

**CONTROVERSY**

**WAS HARRIS DOOMED TO LOSE?**

p.6



**MAIN STORIES**

**The GOP's Senate takeover**

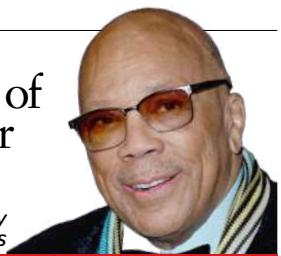
p.5 *Bernie Moreno*



**OBITUARIES**

**A titan of popular music**

p.35 *Quincy Jones*



# THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## America's choice

Why a divided nation swung for Trump—again

p.4



NOVEMBER 15, 2024 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1209

# 1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

Never ones to miss an opportunity, we carefully steadied our glasses of bubbly and climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

With its remarkable retrograde hour and minute indicators, sunburst guilloche face and precision movement, this design is truly one of a kind. What does retrograde mean? Instead of displaying the hands rotating on an axis like most watches, the hands sweep in a semicircle, then return to their starting point and begin all over again.

Retrograde watches by the big brands can set you back thousands; one recent offering from a big French fashion house is selling for more than \$150,000! But because we've designed the 1920s Retrograde Watch in-house, we can offer it to you for just \$99!

This watch is so wildly popular with our customers that we're actually concerned about running out; we only have 937 729 left for this ad!

JOIN MORE THAN 1 MILLION SMART  
PEOPLE WHO LOVE STAUER WATCHES

#### Watch Specifications:

- Precision movement
- Stainless steel case, caseback and crown
- Retrograde hour and minute indicators
- Water-resistant to 5 ATM
- Brown genuine leather band
- Fits wrists up to 8"

#### 1920s Retrograde Watch

~~\$399~~ \$99\* + S&P **Save \$300**

*\*Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

**1-800-333-2045**

Your Insider Offer Code: RGW305-01



Stauer  
Impossible Price  
ONLY  
**\$99**

*"An elegant and exciting timepiece that every collector will love."*

— George Thomas, internationally  
renowned watch expert

*"[A] unique and  
beautiful timepiece."*

— Carlos C., Los Banos, CA

Stauer, 14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. RGW305-01, Burnsville, MN 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

**Stauer** | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®

## Editor's letter

Donald Trump won the White House with perhaps the most unlikely coalition of supporters ever assembled in American politics. There was the usual male MAGA crowd, who lapped up his macho talk of taking back America from the feminized Left. But exit polls show he also won a higher share of women this year than in 2020 and lost voters who support abortion rights by a mere 4 percentage points—even though he nominated the three Supreme Court justices who were crucial to toppling *Roe v. Wade*. He won with white people who approve of his plan to deport millions of immigrants, but also did 16 points better with Latino voters this time around. He won with oil and gas workers who want to “drill, baby, drill,” and also with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. supporters who want to ban hydrocarbon-derived fertilizers and plastics. And he boosted his vote share in both deep-red rural counties and deep-blue cities such as New York and Chicago—though he once likened the latter to war-torn Afghanistan—partly by nudging up his numbers with Black men. Trump's diverse

coalition, in other words, looks a lot like America.

The question now is whether he can keep this unusual alliance together. Will he shed support among Latinos if, as promised, he sends the National Guard into communities to round up undocumented migrants and tear apart families in mass deportation raids? Will Trump lose women voters if, as his backers on the Christian right have requested, his administration curtails access to abortion pills or dials back reproductive rights? Can he balance the demands of a conspiracy theorist like RFK Jr.—whom Trump has promised to let “go wild on health”—with the interests of food and pharmaceutical companies, as well as those of countless Republican and Democratic parents who want their kids to be vaccinated against polio and other deadly diseases? Can he keep Tesla CEO Elon Musk on side while also slapping 60 percent tariffs on products from China, Tesla's biggest market outside the U.S.? I don't know the answer to any of these questions and neither, I suspect, does Trump.

**Theunis Bates**  
Editor-in-chief

## NEWS

### 4 Main stories

Trump's decisive victory over Harris; the GOP flips the Senate

### 6 Controversy of the week

How Harris lost, and what that means for Dems

### 7 The U.S. at a glance

Russia threatens polls; Ohio ex-cop convicted of murder; plotting a race war in Nashville

### 8 The world at a glance

A border shoot-out in Mexico; Canada's big drug bust; Iran detains a U.S. citizen

### 10 People

Stevie Nicks on growing 'hatefully' old; Randy Newman on breaking his neck—twice

### 11 Briefing

Only a tiny fraction of the plastic we throw out gets recycled. Why?

### 12 Best U.S. columns

A case for Bezos to donate the *Post*; the silver lining of charter-school closures

### 14 Talking points

Grim outlook for Ukraine; bird flu's new vector; the future of abortion rights

### 17 Best international columns

Israel bans the U.N.'s Palestinian refugee agency; are Canada's lawmakers shortchanging themselves?



Defeat sinks in for a supporter of Harris at Howard University. (p.4)

## ARTS

### 22 Books

Alexei Navalny's final rebuke to Putin

### 23 Author of the week

Sharon McMahon's civics lesson for the nation

### 24 Art & Music

Artist Sophie Calle, the 'original oversharer'

### 25 Film & Games

*Blitz*: WWII from a child's POV



Stevie Nicks (p.10)

## LEISURE

### 27 Food & Drink

Standout Middle Eastern eateries; the best bubbly for the holiday season

### 28 Consumer

Best buys for holiday hosting; *Dark Knight* Batmobile replicas go on sale

## BUSINESS

### 32 News at a glance

Nvidia joins the Dow; Boeing strike ends

### 33 Making money

Goldman's alarming forecast; Carvana's unexpected turnaround

### 34 Best columns

Silicon Valley's AI spending spree; crediting China's EV prowess

## THE WEEK

**Editor-in-chief:** Theunis Bates  
**Editor-at-large:** William Falk

**Executive editor:** Susan Caskie  
**Managing editor:** Mark Gimein  
**Assistant managing editor:** Jay Wilkins  
**Deputy editor/Arts:** Chris Mitchell  
**Deputy editor/News:** Chris Erikson  
**Senior editors:** Isaac Guzman, Harold Maass, Rebecca Nathanson, Zach Schonbrun, Hallie Stiller  
**Associate editor:** Emily Russell  
**Art director:** Paul Crawford  
**Deputy art director:** Rosanna Bulian  
**Photo editor:** Mark Rykoff  
**Copy editor:** Jane A. Halsey  
**Research editors:** Allan Kew, Alex Maroño Porto,  
**Contributing editors:** Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

**SVP subscriptions media & events:**  
Sarah Rees

**VP advertising:** Stevie Lee  
(stevie.lee@futurenet.com)  
**Account director:** Mary Gallagher  
(mary.gallagher@futurenet.com)  
**Media planning manager:** Andrea Crino  
**Direct response advertising:**  
Anthony Smyth (anthony@smlythps.com)

**Managing director, news** Richard Campbell  
**Consumer marketing director:**  
Leslie Guarnieri  
**Manufacturing manager,**  
**North America:** Lori Crook  
**Operations manager:**  
Cassandra Mondonedo

FUTURE  
P.L.C.

Visit us at [TheWeek.com](https://www.theweek.com).  
For customer service go to  
[TheWeek.com/service](https://www.theweek.com/service) or  
[theweek@cdsfulfillment.com](mailto:theweek@cdsfulfillment.com)  
Renew a subscription at  
[RenewTheWeek.com](https://www.RenewTheWeek.com) or give  
a gift at [GiveTheWeek.com](https://www.GiveTheWeek.com).

# Trump returns to power with sweeping victory

## What happened

Donald Trump was decisively elected the nation's 47th president this week, reclaiming the White House despite multiple indictments, a criminal conviction, and accusations of authoritarianism. The stunning comeback by the 45th president followed weeks of polls that showed the nation's seven swing states in virtual dead heats, and wide expectation that Vice President Kamala Harris would benefit from a surge of support from women angered at the erosion of abortion rights. But Trump, 78, won in Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, and as *The Week* went to press was leading in Arizona and Nevada, putting a sweep of battlegrounds within reach. Having lost the popular vote in 2016 and 2020, Trump looked likely to win it after besting his 2020 numbers in one state and one demographic after another, including with women, Latino voters, and Black voters. In Florida and Texas, he improved on his 2020 figures by 10 percentage points, in New York by 13 points. "We overcame obstacles that nobody thought possible," Trump said in his victory speech.

Exit polling showed Trump drew voters with his promises to seal the southern border, cut taxes, and boost the economy. On the stump he told repeated falsehoods about violent migrants overrunning communities, blaming President Biden's border policies, and drew cheers by vowing to round up millions of illegal migrants in camps and deport them. In the week leading up to the election, he said he'd let conspiracy theorist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. "go wild on health" in his administration; mimed oral sex with a microphone; called Harris a "low-IQ individual" and "dumb as a rock"; and said he'd like to see "nine barrels shooting" at his critic Liz Cheney, a former Republican congresswoman.

After calling Trump to congratulate him on his win, Harris spoke to a crowd at her alma mater, Howard University. "While I concede this election, I do not concede the fight that fueled this campaign," she said. "The fight for freedom, for opportunity, for fairness, and the dignity of all people." In his victory speech, Trump called himself the leader of "the greatest political movement of all time," adding that he will "govern by a simple motto: Promises made, promises kept."

## What the editorials said

Trump has staged "a political comeback for the ages," said *The Wall Street Journal*. After he incited the U.S. Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021, "he was all but written off." Democrats "helped to revive him" with their politicized prosecutions and partisan Jan. 6 investigation. But what really opened the door was Biden's failure "to deliver the unity and prosperity he promised." He rammed through overambitious spending programs that spiked inflation and let the border devolve into "chaos." Harris tried to pitch herself as a "new way forward," but fed-up voters weren't buying.



Trump and his wife, Melania, on election night

America has made "a perilous choice," said *The New York Times*, setting the nation "on a precarious course that no one can fully foresee." Trump has made crystal clear who he is: an aspiring autocrat with no respect for the law or the "norms and traditions of democracy," who will use the military against political foes he calls "the enemy within." Over the next four years Americans must be "clear-eyed about the threat" he poses and ready "to exercise their rights in defense of the country and the people, laws, institutions, and values that have kept it strong."

## What the columnists said

Trump "shocked the world with a sweeping victory," said Harry Lambert in *The Daily Beast*, and exit polls show how he did it. He made gains with women; Harris won them by only 10 points, 2.5 points less than Biden in 2020. Trump did 16 points better with Hispanics than in 2020, and 33 points better with Hispanic men, while cutting Democrats' edge with Black voters by 9 points. Polled voters spoke of "frustration with their finances" and "persistent gloom about the state of the country," said Stephanie Perry in *NBCNews.com*. They wanted change—and 7 in 10 said it was Trump who could deliver it.

It's easy to see why voters put their faith in this "colossus," said John Podhoretz in the *New York Post*. Trump was impeached twice, indicted 91 times in three criminal courts, convicted of 34 felonies, targeted twice by would-be assassins, and bombarded with "hostile press coverage." But he refused "to be bent or broken." And as the bumbling Biden created both an "economic crisis" and a "border crisis," Trump spoke straight to the American people "about the mess we are in"—and they responded.

When Trump won in 2016, American voters new to his character "had a sliver of plausible deniability," said Christina Cauterucci in *Slate*. This time there are "no excuses." Americans saw the "chaos" of his first administration and saw him incite a violent mob to try to overturn the 2020 election. They heard his crude, racist, and "bizarre" talk on the stump and his vows to weaponize the government against his enemies. And they "enthusiastically" handed the government "to a man they well know is ready to tear it down."

## What next?

"Trump's second term will look nothing like his first," said Kevin Liptak and Kaitlan Collins in *CNN.com*. He'll return to the Oval Office with the GOP under his thumb, the experience of having done the job before, and "a wealth of resentments." He will staff government agencies "with lawyers who will work to find legal rationale for even his most radical ideas," and likely set his Justice Department on political foes. Trump's win "virtually guarantees that he'll never face serious legal accountability" for the criminal charges pending against him, said Kyle Cheney and Erica Orden in *Politico*. It "shatters years of work" by special counsel Jack Smith, who is reportedly in talks with Justice Department officials about closing the cases he's built against Trump for hiding classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and attempting to subvert the 2020 election. Trump, who faced years in prison if convicted, "is now his own judge and jury."

"Trump will now return to the White House older, less inhibited, and far more dangerous than ever before," said Susan B. Glasser in *The New Yorker*. As he pursues an authoritarian agenda, he'll be "unconstrained" by the sober-headed establishment Republicans who served as guardrails in his first term, and will get no opposition from compliant congressional Republicans. "We're not going back!" was the rallying cry at Harris campaign events. But, with Trump triumphant, the question is "not if we are going back, but how far."

## ...and How They Were Covered

# Surging Republicans win control of Senate

### What happened

Republicans took a majority in the Senate this week, giving President-elect Donald Trump free rein to appoint officials and confirm judges and a strong shot at enacting his legislative agenda. The GOP wiped out the Democrats' previous 51-to-49 Senate majority, flipping formerly Democratic seats in West Virginia, Ohio, and Montana while losing none of the seats they were defending. In Ohio, Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown lost to Colombian-born car dealership owner and blockchain entrepreneur Bernie Moreno, in a race that saw a record \$500 million spent on ads. In Texas, Democratic-aligned groups poured some \$100 million into Rep. Colin Allred's failed bid to unseat Republican Sen. Ted Cruz, who won by nearly 9 percentage points. Among Democrats, Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland and Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware both won their races, which means the Senate will have two Black women for the first time. Races in Arizona, Maine, Nevada, and Pennsylvania were too close to call as *The Week* went to press; a sweep in those would give the GOP its biggest majority in nearly a century. Moreno, a MAGA stalwart, sarcastically thanked Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who spent \$2.7 million in PAC money in the Ohio primary to elevate him against a more moderate challenger. "Thanks for the help," he said, "but you're fired, buddy."

Control of the House of Representatives was still up in the air. North Dakota elected its first-ever female representative in Republican Julie Fedorchak—leaving Mississippi as the only state that has yet to send a woman to the House—but dozens of other races remained to be called. Still, Trump praised the GOP takeover of the Senate as "absolutely incredible," saying, "America has given us an unprecedented and powerful mandate."

### What the columnists said

Trump will be "bringing some important friends with him" on his triumphant return to Washington, D.C., said **Dan McLaughlin** in the *New York Post*. Trump's hold on the party hasn't always benefited congressional Republicans, but "this time, he actually had coattails." He stumped passionately for Moreno in increasingly red Ohio to unseat the powerful Brown, a three-term incumbent and chair of the Senate Banking Committee. And he worked closely with Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), the GOP campaign chair, to weed out low-quality candidates. The result is that Republicans



Voting in Catawba, Ohio

"may have locked Democrats out of power for quite some time."

The Senate victory has "big ramifications," said *The Economist*. Trump can appoint his dream Cabinet, perhaps even Judge Aileen Cannon—who dismissed his stolen-documents case—as attorney general, or the vaccine-hostile Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as health czar. He'll likely extend his 2017 tax cuts, slash corporate taxes, and offer new tax breaks for 93 million Americans. Still, the Republicans don't have a filibuster-proof majority of 60, and "some battle lines" are

emerging. Roger Wicker, for example, the Republican who will lead the Senate Armed Services Committee wants to juice defense spending, "a desire that Trump does not necessarily share."

But Republicans no longer need 60 votes to confirm Supreme Court justices, said **Ed Whelan** in *National Review*, so Trump will be able to ensure "a strong conservative majority" that will endure for decades. Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito are now 76 and 74, respectively. "It would be foolish" of both not to retire soon so they can be replaced with younger conservatives.

Before any of that can happen, though, said **Burgess Everett** in *Semafor*, there's the matter of Senate leadership. With Minority Leader Mitch McConnell stepping down from his post, "the drama isn't over." On Nov. 13, Senate Republicans will "plunge into another election." McConnell's deputy, South Dakota Sen. John Thune, will face off against Texas Sen. John Cornyn and a hard-right challenge from Florida Sen. Rick Scott.

In the House, meanwhile, a Republican victory would remove the last big check on the MAGA agenda, said **Li Zhou** in *Vox*. House Speaker Mike Johnson supports "rolling back the Affordable Care Act" and expanding oil and gas drilling. The House could also rubber-stamp Trump's plans for corporate tax cuts and mass deportation. For the foreseeable future, congressional Democrats are playing on "a field tilted decisively toward the GOP," said **David Daley** in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Partisan gerrymandering," most of it done by Republican-controlled statehouses, ensures pre-ordained results for all but a few dozen of the 435 races every two years. It is this undemocratic process that "has wreaked unrepresentative extremes on our politics, and might still tighten its toxic grip for many years to come."

### It wasn't all bad

■ After a burglary conviction in 1996, Jacob Bell spent two decades in prison, but this year he saved two lives in just six weeks. In August, Bell rescued a girl who was drowning in Lake Waxahachie, Texas, and last month, he was driving around Texas when he saw a crashed car engulfed in flames. He broke the car window and rescued the 72-year-old passenger, saving his life with CPR. The rescues, Bell said, helped him regain his confidence. "This has really shown me that it's possible to give back," he said.

■ **Krissy Miller, a 49-year-old Utah mom, first decided she wanted to be a kidney donor in 2022, as she scrolled through a Facebook post about a man who needed a kidney. Miller offered hers, but her blood sugar was too high, and she was told would have to lose at least 10 pounds to qualify. Determined, she began hiking last spring, and in September, she met Shiller Joseph while hiking near Provo, Utah. Joseph, on the trail with his wife, told Miller he had moved from Florida hoping Utah's kidney transplant list would move faster. When Miller learned that his blood type matched hers, she made the decision to give him a kidney in April. Both families have since become close friends; Joseph now calls Miller his sister and angel.**



Joseph and Miller

■ In a history class last year, 13-year-old Albion, N.Y., middle schoolers Kendall Peruzzini and Mary McCormick studied the Civil War and learned about a local Union Army soldier—Daniel Walterhouse, who served honorably, was wounded, and spent the rest of his life living in poverty. At their teacher's suggestion, the kids researched Walterhouse's death, and found the 1910 record confirming that Walterhouse was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave. Now the Department of Veterans Affairs will create a headstone to honor him. "It was like solving a mystery," said Mary.

# Controversy of the Week

## Democrats: Why Harris lost so badly

Now that Donald Trump has trounced Kamala Harris, “the blame game among Democrats will come fast and furious,” said **Andrew Prokop** in *Vox*. But considering the stunning extent of Trump’s victory, you have to wonder, Did Harris ever stand a chance? Since the Covid pandemic ended, incumbent parties in wealthy democracies have taken electoral beatings—largely because of inflation created by the pandemic itself. As the incumbent vice president under the “historically unpopular” Joe Biden, Harris couldn’t avoid blame for the surge in prices and migration that followed the pandemic’s end. Thanks to Biden’s decision to run for re-election until a disastrous debate forced him from the race, Harris was left only 107 days to present herself to voters as a “new face,” assuage their concerns about inflation and immigration, and help voters understand the threat posed by Donald Trump. She faced “an uphill battle all around.” Women always do in this country, said **Jill Filipovic** in *Slate*. Trump ran a campaign of “almost cartoonish misogyny,” but we can’t blame this result entirely on sexism; voter concerns about immigration and inflation are very real. Still, it should not surprise us that Americans have once again rejected a woman candidate and elected a male president, extending “an unbroken masculine chain more than two centuries long.”



*Tethered to Biden, inflation, and immigration*

Harris was only able to run a short campaign, said **George F. Will** in *The Washington Post*, but it proved “too long for her talents.” In speeches Harris “segued from vapidity (‘joy!’) to hysteria (‘fascism!’)” while in interviews she came off as defensive and insecure, and too often found herself lost in “syntactical labyrinths.” Harris’ most disastrous interview may have been her friendliest, said **Joey Garrison** in *USA Today*. Asked by the fawning hosts of

ABC’s *The View* what she would do differently from Biden, Harris replied, “Not a thing that comes to mind.” Why would she say that, given that about 70 percent of the electorate has consistently told pollsters the country is on “the wrong track”? In the end, the “fatal flaw” of Harris’ campaign was to “remain tethered to Biden” in voters’ minds.

Harris and progressives simply did not “understand how toxic Biden had become,” said **Jonathan Chait** in *New York* magazine. Co-cooned in their own media echo chamber,

Democrats insisted voters were wrong to blame Biden for several years of inflation, and for the “massive surge of asylum seekers” crossing the southern border. Yes, Harris tried to move to the center on these issues, but failed to convince voters she’d been transformed from the far-left California liberal who ran in the 2020 presidential primary. Trump’s “most effective ad of the cycle” spotlighted Harris’ previous support for free sex-change surgery for prison inmates, said **Matt Bai** in *The Washington Post*. The Democratic Party’s embrace of the Left’s gender ideology, including trans athletes competing against girls and women, and the use of “they/ them” pronouns, are big turnoffs to working-class voters, including Hispanics. Harris lost largely because Democrats have “dug themselves into a hole on cultural issues and identity politics.”

At least it wasn’t close, said **Freddie deBoer** in his *Substack* newsletter. Had Harris lost narrowly, Democrats would focus on a scapegoat—Joe Biden, Vladimir Putin, Elon Musk, podcast “bros”—and waste four years lamenting what might have been. The upside of a defeat this sweeping is that you “have to actually figure out what’s wrong with your party.”

### Only in America

■ An Ohio police officer has retracted his threat to stop helping citizens who vote Democratic. Sheriff’s lieutenant John Rodgers posted on social media that citizens must henceforth “provide proof of who you voted for,” and warned Democratic voters that “I will not help you survive the end of days.” Rodgers blamed the posts on sleep medication, saying it “does cause some of my communication to be ‘out of character,’ which is a documented side effect.”

■ A New York transgender woman who failed to land a job at Hooters is suing for sex-based discrimination. Brandy Livingston, who recently transitioned, says she was rejected on three occasions by the breast-themed restaurant chain, with a manager at one point explaining that Hooters has an “image that needs to be met.” Hooters denies Livingston’s allegations, saying she made servers uncomfortable by proposing marriage and discussing masturbation.

