



WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND

The New Black Tie OFF DUTY



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What's News

World-Wide

Top oversight officials responsible for tracking over \$110 billion in U.S. military and economic aid to Ukraine said they would press to deploy auditors and investigators directly into the war zone to beef up monitoring. **A1**

◆ **Russia's death toll** from the war in Ukraine has reached as high as 60,000, the U.K. said, an estimate that draws attention to Moscow's strategy of sending poorly protected soldiers on near-suicidal missions. **A6**

◆ **Sen. Rick Scott** said he would exempt Social Security, Medicare and veterans programs from his plan to sunset all federal legislation in five years, bowing to criticism from Democrats as well as fellow Republicans over the proposal. **A4**

◆ **Five former Memphis, Tenn., police officers** pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder and other charges in the death of Tyre Nichols. **A3**

◆ **The FBI on Friday** searched the office of a think tank affiliated with Pence and found no materials with classified markings, a Pence adviser said. **A3**

Business & Finance

◆ **Meta Platforms** gave thousands of employees subpar ratings in a recently concluded round of performance reviews, a signal that more job cuts may be on the way, people familiar with the matter said. **A1**

◆ **The U.A.E.'s** national energy company plans to sell a stake of about 4% of its natural-gas business in an IPO that it hopes will raise \$2 billion, as Middle East petrostates increase plans to supply Europe. **B1**

◆ **The S&P 500 and Nasdaq** fell 0.3% and 0.6%, respectively, on Friday, while the Dow rose 0.4%. The S&P and Dow ended the week in the red, but the Nasdaq hung on for a weekly gain of 0.6%. **B11**

◆ **Top Fox News anchors** and executives privately raised concerns about false claims of voter fraud made on the air by network hosts and guests following the 2020 presidential election, according to a court filing. **B3**

◆ **Barnes & Noble** is launching a \$40-a-year membership program that promises to offer 10% discounts and other benefits, responding to competitors including Amazon and Walmart. **B1**

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Ameera Long
For Authenticity **A15**

NOTICE TO READERS
WSJ.com and WSJ mobile apps will publish throughout the weekend. The print edition won't appear on Monday, Washington's Birthday (or Presidents Day), but a daily edition will be available in WSJ iPad and Android apps.

CONTENTS Obituaries..... A10
Books..... C7-12 Opinion..... A13-15
Business News... B3 Sports..... A12
Food..... D10-11 Style & Fashion D2-4
Gear & Gadgets D12-13 Travel..... D8-9
Heard on Street... B12 U.S. News..... A2-5
Markets..... B11 World News..... A6-9



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Is She or Isn't She? Riches Are at Stake in Art World Mystery



QUEST: The owners of the Flaget Madonna, a painting discovered almost three decades ago in an antique shop, believe it is a lost work by the Renaissance master Raphael. They have invested more than \$500,000 hoping to prove it. **C1**

U.S. Watchdogs Want to Track Arms, Aid to Ukraine Up Close

By **WARREN P. STROBEL** AND **GORDON LUBOLD**

WASHINGTON—Top oversight officials responsible for tracking over \$110 billion in U.S. military and economic aid to Ukraine said they would press to deploy auditors and investigators directly into the war zone to beef up monitoring as the scale and scope of

American assistance expands. Inspectors general from the Pentagon, State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development said in a joint interview that, thus far, they have been able to conduct critical oversight tasks remotely using personnel based in Washington, Poland and Germany. But following a trip by the

trio to Kyiv in late January, they said they would press to put some of the 177 auditors and investigators scrutinizing Ukraine aid on the ground in Ukraine. The Biden administration has limited the number of government personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv for security reasons. "I think we have been as creative and you know, out of

the box, forward-leaning with the oversight we've been able to accomplish so far. But for real comprehensive, robust oversight, it can't be done remotely," said Nicole Angarella. *Please turn to page A7*

◆ **Russia's war deaths** as high as 60,000, U.K. says..... **A6**
◆ **Europe reasserts support** for Kyiv but signals limits..... **A6**

Wary Companies Shunned Trader Tied to Nickel Saga

Even before Trafigura Group said phony nickel shipments could cost it up to \$577 million, some people and businesses

By **Joe Wallace** and **Julie Steinberg** in London and **Philip Wen** in New Delhi

had decided to steer clear of both Prateek Gupta—the businessman Trafigura says is responsible for the alleged misconduct—and a Swiss firm Mr. Gupta had acquired. Commodity-trading giant

Trafigura has accused Mr. Gupta and related companies of committing "systematic fraud." It says it agreed to buy nickel—a hot commodity, due to the electric-vehicle boom—but instead received other, cheaper cargoes.

The Wall Street Journal couldn't reach Mr. Gupta for comment. Companies that Trafigura implicated in the alleged scheme didn't respond to requests for comment. Efforts to reach employees by visiting office locations in Dubai and London weren't successful.

The Journal reviewed a variety of court and police documents and company filings, and spoke with people who had interacted with Mr. Gupta and his companies in the past few years, such as financiers and commodity traders.

Trafigura said in a Feb. 9 statement that it had begun legal proceedings against Mr. Gupta and the companies it had implicated. A day earlier, Trafigura had asked a London judge to freeze assets related to Mr. Gupta and the company. *Please turn to page A9*

New Life Amid Turkey's Agony



Mustafa Avci, who was trapped under earthquake rubble for days, meets his daughter Almile for the first time and reunites with his wife Bilge on Friday at a hospital in Mersin, Turkey. **A8**

Town Officials Butt Heads Over A Dwarf-Goat Tourist Attraction

A Wilson, Kan., man believes he can lure travelers off I-70 to watch goats frolic

By **SHANNON NAJMABADI**

WILSON, Kan.—Like many visionaries, David Criswell can't say exactly how he dreamed up his big idea.

Yet after chewing it over, Mr. Criswell, the former mayor of Wilson, became convinced

dwarf goats clambering up and down a cluster of grain silos.



Star attraction

"I'm going to bring people to town with these goats," Mr. Criswell said.

He anticipates herds of travelers pulling off Interstate 70 to visit his towering dwarf-goat playground. "Visually *Please turn to page A10*

Schools Cut Honors Classes To Boost Equity, Face Backlash

By **SARA RANDAZZO**

CULVER CITY, Calif.—A group of parents stepped to the lectern Tuesday night at a school board meeting in this middle-class, Los Angeles-area city to push back against a racial-equity initiative. The high school, they argued, should reinstate honors English classes that were eliminated because they didn't enroll enough Black and Latino students.

The district earlier this school year replaced the honors classes at Culver City High School with uniform courses

that officials say will ensure students of all races receive an equal, rigorous education.

These parents disagreed. "We really feel equity means offering opportunities to students of diverse backgrounds, not taking away opportunities for advanced education and study," Joanna Schaanman, a Culver City parent who helped spearhead the effort, said in the run-up to the meeting.

The parental pushback in Culver City mirrors resistance that has taken place in Wisconsin, Rhode Island and else-

where in California over the last year in response to schools stripping away the honors designation on some high school classes.

School districts doing away with honors classes argue students who don't take those classes from a young age start to see themselves in a different tier, and come to think they aren't capable of enrolling in Advanced Placement classes that help with college admissions. Black and Latino students are underrepresented in AP enrollment in the major- *Please turn to page A2*

U.S. NEWS

THE NUMBERS | By Josh Zumbrun

Teens' Distress May Be Worse Than It Looks



America's teenagers are distressed coming out of the pandemic, reporting record levels of sadness and suicide risk, according to a report released this week by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A closer look at how these numbers come together suggests that the data might be a little bit off: If anything, teens' distress levels could be higher than reported.

"The problem is as bad as what is suggested by the survey, if not worse," said Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, a professor of pediatrics at Stanford. She thinks the CDC might be underestimating the extent of some of the most alarming numbers in its report, but "the point is it's high," she said.

Some of the CDC's latest statistics, drawn from its biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey, are staggering: 57% of high-school females report persistent sadness or hopelessness, up from 36% a decade ago. For males that age, feelings of hopelessness rose to 29% from 21%.

For females, 30% said they had seriously considered suicide, up from 19%. These figures are also high for students who don't identify as heterosexual, 69% of whom felt hopeless and 45% of whom considered suicide.

Part of this is the timing of the survey, fielded in the fall of 2021 as many students were returning after pandemic closures and disruptions.

But Kathleen Ethier, director of the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, noted that "while much attention has been given to the youth mental-health crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic," the CDC's data "have shown that many measures were moving in the wrong direction before the pandemic."

The CDC began conducting the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 1991. A total of 17,508 students completed the 99-question survey for 2021. The data is a go-to source for the prevalence of drug and alcohol use, teen sex behavior, bullying and other things identified as health-risk factors.

