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JUNE 28, 2024 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1189

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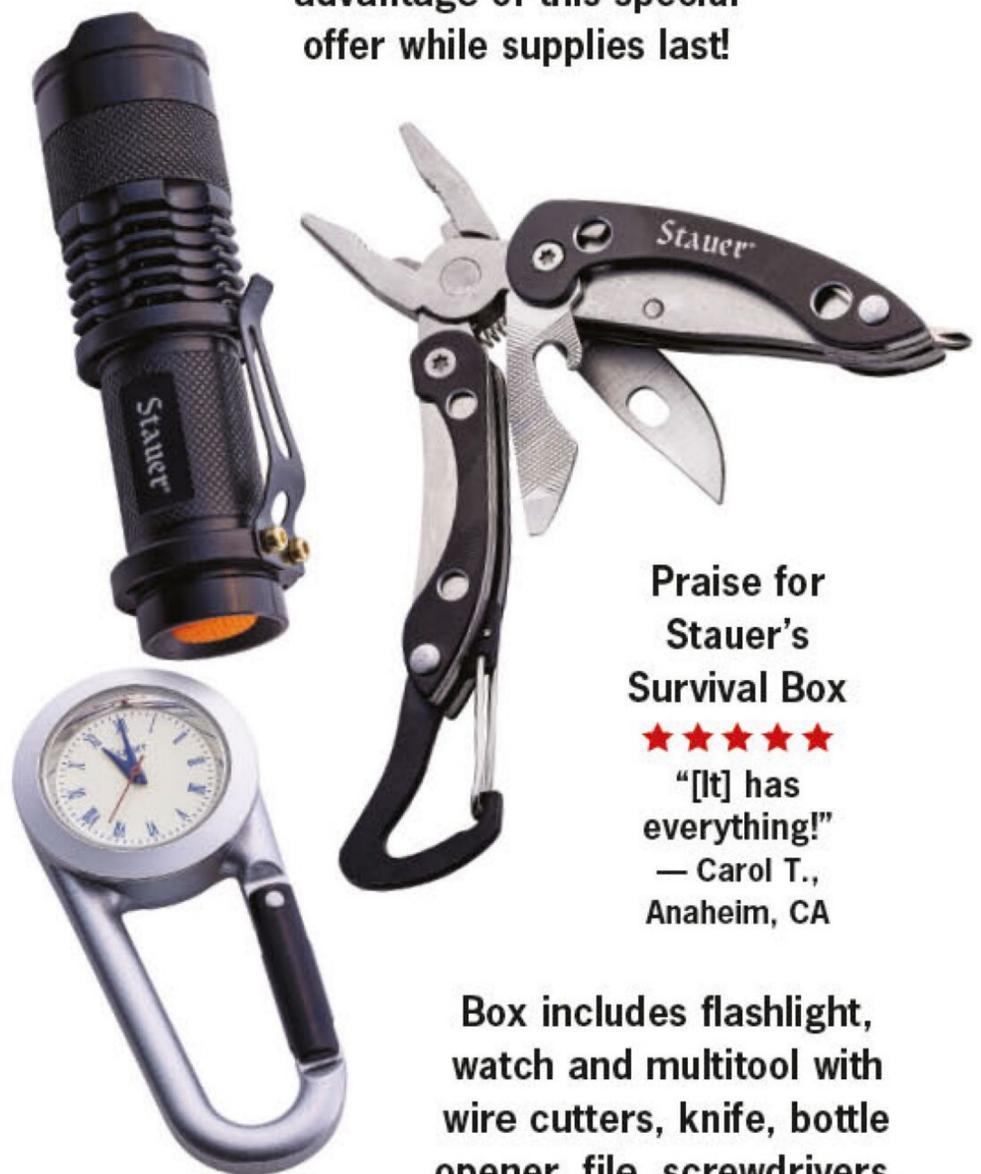
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Editor's letter

Vivek Murthy wants the government to stub out social media use by kids (see Business news, p.32) In a *New York Times* op-ed, the surgeon general this week details the growing body of evidence linking TikTok, Instagram, and other apps to the mental health crisis among young people. There's the study that found adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media have double the risk of anxiety and depression symptoms. Notably, the average daily use for a teenager is now about five hours. There's the survey in which nearly half of adolescents say social media makes them feel worse about their bodies. And then there are the endless anecdotes from teens who don't know how to look away from apps designed to deliver a steady scroll of dopamine hits. These platforms are engineered to be addictive, so Murthy proposes slapping an official surgeon general's warning on apps—like those on cigarettes—to “regularly remind parents and adolescents that social media has not been proved safe.”

As a worried father of two, I can only say let's do it. But why stop at warnings for kids when excessive social media use is also rotting adult brains? What about if every time Elon Musk hit post on his latest X tirade, he were to see a pop-up stating, “This message may contribute to partisan animosity and further alienate Tesla owners. Do you still want to share this thought with the world?” Or when a celebrity is about to broadcast a filter-treated beach selfie on Instagram, a banner slides across the screen cautioning, “Searching for affirmation from strangers online may only exacerbate your feelings of insecurity. Have you considered seeking the answer within?” Even passive users of social media such as myself could be targeted by such PSAs: “Your 1 a.m. doomscrolling on Reddit about impending climate apocalypse is hurting the planet. Sleep would use less power.” Dr. Murthy, I'm ready for your tough medicine.

Theunis Bates
Editor-in-chief

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Heat dome brings extreme temperatures to East

What happened

An unusually early heat wave scorched the Midwest and Northeast this week, breaking temperature records from Michigan to Maine and auguring a sweltering summer that may prove the hottest in recorded history. As a heat dome settled over the eastern U.S., some 270 million Americans baked under 90-plus degree temperatures—15 to 20 degrees above historical norms—with heat index readings expected to top 100 in many locations. The National Weather Service issued its first-ever excessive heat warning in northern Maine, where temperatures were expected to reach 96 degrees, while Chicago broke a daily temperature record as it hit 97 degrees. The heat dome—a high-pressure system that traps air in place and bakes it with sunshine for days on end—follows record-breaking temperatures earlier this month in parts of California and the Southwest. Meteorologists forecast that this summer may be hotter than that of 2023, which itself was the Northern Hemisphere's hottest in 2,000 years.

In California, firefighters battled at least six major wildfires. In Northern California, firefighters fought a blaze that spread over nearly 16 square miles; another fire north of Los Angeles forced the evacuation of 1,000 people and scorched more than 15,000 acres. "It's very early for a fire of this magnitude," said L.A. County Fire Department spokesman Craig Little. Meanwhile, in southern Florida, cleanup was underway after severe storms dumped more than 20 inches of rain in 48 hours. Neighborhoods in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and other cities were left waist-deep in water. The aftermath "looked like the beginning of a zombie movie," said Miami tow-truck driver Ted Rico. "Every year it's just getting worse."

What the columnists said

Heat waves don't "topple buildings" or flood cities, but they're federal disasters and should be treated as such, said Mark Gongloff in *Bloomberg*. More than 30 environmental and health groups and trade unions petitioned the Federal Emergency Management Agency this week to classify heat waves as disasters qualifying for federal relief, and "the agency should listen." Extreme heat is a killer that contributed to the deaths of a record 2,300 Americans last year. Federal disaster money would help local governments to build cool-



Trying to cool down in Washington, D.C.

ing centers, reach out to vulnerable citizens, and more, saving "countless lives."

In Florida, "the rain has become political," said Lori Rozsa in *The Washington Post*. The science is clear: A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, leading to more rain and more extreme weather events. But Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis pushed back against the idea that climate change helped fuel the recent storm, saying the downpour "is not unprecedented." Last month, DeSantis signed a bill that eliminates references to climate change from state documents. "We don't want our energy policy driven by climate ideology," he said.

Meanwhile, "Miami is entering a state of unreality," said Mario Alejandro Ariza in *The Atlantic*. Meteorologists call last week's storm "a once-in-200-years event," but it's the fourth such deluge to swamp the region in as many years. And as "the sea keeps rising," sunny-day flooding has increased fourfold since 1998. Miami has spent millions of dollars to install pumps and otherwise upgrade its infrastructure, but as conditions worsen, it seems less and less equipped to ward off "creeping catastrophe."

"Climate alarm bells" are ringing everywhere, said Ishaan Tharoor in *The Washington Post*. Pre-summer heat waves have "already slammed disparate stretches of the planet, from Bangkok to Barranquilla." In Asia, temperatures rocketed as high as 120 degrees Fahrenheit "in an arc from the Philippines to India." A decade ago, scientists put the odds of the planet warming 2.7 degrees higher than in preindustrial times—"the threshold that spells climactic disaster"—by 2020 at nearly zero. Now the odds of that happening by 2028 are estimated at 8 in 10.

Remember this in November, said Paul Waldman in *MSNBC.com*. President Biden has taken unprecedented action against climate change, enacting over 100 new environmental regulations and passing legislation that boosts clean energy and more. A President Donald Trump would roll back that progress. Biden's "climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding," declares Project 2025, the blueprint for a second Trump term drafted by his allies. As the globe broils, climate denialism "is no longer tenable." Now American voters "have to decide whether they want to do anything about it."

It wasn't all bad

■ Daniel Wright and Gaar Lausman were at a Colorado River beach in Utah when they saw a 40-year-old man and his two children, ages 8 and 10, fall into the water when their kayak capsized. Lausman quickly got onto his paddleboard and went after the two kids—one of whom had been flipped face down by his flotation device. After rescuing the kids, Lausman saw that their dad had been swept downstream. Fortunately, Wright then arrived on his jet ski and managed to reach the father, who was nearly underwater. Both father and kids got back to shore with no serious injuries.

■ Residents of Palo Alto have embraced a gray miniature donkey named Perry, who served as the model for the donkey character in the 2001 animated movie *Shrek*. The 30-year-old Perry, who lives in a pasture in a local park along with two other donkeys, suffers from severe arthritis and a hormonal disorder, and the community has stepped up to care for him. Perry has smitten



Perry at his 30th birthday

many locals since he was donated to the park in 1997—including Rex Grignon, an animator who brought a team to study Perry while working on *Shrek*. Perry and his fellow donkeys "have brought people lots of joy," said Jenny Kiratli, their lead handler. "There is something about looking into a donkey's eyes that's very therapeutic."

■ Seven Przewalski's horses are once again roaming in their native Kazakhstan for the first time in 200 years. Horses are thought to have been domesticated in the central Asia region about 5,500 years ago, but hunting and road construction nearly drove these animals to extinction in the wild in the 1960s. The four mares from Berlin and two mares and a stallion from Prague were transported on a 30-hour plane journey. Over the next five years, 40 horses will be transported there. "This is the beginning of a whole new chapter in the story of the last wild horse on the planet," said the Prague zoo's director.

Israel accuses U.S. as Hezbollah conflict looms

What happened

An increasingly isolated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent mixed signals to the U.S. this week, disbanding his war cabinet while accusing the Biden administration of blocking weapons Israel needs for its war against Hamas. Netanyahu dissolved the council rather than appoint hard-liners to replace two centrist members who resigned, an indication he didn't want to upset Washington. Yet he also released a video accusing the U.S. of "withholding" arms deliveries, prompting the U.S. to cancel a planned meeting with Israeli officials about Iran. The Biden administration said it had provided \$12.5 billion worth of arms and ammunition and paused only a single shipment of 1-ton bombs ill-suited to close urban conflict. "We genuinely do not know what [Netanyahu] is talking about," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. In Gaza, cease-fire talks remained stalled, but the Israel Defense Forces said it would pause operations each day to allow aid in. The IDF also said it was just weeks away from completing its elimination of Hamas battalions in Rafah.

Along Israel's northern border, a long-simmering conflict with Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon threatened to erupt into a wider war. In retaliation for the Israeli killing of one of its top commanders, Hezbollah launched more than 200 rockets into Israel and released drone footage of Israeli cities—including the major port of Haifa—suggesting they were being targeted. Seeking to deter Hezbollah, Israel said its top generals had prepared a battle plan that would have "devastating consequences for Lebanon."



Hezbollah rockets hitting northern Israel

What the columnists said

With Netanyahu's war cabinet sidelined and peace talks at an impasse, his biggest weakness is exposed: He has no plan to end the war, said **Marc Champion** in *Bloomberg*. After the "hot phase" ends in a few weeks, he envisions continued IDF incursions, "a recipe for perpetual war and occupation." That suits Netanyahu because if he makes peace, the ultra-right will collapse his government, leaving him vulnerable to prison time for his multiple corruption charges.

Israel's American friends, including President Biden, still haven't "come to terms with just how radical" Netanyahu has become, said **Thomas L. Friedman** in *The New York Times*. His "nightmare coalition" of ultra-right leaders wants to annex Gaza and flood the West Bank with settlers. "This is ultimatum time." The U.S. needs to tell Israel to accept Hamas' demand: End the war fully in exchange for all Israeli hostages. The alternative is to "sink into an endless war"—even as another front opens with Hezbollah.

There is a way forward that Netanyahu might accept, said **Dennis Ross** and **David Makovsky** in *The Washington Post*. It would be based on "the demilitarization of Gaza and the guarantee that it could never again be militarized." First, let Israel destroy enough Hamas "weapons labs, production facilities, depots, and tunnels that reconstitution becomes impossible." Then, enlist Egypt and the U.S. to shut down smuggling and track all reconstruction materials. If Israel can agree on an end point, "many other things can fall into place. If not, far worse outcomes are looming."

Biden moves to shield migrant spouses of U.S. citizens

What happened

President Biden this week unveiled what could be the largest relief program for undocumented immigrants in over a decade, with a new policy that lifts the threat of deportation from as many as 500,000 migrants married to U.S. citizens. Announced two weeks after Biden's move to block asylum claims at the border during migrant surges, the executive order would allow people who came into the country illegally but married citizens to remain and get work permits while their green cards are being processed. The order also protects about 50,000 children of such "mixed-status" couples. Currently, undocumented migrants married to Americans must return to their home countries to gain legal status, with no guarantee of success. Biden touted the rule change as proof that America can both toughen border enforcement and better protect vulnerable immigrants. "Families belong together," he said. "It's that simple."

The move, which the Biden administration paired with measures to make obtaining work visas easier for onetime child migrants and highly skilled workers, could help the president's re-election chances in swing states. Nevada, Arizona, and Georgia alone have an estimated 100,000 voters in households that will be directly affected. Though the White House plans to start accepting applications later this summer, the program is expected to face legal challenges. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) and other Republicans condemned it, and at a campaign stop in Racine, Wis., Donald Trump promised that if he is elected, Biden's measures would be "ripped up and thrown out."

What the columnists said

Immigration remains a weakness for Biden among voters, said **Myah Ward** in *Politico*. But now he's trying to turn the tables and highlight "one of the most controversial chapters of the Trump era: the separation of families on the southern border." This zero-tolerance approach proved deeply unpopular, though polling has since shifted so far to the right that more than half of Americans now say they favor mass deportations. Still, with a policy framed as a bid to preserve family unity, Biden hopes to cut a sharp contrast with Trump and "lure him into a very specific debate."

For many immigrant families, this will be "a game changer," said **Elvia Díaz** in *The Arizona Republic*. Only undocumented people who've lived here for at least 10 years can apply, and anyone with a criminal record cannot. Biden is beset by Republican stonewalling on border legislation, but this seemingly no-win situation apparently gave him "the guts to let law-abiding migrants out of the shadows" and let them contribute to the economy.

But maybe not for long, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. The order, which stretches the president's immigrant parole power to the breaking point, is "legally uncertain," and it "may boomerang on spouses who apply for the legal status" only to see it obliterated by a future court challenge. This is just an empty gesture to progressives outraged at Biden's move to the center—one that has "turned illegal spouses into political pawns whose lives can be toyed with."

Supreme Court: Delivering a victory for abortion access?

“What a relief,” said Erwin Chemerinsky in the *Los Angeles Times*. The same Supreme Court that two years ago scrapped *Roe v. Wade* last week ruled that abortion opponents lacked the legal right to challenge the FDA’s two-decade-old approval of the abortion drug mifepristone, or the agency’s subsequent actions to improve its availability. This 9-0 decision to preserve access to mifepristone is “crucial for reproductive rights”: Some 63 percent of abortions are now medically induced—usually by mifepristone paired with another drug, misoprostol. Still, the case “never should have gotten this far.” A Christian group, Alliance Defending Freedom, had argued that anti-abortion doctors could suffer moral harm if they had to treat women with mifepristone-induced complications. No actual harm was demonstrated, but conservative judges on lower courts—acting out of “their desire to restrict abortions”—let the case proceed, “ignoring basic rules about who can sue in federal court.” In the high court’s majority opinion, Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote that allowing such a tenuous link to actual injury would mean “every citizen had standing to challenge virtually every government action that they do not like.” Even this “ultraconservative Supreme Court” had to draw the line somewhere.



Still legal, for now.

“So much for the Left’s denunciations of the court as ‘Christian nationalist,’” said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. This decision shows conservative justices “putting the law first,” even above their moral beliefs. The pro-life doctors argued they could be forced to participate in emergency abortions that would violate their conscience, but Kavanaugh rightly pointed out that federal conscience laws have protected anti-abortion doctors “ever since FDA approved mifepristone in 2000.” His defense of standing as “a bedrock consti-

tutional requirement” is a textbook example of a justice “affirming core judicial principles.”

This decision isn’t a win for reproductive care, said **Dahlia Lithwick** and **Mark Joseph Stern** in *Slate*. “It is at best a reprieve.” The ruling failed to address lower courts’ acceptance of the plaintiff’s shoddy science. U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk—a Donald Trump appointee and former anti-abortion activist—“ignored more than 100 scientific studies” demonstrating mifepristone’s safety in favor of two “compiled by anti-abortion advocates”

that inflated the risk of complications and were later retracted. And Kavanaugh’s decision explicitly “leaves open two ways” for abortion opponents to eventually prevail, said **Ian Millhiser** in *Vox*. He rejects the idea that “no one else would have standing” to sue the FDA. That’s a nod to a looming challenge by Idaho, Kansas, and Missouri, which claim the agency’s mifepristone rulings prevent them from fully enforcing their anti-abortion laws. “More ominously,” Kavanaugh mentions that plaintiffs could instead “present their concerns and objections to the president and the FDA.” Under President Biden, they wouldn’t get anywhere. But if Donald Trump wins the White House, that’s a different story.

That’s why this decision isn’t nearly as important to abortion access as the 2024 election, said **Ruth Marcus** in *The Washington Post*. Trump has said repeatedly that he’ll leave abortion to the states. Yet his closest allies are pushing plans to curb reproductive rights nationwide, potentially by resurrecting the defunct 1873 Comstock Act, which outlaws the mailing of abortion drugs. Last week was what passes for a good week in abortion rights. But there remains a clear threat “to access, and he’ll be on the ballot come November.”

Only in America

■ Delegates at July’s Republican National Convention in Milwaukee will be allowed to carry AR-15 rifles inside the event’s security zone, but not tennis balls. Under Wisconsin law, cities can’t enact restrictions on firearms that go beyond state regulations, so most guns will be allowed at the RNC. Alderman Scott Spiker notes that canned goods will be prohibited because they could be thrown, but “nothing is a more dangerous projectile than a bullet.”

■ A Washington school district banned students from painting a mural of Thor as their senior gift, saying the Norse deity represents “white supremacy” and “colonization.” Students at Mountain View High thought the storm god would be a fitting mascot for the school because its team is called the Thunder. But district officials deemed Thor “problematic,” students said, and suggested replacing him with more diverse “AI-generated images.”

Good week for:

Darkness, with reports that *The Washington Post* is seeking to broaden its appeal “beyond the hardest, darkest news” with a rebrand that will replace the paper’s President Trump-era slogan, “Democracy dies in darkness,” with a more positive proposition.

Bangers, after Taylor Swift fans danced so hard during the pop queen’s three nights of concerts in Edinburgh that seismologists picked up earthquake readings nearly 4 miles from the venue. Tremors were strongest during the song “...Ready for It?,” when the crowd transmitted roughly 6,000 car batteries’ worth of power.

Double takes, after 23 sets of twins graduated from Pollard Middle School in Needham, Mass., making up 10 percent of the eighth-grade class. It’s “quite unusual,” said Principal Tamatha Bibbo.

Bad week for:

Dads, after Donald Trump benevolently wished a “Happy Father’s Day to all” on social media, “including the radical left degenerates” who are bringing the U.S. into “third world nation status with their many attempts to influence our sacred court system.”

Spell-check, after the Robert F. Kennedy Jr. campaign refiled its petition to get on the ballot in Nevada because the original declared that Kennedy’s VP pick, Nicole Shanahan, was running for the office of “Vice President of the Unites States.”

Double entendres, after the Supreme Court rebuffed a California man’s attempt to trademark the phrase “Trump too small”—a reference to a crude joke about Trump’s “small hands” by GOP Sen. Marco Rubio in the 2016 primaries—for use on T-shirts.

In other news

RFK Jr. misses cutoff for first presidential debate

Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. failed this week to qualify for CNN’s June 27 debate with President Biden and Donald Trump. Candidates needed to appear on enough state ballots to reach the 270-electoral-vote threshold required to win the election, and also earn at least 15 percent in four national polls. Despite claiming that he’d fulfilled the criteria, Kennedy only reached 15 percent in three polls. Hours before the deadline, five states had confirmed he was on the ballot, totaling 42 electoral votes. He has submitted petitions in states worth another 199 votes, but those petitions are not yet certified. Kennedy has objected to the debate criteria, noting that Biden and Trump also had not yet been officially selected by their parties and would not qualify under a stringent reading of the rules.

Rochester Hills, Mich.

Shooting spree: Nine people were wounded when a shooter opened fire at a splash pad in suburban Detroit—one of at least 16 mass shootings that occurred around the country last weekend, injuring more than 80 people.



Evidence markers

Forty-two-year-old Michael Nash fired a 9 mm handgun 36 times before returning home and killing himself. Two of the victims remained in critical condition days later, including an 8-year-old boy shot in the head. The boy's 4-year-old brother was hit in the leg, while his mother was shot in the leg and abdomen. Another set of parents were shot seven times as they shielded their daughters. Authorities haven't identified a motive, but Nash's mother said he'd been paranoid about the government tracking him. Elsewhere, two people died at a Juneteenth celebration in Texas, seven were shot in Massachusetts, and a dozen wounded in two shootings in Chicago.

Phoenix

Pervasive failings: A Justice Department investigation released last week found that the Phoenix Police Department regularly discriminates against people of color. The years-long investigation identified a pattern of violating the civil rights of Black, Hispanic, and Native people, as well as using excessive force and discriminating against people with behavioral health disabilities.