### Good week for:

**Elon Musk**, whose wealth soared by more than \$15 billion after Donald Trump’s election win sent Tesla stock rocketing. Now worth an estimated \$280 billion, Musk saw a better than 12,000 percent return on the \$119 million he donated to help Trump win the White House.

**Walkin’ here!** after New York City legalized jaywalking. The practice of crossing the street without regard to crosswalks or traffic signals was banned in 1958, and its legalization will free police to “focus on true public safety efforts,” said NYC Council Member Mercedes Narcisse.

**Privacy**, after a Singaporean court granted a “partial domestic exclusion order” to a man whose adult sister, against his will, has been cleaning his bedroom in their shared home for the past eight years. “It was not necessary for the sister to impose her own hygiene standards on her brother,” ruled Judge Tan Zhi Xiang.

### Bad week for:

**The infinite monkey theorem**, after Australian mathematicians calculated that if all 200,000 of the world’s chimpanzees were chained to typewriters, and made immortal, they would fail to produce the Complete Works of Shakespeare or even any “non-trivial written work” before the expected heat death of the universe in  $1.7 \times 10^{106}$  years.

**Sweet dreams**, after former Fox News host Tucker Carlson revealed in a new documentary that he was “physically mauled” by a demon while in bed 18 months ago. The assault left him bleeding from “claw marks” on his sides, he said. “No one has to believe me. But that happened to me.”

**Cheese heads**, after 24 tons of rare cheddar, worth about \$390,000, was stolen from a top London cheese store. Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver asked Brits to stay on the lookout for the loot, saying if they hear “about posh cheese going for cheap, it’s probably some wrong’uns.”

### In other news

#### Thousands hacked by China’s ‘Salt Typhoon’

Hackers linked to the Chinese government targeted dozens of prominent U.S. national security and policy officials’ cellphones and accessed the information of Americans they communicated with in an unprecedented cyberattack, *The Wall Street Journal* reported this week. The scheme, dubbed Salt Typhoon by investigators, proved China can spy on Americans by accessing the cellphone data of anyone who uses AT&T, Verizon, or other compromised telecom carriers. Over the course of at least eight months, hackers obtained call logs, unencrypted text messages, and voice audio from thousands of Americans and U.S. officials, including people affiliated with Kamala Harris’ and Donald Trump’s presidential campaigns. Mark Warner, the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, said the hack—which China denies—is “one of the most serious breaches” he has ever seen.

# The U.S. at a Glance

## Columbus, Ohio

**Reckless killing:** A jury found a former police officer guilty of murder and reckless homicide this week for the 2020 death of Andre Hill, an unarmed Black man. Responding to a call about a suspicious vehicle in a



Coy in court

residential area, Adam Coy, who is white, shot Hill four times as he exited the garage of his friend's home. Coy, 48, testified that in the darkness of the garage, he thought the keys Hill, 47, had in his hand were a silver revolver. "I thought I was going to die," he said. Hill bled out on the floor of the garage for nearly 10 minutes before officers rendered aid. Protests after his death prompted the City Council to pass Andre's Law, mandating officers provide medical attention to a hurt suspect. "Justice spoke," said Shawna Barnett, one of Hill's sisters, of Coy's conviction, for which he will serve at least 15 years in prison.

## San Francisco

**Turning right:** Daniel Lurie, a 47-year-old heir to the Levi Strauss fortune, was strongly leading incumbent London Breed in the race for San Francisco mayor when *The Week* went to press, marking a potential sea change in the politics of the progressive city. Under Breed's leadership, the city has grappled with an economic downturn prompted by the Covid-19



Lurie

pandemic, a soaring budget deficit, and theft, housing, and fentanyl-overdose crises that have turned parts of the city's downtown into a symbol of urban disarray. Lurie promised to streamline and quicken the permit process for housing construction, crack down on drug dealers, and increase police forces downtown to arrest public drug users. With votes still being counted, Breed called it disgusting that Lurie could "buy" the mayoral office. Election night was difficult for progressives in other parts of the state as well: In Los Angeles, progressive prosecutor George Gascón fell to former Republican turned independent Nathan Hochman, and Oakland Mayor Shang Thao appeared set to lose a recall vote.

## Raleigh, N.C.

**Robinson trounced:** Democrat Josh Stein won the North Carolina governor's race this week in a landslide over Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, whose campaign was shaken by a series of posts he made more than a decade ago on a porn site called *Nude Africa*. Robinson plunged in polls after CNN reported he had called himself a "Black Nazi" and Martin Luther King Jr. a "commie bastard." Robinson denied posting the remarks and sued CNN. He also faced criticism for calling abortion "genocide" and telling women to "keep your skirt down." Donald Trump endorsed Robinson, calling him "Martin Luther King on steroids," but distanced himself after the scandal. Stein, the state's attorney general and soon to be its first Jewish governor, won his race by 15 points even as Trump carried the state in the presidential vote. Stein's election ads zeroed in on Robinson's extreme and offensive comments, calling him "absolutely unfit" to lead.

## Dover, Del.

**Trans advance:** Democratic State Sen. Sarah McBride this week became the first openly transgender person to be elected to Congress. McBride, 34, defeated Republican opponent James Whalen III, a former police officer with no political experience, to secure Delaware's House of Representatives seat. "Delaware has sent the message loud and clear," she wrote on X after winning 58 percent of the vote. "This is a democracy that is big enough for all of us." She replaces Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester, who won a U.S. Senate seat. McBride rose to prominence when she spoke at the Democratic National Convention in 2016, five years after coming out as transgender in college. In 2020, she became the first out transgender Delaware state senator. McBride said during her congressional campaign that while she is "personally invested in equality as an LGBTQ person," her priorities also included "paid family and medical leave, housing, health care, reproductive freedom."



McBride

## Atlanta

**Russian mischief:** Polling stations in dozens of precincts in the Democratic-leaning Atlanta metro area were targeted on Election Day with bomb threats that officials believe originated in Russia. "They're up to mischief," Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said of the suspected Russians, who have also been blamed for manufacturing fake election-related videos on social media.

"They don't want us to have a smooth, fair, and accurate election." In Fulton County, police evacuated five polling places and responded to 32 bomb threats that were emailed and called in. Neighboring DeKalb County temporarily halted voting at five polling locations while police swept them for bombs. None were found. Polling places in Maine, Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Ohio faced similar emailed threats, which were all later deemed not credible. Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes laid the threats directly at the feet of Russia's authoritarian president, saying, "Vladimir Putin is being a prick."



Voting in Atlanta

## Nashville

**Race war plot:** A white supremacist was arrested last week for allegedly planning to blow up an electricity substation in an attack that would have left thousands without power. Skyler Philippi, a 24-year-old self-declared adherent of accelerationism—hastening the breakdown of American society to build a new state—was ready to launch what he believed was a drone armed with explosives when law enforcement detained him, according to the U.S. Justice Department. The DOJ said the plan was disrupted by the FBI, whose agents tracked Philippi and posed as his accomplices for months. In September, Philippi, who allegedly wanted to create an all-white state, told one of the agency's confidential sources about his plan. "If you want to do the most damage," he said, you should "attack high economic, high tax, political zones in every major metropolis." He now faces life in prison if found guilty on several federal charges.





Enough to kill everyone

### Falkland, British Columbia

**Fentanyl superlab:** Law enforcement officers last week busted the biggest drug operation ever uncovered in Canada. The “superlab” in remote Falkland, a tiny hamlet in British Columbia, contained chemicals for 96 million lethal doses of fentanyl, enough to “have taken the lives of every Canadian, at least twice over,” said David Teboul of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Along with the 54 kilos of fentanyl and “massive amounts of precursor chemicals,” police said, they also seized 89 guns, 390 kilos of methamphetamine, and smaller amounts of cocaine, ecstasy, and cannabis. The investigators said the lab was using the same drug production methods that Mexican cartels favor. That discovery, they said, is “of particular concern,” because it suggests that either Canadian drug dealers are taking lessons from cartels or Mexican gangs are moving into Canada.

### Tecate, Mexico

**Shoot-out at the border:** Mexican National Guard members killed two Colombian migrants and wounded four others this week during a shoot-out with suspected human traffickers near the U.S. border. Authorities said the three National Guard members had a “head-on” encounter with two vehicles in Tecate, a border city of 108,000 people east of Tijuana, when the smugglers opened fire and the guardsmen shot back. The guards seized one vehicle—the other sped away—and arrested the driver, a Mexican national. The guardsmen were removed from duty pending an investigation. Since last year, Mexico has redoubled its efforts to catch migrants heading northward before they reach the U.S. border. In the first half of the year, it logged more than 700,000 apprehensions—nearly triple the number over the same period in 2023.

### Cochabamba, Bolivia

**Open rebellion:** Supporters of former Bolivian President Evo Morales have seized a military base and taken 200 soldiers hostage, Bolivia’s foreign ministry said last week. The government said three military units at the outpost near Cochabamba in central Bolivia were “assaulted by irregular groups” who “seized weapons and ammunition.” Morales is wanted for questioning on allegations of statutory rape, and his supporters have been protesting in the streets for weeks, setting up roadblocks to keep authorities from hauling him in. A soldier who said he was being held captive on the base sent a message to commanders saying the Morales supporters were demanding that the military stop trying to tear down the roadblocks. Morales, meanwhile, said he was on a hunger strike and would continue it until President Luis Arce agreed to a dialogue.



Morales supporters surround the base.

### Buenos Aires

**Money under the mattress:** Argentina hauled in at least \$18 billion under a tax amnesty program that was to end last week, and it has now extended the deadline. President Javier Milei has urged Argentines to bring in for deposit all the money they are hiding—whether it’s stashed under mattresses, sitting in safe-deposit boxes, or held in foreign accounts—in hopes that the influx will shore up dwindling foreign currency reserves. Argentines have long kept stores of dollars or euros outside the country’s financial system as a hedge against hyperinflation, peso devaluation, and the country’s chronic economic instability. Under the amnesty, they will not be taxed on the first \$100,000 they deposit and will pay just 5 percent on the rest. While the government is calling the amnesty a success, there’s still an estimated \$240 billion out there that has yet to be declared.



### London

**New Tory leader:** The Conservative Party picked Kemi Badenoch as its new leader last week, making the right-wing firebrand the first Black woman to head a major British political party. Badenoch, born in the U.K. but raised in her parents’ native Nigeria until age 16, will be tasked with reinvigorating the party after its crushing rout by Labour in July. That defeat ended 14 years of Conservative rule under five prime ministers and relegated the Tories to the opposition. Badenoch, 44, vowed to steer the party further to the right, saying she would make it more authentically conservative and reject “woke” ideology, but she did not outline specific new policy positions.



Badenoch



### Kano, Nigeria

**Children spared death penalty:** Nigerian President Bola Tinubu ordered the release this week of 29 children who’d been facing the death penalty for allegedly protesting against the country’s cost-of-living crisis. The children, ages 14 to 17, were among 76 people detained during the August protests and charged with crimes including treason and mutiny. When they were brought to court last week after three months in custody, they looked terrified and malnourished, and four of them collapsed. Video of their arraignment sparked outrage among Nigerians, and Tinubu quickly stepped in. The teenagers’ arrest “highlights significant flaws in our criminal justice system, particularly the child justice system,” said Funke Adeoye, founder of the advocacy group Hope Behind Bars Africa, “indicating systemic issues that fail to protect minors’ rights.”



Teens in custody

# The World at a Glance

## Chisinau, Moldova

**Sandu prevails:** Moldova's pro-Western president, Maia Sandu, beat a Kremlin-friendly rival in a runoff election this week, winning a second term despite Russian attempts to tip the result through vote buying and other interference. Sandu took 55 percent, easily besting former prosecutor general Alexandr Stoianoglo, backed by the pro-Russia Party of Socialists, whom she denounced as "Moscow's man." "Dear Moldovans, you have given a lesson in democracy worthy of being written in history books," Sandu said. "You have saved Moldova!" Sandu's victory is a setback for Vladimir Putin's push to regain control over former Soviet republics. Moscow still has troops in Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria, which sought to remain in the Soviet Union when Moldova became independent in 1991.



Sandu

## Moscow

**Celebrating Trump's win:** Russian leaders expressed barely veiled joy over Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election this week. While President Vladimir Putin didn't immediately comment, former President Dmitry Medvedev said Trump could be "useful for us" because he "hates spending money on idiotic allies." Kirill Dmitriev, head of the sovereign wealth fund, said he hoped for a "reset" in U.S. relations, which could well include the lifting of sanctions against Russian oligarchs imposed after the invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, meanwhile, pleaded for continued U.S. support for his country's war effort while flattering Trump, saying that Trump's "commitment to the 'peace through strength' approach" could help "bring just peace in Ukraine closer." European leaders were less optimistic. NATO chief Mark Rutte reminded Trump that "peace through strength" meant "keeping our alliance strong."

## Moscow

**Plot to bomb airplanes:** Russia was behind a foiled plot to plant bombs on cargo planes, European officials said this week. In July, incendiary devices ignited at two DHL warehouses, one in the U.K. and one in Germany. "Had it exploded in the air, it could have resulted in a crash," a German security official said. European investigators traced the fires to packages containing electric massagers implanted with a magnesium-based substance. The two firebombs appeared to be sent as trial runs for an effort to start fires on planes bound for the U.S. and Canada. Poland has arrested four suspects, while Lithuania has detained at least one. Russia has stepped up its "hybrid war" on NATO countries in recent months, with acts of arson and industrial sabotage targeting data cables and even water supplies. Moscow called the allegations "unsubstantiated insinuations."



Hidden in packages

## Tehran

**American hostage:** An Iranian-American citizen has been arrested in Tehran, the State Department confirmed this week, and rights groups say that the dual national is journalist Reza Valizadeh. Valizadeh worked for years for Radio Farda—part of Prague-based, U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty—but left in 2022. He said in February that Iranian authorities had detained his relatives in an attempt to lure him back to Iran, and in his final post on social media in August, he said he had traveled to Tehran. Iran routinely takes Westerners to use as bargaining chips. Valizadeh is the first American known to be detained by Iran since 2023, when five Americans were released in exchange for five Iranians held by the U.S. and \$6 billion in frozen assets held by South Korea.



Valizadeh



Masisi, Boko

## Gaborone, Botswana

**Ruling party concedes:** Botswana's ruling party lost its majority in parliament for the first time in six decades last week, and President Mokgweetsi Masisi conceded peacefully. The opposition coalition, Umbrella for Democratic Change, won in a landslide, and its leader, lawyer Duma Boko, was promptly chosen president by the new parliament. Anger over economic hardship, particularly among young people, helped topple Masisi's Democratic Party, which had been in charge since Botswana gained independence from Britain in 1966. Botswana's economy is based on income from mined diamonds, but pressure from synthetic diamonds has caused the global diamond market to plummet, and unemployment in Botswana is at 28 percent. Boko promised to raise the minimum wage. "Although I wanted to stay on as your president," said Masisi, "I respect the will of the people."

## Tel Aviv

**Netanyahu fires Gallant:** Tens of thousands of protesters poured into the streets of Tel Aviv this week after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, citing a "crisis of trust." Gallant, a former general in Netanyahu's Likud party, was a voice of moderation in a far-right government. He clashed openly with Netanyahu last year over an attempt to politicize the judicial system, and since the war with Gaza began, he has criticized his boss for failing to prioritize a hostage deal. One opposition leader, Yair Lapid, said Netanyahu was sacrificing Israel's security for his own "disgraceful political survival." Another, Avigdor Lieberman, said that if a defense minister could be replaced during wartime, "it is also possible to replace a prime minister who failed in his duties."



Pro-Gallant demo

### What Navalny's widow wants



Yulia Navalnaya could probably have stopped her husband from returning to Russia in 2021, said Decca Aitkenhead in *The Sunday Times* (U.K.). Five months earlier, Alexei Navalny, Vladimir Putin's most vocal critic, had almost died after being poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok. He'd been able to leave his home country for treatment in Germany, but as soon as he was better,

he'd resolved to go back. Both he and his wife knew that this would probably be his last act as a free man, but she didn't try to dissuade him. "His political life was based in internal Russian politics," says Navalnaya, 48. "He couldn't be in exile. Putin and his regime wanted him to be in exile. And that's a terrible tragedy in my life. But I absolutely understood that you need to fight." On landing in Moscow, Navalny was arrested; three years later, he died in a penal colony in Siberia. Navalnaya, who lives in exile with round-the-clock security, has no doubt Putin ordered his killing, yet she insists she doesn't want him dead. "People say to me, 'I hate him, I'll drink to Putin's death.' But I don't feel like this." What she wants is for Putin to be unseated and brought to justice. "I want him to go from being a kind of czar of Russia to an ordinary prisoner in Russia."

### Newman's prescient vision

Our current political moment could be pulled straight from a Randy Newman song, said Bob Mehr in *The New York Times*. Over 11 solo albums, the singer-songwriter and composer has told the story of America through a string of untrustworthy narrators: avowed racists, money-obsessed yuppies, and a limo's worth of hucksters. "I was always interested in aberrant personalities," says Newman, 80. But at a time when his songs feel more relevant than ever, Newman has been largely absent. Sidelined by major health problems, he hasn't released an album since 2017 or a movie score since 2019. "I broke my neck twice, unbelievably enough," he says. "I was chasing after a dog when I stepped in a hole. And broke it again with another fall." He has had to retrain himself to play the piano. "I lost about 80 percent in my right hand, and 40 percent in my left hand. But I've got it all back pretty much now." As he's regained control of his body, Newman has started writing again. "I guess there's always the possibility of making another record. And I really want to get back on the stage. Maybe work on a couple more movies, too. Those are the things I'd like to do before I take up the harp and head upstairs or grab a pitchfork and head down."



### Nicks' determination to keep dancing

Stevie Nicks has lost too many friends in recent years, said Angie Martoccio in *Rolling Stone*. Her Fleetwood Mac bandmate Christine McVie—whom Nicks calls her "musical soulmate"—died in 2022; songwriter J.D. Souther, her ex-boyfriend, died in September. "And then Kris Kristofferson," says Nicks, 76. "[My assistant] came in to tell me something today. And she goes, 'So, Stevie...' Every time she says 'So, Stevie,' I go like, 'Please don't tell me somebody else died. I wish you'd just come in, say my name, and don't say "so," because it's starting to set me up for tragedy, because we're old.'" Nicks says she's not afraid of dying, but is determined to stay healthy "because I'm so busy." On tour, she wears a medical mask when she's not performing. "As a singer with asthma, I f---ing hate the masks, but I wear them. People give you dirty looks. I dare anybody to give me a dirty look. I would just say, 'Hey, I'm Stevie Nicks. And if I get sick, 40 families are out of work. So that's why I have a mask on, asshole.'" If all goes well, she thinks she'll be around for another couple decades. "I'll probably live to be hatefully 95 years old. I have no want to be that old, honestly. I mean, I'll have an electric scooter, and I will be raging, and I will keep dancing."

### In the news

■ **Jason Kelce** last week smashed the phone of a Penn State fan who allegedly hurled a homophobic slur at his brother, Kansas City Chiefs' tight-end **Travis Kelce**, for dating **Taylor Swift**.

Social media footage shows the retired Philadelphia Eagles center walking through a crowd outside Beaver Stadium, ahead of a showdown between Penn State and Ohio State, pausing for fist bumps with fans. A man in a Penn State hoodie then shouts at the seven-time Pro Bowler: "Hey, Kelce! How does it feel your brother is a f--- for dating Taylor Swift?" Kelce, 36, swings around, grabs the fan's phone and spikes it to the ground before picking up the phone and walking away. The man chases after



Kelce, asking for his phone; Kelce responds, "Who's the f--- now?" Kelce later told ESPN that he wasn't "proud" of his reaction, and shouldn't have met "hate with hate."

■ Convicted pedophile **Jeffrey Epstein** called himself **Donald Trump's** "closest friend" and accused the former president of being a "horrible human being" who delighted in cuckolding his friends, according to a 2017 recording released by *The Daily Beast* last week. That 1-hour, 44-minute interview was recorded by journalist Michael Wolff during research for his book on Trump, *Fire and Fury*; Wolff said he recorded 100 hours of interviews with Epstein, who died by suicide in jail in 2019. On tape, the disgraced financier claims Trump first slept with his third wife, Melania, on the "Lolita Express"—Epstein's private jet—and said the real

estate mogul was a serial cheat who loved to "f--- the wives of his best friends." Epstein also claims Trump had scalp reduction surgery for baldness, and was "functionally illiterate." Asked how he knows all this, Epstein replies: "I was Donald's closest friend for 10 years."

■ Supermodel **Gisele Bündchen** surprised her fans—and her ex-husband **Tom Brady**—by announcing last week that she is expecting a baby with her new partner, jiu-jitsu trainer Joaquim Valente. Bündchen, 44, began publicly dating Valente, 35, in June 2023. But rumors of a romance started when the two were photographed together in Costa Rica in late 2022, just weeks after the end of her 13-year marriage to Brady. The NFL Hall of Famer, who has two children with Bündchen, was "stunned" by the pregnancy news, a source told the *New York Post*. But after the initial shock wore off, said the source, Brady, 47, has "grown used to the idea and he's happy for Gisele."

# Briefing

## The problem with plastic

Most plastic waste can't be turned into new products. Is it time to give up on recycling?

### How much plastic do we toss out?

The U.S. generates about 48 million tons of plastic trash every year; globally, the figure is estimated at 400 million tons. And only a tiny share of the plastic bottles, bags, and packaging that we use gets recycled. Worldwide, about 9 percent of that waste is transformed into new items; in the U.S., it's 5 to 6 percent. The rest is dumped in landfills or incinerated, or ends up littering oceans, beaches, and other parts of the landscape, where this hardy material—it takes at least 400 years to decompose—fragments into smaller pieces known as microplastics. Those plastic particulates have been found in Arctic snow, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. The dismal recycling figures aren't due to lack of will or low compliance with recycling mandates, but because recycling plastic is inherently problematic. "Most plastics are not recyclable," said Judith Enck, a former EPA administrator and president of the advocacy group Beyond Plastics. "And you know who has known this for years? The companies that make and sell plastic."