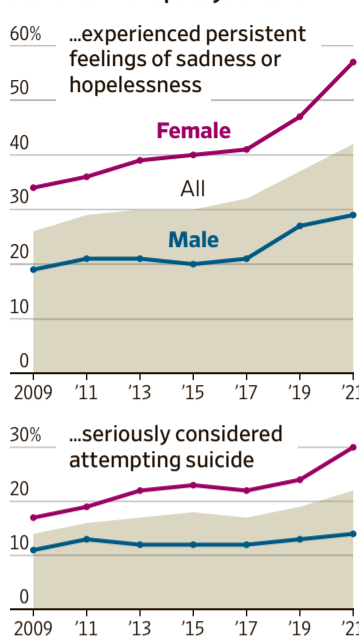
The first reason for some caution in interpreting the results is that the survey is administered in school.

I remember taking a survey with a very similar set of questions in high school. The administrators informed us that the answers would be confidential, but as someone who doesn't automatically trust authority, I wasn't 100% confident of that. I wasn't about to admit to anything illegal on a survey being distributed in homeroom. (Though, at that point in my life, I had done very little interesting or risky.)

But hesitation to admit behaviors in a classroom survey means those behaviors would be more common than the survey captures.

Surveyors have tried other ways to tell whether students tell the truth. Studies over

Percentage of high-school students in the past year who...

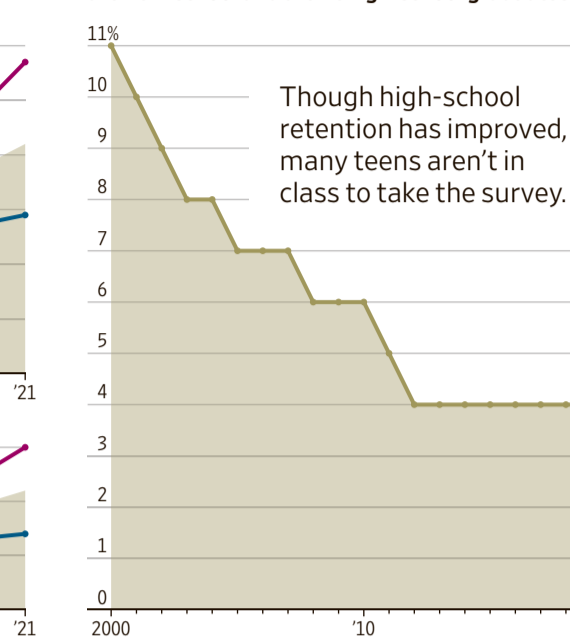


Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Survey (percentage of high-school students); Population Reference Bureau via Annie E. Casey Foundation (teens not in school)

the years have attempted to suss out whether you can poll adolescents about drug use by asking if they had ever taken fictitious drugs—such as zetacyllin (invented by Norwegian researchers only for the purpose of seeing who is bluffing about drug use in surveys). Such studies have typically shown only about 1% or fewer of respondents claiming to have used nonexistent drugs.

Researchers have tested for the presence of cotinine, a compound metabolized from nicotine. One study found 3% of adolescents said they were nonsmokers, but testing showed they smoked. Researchers attributed the find-

Percentage of U.S. teens aged 16 to 19 who aren't in school and aren't high-school graduates



Though high-school retention has improved, many teens aren't in class to take the survey.

The CDC has acknowledged the limitations of self-reported data and of missing students who are out of school. (Another limitation officials have noted is that parental permission procedures aren't consistent across different locations.)

Not everything that the CDC tracks as a risk factor has increased. Teen alcohol use and drug use, for example, have both declined over the past decade. Thinking about suicide is of course a warning sign, but the link between thinking about it and following through isn't as clear as one might imagine. Despite high rates of young females thinking about suicide, the rates of suicide are significantly higher among young males.

Though the data is alarming, the situation isn't hopeless, said Scottye Cash, a professor at Ohio State.

Resources are available, she said, including 988, the new national suicide and crisis lifeline, and the Crisis Text Line, which can be reached by texting HOME to 741741.

It would be nice—but alas wishful thinking—if the numbers were wrong and it meant we didn't have to worry. Teen years are never easy, but many of the things that make those years stressful are especially acute right now.

"The more we normalize what adolescents are going through—this is hard and there's nothing wrong with them—then we can talk about it and we can start getting help for it," Dr. Cash said.



Elena Frigola, a student in Culver City, Calif., says honors English students did research independently before her district eliminated honors.

Districts Cut Honors Classes

Continued from Page One

ity of states, according to the Education Trust, a nonprofit that studies equity in education.

Since the start of this school year, freshmen and sophomores in Culver City have been able to select only one level of English class, known as College Prep, rather than the previous system in which anyone could opt into the honors class. School officials say the goal is to teach everyone with an equal level of rigor, one that encourages them to enroll in advanced classes in their final years of high school.

"Parents say academic excellence should not be experimented with for the sake of social justice," said Quoc Tran, the superintendent of 6,900-student Culver City Unified School District. But, he said, "it was very jarring when teachers looked at their AP enrollment and realized Black and brown kids were not there. They felt obligated to do something."

Culver City English teachers presented data at a board meeting last year showing Latino students made up 13% of those in 12th-grade Advanced Placement English, compared with 37% of the student body. Asian students were 34% of the advanced class, compared with 10% of students. Black students represented 14% of

AP English, versus 15% of the student body.

The board saw anonymous quotes from students not enrolled in honors classes saying they felt less motivated or successful. One described students feeling "unable to break out of the molds that they established when they were 11."

Tuesday marked Ms. Schaeffer's first time attending a school board meeting in person in years. She wandered the hallways of City Hall with fellow parent Pedro Frigola looking for the right room, clutching a stack of copies laying out the two-page resolution they and a few dozen other parents are asking the board to adopt.

Mr. Frigola said he disagrees with the district's view of equity. "I was born in Cuba, and it doesn't sound good when people are trying to achieve equal outcomes for everyone," he said.

His ninth-grade daughter, Emma Frigola, said she was surprised and a little confused by the decision to remove honors, which she had wanted to take. She said her English teacher, who used to teach the honors class, is trying to maintain a higher standard, but that it doesn't always seem to be working.

"There are some people who slow down the pace because they don't really do anything and aren't looking to try harder," Emma said. "I don't think you can force that into people."

For a unit on research, Emma said her teacher gathered all the reference sources they needed to write a paper on whether graffiti is art or vandalism and had students review them together in class.

Her sister, Elena Frigola, now in 11th grade, said prior honors English students chose their own topics and did research independently.

In Santa Monica, Calif., high-school English teachers said last year they had "a moral imperative" to eliminate honors English classes that they viewed as perpetuating inequality. The teachers studied the issue for a year and a half, a district representative said.

"This is not a social experiment," board member Jon Kean said at a meeting last spring. "This is a sound pedagogical approach to education."

Gail Pinsker, a Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District spokeswoman, said the

Supporters say the curriculum of honors courses resembles regular classes.

shift this school year "has increased access and provided excellent educational experiences for all of our students."

Several school districts have scaled back plans to eliminate honors classes after community opposition. San Diego's Patrick Henry High School planned to eliminate 11th-grade honors American literature and U.S. history last year, but reinstated both after listening to students and families, a district spokeswoman said.

The school district in Madison, Wis., pulled back on plans last year to remove stand-alone honors classes and now

lets students earn an honors label within general classes. A Rhode Island district made a similar move.

Those who support cutting honors classes point out that the curriculum of honors courses often doesn't differ substantially from regular classes. Honors classes often move at a faster pace and the students complete more assignments. Some can boost grade-point averages or give students an advantage when applying for college.

Critics say attempting to teach everyone at an elevated level isn't realistic and that teachers, even with the best intentions, may end up simplifying instruction. Instead, some educators and parents argue schools should find more ways to diversify honors courses and encourage students to enroll who aren't self-selecting, including proactively reaching out to students, using an opt-out system, or looking to teacher recommendations.

"I just don't see how removing something from some kids all of a sudden helps other kids learn faster," said Scott Peters, a senior research scientist at education research nonprofit NWEA who has studied equity in gifted and talented programs.

In Culver City, Mr. Tran said he isn't going to mandate that other departments move away from honors but that he would listen to any teacher-driven suggestions. As for English, he said he is throwing his support behind the high school's teachers to try to elevate education for all students.

"We will keep moving forward," he said.

U.S. WATCH

LABOR DEPARTMENT

Company Pays Fine In Child-Labor Case

A food sanitation-service provider accused of hiring at least 102 children to work overnight shifts cleaning meatpacking plants in eight states has paid \$1.5 million in penalties, the Labor Department said.

Packers Sanitation Services Inc. illegally employed minors between the ages of 13 and 17 at 13 meatpacking facilities around the U.S., the agency said Friday. The children worked with hazardous chemicals and cleaned meat-processing equipment, it said.

At least three minors suffered injuries while working for PSSI, agency investigators said. PSSI cleans plants operated by some of the country's largest meatpacking companies.

