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THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Ultimate trade war

Will Trump's
tariffs hurt
the U.S. more
than China?

Pages 5 and 34



APRIL 25, 2025
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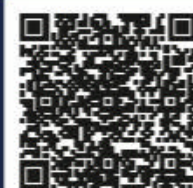
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Tracy Chapman (p.10)

Editor's letter

American conservatives have long compared left-wing campus zealots to the Red Guards of China's Cultural Revolution, given to intolerance and empty sloganeering. There may have been some truth to that, but now it is the Trump administration that seems to be following the Cultural Revolution's path. While we associate the Cultural Revolution with images of students dragging out their bloodied professors, that period was soon followed by the closing of the universities as Chairman Mao sought to stamp out the remnants of pre-Communist culture. Now, similarly, the culture war of the Right has come, with full force, to our universities.

The presidents of the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University resigned after a disastrously out-of-touch performance in Congress at the end of 2023. Republicans then had legitimate points about campus antisemitism, and valid complaints about universities' liberal monoculture. Yet the Trump administration's moves against Harvard (see *The U.S. at a Glance*, p.7) undermine any points the campaign to reform colleges made and betrays that its real target is not antisemitism, or admissions, or left-wing intolerance. It is the independence of the university and its scholarship from the government. In the name of "viewpoint diversity," the White House wants the university to place itself into a kind of federal receivership. The same administration that dismissed "diversity" as a code word for liberal ideas now proudly recycles the term as a code word for its own ideology.

The MAGA world has long had a chip on its shoulder about academia, despite its own pedigree (Trump: University of Pennsylvania, JD Vance: Yale Law School, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth: Princeton; the list goes on). It sees universities as the top of the cultural pecking order, and knocking them down a peg is a bid to reshape the culture in MAGA's image. It is a terrible road to go down for anyone who has ever had any genuine belief in viewpoint diversity, or any suspicion of the unchecked powers of government. Running the Ivy League has proven itself in the last year to be a singularly thankless task. The administrators have often done it badly. But it is a dead certainty that the federal government will not do it better.

Mark Gimein
Managing editor

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Trump defies courts over migrant's deportation

What happened

A potential constitutional crisis loomed this week, as a federal judge accused the Trump administration of ignoring a Supreme Court order to pursue the release of an asylum seeker from a notoriously brutal El Salvador mega-prison. In a unanimous ruling, the nation's highest court largely affirmed U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis' order that it must "facilitate" El Salvador's return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a 29-year-old Maryland father of three, sheet metal worker, and university student who was detained and deported without a hearing. Chief Justice John Roberts, however, gave Trump some wiggle room, saying that Xinis must defer to Trump's authority in "foreign affairs" and could not dictate his dealings with El Salvador. In response, Attorney General Pam Bondi said "facilitate" meant only the U.S. would "provide a plane" if El Salvador chose to return him. After the Supreme Court's ruling, Xinis scolded the White House for that interpretation, saying "nothing has been done" to bring Abrego Garcia back, and ordered a period of "intense" discovery in which administration officials would have to testify about their efforts to comply with her order. "There will be no tolerance for gamesmanship," she warned. Another federal judge, James Boasberg, this week found "probable cause" to find the administration in criminal contempt for failing to obey his stay on other deportations to El Salvador under the 1798 Alien Enemies Act, giving officials until April 23 to try to "purge their contempt."

In an Oval Office meeting with El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, Trump and his Cabinet officials scoffed at the idea of seeking Abrego Garcia's return and insisted he was "an illegal alien." Bukele called the suggestion of a transfer "preposterous." Abrego Garcia was apprehended in March in front of his 5-year-old autistic son, accused of membership in the MS-13 gang, and sent to El Salvador's massive Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT. In a court hearing, Trump administration officials later conceded it was an "administrative error" to deport Abrego Garcia. In 2019, an immigration judge had blocked his deportation to his native El Salvador and found that he had credible fear of "persecution" by violent gangs there.

Trump, meanwhile, floated the idea of sending U.S. citizens convicted of crimes to El Salvador's prison. "The homegrown are next," he said.

What the editorials said

The Supreme Court's ruling "ought to have been the end of the matter," said the *Chicago Tribune*. But the Trump administration has since "refused to comply," on the pretense it can't force El Salvador to send Abrego Garcia back. The U.S. is paying Bukele



Bukele meeting with Trump and aides in the Oval Office

\$6 million to imprison deported migrants for a year, and he "would promptly return Abrego Garcia to these shores if Trump said to do so."

Roberts offered Trump a chance to avoid "a constitutional crisis," said *The Wall Street Journal*. But instead of "quietly asking Bukele to return Abrego Garcia," Trump is essentially "taunting the Supreme Court." Why is he risking so much over the fate of a single man? This president "may be bloody-minded enough that he wants to show the judiciary who's boss."

What the columnists said

Trump is clearly acting in bad faith, said **Andrew C. McCarthy** in *National Review*. Although Abrego Garcia was illegally deported to El Salvador, he "remains in the constructive custody of our federal government," which is simply paying Bukele to temporarily house him in its prison. "There appears to be no reason, other than his own stubbornness," that Trump could not immediately bring back Abrego Garcia for a hearing that respects his due-process rights. Any claim to the contrary is "laughable."

"One Trump official after another" has claimed Abrego Garcia belongs to the MS-13 gang, said **Greg Sargent** in *The New Republic*. But the only evidence a detective provided in 2019 was "conspicuously thin"—that the migrant wore a Chicago Bulls cap and hoodie and was named as a gang member by a confidential informant. But that detective later pleaded guilty to divulging confidential information to a sex worker and was suspended. Meanwhile, Abrego Garcia was never "charged with, let alone convicted of, any crime," while holding a job and supporting a family.

"This is state terror," said **Timothy Snyder** in his *Substack* newsletter, and every American is vulnerable. The Constitution's bedrock principle is habeas corpus—the right not to be bodily detained without legal justification. But the Trump administration claims our Dear Leader is acting on "a mandate" from the people, and cannot be restrained by law, due process, or court orders from sending people he deems dangerous to "foreign concentration camps." That means that even if you're a citizen, the government can "claim that you are a foreign terrorist and disappear you."

If Trump wins his struggle with the courts, said **Noah Smith** in *Noahpinion*, "then we do, in fact, live in a dictatorship." We can only hope he'll prove incompetent enough to botch this "transition to authoritarianism." It's "upon this thin thread that we must hang our hopes for democracy."

What next?

Xinis' discovery order "sets up a high-stakes sprint," said **Kyle Cheney** and **Josh Gerstein** in *Politico*, during which Trump officials may be forced to reveal much about their arrangement with El Salvador. But "the Justice Department appears likely to throw up a series of legal obstacles," including claims of confidentiality and national security. If that happens, expect the case to boomerang "back to SCOTUS," said **Jonathan V. Last** in *The Bulwark*. Surely, as our authoritarian president seeks to establish his dominion over the courts, Chief Justice John Roberts can see "what Trump is playing at." So, does he gamble on standing up to Trump? If "SCOTUS pushes all in on this case and loses, then it can no longer even pretend to have authority over the executive," rendering the Constitution "a dead letter." But surrendering "will mean that we have created a de facto extralegal policy of imprisonment in a foreign gulag for enemies of the regime."

...and How They Were Covered

Trade war with China threatens U.S. economy

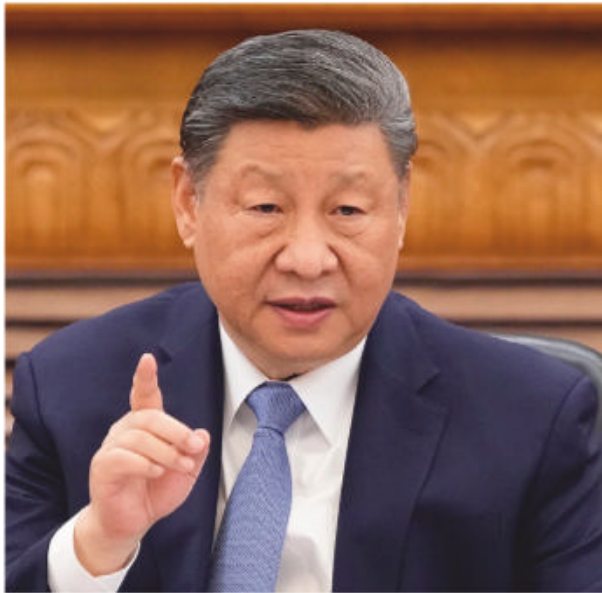
What happened

The tariff war between the U.S. and China intensified this week as both sides dug in amid rising fears of a global recession. The Trump administration's levies on Chinese imports hit a staggering 145 percent, and China countered with levies of 125 percent on U.S. goods. After saying repeatedly there would be no carve-outs, the administration announced an exception for electronic goods including smartphones, laptop computers, and modems, which face only 20 percent tariffs. But Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick then said additional tariffs on electronics would be announced "in a month or two." President Trump signaled he would also impose new tariffs on semiconductors and other technologies; he has already imposed stricter limits on the transfer of AI technology to China. The dollar hit a three-year low—dropping 9 percent since January—as investors shed U.S. assets, and U.S. business owners who rely on trade with China were left reeling. "I'm terrified for my business," said Beth Benike of Busy Baby, a Minnesota company whose products are manufactured in China. "I could lose my home."

China directed its airlines to halt deliveries of jets ordered from Boeing, the U.S.'s largest exporter, and it suspended exports of the rare-earth minerals and magnets that are critical for manufacturing everything from cars and planes to drones and weapons systems. In a statement read by White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, Trump said "the ball is in China's court" to "make a deal," but there was no sign China was ready to even initiate talks. America's tariffs "will backfire," said senior Chinese official Xia Baolong. "Peasants in the U.S.," he said, will "wail in front of the 5,000 years of Chinese civilization."

What the editorials said

If you're flummoxed by Trump's tariff policy, "don't worry," said the *Washington Examiner*. "You are not alone." The president and his team have flip-flopped continually while offering a dizzying range of rationales for the levies and sending mixed signals about future moves. The maybe-temporary turnabout on electronics is just the latest example. To steer Americans through such a trade shift would require a steady hand and clear communication of



Xi: Many options for striking back

what's being done and how it will work. But so far "the only constant" has been "chaos."

These "monster" tariffs on China are inflicting pain, "yet it's not Trump's billionaire chums who are suffering the most," said the *New York Post*. It's ordinary folks, who "make up the backbone of the country and his base." Mom-and-pop shops that rely on Chinese imports face ruin as they find "their business models unworkable in an instant," and blue-collar voters will suffer worst from price spikes. If Trump "doesn't wake up fast to the growing angst," the fallout will be "deep and lasting."

What the columnists said

The tariffs' impact will hit the entire economy, said Dave Lawler in *Axios*. "The vast majority of the toys, cellphones, and many other products" we buy come from China, and price jumps loom on everything from "fast fashion to gaming consoles." Chinese President Xi Jinping has no end of ways to inflict damage beyond levying his own tariffs, including export controls, blacklisting individual firms, and the "nuclear option" of selling off China's vast holdings of U.S. bonds.

And all this for what? We should be "the last country on Earth" to throw a bomb into the world economy, said Rich Lowry in *National Review*. Despite Trump's claims we've been "ripped off," America "has thrived in recent decades, while other advanced democracies have fallen behind." Since 2020 we've grown at three times the rate of other G-7 nations, and "our labor productivity has skyrocketed." It's insanity "to change the rules in the middle of the game" when you're many points ahead.

"I've never been more afraid for America's future in my life," said Thomas L. Friedman in *The New York Times*. Trump has launched an irrational trade war with no allies, "no serious preparation," and no understanding of the modern global economy, a "complex ecosystem" where an American-made product can contain Chinese and Mexican parts. This "cruel farce" is "triggering a serious loss of global confidence in America," with profound implications that will touch every one of us. The rest of the world "is now seeing Trump's America for exactly what it is becoming: a rogue state led by an impulsive strongman."

It wasn't all bad

■ The staff at a Haverhill, Mass., McDonald's were skeptical when a stranger left a wad of several thousand dollars to pay for everyone's food until the money ran out. But the money paid for 356 meals after police confirmed that the cash wasn't counterfeit. "We have customers regularly offer to pay for the car behind them, but that's just one order," said Christine Yee, daughter of the McDonald's franchise owner. "We hope everyone who got a meal for free today passes that good feeling of caring forward."

■ Mommy, a roughly 100-year-old Galápagos tortoise, became an actual mother for the first time when she had four hatchlings at the Philadelphia Zoo over a few days in February and March. The brood of tennis-ball-size babies comes from 16 eggs that Mommy laid in November. All are female, and they will remain at the zoo for at least five years. Mommy herself has lived at the



Mommy the tortoise

zoo since 1932, and not counting her offspring, she is one of 44 critically endangered Western Santa Cruz tortoises in American zoos. Her hatchlings could live between 100 and 200 years. "They serve as important ambassadors," said the Philadelphia Zoo's Rachel Metz, "to inspire guests to save wildlife and wild places."

■ Each spring, Pat DeReamer, 95, and Mary Kroger, 94, exchange the same birthday card featuring a giant dinosaur skeleton. For each birthday they write the year and sign their names—and they've maintained the tradition since 1944. Sixty years in they won the Guinness World Record for longest birthday exchange; that record was surpassed, though they have recently asked for the title back. They don't remember who started the tradition. "We really weren't looking for notoriety," DeReamer said. "We're just doing what we have done for the better part of our lives."

Controversy of the Week

Retribution: Trump calls for prosecution of critics

President Trump “fired a warning shot from the edge of autocracy” last week, said **Thom Hartmann** in *The New Republic*. The U.S. moved much closer to becoming a “police state” when Trump signed executive memoranda directing Attorney General Pam Bondi to investigate public comments made by two former officials: Christopher Krebs, a former top cybersecurity official in the first Trump administration who debunked baseless claims that the 2020 election was stolen, and Miles Taylor, a former Homeland Security official who wrote an anonymous newspaper column and book criticizing Trump. They’re “public servants whose only crime” was speaking truth to power—but a vengeful Trump now wants them prosecuted to send “a chilling message to current and future whistleblowers: ‘Cross me, and you’ll pay.’” Trump is no longer simply “using the justice system to reward friends” as he did when he pardoned Jan. 6 rioters this year, said **Mona Charen** in *The Bulwark*. Ominously, he has targeted individuals he views as enemies. In Krebs’ case, he has ordered the Justice Department to scour his tenure in government to find some form of misconduct. In the infamous words of Lavrentiy Beria, Stalin’s hatchet man: “Show me the man, and I will find the crime.”



Krebs, Taylor: Enemies of the state

Krebs and Taylor are “minor characters from Season 1 of *The Trump Show*,” said **Nick Catoggio** in *The Dispatch*. So why target them? It signals there are no insignificant critics, and that if you cause this president “any trouble, you too should sleep less soundly at night. No one is safe.” The ball is in Bondi’s court, said **Elie Honig** in *New York*. An ethical attorney general would not proceed without “predication” of a crime, but despite assurances during her Senate confirmation hearing that she would uphold the Justice Department’s independence, Bondi has shown “she’s in the

bag for Trump.” Unlike her predecessor, Bill Barr, who “ignored Trump’s public pleas” to arrest enemies, Bondi will vigorously investigate. And even if she can’t bring charges or make them stick, Krebs and Taylor could face staggering legal fees, searches of their phones and computers, intrusive interviews of friends and colleagues, and damage to their careers.

Trump broke a promise by “sicking” Bondi on Krebs and Taylor, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. He “campaign[ed] on ending lawfare” and in January signed an executive order squashing “the ‘weaponization’ of government.” So much for that. Now he’s “doing precisely what Democrats did to him.” The hypocrisy doesn’t end there, said **Aaron Blake** in *The Washington Post*. Trump says Taylor is “guilty of treason,” accusing him of exposing classified conversations. But after his first term, Trump was indicted for “taking and resisting returning” more than 100 classified documents, and stashing them in a bathroom at Mar-a-Lago.

The attack on Krebs and Taylor ushers in “phase two” of the second Trump presidency, said **David A. Graham** in *The Atlantic*. “Phase one” featured the Elon Musk–led purge of federal agencies. That was done in the name of cost cutting, but the Department of Government Efficiency’s work also reduces the number of “long-time professionals” who might “stand in the way of” Trump’s retribution mission. To advance that mission, Trump fired career Justice Department attorneys who might object to political prosecutions, and punished and neutered law firms that have represented Trump critics. Now in phase two, critics will taste his vengeance. For Trump, “revenge isn’t just a welcome adjunct to controlling the levels of government.” It’s the whole point of his second term.

Only in America

■ A sixth-grade teacher in Idaho was ordered to remove a classroom poster saying “Everyone is welcome here.” Sarah Inama said administrators told her that the poster’s depiction of hands with varying skin tones was “a ‘political opinion’ that violated President Trump’s ban on ‘equity ideology’ in schools. Inama briefly took the poster down, but then put it back up. “You either believe everyone is welcome here or you don’t,” she said.

■ Flight attendants for a charter airline taking deported migrants to El Salvador are wondering how to handle an emergency when their passengers are in shackles. The attendants have been told not to talk to or touch the deportees. If the plane has to be evacuated, said Lala, an attendant for Global Crossing Airlines, “I don’t know what we would do.” She said attendants were told when they were hired that passengers would be “elites, celebrities.”

Good week for:

Redesigning the pearly gates, after the Vatican put “God’s architect,” the modernist master Antoni Gaudí, on the path to sainthood.

Togetherness, after three female elephants at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park quickly formed a protective “alert circle” to protect two calves as the ground shook from a magnitude-5.2 earthquake. On sensing the tremors, the females immediately surrounded 7-year-old calves named Zuli and Mkhaya until the quake passed.

Try, try again, after Rory McIlroy finally won the Masters to give him the last of the four majors in golf’s Grand Slam—11 years after he clinched his third. McIlroy, who lost a three-stroke lead on the final round of the Masters in 2011, called the victory “the best day of my golfing life.”

Bad week for:

Security, after a whistleblower told Congress and CNN that DOGE staffers secretly used Starlink to export vast amounts of sensitive worker, union, and employer data from the records of the National Labor Relations Board. Russian hackers then logged into the NLRB’s computers using the right passwords, the whistleblower said.

Air passengers, after United Airlines said it had begun reducing the number of daily flights because “the softer economic situation is creating softer demand for travel.” Air travel from Canada and by U.S. government workers, the airline said, had noticeably declined.

Credibility, after President Trump’s doctor reported that he’s 6 foot 3, weighs 224 pounds, and is in excellent health due to his “active lifestyle.” That makes Trump an inch taller and 16 pounds lighter than when he was booked in Manhattan in 2023 on 34 felony counts.

In other news

ATF still without permanent head as U.S. replaces Patel

The Justice Department confirmed last week that Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll has replaced FBI Director Kash Patel as acting head of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives—an unusual move that places a civilian defense leader in charge of a domestic law enforcement agency. The White House, worried that running the ATF and FBI would be too time-consuming for Patel, reportedly decided to replace him in February, shortly after he was given the role. Driscoll, an Iraq veteran with ties to Vice President JD Vance, maintains his role as Army secretary, overseeing a budget of over \$187 billion. President Trump has not indicated whether he has any plans to nominate a permanent head for the 5,000-person agency. The Justice Department has suggested combining the ATF with the Drug Enforcement Administration, leaving ATF employees demoralized and worried that their agency will be gutted.

The U.S. at a Glance

Waukesha, Wis.

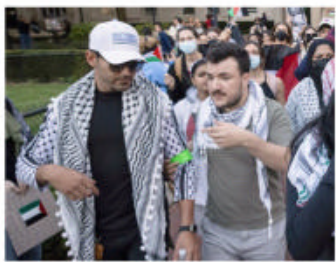
Assassination plot: A Milwaukee-area teen charged with murdering his parents also planned to assassinate President Trump and overthrow the government, the FBI revealed this week. Seventeen-year-old Nikita Casap faces charges including first-degree murder and hiding a corpse for allegedly killing his mother and stepfather. Their bodies were found decomposing in their Waukesha, Wis., home in February, and authorities suspect Casap lived alongside the corpses for weeks before fleeing with about \$14,000, a gun, passports, and his dog. He was arrested in Kansas soon after the bodies were discovered. His communications suggested he murdered his parents to obtain the money needed to kill Trump, destabilize the government, and “save the white race,” according to federal authorities. He also pledged allegiance to neo-Nazi extremist groups and described his plan to kill his parents on social media and messaging apps, saying he would head to Ukraine after assassinating Trump.



Casap

Jena, La.

Activist detentions: An immigration judge ruled last week that Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate involved in last year’s pro-Palestinian protests, can be deported, in a case that tests the government’s power to expel permanent residents. Khalil, 30, was detained in New York City last month and quickly moved to a detention center in

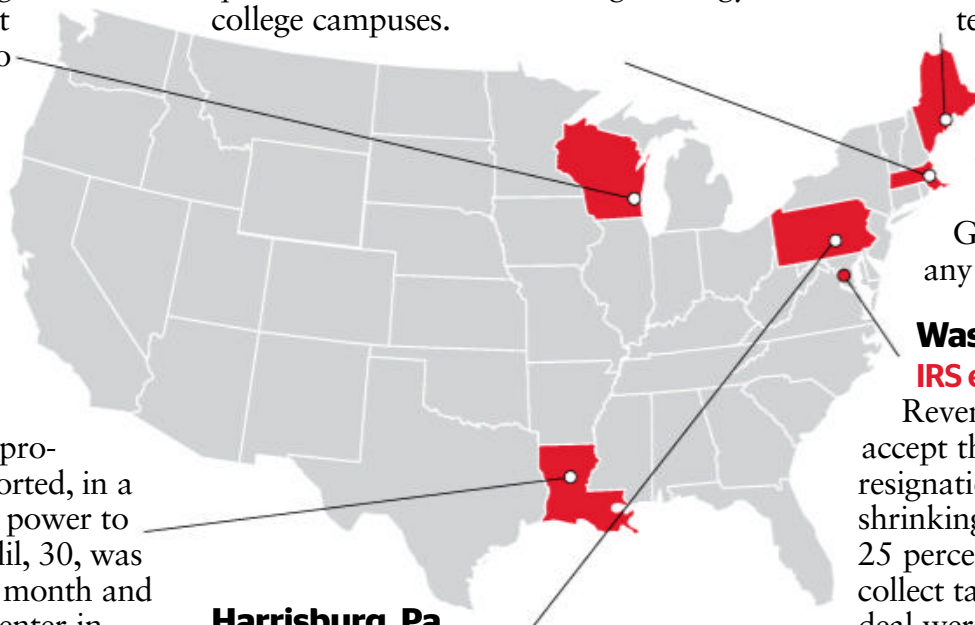


Mahdawi and Khalil

Jena, La. Born in Syria and married to an American citizen, Khalil, a green-card holder, was a negotiator and spokesman for Columbia protesters last year. While he has not been charged with any crime, the immigration judge accepted the government’s argument that his presence could have “serious foreign policy consequences.” Khalil plans to appeal, and has already filed a separate case challenging his detention. A second Columbia student activist with permanent residency, Mohsen Mahdawi, was detained this week at a Vermont immigration office. A federal judge granted his lawyer’s request to keep federal officials from moving him out of state.