Only 5 to 6 percent of our plastic trash gets recycled.

### Why is it hard to recycle?

Plastic, which is made from fossil fuels, comes in hundreds of varieties. An orange Tide jug and a clear Pepsi bottle contain different polymers, chemical additives, and colorants that can't be recycled together. That makes sorting out the many types of plastic and melting them down expensive and energy intensive. Plastic also degrades each time it is reused, and so sturdy bottles and containers are typically "downcycled" into lower-grade products such as trash bags. Only about 1 percent of the plastics ever produced have been recycled twice. "It is cheaper to just make a new plastic product than to collect it and recycle it or reuse it," said Kristian Syberg, who studies plastic pollution at Roskilde University in Denmark. "That's a systemic problem." Critics of plastic recycling say the roots of that problem go back to the 1950s, when the plastics sector embraced a growth strategy that has helped turn it into a \$700 billion industry.

### What was the new strategy?

Turning plastic into a disposable good. For the first half of the 20th century, the new plastics created by chemists were mostly used to craft durable products: Bakelite replaced wood in radios, for example, and polyethylene Tupperware replaced glass and ceramic containers. But in 1956, *Modern Packaging* editor Lloyd Stouffer told an industry conference that the "future of plastic is in the trash can." For plastic sales to really boom, he argued, the industry should focus on single-use plastic bottles, jugs, tubes, and other packaging. The idea caught on, and by 1963, Stouffer was celebrating that "the happy day has ar-

rived when nobody considers the package too good to throw away." Plastic production exploded, going from 1.7 million tons in 1950 to 110 million in 1989. As plastic swamped landfills and piled up on streets, it fueled a public backlash. Facing threats of state and federal regulation, the industry landed on a solution: Promote recycling.

### How did it push that message?

In 1984, petrochemical companies and bottlers formed the Plastics Recycling Foundation. The trade group rolled out the three-arrows "recyclable" logo, lobbied governments to create curbside recycling programs, and launched

ad campaigns. "A bottle can come back as a bottle, over and over again," read one. But documents and statements by former industry executives reveal this was done with full knowledge of recycling's limitations. Recycling plastic is "costly" and "infeasible," wrote scientists in an industry-commissioned report in 1973. At a 1994 trade meeting, an executive with oil giant Exxon Mobil—the world's largest producer of plastic polymers—said a common form of chemical recycling was a "fundamentally uneconomical process." In September, California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a first of its kind lawsuit against Exxon Mobil, alleging the company waged "a decades-long campaign of deception" on plastic recycling. The company led consumers to believe recycling could solve the plastic-waste crisis, said Bonta, even though it "clearly knew this wasn't possible."

### How has the industry responded?

Exxon says California is simply trying to "blame others" for the state's ineffective recycling system. And the industry as a whole is pushing back on efforts by states and local governments to phase out single-use plastics, saying that a new process known as advanced recycling will be able to handle all plastic waste. In advanced recycling, heat or solvents are used to break down plastic to its basic molecular building blocks, which can then be made into virgin-grade plastic. The industry is "on the cusp of a circularity revolution," said the American Chemistry Council, a lobbying group. But Jennifer Congdon of Beyond Plastics said much of what's produced in advanced recycling isn't new plastic but rather fuel to be burned. "It's like a fancy way to incinerate without saying that you're using an incinerator," she said. Congdon and other critics also point out that the industry has spent millions of dollars on advanced recycling plants that have either closed or are operating at a small fraction of their touted capacity. Meanwhile, global plastic production, which doubled over the past 20 years, is on track to nearly quadruple by 2050. There's only one solution to that looming wave of trash, said Enck: "making less plastic."

### What's in a (recycling) label?

When can a plastic item fairly be called recyclable? That's a matter of debate among plastic executives, environmentalists, and regulators. For decades the familiar three-arrows recycling logo has been stamped on single-use plastic items, with a number from 1 to 7 indicating plastic type. But only those marked 1 and 2 are commonly recycled. And environmental groups say including the logo on unrecyclable products gives consumers false reassurance they won't go to landfills. Starting next year, California will prohibit companies from putting the symbol on products that aren't commonly recycled there; lawmakers in six other states are considering similar laws. Nationally the Federal Trade Commission is preparing to update its Green Guides, which set guidelines for sustainability claims. Calling widespread use of the symbol "deceptive," the EPA has asked the FTC to limit it to products likely to be recycled. But manufacturers argue they should be free to label as recyclable anything capable of being recycled, no matter how low the likelihood. Jan Dell, founder of the nonprofit The Last Beach Cleanup, says barring that practice would send a worthy message. "When they fully admit, Oh, we're selling plastic trash," she said, "that will motivate them to make changes."

# Best Columns: The U.S.

## The price of Garland's dithering

Jeremy Stahl  
*Slate.com*

If Attorney General Merrick Garland had done his job, said Jeremy Stahl, Donald Trump might already be serving a prison sentence. In early 2021, federal prosecutors reportedly began looking into Trump's role in the fake-elector scheme and the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. But Garland decided that the Department of Justice would focus its investigation only on the rioters, because he was worried that prosecuting a former president would have "unpredictable consequences." Garland also delayed bringing criminal charges against Trump for taking boxes of classified documents to Mar-a-Lago. The dithering attorney general finally felt compelled to act only after the House's Jan. 6 committee made public an embarrassing mountain of evidence about Trump's role in possible crimes. By the time special counsel Jack Smith obtained indictments on the documents and Jan. 6 cases more than two years after Trump left office, Trump was running for president again. He and his legal team knew their best strategy was to delay, and rely on friendly federal judges and Supreme Court justices to block any trials until after the election. They were right, and "a dangerous criminal" escaped justice. "The law did not do enough to protect the country."

## Why Bezos should sell the Post

Steven Waldman  
*Columbia Journalism Review*

To ensure its independence, Jeff Bezos should "donate *The Washington Post* to a public charity," said Steven Waldman. Until his recent, last-minute decision to kill the newspaper's endorsement of Kamala Harris, the Amazon mogul was an admirable newspaper owner who "kept his opinions to himself" while letting editors make the journalism decisions. Now, though, he is "simply too financially compromised" to maintain the *Post*'s credibility. Amazon and his spaceflight company, Blue Origin, are deeply dependent on federal regulation and dollars—which makes Bezos vulnerable to political punishment for what his newspaper publishes. When he was president, Donald Trump retaliated against Bezos by ordering the Pentagon to deny Amazon Web Services a \$10 billion contract. To protect his reputation and that of the *Post*, Bezos should now set up a foundation with an independent board to run the paper, and add a \$100 million donation to get the new arrangement rolling. The owners of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Tampa Bay Times* have overseen similar transitions. Bezos would go from embattled corporate censor to an Andrew Carnegie-like national benefactor—and ensure the survival of "one of the most important news outlets in America."

## How charters weed out bad schools

Emma Camp  
*Reason*

Not all charter schools succeed—but "there is an unexpected upside" when they close, said Emma Camp. New research published by the National Center for Charter School Accountability shows that 1 in 4 public charter schools shutter within five years of opening. While these closures can be "destabilizing" to students and their families, it is also a positive sign that market factors are effectively ensuring educational quality. Traditional public schools "can stay open forever" with guaranteed public funding in spite of terrible performance in educating students. But charters face strong parental pressure to succeed, and those that don't perform well are weeded out fairly quickly by enrollment declines. For that, "we should be glad." The closure of mediocre charters frees up families to support better alternatives—including new charter schools and "private school or homeschool voucher programs." As a whole, the country's 7,800 charter schools are a "wildly successful alternative to local public schools," especially in poor neighborhoods where students have been neglected for decades. That success comes from "giving families a choice"—and allowing competition to improve educational quality.

### Viewpoint

"Polarization—the process of deepening partisan and ideological divides—isn't just a phase. It's now our default setting. People have fundamentally different conceptions of what is right, true, and good. Debates become less about tangible policies—the things you can split the difference on—and more about divides that seem to be *existential*. Too many Americans view their fellow citizens as irredeemable, as enemies to be vanquished rather than mere opponents. There's a thrill when the stakes feel so existential. If you believe the opposing party endangers your very way of life, then to be on the right side of history can have an intoxicating effect."

Shadi Hamid in *The Washington Post*

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

■ A Florida surfer was bitten by a shark on the same beach where he'd been bitten by one 11 years earlier. "It's freaky," said Cole Taschman, 28. He needed 93 stitches and two surgeries to repair torn tendons after either a bull or tiger shark bit his feet while he was paddling at Bathtub Beach in Stuart. "Same place, same reef, same everything." This bite was far worse than the last one, when a smaller shark bit his hand, he said. Taschman vows to continue surfing, but not at Bathtub Beach. It's a "very sharky place," he said.

■ A man in upstate New York whose pet squirrel found internet fame lost the animal after state authorities seized and euthanized it.

Mark Longo adopted P'Nut seven years ago after seeing the squirrel's mother hit by a car in New York City. He let P'Nut roam free in his home and posted photos of his antics on an Instagram page with more than 533,000 followers. Authorities said they'd received multiple complaints about P'Nut and euthanized him to test for rabies after he bit one of the state investigators. A grieving Longo described his squirrel as "the most charismatic, sassy animal," with "the attitude of a celebrity."

■ A Florida veteran who lost his Naval Academy ring on a Pennsylvania golf course 54 years ago got it back after a golfer found it. Former Marine fighter pilot David Lorenzo wore the ring through numerous combat missions in Vietnam but lost it while golfing at Uniontown Country Club. A local golfer recently saw it glinting in some clay exposed by rain, tracked Lorenzo through the engraved name, and traveled to Florida to return it. "It survived combat," said Lorenzo, "but it couldn't survive my golf game."





# On The Trail of LEWIS & CLARK

## COLUMBIA AND SNAKE RIVERS

Follow Lewis and Clark's epic 19th-century expedition along the Columbia and Snake Rivers aboard the newest riverboats in the region. Enjoy unique shore excursions, scenic landscapes, and talented onboard experts who bring history to life.

*Small Ship Cruising Done Perfectly®*



Call

**800-460-4591**

to request a

★ **FREE** ★

Cruise Guide

## Noted

■ Residents of several U.S. states are being killed by guns at higher rates than in countries beset by conflict. The rate of gun deaths in Mississippi (28.5 per 100,000 people) in 2021 was nearly double that of gang-violence wracked Haiti. And Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and New Mexico all have higher gun mortality rates than Mexico, where drug cartel violence has killed hundreds of thousands of people since 2006.

*The Guardian*

■ A record high of at least 170 Native American, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian candidates appeared on ballots on Election Day. There are currently 347 Native elected officials in the U.S. That number would need to reach 17,000 to achieve representational parity for Native Americans, who make up 3 percent of the U.S. population.

*NPR.org*

■ Boeing overcharged the U.S. Air Force nearly \$1 million for a dozen spare parts on its C-17 cargo planes from 2018 to 2022, according to the Pentagon's inspector general. Among the up-charged items: bathroom soap dispensers sold at an 8,000 percent markup.

*Associated Press*

■ Elon Musk's false or misleading posts about the election, such as the claim that Democrats are "importing" migrants to vote, have generated more than 2 billion views on his X platform, according to the Center for Countering Digital Hate. The non-profit found that Musk's election-related posts, boosting Donald Trump and slamming Kamala Harris, were worth about \$24 million in advertising.

*CNN.com*



## Abortion: Pro-choice victories in seven states

Pro-choice advocates celebrated "a strong win" this week, as seven successful state ballot measures expanded abortion access "for millions of women," said Molly Hennessy-Fiske and Lori Rozsa in *The Washington Post*. In deep-red Missouri, which boasts one of the country's strictest abortion bans, nearly 52 percent of voters supported guaranteeing access until fetal viability, generally considered 24 weeks. More than 60 percent of Arizonans chose to overturn a 15-week limit and replace it with a fetal viability standard. Amendments that enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution also passed in Colorado, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, and New York, all of which already have liberal abortion laws. This string of victories reflects "many Americans' belief that the strict abortion bans" enacted after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* "went too far."

But the pro-choice movement's winning streak also ended this week, said Tessa Stuart in *Rolling Stone*. Amendments to expand abortion rights were defeated in Florida, Nebraska, and South Dakota. In Florida, about 57 percent voted in favor of a fetal viability standard rather than the state's current six-week limit, but under state law, the amendment needed 60 percent to pass. The amendment faced "an unprecedented state-sponsored campaign"



A pro-choice celebration in Missouri

of "dirty tricks" led by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who spent \$20 million in taxpayer funds on deceptive TV ads, and sent "his election goon squad" to amendment supporters' homes to challenge their signatures. He even threatened legal action against TV stations airing pro-amendment ads.

In the same election that produced so many pro-choice victories, Donald Trump won the presidency, said Rachel M. Cohen in *Vox*. He could curtail abortion rights in numerous ways, including directing the Department of Justice to enforce the 1873 Comstock Act to restrict mailing abortion pills, currently used in 63 percent of abortions. Trump's Food and Drug Administration could rescind approval of the abortion pill mifepristone or severely limit its use. And "then there's Project 2025," said Jessica Valenti in her *Substack* newsletter. The road map for Trump's second term would gut federal contraception funding and create new "conscience" exceptions to enable doctors, pharmacists, and employers to refuse to have any involvement in abortion or contraception. Trump will undoubtedly appoint more Christian conservative "zealots" to federal courts. Under Trump, Republicans will try to turn America into "a Christian nationalist country," and the outlook for federal abortion rights is "not good."

## Economy: Sweet numbers and sour vibes

"Donald Trump's decisive election victory was about many things," said David Goldman in *CNN.com*, including a desire for change and a rise in the GOP electorate. But above all, it was about the widespread belief that "the economy stinks." In exit polls, nearly half of voters said they are worse off financially than they were four years ago, and 2 in 3 described the economy as poor—with many blaming President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris for their woes. Yet by most metrics, the "economy is on fire." Gross domestic product grew at a "healthy" 2.8 percent in the most recent quarter, and consumer spending is "surging," up 3.7 percent last quarter. Unemployment, which hit 14.8 percent during the pandemic, now sits at 4.1 percent. And the nation has added a record 368,000 jobs a month on average under Biden. The rosy numbers have outstripped those of every other G-7 economy and made ours "the envy of the world." So "what more could you want, America?"

The "pessimism is something of a puzzle," said Jeanna Smialek in *The New York Times*, but several factors are at work. One is continuing "sticker shock." While inflation has cooled, prices for groceries and other basics are about 20 percent higher than before the pandemic, and some families "are

struggling to adjust." Home prices and mortgage rates have spiked, jacking up rent and putting homeownership out of reach for many. And some sourness "boils down to basic partisanship," in a campaign year when Trump repeatedly told voters Biden and Harris tanked the economy. Many Americans complain their wages haven't kept pace with "dramatic price hikes," said Jon Kamp in *The Wall Street Journal*. Overall, wages have grown faster than inflation, which has slowed to 2.4 percent. But people "tend to peg increases to their job performance," and feel higher prices "have devalued raises they worked hard to get."

Trump's win might not deliver the economy voters want, said Mark Niquette in *Bloomberg*. If enacted, his pledge to slap tariffs of up to 20 percent on all imports—and duties of 60 percent on Chinese products—would push up prices for U.S. consumers, potentially sending inflation back above 3 percent, according to Moody's. And Trump's vow to deport millions of undocumented migrants would wreak havoc on the industries that employ them—especially construction, agriculture, and hospitality—possibly shrinking the economy by 3 percent by 2028. Trump might soften some of these plans. But for now, the "economy is in for a wild ride."

# Talking Points

## Ukraine: A grim reality sets in

Pessimism is growing in Kyiv and Washington, D.C., said Julian E. Barnes in *The New York Times*, as the war in Ukraine enters “a grim phase.” Defying Western military analysts’ predictions, Russian troops are eroding Ukrainian front lines in eastern Ukraine’s Donbas region and making their largest territorial gains since 2022. They’ve wrestled back over a third of the territory



Fleeing Russian bombs in eastern Ukraine

Kyiv’s forces captured in Russia’s Kursk region, and are now buttressed by the arrival of about 8,000 North Korean troops. Russian shelling has intensified by multiple orders of magnitude, hitting Ukraine with 900 bombs and nearly 500 drones last week alone. And despite “staggering losses” of more than 600,000 troops, Russia is still recruiting 25,000 to 30,000 replacements each month, while Ukraine is running out of able-bodied fighters. “Morale is eroding” in exhausted Ukraine, as Russia advances and fears grow that the flow of U.S. military aid might dry up completely.

Ukraine’s Kursk offensive “was supposed to prevent some of this from occurring,” said Daniel R. DePetris in *Newsweek*. Ukrainian leaders hoped capturing territory in Russia would force Moscow to divert troops away from the Donbas. Now, with Ukraine slowly retreating in the East, it has become painfully clear that the “gamble isn’t paying off.”

The North Koreans’ arrival “effectively internationalizes the war,” said *The Observer* (U.K.) in an editorial, further weakening the West’s excuse for the self-defeating limitations it has placed on its struggling ally. If only Washington would greenlight the use of its long-range weapons, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly asked, Kyiv’s forces could strike every camp housing North Korean troops. “Why must Ukraine keep fighting with one hand tied behind its back?”

Unfortunately, “there is no game-changing weapon or lifted restriction” that will enable Ukraine to expel Russian troops from its soil, said Richard Haass in *Foreign Affairs*. Russia’s advantages in manpower and production capabilities are simply too great. Kyiv must prepare for serious peace negotiations, and to relinquish “most or all of the Ukrainian territory” Russia controls—about 20 percent of the country. In return, it should insist on remaining free and democratic, with a security guarantee from the West, ideally via NATO membership. It’s “neither fair nor just” for Ukraine to surrender territory to a ruthless invader. But with a military victory over Russia increasingly unlikely, the goal should be to keep Ukraine “an independent, sovereign, and economically viable country.”

## Bird flu: Will it evolve to target humans?

It’s time to start worrying about bird flu, said Leana S. Wen in *The Washington Post*. Last week, two pigs on a small farm in Oregon tested positive for the disease—an indication that the H5N1 virus has mutated in “significant” ways to infect a mammalian host that’s biologically similar to humans. Simultaneously, a growing number of humans are getting sick with H5N1, mostly through contact with cows and chickens; more than half of the country’s known 41 human cases have been reported in the past two weeks alone. “The trend is ominous,” said E.D. Flam in *Bloomberg*. We’ve seen pig-to-human flu spread before—most recently in the 2009 swine flu pandemic. That virus was mild. But experts say a hybrid virus, produced through gene-mixing of avian flu and the seasonal flu, could infect us more easily and with “greater lethality.” Of the 900 people who’ve contracted bird flu since 2003, 50 percent have died. The virus is testing mutations that could infect more mammalian species. “If it wins, we lose.”

The U.S. should be mounting “an all-hands effort to defeat a wily virus,” said Katherine Eban in *Vanity Fair*, but has “bungled” its response. The Department of Agriculture, which tracks animal outbreaks, does not even have “nationwide sur-

veillance or a clear understanding of the outbreak’s scope.” Tests to detect H5N1 in humans are in development, but they will be available by prescription only for people in close contact with animals—even though two people diagnosed with bird flu last week reported no such contact, confounding the experts. And the federal government has stockpiled fewer than 5 million vaccine doses that match the current H5N1 strain—with no plans in place for how to distribute them if there’s a major outbreak.

“That’s in no small part a result of growing public hostility,” said Maggie Fox in *Scientific American*. Americans developed deep vaccine skepticism during the Covid pandemic, stoked by misinformation peddlers like Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. The government has yet to license an mRNA avian flu vaccine, which could be adapted to match rapidly evolving strains. Our closest option—Moderna’s avian flu mRNA shot—is still in phase 2 trials. With the rate of even routine vaccinations declining, we can hardly expect “a political push” for an effective avian flu vaccine—or for Americans to line up for it if another pandemic starts. “Vaccines cannot help anyone if people don’t get them.”

### Wit & Wisdom

“Truth is the glue that holds government together, not only our government but civilization itself.”  
**President Gerald Ford, quoted in the Detroit Free Press**

“Gardens are not made by singing ‘Oh, how beautiful!’ and sitting in the shade.”  
**Rudyard Kipling, quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press**

“Many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.”

**William James, quoted in the Daily Citizen**

“Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.”  
**Vince Lombardi, quoted in The Knowledge**

“Every kid starts out as a natural-born scientist, and then we beat it out of them. A few trickle through the system with their wonder and enthusiasm for science intact.”  
**Carl Sagan, quoted in The Objective Standard**

“It is possible to read the history of this country as one long struggle to extend the liberties established in our Constitution to everyone in America.”  
**Molly Ivins, quoted in The Canberra Times**

“There is no doubt fiction makes a better job of the truth.”  
**Doris Lessing, quoted in UPI.com**

### Poll Watch

■ **77%** of American adults, including **75%** of men and **80%** of women, say women are as qualified as men to hold the highest offices in government. But **17%**, including **20%** of men and **15%** of women, say women should focus on running their homes and leave running the country up to men.

YouGov

## UNITED KINGDOM

## Our athletes are getting yelled at

Oliver Brown  
*The Telegraph*

Why must British athletes stand meekly on the field to be abused by Kiwis? asked Oliver Brown. In days past, it was a rare occasion when New Zealand soccer or rugby players performed a ceremonial Maori dance, grimacing menacingly and delivering their “blood-curdling war cry.” But now the haka has become a routine part of sporting contests—indeed, of daily life. One might “easily break out” in a mall, or in the aisle “when you order your breakfast tea on Air New Zealand.” Its “primal intensity is diluted by its sheer ubiquity.” Yet on the playing field, any time Kiwis play, opponents are supposed to be “mute and reverential

while 15 man-mountains threaten to tear them to tiny pieces.” This commandment is now enshrined in the rules of World Rugby, under the section on cultural challenges. “Woe betide anybody who rocks the boat.” Ignoring the pregame haka, or even “blowing kisses,” as some British players have taken to doing, can get you accused of “committing a microaggression.” It’s an impossible choice. Do nothing in the face of this “inviolable expression of Maori pride” and give New Zealand a “psychological advantage?” Or “do something, anything, beyond meek acquiescence” and “spark a diplomatic incident?”