PSSI said Friday that its policy prohibits employing anyone under the age of 18. "As soon as we became aware of the DOL's allegations, we conducted multiple additional audits of our employee base, and hired a third-party law firm to review and help further strengthen our policies in this area," the Kieler, Wis., company said.

—Ginger Adams Otis

MISSISSIPPI

Six Fatally Shot; Suspect Arrested

Six people were fatally shot Friday at multiple locations in a small town in rural Mississippi, and authorities blamed a lone suspect who was taken into custody.

Mississippi Department of Public Safety spokesperson Bailey Martin confirmed the killings in Arkabutla, in Tate County.

—Associated Press

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

Gatekeeper Named For Chip Initiative

The Commerce Department appointed Todd Fisher, a veteran of private-equity firm KKR & Co., to a key role determining which companies will receive part of \$52.7 billion in federal funding intended to boost domestic semiconductor manufacturing.

As chief investment officer for Chips for America, Mr. Fisher will lead the work of screening applications from U.S. and foreign manufacturers and negotiating with the companies in the coming months.

—Yuka Hayashi

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

China has been pushing through changes since 2021 that would cut individual benefit allowances for medical care in exchange for an expansion of the range of outpatient medical services on offer. A World News article on Thursday about protests in Wuhan incorrectly said the changes would cut individual reim-

bursements for medical care.

Judge Edward L. Morris held a hearing about home-goods retailer **Tuesday Morning Corp.** in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Fort Worth, Texas. A Banking & Finance article on Friday about the company incorrectly said Dal-

Readers can alert The Wall Street Journal to any errors in news articles by emailing wsjcontact@wsj.com or by calling 888-410-2667.

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U.S. NEWS

Ex-Officers Plead Not Guilty In Death Of Nichols

By JOSEPH PISANI AND JENNIFER CALFAS

Five former Memphis, Tenn., police officers pleaded not guilty in the death of Tyre Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man who died last month after being kicked and punched by police during a traffic stop.

Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr. and Justin Smith were arrested and charged with second-degree murder last month for Mr. Nichols's death.

They are also charged with aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression. The men, who are also Black, were fired by the Memphis Police Department last month following an internal investigation.

Lawyers for each man entered not guilty pleas on all counts Friday in Shelby County Criminal Court.

Mr. Nichols died in a Memphis hospital Jan. 10, three days after officers pulled over his car, according to local police and Benjamin Crump, a lawyer for his family. His family said Mr. Nichols was fatally beaten beyond recognition. The Shelby County medical examiner's office hasn't released autopsy results.

Police body-camera footage showed several Memphis police officers repeatedly kicking and striking Mr. Nichols, including at times when he appeared defenseless and subdued. The footage showed two officers striking Mr. Nichols as he lay on the street. As he tried to get up, a third officer kicked him in the head. Investigations into Mr. Nichols's death continue.

"This is the beginning of the process," Mr. Nichols's mother, RowVaughn Wells, said at a press briefing after Friday's hearing. Ms. Wells said she plans to be at every court date. "I want each and every one of those police officers to be able to look me in the face, but they haven't done that yet. They couldn't even do that today," she said.

Mr. Bean's lawyer, John Keith Perry, said his client was doing his job, "no more, no less," and asked people not to jump to conclusions.

Blake Ballin, a lawyer for Mr. Mills, said the public should be patient and not judge his client. "Justice for Mr. Nichols will not be achieved at the expense of justice for Mr. Mills," he said.

Lawyers for Messrs. Haley, Martin and Smith didn't respond to requests to comment.

Residents Affected by Ohio Train Derailment Await Aid



QUEUED UP: In East Palestine, Ohio, on Friday, residents waited at a center set up by Norfolk Southern Corp. to hand out stipends and reimburse expenses that residents incurred while they were evacuated following the Feb. 3 derailment of a cargo train carrying toxic chemicals in the town near the Pennsylvania border.

Of the 38 railcars that derailed on a Norfolk Southern Corp. train Feb. 3, 11 were hazardous-material cars, and officials assumed the contents of nine cars had vented, seeped into the ground and nearby waterways, or burned.

In a Feb. 10 letter sent by Jason El-Zein, an emergency response manager at the Environmental Protection Agency, to Matt Gernand, deputy general counsel for the Norfolk Southern, he lists five toxic chemicals that may have contaminated air, soil or water surrounding the crash site.

Cars containing vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate, isobutylene and ethylene glycol monobutyl ether are known to have been or could have been released to the air,

surface soils and surface waters. Later, investigators said that the tank car carrying isobutylene wasn't breached.

The EPA said the exact volume of each chemical lost isn't known at this time. "Response efforts assumed all the contents of the railcars leaked to ensure the most protective action," said an agency spokesperson.

Air testing in more than 400 homes detected no vinyl chloride or hydrogen chloride, the EPA said Tuesday.

Norfolk Southern said water samples from wells have been gathered for testing, and results will be out next week. Soil sampling from the derailment site will be done before the soil is removed, the company added.

—Brian McGill, Taylor Umlauf and Esther Fung

Infographic showing hazardous materials in tank cars. Includes a table with columns for Vinyl chloride, Ethylene glycol monobutyl ether, Ethylhexyl acrylate, Isobutylene, and Butyl acrylate, detailing their properties and hazards.

No Files Found in Pence Think-Tank Search

By C. RYAN BARBER

WASHINGTON—The FBI on Friday searched the office of a think tank affiliated with former Vice President Mike Pence and found no materials with classified markings, a Pence adviser said.

The search at the Washington office of the think tank, Advancing American Freedom, lasted several hours and came a week after the Federal Bureau of Investigation discovered

a sensitive document at the former vice president's Indiana home. Last month lawyers for Mr. Pence discovered classified documents at his Indiana home and turned them over to the National Archives, saying they had been "inadvertently boxed and transported" to his residence.

While Friday's search yielded no new documents bearing classified markings, the FBI did remove a binder containing three documents

that had previously been redacted, Pence adviser Devin O'Malley said.

"The vice president has consistently cooperated with appropriate authorities, has been fully transparent, and looks forward to the imminent conclusion of this matter," Mr. O'Malley said.

The documents in the binder are believed to be related to debate preparations during the 2020 campaign, according to a person familiar

with the search. A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment.

Friday's search unfolded as former President Donald Trump and President Biden face scrutiny of their own handling of classified documents. In November, Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel, Jack Smith, to oversee the criminal investigation into the handling of classified documents found at Mr. Trump's Mar-a-

Lago estate in South Florida.

Mr. Smith has subpoenaed Mr. Pence as part of the investigation into Mr. Trump's efforts to remain in office.

Mr. Pence plans to challenge the subpoena by arguing that, as vice president, he served also as president of the Senate and is covered by a constitutional protection that prevents members of Congress from being questioned in court about their legislative acts.

Passengers to JFK Get Nowhere in 16 Hours

By ALYSSA LUKPAT AND GARETH VIPERS

Passengers at John F. Kennedy International Airport's Terminal 1 faced cancellations and delays Friday, a day after a power outage disrupted travel. Several planes had to turn around in midair, including one bound for New York from New Zealand that ended up back where it started.

Terminal 1 was closed on Friday because of electrical issues that started a day earlier, thwarting operations at one of the busiest airports in the world at the start of a holiday weekend.

The airport said it expected to start limited operations out of Terminal 1 on Saturday, contingent on the completion of repairs and testing.

At least 41 flights out of JFK had been canceled and 232 delayed, according to the flight-tracking specialist FlightAware. Several international flights set to land at the airport instead took passengers on hourslong excursions that ended nowhere near the Big Apple.

On one of the flights, passengers departing from Auckland, New Zealand, knowing they were about to spend 16 hours in the sky, but after all that time landed right back where they started. The plane made a U-turn in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and returned to Auckland instead of heading to New York, accord-



Passengers passed their time waiting at Terminal 1 at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on Friday, after a power outage led to numerous flight cancellations.

ing to FlightAware.

The airline that carried the flight, Air New Zealand Ltd., said Friday that the plane diverted back to Auckland because the aircraft would have otherwise been grounded in the U.S. for several days, delaying other flights.

The affected passengers were rebooked on flights on Friday and Saturday.

Similarly, a Korean Air flight to New York turned around midflight and landed back in Seoul after more than 13½ hours in the air, according

to FlightAware. An ITA Airways flight headed to New York from Milan returned to Italy after 7 hours and 40 minutes, FlightAware data showed.

Korean Air Lines Co. and ITA Airways didn't return requests to comment on Friday.

The headache in the skies started with a small fire on the ground at Terminal 1 overnight that was quickly extinguished, according to the airport's Twitter account. Some flights on Thursday and Friday were diverted to other regional airports or to airports in Boston, Wash-

ington, D.C., and other places hundreds of miles away.

Friday afternoon, the airport said the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was working with Terminal 1's operator to "complete repairs, restore power and resume flight operations at the terminal as soon as possible."

