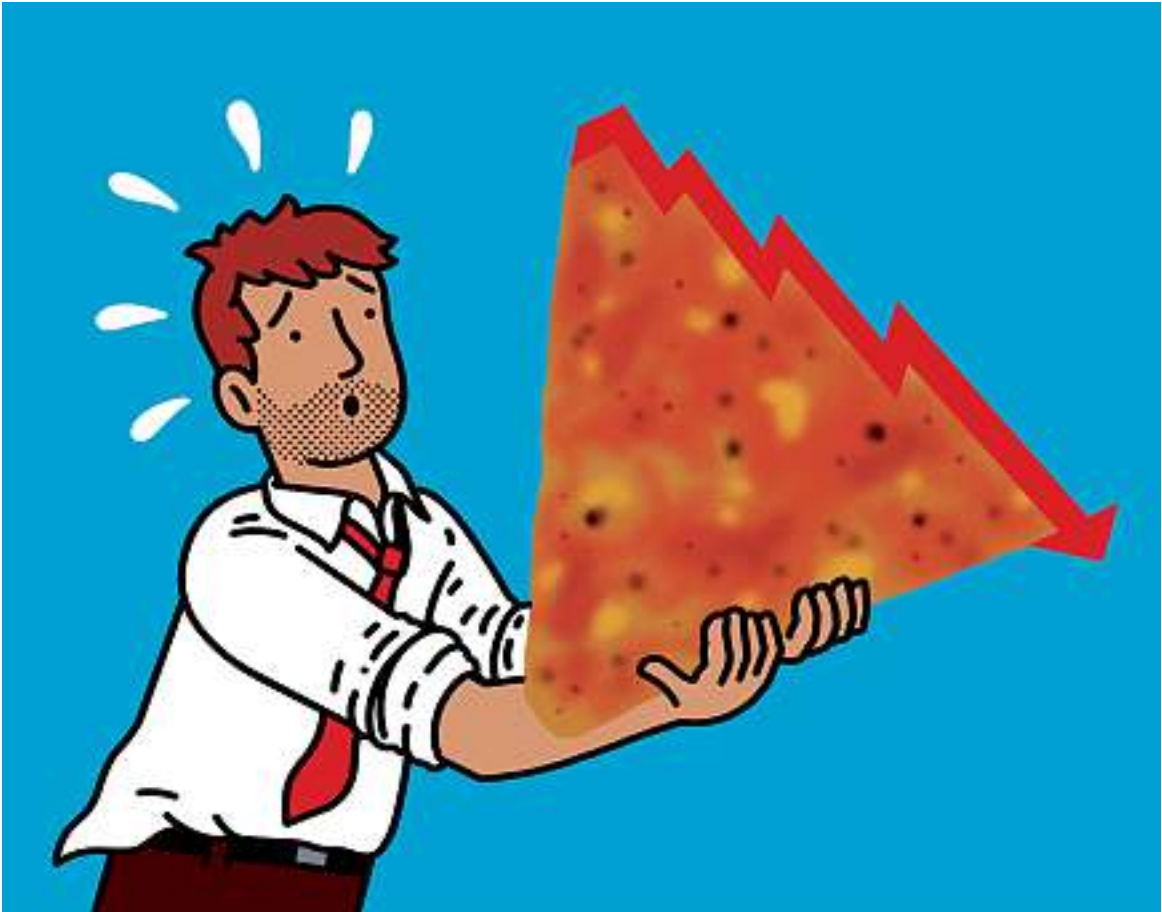
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & COMMENTARY

America’s Snack Habits Are Changing

Snack-food giants are suffering as economic pressures combine with demand for healthier options

Something strange is happening in the American diet: People just aren’t reaching for cookies and pretzels the way they used to. It remains too soon to say whether this is just a temporary slowdown or the start of something bigger, perhaps related to the rise of weight-loss drugs and healthier diets. But the cracks are showing. Take **PepsiCo’s** Frito-Lay, the dominant force in U.S. snacking, known for Doritos and Lay’s. Last year, for the first time since the financial crisis, the North America snack empire reported an annual sales decline, with revenue slipping to \$24.76 billion in 2024 from \$24.91 billion. And it isn’t just Frito-Lay—the downturn is being felt across the industry. **General Mills**, **Kraft Heinz**, PepsiCo and **Campbell’s** have seen their stocks drop an average of 14% over the past year, even as the S&P 500 has risen 8.5%. The snacking decline is coming at an awkward time for food com-

panies, many of which have spent billions doubling down on indulgences. Last year, Mars struck a nearly \$30 billion deal to acquire **Kellanova**, the maker of Pringles and Cheez-Its that was separated from Kellogg’s cereal business. In 2023, **J.M. Smucker** paid \$4.6 billion for Hostess Brands, betting big on Twinkies and HoHos. Those deals came at a time when it seemed as though Americans just couldn’t stop snacking. The snacking business boomed in the years following the pandemic, when people stuck at home during months of social isolation turned to Cheez-Its and Oreos for comfort. Even after restrictions eased, snack sales remained strong, bolstered by price hikes that consumers—flush with stimulus cash—absorbed without much resistance. Large food makers have blamed the slowdown on economic pressure weighing on American consumers, who are increasingly trading down to private-label options and opting for smaller package sizes. Asked if weight-loss medications known as GLP-1s could have something to do with falling demand, General Mills Chief Executive Jeffrey Harmening pointed out that even dog treat sales are down. And, he quipped during an earnings call, there are no GLP-1s for dogs. Yet a look under the hood of the \$180 billion snacking industry also reveals a shift toward healthier options. Demand for high-protein snacks—like Greek yogurt, meat sticks and nutrition shakes—surged last year, even as sales of sweet and salty snacks declined, notes Max Gumport, packaged food analyst at BNP Paribas Exane. Fresh produce is also outperforming packaged goods, a trend that tends to accelerate when consumers feel the financial pinch. But, as Bernstein an-



alyst Alexia Howard points out, it “could also be driven by underlying health and wellness trends across the broader U.S. population as well as among GLP-1 drug users more specifically.” In 2023, for the first time in more than a decade, the country’s obesity rate declined from 44.1% to 43.96%, according to a study published in the JAMA Health Forum. The shift is small, but it could mark an inflection point. Some 5% to 10% of American adults are already on GLP-1s like Wegovy and Mounjaro, whether for diabetes or obesity, and the trend is expected to accelerate as the drugs become more available. “Snacks are high on the list of things takers don’t want to eat,” observes Marion Nestle, a professor emerita of food nutrition at New York University. Ultimately the decline could reflect multiple trends at once. Lower-income consumers could be cutting back primarily for financial

reasons, while wealthier households may be gradually shifting their eating habits for health-related reasons. Another concern for food companies is that the so-called Make America Healthy Again, or MAHA movement led by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. A February TD Cowen survey revealed that 38% of respondents have grown more concerned about the health impacts of processed foods in recent months. “If the rhetoric continues to gain traction,” wrote TD Cowen analyst Robert Moskow, “the value of the brands in the big food companies’ portfolios will wither.” As snacking habits evolve, so do food companies. The 1980s brought us Diet Coke; the 1990s saw the rise of fat-free products; the 2000s brought low-carb diets like Atkins; and the 2010s popularized plant-based foods such as **Oatly** milk. The 2020s appear to be the decade many Americans move to less-pro-

cessed foods and high-protein snacks, and companies are already moving in that direction too. **Conagra Brands**, maker of Slim Jim, recently highlighted meat snacks as its fastest-growing category. Earlier this year, PepsiCo completed a \$1.2 billion acquisition of Siete Foods, known for its grain-free tortilla chips, and followed that with plans to acquire full ownership of its Sabra and Obela joint ventures, which produce dips and spreads like hummus. For food companies that are more heavily reliant on snacks packed with carbs and sugar, there are ample potential acquisition targets in the protein sector, notes BNP’s Gumport, pointing to companies like Chobani (for yogurt) or Barebells and GoMacro (for protein bars) as examples. Americans will never stop snacking, but when their snack preferences change, Big Food has to change with them. —David Wainer

SAM ISLAND



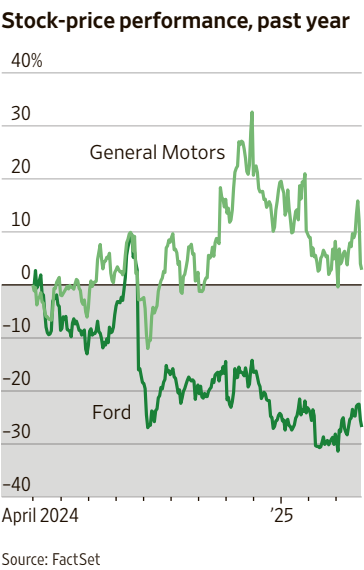
The General Motors plant in Ramos Arizpe, Mexico. Cars made there are exported to Canada and the U.S.

Who Is the Biggest Tariff Loser?

The latest trade-war twist is hitting GM’s stock harder than Ford’s

Investors think Donald Trump’s 25% tariff on imported autos is a bigger roadblock for General Motors than Ford. It may not be so clear-cut. The tariff announcement knocked about 11% off GM’s shares over three days this week, while Ford’s dropped by about 5%, even though the former’s business has been doing much better of late. Ford is, on the surface, a much more American carmaker. Roughly 80% of the vehicles it sells to the U.S. market are assembled domestically, and its large onshore capacity could feasibly absorb all of its production outside of North America. GM sells a bigger percentage of its autos to the U.S.—its European operations are much smaller—but only manufactures about half of them there. It relies more heavily on plants in Canada and Mexico. The market for large pickup trucks, which is a key source of high-margin sales, exemplifies the issue. Ford makes its F-150 series in the U.S.; GM assembles some of its Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra models in plants in Ontario

and Guanajuato. There is a chance, then, that GM’s trucks will increase in price by more, and Ford could wrest some market share. But it would be a mistake to believe we already know the endgame

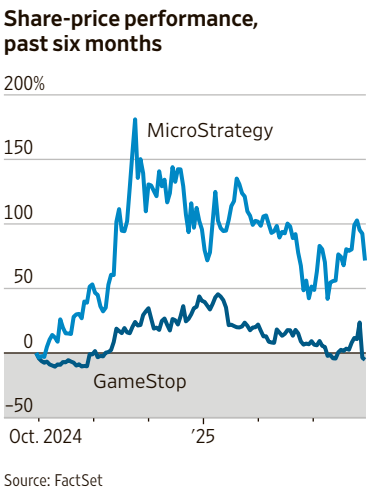


of protectionist policies. For one, these tariffs may or may not stack on top of further retaliatory duties. And the process of eventually slapping them on “key” Mexican and Canadian parts is even murkier: Officials still have to come up with a way to identify their non-U.S. content. Supply-chain complexity also makes it hard to decisively identify winners and losers. Official data showing that even cars fully assembled onshore, such as the compact crossover SUV Ford Escape, are in great part made with foreign parts. Indeed, a recent analysis of these figures by Bernstein Research suggests that only about a third of Ford’s U.S.-made vehicles are made up of domestic content. This suggests the hit to overall profitability due to tariffs—even accounting for some sourcing adjustments and customers paying higher prices—would be about the same for both Detroit manufacturers, amounting to roughly 30% of operating earnings. —Jon Sindreu

GameStop Learns There’s No Free Lunch

The retailer’s bitcoin play didn’t go as expected

It’s all fun and games until someone loses a billion. GameStop, which briefly went from terminal decline to the center of the investing universe four years ago, is back on Wall Street’s radar. Instead of being the instrument of inexperienced “YOLO” traders who ambushed hedge funds, it’s doing the opposite—raising money from sophisticated investors and leaving its shareholders with the risk of ruin. The videogame retailer is taking a page out of MicroStrategy’s playbook by selling \$1.3 billion in convertible bonds bearing no interest to buy bitcoin for its corporate treasury. At first, MicroStrategy mostly sold richly valued stock to fund its purchases. Investors were willing to pay much more for its shares backed by bitcoin than for the cryptocurrency itself—an act of faith in its outspoken chairman and a way to thumb their noses at Wall Street wisdom. More recently, MicroStrategy has relied mostly on convertible debt to buy bitcoin. It almost seems like an infinite cheat code: Borrow money free, buy a scarce asset, help push its value higher, increase your stock price, use it to extinguish the debt—rinse and repeat. But GameStop, which is new to this particular game, learned Thursday that there’s no such thing as a free lunch. Its stock plunged, wiping \$2.8 billion off of its market value—more than twice what it’s borrowing. One reason is the sheer recklessness of the idea. A more immediate one might be the mechanics of convertible bonds. Sophisticated buyers like hedge funds don’t care whether buying bitcoin with borrowed money is smart or dumb—or that the bond doesn’t pay interest. They do care that GameStop’s stock is volatile. Options math, which helps investors price convertible bonds, relies on volatility as a key input.



More volatility means the bonds are a low-risk way to lock in value. But to make this financial arbitrage trade work, they also have to hedge their risk in GameStop’s underlying share price, so they short the shares—borrowing and selling them with a promise to buy them back later. Since GameStop’s issue is more than a 10th the size of its market capitalization, that means lots of selling. It’s ironic: The episode that put GameStop on the map harnessed its retail fan base’s hatred of short-selling hedge funds. Since it’s a private offering, the convertible can’t be sold to its small investors—but it could cost them. The problem comes if it isn’t converted before maturing in April 2030 and GameStop doesn’t have enough bitcoin or cash to satisfy the debt. In that case, the company will need to borrow more money, if it can, or repay the bond with shares—as many as it takes. This bond alone is worth four times as much as the whole company was before meme-stock mania. The bond’s owners should be made whole, but that might be another ugly day for its shareholders. —Spencer Jakab



My Monday Morning
Actress Gemma Chan
on hating the gym and
loving her cat **C14**

REVIEW

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Rise in the East
On Kim Il Sung's
accession to power in
North Korea **Books C7**



EDDIE GUY

What Does **MAGA** Have Against Europe?

You've heard about anti-Americanism. Welcome to anti-Europeanism.

By David Luhnow and Marcus Walker

It was a text message the public was never supposed to see. Vice President JD Vance and other top Trump administration officials were using the messaging app Signal to discuss a planned military strike against Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been disrupting shipping through the Red Sea—a vital commercial route, especially for Europe. “I just hate bailing Europe out again,” Vance wrote. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth quickly agreed: “I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It’s PATHETIC.” Because a journalist—Jeffrey Goldberg, the editor in chief of the Atlantic—was ac-

cidentally included in the Signal chat, the texts went public, offering evidence of a theme that is fast emerging as one of the hallmarks of Trump 2.0: a visceral dislike of Europe. Call it anti-Europeanism, a kind of mirror image of European anti-Americanism. The latter is strongest on the left; the former is rooted in the right. Both rely on stereotypes and caricatures that often contain a kernel of truth. Europeans, even those who thought they were prepared for a second Trump presidency, have been stunned by the speed of events. In its first two months, the administration has targeted the EU with tariffs as

part of a global trade war, adopted Russia’s talking points about its invasion of Ukraine, bypassed Europe while negotiating with Moscow about how to end the war and watered down commitments to defend European allies against attack. “If they don’t pay, I’m not going to defend them,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office in early March. “Think of it—we’re paying 100% of their military, and they’re screwing us on trade,” he added. Just in case Europe isn’t getting the memo, Trump also wants Denmark to hand over Greenland to the U.S.

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Meet the People Who Work Fully Remote—and Hate It

Most employees want to be able to work from home at least some of the time. But a small cohort yearns to get back to cubicles and chit-chat. **By Joanne Lipman**

TRAVIS WOO IS living the dream, working remotely from the Hawaiian island of Oahu. On a recent Tuesday, the 35-year-old entrepreneur posted a YouTube video of himself walking his dog on an idyllic beach beneath a cerulean blue sky, white-tipped waves crashing on the shore behind him. It’s an envy-inducing scene, until you listen to what he’s saying. “Working remote, it allowed me to move to Hawaii,” the Seattle native ac-

knowledges, but “there’s a lot of social negatives...One of the costs is loneliness.” Being on a computer screen all day, Woo says, feels like “being a captive animal in the zoo. You know, like a captive human.” Five years after the pandemic shutdown, we’re in the midst of a major back-to-the-office push. Companies from AT&T to Chipotle are cracking down on remote work, as is the Trump adminis-

Please turn to page C4



TRAVIS WOO

Inside

ABOUT FACE

Elaine Sciolino never understood why people flocked to see the Mona Lisa. Then she spent some time with the famed portrait. **C4**



So Long #MeToo

The return of Andrew Cuomo has Katie Roiphe pondering the merits of today’s post-woke era. **C3**

OBITUARY

Melanie Beattie wrote her best-selling book on co-dependency after realizing she suffered from it. **C6**



MIDDLE EAST

A bold TV saga about Islamic history is a sign of religious change in Saudi Arabia. **C5**



REVIEW

How the
GOP
Learned to
Despise
Europe

Continued from the prior page

Perhaps even more than the tectonic policy shifts, it's the tone of open contempt that has shocked Europeans, as well as many Americans who support the longstanding trans-Atlantic alliance. The verbal barrage began in February, when Vance spoke at a security conference in Munich that was meant to focus on the threat of Russian expansionism. Instead, the vice president delivered a culture-war broadside against European governments, accusing them of suppressing free speech, particularly by conservative opponents of immigration and abortion.

Soon afterward, when Britain and France discussed sending peace-keeping troops to Ukraine, Vance dismissed the idea of "20,000 troops from some random country that hasn't fought a war in 30 or 40 years." After a furious reaction in those two countries—which deployed tens of thousands of troops in Afghanistan over two decades to back up the U.S., hundreds of whom were killed in action—Vance denied he had been referring to them.

Trump and Vance's dressing-down of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the White House was the most high-profile humiliation of a visiting European leader, but not the only one. Polish President Andrzej Duda got only 10 minutes with Trump after crossing the Atlantic to see him, while the European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who grew up in Soviet-occupied Estonia, was stood up by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio after flying to Washington, D.C., for talks. (Rubio's office blamed "scheduling difficulties.")

The EU is the result of a long process of European integration that the U.S. encouraged from the 1950s onward, but Trump has said that "It was formed in order to

'When they say "Europe," they mean liberal Europe. This is being driven primarily by domestic ideological battles.'

ROBERT KAGAN
Historian

screw the United States." Little wonder that Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the EU's executive arm, has been unable to get face time with senior Trump officials.

Other figures close to Trump, including his billionaire benefactor Elon Musk and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, attack Europe on social and cultural grounds. MAGA leaders believe the continent is geopolitically irrelevant, economically moribund, morally decadent and demographically doomed by falling birthrates. They also accuse Europe of turning its



Above: President Trump and other NATO leaders at a 2018 summit. 'If they don't pay, I'm not going to defend them,' Trump said of European allies this month. Below right: U.S. soldiers in Albania in May 1999. America deployed forces in the Balkans after Europe was unable to stop the fighting.

back on its Christian heritage, while allowing itself to be overrun by Muslim migrants. "Europe is at risk of engaging in civilizational suicide," Vance told Fox News earlier this month.

The leaked text messages offered clear evidence that the Euro-bashing isn't just political posturing. "There's a big difference between standing up in Munich and finger-wagging, which is obviously performative, and sending a text to one of your mates on Signal where you don't think anyone is listening," said Andrew Roberts, a British historian. "That is where you let your hair down and say what you really think. And they apparently feel hatred and resentment and fury against an entire continent which is actually democratic."

Mars Against Venus

Cultural friction between Europe and America is as old as the United States. In the 18th century, America defined itself as free, forward-looking and optimistic, in contrast to the repressive and hidebound Old World. American suspicion of European snootiness was matched by Europeans' contempt for Americans' vulgarity and materialism.

The trans-Atlantic relationship warmed up after World War II, as the U.S. promoted reconstruction and democracy in Western Europe. The European left remained critical of American capitalism, but the threat of Soviet Communism brought American and European governments together to form NATO, one of the most successful alliances in history.

Inevitably, the disappearance of the common enemy at the end of the Cold War brought tensions between Europe and the U.S. to the surface. In the 1990s, European leaders' failure to stop the wars in the former Yugoslavia bred frustration in Washington. As America's high-tech sector boomed, Europe's slow adoption of digital technologies deepened perceptions of a sclerotic continent.

When the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, opposition from France, Germany and other countries led to the sharpest tensions for decades. The

aggressive policy and verbal stumbles of President George W. Bush played into European stereotypes about unsophisticated American cowboys. Meanwhile, Americans accused Europeans of being appeasers or even "cheese-eating surrender monkeys," a jokey insult for the French borrowed from TV's "The Simpsons."

Historian Robert Kagan captured the divergence in a memorable phrase: "Americans are from Mars, and Europeans are from Venus." He meant that Europe believed in a world governed by rules and multilateral institutions, while the U.S. recognized the anarchic nature of international affairs, where raw power mattered.

Back then, most Americans didn't hate Europe, Kagan says: "The animosity was mostly coming from Europe." That is changing now that MAGA Republicans see Europe as an extension of blue-state America, full of latte-sipping progressives who love high taxes and open borders.

"When they say 'Europe,' they mean liberal Europe," says Kagan. "This is being driven primarily by domestic ideological and political battles." He notes that Trump and his top aides have no problem with European nativists such as Hungarian leader Viktor Orban or the far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD). As for Trump's pivot toward Russia, "The warmth for Putin is partly because he's an anti-liberal world leader," Kagan says. "Trump and Co. have decided this is the thing. And his supporters will follow."

Europe's democracies aren't the only targets of Trump's claim of unfair treatment, as Canada and Mexico can attest. And Trump's anti-Europeanism is partly an expression of longstanding U.S. frustrations, especially over the unequal burden of



defense spending within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. American conservatives have long argued that Europe can afford generous welfare benefits only because the U.S. is paying for its security. But such critics, including Republicans like former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, tended to be strongly pro-NATO; they just wanted Europe to step up.

lieved that the U.S.'s role as the guardian of world trade and security was bad for Americans. As early as 1990, he said the U.S. was being ripped off by "our so-called allies," singling out Germany and Japan for selling too many cars in the U.S. This week, that long-term grievance inspired Trump's announcement of a 25% tariff on all car imports, starting April 3. "Frankly, friend has been oftentimes much worse than foe," he told reporters this week.

Meanwhile, since returning to the White House Trump has continued to express admiration for autocrats whom Republicans used to view as America's enemies, such as Russia's Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korea dictator Kim Jong Un. For Trump and his inner circle, the EU is the beating heart of the globalist elite they blame for rigging the rules of world trade to hurt American workers and espousing multiculturalism and wokeness. Much of MAGA would be thrilled to see other European countries follow in the footsteps of Britain, which left the EU in 2020, says Mujtaba Rahman of Eurasia Group, a political-risk consulting firm. "They believe in strong nation states, with power drained away from Brussels," he said. "They would much rather have equivalent MAGA-type allies in power."

Vance and other critics of Europe say they're unhappy with Europe's governing establishment, not its people. "I think JD seriously loves Europe," says Rod Dreher, a conservative writer who is a longtime friend of the vice president. Dreher says he showed Vance around Paris on a trip in 2018 and that he raved about it. But, Dreher adds, "it's hard for any American to feel sanguine about where Europe is, watching their inability to get a grasp on migration."

MAGA commentators argue that out-of-touch technocratic elites are mismanaging the continent while running scared from their own voters, who are increasingly turning to far-right parties like AfD. After a little-known far-right candidate came first in Romania's presidential election last November, the country's constitutional court annulled the vote, citing intelligence about Russian interference. For many right-wing populists, it was another ex-

ample of European elites ignoring the people's will.

Culture War and Real War

Yet the truth is that many of Europe's problems—including chronically low economic growth, burdensome welfare states and military weakness—are a result of popular policies. Voters in many European countries have long been skeptical of market-oriented economic overhauls and higher defense spending.

The real sore point in European politics is immigration. Large numbers of refugees and economic migrants have entered Europe from the poor and war-torn regions around it, and growing frustration among voters is driving support for anti-immigration parties across the continent. Elon Musk regularly predicts violent conflict in Europe between the indigenous population and radicalized Muslim migrants: "Civil war is inevitable," he posted on his social-media platform X last August during anti-immigrant riots in the U.K. Most Europeans view this prospect as an absurd exaggeration, despite the continent's real problems of poor integration.

What scares America's European allies the most is Trump's about-face on Ukraine. The U.S. has been cutting back its military commitments since before Trump's first term, but now it is actively pursuing a rapprochement with Moscow. Europe fears that this will embolden Putin's imperial ambitions, at the expense of Ukraine's sovereignty and European security.

European leaders believe the Trump administration is changing U.S. policy on a real war to reflect its preferences in the culture wars. But for MAGA, which has refrained from criticizing authoritarian Russia, it would appear liberal Europe poses as serious a threat to freedom as Putin's repressive regime.

"There's something fundamentally deeper here that shows a huge difference and divergence between the values that President Trump and Vice President Vance are fighting for, versus those of many of the European countries who are coming to Zelensky's side," Gabbard told Fox News after the Ukrainian leader was castigated in the Oval Office. "They claim to champion freedom, but their actions tell a different story."



The Trump administration favors European nationalists like Alice Weidel, co-chair of Alternative for Germany (AfD), and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, seen here together in Budapest on Feb. 12.

REVIEW

Andrew Cuomo’s Resurrection And the Death of #MeToo

The excesses of the late woke era helped to spark today’s climate of reaction—and an openness to second chances.



EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS

Allegations of sexual misdeeds seemed to spell the end of Andrew Cuomo’s career. But now he’s back.

Sometimes what you are *not* hearing people talk about at parties is revealing. I have not heard a single person at a dinner or drinks gathering expressing outrage that Andrew Cuomo is running for mayor of New York City, despite allegations that he groped or harassed women on his staff as New York’s governor. I have not seen angry tweets about this from the people who are, say, tweeting that the Oscars are going to too many actresses playing prostitutes. Nor has a spate of angry editorials materialized. Almost all news stories on Cuomo’s run mention the sexual harassment scandal only in passing.

In 2021, a 165-page report from the state attorney general outlined Cuomo’s misdeeds—including groping and making sexual comments—involving 11 female staffers. Pundits ranging from a columnist at the Daily Beast to Bill O’Reilly announced,

“Cuomo’s political career is over.” Cuomo has denied the allegations.

If you had told anyone at the time that in just a few years, Cuomo would be an early front-runner in the mayoral race, they would have laughed at you. It seemed like he had irreparably damaged his reputation, that he would slink off to wherever shamed #MeToo’d men slink off to.

At the time, it felt like the men disgraced in the fevered heights of #MeToo would be forever disgraced, that the exiled would be always exiled. There was a sense of inevitability to it, a casting out, a catharsis, an absolute moral clarity among a very large number of the people I knew and encountered. In certain circles, it felt like rooting out male predators was all anyone was ever going to talk about.

Yet, now it seems like no one cares. It isn’t that they approve of Cuomo’s behavior. They are just not focused on it. Those who talk publicly about how he would be a bad

mayor tend to think he would be a bad mayor for different reasons.

Could it be that people’s deep, passionate convictions were not so deep and passionate after all? Is what we are seeing, in some sense, a certain kind of moral exhaustion?

As I was pondering all of this, I was reading Curtis Sittenfeld’s new short story collection, “Show Don’t Tell.” One of her characters says, “But, as despicable as Trump is, he has made me see that so many of the things I thought people couldn’t do were just things people usually don’t do. They’re just norms. They aren’t laws.”

This assimilation of Trumpism into personal life is fascinating. A new kind of permissiveness seems to have crashed into our world, whether we like it or not. There is something shocking or thrilling, depending on one’s view, about Trump’s ascendance. He has shown that flagrantly violating norms can have zero consequences if you brazen your way through.

There is currently a kind of Wild West feeling. As a culture, we are

improvising, in flux. There is a sense that anything goes. Even for those who abhor Trump, it is hard to muster up conviction about our quaint limits and decorums from a few years ago. The idea that anything at all might disqualify you from public office has become a niche view.

It may be that a sense of perspective is being thrust upon us by Trumpworld and its garish corruptions. It is hard to make the argument that Cuomo is unfit for office when a man found liable for sexual abuse by a jury of his peers holds the highest office in the country.

At the height of #MeToo, one of its most prominent figures, Moira Donegan, then an assistant editor at the New Republic, tweeted that the women working at a certain magazine couldn’t feel “safe” because the magazine allowed a man, who had been fired from another publication for sexual misconduct, to write articles from home. He didn’t come to the office or have power over anyone. He was just making the editors at the magazine feel “unsafe” by

writing his articles in his pajamas at home. It is almost like we were living on a different planet then.

Al Franken, who appeared at the crescendo of the #MeToo moment to be one of its most obvious predators and toxic men, has come to seem wrongfully shuffled out of the Senate. I remember when Zephyr Teachout, a law professor at Fordham University, wrote an opinion column saying Franken deserved a full investigation before being banished from political life. She wrote, “As citizens, we should all be willing to stay ambivalent while the facts are gathered and we collect our thoughts.”

She was a lone voice articulating a point of view that was so out there, so beyond the pale that no other respectable person echoed it.

A new kind of permissiveness seems to have crashed into our world, whether we like it or not.

One prominent magazine editor tweeted about this issue more generally: “I get the queasiness of no due process. But...losing your job isn’t death or prison.”

Now I think many of the same people who were quick to call for Franken’s immediate resignation would admit, if pressed, that the response was a bit extreme.