## EUROPEAN UNION

## Not yet serious about global leadership

Hubert Wetzel  
*Süddeutsche Zeitung*  
(Germany)

When American presidents take office, their new foreign, defense, and treasury secretaries are sworn in within weeks—regardless of which party controls the Senate, said Hubert Wetzel. America being a global superpower, its leaders know they can’t afford a “paralyzing interregnum” after an election. Why doesn’t the EU, which has superpower pretensions, feel a similar sense of urgency? Ursula von der Leyen was re-elected as head of the European Commission in July, but thanks to our tedious slog of a confirmation process, the 26 commissioners she chose for her second term won’t roll up their sleeves and get to work until December “at the earliest.” And that’s assuming no parlia-

mentary faction takes a dislike to one of her picks. “This is not good for Europe.” The global political situation is hardly “rosy” right now, with war in the Middle East, Sudan, and Europe itself, and both China and North Korea rumbling aggressively. The fallout from the bare-knuckles presidential battle in the U.S. will reverberate for months to come. Yet the EU’s top positions continue to be filled by lame-duck placeholders. Had the European Parliament acted with a little more urgency, we would have had new EU leadership in place before the American election. Instead, Europe remains effectively muzzled—just when it should be leading the global defense of democracy.

## Spain: Raging at the government as floodwaters recede

Furious over the government’s feeble response to October’s deadly floods, Spaniards have taken to pelting the royals with mud, said *El Mundo* in an editorial. King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia accompanied Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to Paiporta, a hard-hit town in the Valencia region, to comfort victims this week and were driven out by a muck-hurling mob. “Where have you been?” residents shouted. As the weeping queen wiped mud from her face, one person hit Sánchez with a stick, while another cracked the window of a car in the motorcade with a shovel.



Confronting King Felipe and Queen Letizia

The violence was regrettable, but understandable. It was “the crystallization of the feeling of helplessness that the victims have had since the first minute of the catastrophe.” A storm supercharged by climate change dumped a year’s worth of rain in just eight hours, triggering apocalyptic floods that roared through Valencia’s towns. More than 200 people are dead, possibly hundreds more. But the government took “almost a week” before sending the military to help find survivors or bodies, and it has yet to declare a national emergency to federalize the response. The ineptitude is apparent at every stage—prevention, coordination during the storm, and now recovery—and it is simply inexcusable.

Residents are calling Valencia’s governor, Carlos Mazón Guixot, a “murderer,” said Màrius Carol in *La Vanguardia*. Early in the day, state meteorologists had put out a red alert that a sharp temperature drop over the unusually hot Mediterranean would make the rains catastrophic, but his government “waited 10 hours to send a warning by text message.” By the time the

alarm sounded, people were already trapped. It took just minutes for the floods to whoosh down streets, uprooting trees, piling up cars, even tearing chunks from buildings. Desperate people clambered to rooftops, and many didn’t make it. In one garage, rescuers found the bodies of eight people who had run to their car, only to drown as the water rose around them. So many of these deaths could have been prevented, said Neus Tomàs in *El Diàrio*. Some victims were in “housing developments that never should have been built” in floodplains.

Climate deniers said shoring up our cities against weather disasters was a waste of money, and now people have paid with their lives.

“The scale of this disaster has exposed a huge hole” in the state’s ability to keep the people safe, said Ignacio Camacho in *ABC*. When citizens were pleading for help—literally calling into radio stations begging for rescue—our government was “inefficient, useless, paralyzed, lost in its own bureaucratic labyrinth.” This is “not the time to demand accountability,” said *El País*. Let the bodies be found first; let the injured be treated. Soon, though, we will have to explain how a storm we saw coming could have caused “such chilling consequences,” and in a region with a well-known history of major floods. This fresh horror “has been a painful reminder that Spain is on the front lines of the climate crisis.” While we redouble our efforts to cut emissions and prevent more global warming, we must also “be prepared for consequences that are already irreversible.” Another 1,000-year storm could come next year.

# Best Columns: International

## Israel: Will banning UNRWA help or hurt?

Israel is getting a lot of flak for banning the U.N. refugee agency for Palestinians, said **Ben-Dror Yemini** in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, but it should have happened decades ago. At a minimum, UNRWA “has spectacularly failed at preventing terrorism,” and at worst it has “actively participated in it.” Established in 1949 to resettle Palestinians displaced by the First Arab-Israeli War, the agency never did its job. A similar United Nations agency set up around the same time to resettle Koreans uprooted in the Korean War spent some \$200 million and wrapped up its mission by 1958. UNRWA, by contrast, has received billions over the decades yet achieved “no rehabilitation” for the Palestinians and “no exit from the refugee camps.” Instead, it perpetuated the Palestinians’ refugee status generation after generation, running schools that became “breeding grounds for indoctrinating hatred against Israel.” It nurtured “illusions about the ‘right of return’”—a right no other displaced group has ever enjoyed. And it became deeply infiltrated by Hamas: Several UNRWA workers even took part in the Oct. 7, 2023, massacre that launched the Gaza war. Finally last month, Israeli lawmakers took a first step toward dismantling “this terror-supporting agency” by barring it from working in areas controlled by Israel.

This isn’t about fighting terrorism, said Palestinian journalist **Shahd Safi** in *Middle East Eye* (U.K.). It’s about “erasing decades of Palestinian resilience, survival, and identity.” UNRWA is the key provider of medical care, housing, and education to millions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. It’s what nurtured me as I grew up in Gaza,



UNRWA building demolished in the West Bank

taught by dedicated UNRWA teachers and vaccinated by caring UNRWA doctors. Banning it will make the “dire situation” in Gaza—where Israel has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and bombed the region to ruins—even more catastrophic. It is the next step in Israel’s “methodical destruction” of the territory, said **Samah Khalifa** in *Al Quds* (West Bank). The Israeli right despises UNRWA because its existence legitimizes the Palestinian cause. The agency reminds the world that 700,000 Palestinians were driven out in 1948 during the

Nakba—Arabic for “catastrophe”—the ethnic cleansing of our homeland. Israel’s goal is “eliminating the idea of refugees completely” and denying the core truth that Israel stole our land.

The ban might backfire on Israel, said *Haaretz* in an editorial. The U.N. found evidence against just 12 of UNRWA’s 13,000 employees in Gaza—hardly proof that the whole agency is a tool of Hamas. Now it has angered Europe, which is considering sanctions, and it has saddled itself with a logistical and moral nightmare. UNRWA “workers are almost the only ones standing between Gaza’s 2 million residents and mass acute hunger.” The United Nations was already apoplectic over Israel’s destruction of U.N. buildings in Gaza, said **Itamar Eichner** in *Yedioth Ahronoth*. While the “doomsday scenario” of suspension from the General Assembly is unlikely—the only country ever suspended was apartheid South Africa—U.N. relations will be even tougher than usual. Still, Israel succeeded in one thing: “It put a terrible stain on UNRWA, and now many countries understand” the vital need for an “alternative to the agency.”

### CANADA

## Lawmakers stint on their own pay

**Edward Keenan**  
*Toronto Star*

Canada’s lawmakers can’t be trusted to decide the size of their own paychecks, said Edward Keenan. But the danger isn’t that “they’ll line their own pockets.” It’s that “they usually *underpay* themselves.” Toronto city councillors, for example, earn far less than their counterparts in comparable U.S. cities. The last time they gave themselves anything over an inflationary adjustment was nearly two decades ago, in 2006, and their own internal reports concede they are now “drastically underpaid” at \$92,000 a year. At the provincial level, it’s even worse—Ontario lawmakers make just \$83,400. Such salaries are above the median, but they’re a

fraction of what these people could make for similar duties in the private sector. It’s easy to see how we got here: Elected officials don’t want to hand their challengers the opportunity to say they’re just “in it to make themselves rich”—witness Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who loves to blast his “stop the gravy train” foghorn. Yet we need to attract the best, and right now we’re getting only the rich and those who can’t “get an executive job anywhere else.” Canada’s governments are missing the voices of people who would run if only the job paid halfway decently. “Maybe some of those are ones we’d benefit from hearing.”

### MOROCCO

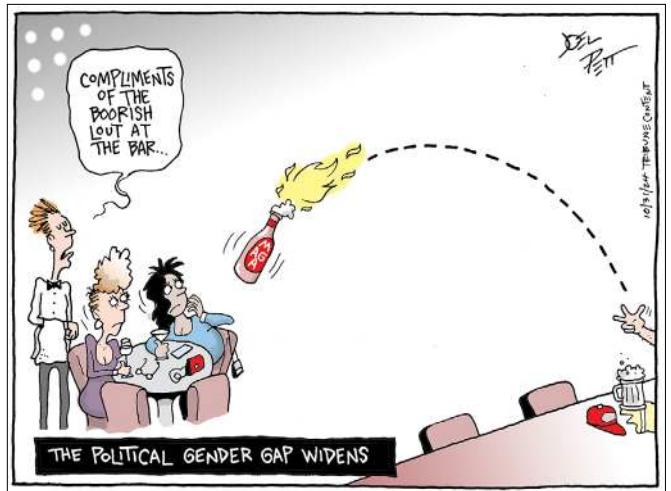
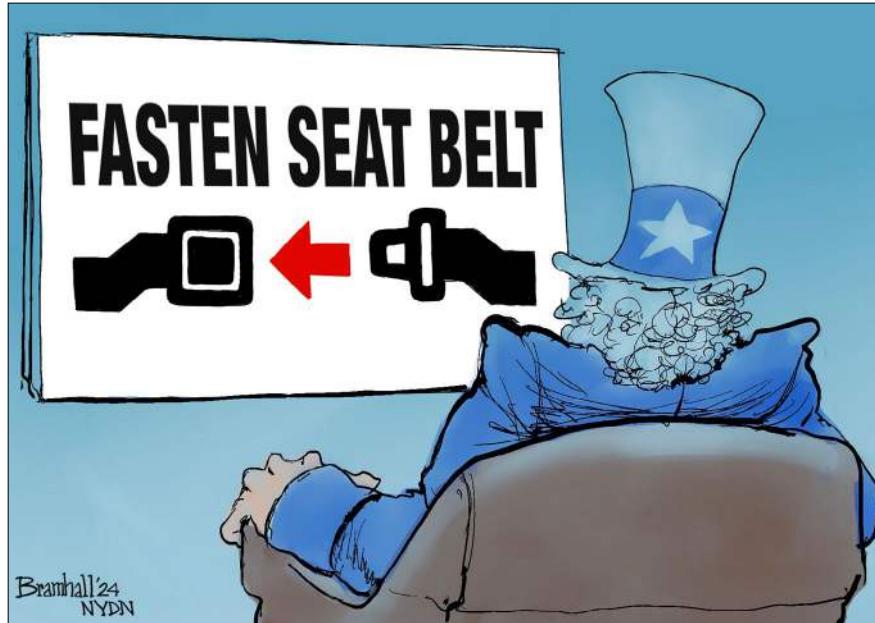
## Don’t leave us at the mercy of the greedy

**Soufiane Chahid**  
*L’Opinion*

The government has tried everything in its bag of tricks to help struggling families put food on the table, said Soufiane Chahid. Ahead of the Eid Al-Adha holiday in June, which involves the ritual sacrifice of sheep to mark Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac, authorities imported an extra 600,000 head of sheep. “But boosting supply had only a marginal impact on prices at the markets.” The government tried something similar last month, lifting import taxes on 120,000 cows, 100,000 sheep, and 20,000 tons of red meat. Yet again, the influx of supply failed to bring down prices significantly. “Whose fault is it?” Blame “greedflation.” Greedflation occurs when a “dys-

functional market” lets “certain economic players” use inflation as a pretext to jack up prices by more than their costs have risen. These price gougers are “taking Moroccan consumers hostage” so they can pocket fat profits they didn’t earn. The only way to stop them is to go into the markets, to “investigate and sanction these predators” at the source. Unless the cheaters are punished, “any government measures to control prices will be in vain.” And that could have dire consequences for Moroccan society. We already saw protests over high prices during the summer, in Rabat, Casablanca, and beyond. The drivers of greedflation aren’t just exploiting consumers, they’re also “endangering social peace.”

# Pick of the Week's Cartoons





ONLY  
**\$39**  
plus FREE  
earrings!

Praise for DiamondAura®



“So much sparkle and the play of light on DiamondAura® beats any diamond!”  
— D.D. from Columbus, OH

## How to Win at Love

**A classic tennis bracelet serves up over 10 carats of sparkle for a guaranteed win**

It was the jewelry piece that made the world stop and take notice. In the middle of a long volley during the big American tennis tournament, the chic blonde athlete had to stop play because her delicate diamond bracelet had broken and she had to find it. The tennis star recovered her beloved bracelet, but the world would never be the same.

From that moment on, the tennis bracelet has been on the lips and on the wrists of women in the know. Once called eternity bracelets, these bands of diamonds were known from then on as tennis bracelets, and remain *the* hot ticket item with jewelers.

with D Flawless diamonds from another company that costs \$57,000!

Want to look like a million bucks without stressing over losing or damaging something that cost you a fortune? The Love Wins Tennis Bracelet is a simple strand of glittering gems in precious sterling that epitomizes elegance.

**FREE**

earrings with your purchase of the Love Wins Bracelet.



JOIN MORE THAN 1 MILLION  
THRILLED DIAMONDAURA® CUSTOMERS

We've captured this timeless classic with over 10 total carats of DiamondAura®, our signature diamond alternative stone. This sparkling marvel rivals even the finest diamonds (D Flawless) with its transparent color and clarity, and both are so hard they can cut glass. Don't believe me? The book *"Jewelry and Gems – The Buying Guide,"* praised the technique used in our diamond alternative DiamondAura®: "The best diamond simulation to date, and even some jewelers have mistaken these stones for mined diamonds," it raved. For comparison, we found a similarly designed 10 carat tennis bracelet



The first time we offered this bracelet, we sold out literally in minutes. It was our fastest selling product of 2021. It took six months to get it back in stock — Get yours before we run out! And there's more... we will also include our Ultimate Diamond Alternative™ DiamondAura® stud earrings for FREE!

### Jewelry Specifications:

- 10 ¾ ctw of the Ultimate Diamond Alternative®, DiamondAura®
- Rhodium-finished .925 sterling silver settings
- Bracelet: Fits wrists to 7 ½". Earrings: 1 ctw with post backs

Love Wins Tennis Bracelet (10 ¾ ctw) ~~\$399~~ \$39\* + S&P  
FREE stud earrings (1 ctw) with your purchase of the Love Wins Bracelet — a \$99 value!

*\*Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

**1-800-333-2045**  
Your Offer Code: LWB307-02

Stauer, 14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. LWB307-02, Burnsville, MN 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

**Stauer® | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®**

## Entertainment: The last days of cable

One of the biggest cable-television providers sees no future for its own cable networks, said **Janya Sundar** in *Fast Company*. Comcast, the cable giant that owns NBCUniversal, told investors last week that it will begin “exploring the potential of spinning off its cable networks” to be able to focus on its struggling streaming channel, Peacock. The idea puts the future of popular network channels like Bravo, USA, MSNBC and CNBC—as well as the cable TV business as a whole—in some doubt. “The NBC broadcast network and streaming service Peacock would remain with the core company,” but even Peacock is “nowhere near profitable” and is seeking partnerships “to help boost the business.” Meanwhile, 365,000 of Comcast’s roughly 13 million cable TV customers dropped their service in the last quarter.

This is a potentially seismic development for whatever cable fans are left, said **Alex Sherman** in *CNBC.com*. If Comcast moves forward with this, “it could lay the groundwork for a reconfiguration of the entire American media landscape.” The decision would likely trigger a domino effect as other media companies like Warner Bros. Discovery and Paramount also rush to offload their legacy cable networks to buoy their investors. A “land of misfit networks” isn’t a bad idea, said **Alex Weprin** in *The Hollywood Reporter*. A cable-focused company



In a world of streaming, cable channels are losing value.

could place them at the “center of attention” and would have “more freedom and flexibility to make strategic moves” without worrying about feeding the streaming beast. Warner Bros. Discovery has a strong cable portfolio with TBS, CNN, and Food Network, while Paramount has brands like MTV and Comedy Central. Independent companies like AMC Networks and Hallmark Channel “may find joining with a larger firm benefits them.”

People may not want cable, but they still want the cable buffet model, said **Sam Barsanti** in *The Hustle*. In 2022, Nielsen reported that 64 percent of streaming subscribers “wished they could just pay one bill to get everything”—which is exactly “how cable worked before it faded into cord-cutting obscurity.” Netflix is “the purest expression of the streaming model,” and its sheer enormousness has made for a bewildering and disorienting consumer experience, said **Willy Staley** in *The New York Times Magazine*. Its library currently contains “more than 16,000 titles of content.” To consume it all would take “three and a half years of nonstop viewing,” or 29 years if you watched Netflix for three hours a day. “What we’re paying for, in the end, is not any one show, or any three or 10 or 50 shows, but rather this fathomless sense of abundance.” What happens when we get bored with *that*, too?

### Innovation of the week

Apple’s smallest computer ever might be its most powerful, said **Lance Ulanoff** in *TechRadar*. The palm-size Mac Mini—with Apple’s latest M4 chip—is just slightly larger than the Apple TV box. But don’t let its diminutive size deceive you. It boasts “Apple’s newest and fastest silicon,” and the more expensive M4 Pro “brings with it an up-to-14-core CPU and up-to-20-core GPU” as well as a 16-core “neural engine” for handling Apple’s on-device AI features. “One of the big changes” is a 75 percent improvement in memory bandwidth from the last Mac Mini. “The new Pro-level silicon also introduces Thunderbolt 5 support, which means those ports will offer transfer speeds of up to 120 Gbps, a tantalizing prospect for those who work in pro-level video editing.”



September 15, 2024

### Bytes: What’s new in tech

#### ■ ChatGPT search, a work in progress

ChatGPT isn’t ready to replace Google yet, said **Maxwell Zeff** in *TechCrunch*. Last week, OpenAI released a search engine within its popular chatbot, letting users query for real-time information like sports scores and stock prices. “It presents concise answers in a nice format,” with links to sources on the right side of the page, and sometimes let me avoid Google’s overflow of ads and clickbait. But the site failed my tests “for what people use Google for the most: short, navigational queries.” For instance, when I typed in “Nuggets score,” ChatGPT told me the NBA’s Denver Nuggets “were winning, even though they were actually losing.” I tried “earnings today” to see which companies were reporting quarterly results, and ChatGPT gave me inaccurate information about both Apple and Amazon. “For the first time in years, I actually longed for Google.”

#### ■ Bees ruin Meta’s nuclear buzz

Meta’s plan to build a nuclear-powered AI data center was scuttled by a rare bee species, said **Hannah Murphy** and **Cristina Criddle** in the *Financial Times*. Meta intended “to strike a deal with an existing nuclear power plant operator to provide emissions-free electricity” for a new data center, joining other tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon, and Google that have locked in nuclear

energy arrangements to meet the growing demands of their artificial intelligence ambitions. Meta’s arrangement, however, faced multiple environmental and regulatory challenges. CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** said during an all-hands meeting last week that the deal ultimately fell apart because a rare species of bee was found on land next to the nuclear plant where the data center was to be built.

#### ■ Futuristic air taxi maker Lilium fails

The collapse of a pioneering German air-taxi company casts doubts about a Jetsons-style future anytime soon, said **Jon Sindreu** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Lilium said it will apply for “the rough equivalent of the U.S.’s Chapter 11 bankruptcy” as it burns through cash trying to bring its electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles to market. Lilium pitched itself as “a much-needed step toward decarbonizing aviation,” with a helicopter-size vehicle that could transport six passengers “more than 150 miles.” However, its complex design—featuring 30 small fans and large wings—“prolonged development, in part because more advanced batteries had to be created.” Other air-taxi startups like Joby Aviation are still raising funding, but the promise of “air taxis that would rival Uber cars” seems a long way off.

## The mass extinction of Earth's trees

More than a third of the world's tree species are at risk of going extinct, according to a comprehensive new report. The assessment, known as the Red List, covered 80 percent of all known species and was carried out by more than a thousand experts for the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the world's leading scientific authority on the issue. It found that 38 percent of species are under threat, with island varieties—like Madagascar's rosewoods and Borneo's giant dipterocarps—facing the highest risks because they have small, isolated populations. In temperate regions, pests and diseases are a growing problem, while climate change

is an intensifying threat everywhere. But the main underlying stressor, of course, is humans: Worldwide, agriculture and logging are the biggest drivers of species loss, followed by urbanization. At the U.N. climate conference in 2021, more than 140 countries pledged to halt deforestation by the end of this decade, but the rate of tree loss is currently 45 percent above where it needs to be to meet that target. These findings are particularly sobering because trees and forests are crucial for regulating the planet's flows of water, nutrients, and carbon. "Trees directly underpin the survival of so many species," Dave Hole, from Conservation International's Moore Center for Science, tells *CBSNews.com*.

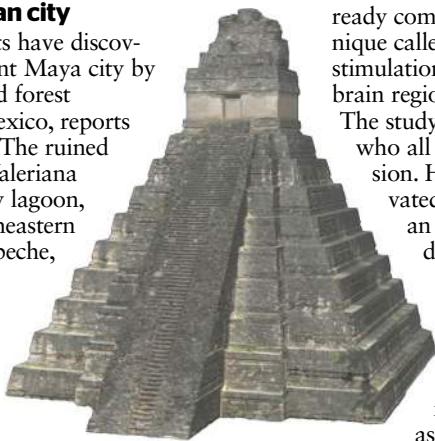


Clear-cutting in Colombia

"Without biodiverse ecosystems that include healthy and diverse tree populations, the world will face an even greater climate threat than the one we are already facing."