Officers enforced laws relating to drug and low-level offenses more severely against people of color than against white people. The 126-page report concluded that the department also unlawfully detained homeless people and tossed out their belongings. The homeless made up one-third of people arrested in Phoenix from 2016 to 2022, and the report found that police routinely forced them into The Zone, a sprawling, dangerous downtown homeless encampment that was dismantled last year. Phoenix ranked first in use of deadly force among the nation's major police departments in 2022, but a spokesperson for the city's PD denied it needed federal oversight to make reforms.

Washington, D.C.

Sex investigation: The House Ethics Committee has been investigating accusations that Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) paid for sex, *ABCNews.com* reported this week. The Justice Department previously looked into accusations of sex trafficking but declined to bring charges against Gaetz last year. The committee has now interviewed at least six women who were witnesses in the federal probe; one woman claimed the congressman paid her for sex, while others said they were paid to go to parties involving sex and drugs. The women allegedly went to parties that Gaetz attended and were paid by Joel Greenberg, a close Gaetz associate who is serving an 11-year prison sentence for charges including sex trafficking a minor. Gaetz previously denied all wrongdoing and lashed out at the committee on social media this week. "This is Soviet," he wrote. "I work for Northwest Floridians who won't be swayed by this nonsense."

Washington, D.C.

Press ethics: *Washington Post* publisher William Lewis and incoming executive editor Robert Winnett were embroiled in an expanding controversy this week over their ties to stolen documents and voicemails. Lewis, made publisher in November, faced fierce staff criticism over charges that in May he tried to kill a *Post* story about his role in a phone-hacking scandal at Rupert Murdoch's newspapers. Lewis, who worked for Murdoch when the scandal broke in 2011, has asserted that his only role was to clean up the mess. However, *The New York Times* reported last week that a reporter said that while at the Murdoch-owned *Sunday Times* Lewis assigned a story to him based on hacked phone records.



Winnett

Winnett, a Lewis protégé who is now deputy editor of *The Telegraph*, has also been linked to a 2004 operation to secure British government records by having a reporter take a government job. New reporting from *The Washington Post* itself this week tied Winnett to the theft of former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair's memoir.



Annapolis

Pot pardons: Maryland Gov. Wes Moore issued pardons for 175,000 marijuana convictions this week in one of the broadest clemency actions involving the drug.



Moore

About 100,000 people saw their low-level possession convictions eliminated in what Moore, the country's only Black governor, called an effort to heal decades of injustice. "We are taking actions that are sweeping and unapologetic," he said. Black people are over three times more likely to be arrested for possession than white people, according to the ACLU. Maryland has legalized pot, and the pardons were the culmination of a campaign to bring past convictions in line with current laws. "I was thrown out of school, denied access to my high school education, ripped from my family and my friends, and had to endure two years of isolation for a simple cannabis charge," said Jason Ortiz, director of a group that has pushed for clemency for marijuana offenders.

Fredericksburg, Va.

Whistleblower win: Yevgeny Vindman, a whistleblower who played a key role in Donald Trump's first impeachment, won the Democratic primary race for an open House seat in Virginia's 7th Congressional District this week. Retired Army colonel Vindman and his twin brother, Alexander, both worked for the National Security Council. They helped expose Trump's effort to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in a 2019 phone call, to investigate Hunter Biden's business dealings in Ukraine, while the administration withheld aid to the country. Vindman is slightly favored to win the general election in the Democrat-leaning district. Trump did appear to score a success in Virginia's GOP-leaning 5th Congressional District, where House Freedom Caucus Chair Bob Good (R-Va.), whom Trump had targeted for endorsing Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for president, was losing the Republican primary by 321 votes as *The Week* went to press.



Rallying the Left

Paris

Fear of far-right victory: Over a quarter of a million people protested across France last week, calling on voters not to let Marine Le Pen's National Rally party win the June 30 elections. President Emmanuel Macron called the vote after the nationalist, anti-immigrant party trounced Macron's

centrist allies in the European Parliament elections. Analysts said he was gambling that the French would unite to keep the far right from power, as they've done several times before—but this time it's a huge risk. Polls show the National Rally leading with 33 percent, ahead of the left-wing coalition New Popular Front with 28 percent and Macron's centrist allies with 18. "The extreme right could prevail again in France," said Socialist Party leader Olivier Faure, "for the first time since the Vichy regime."

Mexico City



Hold the guacamole: The USDA suspended inspections of avocados and mangos in Mexico this week after two of its inspectors were detained and assaulted by a vigilante group. Indigenous communities in Michoacán state, which grows most Mexican avocados shipped to the U.S., have organized security patrols to defend themselves against drug cartels, which have muscled into the avocado trade (see Briefing, p.11). The inspectors were stopped by one of those patrols. They have been released, but the USDA said inspections wouldn't resume until security problems are resolved—which could mean a halt to avocado exports from Mexico. The USDA inspects Mexican crops on site to ensure exported fruits don't carry diseases that could infect U.S. crops.

Havana

Cold War-style showdown: The U.S. sent a fast-attack submarine to dock at its naval base in Guantánamo Bay and Canada sent a navy patrol ship into Havana's harbor this week in a show of force as a fleet of Russian warships visited Cuba. Russia anchored its vessels—including a frigate capable of firing hypersonic missiles and a nuclear-powered submarine—in Havana Bay after carrying out what it said was routine missile training in the Atlantic. The U.S. Northern Command said the Russian ships, which left Communist-run Cuba this week after a five-day stay, posed "no direct threat." But it added it had monitored them closely as they tacked within 30 miles of the Florida Keys. Russia and Cuba have maintained the close military ties the two established during the Soviet era.



USS Helena

Buenos Aires

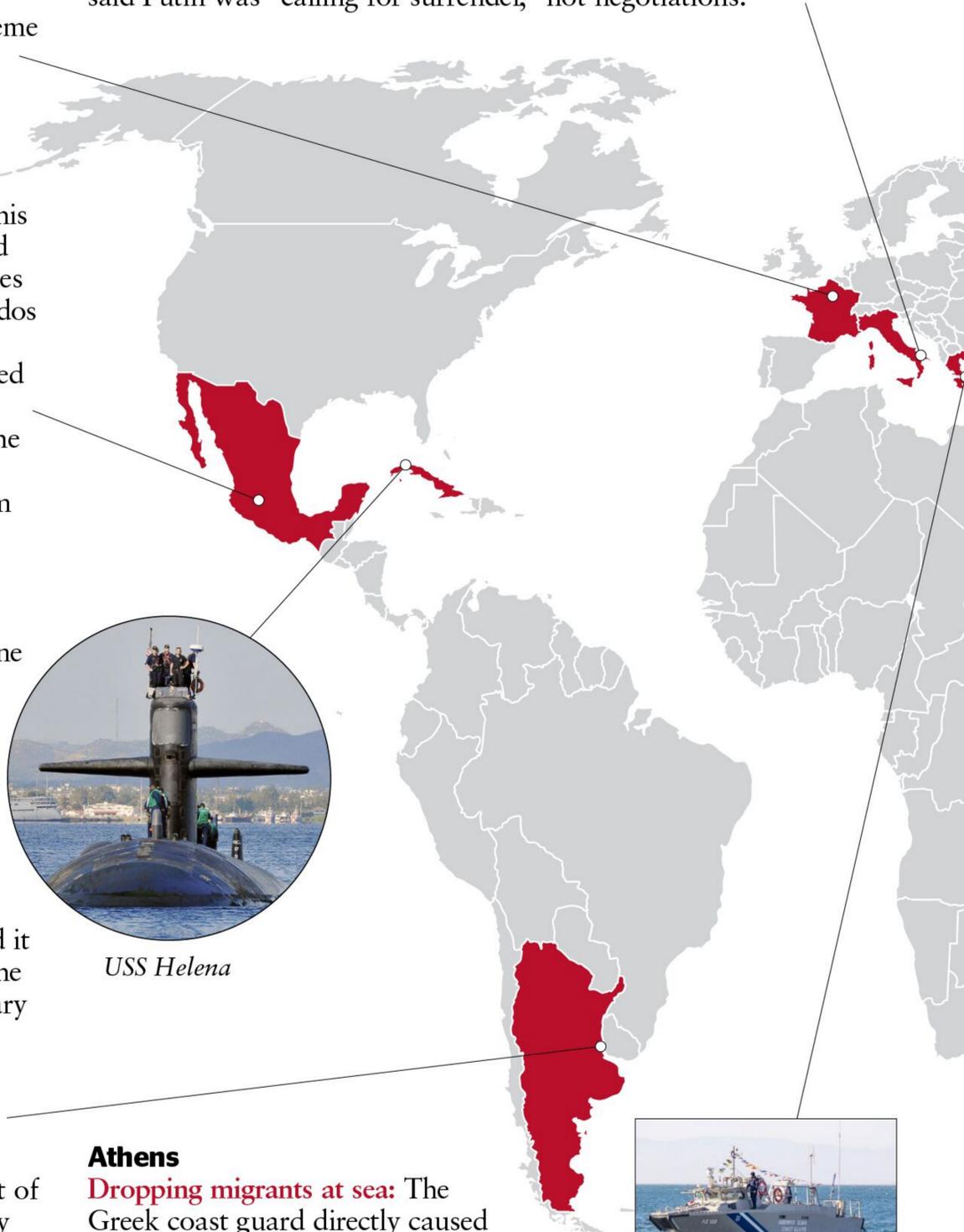
Clashes over Milei's 'chainsaw' reforms: Demonstrators hurled Molotov cocktails and stones at police outside Argentina's Congress last week after senators narrowly backed the first part of President Javier Milei's extreme economic agenda. "Our country is not for sale!" protesters chanted. Milei's reforms include cutting pensions, curbing union rights, and selling off some state-owned companies. The libertarian economist, who brought a chainsaw to campaign events to show he would slash spending, has cut government jobs over his six months in office but has yet to get a bill all the way through both houses. Milei inherited an economic crisis that has caused nearly 300 percent inflation and left almost half of Argentinians in poverty. But the leftist opposition says his solutions would amount to "declaring war on the Argentine people."



Battling police

Puglia, Italy

Money for Ukraine: Rich nations agreed to a \$50 billion loan to Ukraine last week to help it rebuild and buy weapons for the war against Russia. At the G-7 meeting in Italy, the U.S., U.K., and Canada agreed to provide the money, using interest from frozen Russian assets. Kyiv got another, symbolic boost this week from a 78-nation peace summit in Switzerland that established that any cease-fire deal must respect Ukraine's territorial integrity—although several countries, including India, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia, declined to sign that statement. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who wasn't invited to the summit, proposed his own plan, offering peace if Ukraine cedes the four regions Russia has partly occupied. Vice President Kamala Harris said Putin was "calling for surrender," not negotiations.



Coast guard accused

Athens

Dropping migrants at sea: The Greek coast guard directly caused the deaths of at least 43 migrants, including by tossing people overboard, according to a BBC investigation released this week. The report—based on local media accounts as well as interviews with eyewitnesses and sources in NGOs and the Turkish coast guard—covers a period from 2020 to 2023. In one incident, caught on video, the coast guard loaded 12 people into a dinghy and abandoned them at sea. Greek government spokesman Pavlos Marinakis said the BBC had "not proved" its allegations, adding its coast guard rescues people every day. The main opposition party, Syriza, called for an official investigation. Greece has long been accused of violating international law by forcibly pushing back migrant boats as they try to enter the EU country from Turkey.



A side of protection

Baghdad

Attacks on KFC: Iraq has deployed an elite counterterrorism force to patrol Baghdad, after a wave of attacks on American restaurants spurred by U.S. support for Israel. Vandals have targeted several popular chains, including KFC and Pizza Hut, with masked men rushing in and smashing everything they can reach. The attacks began last month, after Iranian-backed Shiite militias called on Iraqis to boycott big U.S. brands, saying their profits help the U.S. government bankroll Israel's war in Gaza. Iraq is likely providing the protection to reassure foreign investors, but some of the U.S.-trained Iraqi commandos think it's a bad idea. "It feels weird to be deployed to protect a restaurant," one soldier told *The Washington Post*. "We are special forces, not bodyguards."

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Pyongyang

Pariahs unite: Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this week signed a new partnership that includes mutual defense against aggression, their strongest pact since the Cold War. Putin, visiting Pyongyang for the first time in 24 years as he seeks weapons for his war in Ukraine, said the deal took cooperation between the countries to a "new level." Kim, meanwhile, became the first world leader to pledge "full support" for the Russian war. The U.S. and South Korea say North Korea has already sent Russia dozens of ballistic missiles and more than 11,000 shipping containers of munitions in violation of U.N. sanctions. In return, U.S. intelligence believes, Putin is providing North Korea with nuclear submarine and ballistic missile technology.



Kim, Putin: Allies

Bangkok

Gay marriage legalized: Hundreds of activists, dressed in rainbow banners and waving rainbow flags, celebrated outside Thailand's Senate this week after lawmakers overwhelmingly approved a bill legalizing same-sex marriage. The bill, which also grants same-sex couples the rights to inherit property and to adopt children, is expected to quickly receive royal assent. That will make Thailand the first Southeast Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage; in all of Asia, only Taiwan and Nepal have done so, while in countries like Myanmar and Indonesia, any same-sex relations are illegal. Broad Thai support for gay rights has made the country a haven for the LGBTQ community, and Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said he wants to have Bangkok host the World Pride festival in 2030.



Party at the Senate

Manila

Chinese aggression: Chinese coast guard ships rammed Philippine vessels in the South China Sea this week, a dramatic escalation of the rivalry around the Second Thomas Shoal. The Philippines routinely resupplies a warship beached on that shoal as a way of staking its claim to the island, and sent rubber dinghies to do so this week. Chinese sailors punctured the dinghies with knives and destroyed equipment, injuring at least eight Filipino sailors. "This is piracy," said Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., chief of staff of the Philippines military. The U.S. condemned China's "dangerous, aggressive maneuvers" and warned Beijing that Washington has a mutual defense treaty with Manila. The incident came as Washington and Manila were at odds: Reuters reported that, during the pandemic, the Pentagon ran a covert disinformation campaign in the Philippines to discredit China's Covid vaccine, the only one available to Filipinos. Manila has demanded an explanation.

Delhi

BJP goes after novelist: India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has authorized the prosecution of writer Arundhati Roy on sedition charges for a comment she made 14 years ago. Roy, 62, an outspoken critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his policies targeting Muslims and other minorities, said in 2010 that the disputed region of Kashmir—which Pakistan also claims—was not an "integral" part of India. Opposition leaders said the BJP is now cracking down on such minor infractions in an attempt to project power after losing support in the recent elections, in which Modi had expected to win a supermajority but instead took a plurality. Roy is one of India's most famous writers; her novel *The God of Small Things* won the Booker Prize in 1997.



Roy: Charged with sedition

Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Hajj heat wave: Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of pilgrims died of heat exhaustion during this year's Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, which ended this week. Officials from Tunisia, India, Jordan, Russia, and Egypt



Pilgrims endured brutal heat.

reported deaths among their citizens; many other countries did not release information. Temperatures soared to 116 degrees during the five-day event, and thousands of people suffered sunstroke or heat stress. The Hajj, among the world's largest mass gatherings, is one of the five pillars of Islam, and all Muslims are supposed to participate at least once in their life, if they can. Some of the rituals, like standing in the sun on Mount Arafat to pray from noon to sunset, can be dangerous when the Hajj falls in late spring or summer. This year's Hajj attracted an estimated 1.8 million people, down from a high of 3.2 million in 2012.

How Lauper found her voice



Cyndi Lauper's signature song celebrates female empowerment, said Amanda Hess in *The New York Times*, but "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" began its life very differently. Written by a man, it celebrated the women who sought their fun in his bedroom. Lauper made some edits for her 1983 debut album, recasting it as a declaration of female liberation and pitching it at the top of her vocal register "because I was trumpeting an idea," she says. The song made the Queens native a star, a sharp turnaround from the years she spent in bar cover bands trying to find her voice. Lauper says she tried to copy Janis Joplin, but "I was stuck inside her body, and she didn't like it, and I didn't like it." When she instead emulated Gene Pitney, "it came out sounding like Ethel Merman." Key to finding her musical self was telling stories "about the women I knew. About my mom, my aunt, my grandmother." Her mother landed in the high-spirited video for "Girls," alongside a racially diverse group of actors and singers. "That video was what you call 'inclusive' nowadays, and that was the most important thing," says Lauper, 70. "Everything I wanted [listeners] to understand was in that video. It's people together that create a style."

Handler's strange apparitions

Daniel Handler has visions, said Tristram Fane Saunders in *The Telegraph* (U.K.). Not just artistic inspirations that land in his blackly comic children's books, such as *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, but actual hallucinations that visit almost daily. He sees hairless, genderless people with bright white skin, who silently watch him. The visions "tend to happen at moments when my mind is unclenched," says Handler, 54. They first came to him in terrifying dreams, when he was a freshman at Wesleyan University. Fearing sleep and exhausted, he began having seizures. One day the figures appeared in broad daylight. With no medical explanations, psychiatrists had him hospitalized. Eventually, the dreams stopped and he was released, but the visions continued. What's behind the hallucinations is a mystery. Handler recently revealed that he was sexually assaulted as a child, but he's reluctant to speculate about how that single incident might have shaped his later life. "I would find it ill-fitting to announce myself as a 'survivor', let alone a 'victim.'" Handler says he is eager not to have his life story reduced to a simple label. It's like "when you're watching TV and some citizen is giving their opinion on some matter, and it has some reductive caption like 'Hates Immigrants' or 'Concerned About Neighborhood Fire Department,' and you think, 'That's their whole thing?!'"



Lane's wild youth

Diane Lane had an unusual introduction to the acting profession, said Emine Saner in *The Guardian* (U.K.). Growing up in New York with a singer and *Playboy* model mother and an acting coach father, she landed her first stage role at age 6. At 7, she joined an experimental theater group, La MaMa, and embarked on a world tour in its young actors' care. They performed "in Shiraz and Tehran and Beirut," says Lane, 59, often at ancient ruins "with fire preferably." There was nudity on stage and depictions of sexual assault; in Amsterdam, she mistakenly ate hash brownies. Does she wonder what her parents were thinking? "It definitely got me a seat in therapy," Lane says. But she notes that the 1970s were a more innocent time. "The comparisons are not on the same playing field. The experiences I had were extraordinary and multicultural and filled with intense experimentation and freedom." After returning to the U.S., she acted in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* with Meryl Streep at 12, and at 14 starred with Laurence Olivier in the film *A Little Romance*, landing on the cover of *Time*. Her career has seen ups and downs since, but its unpredictability is "half the fun. You cycle through periods where there's work that nobody sees, and when you do something that's a hit, everybody goes, 'So glad you're working again,'" she laughs. "That's fine. Everything's not for everybody."

In the news



■ **Catherine, Princess of Wales**, waved and smiled at crowds in London last week during her first public appearance since being diagnosed with cancer. Wearing a crisp white dress and matching cartwheel hat, the princess, 42, rode in a carriage through the capital to watch the Trooping of the Colour—a military parade that marks the official birthday of her father-in-law, King Charles III. After the event, she appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace alongside her husband, Prince William. In a personal written message released a day earlier, Kate said she is making "good progress" with her treatment but is "not out of the woods yet." The princess, last seen in public at Christmas, underwent abdominal surgery in

January and began preventative chemotherapy in March after tests revealed the presence of cancer. "I am learning how to be patient," the mother of three said, "especially with uncertainty."

■ WNBA archrivals **Caitlin Clark** and **Angel Reese** faced off in their second game of the season this week—a clash that saw the Chicago Sky's Reese hit with a flagrant foul after she clunked the Indiana Fever's Clark in the head during a lay-up. Speaking after the 91-83 Fever victory, Reese brushed off her foul, saying she was simply "going for the ball." Two weeks earlier, the Sky's Chennedy Carter aggressively bodychecked Clark after a play; Reese cheered the move from the sideline. Reese recently told reporters that she doesn't mind playing the "bad guy" and that Clark doesn't deserve all the credit for the WNBA's new popularity. "It's not just because of one person," Reese said. "It's because of me too."

■ **Bill Belichick** has found love with a former NFL cheerleader 48 years his junior, *TMZ* reported last week. A source told the outlet that the retired Patriots head coach, 72, first met **Jordon Hudson**, 24, on a flight in 2021, when she was a student and cheerleader at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts. The pair reportedly bonded over a philosophy project that Hudson was working on. After Belichick and his girlfriend of 16 years, TV host Linda Holliday, split in 2023, the coach and Hudson became more than friends. Former Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski hinted at the May-December romance during Netflix's recent *The Roast of Tom Brady*. "Coach, you used to talk about Foxborough High School when we sucked," Gronkowski joked. "But now I know why you were so obsessed with Foxborough High School: You were scouting your new girlfriend."

Mexico's criminal conglomerates

The country's cartels have expanded their operations far beyond drugs, infiltrating the legal economy and the political system.

How do the cartels make money?

Drug trafficking is still the big earner. Cartels make an estimated \$12 billion annually from the sale of cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine—mostly in the U.S. But in recent years, these organizations have diversified their criminal enterprises to include extortion, people smuggling, and arms dealing. And they have expanded into the legal economy as well. Narcos operate taxi and bus networks and tax avocado and lime growers (see box). About 70 percent of lumber production in Mexico is now illicit and roughly 30 percent of fuel sold in the country is stolen or smuggled. The crime gangs have also aggressively infiltrated local and regional governments, allowing them to direct public contracts for road building and other infrastructure projects to their preferred firms. While data is limited, it's thought the revenue from all these schemes could rival the crime groups' drug earnings. "Today in Mexico we have a mafia-like criminal landscape," said Romain Le-Cour-Grandmaison of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.



Members of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel.

Why did cartels diversify?

Because they saw new opportunities for profit. "El Narco [is] a monster that eats everything it can," said Mexico-based journalist Ioan Grillo. But this expansion is also a result of government policy. In 2006, then-Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched a war on the cartels, using the military as well as state and federal police to crack down on organized crime. Some 200,000 Mexicans were killed in 14 years of conflict, and the handful of big cartels splintered into many smaller ones. There are now more than 200 outfits employing a total of 150,000 people operating across the country. Many of these form shifting alliances with the remaining big players, such as the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel. To survive in this ultracompetitive and ultraviolent environment, "the cartels began to diversify their portfolios to try to gain resources," said Eduardo Moncada, an expert on Latin American crime at Barnard College. Extortion has proved to be one of the cartels' most lucrative operations.

How prevalent is extortion?