It’s my theory that a very large number of people, even blue-state people, were always uncomfortable with #MeToo even while it was happening. While they applauded the rightful correction taking place, they felt that the almost universal condemnation of men was going too far. That the urge to fire, banish, punish and moralize was a bit excessive, sweeping, that it lacked nuance, perspective, scale. There was a pitchforky, mob feeling in the air that a lot of people, even very liberal people, were uneasy about.

Did the excesses of #MeToo and the late woke era feed into our current climate of reaction? It doesn’t seem a huge stretch to argue that they did. There was a kind of overreach, an attempt to bully or pressure or police people into views they may not have been ready for or willing to accept.

I find many things about our current political moment terrifying. But if the rapid rise and dwindling of #MeToo teaches us anything it is that intensities fade. The things that people seem to care about shift, the winds change. Political fashions and obsessions that seem intractable and permanent dissolve. The things that no one could say without being pilloried become mainstream. Whatever one thinks of Andrew Cuomo, it may not be a bad thing that an exhausted New York City is beginning to believe in second chances.

EXHIBIT

A Rose Is a Rose



ROSIE SANDERS

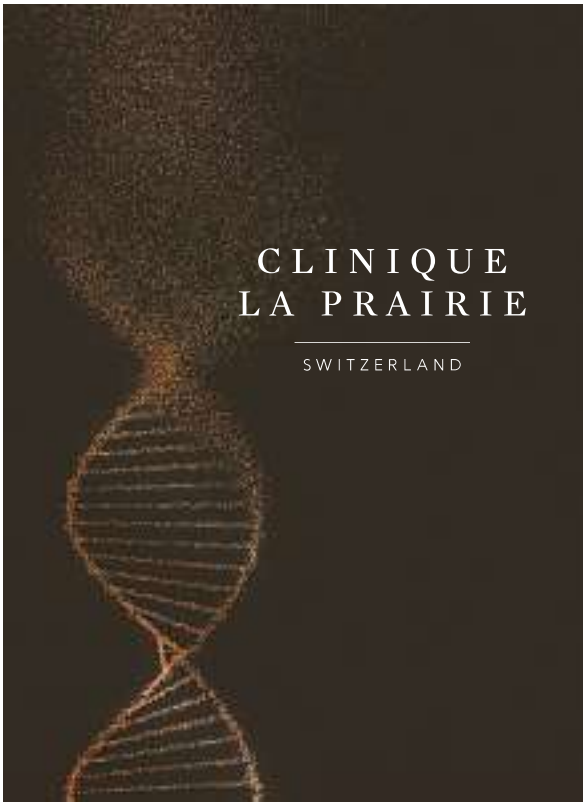
THOUGH GERTRUDE STEIN insisted that “a rose is a rose is a rose,” the flower has been used for centuries to symbolize love, lust and religious devotion, among other things. “The Rose Book,” published this month by Phaidon, surveys the many ways it has been depicted in art, poetry, fashion and movies, with more than 220 illustrations.

In Salvador Dalí’s 1958 painting “The Rose,” a giant stemless flower hangs in the air, “both menacing and serene.” Vast numbers of roses dropped from the ceiling smother ancient Roman partygoers in Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s painting “The Roses of Heliogabalus” (1888).

In 2012, the appropriately named British botanical artist Rosie Sanders noticed a hybrid tea rose still blooming in January, maintaining its brilliance even as it faded. To bring out the fragile details of “A Rose in Winter” (left), the painter lit her subject from behind, saying she wanting to “convey the strength and tenacity of the flower” in its waning days.

—Peter Saenger

‘A Rose in Winter’ by botanical artist Rosie Sanders.



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REVIEW

‘I Hate Remote Work, Am I Insane?’



Left: Ellyn Rose of Kirkland, Wash., laments that friends with offices don't want to hang out after work. Above: Nelson Wang of New York City works in his apartment building's common room to recreate office vibes. Below: Damien Peters of Silver Spring, Md., says 'I know I'm the weird one' for not loving remote work.

Continued from Page One

tration, which has threatened to fire federal employees who don't show up five days a week.

Employees, for the most part, are furious, fighting back with petitions and lawsuits. More than 90% of Amazon professionals in a recent survey objected to the company's demand for five days a week on premises. A recent Pew survey found that almost half of employees say they'd likely look for a new job if their employer eliminated remote options.

But lost in the crowd is a small, sad cohort that just wants their cubicles back. Most are stranded at home either because their physical office no longer exists or their position in the org chart has been designated remote. Reddit is filled with threads from this lonely crowd, with topics like "Working from home has ruined me," "I absolutely hate working from home" and "I hate remote work, am I insane?" A U.K.-based executive's LinkedIn rant, "I HATE WORKING FROM HOME! There, I said it," went viral, racking up thousands of comments.

Just 3% of white collar employees want to return to the office five days a week, an Advanced Workplace Associates poll found. "I know I'm the weird one," laughs engineer Damien Peters, 41, of Silver Spring, Md., the managing partner of a fully remote consulting firm. He gets too easily distracted by "chores I can attend to, taxes I can do," and misses the camaraderie with colleagues. "I'm quite introverted and a bit antisocial, but I don't like *not* seeing anyone," he says. He realizes that he is an outlier, even in his own home: "My wife is fully remote, and she loves it passionately."

Paige Shaw, 47, an Orlando insurance professional who went remote



during the pandemic, hated it so much that she quit her job. She's now in an on-premises role, where she relishes everything about office life—the colleagues to chitchat with, the free food for celebrations, the corridors she can roam when she needs a break. She even likes the commute, which she uses to plan her day in the mornings and to unwind in the evenings, taking "the scenic route" on local roads. "My industry is stressful, and you need to compartmentalize," she says.

Some unhappy remote workers complain that the isolation crushes their social skills. Travis Woo says weekends with friends are awkward when "you're not socially warmed up" from the week. Ellyn Rose, 58, a remote senior project control engineer in Kirkland, Wash., tries to see friends on weekday evenings, but those with on-premises jobs just want to chill out at home. "I feel like my dog when I used to come home:

'Can we play, can we play?' But they already had their social fix for their day."

In pre-pandemic days, getting an occasional day to work at home was seen as a gift, a glorious break from the daily grind. "I loved my Fridays working at home. It was a treat," says Amy Aronoff Blumkin, a senior marketing executive. She enjoyed doing early-morning workouts instead of commuting to New York from her New Jersey home.

But now, working remotely for a Washington, D.C., nonprofit, the novelty has worn thin. "I miss the creativity, I miss the popping into someone's office to say, 'I have a question' rather than setting up a Zoom call," says Blumkin, chief growth officer for the National Council of Jewish Women. It's more difficult to forge relationships, to act quickly and to mentor younger employees. She looks forward to her periodic visits to

headquarters, with its bustling energy. "Most of my closest friends have been people who I met at work, the people who get me through and who were at my wedding," she says. "You don't have that now."

Lonely remote employees try all sorts of hacks to re-create office vibes. New York City journalist Nelson Wang, 54, who spent the majority of his 30-year career working in a newsroom, has become an expert at sussing out a rotating set of locales, among them his apartment building's common room, neighborhood coffee shops and the office of a publication where he freelances.

But even when remote workers show up in person, there's no guarantee anyone will be there. IT professional Ryan Daniels tried going into his office even though his position is classified as remote. "It was worse than being at home," he says. "It was a ghost town. I thought if something happened to me here, it would take a couple of days for people to find me." He then rented a co-working space on his own dime, "but there are rarely any people in there" either.

Those who are itching to go back to the office don't get a lot of sympathy. When a remote worker wrote on a Reddit post that "my depression has steadily increased," one commenter chided him for "wasting a spot" for someone more deserving. When another remote worker confessed, "I now dread logging in, I feel so isolated, the days feel draining and I'm just unhappy," an irate com-

menter shot back: "Everyone I know that was forced back to an office hates their lives right now. Someone complaining about work from home is unbelievable."

Still, even those pining for the office don't necessarily wish for five days a week chained to their desks. Many would prefer a hybrid schedule, which more than half of Americans with remote-capable jobs already enjoy, Gallup found. Stanford University economist Nicholas Bloom has found that hybrid work is equally productive and makes employees happier, with quit rates declining by 35%. Even Shaw, the Orlando insurance professional who loves the office, still works one day a week at home: "It's more efficient for me, and it's more efficient for my employer."

Oahu's Woo, for his part, has given up the fully remote life. He first moved to the island in 2017 while working remotely in the videogame industry, but a year ago, he says, "I found myself not missing the office but missing socializing during the day." He pivoted into running a few small online businesses and now works part time at a marine tourism company, ferrying visitors to look at dolphins and whales. "It's not an office setting," he concedes, but at least "I have a bunch of co-workers now."

Joanne Lipman is the former chief content officer of Gannett and editor in chief of *USA Today*. She is the author of "Next! The Power of Reinvention in Life and Work."

'I miss popping into someone's office to say "I have a question" rather than setting up a Zoom call.'

AMY ARONOFF BLUMKIN
Senior marketing executive

ABOUT FACE

I Didn't Get the Fuss Over the Mona Lisa. Then I Got to Know Her.

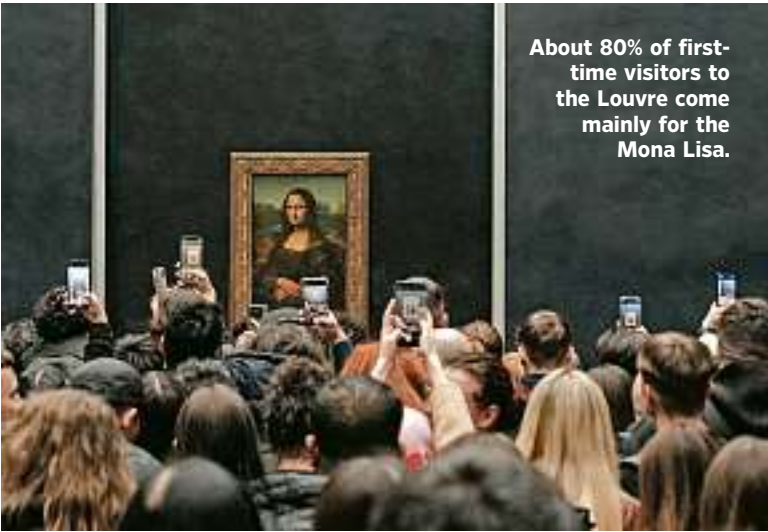
Like the Kardashians, the painting is famous for being famous. It is also magnificent.

BY ELAINE SCIOLINO

I HAVE A complicated relationship with the Mona Lisa. She is the best-known artwork in the world. Books, films, songs and poems celebrate and parody her. Amateur investigators have identified her as a harlot, a vampire, a goddess, a self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci in drag. About 80% of first-time visitors to the Louvre come mainly to see her. France's President Emmanuel Macron recently announced an ambitious plan to give the Mona Lisa her own room and special entrance.

I never got the fuss. Why do people care so much about this surprisingly small—just 30 by 20 inches—16th-century painting of some silk merchant's wife from Florence? Slightly cross-eyed, lacking eyebrows and eyelashes, she is not even classically beautiful.

The painting enjoyed some fame in its day for just how real and alive its subject seemed. "There was a smile



so pleasant that it was more divine than human to see," observed Giorgio Vasari, a Renaissance artist and critic.

Yet the source of the painting's notoriety reinforced my prejudices against it. In 1911 an Italian who worked at the Louvre stole her from the museum. New printing technology spread quality reproductions in newspapers around the world, and headlines kept the portrait in the collective imagination until she was recovered two years later.

The Mona Lisa, like Paris Hilton and the Kardashians, had essentially become famous for being famous.

But why is the painting still so popular? For answers, I went to Vincent Delieuvin, the Louvre's curator of 16th-century Italian paintings. He allowed that the Mona Lisa's charisma is mysterious: "Like a

singer who doesn't necessarily sing better than any other singer in the world, but there is a personality, a story, too, that makes the singer more famous, more important."

To truly appreciate this power, Delieuvin recommended getting up close. "You must be alone with her," he insisted. He explained that his own quiet communions with the Mona Lisa have proved transporting, even ecstatic. "You're in her presence and she vibrates...," he said. "You tremble."

Such intimacy is hard to come by amid the usual hordes of pushy tourists snapping smartphone photos of an image they can already buy on T-shirts and tea towels. By the time you get close—but still several feet away—a guard will order you to move on. "She's a victim of her own success!"

Delieuvin exclaimed. I needed a plan to be alone with her. For a book I was writing about the Louvre, I was assigned a museum chaperone. After we got to know each other, this battle-hardened, rule-following bureaucrat confessed that once, while working late with a television journalist, they stood and stared at the Mona Lisa for several minutes. "After we leave, she tells me, 'I saw her move!'" my chaperone said. "The problem was I had seen her move, too."

On Tuesdays, when the museum is closed, I had my chaperone take me to the Mona Lisa. I stared dutifully and waited, but I did not see her move. I did not tremble.

I asked Sébastien Allard, the Louvre's director of paintings, to join me on one of my Tuesday pilgrimages to the painting. He admitted it can be hard to separate the painting from its reputation: "She has become an icon, like a religious relic," he said. He suggested I get close and try to forget everything I knew and learned about her. "Look, really look," he said.

I looked past the extra-thick security glass, past the coats of varnish, into Mona

Lisa's eyes. She looked back. I moved back and forth. Her eyes followed me—a phenomenon in painting that is sometimes called "the Mona Lisa effect." I gazed at her lips to study that smile, perhaps the most famous in the world. When I focused on her mouth, she didn't smile back. But when I caressed other parts of her face with my gaze, Leonardo's brilliant use of light and shadow shifted something. She seemed to smile at me. For a moment, yes, the Mona Lisa came alive. How could I not be seduced?

Allard took in my response. He said: "I have never met a person who saw her outside of her frame who did not ask, 'Can I touch her?'"

I was lucky to have her all to myself. Such moments are available to the canny tourist. I recommend lining up before the museum opens to be the first in, then making a bee-line to the painting before the crowds. Another approach that sometimes works is to linger near the Mona Lisa before closing time and charm the guards into granting a few minutes after most visitors leave. A smile, even a subtle, enigmatic one, often helps.

Elaine Sciolino's latest book, "Adventures in the Louvre: How to Fall in Love with the World's Greatest Museum," will be published by W.W. Norton & Co. on April 1.

"About Face" is a column about how someone changed their mind.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ELLYN ROSE; ANANDA WANG; DAMIAN PETERS

THIBAUT CANUS/ASSOCIATED PRESS



By BRADLEY HOPE

Across the Middle East, Ramadan evenings are synonymous with families gathered around televisions watching dramatic sagas after breaking their fast. These series, known as musalalat, offer familiar tropes of melodramatic storytelling and typically steer clear of controversy. But this year is different, thanks to the blockbuster success of “Muawiya,” a 30-episode Ramadan TV series produced by the Saudi-owned MBC network.

Filmed across historical locations in Tunisia with a budget reportedly exceeding \$100 million, the show explores the life of Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, who began as a scribe to the Prophet Muhammad and later founded the Umayyad Caliphate, Islam’s first hereditary dynasty. From the very first episode, the production’s ambition is clear. Scenes unfold against sun-baked desert landscapes and detailed re-creations of 7th-century cities, bustling markets and lavishly appointed palaces. Cinematic overhead shots capture sweeping caravans, armies on horseback and bustling crowds, lending the series a scale rarely seen in Arabic television.

“Muawiya” isn’t just unprecedentedly lavish; it’s also a radical departure from the general rule that Ramadan dramas steer clear of religious sensitivities. Because Muawiya came to power after a struggle against Ali, whom Shiites revere as the Prophet’s legitimate successor, he remains an enduringly divisive figure in Islamic history, honored by Sunni Muslims and reviled by Shiites.

The series portrays the conflict of the two men as tragically inevitable. Syrian actor Lujain Ismail brings a compelling intensity to Muawiya, playing him as a master strategist who is finally inscrutable. Opposite him, Jordanian actor Iyad Nassar delivers a measured portrayal of Ali ibn Abi Talib, deeply contemplative yet burdened by leadership.

Just as unusual is the way the series humanizes its protagonist, treating him as a complex figure navigating a turbulent period rather than as a straightforward hero or villain. In one poignant early episode, Muawiya is shown privately wrestling with doubt before entering battle, reciting prayers softly in dim lamplight. This intimate depiction contrasts sharply with his stern public persona.

As soon as the show began airing, the reaction from religious authorities was swift and severe. Al-

Saudi Arabia Used to Export Extremism. Now It’s Exporting TV Dramas.

‘Muawiya,’ a controversial new series that offers a bold retelling of Islamic history, is a sign of Mohammed bin Salman’s determination to break with religious fundamentalists.



Top: Actor Lujain Ismael, left, as the title character in ‘Muawiya.’ Above: An action scene from the series, whose budget was reportedly over \$100 million.

Azhar University in Cairo, the most influential Sunni institution, issued an effective fatwa against the show, declaring the depiction of the Prophet’s companions “religiously unacceptable.” Iraq’s Communications and Media Commission banned the series outright, warning that its “historically controversial content may provoke sectarian debates and threaten social harmony.” Iran followed, accusing Saudi Arabia of rewriting history at the expense of Shia narratives.

Certain episodes have become lightning rods for criticism, particularly those depicting revered religious figures or moments closely associated with the Prophet Muhammad. In one particularly controversial flashback scene, Muawiya, still a young scribe, stands anxiously outside a simple tent, listening as the muffled voice of the Prophet issues from within. The camera carefully avoids any direct visual representation of Muhammad, instead lingering on Muawiya’s reverent yet conflicted expression and the reaction of bystanders who whisper

with awe. Still, the very notion of dramatizing any proximity to the Prophet sparked widespread condemnation from conservative scholars, who deem such portrayals disrespectful or even blasphemous.

“Muawiya” isn’t only important as a religious and cultural event. It’s also a sign of an historic political shift in Saudi Arabia. For decades, the Saudis exported a puritanical ideology known in the West as Wahhabism, which emphasized a literal interpretation of Islamic texts and saw cultural openness as sinful. Founded as a revivalist creed in the 18th century by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, it formed the basis of a historic bargain: The Saud family agreed to enforce Wahhabi doctrines across their territory in exchange for religious legitimization of their rule.

This arrangement intensified dramatically after 1979, when the Iranian Revolution and a siege of Mecca’s Grand Mosque by Saudi rebels forced the Saudi state to double down on religious conservatism. Flush with oil

wealth, the country financed thousands of mosques, madrassas and Islamic centers worldwide, spreading Wahhabi doctrine with free literature and textbooks, seeding ultra-conservative movements across the Muslim world.

The consequences became impossible to ignore on Sept. 11, 2001, when 15 of the 19 hijackers who seized U.S. airplanes were revealed to be Saudi citizens, thrusting Saudi Arabia’s religious policies into international scrutiny. The royal family found itself trapped, dependent on extremist clerics for internal legitimacy yet pressured by the world to rein them in.

Then came the wrecking ball, Mohammed bin Salman—MBS—the millennial crown prince determined to reshape Saudi identity. Since his rise to power in 2017, MBS has done what was once unthinkable: systematically dismantling Wahhabi influence in Saudi public life. Within months of coming to power, he launched a sweeping crackdown on Saudi Arabia’s Islamist old guard. Authorities

arrested dozens of prominent religious figures, including Sheikh Salman al-Ouda, a popular cleric with 14 million Twitter followers. Some reportedly face the death penalty simply for failing to actively support his policies. He also neutered the infamous religious police who used to barge into cafés and interfere in private life.

If the stick of MBS’s rule has been repression, the carrot has been an astonishing liberalization of daily life. Women’s participation in the workforce has skyrocketed, exceeding the government’s targets. It’s no longer uncommon to see women with hair uncovered or young couples strolling side by side, things once unimaginable. To many Saudis—especially the youth who form the majority of the population—these changes were a long-awaited breath of fresh air.

The paradox of MBS is that he fights religious oppression while practicing political oppression. By eliminating all avenues of peaceful dissent, MBS could be planting the seeds for future instability—the very thing he seeks to prevent. History has grim examples of suppressed opposition boiling over. Egypt’s crackdown on Islamists in the 1960s arguably bred more radical generations, and the Shah of Iran’s silencing of critics led to an explosion when he eventually fell.

Against this background of authoritarianism, allowing Saudi popular culture to explore questions of power, religion and society is an important first step toward freedom. The 2023 film “Mandoob” (“Night Courier”), for instance, is a black comedy that delves into the life of a mentally fragile man who, after losing his call center job, turns to delivering illicit alcohol in Riyadh. The film’s candid portrayal of controversial subjects in a country where alcohol is prohibited was jaw-dropping for many observers in the region.

As for “Muawiya,” it isn’t just a historical drama; it’s an attempt to free the present from simplistic, unilateral interpretations of history. Whether it sparks meaningful dialogue or deepens sectarian divides remains to be seen. But one thing is clear: Saudi Arabia is no longer just exporting religious ideology. It’s now exporting controversial, thought-provoking television—and that may be just as disruptive.

Bradley Hope is the co-founder of the production company Project Brazen and the co-author of “Blood and Oil: Mohammed bin Salman’s Ruthless Quest for Global Power.”

SCIENCE SHORTS

Be Healthier, the Space Station Needs More Germs

A lack of microbial diversity on the ISS may be making astronauts prone to a raft of infections.

By ERIC NILER

ASTRONAUTS ABOARD the International Space Station are plagued by persistent rashes, unusual allergies and a variety of infections, including fungi, cold sores and shingles.

Researchers now think they know why: The orbiting lab doesn’t have enough germs.

Bacteria arrive at the otherwise-clean station along with their human hosts, but the array of free-living microbes found on Earth in soil and water is lacking.

This kind of microbial imbalance has been linked to chronic inflammatory diseases, and cul-

tivating a diverse set of microbes on the ISS could improve astronaut health.

“There’s a big difference between exposure to healthy soil from gardening versus stewing in our own filth,” essentially what happens in the strictly enclosed environment of the ISS, said Rob Knight, director of the Center for Microbiome Innovation at the University of California, San Diego.

“Understanding whether there is a way to bottle those healthy microbes or supply them in an ecosystem in space

that astronauts can maintain is a very interesting topic of research at the moment,” he said.

To map the ISS microbes, astronaut and microbiologist Kathleen Rubins and other crew members swabbed more than 700 surfaces and 60 controls; almost none of the bacteria they found were from Earth’s

broader environment.

Knight and researchers from UCSD and NASA determined that the station is more sterile than living quarters on Earth but most of the bacteria found in the swabs was associated with immune-related symptoms.

The findings were published



Astronaut Kate Rubins studies microbes on board the ISS. last month in the journal Cell.

It’s also possible that living conditions on the station contribute to some of the skin ailments astronauts have experienced, according to Rubins.

“We don’t have showers on the ISS and can only use a small amount of water to wash,” Rubins wrote in an email to The Wall Street Journal. “We wear our clothes for two weeks straight because we don’t have a way to do laundry in space.”

But as humans push to explore beyond Earth, space travelers will have to understand how to promote a diversity of healthy microbes, Rubins said.

“We probably need to bring a little more of the outdoors inside,” she said. “But we have to do that safely so we don’t have fungal overgrowth or anything pathogenic.”

NASA

REVIEW

OBITUARIES

MELODY BEATTIE | 1948-2025



Beattie an in undated photo; below, the cover of an edition of her first bestselling book.

Author Who Wrote the Book on ‘Co-Dependency’

Written when she was destitute, her first bestseller struck a chord with millions of readers, spawned popular sequels and helped define the growing self-help genre.

By Chris Kornelis

One of Nichole Beattie’s most vivid childhood memories is the day she heard screaming coming from the basement. It was her mother.

The basement of their home in Stillwater, Minn., is where her mother, Melody Beattie, did her writing in the mid-1980s. All day and through much of the night, she sat cross-legged in a cement-walled, windowless storage room—a cigarette perpetually between her teeth—typing on a Kaypro computer with green text that marched across its tiny screen.

Nichole was terrified. She ran to the basement and asked her mother what had happened. Nothing was wrong. In fact, she said they needed to celebrate: She had just finished her book.

The celebration would have to be modest. The family was on welfare. Nichole used free lunch coupons at her elementary school. They shopped for groceries at night so neighbors wouldn’t see them using food stamps.

So to celebrate, Nichole and her brother, Shane, went through the couch cushions for change, and the family went to Burger King. There wasn’t enough money for all three of them to get a sandwich, drink and fries, but they got what they could, brought it home and spread their feast out over the floor using a newspaper as a picnic blanket. “We knew we were celebrating my mom, but we didn’t un-

derstand what any of it meant,” Nichole said recently. “But she was so excited, and you could just feel that she had done something incredible.”

Released in January of 1987, “Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself,” was more than a bestseller; it helped put the idea of co-dependency into the mainstream.

Reading it was a life-changing experience for readers who identified as co-dependent, defined by Beattie as someone who “has let another person’s behavior affect them and who is obsessed with controlling that other person’s behavior.”

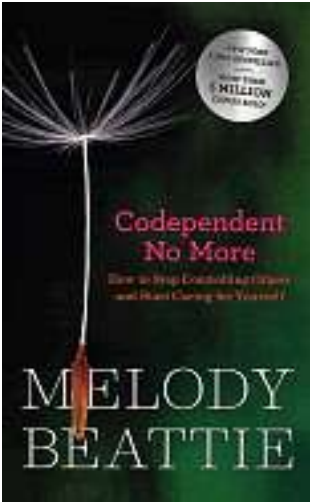
Rebecca Post, who edited the book for Hazelden Publishing, said that Bettie was met at book signings with long lines of people who “would get up face to face with her and burst into tears and tell her that she saved their life.”

The book tapped into the national zeitgeist. It arrived at a time when self-help sections of bookstores were growing and were adding books on topics like recovery and addiction.

“It was,” Post said, “as if baby boomers were just really ready to take a look at their own addictions and their parents’ addictions and their family systems.” Beattie was among them.

It was never easy

Melody Lynn Vaillancourt was born May 26, 1948, and raised primarily in St. Paul. Her father was an alcoholic who left the family when Melody was 2 years



‘The longer this lifetime goes, the more convinced I am that our primary responsibility in life is to find a way to make peace with ourselves, our past and our present.’

old. A couple of years later, she was abducted and molested by a stranger. Her mother beat her siblings but spared Melody, who suffered from a heart condition—though some of the men in her mother’s life didn’t.

Melody began “medicating” with alcohol when she was 11, coming home during school for some of the booze under the kitchen sink. “When I drank, I could go back to school, and I felt as good as the other kids,” she told the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 1988. “I felt like I belonged. And that’s really what addictions are all about—stopping the pain.”

As a teenager, she moved on to drugs, including heroin. She eventually worked as a stripper, robbed stores and was in and out of jail.

She had a son with her first husband but lost custody. After she was caught breaking into a drugstore, a judge offered her a choice: prison or a treatment center. She chose the treatment center and got sober. A couple of years later she began working at another treatment center, where she met a fellow employee named David Beattie, who was also in recovery. They got married and had two children. Along the way, she discovered that he hadn’t stopped drinking.

At her job, she was put in charge of a group for wives of alcoholics. In her book, she described the women as “people who felt responsible for the entire world, but they refused to take responsibility for leading and living their own lives.”

Eventually, Beattie realized that applied to her, too. Her husband, she wrote in the 2022 revised edition, “had a compulsion to drink and screw around; he’d lost control. I had a compulsion to control him; I’d lost control too.” The couple divorced before she finished the book; he died in 2003.

A national sensation

After the book’s release, the family was never poor again. The \$500 advance she received turned into millions of dollars in royalties. They bought a big house, multiple cars and took their first vacations. Over Christmas, they splurged on gifts for local children.

The book was only the beginning of Beattie’s career as a bestselling author. She released a follow-up, “Beyond Codependency,” in 1989. For a time, the two books overlapped on the New York Times bestseller list. “The Language of Letting Go,” released in 1990, was another hit, with more than three million sold.

“The first half of my life has been so damned unhappy, so miserable and hateful, that one of my real goals, one of my visions—I want the second half of my life to be as happy as the first half was miserable,” she told the Star Tribune. “And it’s turning that way.”

It didn’t last long.

In 1991, Beattie’s son died in a skiing accident, three days after he turned 12. It shattered her. She wrote about the experience in her 1995 book, “The Lessons of Love: Rediscovering Our Passion for Life When It All Seems Too Hard to Take.”

Nichole Beattie, a producer of TV shows including “The Walking Dead,” said her brother was top-of-mind for her mother for the rest of her life. In 1994, after Nichole graduated from high school, she and her mother moved to California. Beattie bought a house in Malibu, where she started a new life at the beach. She traveled widely and took up skydiving—an antidote for being an empty-nester, her daughter said.

Her favorite hobby was smoking cigarettes, two packs a day. She preferred Davidoffs but would accept Parliaments. She quit in 2023 but reverted when she went into hospice, telling Nichole: “I don’t want to get to heaven and regret the cigarettes I didn’t smoke.”

Beattie was married and divorced two more times, including to Dallas Taylor, who had played drums with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

She kept writing. By the time she died of congestive heart failure on Feb. 27, at the age of 76, she’d written 18 books.

The sales and influence of “Codependent No More” have been enduring. In 2009, Newsweek named it one of the four essential self-help books of all time. Its current publisher, Spiegel & Grau, said it sold more than 165,000 copies in 2024 and is above seven million all told. Nichole Beattie said people showed up at her mother’s funeral who had only recently read the book.