Of the 64 scheduled arrivals and departures on Friday at Terminal 1, the airport said 13 would operate at other JFK terminals and 12 would shift to local airports, while the remaining 39 were canceled.

Advertisement for Rocheboboys Paris Fall-Winter Collection, featuring a dining table and the brand name.

U.S. NEWS

Texas Arrests Some Migrant Women

By ELIZABETH FINDELL

AUSTIN, Texas—Operation Lone Star, the Texas program to arrest migrants who crossed the border on state charges, has jailed more than 8,600 men since it started in 2021.

Within the past few months, a couple dozen women have begun to join them.

Though migrants arrested under the program, mostly on misdemeanor trespassing charges, were frequently traveling in mixed-gender groups, the Texas Department of Public Safety has had a policy of arresting only men on the trespass charges and referring women and children to Border Patrol, according to court records.

But since last fall, 24 women in three counties have also been arrested and charged, according to the Lubbock Private Defenders Office, an indigent-defense group responsible for appointing attorneys to migrants. Texas had previously arrested some women for smuggling.

The inclusion of women has come after repeated successes by defense attorneys arguing that arresting only men for trespassing is unconstitutional. Judges in five counties have thrown out dozens of cases against men based on arguments of equal-protection violations, and hundreds more such cases are pending, attorneys said.

On Thursday, Judge Linda Yanez in Jim Hogg County dismissed five such cases, saying that the recent arrests of women didn't fix the earlier



Texas' policy of arresting only men and referring women and children to Border Patrol is being successfully challenged in courts. Above, migrants after crossing the Rio Grande last year.

equal-protection problem. "I thought that actually cut against the state, that they recognized they were doing something wrong," she said.

Representatives for the Department of Public Safety and for Gov. Greg Abbott didn't return requests to comment.

The state has spent more than \$4 billion on Operation Lone Star, an experimental effort that has been a top priority of Mr. Abbott, a Republican. In addition to dispatching state police to arrest migrants, it also includes deployment of National Guard troops to the border and an effort to build a state border wall.

As of Monday, 5,176 men jailed under the program had been released on bond with their cases pending, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. An additional 354 had seen their charges dismissed and 2,444 pleaded guilty in exchange for release with no penalties beyond the jail time already served.

Nearly 60% of the arrests have occurred in Kinney County, a county of 3,130 people and sprawling ranches midway along Texas' 1,254-mile border with Mexico. No women have been arrested on trespassing charges there.

During a hearing Tuesday

on the cases of nine migrants arrested there, defense attorney Billy Pavord argued that to charge one person with a crime and not another solely based on their gender is unlawful.

Prosecutor Tony Hackbeil argued that even though women found trespassing weren't arrested, they weren't free to go either; they were turned over to Border Patrol.

Attorneys for migrants said that while some of those women may have been deported, they weren't put in state jails or charged with any state crime.

In November, a week before

a hearing on the equal-protection claims of 12 men arrested in Kinney County, the county sought trespassing charges against four women who had been encountered the previous month. A Kinney County court threw out the cases because the warrants hadn't been signed by any judge or magistrate.

A judge later dismissed the cases of the 12 men on grounds that Operation Lone Star was "motivated by a discriminatory purpose."

Kinney County Sheriff Brad Coe, who signed the complaints against the four women, didn't return requests to comment.

County spokesman Matt Benacci said he wasn't familiar with the cases, but he noted that jail space for women arrestees has been a consistent problem. The Kinney County jail doesn't meet minimum state standards, so the county must take people arrested to other counties, where space is also limited.

"There's a lack of housing for females in the region, so if you arrest a woman there has to be a compelling public-safety reason," Mr. Benacci said.

Men arrested under Operation Lone Star are routed through processing centers set up specifically for the purpose, and then jailed in former state prisons. Those facilities haven't housed any women, according to the state. Attorneys said even in counties where women have been arrested, they have been quickly released on personal bonds.

Sen. Scott Exempts Safety-Net Programs From Plan

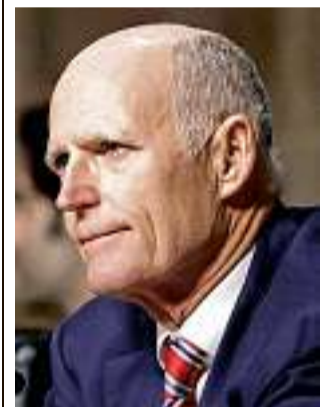
By SIOBHAN HUGHES

WASHINGTON—Sen. Rick Scott said he would exempt Social Security, Medicare and veterans programs from his plan to sunset all federal legislation in five years, bowing to criticism from Democrats as well as fellow Republicans over the proposal.

Under Mr. Scott's revised Rescue America plan, those entitlement programs as well as national security and other essential services would no longer face regular requirements to have Congress reapprove them. The proposals were initially unveiled when Mr. Scott (R., Fla.) was the head of his party's Senate campaign committee.

The plan "was obviously not intended to include entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security—programs that hardworking people have paid into their entire lives," he wrote in a Washington Examiner opinion piece.

Senate Minority Leader



Sen. Rick Scott said Medicare and Social Security wouldn't face reapproval under his plan.

Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) has repeatedly said that the plan was a bad idea.

Mr. Scott said his plan was being misrepresented for political purposes. "I have never supported cutting Social Security or Medicare, ever," said Mr. Scott. "To say otherwise is a disingenuous Democrat lie from a very confused president. And Sen. Mitch McConnell is also well aware of that."

Under the new plan, Congress would have to issue a report every year disclosing publicly its plans for when Social Security and Medicare run out of money with assets depleted and expenditures outpacing revenues.

White House spokesman Andrew Bates said the revision proved Mr. Scott's original plan would have threatened entitlement programs.

Trump-Era Officials Knew of Flying Objects

By VIVIAN SALAMA

WASHINGTON—A small circle of intelligence officials at the Pentagon during the Trump administration monitored a series of mysterious objects—now suspected to be balloons—but the incidents were never reported to the White House because it wasn't clear what they were, former U.S. officials said.

Following the shutdown this month of a Chinese high-altitude balloon, the Biden administration revealed these past incidents but didn't say where they had flown, and added that they likely went undetected by the previous administration.

Now it appears some intelligence officials at the Pentagon were aware of the incidents and harbored concerns that they were related to China, believing Beijing was using them to test radar-jamming systems over sensitive U.S. military sites. The data collected about the Trump-era incidents was limited to a ba-

sic assessment and therefore wasn't shared more broadly within the government at the time.

Pentagon intelligence analysts reached their assessment about the objects in the summer of 2020, the former officials said. The assessment "never got to be assertive" in concluding that the objects were linked to Chinese surveillance, said one of the officials familiar with the issue. The new revelations offer details into when and how the intelligence community pieced together what little is known about the suspected Chinese balloon program. It also raises questions about the extent to which these assessments were shared more broadly.

Concerns about China's balloons became public in recent weeks after a high-altitude object was spotted over American airspace. The U.S. military shot down the balloon on Feb. 4 off the South Carolina coast; three more highflying objects were later shot down over Lake Huron, over Alaska and

over Canada's Yukon territory.

The U.S. military Friday night ended its search for airborne objects that were shot down near Deadhorse, Alaska, and over Lake Huron on Feb. 10 and 12, according to a statement posted on Twitter. U.S. Northern Command said the decision came after the U.S. and Canada conducted systematic searches, "and did

Concerns about China's balloons became public in recent weeks.

not locate debris."

The Chinese Embassy in Washington, in response to a request to comment, cited Beijing's previous denials that the balloon shot down Feb. 4 was intended for surveillance.

The suspected balloons detected during the Trump presidency were smaller and flew

at a much lower altitude and for a much shorter duration than the one downed on Feb. 4. They were detected over Navy sites in Coronado, Calif., Norfolk, Va., and Guam, the officials said, adding that these unidentified aerial objects didn't travel across the country.

The data on these prior suspected balloons was collected at the time from a variety of Defense Department sources, including intelligence assets. Agencies often share that type of information, but they aren't required to do so, particularly when dealing with a highly specialized issue such as unidentified aerial phenomena, the officials said.

A Pentagon spokesman confirmed that intelligence analysts within the Pentagon had been tracking these incidents but said that leadership wasn't briefed on the matter. The Biden administration offered to brief former senior Trump administration officials about the incidents.

On Wednesday, the Office

of the Director of National Intelligence briefed Trump administration officials about the Chinese balloon program, including former national security advisers Robert O'Brien and John Bolton, former deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the former director of national intelligence, John Ratcliffe.

Mr. O'Brien, who was among those previously unaware of the incidents, told The Wall Street Journal that the balloon downed in the Atlantic Ocean on Feb. 4 was unprecedented. One of the biggest takeaways from his briefing, he said, was how different in nature these recent balloons were from the Trump-era objects.

Rep. Michael Waltz (R., Fla.) said recently that his office was informed about incursions near Florida and Texas, likely during the Trump era, but it remains unclear what type of systems were on those balloons.