About 20 million extortion crimes are reported each year, a huge number in a country of 128 million people. But the true total is likely far higher, because many victims are afraid to file reports with local police, who are often allied with cartels. Almost every industry is subject to shakedowns, with small businesses proving to be especially tempting targets. At least 15 percent of Mexico's 135,000 mom-and-pop *tortillerías* are forced to regularly pay extortion, according to the National Tortilla Council. "We're practically at the point where criminals set the price of tortillas," said

council leader Homero López. One shop owner in Cuernavaca, a city in south-central Mexico, told *The Washington Post* that thugs turned up three years ago, asking for \$10 a week to "protect the neighborhood." Cuernavaca changed hands several times amid bloody gang battles, and the mob now in charge demands up to \$900 a month in protection. Those who don't pay risk having their shops or homes firebombed or strafed with bullets—or being assassinated.

What's the government doing?

Not much. When the left-leaning Andrés Manuel López Obrador won the presidency in 2018, he declared the war on drugs over and enacted a new policy of "hugs not bullets." He scaled back cooperation with the U.S., dissolved the federal police, and tried to discourage young people from joining the cartels by expanding job-training programs. With security forces on the sidelines, cartels focused on expanding and fighting rivals for territory. López Obrador's term saw a record number of murders, with at least 175,000 people killed in six years. President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, a former Mexico City mayor and an acolyte of López Obrador, plans to continue his policies. She will "start from below zero," said Guillermo Valdés, former head of Mexico's national intelligence agency. "Criminals are more powerful, there is more violence, there is more political control of territory."

How do the cartels secure political influence?

Through bribes and force. In the run-up to this year's June 2 vote—which included races for federal and state legislatures, governorships, and mayoralties—37 candidates and dozens more people involved with elections were murdered, making this the bloodiest election in modern Mexican history. In the town of Maravatio in Michoacán state, gangs shot dead three mayoral candidates, including a respected doctor. Once in office, cartel-friendly pols can facilitate corruption and set police on their enemies.

How does this affect the U.S.?

It's contributed to the crisis at the southern border, where some 717,000 Mexicans were detained last year, triple the number in 2019. A Catholic aid organization reported that nearly 90 percent of the Mexican migrants it interviewed last year said they were fleeing violence, up from about 6 percent eight years earlier. Some of those migrants couldn't afford to keep up with extortion payments; others likely fled the "social cleansings" carried out when one gang seizes another's territory. But experts say the bigger danger to the U.S. is that the cartels' thirst for money could lead them to substantially expand their operations north of the border. "Our cartel problem," said Rodrigo Villegas, a Mexico City-based political consultant, "is your cartel problem."

Narco avocados

The avocado toast and guacamole Americans love are part of a \$3 billion agribusiness dominated by the state of Michoacán, where 75 percent of Mexico's crop is grown. Unsurprisingly, the cartels have grabbed a slice of this green gold. Crime gangs extort growers, trucking firms, and packers, but—in a sign of the tangled relationship between government, business, and the cartels—have also aided "the expansion of avocado-producing lands," said Le-Cour-Grandmaison. Cartels displace and kill people on protected lands, clear forests, and then secure the permits needed for "virgin land" to be converted to avocado ranches. In Michoacán, more than 25,000 acres of avocado orchards authorized to export to the U.S. are on lands that were covered by forests as recently as 2014, according to researchers at the University of Texas. Some of that land belonged to the indigenous Purépecha people, whose members have been kidnapped and killed for opposing the clearing of communal lands. "The avocados you're eating in the United States are bathed in blood," one Purépecha man told *The New York Times*.

Preventing another 9/11

Graham Allison
and Michael J. Morell
Foreign Affairs

“The terrorism warning lights are blinking red again,” said Graham Allison and Michael J. Morell. FBI Director Christopher Wray and other U.S. intelligence and military officials have been warning for months that the threat level of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil has escalated dramatically, with Iran and extremist groups such as Hamas, ISIS-K, and al Qaida seeking vengeance for the killing of their soldiers and leaders. Terrorists could exploit the porous U.S. southern border to enter the country, and Wray has warned that “homegrown violent extremists”—so-called lone wolves—also pose a serious threat. In fact, terrorists have never stopped trying to strike: In 2022, U.S. officials broke up two foreign plots—one to kill former national security adviser John Bolton and another to assassinate former President George W. Bush. In recent months, leaders of ISIS-K and al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula have issued videos calling for attacks on U.S. airliners and cities—just as Osama bin Laden did before 9/11. For the past two decades, America’s intelligence and military communities “have spared our country a second 9/11,” but “the work is not done.” To prevent “the unthinkable,” policymakers need to take the warnings very seriously.

Local news’ skewed substitute

Zeeshan Aleem
MSNBC.com

The collapse of local journalism has been “terrible for democracy,” said Zeeshan Aleem, and it’s even worse now that the void is being filled by partisan propaganda labeled as news. The 1,213 local daily newspapers left in the U.S. are now outnumbered by the estimated 1,260 sites that are partisan mouthpieces deceptively presented as independent news outlets. Most of these sites are published by conservative entrepreneur Brian Timpone’s company, Metric Media, under such “generic-sounding” names such as the *Illinois Valley Times* and *North Pocono News*. They’re designed to look like conventional news outlets, but combine a bit of “quasi-journalistic newsgathering” with agenda-driven stories from political operatives and public relations firms lauding Republican public officials or local corporations. Some are even produced in Russia. Progressive organizations have gotten into the same game, though they are far outnumbered. Journalism, of course, is never 100 percent free of ideological influence. But most Americans do not have the digital media literacy to differentiate between faux news and news sites that strive for accuracy and fairness. The replacement of local news by propaganda is happening “at the worst possible moment for democracy.”

The Trump film you may not see

Michelle Goldberg
The New York Times

A new movie called *The Apprentice* traces Donald Trump’s rise to fame under the tutelage of his Machiavellian mentor, lawyer Roy Cohn. But American audiences may never see it, said Michelle Goldberg. The unflattering film features “extraordinary” performances by *Succession* star Jeremy Strong as Cohn and Sebastian Stan as the young Trump, and distributors in many countries have bought rights to show it. But U.S. movie studios reportedly became afraid to touch *The Apprentice* after Trump’s lawyers threatened to sue and attacked the film as “foreign interference in America’s elections.” Corporations have seen the boycotts the MAGA right launched against Bud Light and Disney, and fear that if Trump is re-elected, he will actively use federal regulators to punish them. In his first term, Trump’s Department of Justice tried to block AT&T’s purchase of CNN’s parent company, Time Warner, to punish the news network for its coverage of him. Trump ally Kash Patel has warned journalists and the media that if Trump gets a second term, “we’re going to come after you, whether it’s criminally or civilly.” The fear of releasing this movie in the U.S. is a “sign of democratic decay,” and it augurs “greater self-censorship to come.”

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A Missouri woman is fighting a legal battle to claim damages from an auto insurance company after she caught a sexually transmitted disease in a former partner’s Hyundai Genesis. In a \$1 million suit now in federal appeals court, the woman, identified only as M.O., argued she should be compensated for medical costs and “mental and physical pain and suffering” from ex-partner Martin Brauner’s GEICO policy. She lost a lower court ruling and appealed. “This was a bodily injury,” her lawyer told the appeals court. The attorney for GEICO said the policy only covers injuries suffered when “using an auto as an auto.”

■ Rotting cured meats and cheeses dangled from a street pole for weeks after organizers of a Philadelphia festival forgot to take the food down. At the annual South 9th Street Italian Market festival, people compete to climb a greased pole to snag provolone, mozzarella, and sausages. Leftovers are usually removed, but “we just literally forgot,” said organizer Michele Gambino. In the month it took to get a crane for the removal, the dangling delicacies became a local curiosity and tourist attraction—*The Philadelphia Inquirer* dubbed them the “world’s worst wind chime.”

■ Danish health officials have ordered a recall of several South Korean instant-noodle products for being too spicy. Three instant-ramen flavors made by the popular South Korean company Samyang Foods have capsaicin levels that “can pose a health hazard” and cause “acute poisoning,” said regulators in the Scandinavian country, which is not known for aggressively seasoned food. Samyang said that the noodles “are being exported globally” and have not faced issues elsewhere.



Kat Kuo/South 9th Street Italian Market Festival

Viewpoint

“Motivated ignorance refers to *willfully blinding* oneself to facts. It’s choosing not to know. In many cases, for many people, knowing the truth is simply too costly, too psychologically painful, too threatening to their core identity. People actively decide to remain in a state of ignorance. If they are presented with strong arguments against a position they hold, or compelling evidence that disproves the narrative they embrace, they will reject them. Doing so fends off the psychological distress of the realization that they’ve been lying to themselves and to others.”

Peter Wehner in *The Atlantic*

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SWEDEN

Let convicts be housed with monks

Olle Jonasson
Dagens Nyheter

Here's a radical solution to Sweden's overcrowded prisons, said Olle Jonasson: House inmates in monasteries. "The wave of violence that has swept through Sweden in recent years," as immigrant gangs battle over turf, has tested our once peaceful society. Police have responded admirably, making thousands of arrests and confiscating weapons. But the prison system wasn't built for so much crime and punishment, and jails are now overflowing, with inmates sleeping on "extra mattresses on the floor." Degrading, overcrowded conditions do not make a "good environment for rehabilitation." As a prison pastor, I believe that "every human being

has an inherent potential for change" and that criminals can become productive members of society if given the chance. That's why monasteries are the ideal spot for incarceration. Many of them are all but empty these days, and could easily be converted into "halfway houses" where felons could reflect, heal, and atone for their sins with the support of clergy. This isn't as crazy as it may sound: Churches and private civic groups have partnered fruitfully with prisons in Germany and the Netherlands. Religious communities have "great competence and experience in social work and caring for the poor." Let them also help care for prisoners.

BELGIUM

A Flemish win is a loss for separatism

Pieter Haeck
Politico.eu

We're at "peak Belgian surrealism," said Pieter Haeck. Bart De Wever of the Flemish nationalist party NVA rose to party leadership "promising to rip his region away from the rest of Belgium." But now that his party took a slim plurality in last week's election, he is set to become prime minister of all of Belgium—and he says he won't let Flanders secede. Even though NVA's founding platform calls for "an independent republic for Flanders," De Wever has "decided to go light on the separatism" and instead seek greater autonomy for each of Belgium's three regions: Brussels, French-dominated Wallonia, and Dutch-dominated Flanders. "It's a gamble that is not without risk."

De Wever faces even more radical separatists to his right, in the form of the ultranationalist Vlaams Belang party. Polls had forecast that VB would beat NVA, but De Wever outmaneuvered the far right by tacking to the center, "running on a platform of fiscal discipline, state reform." Now he must form a government: no easy feat in this complicated, fractious country. After the last election in 2018, it took a world record 592 days for Belgium to form a government, beating its previous record of 541 days after the 2010 election. De Wever, who has ruled out a coalition with VB, may face months of arduous, multiparty talks. Still, "the end of Belgium is off the table—at least for now."

United Kingdom: Where human waste floats in the rivers

Britain's waterways have become a foul stew, said Will Dunn in *The New Statesman*. Raw sewage contaminates our rivers, our lakes, even our coastal waters. In the Cumbrian village of Cartmel, the River Eea wafts its fetid stench over homes and parks. At the beaches of Cornwall, the once turquoise ocean has turned a fecal brown. Last year alone, British water companies "spent 3.6 million hours dumping raw sewage into rivers." The roots of this problem go back all the way to the "Great Stink" of 1858, which inspired Parliament to build the current sewage treatment system; unfortunately, the single-pipe design for runoff and waste allowed sewage overflows to pour straight into the watershed. In the intervening century and a half, we've built the capacity to hold and treat such overflows, but these facilities have been systematically underfunded ever since Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher privatized the water utilities in 1989. The new owners—which include pension funds and sovereign wealth funds—have prioritized profits over safety. London's Thames Water, for example, has paid its shareholders in China, Saudi Arabia, and Canada nearly \$9 billion in dividends while allowing its infrastructure to rot. We've known about this problem for decades. But this spring it reached the point where the government "can no longer hold its nose."

In March, during the famed Oxford versus Cambridge boat race on the Thames, rowers got sick after practicing in water teeming with *E. coli*, said Gemma Abbott in the *Independent*. Last week, dozens more athletes fell ill after swimming in the Thames during the Royal Windsor Triathlon—one competitor vomited blood.



Protesting sewage dumping at Hythe Beach

"Severe vomiting and diarrhea is now an ever-present risk" for anyone coming into contact with our waterways. I hate to break it to my kids, but my family won't be surfing the North Devon waves or paddleboarding our local streams this summer. "It's far too dangerous." Yet the government's big plan to fix the problem is to reward the mismanaged companies that created it, said Alex Klaushofer in *The Spectator*. Thames Water and similar firms took on significant debt to pay their shareholders and their pollution

finances, and they claim that's why they can't make repairs. Ofwat, the water services regulator, is supposed to create a "recovery regime" for such companies. But those close to the discussions tell me the regulator intends to break "the cycle of fines for breaches and underinvestment" by simply waiving the fines. That will only mean more turds bobbing in the waves.

It's time to admit that privatization is an experiment that has failed, said *The Guardian* in an editorial. There's a reason why 90 percent of the world has state-owned water utilities: When each regional water provider is its own little monopoly, there's no market incentive to raise standards. Instead, our private water companies are free to pay exorbitant bonuses to their executives—in "a textbook example of rent seeking by oligopolistic capital"—all while borrowing billions. It needn't be this way. Scotland has a nationalized water company, and so does the Netherlands; their water is among the world's most pristine. Seven out of 10 Britons are in favor of renationalizing. Why persist with a broken system just "for reasons of ideology?"

Colombia: Chiquita faces reckoning for death squads

It's a "historic victory" for Colombians, said **Alejandra Bonilla Mora** in *Cambio* (Colombia). In a case that took 17 years to wind through U.S. courts, a Florida jury has found Chiquita Brands International liable for murders committed by the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), the right-wing paramilitary group Chiquita was bankrolling. Lawyers for the victims' families argued that the AUC killed and forcibly displaced people in fertile regions so that Chiquita could buy their land cheaply and convert it into banana farms.

Chiquita, in fact, had already admitted giving the AUC \$1.7 million from 1997 to 2004, but it said the paramilitaries were extorting it and that it only paid to ensure its employees' safety. The jury didn't buy that argument. The court has now ordered the company to pay \$38.3 million to family members of eight of the nine victims in the case—the first time Chiquita has been found culpable in hundreds of similar suits. This is a rare example of a company being held accountable for its actions in a country torn by conflict, and lawyers say the verdict has sent the message that "nobody is above the law."

This isn't full accountability, but it's a "starting point," said **Isabella Escobedo** in *Deutsche Welle* (Germany). More than 7,000 people have filed suits against Chiquita over its paramilitary links. Of course, "Chiquita's history in Colombia was stained with blood" long before the death-squad era—the company grew out of the notorious United Fruit Co. That colonialist enterprise was at the center of the Banana Massacre in 1928,



Banana plantations in Colombia: Blood-soaked land

when the Colombian military killed hundreds of striking banana workers at the behest of the U.S. Nor is Chiquita the only foreign company with a dark past. Coca-Cola and the Drummond mining company have been accused of financing Colombian death squads, too. The precedent set in Florida could "open the door" for tens of thousands of victims to get compensation, said **Alicia Liliana Méndez** in *El Tiempo* (Colombia). More than 200,000 people died in our brutal, 40-year civil war. And death squads backed by business interests killed many of them.

Don't expect a verdict in the U.S. to change much in Colombia, said **Juan Ospina** in *El Espectador* (Colombia). Our court system is not equipped to "address the responsibility of civilian third parties" for crimes committed before the conflict ended in 2016. Colombia would have to pass laws specifically designed to investigate, prosecute, and punish foreign companies and executives for human rights violations, and it's far from clear we will. The Chiquita verdict is a bitter reminder that our nation is still in denial about how many people aided the terrorists, said **Jineth Bedoya Lima** in *El Tiempo*. It goes beyond the paramilitaries, because many multinationals also paid "stipends to army and police officers who allied themselves with the devil." Colombia will "bear the shame of the history it wants to hide" until everyone—from executives to ranchers—who was once or twice removed from the killers stands up and says, "Yes, it happened, and I was part of it." Only then will "the terror begin to fade."

MEXICO

The U.S. hands us a migrant mess

Nadine Cortés
El Financiero

America's gift to incoming president Claudia Sheinbaum is a border crisis, said Nadine Cortés. Just two days after she was elected, President Biden issued an executive order effectively closing the border to asylum seekers. The Trumpian policy, intended to boost Biden's re-election bid by making him look tough on immigration, "has profound and direct repercussions for Mexico." Shut out of the U.S., tens of thousands of Haitians, Cubans, Guatemalans, and other migrants from around the globe are left "stranded in Mexico, overwhelming the country's already overstretched shelters and humanitarian resources." This crisis "will be

a baptism by fire" for Sheinbaum, a protégé of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador who takes office in October. In the interim, López Obrador has requested that the U.S. deport the migrants to their countries of origin, not back to Mexico, but whether the U.S. complies depends on its goodwill. Even if some deportations proceed, Sheinbaum will face an immediate test of her ability "to collaborate with the United States" while also providing basic services to a growing population of desperate foreigners. And it will be tough for her to prepare, since she doesn't know whether she'll face President Biden—or a President Trump.

CANADA

An uprising greased by \$7 butter

Elianna Lev
Yahoo Canada

It started with a monthlong boycott of Loblaw, Canada's largest supermarket chain, said Elianna Lev. But it may have morphed into a lifestyle. Last year, the group r/LoblawIsOutOfControl sprang up on Reddit, as a place for irate shoppers to post photos of egregious prices, such as a fruit tray for \$16 or chicken at \$10 a pound. Even as prices shot up, Loblaw was pocketing record corporate profits. Their outrage mounting, members of the Reddit group led a May boycott that mobilized tens of thousands of people. Now that May is over, many shoppers are still staying away, "vowing to shun the grocery giant and its chains indefinitely." Loblaw

owns not just its namesake stores but also Shoppers Drug Mart, Real Canadian Superstore, No Frills, Zehrs, and other retail grocery brands—90 percent of Canadians live within 6 miles of one of its stores. But thanks to the proximity of the U.S. and Walmart, Canadians have other choices. "I have saved in excess of \$400 this month alone" by going online, one shopper told me. "I don't think I'll ever go back," said another. Last week, the government's Competition Bureau said it had opened an investigation into "anti-competitive conduct" by Loblaw. If the boycott didn't make Loblaw take notice, perhaps the feds will.

Noted

■ Violent crime dropped 15.2 percent nationwide in the first three months of the year compared with the same period in 2023, with murders and rapes both falling by about 26 percent, according to FBI statistics. Murders plummeted by more than 40 percent in cities such as New Orleans, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Boston; crime analysts say if such figures hold steady, we may see the largest one-year decline in murders in U.S. history. *CNN.com*



■ Nearly 90 percent of House Republicans—including Speaker Mike Johnson and Majority Leader Steve Scalise—last week voted in favor of a failed measure to restore a Confederate memorial to Arlington National Cemetery. The monument, removed in December, features an enslaved Black “mammy” holding the infant child of a white army officer, and an enslaved Black man following his owner into battle. *The Washington Post*

■ More than 171,000 American women are estimated to have traveled across state lines to get an abortion last year. That’s double the number who traveled out of state for an abortion in 2019, and accounted for nearly a fifth of recorded abortions. *The New York Times*

■ China is on track to double its arsenal of nuclear weapons over the next six years. The country’s nuclear stockpile grew from 410 operational warheads to about 500 over the past year, and is expected to hit 1,000 by 2030—about the same number as the U.S. or Russia has. *The Hill*

Supreme Court: What makes a ‘machine gun’?

“If you want to know why people hate lawyers,” said Noah Feldman in *Bloomberg*, look at the Supreme Court’s latest gun ruling. In a 6-3 decision that “flies in the face of all common sense,” the conservative majority last week struck down a 2018 ban on bump stocks. These \$100 devices harness a semiautomatic rifle’s kickback to “bump” back and forth between a shooter’s shoulder and trigger finger, causing the rifle to fire again and again. “This mechanism became horrifyingly relevant in 2017 when a shooter killed 60 people in Las Vegas using several bump stocks,” firing more than 1,000 rounds in 11 minutes. That massacre led then-President Donald Trump’s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to regulate bump stocks as machine guns, which have been effectively outlawed since the 1930s. But in the majority opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas writes that bump stocks don’t meet the definition of a machine gun under federal law: a weapon that fires more than one shot “by a single function of the trigger.” This is absurd literalism that, as Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in her dissent, “will have deadly consequences.”

That bump stocks don’t count as machine guns “is not a new finding,” said Charles C.W. Cooke in *National Review*. As Thomas noted in the



A bump stock: Legal once more

majority opinion, “on more than 10 separate occasions under several administrations,” the ATF concluded that semiautomatics fitted with bump stocks did not meet the “single trigger function” standard set by Congress. All that changed in 2018 was the political pressure put on the ATF to do something after the Vegas tragedy. But the “Constitution is extremely clear on how laws are made, and ‘a lot of people are upset about something’ lies nowhere within its instructions.”

The ATF’s flip-flopping “shows what can go wrong when such clearly legislative matters are left up to the bureaucracy and the courts,” said *The Washington Post* in an editorial. If there’s a “silver lining” here, it’s that the bump stock regulation was knocked down on statutory grounds, not as a violation of the Second Amendment. That leaves the door open for legislation. But Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-Neb.) this week blocked a Democratic-led attempt to quickly restore the bump stock ban, calling the legislation “gun-grabbing overreach.” So when the next bump stock-enabled killing spree happens, “it will not be enough to blame it on the madness of a single deranged individual,” said David Firestone in *The New York Times*. “There are so many others.”

Trump: A question of mental fitness

“Is Donald Trump OK?” asked Eugene Robinson in *The Washington Post*. Over the past week, the presumed GOP presidential nominee has given us several “frightening glimpses into a mind that is, evidently, unwell.” At a Nevada rally, the 78-year-old embarked on a lengthy, muddled disquisition about whether it would be better to be electrocuted by a boat battery or eaten by a shark (he chose electrocution). At a campaign event in Detroit, Trump forgot the name of the doctor who administered the cognitive exam that he “aced.” And during a closed-door meeting between Trump and top CEOs, attendees told CNBC, the former president was “meandering” and “all over the map.” We in the media have become “inured to Trump’s verbal incontinence,” but it ought to be front-page news. President Biden, “who is old, at least makes sense. Trump, who also is old, rants like someone you’d cross the street to avoid.”