“The longer this lifetime goes, the more convinced I am that our primary responsibility in life is to find a way to make peace with ourselves, our past and our present,” Beattie wrote in the revised edition.

She added: “It’s also our job to mindfully practice self-love. Every day. For all our lives. It’s not a narcissistic or obnoxiously selfish attitude toward life and our relationships. Self-love is a humbler, quieter thing. You’ll get used to it. I like it; you may too.”

ERIN SIMKIN

BURTON TANSKY | 1938-2025

A Champion of Luxury Who Rose to Lead Neiman Marcus

A native of Pittsburgh, he showed an early knack for selling and held top jobs at Saks and Bergdorf.

By James R. Hagerty

AS A HISTORY STUDENT at the University of Pittsburgh in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Burt Tansky wasn’t sure what sort of career he would pursue.

There were clues, though. In his spare time, he earned money selling ice cream from a truck. At Pitt football games, he hawked pins and pennants. Selling turned out to be the essential skill for Tansky, who grew up in Pittsburgh’s working-class East Liberty neighborhood as the son of an immigrant hairstylist.

After graduating in 1961, Tansky joined a Pittsburgh department store, Kaufmann’s, as a management trainee. “I liked the action at retail,” he later told Women’s Wear Daily. “I liked the momentum, the interaction with people.”

Tansky, who died March 16 at age 87, became a buyer, managed a suburban Pittsburgh branch store, then moved to

department stores in Boston and Dayton, Ohio. In 1974 he was hired by I. Magnin, a luxury retailer in San Francisco.

He had discovered his niche—supplying luxury to big spenders. “That’s when I found out that there is another way of life in the retail world,” he said in 2015. “For me, there was no turning back.”

Success at Magnin propelled him to top jobs at Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman. He moved to Dallas in 1994 as chief executive of the Neiman Marcus store chain, where he remained until retirement in 2010. (After a recent merger, Saks, Bergdorf Goodman and Neiman Marcus are now all owned by Saks Global.)

Tansky focused on the quality of the merchandise and the extravagance of the customer service. Former CEO Stanley Marcus praised him as “the kind of merchant who is going to look inside the pair of pants to see how well they’re



Tansky as Saks Fifth Avenue president.

Tansky told WWD. “I can talk shoes. I can talk underwear. I can talk hats. I love to talk about the merchandise.”

In his free time, he liked to drive Jaguars and Corvettes, with flair. Speeding down a spiral parking ramp with a reporter as passenger, Tansky said, “I pay attention to the walls, not the speed.”

Burton Marvin Tansky was born in Pittsburgh on Jan. 15, 1938.. His parents, who had immigrated from Eastern Europe as children when their Jewish families fled religious persecution, had a hairstyling shop at the posh William Penn Hotel downtown.

Tansky’s philanthropy eventually included his hometown alma mater, Pitt, and institutions based in south Florida where he retired: the Jupiter Medical Center and the Kind Kitchen, a provider of meals to people facing hardships.

Tansky believed in the financial resiliency of the rich and didn’t think they should be lured in hard times with anything so tacky as blowout sales or lower-quality merchandise. “We will never trade down,” he told the retailer’s board during the 2008-09 financial crisis.

When that recession proved more traumatic than expected, the board persuaded him to add some lower-priced merchandise to the mix. “The alligator belts are tightening,” Tansky quipped.

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Lolla Love
The festival that began
as a tour and became
a phenomenon C11

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Esther in Oils
The Jewish queen was
a symbol of resistance
in Dutch art C12



LOCKSTEP North Korean soldiers carrying a portrait of Kim Il Sung in 2007 during a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Korean People's Army.

The Unlikely Rise of Kim Il Sung

Selected by the Soviets to run what was supposed to be a minor puppet regime, the Supreme Leader created his own cult of personality in North Korea

Accidental Tyrant

By Fyodor Tertitskiy
Oxford, 352 pages, \$34.99

By TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THERE can be little doubt,” writes Fyodor Tertitskiy, that Kim Il Sung “is the darkest figure in all of Korea’s history.” If this Lord of Darkness has any competition at all, it comes from his son and grandson.

Mr. Tertitskiy, a South Korea-based historian, has pulled off a rare and impressive biographical feat—his “Accidental Tyrant” is a book-length account of the life of Kim, the founder of North Korea, who ascended to power in 1945 at the end of World War II. Biographies abound of Hitler, Stalin and Mao, but those of Kim are hard to come by: “Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader,” by Suh Dae-sook, was the last good one, published in 1988, six years before Kim’s death. Mr. Tertitskiy’s book appears 37 years later. Yet for all the passage of time, Kim would surely give present-day North

Korea his seal of approval, recognizing it to be the place of his own demonic conception. The Kimist regime—now led by his grandson Kim Jong Un—“remains unyielding in the face of all challenges,” Mr. Tertitskiy writes, “dominating the lives of over 20 million North Koreans, with no apparent end in sight.”

The country Kim created is, Mr. Tertitskiy tells us, “a nation so closed it defies comprehension.” How closed? He gives us examples: North Korean citizens are prohibited from reading books that haven’t been approved by the state; cannot access the internet without being “personally approved by the Supreme Leader”; cannot speak to foreigners on the telephone without risking harsh imprisonment; must display portraits of Kim Il Sung and his successors in every home; and can be put to death for defacing these portraits. Not being able to leave the country seems a trivial hardship by comparison. That so few attempt to do so is proof of the incarceration of an entire population.

Readers will find it startling, therefore, that Mr. Tertitskiy tells us “it

would be wrong” to say that Kim “was a man of pure evil” or that he was “completely incapable of kindness, forgiveness and mercy.” After all, the book is a detailed portrayal of the man who “instigated the most destructive war Korea has ever seen,” one in which at least 2.5 million people died, and created one of the most suffocatingly coercive societies in human history. Mass famine was a constant feature of Kim’s rule, so much so that the multi-generational deprivation of food has led to the physical stunting of North Koreans, who are on average several inches shorter than their genetically identical brethren in South Korea. In truth, the only well-fed North Koreans we have seen (in the flesh or in photographs) have been the overweight members of the Kim dynasty.

It’s likely that Mr. Tertitskiy stops short of declaring Kim Il Sung to be unadulteratedly evil because of the one example of genuine kindness the author highlights in the tyrant’s life. It involved Kim’s first wife, Han Song Hui, whom he loved but who was captured in 1940 by the Japanese when they were the imperial rulers of Korea.

Husband and wife lost all contact with each other, and eventually Kim married a woman named Kim Jong Suk (the mother of his eventual successor, Jong Il). In the late 1940s, Kim, by then the ruler of North Korea, had the power and wherewithal to search for

The founder of modern North Korea would look with pleasure on its current state of tyranny.

his first wife. He found her, and found also that she, too, had remarried—to a humble Korean farmer. When Kim “found his old love,” writes Mr. Tertitskiy, “he acted honorably,” remembering particularly “how she had woven him socks out of her own hair” when they were desperate rebels fighting against Japanese rule. And so the man who could have had her new husband killed with a snap of his fingers “respected her wishes” to remain with the latter. And the two—Kim and

his first wife—stayed friends through the years to come.

This was, indeed, a touching act of humanity and uxoriousness, all the more remarkable for its performance by a man who would prove to be a monster. So total was his control over his subjects, says Mr. Tertitskiy, that the “enormous cost of his rule can never be wholly assessed.” Hundreds of thousands, sentenced or banished to work camps, never returned. There are places, we learn, “where people toiled in mines like the slaves of ancient Rome—until they died.” When it comes to a full picture of the suffering of the “tens of millions of innocents whose lives were twisted and brutalized by the will of this man,” there is almost no oral or written evidence “to tell the world of their stories.” Contrast this with the concentration camps of the Holocaust and Stalin’s Gulags, from both of which we have profusely documented accounts of the horrors perpetrated.

Was North Korea’s fate inevitable after 1945? Mr. Tertitskiy argues that it wasn’t: Kim’s accession to power

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America’s Revolution Abroad

Shots Heard Round the World

By John Ferling
Bloomsbury, 560 pages, \$40

By WILLIAM ANTHONY HAY

THE American Revolution pitted colonists against the British Empire in a struggle that resembled David’s stand against Goliath, but it also became a global war in which Britain defied an allied coalition alone. In his international history of the Revolutionary War written for the 250th anniversary of its outbreak, John Ferling brings Europe and its rivalries into the familiar story of American independence. With “Shots Heard Round the World,” Mr. Ferling, a professor emeritus of history at the University of West Georgia, shows not only why nations fought but also how they waged a protracted struggle whose outcome remained in doubt to the end.

Foreign assistance was critical in what the author calls “America’s longest war before the Vietnam conflict.” Absolutist monarchs in France and Spain aided rebellious Americans, and

the unruly colonists eagerly looked to them for help. The explanations for this odd coupling lie in the earlier Seven Years’ War (1756-63). Britain had won a victory at stupendous financial cost, which prompted its efforts to tax and regulate the colonies. Americans, free of danger on their frontiers, now defied encroachments on their self-government by the mother country. Many colonists, as Mr. Ferling notes, believed France would give help in any confrontation.

Indeed, after France and Spain’s humiliating defeat, the two empires set out on a path to revenge. British victory had disrupted the balance of power beyond Europe in ways that irked other powers. Noting Britain’s insults to France, the Comte de Vergennes, who advised Louis XVI on foreign policy, described the empire as “greedy, rest-

Britain’s diplomatic isolation proved a powerful weapon in Washington’s arsenal.

less, [and] more jealous of the prosperity of its neighbors than awake to its own happiness.” Spain felt its American colonies were threatened by Britain’s increased power in the New World, and other European states resented how Britain used dominance at sea against their trade. Ruling the waves allowed Britannia to waive the rules for its own



SARATOGA CAMPAIGN ‘Surrender of General Burgoyne’ (1821) by John Trumbull.

advantage. The tyranny of what Austria’s emperor, Joseph II, called British “despotism at sea” grated on Europe as much as taxation or regulation did on the colonies.

Britain, for its part, saw America as essential to its prosperity. Losing the mainland colonies, many believed, would create a domino effect, costing it the West Indies and then Ireland. This assumption fueled intransigence among ministers and George III, who believed concession brought more defiance. The decision to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party in 1773 began an escalating cycle that led to the shots fired at Lexington and Concord in April 1775. A colonial rebellion quickly turned into a civil war across British America. To defeat and dismantle the regime that the Continental Congress and the Patriots had established, large-scale action would be required. George III had already told his prime minister,

Lord North, that “blows must decide” how the quarrel would end.

In 1775 New Englanders besieged a British army at Boston, with George Washington bringing reinforcements—along with the Continental Congress’s authority to lead an American army. Turning militia into soldiers tested him as much as the lack of weapons and equipment. Mr. Ferling stresses European support as essential to effective resistance. The British lacked allies, beyond German princes who rented out their troops in the “soldier trade” to bolster George III’s forces in America. Diplomatic isolation would complicate Britain’s efforts from the start. For its part, Congress framed a model treaty with foreign governments alongside the Declaration of Independence addressed to “a candid world.”

Mr. Ferling casts Vergennes as a character equal in importance to the colonial leaders and the British generals,

presenting much of the struggle through the Frenchman’s point of view. More than any other individual, even George Washington, the author claims, Vergennes shaped the war and “did the most to contour hostilities and make possible the decisive events” that settled the war in the colonists’ favor.

The author describes Vergennes as a man “on a tightrope” during 1777; he sought to avoid war with England but keep the American conflict going. British defeat at Saratoga and a stalemate after capturing Philadelphia forced North’s government to offer the colonists terms in early 1778 that they had refused before. By then, however, Americans had secured a French alliance. Mr. Ferling points out that a French expedition sought to repeat the coup at Saratoga by capturing the British army and fleet at New York in a blow that would end the war on humiliating terms. The French failure turned the conflict into a struggle of attrition. France had made American independence a condition for peace and added the potential acquisition of the British possession of Gibraltar by Spain as an incentive to join the war. That step tied the allies to their new partner’s agenda.

Mr. Ferling brings diplomacy into focus alongside the back and forth of fighting in America. Spanish and later Dutch intervention expanded the war, but Britain kept fighting even when a League of Armed Neutrality was formed to oppose its naval efforts to curtail enemy trade. Victories in Georgia and

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BOOKS

‘He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for time is the greatest innovator.’ —FRANCIS BACON



FIVE BEST BOOKS ON INVENTORS AND INNOVATORS

Carl J. Schramm

The author, most recently, of ‘Burn the Business Plan: What Great Entrepreneurs Really Do’

The Doctors Mayo
By Helen Clapesattle (1941)

Geography played a part in spurring innovation at the Mayo Clinic, which opened its doors in 1889 in Rochester, Minn. Out of the shadow of the leading medical centers in Baltimore, Boston and New York, the brothers and surgeons William and Charles Mayo developed a revolutionary organizational model for treatment. As Helen Clapesattle writes in “The Doctors Mayo,” every patient at the Mayo brothers’ multispecialty facility was a patient of the entire clinic and not of any individual doctor. Charles believed that in order for the sick to “have the benefit of advancing knowledge, union of forces is necessary.” A network of pneumatic tubes was built to deliver patient records to physicians across the facility in minutes. This same system supported another innovation: pausing surgeries while biopsied tissue was dispatched to the clinic’s pathology laboratory for immediate analysis. Yet another Mayo innovation, dating to 1907, was to keep uniform patient histories. The clinic’s extensive archive—initially preserved on paper and now digitally—continues to serve researchers today.

Longitude
By Dava Sobel (1995)

The ranks of innovators are crowded with obsessive heroes. Dava Sobel’s “Longitude” tracks John Harrison’s 43-year quest to give sailors a crucial tool for navigating the seas. As the 18th century began, shipwrecks bedeviled European explorers. In 1707 sailors of the British fleet “misgauged their longitude” and sunk four warships off southern England near the Scilly Isles, making the isles “unmarked tombstones for almost two thousand” men. After that wreck and others that followed, Parliament established a £20,000 prize (over \$4 million today) for anyone who could devise a method to measure longitude at sea accurately. Latitude can be easily determined by referring to the stars. Longitude, however, requires reference to the difference in time between the ship’s position and the port from which it left. The solution lay in inventing a device to measure time accurately—a sea-going clock. At the time, the most sophisticated clocks required pendulums, a mechanical solution incompatible with a rolling ship at sea. Harrison, a carpenter and clockmaker, crafted three ingenious clocks without pendulums. “His every success, however, was parried by members of the scientific elite,” Ms. Sobel writes. Harrison’s fourth attempt, a sea chronometer produced in 1759, resembled a large pocket watch and won Parliament’s prize. A 1783 update of his invention ruled the waves until GPS technology became available in 1983.

The Medieval Machine
By Jean Gimpel (1976)

“Between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, Western Europe experienced a technological boom,” the French historian Jean Gimpel writes in “The Medieval Machine.” Gothic cathedrals emerged, along with eyeglasses, the weight-driven mechanical clock and the science of crop rotation. “The ambition of inventors was unlimited, their imagination boundless,” according to Gimpel, who defines innovation as nonstop experimenting to increase productivity. The heavy-wheeled plow, another marvel of the era, exemplifies such thinking. Its deep furrows brought more fertile soil to the surface, yielding larger harvests. European innovators harnessed water and wind to save human and



SPECTACLE Charles Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic, demonstrating a surgical procedure in 1913.

animal energy. Gimpel documents how dams and water wheels were built, transmitting power to the millstones, grinding wheels, carding machines, and hammers that beat linen and cotton rags into the slurry that would become paper. Dutch settlers brought the windmill to New Amsterdam; now this triumph of innovation is memorialized in the seal of New York City.

The Dawn of Innovation
By Charles R. Morris (2012)

In the War of 1812, the United States and England clashed in naval battles for control of Lake Ontario. The new nation prevailed, thanks in part to massive, ocean-worthy warships built deep in the North American wilderness. Charles R. Morris enlists this history in “The Dawn of Innovation” to illustrate two habits of innovators. The first is tinkering, or testing big ideas on a small scale; the second is thinking about problems differently, or, as the British historian Herbert Butterfield put it: “picking up the opposite end of the stick.” Innovation dawned in the 19th century because America had invented a new economy—the world’s first “mass-consumption society,” as Morris calls it. “Machinery-intensive methods of manufacturing guns” for the U.S. Army fostered progress in precision measurement, advanced machining and parts production. Gun makers including E. Remington & Sons diversified into producing typewriters, locomotive parts and gears for the nascent bicycle market. Bicycles in turn inspired Henry

Ford and the Wright brothers, whose inventions changed history.

Where Good Ideas Come From
By Steven Johnson (2010)

“Chance favors the connected mind,” Steven Johnson writes in “Where Good Ideas Come From,” and innovation thrives when good ideas connect. Innovators embrace chaos as a habit of mind, firm in their belief that this is how new ideas are born. Among the innovators—and connected minds—Mr. Johnson cites is an engineer named Willis Carrier. In 1902 Carrier was tasked with solving a problem at a Brooklyn, N.Y., plant that printed magazines, catalogs and other publications. A recent innovation in printing—colored ink—proved unstable on humid summer days, causing pages to wrinkle and delaying production. Carrier focused not on the ink but the high humidity levels inside the printing plant. To dry the air, he figured, the building’s interior temperature had to be lowered. Air conditioning was born. “Carrier’s narrative fits the classic mold of the genius entrepreneur,” Mr. Johnson writes. “After experimenting with a handful of failed schemes suggested by his colleagues, Carrier followed his own instincts” in building prototypes to cool the air. Early adopters of his invention included food-processing plants, theaters and hospitals. By the second half of the 20th century, air conditioning, Mr. Johnson writes, “went from a curiosity to a luxury item to a middle-class necessity.”

Follow the ‘Great Leader’

Continued from page C7
wasn’t preordained but was, instead, the result of Soviet complacency and incompetence. North Korea was merely a trifling part of Stalin’s sphere of influence after World War II and—viewing its Korean fiefdom as a backwater—Moscow dispatched ambassadors of low caliber and intellect to oversee the new (ostensibly) puppet state. Kim ascended to power for want of any real competition among the leaders in North Korea. His promotion was intended to be temporary, the Soviets still believing in 1945 that it was possible to unify the Korean peninsula. Kim, who had been educated in Manchuria and had lived in Russia (where his son Jong Il was born), wasn’t entirely fluent in Korean at the time of his ascent. His mannerisms weren’t even Korean: After his first public speech as North Korea’s leader, one eyewitness later remembered that Kim “looked like a waiter in a Chinese restaurant.”

But Kim was, Mr. Tertitskiy says, “an extraordinarily talented dictator,” and the first signs of the Cult of Kim that was to swallow his entire nation was evident soon after he took charge. State publications began to refer to him as “Commander,” “True Patriot” and “Great Chief.” By the 1960s, his standard sobriquet became “Great Leader.” In time, the name Kim Il Sung

A master manipulator and propagandist, the dictator possessed his own brand of genius.

was declared sacred, with no one else permitted to use it. In print it was required to appear in bold type. He was also addressed as “Great Marshal” and “Sun of the Nation.” The traditional Chinese Zodiac was proscribed in North Korea because the year 1912—when Kim was born—was the Year of the Rat, “unbefitting the Great Leader.”

Another title bestowed upon Kim was “Unsurpassed Genius,” and we ought, perhaps, to dwell on how this puffed-up moniker did have some perverse truth to it. Kim was brilliant—masterly, even—at playing the Soviets off against Mao and the Chinese, especially in the years when the two Communist behemoth-states were at loggerheads with each other. He persuaded Mao to enter the Korean War when the Soviets were reluctant to come to Kim’s aid—regarding him as a maverick who’d launched an unwinnable invasion of the south. In later years, he milked Moscow for aid and political support when Mao soured on him. All the while, he used his country’s threadbare resources to militarize and to consolidate his vise-like grip on the throat of his nation.

Kim Il Sung was a man who told his people what to think, where to go, what to wear, what to eat, whom to marry, whom to shun, whom to worship and whom to anathematize (both at home and abroad). Mr. Tertitskiy has given us a chilling portrait of a man who seems almost too bad to be true.

Mr. Varadarajan, a Journal contributor, is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and at NYU Law School’s Classical Liberal Institute.

Infant Hercules and The Serpent

Continued from page C7
South Carolina opened British prospects of recovering the colonies below Virginia. The U.S. government faced national bankruptcy while its citizens suffered grinding impoverishment. In France, the author writes, “Vergennes was awash with problems.” His nation’s economy was under strain and its financial situation had become, in the diplomat’s words, “truly alarming.” In early 1781 Austria joined Russia in offering to mediate the international conflict; the proposal they offered clarified dynamics that most histories have neglected. Peace negotiations, the author makes clear, meant restoring a colonial balance of power that likely

would have partitioned America according to the territory that armies were holding at that point. While Vergennes welcomed an escape from the war, John Adams, who would negotiate for the United States, believed mediation more dangerous than fighting. British leaders also refused to compromise, anticipating gains that year, which Mr. Ferling deems a mistake. “There would be no Congress of Vienna in 1781,” he writes. “Hope of a favorable outcome yet existed in every camp.” But someone’s hopes would soon be dashed. In 1781 the war took another turn. France sent a second expedition to America with money and equipment for Washington’s army. Lord Cornwallis failed to secure British control over the Carolinas and marched into Virginia. Aided by a French fleet that had briefly secured naval control over the Chesapeake, Washington’s Franco-American army trapped the British at Yorktown to force their surrender. Repeating the Saratoga debacle broke the political will in London to continue fighting for

America. “Infant Hercules in his Cradle has now strangled his second Serpent,” Benjamin Franklin declared. The war continued at sea, away from the American continent, along with

Battles thousands of miles from America helped the colonies secure independence.

diplomacy in Europe. British naval victories in the Caribbean evened the score and Spain’s failure to capture Gibraltar forced its leaders to yield to French pressure for a settlement. New British ministers had offered Americans a separate peace, which Franklin negotiated without consulting Vergennes. The favorable terms justified the wily Philadelphian seeking forgiveness rather than permission. Negotiations among European belligerents brought a prelim-



ALLY A 1774 portrait of the Comte de Vergennes by Gustaf Lundberg.

inary agreement, and, after formal recognition by George III, the U.S. won the independence it had claimed in 1776. America had baffled the British efforts to defeat it, albeit with vital help from abroad. The British, however, also thwarted their European foes, and kept their empire. Losing the mainland American colonies did not set domi-

noes falling or depose Britain from its perch as a great power. Britain held on to Gibraltar, and British power recovered by the late 1780s, as France fell into crisis. The main losers in the American War for Independence, as Mr. Ferling shows, were the other European powers as well as the Native Americans, whom the peace weakened in different ways. After 250 years, some points everyone at the time understood have been forgotten. The American Revolution was a global event, with global consequences. What began as a struggle over self-government by colonists and a bid for revenge by the French and Spanish turned into a transformative conflict that reached well beyond the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Hay, the author of “Lord Liverpool: A Political Life,” is a professor and associate director at Arizona State University’s School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership.

BOOKS

‘They will never shoulder a musket in anger again, and if Grant is wise he will leave them their guns to shoot crows with.’ —ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The War That Wouldn’t Die

Lincoln’s Peace

By Michael Vorenberg
Knopf, 480 pages, \$35

By ALLEN C. GUELZO

OF ALL WARS, none are quite so catastrophic as civil wars. They arise from the ugliest of disagreements, spill into the most reprehensible of behaviors and seem never to have a distinct ending.

The American Civil War is no exception, since there was no convenient peace treaty to lend it a conventional closing date. And how could there have been, since the Lincoln administration consistently refused to recognize the secession of Southern states in 1861 as constitutionally legal? In Lincoln’s mind, there was no such thing as the Confederacy; there was only an insurrection, and nations do not sign peace treaties with insurrectionists they have defeated.

In the popular imagination, the Civil War usually ends with the surrender of Robert E. Lee’s Confederate army at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. True, most of the large-scale killing ended at Appomattox, but another major Confederate field army was still at large in North Carolina and wouldn’t disband until April 26. An entire rebel department was also still in the field, beyond the Mississippi, and it wouldn’t formally surrender until May 26. Even then, a Confederate warship, the Shenandoah, continued to destroy Union merchant vessels in the Pacific until the beginning of August, when captured newspapers finally convinced the crew to run for refuge in England. Meanwhile, unreconciled Confederates crossed into Mexico in the hope that its French puppet-emperor, Ferdinand Maximilian, would help them to continue the fight.

The Union seemed just as uncertain about declaring the conflict over. President Andrew Johnson, having assumed the presidency after Lincoln’s assassination on April 14, declared on May 10 that “armed resistance” was “virtually at an end.” On May 11, the Union’s general-in-chief, Ulysses Grant, announced that “all persons found in arms against the United States” after June 1 would be regarded as “guerillas and punished with death.”

But guerillas are warriors of a certain shape, and Johnson had only spoken of hostilities as being “virtually” at an end. Not until Aug. 20, 1866, did Johnson finally proclaim that the “insurrection is at an end,” and “peace, order, tranquility, and civil authority now exist.” This came only three weeks after a deadly race riot in New Orleans made it clear that tranquility was still a long way off in the onetime Confederacy.

Michael Vorenberg’s “Lincoln’s Peace” chronicles this uncertainty. The writing of it began in 2003—two years after the publication of his landmark “Final Freedom,” on the making of the 13th Amendment—with a kind of archival epiphany. In an 1890 War Department report, Lewis Grant (no relation to Ulysses) struggled with the Civil War pension claim of a former soldier, John Barleyoung. The department was ready to dismiss Barleyoung’s claim on grounds that he had only enlisted in April 1866, a year after Appomattox. But Barleyoung countered that the war



YANKEES Union Army horse-drawn artillery, ca. 1865.

had not received a final dismissal until Johnson’s Aug. 20, 1866, proclamation, and thus he was entitled to the pension Congress provided to all Civil War survivors. That sent Lewis Grant down a legal rabbit hole to determine when, exactly, the Civil War ended. More than a century later, he dragged Mr. Vorenberg down the hole after him.

Barleyoung never got his Civil War pension, but his complaint opened up for Mr. Vorenberg a disturbing new vista on a landscape he had taken for granted. Did Lee and Grant really bring the war to a halt at Appomattox Court House? Grant generously offered paroles to Lee’s soldiers rather than demanding the kind of unconditional surrender Lee feared he would demand. But paroles only end combatant activity, not wars. A day after their meeting, Lee warned Grant that Northern armies “might have to march over” the South “three or four times before the war entirely ended.”

The anomalies multiplied. A great celebratory review of the victorious Union armies was staged in Washington at the end of May 1865. But that same month as many as 50,000 Union soldiers were dispatched to the Rio Grande to deal with the possibility that a new Confederacy would be fashioned, with the blessing of the French emperor Napoleon III, from parts of Texas and French-occupied Mexico. Would that create a new war, or an extension of the old one? And did outbreaks of fighting against the Sioux and

Cheyenne also count as part of the Civil War? If so, the war could be stretched farther westward to include the Battle of Little Big Horn, where the Civil War’s most sensational cavalryman, George Armstrong Custer, and more than 200 of his troopers met their doom in 1876.

The largest uncertainty over what counts as war involves the years of Reconstruction, which frequently and swiftly degenerated into the kind

If the Civil War didn’t end with the surrender of Robert E. Lee’s forces on April 9, 1865, when did it end?

of guerilla violence Grant had hoped to head off. And alongside the white-hooded barbarity Grant struggled to suppress, a political war broke out between President Johnson and Congress in which Congress seized the reins of Reconstruction from his hands and passed a series of acts reducing the defeated Confederacy to five military occupation districts. Is occupation an extension of war, or its conclusion? Eventually, by 1871, Congress was persuaded to readmit the districts to the Union in the form of the original states. But it took only a few years before the Confederate oligarchs were once more in control,

and Southern politics resumed so much of its old shape that it could have seemed that the war had never happened at all.

Like mercury escaping from a broken thermometer, the more Mr. Vorenberg pressed on the question of when the Civil War ended, the more it squiggled away from him. Finally, he had to confront “the unbearable knowledge” that pinning an end on the Civil War might be impossible. That uncertain note should not suggest any lack of clarity in either Mr. Vorenberg’s cheekily ironic style or in his careful delineation of the many ways in which the Civil War stubbornly refused to end. The title may be slightly misleading—Lincoln doesn’t play a major role in the peace he never lived to see. Moreover, Mr. Vorenberg isn’t entirely persuaded that Lincoln would have yielded to Congress’s demand that all adult black men be allowed to vote, or to its barring former federal officeholders who had served the Confederacy from reacquiring “any office, civil or military, under the United States.”

Nevertheless, “Lincoln’s Peace” is a vivid introduction to the complexities of what we call Reconstruction, and to the maddening difficulty of bringing a war to a close. Perhaps, as T.S. Eliot remarked about the English Civil War, it may be that no serious civil war ever really ends.

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Modern Miracles For Sale

Holy Men of the Electromagnetic Age

By Raphael Cormack
Norton, 304 pages, \$29.99

By TARA ISABELLA BURTON

THE line between science and magic can be difficult to draw. Early chemical experimentation bore the name “alchemy.” Its practitioners—among them, Isaac Newton—were eager not only to break down and transform the fundamental building blocks of existence but also to use them to achieve some of humanity’s most dizzying ambitions, including the creation of the reputed philosopher’s stone, which was supposed to grant the bearer immortality and turn base metals into gold. (This latter ambition was finally achieved by scientists at a Berkeley laboratory in 1980, at a cost far greater than the value of the modicum of gold created.)