### A vast Mayan city

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient Maya city by examining old forest surveys of Mexico, reports *Smithsonian*. The ruined city, named Valeriana after a nearby lagoon, is in the southeastern state of Campeche, an area with several other Maya settlements. It appears to have been one of the most densely populated centers in ancient Latin America, supporting up to 50,000 people. The researchers found evidence of more than 6,500 structures as well as several enclosed plazas, causeways connecting different districts, a ball court where people played games with rubber balls, temple pyramids, amphitheaters, and a freshwater reservoir. Founded before A.D. 150, the settlement likely flourished during the Classic period between roughly 250 and 900. Lead author Luke Auld-Thomas, from Northern Arizona University, discovered the city after coming across a 2013 environmental survey that used Lidar, a remote-sensing technology that can map structures buried beneath vegetation. "The government never knew about it; the scientific community never knew about it," he says. "[It's] right next to the area's only highway, near a town where people have been actively farming among the ruins for years."



Hidden beneath the forest

ready commercially available, uses a technique called transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) to increase activity in brain regions involved in mood regulation. The study involved 174 adults in the U.K. who all had moderate to severe depression. Half of them were given an activated headset, and the other half got an identical-looking but deactivated device that mimicked the slight tingling sensation of the electrical pulses. After a 10-week course of treatment involving up to five 30-minute sessions a week, the patients in the first group were more than twice as likely as those in the second group to report that their symptoms had improved or even disappeared—results similar to successful trials of antidepressants. "Medication can have side effects that some can find disruptive," senior author Cynthia Fu, from the University of East London, tells *The Times* (U.K.). "Our study has demonstrated that tDCS is a potential first-line option that could help those in need."

### Walking pneumonia outbreak

If your child has a cough that lingers for days, it may be "walking pneumonia," *The Washington Post* reports. The CDC has warned that cases of the bacteria-borne illness are surging, with ER visits up sevenfold since April. *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* is transmitted through respiratory droplets and spreads easily in crowded places like schools. While symptoms often start out mild—allowing sufferers to keep walking around rather than staying confined to bed—they can become severe enough to require antibiotics. Doctors emphasize that while we're seeing a spike, the walking pneumonia rate isn't unusually high. Rather, infections dipped during the pandemic, when kids were out of school, and they are now bobbing back up to their normal level. That's why rates of other lung infections, such as whooping cough and RSV, are also on the rise. "A lot of the CDC-recommended respiratory protection precautions for those bugs work for mycoplasma as well," says epidemiologist Chris Edens, including washing hands, avoiding crowds, and covering your mouth when you cough.

### An update to fifth-grade geography

We learned in elementary school that there are seven continents, but that may not be true, reports *The New York Times*. There's a debate raging among geologists over exactly what counts as a continent. It depends on how you weigh factors like elevation and crust thickness. Some argue that Europe and Asia should count as one; others say the same of North and South America. Some go further still. "There are basically only two major continents," says Valentin Rime, a geologist at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. "Antarctica and everything else, since

South America is connected to North America through Panama, North America is connected to Asia through the Bering Strait, and Asia is connected to Europe, Africa, and Australia through the Urals, the Sinai, and Indonesia, respectively." The dispute has gained traction with discoveries like Zealandia, a largely submerged landmass

beneath New Zealand that meets many criteria for a continent except that it's underwater. Iceland presents another puzzle, as it lies above an oceanic ridge but shares crust characteristics with continents. So maybe it's not seven, but eight. Or maybe nine?



Counting continents isn't easy.

### Zap depression away at home

A headset that delivers mild electrical currents to the brain could be an "efficient and safe" treatment for depression at home, a new study suggests. The device, which is al-

# Review of Reviews: Books

## Book of the week

### Patriot: A Memoir

by Alexei Navalny (Knopf, \$35)

“One might expect a work by an anti-corruption activist and political prisoner to read like a righteous diatribe,” said David Kortava in *The New York Times*. But Alexei Navalny was a different kind of Russian opposition leader. His new memoir, published eight months after he died at 47 in an Arctic penal colony, “reveals less about his politics than it does about his fundamental decency, his wry sense of humor, and his (mostly) cheery stoicism under conditions that would flatten a lesser person.” When he started the project, shortly after he narrowly survived assassination by poisoning in 2020, he imagined that the book might read like a thriller dramatizing his attempt to prove the crime was the work of his foe, Vladimir Putin. But then Navalny was imprisoned, owing to his courageous decision to return to Russia. “Wow, what a dramatic turn in my book,” he writes.

At times, the book’s opening section “reads



Navalny in 2020 at a protest march in Moscow

like a beautifully crafted novel,” said Mikhail Zygar in *Vanity Fair*. We see Navalny as a boy spending summers with his grandmother in a Ukrainian village near Chernobyl. As he cracks jokes and shares detailed anecdotes, we see the fading Soviet Union he grew up in and the broken Russia in which he reached adulthood. We hear how he met his wife, Yulia, and how beginning around 2010 he harnessed the power of the inter-

net to establish himself as Putin’s chief adversary. But then he describes his decision to return to Russia after his recovery from the poisoning. “It is his choice, his Golgotha”—a sacrifice he knows will likely cost him his life but that he makes for the sake of a freer future Russia. Once he is imprisoned and begins a hunger strike, his writing changes. He’s focused on food, and on dying. “It’s horrifying, but impossible to stop reading.”

All in all, “*Patriot* is a bittersweet read,” said Carole Cadwalladr in *The Guardian*. Navalny once appeared to be the person mostly likely to turn the page on Putin’s despotic reign, and “here on the page is the voice of the charismatic, funny, adept communicator who for a time conjured a vision of another Russia.” He died because he knew it was insufficient for him to tell other Russians how to fight while he lived in exile. “He had to show them that Putin’s regime was not to be feared—it was to be defied.” At one point, he writes, half-jokingly, “If they finally whack me, this book will be my memorial.” To his credit, “it’s less a memorial than a handbook on how to stand up to a bully, the mission of his life.”

## Novel of the week

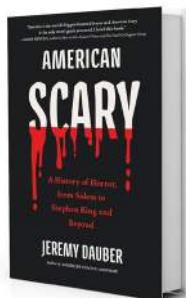
### The Blue Hour

by Paula Hawkins  
(Mariner, \$30)

Paula Hawkins’ latest thriller is “a potent brew of head-spinning deceptions, manipulations, and misdirections,” said Daneet Steffens in *The Boston Globe*. As in her 2015 breakthrough, *The Girl on the Train*, Hawkins threads together multiple perspectives on a mystery. Here, we learn up front that a museum-grade sculpture created by a famously prickly artist may contain a human bone. That artist, Vanessa, is herself deceased. But her “arresting” voice reaches us through diary entries while we watch a longtime companion and an expert in Vanessa’s work spar over the story behind the bone. Each of these characters “harbors past treacheries and alarming secrets.” The main setting proves to be “a character unto itself,” said Rob Merrill in the *Associated Press*. Vanessa spent her final years living and working on an isolated Scottish island—“a fine place to bury secrets,” such as why her longtime husband disappeared 20 years earlier. The fun in this slow burn of a novel is learning such secrets, and “there are few authors writing today who drip them out, page by excruciating page, like Hawkins.”

### American Scary: A History of Horror, From Salem to Stephen King and Beyond

by Jeremy Dauber (Algonquin, \$32)



“American history is kind of terrifying,” said Chris Vognar in the *Los Angeles Times*. Genocide, slavery, civil war. “All that bad karma has to go somewhere,” and Jeremy Dauber’s “casually magisterial” new book

is here to persuade us that the place to look is the horror stories we’ve told ourselves over the past four centuries, via fiction, film, comic books, and more. “Horror, more than most genres, captures societal anxieties and converts them into entertainment,” and while other writers have made the case before, “I’m not sure whether anyone has approached the task with Dauber’s combination of thoroughness, lucidity, and wit.” *American Scary* is “a book that could launch a thousand syllabi,” yet Dauber, a Columbia University professor, “never strangles the fun out of fear.”

The book’s scope “makes for a breakneck pace,” said Nathan Wolff in *The Washing-*

*ton Post*. Many of the creators and texts Dauber refers to get only a sentence, and he never makes space for engaging with other critics who’ve written about horror. “But the benefits of speed become clear as Dauber makes explicit numerous connections across centuries,” such as how the 19th-century Black horror writer Charles W. Chesnutt prefigured the way director Jordan Peele combines everyday racism and supernatural horror in movies like *Get Out*. Elsewhere, Dauber proves “particularly effective in his willingness to think about the horror genre in relation to real-life miseries including slavery, the atomic bomb, and the never-ending ‘war on terror.’”

Dauber’s tour is held together by “a simple, convincing throughline,” said Michael Saler in the *Times Literary Supplement* (U.K.). He sees American horror as Janus-faced. “One side turns outwards, trembling at the vast unknown. The other side turns inward, towards community and the self.” Often, in the inward-looking tales, the community “vilifies difference, projecting onto others traits it fears within itself,” imagining women to be witches or dreaming up aliens as stand-ins for other marginalized groups. Horror can express a culture’s hopes as well as its fears, as Dauber demonstrates, and his insights “add heft to material usually dismissed as lightweight.”

# The Book List

## Best books...chosen by Kate Summerscale

Kate Summerscale is the best-selling author of *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher* and several other acclaimed works of British true crime. Her latest work is *The Book of Phobias and Manias*, to be followed in early 2025 by *The Peepshow: The Murders at Rillington Place*.



**Life After Life** by Tony Parker (1990). Parker recorded interviews with 12 British men and women who had been convicted of murder, then transcribed and edited their words to create a series of extraordinary first-person narratives. Along with Truman Capote's (very different) *In Cold Blood*, this book opened my eyes to the possibilities of writing about crime.

**This House of Grief** by Helen Garner (2014). A wonderful account of the trial of an Australian man charged with the 2005 murder of his three young sons. Garner documents every twist in the proceedings—and her own feelings about the case.

**The Journalist and the Murderer** by Janet Malcolm (1989). A brilliant, bracing examination of the relationship between Jeffrey MacDonald, a U.S. Army captain who was eventually convicted of having killed his wife and children in 1970, and his biographer Joe McGinniss, who claimed to believe in MacDonald's innocence but denounced him in print.

**The Adversary** by Emmanuel Carrère (2000). The shocking story of Jean-Claude Romand, an apparently respectable French doctor who murdered his wife, his children, and his parents in 1993. Romand's whole life, it emerged, had been a weird and elaborate hoax.

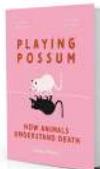
**The Devil You Know** by Gwen Adshead and Eileen Horne (2021). A forensic psychiatrist reflects on some of the criminal offenders she has treated at Broadmoor, the storied psychiatric hospital west of London. Adshead offers fascinating suggestions about the meaning of their violence.

**A Thread of Violence** by Mark O'Connell (2023). This is another book that interrogates the act of writing about crime. O'Connell tracked down and interviewed Irish socialite Malcolm Macarthur, who killed two strangers in Dublin in 1982. To write about Macarthur, he realized, was both to exalt and to exploit him. "Whether I liked it or not," he says, "I was implicated."

## Also of interest...in inner worlds

### Playing Possum

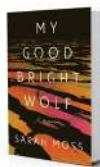
by Susana Monsó (Princeton, \$30)



Though philosopher Susana Monsó aims to understand what animals comprehend about mortality, said Kathryn Schulz in *The New Yorker*, "you should not pick up *Playing Possum* expecting a series of heartwarming tales demonstrating the existence of a love stronger than death between animals." Monsó is less sentimental than previous writers on the subject, often showing why apparent manifestations of grief can be misleading. She prefers focusing on predators, and how their minds must work.

### My Good Bright Wolf

by Sarah Moss (FSG, \$28)



"*My Good Bright Wolf* is not a pleasant read, and it's not meant to be," said Marion Winik in *The Boston Globe*. A memoir about anorexia by the accomplished British author Sarah Moss, "it is an extraordinary record of that particular variety of spiritual, emotional, and physical torment." Starting with her childhood and pulling readers along through a recent near-fatal relapse, Moss shares the discordant voices she hears in her head, making vivid the terrible power of the disorder.

### Rumbles

by Elsa Richardson (Pegasus, \$29)



"If every era has a characteristic condition, ours is indigestion," said Becca Rothfeld in *The Washington Post*. Today's high incidence of gastrointestinal distress makes the timing right for this "engrossing" cultural history of the human gut and the ways we've managed its functions. *Rumbles* tackles human waste disposal across time, suspicions about the gut's link to morality, and much more. "Its discussion of gut disease as an emblem of modernity leaves readers with much to digest."

### I Heard There Was a Secret Chord

by Daniel J. Levitin (Norton, \$32.50)



"Never underestimate music's power to engage us," said Diane Cole in *The Wall Street Journal*. In his new book, the author of *This Is Your Brain on Music* surveys the latest research on music's healing power, blending the science with anecdotes from his own career as a musician and neuroscientist. "Levitin writes most affectingly about the relationship between music therapy and Parkinson's disease," but you won't want to miss his story about helping his friend, Joni Mitchell, recover from a brain aneurysm.

## Author of the week

### Sharon McMahon

In today's darkly divided America, "Sharon McMahon is a small bright spot," said **Belinda Luscombe** in *Time*. Over the past four years, the Minnesota-based former public-school teacher has built a mini media empire based on her ability to convey civics lessons in a nonpartisan manner. It all began when, frustrated by the misinformation she was seeing



on the internet, she posted a short explainer video about the Electoral College in late 2020.

Since then, she has accumulated 1.1 million followers on her SharonSaysSo Instagram account, launched a podcast and newsletter, and written a book, *The Small and the Mighty*, that last month became a No. 1 *New York Times* best-seller. McMahon dubs herself "America's Government Teacher"; her fans refer to themselves as the Governers. Somehow, she spent election season on tour meeting many fans while never revealing how she intended to vote on Nov. 5.

It's not that McMahon is unopinionated, said **Sophia Nguyen** in *The Washington Post*. She has spoken out against racism and corruption. She has promoted gun control and putting democracy's survival above partisanship. Still, she aligns herself with no party. "I think this two-party binary is inherently not useful to the United States, as is evidenced by the current state of affairs, where most Americans feel dissatisfied with the direction that the government is heading," she says. Her book, which spotlights overlooked heroes and heroines from the nation's past, suggests a way forward. "We perhaps fall trapped to this idea that great Americans are people of the past," she says. "Yes, great Americans lived. But great Americans still live. Systemic change will come from individuals who just decide to do stuff."

## Exhibit of the week

**Sophie Calle: Overshare**

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, through Jan. 26

“Sophie Calle is something of a sleuth,” said Alicia Eler in the *Minnesota Star Tribune*. The celebrated 71-year-old French conceptual artist is fascinated with the intimate details of other people’s lives, as she proved with her early work that “touches on topics such as public-private boundaries, voyeurism, and surveillance.” In 1980, she followed a near stranger to Venice and, while disguised in a blond wig, photographed his movements around the city. For a 1981 work, she took a job as a hotel chambermaid and created arms-length portraits of the guests by photographing their belongings. Working primarily in photography, writing, and video, she has since exposed aspects of herself that most people “normally would share only with a trusted friend.” The Walker Art Center, which is currently exhibiting the first career survey of Calle’s work to be shown in America, presents her as the original oversharer—an early herald of our selfie-happy social media world.



Calle’s ‘In Memory of Frank Gehry’s Flowers’ (2014)

“Overshare” is “not to be missed, even by Calle-heads who think they might know her work already through her numerous photo books,” said Emily Watlington in *Art in America*. It shows Calle “evolving from a sociologist-photographer into an artist,” with the turning point arriving in 1981, when she allowed herself to be followed and photographed by a private investigator hired by her mother. By 1992, she and her

then boyfriend used two video cameras to separately record their feelings about each passing day as they took a road trip across the U.S. In the stand-out resulting film, *No Sex Last Night*, “the two are wrecked with anxiety that the other will leave, or that they will mess everything up”—which they do. It’s a piece that prefigures modern reality TV, and it also captures “how the stories we tell ourselves often form ‘reality’ as much as they are formed by it—the crux of Calle’s work.”

Though any Calle project can stand alone, said Tracy Doyle in *Air Mail*, her oeuvre as a whole “forms a semi-autobiographical narrative—simultaneously factual and fictional—that’s meant to be read as one would read the chapters of a novel.” Critics have called her a thief and a stalker,

but whether she is exposing her own real or mundane dramas or leaving a camera trained on her own mother as she lies on her deathbed, she is getting at “larger truths about heartbreak, absence, longing, and fear.” And to whatever degree she has been deceptive with the subjects of her work, “we, as her audience, become complicit when she quenches our desire for other people’s secrets.”

**The Cure**

Songs of a Lost World

★★★★



The Cure’s first studio album in 16 years is “the triumphant power-doom epic it needed to be,” easily the best LP from the post-punk British hitmakers since 1989’s *Disintegration*, said Rob

Sheffield in *Rolling Stone*. Frontman Robert Smith, now 65, “goes deep into loss and grief,” having written the record’s eight grand synth-and string-filled songs after the deaths of his parents and older brother. That makes *Songs of a Lost World* “the sound of Robert Smith raging against the darkness,” and it’s “a full-circle achievement for the goth moppet who was already singing ‘Yesterday I got so old’ when he was halfway through his 20s.” Smith’s voice “still has a teenage hesitation-hiccup dramatic intensity,” said Tom Breihan in *Stereogum*. Bassist Simon Gallup and drummer Jason Cooper still play behind him, and the guitar leads of former Bowie sideman Reeves Gabrels “add psychedelic swoop and grandeur.” As for the lyrics, “some might look histrionic on paper.” But even if we didn’t know their tragic inspiration, Smith is “speaking a language that he’s largely responsible for encoding, and he’s got complete command of that vocabulary.”

**Soccer Mommy**

Evergreen

★★★★



“It would undercut this album, I think, to refer to it as plainly sad,” said Hanif Abdurraqib in *The New Yorker*. Though Sophie Allison, who records as Soccer Mom, created *Evergreen* fol-

lowing an unspecified personal loss, “sadness comes alive and transforms in the course of these songs.” After two albums on which she was layering in additional sounds to “push her compositions into new territory,” this fourth Soccer Mommy release is “something of a return to form” for the artist, who was a Nashville teenager when she was noticed for the sparse, self-recorded guitar-based songs that she released on Bandcamp. “Gone are the synths,” as “flutes and subdued string arrangements now take their place,” said Eric Bennett in *Paste*. On “M,” *Evergreen*’s “spellbinding” second song, Allison conveys the ever-presence of her grief by noting how her dreams and all her favorite songs introduce reminders. “Such heft could make for a defeating listen were it not for the few moments that Allison lets some sunlight pour in,” such as on “Abigail,” a “soaring indie-rock jam” that’s also a tribute to one of Allison’s favorite video-game characters.

**Mount Eerie**

Night Palace

★★★★



Mount Eerie’s sprawling *Night Palace* gives singer-songwriter Phil Elverum the space to explore every facet of his 25 years making music, said Daniel Bromfield in *Pitchfork*. The 26-track

record “embraces some of the biggest vistas and most sumptuous imagery of any album he’s ever made.” It also provides glimpses of all the Elverums that we’ve known—the Zen poet, the stark realist, the black-metal shaman, the kid tinkering with recording gear—since the Washington state native and influential indie rocker released his first album, as the Microphones, in 1999. The “glitchy noise” of Elverum’s sonic palette evokes “storm clouds amassing on the horizon,” mirroring the Pacific Northwest’s weather, said Steve Erickson in *Slant*. Frequently, the buzzing guitars “threaten to swallow up Elverum’s fragile vocals” as he sings of building a fire in a gale, a moment of contemplation amid snowfall, and how his affection for his young daughter is like a patch of salmonberries that grows back year after year. At times intimate and at others assaultive, *Night Palace* “defies easy categorization,” staking out territory “as mysterious and fickle as nature itself.”

# Review of Reviews: Film & Games

## Blitz

Directed by Steve McQueen  
(PG-13)



A boy crosses London amid German bombing.

“Describing *Blitz* as a holiday family watch is not meant to be dismissive,” said Dana Stevens in *Slate*. But that’s about the best that can be said for Steve McQueen’s new World War II movie, “a handsomely mounted re-creation of a tragic time in 20th-century history as seen from a child’s point of view.” The frequently daring British director, whose *12 Years a Slave* won the Best Picture Oscar in 2014, has built his new drama around a 9-year-old named George who’s trying to cross London and reunite with his mother during the German bombardment of the city. But because McQueen prioritizes message over story, George’s ordeal “plays out less like a hero’s journey than a WWII-themed video game.” Unfortunately, “the film will strike many viewers as a bait-and-switch exercise,” said Kyle Smith in *The Wall Street Journal*. Though its surface suggests a



Ronan with her young co-star, Elliott Heffernan

big hug of a war drama showcasing Saoirse Ronan, “most of the first half is about racism,” namely the racism George encounters as the son of a Black immigrant father and a white English mother. In the movie’s second half, McQueen “writes himself into a trap,” allowing himself no options for a satisfying ending. Then again, “the point of a McQueen film is often dancing around the edges of the frame,” said Alissa Wilkinson in *The New York Times*. Here, in a movie that will move from theaters to Apple TV+ on Nov. 22, his young hero is repeatedly dropped into compelling mini tales that abruptly end. That’s frustrating, but it’s McQueen’s way of telling us that the uplifting war stories we tell about ourselves can’t be trusted. “People are prejudiced and cruel,” and “heroes—especially heroes—find themselves, sometimes, just weeping in the ruins.”

## Juror #2

Directed by Clint Eastwood  
(PG-13)



A trial’s outcome rests on a compromised conscience.