How does he get away with it? asked Doyle McManus in the *Los Angeles Times*. When Biden, 81, mistakes a name or place, the media pounces, claiming that he is showing—as a recent *Wall Street Journal* article filled with quotes from Republican lawmakers put it—“signs of slipping.” Yet when Trump spouts wild mistruths or rambles

from one “disjointed thought to another,” there’s no equivalent flurry of press coverage. This “double standard” might be due to the fact that Trump “appears more vigorous, at least at first glance,” than Biden, who has spinal arthritis and walks like an old man. Trump is also “benefiting from the sheer superfluity of crazy,” said Brian Klaas in *The Atlantic*. His “ludicrous statements” don’t drive the news, because they’ve become routine. But a president “who occasionally misspeaks is far less worrying” than one who repeatedly “purveys delusional fantasies and conspiracy theories.”

The idea of this “mentally unstable” man serving a second term “should terrify any American voter,” said Tom Nichols, also in *The Atlantic*. The grown-ups who “managed Trump’s cognitive and emotional issues” first time around “are gone, never to return.” His next White House will be staffed with nothing but toadies pre-vetted for loyalty. There will be no responsible or experienced civil servant in the Oval Office if the day comes when someone has to explain to Trump why the Chinese or Russians have put their nukes on alert, and “he starts talking about frying sharks with boat batteries.” The 45th president is unwell, and he should not “serve as the 47th.”

Gaza protests: Blatant Jew hatred on display

“An explosion of blatant antisemitism by anti-Israel protesters” is alarming Jewish Americans, said **Carl Campanile** in the *New York Post*. In New York City, a pro-Palestinian mob recently gathered outside an exhibit memorializing the Jewish victims savagely murdered by Hamas at a music festival on Oct. 7. The protesters lit flares, chanted “Long live the Intifada,” and held a banner reading “Long Live October 7.” Last week, vandals defaced with red paint the home of Anne Pasternak, the Jewish president of the Brooklyn Museum, scrawling “White Supremacist Zionist” and inverse triangles, which are used by Hamas to identify Israeli targets. In another New York City incident, protesters with faces obscured by kaffiyehs and face masks boarded a subway car and demanded all “Zionists” raise their hands, warning, “This is your chance to get out.” For many Jews, the “overt displays of hate” carried “uncomfortable echoes of Germany in the 1930s.”



A pro-Palestinian protest in Brooklyn

I’ve covered 18 pro-Palestinian rallies in many cities, said **Olivia Reingold** in *The Free Press*, and have been repeatedly threatened, physically menaced, cursed at, and called a Zionist. I’ve seen Hamas and Hezbollah symbols “and even Nazi swastikas.” As the spring’s college demonstrations

have moved to the streets, protesters have “become even more brazen and confident” in spouting antisemitism. At UCLA, protesters called a university rabbi a “pedophile” and shouted “Go back to Poland”; outside the White House, a protest mob chanted “Kill another Zionist now.” The ugly incidents have prompted “a reckoning” for progressive leaders, said **Emily Ngo, Nick Reisman, and Jeff Coltin** in *Politico*. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez hosted a discussion last week with Jewish leaders, and later warned, “Bigotry in organizing spaces imperils everyone’s work.”

If such hate speech were coming from the Right, said **Rich Lowry** in *National Review*, it would be called a “national crisis.” The pro-Hamas chants “aren’t any better than the infamous ‘Jews will not replace us’ chant” that white supremacists delivered at their notorious Charlottesville, Va., rally in 2017. The Charlottesville event set off “shock waves,” but the Jew hatred from leftists has been met with little outrage or attention. “Can you imagine the headlines” if these raging anti-semites were white supremacists carrying Confederate flags, instead of leftists brandishing Hamas symbols? “Every day is a Charlottesville now, but hardly anyone notices.”

Alito: In pursuit of more ‘godliness’

“To Justice Samuel Alito, the Supreme Court is a theater in the grand war against liberalism,” said **Paul Waldman** in *MSNBC.com*. The conservative activist judge made that clear when he recently spoke candidly to liberal activist Lauren Windsor, who posed as a fellow conservative at a Supreme Court Historical Society gala and secretly taped him. Alito told her he agreed with the idea that America must return “to a place of godliness.” Even more troubling was Alito’s endorsement of Windsor’s suggestion that the culture war can end in only one way. “One side or the other will win,” Alito told her. “There are differences on fundamental things that really can’t be compromised.” This explains why—regardless of how tortured his reasoning must become—he sides with Republicans on every case “to help his side prevail.”

“This is no scandal or even revelation,” said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. Alito, a practicing Catholic, has openly discussed in speeches his belief that religion plays an important role in society. In response to Windsor’s “creepy” questioning, he said Americans can “live together peacefully,” while also underscoring the justices’ limited power on cultural disputes: “We have a very defined role.” That’s entirely innocuous.

Besides, even Supreme Court justices are “entitled to their own views,” said **Matthew X. Wilson** in *National Review*. Would it be a scandal if Justice Sonia Sotomayor said on tape that “she personally believed religion has too large an influence in American politics”?

Actions speak louder than words, said **Sabrina Haake** in the *Chicago Tribune*. In standing rulings, which decide whether federal courts have jurisdiction to intervene in legal disputes, Alito has ruled in favor of conservative litigants 100 percent of the time and in favor of liberals 0 percent of the time—demonstrating “irrefutable bias.” He’s ruled in favor of a web designer who objected to the mere possibility she’d have to create a wedding website for gay couples. It’s obvious that Alito—author of the precedent-shattering abortion ruling overturning *Roe*—wants to “inflict his religious worldview onto others.” Look at the “Appeal to Heaven” flag raised by Alito’s wife over their Jersey Shore home—a symbol embraced by Christian nationalists and Jan. 6 rioters, said **Theodore R. Johnson** in *The Washington Post*. A Supreme Court that seeks to steer America toward more “godliness” is a court “swerving out of its lane” and endangering its “legitimacy.”

Wit & Wisdom

“As everyone knows who has ever heard a piece of gossip, we do not ‘own’ the facts of our lives at all.”
Journalist Janet Malcolm, quoted in Bookforum

“Better a spectacular failure, than a benign success.”
Malcolm McLaren, quoted in Lifehacker

“Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come.”
Victor Hugo, quoted in The Washington Post

“Theology is necessary because man is by nature a fanatic.”
Theologian Gerhard Ebeling, quoted in ABC (Australia)

“We were told that our campaign wasn’t sufficiently slick. We regard that as a compliment.”
Margaret Thatcher, quoted in Bloomberg

“Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t after you.”
Joseph Heller, quoted in MSN.com

“Only the shallow know themselves.”
Oscar Wilde, quoted in The Knowledge

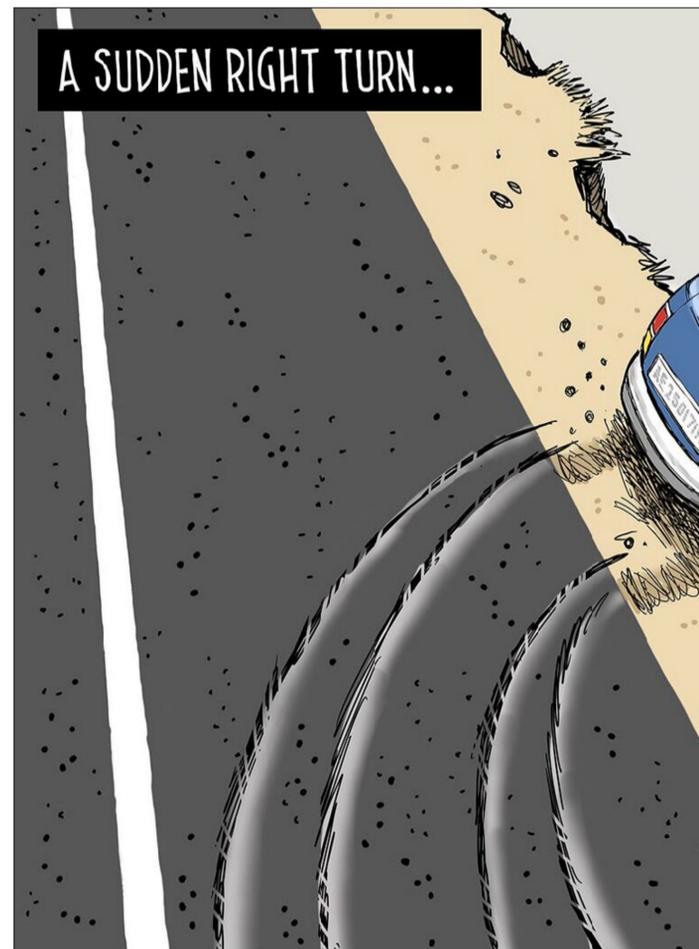
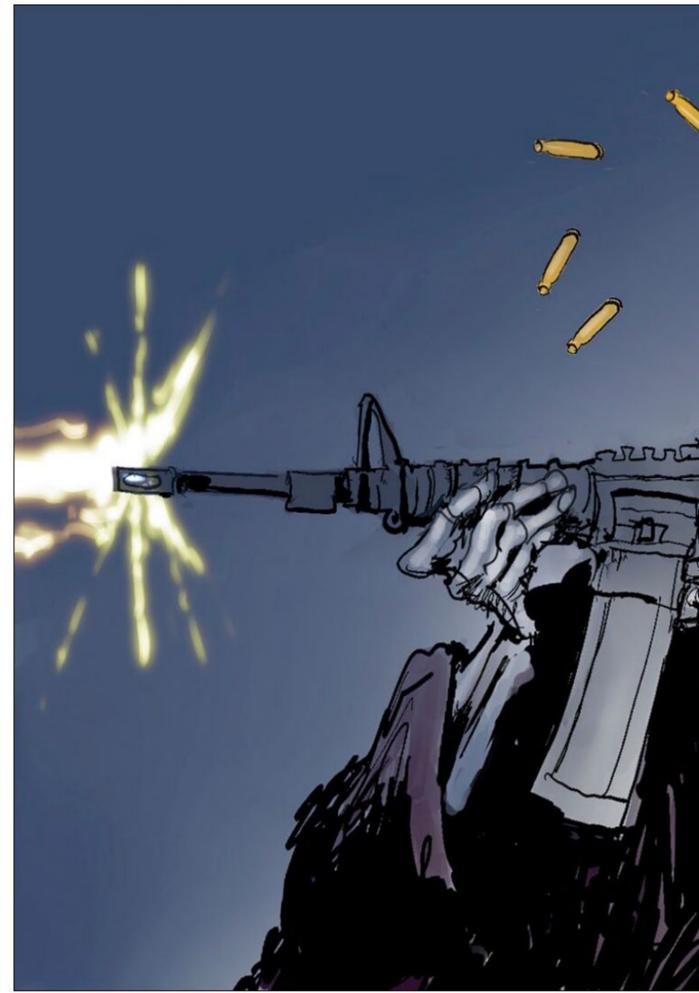
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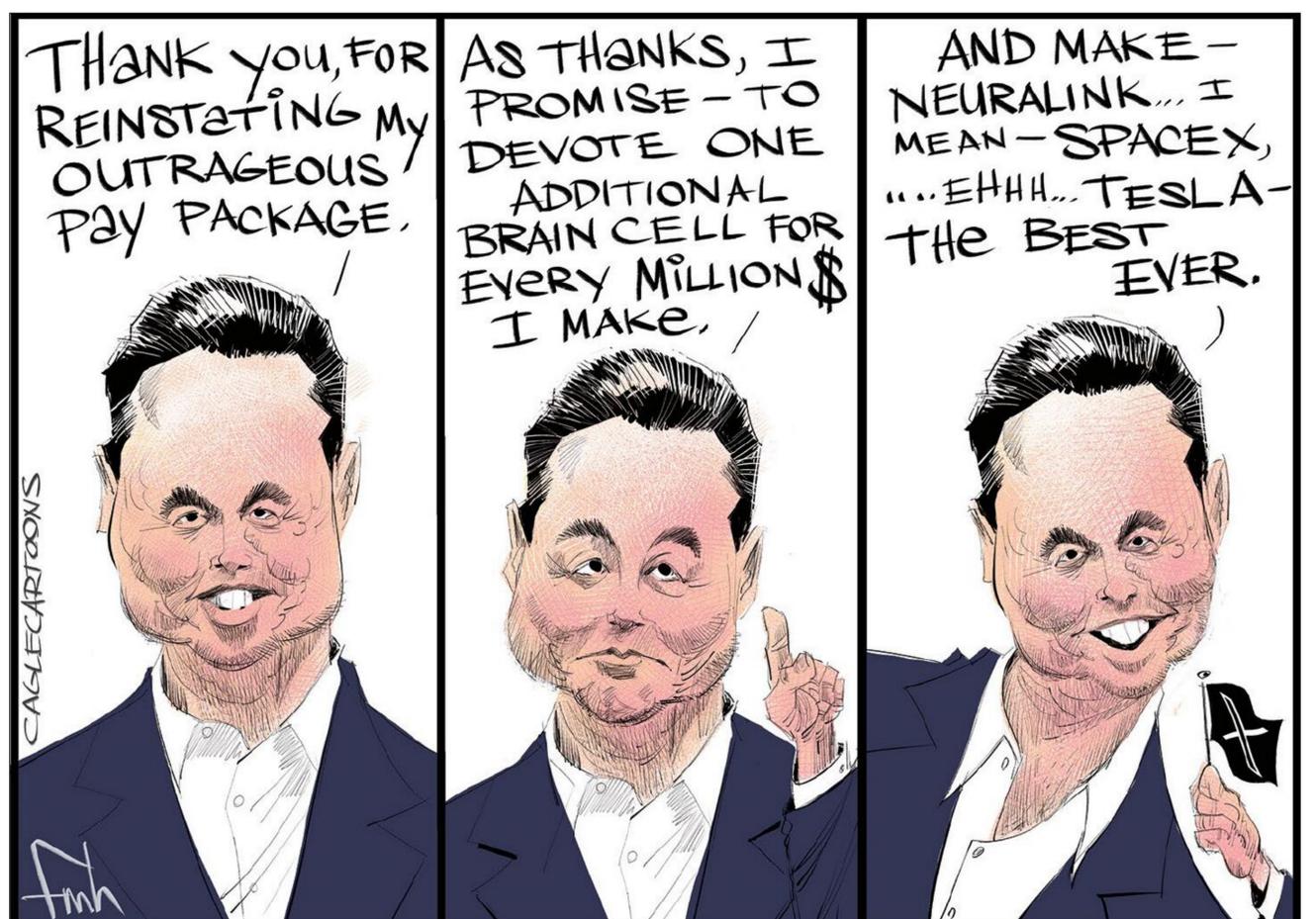
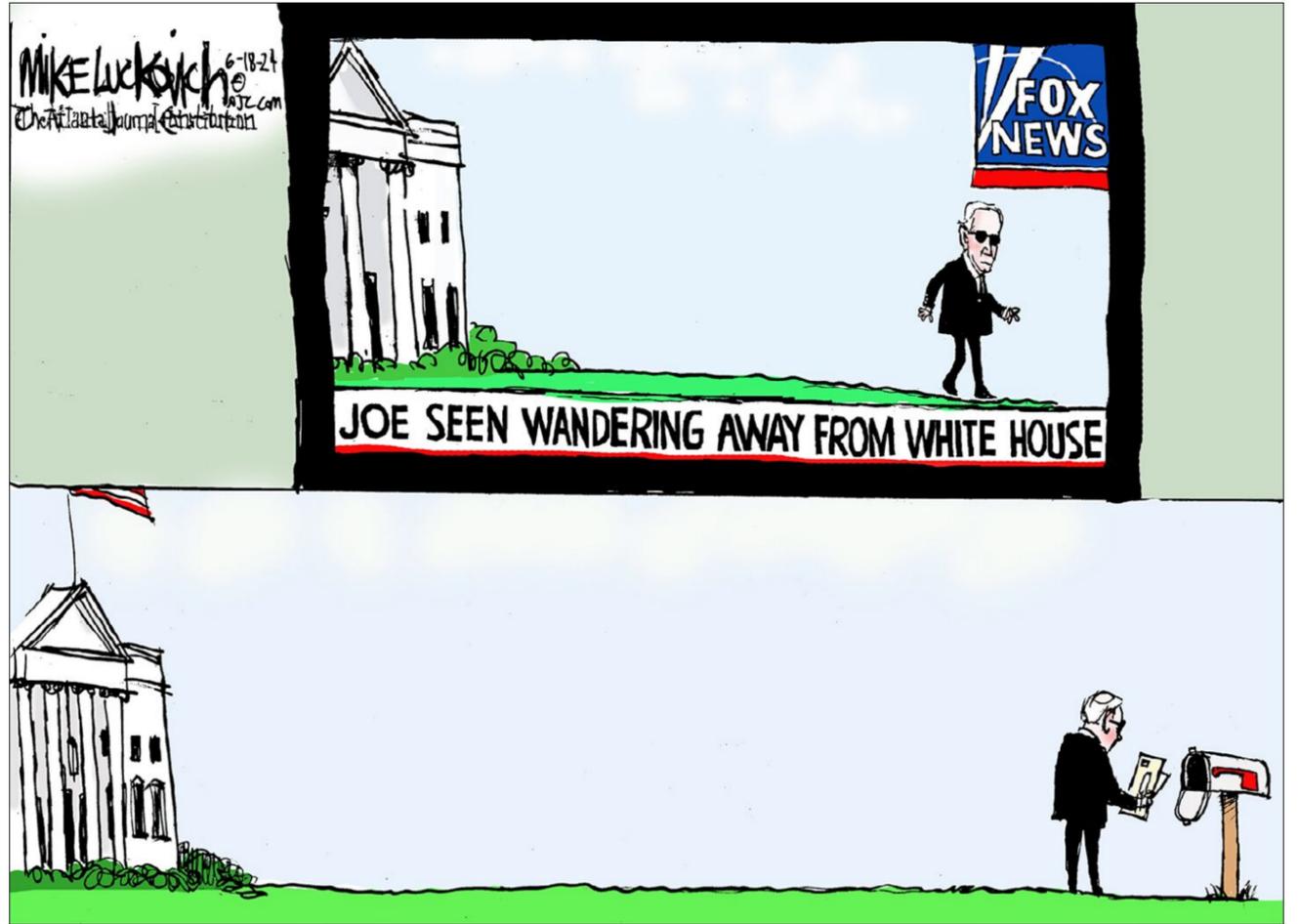
■ **38%** of Americans said that Donald Trump’s felony conviction would not affect their vote, but **33%** said the verdict made them less likely to vote for him. **17%** said it made them more likely to support him. Among independents, **32%** said the conviction made them less likely to vote for Trump.

Politico/Ipsos

■ **23%** of Americans say they will vote only for candidates who are pro-choice, up from **10%** in 2020, while **8%** say the same about pro-life candidates, down from **13%** in 2020. **54%** consider themselves to be pro-choice, and **41%** say they are pro-life.

Gallup





Counterfeits: The rise of the AI news factories

“As local news outlets across America have shuttered in recent years, NewsBreak has filled the void,” said **James Pearson** in *Reuters*. But many of the articles pumped out by the nation’s most downloaded news app, which has 50 million monthly users, is based on information scraped from the internet and rewritten by AI. It’s often wrong. NewsBreak, which bills itself as “the go-to source for all things local,” has reported small-town shootings that never happened and promoted nonexistent health clinics for homeless people. The “app’s algorithm is carried out in its China-based offices,” where about half of NewsBreak’s employees are based. One of NewsBreak’s two primary backers is a Beijing-based firm listed by the Pentagon as suspected of working with the Chinese military.



Replacing the local reporter?

Another well-trafficked news site, BNN Breaking, “had the veneer of a legitimate news service,” said **Kashmir Hill** and **Tiffany Hsu** in *The New York Times*. Microsoft even licensed its content for MSN.com. But it was an “AI chop shop,” founded in 2022 in Hong Kong by “a business-trend chaser” who created a cryptocurrency, manufactured Covid tests, and claims to have developed his own large-language model. “This was the tool that BNN used to generate its stories,” which often featured the “generic prose familiar to anyone who has tinkered with ChatGPT.” Frequently, the machine-generated material was completely wrong.

Yes, the internet has lots of “free, advertising-supported content full of AI fakes,” said **Tyler Cowen** in *Bloomberg*. But clickbait isn’t a new problem. Real journalism will be able to adjust. Authenticity “will be a major selling point,” with the most authentic material “available only on a subscription basis.” Reporters and columnists with “well-known personalities will become more important,” and news outlets will have to make their content more complex and harder to spoof. There is hope from this—subscribers to real news sites “will end up smarter and better-informed.”

It’s not just new sites that are filled with AI, said **Nuala Bishari** in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I covered local news in San Francisco at a site called Hoodline, from 2013 to 2016. “Now, it seems, Hoodline has started using artificial intelligence to produce most of its stories.” A glance at the site reveals dozens of fake bylines denoted by an “AI” badge. “It’s particularly cringeworthy” that many of these fabricated names, like Leticia Ruiz and Tony Ng, “imply the authors are people of color,” making a “mockery of the effort to improve racial diversity problems in journalism.” But worse is that local reporting “has been replaced by fake people who’ve never set foot in any of the neighborhoods they write about.” These sites are collecting ads, capturing “more of the shrinking pot of revenue that used to go to real journalists.”

Innovation of the week



A Bill Gates-backed “advanced” nuclear reactor plant just broke ground, said **Michelle Lewis** in *Electrek*. The billionaire’s clean-energy company TerraPower is constructing the Natrium plant in Kemmerer, Wyo., near a coal-fired plant that’s scheduled to close by 2036. It will feature a reactor that’s cooled by liquid sodium instead of water like traditional nuclear plants. “Liquid sodium’s boiling point is more than eight times higher than water’s,” Gates notes, “so it can absorb all the extra heat generated in the nuclear core.” A molten salt-based energy storage system, the first of its kind, “will allow it to control how much electricity it produces,” ideal for grids that rely on renewable energy. Able “to power around 400,000 homes,” Natrium is scheduled for completion in 2030—though other nuclear plants have faced many years of delays.

Bytes: What’s new in tech

iOS adds powerful satellite text feature

Satellite texting is “the most underrated feature” in Apple’s new iOS 18, said **Patrick Holland** in *CNET.com*. It’s too bad that Apple’s new AI features got all the attention, because if Apple had introduced satellite texts earlier, “it would have been the only thing people talked about.” Apple’s emergency SOS texting has been a lifesaving feature. The new satellite texting capability takes this further, and lets you send and receive text messages—though not photos or videos—whenever your regular internet connection is out of range. Available on models from the iPhone 14 up, it requires no sign-up. You just “follow the onscreen guide on how to connect to a satellite and occasionally adjust the direction” you’re facing. Best part? It’s free—“at least for now.”