It can be even more difficult to distinguish between pop science and its mystical analogue. From at least the post-Enlightenment onward, nearly every wellness and self-help craze—from battling toxins to harnessing the energy in crystals—has framed itself, at least in part, as being grounded in scientific truth. As new scientific ways of looking at the world gain ground, so, too, do their rather less-empirical interpretations.

In the 19th century, for example, there was the phenomenon known as New Thought—a forerunner of today’s “manifesting”—that told people they could influence their health (and bank

accounts) with the power of positive thinking. The proponents of New Thought used the then-novel language of electricity and (animal) magnetism to convince readers that science had, in fact, proved you could manipulate the world’s hidden energy with your mind using a “subtle current . . . charged with a mighty power” that would, in the words of the New Thought writer William Walker Atkinson, “bear down the instinctive resistance of the minds of others.” Proponents of techniques ranging from faith healing to hypnotism cannily blended religio-magical and medical imagery, hedging their hermeneutical bets. Franz Mesmer, who popularized “mesmerism,” was apparently fond of demonstrating his skills of hypnosis with a wand and a cape: all the better to sell his methods to a captivated audience.

Raphael Cormack’s enthralling “Holy Men of the Electromagnetic Age” makes clear the connections not merely between science and magic but also, more ambitiously, between science, magic and celebrity. Mr. Cormack, a professor of modern languages and cultures at Durham University in the U.K., profiles two men of the early 20th century who made names and careers for themselves as practitioners of seemingly supernatural feats; in so doing, the author presents us with a portrait of an era as kaleidoscopic—and fractured—as our own.

He introduces us to Tahra Bey (born Krikor Kalfayan), an Armenian who passed himself off as a fakir—an “itinerant, ascetic holy man,” according to Mr. Cormack—who demonstrated death-defying stunts, such as resting on a bed of nails, to a largely Western audience. We also meet Dr. Dahesh, a Syriac Christian, who offered a largely Arabic-speaking, secularizing audience with his teachings in the scientific language of spiritism.

The dawn of the 20th century, Mr. Cormack tells us, was a time when binaries were breaking down: between the material and the spiritual, the religious

and the scientific, the ostensible East and the ostensible West. “The appearance of modern ‘spiritual sciences,’” the author writes, “upset the rigid dividing line that had been constructed between East and West in the 1920s and 1930s.” He goes on to ask: “If the West was scientific and the East was spiritual, then who had more rights to the scientific study of the spirit?”



DEFYING GRAVITY Tahra Bey lying on a bed of nails, ca. 1928.

The author illustrates these tensions with both sensitivity and verve. Although his characters deal—often in the service of their own personal branding—in stereotype, Mr. Cormack writes with nuance about the cultural and social fluidity of their era, particularly when he investigates how the historical trauma of anti-Armenian violence in the former Ottoman Empire might have informed a desperate populace’s openness to the idea that someone with superpowers might survive, say, Tahra Bey’s signature trick of getting himself buried alive. (“If every Armenian were Tahra Bey and could endure swords and knives and emerge unharmed,” Mr. Cormack quotes from one contemporary Armenian newspaper, “the Eastern Question would look entirely different.”) Equally compelling is an extended discourse on the popularity of Spiritualist

séances in early-20th-century Palestine, where the young and liberal-minded saw the practice as a “scientific” alternative to contentious religious dogma.

Both Tahra Bey and Dr. Dahesh come across as potentially fascinating characters, if personally obscure. (Perhaps that was by both men’s design.) Their facility at personal branding, along with the relative paucity of more-intimate evidence

glory of ancient Rome would inspire the Italian Fascist movement, and from Aldous Huxley, the British writer and psychonaut who briefly believed in Tahra Bey’s powers.

Ultimately, “Holy Men” is less a biography than a portrait of what Mr. Cormack calls “folklore for the twentieth century”: an examination of how a small coterie of spiritualists, fakirs and purported sages “came into a broken world as mysterious prophets,” promising, if not certainty, then at least hope. We may not get inside either of Mr. Cormack’s subjects’ heads, but we do get

Charismatic performers and con artists became celebrities in the early 20th century.

access to the minds of those who sought in them spiritual solace, or scientific proof of life beyond death, or predictions for the outcome of uncertain war. We get access, too, to the celebrity machine that transformed these, for a time, into public figures.

In 1926, New York’s 1,000-seat Selwyn Theater hosted one of Tahra Bey’s rivals and contemporaries: Rahman Bey. His “weird and uncanny” performances—including hypnotism and being buried alive—were so successful that few noticed, or cared, that this “oriental fakir” (as the stage billing insisted) was in fact an Italian named Antinesco Gemmi, whose star would soon fade after being credibly challenged by one Harry Houdini, who claimed no supernatural origin for his own physically taxing feats.

Appealing to an audience, Mr. Cormack suggests, might be the trickiest magic of all.

Ms. Burton is the author, most recently, of the novel “Here in Avalon.”

BOOKS

‘Alternateen / would you go to Lollapalooza with me? / And we can pay five dollars / for a glass of water.’ –WALLY PLEASANT

The Traveling Mosh Pit

Lollapalooza

By Richard Bienstock and Tom Beaujour
St. Martin's, 432 pages, \$32

By FRANZ NICOLAY

THE ALTERNATIVE-MUSIC revolution that blew up around Seattle in the early 1990s almost happened earlier, and 1,000 miles south. It would have starred Southern California's glammy Jane's Addiction and the prog-funk Red Hot Chili Peppers instead of the hard rock of Nirvana and Pearl Jam, and a vision of a come-all freaky utopian party rather than one of insular emotional catharsis.

The media outlets were already in place: Spin magazine had, from 1985, been positioning itself as the alternative to Rolling Stone, and MTV's "120 Minutes" had been serving the after-midnight underground since 1986. By 1990, the Chili Peppers had weathered the death of guitarist Hillel Slovak and scored their first gold record. Jane's Addiction was about to break up, but they were going to go out in style: by headlining a package tour of handpicked acts—Siouxie and the Banshees, Living Colour, Ice-T (with his new metal band, Body Count), Rollins Band, Butthole Surfers and a then-obscure Nine Inch Nails—that Jane's Addiction's lead singer, Perry Farrell, called "Lollapalooza."

In Richard Bienstock and Tom Beaujour's juicy and fast-moving oral history, "Lollapalooza: The Uncensored Story of Alternative Rock's Wildest Festival," Mr. Farrell comes across as the John the Baptist of alternative nation: His community-defining traveling carnival wrapped its first iteration only weeks before Nirvana's "Nevermind" was released in September 1991. "Perry unlocked that door," says one Warner Bros. executive in the book, "and Kurt Cobain basically kicked it open."

Lollapalooza wasn't entirely sui generis—the nascent rave scene had some of the same transgressiveness and techno-optimism, and the rejuvenated Deadhead scene was a throughline to the hippie generation's aspirational bohemia. (The promoter Bill Graham provided early support to Lollapalooza.) But the concept of a *traveling* festival was, apparently, new; and Lollapalooza had a pied-piper effect, exposing and defining a nascent but uncollected new counterculture via, the authors write, "a diverse mix of boundary-pushing musical acts, outsider fashion and art, political activism, and straight-up performative weirdness." Rollins Band guitarist Chris Haskett astutely points out that the acts in that first year's lineup weren't, themselves, the new wave—they were "what had just been . . . we were all from the eighties." But some, such as Henry Rollins's earlier group, Black Flag, were the representatives of the DIY generation. These acts had laid the groundwork for alternative networks of underground venues, indie labels and homemade media. Now it was time to level up to playing festival stages instead of VFW halls.

The early Lollapalooza was as much an immersive experience as it was a concert, eventually involving a midway featuring merchandise, sideshows (the infamous Jim Rose Circus) and—at least in theory—political debates. (Mr. Farrell wanted the festival to be politically agnostic, envisioning live disputation over abortion and between NRA representatives and antigun activists, but had trouble attracting representatives for the conservative viewpoints.) Although later narratives of the alternative era emphasize the Pacific Northwest, this was a Californian view of the counterculture, with its fascination with brain-hacking "smart



RAISING A FLAG Henry Rollins performing at Lollapalooza in 1991.

drinks" and the early internet (the midway eventually featured a "Cyber Pit"). Lollapalooza was, as the music journalist Jim DeRogatis says, the Virgil to suburban kids' Dante, introducing them to the freakier corners of the tattooed, pierced underground.

The festival's success—especially as a crucial launchpad for decade-defining acts such as Nine Inch Nails, Rage Against the Machine and Tool—made it a brand: "spring break for the alienated," as the New York Times wrote in 1993. Indeed, the third festival's Chicago date was initially advertised as simply a brand, selling out before any bands were announced. The music industry took note: As the author Michael Azerrad notes, "a new generation of consumers had arrived," and alternative was going mainstream. It was a paradox that proved impossible for Lollapalooza to square: How could one, as the journalist Rob Tannenbaum puts it, be "both inclusive and exclusive at the same time . . . let's see how big we can make the subculture." Eventually, in the words of Flaming Lips singer Wayne Coyne, "the party just attracts too big of a party."

Lollapalooza may have defined a generational identity, but imagined communities map only partially onto genres, and the cracks between nominally related signifiers such as "alternative" and "indie" quickly emerged: The 1995 "nerds on Lollapalooza" edition—headlined by Sonic Youth and stocked with relatively straight-laced acts like Pavement, Yo La Tengo and Superchunk ("there were a *lot* of kids and nannies," says Elastica drummer Justin Welch)—was a commercial disappointment. When Lollapalooza reacted by enlisting Metallica for the testosterone-heavy following summer, the choice of such a popular, mainstream group triggered an identity crisis: alternative to what?

Even as the Lollapalooza brand was being diluted, the Lollapalooza model—"a big summer

tour with a shared collective vibe," as Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil puts it in a foreword—was quickly adopted by others: the jammy H.O.R.D.E. Tour in 1992; the punky Warped Tour (whose founder, Kevin Lyman, was Lollapalooza's stage manager for its first two years) in 1995; the metalhead Ozzfest in 1996; the feminist Lilith Fair in 1997. After an

An odd collection of college rock, punk and metal bands set out on a tour meant to be more than a concert.

electronica-curious 1997 edition (main-stage acts included Orbital, the Orb and the Prodigy), Lollapalooza went into hibernation. After one aborted revival, the brand was acquired by the promoters behind the Austin City Limits festival and relaunched in 2005 as—like the defining 21st-century festivals, Coachella and Bonnaroo—a multiday, single-destination festival, this one in Chicago.

Oral history, as a digestible way to tell the story of pop-culture moments, is the book equivalent of a talking-head documentary. The authors of this one offer brief introductory summaries of each year of the tour, but the prevailing tone is light, streamlined and chewy with backstage gossip (even in the occasional coy evasion): everyone hates Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan, everyone loves to party with L7, heroin is an open secret, nudity is rampant, and Ministry's Al Jourgensen roams the halls with holsters of Bushmills spiked with liquid LSD. (Every summer, delightfully, seems to feature a disgruntled British goth act miserable in the midday sun.)

Like documentary producers, Messrs. Bienstock and Beaujour largely leave analysis to their interviewees. This has the effect of leaving some conclusions untroubled: Soundgarden's Mr. Thayil says that "we're at a place now in American popular culture and youth culture that is far more integrated and tolerant in terms of racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender identity issues. . . . Those are the sons and daughters of Lollapalooza."

This may strike some readers as a naive, or at least rose-colored, interpretation: The Gen X demographic, "the sons and daughters of Lollapalooza," were the only generational cohort to decisively vote for Donald Trump in 2024. The authors' précis of the values of "alternative nation"—"social consciousness (with a healthy dose of cynicism)"—arguably undervalues, in the long term, the nihilistic cynicism that was core to the "alternative" worldview, and its accompanying devotion to performative transgression for its own sake.

"In the 90s," says Helium's Mary Timony, "people were still shocked by things or didn't like things"—comprehensive exposure to subcultures in the internet age has, perhaps, removed the giddiness of taboo-breaking for younger cohorts. A defining political statement of the Lollapalooza era was Rage Against the Machine's naked protest, in 1993, against the attempts of the Parents' Music Resource Center (PMRC) to affix warning labels to albums containing explicit lyrics. The anticensorship, free-speech absolutist consensus was a core assumption of the popular counterculture of the time, but its political valence has shifted or been co-opted by the political right—alongside some significant tranche of "the sons and daughters of Lollapalooza."

Mr. Nicolay is a musician and the author, most recently, of "Band People: Life and Work In Popular Music." He teaches at Bard College.

An Edit Button for Her Past



SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
LIZ BRASWELL

The price of time travel is a dear one.

THE FIRST RULE of time travel is that you can only travel within your own lifetime. The second rule of time travel is that you can only stay for 90 seconds. And "The Third Rule of Time Travel" (Orbit, 336 pages, \$18.99), according to the author Philip Fracassi, is that you can only observe—you have no ability to change events. Which (along with comparisons to the television show "Sliders") raises the philosophical question of whether time travel differs greatly from memory.

Beth Darlow works for the (mysterious, ultimately evil) Langan Corp., trying to understand the time machine she and her husband created while raising their daughter, Isabella. The device sends Beth back to the worst moments in her life: the childhood plane crash that killed her whole family and the day her husband died. Finally it brings her to a version of the past where Isabella is stillborn: Present-day reality is changing as a result of Beth's time travel. She must figure out how and why this is happening if she is to save Isabella, who no longer exists in the original timeline.

The ideas are good, the pacing brisk. The only problem is Beth:

She's a little too strung out and messily emotional to be believable—a little too obviously written by a male author. But "The Third Rule of Time Travel" would make an excellent "Solaris"-type movie (Clooney, not Tarkovsky) that probes the endurance of grief, the importance of memory and the ultimate malleability of reality and perception.

Edward Ashton is the author of "Mickey7," about an endlessly dying and reborn colonist grunt on an alien world. The book was recently adapted as the movie "Mickey17" by Bong Joon Ho, the director of "Parasite." Mr. Ashton's "The Fourth Consort" (St. Martin's Press, 288 pages, \$29.00) is another sci-fi tale about the strange jobs people get recruited for in the future and how they cope with their nebulous morality.

After his father's death, Dalton Greaves is drinking his life away when he meets Neera, a mysterious woman who offers him the chance to join her as a first-contact specialist for the Unity, a league of advanced alien species that has recently announced its presence to humans. The Unity's competitor in the galactic race for new worlds is the Assembly, another federation of aliens,

whose soldiers, the stickmen, are nightmarish elite warriors.

Dalton's first-contact experience goes sideways when representatives of the Assembly and the Unity arrive simultaneously at a new planet. After their two exploration ships blow each other up, the queen of the planet's

THIS WEEK

The Third Rule of Time Travel
By Philip Fracassi

The Fourth Consort
By Edward Ashton

When We Were Real
By Daryl Gregory

arthropod-like race takes Dalton and a stickman captive. While Neera waits in a shuttle for help, Dalton must ensure that the locals ultimately ally with Unity—but is the Assembly really as evil as Neera and her boss have been telling him? Is his employer's goal to make first contact or to seize the planet's resources before their rivals do? And why does the queen, who is physically incompatible with humans, make Dalton a royal consort?

"The Fourth Consort" is reminiscent of the movie "Enemy Mine" (1985) and Alan Dean Foster's novel "Nor Crystal Tears" (1982)—but much cozier. Action and imagined future tech are second to dialogue: Dalton talks his way out of most scary situations, and there is plenty of clever banter between him, his co-consorts, the stickman and Neera. Light and enjoyable, it's less about galactic intrigue and more about a man realizing where he stands in the universe.

Even more entertaining is Daryl Gregory's "When We Were Real" (S&S/Saga Press, 464 pages, \$29.99), a madcap romp across a simulated landscape with a bus full of truth seekers. Mr. Gregory takes a delightfully nihilist approach to the idea of reality. In his alternate America it has been revealed that the entire world is a simulation; for a while panic and craziness ensue. Then everyone moves on.

There are constant reminders that the world is a creation of the Simulators, of course, such as the code-glitch monuments known as the Impossibles. There's the Frozen Tornado, a giant, conical midair *thing* made up of the "stuff" that defies physics; the creepy, faceless Minecraft-like

sheep of the Hollow Flock; and the Zipper, a gorge where gravity turns 90 degrees and there's some pretty sweet rafting.

A guided trip to see all seven Impossibles seems like the perfect vacation for Dulin and his terminally ill friend, JP. Their companions are a motley crew: a pregnant teen influencer, a "Realist" who drags his reluctant teenage son along to prove all the monuments are fake (they're not), and a mysterious engineer on the run because she doesn't want to create a self-aware artificial intelligence that would remain enslaved to the company she works for. She gets help from a representative of another version of the simulation, who blips in with helpful guidance and then disappears.

Because this is America, even simulated, there is a final showdown with lots of guns. But the journey there is pure fun as tension mounts and questions grow about the Simulators, whether the engineer will escape and if the tour guide will have a breakdown. Not all of the questions are answered, even for the nun facing her doubts about God. Because in the end there is only one question: Does it matter if life is a simulation, so long as we make friends along the way?

BOOKS

‘For how can I see the evil that will befall my people, and how can I see the destruction of my kindred?’ –ESTHER 8:6



LETTER WRITING ‘Esther and Mordecai’ (ca. 1685) by Aert de Gelder.

The Art of Survival

The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt

By Abigail Rapoport
Yale, 160 pages, \$50

By STUART HALPERN

IN 1667, a Jewish refugee in Amsterdam named Clara de Almeida entered a lottery. As a recent arrival in the Netherlands, she was desperate. Her grandparents had been killed by the Inquisition in Córdoba, Spain, and her brother executed at the stake in Santiago de Compostela. Their crime had been loyalty to their Jewish faith. Seeking to afford her wedding, Clara registered her name with the charitable society Santa Companhia de Dotar Orphas e Donzellas, known as the Dotar. Established in 1615 by Sephardic Jews who had escaped the Inquisition in Portugal, the Dotar distributed, by lottery, funds to aspiring brides who had arrived in the city from regions in Europe in which Jews were persecuted. Still operational today, the Dotar’s date for its annual drawing is the holiday of Purim, a celebration of the victory of the heroine Esther over the evil Haman, who plotted to destroy Jews in the ancient Persian empire. The biblical Book of Esther recounts her story, set in the fifth century B.C. After Esther wins a contest to become the new bride of the Persian ruler, Ahasuerus, she and her cousin Mordecai, who are descendants of exiles from ancient Judea, must defend their coreligionists against a plan by Ahasuerus’ scheming advisor, Haman, to exterminate them. Inspired by Mordecai—who tells Esther that she has been elevated to power “for such a time as this”—the queen turns the tables in a dramatic revelation of her Jewish identity to the king and Haman. She wins the day and Haman is put to death. With “The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt,” the scholars Abigail Rapoport and Michele Frederick investigate the profound

political, religious and personal meanings this story held for both Jewish and Christian communities in 17th-century Amsterdam, in the era when the Netherlands emerged as an independent power. This elegantly designed volume, edited by Ms. Rapoport, a curator at the Jewish Museum in New York City, and Ms. Frederick, a curator at the North Carolina Museum of Art, is a companion to the 2025 Jewish Museum exhibit of the same name. It showcases dozens of paintings and works on paper by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) and his contemporaries. The book also highlights the

Queen Esther was a figure of inspiration to Jews. In the 17th century, Dutch artists painted her as a symbol of courage.

story’s use in contemporaneous Jewish ceremonial art, decorative arts, and biblical theater. The result conveys the range of Esther’s cultural impact on Dutch society and its emergent identity on the world stage. As a tale of immigrants forced to utilize their wits to survive an era in which God’s miracles were absent, Esther’s story has long been a source of comfort to diasporic Jewish communities. Particularly among crypto-Jews, who were forced to suppress the practice of their faith after being forcibly converted to Christianity, Esther’s heroism—especially in the context of her hidden background—assumed iconic status. But this book demonstrates some of the ways Esther’s story helped forge Dutch self-perception more broadly. As Ms. Rapoport and Ms. Frederick detail, the waves of Jewish immigration to the Netherlands coincided with the Dutch War of Independence, better known as the Eighty Years’

War (1568–1648). “The Dutch,” Ms. Rapoport writes, “who saw themselves as religiously and politically oppressed by the Spanish monarchy, found in the Book of Esther a viscerally apt analogy for their own liberation and associated their war of independence with the Jewish people’s struggle with, and ultimate triumph over, the ancient Persian Empire.” While one can quibble with this formulation—Mordecai and Esther didn’t so much triumph over the Persian Empire as they did survive within it as a minority—the larger point remains. The Netherlands found a national heroine in the ancient Persian-Jewish monarch. Her popularity emerged from a combination of factors. By the 1670s, the Sephardic Jewish community in Amsterdam had grown to some 2,500 residents. Emboldened by the city’s freedoms—the Dutch imposed neither identifying badges nor enclosure in a ghetto—Jews from Spain and Portugal contributed to the vibrant commercial and art scene. Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel founded its first printing press. Ms. Rapoport notes that Amsterdam in this “Dutch Golden Age,” boasted “the highest rate of book printing in the world,” with editions of the Bible at the heart of such industry. At the same time, Ms. Rapoport writes, educated Dutch Christians enthusiastically embraced the Esther story, “identifying with its themes of resilience in the face of religious persecution by an imperial power.” The authors show how even images of the “Maid of Holland”—a symbolic figure of national courage and beauty who represented protestant heroism in the resistance to Catholic Spain—drew on images associated with Esther. No wonder then that the artists of the time couldn’t seem to paint scenes from Esther’s tale fast enough. Rembrandt’s teacher Pieter Lastman depicted “The Triumph of Mordecai,” in which a downtrodden Haman leads a beaming Mordecai through the streets of Persia’s capital, in a small, horizontal panel in 1624.

A large domed building can be seen in the background of Rembrandt’s 1641 etching of the same scene. It echoes traditional Netherlandish illustrations that since the 15th century had integrated images of the temple of Jerusalem into the Amsterdam cityscape—a signal reflective of the belief that Amsterdam, with its thriving multicultural society, believed itself to be a New Jerusalem. Rembrandt’s repeated engagement with Esther’s story suggests how deeply the Dutch adoption of the narrative went. In what scholars suggest is his earliest representation of Esther, “A Jewish Heroine From the Hebrew Bible” (1632–33), Rembrandt painted a round-faced young woman whose hair is being dressed by a servant. Her expression is contemplative, and she raises her hand to her heart in what has been understood to be a gesture of faith. In the 1635 etching “The Great Jewish Bride,” a similar-looking woman clasps a rolled-up scroll, reinforcing the presumption that the earlier painting is the heroine of the biblical book. Rembrandt’s final student, Aert de Gelder, painted the Jewish queen on even more occasions than his teacher. “For the Dutch, and especially for Rembrandt,” the editors argue, “Esther offered a female protagonist of strong character whose actions as a responsible citizen benefit all.” They conclude “The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt” with a surprise—a leap forward more than 300 years. In 1992, the Jewish Museum commissioned an original work by the African-American artist Fred Wilson, offering his take on Esther’s heroism. The image depicts Harriet Tubman as Esther, dressed in Persian royal garb. Those who embody the ancient heroine’s selfless courage on behalf of her people have continued to step forward “for such a time as this.”

Mr. Halpern is the deputy director of the Straus Center at Yeshiva University and the editor of “Esther in America.”

A Career, Frame By Frame

Alfred Hitchcock All the Films

By Bernard Benoliel et al.
Black Dog & Leventhal, 648 pages, \$60

IN THE AGE of the internet, the idea of a reference book exploring a movie director’s complete filmography may seem a little quaint. Yet even the most informed admirers of the Master of Suspense are likely to be impressed by “Alfred Hitchcock All the Films,” which, in a single, beautifully designed, extremely hefty volume, compiles everything one might wish to know about Hitchcock’s incomparable career. Fulfilling the promise of the book’s title, the four co-authors, Bernard Benoliel, Gilles Esposito, Murielle Joudet and Jean-François Rauger, examine every work to which Hitchcock ever affixed his directorial signature. There are the masterpieces “Rear Window” (1954) and “The Birds” (1963); neglected charmers such as “Young and Innocent” (1937) and “The Trouble with Harry” (1955); and those flawed films whose reputation is less sure, among them “Under Capricorn” (1949) and “Torn Curtain” (1966). Each film is given the same treatment: a synopsis of its plot,

discussion of its genesis, analysis of its casting, overview of its production and summation of its reception. The co-authors are officious in doling out this information but never impersonal, sharing their own critical perceptions throughout. All Hitchcock-helmed episodes of his TV series are also represented, including the iconic “Lamb to the Slaughter” (1958). Numerous subheads render the book easily digestible. For example, readers wishing to know about the lighting of the Greenwich Village set in “Rear Window” will easily locate the relevant paragraphs; so will those curious about the alternate endings imagined (and filmed) for “Suspicion” (1941). Peppered throughout are special sections such as “Freeze Frame,” which scrutinizes individual shots or scenes; and “Where Is Hitchcock?” which discusses the director’s incessant cameos. Breaking up the film-by-film structure are discrete chapters on larger topics, including Hitchcock’s work with specific collaborators, such as the costume designer Edith Head and the titles designer Saul Bass; his standing among French film critics; and his career-long depiction of unusually intense mothers. If one becomes overwhelmed by the text, the book could be thumbed through for its abundant pictures alone, which include Grace Kelly and Ray Milland smiling while taking a break from shooting 1954’s “Dial M for Murder” and Cary Grant perched on the Mount Rushmore set during the production of 1959’s “North by Northwest.”

SHORTCUTS: FILM
By PETER TONGUETTE



PHOTO ©ZALANY

RÉSUMÉ Alfred Hitchcock in 1966 next to the scripts of the films he directed.

A Star Is Born in Oklahoma

Vera Miles

By Christopher McKittrick
Kentucky, 312 pages, \$29.95

AMONG THE MANY actresses to have worked with Alfred Hitchcock, Vera Miles lacked the startling beauty of Grace Kelly, the mystique of Ingrid Bergman or the capacity for shrieking of Janet Leigh. In “Vera Miles,” Christopher McKittrick has written a sympathetic biography of, as his subtitle describes her, “the Hitchcock blonde who got away.” Born in 1930 in Boise City, Okla., Ms. Miles endured an upbringing marred by economic woes and her parents’ divorce. She eventually found success as a model before her beauty made her a natural émigré to Hollywood at age 18. Underutilized at RKO and 20th Century Fox, Ms. Miles turned to television. “It was more or less a matter of making a living,” she told the gossip columnist Hedda Hopper. Hitchcock became besotted with the actress based on one of her small-screen appearances and promptly plugged her into his own TV show, “Alfred Hitchcock Presents.” Persuaded that she possessed the demure

but alluring quality he sought, Hitchcock signed her to a contract that promised substantial film work. Ms. Miles was realistic about her persona. “I looked straight, and I looked Midwest, and those were the roles I got,” she said. In her two films for Hitchcock, Ms. Miles delivered performances of rare credibility and subtlety: In “The Wrong Man” (1956), she played a woman whose mental state is ravaged by false accusations of robbery against her spouse; in “Psycho” (1960), she appeared as the doggedly sensible sibling of Leigh’s Marion Crane. Mr. McKittrick, an entertainment journalist, appreciatively attends to Ms. Miles’s deeply affecting performances in John Ford’s “The Searchers” (1956) and “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance” (1962), and gamely discusses her many appearances in disposable TV shows and undistinguished films. Still, Ms. Miles can claim bragging rights for being Hitchcock’s preferred pick to play the lead in his 1958 masterpiece, “Vertigo.” She was dismissed from that and future leading roles for the director when she chose family over fame, becoming pregnant for a third time. “He told me it was in bad taste to have more than two children,” Ms. Miles said. “I took his advice into consideration and had four.”

Mr. Tonguette is a contributing writer at the Washington Examiner.

NEWS QUIZ DANIEL AKST

1. President Trump nominated acting CDC chief Susan Monarez to remain in the job. What's unusual about her?

- ☐ A. She isn't a U.S. citizen.
- ☐ B. She lacks a medical degree.
- ☐ C. She is a chiropractor.
- ☐ D. All of the above

2. In an online chat about U.S. war plans in Yemen, Trump officials mistakenly included the editor—of what?

- ☐ A. The Wall Street Journal
- ☐ B. The New York Times
- ☐ C. The Atlantic
- ☐ D. Al Jazeera

3. What's going on in South Korea's Gyeongsang province?

- ☐ A. It's becoming a global center of microchip production.
- ☐ B. It has the world's lowest fertility rate.
- ☐ C. A strike is strangling kimchi supplies.
- ☐ D. It's the site of the country's worst-ever wildfires.

4. What's all the rage among the young?

- ☐ A. Analytic philosophy
- ☐ B. Limited edition Oreos
- ☐ C. Roth IRAs
- ☐ D. Protein

5. President Trump said he'd impose 25% tariffs on all imported vehicles. What share of new passenger vehicles sold in the U.S. last year were assembled elsewhere?

- ☐ A. Nearly a quarter
- ☐ B. Nearly a third

Answers are listed below the crossword solutions at right.