Cambridge, Mass.

School fight: The Trump administration this week froze Harvard University funding after the school rejected a series of government demands. The White House had called for Harvard to submit to extensive government oversight and institute changes to leadership, governance, and student discipline. The list of administration demands included reforming every department that an audit finds to be insufficiently “viewpoint diverse.” Harvard is “open to dialogue,” wrote the school’s attorneys, but it is “not prepared to agree to demands that go beyond the lawful authority of this or any administration.” In response, the administration announced it would freeze over \$2 billion of Harvard’s federal grants. President Trump also called for the university to lose its tax-exempt status. Harvard, which had earlier agreed to strengthen its policies against antisemitism, is the first university to push back against a broad White House effort to quash what it sees as left-wing ideology on college campuses.



Harrisburg, Pa.

Passover arson: A Pennsylvania man faced charges of attempted murder and arson after setting Gov. Josh Shapiro’s home on fire this week. Cody Balmer, 38, walked for over an hour with a hammer and beer bottles full of gasoline to reach Shapiro’s Harrisburg mansion. He climbed a fence, broke two windows, and tossed Molotov cocktails inside while the Democratic governor and his family slept upstairs. According to police, Balmer then called 911 to say that he was angry about what “Shapiro wants to do to the Palestinian people.” The attack came hours after Shapiro and his family had finished celebrating the Passover holiday with friends in the house’s main dining room. Balmer’s mother, Christie Balmer, said he was mentally ill; police had visited her home last week but didn’t take any action because Balmer wasn’t expressing violent intentions.

Augusta, Maine

Trans athletes: The Trump administration this week sued Maine’s Education Department over the state’s refusal to comply with its demand to ban transgender athletes from girls’ and women’s sports. The government already announced it was cutting Maine’s federal education funding over the heated dispute last week, including suspending cash for its school meals program, but a federal judge quickly ordered the administration to release that program’s funding. The federal Education Department argued Maine violated Title IX, the law barring sex-based discrimination in education, by letting a trans athlete play women’s sports. The administration won’t “tolerate unlawful discrimination against girls and women,” it said. But Maine contended that Title IX doesn’t bar transgender students from playing on girls’ sports teams. “Because there are maybe two—at most—two transgender athletes competing in Maine schools right now, they decided to shut off funding for our school nutrition program,” said Maine Gov. Janet Mills. “That didn’t make any sense.”



Mills

Washington, D.C.

IRS exodus: About 22,000 Internal Revenue Service employees planned to accept the Trump administration’s latest resignation offer this week, potentially shrinking the agency’s workforce by 25 percent and threatening its ability to collect taxes. Employees who took Trump’s deal were put on paid administrative leave through September, when they’ll officially leave their jobs. The IRS employed about 100,000 people when President Trump took office, and nearly 5,000 have already left this year. Federal employees were initially offered similar buyouts at the end of January, with an email from the Department of Government Efficiency titled “A Fork in the Road.” Few were eager to take the offer when it was not clear how deep federal layoffs would cut. The latest offer, which some federal workers have dubbed “Fork 2,” has had many more takers as federal workers watch Elon Musk’s DOGE steamroll through the federal bureaucracy. About 4,000 Department of Transportation workers and 2,700 Energy Department employees applied for the latest buyout.



Shrinking workforce

The World at a Glance



Scunthorpe steelworks

Scunthorpe, U.K.

Steel takeover: The British government last week took control of British Steel to prevent the company's Chinese owner, Jingye Group, from shutting down the country's last blast furnaces capable of making steel from scratch. Prime Minister Keir Starmer called members of Parliament back from vacation to pass the emergency legislation. The government said it had secured enough iron ore and coking coal to keep the furnaces running; had they shut down, it would have cost too much to restart. Beijing warned that investor confidence in Britain would be jeopardized if Jingye was not treated "fairly and justly." A spokesman for Starmer said that while Jingye still owns the Scunthorpe steelworks, nationalization is "a likely option in the short term," until the government finds a non-Chinese investor to buy it.

London

What is a woman? The legal definition of a woman includes only those born biologically female, Britain's Supreme Court ruled this week. A Scottish court had said that trans women with gender-recognition certificates were covered under a 2018 law setting a 50 percent quota for women on the boards of government agencies. The For Women pressure group challenged that ruling, arguing that sex is biological and can't be changed. The high court ruling says that while trans people are protected from discrimination under the 2010 Equality Act, the categories of "man" and "woman" in that act must refer to "biological sex" because any other definition would be "incoherent and impracticable." Lawmaker Maggie Chapman of Scotland's Green Party said the decision was "a huge blow to some of the most marginalized people in our society."

Budapest

Two sexes only: Hungary approved a constitutional amendment this week recognizing only two sexes, male and female, and banning public events by LGBTQ groups, including Pride marches. Prime Minister Viktor Orban, an ally of President Trump, called for ending what he called "gender madness," saying that "with the change in America, the winds have shifted in our favor." The legislature also changed the constitution to allow for dual nationals to be stripped of their Hungarian citizenship if they are deemed dangerous to the nation, a measure aimed at the exiles who are often vocal critics of Orban. This is the 15th time Orban has revised the constitution since returning as prime minister in 2010 and refashioning his country into what he calls an "illiberal democracy." Before the vote, protesters waving Pride flags gathered at the parliament.



Protesting the ban

Quito, Ecuador

Noboa triumphs: Ecuadoran President Daniel Noboa, 37, won re-election this week in a vote considered a referendum on his wholesale crackdown on drug gangs. The Miami-born Noboa, the wealthy, Harvard-educated heir to a banana empire, imposed a state of emergency last year, rounding up and jailing thousands of alleged gang members. The murder rate,



Noboa: Four more years

which had been one of the highest in the world because of drug violence, promptly plunged, although it began to rise again this year with dozens of mayors and prison directors gunned down in recent months. Defeated leftist challenger Luisa González, a close ally of former President Rafael Correa, refused to recognize the election result and accused Noboa of fraud. Hundreds of González supporters swarmed her party's headquarters, shouting, "Recount!"

Brussels

U.S. not safe: The EU's executive body has started issuing staffers burner phones when they travel to the United States, the *Financial Times* reported this week. The measures are similar to those that EU employees use to avoid surveillance on trips to China. Relations between the U.S. and Europe have deteriorated under President Trump, who accuses European leaders of trying to "screw the U.S." Border guards at U.S. airports are now scouring foreign visitors' phones for social media comments critical of Trump or his administration's policies. Some tourists and academics have been turned away or detained. Washington is now seen as "an adversary," said Dutch historian Luuk van Middelaar, "prone to use extralegal methods to further its interests."

Brasilia

Trump is good for Brazil: Brazilian beef and crop exports are booming thanks to President Trump's trade war with China. Brazil expanded a previously narrow lead over the U.S. as the biggest supplier of food to China during Trump's first term, when the U.S. also had a tariff battle with China. This time, its exports surged even before Trump increased tariffs on China to 145 percent and Beijing responded with its own 125 percent levies. Brazil's beef sales to China jumped by a third in the first three months of 2025, while poultry exports rose by 19 percent in March alone. Brazilian soybeans now sell at a \$1.15 premium compared with their U.S. counterpart, up from a 25-cent discount before the tariffs. "The ramifications of this will be longer lasting than the actual measures," said Ishan Bhanu of commodities data provider Kpler. "In Asia, countries will build better relationships with South America."



Brazilian cattle

The World at a Glance

Sumy, Ukraine

Bombing churchgoers: Russian strikes killed 34 people this week in northeastern Ukraine, 18 miles from the Russian border. At least two ballistic missiles blasted the Sumy city center as families flocked to churches on Palm Sunday. “Launching such an attack on a major Christian holiday is absolute evil,” said Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha. President Volodymyr Zelensky called the strike a “war crime.” President Trump said he was told that Russia “made a mistake.” Russia, which launched the war by invading Ukraine in 2022, continues to resist U.S. calls for a cease-fire. The G7 prepared a statement condemning the strike but the U.S. reportedly blocked it, saying it was “working to preserve the space to negotiate peace.”



No letup in Russian attacks

Harbin, China

U.S. accused of cyberattack: Chinese police said this week that the U.S. National Security Agency targeted this year’s Asian Winter Games with “advanced” cyberattacks. Investigators in the northeastern city of Harbin, where the games were held in February, said the University of California and Virginia Tech were involved in the alleged hacking. China says three NSA hackers tried to conceal their identities by using front organizations to buy IP addresses in different countries and working from servers in Europe and Asia. Police concluded that the attacks targeted athletes’ personal information and other sensitive data. The Trump administration, which accused China of cyberattacks against U.S. officials in March, said Beijing was using “fabrications” to establish “false equivalence to excuse its own bad acts in cyberspace.”

Hong Kong

Opposition gives up: Hong Kong’s Democratic Party voted this week to dissolve itself, a sign that the last remnants of Western-style democracy are disappearing under Chinese control of the former British colony. Hong Kong’s biggest opposition faction, the party was formed in the 1990s to push Beijing to honor its promise to respect freedoms in the semiautonomous city after the 1997 changeover to Chinese rule. The party grew to a membership of 1,000 at its peak, and it led mass pro-democracy protests, but many of its leaders were arrested in 2021. Numerous other opposition groups have also shut down since Beijing imposed a strict national security law in 2020. “We have not achieved what we set out to do,” said Fred Li, a founding party member. “Without money or resources, we can’t even survive ourselves.”



Dissolving the party

Najaf, Iraq

Choked with sand: A strong sandstorm swept across Iraq this week, turning the sky orange for days and shutting down airports in Najaf and Basra. Hospitals treated more than 3,000 people for breathing problems. Clinics in Muthanna province recorded 700 cases of “suffocation.” The sandstorm, which originated in Saudi Arabia, was the worst to hit Iraq since 2022, when massive dust clouds killed one person and sent 5,000 to hospitals. Climate scientists warn that the sandstorms that have long plagued Iraq are becoming more frequent and severe as rising temperatures and declining rainfall worsen desertification in the once fertile land. When this storm started, the high temperature was above 100 degrees each day, but that dropped after the dust blocked the sun.



Apocalyptic



Displaced again

El Fasher, Sudan

Darfur slaughter: Survivors described a horrific atrocity in Darfur this week as paramilitaries from the Rapid Support Forces attacked the Zamzam refugee camp outside the Darfur capital El Fasher. At least 400 civilians were killed, and eyewitnesses said they were forced to flee past dismembered body parts and the charred bodies of their neighbors. The RSF, which has been battling the Sudanese army for two years, now controls much of western and southern Sudan and declared a parallel government this week. More than 12 million people have been driven from their homes and tens of thousands have been killed during the civil war, and the U.N. says fighters on both sides are using rape as a weapon of war. “One survivor recounted that she was told, ‘We are your men now,’ before RSF fighters raped her in front of her children,” said Li Fung, a U.N. human rights official.



Most of Gaza is rubble.

Rafah, Gaza

Civilians suffer without aid: A U.N. relief agency said this week the humanitarian situation in Gaza is “the worst it has been in the 18 months since the outbreak of hostilities.” The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said there had been a surge in Israeli attacks “causing mass civilian casualties,” including a strike on a hospital that Israel said was being used as a Hamas command center. Israel has seized more than 50 percent of Gaza since renewing its military offensive against Hamas last month, with the military bulldozing Palestinian homes and farms to expand the buffer zone along the border with Israel. Hamas this week rejected an Israeli proposal for a six-week cease-fire, saying the plan would require it to give up its weapons with no guarantee that Israel would end the war.

The zoo life of a Monkee



Micky Dolenz almost got trampled by pop stardom, said Alexis Petridis in *The Guardian*. The Monkees' last surviving member, now 80, was barely out of his teens when he answered a 1965 casting call for a new TV show seeking "singers for acting roles." *The Monkees*, about a fictional, Beatlesque band, made Dolenz an instant star. A year after the show started airing, he walked into a shopping mall near his parents' home and saw people suddenly running screaming toward him. "I thought it was a fire. I hold open the big door and I'm going, 'Slow down! Don't run! Don't panic!' And suddenly I realized they were running at me." The Monkees had a series of real-life hits, but at first the actors contributed only the vocals: Professional musicians did the rest. They didn't even know their second album had been released until they saw it in stores. Dolenz didn't mind as much as guitarist Mike Nesmith, a singer-songwriter who had been given false promises of some creative control. Dolenz recalls Nesmith, who died in 2021, playing the show's producers a song he'd written. "They said, 'Thank you, but no thank you—it's not a Monkees song,'" says Dolenz. "He said, 'Wait a minute, I am one of the f---ing Monkees. What are you talking about?'"

Tom Hanks' deprived daughter

Having a famous father didn't spare E.A. Hanks from hardship, said Mike Sacks in *Vanity Fair*. Now 42, Elizabeth Ann Hanks—the full name of the daughter of Tom Hanks and his first wife, Susan Dillingham—spent much of her childhood with her mother after her parents' 1985 divorce. That meant growing up in a home with a mentally ill woman who abused drugs and alcohol. "I understood my mom was an addict, and I had a good grip on what that meant because of all the hours I spent at 12-step programs," she says. "But I had no vocabulary for why my mom talked to God out loud or would tell me there were men hiding in our closets." While she says her mother "was doing the best she could," in practice that meant "I didn't see a dentist for a decade" and the backyard was "so full of dog shit that you couldn't walk around it." In middle school, her father gained custody, and her life was transformed to one of material wealth and plentiful attention. "I wasn't born on third base, but we moved there in the '90s." Still, E.A. refuses to remember Dillingham, who died in 2002, merely as an unfit parent. "A portrayal of my mother that only shows the bad days would be as dishonest as one that only shows the good."

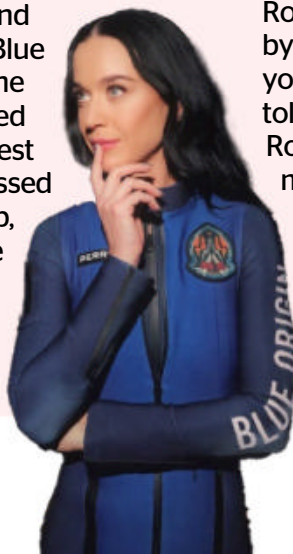


Chapman's grounding in resistance

Tracy Chapman was just 16 when she wrote the 1988 hit "Talkin' Bout a Revolution," said Lindsay Zoladz in *The New York Times*. The song's theme of social justice—of how "poor people gonna rise up"—might seem precocious for a high schooler, but "that was the world that I knew," says the Cleveland native, now 61. "I grew up in a working-class family and was very much aware of the struggles that my mom encountered as she was raising me and my sister. There were other people in my family who were working in blue-collar jobs as the industrial economy was starting to fail. So I'm trying to understand them and paint a picture in these songs." She landed at Tufts University, outside Boston, on a scholarship. "I felt like I was on a path to improving my situation. I graduated with my major in anthropology, which was going to make me a lot of money," she laughs. Instead, at 24 she released a chart-topping album, *Tracy Chapman*, featuring "Revolution" and another hit, "Fast Car." That latter song found new life in 2023 as a No. 1 country smash for Luke Combs, and Chapman sang it with him at the Grammys last year. "I wouldn't have predicted that's where it would go, but the song has been covered quite a bit—and there's dance versions of it. I can't say I would have thought of that either!"

In the news

■ Pop star **Katy Perry** headlined an all-female spaceflight crew aboard a Blue Origin rocket this week in the latest adventure in space tourism, a brief jaunt above Earth's internationally recognized boundary. Joining her were CBS News' Gayle King, former NASA engineer Aisha Bowe, film producer Kerianne Flynn, scientist Amanda Nguyen, and Lauren Sánchez, fiancée of Blue Origin founder Jeff Bezos. The *New Shepard* rocket launched from Blue Origin's private West Texas ranch and quickly crossed the Karman Line, 62 miles up, where the women were able to float in the capsule a few minutes before buckling in for the return. It was the first multiperson mission ever



crewed solely by women. During the descent, Perry sang "What a Wonderful World" to the others and promised she'd "for sure" write a song about the journey.

■ Actor **Mickey Rourke**, who garnered critical acclaim for his starring role in 2008's *The Wrestler*, was booted last week from the reality show *Celebrity Big Brother UK*. Rourke, 72, had upset castmate JoJo Siwa, 21, by telling her, "If I stay longer than four days, you won't be gay anymore." But a source told *The Sun* that the final straw came after Rourke aggressively confronted another cast member, Chris Hughes, calling him a "c--t" and warning him to "stop f---ing eyeballing" him. The British network ITV said Rourke "agreed to leave" in light of his use of "inappropriate language and instances of unacceptable behavior," but said he had not been involved in any physical

altercation. Rourke apologized for both incidents. "I stepped over the line," Rourke said. "I lost my temper, and I've been trying to work on it my whole life."

■ **Rosie O'Donnell** says she's formed a close bond with **Lyle Menendez**, incarcerated along with his brother Erik for the past 35 years for the 1989 murder of their parents. She said Lyle's wife first reached out to her in 2022 after O'Donnell made a TikTok defending the brothers. "He started calling me on a regular basis from the tablet phone thing they have," she said. "He would tell me about his life, what he's been doing in prison. And for the first time in my life, I felt safe enough to trust and be vulnerable and love a straight man." The brothers, who maintain that they acted in self-defense against their father's sexual abuse, could one day walk free, as a judge ruled their resentencing petition can proceed.

Briefing

China Shock 2.0

An overflow of Chinese goods is flooding the global market. Tariffs won't stop it.

Why has China ramped up its exports?

Domestic economic woes have made the world's largest exporter even more reliant on sending goods abroad. Aiming to offset a major real estate bust, Beijing has made an all-out effort to boost manufacturing in the country. China's trade surplus hit nearly \$1 trillion last year, more than doubling since 2019. State-controlled banks dished out a cool \$1.9 trillion to industrial borrowers over the past four years, and even by conservative estimates, China spent more on industrial subsidies than it did on national defense in 2019. New factories come online daily, and upgrades enhance productivity in existing factories. China's factory output—which now includes electric vehicles, lithium batteries, and renewable energy equipment—is larger than that of the U.S., Germany, Japan, South Korea, and the U.K. combined. Now, as President Trump wages a trade war with Beijing, China won't be able to easily access its biggest and most reliable foreign market, which means that some \$400 billion in cheap goods must be rerouted to other countries. “The real fireworks have yet to begin,” said Michael Pettis, a professor of finance at Peking University.



Electric vehicles are China's latest export.

Has this happened before?

The World Trade Organization officially welcomed China, already the world's sixth-largest economy, into its fold in 2001. Then President Bill Clinton was enthusiastic: He believed China's membership would benefit the U.S. economically while also promoting democratization in China. But rather than usher in political reforms, China's rise to a global trading behemoth solidified the Chinese Communist Party's power. In the U.S., meanwhile, there were winners and losers. Consumer prices fell and service sector jobs increased, but the influx of cheap Chinese products has put a significant dent in U.S. manufacturing. Though trade pressure leveled out by 2011, the hardest-hit industries and areas, like the American South, never recovered from declines in wages. Studies on the “China shock” from economists David H. Autor, David Dorn, and Gordon H. Hanson found that trade with China accounted for 1 million manufacturing job losses between 2001 and 2011, and 2.4 million job losses overall. “We didn't see people picking up and moving to better opportunities, as in historical narratives of U.S. resiliency,” Autor said.

Which countries will be affected?

“The tsunami is coming for everyone,” said Katherine Tai, the U.S. trade representative under former President Joe Biden. The fears of a second, world-wide China shock predate Trump's tariffs, and the pace of the sequel may be even more rapid than the original shock that hit the U.S. at the turn of the century. Layoffs are already underway in Indonesia's textile and apparel industry, which saw roughly 250,000 job losses over the past two years, with another 500,000 cuts likely to follow. Other emerging economies like Brazil and India have to compete with China to sell internet cables and

electronics. And China's rapid rise in the car and green-technology industries—China's BYD is now the world's biggest maker of electric vehicles—poses a threat to Germany.

How are those countries preparing?

Most are implementing at least some safeguards. Brazil now has a 35 percent tariff on Chinese fiber-optic cables, while Chinese textile imports face a 200 percent tariff in Indonesia. Mexico is reviewing its tariffs on China, and India has launched a probe into the dumping of Chinese goods, from solar cells to aluminum foil. Thailand and Malaysia have slapped sales taxes on lower-priced imported goods. The

situation presents a conundrum for developing countries, though, since China, seeking to exert its geopolitical influence, often invests heavily in their infrastructure. Blocking imports, therefore, isn't easy. “Do you really want to complain over shoes when someone's building you a port?” asked Deborah Elms, the head of trade policy at the Asia-based Hinrich Foundation, a research firm.

Could China's domestic market be an outlet?

While there have been some signs this year that Chinese consumer spending could be on the upswing, domestic demand still isn't strong enough for the overflow of goods produced. Consumption accounts for only 53 percent of China's GDP, well below the global average of 72 percent. Previously, there weren't many signs that the government was interested in redirecting its investments from manufacturing industries to boost consumer spending, but Beijing is starting to turn its attention to people's wallets. The government has announced stimulus plans, with consumer loans and vehicle trade-in payments, among other enticements. Now, in light of Trump's tariffs, economists are urging the CCP to do even more, but there may not be a quick-fix policy solution.

Will tariffs really shield the U.S.?

Trump waged his trade war based on America's trade deficit with China, but bilateral trade data aren't always the best indicators of the overall trade relationship between two countries. In the past, China has skirted U.S. tariffs by offshoring manufacturing to countries like Vietnam. Even before the current trade war, Chinese manufacturers had already been moving operations offshore, with Chinese automakers opening or planning plants in Hungary, Turkey, and Thailand. Chinese manufacturers see the factories as insurance against U.S. trade barriers, and also a way to build local goodwill. Those factories, which often rely on parts made in China, provide a way for China's industries to ship goods to the U.S. at lower tariff rates. There may be little anyone can do to reduce China's hold on the global market, except for China itself, and that will require a major transformation of domestic economic policy that will focus less on increasing output and more on increasing domestic demand.

Why don't China's consumers buy more?

China hasn't really recovered from the Covid pandemic. After Deng Xiaoping launched China's shift to a socialist market economy in the post-Maoist era in the 1970s, the country's living standards consistently improved. But the stringent lockdown, which wasn't lifted until 2022, halted momentum, as did the real estate crisis. Youth unemployment remains elevated after hitting an all-time high of 21.3 percent in June 2023. Now frugality is the norm, as pessimistic Chinese households brace for another crisis. People have always tended to save their money in China, but reluctance to spend is even more prevalent now, including among Millennial and Gen Z consumers who hold stable jobs with decent pay. China's weak social safety net also makes households wary about long-term security. “When people feel safe about their retirement life and feel safe about their financials after some major events like illness,” said Xu Tianchen, a China analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit, “then I think they're definitely going to be more willing to spend.”