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Facebook Parent Gets Tough

Continued from Page One

One former worker described the process as a return to "OG Mark" or "old school Zuck."

"We're working on flattening our org structure and removing some layers of middle management to make decisions faster as well as deploying AI tools to help our engineers be more productive," Mr. Zuckerberg told investors this month.

Since last year, Meta executives have suggested that low performers wouldn't last at the company. "Realistically, there are probably a bunch of people at the company who shouldn't be here," Mr. Zuckerberg said at a town hall in June.

Meta managers gave approximately 10% of employees a rating of "meets most," people familiar with the matter said. There are five possible ratings at Meta, and "meets most" is the second-lowest. The lowest—"meets some"—is rare, the people said.

Workers who receive two "meets most" ratings in a row are placed on performance improvement plans, and those who receive ratings lower than that are automatically placed on an improvement plan, some of the people said.



One former worker described the process as a return to 'OG Mark.'

Within Meta, some employees take such a rating as a sign to look for new work opportunities, these people said.

In conjunction with the performance reviews, Meta informed employees that one component of employee bonuses—the company's performance—would be paid out at 85% of its target, according to people familiar with Meta's pay.

That figure is one of three used to determine each employee's annual bonus. At 85%, it is down at least 15 percentage points from the prior year, and below 100% for the first time since the first half of 2018, according to people familiar with past bonus figures.

The only other time the companywide multiplier has dropped that low was in the first half of 2012, the people said.

10%

Employees who received the second-lowest rating

The company has struggled over the past year and a half, encountering growing competition from upstart Chinese rival TikTok and a decline in advertising demand amid a

difficult macroeconomic climate.

The company's prospects have begun to look up since it placed an emphasis on artificial-intelligence technologies in 2022 to improve its ad-targeting and content-recommendation tools.

Since April 2021, Meta has contended with the effects of Apple Inc.'s ad-tracking changes, which the social-media company said last year would cost it roughly \$10 billion in revenue in 2022. Over the past three quarters, Meta has recorded year-over-year revenue declines.

Marne Levine, the company's chief business officer during that period, on Monday said that she will be stepping down from the role this month and leaving the company this summer.

Meta responded to its challenging financial situation in November when it announced the layoffs. It also tightened its belt by reducing office space, moving to desk-sharing for some workers and extending a hiring freeze through the first quarter of 2023.

The changes have begun to make an impact. Despite a continuing revenue decline, Meta this month reported net profit of \$4.7 billion for the fourth quarter, up from the prior quarter. That snapped a streak of three quarters in which profit had retreated from the preceding quarter—a slump unlike any the company had experienced in a decade.

U.S. NEWS

Fetterman's Case Shines Light on Depression

Mental-health challenges can often follow a major medical issue, such as a stroke

By ALEX JANIN

Health problems such as stroke and major illnesses often carry a host of uncomfortable symptoms and treatment side effects. Big medical issues can also prompt mental-health challenges.

Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman checked himself into a medical center to treat clinical depression days after being hospitalized for lightheadedness and about one year after suffering a stroke, his office said. The senator's chief of staff, Adam Jentleson, said that Mr. Fetterman has experienced depression previously; he did not say whether the senator's depression is related to his stroke.

Depression following a physical health problem often takes patients and their loved ones by surprise. Here's what to know.

How common is it?

Nearly one-third of stroke survivors experience depres-



Sen. John Fetterman checked into a medical center to treat clinical depression a year after his stroke.

sion, according to the American Stroke Association. It can sometimes occur as a result of biochemical changes in the brain that lead to different rates of expression of neurotransmitters, says Lee Schwamm, a neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Overall, between 20% and 30% of people with a chronic illness experience depression, says Karina Davidson, a clinical

psychologist and dean of academic affairs at Northwell Health's Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research.

Why does it happen?

Biological changes related to an illness itself can prompt depression. So can the side effects of medication, along with social and emotional changes such as isolation or getting

less exercise, psychologists and physicians say. It can be difficult to determine what is mental and what is physical because symptoms of depression often overlap with the effects of illness or medications.

Among cancer patients, approximately one in four experience depression, according to the American Cancer Society. In some cases, biological drivers of the disease can lead

to higher rates of depression, says Arif Kamal, an oncologist.

For example, pancreatic cancer causes a release of hormones that deplete the body of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps to regulate mood, says Dr. Kamal, who runs a clinic at Duke Cancer Center. In other cases, depression arises months or years after diagnosis as a result of social isolation and loneliness.

What are symptoms?

In the immediate aftermath of a diagnosis or acute health event, it can be hard to distinguish between general feelings of sadness and clinical depression, doctors say.

After a chronic disease diagnosis, patients often experience adjustment disorder, which is a short-term reaction to a stressful life event and can present symptoms similar to those associated with depression, says Dr. Kamal.

Loved ones should watch for whether there are changes just in a patient's feelings and mood, or in their behaviors, too, says Dr. Schwamm. Some patients may feel sad or fearful about the future but are still able to go about their daily routines and feel ful-

filled. In other cases, a patient may not be able to get out of bed or may miss major life events. Those behavioral changes could signal clinical depression, he says.

One of the biggest indicators of depression is a lack of interest in activities that someone typically enjoys. Patients and their loved ones should also keep an eye out for significant changes in appetite or sleep, trouble concentrating, increased irritability, and suicidal thoughts, doctors say. Guilt is another common sign of clinical depression, doctors say.

What is treatment?

If symptoms last for more than two weeks and they are affecting a person's ability to go about their normal routine, such as concentrating at work or enjoying activities with friends, it is time to talk to a doctor, says Dr. Davidson.

It is a good idea for a patient to talk with the clinician first before going to a psychiatrist or psychologist, doctors say. Depression can be a side effect of certain treatments, and it may be possible to change the course or dose of treatment, says Dr. Kamal.

Garland Raises Bar For Federal Use Of Death Penalty

WASHINGTON—More than a year after halting federal executions, Attorney General Merrick Garland is authorizing prosecutors to seek the death penalty in some brutal cases while withdrawing it in many others, drilling down on the circumstances surrounding even the most heinous crimes before making the final call.

By Sadie Gurman, Aruna Viswanatha and Corinne Ramey

The approach has effectively raised the bar for the federal government's use of the ultimate punishment after a flurry of executions during the Trump administration.

Mr. Garland, for example, decided not to pursue capital punishment in the case of Patrick Crusius, who killed 23 people in a racist massacre at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart in 2019. In doing so, people familiar with the matter said, Mr. Garland rejected the recommendation of prosecutors who suggested seeking execution. The attorney general noted concerns about Crusius's mental illness. Crusius pleaded guilty and will spend the rest of his life behind bars in the federal case.

The attorney general is authorizing the death penalty in some brutal cases.

In contrast, federal prosecutors in New York this week had Mr. Garland's approval to urge jurors to impose a death sentence in the case of a convicted terrorist who in 2017 intentionally struck and killed eight people on a crowded Manhattan bike path.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Amanda Houle argued that the man, Sayfullo Saipov, had shown no remorse and remains dangerous even while jailed. It was the first time under the Biden administration that a federal prosecutor has pushed for death before a jury.

The push for Saipov's death comes even after Mr. Garland in July 2021 put a moratorium on federal executions while officials review the procedures of the Trump administration, which reactivated the federal death chamber after a 16-year hiatus, putting 13 inmates to death in its final months, the highest rate of federal executions in over a century.

Shifting away from that stance, Mr. Garland has without explanation withdrawn the death penalty against at least 25 defendants in cases he inherited, including murders of witnesses, gang homicides with multiple victims, and the

killing of a sheriff's deputy, according to court records. Most recently, the department in December took death off the table for Nicholas Tartaglione, a former police officer charged with murdering four people north of New York City.

"The government never told us why they decided to seek the death penalty, and they never told us why they withdrew it," Bruce Barket, a lawyer for Mr. Tartaglione said. Mr. Tartaglione has pleaded not guilty, and his lawyers argued the death penalty is unconstitutional.

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco outlined the individualized approach in a Jan. 30 memo to prosecutors. In updated department policy, she told prosecutors they can recommend death for "crimes causing the most harm to the nation, including through widespread impact to the community," while noting that each case should be evaluated "on its own merits and on its own terms."

Ten states have abolished the death penalty since the turn of the 21st century, most recently Virginia in 2021. It remains on the books in 27 states, but its application is concentrated in a handful of jurisdictions, principally Texas and Oklahoma. Roughly 2,400 people are on death row across the country, a number that has decreased for 20 straight years.

Mr. Garland, a deliberative former federal appeals court judge, has been examining the facts of each case in making his calls, people familiar with those decisions said. In the Walmart massacre, a prosecutor said in court that Crusius has schizoaffective disorder. Texas state prosecutors are pursuing their own separate case that could result in a death sentence.