6. Paramount and NBCUniversal are feuding over whose streaming service has rights to air spinoffs of which hit show?

- ☐ A. "Shtisel"
- ☐ B. "Yellowstone"
- ☐ C. "Succession"
- ☐ D. "Reacher"

7. Who called a snap election for April 28?

- ☐ A. Mark Carney in Canada
- ☐ B. Keir Starmer in the U.K.
- ☐ C. Anthony Albanese in Australia
- ☐ D. Barack Obama in retirement

8. 23andMe filed for Chapter 11 protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court—where?

- ☐ A. Illinois
- ☐ B. New York
- ☐ C. Michigan
- ☐ D. Missouri

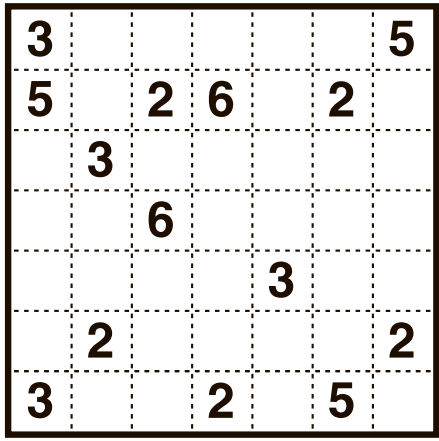
9. A new book by Amanda Knox is titled "Free: My Search for Meaning." Where was she incarcerated and then exonerated of murder?

- ☐ A. Italy
- ☐ B. Aruba
- ☐ C. Mexico
- ☐ D. Thailand



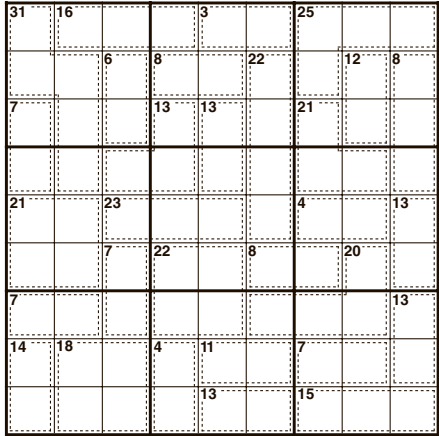
NUMBER PUZZLES

Cell Blocks



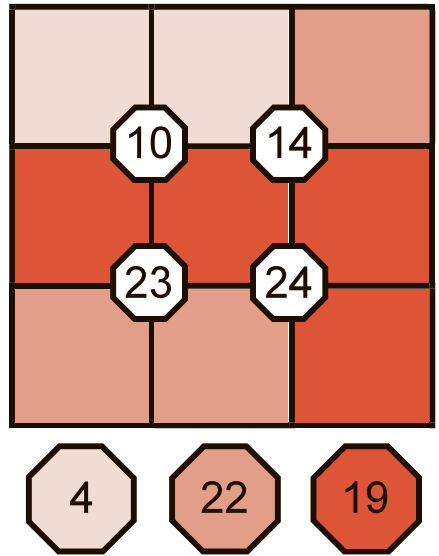
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Killer Sudoku Level 3



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

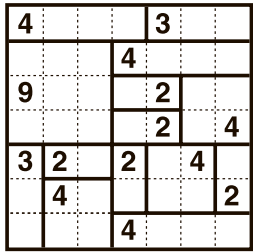
Suko



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each color total is correct.

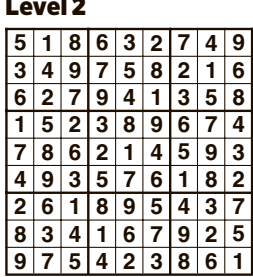
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

Cell Blocks

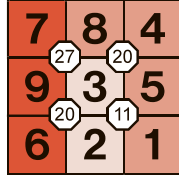


For previous weeks' puzzles, and to discuss strategies with other solvers, go to [WSJ.com/puzzles](https://www.wsj.com/puzzles).

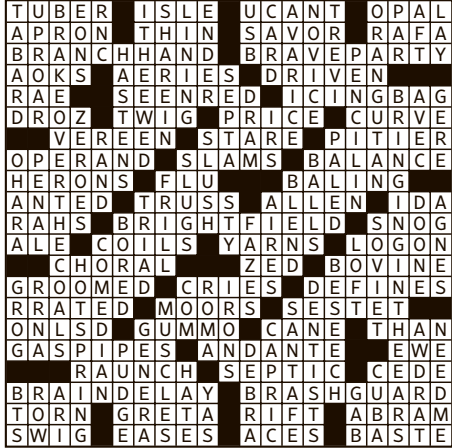
Killer Sudoku Level 2



Suko



Cold Front



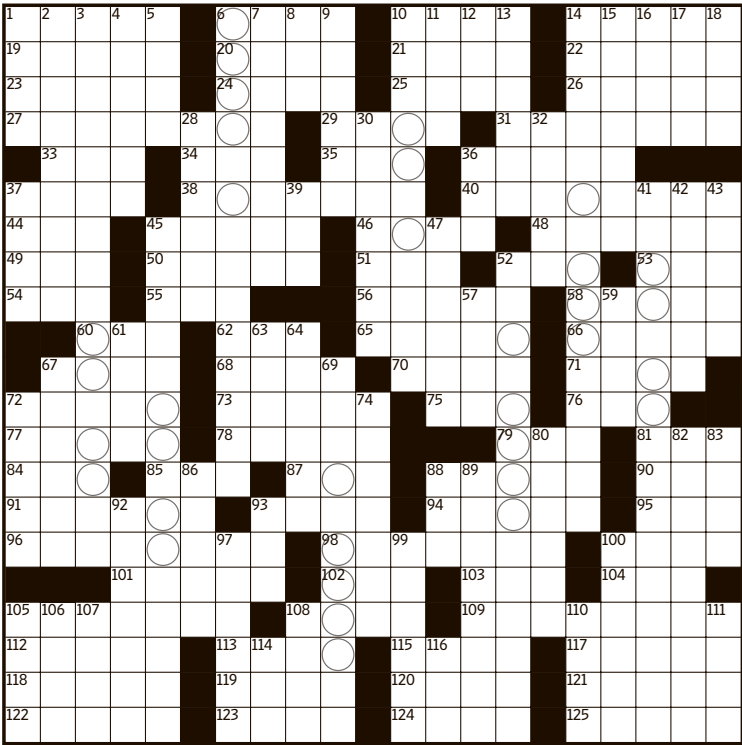
Acrostic

Oscar Wilde, "(The Picture of) Dorian Gray"—"Beauty is a form of genius.... It needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty."

- A. Off the table; B. Steelie; C. Clean slate; D. Attrition; E. Ristretto; F. Winnie-the-Pooh; G. "I'm So Excited"; H. Litter bin; I. Dustin Hoffman; J. Effervescent; K. Drillers; L. On the qui vive; M. Reading Gaol; N. Icosahedron; O. Atlantis; P. New York Mets; Q. Ghost light; R. Rip-offs; S. Air signs; T. "You Oughta Know"

THE JOURNAL WEEKEND PUZZLES edited by MIKE SHENK

Answers to News Quiz: 1.B, 2.C, 3.D, 4.C, 5.C, 6.B, 7.A, 8.D, 9.A



Breaking Bread | by Joe Deeney

- Across**

1 Overdo, as a part

6 Court decree

10 Score symbol

14 Fly catchers?

19 That's just like ewe

20 Sister of Poseidon

21 Basic camera setting

22 "It bothers me when you're so upset"

23 General denial?

24 Girder with wide flanges

25 "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" director Johnson

26 Purifying process, for short

27 Curry favor with

29 Busy hands

31 Double space?

33 Game cube

34 Tolkien creature

35 Senator Klobuchar

36 Comedian Essman

37 Antibloating brand

38 Inform

40 "Jeremy" band

44 "Antiques Roadshow" network

45 With artful modesty

46 Difficult to grasp

48 Show starter
- 49 Clay, later

50 Led down the aisle, slangily

51 Jacket paragraph

52 Golden Age film studio

53 MetLife Stadium team, on scoreboards

54 Third qtr.'s end

55 Bruno, to Mirabel, in "Encanto"

56 Have the same case, grammatically

58 Camel cousin

60 Call option's counterpart

62 It might really be a drone

65 Slug's lack

66 Curtis's "Freaky Friday" co-star

67 School group?

68 Diwali dress

70 Anklebones

71 Positive thinker's mantra

72 Tempered by experience

73 Graph representation

75 "Da 5 Bloods" director

76 Male delivery

77 101 course, often

78 African antelope

79 J. Edgar Hoover Bldg. occupant

81 2022 NL newbies
- 84 Track star Atkins

85 "Tom Lake" novelist Patchett

87 Article in Österreich

88 Leisured stroll

90 Holiday whose celebrants might eat banh chung

91 Sharp as a tack

93 Run out of steam

94 Domain of Poseidon

95 Mare's meal

96 1993 film that received Oscars for Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress

98 Protective barrier

100 Local lecture program

101 Butterfly garden flower

102 PC key

103 "___ been curious..."

104 Leatherwork tool

105 Employed smear tactics, e.g.

108 Letters with a zero

109 Sub's single, say

112 Ancient marketplace

113 "So Big" author Ferber

115 1998 desktop debut

117 Cartoonist Finck

118 Burdened down
- 119 Particular places

120 Irrascibility

121 Coastal recess

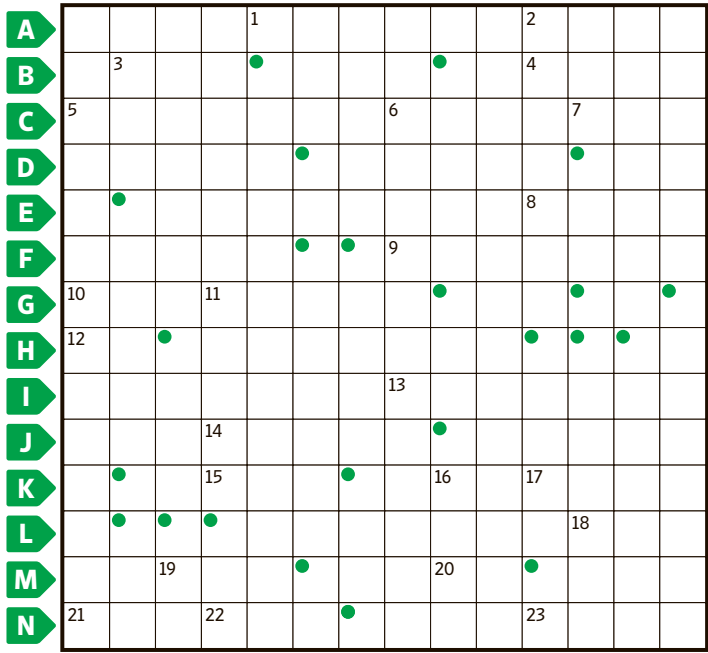
122 Kicked, in a way

123 Future expert

124 Virtual people

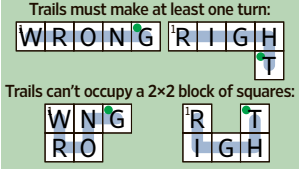
125 Walks on water?
- Down**
- 1 Warn a weaver, say
- 2 Not bound to happen
- 3 University whose mascot is Bully the Bulldog
- 4 Meant for everybody
- 5 Third-largest country in South America
- 6 "Exhale (Shoop Shoop)" singer
- 7 Decant, in a way
- 8 Savings for later yrs.
- 9 Clan identifier
- 10 Matter
- 11 "Despacito" singer Fonsi
- 12 H look-alike
- 13 Pot edible?
- 14 What a plane's transponders system is meant to prevent
- 15 Product often sold alongside shovels
- 16 Folded food
- 17 1982 Disney film with a 2010 sequel

- 18 Button that often looks like a paper plane
- 28 Speaker of the House before McCarthy
- 30 Blobs with pseudopods
- 32 "Wicked Game" singer Chris
- 36 Mole, e.g.
- 37 Rice measurements?
- 39 Elizabethan playwright Thomas
- 41 Bible story that begins with "a mighty tempest in the sea"
- 42 Average fellow
- 43 Soccer star Rapinoe
- 45 1995 swashbuckler that ranks among the biggest box office bombs ever
- 47 Maker of Revitalift products
- 52 Humanitarian aid agency's offering
- 57 Fanning of "The Great"
- 59 Bananas, in Bolivia
- 61 FAQ target
- 63 Diane of "Fire Country"
- 64 Freezer aisle brand
- 67 Surface coating
- 69 Not well kept
- 72 Master, as Texas hold 'em
- 74 Pathology focus
- 80 Trounced
- 82 Star
- 83 "Mr. Robot" band
- 86 Quaint "cool!"
- 88 Spotify genre
- 89 Bearer of purple berries
- 92 Cornered
- 93 Gift tag word
- 97 Staircase posts
- 99 Periodically available sandwiches
- 100 Sesame-based sauce
- 105 Pedestrian path
- 106 "The Candy House" novelist Jennifer
- 107 Connecting point
- 108 At some prior time
- 110 Staple substitute
- 111 Some ink
- 114 Fawn's mother
- 116 Customizable Nintendo avatar



Trail Mix | by Patrick Berry

Answers fit into this grid in two ways: Rows and Trails. Each Row contains two answers placed side by side, clued in order. Each Trail answer begins in the corresponding numbered square and ends in one of the dotted squares, making one or more turns along the way. Trails will never overlap each other, nor will they make hairpin turns (that is, no two-by-two block of grid squares can be filled by a single Trail answer). Lengths of the Trail answers are given in parentheses. In the completed grid, each letter will be used once in a Row answer and once in a Trail answer.



Rows

- A Lead role in "Clueless"
- B Sixth note of the C minor scale (2 wds.)
- C Coalition of like-minded voters
- D Actress Janeane of "Reality Bites" and "Mystery Men"
- E Hawkish political group (2 wds.)
- F Pilots a plane
- G Joyous feeling
- H Like a steel drum's surface
- I Exercises control over (2 wds.)
- J Targets of tuneups
- K Fruit with a portmanteau name
- L Marathon runner's asset
- M Dreams up
- N Toy that makes a bang (2 wds.)
- O Humanitarian reformer Dix
- P Reuben sandwich maker's necessity (2 wds.)
- Q One taking bets
- R Cash in the Nashville
- S Songwriters Hall of Fame
- T "My goodness!"
- U Song you stand for
- V Relinquish by not fully reading the contract, as rights (2 wds.)
- W Birthday gift accompaniment
- X Like cereals that contain bran (Hyph.)
- Y Trail mix
- Z Five-time Derby winner Eddie

- 1 Pilots a plane
- 2 Joyous feeling
- 3 Like a steel drum's surface
- 4 Exercises control over (2 wds.)
- 5 Targets of tuneups
- 6 Fruit with a portmanteau name
- 7 Marathon runner's asset
- 8 Dreams up
- 9 Toy that makes a bang (2 wds.)
- 10 Humanitarian reformer Dix
- 11 Reuben sandwich maker's necessity (2 wds.)
- 12 One taking bets
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- 14 Songwriters Hall of Fame
- 15 "My goodness!"
- 16 Song you stand for
- 17 Relinquish by not fully reading the contract, as rights (2 wds.)
- 18 Birthday gift accompaniment
- 19 Like cereals that contain bran (Hyph.)
- 20 Trail mix
- 21 Five-time Derby winner Eddie
- 22 One of two colors (along with orange) that Isaac Newton belatedly added to the visible spectrum (6)
- 23 President's reward to a loyal politico (7,4)
- 24 Company that has retired dozens of colors (7)
- 25 Draw the boundary of (9)
- 26 Render impure (11)
- 27 Winner of three Best Director Oscars during the 1930s (5)
- 28 Flies the coop (7)
- 29 Sonata finale (4)
- 30 Female in an Arthurian love triangle (9)
- 31 Comic strip character who worked for a newspaper called The Flash (6,5)
- 32 Missouri ___ (protrusion at the state's southeast corner) (8)
- 33 Island where karate originated, and where Mr. Miyagi was born (7)
- 34 Missionary's mission (10)
- 35 Band whose music is used for all "CSI" theme songs (3,3)
- 36 Name for hell in the New Testament (7)
- 37 Have on one's person (5)
- 38 Brand of pipe cleaner (5)
- 39 Likely time for monsoons (5,6)

REVIEW



MY MONDAY MORNING | LANE FLORSHEIM

Gemma Chan Is Ready for the ‘Crazy Rich Asians’ TV Show

The British actress talks about Marvel workouts, her beloved rescue cat and starting the day with Yorkshire Tea

Gemma Chan’s Hollywood breakout was “Crazy Rich Asians,” the 2018 box-office hit about love and wealth in Singapore. But one of the biggest moments of her career, she says, came from a direct-to-streaming role.

Chan had been cast alongside Meryl Streep in Steven Soderbergh’s “Let Them All Talk,” a film where most of the dialogue was improvised. One of the first times she met Streep was to shoot a scene together.

“It’s a highlight and also the most terrifying moment of my life,” Chan, 42, said. “Improvise with Meryl, one of the greatest actresses of all time? Sure!”

This month, Chan, whose past work includes the films “Captain Marvel” and “Don’t Worry Darling,” plays the love interest of a man with amnesia (André Holland) in director Duke Johnson’s “The Actor.”

“At the core of it is a very emotional story, asking questions [like], are we the same person that we were a few years ago?” Chan said. “When I think back on periods of my life where I’ve lived somewhere different or the years when I was at college, in many ways it feels like it’s a whole lifetime ago in a completely different person.”

She said the biggest change for her was in what she values: “When I was younger, I was constantly craving new experiences. I still appreciate those, but now I really want wisdom.”

Chan lives in London with her boyfriend, the actor Dominic Cooper. Here, she talks about the cat they adopted, how she trains for Marvel movies and her favorite characters on “The White Lotus.”

What time do you get up on Mondays, and what’s the first thing you do after waking up?

If I’m not filming, around 8 a.m. I go and say good morning to my cat, Mr. Kitty. Then I do a bit of stretching, a couple of sun salutations and then, most importantly, go and make myself a cup of tea.

How do you like your tea and breakfast?

I have Yorkshire Tea with a drop of semi-skimmed milk, so it’s strong. When I’m filming, I like to eat a proper full English breakfast, eggs and bacon and all the stuff around it. If I’m not filming, I have a lighter breakfast. It might be some muesli with some flax on the top and some berries or avocado on toast or a boiled egg.

What do you do for exercise? How does it change when you’re training for a Marvel movie or something similar?

When I’m training for a role, it’s much more intense. If it requires fight scenes and things like that, I’ll be working with a trainer to do mixed training: some weights, some boxing, all that stuff. I play a dancer

in the [upcoming] film “Josephine,” so I did quite intensive work doing ballet and contemporary dance. Then, when the job’s done, I go to the other extreme. I don’t really like going to the gym.

“The Actor” is a mysterious movie. What got you excited about being in it?

I’d seen Duke Johnson’s film “Anomalisa,” which was a stop-motion animation film. I thought it was really hauntingly beautiful, it really stayed

with me. Then I was sent this script. He had such a clear vision of what he wanted to do to bring a lot of the techniques from his animation work into a live-action movie.

The “Crazy Rich Asians” TV series in the works at Max centers on your character, Astrid. What can you share about it?

I can’t really say any more than what’s already out there. [Director] Jon Chu has said that it’s been such a long time since the film came out

and it’s so beloved—they’ve wanted to wait until they get it really right before bringing everybody back. So I’m crossing my fingers and willing it to happen.

What’s a moment that’s really challenged you as an actor?

Playing an android in a series called “Humans.” It made me appreciate all the things we take for granted that make us human that I couldn’t do playing the part. By the end of the shoot, I was looking forward to

playing a character that could cry, sneeze, blink.

You wrote a moving essay about your dad and his time in the merchant navy a few years ago. What’s something you’ve learned from him?

My dad is someone who is very secure in who he is. He doesn’t look down on anyone else and he’s not intimidated by anyone else who perhaps has more money or higher status, whatever that means in our world. I like the way he moves in the world.

What’s your most prized possession?

He’s not my possession, but my cat. I was not a cat person before I met this cat. My boyfriend did a job in Puglia and he stayed in a farmhouse, and there were stray cats around. This tiny little black kitten with half a tail started sleeping in his room. I would FaceTime him, and this little kitten would always be on the call. They find black cats unlucky in Italy, and we were a bit worried about what would happen to him if we left him there, so we adopted him. We took him from the beautiful Puglian countryside to a small flat in London. I think he’s happy.

You’re a big reader, what’s the last good book you read?

“The Hand that First Held Mine” by Maggie O’Farrell. It’s a beautiful book. I’m also reading a book called “A City on Mars” by Kelly and Zach Weinersmith, a husband and wife who are somewhat skeptical about the whole endeavor to settle space.

What have you been watching lately?

I’m really enjoying “The White Lotus,” the kind of slow burn of what’s going on. I love the three friends, that dynamic that keeps shifting is so intriguing. And “The Traitors.”

I’ve read in a few profiles that you’re a shy person. How do you overcome that for work?

I mean, you’ve just gotta. It’s almost like playing a role. It never feels completely natural, but it’s part of the job.

What do you wear when you want to feel powerful or your best?

Good tailoring makes me feel powerful. Really well-cut trousers and a jacket.

Do you collect anything?

I’ve got quite a good collection of football shirts. I quite enjoy miniatures.

What’s one piece of advice you’ve gotten that’s guided you?

To always stay true to yourself. You learn most from your mistakes and your failures. And to just always be nice to everyone.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

MASTERPIECE | THE SAN BRIZIO CHAPEL FRESCOES (1499-1504), BY LUCA SIGNORELLI

Vivid Visions of the End

By JUDITH H. DOBRZYNSKI

WHEN THEY FIRST were revealed, the frescoes in the San Brizio Chapel of the majestic cathedral in Orvieto, Italy, both awed visitors and shocked them. The realistic scenes (1499-1504), portraying the end of the world and inspired by the Book of Revelation, were terrifying enough on their own. Added to that was the lifelike portrayal of dozens of nude bodies—in a church! They were vivid, dynamic and monumental in size, painted by Luca Signorelli from nearby Cortona, a respected artist who had studied with Piero della Francesca but was not considered a great one.

Fra Angelico, the beloved Dominican friar known for his serene, luminous works, had started on the chapel some 50 years before, but he died in 1455, having completed only the ceiling. After decades of stalling and financial limitations, cathedral authorities hired Signorelli (c. 1441-1523) to finish the job. He was not their first choice.

But Signorelli had a bold vision for the chapel, epic in its ambition. In the four lunettes—two each on opposite sides—he created highly original tableaux for the Rule of the Antichrist, the Blessed in Paradise, the Damned in Hell and the Resurrection of the Dead; in the altar bay

between them, he painted the Last Judgment. Their unforgettable power is obvious on first glance. His use of architectural features, linear perspective and foreshortening draws viewers into these complex scenes. Most notably, his considerable knowledge of anatomy—he had long studied the subject and may have dissected cadavers—allowed him to produce detailed, sculptural images of the human body in multiple positions, as they had rarely, if ever, been rendered before.

Signorelli’s daring figures influenced many artists, including Raphael and, most strikingly, Michelangelo, as he painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508-12) and, even more so, years later, in his Last Judgment on its altar wall.

Signorelli’s figurative prowess is best seen in the nudes that dominate his visions of both the Damned and the Resurrection of the body. Tortured by demons whose flesh is green, purple or other anomalous colors, the doomed men and women are caught in numerous expressive poses—bent over, upside down, shrieking, flailing, fleeing, squirming—as they try to avoid their fiery fate. With their glaringly clear muscles, they appear three-dimensional. With their faces awash in fear, they look ghastly. Above this scrum of bodies, as archangels Michael, Gabriel

and Raphael keep watch, flying demons cast down more condemned humans. It’s chaos.

Signorelli’s skills also stand out in his imagining of the belief that all will rise from the dead, articulated by St. Paul (among others): “For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.” But how? Signorelli’s dead, summoned by two muscular angels blaring trumpets, surface as skeletons, climbing out of the barren ground—pushing against it to rise or helped by others who have already donned their new flesh. Some embrace one another in jubilation. On the far right, one chiseled nude man converses with grinning, anatomically correct skeletons—an example of the humor Signorelli occasionally inserted in his works.

In his most complicated panel, Signorelli takes up the Antichrist narra-



The fresco cycle’s depiction of the Damned in Hell.

imposing temple, generally interpreted as the Antichrist’s. The Antichrist appears in midground working miracles. Finally, in the upper left, Signorelli illustrates his demise, thwarted by the Archangel Michael—his death a prelude to the final events in the other lunettes—in the scene signaled by that friar.

Close observers can detect other portentous elements, like the bribes laid at the Antichrist’s feet. Scholars have suggested the presence of Dante, Thomas Aquinas, Savonarola and several well-known locals in the crowds. On the far left, two men in black, thought to be Signorelli himself and Fra Angelico, act as observers—a link to viewers, with one looking out at them and the other their seeming proxy.

The San Brizio Chapel contains many more examples of the idiosyncratic artistry that has earned Signorelli respect from art historians through time, from Giorgio Vasari to Bernard Berenson to Kenneth Clark, whose erudite 1956 book, “The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form,” still ranks among the most authoritative voices on the subject. They all praise Signorelli’s powerful, vigorous, realistic portrayals of human bodies in the Orvieto Cathedral, which secured for him a prominent place in the history of Renaissance art.

Ms. Dobrynski writes about art for the Journal and other publications.

DAVE BENET/GETTY IMAGES

DE AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES



Hugh Can Do It!
Even older guys can pull off this 'hunky' 1990s hairstyle **D2**

OFF DUTY

The Red or The White?
WSJ readers share their wine allegiances—in vivid detail **D7**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. **** Saturday/Sunday, March 29 - 30, 2025 | **D1**



The Playroom's The Thing

RACK 'N' ROLL Lake Flato Architects, with designer Constanza Collarte, fashioned this Aspen, Colo., fun factory.

JAC FLETCHER

Dungeon-like rec rooms, with their stingy light and cast-off sofas, are so last century. Behold the rise—literally—of the stylish game room, where everyone wants to hang and family time beats out screen time.

By ANTONIA VAN DER MEER

WHEN A FAMILY of six from Miami built their dream vacation home in Aspen, Colo., they wanted their architect and designer to take play time very seriously. So Colin Gorsuch, then of Lake Flato Architects in San Antonio, built a children's area with a vaulted, barn-like ceiling and airy steps to a cat walk that playfully connects bedrooms to a revved up recre-

ation room. The glee of trouncing an opponent at pool or a board game now trumps even the 80-inch television in the room. "The client tells me the TV barely gets used because so many other things are happening in that room," said Constanza Collarte, the Miami interior designer on the project.

There was a time folks dismissed children to the land of saggy sofas and dropped ceilings with a "Go play in the basement!" mainly to get them out of their hair. But for many homeowners, today's handsomely designed and centrally located rec rooms serve another, decidedly 21st-century, desire.

Please turn to page D10

Inside



IT'S A TIE...
...and it's still a polarizing accessory for women. How to wear it well **D3**



WORKING LATE?
We tracked down the original Espresso Martini recipe, and it's excellent **D6**



KEEP YOUR CARDS CLOSE
Tuck them into one of these stylish phone cases **D2**



DESIGN INSPO, RIGHT OFF I-95
The surprising New England city architecture insiders adore **D9**

STYLE & FASHION

He Got the Part...of a '90s Star

Men are increasingly sporting ‘curtains,’ floppy hair with a center-part reminiscent of a young Hugh Grant or a Disney prince. The throwback style can confer immediate charm—and camouflage imperfect hairlines—but it takes some effort to pull off.

By Marshall Heyman

A FEW MONTHS AGO, Ben Duhl, a creative-industry headhunter in Los Angeles, had a “Hugh Grant moment.” With the release of the movie “Heretic,” the British actor was everywhere, including in a social-media video in which he broke down famous past roles. Watching the floppy-haired charmer in vintage clips “just brought me back to the ‘90s,” said Duhl, 48. “I get my hair references from pop culture, and I thought, ‘It’s time to bring that [look] back.’”

Duhl showed his hairstylist a photo of a young, dreamy Grant in which his hair is parted in the center, a few stray locks hanging jauntily above one eye. That soft, mid-length style—also worn by a young Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonathan Taylor Thomas (“Home Improvement”)—was practically mandated for heartthrobs in the 1990s.

Duhl says his wife loved his new Grant-ish mane. And the headhunter was right on trend. In the past year or so, A-listers in their 30s and 40s such as Charles Melton and John Mulaney have sported the youthful look, sometimes called “curtains” thanks to the midline part. Both Takamichi Saeki, the creative director of New York salon Takamichi

While some think the floppy, center-part style is best left to the young, others say it can be a good way for older guys to cover gently maturing hairlines.

Hair, and Julien Howard, a New York barber known as the Vélo Barber, say they have been fielding more requests for the style lately, mostly from younger men. While some experts think it’s best left to the young, others say this can be a good option for older guys wanting to cover gently maturing hairlines.

Its general appeal is easily grasped. Dean Brooks, a 24-year-old who works in commercial real estate in Manhattan and rocks the style, likes its laid-back yet put-together vibe. Rachael Gibson, a hair historian in London, called it “romantic, nonthreatening—classic hunk.” She added, “It’s a bit like Disney-prince hair.” (Literally: Andrew Burnap sports the cut as the dashing love interest in Disney’s new “Snow White” remake.)

Saeki attributes much of its rise to Korean pop stars. Howard said the typical K-pop take, in which the hair is often permed, gives it a “cooler edge.”