Best Columns: The U.S.

Trump's 'peace' plan is dead

Cathy Young
The Bulwark

President Trump's vow to bring peace to Ukraine "seems all but dead and forgotten," said Cathy Young. Late last month "Trump was touting an apparent success": an agreement for a partial cease-fire. But Putin agreed only to limited terms that were "likely to benefit Moscow more than Kiev," such as ending the destruction of Russia's oil depots and the use of force in the Black Sea, where Ukraine has already taken out a third of Russia's warships. Trump has issued only tepid objections as Russia escalated its attacks on residential neighborhoods, such as a recent missile strike on a playground that killed nine children. The White House says peace efforts continue but confirmed Ukraine wouldn't even be discussed at U.S.-Russia talks that started last week in Istanbul. "The bottom line is that Putin has no interest in ending the war." Indeed, he's given every indication he plans to escalate, falsely claiming Russia is nearing victory while calling Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky "illegitimate." Given Trump's appalling deference to the Russian strongman, the war "will almost certainly continue into 2026." We may see Trump "quietly drop his faux peace effort once its futility becomes undeniable."

The GOP's latest attempt to limit voting

Chris Brennan
USA Today

"Why are Republicans so hell-bent on keeping people away from polling places?" asked Chris Brennan. Their latest effort to curtail voting rights is the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, which could disenfranchise millions of people—including married women who've taken their husband's last name. The SAVE Act requires anyone registering to vote or modifying their registration to have a passport or original birth certificate. Unlike many state voter ID laws, which target older voters or voters of color, who usually lean Democratic, this "threatens to impose a bipartisan burden." Only 51 percent of Americans have passports, and 21.3 million—about 9 percent of citizens—lack readily available proof of citizenship. Nearly 80 percent of women in heterosexual marriages take their husband's last name, meaning their birth certificates no longer match their legal names. So how do they prove their identities as citizens? The House passed this bill last week, but the Senate has yet to vote. Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) is trying "to satisfy President Trump's fetishization of election fraud." But this is "an out-in-the-open attempt to restrict legal voting," and Senate Republicans should save Johnson "from himself and kill this bill."

Reviving a nuclear deal with Iran

Joe Cirincione
The New Republic

In his first term, President Trump "for no good reason blew up the successful agreement the U.S. and its allies had negotiated with Iran," said Joe Cirincione. Now he's trying to bring it back—in much the same form. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated by the Obama administration had "successfully blocked all of Iran's paths to a bomb" with an intrusive inspection and monitoring regime. In 2018, Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal, as part of his efforts "to erase anything Barack Obama had achieved." Trump claimed at the time he would force Iran to accept "a bigger, better deal" that would include ending its regional aggression—but "it didn't happen." Instead, Iran went to work enriching a stockpile of uranium that could be converted into six or seven nuclear bombs "in just a few weeks." To gain leverage, Trump is threatening to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, but that would trigger a regional war, "likely crippling world oil shipments through the Persian Gulf." Now Trump is signaling he'd be happy with "an Iran deal lite," focusing only on Iran's uranium enrichment. Republican Iran hawks would be dissatisfied, but with so much going wrong, Trump "needs a real win."

Viewpoint

"Once you grasp Trump as an elected monarch, his full rebuke to the very idea of America comes into clearer view. He is precisely—almost uncannily—what this country was founded to oppose: an arbitrary, corrupt, mendacious, and utterly incompetent king. We need to repeatedly expose this king's long train of abuses and usurpations, his imposition of taxes, i.e. tariffs, without our consent, his transporting people in America beyond seas to jails in dictatorships from which there is no escape or reprieve. We need to insist that a president whose character is marked by every act which may define a tyrant be subjected once again to the Constitution."

Andrew Sullivan in his Substack newsletter

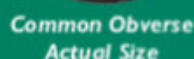
It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A 9-year-old Kansas boy who missed the school bus jumped into his parents' pickup truck and drove himself 3 miles to class. Police responding to a report of an underage driver found the boy and the pickup in his elementary school's parking lot. The fourth-grader said his mother was away and he didn't want to miss school after his father had left for work. He not only arrived safely, "he parked better than most people," said Maize, Kan., police Sgt. Braden Blackburn. No citations were issued, Blackburn said, but "I'm sure he's in tons of trouble with his parents."



■ A restaurant in Thailand is being accused of "fat shaming" for giving discounts to diners skinny enough to squeeze through narrow sets of bars. Chiang Mai Breakfast World gives patrons the chance to reduce their bills by 5 to 20 percent depending on which slot they can pass through. An Instagram post on the system topped 8 million views, with some commenters blasting the restaurant for discrimination based on weight. The restaurant said it was all in fun and that people should "not take everything so seriously."

■ A court in China is trying and failing to auction off hundreds of live crocodiles acquired from a bankrupt company. The reptiles, numbering more than 200, were farm-raised for such products as leather, health tonics, and cosmetics. Interested buyers need to capture, load, and ship the animals and have a proper place to keep them. Two auctions starting at 5 million yuan (about \$680,000) drew no bids; another is planned with the starting bid dropped to 4 million yuan.



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LEBANON

Israel can't bomb its way to acceptance

Fifi Abou Dib
L'Orient-Le Jour

The unthinkable has become thinkable, said Fifi Abou Dib. In Lebanon, people are suddenly talking about “normalizing” relations with Israel—a country we have refused to recognize since its 1948 creation, and with which we have been in a state of on-again, off-again conflict for 60 years. With Hezbollah weakened by Israeli bombing, and a more pro-Western government in Beirut, the U.S. is pushing for a deal. In an “ideal world,” of course we would want relations with our neighbor. But this isn’t that world. For a treaty to be “honest and lasting,” it has to be balanced, and there’s nothing equal about our relationship with Israel. It not only

continues to bomb Beirut neighborhoods on the pretext of targeting Hezbollah but also insists on occupying five “strategic points” inside our southern territory. And while a key condition of normalization has always been the establishment of a Palestinian state, that cause now seems “lost.” Israel is bent on driving back Palestinians “with unprecedented violence” in both Gaza and the West Bank, and all “with the blessing of the United States.” Lebanon’s government is outraged but “utterly helpless.” We have “nothing to negotiate with,” and now a deeply unjust deal may be forced upon us. “The scales are tipping, and not in our favor.”

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Lurching the wrong way on gay rights

Jarrel De Matas
Daily Express

Trinidadians are hurtling “backward into our colonial past,” said Jarrel De Matas. Our highest appeals court has just overturned a 2018 ruling that had nullified an anti-gay law adopted a century ago, under British rule. The “buggery law,” as it’s known in the terminology of the era, criminalized same-sex intimacy. The ruling nullifying it should have ended forever the threat that “consenting adults” could be jailed for what they do behind closed doors. But the government challenged the decision, starting a yearslong legal battle that has already cost taxpayers a fortune, “all to defend religious conservatism.” The justices shrugged off concerns that they were trampling the rights of

LGBTQ Trinidadians by noting that nobody has yet been punished or even charged under the outdated statute. Yet “the glaring problem is that the very existence of a law creates discrimination, even when it is not applied.” How can gay Trinidadians live without fear when the legal system “labels their consenting acts as criminal”? Fortunately, this isn’t the end of the process. The activist who brought the 2018 case is appealing to the Privy Council, the appeals court in Britain that has final say for Commonwealth countries. A decision there could take years. In the meantime, our judiciary must decide whether it wants to “seek justice for all citizens” or be the enforcer for the “religious majority.”

How they see us: Seeking a new Iran nuclear deal

On the Indian Ocean atoll of Diego Garcia, thousands of miles from Iran, “President Trump has issued an ultimatum that is visible from space,” said George Grylls in *The Times* (U.K.). Satellite images show six B-2 Spirit bombers parked on the island, “probably armed with 30,000-pound bunker-busting bombs.” These are intended for “the destruction of Iran’s nuclear program.” That threat of U.S. military action loomed over the indirect talks in Oman last week between Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, and Steve Witkoff, Trump’s Middle East envoy. Trump says he wants to rein in Iran’s nuclear ambitions through diplomacy, and has “teased the prospect of sanctions relief” if Iran agrees to scrap its program. “I want them to thrive. I want Iran to be great,” Trump said last week. “The only thing they can’t have is a nuclear weapon.” If he gets there via treaty, so much the better. If not, the bombers are waiting.



Diego Garcia: U.S. bombers ready to go

Clearly, Trump is desperate, said *Al Alam* (Iran). Despite his “threats of unprecedented, crushing, and destructive bombing,” he would “never resort to the language of diplomacy” if he thought he could get what he wants by force. But how can Iran possibly trust the man who tore up the original nuclear pact? We already traded limits on our nuclear programs for sanctions relief in the JCPOA, a deal signed by President Barack Obama in 2015, only to see Trump kill that deal in 2018. Trust is low on both sides, said Nijat Babayev in *News.Az* (Azerbaijan). But Trump is under time pressure. While he pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA, the deal survived because the European signatories were

still honoring it. It expires in October, after which the Europeans could no longer “snap back,” or reimpose, U.N. sanctions on Iran. Trump needs a deal before then so he can use the snapback threat as leverage. Meanwhile, Iran’s “accelerating nuclear enrichment” pace means we have just months to prevent Tehran from acquiring a bomb. At this point, a “limited, interim agreement” that merely halts further uranium enrichment in exchange for “partial sanctions relief” would be a victory.

The only deal “truly acceptable to Israel is one that dismantles—rather than merely freezes—Iran’s nuclear facilities,” said Michael Oren in *Yedioth Ahronoth* (Israel). Iran has repeatedly sworn to obliterate Israel, and we simply can’t tolerate even the possibility that it could go nuclear. If these unprecedented talks between the U.S. and the country that calls it the Great Satan end in a repeat of Obama’s sorry compromise, Israel will look at military options. “If the talks collapse, Trump faces bleak choices,” said *The Economist* (U.K.). Iran is “closer than ever to developing a nuclear bomb,” having highly enriched significant stockpiles of uranium, and Israel is willing to act against it with or without the U.S. That means, though, that Iran has incentive to compromise. Its proxies— Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen—are weakened. Its economy is crumbling. None of the military options are good: “risk a nuclear Iran, let Israel bomb Iran,” or unleash the B-2 bombers on Diego Garcia. That’s why “even a flawed deal” that leaves Iran “as a latent nuclear power” would “almost certainly be better than war.”

Best Columns: Europe

United Kingdom: Rats rule Birmingham as trash piles up

“Has there ever been a better advertisement against voting Labour in a local election than what is happening in Birmingham?” asked **Simon Heffer** in *The Daily Telegraph*. As residents digested the news that their property tax bills were rising by 7.5 percent—on top of a 10 percent jump last year—20,000 tons of “fetid waste” is lying uncollected on the streets, piling up to 7 feet high. A garbage strike, entering its sixth week, has turned the city into a stinking dump. Bulkied up on an all-you-can-eat buffet of waste, rats “as big as cats” prowl the city, becoming “bolder and more aggressive” by the day. As the weather warms, the rat population could “multiply exponentially,” spreading disease that could spark a public health crisis. As “Binmageddon” drags on, the human population is getting desperate, said **Kate Knowles** in the *Birmingham Dispatch*. Rumors are spreading that picketing sanitation workers could be attacked by angry residents. When mobile household-waste disposal vans make their rare rounds, they are mobbed. One resident described a recent visit as “the last days of Rome.” No wonder the Army has been called in.

On its face, the strike is about the city council’s plan “to scrap the role of waste recycling and collection officer,” a position known as the WRCO, said **James Tapper** in *The Observer*. “But that’s as simplistic as saying the First World War was caused by the killing of an archduke.” This crisis actually dates back to Birmingham’s last garbage strike in 2017, when the council persuaded garbage collectors to stand down by creating the WRCO



No room to pass on the sidewalks

role, which paid an extra \$10,000 or so due to its “extra responsibilities.” Turns out those extra responsibilities didn’t really exist, and female municipal workers—many of them teaching assistants, cleaners, and caterers—won a record-breaking \$1.4 billion claim that they were being paid less for equal work. That bill bankrupted Birmingham, which is now trying to abolish WRCOs to save itself from future liability. It’s a mess, said **Henry Hill** in *CapX*. But here’s a fun idea that could ease residents’ suffering: Given that 6,000 city workers “fought very hard” to establish that they are doing equal work, let’s give them “gloves and a

hi-vis” vest and send them out to pick up the trash.

If anyone should be springing into action, it’s the Labour government, said **John Rentoul** in the *Independent*. With its echoes of the 1978–79 Winter of Discontent, when strikes left rubbish piled up on London’s streets, this situation has “all the ingredients to make a toxic brew.” So where’s Angela Rayner, the secretary of state for local government? A former trade union rep herself, she has offered little assistance beyond helping the city clear a few bags. She should get on the phone to the union and persuade them to resolve the issue. “If she cannot do that, the echoes of the 1970s will only grow louder.” In the meantime, Birmingham continues to suffer, said *The Times* in an editorial. Had this strike been in London, it would have been “resolved long ago.” Instead, England’s second city looks increasingly like a “Third World country.”

SERBIA

Can a doctor cure Vucic’s political ills?

Andrei Ivanji
Vreme

President Aleksandar Vucic seems to have pulled his new prime minister “out of his sleeve,” said **Andrei Ivanji**. The previous two people he named to what is supposed to be the “most powerful political position in the country” were both fellow members of the Serbian Progressive Party, “raiders and proven defenders” of the nationalist Vucic’s agenda. Yet the incoming premier, Djuro Macut, is not even a politician; he’s a doctor, a professor of endocrinology. With his “unassuming face,” he looks like “an AI-generated robot” that some PR team created to “halt the sliding popularity of a Vucic government steeped in corruption.” It’s ob-

vious why Vucic picked a professor. Universities “stood firmly behind the students” who led the recent mass protests against cronyism and democratic backsliding—protests that forced the resignation of Vucic’s previous prime minister several months ago. Macut, then, is being held up as a “good professor who wants to teach, as opposed to those bad ones who want to destroy the state.” And it doesn’t hurt matters that Macut is “not a soldier of the Serbian Progressive Party, which voters increasingly see as a breeding ground for unprofessional, venal, and corrupt people.” The appointment of Macut is intended to “break the backbone of the rebellion.”

CYPRUS

Pretending to be a Nazi isn’t funny

Editorial
Cyprus Mail

“Welcome to the 21st-century version of political dialogue—Kindergarten 2.0,” said the *Cyprus Mail*. The Education Ministry admitted last week that the viral image that recently shocked the nation—a bunch of high school boys “giving a Nazi salute” in their class photo—was real. But the government’s response was downright “wishy-washy.” It reassured us that the kids signaling “Heil Hitler” had been told never to do it again, because the gesture might “be misinterpreted.” Misinterpreted? Even if this was just a “stupid joke,” these youngsters “knew what they were doing.” None of the girls in the class raised their arms, nor did several of the boys, which indicates they wanted

no part in such a shameful spectacle. If the others aren’t budding fascists, they are certainly “sheep” following the instigators. The boys likely believe that they are just being sassy. It’s trendy online to “call everyone you don’t like a Nazi,” and now “those being called Nazis are in turn using Nazi gestures to troll back.” But if that’s their intention, they are only revealing their ignorance. Clearly, their school failed to teach them enough about the horrors of World War II, about the millions slaughtered in the name of an unhinged dictator—indeed, our entire society has failed these children. If the students had been exposed to “photos from Auschwitz, would they still think Nazi salutes are funny?”

Noted

■ Researchers using cadavers to study the accumulation of microplastics found on average 7 grams of plastic per brain—about the amount in five water bottle caps. Brain samples from 2024 had nearly 50 percent more microplastics than samples from 2016.

The New York Times

■ Federal spending has gone up even as DOGE slashes jobs and contracts. The government has spent \$154 billion more since the inauguration than President Biden's administration spent over the same period, in part due to higher Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid payments and higher costs to service the debt.

The Wall Street Journal

■ The Department of the Navy has culled 381 books from the Naval Academy

library, including works covering the Holocaust, feminism, civil rights, and racism. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Robin

DiAngelo's *White Fragility* were removed; *The Bell Curve*, which argues that intelligence is linked to race, was not.

Associated Press

■ President Trump has set a goal of 1 million deportations this year, which would vastly exceed the single-year record of over 400,000 set by President Obama. So far, the administration is lagging behind even the Biden administration's pace. To meet the goal, officials will seek to deport to third countries—such as El Salvador—some of the 1.4 million immigrants who are already slated for removal but can't be sent to their home countries.

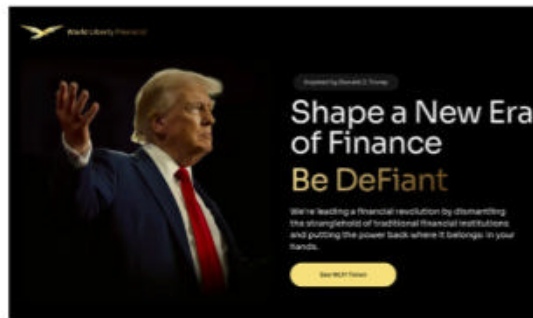
The Washington Post

Corruption: The road to crony capitalism

We may have just witnessed “the biggest example of market manipulation in history,” said **Sasha Abramsky** in *The Nation*. President Trump's imposition of huge tariffs on nearly every country in the world had the stock market in a tailspin. But then last week, Trump told his followers on Truth Social “THIS IS A GREAT TIME

TO BUY!!!”—just hours before his announcement of a 90-day pause on the tariffs sent the market briefly soaring. “Many, many investors seemed to take note of Trump's rather open hints” that such a pause was coming. Though there's “not yet any evidence” of an illegal insider-trading scheme, said **Bryan Metzger** in *Business Insider*, Sens. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) and Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) are demanding a federal investigation. Others in Congress are calling on any colleagues who followed Trump's advice “to come clean” now, since the law requires them to disclose stock trades within 30 days in any case. We'll soon see who profited.

Even if insider trading can't be proved, Trump's chaotic tariff policy “will inevitably result in a cascade of corruption,” said **Fareed Zakaria** in *The Washington Post*. When the economic rules become capricious, the only constant is the need to placate the people in power. “Countries and companies will descend on Washington to cut deals and gain carve-outs, exemptions, and spe-



Trump's crypto: Bribery made easy

cial terms.” For every tariff, there will be tariff waivers for a select few firms—already, Apple has persuaded Trump to pause the tax on smartphones. Our economy will be transformed “from the leading free market in the world to the leading example of crony capitalism.” We saw this in my native Argentina, said **Andres Oppenheimer** in the *Miami Herald*, when a populist dictator imposed a protectionist regime. Favored businesses had no incentive to keep prices low or quality high. Inflation and debt skyrocketed, and the once wealthy nation became “an economic basket case.”

The paradigm shift is already underway, said **Anne Applebaum** in *The Atlantic*. “Blatant conflicts of interest,” any one of which would have been a scandal for any other president, are routine in Trumpworld. His family's cryptocurrency business, World Liberty Financial, is transparently “a vehicle for anyone to pay him indirect bribes.” His properties are rented by anonymously owned shell companies. He suspended enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the Corporate Transparency Act, freeing up companies to launder money and buy off regulators. The state and the economy are slowly being reconfigured “not to benefit Americans but to benefit the president, his family, and his friends.” Only voters can stop it.

Budget: Gutting Medicaid to pass tax cuts?

Republicans are at war over how “to slash the trillions in taxes and spending that Trump is demanding,” said **Russell Berman** in *The Atlantic*. House Speaker Mike Johnson secured a win last week when the Republicans' budget framework squeaked through the lower chamber, setting up a final vote in coming weeks. But the “big, beautiful bill” that President Trump has asked for hangs on the support of the GOP's House hard-liners. They are demanding \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts that “they believe they are on the verge of achieving.” The Senate, which already passed its blueprint, set a minimum of just \$4 billion in cuts, but Johnson promised a dozen House holdouts that the Senate would fall in line. One thing all the Republicans agree on is that they need to come up with a bill, or “Trump's 2017 tax cuts will expire, resulting in an across-the-board hike at the end of the year.”

A central squabble is over Medicaid, said **Ben Leonard** and **Meredith Lee Hill** in *Politico*. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is tasked with finding \$880 billion in cuts, and the health-care safety net program falls under its jurisdiction. Additionally, GOP leaders are pushing the Agriculture Committee to cut \$230 billion, potentially from SNAP, the largest food assistance

program for low-income Americans. Fiscal hawk Chip Roy (R-Texas) said he reluctantly backed the framework after private promises of entitlement cuts. But other lawmakers, including heavy-hitting Trump allies like Sen. Josh Hawley, don't want to touch Medicaid. GOP hard-liners have been public about wanting to “gut the low-income insurance program,” said **Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling** in *The New Republic*. But Johnson isn't ready to admit the “reality” that taking a chain saw to Medicaid is the most plausible path to the cuts they want.

Some Republicans have floated “a tax increase on the rich,” said **Andrew Duehren** in *The New York Times*. Extending Trump's 2017 tax cuts would cost a shiver-inducing \$4 trillion. Bringing the top tax rate back to 39.6 percent from its current 37 percent would save \$366 billion. Just don't count on Republicans suddenly rediscovering fiscal responsibility, said **Andrew Egger** in *The Bulwark*. In Biden's presidency, they repeatedly took “the nation to the brink of government shutdown or debt default, supposedly over its deep concern about deficit spending.” Now they want to “blow a brand-new hole in the federal budget” by renewing the 2017 tax cuts, all the while “lying” to claim the tax cuts are free.

Talking Points

Climate: Trump's attempt to bring back coal

"Hard hats are back," said **Lisa Friedman** and **Brad Plumer** in *The New York Times*. Surrounded by miners, President Trump last week signed four executive orders designed to revive the declining coal industry. "I call it beautiful, clean coal," Trump said. In reality, coal is "the dirtiest fossil fuel" and "a major contributor to climate change" and health-damaging air pollution. Nonetheless, Trump lifted restrictions on mining and burning it—just the latest of his attempts to reverse progress on reducing emissions that are dangerously heating the planet. Trump recently directed the Justice Department to block "burdensome and ideologically motivated" state climate policies, proposed eliminating the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's scientific research division, and canceled funding for the country's signature National Climate Assessment report. The Environmental Protection Agency even plans to stop requiring polluters to report their greenhouse gas emissions.



Coal plant in Wisconsin: The dirtiest fuel

and innovation." It's now both cheaper and cleaner for utilities to generate electricity with a mix of natural gas, wind, and solar power. Trump also issued an executive order to revive the coal industry in 2017, said **Michael Hawthorne** in the *Chicago Tribune*. Since then, 79 coal plants have closed and 13,000 industry workers have lost their jobs. But Trump is still pushing his "pro-coal agenda" and is willing to sacrifice anything to achieve it.