Clint Eastwood’s latest movie may sound like a throwback, said Richard Brody in *The New Yorker*. It’s a courtroom drama like many you’ve seen, and yet the 94-year-old actor turned director “infuses it with a bundle of ideas and ideals that turn it both bitterly ironic and ferociously critical.” Nicholas Hoult stars as a young expectant father who lands on the jury for a murder trial only to discover that he knows more about the case than he can comfortably reveal. Meanwhile, the prosecutor pushing for a conviction is running for district attorney, raising the possibility that the story will cast Hoult’s co-star, Toni Collette, as another Eastwood character who distressingly puts the cultivation of public image above truth. As Hoult’s con-



Hoult: A soldier for partial justice

flicted everyman argues against conviction while hiding his secret, said Bilge Ebiri in *NYMag.com*, “the slow agony of guilt chews its way through him.” Because truth fails to prevail, *Juror #2* develops into “the most damning of legal thrillers, one that suggests miscarriages of justice happen not from evil figures pulling strings but from ordinary people making ordinary mistakes because life gets in the way.” Eastwood himself is “guilty of wanting to entertain folks like it’s still 1992”—when we still loved legal dramas, said David Fear in *Rolling Stone*. While his ending doesn’t work at all, “you can’t deny the ambition” or the “steady hand” he brings to the rest of the project. “Artists half his age couldn’t come up with a *cinéma du airport read* this intriguing.”

## Video games

### Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 boosts an iconic franchise

The latest *Call of Duty* release is another “maniacal first-person shootfest that many players will absolutely detest,” said Keith Stuart in *The Guardian*. But Microsoft has a lot riding on it, and it happens to be “the best title in the series for years.” The 21st installment in the world’s second-most-popular video game franchise arrived in late October as the first game available from day one on Microsoft’s Xbox Game Pass, a game subscription service whose membership stalled after pandemic shutdowns lifted. In part to revive Game Pass, Micro-



‘Omnimovement’ in action

soft paid \$69 million last year to acquire Activision Blizzard, the owner of the *Call of Duty* franchise. *Call of Duty: Black Ops 6* wound up with a generous four-year development span, and “boy, does it show.” You play most

of the single-player campaign as a special-ops soldier seeking a mysterious weapon of mass destruction during the 1991 Gulf War, while the multiplayer mode is boosted by a new “omnimovement” feature that allows your character far greater dexterity. “At crunch moments, it feels like a giant John Woo shoot-out—balletic and bloody in equal proportions.”

The solo campaign is “absolutely bonkers,” said Erik Kain in *Forbes*. To find the WMD, you and your team must root out a murderous cabal that has infiltrated

the CIA, a mission that’ll have you infiltrating galas and casinos and battling demons and zombies amid “hallucinatory journeys into the mind.” Still, multiplayer is “the core of *Call of Duty*’s appeal,” and “this is the best multiplayer in *Call of Duty* history.” Its zombie mode features “killer Easter Eggs, lots of truly absurd guns, and the glorious return of round-based gameplay,” said Will Borger in *IGN*. It’s “absurd and campy and amazing and goofy in all the right ways.” Clearing a map of these foes “will have you feeling equal parts exhausted and triumphant.”

## Streaming tips

## Stories about art and creation

## Leonardo da Vinci

Ken Burns boldly goes where he's not gone before, making a documentary about a non-American. His new two-part series on Leonardo, the 15th-century artist and polymath, focuses on the artist's deep inquiry into humans' relationship with the rest of nature. Available Nov. 18, PBS

## Daaaaaali!

Director Quentin Dupieux's delightful comedic drama follows a documentarian who attempts to interview the great artist Salvador Dalí but is thwarted by all manner of surrealist shenanigans. \$4 on demand

## Taking Venice

Robert Rauschenberg was an undisputed art-world heavyweight, but he had a little help at the height of the Cold War. This documentary details the push by a cadre of Americans to ensure he took the grand prize for painting at 1964's Venice Biennale. \$4 on demand

## Rule of Two Walls

Vladimir Putin has denied the existence of Ukrainian culture. The artists of Lviv are living proof that he is lying. In this new documentary, filmmaker David Gutnik focuses on musicians who continued to create and share as bombs dropped on their city. Available to rent Nov. 12

## Ryuichi Sakamoto: Opus

Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto knew he was dying of cancer when this concert movie was filmed by his son in 2022. Sakamoto pours himself into the performance, offering a survey of his long career that becomes a meditation on art and mortality. \$4 on demand

## Carpet Cowboys

Eighty-five percent of all carpet in the U.S. is produced in Dalton, Ga. This offbeat documentary embeds with the artists, scientists, and business folk who power the industry, revealing a deeper story about the hollowing out of the American dream. \$4 on demand

## The Week's guide to what's worth watching

## Bad Sisters

Lord have mercy on Dublin's Garvey sisters. Two years after the death of one sister's awful git of a husband and the insurance fraud investigation that followed, the deceased's widow, Grace, is marrying again and life may be returning to normal. But suspicions remain about that initial death, and as is often the case, one murder begets another. Expect plenty of laughs and intrigue in the long-awaited second season of Sharon Horgan's wonderful, award-winning series. *Wednesday, Nov. 13, Apple TV+*

## Emilia Pérez

Musicals are seldom as daring as this 2024 Cannes award winner from French director Jacques Audiard. Zoe Saldania plays a defense lawyer who's forcibly enlisted by a Mexican cartel leader to engineer an audacious scheme: The drug lord wishes to fake his death, leave a fortune to his wife and children, and transition to a woman. Selena Gomez and Karla Sofia Gascón co-star. *Wednesday, Nov. 13, Netflix*

## Cross

Can Alex Cross follow in the footsteps of Jack Reacher and Harry Bosch? Aldis Hodge stars in the latest show based on a detective from a popular novel series, this one a James Patterson creation. Cross is a Washington, D.C., detective and forensic psychologist who specializes in the psyches of murderers. He'll have his work cut out for him here as he chases a serial killer working on a twisted magnum opus. *Thursday, Nov. 14, Prime*

## The Day of the Jackal

Speaking of literary adaptations: Eddie Redmayne has stepped up to star in a series based on Frederick Forsyth's 1971 thriller about a shape-shifting assassin, code-named Jackal, who stirs turmoil across Europe as he picks off power brokers one by one. *No Time to Die's* Lashana Lynch co-stars as the British intelligence officer who throws herself into the cat-and-mouse chase to take him down. *Thursday, Nov. 14, Peacock*



Horgan (center) with her four 'Bad Sisters'

## Landman

It's Taylor Sheridan's America, we're all just watching it. The *Yellowstone* creator's latest saga is based on the *Boomtown* podcast from *Texas Monthly* magazine and unfolds in West Texas oil country, where roughnecks put their lives on the line extracting oil for billionaires, environment be damned. Billy Bob Thornton leads the cast as Tommy Norris, a fixer and land manager with a foot in both worlds. Jon Hamm and Demi Moore co-star. *Sunday, Nov. 17, Paramount+*

## Other highlights

## The Stanford Prison Experiment

Fifty-three years after a group of college students turned abusive when asked to role-play as prison guards, participants share their memories of the shocking study. *Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 8 p.m., National Geographic*

## Say Nothing

A new drama series based on Patrick Radden Keefe's nonfiction best-seller follows multiple generations of characters tied to the Irish Republican Army amid the Troubles of the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. *Thursday, Nov. 14, Hulu*

## Silo

As Season 2 begins for the post-apocalyptic series set in a vast underground silo, the protagonist, played by Rebecca Ferguson, ventures into the wasteland above. *Friday, Nov. 15, Apple TV+*



Watson and Williams: A threat to the patriarchy

## Show of the week

## Dune: Prophecy

The rich world conjured by Denis Villeneuve's recent *Dune* movies has now yielded a promising spin-off series. Set 10,000 years before the saga of the young hero Paul Atreides, the prequel centers on sisters Valya and Tula Harkonnen, played by Emily Watson and Olivia Williams, who are building a large sisterhood of disciplined women seeking enlightenment and supernatural powers. Of course, the patriarchy isn't pleased, especially when Desmond Hart, a charismatic soldier played by *Vikings'* Travis Fimmel, bends the ear of the emperor, convincing him the Harkonnens pose an imminent threat. *Sunday, Nov. 17, HBO and Max*

## Critics' choice: Flavor journeys through the Middle East

### Sawa Brooklyn

Every meal at Sawa “feels like something of a special occasion,” said Helen Rosner in *The New Yorker*. It begins, always, with housemade pita, each one baked until fat in a round tiled oven near the entrance. “Tear open the pale balloon of bread, and steam puffs out in a white cloud of yeasty exhalation.” You’ll swipe hunks of that pita in whorls of *muhammara* (a walnut and red pepper dip) or in hummus topped with braised beef cheeks that are “as velvet-soft as the hummus itself.” There are many other Lebanese restaurants in New York City, but Sawa, located a short walk from Brooklyn’s Barclay Center, “brings a destination-worthy degree of precision and clarity to its cooking.” Despite the “refined casualness” of the dining area, “the food has a grandness to it.” The grilled whole dorade, for example, arrives atop stewed tomatoes and already deboned, while the *kibbeh arnabiyeh* is “a true showpiece,” with the bone of a tender lamb shank rising up from a puddle of tahini sauce and strewn with pine nuts, mint leaves, and wheels of candied kumquat that are such a bright yellow “they almost seem to glow.” 75 Fifth Ave.

### Azizam Los Angeles

When you’re scanning the tabletops of other diners at Azizam, “it’s hard to miss the giant meatball,” said Bill Addison in the *Los Angeles Times*. But look closer at



Courtyard dining at Ammoora

the softball-size *kofteh* Tabrizi, because the beefy orb hides a secret interior world—prunes, dried apricot, herbs, and walnuts—while its ruddy sauce is “electric with Persian dried lime.” The dish has its origins in the cooking of the Iranian grandmother of co-owner Cody Ma, who along with partner Misha Sesar started Azizam as a pop-up with the social media tagline *#notjustkebabs*. At their new brick-and-mortar location in Silver Lake, they haven’t shied from offering labor-intensive dishes more suited to the Iranian family table than a restaurant’s pace. You can taste the care in the *ash-e-jo*, a barley-based soup characterized by its “disarming, melting lightness,”

or a turmeric-marinated chicken “braised to utter tenderness.” Though this is essentially home cooking, “in its quiet precision, you can also sense that every recipe leads back to a good story.” 2943 Sunset Blvd.

### Ammoora Baltimore

“For anyone steeped in generic Middle Eastern takeout staples, Ammoora will be a revelation,” said Eric Asimov in *The New York Times*. Owner Jay Salkini and chef Dima Al-Chaar “want diners to taste the enchanting, multidimensional sorts of foods they grew up eating in Syria,” and they achieve that goal in the “ambitious, elegant” restaurant they’ve created inside a “somewhat corporate” condominium complex. Don’t let the surroundings fool you. *Kebbet karaz*—minced lamb in tart cherry sauce—finds “a thrilling balance of sweet and sour, spicy and breezy.” *Kofta kawaj*—spiced ground lamb, onions, and sweet eggplant in tomato sauce—“builds in complexity as you eat.” Even Ammoora’s hummus “can make you feel as if your eyes have been opened, revealing vivid new colors.” The space, “all pink, rust, and cinnamon,” is “as alluring as the food,” said Jane Marion in *Baltimore* magazine. Salkini brought in coffee carts from Syria and “exquisite” inlaid mother-of-pearl furniture. If you aren’t intimidated by the prices, dinner at Ammoora is “a round-the-world flavor journey worth taking.” 751 Key Highway

### Recipe of the week

“Fans of broccoli cheddar soup might like this variation, which pairs verdant broccolini with sharp Parmesan cheese,” said G. Daniela Galarza in *The Washington Post*. Cannellini beans get pureed into the soup, adding body and protein. “If you like your soup chunky, don’t blend it much, or at all.”

#### Broccolini and Parmesan soup

2 tbsp olive oil • 1 medium yellow onion, diced • 2 bunches broccolini (1 lb total), chopped • 2 garlic cloves, minced or finely grated • fine salt • freshly ground black pepper • 2 (15-oz) cans cannellini beans, preferably no-salt-added, drained and rinsed • 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth • 1 Parmesan rind (optional) • ½ cup heavy cream (optional) • 1 packed cup (4 oz) grated Parmesan, plus more for serving

■ In a large Dutch oven or other heavy-bottomed pot heat oil over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add broccolini, garlic, and a big pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until broccolini turns bright green and thickest stems are fork-tender, about 5 minutes.

■ Stir in beans, broth, and Parmesan rind, if using. Increase heat to high and bring liquid to a boil. Reduce heat to

maintain a simmer, and cook, uncovered, until broccolini is tender, 5 to 10 minutes.

■ Remove pot from heat, discard Parmesan rind, and stir in cream, if using, a little at a time. While stirring, sprinkle cheese into soup. Using an immersion blender, puree soup until it is as chunky or smooth as you’d like. Taste, and season with more salt and pepper, as needed. Divide among individual bowls and sprinkle additional Parmesan on top, if desired. Serves 4 to 6.



### Wine: Seasonal sparklers

“A bold bubbly is never a bad way to get the holiday party started,” said Elin McCoy in *Bloomberg Businessweek*. The three sub-\$100 options below “reflect what’s trending in sparkling wine, from brand-new cuvées to underrated regions where bargains reign.”

**NV Domaine de Montbourgeau Crémant du Jura Brut Zéro** (\$33). “Even from France’s trendy Jura, crémants are sadly underrated,” including this “delicate, racy, bone-dry” offering. Its “slightly salty, green apple-y character” make it “an ideal match with oysters.”

**2020 Domaine Carneros Brut Rosé** (\$47). Sure to pair well with turkey, this pink sparkler is a California wine from the Champagne house Taittinger. It’s “sleek and spicy, with refined notes of ginger, citrus, and rose petals.”

**NV Racines Grand Reserve** (\$75). A California collaboration between vignerons from Burgundy and Champagne yields this “silky-textured” wine, which combines “toasty brioche aromas” with “pure lemon zest complexity.”



## The Volkswagen ID.Buzz: What the critics say

### The Wall Street Journal

Inspired by VW microbuses of the mid-20th century, the “neo-bohemian” ID.Buzz satisfyingly evokes its forebear with its “breadloaf-like” proportions, panoramic front window, two-tone paint scheme, and big VW badge up front. Of course, “beneath those Bauhaus skirts, it’s a minivan.” In America, at least until now, “to be cool is to fight the power” and “to drive a minivan is to be the power.” Yet the Buzz has finally arrived, and it’s the first all-electric, three-row minivan available in the U.S. “That’s cool.”

### Motor Trend

Perhaps surprisingly, the Buzz “drives far nicer than any non-performance Volkswagen

since Dieselgate,” a decade-old scandal. The Buzz’s low center of gravity, “punchy” motor, responsive steering, and good brake feel make it “a riot on a good back road.” The rear-wheel-drive, single-motor version hits 60 mph in 6.6 seconds, “a feat the old hippie van could only dream of accomplishing.”

### Car and Driver

Inside, “the appointments are a study in minimalism but stop far short of feeling inferior.” There’s “plenty of light and lots of usable space, with stowage solutions out the wazoo.” Because the Buzz has an EPA-estimated range of only 231 miles and hit just 190 in our test, “haters will, with some justification, complain



A joyful EV minivan, from \$59,995

that the Buzz is too expensive for its capability.” Yet “character counts too,” and this fun throwback “exceeds expectations.”

## The best of...holiday entertaining

### Cuisinart 16-inch Stainless Roaster

This rack-equipped roasting pan can handle ham, turkey, or prime rib. Made of dishwasher-safe stainless steel, it has handles sized for oven mitts and the drip-free pouring rim “ensures prep mess is kept to a minimum.”

\$65, cuisinart.com

Source: Good Housekeeping



### Thermoworks Smoke Remote Thermometer

This two-channel remote-probe thermometer is “ideal for monitoring long-cooking roasts and barbecue.” It will sound off when your dish reaches the temperature you set—“so you don’t have to hover near your oven, grill, or smoker.”

\$99, thermoworks.com

Source: America’s Test Kitchen



### Duxtop 9600LS Induction Cooktop

When multiple recipes crowd your burners, a portable cooktop expands your range “while also being incredibly safe and energy-efficient.” Features of this one include 20 temperature settings from 100-460 degrees and a 10-hour programmable timer.

\$110, duxtop.com

Source: thespruceeats.com

### Haand 18-inch Oval Platter

North Carolina’s artisanal pottery Haand specializes in organic shapes that “lend an elegant look” to any table. “The finishes are gorgeous,” and each piece is heavy enough to “feel substantial, not cumbersome.”

\$125, haand.us

Source: NYMag.com



### Shun Classic Two-Piece Carving Set

“The best of the best in carving knives” has 68 layers of Damascus steel supporting its hollow-ground cutting core. The 9-inch blade is “thin and flexible, making it easy to slice through meat without tearing or shredding.”

\$280, shun.kaiusa.com

Source: Food & Wine

## Tip of the week...

The right way to clean eyeglasses

■ **Do it regularly.** That small microfiber cloth that your glasses probably came with should be your first choice for all routine cleaning. “Use that cloth to try to gently buff out any smudges,” and, to prevent troublesome buildup, get in the habit of starting every day with a quick wipe down.

■ **Use warm water and dish soap.** To tackle stubborn streaks, first rinse the lenses in lukewarm water to flush away any grit. Put a small drop of dish soap on your finger and gently rub the lens, rinse in warm water, then dry with a microfiber cloth. “This is key”—because even your shirt might be too rough and will scratch the lens.

■ **Avoid other household cleaners.** Products made for eyeglasses, including pre-moistened lens-cleaning wipes, can be excellent aids, but never use glass cleaner, ammonia, or alcohol. Those “can damage the surface of your lenses.”

Source: NBCNews.com

## And for those who have everything...



Even before the arrival of the **Tumbler Batmobile**, the bid by Warner Bros. to turn Wayne Enterprises into a luxe lifestyle brand “was already the height of absurdity.” But the studio didn’t feel it was enough to be using Bruce Wayne’s good name to sell \$1,500 skincare products and \$78,000 watches. So now comes the chance for fans to buy one of 10 replicas of the Batmobile featured in Christopher Nolan’s *Dark Knight* movie trilogy. Each vehicle will be operational but not street legal, powered by a 525-hp engine and equipped with a smoke-screen delivery system. Prospective buyers must be approved before they pay, and should expect a year-plus wait before delivery.

\$3 million, brucewaynexus.com

Source: Gizmodo

## Best apps...

For making to-do lists

■ **Todoist** is “a joy to use, with a treasure trove of helpful functions.” Progress tracking, unlimited reminders, and smart color coding “make managing multiple projects a breeze.” With its “uncluttered, straightforward design” and slick calendar integration, it’s “well worth the \$5 per month or \$48 per year.”

■ **TickTick** stands out because its free plan is “much more comprehensive” than other no-fee apps. “It takes a little longer to get the hang of it,” but TickTick also has “the best natural language support we’ve seen.” Its paid plan is less expensive than Todoist’s.

■ **Things 3** is “impressively powerful” and occasionally “more of a pleasure” to navigate than Todoist, but it’s only for Apple users. The Cupertino crowd will appreciate how it integrates seamlessly with apps like Calendar and Reminders, even though it’s “robust enough to use on its own.”

Source: Wirecutter

# Marketplace



Common Obverse  
Actual Size

## Now! Complete National Park Quarter Set Only \$14.95!

**Don't miss out!** The final coin has been released and quantities are limited for these **Uncirculated Complete 56-Coin sets!** The first coin in this set was issued in 2010.

- **FREE** Shipping!
- **FREE** Gift: Uncirculated Lincoln Shield Cent

You'll also receive a handpicked trial selection of fascinating coins from our **No-Obligation Coins-on-Approval Service**, from which you may purchase any or none of the coins – return balance within 15 days – with option to cancel at any time.

**Personalize Your Folder!**

- Add a name or special message
- Embossed in gold-colored foil

**SAVE 50%**  
John Sample

Made in **USA**

**Littleton Coin Company®**  
Serving Collectors Since 1945

**Mail Coupon Today! For Faster Service**  
Visit: [LittletonCoin.com/Respond](http://LittletonCoin.com/Respond)

**Offer Code: 27K474**

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW CUSTOMERS ONLY**  
 **YES** Please send me the following:

QTY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
	56-Coin Collector's Set (limit 3)	\$14.95	
	Display Folder	\$4.95	
	Personalize my folder for \$1.97 each (Reg. \$3.95)*		
1	Uncirculated Lincoln "Shield" Cent		<b>FREE!</b>
	Shipping		<b>FREE!</b>
	Sales Tax		<b>FREE!</b>
<b>Order Deadline: 12:00 Midnight December 15, 2024</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

Write your personalization here, limited to 30 characters including spaces

ACTUAL LETTERING WILL APPEAR ON ONE LINE. Folder sold separately. Personalized items cannot be returned.

**Payment Method:**  Check payable to Littleton Coin Co.  
 VISA  MasterCard  American Express  Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date  /

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt# \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  Littleton Coin Company  
**Offer Code: 27K474**  
 1309 Mt. Eustis Rd  
 Littleton NH 03561-3737

## How will *your* story live on for generations?

Imagine the smile of a loved one as they discover your life stories—stories they may never have heard before. Your LifeBook is more than a memoir; it's a journey through the cherished memories and defining moments that shaped you. A private memoir written by us in your authentic voice, carefully crafted to preserve your experiences, values, and wisdom. This isn't just a beautifully bound book, it's a lasting gift for future generations, a timeless legacy.