Because a center part divides your hair in two, the style demands quite a lot of hair to prevent either side from looking wispy. “It showcases how nice your hair is,” Howard said. Gibson credits Gen Z’s embrace of the style to their fondness for ‘90s nostalgia, and to the TikTok trend of “looksmaxxing,” in which men focus on improving their appearance. “Having a good head of hair is a bit of a flex,” she said.

The popularity and accessibility of hair supplements and growth sprays with ingredients such as finasteride and minoxidil could be contributing to the demand for this style, says Howard. Many of those products,



Hugh Grant in 1992



Keanu Reeves in 1997



Jonathan Taylor Thomas on ‘Home Improvement’ in 1995



K-pop star Jung Kook in late 2023



Actor Taylor Zakhar Perez in 2024



Comedian John Mulaney in 2024



Actor Charles Melton in late 2023



Actor Cillian Murphy in 2024

Curtains Yearbook

Famous men—then and now—with the romantic, youthful hairstyle

DOWN THE MIDDLE / ITEMS FOR A FLOPPY, CENTER-PART STYLE

1. Hairstory Lift Heat-Activated Volumizing Spray, \$38; **2.** Blind Barber 40 Proof Sea Salt Spray, \$22; **3.** AG Care Fast Food Leave-On Conditioner, \$26 at Ulta **4.** Hanz de Fuko Sponge Wax, \$25 at Nordstrom



increasingly popular in recent years, promote hair growth.

Though Saeki says silver foxes can pull off the style, he generally thinks it’s “for the young people.” But Andrea Pezzillo, an L.A. hairstylist and groomer working with celebs like Mulaney and Jon Hamm, said floppy hair can flatter older guys because it’s “forgiving on a lot of hairlines.” She recommends it if a man is “getting older and the corners are getting thinner,” or he has a widow’s peak. When hair flops over the edges, she explained, “it’s covering some of the minuscule changes [to] your hairline as you age.” Though it can camouflage slightly deepening corners, this style won’t help folks with noticeably thinning pates. If “you’re seeing your scalp,” said Pezzillo, Hugh’s not your guy.

The ‘90s rom-com look best suits wavy hair, but a center-part with length can work on straighter or curlier hair too,

says Pezzillo.

Tempted? You’ll need at least a few inches at the front. Give wet hair a good towel dry, then make the center part with a comb, says Saeki. Blow-dry hair starting at the base of the parting (at the front); move up and outward, using fingers to help shape, said Saeki, who cautioned that “a bit of skill” is required for styling. Once dry, he’d keep it in place with Davines Medium Hold Finishing Gum.

To achieve what Howard calls an “iconic ‘90s coming-off-the-beach look,” spritz Blind Barber’s sea salt spray on damp or towel-dried hair. Pezzillo says salt spray, which ups volume and texture, works best on straight strands. Got wavier locks? She recommends using a leave-in conditioner like AG Care’s Fast Food, while Howard suggests Hanz de Fuko Sponge Wax for order. Just don’t let on how much has gone into it: This look is all about breezy cool.

Hold the Phone! (And Cards)

Ditch that wallet and simplify life by stashing your IDs and Amexes in a sleek iPhone case



- 1.** You’ll never mistakenly grab someone else’s phone—or lose yours in a cluttered tote—thanks to this case’s scarlet patch, which accommodates two cards. Maison de Sabré Case, from \$89 (depending on iPhone model)

2. Carry a bunch of cards? Consider this textured-leather case: Pouches of different sizes, purchased separately, button onto its back (the one shown holds 10 cards). A shoulder strap can be clipped onto the bottom for a hands-free situation. Bonaventura Backcover Case for iPhone 16, \$130; Envelope Pouch, \$150

3. Our men’s fashion editor keeps his pockets streamlined with an older version of this case. A magnetic hidden “trapdoor” compartment fits three cards. Bellroy 3 Card Case for iPhone 16, \$79

4. Another low-key number, this calfskin case can host three cards. Metal barriers help protect the camera and buttons. Muji Full Leather Wallet Case for iPhone 16 Pro Max, \$64

5. Reluctant to retire your status wallet? This one-card case flexes tastefully with Prada’s signature crosshatched Saffiano leather—and famed enamel triangle. Prada iPhone Cover, \$495 —Caitie Kelly

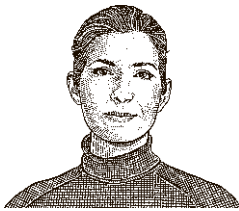
STYLE & FASHION

NECK AND NECK From left: Marlene Dietrich in 1933; influencer Yoyo Cao wearing an animal-print tie in Paris this month.

MATT CHASE ALAMY (DIETRICH); GETTY IMAGES (CAO)



FASHION WITH A PAST / NANCY MACDONELL



Women in Ties: A Knotty History

WHEN OPRAH WINFREY appeared at the Oscars this month wearing a tie, a historically masculine accessory that women have been enthusiastically co-opting, a subtle yet meaningful Rubicon was crossed. It's one thing for influencers and actresses in search of attention and clicks to claim one of the last truly male sartorial signifiers. But when Oprah, one of the most relatable ce-

Jenna Ortega, Zendaya, Ayo Edebiri and Zoe Saldña, as well as designers such as Sergio Hudson and Daniella Kallmeyer, championed the look. The trend accelerated on the spring 2025 runways, notably chez Saint Laurent. It continued to gain momentum for fall 2025 with designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Sandy Liang. Street-style photos from the most recent rounds of

continent to Britain and its colonies, it became known as a *cravate*, a play on the French word for Croatian, *croate*. In reality, the Italian word *cravata* had been around for years by that point. Moreover, the idea of the tie dates all the way back to ancient Rome, where soldiers wore strips of fabric—known as *focallia*—around their necks.

Whether Roman matrons appropriated *focallia*, we don't know. Historically, women who embraced male dress and the higher status it suggested often already enjoyed elevated rank. Take the duchesse de La Vallière. The mistress of Louis XIV copied her lover's floppy ties and has given her name to the *lavallière*, aka the pussy bow. But for most women, gaining access to the power of male garments meant navigating both social rejection and legal restrictions against cross-dressing. The novelist George Sand, born Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, began wearing men's suits and ties in the 1830s, citing comfort and personal preference—but first, she had to ob-

tain a permit from the Paris police.

By the late 19th century, which saw the rise of first-wave feminism, the tie was a fashionable accessory. The skirt suit, a triumph of the nascent American ready-to-wear industry, was adopted as a uniform by the new army of female office workers, who paired it with blouses and ties. The Gibson girl, the visual embodiment of the independent “New Woman” who supported female education and suffrage, wore ties, as did the women who drove ambulances and staffed Red Cross stations during World War I. The tie was a symbol of the advances women were making, but as long as it was paired with the safely feminine skirt, it simmered just below the controversy radar. However, in the 1930s, when Dietrich assumed the full panoply of male dress—tie, shirt, suit and flat shoes—public opinion grew considerably more heated.

This is the look that many of today's tie enthusiasts are endorsing. Less rigid perceptions of gender roles mean there has been no public brouhaha. But putting on a tie, espe-

cially in an era when little can be taken for granted, still feels surprisingly emboldening. Caitlin Burke, a stylist who works with Kallmeyer, a label known for its suiting, said that when she wears one of its ties, she feels “powerful, in charge. Like I could take on anything.”

The brand's founder, Daniella Kallmeyer, urges her clients to tap into that feeling. “I want them to have access to the dress codes and the convenience that men have,” she said. “To know that they can be well dressed for every occasion.”

But back to Oprah. Her tie was sparkly, and she paired it with a long skirt (in fact, her look was quite Gibson girl-ish). But it was still very much a tie. Will this ever not be notable? Sergio Hudson, a designer known for dressing trendsetters such as Michelle Obama and Beyoncé, thinks so. “Every woman wants to feel powerful because they're often made to feel that they're not,” he said. “There was a point when a woman in a suit, a woman in pants, was considered crazy. Now it's fine.”

My Girl Loopy

Get the hang of these fresh shirt-and-tie pairings



Kallmeyer Billie Tie Blouse, \$485

Loulou de Saison Alim Stripes Shirt, about \$310; The Tie Bar Grosgrain Solid Tie, \$28

Yaitte Buoy Bespoke Shirt, about \$297; Brooks Brothers Silk Paisley Tie, \$108

The novelist George Sand began wearing men's ties in the 1830s—but first, she had to obtain a permit from the Paris police.

lebrities in America, dons a neat four-in-hand rather than an evening gown on the country's biggest, glitziest stage, something is going on.

Women wearing ties is nothing new—Marlene Dietrich, Diane Keaton, Princess Diana and Avril Lavigne have all been fans. But given recent gender politics, its current ubiquity is noteworthy. Over the past few seasons, early adapters like

shows depicted numerous women sporting jauntily knotted cravats.

This French term for a necktie is often cited as part of the accessory's origin story, which holds that during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), French officers became enamored of the casual yet elegant neckerchiefs of Croatian mercenaries. The French took up the neckerchief and, as it spread through the

FAST FIVE

You've Got to Know When to Fold 'Em

Strategically positioned ruching adds visual interest (and handy camouflage for that extra helping of fettuccine Alfredo) to this season's vibrant, form-fitting dresses.



Colleen Allen Twist Dress, \$1,475 at Moda Operandi

Staud Amelie Midi Dress, \$450

Carolina Herrera Ruched Jersey Midi Dress, \$1,890

Sandro Draped Satin-Effect Dress, \$395

Simkhai Aldina Dress, \$645

CALL OF THE THINGS I JUST FOUND TOO HARD TO SAY

LAUREN JAUREGUI // TRACK 03

WHEN YOUR KID CAN'T FIND THE LANGUAGE, FIND THE LYRICS.

USE THEM TO START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT EMOTIONAL WELLBEING. LISTEN TO THE ALBUM, FIND TOOLS AND GET TIPS FROM PROFESSIONALS AT [SOUNDITOUTTOGETHER.ORG](https://sounditouttogether.org)

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STYLE & FASHION

The Duchess of Sales

How fashion brands are reaping the benefits of Meghan Markle’s aspirational wardrobe



Above: Meghan Markle in a sold-out Jenni Kayne sweater. Below: Markle wore an Ulla Johnson dress in a promo image for her show ‘With Love, Meghan.’

By CHAVIE LIEBER

IN HER NEW Netflix show, “With Love, Meghan,” the Duchess of Sussex cooks, gardens and entertains, taking audiences into a dreamy (rented) kitchen in sunny Montecito for lemon cakes and fruit platters.

Since the show made its debut in March, viewers have been split on whether the former royal has the chops to stand next to icons like Martha Stewart and Gwyneth Paltrow in the homemaking category. What’s not up for debate is Meghan Markle’s fashion-selling power.

Her breezy Ulla Johnson dresses, Sézane button-down shirts, muted J.Crew vests and Jenni Kayne cashmere sweaters are just some of the items from her TV wardrobe that are now sold out and accruing wait lists. Both aspirational and laid-back, her style is a commercial force.

“She is in a league of her own,” said Lyndie Benson, founder and CEO of the luxury-basics brand Bleusalt, which sold over 300 T-shirts in one day after Markle wore one on the show.

Netflix viewers have been flooding websites and Instagram accounts dedicated to Markle’s fashion and beauty in search of product credits. They pay attention to details as minute as Markle’s manicure.

“I go back and forth on whether I want longer nails or shorter

nails, and then I see her and I’m like, ‘Should I go back to shorter nails?’” said Alexandra McCormick, a beauty brand director in Los Angeles. “She has this effortless yet put-together look.”

McCormick, 41, said she has friends in London who dislike Markle out of allegiance to the royal family yet still take style directives from her. “They are like, ‘Meghan can’t do anything right. Also, I just bought her sweater!’”

“With Love, Meghan” is part of a reported \$100 million deal Markle and Prince Harry signed with Netflix in 2020, which included a six-part series documenting their relationship, as well as their split with the royal family. After several TV ideas were canceled or rejected, and the couple ended a podcasting deal with Spotify, people familiar with Harry and Meghan’s projects told The Wall Street Journal that Netflix was unlikely to renew its contract, which expires this year.

Netflix declined to comment for this article. In an interview this month with Variety, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said Markle’s selling power is part of the reason why Netflix is a “passive partner” in her forthcoming lifestyle business. Sarandos noted how in the days after the “Harry & Meghan” documentary series aired, Markle’s shoes and Hermès blanket “sold out everywhere in the world.”

“Meghan is underestimated in



terms of her influence on culture,” Sarandos said. Her Netflix series has been renewed for a second season.

Following a flood of interest in Markle’s wardrobe and fan nostalgia for her pre-royal lifestyle blog, The Tig, the duchess started a ShopMy page on Monday, where she can make affiliate revenue from product recommendations. A spokesman said that the page has

more to come, including beauty, fashion, kids and home products.

Her fashion fans will likely be pleased to hear this. Andrea Gillespie, a 44-year-old real estate publicist in Lake Forest, Ill., said she combed the web in search of a pair of white Aquazzura sneakers she saw Markle wear recently.

“I’m surprised we’re all left to our internet sleuthing to find this

stuff,” she said. As Ever, Markle’s yet-to-be-launched line of teas and preserves, “is not scratching my purchasing itch,” Gillespie said, “but all this other stuff is.”

Brands are feeling the Meghan Effect. New York fashion brand La Ligne saw a pair of its jeans sell out within a few days of Markle wearing them on the show, said co-founder and CEO Molly Howard. The brand had sent the jeans to Markle, Howard said, and after the episode dropped, the company sold over 500 pairs of the pants in about two weeks.

A pair of \$40 clogs Markle wore during an episode where she feeds her chicken sold out online in most women’s sizes, and searches for the shoes on the Crocs website increased by 70%, compared with last month, a company spokesperson said. Over 1,000 people signed up to join the wait list for the \$950 Ulla Johnson blue dress Markle wears in her show’s promo image, according to a brand spokeswoman.

Interest in Markle’s clothes had slowed down since the duchess stepped back from royal duties, said Susan Courter, the curator of the Markle style account What Meghan Wore. But she said views on her page have picked up recently, from about 50,000 monthly

Viewers pay attention to details as minute as Markle’s manicure.

page views to 150,000. Courter said shoppers have bought over 80 pairs of dupes of Markle’s white Saint Laurent sneakers after Courter directed them to a copy from the website Quince. She makes affiliate revenue from purchases made through her fashion blog.

Viewers are also buying the home goods Markle uses in her show, said Amanda Dishaw, who runs the Markle style archive Meghan’s Mirror. Within the last two weeks, Dishaw has sold 306 Le Creuset enamel dishes in the cream color Markle uses, as well as 187 glass Crate & Barrel bowls that Markle uses to make yogurt parfait.

Clarissa Darbone, a regional manager for a school-furniture manufacturing company in Houston who describes herself as “neutral” on Markle, said she grabbed her phone to buy a Jenni Kayne striped sweater after spotting it on Markle, and was disappointed to find it was sold out. “I was less intrigued with her recipes and more with her fashion,” Darbone, 39, said.

Lauren Donagher, who works in e-commerce at a jewelry company in Los Angeles, said she tried to buy a Loro Piana sweater Markle wears in the show for about \$1,300, but it was sold out.

While some viewers have pointed out that Markle’s wardrobe is a bit fussy for cooking, Donagher, 41, said that’s not a concern for her.

“In my opinion,” she said, “that’s what dry cleaning is for.”

NETFLIX (2)

RUNWAY TRICKS

In the (Stylish) Trenches: Three Outfits Featuring Winning Coats

Recent menswear runways showed how to make the trench coat, that polished spring staple, feel cool and unstuffy. These everyday looks are easy, modern—and well worth copying. Here’s how.



TEE PARTY
Graphic T-shirts can be tricky to pull off. But luxe Italian label **Brunello Cucinelli** deftly uses a kitschy “New York” tee to de-stuff an otherwise classic outfit of tidy, tailored trench and pleated trousers. A textbook example of high-low dressing. A similar effect could be achieved with a vintage band tee or a summery, patterned shirt.

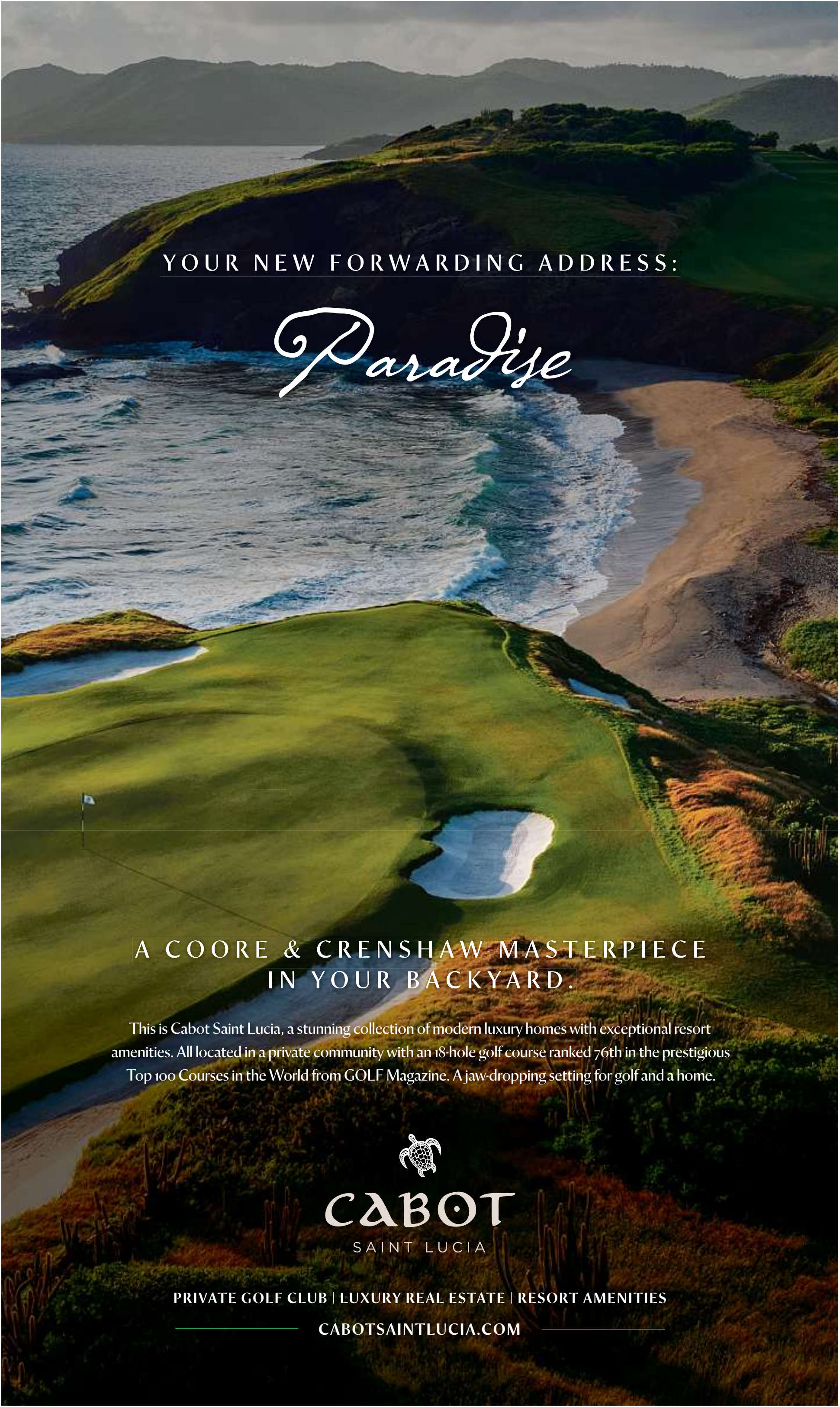


A NEW NEUTRAL
A chocolate-brown trench anchors this **Homme Plissé Issey Miyake** outfit. The coat’s generous cut is just right. And deep brown, whether in a coat, knitwear or pants, offers a handsome, less-expected alternative to obvious neutrals like black and navy. The Japanese brand keeps this outfit cohesive by sticking to rich, earthy colors. Exposed boxer shorts optional.



TAKE IT EASY
Bold sorts could skip the predictable beige trench and pick this pistachio **Canali** number instead. Striking but not shouty, the coat works well over a fairly muted, preppy ensemble. The styling—open coat over chunky V-neck sweater, untucked shirt, puddling chinos—feels agreeably breezy. It says, “I rolled out of bed...and into nice clothes.”

ISSEY MIYAKE (1)



YOUR NEW FORWARDING ADDRESS:

Paradise

A COORE & CRENSHAW MASTERPIECE
IN YOUR BACKYARD.

This is Cabot Saint Lucia, a stunning collection of modern luxury homes with exceptional resort amenities. All located in a private community with an 18-hole golf course ranked 76th in the prestigious Top 100 Courses in the World from GOLF Magazine. A jaw-dropping setting for golf and a home.


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EATING & DRINKING

BAR TAB / A COCKTAIL AUDIT

Dick Bradsell's Espresso Martini

Total Time 5 minutes
Makes 1 drink

50 mL vodka
25 mL strong espresso
15 mL Kahlúa
10 mL Tia Maria
Sugar to taste

1. Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice and shake until chilled.
2. Strain into a Martini glass. Garnish with three espresso beans suspended on the surface of the drink.



GREAT SHAKES At the Pink Chihuahua in London, Alex Austin prepares an exemplary Espresso Martini.

it in reference to my dad, because there was such a narrow margin of what he could work with. There were really only three coffee liqueurs.”

Bea Bradsell believes her father’s original cocktails have proven so durable because he purposefully designed them to be easy to recreate. That’s certainly the case with the Espresso Martini. The final recipe for the drink to come from Dick Bradsell’s hands—he tinkered with it constantly—is simplicity itself.

At Your Bar

Don’t have an espresso machine at home? Bea Bradsell recommends a moka pot to get the kind of strong espresso her father favored. She has nothing against the cold-brew concentrates many bars use, but in her opinion, only espresso will produce the big, bountiful head one expects on an Espresso Martini. “The coffee does so much of the work,” she said.

“The oils in the espresso allow for that foam to happen.”

For the drink’s base, vodka is vodka, particularly when masked by all that coffee flavor. Use your preferred brand. To get the full Bradsell effect, invest in the two coffee liqueurs he used in a blend, Kahlúa and Tia Maria.

Bea is careful in her application of additional sugar: “A thing a lot of bars go wrong with is they put too much in. The Espresso Martinis my dad made were not crazy sweet.”

Finally, raid your stash of dark roast for what’s become one of the most famous cocktail garnishes in the world: three coffee beans. They signify “health, wealth and happiness,” according to Bea Bradsell. Suspend them gingerly on the drink’s surface with a set of kitchen tweezers.

“I think it’s one of the easiest cocktails to make at home,” Bea Bradsell pronounced. There’s your wake-up call.

Caffeinated Classic

That 1980s sensation the Espresso Martini never really went away—with good reason

By ROBERT SIMONSON

FOR 40-ODD years now, the Espresso Martini has dined out on its own saucy origin story. As the drink’s inventor, the late barman Dick Bradsell, used to tell it, a supermodel—or someone he assumed was one—walked into the London bar he was working sometime around 1985 and asked for a drink that would “wake me up and then **** me up.”

Bradsell obliged with a mix of vodka, coffee liqueur and fresh espresso. And so began the Espresso Martini’s decadeslong march across bars more or less everywhere.

One part of that story, however, is not widely known. And it answers the question

of how a busy 1980s London bartender had such ready access to freshly made espresso. “Illy made a big push to bring their coffee to London,” said Bea Bradsell, Dick’s daughter, who followed her father into the bar business. “He had one of the first Illy machines at his restaurant. It was installed that day—the day the model came into the bar.”

Bea Bradsell told me that story in the last place her father bartended, a subterranean bar in the Soho section of London called the Pink Chihuahua, located beneath the Mexican restaurant El Camion. The bar remains much as it did in her father’s day. (Bradsell died in 2016.)

“The core of what me and

Dad worked on—which was creating a bartender’s bar, essentially a social club—that’s what stayed,” said Bea Bradsell. “It’s the latest bar open in the area. It’s where all the bartenders come after work.”

The Espresso Martini served at the Pink Chihuahua has remained another constant. The recipe is Bradsell’s. “They use the same coffee machine,” said his daughter. “It’s probably been serviced a few times since then.”

The ‘Tini Details

Since that fateful day when Dick Bradsell did a party girl’s bidding, the Espresso Martini has lived many lives. It began as an off-menu item

that Bradsell called, simply, the Vodka Espresso and served to friends. It achieved widespread fame after bar owner Jonathan Downey showcased it at his popular Match Bar in London in the late 1990s. After that, it went global. And then it died away for a while in the aughts before roaring back in the 2010s as bars discovered better-quality coffee liqueurs like Mr Black, as well as cold-brew concentrate.

Today, you’d be hard-pressed to find a successful cocktail bar that doesn’t have the drink on the menu, or a version of it. Even London pubs can whip you up a decent one.

“There are so many new products,” said Bea Bradsell. “It’s quite weird talking about

COFFEE MATES

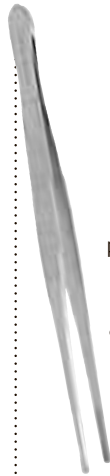
MOKA POT

Dick Bradsell didn’t require the best espresso to make the best Espresso Martini, and neither do you. There are plenty of moka pot brands out there, but Bialetti is most closely associated with the appliance. A 3-cup pot will do. Williams Sonoma carries them. \$40



GARNISH TONGS

This 10-inch-long tweezer from barware purveyor Cocktail Kingdom will ensure you won’t mar the perfect head on your Espresso Martini as you apply the three crucial coffee beans to garnish it. You’ll also feel cool using it. \$13



PAULINA FI GARDUINO FOR WSJ (2); GETTY IMAGES (COFFEE BEANS)

PARTY TRICK

Just a Little Something

Polenta piled with crisp salad is the sociable sort of snack we crave now

By ODETTE WILLIAMS



THE FIRST TIME I made this spirited, stand-around-the-kitchen appetizer we had friends visiting from San Francisco. The dinner was really a campaign to get them to move back to New York.

There were eight of us in total. The menu: fried polenta, vegetable lasagne from my cookbook “Simple Pasta,” a roast chicken for those who just need protein and mini meringues for dessert.

The hit? The warm, crispy fried polenta. I served the squares piled with cool, crunchy heaps of fennel, celery, hazelnuts and sharp Parmigiano, dressed in a simple vinaigrette. Damn, they were good.

You can prep the polenta squares the night before or morning of, so they’re ready to fry. If you’d rather be totally hands-off by go-time, fry the polenta ahead and keep warm in a low oven. Have all the salad components prepped and chilled, ready for a quick toss à la minute.

Did my friends move back? Not yet. Are we all still thinking about that polenta? Daily.



SQUARE DEAL Fry the polenta ahead and keep in a low oven until ready to devour.

Fried Polenta With Crunchy Fennel, Celery, Hazelnut and Parmigiano

Active Time 1½ hours
Total Time 4½ hours (includes chilling) **Makes** 20 squares

For the fried polenta:
6 cups water
3 cups fine polenta
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
1½ teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Peanut oil, for frying
Flaky salt

For the topping:
5 celery stalks, including leaves
1 medium fennel bulb, with fronds
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1½ teaspoons honey
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup whole hazelnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
Parmigiano-Reggiano, for serving
Flaky salt

1. Make the fried polenta: In a heavy pot over medium-high heat, bring 6 cups water and 1½ cups polenta to a

simmer, whisking constantly. As the polenta thickens and begins to bubble, after about 6 minutes, reduce heat to low, partially cover, and cook, whisking often, until polenta is soft, 35 minutes more. If it thickens too quickly, add a splash more water as needed. Remove from heat and whisk in butter, Parmigiano, kosher salt and lots of pepper.

2. Pour cooked polenta onto a parchment-lined quarter sheet pan, using a spatula to smooth the top and spread into all corners. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, at least 3 hours or overnight.

3. Once polenta has set, remove

plastic, run a spatula around edges to loosen, then invert polenta onto a cutting board. If you want sharp edges, trim the rounded corners, then cut into 2-inch squares. Pat each square dry with paper towel.

4. Spread remaining uncooked polenta onto a clean quarter sheet pan. Coat each polenta square on all sides, as if breading.

5. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, heat about 2 inches oil to 350 degrees. If you don’t have a thermometer, test with one polenta square: It should sizzle immediately. Working in batches, fry squares until golden and crisp, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a parchment-paper-lined sheet pan to drain. While hot, season with flaky salt.

6. Make the topping: Remove and reserve celery leaves, then slice stalks very thinly at a sharp angle. Remove and reserve fennel fronds, then core the bulb and slice it thinly with a mandoline or sharp knife. If not using immediately, submerge sliced fennel and celery in a bowl of ice-cold water with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent oxidation. Before using, drain and dry thoroughly.

7. Make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together oil, lemon juice, honey, mustard, salt and a few cranks of pepper.

8. In a large bowl, combine sliced celery and fennel, reserved leaves and fronds, and hazelnuts, and toss with dressing.

9. Assemble and serve: Place fried polenta squares on small serving plates, top with some salad, shave curls of Parmigiano overtop, and finish with black pepper and flaky salt.