That includes declaring war on city and state environmental regulations—"the last bastion of U.S. climate action," said **Adam Aton** and **Lesley Clark** in *Politico*. His Justice Department directive to bring legal action against local regulations represents "a sharp escalation in his war on climate policy." It will all add up to an unhealthier country, said **Zoë Schlanger** in *The Atlantic*. Burning coal emits brain-damaging mercury and microscopic soot that causes or worsens asthma, COPD, and other lung diseases, and can trigger heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Particulates in air pollution have even been linked to dementia, Parkinson's disease, and prenatal damage to fetuses. With Trump's recent orders, "America is backsliding toward its most polluted era"—and the consequences will be lethal.

Trump is "propping up his favorite energy sources even if markets don't want them," said **Jeff Luse** in *Reason*. Coal provided 16 percent of U.S. electricity in 2023, down from 45 percent in 2010. That's not due to some liberal "plot to transition away from coal, like Trump thinks." It's due to "markets

RFK Jr.: A public-health wrecking ball

During his confirmation hearings, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. "presented himself as a supporter of vaccines," said **Apoorva Mandavilli** in *The New York Times*, but his actions as health secretary tell a starkly different story. He and his agencies have taken "far-reaching, sometimes subtle steps to undermine confidence in vaccine efficacy and safety." Last week, the health secretary announced a "massive" study that he says will determine by September the cause of the "autism epidemic"—led by a top proponent of the repeatedly debunked theory that vaccines cause autism. Under RFK Jr.'s conspiracy-minded, anti-scientific leadership, health agencies have halted research into vaccine hesitancy, cut billions in state funding for childhood immunization, and terminated an ad campaign promoting flu shots. Top FDA vaccine regulator Peter Marks quit last month under pressure, saying it was clear Kennedy was not after truth but "subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies."

Even amid a Texas measles outbreak that has sickened more than 500 people and killed two children, Kennedy has failed to offer "a firm, unambiguous endorsement of vaccination," said **Jonathan Cohn** in *The Bulwark*. He "begrudgingly" told an interviewer last week that "the federal government's

position" is that "people should get the measles vaccine." But he quickly undercut his tepid endorsement by falsely saying that vaccines aren't safety-tested. Last week, Kennedy had the astounding "chutzpah" to attend the funeral of an unvaccinated 8-year-old Texas girl who died of measles, said **Robin Abcarian** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Her death is the "direct result of years of vaccine skepticism and hostility" sown by Kennedy and his anti-science allies.

The erosion of trust in vaccines just scratches the surface of the damage Kennedy is doing, said **Adam Cancryn** in *Politico*. In two months, he has "dramatically reshaped the U.S. health apparatus," firing 10,000 government health officials and scientists, erasing a vast trove of "collective expertise and institutional knowledge," and leaving his department in "an unprecedented state of upheaval." The public health infrastructure he's dismantling "is the greatest invention of the Industrial Age," said **Troy Farah** in *Salon*. We now take for granted its success in reducing childhood mortality, eradicating horrific diseases like smallpox and polio, and giving us longer, healthier lives. If we let Kennedy's "reckless stupidity" reverse a century of progress, the impact will be felt for generations.

Wit & Wisdom

"Friendship adds a brighter radiance to prosperity and lessens the burden of adversity by dividing and sharing it."
Cicero, quoted in LitHub

"Every time a friend succeeds, I die a little."
Gore Vidal, quoted in The Independent

"Music is the language of the angels. When I sing, I feel oneness with all creation."
Chaka Khan, quoted in The Guardian

"We may encounter many defeats, but we must never be defeated."
Maya Angelou, quoted in The Bulwark

"If we want everything to stay the same, everything needs to change."
Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, quoted in National Review

"At 18 our convictions are hills from which we look; at 45 they are caves in which we hide."
F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Forbes

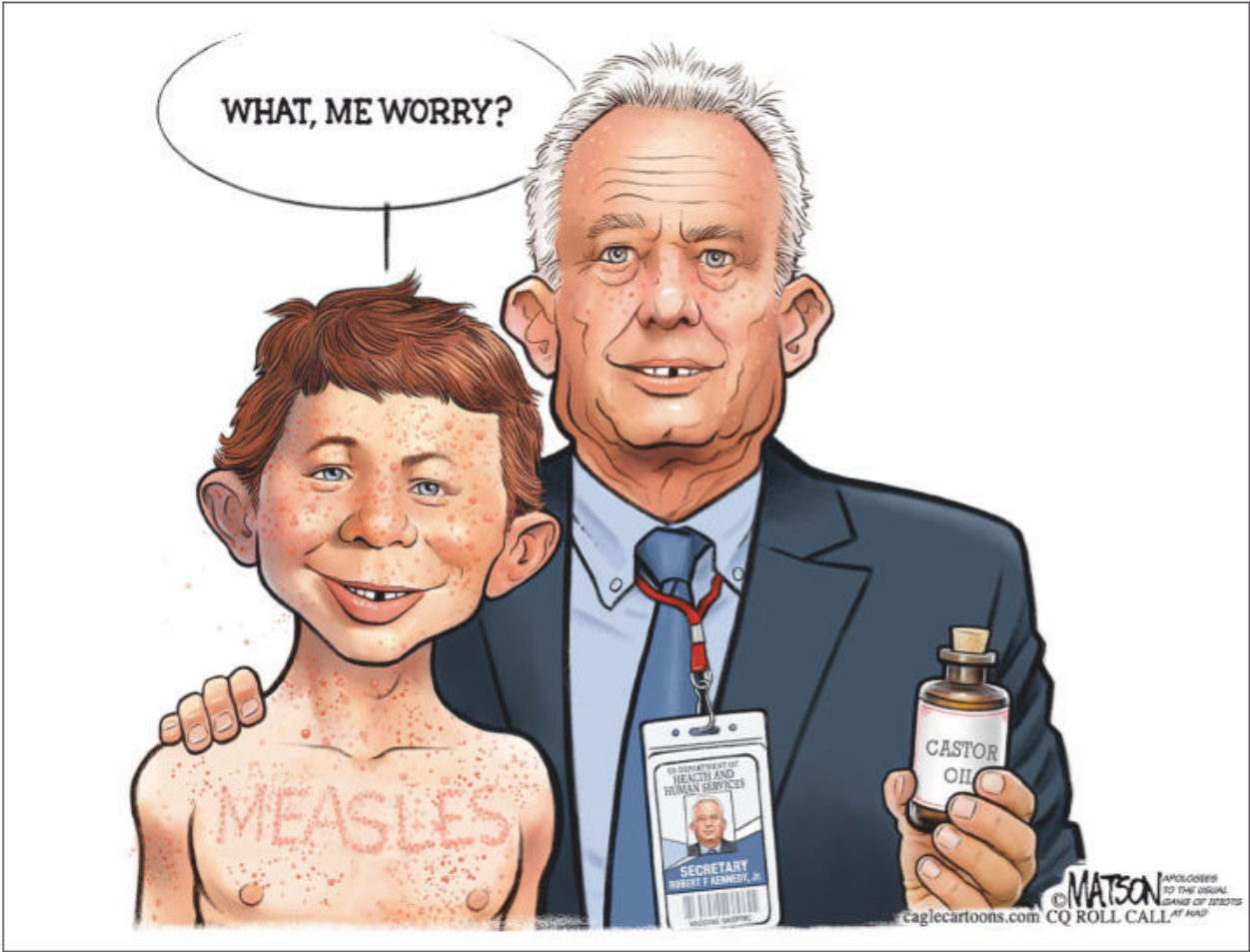
"The law holds that it is better that 10 guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer."
William Blackstone, quoted in UnHerd

Poll Watch

58% of Americans oppose President Trump's tariffs on imported goods, while **42%** approve. **65%** think the tariffs will make the economy worse in the short term, while **34%** think it will make it better in the long term. **16%** of Democrats, **43%** of independents, and **91%** of Republicans believe Trump has a "clear plan" for tariffs and trade.
CBS News/YouGov

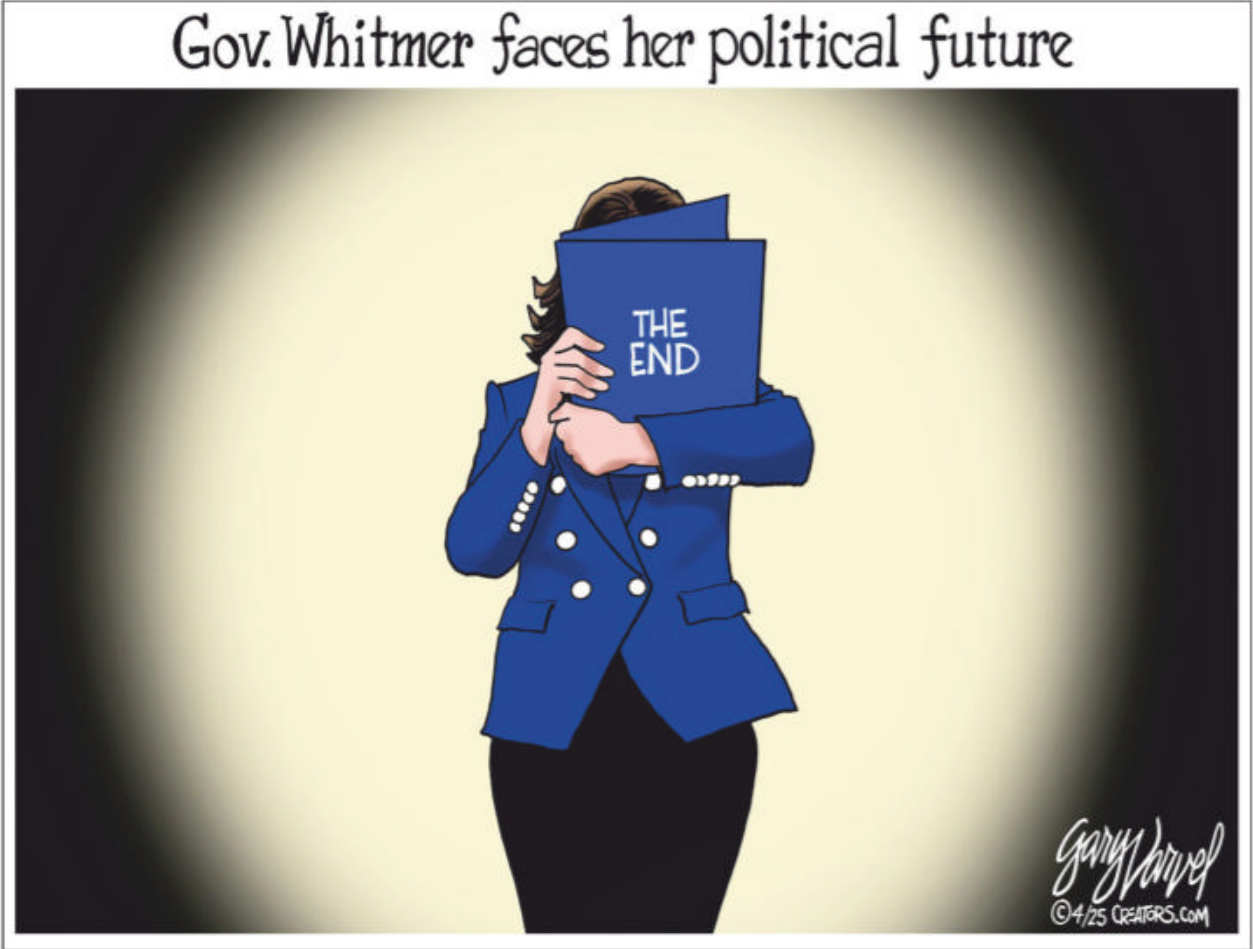
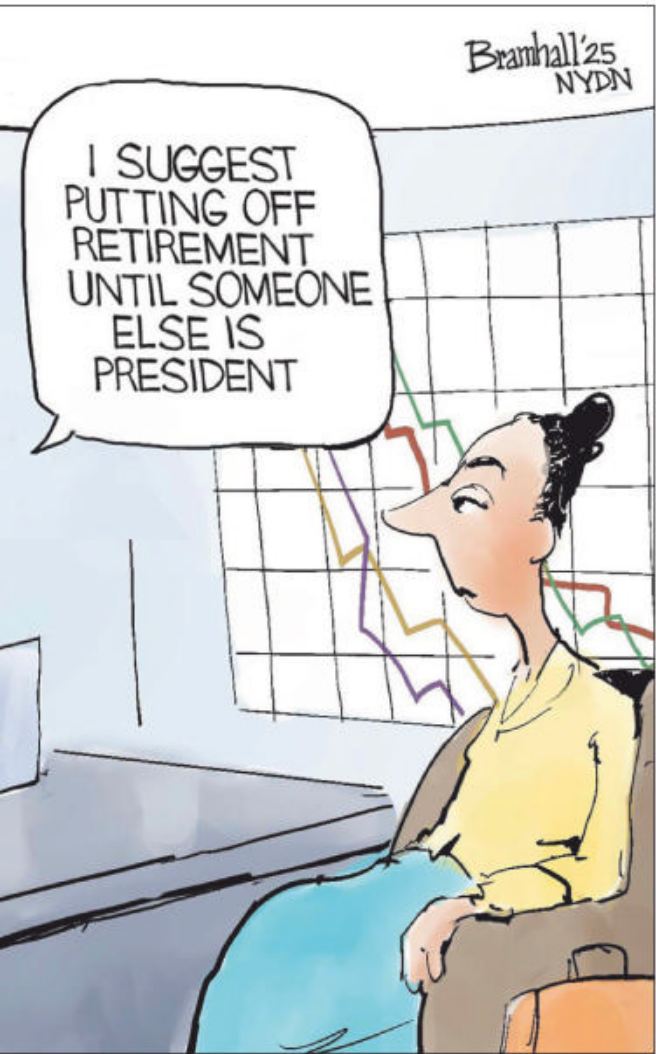
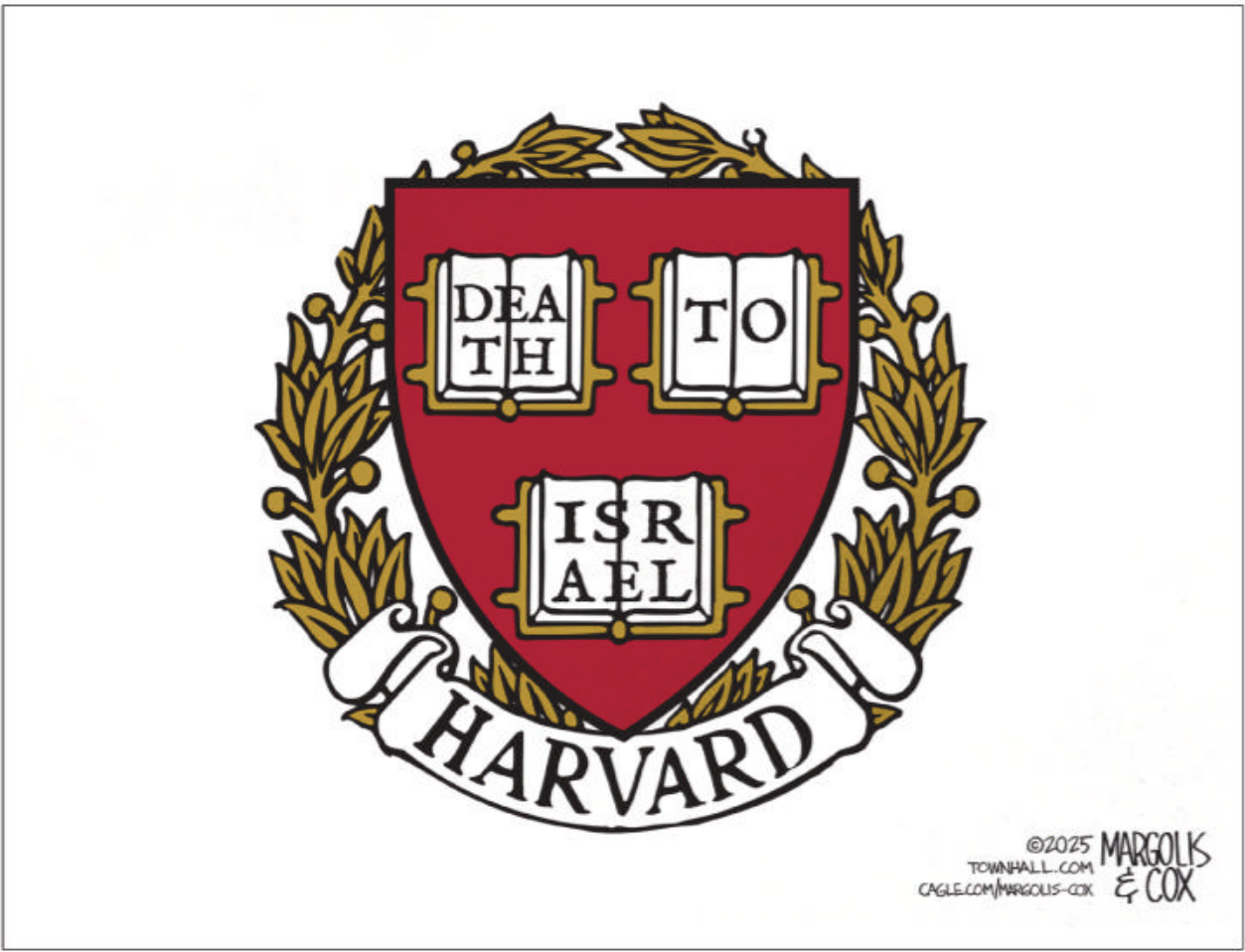
61% of Americans say they would not date someone with an opposite view on Trump.
YouGov

Pick of the Week's Cartoons



Pick of the Week's Cartoons

For more political cartoons, visit:
theweek.com/cartoons



Climate tech: Can geoengineering cool the globe?

Some scientists think we can quickly cool the planet, said **Carolyn Gramling** in *Science News*—by blocking the sun. “Solar geoengineering” is an umbrella term “for a variety of possible strategies to reflect sunlight.” They include “injecting reflective molecules into the stratosphere or brightening clouds over the ocean.” In essence, the strategy is to mimic what happens when a volcano erupts and sulfur and ash are spewed into the atmosphere, lowering Earth’s temperature. “But there’s also a great deal of wariness” about bringing the ideas out of the lab. In 2024, Harvard University shuttered its solar geoengineering research program after the test flight of one of its cloud-seeding balloons in Sweden was blocked by protests from an indigenous group. In the U.S., 16 states have introduced bills to ban solar geoengineering, in some cases because of “a debunked conspiracy theory” that the government is “already conducting weather modification” via “chemtrails” sprayed by airplanes.



Reflective particles could block sunlight.

Bizarre as the chemtrail claims may be, public skepticism isn’t surprising, said **Rebekah White** in *Science*. Climate engineering is perhaps “more unsettling to the public than genetic engineering,” because it involves “tinkering with complex natural systems—which largely renders it irreversible.” The main problem with geoengineering, said **Raymond Pierrehumbert** and **Michael Mann** in *The Guardian*, is that it treats the symptoms of climate change but, unless we change our carbon-emitting behavior, leaves “the

underlying malignancy to keep growing.” That becomes a problem if we ever *stop* seeding the atmosphere: We’ll be left with “a catastrophic termination shock.”

Most geoengineering research today is led by scientists at universities and federal agencies, said **Ramin Skibba** in *Wired*. But that is starting to change as more venture capital flows into climate-tech strategies. One Israeli geoengineering startup called Stardust has raised \$15 million for the development of “a proprietary aerosol particle” to be distributed about 60,000 feet into the atmosphere “through a machine mounted on an aircraft.” The idea is thus far being tested only indoors, and little is known about the particles other than that they are “nonsulfate.” Still, the “prospect of proprietary, privately held geoengineering technology worries some experts” who have questioned Stardust’s lack of transparency, likening it to “a defense contractor for climate alteration.”

Such worries are reasonable, yet the question remains, said **David King** in *The Guardian*. “If not now, when?” We need drastic and immediate climate action. Some of the “necessary levers to regain control are uncomfortable, even controversial.” Ideas such as “brightening marine clouds to reflect sunlight may have once seemed extreme.” But “we do not have the luxury of rejecting solutions outright before we have thoroughly investigated their risks, trade-offs, and feasibility.”

Innovation of the week



A new drone-delivery service is actually two drones in one, said

Jack Daleo in *Flying* magazine. Zipline launched a partnership with Walmart last week that makes anyone living in the suburb of Mesquite, Texas, “eligible for delivery of more than 65,000 items in 30 minutes or less.” It achieves this thanks to a mothership drone and a “baby” drone stowed inside. The smaller, “microwave-size” drone can carry 8 pounds and is deployed from the mother drone, which hovers 300 feet up, “on a tether, using onboard fans and sensors to guide itself to hard-to-reach landing spots, such as a customer’s doorstep.” It is designed for urban delivery with “dinner-plate level” precision, the company says. The first Walmart order “included a dozen eggs, a bag of Popcorners chips, and flower bulbs for spring gardening.”

Bytes: What’s new in tech

■ The great iPhone airlift

Apple airlifted roughly 600 tons of iPhones out of India amid uncertainty over tariffs, said Aditya Kalra in Reuters. The tech giant chartered six cargo flights “with a capacity of 100 tons each,” transporting roughly 1.5 million iPhones to the United States since March. The rush was so desperate that Apple “lobbied Indian airport authorities to cut to six hours the time needed to clear customs at the Chennai airport, down from 30 hours.” Ultimately, President Trump decided last week to pause a 26 percent import tax on India, and said that phone imports from China would be exempt from tariffs. Still, Apple has directed India’s biggest iPhone assembly plant to run on Sundays, hoping to boost its regular production by 20 percent.

■ DOGE lays off auto regulators

Elon Musk’s DOGE team laid off regulators overseeing Tesla’s self-driving technology, said Stephen Morris in the *Financial Times*. “Of the roughly 30 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration workers dismissed as part of Musk’s campaign to shrink the federal workforce, many were in the ‘office of vehicle automation safety.’” Musk has “staked the future of Tesla” on its ability to develop self-driving cars. But the NHTSA has “eight active investigations” into the

company’s autopilot feature. Musk has promised “that Tesla will launch a driverless ride-hailing service in Austin by June,” but the layoffs may have made it harder for the agency to analyze the technology and move ahead with an NHTSA cyber-cab exemption in time. “It would be ironic if DOGE slowed down Tesla,” said one laid-off agency worker.

■ Emergency response, by Amazon?