While Mr. Garland hasn't authorized U.S. attorneys to seek death in any new cases, the department is continuing to pursue it in seven cases that began before he took office. One of those is Robert Bowers, who is scheduled to stand trial in April on federal hate-crimes charges stemming from a 2018 shooting rampage that killed 11 people at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue.

Earlier this week, David Stern, a lawyer for Saipov, told the jury that sentencing his client to life would send him to a federal supermax prison in Colorado, where he would spend at least 23 hours of every day in a tiny cell with a cement bed.

"He will die on a prison gurney in the execution chamber or, if given life in prison, on a small cement bed alone, with no one he cares about to say goodbye to him," Mr. Stern said.



WORLD NEWS

War's Death Toll for Russians As High as 60,000, U.K. Says

By MATTHEW LUXMOORE

Russia's death toll from the war in Ukraine has reached as high as 60,000, the U.K. said, an estimate that draws attention to Moscow's strategy of sending poorly protected soldiers on near-suicidal missions to break through Ukrainian lines.

In its daily intelligence briefing Friday, the U.K.'s Defense Ministry said the Russian armed forces and private military contractors fighting alongside them as paramilitary forces has lost 40,000 to 60,000 troops, and suffered up to 200,000 casualties, which includes forces killed or wounded in action.

U.S. officials estimate that more than 200,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded since the start of the invasion. U.S. and European officials have said the toll is likely to continue to rise in the coming weeks as Russia mounts more offensive operations in the east to try to gain momentum in the war.

Kyiv doesn't reveal figures on its dead and wounded, though Western officials have estimated some 100,000 casualties among Ukrainian troops.

Valery Zaluzhny, commander-in-chief of its armed forces, said in August that Ukraine had lost nearly 9,000 soldiers in the war.

For Russia, the casualty rate has risen markedly since it announced a mobilization in September that brought 300,000 troops into the military, many of them undertrained and underequipped.

The U.K. said most of Russia's casualties have resulted from artillery attacks and inadequate provision of first aid.

"By modern standards, these figures represent a high



The bodies of Russian Wagner Group paramilitary fighters are buried in a cemetery near the village of Bakinskaya in Russia.

ratio of personnel killed compared to those wounded," it said. "This is almost certainly due to extremely rudimentary medical provision across much of the force."

Alongside the mobilization announced last fall by Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Wagner paramilitary group has recruited tens of thousands of convicts from Russian jails in return for an amnesty after six months' service in Ukraine, where it has spearheaded the brutal monthslong assault on Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine.

These convict-recruits have taken an active part in offensives aimed at breaking through Ukrainian lines in Bakhmut, Ukrainian military officials say. The U.K. said that up to half the convicts deployed by Wagner in

Ukraine have ended up as casualties.

Russia has gained some ground around Bakhmut and in other parts of Ukraine's east in recent weeks by using a tactic that military experts say recalls the Soviet Red Army's methods in World War II, when waves of soldiers were sent to storm enemy positions without artillery or air support.

Ukrainian troops defending Bakhmut say the tactic has baffled them, as groups of Russian soldiers advancing house-by-house are mowed down by Ukrainian artillery strikes pinpointed by reconnaissance drones.

They also say the rate of Russian bombardment is increasing daily.

"We spend most of our time in basements," Yuriy Sy-

royuk, a 47-year-old Ukrainian grenadier, said on the phone from Bakhmut. "We take turns manning the trenches, driving there in armored vehicles and back."

He said Russia, which is attacking the city from three directions, is using Grad multiple rocket launchers in failed bids to flush out the Ukrainians.

Ukrainian officials say Russia aims to capture Bakhmut by the first anniversary of the war, though military experts say this is unrealistic.

"Russian forces do not appear to be quickening their rate of advance around Bakhmut and are unlikely to meet this reported February 24 goal," the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War said Thursday.

To the north of Bakhmut, Ukraine has spent weeks trying to retake the Russian-held city of Kremynna, which would give access to roads leading to major occupied cities in the Luhansk region.

Serhiy Haidai, the exiled governor of Luhansk, said Friday that Russia is throwing everything it can against Ukrainian forces pushing on Kremynna.

"The situation is very difficult in every direction, because the number of offensives and shelling has increased significantly," Mr. Haidai said in an interview with Ukrainian TV. "But as difficult as the situation may be, it's under control."

During Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's visit to Kyiv on Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked the Netherlands for its pledge to transfer a Patriot missile-defense system to Ukraine and for teaming up with Denmark and Germany to send 100 Leopard tanks to Ukraine.

—Georgi Kantchev contributed to this article.

Europe Reasserts Support for Ukraine, But Signals Limits

By BOJAN PANCEVSKI AND LAURENCE NORMAN

MUNICH—European leaders put on a show of unity Friday, stressing their support for Ukraine against Russia, while seeking possible negotiated paths to end the conflict.

Meeting at the Munich Security Conference, a global security and foreign-policy forum, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron pledged continued support for Ukraine but signaled they don't intend to supply Kyiv with new weapons systems.

Mr. Macron said that the time for peace had not yet come and that Russia must not win the war, but he warned that there would be no lasting peace without a negotiated settlement with Russian President Vladimir Putin—something Kyiv has ruled out.

Speaking before Mr. Macron, Mr. Scholz said: "I think it is wise to be prepared for a long war and it is wise to give Putin the message that we are ready to stay all the time together with Ukraine." But he dismissed calls from Kyiv to send jet fighters to Ukraine.

Mr. Scholz reiterated one of his key goals: Avoiding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization becoming embroiled in a direct conflict with Russia.

The remarks come as Western officials believe Russia has begun a fresh offensive in parts of Ukraine. The conference takes place days before the first anniversary of Russia's attack on Ukraine Feb. 24, and ahead of a visit to Poland by President Biden next week.

In a sign of potential fatigue in the West's military support for Ukraine, a European initiative to provide Western-made main battle tanks to Kyiv is struggling to get off the ground, dimming hopes that

the tanks could be used to counter the Russian onslaught.

French and German officials said Friday that the two countries would backstop existing weapons systems that they have sent to Ukraine but insist there won't be further escalation in the type of military hardware they would supply—a rebuttal to Kyiv's pleas for Western warplanes.

A French official said Paris would send more howitzers and light tanks but had no plans to send heavy tanks or jets—hardware that could be used to attack Russian territory.

British officials have said they are considering Ukraine's request for jet fighters and have pledged to start training Ukrainian pilots to fly them in the spring. However British officials are signaling that these could be for Ukraine's postwar defense rather than for the war.

In Washington as in some European capitals, political differences are emerging over how far and for how long the West can keep supporting Ukraine financially and militarily despite Mr. Putin showing no willingness to wind down the conflict.

French officials said that as part of any peace deal, there must be guarantees for Ukraine but also openness for a serious dialogue with Moscow about a durable security structure in Europe. "The question is how to make the new normal acceptable for them and sustainable for all of us," he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who spoke by videoconference, said he regrets that Western support came flooding in only "after the Russian tanks started moving in." He said Mr. Putin is banking on further Western military and financial support arriving too slowly. "There is no alternative to speed because it is speed that lives depend on," he said.

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WORLD NEWS

North Korean-Russian Trade Appears to Rebound

By DASL YOON

SEOUL—Trade at the main railroad crossing between Russia and North Korea has rebounded in recent months to prepandemic levels, as the Ukraine war leads to deepening economic ties between the two countries.

Satellite imagery of railroad traffic at the Tumangang-Khasan crossing shows increased transfers of coal, oil and other goods, according to a new report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank based in Washington, D.C.

"The uptick in railway traffic is not a coincidence," said Victor Cha, senior vice president for Asia and Korea chair at CSIS, who co-wrote the report. "North Korea is trying to take advantage of the fact that Russia needs help with the war in Ukraine."

The railroad crossing identified in the report is the same one U.S. officials say North Korea used in November to ship infantry rockets and missiles to Wagner Group, the Russian paramilitary force. In January, Washington released satellite images U.S. officials

said showed the arms transfers. North Korea will likely continue to supply Russia's war effort in Ukraine, said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby. North Korea and Russia have denied the arms transaction.

The Ukraine war has handed North Korea an opportunity to improve ties with Russia, as the pandemic and sanctions have further increased its isolation and put a strain on its weak economy. Pyongyang can get foreign currency and fuel shipments from Moscow, as well as a lenient attitude toward the enforcement of United Nations sanctions, said Naoko Aoki, an associate political scientist at Rand Corp., a think tank based in California. That is particularly important as North Korea seeks to procure technology needed for its nuclear and missile programs, she said.

"North Korea benefits from this type of global instability," Ms. Aoki said.

The deepening trade ties with Russia serve to support North Korea as the country is making advances in its weaponry. North Korea carried out a record number of missile tests last year, and

leader Kim Jong Un vowed in December to expand his nuclear arsenal exponentially.