MATT RUSSELL FOR WSJ; FOOD STYLING BY REBECCA JURKEVICH; PROP STYLING BY JULIA ROSE

EATING & DRINKING



NICOLÒ CANOVA

in white” and now “always” drinks a glass of white before dinner. The women who responded tended, on average, to drink more white wine than red, though it didn’t always break down neatly along gender lines. Wally Theiss of Dallas reported he has been drinking more white wine recently, because he finds it more consistently interesting—especially Vernetino, Grüner Veltliner and Viognier. But his wife, Sandy, is “all red all the time.” Red wine was frequently credited as being more serious—the words “weighty” and “complex” were used more than once. Even Rick Lopus of Highland Park, Mich., who noted that he drinks far more white wine than red, hoped “to die with a bottle of red Burgundy on my chest.” For readers who reported a move from red to white, most cited a shift in eating habits as the reason. Both men and women said they were choosing white over red because they were eating more seafood and chicken and much less red meat. As Theiss said, “I wouldn’t drink white with a steak.” Robert Irish of Delray Beach, Fla., estimated he and his wife drink five times more white than red not only because they’re eating much less meat, but because red wine adversely affects his wife’s sinuses. “I’m somewhat reluctant to open a nice red knowing I’ll have half a bottle left at the end of dinner,” he said. Judy Leep and her husband, Kevin Canning, of Olney, Md., have been drinking more white wine in the past few years for another commonly cited reason: It tends to have lower alcohol content than red wine. Current favorites at their table include Cava; the sparkling wines of the Franciacorta region of Italy; and Murgo Brut, a sparkling wine from Sicily. (These wines typically range between 12 and 12.5% alcohol.) Candace Eaton of Sheffield, Mass., concurred: She and her friends are drinking more white wine for its lower alcohol, she said, and because they find it “less tiring.” She explained, “Whites generally seem lighter and won’t bring on the drowsiness a full-bodied red can, especially ear-

lier in the day.” Sauvignon Blanc came up quite often. Paul Mooney of Syracuse, N.Y., said he’s drinking more of it than in previous years, though he pours reds when he serves friends, celebrates special occasions...or tires of drinking Sauvignon Blanc. Many readers maintained, as I do, that good, reasonably priced whites are easier to find than comparable reds. Red wines, after all, often undergo fermentation and extended aging in oak, which adds to the cost of production. I’d also posit a “perception tax”: Since many people consider reds more serious, they expect to pay more for them. Sometimes readers switched from red to white after finding themselves in new situations: Tim Scott of Zionsville, Penn., began drinking more white wine when he joined the wine club of a local winery whose Grüner Veltliner, Char-

Red wine might have a ‘perception tax’: Since many people consider reds more serious, they expect to pay more.

ON WINE / LETTIE TEAGUE



Are We All Ordering The White Now?

ACCORDING TO the 24th annual State of the U.S. Wine Industry report, released in January by Silicon Valley Bank, white wine sales grew faster than those of red this past year, with sales of Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc particularly strong. I wasn’t surprised: In recent years, I’ve noted an uptick in reader requests for white wine recommendations. I wondered how closely this study reflects the choices of WSJ readers, and if those choices reveal anything deeper about the way we drink now. I posed a couple questions to readers a few weeks ago, and 78 wine lovers responded with specific—often highly so—details about their drinking habits and how they’ve changed in recent years. Alan Tausch and his wife, Jerri Pease, of Simsbury, Conn., shared a chart tracking their wine consumption all the way back to 1993. Some years they drank more red than white; some years, it was the opposite. Right now, red has the edge.

Bill Rainbolt of Houston sent a precise inventory of his cellar—currently 271 reds to 100 whites, along with a dozen or so bottles of sparkling, though he noted the proportion of white wines has increased over the years. Some readers, like John Eberle of Chicago, simply supplied proportions. “I’m three whites for every red bottle,” Eberle wrote. Larry Merse of Franklin Lakes, N.J., drinks “70% red to 30% white” but has “started to dabble

donnay and Albariño proved better than its reds. Scott attributed that to the short growing season vintners face in the Keystone state. Regarding her own conversion, Clare Tilton of Richmond, Va., credited Donnie Glass, owner of Grisette restaurant. During the pandemic lockdown, Glass started a wine club (that is still going strong). Tilton fell in love with his white wine selections. “I still drink reds, but things have definitely shifted to a predominance of whites,” she said. “Thank you, Donnie!” Though readers did report consuming more white wine than ever in recent years, red-wine loyalists still held an edge overall—41 to 31—while six readers reported drinking both equally. But after learning the fascinating details of why they drink what they drink, those numbers seemed almost beside the point. ► Email Lettie at wine@wsj.com.

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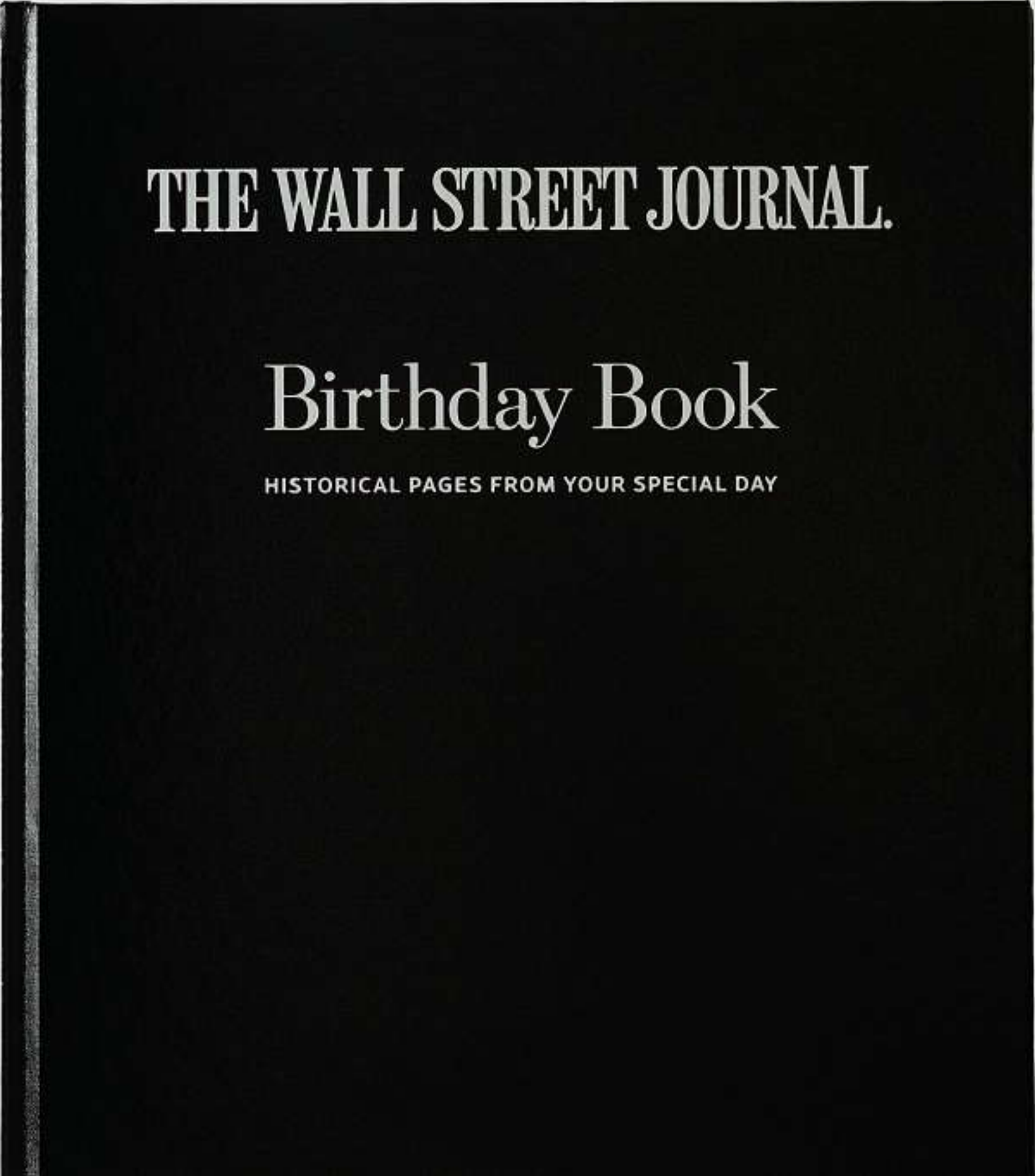
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ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

By Amy Thomas

PEOPLE KNOW New Haven as the home of thin-crust “apizza” and Yale University, both worthwhile reasons to stop for a pie or take in a Bulldogs game. But for many years, architecture buffs have made a pilgrimage to this Connecticut coastal town for its modernist buildings. “Anyone who lives on the Eastern Seaboard and has driven up I-95 knows the Armstrong Rubber Company building,” said Deborah Berke, dean of the Yale School of Architecture, who knew she wanted to be an architect as soon as she saw that sculptural concrete structure, designed by Marcel Breuer and Robert F. Gatje in 1968. “New Haven is a treasure trove of modern architecture, and whether you’re coming from New York or Boston or really anywhere in the world, it is worth an architectural field trip.”

Especially now. After a two-year restoration project at Yale Center for British Art (YCBA), the world’s largest British art collection outside the U.K. is accessible again in the museum’s Louis I. Kahn-designed building. Scores of modernist gems from an international roster of architects such as Marcel Breuer, Paul Rudolph and Eero Saarinen, as well as local designers, such as Herbert S. Newman, are situated nearby.

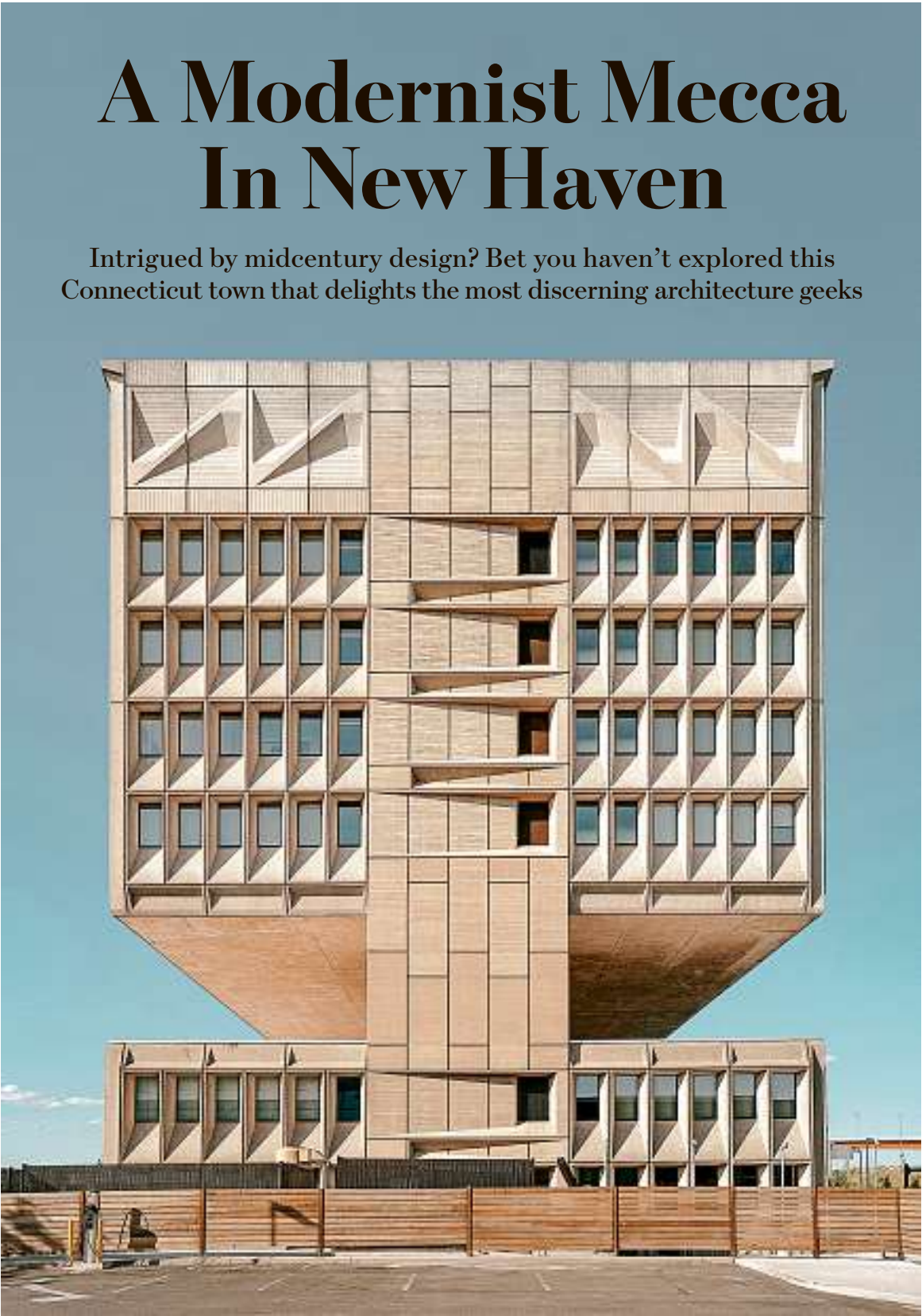
Over 250 projects were constructed here between 1931 and 1980, according to Sarah Tisdale of the New Haven Preservation Trust. At that time, “projects to reduce slums, rethink the highway and focus on better public housing were well-funded.” Those goals, she added, were “solved by design.”

Some of the most notable structures from that time are on campus, so it is a good place to begin a tour on foot before driving to spots farther away.

Start at the YCBA, where director Martina Droth wants visitors to experience Kahn’s building anew. After the replacement of 224 domed skylights, the interior now holds a much warmer vibe than you would expect from the austerity of the matte-steel and glass facade. “The tone of the galleries changes if there are clouds passing over, or it is a sunny day,” said Droth, so you really feel that connection.

While this was Kahn’s final design, completed three years after his death in 1974, the Yale University Art Gallery right across the street was his first major commission and the university’s first modernist structure. Also constructed with steel and glass, as well as masonry and concrete, it is an elegant study of geometry and light, particularly against the adjacent neo-Gothic buildings.

Next up: the Art & Architecture Building, a block away. “It is perhaps the most famous Brutalist building in the world,” said Berke. The raw concrete exterior de-



POWER PLAY Once the headquarters of Armstrong Rubber, this Brutalist building now holds Hotel Marcel.



From left: Inside the Yale Center for British Art; the Art & Architecture Building designed by Paul Rudolph.



OWEN DAVIES (2); RICHARD CASPOLE (YALE CENTER)

signed by Paul Rudolph rises in towers and stretches across horizontal planes containing 37 unique levels within.

A quick stroll to the Hewitt University Quad brings you to Gordon Bunshaft’s Beinecke Library. Its geometric granite and marble exterior appears windowless, but inside, you’ll see marble panels, only 1¼ inches thick, which filter sunlight and offer a glowing illumination, while also insuring the 180,000 volumes of rare books and manuscripts within its six-story glass-enclosed tower are protected. Time spent inside, said Berke, is a “cathedral-like experience.”

Circle back through downtown, past the historic town green, and you’ll see Paul Rudolph’s Temple Street Garage, a curving concrete structure extending multiple levels up and two blocks long.

‘Whether you’re coming from New York or Boston or really anywhere in the world, it is worth an architectural field trip.’

At Havenly, a street-level cafe and training kitchen run by refugee and immigrant women, order a meat and cheese burek and Turkish coffee to eat before leaving the downtown area by car.

Head down George Street and you’ll come face to face with the Community Services Building, renamed the Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center. Its industrial concrete facade has stark lines and flowing curves, an assault of contradictory shapes and forms. But inside, an elegant entry staircase, hidden courtyard garden and more soften the effect.

Cruise north on State Street—passing the Central Station Fire HQ looming like the many-sided Brutalist fortress it is—to Dixwell, a historic Black neighborhood. The John M. Johansen-designed Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ captures modernist design with its two-story central tower and semicircular section. Then head to Westville, where a sprawling T-shaped ranch known as the Mr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Geisinger House embodies Frank Lloyd Wright principles. The hipped roof with deep overhangs, vertical slit windows and pale brick facade fits elegantly into the landscape.

How nice it would be to finish the day inside a modernist structure. Down along the harbor, Breuer and Gatje’s Armstrong Rubber Company was converted into a 165-room hotel in 2022, called Hotel Marcel. BLDG, its aptly-named restaurant, doesn’t offer pizza, but you can always stroll over to Wooster Street, famed for its apizza parlors, should you get the urge.

Soft Landing

Airlines and airports have upped their wellness offerings for travelers who want to indulge in a nap pod or massage en route



EBRATA CARIMONA

I TOUCHED DOWN in Los Angeles after a 13-hour flight and made a beeline for the lounge. I wasn’t there for a Martini or a meal, though the bento boxes seemed enticing. Instead, the Delta One Lounge’s dedicated relaxation suite became my refuge before my JFK connection.

I bypassed the zero-gravity nap pod (I’d slept on the plane) and found a cozy spot in the wellness suite where I could stretch out and use the tools offered to relieve my flight-induced stiffness. I slipped on the puffy air-compression boots—the kind athletes use after a punishing game—that pulsate and increase blood circulation while reducing soreness. Then I went the extra mile and pummeled my corpse-like limbs with a hand-held massage gun. Some 30 minutes later, I felt renewed for the next leg of my journey.

It is all part of a new wave of lounge and airport amenities that provide a day-of-travel respite for passengers. Flying takes a physical toll on frequent fliers. “Sitting for prolonged periods places mechanical stress on the body,” said Dr. Joshua Martin, a sports medicine specialist and expert in musculoskeletal pain in Potomac, Md. That immobility can cause blood to pool in the legs and wear and tear on muscles and joints.

Rest and recovery—along with alleviating stress—is a perk for those flying in a premium cabin or holding a premium credit card. Long-haul business-class passengers on Delta, for example, can reserve a full range of Hyperice recovery gear, like the compression boots I used, along with zero-gravity chairs and full-body massagers—all complimentary.

Those seeking a snooze between connections can check into a nap room with ceiling lights that mimic nighttime constellations at Capital One Lounges in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Denver (DEN) and Las Vegas (LAS)—free as long as they hold a Venture X credit card. “Sleep deprivation and disrupted circa-

dian rhythms weaken the immune system, making travelers more susceptible to illness,” said Martin. To circumvent that disruption, Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse at LAX provides day-to-night transitional lighting with bulbs that dim to presumably prep the body for sleep before the red-eye to London. Or, pre-flight, travelers can sip a drink with magnesium, ashwagandha or L-theanine intended to promote relaxation at Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse at LAX and Capital One Lounge (LAS).

Airports have also made feel-good design choices by adding natural light and greenery. In New York, JFK’s Terminal One, set to be open in 2026, will include ceilings up to 90 feet high with expansive spaces flooded by natural light. Portland’s 1-million-square-foot terminal at PDX, which opened in 2024, has a forestlike space with 72 trees and 49 skylights. Inspired by “a walk in a Pacific Northwest forest,” said Vince Granato, chief projects officer at the Port of Portland, it is one of the first U.S. airports to go all-in on biophilic design, which develops indoor spaces with the natural world in mind. Forest bathing it isn’t, but the greenery improves the indoor air quality as well.

Sensory rooms with low lighting and soft surfaces have debuted from San Francisco (SFO) and Salt Lake City (SLC). These spaces provide a quiet place for those with an anxious mind. “Constant stimulation, changes in routine and lack of downtime make it difficult for the brain to relax,” Martin notes.

Low cabin humidity can result in dehydration, fatigue and sinus irritation, as well as tax dry skin. Drinking water in flight helps, but those passing through Chase Sapphire Lounges in New York (LGA) and Philadelphia (PHL) can book “The Soother,” a free 30-minute facial to plump up parched skin with a jellylike mask, or “The Renewer,” in San Diego (SAN), a treatment to reduce inflammation. —Chris Dong

DESIGN & DECORATING



PARTY IN THE FRONT In a Simsbury, Conn., rec room cum home office, designer Jeanne Barber set the game table near the door, the desk in the back.

JARED KUZIK (CONNECTICUT); REBECCA MALPIN (PENNSYLVANIA); MIKE KELLEY (CALIFORNIA)

The Family Room Where All Unplug

Continued from page D1

“We’ve worked with clients much more the last few years to find ways to get family members to gather without devices,” said Abigail Turin, co-founder of Kallos Turin in San Francisco and London. Among the design firm’s tricks: a brass-lined charging nook at the entrance to a playroom in Buenos Aires. “It’s a cue to leave your phone,” said Turin. Another powerful way to encourage unplugging, says the designer, is displaying analog activities. Foosball, ping pong and pool tables—to-day’s models spiffy enough for prime locations in the home—have returned to put a dent in the many hours a day the average American spends eyeballing a screen. Said

bles; and the Nerf basketball net hangs on a central column painted a candy-color version of a Hudson Bay blanket. The Montchanin, Del., designer’s crowning flourish: elegant blue dragons that gallop across the ceiling, courtesy of Schumacher wallpaper. Such thoughtfully conceived rumpus rooms—some plumbed for a wet bar or small kitchen—often become the place everyone wants to be. “Rec rooms are being used as much as formal living spaces,” said architect Gorsuch. Deploying the same quality materials as in the rest of the Aspen home—Douglas fir paneling, stairs of steel and white oak—has resulted in “a hub for all generations, from grade school to



In Lancaster, Penn., designer Megan Gorelick was tapped to conjure a destination that would ‘act like a magnet to kids.’

Using the same quality materials as in the rest of the house, the retreat has become a hub for all generations.

Catherine Price, author of “How to Break Up With Your Phone” (*Ten Speed Press, 2018*), “You miss your phone until you start to have fun.” Here, how designers and homeowners have lifted the rec room out of its dungeon-y past.

Elevate the Decor

In many cases, the move to raise the playroom has been literal. Homeowners are converting upper spaces, such as attics, so occupants view treetops rather than dreary window wells filled with wet leaves. Minneapolis-based O’Hara Interiors, for example, recently created a playroom on the bedroom level of a family home overlooking Lake Minnetonka. White oak floors and undressed black-frame windows keep it light and breezy. “The rec room is no longer an afterthought. It is as important as other rooms,” said Turin. When Megan Gorelick cooked up a retreat for the Castelli family’s four school-age children in Lancaster, Penn., she tucked the fun into polished design. The ping-pong table is lacquered baby blue; royal blue banquettes hug the two card ta-

WINNING DESIGNS / GAME TABLES THAT GET POINTS JUST FOR BEING GOOD-LOOKING

Crate & Barrel Shuffleboard Game Table, \$6,209

Giacopini Joie Mint Foosball Table, \$4,805 at Artemest

Elevate Customs x Sasha Bikoff Bon Backgammon Table, \$10,250 at 1stDibs

grandparents,” said Collarte. That universal appeal is a happy unintended result. Teens aren’t the only age group isolating themselves via extreme scrolling. “For years I’d speak to parents about understanding and curbing their kids’ use,” said Adam Alter, author of “Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked” (*Penguin Books, 2018*) and a professor of marketing at New York University. “But over the past several years

I’ve had dozens of kids ask me what they can do about their parents’ phone use.” **Let the Games Be Chic** Rec room toys are getting a glow-up as well. In 2021, Crate & Barrel launched a collection of contemporary game tables, walnut-veneered and mounted on plinth-like legs. Its pool tables, like the model Collarte chose for the vacation home in Aspen, cost about \$6,000. A similarly priced shuffleboard is the company’s

hottest-selling game table, says Alicia Waters, brand president of Crate & Barrel and Crate & Kids. “It’s up triple digits in sales year over year.” In a Riverside, Conn., attic that Eve Robinson transformed into a grown-up venue for drinks and table games, the New York designer found an Italian foosball table, the 90 Minuto from Teckell (\$14,703). The sophisticated take on the frat-house staple features svelte tapered legs and a tempered-crystal field. On the tippy-top of the luxury

scale: Kelly Wearstler’s \$39,430 green onyx NUDO ping-pong table and a marble version from Miami design duo Moniomi (\$120,000). They both become dining tables when relieved of their leather nets.

Double Up the Duties

Dallas designer Erin Sander has fielded several requests to preserve a formal dining room while also making it a play space. Her fix for a family of five in University Park, Texas: a Speed Rollover Table from Sir William Bentley Billiards. The parsons-style piece, in black walnut, seats 10 as a dining table and becomes a billiards table with a flip of its lid. Dining chairs of cane and green velvet stack neatly away in a closet. “It’s used 80% of the time as a billiards room,” said Sander. Ron Mairano, an insurance industry executive, wanted a home office above his garage in Simsbury, Conn., where he lives with his wife and four children, but quickly realized it could be more. The open layout now features a games area with a felt-topped poker table, a leather Chesterfield couch in front of a TV and an office area with built-in desk, all designed by Jeanne Barber of Camden Grace Interiors in West Hartford, Conn. The family has gotten more use out of it than Mairano imagined. “My 16-year-old and 20-year-old use the poker table a lot, and my wife and I do puzzles on the conference table.”

TV or Not TV

Designer Kate O’Hara believes televisions in a recreation room become background noise, as in a sports bar. “You’ve got the game on, but you’re interacting.” Still, some people, like Mary Castelli, prefer a strictly analog haven. “They’re on their laptops all day,” said the full-time mom of her four children. “They needed somewhere to congregate and have fun with friends.” Happily, Castelli reports that today, when her kids come home, they throw their phones down in the kitchen and run upstairs to the light-filled playroom on the third floor. “It’s been a game changer,” she said.

—Additional reporting by David Eardley



RIGHT ON CUE

A dining room in a 1914 Pebble Beach, Calif., home doubles as a billiards room thanks to an Aramith Fusion Dining Pool Table, whose thick oak leaves lift to reveal the game table’s felt and pockets. Says New York architect Eric J. Smith of the piece’s effect on the household, “They entertain more than they thought they would.”

JOURNAL REPORT

TRAVEL

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, March 29 - 30, 2025 | **R1**



They Traveled to 193 Countries. Why Did They Do It? And How?

ANDREW B. MYERS FOR WSJ

The ranks of extreme travelers is booming, fueled by social media and collective curiosity

BY KATHLEEN HUGHES

I am determined to visit every country in the world before I die.

In the next couple of weeks, I'm going to check four more off the list, with my reluctant and semiretired husband in tow: the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia. That will bring my count to almost 50.

Why the urge to cover the globe? I've decided to join the world of extreme travel.

I've always loved going abroad. But I recently learned there is a group of people whose passion is visiting as many countries

Please turn to page R6

The Joys of Floating Down a Wild River

Here are three trips to consider where the crowds are minimal and the scenery is spectacular

BY BRIGID MANDER

IT TOOK LESS than a minute from when we pushed my friends' raft into the green current for the chaos and complications of the modern world to fall away.

Drifting down the Upper San Juan River in southern Utah, life

slowed to the speed of the river and the rhythm of nature. Over the next four days, sheer cliffs rose above the water; great blue herons fished, wildlife went about their business unperturbed on the banks. In the evenings, we landed on pristine beaches, made our ways to designated campsites, grilled a hearty dinner and fell asleep to river burbles. It was a

smaller, slower, richer world.

"Once you launch on a river, there is no going back. You have to surrender to the downstream flow, and that's actually very freeing," says Frederick Reimers, a former river guide and editor of Canoe & Kayak magazine. "It really lets you completely unplug...let go of the decision-fatigue of modern life and simply be present to float through spectacular landscapes and wilderness in a sense of awe."

Wild rivers are where much of this magic happens. Floating the Colorado is perhaps the most iconic, and popular, river experience in the U.S. But to avoid fleets of commercial and private vessels, equally spectacular but lesser-known rivers also offer wilderness adventures that last from a few days to three weeks. And, using

Please turn to page R2

Inside



Vacation Rentals

A smiling photo leads to more Airbnb bookings, especially if it's a male host, a study finds. **R2**



LUCA BURGELLI FOR WSJ

Under-the-Radar New York

A cocktail lounge in the subway, the "real" Little Italy and other attractions worth seeking. **R3**

Adventure

The author of "Gumbo Life" found the best to eat in Louisiana. **R7**

PLUS: Italy's unsung Venetian Lagoon. [WSJ.com/travelreport](https://www.wsj.com/travelreport)



Scan this code for a plan that may ease congestion at Los Angeles International Airport.

JOURNAL REPORT | TRAVEL

Here’s Some Advice for Airbnb Hosts: Smile in Your Profile Picture

Study finds that a smiling photo leads to more bookings, especially if it’s a male host

BY LISA WARD

WHEN it comes to Airbnb bookings, a smile can go a long way. So suggests a study published online last year that found that Airbnb hosts who smile in their profile pictures tend to attract more online bookings than those who don’t smile. And important to note: Smiling mattered most for male hosts rather than female ones, according to the research.

The researchers looked at 9,248 hosts listing properties on Airbnb between January and August 2016. They found that a profile photo of a smiling host increased demand for properties by about 3.5% on average compared with hosts who didn’t smile in their photos. The researchers measured demand by looking at the number of days a property was booked in a month.

When male hosts posted smiling profile pictures, demand for their properties increased by 8.7% compared with male hosts with straight-faced photos, according to the study. For female hosts, however, smiling or having a straight face in a profile picture made little statistical difference. There were more female hosts than male ones in the overall sample, which brought down the overall average to around 3.5%.

“Smiling helps boost demand in certain circumstances,” says Shunyuan Zhang, an assistant professor at Harvard Business School and one of the researchers, adding that smiling may

make more of a difference when the person booking the Airbnb is unsure about the listing’s quality or the host.