Amazon is experimenting with turning some of its delivery drivers into first responders, said Benoit Berthelot and Anna Edgerton in *Bloomberg*. The company is planning to equip some of its ubiquitous delivery vans in Europe with AEDs—automated external defibrillators—to “speed up aid to heart attack victims.” Drivers who volunteer will be “trained on the devices as part of a basic first aid course that includes CPR.” They also will “enroll in local citizen-responder networks” via app. “Nine out of 10 people live if they receive a jolt within a minute of a cardiac event, and chances of survival without CPR decrease by 10 percent every minute.” One U.S. study “estimated that a fleet of 50 AED-equipped delivery vans on the roads of a north Seattle neighborhood would be able to respond more than a minute faster, on average, than emergency medical services.”

Health & Science

Bringing back the dire wolf—sort of

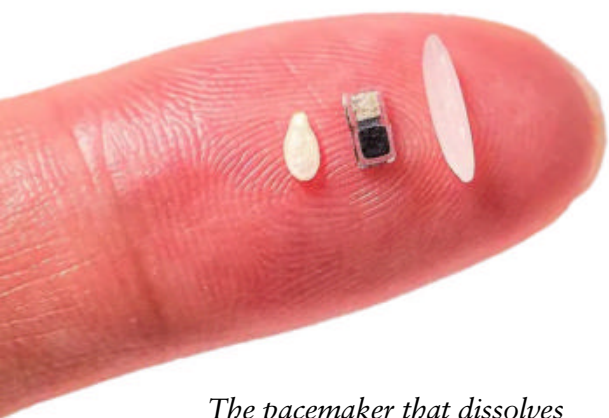
A biotech firm says it has “de-extincted” a species of huge wolf that died out 12,000 years ago. Dallas-based Colossal Biosciences, which is also trying to bring back to life the dodo and the woolly mammoth, used ancient DNA and genetic engineering to breed three hybrid dire wolf pups. It’s calling them Romulus, Remus, and—in a nod to the species’ appearance in *Game of Thrones*—Khaleesi. Researchers created the hybrid, reports *The Washington Post*, by combing through DNA taken from dire wolf remains to identify the 14 genes that gave the species its distinctive size and fearsome appearance. They then made 20 edits to the

corresponding genes in a gray wolf, cloned the cells to create embryos, and implanted the embryos in domestic dogs to act as surrogate mothers. The three pups, ranging in age from 3 to 6 months old, are now living on a secret 2,000-acre facility somewhere in the northern U.S. Many scientists, though, are opposed to such de-extinction efforts, saying such research diverts crucial funds from traditional conservation and doesn’t even achieve its goal. These three pups, they say, aren’t dire wolves at all—they’re just gray wolves that look sort of like their extinct cousins. “Would a chimpanzee with 20 gene edits be human?” Pontus Skoglund, head of the Ancient Genomics Lab-



An ancient beast born of a domestic dog

oratory at Britain’s Francis Crick Institute, asked on Bluesky. “These individuals seem optimistically 1/100,000th dire wolf.”



The pacemaker that dissolves

How to fix a tiny heart

Scientists have developed the world’s smallest pacemaker for newborns, reports *Smithsonian*, a device just half the size of a grain of rice that is injected into the heart and then dissolves when it’s no longer needed. About 1 percent of babies are born with heart issues, and after their surgeries they need a temporary pacemaker. “In about seven days or so, most patients’ hearts will self-repair,” says Igor Efimov, a cardiologist from Northwestern University who helped create the device. “But those seven days are absolutely critical.” The new pacemaker is controlled through a small patch on the baby’s chest that sends a flash of light when it detects an irregular heartbeat. The pacemaker then emits a small electrical pulse to return the heartbeat to normal. That it dissolves naturally is crucial, because extracting a pacemaker surgically can be risky even in adults. The wires can get enveloped in scar tissue, or infection can set in. “That’s actually how Neil Armstrong died,” Efimov says. Despite its wee size—just 1.8 mm wide and 2.5 mm long—the device yields the same stimulation as a conventional pacemaker, and the researchers believe that they can develop a similar device for adults who need temporary pacemakers.

A shot to cut dementia risk

The shingles vaccine appears to reduce your risk of getting dementia. A large new study

has found that those who received the vaccine were up to 20 percent less likely to develop dementia than those who didn’t. Researchers looked at health data from 280,000 older adults in Wales, where the Zostavax shingles vaccine was first given in 2013 to people born on Sept. 2, 1933, or later. This natural experiment allowed scientists to compare dementia rates among those a few months older than the cutoff age, who didn’t get the vaccine, and those a few months younger, who did. The drop in dementia rates among the vaccinated group was significant, particularly among women. Doctors aren’t sure why the shot offers this protection, but it may be because it reduces inflammation in the nervous system, or because it triggers broader changes in the immune system. And it’s not just Zostavax that has this effect: Researchers at the University of Oxford last year reported an even stronger drop in dementia rates among patients who received Shingrix, a newer shingles shot. “If this truly is a causal effect,” co-author Pascal Geldsetzer, from Stanford University, tells *The Guardian* (U.K.), “we have a finding that’s of tremendous importance.”

Watch out for strep

Life-threatening invasive strep infections are skyrocketing in the U.S., with cases more than doubling between 2013 and 2022. The bacteria known as group A streptococcus is common: Many of us have had strep throat. Invasive strep, though, occurs when the bug spreads through the bloodstream and infects areas like the lungs. Then it can cause complications like flesh-eating disease or streptococcal toxic shock syndrome, which can quickly lead to organ failure. Data collected by the Centers for Disease Control for just 10 states showed cases rising from 1,082 in 2013 to 2,759 in 2022. Of the 21,000 recorded cases, almost 2,000 resulted in death. “Extrapolate that across the country,” Victor Nizet, from the University of California, San Diego, tells *NBC News.com*, “[and] we’re probably well into more than 10,000 deaths.” Health officials offer several possible explanations for the jump, including rising rates of diabetes and obesity, which make people more vulnerable to infection, and the growing prevalence of IV drug use, which can introduce the bacteria into the bloodstream.

Books of sealskin

The covers of medieval manuscripts were typically fashioned from the tanned skins of local livestock such as calves, goats, and sheep. But more than a dozen books at Clairvaux Abbey in northeastern France in the 12th and 13th centuries are covered in something else: something hairy. Now, using DNA analysis, researchers have figured out that those skins come from seals not native to France. Several of the books were found to be bound in harbor-seal skin, and at least one in the skin of a harp seal. These animals appear to have come from Scandinavia and Scotland, and potentially as far away as Iceland or Greenland—a finding that sheds light on the complex trading networks that operated in the Middle Ages. The Cistercian monks at Clairvaux likely favored this sealskin because of the animals’ bright white fur. “In medieval Europe, you don’t really have anything that’s pure white,” co-author Matthew Collins, from the University of Copenhagen, tells *The New York Times*. “It must have been quite magical.”



It used to be white.

Review of Reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Thinking Machine: Jensen Huang, Nvidia, and the World's Most Coveted Microchip

by Stephen Witt (Viking, \$30)

The Thinking Machine is the biography of a tech titan, but it's also "something more interesting and revealing," said James Surowiecki in *The Atlantic*. Nvidia co-founder Jensen Huang has been the outfit's CEO from 1993 through its explosive rise to its current standing as the world's third most valuable company, and "to be sure, Huang himself was central to Nvidia's success." But author Stephen Witt makes clear that Nvidia wouldn't be building the chips that are powering the AI revolution absent the culture and economy established in Silicon Valley decades ago. Nvidia's breakthroughs have been built on the free movement of labor within the industry, the talent of immigrants, research funded by universities and the federal government, and a board willing to forego instant rewards for a long-term payoff. Finally, when opportunities have crossed Huang's sights, "he's made the bold moves."



Huang: Silicon Valley's mogul of the moment

"Huang's biography, at this point, is well-known," said Marc Levinson in *The Wall Street Journal*. Born in Taiwan in 1963, he arrived in the U.S. at 10, at first landing at a reform school in Kentucky that a family member mistook for an elite prep school. He spent most of the rest of his youth in Oregon, moving to Silicon Valley after college and, after picking up a master's degree, co-founding Nvidia to build chips for PC gaming. "One virtue of *The Thinking Machine* is that it is not entirely admiring of Huang," detailing how some early bets went disastrously wrong and how quick Huang has been to blame others. But Huang gam-

bled wisely on parallel processing, giving his gaming chips an edge, said *The Economist*. And in 2013, he went all in on the idea of neural networks before anyone knew that they'd be crucial to AI's leap. His famed temper, meanwhile, "co-exists with a tenderness recalled by current and former subordinates." As a boss, he's both liked and admired.

Because the book's narrative ends in mid-2024, it misses some key developments, said Katie Notopoulos in *The New York Times*. In late January, Nvidia's stock price plummeted on news that DeepSeek, a Chinese startup, had developed a potent new AI reasoning model using a fraction of the Nvidia chips required by rival systems. But Nvidia remains the market leader, and *The Thinking Machine* remains "a lively biography" that makes the technology of AI understandable and does "a decent job" of wringing drama from the efforts of Nvidia's engineers to achieve their market-changing breakthroughs. Late in the book, when Witt asks Huang to discuss the dangers of AI, Huang doesn't just refuse, he explodes in anger. To some extent, this pioneer's lack of worry about runaway AI "should be comforting." Mostly, though, it's not.

Novel of the week

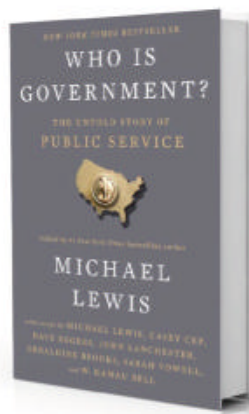
Audition

by Katie Kitamura (Riverhead, \$28)

Katie Kitamura's latest novel, her first since 2021's *Intimacies*, recalls Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*, said Priscilla Gilman in *The Boston Globe*. Like those mind-bending films, it's "a radically disquieting meditation on the nature of identity and the construction of selfhood." The unnamed narrator, a middle-aged film and stage actress, meets with a young man who has claimed he may be her son. Though she has informed him that she's never given birth, they grow close. But halfway through the novel, the story begins again, with sharp differences in the characters' shared reality. "Bold, stark, genre-bending, *Audition* will haunt your dreams." It also rewards a re-reading, said Justin Taylor in *The Washington Post*. On my second go, I was more aware of the effects of the young man on the narrator's marriage even as I remained uncertain exactly how the novel's two halves fit together. Is one real and one fiction? Do they unfold in alternate dimensions? "If these questions have answers, I hope I never learn them. Any definitive 'truth' would only diminish the deeper and more mysterious truths of Kitamura's resolute irresolution."

Who Is Government? The Untold Story of Public Service

edited by Michael Lewis (Riverhead, \$30)



"Government workers are saddled with a stereotype of being faceless, lazy, corrupt paper pushers," said Janet Hook in *Washington Monthly*. So at a moment when President Trump and his billionaire surrogate Elon Musk are slashing government jobs while bashing the very people they're firing, it's a pleasure to discover that this recent best-seller about several formerly faceless federal employees is also "a surprisingly engaging read." Michael Lewis, the author of *Moneyball*, *The Blind Side*, and other nonfiction best-sellers, persuaded several other talented writers to contribute profiles of individual workers providing important public services. While the book "sometimes smacks of puffery and boosterism," the spotlighted subjects are good people performing good works, and it's clear that only government can support such endeavors.

"Each chapter has its own distinct flavor," said Dorian Lynskey in *The Guardian*.

Novelist Geraldine Brooks' profile of an IRS cybercrime specialist who has thwarted drug dealers and pedophiles "could be a movie pitch." Dave Eggers introduces the scientists who build the satellites and rovers looking for evidence of life on other planets. Lewis himself provides two "gripping" entries, one about a former coal miner who has radically improved mine safety and another about an epidemiologist whose research on rare diseases saved the life of a girl whose brain was being eaten by an amoeba. Given the recklessness with which Musk has operated, "it would not be surprising to learn that some of the people interviewed here have already been laid off." For all of them, though, "public service is a higher calling."

Sometimes, government also performs better than the private sector could, said Garrett M. Graff in *The Washington Post*. *The New Yorker*'s Casey Cep profiles Ronald Walters, who as the official in charge of the nation's veterans cemeteries, runs a service-oriented operation that scores higher on customer satisfaction surveys than any U.S. corporation. Elsewhere, "the book shows, in specific ways, how much safer and more secure daily life is today than it was even a generation or two ago." And that's all thanks to a government workforce that's accused of being bloated but hasn't grown during that same span of time.

The Book List

Best books...chosen by Susan Page

Susan Page's best-selling biography of Barbara Walters, *The Rulebreaker*, is now out in paperback. Below, USA Today's Washington bureau chief, who has also written biographies of Nancy Pelosi and Barbara Bush, recommends six books about rule breakers.



Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom by Catherine Clinton (2004). This is the definitive portrait of a legendary figure. Tubman escaped slavery and broke the rules of race, gender, and the legal system to lead enslaved people to freedom on the Underground Railroad. She was also a scout and spy for the Union Army.

John Lewis: A Life by David Greenberg (2024). For the rest of his life, John Lewis bore a scar on his forehead from the police beating he endured during the 1965 civil rights march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. Reserved and relentless, Lewis became the House member from Georgia known as "the conscience of Congress."

Nightingale's Song by Robert Timberg (1995). This book intertwines stories of five Annapolis graduates, each shadowed by their service in Vietnam. One of them is maverick John McCain, whose life is explored in depth. The onetime prisoner of war became a U.S. senator, a Republican presidential nominee, and an independent GOP voice not afraid to take a stand against President Trump.

Personal History by Katharine Graham (1997). Graham's father and her husband were supposed to lead *The Washington Post*; she was cast as the supportive spouse. But after her husband's suicide, she became the first female Fortune 500 CEO and the fearless publisher of a top newspaper, including during its war with President Richard Nixon.

Janis: Her Life and Music by Holly George-Warren (2019). A brash musical trailblazer who sensed the power of the blues, Janis Joplin would find her place as the impassioned queen of rock, but she could never escape her personal demons. The singer and songwriter died of a heroin overdose at 27.

Patriot: A Memoir by Alexei Navalny (2024). After he was poisoned in 2020 and evacuated to Germany for treatment, Navalny returned to Russia knowing that prison was likely and death possible. The opposition activist continued to defy Russian President Vladimir Putin anyway. In 2024, Navalny died serving a 19-year prison sentence in a penal colony in the Russian arctic.

Author of the week

Daniel Breyer

Daniel Breyer swears that his satirical debut novel is not about his own family, said **Emily Shugerman** in *The San Francisco Standard*. *Smokebirds* savages an ultra-wealthy San Francisco clan, the Petersons, who belong to a class of people who simply jet elsewhere when wildfires put others' homes and lives in danger.

Breyer knows that social set well. His father, who's also his current boss, is billionaire venture capitalist Jim Breyer, who famously bet early on



Etsy and Facebook. "He's a much better person than all of my characters, I promise," Breyer says. The callous, self-absorbed, mendacious Petersons, however, do have a basis in reality. "Maybe they're all the worst parts of myself, or the worst thoughts that have ever entered my head, coupled with the worst behaviors I've seen from other people in my circles," he says. "Some of them are great, for sure. But a lot of them aren't."

Another distinction Breyer can draw is between the outlooks of millionaires versus billionaires, said **Ellen Gamerman** in *The Wall Street Journal*.

"There is a level of excess that is different," he says. "And the problems are different. It turns into less of, 'OK, how do I get to this next point in my career to get an even nicer house for my family?' to 'OK, how am I being portrayed among my peers? Do they respect me? Am I as respectable as this person or this person?'" Being an heir to wealth, as Breyer is, adds another layer to navigate. "You can be a 'good nepo baby' and own it, and it's almost a social currency—people like you more," he says. With *Smokebirds*, in other words, he almost can't lose by taking shots at his own kind. "A lot of writing this book," he says, "is about owning my own hypocrisy."

Also of interest...in fluid states

There Is No Place for Us

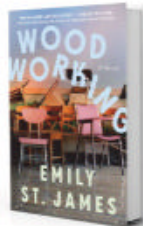
by Brian Goldstone (Crown, \$30)



The people profiled in this "appropriately enraging" book "work a lot, and for very little," said Jennifer Szalai in *The New York Times*. Author Brian Goldstone profiles five families as they shuffle from shared apartments to hotel rooms to cars in their struggle to stay housed while holding down jobs. "*There Is No Place for Us* is an exceptional feat of reporting, full of an immediacy that calls to mind Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's *Random Family*," and it spotlights a nearly invisible national crisis.

Woodworking

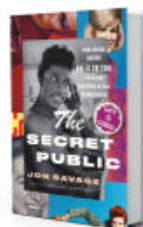
by Emily St. James (Zando, \$28)



"Writing a funny book is hard," said Meredith Maran in *The Washington Post*. "Writing a funny novel in which imperfect characters make a compelling case for one of our culture's most maligned groups—that takes smarts and heart." But that's what Emily St. James has done in this tale about a 17-year-old trans girl who discovers that one of her teachers is resisting her own trans identity. "People are funny," *Woodworking* says, even when their pain is anything but.

The Secret Public

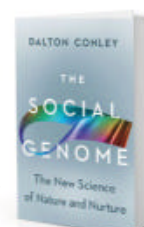
by Jon Savage (Liveright, \$35)



From the 1950s through the '70s, "there was something undeniably queer about pop culture," said Samuel Clowes Huneke in *The New Republic*. Among listeners whose tastes fueled the rise of rock and disco, homosexuality was seen as hip, and "to put it bluntly, it sold." In a book that's "encyclopedic in scope" and "stuffed full of arcana," author Jon Savage unpacks how queer subcultures cultivated musical trends and how musicians in turn helped normalize homosexuality.

The Social Genome

by Dalton Conley (Norton, \$30)



This "immensely informative" book reframes the nature vs. nurture debate, said Glenn C. Altschuler in *Psychology Today*. Princeton sociologist Dalton Conley explains how a measure known as the polygenic index quantifies individuals' genetic propensities in countless categories, from height to educational attainment. PGIs can't predict individual futures, because the effects of DNA and environment echo back on each other. "The window is now open, Conley believes, for constructive debate."

Exhibit of the week

Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, through Sept. 2

In today's San Francisco, said Sarah Hotchkiss in *KQED.org*, "is there any artist as locally beloved as Ruth Asawa?" The hugely influential multimedia artist made her home in the city from her early 20s until her death at 87 in 2013, and her generous spirit lives on not only in her public sculptures, fountains, and landscape design but also in key arts institutions that she helped create. It's therefore fitting that her first posthumous museum retrospective currently fills 12 galleries at SFMoMA, sharing with visitors more than 300 works in various media. While roughly 60 of her signature hanging-wire sculptures are included, her range proves wide. "To Asawa, art could be informed by, and physically made from, just about anything: fruits and vegetables, flowers, a sleeping child, bentwood cane chairs, a shingled house." Some of the most delightful pieces on display are ink-on-paper works made with images carved into apples or potatoes.



Seven hanging Asawas in an installation view

Asawa wasn't always a darling of the larger art world, said Hilarie M. Sheets in *The New York Times*. Though her work appeared in museums and in solo New York gallery shows as early as the 1950s, her notoriety has exploded only in the past 15 years. Today, she's "widely acclaimed for transforming a utilitarian material and innovating on techniques that added buoyancy and transparency in sculpture." Born to Japanese immigrants in 1926, she grew up on a farm near Los Angeles and during World War II was detained with her family at two of the government internment camps for people of Japanese descent. In the late

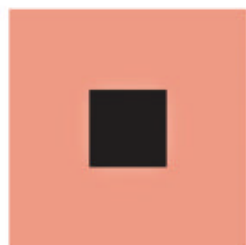
'40s, she studied art at North Carolina's Black Mountain College, and in the 1950s, she and her husband raised six children in their Noe Valley home, where she was constantly creating. Today, her hanging-wire sculptures "can be seen as sinuous cages holding the aesthetic zephyrs of mid-20th-century art," said Laura Jacobs in *Air Mail*. Based on a technique she learned from Mexican basket weavers, they are craft-y, but they also nod to minimalism, abstraction, and op art.

"For Asawa, there was no line between living a full life and making astonishing art," said Teresa Moore in *Mission Local*. She often crafted her wire sculptures using a hook in the kitchen doorway and having her children feed her wire. The family home became almost a museum in itself, with redwood entrance doors that Asawa had carved, an array of life masks she'd cast from the faces of friends and neighbors, and intricate ink drawings of the flower bouquets she received as gifts. One gallery at SFMoMA, designed to resemble the living room, displays a bronze casting of Asawa's hands. With her life's work filling these rooms, "it is stunning to think of all she made with those small, strong hands."

Bon Iver

Sable, Fable

★★★★★



Justin Vernon, at 43, is "ready to walk into the light," said Leah Lu in *Rolling Stone*. Ever since the Eau Claire, Wis., native debuted under the alias Bon Iver with 2007's acclaimed *For*

Emma, Forever Ago, all of his albums until now "captured him in the throes of spiritual crisis." But *Sable, Fable*, which adds nine songs to the three he released on an EP in October, finds him "at his most hopeful and open." On the new tracks, he often still employs his "signature lilting falsetto." But he's leaning into "more triumphant, anthemic pop melodies," and those melodies ride atop "propulsive percussion and a whole lot of pedal steel." As usual, Vernon is stretching his sound, said Stephen Thompson in *NPR.org*. But while *Sable, Fable* "revels in fresh comforts," it does so "without sacrificing the ache that animated his early work." Eighteen years after Vernon famously retreated to a cabin to record a suite of songs about heartbreak, he "seems liberated and at peace, free to bask in the warm glow of a less burdened version of himself" while still not forgetting the hardships that brought him to this moment.

Valerie June

Owls, Omens, and Oracles

★★★★★



As bleak news abounds, Valerie June's sixth album arrives as "a necessary reminder that happiness is just as potent a tool for beating back the darkness as anger," said Andy Crump in *Paste*. The

43-year-old Tennessee native is still blending elements of roots rock, Americana, and soul, but she's more insistently exhorting listeners to fight despair by connecting in small ways with others. The opener, "Joy, Joy!" sets the tone with a "funk-forward downbeat," blasts of horns and fuzzed-out guitars, and a vocal melody that's "like the cheeriest roller coaster you've ever been on." Taken whole, *Owls, Omens, and Oracles* is "a textured, grungy-sounding album, full of melody, soul, and inspired songwriting," said Timothy Monger in *AllMusic*. Despite its genre hopping, this M. Ward-produced collection is also "June's most overtly pop record," with her idiosyncratic voice delivering memorable hooks on tracks that rarely top three and a half minutes. Though the tempos slow in the second half of the record, "its quality persists." The closer, "Love and Let Go," is a "gorgeous, slow-burning testament to patience and surrender."