Start your LifeBook journey today  
**Call 833 200 7035**  
[www.lifebookmemoirs.com/weekus](http://www.lifebookmemoirs.com/weekus)



**Life Book**  
memoirs



## This week: Homes in the Mediterranean style



**1 ◀ Calistoga, Calif.** Ocher exteriors, wrought-iron balconies, and honed-limestone floors give color to this 2003 Mediterranean compound. The three-bedroom main house has three wood-burning fireplaces, a chef's kitchen, a living room with vaulted, beamed ceilings, and French doors opening on the terraces. The 71-acre Napa County estate includes a tennis court, casita, two rentable two-bedroom cottages, and an infinity pool overlooking the 15.39-acre cabernet saignon vineyard. \$7,500,000. Cyd Greer, Coldwell Banker Brokers of the Valley/Chuck Meibeyer, Vine and Wine Properties, (707) 322-6825



**2 ▶ Los Angeles** This 1924 Spanish-modern Mediterranean in Silver Lake was renovated by architect Josiah Maddock. The two-bedroom bungalow features an adobe-style exterior, creamy interior walls, and wide-plank wood floors; a kitchen-dining area with an eat-in peninsula, open wood shelving, zellige tiles, and French doors to the two-level patio; an art-tiled bath; and a detached artist's studio. The lot has redwood privacy fencing, trees, and garden beds, and downtown L.A. is 15 minutes' drive. \$1,395,000. Rachel Mendoza Nickell, Seven Gables Real Estate, (323) 423-0095



Aurelia Damore Photography



Geo Flores



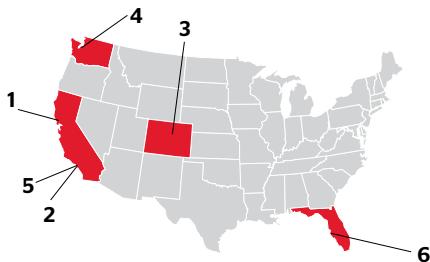
**3 ◀ Littleton, Colo.** Vinero en el Cañón del Río is an award-winning 2010 Spanish Mediterranean mansion. The five-bedroom house has stone, brick, wood, and iron detailing; stone feature walls; arched halls; chef's kitchen with brick ceiling; lofty sitting room with curved beams; three guest suites; and lower-level wine cellar, gym, and pub. Outside are a balcony with firepit and Neapolitan wood-fired oven, garden courtyard with fountains, and Dakota Hogback views; town is 20 minutes away. \$7,750,000. Dale Schossow, Compass, (303) 919-7176

# Best Properties on the Market



**4 ◀ Des Moines, Wash.** Redondo Castle is a 1934 Spanish Revival inspired by the Alhambra palace in Granada. The five-bedroom house features beamed vaulted ceilings, arched windows and doors, and ornate wrought-iron work and decorative tiling and inside and out, including Moravian-tile floors and a unique peacock-tiled primary bath. The 2-acre property on Puget Sound's Poverty Bay has mature trees, sweeping lawns, a tiled pool, a large sea-facing terrace, and 140 feet of private shoreline, with shopping and dining nearby. \$3,900,000. Veronique Hval, Windermere Real Estate/Luxury Portfolio International, (206) 214-8499

**5 ▶ Pasadena, Calif.** Style elements of this 1928 Mediterranean include carved pillars, groin-vault colonnade ceilings, arched doors and windows, Italian tiling, and handwrought ironwork. The five-bedroom house has a remodeled kitchen with breakfast alcove, a wood-paneled library, the original billiards room, a Prohibition-era speakeasy, and a dance floor. The landscaped 1.78-acre hillside lot in North Arroyo has palms, a pool, a garden patio, and views of the San Gabriel Mountains. \$5,350,000. Peter Martocchio, David Goldberg, and Diane Lasel, Sotheby's International Realty-Pasadena Brokerage, (626) 529-6880



## Steal of the week



**6 ◀ Sarasota, Fla.** The 1924 Frances Carlton, a 20-unit complex on the National Register of Historic Places, was modeled on ancient hostleries in the Pyrenees along the Spanish-French border. This one-bedroom condo features arched windows; wood floors; new light fixtures and kitchen; a laundry; a spa-style bath; and a windowed bonus room. Building amenities include a pool, courtyard, and parking; shopping, dining, and cultural venues are steps away and the beach is accessible by car or trolley. \$495,000. Mairead Smialek, Coldwell Banker Realty, (847) 334-4848

## The News at a Glance

## The bottom line

■ The average age of homebuyers is now a record-high 56, up from 49 in 2023, according to the National Association of Realtors, with first-time buyers responsible for just 24 percent of home purchases.

CNBC.com

■ Since oil prices surged at the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, Exxon Mobil and Chevron have paid out \$155 billion in dividends and buybacks to shareholders. Recently, though, profits have dropped as oil prices fell about 15 percent in the past six months.

The Wall Street Journal

■ Berkshire Hathaway's cash pile grew to \$325 billion in the third quarter, after the conglomerate sold another \$36 billion worth of stock. It's enough money to buy every single one of the 32 teams in the National Football League at a 50 percent premium to their current valuation.

Sherwood News



■ Chinese EV and hybrid carmaker BYD sold 500,526 vehicles in October; 310,912 of those were plug-in hybrids. However, just 31,200 of BYD's sales came from outside China. BYD's revenue, \$28.3 billion, exceeded Tesla's for the first time last quarter.

Bloomberg

■ Startup HelloPrenup, which offers prenuptial agreements for \$600, has seen its sales jump to \$3 million. Meanwhile, Divorce.com offers a "fully guided" divorce, with services including mediation, for \$2,000.

The Hustle

■ Sales of Nerds candy have risen 20-fold in the past six years. In 2018, Nerds products brought in \$40 million in sales. In the past calendar year, the company said, that number jumped to \$800 million.

The New York Times

## Sunsets: Nvidia replaces Intel in Dow index

The Dow marked the end of an era in technology last week with a swap of Intel for Nvidia, said Jack Pitcher in *The Wall Street Journal*. The move by the 30-stock benchmark index, Dow Jones industrial average, "would have been unthinkable just three years ago," before Nvidia's high-performance chips made it "the high-flying face of the AI boom." It even briefly overtook Apple this week as the world's most valuable company, surpassing \$3.4 trillion. Intel, on the other hand, "missed the boat on AI" and has gone from a "tech titan to a takeover target." It reported a \$16.6 billion net loss in the last quarter, writing off billions of dollars spent on fading PC chips.



Nvidia, chipmaker for the AI age

Intel's stock had already dropped so much that it had little impact on the Dow, said Emily Bary in *MarketWatch*. The index, unlike the S&P 500, is weighted by price, so as Intel fell to \$23 a share it became less and less of a factor, and replacing it with Nvidia seemed natural. "Still, there are cautionary tales around indexes adding hot stocks on the heels of big runs." In 1999, the Dow added a company that had been a Silicon Valley icon since the tech industry's start and "was a darling of the 1990s." Its shares have fallen by 39 percent in the 25 years since it was added to the Dow. What company was it? Yes, Intel.

## Jobs: Unemployment stays steady as hiring softens

A meager 12,000 jobs were added to the economy in October, the slowest pace since 2020, said Molly Smith in *Bloomberg*. The Bureau of Labor Statistics last week blamed the "two hurricanes that hit the Southeast" as well as the major strike at Boeing for distorting the results. The response rate to the survey was just 47.4 percent, the lowest since 1991, "likely a reflection of the storms cutting the collection period short." But while the unemployment rate held steady at 4.1 percent, revisions to previous months' estimates indicate that "the labor market is still softening beyond temporary factors."

## iPhones: New features drive uptick in Apple sales

Apple hit a quarterly revenue record as iPhone sales bounced back, said Aaron Tilley in *The Wall Street Journal*. The tech giant reported fourth-quarter revenues last week of \$94.9 billion, beating estimates, with iPhones accounting for about half of it. "The results represent a turnaround from the first half of the year, when smartphone sales were sluggish for consecutive quarters." Apple recently launched Apple Intelligence, a set of AI tools and features that it hopes "will lead users to upgrade their smartphones."

## Aerospace: Boeing workers end strike with pay gains

Boeing machinists ended their strike this week after 53 days, said Lauren Rosenblatt in the *Seattle Times*. Nearly two-thirds of the 33,000 machinists in Boeing's Seattle factories voted to accept the company's latest contract offer, which "included a 38 percent general wage increase over the next four years," above the initial offer of a 25 percent increase. Workers will also get a \$12,000 cash bonus and a 100 percent company 401(k) match of up to 8 percent. The deal, however, did not restore the pension plan that the union voted away 10 years ago.

## I, Robot: Bezos invests in startup Physical Intelligence

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos led a \$400 million funding round for a startup trying to achieve the science fiction dream of "general purpose" robots, said Michael J. de la Merced in *The New York Times*. OpenAI also joined in the funding round that closed this week and valued San Francisco-based Physical Intelligence at \$2.4 billion. Company co-founder Karol Hausman said Physical Intelligence aims to build the equivalent of a "single generalist brain that can control any robot." That requires "a huge amount of data on how to operate in the real world"—though it has become easier with "big leaps in AI models that can interpret visual data."

## Mixologists melt for Japanese ice

Demand for Japanese ice is booming in high-end U.S. bars and restaurants, said Keijiro Goto in *Nikkei Asia*. A 100-year-old ice maker, Kuramoto Ice, in Kanazawa, Japan, has boosted sales of its "highly pure" ice sevenfold in three years, to close to \$500,000, in the U.S., where it is used in some 300 establishments. It's a long way for ice to travel, but customers say the journey is worth it. Kuramoto's glass-like cubes supposedly "don't melt easily" and don't alter the taste of the alcohol. The marketing around the ice has also taken off thanks to Japanese social media influencers. The company says that its water comes directly off Mount Haku, one of Japan's "Three Holy Mountains." From there, it gets processed for at least 72 hours to remove "minerals and impurities," eliminating even the "microbubbles" that make ice more brittle and meltable. The Japanese claim their water contains "fewer minerals" than American tap water to begin with, making the purification process less burdensome.

# Making Money

## Markets: Goldman predicts a 'lost decade' ahead

No one thinks the stock market will continue breaking records forever, said **Joseph Adinolfi** in *MarketWatch*. But recent forecasts have been sounding the alarm that investors need to adjust their sky-high expectations. The most glaring was a report from the chief equity strategist for Goldman Sachs, David Kostin, who thinks that the S&P 500 will return only about 3 percent a year in the coming decade, compared with a 13 percent average over the past 10 years. One reason he's forecasting a "lost decade" for equities is the market's extraordinary concentration, "which has surpassed its levels from the dot-com era" and is now higher than at any time since the early 1930s. That, combined with increasingly harder-to-justify stock valuations relative to corporate profits, raises the chances of hitting a plateau—or worse.



How long can the good times last?

Something strange is afoot, said **John Authers** in *Bloomberg*. Kostin already predicted the S&P would reach 6,300 by next October, or a gain of about 11 percent. "To predict simultaneously that an already strong market will have another great next 12 months and a poor next 10 years does imply an untenable spot." After past peaks in valuation, the market "descended dramatically for a number of years." Valuations surged in 2021, then descended in 2022, but bounced back up "with the launch of ChatGPT." The AI boom seems to be "performing a Herculean task in keeping the market high." Can that last?

Other analysts think it can, said **Sam Ro** in *Yahoo*. Economist Ed Yardeni believes strongly that "technology-led productivity growth" will propel stocks to another "Roaring Twenties"—and even last into the 2030s. JPMorgan's team has a more modest projection, expecting "large-cap U.S. stocks to return 6.7 percent annually over the next 10 to 15 years." Even if you believe Goldman's forecast, "selling stocks still seems premature at this point," said **Jeremy Bowman** in *The Motley Fool*. "The economy is strong. Corporations are reporting solid earnings growth, and the Federal Reserve is planning to lower interest rates, which typically fuels growth in the stock market."

The flip side of the mega-cap growth "is that pretty much everything else" is undervalued, said **Neil Irwin** in *Axios*. Those of us who built a strategically diversified portfolio "have suffered subpar returns over the last 15 years relative to people who just piled everything into the S&P." Goldman suggests that the many investors who've gotten used to putting their money in an S&P 500 index fund should consider "equal-weighted rather than traditional market cap-weighted versions of the S&P 500," said **Ian Salisbury** in *Barron's*. An equal-weighted index spreads the contributions of each stock equally—meaning you are not tying your investment returns to just the few Big Tech names that have dominated the market.

## What the experts say

### ■ Carvana's startling recovery

The online used-car seller Carvana has pulled off a remarkable U-turn, said **Sujeet Indap** in the *Financial Times*. "Carvana had been a pandemic darling," but it spent heavily on marketing—and constructing those distinctive "car-vending machines"—to make sales. "By the end of 2022, Carvana's revenues had collapsed amid higher interest rates and weary American consumers," and its stock price crashed 98 percent, putting it on the verge of bankruptcy. Chief executive Ernie Garcia somehow held off the creditors and "purchased more Carvana equity," giving the company more breathing room "to spend 2023 slashing costs." Last week, "Carvana reported record profitability," and its total market value has climbed from \$1 billion to close to \$50 billion in 22 months.

### ■ Did AI break the job hunt?

LinkedIn wants job seekers to "stop swinging at every pitch," said **Amanda Hoover** in *Business Insider*. The job-hunt platform said job applications are up 20 percent from last year, in part because of the site's own "Easy Apply feature or generative AI tools" that help users "mass-apply" to dozens of quasi-relevant listings. But the flood of résumés has "hit a

wall with overwhelmed recruiters," many of whom have begun using AI to automate their hiring. No wonder the job-hunting process feels "broken," said **Rohan Rajiv**, the head of career products at LinkedIn. Now the company is rolling out new AI features that will actually scrutinize listings so that candidates can "apply to fewer jobs—but ones that better fit their qualifications."

### ■ No bank is perfect, Florida finds

Florida accidentally banned America's biggest banks from doing business in the state, said **Alexander Saeedy** in *The Wall Street Journal*. A new law that went into effect on Oct. 1 "sought to make it easier for startups and other companies to fundraise" while also making sure that "bad actors with a criminal record couldn't take advantage of Floridians." But the law inadvertently banned "any bank that had been punished by the Securities and Exchange Commission or other authorities" from selling investments. That's a problem for the country's big banks, which have all at some time gotten in trouble with the law. Florida's top financial regulator had to invoke emergency powers to suspend the part of the law affecting the banks. But a permanent fix can't be made until the Florida legislature next convenes in March.

## Charity of the week



The **American Bird Conservancy (abcbirds.org)** is dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. Since its founding in 1994, ABC has established a 1.1 million-acre network of 100-plus protected areas in 15 countries; in 2023 alone, ABC protected 30,000 acres of habitat for endangered birds. In Madagascar, the Search for Lost Birds, a project supported by ABC and its partners, rediscovered the dusky tetraka, a small olive-colored bird that ornithologists had not seen in 24 years. In Hawaii, the organization participated in a project to reduce the mosquito population and curb the transmission of avian malaria. In the U.S., ABC works to preserve grasslands birds, like the iconic lesser prairie chicken—aiming to keep them from disappearing, and ultimately to create habitats that will reverse their decline.

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.

## Spend, spend, spend: The unending AI feast

Wall Street “punished” Silicon Valley for spending too much on AI earlier this year, said **Mark Bergen** and **Lynn Doan** in *Bloomberg*. “Silicon Valley’s response?” Spend even more. The four largest internet and software companies—Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, and Google—are set to invest well over \$200 billion this year as they race to buy chips and build data centers that can support the development of generative artificial intelligence. The companies “are trying to convince Wall Street that these huge investments will make their future businesses more profitable.” But at the same time, executives from each company warned investors last week that the spending could “even ramp up” next year. It’s testing a lot of nerves, and signs of doubt are emerging. Last week, Meta and Microsoft both beat earnings expectations for the third quarter, but their shares took a hit when they revealed their rising costs.



For Meta, data centers are a massive expense.

AI carries remarkable promise, said **Dan Gallagher** in *The Wall Street Journal*, but investors need more details to better gauge the return on investment. Microsoft reported last week that its generative AI services “contributed about 12 percentage points” to the growth of its cloud-computing service in the last quarter. Meta, meanwhile, vaguely claims that its generative AI tools “are boosting user time spent on Facebook and Instagram” and helping advertisers craft more effective campaigns. “Partial disclosures” like these make it impossible to know “just how much revenue AI is generating.” That’s why the market is wary of tech giants even as they report “strong revenue growth” and accelerating profits. Big Tech companies once distinguished

themselves by their eye-popping sales and minimal physical footprint, said **John Foley** in the *Financial Times*. But all this spending on massive data centers has put way too much “solid stuff on their balance sheets.” It’s cramping the “good feelings” that “keep share prices aloft.”

While AI spending numbers are eye-popping, so are the potential rewards, said **Robert Cyran** in *Reuters*. “If the economic impact of AI is \$15.7 trillion, as PWC

estimates, then these companies have no choice but to chase the opportunity.” And though the sums that tech companies are spending are big, they are defensible. To justify the extra \$29 billion it devoted to capital expenditures this year, for instance, Microsoft will need to make about \$6 billion of additional profit. With \$88 billion in net earnings this year, that seems realistic.

The spending on AI, though, isn’t just coming from the tech giants, said **Aaron Holmes** in *The Information*. Building out AI systems has become “a substantial, recurring expense at dozens of large companies,” ranging from Coca-Cola to Intuit to T-Mobile, which spent \$100 million on a three-year deal with OpenAI “to power the next generation of its customer-service bots.” Companies will need to make up this money—sometimes by cutting back on other software. That is already showing up in earnings reports from the large cloud providers like Microsoft, which is gaining AI revenue but simultaneously losing revenue from non-AI services. As some tech executives admit, for many companies, much of the budget ostensibly devoted to AI just shuffles around “the money we were already spending.”

### Can the world run out of sinners?

*The Economist*

“Governments spent years fighting sin. Now they miss it,” said *The Economist*. At the turn of the 20th century, roughly 90 percent of American federal revenue came from taxing alcohol and tobacco. As the country grew larger, other levies became more common, and sin taxes were “mostly used as a tool to change behavior.” But what’s good for our health isn’t great for the budget. Just 12 percent of Americans today smoke, down from 33 percent in 1980. In California, “revenue from cigarette taxes has fallen by \$500 million, or 29 percent, since 2017.” Alcohol taxes have dried up, too, and California has been so effective at push-

ing sales of battery-powered cars that concerns are emerging about the disappearance of gas-tax revenues. Combined, those three taxes add up to nearly half of what the state spends on higher education. The search is now on for alternatives. California in 2022 “earned double the amount from taxes on marijuana as it did from those on alcohol.” Replacing other sin taxes, though, isn’t easy; with fuel use falling, Virginia is experimenting with “charging drivers for every mile they drive” in an electric vehicle. The public hasn’t been enthused. And states are bumping up against the limits of how hard to squeeze. After all, “even sinners have the vote.”

### Don’t blame subsidies for China’s EV wins

**David Fickling**  
*Bloomberg*

“It’s been treated as an established fact” that clean-energy subsidies “are the sole explanation for China’s competitive advantages,” said **David Fickling**. Unfortunately for Western carmakers, this doesn’t withstand any real scrutiny. Yes, Chinese carmakers like BYD get “substantial benefits from the government.” Those benefits, though, are “not out of line” with what European and American carmakers get. The value of subsidies received by Volkswagen in 2023 “was greater than every cent declared by Chinese carmakers in the same fiscal year.” Ford also received more money than any Chinese rival. There’s likewise little evidence in the balance sheets

of the major Chinese electric automakers that they have benefited from extraordinary tax breaks. China’s EV industry received “the support that every large economy has been (rightly) offering to clean technology.” China combines the “net-zero commitment of the European Union with the fiscal power of the United States,” which makes it a “formidable competitor in the clean technology race.” But convincing ourselves “that China’s manufacturing prowess is purely a matter of rubbery state money” is a formula for defeat. China’s Western rivals will be better off “if they try to compete, rather than shutting themselves away behind tariff walls.”

## The musical giant who spanned genres and generations

**Quincy Jones**

1933-2024

The wonder of Quincy Jones, U2 frontman Bono once said, is “that one man could have fit so much music into one lifetime.” Over a seven-decade career, Jones compiled a staggering résumé, shining as a performer, composer, arranger, and producer, and working with hundreds of artists across genres from bebop to soul, bubblegum pop to rap. He played trumpet with Count Basie, arranged records for Frank Sinatra, wrote film scores, and produced Ray Charles, Luther Vandross, Lena Horne, and Snoop Dogg. Nominated for 80 Grammys (he won 28), he produced “We Are the World,” the 1985 charity record featuring a who’s who of A-list musicians. His top commercial triumph was producing a trilogy of Michael Jackson albums including *Thriller*, a global juggernaut that sold over 75 million copies. Such achievements earned Jones a Bel Air mansion and estimated \$400 million fortune, but he insisted he’d never done anything just for commercial reward. “Not even *Thriller*,” he said in 2018. “God walks out of the room when you start thinking about money.”

Born in Chicago during the Depression, Jones was “obsessed with all forms of music from an early age,” said *The Wall Street Journal*. His carpenter father “struggled to put food on the table,” and he and his siblings sometimes ate rats fried by their grandmother. His mother, a schizophrenic, was institutionalized when he was 7, and the traumatized boy began running with a gang. But he had a revelation at 11, when he and some friends broke into a recreation center and saw a piano. Playing a few notes, he “began to find peace,” he later wrote. “I knew this was it for me. Forever.” At school he was “recognized as a musical prodigy,” said *The Washington Post*. He learned drums, tuba, French horn, and piano, but focused on the trumpet. After briefly attending what’s now the Berklee College of Music in Boston, he left to tour with Dizzy Gillespie.

As “Jones’ visibility escalated,” said the *Los Angeles Times*, he was soon arranging for stars including Basie, Duke Ellington, and Sarah



Vaughan. He moved to Paris, where he studied composition and started his own big band. But after a tour “ran into financial problems,” he grew tired of scraping by, and in 1961 he took a job as New York musical director for Mercury Records. He found “immediate pop success,” said *The Times* (U.K.), producing the No. 1 Lesley Gore hit “It’s My Party.” More hits followed, and a promotion made him the first Black major-label executive. But he shifted gears after director Sidney Lumet drafted him to compose the score for *The Pawnbroker* (1964), and “buoyed by the film’s success,” he relocated to Los Angeles. Over

the next three decades he scored more than 30 films, including *In Cold Blood* and *The Color Purple*, and wrote theme music for TV shows such as *Ironside* and *Sanford and Son*.