In the analysis, researchers found that smiling had a greater effect on demand for hosts with less experience, hosts whose properties were in areas with more crime and hosts renting a

single room in a home rather than an entire dwelling.

To better understand their initial findings, the researchers ran a series of laboratory experiments in which they showed participants Airbnb listings and surveyed them about the likelihood of booking the properties.

They concluded that a smiling profile picture had less of an effect on how participants viewed the actual accommodation, but it did have a significant effect on how they viewed the host. In one

experiment, researchers asked participants several questions, including: “How certain are you that the interactions with the host will be positive?” Those who saw a smiling host rated their expected interactions with the host 6.03 on a 9-point scale (with 9 being “very certain” and 1 “not at all certain”) compared with 4.86 when the host didn’t smile.

“Smiling creates a halo effect. It inspires confidence in the host, which in turn increases the likelihood of booking an accommoda-

tion,” says Elizabeth Friedman, an assistant professor at Columbia University Business School and one of the researchers.

Why would smiling make more of a difference for men?

The authors found that the study’s participants had more confidence in female hosts, viewing them as warmer, more trustworthy and competent than male hosts regardless of their facial expressions. Other papers had similar findings. “Extensive research has documented that women are perceived as friendlier, more oriented toward the community, and more trustworthy than men,” says Friedman, which could explain why participants were less concerned about interacting with female hosts.

Lisa Ward is a writer in Vermont. She can be reached at reports@wsj.com.



MAYA NGUYEN

The Joys of Floating Down A Wild River

Continued from page R1

professional outfitters, you don’t have to do much beyond book your trip and show up. Experienced guides handle the boats, provide safety, prepare the (often-gourmet) meals, and bring all the necessary gear.

Where to go? You could start with one of the many river segments named in the U.S. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. You can disappear for a week in the Montana wilderness on the Middle Fork of the Flathead. Parks Canada, meanwhile, oversees a handful of extraordinary waters, such as the Firth River in the Yukon territory, where it is possible to witness the migration of a 200,000-strong herd of caribou as they move to their calving grounds in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Here are three wild rivers that still offer great experiences without being crowded:

Middle Fork of the Salmon River, Idaho

This 104-mile stretch of river is renowned among avid boaters and kayakers, but limited permitting helps prevent crowding.

The river runs through the heart of the largest federally designated wilderness and roadless area in the Lower 48 states: the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. This vast protected ecosystem offers spectacular scenery and wildlife-watching opportunities. The river drops about 3,000 feet over the course of the float, with plenty of white water.

“The Middle Fork is the crown jewel of Idaho Wilderness,” says Jamie Weeks, a guide with 20 years’ experience. “You descend from mountains to grassland, through canyons and hot springs...and you finish in the desert.”

Trips run from June to September, most being six-day trips during July and August. Outfitters like Northwest Rafting Co. and Rocky

Mountain River Tours offer experienced guides, all necessary gear and backcountry meals.

Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers, Yukon territory, British Columbia and Alaska

The Tatshenshini and Alsek Rivers flow through a remote, Himalaya-like wilderness where Alaska, the Yukon territory and British Columbia all meet near the Gulf of Alaska.

Sharing the rivers’ names, British Columbia’s Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park is one of four parks straddling the U.S.-Canadian border at this location whose 24.3 million contiguous acres make up a UNESCO World Heritage site, “the largest internationally protected land-

Right, rafting the Middle Fork Salmon River in Idaho. Below, passing Lowell Glacier on an Alsek River expedition.



based ecosystem” in the world, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The two rivers—the former flows into the latter—are known for scenery and biodiversity in a wilderness shared by eagles and grizzly

bears. Yet only a few hundred people experience this wilderness in a given year, says Joel Hibbard, owner of Nahanni River Adventures, based in Whitehorse, Yukon. A handful of outfitters offer guided trips. Hibbard’s service runs 11-day trips suitable for beginners from White-

horse to the Gulf of Alaska. A shuttle flight back to Whitehorse is included. Haines Rafting Co., based in Haines, Alaska, also offers guided trips on the Tatshenshini and Alsek rivers.

Yampa River, Colorado

This high-desert flow is beloved by river runners and features one of the most-sought-after—and tightly controlled—permits in the U.S. The Yampa is the only major tributary to the Colorado that still runs wild, having no dams. It winds through spectacular landscapes in western Colorado, Dinosaur National Monument and Utah.

The red, pink, orange and white walls along its canyon route contain some of the oldest known exposed rocks, unique uplift formations and many fossils. Before or after the float, a stop at Dinosaur National Monument’s Quarry Exhibit Hall is a must, especially for children. The rafting season here depends solely on the snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains each spring. Visits are best timed in May through July, when exciting white water rapids can be mixed with stretches of smooth water. Colorado-based outfitters such as Eagle Outdoor Sports and Mild to Wild offer five-day guided floats, with riverside excursions, pristine camps and multicourse meals.

Brigid Mander is a writer in Wyoming. She can be reached at reports@wsj.com.

FROM TOP: ALAMY; NAHANNI RIVER ADVENTURES



DIGESTIVE TRACKS: Within the 50th Street subway station near Times Square are See No Evil Pizza and the Nothing Really Matters cocktail lounge.

Under-the-Radar New York Experiences

Bars in subway stations, a tour of an abandoned hospital, the real Little Italy—and more attractions you probably haven’t heard of

BY TONY PERROTTET

EVERY New Yorker harbors an unashamedly opinionated list of under-the-radar attractions for entertaining themselves and out-of-town friends—whether it’s a secret museum of minimalist art in SoHo, an underrated Uzbek restaurant in Brighton Beach or a neighborhood bodega that toasts transcendent bagels. Every roster betrays the personal biases of the creator.

I’m a writer and historian who lives in the East Village, where I host free literary cabaret events in a historic bar. So it should come as no surprise that my list skews toward the theatrical: To steal a phrase, the whole of New York is a stage, and we are merely players. After slaving over a hot laptop all day, I like to explore the city’s more-extravagant and eccentric attractions. And as a travel writer, I am happy to explore remoter corners of the boroughs (within reason).

Announcing any New York “insider list” is an egotistic gesture, inviting outraged emails from local aficionados whose most-cherished spot has been left out. But with apologies to the other eight million residents, I would recommend the following:

Speakeasy in the sky

Speakeasy bars with live music are thriving all over the city, hosted by characters with names such as Dandy Dillinger and Velvetina Taylor. But Jay Gatsby would doff his fedora to the free Gotham Jazz events on Wednesday nights at Somewhere, No-where—a club perched atop 112 West 25th St. Swing dancers in flapper dresses, spats, pearls and feather boas hit the floor as the six-piece Hot Toddlies Band blasts jazz. Tap dancing and other retro performances are featured as well. But the real scene-stealer is the jaw-dropping view of the Empire State Building, whose floodlit form fills the picture windows. The host, Prohibition Productions, runs many weekly shows and events.

A toast to subways

Riding the subway would drive anyone to drink these days. Luckily, inside several stations there are bars—and a Michelin-starred Korean restaurant—that can ease the most grueling journey. Near Times Square, all within the 50th Street No. 1 station (Downtown), you’ll find three such respites: Nothing Really Matters, a moodily lighted cocktail lounge with a

sparkling disco ball; Tiny Dancer, a cafe; and See No Evil, an upscale pizza parlor serving Neapolitan thin-crust like the extra-spicy Hell Pie. A short ride downtown, a 20-seat cocktail lounge lurks inside the 1 Line stop at 28th Street and 7th Avenue: La Noxe. But perhaps New York’s most surprising touch of underground glamour is Noksu, at 49 West 32nd St. Guests with reservations descend a stairwell in the Herald Square station at 32nd and Broadway, punch in a code at a metal door, then step inside to a gleaming marble counter with 15 seats inside a former barbershop. A sommelier serves Champagne while chefs whip up a nine-course tasting menu.

Set sail

Even New Yorkers can forget that their city was until the 1950s the world’s busiest harbor, and it still has more coastline

Sunny’s bar in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn, right, and the concert space in the catacombs of Brooklyn’s Green-Wood cemetery.

go with your view of the Statue of Liberty, seagulls and boats. Afterward, have a nightcap at Sunny’s, a local institution with a hipster-meets-Herman Melville ambience.

Immerse yourself

The hit Macbeth-themed play “Sleep No More” ended a 14-year

cret locale where, in the theatrical equivalent of speed dating, magicians do tricks that, to my eyes, are impossible to crack.

Way off Broadway

Shoulder open a heavy portal at 383 Troutman St. in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn and you enter one of New York’s loveliest and most over-the-top small theaters. Théâtre XIV is a jewel box of glittering chandeliers, gold trim and plush velvet that suggests a Surrealist reimagining of the Moulin Rouge in Paris. It is home to the extravagantly inventive dance-performance troupe Company XIV. Before the show, actors in fluorescent Marie Antoinette-

which gives access to a priority line at the security check-in in Battery Park. (Try the 9 a.m. tour.) The complex is separate from the famous immigration hall where some 60 million new arrivals to the U.S. were processed from 1892 to 1954. Today, the complex is in a state of “arrested decay,” hence the requirement of hard hats on these eerie tours. It’s safe, but expect peeling paint, battered ceilings, fallen plaster and dead leaves. The tour includes the morgue and private rooms for tuberculosis patients with “spit sinks.”

The ‘real’ Little Italy

Compared with the cheesy, commercialized Little Italy of downtown Manhattan, where pushy waiters wave menus at passersby, Arthur Avenue in the Bronx is a trip back into a mythic Italian-American past. Classic red-sauce restaurants line up between bakeries, pastry shops and grocers selling prosciutto and Parmesan at economical prices. For fried calamari, breaded clams or lasagna, drop in at Mario’s, founded in 1919 and decorated with loving murals of *Il Bel Paese*, “the beautiful country.” To work off the meal, forage in the Arthur Avenue Retail Market where some 25 specialist vendors sell the full panoply of Italian treats. The freshly made burrata balls at the Casa della Mozzarella Deli are still warm—“as if they had just been born,” as some Italians say.

New York underground

The avant-garde music producer Death of Classical established its reputation by finding acoustically excellent and unusual settings for concerts, like in the catacombs of Brooklyn’s Green-Wood cemetery, where robber barons and artists alike rest in peace. More recently the company has moved inside, and beneath, ravishing churches in upper Manhattan. For the 2025 season, venues will include the crypts of the vast, unfinished Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the world’s largest Gothic cathedral, which has been under construction since 1892. The underground New York concert halls heighten the pleasure of hearing virtuoso musicians perform 18th-century baroque works and premieres by contemporary composers.

Feasting at the museum

New York museums are no longer just museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s buzzing summer bar overlooking Central Park, and the Morgan Library, where an elegant café serves afternoon tea and Champagne, are but two examples. For my money, the best museum-curated culinary experience is the Café Sabarsky at Neue Galerie, a majestic Fifth Avenue mansion-turned-museum of 20th-century German and Austrian art. After sating oneself upstairs on the works of Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt (including the illustrious “Woman in Gold”), head downstairs to the painstakingly reproduced Viennese-style café from the time of Sigmund Freud. Have a coffee and Sacher torte, or, later in the day, veal schnitzel with a cheeky glass of Grüner Veltliner.

Tony Perrottet is a writer in New York. He can be reached at reports@wsj.com.



than Seattle and San Francisco combined. One of the great recent breakthroughs for exploring the city has been the expansion of the public ferry service (get the NYC Ferry app). For only \$4.50, hop on the South Brooklyn ferry at Wall Street (Pier 11) for a spectacular short cruise crossing over from the glass towers of Manhattan to Red Hook, a once-teeming shipbuilding district and now home to the art center Pioneer Works, where cathedral-like spaces hold performances and lectures, and bands play in the garden. Wines at Red Hook Winery are excellent—bottles start at \$30—and you can order a cheese-and-charcuterie board to

run in January, but the force behind it, Emursive Productions, a theater company that specializes in “immersive” audience experiences in unusual locations, is still at it. Its Faustian story, “Life and Trust,” is playing at Conwell Tower, an old financial district building converted into a performance space and coffeehouse at 69 Beaver St. Another Emursive show, “Speakeasy Magick,” after opening at the McKittrick Hotel near Hudson Yards, now has its own venue in Chelsea with eight shows a week. The audience enters through the Overlook Bar, an actual bar with the look and feel of its namesake in “The Shining,” then proceeds to tables in a se-

style wigs, leather-studded animal costumes and bejeweled codpieces strut around the stage and two cocktail bars, chatting and flirting with the audience. The burlesque extravaganza that follows explodes fromater the stage to every corner of the theater, including aerialists over the audience’s heads. The spring schedule features “Queen of Hearts,” an erotic reworking of the queen from “Alice in Wonderland.”

The ghosts of Ellis Island

To visit Ellis Island without the long lines and harrowing crowds, sign up for the Hard Hat Tour of the ghostly abandoned hospital,



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3. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE LOCAL CULTURE

The proud traditions of Alaska’s indigenous people are deeply engrained in the local culture. Among the complimentary shore excursions offered, you can learn about First Nations cultures at a replica 19th-century village or admire colorful totems within Totem Bight State Park. Listen to a Tlingit storyteller explain tribal culture, explore Icy Strait Point with Hoonah locals, or accompany an Indigenous guide along a trail at Connell Lake to hear how medicinal plants are used.



4. EXPERIENCE THE WILDS OF ALASKA

Where else can you see sea otters, whales, sea lions, brown bears, deer, bald eagles, and a variety of marine birds — all in a span of a few hours? Wildlife is abundant throughout Alaska, from Dall sheep high in the alpine basin to harbor seals that like to sun themselves on ice floes. Of course, animals in the wild have their own schedules and routines, so you’re never guaranteed to see them. Luckily, your onboard Destination Services team works closely with tour operators and naturalists to design excursions filled with wildlife-viewing spots along the Inside Passage.



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Watch their faces light up at sighting a family of black bears feeding along the salmon streams. Together, explore the waters surrounding Wrangell in a canoe and enjoy a thrilling dogsled adventure near Juneau. Snap a family photo with a glacier in the background and relive the adventure of the Gold Rush in Skagway as you compete to see which one of you will find gold in the river. Back on board, the younger travelers will make new friends at Club Mariner while you enjoy the unmatched comfort and *Heartfelt Hospitality™* of the extraordinary crew aboard *Seven Seas Explorer®*.

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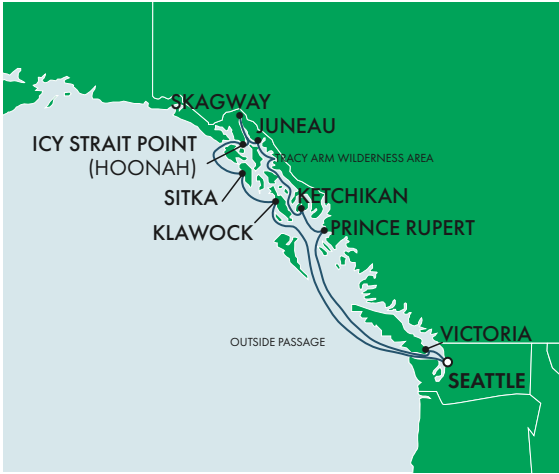
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JOURNAL REPORT | TRAVEL

Extreme Travelers: How Do They Do It—And Why?

Continued from page R1

and territories they can, no matter how difficult or dangerous. For many, the gold standard is 193—all the member states of the United Nations—although many are stuck at 192 because Americans aren’t allowed into North Korea following the State Department ban in 2017.

Sometimes called country-collecting or competitive travel, and once the domain of mostly wealthy men, extreme travel is now a rapidly growing and more-diverse community, fueled by social media and collective curiosity. People who claim to have visited all the countries in the world, or to have set any kind of record, may attract media attention, book deals, sponsors—along with disputes and controversy. Just what counts as a “visit” has been endlessly debated. Claims of being first in any category, such as first woman, have been challenged and turned into feuds.

The spur to travel

People plunge into extreme travel for all sorts of reasons. “The lightbulb moment was usually reading about someone online,” says Ric Gazarian, the host of “Counting Countries,” a podcast about extreme travelers. Many decide to take up the travel challenge after a major life change such as the death of a spouse, a breakup, recovery from illness or retirement. Gazarian, who has been to 184 countries, decided to plunge into extreme travel after being laid off from his financial-services job in 2008.

The odyssey also appeals to those who love checking lists. “The country-collect-

ing impulse isn’t that different from being a stamp collector or a birder; there’s a compulsion for completeness,” says Dave Seminara, author of “Mad Travelers: A Tale of Wanderlust, Greed and the Quest to Reach the Ends of the Earth,” a book on the extreme-travel community.

In my case, my father backpacked around the world in the 1970s, leaving me with the idea it was a normal thing to do, something you don’t want to miss. And then, in November, I went to a conference in Bangkok, the Extraordinary Travel Festival, organized by Gazarian, with over 200 country counters. By the end, I was hooked.

Whatever the reason people decide to travel, there is plenty of support out there. Members of the Facebook community Every Passport Stamp share advice on everything from safety in war-torn countries to finding the right guide. Online groups, meanwhile, offer competitive rankings, advice forums and forthcoming conferences in places like Uzbekistan and Ethiopia.

At the group Most Traveled People, growth is exploding, says founder Charles Veley, a software developer in Larkspur, Calif. The group has about 40,000 members, up from 30,000 a year ago. Likewise, the group NomadMania added 12,000 members last year, bringing its total to about 42,000. “Last year was the biggest year on record,” says founder Harry Mitsidis, who lives outside London.

Mitsidis says he can confirm that 382 travelers in the world

New places, new thrills

All that traveling can bring eye-opening—even life-changing—experiences. Diane Pechenick, owner of Healing Dives, a medical-equipment company in Woodland Hills, Calif., has been to 106 U.N.-member countries and a total of 156 countries and territories on the Travelers’ Century Club list. She particularly enjoys seeing animals and loved visiting Antarctica last year, where she was able to watch penguin behavior. In massive colonies, penguins were cohabiting with seals

Top: Randy Williams in Madagascar in 2022. Middle: Slawek Muturi, Taylor Demonbreun. Below: Diane Pechenick in Antarctica, David Langan in Laos, Ted Nims in Iran.



have been to every U.N.-member country. NomadMania works to verify many claims, using passport stamps and other documents. Mitsidis has been to every country *twice*.

The Travelers’ Century Club, which is open to people who have visited 100 or more countries and territories on its list, works on the honor system. Some of its 1,600 members have visited all 193 of the U.N.-member nations, while the most ambitious travel to all 330 countries and territories on the list, including remote islands without airports.

ington, D.C., in 2022 to travel, loves “being able to connect with people and experience hospitality in a way that doesn’t exist in your home country.” Since then, he has been to Belgium, Armenia, the country of Georgia, Argentina, Uruguay, Qatar, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, South Korea, Bhutan, Japan and Cuba, bringing his country count to 64. “Once you get through the hassles, you encounter the kindness of people,” he says.

One of his most memorable examples happened in a poor town in a remote area of Tajikistan in 2008. An elderly man beckoned McKenzie into his home. “We had tea and smiled a lot,” says McKenzie. “I think back



country can find themselves in places that are unexpectedly harrowing. Plenty have faced detainment, imprisonment, scams and body searches, particularly in politically unstable places.

Nims keeps a map in his Chicago living room using white pins for standard visits and blue pins for trips that had issues with police or other problems. “There are more blue pins than I would like,” he says.

Slawek Muturi, a real-estate investor in Warsaw, Poland, has been to every U.N.-member country at least twice, as well as Vatican City and the Palestinian territories, which have nonmember-observer status at the United Nations. He says he has had few

bad experiences, with one notable exception.

In January 2024, he flew to Mauritania in Africa and took a public bus, planning to travel through Senegal, Guinea and Burkina Faso into the Ivory Coast. When the bus broke down in Burkina Faso, he decided to walk about 6 miles to the border but was stopped “by heavily armed gentlemen.” He was detained for four days without his phone and without understanding who the men were. “I was scared I had been kidnapped,” he says.

He learned the men were civilians and had been told to report anything unusual.

made it to Tuvalu.

Not always so dangerous

For many travelers, seemingly dangerous places turn out to be benign. David Langan, a furniture-business owner in Dublin, Ireland, says he didn’t have any major negative experiences in 18 years of travel. Langan, who completed all 330 countries and territories on the Travelers’ Century Club list in November 2022, studied what was happening on the ground, used common sense and didn’t go into war zones. “I never felt threatened, and I haven’t been robbed,” he says.

Taylor Demonbreun set a Guinness World Record in 2018

with the fastest time to visit all sovereign countries, at one year and 189 days. (Guinness counts 195 sovereign countries, including Vatican City and Taiwan.) In her travels, “the more terrified I was of a country, the better it went for me,” says Demonbreun, head of product for a travel startup.

“The Iranians were so welcoming and kind,” she says, after visiting Kish Island in the Persian Gulf. “I could talk to them about anything. Travel is about opening minds.”

Randy “R Dubl” Williams, the San Diego-based host of a syndicated music radio show called “Slow Jams,” says he completed visits to 193 countries in May of 2023. He’s still traveling but admits he does miss checking the boxes.

A visit to Suriname in 2013 kicked off his love of seeing little-known places. “I was intrigued and astonished that I was standing in the capital of a country that my friends and family had never heard about,” he says.

In Tuvalu, Williams bumped into other country-counters. “We’re a small tightknit community,” says Williams. “No one goes to those countries if they don’t have to; you go and recognize a lot of people from the group.”

Hard currency

The cost of these adventures can be, well, all over the map. “We have people who can afford to go first class, and we have happy backpackers,” says Margo Bart, the president of Travelers’ Century Club. Many extreme travelers work remotely or they alternate work and travel, and many are retired. Travel influencers try to help cover costs by posting on TikTok and Instagram and gaining sponsors.

Veley, the founder of Most Traveled People, estimates you could visit all 193 countries for about \$1,000 a country and all 1,500 countries and other areas the group recognizes at an average cost of \$500 apiece. For relative beginners, Veley advises traveling by region, staying in hostels, using budget flights and becoming an expert in points and miles. “Make friends in the community and try to share costs, particularly if you are going to more-difficult places,” he adds.

“There are thousands of like-minded individuals out there, and they are all fun people.”

Demonbreun, who spent two or three days in each country, says she started her trips with about \$15,000 in savings and ended up about \$60,000 in debt. She cut costs by finding hotel sponsors and listing them on her website. She also took the cheapest possible flights by getting multistop tickets and using 114 different carriers.

After hearing everyone’s best and worst stories, I still want to get to 193 countries before time runs out. Now, like many couples, I just need to negotiate the travel time in my marriage. “I want to travel with you,” my husband says earnestly. “Just not continuously.”

Kathleen Hughes is a writer in Los Angeles. She can be reached at reports@wsj.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: RANDY WILLIAMS; DAVID LANGAN; TED NIMS; DIANE PECHENICK; SLAWEK MUTURI

Where to Find the Best Gumbo in Louisiana

One of the delights of a roadtrip through Cajun country is stumbling upon a restaurant with a killer gumbo

BY KEN WELLS

YOU CAN NOW find decent gumbo, Louisiana's signature Cajun and Creole soup, all over America. But there's no better place to eat it than in the Gumbo Belt.

By that I mean the 22 parishes that form francophone Louisiana and hold most of the state's best gumbo restaurants—from elegant, high-end New Orleans eateries to rustic mom-and-pop places plopped on backwoods roadsides.

For the uninitiated, gumbo almost always begins with a roux—flour browned in butter, lard or vegetable oil—mixed with diced bell peppers, celery and onions, plus spices. That forms the base for the two traditional types of gumbo, chicken and sausage or seafood and okra, as well as other varieties. All are usually served over white rice.

In doing research for a book I wrote about gumbo, I sampled more than 70 dishes in restaurants spread across 14 Gumbo Belt cities. For this article, I revisited many of those places to see if some of the gumbos I liked best were still my favorites, and dropped in on a few new places recommended to me by gumbo aficionados.

My first stop was Abear's Cafe in my hometown of Houma, about an hour's drive southwest of New Orleans. Abear's, a phonetic rendering of the Cajun French surname Herbert, sits in a delightful 1930s-era blue wooden Creole cottage and has been dishing out gumbo and tasty plate lunches since 1963.

Depending on the day, the choice will be either chicken-and-sausage gumbo or seafood gumbo usually made with shrimp, crab and okra. The place generally is packed 90% with locals, 90% of whom are regular diners. Go with a big appetite, because the portions are large.

Twenty miles up the road is another favorite of mine, Flanagan's Creative Food & Drink in Thibodaux. What's an Irish-named restaurant got to do with gumbo? Well, actually, Flanagan's, in business since 1983, is owned by the Fremin family, with deep roots in southern Louisiana.

This unpretentious restaurant serves up a traditional Cajun gumbo with a medium-dark roux and offers both table and bar seating. Burgers, steaks and wraps share space on the menu with other Cajun specialties such as shrimp po'boys and fried catfish. Having dined there on and off for years, I swear the chicken-and-sausage gumbo tastes like my mother's recipe.

Going upscale

Switching gears, I booked a table at Restaurant R'evolution, an elegant eatery in the upscale Royal Sonesta hotel in the heart of the New Orleans French Quarter. Co-owned by legendary Cajun chef John Folse, R'evolution promises "modern, imaginative reinterpretations of classic Cajun and Creole cuisine." Folse's Death by Gumbo delivers on that, a gastronomic feast that is a testament to the chef's creativity.

A dark-roux soup is ceremoniously poured by a white-jacketed server from a pitcher into a shallow white bowl with a succulent whole roasted quail sitting in the middle. Slice open the quail and rice and spices spill out to complete a supremely balanced gumbo. Two hard-to-please foodie friends I brought along raved about it. Reservations are pretty much mandatory, especially on weekends.

For another change of pace, I drove about two hours west to Lafayette, where I sat at the bar of Charley G's and ordered a bowl of

the smoked-duck and andouille gumbo. In terms of decor and feel, this eatery, which has been around for 40 years, wouldn't be out of place in New York's Tribeca. You can get a killer martini and order from an eclectic menu that showcases Louisiana-centric dishes such as wood-grilled Gulf shrimp and smoked-Gouda grits.

bling upon a little out-of-the-way, mom-and-pop eatery with a killer gumbo on the menu.

• **Mr. B's Bistro in the French Quarter.** This upscale restaurant's Gumbo Ya Ya is the epitome of a rich, luscious, dark-roux chicken and andouille gumbo that demonstrates how the complexity of its spices delivers a transcendent flavor.

• **Dooky Chase's Restaurant in the Tremé district of New Orleans.** This iconic and stylish Creole eatery, for decades presided over by the leg-

family, whose New Orleans roots go back two centuries, this casual Creole eatery serves up a gumbo that mixes hot sausage, smoked sausage and ham with peeled shrimp and crab.

• **Don's Seafood in Lafayette.** There's a reason Don's has been in business in Lafayette since 1934. Its chicken and andouille variety is a classic medium-dark-roux gumbo with a nice peppery kick and a finish of green onions. Started in a tiny downtown storefront, Don's is now a chain with six locations throughout the Gumbo Belt.

• **Glenda's Creole Kitchen in Breau Bridge.** In this scenic hamlet about 10 miles northeast of Lafayette, Glenda's is housed in an unpretentious white clapboard building. Walk-ins only. Check the menu before you go. Glenda Broussard, owner and chef, cooks up tasty daily Creole plate lunches,



Chicken sausage gumbo with rice at Abear's Cafe.



Above, the Gumbo Ya Ya at Mr. B's Bistro and the Creole Filé Gumbo at Li'l Dizzy's Cafe. At right, customers at Abear's.



Li'l Dizzy's Cafe is operated by Wayne Baquet Jr. and his wife, Arkeshia Baquet.

But the smoked-duck and andouille gumbo has long been a Charley G's calling card, created by a local chef who had spent a lot of time in the duck-hunting camps that dot the Louisiana marshes and bayous by the hundreds. Smoking and tenderizing the duck and pairing it with an ultradark roux produces a soup with a complex, smoky flavor unlike any other.

More to savor

Below are a few more of my favorites. But this list leaves out scores of Louisiana restaurants serving tasty gumbos. One of the delights of a road trip through the Gumbo Belt is the high probability of stum-

endary Leah Chase and now run by her grandson, Dook Chase, serves up a rich Creole gumbo. If you time it right, you can also sample the late Leah Chase's gumbo z'herbes, a pre-Lenten dish filled with nine different greens, andouille, beef brisket and ham, and a plethora of spices, all cooked in a roux. Two U.S. presidents (George W. Bush and Barack Obama) have dined at Dooky's, which, during the 1960s civil-rights struggles, regularly hosted activists, including Martin Luther King Jr., in its dining room. Reservations are advisable.

• **Li'l Dizzy's Cafe, also in Tremé.** Owned by a member of the Baquet

with gumbo on the menu usually once a week. A Louisiana chef friend of mine steered me here and, wow, it was worth the trip.

Broussard is the epitome of the Louisiana self-taught chef. She was working as a dispatcher for the local sheriff's department when she began bringing her home-cooked lunches to work with her. Fellow employees began sniffing the air and asking where the food came from. The rest is history.

Ken Wells is a Louisiana native who lives in Chicago. His book, "Gumbo Life," was recently published in paperback. He can be reached at reports@wsj.com.

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