The Waterboys

Life, Death and Dennis Hopper

★★★★★



"You've never heard a Waterboys album like this before," said Bill Pearis in *Brooklyn Vegan*. On the group's "most unusual" release yet, the Scottish-British-Irish band best known for Celtic-

tinged 1980s rock anthems pays a mercurial tribute to mercurial actor Dennis Hopper. As frontman Mike Scott and his current collaborators trace Hopper's life from a Midwest childhood to his Hollywood friendship with James Dean to *Easy Rider* and beyond, the music of each song matches the relevant era, touching on genres from country to cabaret. Scott has long countered his image as a solemn seeker with a streak of humor, and here he "runs riot with it," said Tom Doyle in *Mojo*. "Kansas," the opener, "throws the first curveball," with Steve Earle singing about Hopper pining to leave home. Then we get "retro futuristic bossa nova" in "Andy (A Guy Like You)" and "distinct Buffalo Springfield vibes" with "The Tourist." Not all of it works, particularly the grinding "Frank," with its howled repetition of a vulgar *Blue Velvet* catchphrase. Overall, though, the record's a blast, and the band plays fast and loose, just as Hopper would.

Review of Reviews: Film & Stage

Sinners

Directed by Ryan Coogler
(R)



Vampires lay siege to a Mississippi juke joint.

A movie in which Michael B. Jordan plays twins and takes on a pack of vampires “would have been more than enough,” said William Bibbiani in *The Wrap*. But Ryan Coogler’s “bloody, brilliant” first non-franchise film since 2013’s *Fruitvale Station* “evolves into a tale of cultural survival,” and while the director of *Creed* and *Black Panther* has probably tried to do too much with *Sinners*, “its allure cannot be denied.” Jordan portrays the Smokestack brothers, who have returned to their Mississippi hometown in 1932 to open a transcendent juke joint with ill-gotten riches. The star proves “dynamic and alive in a way that allows this movie to be at least two things at any one time—not just silly and serious, but also ruthless and loving,” said David Ehrlich in *IndieWire*. When the grand opening is threatened by



Jordan and friends take a stand.

the arrival of three white vampires, viewers will expect blood and get it. Really, though, “the only thing scary about *Sinners* is the abstract notion of losing someone, or yourself, to the devil’s embrace.” And instead of making a movie about white interlopers feeding like vampires on Black culture, said Richard Lawson in *Vanity Fair*,

“Coogler, as ever, digs deeper.” The lead vampire, played by Jack O’Connell, is an Irish immigrant who has also known discrimination, and he temptingly suggests that joining his tribe of bloodsuckers can be a way for the Black revelers to seek revenge against their oppressors. “Messy but always compelling,” *Sinners* fumbles certain details. Even so, it “announces a new and perhaps further elevated era of Coogler’s cinematic reach.”

The King of Kings

Directed by Seong-ho Jang
(PG)



An animated retelling of Jesus’ life

Judged as cinema, the new animated life of Jesus is “ripe for a Sunday youth group but not much else,” said Carlos Aguilar in *Variety*. “Serviceable if uninspired,” *The King of Kings* has nevertheless scored the highest-grossing opening weekend ever for an animated biblical movie, bouncing 1998’s *The Prince of Egypt* if no adjustment is made for inflation. Jesus’ story is told here by Charles Dickens, which is “not quite as Mad Libs-adjacent as it sounds,” said Alissa Wilkinson in *The New York Times*. The great novelist wrote a book about Jesus exclusively for his children in which he emphasized Jesus’ kindness. By contrast, this movie from Angel Studios, the faith-based media company responsible for the 2023 hit *Sound of Freedom*, focuses hazily on what it calls the



The hero, washing a disciple’s feet

power of faith, and it seems to have been made purely to take money from the type of people who feel obligated to buy tickets to any retelling of Jesus’ life. “As a Christian, and as a movie critic, I would like to say this loudly, with my whole chest: This movie doesn’t need to exist.” But if you’re a Christian moviegoer and you have children, said Bob Strauss in

the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “there are worse ways to celebrate Easter.” The all-star vocal cast includes a “credible” Oscar Isaac as Jesus and Kenneth Branagh as Dickens, and while there’s little subtlety to the characters’ expressions, the animators “can serve up stirring tableaux.” Besides reviewing Jesus’ story from birth through death and resurrection, the film also “makes a good case for the power of imagination.”

Smash

Imperial Theatre, New York City ★★★★★

The long-in-the-works Broadway version of *Smash* turns out to be half of a strong show, said Robert Hofler in *The Wrap*. The impressive first act “does in an engaging 90 minutes what it took the NBC TV series two seasons of episodes to accomplish,” thoroughly reworking the plot about a team struggling to pull together *Bombshell*, a fictional Broadway show about Marilyn Monroe. Here, *Bombshell*’s star, played by Robyn Hurder, begins unraveling when she brings in a Method acting guru, and the “stellar” performances help *Smash* cruise into intermission as “a first-rate musical.” Then the curtain rises again, and there’s no story left to tell.

None of this adaptation worked for me, said Jackson McHenry in *NYMag.com*. The



Hurder’s meta-Marilyn

“deliciously hate-watchable” TV series took jabs at the self-involvement of everyone in theater, from producers to performers to assistants. This version “makes the mistake of trying to button up the madness,” mocking Hurder’s character while making every-

one else look relatively sane. “For a musical like this to be good, it has to embrace being ridiculous.” Instead, “*Smash* is tragically afraid of being bad—and worse, it wants to be respectable.”

To me, “it’s the great musical comedy no one saw coming,” said Jesse Green in *The New York Times*. Most attempts at the genre are “either too tuneless to be musicals or too dull to be comedies,” but the reimagined *Smash* is “a sterling example of both.” The show’s biggest numbers, written by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, are “too good and too well sung to miss.” Director Susan Stroman keeps the pacing brisk and breezy, and the comedy itself is “always pushing the plot ahead.” A show this on point is “a cause for celebration.”

Streaming tips

The joy of cooking shows

Chef's Table: Legends

Season 8 of the beautifully executed docuseries about the lives and kitchens of the world's top chefs focuses on some heavy hitters in its four new episodes: British chef Jamie Oliver, Spanish-American restaurateur José Andrés, French Laundry founder Thomas Keller, and farm-to-table pioneer Alice Waters. *Netflix*

Yes, Chef!

Speaking of Andrés, the man who turned Americans on to tapas is also co-hosting this new cooking competition alongside Martha Stewart. The duo will put 12 contestants through rigorous cooking challenges, with the winner claiming a \$250,000 prize. *Peacock*

24 in 24: Last Chef Standing

And you thought Carmy's kitchen in *The Bear* was stressful. This competition throws a 24-hour barrage of cooking challenges at its contestants. The second season pits upstart chefs against seasoned vets like Stephanie Izard and Bryan Voltaggio. *Max*

Garnachas:**Glorious Street Food!**

There isn't a food show in all the streaming universe that will make you hungrier than this series, which treats viewers to an epic tour of Mexico's street-food scene. Chalupas, tlayudas, and huaraches, oh my! *Netflix*

Morimoto's Sushi Master

No stranger to competing himself, the Japanese Iron Chef, Masaharu Morimoto, serves as the unforgiving judge of this cutthroat competition between some of Japan's preeminent sushi chefs. *Roku*

BBQ High

They train their pitmasters young in Texas. This six-part series crisscrosses the Lone Star State to profile teens who prefer the smoker to the gridiron, each working on their briskets and ribs in pursuit of a spot in the Texas High School BBQ State Championship. *Max*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Race for the Crown

A six-part series from the makers of *Formula 1: Drive to Survive* shifts to horsepower of a more literal sort, covering trainers, jockeys, and blustery billionaire owners as they chase horse racing's Triple Crown. Cameras capture the high-stakes action and off-track drama from the Breeders' Cup through the Belmont Stakes. *Tuesday, April 22, Netflix*

Étoile

The creators of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* leap from stand-up comedy to world-class ballet in this promising new series about desperate dance companies in New York City and Paris whose leaders hatch a scheme to boost interest by swapping their forever demanding star performers. Expect the witty, rapid-fire dialogue that co-creators Amy Sherman-Palladino and Daniel Palladino have become known for. Charlotte Gainsbourg and Luke Kirby lead the cast. *Thursday, April 24, Prime*

You

Goodbye to *You*. The popular series begins its fifth and final season with Penn Badgley's serial killer Joe Goldberg returning to New York City, this time as the husband of a high-profile CEO. In that role, Joe attracts a lot of public attention, leading people familiar with his murderous past to speak up. And what would a season be without a new woman for Joe to obsess over? *The Handmaid's Tale*'s Madeline Brewer joins the twisted drama. *Thursday, April 24, Netflix*

Havoc

Tom Hardy is bringing his tough-guy bona fides to a bloody new feature-length action thriller. The *Mad Max: Fury Road* star plays a big-city detective who finds himself in the crosshairs of a powerful crime syndicate, a crooked politician, and fellow cops. Forced to try to save the politician's son who's been put in mortal danger by a botched drug deal, Hardy's Walker uncovers a vast conspiracy. Forest Whitaker and Timothy Olyphant co-star. *Friday, April 25, Netflix*



Gainsbourg (right) with Yanic Truesdale in 'Étoile'

My Happy Place

This jet-setting new travel series hitches a ride in each episode with a famous guest host taking a journey to a favorite destination. Up first, Alan Cumming, who leads a camera crew to the Scottish Highlands he roamed as a boy. In future episodes, Taraji P. Henson will dish on the escapist pleasures of Bali, Questlove will tour Austin, and Billy Porter will return to Mykonos, which he became enraptured with while working on a cruise ship. *Sunday, April 27, at 10 p.m., CNN*

Other highlights**Simon Schama: The Holocaust, 80 Years On**

Eighty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, Schama, a British historian, travels around Europe to re-examine the origins of the Holocaust and how its atrocities were allowed to occur. *Tuesday, April 22, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

A Tragedy Foretold: Flight 3054

A three-part series examines South America's worst-ever air disaster: the fiery 2007 crash of an Airbus A320 at a São Paulo airport. *Wednesday, April 23, Netflix*

Bullet Train Explosion

In this Japanese thriller that echoes the premise of *Speed*, a bullet train is rigged to explode if it decelerates. *Wednesday, April 23, Netflix*

Show of the week

Andor

This may be the *Star Wars* series you've hoped for. Grown-up fans of the franchise who've long wished for a less juvenile galaxy far, far away found it in the first season of this spin-off of a spin-off. This prequel to *Rogue One*—in turn a prequel to the original 1977 *Star Wars* film—returns to advance the story of Cassian Andor, the smuggler turned rebel soldier played by Diego Luna. As the Empire builds its Death Star and the rebellion begins to coalesce, Andor takes the next step in his hero's journey by becoming a movement leader. Ben Mendelsohn returns as the ruthless Director Krennic. *Tuesday, April 22, Disney+*



Luna as Andor: A space hero for adults

Lingcod ceviche: A bracing blast of spice and sea

“You won’t find lingcod outside of the West Coast,” says Scott Clark in *Coastal: 130 Recipes From a California Road Trip* (Chronicle Books). Also known by its nickname, “buckethead,” lingcod is what I use in this ceviche, but you can choose any white-fleshed fish. “Just don’t use frozen fillets,” and make sure you get something that’s super fresh and of high quality by telling your fishmonger that you intend to eat it marinated raw.

“You can go crazy with the other ingredients.” If you can’t find gooseberries, just double the Sungold cherry tomatoes, but aim for a variety of textures, colors, and sensations.

I serve this ceviche with tortilla chips I make from homemade tortillas, dusted with a homemade Tajín-style spice blend. Tortillas are simple to make if you have a tortilla press, and I’ve included directions on how to turn homemade tortillas into chips.

Recipe of the week Lingcod ceviche

- 1 lb fresh white-fleshed fish fillets, such as lingcod, cod, or halibut, cut into ¾-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- 2 serrano chiles
- 1 tbsp avocado oil
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 oz Sungold cherry tomatoes, halved
- 8 oz gooseberries, halved
- 2 fresh cayenne chiles, minced
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced



Varied textures make the ceviche memorable.

- 3 limes
- 6 cranks chile pequin or black pepper
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced, for garnish
- 2 avocados, sliced, for serving
- Tortilla chips, for serving

Place fish in a medium bowl. Season with 2 or 3 pinches of salt and stow it in the refrigerator to chill.

Place serrano chiles in a small bowl and coat them with the avocado oil, olive oil, and a pinch of salt. In a 9-inch cast-iron pan, over high heat, pan-roast the chiles

until they’re soft and charred all over, 2 to 3 minutes. When they’re cool enough to touch, seed one serrano, and mince both. Put them in a serving bowl, then add tomatoes, gooseberries, cayenne chiles, and shallot and mix to fully incorporate.

Zest limes into a small bowl. Set aside the zest.

Using the heel of your palm, roll limes on a hard surface to break down the pulp. Halve them, then use your hands to squeeze the juice onto the vegetables. Add chile pequin and a pinch of salt, then mix well. Rest vegetables at room temperature for 30 minutes, then mix in the fish, and place ceviche in refrigerator to chill for at least 15 minutes and up to 1 hour.

Season chilled ceviche with salt and pepper, then garnish it with lime zest and green onions and serve it with tortilla chips and avocado on the side. Serves 4 to 6.

To make tortilla chips:

In a medium Dutch oven with a candy thermometer attached, heat 3 inches of canola oil to 350 degrees. Rip 8 to 10 homemade tortillas into big pieces and carefully drop a tortilla’s worth of chips into the hot oil, making sure not to crowd them. Fry them, moving chips around and flipping them until they’re golden, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined bowl. Repeat to fry remaining chips. Add Tajín seasoning if desired.

Tastemakers’ favorites: America’s best restaurants

“While it’s incredible to travel the world for the best culinary experiences, you don’t have to trek to France or Japan to get great food,” said Becky Duffett in *Food & Wine*. We recently asked 400 chefs, writers, and travel experts to name the best restaurants in America, and as their top five prove, “there’s good eating in every part of this country.”

Burdell Oakland Our top vote getter “looks like a grandmother’s sitting room from the 1970s.” But the main draw is Geoff Davis’ “totally fresh take on California soul food,” including boiled peanuts, barbecue shrimp, and family-style meals that “fold local and seasonal produce into dishes with slow-simmered nostalgia.”

Canlis Seattle This third-generation, family-run fine-dining restaurant “still serves stunning mid-century architecture and lake views,” and it leveled up in 2023 when it brought in chef Aisha Ibrahim. Her tasting menus are precise executions of Pacific Northwest flavors, and she brought back Canlis’ “iconic” steakhouse salad.

The Musket Room New York City Chefs Camari Mick and Mary Attea were named to



The Musket Room’s co-chefs

Food & Wine’s Best New Chefs list in 2024, and they oversee one of New York City’s most arresting restaurants. Dinner options such as rabbit with kumquat, fennel, and pistachio arrive at the table like works of art.

Lowland Charleston, S.C. Jason Stanhope’s “ode

to Lowcountry cooking” occupies two “dreamy” stories of a wallpapered 19th-century home. The kitchen specializes in “refined Southern comforts, from local oysters to farmer cheese biscuits to a thick tavern burger.”

Emeril’s New Orleans “Bam! Emeril’s has still got it.” Legendary chef Emeril Lagasse passed the baton to his son, E.J., whose tasting-menu interpretations of oyster stew and quail Milton will leave you dazzled.

Wine: New York’s cab francs

Whatever else you may think of our state, “there’s no doubt that New York makes great cabernet francs,” said Eric Asimov in *The New York Times*. Those produced in the Finger Lakes region are “particularly distinctive.” They’re “true cool-climate wines,” almost always “floral and red-fruited” and relatively low in alcohol. I enthusiastically recommend the three below.

2023 Eminence Road Farm Winery Lamb’s Quarters Vineyard (\$24).

This wine expresses “the lively, easy-going side of cabernet franc,” offering “light herbal aromas and bright flavors of red fruit.”

2021 Hermann J. Wiemer (\$25).

This “superb value” biodynamic cab franc is “fragrant, complex, pure, and focused.”

2020 Bloomer Creek White Horse Red (\$28). Mostly cab franc, with a little merlot, this Bordeaux-like wine is “a bit rustic, with chewy tannins.” Even so, “the floral, red fruit flavors are clear, lively, and a little eccentric.”



This week's dream: The modern pulse of historic Vienna

Until we saw it for ourselves, “we had a very outdated impression of Vienna,” said Diane Bair and Pamela Wright in *The Boston Globe*. We thought we knew what to expect of the storied city on the Danube: “classical music, coffeehouses, cream cakes, and carriage rides.” But over the past decade, Vienna has given itself a contemporary update, renovating scores of buildings and creating new green spaces and pedestrian-only areas. Meanwhile, an influx of young families has spurred the opening of new boutiques, galleries, and restaurants. Even Vienna’s rich history feels refreshed, as a \$110 million makeover has made the Wien Museum a more exciting place to learn about the city’s past. And at the year-old House of Strauss and elsewhere, waltz king Johann Strauss II is being celebrated during his bicentennial year with concerts, special events, and exhibits.

Our hotel, the Amauris, occupies an 1860 former palace on the famed Ringstrasse,



Pedestrians rule the streets near the city's center.

and while it “oozes grace and elegance,” contemporary touches like “splashes of eye-popping colors” keep it from feeling stuffy. The location put us just a short walk from most Old Town sights and plenty of classic coffeehouses, a throwback feature of the city we were glad to find still thriving. Locals mix with tourists in these grand gathering places where elegantly dressed servers deliver the coffee, pastries,

and traditional Viennese dishes. We enjoyed apple strudel at the 150-year-old Café Landtmann, once frequented by Sigmund Freud, and we had an excellent Sacher torte at Café Tirolerhof, a locals’ favorite.

It’s “nearly mandatory” to order Wiener schnitzel at least once, and the crisp, ultra-thin cutlet at Praterwirt “didn’t disappoint.” But Ringstrasse is also now home to “a slew of ethnic eateries, contemporary wine bars, and new farm-to-table restaurants.” One evening, we savored sunset cocktails and sweeping views of the city at Das Loft, a modern rooftop bar, and at Tian Bistro am Spittelberg, we learned what Michelin-starred chef Paul Ivic can do with such seasonal vegetarian dishes as beetroot risotto. Black-tie balls and world-class opera could be found elsewhere that night. “This capital city is all that, and much more.”
At the Amauris (theamauris.com), doubles start at \$530.

Hotel of the week



The tree-house bar at sundown

Nekajui

Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Sunset at this new cliffside resort is “quite a show,” said Maya Kachroo-Levine in *Travel & Leisure*. The tented tree-house bar is a great place to watch the sky go dark pink over the Pacific, but so is the 70-foot infinity pool, the spa, and almost every one of the property’s 107 rooms and suites. As at the world’s several other Ritz-Carlton Reserve sites, the staff here “will move mountains for guests,” and activities and dining options abound. Perhaps your favorite moments, though, will be spent walking the resort’s “magnificent” wooden suspension bridge or riding the glass funicular “down, down, down” to the crescent beach and azure water.
ritzcarlton.com; doubles from \$1,225

Getting the flavor of...

Death Valley’s surprising neighbors

Two of the tiny California towns just outside Death Valley National Park “have more to offer than gas tank refills,” said Jessie Schiewe in the *Los Angeles Times*. Though “far from chic or trendy,” Tecopa (pop. 169) and nearby Shoshone (pop. 22) are “rife with charming businesses, eateries, and wildlife hot spots.” Both sit in the prehistoric Lake Tecopa basin, source of the fossils now displayed at the free Shoshone Museum. The ancient lake is gone, but the area has four public hot springs to soak in before a beer at Tecopa’s Death Valley Brewing or vegan sandwiches and a wood-fired pizza at the Kit Fox Cafe. There’s also delicious American and Mexican fare, including rattlesnake chili, at the Crowbar Cafe and Saloon, Shoshone’s only restaurant. The woman who owns Shoshone has invested in restoring Shoshone Spring, “a literal desert oasis” that’s become a popular destination for birders and for nature lovers hoping to spot a Shoshone pupfish, a species once thought to be extinct. Like the towns, the oasis “might seem empty,” but you’ll realize “it’s actually teeming with life.”

The go-go groove of D.C.

For many music fans, stepping inside Washington, D.C.’s newest museum will be “nothing short of nostalgic,” said Johnaé De Felicis in *Thrillist*. The two-month-old Go-Go Museum and Café, in the historic Anacostia neighborhood, celebrates the homegrown, high-energy funk subgenre that, starting in the late 1970s,

spread joy throughout a city that needed a boost. “Famous for its conga-driven beats and call-and-response interactions,” go-go plays all day on the museum’s sound system while visitors explore the stories of legends including Chuck Brown and the band Trouble Funk, along with hundreds of artifacts. One audiovisual exhibit presents vintage go-go tracks alongside its later echoes, including Nelly’s big 2002 hit, “Hot in Herre.” Go-go also inspired “daring fashion choices,” and one section showcases local streetwear brands that started with grassroots sales and grew into multimillion-dollar businesses. While longtime fans will love it all, “uninitiated visitors can expect to learn a ton here, too.”

Time to get a Real ID

May 7 is a deadline that every U.S. air traveler should know about, said Hannah Sampson and Andrea Sachs in *The Washington Post*. On that date, after years of delay, the Transportation Security Administration will finally stop accepting standard driver’s licenses as adequate identification for passengers boarding domestic flights. The new standard will be a security-enhanced Real ID, which is what you have if your current driver’s license is emblazoned with a star. There are a few acceptable substitutes, including a U.S. passport, so not all travelers will need to update their license quickly. TSA branches have been freed to employ a “phased” approach to enforcement, but “what that means in practice is not entirely clear,” so don’t risk facing a long delay at the security check or being completely turned away.

Join the Race to Restore Ocean Health



“After sailing in regattas all over the world, one thing is clear – we need to do more to protect our oceans.”

– Lara Dallman-Weiss
Olympic Athlete and
Sailors for the Sea Ambassador

Our oceans face devastating threats such as plastic pollution, oil spills, and destruction to marine habitats. Join Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana to take action to protect our waters.