Most of North Korea's trade historically has been with China, but Russia has been an important partner, particularly when it comes to oil. Trade between North Korea and Russia amounted to about \$48 million in 2019, with petroleum products accounting for the largest portion of North Korea's imports, according to the International Trade Centre. Trade between the countries dropped to about \$43 million in 2020 and plummeted to near zero in 2021, according to Russian customs data, as North Korea shut its borders during the pandemic.

Recent satellite images show railcars carrying petroleum on the North Korean side of the border and cars carrying ore on the Russian side of the border, according to the CSIS report. The petroleum cars can be identified because of their long cylindrical tanks; the ore cars are rectangular with open tops. Other cars were closed, concealing their contents.

Moscow didn't respond to a request to comment.

South Africa Is Criticized for Russia, China Drills



NARDIUS ENGELBRECHT/ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNESBURG—The navies of Russia, China and South Africa began an 11-day exercise off South Africa's east coast Friday that will overlap with the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

The U.S. Embassy in South Africa and opposition politicians criticized the exercise, saying it allows Russia to test its military capabilities and show itself surrounded by allies at an important moment in its war in Ukraine.

Representatives for South Africa's Defense Ministry and Russia's embassy in South Africa didn't respond to requests to comment Friday, but the countries' foreign ministers has said the exercise is

routine between friendly nations.

The South African government, which enjoys close relations with both Washington and Moscow, has avoided condemning the invasion, and called on Kyiv and Moscow to end the war through talks. It has come under fire from U.S. officials recently after it allowed a sanctioned Russian freight ship to dock at its largest naval base, where it delivered and loaded unidentified cargo.

Russia's navy dispatched one of its modern frigates, the Admiral Gorshkov, (pictured with people on a yacht protesting by raising the Ukrainian flag), to participate in the exercise in the Indian Ocean. Russia's consulate

in Cape Town said it was equipped with a Zircon hypersonic missile system.

The vessel has been emblazoned with a white "Z," which Russia has used as a symbol for supporting the war in Ukraine.

South Africa's defense force has denied a report from Russian state news agency TASS that a training launch of one of these missiles was planned as part of the joint exercise. China's navy has dispatched a destroyer, a frigate and a support vessel. South Africa's navy, which has been struggling with budget cuts and poor equipment, is participating with one frigate and 350 personnel.

—Gabriele Steinhilber

McCconnell Says Top Republicans Strongly Back Kyiv Aid

By LINDSAY WISE

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said top Republicans are committed to providing money and weapons to Ukraine as the country enters its second year of war with Russia, dismissing what he says are isolated voices of opposition within the party.

"Reports about the death of Republican support for strong American leadership in the world have been greatly exaggerated," the Kentucky lawmaker said in a speech to the Munich Security Conference.

"My party's leaders overwhelmingly support a strong, involved America and a robust trans-Atlantic alliance," he said. "Don't look at Twitter, look at people in power. Look at me and Speaker Kevin McCarthy."

Congress has authorized \$113 billion in military and economic aid for Ukraine since Russia invaded the country on Feb. 24, 2022. But future aid packages must pass a newly divided Congress, with House Republicans in particular under increasing pressure from the isolationist wing of their party to oppose further funding.

The war is currently deadlocked. Russia is dialing up pressure along the front lines in the east but Ukraine is holding firm, waiting for the arrival of new Western weapons.

Mr. McConnell said in an interview before the Munich trip that he is concerned that media coverage overstates GOP opposition to Ukraine aid, elevating the voices of a minority who don't hold influential chairmanships or leadership positions.

Mr. McConnell stressed that the U.S. is conducting careful oversight of the aid distributed so far, and that he has

urged Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials to give priority to anticorruption efforts and to reach out to skeptical Republican lawmakers, think tanks and media organizations. Meanwhile, top oversight officials said they would press to deploy auditors into the war zone to beef up monitoring.

Mr. McConnell and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) traveled to Munich with large delegations of pro-Ukrainian senators from both parties in tow, aiming to demonstrate to European allies

and Ukraine that broad bipartisan majorities in Congress back the Ukrainian war effort.

Mr. Schumer, in his own speech in Munich, thanked Republican colleagues who have backed aid, singling out "my friend Mitch McConnell" for special recognition.

Mr. McCarthy didn't respond to requests to comment. He has said House Republicans won't write Ukraine a blank check.

Neither Mr. McCarthy nor House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D., N.Y.) is attending the Munich conference.

A recent Associated Press-

NORC poll showed 48% of American adults are in favor of providing weapons to Ukraine, down from 60% in May. Among Republicans, support for sending weapons to Ukraine has weakened to 39% from 53% during the same time frame.

Sen. Josh Hawley (R., Mo.), an opponent of Ukraine aid, said: "Our voters don't want to write blank checks to Ukraine."

"I think we've got to make a choice between deterring China in Asia and writing blank checks to Ukraine. We just can't do both, and I think it's fanciful to think we can do both."

U.S. Seeks To Beef Up Monitoring

Continued from Page One acting deputy USAID inspector general. "The closer we are, the more comprehensive oversight will be."

The three officials are responsible for, among other issues, ensuring U.S. weapons aren't diverted, taxpayer funds aren't siphoned off and aid programs are working properly.

The officials said that, while it is early days, they had thus far received no reports of major fraud or illegality involving U.S. assistance to Ukraine, which has been working to repel Russia's invasion. That aid ranges from expensive weapons systems to cash that helps keep the Kyiv government afloat.

They also acknowledged that the sheer size of the American aid package, and the speed with which it has been appropriated by Congress, presents challenges.

"One of my colleagues said 'We're doing oversight at the speed of war, right?'" said Defense Department Inspector General Robert Storch. "And so we have to be agile."

Inspectors general usually labor in the background, issuing reports months or years after federal funds have been spent. But the scale of Ukraine aid is placing unusual scrutiny on the work of the three officials and their teams.

Many congressional Republicans have expressed skepticism about the level of Ukraine aid, amid pressure from the isolationist wing of their party to oppose further funding. But in a speech Friday in Munich, GOP Senate Leader Mitch McConnell said top Republicans are committed to providing money and weapons to Ukraine, dismissing what he called isolated voices of opposition within the party.

"It's an incredibly large amount of assistance to flow to a single government or to a single purpose" in a "very short time," said Diana Shaw, deputy inspector general at the State Department. "Any

fraud, waste, abuse that would divert that funding from its intended purpose risks jeopardizing the continued flow of that assistance."

With Western scrutiny heightened, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in recent weeks has stepped up anticorruption efforts, firing officials and ordering raids of former officials. Even a well-known oligarch who was among Mr. Zelensky's major political backers was the subject of a recent raid.

U.S. officials said none of those allegations of wrongdoing involved American assistance.

In the meetings in Kyiv, which included Ukraine's prime minister, defense and finance ministers and prosecutor general, the inspectors general emphasized "U.S. ex-

Watchdogs will push to put auditors and investigators on the ground in Ukraine.

pectations for accountability, and also the importance of cooperation with our oversight work," Mr. Storch said.

In 2022, Congress appropriated more than \$113 billion in assistance to Ukraine, according to government documents.

U.S. auditors have mostly tracked the flow of money from afar, relying on U.S. officials stationed at the Kyiv embassy, individuals deployed in nearby countries and partnerships with the European

Union—which has anticorruption personnel in Ukraine—and with the World Bank.

A ceiling imposed by the State Department on the number of diplomats at the Kyiv embassy has sharply limited the number of investigators on the ground.

Ms. Angarella said she was the only person from USAID's inspector general office who has gone to Kyiv since Russia's full-scale invasion last year.

"Part of our reason for going to Kyiv on this recent trip was to assess whether we felt that we needed to have an on-site presence in-country. And so coming back from that trip, I think we feel that we do and so we're now in the process of pursuing that," Ms. Shaw said.

Another challenge for oversight, the officials said, is that the nature of U.S. assistance to Ukraine is evolving rapidly. For example, several advanced weapons systems that the White House initially declined to share with the Ukrainian military have now been approved and have either been delivered or are on their way.


While most public attention has been on the possible misuse or diversion of U.S. weaponry, Ms. Angarella said her primary concern is the more than \$20 billion the U.S. is sending to Ukraine, via the World Bank, to keep its government afloat and pay civil servants' salaries.

Auditors are intensely focused on the funds, she said, and a recent assessment found that there are proper controls in place to detect misuse.

Cash payments are "the greatest risk for oversight," Ms. Angarella said.



Ukrainian soldiers prepared to load ammunition for U.S.-supplied HIMARS mobile rocket launchers last September.



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WORLD NEWS

Quakes Hurt Turkey's Ailing Economy

About \$84 billion in losses hit a country struggling with soaring inflation, currency crisis

By JARED MALSIN
AND ELVAN KIVILCIM

KAHRAMANMARAS, Turkey—The earthquakes that devastated Turkey and Syria last week are heaping new stresses on the Turkish economy, posing a challenge for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who is facing an election this year.