How Amazon fell behind in AI

Alexa’s AI overhaul has been stuck in neutral, said **Sharon Goldman** in *Fortune*. In September 2023, Amazon “showed off a new generative artificial intelligence–powered version of the company’s signature voice assistant.” But Alexa still hasn’t changed, and efforts to update it have been “beset by structural dysfunction and technological challenges.” For one,

the “questions and commands” that “people bark at Alexa” are often limited to things like “What’s the weather?” That has hobbled the data set Amazon has available to train a large-language model to be more conversational. Amazon has invested \$4 billion in the AI startup Anthropic, but can’t use its Claude AI model because of privacy concerns. Amazon also “lacks access to the vast quantities of the latest Nvidia GPUs,” the H100 series.

Voice tech to make callers sound calmer

Japan’s SoftBank has developed voice-altering technology built to subdue even the most irate caller, said **Takeshi Narabe** in *The Asahi Shimbun* (Japan). Next time you call customer service and demand to speak to a manager, your voice might sound different on the other end. SoftBank’s system utilizes artificial intelligence that has learned to recognize “many expressions, including yelling and accusatory tones.” The AI doesn’t change the wording, “but the pitch and inflection of the voice is softened.” The AI will even recognize and cut off a call that lasts too long or sounds too abusive. Knowing that customers can become even more irate if a rep can’t tell that they are mad, “the developers made sure that a slight element of anger remains audible.”

A frosty discovery on Martian volcanoes

Scientists have found frost on volcanoes near the equator of Mars, reports *Space.com*, evidence of a sparse but active water cycle across the planet. While ice has long been seen at the poles, the equator was assumed to be too warm for any frost to form. But images from two European Space Agency probes show that a layer of ice as thin as a human hair forms briefly overnight in the volcanoes' calderas, evaporating soon after sunrise. This ultrafine dusting covers an enormous area, containing enough water—some 29.4 million gallons—to fill 60 Olympic swimming pools. The dozen volcanoes in the Tharsis region are among the largest in the

solar system: One, Olympus Mons, is almost three times the height of Mount Everest and covers an area the size of France. Yet because of the planet's low atmospheric pressure, the mountaintops are typically no cooler than the plains. Researchers think the frost likely forms in the calderas when moist air is blown up the mountainside by Martian winds and condenses at the higher altitude—a common phenomenon on Earth. "It's significant because it shows us that Mars is a dynamic planet," says study author Adomas Valantinas, an astrobiologist at Brown University, "but also that water can be found almost everywhere on the Martian surface." The ice wasn't



It only lasts for a few hours.

spotted in earlier photos because it is only present in the early morning, and only during certain months.



You talking to me?

Elephants' rumbling names

Elephants call one another by name, a new study finds, making them the only creatures besides humans to do so. While elephants are known for their trumpeting, such loud calls are used only infrequently, and generally as an emotional outburst. Most of their communication takes the form of low-pitched rumbles. Biologists from Colorado State University used artificial intelligence to analyze those rumbles, examining 469 recorded calls from wild elephants in Kenya. Some of the calls had a "name-like" component that individuals responded to—typically pricking up their ears and calling back. To determine whether those were really names, the researchers played recordings of those rumbles to individual elephants. Sure enough, the animals responded more strongly to calls containing their "names" than to other calls. "I was super excited," co-author Mickey Pardo tells *The New York Times*. "I think that's the strongest piece of evidence that the elephants can actually tell, just from hearing the call, if it was intended for them or not." Dolphins and parrots are also known to address one another with specific noises, but those are imitations of the addressee's calls, like naming someone Squeak. Elephant names don't appear to be imitative—they're arbitrary sounds, like the name Jennifer.

Bright swimsuits save lives

If you're buying a swimsuit for your child this summer, make it a bright one. That's the conclusion of new research by a water safety company that found that the color of a child's swimwear can have a huge impact on their visibility in the water. Alive Solutions placed swimsuits of 14 different hues in a swimming pool and a lake, and measured how easily they could be seen. In the pool, neon pink and neon orange were the most visible, darker colors like blues and greens were often mistaken for shadows, and white and light blue became all but invisible. In lake water, neon colors again won out—with the exception of neon pink, for some reason—along with white, while all other colors were barely visible. The results haven't been peer-reviewed, but lifeguards surveyed also said they found brighter colors easier to spot. "Of course, the color of the suit doesn't matter if no one is supervising effectively," Alive Solutions founder Natalie Livingston tells *CNN.com*. "But it can and does help in partnership with effective supervision and other layers of water safety prevention."

Xylitol bad for the heart?

The sugar substitute xylitol may be associated with a risk of heart attack or stroke, a new study shows. Xylitol is a sugar alcohol that occurs naturally in fruits and vegetables. Because it has fewer calories than sugar and doesn't cause blood glucose to spike, it's been added to many "low sugar" processed foods, such as those often marketed to diabetics. But in lab tests, xylitol was seen to increase the rate at which blood platelets form clots. And researchers also found that over a three-year period, people with high levels of xylitol in their blood plasma had roughly double the risk of heart attack, stroke, or death than those with low levels. Earlier studies showed similar risks for erythritol, another sugar alcohol. People "may think they're making a healthy choice by picking xylitol over sugar, yet the data argues that it is not the case," study author Stanley Hazen, of the Cleveland Clinic, tells *The New York Times*. Now, researchers say, they want to investigate whether the risk from xylitol is higher than that from sugar—since eating a lot of sugar is also associated with heart attack and stroke.

Women better adapted to space

Women bounce back from the physical toll of space travel more easily than men, reports *The Guardian* (U.K.). While the new study's findings are preliminary—because so few people and even fewer women have ever been to space—researchers were able to look at data from four passengers on a commercial spaceflight as well as from 64 astronauts who had done stints aboard the International Space Station. They found that the men showed much more disruption in gene



NASA's Christina Koch

activity than the women while in space, and the men's genes also took longer to return to normal once back on Earth. "Males appear to be more affected by spaceflight for almost all cell types and metrics," the researchers said. Study leader Christopher Mason, from Weill Cornell Medicine in New York, says women may be more resilient because their bodies are built to withstand pregnancy and can therefore "tolerate large changes in physiology and fluid dynamics." These findings, he said, could have "implications for recovery times and possibly crew selection" for future missions.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Hip-Hop Is History

by Questlove
(AUWA Books, \$30)

“Nobody knows more about hip-hop, and perhaps popular music in general, than Ahmir ‘Questlove’ Thompson,” said Dorian Lynskey in *The Guardian*. Born in 1971, two years before the birth of hip-hop itself, the Roots drummer has become “the Ken Burns of Black music,” a prolific author, DJ, and producer who has explored the subject as a writer, podcast host, and musical ringleader. His latest book arrives just after Drake and Kendrick Lamar engaged in a widely followed exchange of diss tracks that inspired the author to declare hip-hop “truly dead.” But “in Questlove’s analysis, hip-hop is an eternal cycle of death and rebirth,” and *Hip-Hop Is History* should satisfy any reader equipped with a bit of prior knowledge about the music. “It’s a wonderful ride, colored by personal digressions and crisp observations.”

The book is “really a tale of two halves,” said Brandon Yu in the *San Francisco*



Public Enemy: Titans of hip-hop’s ‘golden age’

Chronicle. After briefly revisiting the birth of hip-hop, at a 1973 Bronx rec-room party, Questlove recalls being electrified by hearing the genre’s first hit, “Rapper’s Delight,” in 1979, and eventually becoming a participant in what he considers the golden age of hip-hop. The late 1980s and early 1990s spawned his artistic lodestars—Public Enemy, De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest—while most of the music that’s come since the East Coast/West Coast feud

that led to the late-1990s murders of Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. has run counter to his sense of the genre’s core purpose and values. Because the book charts Questlove’s changing understanding of the music, “underground artists like J-Live get about as much coverage as Jay-Z.” That’s part of its charm.

In the end, Questlove makes “a convincing case” that hip-hop as an art form has run its course in some important ways, said G’Ra Asim in *The Washington Post*. “So much of hip-hop is a reflection of pain, even the joyful parts,” he writes, noting that the practice of using existing records to generate new music emerged in Black communities where musical instruments were scarce. He also breaks the genre’s history into five-year periods in which he says the sound of the music corresponded with whatever drug—crack, weed, ecstasy, etc.—Black Americans were using to soothe their pain. To close the book, he imagines looking back on the same history from 2073, with hip-hop firmly dead, but only because it’s no longer needed. In that way, “Questlove dares us to choose, for once, to love Black people over Black culture.”

Novel of the week

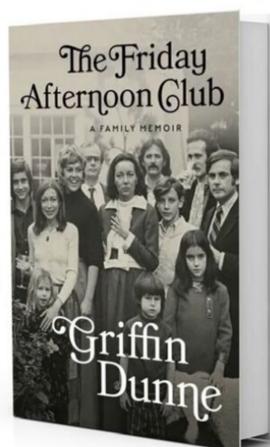
Enlightenment

by Sarah Perry
(Mariner, \$28)

The latest novel by the author of *The Essex Serpent* is “a story of hopeless love, tested faith, and wondrous science, all bracketed by two comets,” said Anna Munday in *The Wall Street Journal*. When a comet passes over an English village in 1997, Thomas, a gay, middle-aged newspaper columnist, is about to fall into unrequited adoration, while Grace, a teenager, will be trying to reconcile her religious beliefs with her attraction to a peer. Over the next 12 years, those two protagonists “endure heartbreaks” and “a betrayal that shatters their friendship.” The novel “marks its interests clearly—how humans connect, how they find meaning,” said John Self in the *Financial Times*. But the book’s attenuated plot, which swells to include cosmic musings and a ghost story, “takes an indirect route into the reader’s head, so that it can seem elusive and even confounding.” Still, the oddness of the story has a purpose, “reminding us that this is not real life, but a work of art, a human creation.” *Enlightenment* is, above all, “a book that doesn’t compromise, and is all the more interesting as a result.”

The Friday Afternoon Club:
A Family Memoir

by Griffin Dunne (Penguin, \$30)



“From the moment he was born, Griffin Dunne was surrounded by people who told good stories,” said Glenn C. Altschuler in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. The actor’s father was Dominick Dunne, who became a featured *Vanity Fair* columnist. Joan Didion and fellow novelist-journalist John Gregory Dunne were his aunt and uncle. Griffin himself became a director after his acting career ended. His new memoir delivers the celebrity gossip and tales of misspent youth you might expect. At bottom, however, his “candid, passionate, heartrending” new best-seller is the portrait of an “extraordinary and ordinary” family as its members contend with sexual incompatibility, substance abuse, career setbacks, multiple sclerosis, mental illness, and the murder, in 1982, of Griffin’s younger sister, Dominique.

Still, “much of *The Friday Afternoon Club*

is a privileged young man’s search for a place in the showbiz court to which he was born,” said Alexandra Jacobs in *The New York Times*. Dunne’s youth was full of entertaining brushes with fame. As a boy, he was saved from drowning by Sean Connery. Susan Sarandon once bought acid for him from Timothy Leary. He slept with Carrie Fisher when the pair were best friends and housemates. “But there are pockets of real depth, too,” particularly about his father, a closeted gay man whose strengths became apparent to Griffin only late in life.

While Dunne gets much mileage from his youthful stumbles, said Charles Arrowsmith in the *Los Angeles Times*, his memoir is “haunted at its core” by his sister’s murder. The book opens with that tragedy, and its “devastating final act” describes the circus of a trial that resulted in the killer, an ex-boyfriend, serving less than four years in prison. “What makes these unimaginable events so readable, and allows Dunne to find a kind of grace even amid tragedy, are his unshakable black humor and unfailing nose for a good story.” His handling of the material demonstrates “the power of writing and temperament” to transform tragedy, here turning Dominique into a kind of guardian angel and showing why even a trying life is “worth enduring and celebrating.”

Best books...chosen by Julia Phillips

Novelist Julia Phillips is the author of *Disappearing Earth*, a 2019 international best-seller that was also a National Book Award finalist. In her new novel, *Bear*, the bond between two sisters is tested when a grizzly arrives on the island where they live.



Middlemarch by George Eliot (1871). About marriage, love, expectations, and class, this novel is an exquisite and moving account of how the people in one small town built their lives together. Eliot crafts her characters with unparalleled honesty and tenderness. She shows people as they really are.

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez (1967). Through the story of the rise and fall of one family, this novel shows the entire world, not only as it is but as it might be: lush, fantastical, heartbreaking. Nobody does it like García Márquez. Nobody could.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker (1982). From its very first words, this novel is ferocious—a gorgeous and shocking depiction of violence, intimacy, desire, and dreaming. Walker’s voice on the page is like no other. She grabs you and doesn’t let you go. And somehow, though this story contains so much pain, it ultimately is built on hope: the belief, eventually made real, that these characters can not only survive but also triumph.

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead (2016). Whitehead is, without a doubt, one of our greatest living writers, creating stories that are as beautiful as they are brutal, as narratively satisfying as they are form-breaking and inventive. This novel is my favorite of his. To read it is to witness a genius at work.

Women Talking by Miriam Toews (2018). A truly perfect novel, this book is unforgettable. It takes the facts of a real story—a series of sexual assaults at a Mennonite colony in the early 2000s—and creates from those an astounding work of art that explores justice, forgiveness, and faith. It asks what is, to my mind, the most essential question of all: How do we keep going? How do we live?

The End of Drum-Time by Hanna Pylväinen (2023). A work of historical fiction about the collision between reindeer herders and Lutheran missionaries in the Scandinavian tundra, this novel astounded me. It is epic, rich, and deeply beautiful, like seeing the northern lights on the page.

Author of the week

Elin Hilderbrand

Elin Hilderbrand is hanging up her bikini, said **Ellensrman** in *The Wall Street Journal*. For nearly 25 years, the author described as “the queen of beach reads” has enjoyed the same ritual: putting on a two-piece bathing suit, strolling down to the beach near her home on Massachusetts’ Nantucket Island, and writing,



in longhand, a rom-com novel set in her own summer wonderland. But Hilderbrand, 54, says her latest novel,

the aptly titled *Swan Song*, marks her retirement from the formula that produced her remarkable run of 30 books, multiple best-sellers, and more than 20 million copies sold. “I have run out of really good ideas for Nantucket novels, and I don’t ever want to put out a product that is subpar,” she says. “I don’t want to repeat myself, and I really feel like this is the time to go.”

Not that Hilderbrand is abandoning island life itself, said **Kelly Vaughan** in *Today.com*. “The irony is that I spend a lot of time off Nantucket promoting my books, and I really just want to be home,” she says. She’s also not abandoning writing altogether. Her upcoming projects include a two-book boarding-school series written with her teenage daughter, another work in progress she describes as a literary novel, and a podcast, *Books, Beach, and Beyond*, in which she swaps notes with other best-selling authors. For now, she’s happy to enjoy the swan song of *Swan Song*. “It really feels like an end to an era,” she says. Then again, she readily admits that there may come a day when she will add at least another volume to her stack of Nantucket stories—provided that two conditions are met. “After some time has passed,” she says. “And if I feel like it.”

Also of interest...in the art life

The Art of Dying

by Peter Schjeldahl (Abrams, \$30)



Peter Schjeldahl, *The New Yorker*’s longtime art critic, “wrote things that were so good you needed to take a minute,” said Sebastian Smee in *The Washington Post*. This collection gathers everything he published after receiving a cancer diagnosis in 2019, and it’s “filled with terrific examples of Peter doing what he did best.” The title essay is “hard-packed with tough truths,” and the others—about the shows he assessed in those final years—connect readers with a state of being where curiosity and ecstasy are the norm.

Blue Ruin

by Hari Kunzru (Knopf, \$28)



In Hari Kunzru’s latest novel, “the art world and its inhabitants are unmasked,” said Bekah Waalkes in *The Atlantic*. When Jay, a former art school student working as a pandemic-era delivery driver, quarantines at an estate occupied by two ex-classmates, he discovers that he has become famous for the way he broke with the art world years earlier. Though Jay’s onetime collaborator has won fame of his own by selling out, neither path looks like victory. In *Blue Ruin*, “being an artist is just another job.”

Parade

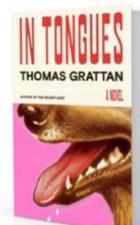
by Rachel Cusk (FSG, \$27)



“Rachel Cusk has written so well for so long that it’s almost a relief to discover that her new novel is skippable,” said Dwight Garner in *The New York Times*. “Sterile, ostentatious, and essentially plotless,” *Parade* largely consists of “leaden” conversations about art, parenting, and relationships among a group of painters and sculptors, with each speaker identified by the initial G. “A little black box of a book,” this latest Cusk experiment should chase away “all but her most devoted tier of readers.”

In Tongues

by Thomas Grattan (MCD, \$28)



Thomas Grattan’s sophomore work is “one of the funniest novels in recent memory,” said James Tarmy in *Bloomberg*. Gordon, the protagonist, is 24 when he arrives in New York City. “Young, attractive, queer, and poor,” he soon stumbles into the lives of an older gay couple and the art world they inhabit. Among the experiences that shape Gordon’s coming of age, none outranks his relationship with the couple, “one in which he’s not quite the help but also not quite just a friend, either.”

The 2024 Tonys: The rewards of taking risks

“Broadway is slowly accepting the reality that new thinking isn’t a luxury but a necessity,” said **Charles McNulty** in the *Los Angeles Times*. At this year’s Tony Awards ceremony, voters “spread the love around,” and the clear takeaway from the results was “if you’re looking to develop a winner, an off-Broadway or regional theater is the way to go.” Nonprofit companies are simply better at innovation, as demonstrated by the big nights for *The Outsiders* (best new musical), *Stereophonic* (best new play), *Merrily We Roll Along* (best musical revival), and *Appropriate* (best revival of a play). At a time when Broadway ticket sales still haven’t rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, said **Naveen Kumar** in *The Washington Post*, it also felt like “a strong argument for the industry’s faith in its own future” that “stories about making music and theater reigned victorious.”

Despite drawing only 3.5 million viewers, the Sunday night broadcast was “like a how-to for awards shows,” said **Greg Evans** in *Deadline*. The pacing was swift, three-time host **Ariana DeBose** “knows how to hold the spotlight,” and nearly all



Keys puts viewers in an ‘Empire State of Mind.’

of the musical performances “showcased each production at its best.” In an upset, *Hell’s Kitchen* didn’t win best musical. But creator **Alicia Keys** (along with a beamed-in Jay-Z) gave the Tony broadcast a rousing opener with the New York City anthem “Empire State of Mind,” while only **Eddie Redmayne’s** creepy-weird *Cabaret* number slowed the show’s momentum.

First-time winners ruled the night, said **Jesse Green** in *The New York Times*. All eight winners in the acting categories—**Jeremy Strong** (*Enemy of the People*), **Sarah Paulson** (*Appropriate*), **Jonathan Groff**

and **Daniel Radcliffe** (*Merrily We Roll Along*), **Maleah Joi Moon** and **Kecia Lewis** (*Hell’s Kitchen*), **Will Brill** (*Stereophonic*), and **Kara Young** (*Purlie Victorious*)—had never previously won Tonys. And joining them as first-timers were *Stereophonic* playwright **David Adjmi**, that show’s director, **Daniel Aukin**, *Outsiders* director **Danya Taymor**, and *Suffs* star **Shaina Taub**, who won for both that musical’s book and score. The broadcast’s improved pacing made room for acceptance speeches marked by

“thoughtfulness and giddiness,” so that “for the first time in a long time, the Broadway on TV felt like the one I know.” With this busy season’s trophies finally distributed, “now comes the hard part,” said **Michael Paulson**, also in the *Times*. “All the productions, win or lose, must get back to work trying to woo ticket buyers at a time when there are a lot of exciting shows and not quite enough patrons.”

And the winners were...

Best new musical: *The Outsiders*

Best new play: *Stereophonic*

Best revival of a play: *Appropriate*

Best musical revival: *Merrily We Roll Along*

Charli XCX

Brat

★★★★★



“A strange and memorable collision of realness and fakeness,” Charli XCX’s sixth album “doesn’t really sound like anything else,” said **Kelefa Sanneh** in *The New Yorker*. Since emerging from East

London’s underground rave scene more than a decade ago, the British trendsetter “has often treated pop music as if it’s a game—something to play with so she doesn’t get bored.” Her warping of pop clichés and experiments with the glitchy electronic music known as hyperpop have made her “one of the most influential musicians of her generation,” and the 15 songs on *Brat* “affirm Charli’s status as a trailblazer, while divulging her own doubts about where, exactly, she’s going.” Beginning with the catchy opener, “360,” the album “changes moods between nearly every track,” said **Jem Aswad** in *Variety*. Charli’s lyrics “swerve between boastful swagger and shriveling vulnerability,” and she often uses auto-tune to shift her voice “into wild and bizarre new forms.” *Brat* combines “the shimmer of hyperpop” with “the effervescent hooks of her best work,” and its unique sound “vaults Charli back to the front of the line as a pop innovator.”

Luke Combs

Fathers & Sons

★★★★★



Luke Combs’ fifth album “may be his strongest to date,” said **Clayton Edwards** in *American Songwriter*. Released two days before Father’s Day, the North Carolina native’s 12-track ode to

the bond between fathers and sons features “some of the most personal and vulnerable songwriting Combs has ever shared.” The popular country singer, whose cover of Tracy Chapman’s “Fast Car” became 2023’s song of the summer, has moved beyond the country bangers that launched his career. Here, he sings as the 34-year-old father of two young boys, but also as an adult son who still looks up to his aging dad. “It’s all sweet—but kinda sappy,” said **Chuck Arnold** in the *New York Post*. Combs sets the tone with “Front Door Famous,” in which he sings that he’d gladly trade stardom for the feeling he gets when his boys run to greet him at the door. “Wrapped in arrangements as warm and comforting as a father’s tender embrace,” the other songs are equally sentimental. “You can’t begrudge the guy for getting all paternal,” though, and “I dare any dad not to get a little weepy when he listens to ‘The Man He Sees in Me.’”

NxWorries

Why Lawd?