Learn more at sailorsforthesea.org/lara



Photo credit: © Allison Chenard

Best Properties on the Market

This week: Homes in farm country



Erwin Estrabo, Jeff Chen



1 ◀ Pescadero, Calif. Architect Jerry Wings designed this 2008 contemporary industrial six-bedroom in a coastal Northern California town known for its organic farming. A curving roofline tops a vaulted open living area with concrete floors, lofts, and walls of steel-framed glass facing the ocean. The two-story solarium has a pool, and outside are an orchard, a chicken coop, barn, and attached garage. San Francisco is about an hour away. \$7,980,000. Eva Chen, Compass, (415) 971-5171



2 ▶ Kingston, N.Y. In the heart of Hudson Valley farmland two hours from Manhattan, the Willows Farmhouse is on 13.8 acres with views of the Catskill Mountains. The eight-bedroom limestone manor, built in 1861, includes marble mantels, original flooring, tiered crown molding, and a country kitchen with a Fisher & Paykel range. The estate has a pool, barrel sauna, and an event-ready barn, plus a stable, orchard, and vineyard. \$4,399,000. Shane Menaker, Hudson Modern, (305) 904-7536



Big Bear Aerial Productions



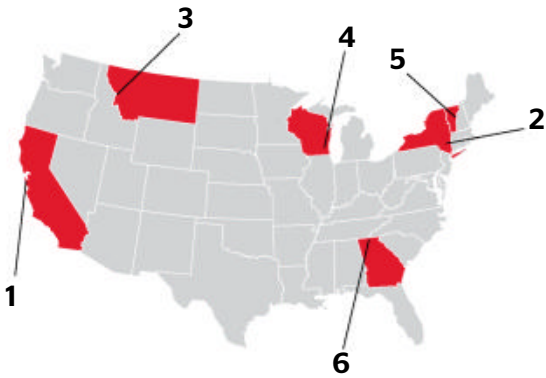
3 ◀ Florence, Mont. Built in 2021, this Scandinavian modern home on more than 20 acres is in an agriculturally diverse area 30 minutes south of Missoula. The single-story three-bedroom has heated concrete floors, a kitchen with black quartz counters, and tall windows framing mountain views. The lot includes a new garage and shop, fields with farming potential, creek frontage, and access to trails and wild-life. \$1,599,000. Hannah Shelley, PureWest/Christie's International Real Estate, (406) 270-0794

Best Properties on the Market



4 ◀ Oconomowoc, Wis. Located in a crop-rich area with a popular farmers market, this Dodge County home is on more than 270 acres, 40 minutes outside Milwaukee. Fitzhugh Scott designed the main 1953 mid-century-modern four-bedroom, which has two fireplaces, a vintage kitchen, floor-to-ceiling windows looking over prairie and farmable land, and a three-season screened porch. Outside are rolling pastures, mature trees, a farmhouse, and a barn. \$3,495,000. Paul Handle, Mahler Sotheby's International Realty, (414) 202-6200

5 ▶ Corinth, Vt. This renovated 1812 farmstead on 164 acres is near family-run orchards and dairy, sheep, vegetable, and maple farms. The four-bedroom features a kitchen with a soapstone farmhouse sink, hand-hewn beams, and original heart pine floors, and a formal dining room with a fireplace. About an hour from Montpelier, the property spans woods and grassland, and offers views of the White and Green Mountains. \$1,679,000. Wade Weathers, Landvest, (802) 238-6362



Steal of the week



6 ◀ Blue Ridge, Ga. Close to vineyards and the largest orchard in the South, Treetop Getaway is a 1990 two-bedroom modern rustic lodge on Cherry Log Mountain. A floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace anchors an open-plan living space with wood ceilings, shiplap walls, and an updated kitchen. The primary bedroom opens to a porch, and the large deck includes a hot tub overlooking the wooded 1-acre lot. \$475,000. Emily Gray, Mountain Sotheby's International Realty, (706) 851-5714

The News at a Glance

The bottom line

■ Total U.S. home equity has climbed nearly 80 percent since early 2020 to \$35 trillion, up from \$19.5 trillion. That was about twice the increase in financial wealth including stocks and bonds as of the end of 2024, according to the Federal Reserve. *The Wall Street Journal*

■ Apple shipped 57.9 million iPhones from the beginning of January through March, a 10 percent rise from the 52.6 million units it delivered in the same period a year ago. Industry tracker IDC says the increase came from a stockpiling effort meant to offset tariffs on goods exported from China to the U.S. *Bloomberg*

■ Retail sales jumped 1.4 percent in March, the biggest monthly increase in two years after two months of weak consumer spending. Economists say shoppers rushed to buy before tariffs take effect. *Axios*



■ Last year, Indians were the world's biggest buyers of gold jewelry, their combined purchases of 560 metric tons outpacing even China's 510 metric tons. Asia accounted for 64.5 percent of global demand for gold jewelry and bullion last year. America bought just 6.5 percent. *The Economist*

■ LVMH lost its spot as the world's most valuable luxury firm to rival Hermès after an unexpected decline in first-quarter sales. LVMH shares fell to lower its market capitalization to \$275.4 billion against Hermès' \$280 billion. *CNBC.com*

■ Goldman Sachs estimated that, in a worst-case scenario, a pullback in foreign tourism and boycotting of American products could cost the U.S. \$90 billion, or 0.3 percent of GDP. *Bloomberg*

Antitrust: Meta defends Instagram purchase

Mark Zuckerberg took the witness stand this week to defend his social media empire in a landmark antitrust trial, said Cecilia Kang and Mike Isaac in *The New York Times*. In its lawsuit, the Federal Trade Commission is arguing that Meta “violated competition laws by purchasing WhatsApp and Instagram” to “cement its power” and to bury competition. Zuckerberg acknowledged that the 2012 acquisition of Instagram for \$1 billion came after Meta failed at efforts to build its own photo-sharing app. The case, which began during the final weeks of President Trump’s first term, “poses a consequential threat to Zuckerberg’s business” and could result in the breakup of the company.



Zuckerberg: Hoping for Trump’s help

Zuckerberg “isn’t getting much return on his investment” in mending fences with Trump, said Dana Mattioli in *The Wall Street Journal*. Once a frequent Trump target, he has “spent tens of millions of dollars in recent years aiming to rebuild his relationship” with the president, even recently purchasing a home in Washington, D.C., where he has been repeatedly spotted in the White House. In late March, Zuckerberg called FTC head Andrew Ferguson offering \$450 million to settle the case. It was “far from the \$30 billion that the FTC had demanded,” but Zuckerberg “seemed confident that Trump would back him up.” Trump did not. Instead, he allowed Ferguson to bring the case to trial.

Wall Street: Trading desks prosper in market turmoil

Big banks enjoyed a surge in first-quarter trading revenues, largely thanks to President Trump’s tariff chaos, said AnnaMaria Andriotis in *The Wall Street Journal*. Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley reported this week “more than \$12 billion in fees in their equities business, the desks that run stock-related activities for clients.” This figure topped even “the Covid-era swings.” For now, the policy uncertainty means more trading. But “too much volatility for too long” could become a problem for banks if clients choose to “sit on the sidelines.”

AI: Nvidia faces new limits on chips meant for China

Nvidia said this week that new restrictions on chip exports will cost it \$5.5 billion, said John Liu in *CNN.com*. In a regulatory filing, the chipmaker said “it was informed by the U.S. government” that its H20 chips for artificial intelligence “would now require a special license to be exported to China.” The H20 chips account for 13 percent of Nvidia’s sales, and had been “specifically designed to accommodate stringent U.S. export controls” and let Nvidia keep selling to China. But curbs on the chips were expected after China’s DeepSeek used them for the development of its own ChatGPT-like reasoning model.

Climate: Maritime group agrees to greenhouse gas tax

The International Maritime Organization agreed to impose the first-ever global tax on greenhouse gas emissions from ships, said Jennifer McDermott and Sibi Arasu in the *Associated Press*. Member states voted last week to enact “a minimum fee of \$100 for every ton of greenhouse gas emissions emitted by ships above certain thresholds,” in a move estimated to cost the shipping industry \$11 billion to \$13 billion every year. The U.S. skipped the negotiations but “urged other governments to oppose” the tax, which takes effect in 2027.

Personal stake: New Intel CEO has deep China ties

Lip-Bu Tan, the new chief executive of Intel, has invested in hundreds of Chinese tech firms, including several with ties to the Chinese military, said Eduardo Baptista in *Reuters*. A review of Chinese and U.S. corporate filings last week found that Tan, a legendary Silicon Valley investor in China, “controls more than 40 Chinese companies and funds” as well as stakes in hundreds more. The investments were made through Walden International, his San Francisco venture capital firm, along with two Hong Kong-based holding companies he controls. Some of the Walden investments were made jointly with China Electronics Corporation, a Chinese military supplier.

Is it 4:20? You may need a Twinkie

Hostess hopes to supercharge the Twinkie by marketing to stoners, said Katie Deighton in *The Wall Street Journal*. J.M. Smucker, which bought the 106-year-old snack maker Hostess for \$4.6 billion in 2023, “wants to revitalize sales of a storied yet dusty portfolio” by moving “closer to popular culture.” One way it is doing so: by sending a “Munchie Mobile” on a road trip along the East Coast to hand out free snacks outside cannabis dispensaries on April 20, an unofficial holiday for weed lovers. The move “is a departure from Hostess marketing in its pre-Smucker era, when its sweet baked goods were advertised largely with families and kids in mind.” But with sales trending down, Hostess is trying new approaches, including using geotargeting technology “to serve ads to consumers when they might be driving close to a grocery store.” At the Munchie Mobile, visitors will receive a free Hostess snack in exchange for reciting phrases like, “Bet you dollars to Donettes I have the munchies.”

Making Money

Safe havens: Tariff wars shake Treasury market

Until a week ago, U.S. Treasury bonds were considered to be as rock-solid as Mount Rushmore, said **Peter S. Goodman** in *The New York Times*.

They were a global safe haven for investors because of the belief that, no matter what, “the federal government will endure and stand by its debts.” President Trump’s tariffs, however, have shaken that faith. A “sharp sell-off in the bond market” last week sowed fears that international investors are fleeing for even safer havens. The yield on the 10-year Treasury bond—essentially, the interest that investors demand to loan money to the U.S. government—rose last week at the fastest pace in more than two decades. That’s a warning about investor confidence, and “is itself a cause of future distress,” because the interest rate on that bond is what financial institutions use to benchmark their mortgage rates and other borrowing costs.

“Historically, America’s greatest export has been its debt,” said **Felix Salmon** in *Axios*. U.S. corporations, as well as the U.S. Treasury, “issue trillions of dollars of debt every year” that is happily snapped up by foreign investors “at very attractive rates to the borrowers.” That money is invested in the U.S. economy, “where it generates returns far greater than the cost of servicing the debt.” This flow of money into America is like “the mirror image of the trade deficit,” and it is “one of the main reasons



Will global investors still seek safety in Treasury bonds?

the U.S. economy has outperformed the rest of the developed world over many decades.” But that exceptionalism is at risk.

This is where China has a dangerous card to play, said **Shuli Ren** in *Bloomberg*. China is the second-largest foreign holder of Treasury securities after Japan, with \$760 billion. “Some of the sharpest moves” during the volatility last week came “during Asian hours, prompting speculation that Beijing was in the market” dumping its holdings. And

frankly, why wouldn’t it? If it can manipulate interest rates through a bond-market fire sale, it can bring the U.S. closer and closer to the fiscal brink.

The market crisis was frightful because stocks, bonds, and the dollar all fell in concert, said **Robert Armstrong** in the *Financial Times*. That “feels momentous, because the reliability of the dollar and Treasuries are the foundation of just about every global market.” But it’s far “too early to declare that the supremacy of the dollar is ending,” or that Treasuries are no longer safe. Even after last week’s jump, yields on Treasuries are roughly where they were in February. Overall, the U.S. economy still looks strong. And Trump seems to listen to the market. He has “now backed down to market pressure twice in a few days.”

What the experts say

■ The myth of the flighty Millennial

Young workers are no more prone to job-hopping than their parents were, said **Josie Cox** in *Business Insider*. “Despite Millennials and Gen Z making up more than half the workforce, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the median job tenure today is actually longer than it was in the 1980s.” About a third of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers switched employers at age 20, compared with less than a quarter of Millennials and 20 percent of Gen Zers at the same age. “The share of workers who have stayed with the same employer for over 20 years, meanwhile, is about the same as it was in 1983.” How did the myth of the flighty Millennial worker arise? One theory is that the age of social media means every job switch becomes highly visible when it gets blasted out to your whole social network.

■ Zillow fights shadow listings

Zillow is banning homes that were initially listed “off-market” from appearing on its home-search platform, said **Claire Boston** in *Yahoo Finance*. Such “pocket” listings, marketed first through Instagram, brokers’ private lists, or “on a single brokerage’s website,” have become increasingly common in some markets. Zillow has long opposed so-called shadow listings,

which it argues hurts transparency. The National Association of Realtors, however, had recently ruled that sellers could “delay broadly advertising their homes online.” Under the new Zillow rules, any home that initially got this kind of private marketing will be barred from Zillow “for the life of the listing”—in essence, until the home is sold or moved to a new brokerage.

■ When ‘FDIC insured’ accounts aren’t

A fintech mess shows how even FDIC-insured bank accounts aren’t completely safe, said **Paige Smith** in *Bloomberg*. Customers who got savings accounts through the financial app Yotta say they have been unable to retrieve their money, which they were told was FDIC-insured. Many have since learned that “Yotta isn’t a bank and never actually held its customers’ money.” It worked with a software middleman called Synapse that linked Yotta’s app with an Arkansas-based bank called Evolve Bank & Trust. Last spring, Synapse went bankrupt, “leaving behind a tangled mess of records” and a shortfall of about \$95 million. The FDIC guarantees money deposited into a bank (up to \$250,000). However, if you “move the money through third parties” and one of them loses the cash, you may be out of luck.

Charity of the week



Tornadoes in the Midwest and South have devastated communities this month, with a 160 mph storm killing five people in Selmer, Tenn. **Mercy Chefs** (mercychefs.com) is working on the ground to distribute and hand-deliver fresh meals—salad, pasta, bread, chocolate cake—to Tennesseans, some displaced from their ruined homes. The organization serves high-quality, professionally prepared meals not only to survivors of natural disasters but also first responders and volunteers. Working across 33 states and 33 countries, more than 29 million meals have been served since 2006. Founded in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Mercy Chefs was launched as an effort to improve the quality of food served in aid. The nonprofit also manages permanent community kitchens in Richmond, Va., and Nashville that support single parents, children in after-school programs, and low-income families in need.

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.

Decoupling: The U.S.-China trade divorce

A bridal-store owner in Pennsylvania is slashing his salary to cover increased costs on dress orders. A kitchen-equipment importer is planning layoffs. And a cosmetic-bag maker in Virginia thinks China tariffs “may be the final blow,” said Jason Douglas in *The Wall Street Journal*. Businesses all across the country are having to adjust to “a reality of higher tariffs” as the trade war with China intensifies. When President Trump announced a tariff pause for dozens of countries last week, Wall Street breathed a sigh of relief. But Main Street is suffering as trading between the two superpowers, America and China, grinds to a halt. Despite times of animosity, the two economies are “deeply intertwined.” Unwinding that relationship will present “profound changes for American consumers” and businesses that have depended on access to cheap Chinese production. The pain will not be one-sided. China has based “its entire economic model” around producing goods to export to the world’s biggest consumer market.

The temporary exclusion of smartphones, laptops, and other consumer electronics from tariffs will help, said Sam Joiner in the *Financial Times*, but the impact will still be widespread. “More than three-quarters of the video game consoles, food processors, and electric fans imported into the U.S. were made in China,” as well as 75 percent of the dolls, tricycles, scooters, and other wheeled toys delivered to American customers. Moving manufacturing elsewhere will not be easy. Consider the example of Apple. It has been trying to reorient its supply lines for years, leaning heavily on India. Still, “if Apple were to reserve its entire iPhone output from India for the U.S. market,



U.S. firms must rethink their reliance on China.

it would cover only about half” of the necessary supply.

There are still plenty of people on Main Street cheering on Trump’s policy, said Sohrab Ahmari in *UnHerd*. “That is especially true for the regional manufacturers who form the heart of the GOP’s power base.” The manufacturing-heavy counties that have lost jobs and seen their living standards decline can trace a direct line between American deindustrialization and the inclusion of China in the World Trade Organization in 2001. A trade war,

however, hurts other groups that Trump supports—including farmers like me, said Caleb Ragland in *The Free Press*. The stand-off with China has me worried about “who will buy my crops.” The U.S. is the world’s leader in soybean production, and China is by far our biggest customer. But the longer this stalemate continues, “the likelier China is to take its business elsewhere.”

Get used to the idea of a bifurcated global economy, said *The Economist*. Trump appears set on “decoupling” from China to contain its economic rise, “whatever happens to the balance of trade.” Commercial relations between the two countries have reached a contentious low point, but they have also been “in secular decline.” The trade war has arrived “with a speed and ferocity China did not anticipate.” One survival strategy is to “sell parts and components to trading partners” like Thailand and Vietnam, “where they can be incorporated into finished products for export to America.” But Trump knows this strategy well—and has warned against it. “Make no mistake, the death knell of the postwar trading order has been rung.”

No, America doesn’t need ‘little screws’

Andy Kessler
The Wall Street Journal

President Trump, who grew up 15 minutes from Archie Bunker, is trying to bring back the *All in the Family* nostalgia: “Those were the days!” said Andy Kessler. But going backward “is a meathead move.” I am all for America on top, but Trump’s America First vision “is a vertical model: Do everything.” A self-sufficient, stand-alone country. News flash: Vertical always fails. American prosperity comes from a horizontal empire in which industries are “organized into layers of expertise.” Apple designs iPhones in California but assembles them lower down the stack in China, where living standards are also increased. “Even the artificial intelligence

revolution is horizontal,” where OpenAI uses Nvidia chips made by Taiwan’s TSMC using Dutch equipment. “Sadly, this horizontal model causes freak-outs over U.S. trade deficits. But who cares?” We’ve run a cumulative trade deficit since 1999 of \$15.4 trillion. In that time, U.S. equity values rose \$45 trillion, while U.S. household wealth quadrupled to \$169 trillion. “So why would you ever want to go back to a vertical, isolationist model for the U.S.?” Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick says, “‘Human beings screwing in little screws to make iPhones, that kind of thing is going to come to America.’ You first, Howard.”

Neoliberalism is ready for its comeback

Allison Schrager
Bloomberg

While much of the world is freaking out about the upending of the global economy, I am feeling an odd sense of calm, said Allison Schrager. That’s because I am a proud neoliberal. “And after President Trump’s tariffs destroy what is left of the post-neoliberal world order, neoliberalism itself will be due for a comeback.” Free trade and free markets raised living standards, reduced poverty, and enabled astounding innovations. It was not immune to attacks, starting from “traditional lefties” who thought free-trade-loving economists had “led the world astray.” Eventually, even the Right joined in the criticism, and the entire neoliberal argument

became warped. A poll last year found that the majority of Americans “questioned whether they benefited from trade.” Now that Trump has taken a wrecking ball to it, he will own the economic fallout. “And if history is any guide, it won’t be pretty.” The infamous Smoot-Hawley tariffs enacted in 1930 “made the Great Depression worse” and made the world poorer. By 1934, they were lowered, paving the way “for free trade and co-operation to become tenets of the postwar global economic order.” With former anti-traders already “extolling the benefits of the old economic order,” this time the turnaround won’t take as long.

Obituaries

The novelist who lectured Latin America

Mario Vargas Llosa
1936-2025

Fact and fiction circled each other in the works of Mario Vargas Llosa. Through realism,



erotica, and even crude slang, the Peruvian novelist wove tales of political corruption and moral compromise. As part of the Latin American literary boom of the 1960s—alongside Colombia's Gabriel García Márquez and Argentina's Julio Cortázar—he reached international fame, winning the Nobel Prize in literature in 2010. But unlike most other regional giants, he never embraced leftist politics. While his fictional works appeared to support revolution and speaking truth to power, his expository essays tended toward conservatism. He even unsuccessfully ran for president of Peru in 1990 as a right-winger, proposing to privatize state enterprises and lay off public-sector workers. “If you're a writer in a country like Peru or Mexico, you're a privileged person because you know how to read and write,” he said. “It is a moral obligation of a writer in Latin America to be involved in civic activities.”

Born in Peru, Vargas Llosa grew up in Bolivia, where his mother told him his father was dead. In fact, his parents had divorced before his birth; they reunited when he was 10 and soon packed

him off to military school in Lima. He retaliated by writing a novel, 1963's *The Time of the Hero*, a scathing account of life in a military academy that portrayed officers as abusive and corrupt. Scandalized generals denounced the book, which only turned it into a sensation. At 19, Vargas Llosa eloped with his uncle's 29-year-old sister-in-law, inspiring his novel *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*. “His distaste for the norms of polite society in Peru gave him abundant inspiration,” said *The New York Times*, but he refused to live there. Instead, he spent decades in Europe, feted as an international literary star.

“His fame and swelling ambition fueled his run for president,” said *The Washington Post*. But he came across as an elitist and failed to win over Peru's largely impoverished indigenous electorate. Chastened, he returned to Europe and became a columnist for Spain's *El País*, espousing his love of free markets to a global readership. “His combative defense of this position earned him enemies” among Latin America's left, said *The Guardian*. Yet he maintained his dedication to his craft. Writing “is a way of living with illusion and joy and a fire throwing out sparks in your head,” he said. “This is an experience that continues to bewitch me as it did the first time.”

The producer who was a master of live events

Don Mischer
1940-2025

Don Mischer came alive under pressure. As the go-to director and producer of



live television specials for decades, the 15-time Emmy winner orchestrated coverage of Olympic Games, Super Bowl halftime shows, and Oscars ceremonies. He captured the first Michael Jackson moonwalk in 1983, the Olympic cauldron lighting by Muhammad Ali in 1996, and the celebrity-filled Lincoln Memorial performance for President Obama's 2009 inauguration. The one time that things didn't go smoothly was also the only time most Americans heard his voice. At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, a cascade of 100,000 balloons was supposed to drop from the ceiling upon John Kerry's nomination, but only a trickle floated down. “Jesus, we need more balloons!” Mischer barked from the control room. “What the f--- are you guys doing up there?” Unfortunately, CNN had picked up his mic and was broadcasting his words. “Had I known it,” he later said, “I would have chosen some very different adjectives.”

Raised near San Antonio by middle-class parents, Mischer “was always enthralled with the small screen,” said *The Hollywood Reporter*. He entered the University of Texas intending to be-

come a teacher. But when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, he helped out as a runner for TV journalists covering the aftermath of the shooting, and he realized he had to go into broadcasting. By the 1970s, he had moved to New York City and was directing news programs, Barbara Walters interviews, and live concerts. He was eventually put in charge of “some of the biggest star-studded events in live television,” said the *Los Angeles Times*. A self-professed “stress junkie,” he loved to defuse the crises that inevitably sprang up. When a sudden downpour threatened to short-circuit, literally, Prince's 2007 Super Bowl halftime show, Mischer managed to make the event into “a cinematic experience, featuring a breathtaking rendition of ‘Purple Rain’ amid violet lighting.”

Mischer “did not stop working until the end,” said *Deadline*. He announced his retirement earlier this month but had made the preparations for a science awards ceremony that took place just last week. “People said to me, ‘Wasn't there an easier way to make a living?’” he said in 2023. But “those of us in live television, we're kind of rolling the dice. We're taking a challenge to see if we can pull it off where nothing goes wrong. Once you do that, it does become addictive.”

The actress who showed us the inner lives of servants

Jean Marsh knew firsthand that Britain runs on its servant class. While house-sitting for a wealthy friend, Marsh—then in her mid-30s and nearly broke—and fellow actress Eileen Atkins forged the idea for a TV show about the overlooked staff in an aristocratic household.