Jones’ collaboration with Jackson grew out of his work on the soundtrack for the 1978 film *The Wiz*, said *Rolling Stone*. Jackson’s label resisted, calling Jones “too jazzy.” But Jackson insisted, and the result was “one of the most fruitful musical partnerships in history.” On *Off the Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad*, Jones paired Jackson with “crack musicians and songwriters” and “the most modern musical technology.” The result was “stunningly sophisticated, rhythmically explosive hits,” such as “Beat It” and “Billie Jean,” that made Jackson a worldwide megastar. Jones’ own profile was further lifted by “We Are the World,” which went multiplatinum.

In later years, Jones helmed a multimedia empire, said *The New York Times*. His entertainment company ran a record label, produced the sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, and published the hip-hop magazine *Vibe*. A self-described “dog” who juggled lovers around the world, he married three times and fathered seven children by five mothers. When he wasn’t hanging out with presidents, movie stars, or Nobel laureates, he “dedicated much of his time to charity work” through his Listen Up! Foundation aimed at disadvantaged youth. “The experiences I’ve had!” he said in 2018. “You almost can’t believe it.”

## The comic actress who lent dignity to ditzes

**Teri Garr**

1944-2024

With her sensitive blue eyes and her expert comic timing, Teri Garr turned dumb-blonde roles into characters of poignancy and depth. Often, as in *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), and *After Hours* (1985), she played women who had to deal with unpredictable men, but she was more than a foil. She combined vulnerability with deadpan humor even as her characters were melting down—as in the sudden, shrieking tantrum of a jilted lover she gave in *Tootsie* (1982), which earned her an Oscar nomination. A favorite on late-night TV, Garr hosted *Saturday Night Live* three times and was a frequent guest of Johnny Carson and David Letterman. Yet despite widespread accolades for her comedic talent, she struggled to find suitable roles. “Women are not taken seriously,” she said in 2008. “If there’s ever a woman who’s smart, funny, or witty, people are afraid of that, so they don’t write that.”

Born in Los Angeles, Terry Ann Garr was the daughter of a Rockette and a vaudevillian; her father died when she was 11. She started out studying ballet, making her professional debut as a dancer right



after high school. Once she started making money from commercials, she dropped out of college. She began getting work in films, mostly as an uncredited backup dancer, and appeared in multiple Elvis Presley movies. Yet “playing showgirls and go-go dancers was less satisfying” than she’d hoped, said *The New York Times*. Garr wanted to act. She booked a few speaking roles, appearing on *Star Trek* and *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour*. But she really “gained attention” as the German lab assistant in *Young Frankenstein*, said *Variety*, where her first line was “the memorable ‘Would you like to have a roll in ze hay?’”

The last part of her career “was a lot like the beginning,” said *NPR.org*, “with small roles on big TV shows” like *Friends*. After years of inexplicable pain and muscle weakness, Garr was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999 and became a spokesperson for MS research, making appearances in her wheelchair. She suffered a brain aneurysm in 2006, spending a week in a coma before relearning to walk and talk. “I really do count my blessings,” she wrote in a 2005 memoir. “At least I used to. Now I get so tired I have a woman come once a week and count them for me.”

# Their son died, then the hate came

When 11-year-old Aiden Clark was killed in a school bus crash, his parents didn't think to blame it on immigration, said **Eli Saslow** in **The New York Times**. But others did.

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO—A sheriff's deputy arrived at Nathan and Danielle Clark's front door on the outskirts of Springfield last month with the latest memento of what their son's death had become. "I'm sorry that I have to show you this," she said and handed them a flier with a picture of Aiden, 11, smiling at the camera after his last baseball game. It was the same image the Clarks had chosen for his funeral program and then made into Christmas ornaments for his classmates, but this time the photograph was printed alongside threats and racial slurs.

"Killed by a Haitian invader," the flyer read. "They didn't care about Aiden. They don't care about you. They are pieces of human trash that deserve not your sympathy, but utter scorn. Give it to them...and then some."

Nathan reached into his pocket and squeezed a piece of Aiden's old blanket that he kept with him to help stave off panic attacks.

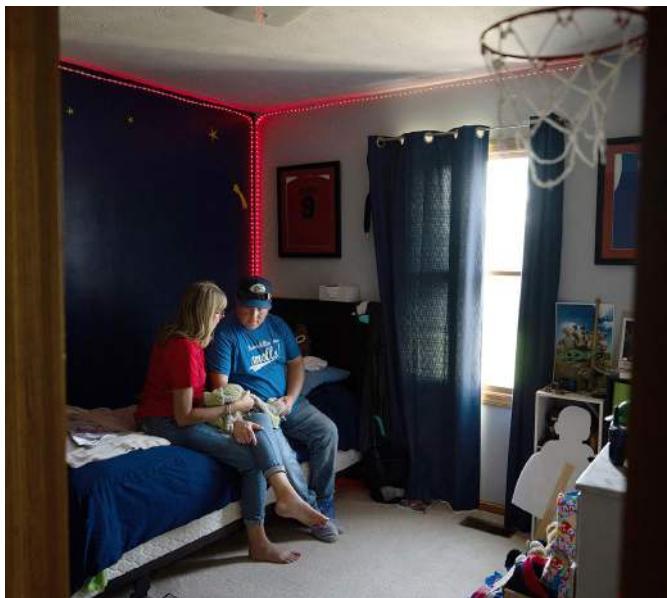
"They have no right to speak for him like this," Danielle said. "It's making me sick. There must be some way to stop it."

"We're checking the flyers for fingerprints," the deputy said. "They put them online and dropped them off all over the neighborhood. It's awful. It's grotesque."

"Once upon a time, it would have surprised me," Nathan said. "But nothing's off limits anymore. We keep hitting new lows."

This was the version of the country the Clarks and their two teenage children had encountered during the last year, ever since Aiden died in a school bus crash in August 2023 on the way to his first day of sixth grade. The crash was ruled an accident, caused by a legally registered Haitian immigrant who veered into the bus while driving without a valid license. But as the presidential campaign intensified, former President Donald Trump and his running mate, Sen. JD Vance, began to tell a different story.

They said Aiden's death was a "murder" committed by "an illegal" as part of a "border bloodbath," in another American community that had been "invaded," "conquered" and "taken over" by "migrant criminals from the dungeons of the Third World." In the past five years, as many as



*Danielle and Nathan have left Aiden's bedroom largely unchanged.*

20,000 Haitian immigrants have moved to Springfield, a town of about 60,000. The bus accident became a flashpoint at city meetings, where pain and frustration about the city's shifting demographics turned to anger, and anger often escalated into fear-mongering and racism that put Springfield at the epicenter of a contentious election.

All of it was antithetical to what the Clarks believed and to the compassion they'd admired most in their son. "Please, stop the hate," Nathan had said at a city meeting in September, but instead some of that hatred had turned back against them: icy stares from neighbors, cruel Facebook messages, the public doxxing of their phone number, letters about being "immigrant-loving race traitors," and a recent death threat relayed by the FBI.

"The best thing you can do is stay out of the city," the sheriff's deputy told them. She said the Proud Boys had another march scheduled for the upcoming weekend. During the last few months in Springfield, there had been acts of vandalism at Haitian churches and more than 30 bomb threats that evacuated municipal buildings, forced the city's hospitals into lockdown, and required state troopers to stand guard in front of local elementary schools.

"We're setting up 24-hour protection for you," the deputy said. "We'll leave a car stationed in front of the house."

THEY HAD DONE everything they could to preserve Aiden's presence within the house since the accident, leaving the decorative red lights on in his bedroom and his sandals perched at the top of the stairs, just as Aiden had done when he rushed out to the bus. That was his zucchini replanted in the garden, his handwriting tattooed on their forearms and his ashes stored inside a custom-made soccer ball in the living room, where they'd often warned him about throwing balls and playing outdoor sports inside.

At the same time, the rest of Springfield was memorializing Aiden, too. More than 1,500 people came to his funeral, many of whom the Clarks didn't know, and dozens of people began lining

up to speak on his behalf during the public comment session at city meetings. They said they wanted justice for Aiden, retribution for Aiden, enhanced traffic enforcement for Aiden, increased police presence for Aiden, English-only signs at Walmart for Aiden, workplace immigration raids for Aiden, mass deportations for Aiden, to take Springfield back for Aiden—none of which reflected what the Clarks wanted or believed.

They had worked hard to seek out diversity in rural Ohio. Danielle taught kindergarten on the outskirts of Dayton, at a low-income elementary school where her students were Black, white, Hispanic, Ukrainian, and increasingly Haitian, and where she specialized in working with children who had multiple disabilities. Nathan taught fourth grade in a nearby farming community transformed by a new wave of Turkish immigrants, and as cultural tensions reverberated through the town, he requested to have Turkish students placed in his class. He put a sign up above his classroom, "Talking Turk," and asked the students to teach him a new word each week.

When he started to notice large groups of Haitian immigrants moving into Springfield a few years ago, he signed up for Duolingo to learn phrases in French and Haitian Creole. He wrote to a friend in city government, asking if he knew of any

# The Last Word

summer jobs teaching English to Haitians. “I’m pretty sure I can help,” Nathan wrote.

It wasn’t until a few days after the crash that Nathan and Danielle learned the driver, Hermanio Joseph, was also an immigrant—a Haitian who had flown to South America and crossed in 2022 from Mexico into Texas, where he’d requested asylum and been released into the United States with temporary protected status. The Clarks were angry about many things after the accident: that Joseph had been driving with an invalid Mexican license; that he was seemingly tired or distracted on his way home from the graveyard shift at an Ohio manufacturing plant; that his minivan crossed over the centerline as he went around a curve; that his recklessness forced the school bus off the road, down an embankment and onto its side; that prosecutors said his maximum sentence for involuntary manslaughter was only 11 years. But it never occurred to the Clarks to extend their anger onto an entire population of immigrants.

“Let us grieve in peace. Take this picture down!” Nathan wrote in a comment on Instagram, after Trump’s campaign posted a photo of Aiden, which it never took down.

“We do not want our son’s name associated with the uninformed majority that vocalize their hate,” he said, at Joseph’s trial.

And when none of that changed the discourse, Nathan called the one politician he still trusted most, Rob Rue, the Republican mayor of Springfield, who also ran a local funeral home. It was Rue who had brought in a restorative mortician from Cincinnati to work on Aiden after the accident and then given the Clarks full access to his funeral home so they could sit at Aiden’s side, touching his hair and holding his hand for the better part of three days because they couldn’t stand the idea of leaving him there alone. Rue knew as well as anyone how much they had suffered, so when Nathan asked in early September if he could make his first statement at a city meeting, Rue offered to bring the Clarks into the building through a private entrance and then called them to the podium first.

“I wish that my son, Aiden Clark, was killed by a 60-year-old white man,” Nathan said that day, as Danielle stood next to him. “I bet you never thought anyone would ever say something so blunt. But if that guy killed my 11-year-old son, the incessant group of hate-spewing people would leave us alone. They make it seem as though our wonderful Aiden appreciates their hate—that we should follow their hate. This needs to stop now.”

A police officer led them toward the

exit as more speakers lined up behind the microphone. “Are they going to take over our whole city?” the next speaker said. “We should have a ‘No Vacancy’ sign up right now.”

“The diseases. The crime. They are using our community as a dumping ground,” someone else said, but by then the Clarks were back in the car, on their way home.

**T**HE SCHOOL BUS traveled through Nathan and Danielle’s imaginations a dozen times each day as they traced over the last hours of Aiden’s life. He was always nervous about transitions like the first day of school, so he’d spent the previous evening prolonging his last hours of summer: lying on the trampoline in the backyard with his 15-year-old sister Madelynn; playing video games with his 19-year-old brother, Preston; shooting water guns in the yard with Nathan; lounging on the couch with Danielle until bedtime. His anxiety sometimes turned into stomachaches and trouble sleeping, but Nathan sat on his bed and reassured him. He was a straight-A student. His classmates adored him. He loved going to school. There was nothing to worry about.



*Aiden, selling vegetables from his garden.*

Standing inside the Clarks’ living room was the sheriff’s deputy they knew best, John Loney, a school resource officer who had been one of the first people to arrive at the crash that morning. He’d accompanied the Clarks to support them during the funeral and the trial, and now he’d come to retrieve one of the dozens of racist flyers that had been dropped off in their neighborhood so he could help with that investigation. He told them he’d spent the morning downtown, tracking white supremacist groups as they marched with Nazi flags to the mayor’s house and chanted about “Haitians” and “crime and savagery.”

“It was more of the same,” Loney said.

“That’s every weekend now.”

“It gets to a point where you start to lose faith in the goodness of people,” Nathan said.

“I know what you mean,” Loney said. He told them how a few white supremacists had gone to the accident site to film a video, and they’d shared lies about the crash online. “It burns me, because that place should be sacred,” Loney said. His voice broke, and he paused to catch his breath. “I’m sorry,” he said. “I have no right to get emotional compared to you guys, but it pisses me off.”

“It should,” Danielle said. “It’s personal. You were there.”

“Those were the hardest hours of my life,” Loney said, and they began to talk about the morning of the crash. Loney told Danielle and Nathan about how he arrived a few minutes after the crash and noticed backpacks in the road, water bottles, broken glass, and finally two students who had been ejected when the bus rolled and then caught under the roof. One was a girl who survived her injuries and the other was Aiden, who was already dead. “Me and another deputy, we went and sat with him on the grass,” Loney said.

“Oh, Aiden,” Danielle said. “Oh, God.”

“I held his hand,” Loney said.

“I made sure nothing touched him. I talked to him and told him that I wasn’t going to leave.” A fire crew arrived and said the position of the bus was unstable. They asked Loney and his partner to move for their own safety, but they refused. They stayed in place for more than an hour until the coroner came, and then they carried Aiden into the van.

“For a long time, I wondered if I was being punished for something,” Loney said. “To see this little boy on the first day of school, it broke something in me. But in a way, I’m grateful.”

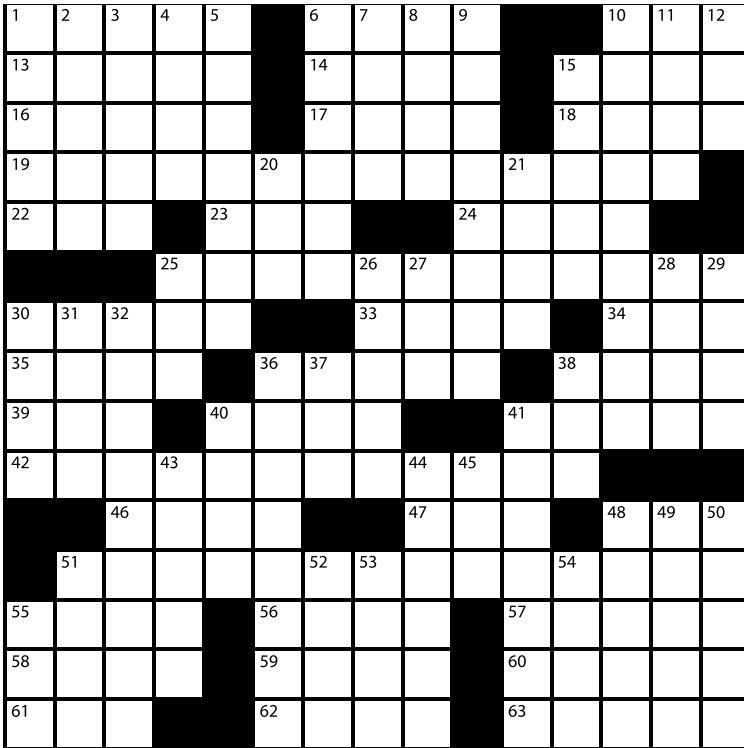
“You stayed,” Danielle said, still making sense of it. “You stayed right there with him.”

“It speaks to your character,” Nathan said.

“It was nothing. It was basic,” Loney said, but Nathan reached over and squeezed his shoulder, trying to make him understand. In the moments that haunted them most, someone had responded to their son’s death not with callousness or self-interest or fear but with compassion, with decency. “That matters to us,” Nathan said. “Right now, it matters more than anything.”

*A longer version of this story originally appeared in The New York Times. Used with permission.*

## Crossword No. 768: He's Three for Three by Matt Gaffney



**ACROSS**

- 1 \_\_\_ ray (sea creature)
- 6 Conrad of *Diff'rent Strokes*
- 10 Snitch
- 13 "Light at the end of the tunnel," e.g.
- 14 "\_\_\_ Perpetua" (state motto on Idaho quarters)
- 15 Test version
- 16 Jane or Henry
- 17 Way out, often
- 18 Highest point
- 19 Dodgers first baseman who was named World Series MVP on Oct. 30
- 22 To be, in Mexico
- 23 Reference bk.
- 24 All-consonant chain
- 25 Gangster played by Christian Slater in *Mobsters* and Stanley Tucci in *Billy Bathgate*
- 30 Parts of the brain
- 33 Prefix for nautical
- 34 Go a few rounds
- 35 More than enough
- 36 Military scouting operation, briefly
- 38 Ballerina's bend
- 39 "It's that guy over there"
- 40 Cologne currency
- 41 Like a taskmaster
- 42 *Good Morning America* co-anchor since 2005
- 46 Stadium torn down in 2009
- 47. Besmirch, as someone's good name
- 48 "\_\_\_ tree falls in the woods..."

- 51 Robert Downey Jr. netted a 1993 Best Actor nomination for playing this Hollywood icon
- 55 Basis for borscht
- 56 "Woe \_\_\_!"
- 57 Like bathroom floors, often
- 58 Magazine you can read backward?
- 59 Narrow opening
- 60 *In \_\_\_* (Nirvana album)
- 61 100 percent
- 62 With 63-Across: *WTF* podcaster whose first and last name start with the same three letters; ditto for our other four theme entries
- 63 See 62-Across

**DOWN**

- 1 Irritates
- 2 Love so much
- 3 Certain number, on a walkie-talkie
- 4 Gurley or Rundgren
- 5 Best Picture *the* year after *Terms of Endearment*
- 6 Festoon
- 7 Since
- 8 "Like \_\_\_ or not!"
- 9 Point of \_\_\_
- 10 Like some debts
- 11 Two fives for \_\_\_
- 12 Word on two Monopoly spaces
- 15 Dear deer
- 20 *Businessweek* competitor
- 21 \_\_\_ Domani (wine brand)

- 25 Tennis judge's call
- 26 Hebrew boy's name
- 27 Shortest zodiac sign
- 28 Subgenre of detective fiction
- 29 Beasts of burden
- 30 One of Garland's *Wizard of Oz* co-stars
- 31 Mishmash
- 32 Astonishing news report
- 36 Appreciative depictions of country life
- 37 Suffix with ranch
- 38 A TD is worth six
- 40 One of the Cabinet depts.
- 41 Layer
- 43 "\_\_\_ it when that happens"
- 44 "I could list many more examples"
- 45 Cheer from the stands
- 48 Less healthy
- 49 Classic Pontiac
- 50 "\_\_\_ that note..."
- 51 Minesweeper unit
- 52 \_\_\_ Mujeres (it's off the coast of Mexico)
- 53 Mideast ruler
- 54 Edible pocket
- 55 She played Golden Girl Dorothy

## The Week Contest

**This week's question:** Boston Celtics head coach Joe Mazzulla said his team feels "zero pressure" to repeat last year's championship season because "we're all going to be dead soon, and it doesn't matter anymore." If Mazzulla were to write a leadership book about his less-than-motivational style, what should it be titled?

**Last week's contest:** A New Zealand airport is now mandating time limits for farewell hugs at its passenger dropoff zone to keep traffic flowing smoothly. In seven or fewer words, come up with a message for a warning sign tactfully informing travelers and their loved ones to keep goodbyes short.

THE WINNER: You can't hurry love—but please try  
*Joel Nelson, Goleta, Calif.*

SECOND PLACE: Quick goodbye, or no sky  
*Steve Zoller, Baltimore*

THIRD PLACE: Huggage allowance: Three minutes  
*Laurel Rose, Pittsburgh*

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to [theweek.com/contest](http://theweek.com/contest).

**How to enter:** Submissions should be emailed to [contest@theweek.com](mailto:contest@theweek.com). Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Demotivational coach" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Nov. 12. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at [theweek.com/puzzles](http://theweek.com/puzzles) on Friday, Nov. 15. 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

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

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: [www.theweek.com/puzzle](http://www.theweek.com/puzzle).

©2024. All rights reserved.

**The Week** (ISSN 1533-8304) is published weekly, except January 5, January 12, July 12, and September 13. **The Week** is published by **Future US LLC**, 130 West 42nd Street, 7th floor, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **The Week**, PO Box 37252, Boone, IA 50037-0252. One-year subscription rates: U.S. \$199; Canada \$229; all other countries \$269 in prepaid U.S. funds. Publications mail agreement No. 40031590, Registration No. 140467846. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6. **The Week** is a member of The New York Times News Service and The Washington Post/Bloomberg News Service, and subscribes to The Associated Press.

# *Did you know:*

**5+ million**

Medicare beneficiaries have – or know someone who has – experienced challenges accessing a doctor who accepts Medicare.

**35+ million**

Medicare beneficiaries experience health care access delays of more than one month.

When you retire, you should be able to reap the benefits of Medicare – a program you've paid into for years through hard-earned tax dollars.

Learn More at  
[FixMedicareNow.org](http://FixMedicareNow.org)



**AMA**  
AMERICAN MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**FIX  
MEDICARE  
NOW**

# 'Bel Can-do'



In November 2022 we introduced the Bel Canto. Instantly making haute horology accessible. This subtly chiming timepiece caused a cacophony. And enormous demand. (The first 600 sold out in 8 hours.) Asked could we produce 5,000 annually, our Swiss CEO Jorg Bader Snr replied: "No. But we'll find a way." Because that is our way. Today, our supply chain is as fit for purpose as the gear chain of the new Bel Canto Classic. Which features a dressed-up dial. A dialled-down handset. And a gorgeous guilloché finish, with a precision only achievable (and affordable) using a femto laser. Outward displays, we like to think, of inward grace.

(Bel Can-)Do your research



[christopherward.com](http://christopherward.com)