★★★★★



Anderson .Paak and Knxwledge’s second collaborative release “not only succeeds, it expands their vision,” said **Dylan Green** in *Pitchfork*. The jet-setting singer-rapper-drummer and the lo-fi hip-

hop producer first recorded as NxWorries (pronounced “No Worries”) in 2016, and on the Los Angeles duo’s follow-up, .Paak’s “scratchy croon-raps” click with Knxwledge’s “caramel-rich” music. Knxwledge, 36, is famous for creating thumping beats from samples of vintage gospel, doo-wop, and soul, and here, the crate-digging DJ provides .Paak with some of the most “ornately constructed” music of the Silk Sonic singer’s career. He raps crisply on “86Sentra,” a hazy G-funk track that “sounds beamed in from the early ‘90s,” said **Mark Richardson** in *The Wall Street Journal*. “FromHere,” a swooning slow jam, “conjures the elegant harmonies of the Stylistics and the Dramatics.” Sometimes, this summer-ready album merely “coasts on a vibe.” Its mix of soul, jazz, and R&B “sounds just right,” though, and the presence of guests H.E.R., Thundercat, Snoop Dogg, and Earl Sweatshirt “reinforces the feeling that *Why Lawd?* is above all a celebration of music.”

The Bikeriders

Directed by Jeff Nichols
(R)



A love letter to 1960s
biker gangs

Jeff Nichols' first feature film in nearly seven years "busts out of the gate as some kind of new American classic," said David Ehrlich in *IndieWire*. Though it "ultimately runs out of gas," its first 45 minutes thrillingly immerse viewers in the world of an outlaw Chicago motorcycle club that rumbled around the American Midwest in the 1960s. The cast, featuring Austin Butler, Tom Hardy, Michael Shannon, and Jodie Comer, "feels like the Avengers of sexy Method weirdos," and the male stars display the mixture of toughness and vulnerability that made the club's members so dependent on one another. Clearly, "this is a guy's story," said Sarah Knight Adamson in *RogerEbert.com*. But Nichols, the director of *Midnight Special* and *Loving*, chose to tell it



Leather-clad lovers Comer and Butler

via "a strong female point of view." Comer's Kathy, who narrates, marries into the club when she falls for Butler's suave but volatile Benny. Much of the ensuing drama derives from the tension between this levelheaded woman and the violent men around her—particularly Hardy's Johnny, the gang's intimidating founder. With Butler and Brits Comer and Hardy all affecting blue-collar Midwestern accents, "the performances aren't exactly subtle," said Peter Bradshaw in *The Guardian*. But "there's enormous impact in everything they do onscreen," and Nichols' portrait of a vanishing subculture delivers both "the doomy romance of an old-fashioned Western" and "the thrills of a mob drama."

Inside Out 2

Directed by Kelsey Mann
(PG)



A 13-year-old learns to
cope with anxiety.

If Pixar is going to give us nothing but spin-offs from now on, "let them all be as thoughtfully considered as *Inside Out 2*," said A.A. Dowd in *The Ringer*. Arriving after a brief string of box office disappointments from the venerated animation studio, the sequel to Pixar's 2015 Oscar winner has scored by far the biggest opening weekend of any 2024 release to date. Beyond that, it provides "a vision of what a Pixar sequel can hopefully be for its audience: a guide to growing up." Once again, we are inside the mind of Riley. But she's now 13, not 11, and the personified emotions vying for control of her personality include a handful of newcomers that often arrive with puberty. "The best thing in *Inside Out 2*, both in concept and execution, is



Anxiety joins the command center.

Anxiety herself," said Jordan Hoffman in *Entertainment Weekly*. Maya Hawke's high-energy voice performance helps make the stringy orange creature an emotion you can almost root for. After all, she only wants the best for Riley. But the challenge of making new friends at a hockey camp provides a "surprisingly thin" main storyline, and *Inside Out 2* continues the Pixar tradition of prioritizing life lessons over entertainment. True, the movie "probably could have used more silliness," said Kyle Smith in *The Wall Street Journal*. But "teen girls are navigating stormy weather these days," and this "pointedly funny" family comedy "has a lot to say about the state of youth today."

Tuesday

Directed by Daina O. Pusic
(R)



A mother battles the
imminent loss of a child.

In her latest film, Julia Louis-Dreyfus delivers a change-of-pace performance "that some will call brave and others will call foolhardy," said Ty Burr in *The Washington Post*. "They're both right." Anchoring the first feature film from Croatian director Daina O. Pusic, the Emmy-winning *Seinfeld* and *Veep* actress doesn't even appear onscreen before viewers are asked to accept that Death is a macaw that speaks in a guttural croak. The rest of the film is "a bumpy ride indeed," at times a powerful parable about accepting the inevitability of death, at times merely ludicrous. Louis-Dreyfus plays a mother whose 15-year-old daughter is dying of an unnamed illness, and, "to say the least," she is not handling her imminent loss well, said David Fear in *Rolling Stone*. After her daughter, Tuesday, bargains with Death for time to counsel her mother



Louis-Dreyfus as a parent in denial

just once more, the three engage in a debate that briefly extends Tuesday's life. Yet every time you feel the movie is tipping toward the ridiculous, "Louis-Dreyfus grounds the story and manages to add a wounding, wondrous emotional spin on things," proving herself "one of the greatest actors working today." With only Louis-Dreyfus, co-star Lola Petticrew, and the macaw carrying the action, "*Tuesday* can feel overlong and a little claustrophobic," said Jeannette Catsoulis in *The New York Times*. "Yet this compassionate fairy tale works because the actors are so in sync and the imagery is often magical." While baring the pain borne by one family, Pusic's "highly imaginative" film "also asks us to ponder the possibility that a life without end means nothing less than a world without a future."

Streaming tips

More adventures
in animation**The Boy and the Heron**

From the beautiful animation to the unbridled expression of imagination, there's nothing like a Hayao Miyazaki movie. The 83-year-old director's Oscar-winning latest is another wonder. It follows 11-year-old Mahito, a motherless boy newly relocated to a family estate where he discovers a portal to a fantastical world. *\$20 on demand*

Blue Giant

An energetic bit of musical anime tracks a young man's quest to become the world's greatest tenor sax player. A terrific score composed and performed by Japanese pianist Hiromi Uehara propels scenes of the trio that our hero launches. *\$4 on demand*

Mars Express

This 2023 French cyberpunk feature dazzles with cool 2D animation and a great sci-fi story about the uneasy coexistence of man and machine. In 2200, a detective and her android partner wind through a metropolis on Mars as they investigate the death of a hacker and uncover a deeper conspiracy. *\$15 on demand*

Ultraman: Rising

In this animated riff on a popular Japanese superhero franchise, a Japanese star player for the L.A. Dodgers is called home to Tokyo to assume the family superhero mantle. He quickly learns that fighting giant monsters requires more than his athletic skills. *Netflix*

Suicide Squad Isekai

DC Comics supervillains get the anime treatment in this series from Japan's Wit Studio. Sent to an alternate world full of orcs and dragons, Harley Quinn, Joker, and company are given the unexpected task of keeping the peace. *Max/Hulu*

Star Wars Tales of the Empire

Star Wars fans who may have burned through *The Acolyte* can find more fresh content in this six-part animated series from *Mandalorian* creator Dave Filoni. *Disney+*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching**Babylon Berlin**

The fourth season of this award-winning detective thriller series from Germany finally arrives in the U.S., not on Netflix, where the previous seasons had lived, but on the show's lesser-known new streaming home. The Weimar Republic is now teetering and the Nazis rising as the Great Depression takes hold. Detective Gereon Rath and his partner, Charlotte Ritter, chase cases that take them from underground boxing rings to the catacombs of police headquarters. *Tuesday, June 25, MHz Choice*

My Lady Jane

Bridgerton has proven that alternative British history can make scintillating television. This new series looks to expand the field by focusing on the teenage figure of Lady Jane Grey, who reigned as queen for just nine days before she was usurped by her cousin, Mary Tudor, and later beheaded. Jane survives on grit and cunning far longer in this irreverent rewrite of the record, which casts newcomer Emily Bader in the lead. *Thursday, June 27, Prime*

2024 Presidential Debate

Get ready for the most unusual debate in presidential history. Presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump, who just turned 78, is a convicted felon who tried to subvert U.S. democracy just three years ago. Democratic incumbent Joe Biden is an even older man who's struggling to convince his own party faithful that he deserves a second term. Have plenty of popcorn on hand for what's sure to be a slugfest. *Thursday, June 27, at 9 p.m., CNN*

Fancy Dance

If you liked Lily Gladstone in *Killers of the Flower Moon*, you'll love her in this new movie about a Seneca-Cayuga woman named Jax who hits the road with her niece, Roki, on a wrenching mission. Jax's sister has gone missing, and if the pair can't find her quickly, the same authorities who should be helping them could take Roki away. Gladstone gets more to play here than she did in her Oscar-nominated role. Isabel DeRoy-Olson co-stars. *Friday, June 28, Apple TV+*



Ted, Carmy, and Neil: Lofty ambitions



'Fancy Dance' co-stars DeRoy-Olson and Gladstone

A Family Affair

Nicole Kidman to Anne Hathaway: Hold my drink. Weeks after Hathaway's *The Idea of You* had its hit streaming run, Kidman offers her own spin on a May-December romance in this star-packed rom-com about an L.A. mom who hooks up with a younger Hollywood star, played by Zac Efron. Trouble is, her 20-something daughter is his assistant, and can't stand him, leading to loud, hilariously persistent protests. Joey King and Kathy Bates co-star. *Friday, June 28, Netflix*

Other highlights**Diane von Furstenberg: Woman in Charge**

The legendary New York fashion designer revisits the highs and lows of her life and career—including the inspiration for her iconic wrap dress—with help from some famous friends. *Tuesday, June 25, Hulu*

Land of Women

Eva Longoria takes the lead in a new dramedy series as a New York City socialite who flees to a Spanish wine town with her mother and daughter after learning that her husband owes \$50 million to some very dangerous men. *Wednesday, June 26, Apple TV+*

Domino Day

A Manchester, U.K., barista by day, Domino Day is a witch who by night feeds off the energy of violent men, giving her plenty of juicy targets. *Thursday, June 27, Sundance Now/AMC+*

Show of the week**The Bear**

Bye-bye, beef stand. The transformation to fine-dining establishment is complete, whether the team at The Bear is ready or not. Season 3 and the dinner rush will kick off with Jeremy Allen White's Carmy establishing "non-negotiable" workplace standards, high expectations certain to rankle chef de cuisine Sydney, manager Richie, and the rest of the staff. Carmy's total dedication to the restaurant and to winning a Michelin star comes at the expense of his love life, as he soon ends things with fan favorite, Claire. And that may not be his only loss. Success and tensions will bring new opportunities for certain key staff members. *Thursday, June 27, Hulu*

Critics' choice: Three new James Beard Award winners

Maty's Miami

Valerie Chang keeps piling up honors, said **Nicole Lopez-Alvar** in the *Miami New Times*. Having already won national acclaim for a Nikkei restaurant she'd run with her father and brother, she earned new plaudits soon after opening her own place last spring. Now she has broken a 14-year drought for Miami by becoming the latest winner of the James Beard Award for Best Chef: South. Maty's, which Chang named after her grandmother, offers "an intimate glimpse into her upbringing." Chang's menu presents a modern take on Peruvian-Chinese food, said **Eric Barton** in *Time Out Miami*, and even though the Beard award will make reservations scarcer, the food is "well worth whatever wait is required." Think oysters bathed in a tangy *leche de tigre*, charred cauliflower with *ocopa* sauce, and "what's become the restaurant's signature dish": a whole dorado set atop a delicate *aji amarillo beurre blanc*. You could order only from the menu's crudos section and leave happy, said **Kevin Sintumuang** in *Esquire*. But the Wagyu oxtail *saltado*? "My goodness. The gorgeous contrast between crisp potatoes and unctuous oxtail is a different level of unreal." 3255 NE 1st Ave.

Ana Liz Taqueria Mission, Texas

"The finest dining isn't relegated to big



A festive dinner hour at Maty's

cities," said **José R. Ralat** in *Texas Monthly*. "In Texas, at least, the best chef is a woman who owns a restaurant on the Texas-Mexico border." The sole James Beard winner from the Lone Star State this year, Ana Liz Pulido oversees a five-table space in a strip mall in Mission, a city of just 87,000. Yet customers are greeted not with forgettable chips and salsa but with whole house-made tostadas of blue and yellow corn, plus six memorable sauces. From then on, "the menu is one wonder after another." Pulido's father ran two taquerias in nearby Mexico, and after launching a spin-off, Pulido decided to attend culinary school before going solo once again at age 23. She uses her mother's recipe for flour tortillas and also makes her own nixtamalized corn tortillas, filling them with chopped carne asada or a mix

of fajita, Polish sausage, *pimiento verde*, and onions. But try her chile relleno taco and you'll know what I know: "Her spot is worth the pilgrimage for taco lovers." 215 N. Conway Ave.

Bas Rouge Easton, Md.

Food lovers of the mid-Atlantic, "we have the place for you," said **Patricia Talorico** in the *Delaware News Journal*. Easton, a "charming, no longer sleepy" town on Maryland's Eastern Shore, is now home to the first chef in the region ever to win a James Beard Award. Harley Peet, who oversees the culinary program at several Easton restaurants, earned the honor for his work at Bas Rouge, a 24-seat destination that caters to the type of customers who "want to indulge in refined elegance." Nineteenth-century chandeliers and "stunning" flower arrangements set the tone for Peet's polished adaptations of Viennese and other European classics. "Truly, all senses are rewarded," said **Tom Sietsema** in *The Washington Post*. The space is quiet, the wine list superb, and the food rewardingly varied. I loved the grilled wild shrimp arranged on sliced cucumbers shot through with jalapeños, but the old-world setting compelled me to order the Wiener schnitzel, which was perfectly prepared. "It takes skill and time to produce these dishes." For now, Peet and his staff have both. 19 Federal St.

Recipe of the week

Tennessee has a new official state food, but even most Tennesseans are just learning about it, said **Emily Cochrane** in *The New York Times*. In one city—Cleveland, Tenn. (pop. 47,000)—hot slaw is a summer staple. "People slather it on hot dogs, plop it on pulled pork, or simply reach for a heaping spoonful." The name of the "shockingly yellow" side dish has nothing to do with its temperature. Instead, "it is all about spice: a tart smack of mustard followed by the slow burn of a jalapeño pepper." The recipe below is adapted from a version held by the family widely credited with inventing hot slaw in the 1950s to serve at a Cleveland drive-in movie theater. "You can serve it with just about everything."

Hot slaw

1 medium head green cabbage (about 2½ lbs), cored and coarsely chopped • 1 large yellow onion (about 9 oz), finely chopped (roughly 2 cups) • 1 cup jarred pickled hot jalapeño slices, finely chopped, plus ¼ cup jalapeño brine (more to taste) • 1¼ cups yellow mustard • ½ cup mayonnaise • 1 tsp sugar (optional) • salt and pepper



- Set up a food processor with the knife blade attachment. Working in batches, pulse cabbage until finely chopped. You should wind up with about 10 cups.
- Transfer cabbage to a very large bowl, along with the onion and jalapeño, and mix well. Add mustard, mayonnaise, ¼ cup jalapeño brine and sugar, if using. Mix well, then taste and add salt, pepper, and additional brine as desired. Serve right away or chill to serve cold. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week. Makes 8 cups.

Session IPAs: Still worthwhile

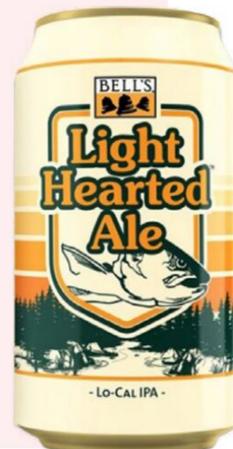
Scanning the shelves of your local beer retailer, "you may find yourself wondering where all the session IPAs have gone," said **Courtney Iseman** in *Punch*. Around 2015, IPAs with sub-5 percent alcohol levels were hot. Today, many consumers either dismiss them as lesser IPAs or choose a nonalcoholic beer instead. That doesn't mean there aren't still some good ones out there.

Lawson's Finest Liquids Beach Party IPA "A gold-standard low-ABV option," Lawson's offers "an impeccable balance of hop bitterness and malt backbone."

Bell's Light Hearted Lo-Cal IPA

The calorie and alcohol counts are lower than in Bell's beloved Two-Hearted IPA. Still, its sibling delivers "that signature honey, resin, pine, and orange profile."

Two Roads Brewing Co. Lil' Heaven Crushable IPA "Fans of the quintessential West Coast IPA, look here." This Connecticut-made beer "ticks all the right boxes."



The 2024 Toyota Land Cruiser: What the critics say

Car and Driver

"The new Land Cruiser is the best Land Cruiser in years." Toyota's fabled four-wheel-drive SUV arguably "lost the plot" when it grew too big and too expensive a generation ago. But after a three-year hiatus, the Land Cruiser is back, pleasingly shorter, more off-road ready, and almost \$30,000 cheaper than the entry-level 2021 model. The new 326-hp hybrid power train also makes this five-seater the "torquiest" Land Cruiser ever.

Motor Trend

Yes, the Land Cruiser is a hybrid now. "But save the Prius jokes, because, like other Toyota trucks, it feels tuned for power, not economy."

In fact, the 2024 model may be the quickest yet. Even though the retired V-8 generated an extra 55 hp, the combination of an electric motor and a turbocharged four-cylinder cranks out up to 465 lb.-ft. of torque every time you touch the throttle. The new power train also averages 23 mpg in combined highway and city driving—a 53 percent improvement over the V-8's dismal 15 mpg.

Edmunds

Unlike a crossover SUV, the Land Cruiser "pitches and rolls and dives if you're driving with enthusiasm." But that's to be expected with a truck-based four-by-four, and this one is "better behaved" than any rival in its class. Our



A smaller, quicker Cruiser, from \$57,345

time behind the wheel dispelled any notion that Toyota's "go-anywhere, do-anything" SUV needs a V-8 to live up to its seven-decade legacy. "The new Land Cruiser might just be Toyota's most polished product in years."

The best of...backyard summer games



Baden Bocce Ball Set

Baden's 2-lb. regulation-size polyresin bocce balls are used by serious competitors in tournaments, "yet they are just as practical for backyard play." Inside the sturdy nylon carrying bag, you'll also find a 5-foot measuring tape for accurate scoring. \$100, badensports.com
Source: BestReviews

Spikeball Standard 3 Set

"Spikeball takes all the fun, strategy, and skill of volleyball and packs it into a compact, go-anywhere kit." And the game is easy to learn, "even with an adult beverage in hand." \$70, spikeball.com
Source: Men's Health



Franklin Sports Pickleball Set

If you're dabbling in pickleball at home, "this is a solid set to have on hand." The 22-foot nylon net sets up easily in a driveway and folds neatly into a bag with four wooden paddles and 12 balls. \$180, franklinsports.com. Source: CNET

NSG Deluxe Archery Set

Kids ages 6 and up can test their skills with a bow and arrow using this set. The target stands 3 feet high, the bow is tension-adjustable, and the arrows sport suction-cup tips. \$50, nsgproducts.com
Source: NYMag.com



AllCornhole Tournament Boards

If you play a lot of cornhole, investing in quality boards is essential for fun, consistent play. These smooth birch boards are used by the pros. Pair them with the same brand's Steady 2.0 bags, which are a "pleasure to hold." \$499, allcornhole.com
Source: Wirecutter

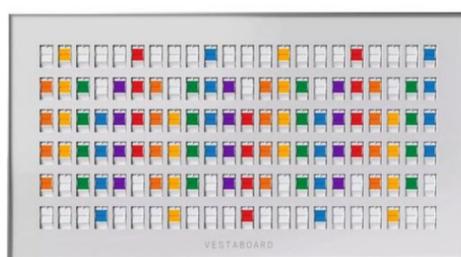
Tip of the week...

How to keep an old computer running

- **Clean the hardware.** Keeping a desktop or laptop free of dust "improves airflow, which means less heat and stress on the components." Regular cleaning will extend the machine's life.
- **Reset the operating system.** Because Windows and macOS slow down over time as they pick up digital clutter, a full reset of your operating system "will usually result in better performance." First, you'll want to save all your files and apps by transferring them to an external hard drive or cloud storage.
- **Install Linux.** The free, open-source operating system "runs just fine" on computers that have slowed to a crawl. You could also convert yours to a Chromebook by installing Google's ChromeOS Flex.
- **Upgrade the components.** An aging desktop PC could be revived by installing a couple sticks of RAM and replacing its mechanical drive with a solid-state drive. Or add the SSD as a second drive. "It's a lot less work." Source: Wired

And for those who have everything...

In the age of digital screens, there's something irresistible about the **Vest-board**. A



mechanical display that turns typed messages into analog joy, "it's like those classic train-station schedule boards with individual letters and numbers that flip around and make a really nifty sound." The Wi-Fi-connected board can display up to 132 characters, or a colored tile instead of a letter or number. Type a message into the app and the board "springs to life, with each bit flipping to its assigned state and making that oh-so-satisfying sound." At home, it can be used for snippets of poetry, or simple love notes. \$3,295, vestaboard.com
Source: Yahoo! Tech

Best apps...

To occupy kids on summer break

- **Khan Academy Kids: Learning!** is the gold standard of free educational apps. Its 5,000 games and activities provide lessons in reading, writing, and numbers. It also provides "a library of books" on "kid-friendly topics."
- **PBS KIDS Games** offers another 250 games for children ages 2 to 8. One standout, *Scribbles and Ink*, brings hand-drawn doodles to life.
- **GoNoodle** gets kids moving with exercises set to catchy songs. Its 300 colorful, interactive videos "never seem to get old."
- **Pick Your Plate!** teaches kids about food, nutrition, and culture. Users travel the world with a magical plate, creating healthy meals using local ingredients. "Children can discover baobab fruit or how the Finnish prepare reindeer."
- **Aardman Animator**, a free app from the studio behind *Wallace and Gromit*, teaches young artists about stop-motion animation. "There are plenty of tutorials and easy-to-use tools, including a dialogue and sound effects recorder." Source: Lifehacker



“Early detection gave us time to adapt together, as a family.”

If you're noticing changes, it could be **Alzheimer's**. Talk about visiting a doctor **together**.

[ALZ.org/TimeToTalk](https://www.alz.org/TimeToTalk)



This week: Homes from Sears, Roebuck and Co.