Jean Marsh
1934-2025

The two created *Upstairs, Downstairs*,

which debuted in 1971 to much fanfare, and not just in the U.K. The show's 68 episodes eventually reached 80 countries, and it was particularly popular in the U.S. So was the Emmy-winning Marsh, who played Rose Buck, the head parlormaid and became a household name in London and beyond. “I was on buses and rubbish bins everywhere,” Marsh said.

Born to a working-class London family, Marsh was a talented dancer, singer, and actress from an early age. She attended drama school, which her parents considered “a practical career move,” said *The New York Times*. If you weren't posh, Marsh said, “you either did a tap dance or you worked in Woolworths.” She worked steadily in the 1950s and '60s, appearing in *The Twilight Zone* and *Doctor Who*. She did Shakespeare on Broadway in 1959 and had a small role in *Cleopatra* (1963).

After her *Upstairs, Downstairs* run, she took science fiction and fantasy roles. She played both a “brutal psychiatric nurse” and a “witch with a detachable head” in *Return to Oz* (1985), said *The Telegraph* (U.K.), as well as a villainous queen clad in latex in *Willow* (1988). She and Atkins both signed on to an *Upstairs, Downstairs* reboot, which premiered in 2010 with Marsh reprising her role. But the retread was eclipsed by a new show with a very similar premise: *Downton Abbey*. “It might be a coincidence,” Marsh said acidly. “And I might be the queen of Belgium.”

Building a thousand-year-old tree

Gnarled, ancient trunks are an essential and magical part of old forest habitats, said **Matthew Ponsford** in **Noema Magazine**. Now arborists are re-creating their properties in younger trees.

EVEN IN EARLY summer, when Sherwood Forest is thick with lime-colored new leaves, you start to see it from a few hundred paces away. Its trunk is 36 feet around and its canopy stretches for almost three bus lengths. Its broad, bowl-shaped crown is propped up by a ring of metal columns, like walking sticks measured to fit each of its groaning boughs. The Major Oak, as it's called, is surrounded by a fence that keeps its many visitors from tramping too close. On the summer day I visited, Reg Harris, a 50-something arborist in thick utility trousers and a sun-bleached polo, invited me to hop over and stand for a while at the foot of the giant tree.

The Major, Harris told me, sprouted from an acorn here at least eight centuries ago. No one knows exactly when. Some estimate it has seen the arrival of a thousand summers. It's shorter than it once was, Harris said; the tree would have reached its peak height sometime around Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas, but its upper limbs have long since dropped off. In its later years, it has developed a fat, furrowed trunk that has twisted and fissured through storms and grown boulder-size calluses, which bulge where wounds were torn and healed lifetimes ago.

Place a hand against its lichen-crusted bark, and its hard flesh feels as cool and sturdy as a cathedral's timbers. Up close, it's possible to see signs of rot and inhabitation between the band-aids Harris' predecessors have placed to try to keep the tree alive. The walking sticks, which replaced a system of iron chains (some of them are still stuck fast in the limbs), protect the tree's trunk from being torn apart by the cantilevered weight of its branches. A macabre process of "cannibalization" began centuries ago, during which time the tree has basically consumed its own rotting, pulpy core, creating a 10-foot-high cavern in the trunk. Harris is one of the few people alive to have been in there, where bugs crawl and beefsteak fungus erupts.

Harris introduced me to the Major not to show me a withering geriatric, but rather a sort of living blueprint. It's a template or "inspiration," he said, that's guiding a set of experimental techniques and technologies that aim to re-create some of the Major's rich collection of scars and wrinkles, hollows and decay. These "veteran features" of the rarest, oldest trees are what brought me to Sherwood in search of an answer to an



The Major Oak germinated in Sherwood Forest around the time of the Norman Conquest.

impossible challenge that Harris and other expert "arbs" are collectively facing: to artificially re-create in a fraction of the time the things that only the slow movement of eons is known to make.

BITAIN'S OAKS ARE both symbols of national pride and vital infrastructure in its forests. Collectively, the country's oaks support about 2,300 species of mammals, birds, invertebrates, mosses, fungi, and lichens. Many of them—like the family of bats that live high in the Major's shattered trunk—find shelter only in old trees and feast on the deadwood-loving creatures that crawl the dark bark canyons and damp cavities that the tree builds up over countless human lifetimes. On their branches and trunks, squirrels make their dreys (dens) and woodpeckers their nests. So-called secondary cavity nesters—including the petite pied flycatcher and the stocky, foot-tall tawny owl—later take over the vacated hollows that the woodpeckers excavated. Taken altogether, trees like the Major are complex mountains of microhabitats.

Unfortunately, they are roughly one in a million. The U.K. has an estimated 170 million oaks, but only 115 ancient giants the size of the Major were found in a census by the University of Oxford. In total, Sherwood Forest has about 380 trees older than 400 years—usually the minimum age to have developed veteran features and be classified by arborists as "ancient." The rest of the continent combined has fewer ancients than the U.K.

Partly, this is a consequence of the U.K.'s

long history of ring-fencing vast areas away from the common folk as private reserves for kings and queens. Sherwood Forest has been recognized as a protected area since it became William the Conqueror's hunting ground in the 11th century. Still, thousands of its trees have been hauled away over the centuries, destined to be used to build ships during the Napoleonic Wars or cathedrals like St. Paul's in London, or else cut down in some other wave of logging. The handful that survived, like the Major, were usually spared the axe because they were considered too old, gnarled, or rotten to be of use.

On the day I visited, a haze of tree pollen hung overhead as the forest began its most active season of growth and reproduction, but what Harris wanted to show me was rot and decay. "That one died," he said, enthusiastically pointing to an oak that still had a forking silhouette of branches but was entirely without leaves. "And yet it's absolutely full of life."

Deeper in the backwoods, Harris pointed out dead branches hanging from still-living joints: places beloved by a moth that lives behind the bark. He stopped to explain "ram's horn callusing," a wave-like shape of "wound wood" where the tree scabs around injuries: a favorite sleeping spot for bats. There were split trunks, where the core of the tree had been suddenly exposed by a storm or lightning strike, and "walking trees," where a tree cracked or was blown down and rerooted itself a few feet away. All of it is habitat for something, even if it's microscopic fungi invisible to the naked human eye.

The Last Word

AN HOUR INTO our walk, by then deep in Sherwood, Harris found an unremarkable oak he'd been hoping to show me. About 3 feet up its trunk, there was an unnaturally rectangular hole that looked like an upright mailbox. An inch or two of wound wood curled around the edges. Harris grinned with pride. Squeezing his hand into the slit, he turned over a leaf that had fallen inside and found two wood lice rummaging through a dusting of decaying tree soil. Two years ago, he'd found a darkling beetle here, one of the wood mold specialists that are fond of hanging around deadwood chimneys.

Without help, a tree like this—"a very uninteresting, very boring, very small tree, maybe 25 to 30 years old"—would not form a dank, bug-crawling crevice for perhaps a few hundred years. So, to defeat time, arbs like Harris have put the tools of tree maintenance to work on surgical tree-wounding. Sherwood is now the site of the U.K.'s largest program of "veteranization," as the process is known to arborists. The goal of veteranization, which is only ever done to young trees, is not to kill them but to leave them living with features like storm damage or damp hollows that would usually not form until much later in life. Armed with a chainsaw, an arborist might make a slice akin to a lightning strike, carve out an artificial "woodpecker hole," or make a series of plunging cuts into a trunk to create a "nest-box." Walloping the base of a tree with a sledgehammer has turned out to be a surprisingly efficient way to cause a column of rot to form above. This "horse kick damage" replicates impacts by roaming herds of horses and extinct megafauna like aurochs or elks, whose creative disturbances have been disappearing or missing entirely from the British Isles for millennia.

Thanks to its unique stock of ancient trees, Sherwood is one of the best places in Europe to find deadwood-loving invertebrates like the red-robed cardinal click beetle and wood-boring anobiid beetles, whose backs look like they are carved out of wood. Known as "saproxylic invertebrates," these species recycle many of the forest's resources, provide an important food source for birds and mammals, and carry tiny organisms around the forest that are important for its overall health, like mites and bacteria. Damp little caverns within old trees are living miniature worlds, where saproxylic invertebrates find food, shelter, mates, and more. Over time, "the cavity naturally expands so it is used by a succession of species with increasing body size, all the way up to bears in places like Canada," Matthew Wainhouse, a mycologist who works on forest ecology, told me.

IN 1970, THE poet W.S. Merwin published a four-page instructional manual for putting a tree that had been felled back together. The first step is to stick each leaf back to its twig, he wrote, then attach the bark and branches that had come loose. "Unchopping a Tree" is a fable written in meticulous, matter-of-fact steps:

It goes without saying that if the tree was hollow in whole or in part, and contained old nests of bird or mammal or insect, or hoards of nuts or such structures as wasps or bees build for their survival, the contents will have to be repaired where necessary, and reassembled, insofar as possible, in their original order, including the shells of nuts already opened. With spiders' webs you must simply do the best you can.

In a tense final act, the reader is commanded to remove the supporting scaffold of "chains and struts" that prop up the rebuilt tree until it is left standing, at last, on its own:

It is as though its weight for a moment stood on your heart. You listen for a thud of settlement, a warning creak deep in the intricate joinery. You cannot believe it will hold. How like something dreamed it is, standing there all by itself.



Harris: Even 'dead' trees are 'absolutely full of life.'

I had this image in mind as I walked through Sherwood, studying the Major, propped up on metal sticks, and the various trees bearing band-aids from preservation or toolmarks from veteranization. It's hard not to feel that conservation and restoration often turn wilderness into artifacts like Merwin's tree—no longer their wild selves, but artificially remade. During my research on veteranization, I read about researchers attempting to restore a temperate rainforest in Scotland by painstakingly sticking moss and lichen back onto old trees. And Wainhouse told me about a Douglas fir forest in Oregon where fungi

were administered somewhat less delicately with a 12-gauge shotgun.

But I was reminded by Harris that artificial interventions are just the latest chapter in the age-old human management of trees and forests. There's much more to Sherwood's story than the ancient royal decree that the commoners should be kept out. For generation upon generation, people have been active among the trees of the forest, harvesting branches for firewood, grazing livestock, and drilling into trunks to assess timber. Even before the Norman Conquest in 1066, virtually all woodland in England had already been highly modified by human action. Across the planet, forests are hybrid places: Not perfectly protected away from human impact or wholly manufactured piece by piece, but intertwined to one degree or another in our lives.

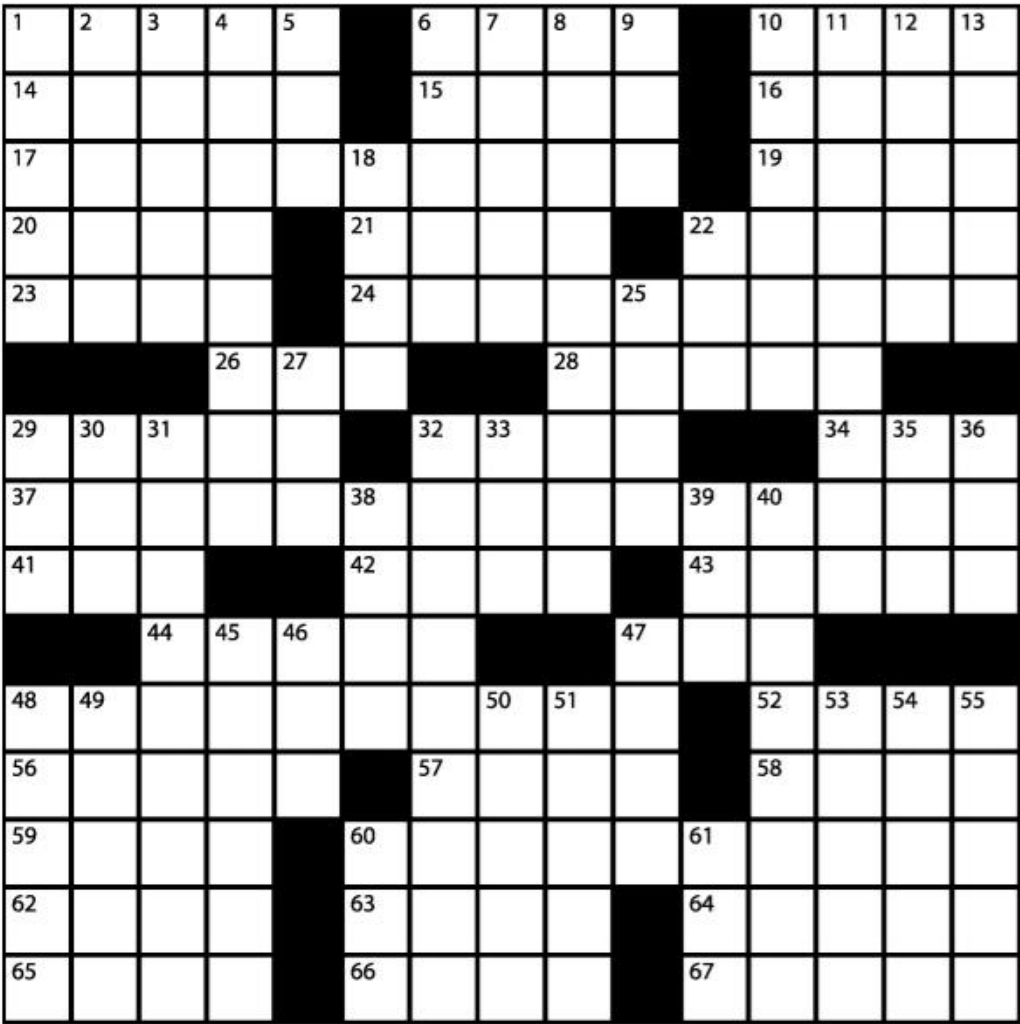
Those who know the Major say it teaches a lesson in humility: Human management of something as complex as an old tree, let alone a whole forest, is a chastening ordeal. The oak's own ingenuity constantly surprises arborists and forest biologists. With our current technology at least, humans could never hope to build an artificial 1,000-year-old tree. "All we can do is provide something in a younger tree that might simulate some of those properties," Wainhouse told me. "Just to give enough time and space for some of these things to have a future."

Merwin came to a similar conclusion. For 50 years after he published "Unchopping a Tree," he labored to reforest 3 acres of agricultural scrubland on the Hawaiian island of Maui. He carted seaweed from coastal coves to spread on the barren land, heaved wheelbarrows of manure from neighbors' cows and goats, and planted some 14,000 native and imported palms. Many of them died, and the resulting collection of trees was not much like a Hawaiian forest. "Only a forest knows how to grow a forest," he eventually concluded.

Amid unfolding and intertwined ecological crises, we are chasing eons we do not have. Several people I interviewed for this story mentioned their own deaths as moments in the overall arc of the work they were doing, signifying that it will be decades before success (or failure) has become clear. What alternative is there but to keep going? "There's hope," Harris said as he looked into the cavity in the unremarkable young oak, observing the wood lice and a teaspoon or so of tree soil. "I think that's what I take from this: There is actual hope."

Adapted from a story that originally appeared in Noema Magazine. Used with permission.

Crossword No. 789: Cleanup Time by Matt Gaffney



- ACROSS**
- 1 “__ something I said?”
- 6 Dough made into tortillas
- 10 Where a coin goes in Vegas
- 14 Place to play
- 15 “What a cute puppy!”
- 16 Zippo
- 17 In an April 9 press release, President Trump vowed to “Make America’s Showers __” by revoking an Obama-era limit of 2.5 gallons per minute on showerheads
- 19 Finito
- 20 Mighty trees
- 21 Small cut
- 22 No mere sea
- 23 NASDAQ rival
- 24 It’s speculated that the first showers used for cleansing, predating water jugs, were these
- 26 Dec. 31
- 28 Pitcher it’s tougher to steal second base on
- 29 Undo the effects of
- 32 Frozen reindeer
- 34 Hound
- 37 “I like to take a nice shower to take care of __” (quote ad-libbed by President Trump while signing the executive order)
- 41 Part of Manhattan (abbr.)
- 42 Tirade
- 43 Good surname for a chef?
- 44 Finish up by the hour of
- 47 Brunch drinks
- 48 This actress used a stunt double for much of her famous shower scene in 1960’s *Psycho*
- 52 “What was __?”
- 56 Pays for cards
- 57 Having grown up in, as a city or state
- 58 Nuclear reactor part
- 59 Did a bouncer’s job
- 60 She sang backup on James Taylor’s 1976 hit “Shower the People”
- 62 __ the Press
- 63 “The __ Piper of Hamelin”
- 64 “This is only __” (classic TV announcement)
- 65 Vintage gas station name
- 66 Sudden impulse
- 67 Stringed instruments
- DOWN**
- 1 Radio Flyer creation
- 2 Impressive selection
- 3 Verb in personal ads
- 4 Sort of
- 5 Piece of body art
- 6 __ Carta
- 7 Look forward to the arrival of
- 8 Reject someone’s profile, on some dating sites
- 9 Bristle on barley
- 10 Machine for a ski resort
- 11 1977 Bill Withers hit
- 12 “Shaq”
- 13 Seabirds
- 18 __ speak (right now)
- 22 Not working today
- 25 Contact lens solution brand
- 27 Vote in favor
- 29 Big bird
- 30 Bread sometimes marbled
- 31 No-shows
- 32 1945 movie with music by Rodgers and Hammerstein
- 33 Sauvignon blanc, par exemple
- 35 Olive or sesame, say
- 36 SAT’s big cousin
- 38 __ Mountains (they divide Europe and Asia)
- 39 Prez from Texas
- 40 Brisbane for the 2032 Summer Olympics, e.g.
- 45 Have no other choice
- 46 Some linemen in football (abbr.)
- 47 “Wowzers!”
- 48 Super-teacher Escalante
- 49 Candy named for a range
- 50 Nonstandard, as an item of clothing (abbr.)
- 51 Tevye’s wife
- 53 Marge’s husband
- 54 Came up, as a topic
- 55 Campground shelters
- 60 Main part of a laptop
- 61 Comedian Vulcano

The Week Contest

This week’s question: Tech executive Bernt Bornich has staffed his house with a robot butler. What would you call a *Downton Abbey*-style drama in which the household servants are all humanoid machines?

Last week’s contest: A recent study identified Virginia as the state best equipped to survive an alien invasion. If the state were to change its tourism motto from “Virginia Is for Lovers” to a phrase that promotes this surprising strength, what would it be?

THE WINNER: Virginia: Land of Inalienable Rights
Barry Cutler, Palm Desert, Calif.

SECOND PLACE: Virginia Is for Intelligent Life-forms (Certain restrictions apply) —*Nancy Rockefeller, Delmar, N.Y.*

THIRD PLACE: Where Lovers Can Relax, If Mars Attacks
John Bregoli, Weymouth, Mass.

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

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type “Robot melodrama” in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, April 22. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/contest on Friday, April 25. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

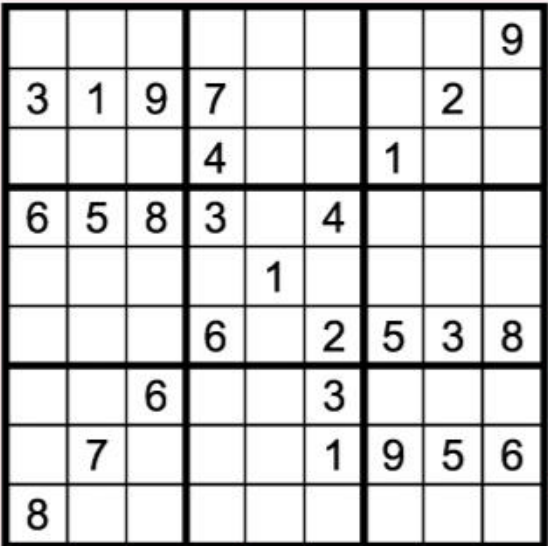
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Sudoku

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

Difficulty:
hard



Find the solutions to all *The Week*’s puzzles online at theweek.com/solutions

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Architectural Digest Writing Magazine Pratiyogita Darpan

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Wisden Cricket Monthly
Sports Illustrated World Soccer Tennis Sportstar FourFourTwo
Auto & Moto

Autocar India UK BBC TopGear
Bike Car

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Wired PC Magazine Maximum PC
PCWorld Techlife News T3 uk India
DataQuest Computeractive
Popular Mechanics PC Gamer
Macworld Linux Format
MIT Technology Review

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GQ Esquire National Geographic Traveler Condé Nast Traveler
Outlook Traveller Harper's Bazaar
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DC (Assorted) Marvel (Assorted)
Indie Comics Champak

Home & Food

Real Simple Better Homes and Gardens Cosmopolitan Home
Elle Decor Architectural Digest
Vogue Living Good Housekeeping
The Guardian feast The Observer Food Monthly Nat Geographic Traveller Food Food Network

Other Indian Magazines
The Economist
Mutual Fund Insight Wealth insight
Electronics For You Open Source For You Mathematics Today Biology Today Chemistry Today
Physics For You Woman Fitness
Grazia India Filmfare India
Rolling Stone India Outlook
Outlook Money Entertainment Updates Outlook Business
Open Investors India The Week India
Indian Management Fortune India
Scientific India India Today Brunch
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समय पत्रिका साधनापथगु हलकषमी उदयइंडिया नरिंगधाम मॉडर्न खेतीइंडिया टुडेदेवपुत्र
क्रिकेट टुडेगु हथोभा अर्नाखीहनिदुस्तानमुक्ता सरति चंपकप्रतियोगिता दरपण सकसेसमरि
सामान्य ज्ञान दरपण फारम एवं फूडमनोहर कहानियां सत्यकथा सरस सललि स्वतंत्र वार्ता लाजवाब आउटलुकसचची शकिषावनति
मायापुरी रूपायन उजाला ऋषि पिरसाद जोश रोजगार समाचार जोश करंट अफेयर्स जोश सामान्य ज्ञान जोश बैंकिंग और एसएससी
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समय पत्रिका,साधना पथ,गृहलक्ष्मी,उदय इंडिया,निरोगधाम,मॉडर्न खेती ,इंडिया टुडे,देवपुत्र,क्रिकेट टुडे,गृहशोभा,अनोखी हिन्दुस्तान,मुक्ता,सरिता,चंपक,प्रतियोगिता दर्पण,सक्सेस मिरर,सामान्य ज्ञान दर्पण,फार्म एवं फूड,मनोहर कहानियां,सत्यकथा,सरस सलिल,स्वतंत्र वार्ता लाजवाब,आउटलुक,सच्ची शिक्षा,वनिता,मायापुरी,इंडिया हेल्थ,रूपायन उजाला,ऋषि प्रसाद,जोश रोजगार समाचार,जोश करेंट अफेयर्स,जोश सामान्य ज्ञान,जोश बैंकिंग और एसएससी,इंडिया बुक ऑफ रिकॉर्ड्स,राजस्थान रोजगार संदेश,राजस्थान सूजस,सखी जागरण,अहा! जिंदगी,बाल भास्कर,योजना,कुरुक्षेत्र,हिन्दुस्तान जॉब्स

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