1 **Austin** This updated, expanded Craftsman home from Sears was probably built using the 1915 Bandon kit. The four-bedroom house features the original long-leaf pine floors, built-ins, and wavy-glass windows; 12 stained-glass windows; a double-sided brick fireplace; an eat-in chef's kitchen; a full primary suite; and a marble-tiled laundry. The covered front porch has two swings and the back deck faces a grassy yard; dining and shopping are walking distance and the university is nearby. \$1,585,000. Suzanne Pringle, Kuper Sotheby's International Realty, (512) 217-1047

2 **Chevy Chase, Md.** A two-story Cape Cod-style addition turned this 1931 Maplewood Tudor cottage into a five-bedroom house. The home has a big modern kitchen; the new wing features high ceilings, glass walls, the primary suite, and a sunken living room. At the back of the landscaped lot are a roomy deck and sweeping lawn, Little Falls Park Trail is across the road, and downtown Bethesda is minutes by car. \$1,800,000. Amy Levin, Long & Foster Real Estate/Luxury Portfolio International, (301) 641-5695

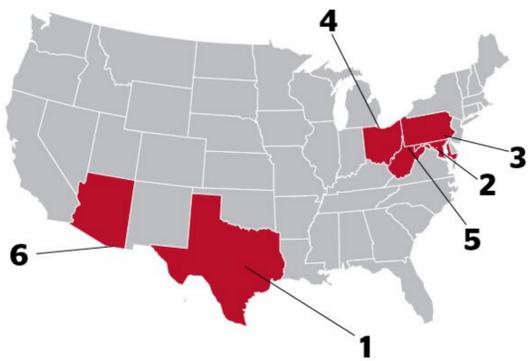


3 **Lancaster, Pa.** Another Craftsman home, this Vallonia model dates to 1930. The expanded three-bedroom house features wood floors, crown molding, arched doorways, and a three-sided fireplace; a renovated gourmet kitchen; and an added mud-room, laundry, and extra bathroom. The 0.64-acre lot, across from the Lancaster Country Club and eight minutes from downtown, includes a back deck, driveway with a basketball hoop, detached two-car garage, and backyard with mature trees. \$399,900. Lisa Naples, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty North Pointe, (717) 333-5151



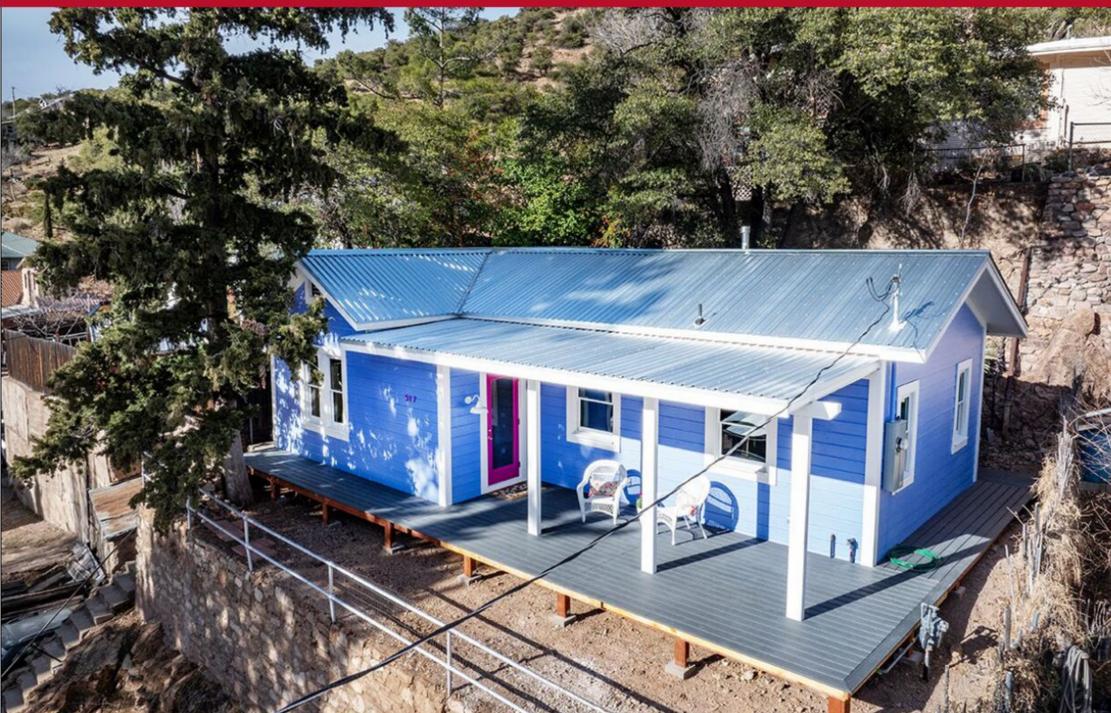
4 ◀ Marblehead, Ohio
This 1927 Craftsman bungalow was likely built from one of the catalog's Clyde models. The four-

bedroom house has retro '50s interiors, with pastel color schemes, room-dividing columns and pony walls, a wood-burning fireplace, a big cottage-style eat-in kitchen, a dining area with built-ins, and a Mamie Eisenhower pink-tiled bath. Outside are a stone-columned front porch and wraparound lawn, Lake Erie's Lakeside Beach is walking distance, and Cleveland is about 80 minutes' drive. \$499,000. Kim Redfern, Street Sotheby's International Realty, (614) 499-5579



5 ▶ Morgantown, W.Va. Built on the Clyde 9030 plan in the 1920s, this three-bedroom Craftsman received additions in the '50s and was further expanded and remodeled in the 2010s. The home features glass-fronted wood built-ins, tapered columns, coffered ceilings, and a fireplace; a chef's kitchen with apron sink and bar; and a dining room with French doors to the outside. The landscaped half-acre property in Evansdale, close to the university, has multiple decks, yards, and garden beds. \$700,000. Melissa Hornbeck, Old Colony Realtors, (240) 727-5830

Steal of the week



6 ◀ Bisbee, Ariz. Originally built in 1910, probably from Sears' kit model 147, this farmhouse-style home has since been completely revamped. The two-bedroom house in Tombstone Canyon has new hardwood floors; a window framing a canyon wall; a refreshed kitchen with granite counters; tiled baths, one with a 1930s clawfoot tub; and a wraparound deck overlooking the wooded neighborhood. The lot is steps from downtown Bisbee's arts and music scene; Tucson is about two hours by car. \$347,000. Barbara Guy, ProSmart Realty, (480) 221-5513

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Nvidia has posted a return of 591,078 percent since its initial public offering in 1999, making it the best-performing stock of the past 25 years. This week, the chipmaker unseated Microsoft as the world's most valuable company, with a market capitalization of \$3.34 trillion.

Bloomberg

■ All stocks listed in France are now worth about \$3.13 trillion in total, while the total value of U.K.-listed shares is \$3.18 trillion. Since June 9, the CAC 40 index of leading French stocks has shed more than 5 percent of its value—equivalent to \$160 billion.

CNN.com



■ Onetime “bond king” Bill Gross auctioned off 100 rare stamps from his collection for \$18.1 million. The highest lot of the sale was the exceedingly rare 1-cent “Z” Grill stamp from 1868, of which only two are known to exist, which sold for \$4.4 million.

Bloomberg

■ Pixar's *Inside Out 2* debuted with an estimated \$155 million domestically, the second-highest theatrical opening of an animated film and the first movie since *Barbie* to top \$100 million during its debut.

CNBC.com

■ BNSF Railway must pay \$400 million to a Native American tribe in Washington state for repeatedly running 100-car trains carrying crude oil across the tribe's reservation.

The New York Times

■ Donald Trump's proposal to exempt tips from taxation would add between \$150 billion to \$250 billion to the federal budget deficit over 10 years, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

CBSNews.com

Social media: A new warning for teenagers

The U.S. Surgeon General says social media's health risks should come with a tobacco-like warning label, said **Simmone Shah** in *Time*. In an op-ed for *The New York Times* this week, Vivek Murthy called on Congress “to issue a warning label for visitors to social media platforms” due to an “emergency mental health crisis” among teens and adolescents.

Murthy said the warning label should pop up regularly to remind parents and kids “that social media has not been proved safe.” The request echoes the warning labels on packages of cigarettes mandated by Congress in 1965, after studies linked smoking and lung cancer. Murthy cited research finding that social media is contributing



Murthy: Urging lawmakers to act

to a mental health crisis among young people.

A warning label is the wrong prescription, Dr. Murthy, said **Dave Lee** in *Bloomberg*. With tobacco, the idea “was to compel people to quit, not moderate.” But the same can't be said of social media, which Murthy himself has even acknowledged can “provide benefits for some youth” via social connection. A label becomes just “another pop-up that users will instinctively disregard.” Murthy offered better remedies in his advisory on social media published last year, including age-appropriate restrictions on the most addictive features. “Sadly, Congress doesn't seem to share his urgency.”

Grounded: Senators grill Boeing's embattled CEO

Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun defended his company's safety record in a Senate hearing this week, said Sharon Terlep in *The Wall Street Journal*, saying that since the pandemic “training workers has been a momentous challenge.” But Calhoun admitted that some supervisors had retaliated after worker complaints—even as yet another whistleblower came forward on the eve of the hearings. Boeing's difficulties are compounded by the difficulty of finding a replacement for Calhoun, who said in March he will step down. “Several high-profile candidates have turned down the chance” to replace him, including GE's Larry Culp.

Cease-fire: DeSantis feud ends as Disney expands

Florida last week granted Disney World the right to build a fifth theme park, said Brooks Barnes in *The New York Times*. The green light from the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District essentially ends the two-year feud between Disney and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who took over the district in 2022, after “55 years of Disney control.” Disney has earmarked \$17 billion for the planned development, which it says will “create an estimated 13,000 jobs.” The company agreed to use Florida businesses for at least 50 percent of its total spending on the expansion.

Health care: Executives charged over Adderall scheme

The founder and chief doctor of a San Francisco-based telehealth startup were arrested for peddling ADHD medication, said Megan Cassidy in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Prosecutors say Ruthia He, the founder and CEO of Done Global, and clinical president David Brody “secured prescriptions for more than 40 million pills of Adderall” and preyed on “drug seekers” on social media. He and Brody allegedly told Done providers to issue unnecessary prescriptions, then billed insurance companies for more than \$14 million. It's the first time that charges for criminal drug distribution have involved a telehealth company.

Autos: EV maker Fisker latest to declare bankruptcy

Electric SUV maker Fisker declared bankruptcy this week, the latest casualty in “a crop of once high-flying EV startups that looked to upend the traditional auto industry,” said Sean McLain in *The Wall Street Journal*. Fisker had tried to speed its entry into the industry by “outsourcing manufacturing,” and started delivering its Ocean SUV last summer. However, the Ocean had a troubled rollout and was “panned” by reviewers and customers. Several EV makers, including Lordstown Motors, have been forced into bankruptcy.

A chessboard battle for corporate cred

A “corporate chess championship” lets Wall Street and Big Tech titans showcase their stars, said Andrew Beaton and Joshua Robinson in *The Wall Street Journal*. “Teams from Goldman Sachs, Google, Deutsche Bank, and BlackRock, among others,” met last weekend in the FIDE World Corporate Chess Championship in New York, each hoping for recognition “as the ‘smartest company in the world.’” Companies take it so seriously that Google's top player, Ritvars Reimanis, flew in from Lithuania. “Just like corporate softball,” squads are allowed to bring one nonemployee—informally, a ringer. Not every company needs that. Google's internal chess group “is 2,500 people strong.” The rules let companies bring only one player with a chess rating of over 2400, the international master level; at Goldman Sachs, two chess players qualify. None of the tech or finance giants won in the end. Fittingly, the champion was Chessify, a cloud platform for online chess analysis.

Insurance: How spy tech can raise your rates

The world's worst backseat driver is the insurance company, said **Kashmir Hill** in *The New York Times*. Phone apps like Gas Buddy and MyRadar have been surreptitiously spying on users' driving behavior—and selling that information to insurers eager to know “how risky their driving is.” The spying features are technically opt-in, but what drivers are consenting to usually appears to have nothing to do with insurance. GasBuddy, for instance, has a feature that “users can turn on that rates the fuel efficiency of their drives.” Another app, Life360, can be used by parents to monitor their kids' driving. But the features are powered by Arity, a data company founded by Allstate that tracks “sensor and motion data” from the phone while in the car to build a picture of drivers' behavior. This behavior, “including how often they brake suddenly, speed, or use their phones,” is used to design an individual “driving score,” almost like a credit score for insurers.



Phone apps might secretly track your driving.

The sneaky digital surveillance isn't limited to the car, said **Jean Eaglesham** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Home-insurance companies are increasingly “deploying drones, manned airplanes, and high-altitude balloons to take images of properties” and detect any “damaged roof shingles, yard debris, overhanging tree branches, and undeclared swimming pools or trampolines.” Insurers say the bird's-eye view is “less intrusive than the home visits used in the past.” But the airborne results can catch home-

owners by surprise. Cindy Picos, who lives in California, said her home's policy was suddenly dropped because of “aerial photos of her roof,” which the insurer, CSAA, insisted showed that the roof had “lived its life expectancy.”

Usage-based insurance has some merit for drivers, said **Pete Grieve** in *Money*. Safe driving *should* be rewarded, and insurers have been trying to get drivers to opt in to so-called usage-based insurance, or telematics insurance, for years. The insurers “claim you can save up to 30 percent on your premium” by allowing driving behavior to be tracked either via app or an in-car device, and with premiums up 22 percent over the past year, more drivers are looking for ways to save. However, “the real savings are probably much lower,” unless your driving is truly impeccable, you never drive late at night, and you choose only the safest routes.

The practice of tailoring insurance premiums to driver behavior isn't new, said **David Moscrop** in *Jacobin*, but hiding behind the “arcane terms of service legalese is a bold new step toward a sci-fi surveillance hellscape.” Companies should be forced to “collect less data” and be required to “state expressly and in simple terms what's being collected and how it's being used.” Americans “shouldn't become numb” to “ghoulish voyeurism” by companies that use our data “to exploit us.”

What the experts say

Goldman sees slowdown and rate cuts

Influential Goldman Sachs economist Jan Hatzius is sticking to his prediction that the Federal Reserve will cut rates twice this year, said Malcolm Scott in *Bloomberg*. Investors have been hoping that Fed rate cuts would push up stock prices, but those hopes have been frustrated by a strong labor market. Hatzius, though, thinks that jobs are “at a potential inflection point,” and we could see unemployment increasing. While inflation ticked up early this year, he sees that as an “aberration.” The “main drivers”—access to credit, high savings, and growing incomes—“that have supported the resilience of the American consumer are losing steam.” That's bad news for the health of the economy, but potentially good near-term news for the stock market.

Savvy cardholders outsmart a bank

Wells Fargo's plans to expand its credit card business with a card that could be used to pay rent have badly backfired, said AnnaMaria Andriotis and Gina Heeb in *The Wall Street Journal*. In partnership with financial tech startup Bilt Technologies, the bank released a co-branded card that waived merchant fees for landlords, and gave customer reward points to boot. Wells Fargo assumed that it

would make up the money from other purchases, with “half to three-fourths of dollars charged to the card carrying over from month to month, generating interest charges.” But customers have proved surprisingly “savvy”: Only 15 to 25 percent carry a balance, and rent makes up two-thirds of the purchases. Wells is now “losing as much as \$10 million every month on the program.”

Retirement anxiety for Gen X

The slacker generation is reaching “crunch time” for retirement, said Jason Ma in *Fortune*, and it's not going well. According to a new survey from insurance and asset management company Allianz, only 62 percent of Gen Xers “feel confident” about their ability to afford what they want in life. That's smaller than the share of both Millennials (77 percent) and Baby Boomers (82 percent). Surprisingly, a lower share of Gen Xers than Millennials are currently working with a financial professional. Gen Xers seem to be aware of how ill-prepared they are. On average, they expect it will take “a bit over \$1.1 million in savings to retire comfortably,” but expect their savings by retirement to hit just \$660,000. Millennials, by contrast, are notably optimistic despite “heavy student loan debts and high mortgage rates.”

Charity of the week

In her 20s, Madonna Coffman, a nurse, suddenly started losing her hair. She had developed alopecia areata—an incurable disease that leads to total hair loss.

Later, when her 4-year-old daughter began losing her hair, too, Coffman was inspired to found **Locks of Love (locksoflove.org)**. The nonprofit provides free hair prostheses to young people with financial needs who are suffering from hair loss caused by a chronic illness. Human hair of all colors and textures can be cut and donated from a salon or at home and mailed in a resealable bag to the Locks of Love headquarters in Palm Beach, Fla. The organization then repurposes the donations into custom-made and fitted hairpieces for qualified boys and girls, helping them regain a sense of normalcy with a full head of real hair.



Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group's highest rating.

Windfalls: Does Musk deserve a \$48B payday?

Elon Musk got his ransom, said **Alex Kirshner** in *Slate*. When a Delaware judge invalidated Musk's outrageous pay package in January, it was like a belated Christmas gift to Tesla's shareholders. "Tesla already got the stock-price increases it wanted" when it made the 2018 offer, and now it could pay its CEO less. Much less. Musk quickly threw a tantrum and threatened to "build products outside of Tesla" unless shareholders approved the pay package, worth \$48 billion at Tesla's current share price. They did that overwhelmingly last week. "At normal companies, the CEO works for the shareholders." But in Musk's bizarre world, Tesla's "shareholders work for the CEO in the hopes that he won't stiff them."



Musk retains his hold on a loyal fan base.

Nobody was holding a gun to shareholders' heads, said **Holman W. Jenkins Jr.** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Musk's 2018 award granted him nothing "unless he succeeded in creating an extraordinary and implausible increase in shareholder value," which he did. But it was at the time a risk; "no other CEO would have signed it." Even so, last week's overwhelming vote in Musk's favor wasn't about gratitude. Investors were entitled to ask, "What are you going to do for me next?" They concluded "that Musk is still instrumental" to Tesla's value. "Though Musk still has to fight the Delaware court to reverse its decision," the shareholder vote helps his case, said **Hasan Chowdhury** in *Business Insider*, and represents "a vote of confidence in his leadership." Now Musk, who has been promoting an autonomous-driving future for Tesla, has to deliver on his "wildly ambitious promises."

Musk's supporters have somehow managed to turn this into a question of "fairness," said **Christiaan Hetzner** in *Fortune*. Robyn Denholm, the chair of Tesla's board, accumulated "life-changing wealth" thanks to Musk. Then she returned the favor, whipping votes for Musk's outsize pay package. This is how pay gets out of control: Supposedly independent directors with "cushy and lucrative seats" are happy to oblige their CEO patrons. Tesla's shareholders "bought into the man as much as into the company," said the

Financial Times in an editorial, and it paid off. However, "Tesla is a singular example." The biggest danger is that executives elsewhere will "mimic Musk by pursuing giant rewards and appointing supine boards."

Some already have, said **Theo Francis** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Though no other executive compensation plan comes close to \$48 billion, "three dozen CEOs of S&P 500 companies have received pay packages valued at \$50 million or more" since 2019, "up from nine in the five years before Musk's." Analysts say Musk "set the tone." The average CEO made nearly 200 times what the typical employee took home last year, said **Seamus Webster** in *Fortune*. And those execs' median compensation rose 13 percent, while a salaried worker saw only a 4 percent raise. "For the third year in a row," a recent Gallup poll revealed that "an overwhelming majority of Americans believe that reducing the pay gap between CEOs and average workers" is an important issue. But public opinion "doesn't seem to be having much of an impact."

'Degrowth': academia's hot product

Noah Rothman
National Review

Climate activists who want to shrink the economy never seem to leave the ivory towers of academia, said Noah Rothman. "'Degrowth' is not a new idea, though it has found a new audience" among "gullible young ideologues." They've decided that when it comes to the environment and social justice, "prosperity is the problem." The would-be reformers insist that the economy "can be brought into balance with the living world" by ridding itself of the things they don't like, such as "SUVs, weapons, beef, private transportation, advertising, and consumer technologies." Proponents of this ideology "take the idea of 'degrowth' to its logical conclusion, which

is, invariably, Leninism"—an attack on property and any paths to future prosperity. But as one student lamented, there are few "career paths" in the degrowth movement, given its aversion to productivity. So "wide-eyed young people are seduced into pursuing degrees" that position them only for professional activism or further study. The field isn't lucrative, but it promises its acolytes "the self-importance with which unheeded Cassandras of the apocalypse must satisfy themselves." The movement entraps its targets "in fields with no utility outside academia, thereby making itself self-sustaining"—and the perfect scam to seduce modern Bolsheviks.

Jobs, stats, and a fake sports boom

Justin Fox
Bloomberg

Jobs numbers aren't always what they seem, said Justin Fox. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, sports teams and clubs accounted for "2.6 percent of all job growth" in the United States last year, employing "75 percent more people...than before the pandemic." What's driving this boom? Is it the rise of sports analytics? New sports leagues that nobody has heard of? Or—by far the most likely explanation—it's just a statistical fluke. Monthly payroll numbers that make up the "jobs reports" we pore over "are derived from a survey of 119,000 businesses and government agencies covering 629,000 distinct establishments." Only later does the BLS check these num-

bers against "the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages," a more objective measure compiled from state unemployment-insurance records. That survey "is painting a wildly different picture of sports team employment," with no boom. More importantly, the QCEW shows weaker employment all around than the payroll survey, with jobs growing in late 2023 at just 70,000 a month instead of 200,000. The jobs numbers for 2023 will be revised and finalized later this year. But for now the sports numbers let us see "how noisy and just plain wrong" some employment numbers can be—and hint that the job market may be "less robust" than many observers think.

The civil rights icon who taught nonviolence

James Lawson
1928-2024

Pastor, teacher, and activist, James Lawson was, in the words of his friend and colleague



Martin Luther King Jr., “the greatest teacher of nonviolence in America.” He never wavered in his commitment to pacifism, through the bomb threats he weathered as a Freedom Rider to the beating he endured at the hands of police in Selma, Ala. When, during one pivotal 1960 Nashville sit-in, a white motorcyclist spat on him, Lawson politely asked for a handkerchief and then stunned his assailant by striking up a conversation about motorbikes with him. An unyielding commitment to nonviolence, he believed, was the only way to shock America’s conscience. “Chances are,” he said, “without people being hurt, we cannot solve the problem.”

Born to a gun-toting Methodist preacher and a Jamaican-born seamstress, Lawson “did not always practice nonviolence,” said the *Los Angeles Times*. As a 10-year-old in Massillon, Ohio, he once smacked a white boy for calling him the N-word. “Jimmy,” his mother reproached him, “what good did that do? There must be a better way.” Her words would inform his worldview: Lawson spent 13 months in prison for refusing to serve in the Korean War, then traveled to India

in 1953 to study the teachings of Gandhi. News of the Montgomery bus boycott prompted his return, and King recruited him to join the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Lawson became King’s “chief strategist,” said *The Times* (U.K.), leading workshops, boycotts, and freedom rides. He taught activists ways to minimize being hurt as well as how to curb a natural instinct to fight back, telling them to expect beatings, even broken bones. In 1968, Lawson

invited King to speak to striking sanitation workers in Memphis, where King would be killed. Lawson would later officiate the prison wedding for James Earl Ray—in part because he doubted Ray’s sole culpability in the assassination, but also because, he said, “I knew if Martin were alive and in my position, he would have married them.”

Lawson moved to Los Angeles in 1974, where he served as pastor of a Methodist church for 25 years, said *NPR.org*. He continued his activism “well into his 90s,” advocating for gay rights and immigrant rights and embracing the Black Lives Matter movement. “There are too few people in our country who are pushing nonviolent struggle,” he said in January. “We need, in the United States, thousands and thousands of small and large campaigns of nonviolent wrestling with our country.”

The farm boy who created the Cowboy Channel

Patrick Gottsch built a down-home TV empire aimed at the farmers and ranchers he grew up with. His RFD-TV (which stands for Rural Free Delivery) channel was the first

Patrick Gottsch
1953-2024

to center on rural life, airing programs on cattle-market reports, hay-

harvesting tips, and rodeos. Broadcast executives told him he was crazy, and his first attempt at such a channel went bankrupt, but he plowed ahead. “There was a wall being built between urban and rural America,” he said in 2021, “and there needed to be some balance in media to offset some misconceptions.”

Gottsch was born in Omaha, where his parents raised soybeans, corn, and cattle, said *The New York Times*. He got a baseball scholarship to Sam Houston State University in Texas but broke his hand and left after one year. His father advised against farming, so Gottsch bounced from job to job. Working as a satellite-dish installer, he heard rural clients complain there was nothing on TV for them. He started his own channel, determined “to prove that TV programming about agriculture, horses, the rural lifestyle” was viable. It took over a decade, but by 2002, he’d landed RFD-TV on some of the biggest cable networks in America. He did so well, he was able to spend \$265,000 for the taxidermied remains of Roy Rogers’ horse Trigger; it’s on display at RFD headquarters.

Gottsch launched the Cowboy Channel in 2017, offering full-time broadcasting of rodeo events with “ESPN-style coverage and a sense of drama,” said *The Wall Street Journal*. The sport’s fan base grew, and the Cowgirl Channel spun off in 2023. A micromanager, Gottsch was given to frequent on-air appearances, where he would opine on everything from barrel racing to politics. When one politician said people should eat less meat, Gottsch responded with outrage. “There’s efforts to wipe out the rural way of life,” he said in 2021, “and we can’t let it happen.”

The Lakers legend who forged a dynasty

Jerry West
1938-2024

A force in basketball for five decades, Jerry West became so synonymous with the NBA



that its very logo is his silhouette. As a guard for the Los Angeles Lakers from 1960 to 1974, he averaged 27 points a game and led the team to nine NBA finals. A savvy passer with a lethal jump shot, he was known for both ferocity—frequently crashing the boards and breaking his nose nine times—and poise under pressure, earning him the nickname Mr. Clutch. He went on to serve as a winning coach for three seasons, then an executive.

He managed the “Showtime” Lakers of the 1980s through their dominance of the NBA, with eight trips to the finals and four championships. But West was also known for his near misses: Of the nine times he played in the finals, the Lakers lost eight. An intense, driven man, he was tormented by every loss. “The pain of losing,” he said, “is so much stronger than the joy of winning.”

Lawson was born in West Virginia coal country, where his father, a mining electrician, “bounced between jobs” and beat him regularly, said *The Washington Post*. West found refuge in basket-

ball. He led his high school team to the state championship and earned a scholarship to West Virginia University, becoming “a statewide hero” when the team made the 1959 NCAA finals—losing by a point. In 1960, he captained the U.S. Olympic team to a gold medal and was soon drafted by the Lakers. West made the NBA all-star team all 14 of his seasons, said *The New York Times*. “But injuries finally caught up with him,” and in 1974 he retired as the third-leading scorer in NBA history.

As general manager, West made the Lakers “one of the most valuable franchises in sports,” said the *Los Angeles Times*. He engineered the signing of luminaries like Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O’Neal, and while he was prone to yelling, players adored him. In retirement, he was angered by his “raging, foulmouthed” portrayal in the 2022 HBO docudrama *Winning Time* and demanded, but didn’t get, a retraction. But West was just as hard on himself. In his memoir, he described himself as “a sick competitor” possessed of a “demon-filled mind.” Fear of failure is “the greatest motivational tool,” he said in 2003. “It drives me and drives me and drives me.”

Leaving party politics behind

Americans are increasingly skeptical of political parties, said David Siders in Politico. In Colorado Springs, that's created an opening for independents—and handed the local GOP to extremists.

COLORADO SPRINGS—Yemi Mobolade, when I asked him how he made history here, slid a book toward me across the table in his office. Last year, Mobolade became the first non-Republican elected mayor of Colorado Springs—a development that would have seemed unthinkable for decades in a city known as a fortress of right-wing evangelical politics. “This title says it all,” he said. And then he read from the book’s cover: *A Declaration of Independents: How We Can Break the Two-Party Stranglehold and Restore the American Dream.*

A Nigerian-born former pastor and political newcomer, Mobolade told me that when he ran for mayor as an independent, he did it to represent people who “don’t like the party chaos,” who “live our quiet lives.” Some of his biggest supporters, he said, are “cowboys and cowgirls.” And like him, he said, “I’ve come to learn they don’t like politics, either.”

Which is why, as we sat in his office, Mobolade was predicting a “tipping point” for America’s two parties sometime in the next half-century, when they would lose their hold on the American political system—and explaining how it already happened here. Over the past 10 years, the number of independent, or unaffiliated, voters in El Paso County has more than doubled, and earlier this year, unaffiliated voters became a majority of the county’s electorate.

To political observers here, it was a sign of where the rest of Colorado and the country may be heading. In the past two decades, party affiliation nationwide has been on a downward trajectory, and the percentage of Americans who consider themselves political independents has been on the rise. The proportion of Americans who identify as independent now registers at about 43 percent, according to Gallup, while only about 27 percent of Americans identify as Republican and another 27 percent as Democratic. In Colorado, the percentage of independents is even higher, about 48 percent.

For all the attention that third parties are drawing nationally this election cycle, some people don’t see the rise of political independents as a threat to the country’s dominant



Mobolade appeals to voters who ‘don’t like the party chaos.’

political parties. One reason is that research has long suggested most independent voters lean toward one of the two major parties. But partisan lean and partisan affiliation are two very different things—and what is happening in Colorado Springs suggests to even longtime political operatives in Colorado that the party system as they know it may be starting to fall apart.

It’s not so much that voters’ values are changing. It’s that here and around the country, they are removing themselves from the party-led political process. And we’re only beginning to understand the ramifications. It’s one reason that the two parties may be increasingly beholden to fringe figures and less responsive to what voters say are their actual concerns.

The parties are struggling to figure out how to respond. When I stopped in Denver on my way to Colorado Springs, Dick Wadhams, a former Colorado Republican Party chair and longtime party strategist, told me that the mayoral election and registration surge of unaffiliated voters in El Paso County had sent “shock waves” through the ranks of political professionals in the state.

THAT INDEPENDENTS SEEM to be taking over in Colorado Springs is likely a surprise to anyone who followed politics in the 1990s. It was here that conservative activists dreamed up the Colorado state ballot initiative barring anti-discrimination laws against gay people in 1992. (The initiative was later ruled unconstitutional.) Focus on the Family planted

its headquarters in the city—as did many other evangelical Christian groups. A center of the culture wars in the 1980s and ’90s, it became known as the “evangelical Vatican.”

Then, in recent decades, Colorado Springs’ population exploded, fueled by an influx of young professionals, and its politics began tugging to the left. Between 2016 and 2020, former President Donald Trump’s margin of victory in surrounding El Paso County dropped nearly 12 percentage points, and two years later, Republican candidates for governor and the U.S. Senate carried the county by narrower margins still.

The proliferation of unaffiliated voters doesn’t mean that Colorado Springs is any less polarized or more

centrist than the rest of the country. Locals’ politics range the full spectrum. The week I visited, students at Colorado College had just dismantled the encampment where they protested the war in Gaza this spring. At the nonprofit Chinook Center—a left-leaning community center where the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado claimed, in a lawsuit dismissed in April, that authorities were targeting activist leaders—a woman at the door told me she left the Democratic Party and re-registered as unaffiliated after Sen. Bernie Sanders (the independent from Vermont) lost the presidential primary in 2016. President Biden, she said, is too conservative to gain her vote.

There’s also lots of evidence of right-leaning politics. The Gadsden flag—“Don’t Tread on Me”—flew outside a home nearby, with a hand-printed sign in the yard that said “Try God.” And then there was Clarice Backus, who had tried God—she had been raised evangelical, she said—but who told me at the vintage clothing store where she works downtown that she had left the Republican Party for unaffiliated when Trump was running in 2016. Now, she said, “the world is as bad as it’s ever been—and even more—the last four years.”

In 2002, when there were proportionally fewer unaffiliated voters on the rolls in Colorado, then-Republican Gov. Bill Owens won re-election with nearly 62 percent of the vote. That same election, the Republican running for state attorney general carried less than 38 percent against

Democratic incumbent Ken Salazar. (Salazar, after winning re-election to that seat, went on to become a U.S. senator and, now, ambassador to Mexico.)

“So, there’s a 25-point swing between the Republican nominee for governor and attorney general,” Wayne Williams, the Republican former secretary of state who lost to Mobolade in the mayoral race, told me. “In other words, a quarter of the people in this state looked at the candidates and said, You know, I really like the job Bill Owens is doing here. I really like the job Salazar’s doing here.”

Fast-forward to 2018—the year Williams lost his post as secretary of state to a Democrat—and the Republicans running in five statewide races all finished within about 2 percentage points of one another, the same kind of highly partisan, party-line voting seen around the country. “So, we went from 1 out of 4 voters splitting their ticket to 1 out of 50,” Williams said. “You were either with Donald Trump or you hated Donald Trump. And despite this vast increase in the number of unaffiliated voters, they are voting in a bloc more than they did when they were affiliated. Which is quirky.”

It has also been problematic for the parties, if not the candidates running on their labels. That’s because unaffiliated voters have less and less input into the people and priorities governing the two parties. The voters, Williams said, “are no longer part of the party. So, they don’t make the decisions on party leadership.... They don’t choose who runs the party.”

The consequences of that may be far-reaching. When I called Lee Drutman, a senior fellow in the political reform program at New America, he told me that what interests him most is not the number of people who tell pollsters they consider themselves independent, but what they say about the parties. When Pew Research Center polled Americans last year, just 4 percent said the political system was working extremely or very well, and more than a quarter of Americans said they dislike both political parties—the worst reading in three decades. That’s a “big problem,” Drutman said, because it reflects a “profound sense of alienation about our political system, which is extremely discouraging at the very least, and potentially destabilizing at the worst.”

In Colorado Springs, the once-dominant Republican Party shows signs of that kind of destabilization. Over an Arnold Palmer at a country club near his home, Larry Liston, a Republican state senator, told me “I be-

lieve in the two-party system, when they’re vibrant.” But Liston, a social conservative, said he runs into Republicans regularly who have left the party as hard-liners have gained power—their view being that “if we were only further to the right and more dogmatic and more spiteful and more hateful...we would be winning these elections.”

But it’s not just that the party is beset by infighting; that’s happened in local Republican parties across the country in the years after Trump’s presidency. It’s that, as the party organization has become more insular, the apparatus itself, on a small scale, is splintering.

Liston and like-minded Republicans have sought refuge in a separate entity, the Peak Republicans, a nod to Pikes Peak, the summit that serves as the backdrop of Colorado Springs. They needed the group, he said, “because of the dysfunction of our party,” which he described as being “run by the crazies.” “With the lunatics that we have,” Liston said, “Ronald Reagan would not be considered Republican by them.”



Liston: ‘The dysfunction of our party’ is crippling the GOP.



Outside the left-leaning Chinook Center

THERE ARE STRUCTURAL reasons, like rules governing ballot access, and behavioral ones, like voters’ desire not to waste their votes, that the two-party system has endured for so long. And if the rules remain the same, “we will always have two,” said Sara Hagedorn, who worked as an aide to Sen. John Thune of South Dakota and former Sen. Conrad Burns of Montana, both Republicans, and who is now an assistant professor of political science at the Colorado Springs

branch of the University of Colorado.

But there is less reason to think that the two parties as they exist today will necessarily persist—or persist in their current form. And speaking with people here, it seemed possible that if the two major parties ever do die, they might bury them in Colorado Springs.

I asked Hagedorn, herself an unaffiliated voter now, what she thought would happen to the two parties if people kept abandoning them in her county. “I think they’re going to have to collapse and be built back up,” she said. “I don’t know when, and it might be slow. It might not be an earthquake kind of thing. It might be something slow, like an erosion.”

On the morning I met with him in Colorado Springs, Mobolade, or “Mayor Yemi,” as people call him, had just held his monthly press conference, where he was promoting the city’s third-place ranking in *U.S. News & World Report’s* Best Places to Live rankings for 2024-25.

He was high on his city—and on the long-term prospects of an alternative to the two-party system. In the next 20 to 50 years, he predicted, “we’re going to see the emergence of new parties.”

But Mobolade is also not unrealistic about the near-term prospects of his success being replicated statewide or nationally. Independents may be plentiful in the electorate, but they are scarce at all levels of government. Third parties “have not figured out a way to elevate the vehicle and the infrastructure needed to be on par with the two-party system,” he said.

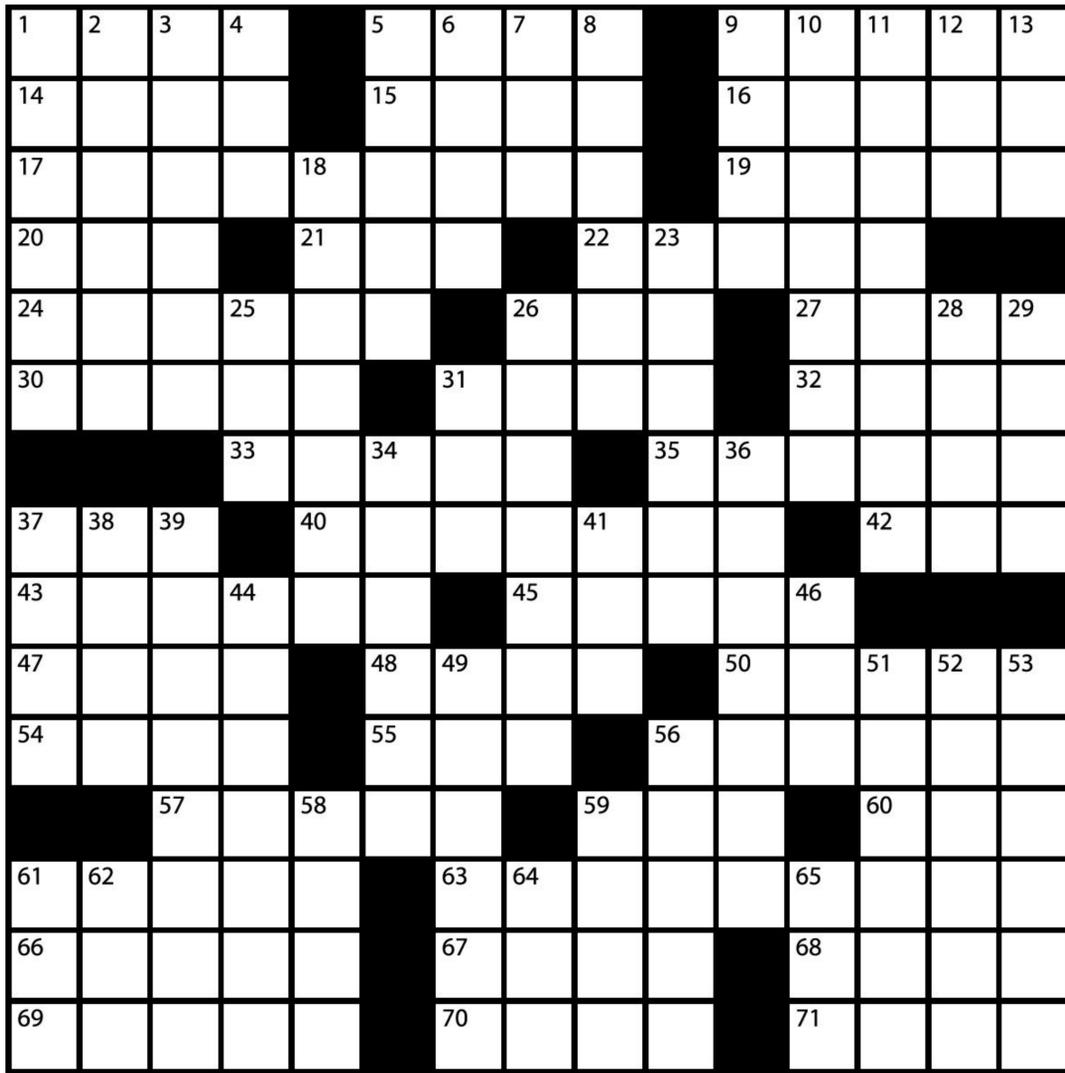
Mobolade said he knows “the importance of a group of like-minded folks who share the same values, and together you can accomplish more than just individually.” At the same time, his sense of himself as existing outside the political process seemed to me like a disposition that could be limiting for a political movement. I asked the mayor if the same feelings that caused him to register—and run—as an unaffiliated voter caused him to be less interested in attaching himself to a broader effort to expand his movement’s ranks.

If he were to, he said, “It affiliates me now, right?... These third-party institutions and systems are still institutions and systems.”

“Like most Americans,” he said, “I’m a little jaded with any kind of institution or system.”

Adapted from an article that originally appeared in Politico. Used with permission.

Crossword No. 750: Logo Lore by Matt Gaffney



ACROSS

- 1 Stadium feature that may be retractable
- 5 Gets caught, as paper in a printer
- 9 ___ Is Born
- 14 At any point
- 15 World's Fair
- 16 EGOT winner Davis
- 17 This NBA great died on June 12 at the age of 86; his silhouette is the league's logo
- 19 "My best guess is..."
- 20 "Where ___ my keys?"
- 21 Famously slippery fish
- 22 Rod for Rosie
- 24 Get a ___ on (spot)
- 26 Literary device common in Shakespeare
- 27 Water carrier
- 30 Complete and total
- 31 Red as a ___
- 32 Elevator pioneer
- 33 Gossipy type
- 35 Patronize a pizzeria, say
- 37 1-3 of 26
- 40 *The Price Is Right* prizes, often
- 42 Issuer of IDs
- 43 Starbucks size
- 45 Take responsibility for something
- 47 Tennis great Nadal, to friends
- 48 Rolled pair
- 50 Beginners, humorously
- 54 Radio switch options
- 55 Sound made to a misbehavior
- 56 *Succession* Emmy winner Culkin

- 57 7-foot-4 former NBA star Mark
- 59 Opposite of max.
- 60 Fury
- 61 Come up, as a topic
- 63 You've seen the mountain on this chocolatier's classic logo—but have you noticed the bear hidden in the mountain, representing Switzerland's capital city of Bern?
- 66 Bad behaviors
- 67 Home of the rice dish *chelo kabab*
- 68 Hazy memory
- 69 Like lollipops
- 70 *Dick Tracy* character
- 71 Pricey rocks

DOWN

- 1 Eerie sense
- 2 Not willing to put up with this anymore
- 3 Superlatively small
- 4 Go astray
- 5 "Hands" singer, 1998
- 6 Rink leap
- 7 Some U.K. politicians
- 8 "Couldn't agree more"
- 9 Israel's Tel ___ University
- 10 Poker table pile, on some hands
- 11 Most don't notice, but the 4th, 5th, and 6th letters of this chip brand's lettering depict two people sharing a bowl of salsa
- 12 In the style of

- 13 Fish that may sting
- 18 Held in late December, as a sale
- 23 Future full-time employee, maybe
- 25 Three-point turn alternative
- 26 NBC chose this bird as its logo in 1956 to best showcase the network's new color technology
- 28 Aptly named pope
- 29 It is, in Spain
- 31 "1 other thing 4 u..."
- 34 Must
- 36 Totally illogical
- 37 It's a three-hour drive from New Delhi
- 38 Spooky Stoker
- 39 The designer of Starbucks' logo told *The Seattle Times* in 2011 that he chose a mythical siren "as a metaphor for the allure of" this
- 41 Bedazzle
- 44 "Respect be with you"
- 46 Nail holder
- 49 "Or do I have that wrong?"
- 51 Baltimore bunter
- 52 Showman P.T.
- 53 Nasty looks
- 56 Bowl bakers
- 58 Sample
- 59 Billionaires' degrees, maybe
- 61 Mag revenue sources
- 62 Move across a lake, say
- 64 Unrefined find
- 65 Late Supreme, briefly

The Week Contest

This week's question: Competitive eating star Joey Chestnut has been banned from Nathan's July 4 Hot Dog Eating Contest—which he has won 16 times—after striking a sponsorship deal with vegan hot dog maker Impossible Foods. If Chestnut were to write a memoir defending his decision to shill for fake franks, what should the book be titled?

Last week's contest: A California man is suing Madonna for subjecting him to "pornography without warning," claiming he was left traumatized by suggestive onstage dancing at one of the Queen of Pop's recent concerts. If Madonna were to rewrite one of her hits to address the plaintiff's claims, what title should she give the song?

THE WINNER: "Like a Virgin (Shocked by His Very First Show)"
Judith Wilkison, Martinsville, Ind.

SECOND PLACE: "Open Your Heart, Cover Your Eyes"
Erica Avery, Greenfield, Mass.

THIRD PLACE: "Papa, Just Don't Peek"
Stephanie Sarich, Minnetonka, Minn.

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime

telephone number for verification; this week, type "Hot dog memoir" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, June 25. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, June 28. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.



◀ **The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.**

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: medium

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

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

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later becomes
someday becomes
...when?



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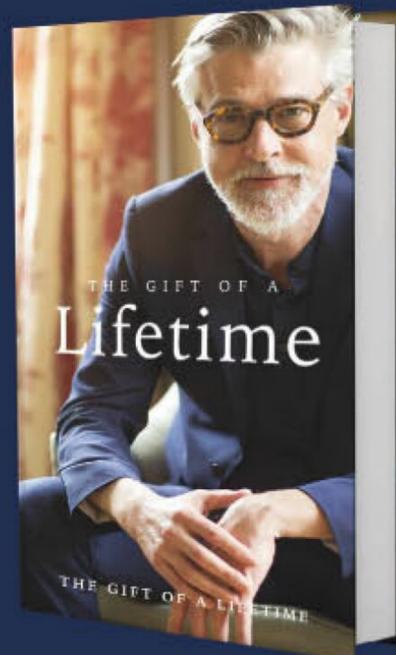
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