The quakes cut a path of destruction through a core industrial region in Turkey around the cities of Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep, home to factories exporting everything from clothing for Western brands, jewelry, and iron. It also devastated some of the country's agricultural infrastructure. Now, the region is littered with damaged and destroyed industrial facilities.

The earthquakes have caused about \$84 billion in losses, the equivalent of about 10% of Turkey's entire economy in 2022, according to a report from the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation. The business association made the projection based on the damage done by the 1999 earthquake that destroyed parts of Istanbul.

The earthquakes, which have killed more than 39,600 people in Turkey, emptied entire cities and uprooted millions from their homes. The disaster has deepened the economic turmoil in a country that is already reeling from a cost-of-living crisis, which is threatening to unravel 20 years of economic expansion under Mr. Erdogan.



People in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, prayed Friday. The city was among those decimated by earthquakes that left 39,600 people in Turkey.

The longtime leader helped lift millions of Turkish citizens into the middle class during the early part of his tenure.

The Turkish state faces several challenges, including making safe parts of cities that have been reduced to rubble and restoring power, water, and heating to swaths of the country. More than two million people lost their homes in the earthquake, dislocating part of the country's workforce.

"We need to solve the problem of jobs and shelter as soon as possible in order not to lose these people. Some people

who left will not come back," said Mikail Utlu, the director of a company that makes metal cookware and the head of the Kahramanmaraş Industrialists' and Business Association.

Mr. Utlu stood in front of one of three factories he runs in Kahramanmaraş that make pots and pans and other metal goods that are sold within Turkey and are exported to about 50 countries, including across Europe and the Middle East. Metal cooking pans were shattered across piles of shattered concrete and twisted metal. More than 20 of his

workers were killed. He estimated he has \$6 million in damages to just one facility.

Paying for the recovery will be difficult because Turkey is reeling from a currency crisis that has wiped more than half the value off the lira and caused record inflation that peaked at 85% in October. Inflows of money from Russia and the oil-rich Persian Gulf countries, and a postpandemic jump in tourism, have cushioned some of the falls in Turkish foreign-currency assets.

Mr. Erdogan's government has pursued an unorthodox

strategy of cutting interest rates despite high inflation, a move he says will encourage growth, particularly exports, that benefit from a weaker national currency. Those interest-rate cuts triggered the collapse of the lira in late 2021.

With investors and ordinary people selling the lira, the Turkish central bank spent more than \$100 billion to prop up the currency last year, economists say, straining the country's foreign assets, which are already net negative according to some economists.

The earthquakes also inten-

sify the political pressures facing Mr. Erdogan, who is expected to face re-election in May. The president, who came to power in the aftermath of the 1999 earthquake, is facing a public outcry over the government's initial response to this year's disaster, which residents said was slow and disorganized.

Mr. Erdogan is promising to rebuild housing for everyone displaced by the earthquake within a year. The government said this week that the Turkish public, state institutions, and businesses donated 115 billion Turkish lira, around \$6 billion, to a fund designated for the government's disaster-relief agency and the Turkish Red Crescent.

Economists say the earthquake will add strain to Turkey's finances, forcing the government to allow the lira to slide further, or risk a balance-of-payments crisis.

"Before, they were pumping money into the system to win the election. Now some of that money is going to be directed to the earthquake," said Bilge Yilmaz, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, who is an official with a Turkish opposition party. "Their challenge is that absent the earthquake, they were trying to sustain something that is not sustainable."

The earthquakes struck a region of the country whose industries are at the heart of Mr. Erdogan's economic vision. The area around Kahramanmaraş, a small city in southern Turkey, was an industrial center that attracted people from across the region for work. Now, much of the city center is a pile of rubble, and much of the industrial estates outside the city are in ruins.

Brazil's Right Eagerly Awaits Ex-President's Return

By LUCIANA MAGALHAES
AND SAMANTHA PEARSON

SÃO PAULO—Conservative Brazilian lawmakers welcomed former President Jair Bolsonaro's announcement that he plans to end his self-exile in Florida and return home, saying they hope the right-wing leader can marshal opposition to the leftist government's plans to raise taxes, toughen gun laws and increase the state's role in the economy.

"He has the confidence of 58 million people, it's undeniable that he's influential and a political force," said a prominent congressman, Deltan Dallagnol, referring to the number of votes cast for Mr. Bolsonaro in his losing re-election effort in October against Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

"This popular support that Bolsonaro has can be used in favor of a liberal economic

agenda, shrinking the role of the state, lower taxes, stronger public safety policies, just to name a few examples," Mr. Dallagnol said.

In power from 2003 to 2016, Mr. da Silva's Workers' Party forged ties with countries such as Cuba and Venezuela while backing abortion rights and same-sex marriages at home. Mr. da Silva also provided aid to Brazil's poorest and oversaw strong economic growth, giving him a high approval rating when he finished the second of two earlier terms in 2010.

Conservatives say they will oppose positions like those that Mr. da Silva plans to pursue in his third, nonconsecutive term.

"Sadly, this new government is shaping up for a return to the past," Mr. Bolsonaro told The Wall Street Journal in an interview on

Monday in which he said he would go home in March to lead the opposition against his left-wing rival.

The former army captain said he would work to elect conservatives in municipal elections next year before himself running for senator or possibly again as president.

A spokesman for Mr. da Silva declined to comment on Mr. Bolsonaro's return to Brazil and his plans to lead the opposition.

Mr. Bolsonaro said he planned to fight for traditional values and freedom of speech, saying he opposed moves by Mr. da Silva to introduce greater controls on social media. Mr. da Silva has called for greater regulation of social-media companies—calls the country's Supreme Court has said it supports.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes this month

called for international action to address what he said was "brainwashing" by far-right social-media sites.

Mr. Bolsonaro narrowly lost Brazil's October elections with 49.1% of the vote, but his conservative allies took scores of

Jair Bolsonaro 'has the confidence of 58 million people' and he is a 'political force.'

seats in Congress and won the governorship in economically strong and heavily populated states such as São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

Still, he has obstacles before him. He said he was facing dozens of legal cases in Brazil, including criminal alle-

gations he encouraged his supporters to raid government buildings in the Jan. 8 riots in the capital. Mr. Bolsonaro denies any involvement, but the violence has already cost him popular support, polls show.

He also faces critics among his base. Some conservative lawmakers and many voters have criticized Mr. Bolsonaro for failing to tame corruption while in office and making good on promises to privatize scores of state companies.

Arthur Virgílio, a former senator who supported Mr. Bolsonaro during his latest presidential campaign, also criticized the former president for leaving the country in late December before his term ended.

A few days later, with Mr. da Silva inaugurated, mobs of people, many of whom said they were pro-Bolsonaro, stormed the Congress, the

presidential palace and the Supreme Court, investigators and government officials say.

"It was a mistake, a leader doesn't leave," said Mr. Virgílio, who like Mr. Bolsonaro supports market-friendly policies and reducing the role of the state in the economy.

Mr. Bolsonaro has said he left Brazil to "recharge his batteries," adding in Monday's interview that he also left so he wouldn't be "accused of anything or cause any troubles for the new administration."

But many members of Brazil's right wing—both on the street and in Congress—acknowledge that the former president's return to the political scene will bolster the conservative movement.

"He's the biggest name on the right in our country," said Nikolas Ferreira, a 26-year-old conservative who was elected congressman last year.

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WORLD WATCH

CANADA

Inquiry Backs Steps Used to End Protest

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was justified in invoking emergency powers last year to end a weeklong protest that paralyzed the capital and thwarted trade on key U.S.-Canada corridors, a judicial inquiry said Friday.

The inquiry said Canada's cabinet had information about a "threat of serious violence for a political or ideological purpose." Furthermore, the inquiry said a series of policing mistakes by local authorities "contributed to a situation that spun out of control. Lawful protests descended into lawlessness, culminating in a national emergency."

The report's main finding is likely to provide a boost for Mr. Trudeau, who argued the use of limited, rarely used powers was necessary to bring an end to what officials viewed as a national security threat.

—Paul Vieira

BULGARIA

Police Find Bodies of 18 Migrants in Truck

Police in Bulgaria on Friday discovered an abandoned truck containing the bodies of 18 migrants, who appeared to have suffocated to death inside a secret compartment under a load of lumber.

The Interior Ministry said that according to initial information,



CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE RETURNS: The official parade of the Rio de Janeiro Carnival returned in force Friday. Covid-19 restrictions delayed last year's event by two months and limited participation.

INDIA

Officials Accuse BBC Of Tax Evasion

India's Finance Ministry accused the BBC of tax evasion on Friday, saying that it had not fully declared its income and profits from its operations in the country.

Indian tax authorities ended three days of searches of the British Broadcasting Corp.'s New Delhi and Mumbai offices on Thursday night. Opposition political parties and other media organizations have criticized the searches as an attempt to intimi-

date the media. Critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have also questioned the timing of the searches, which came weeks after the BBC aired a documentary in the U.K. that was critical of him.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes said it gathered evidence that "tax has not been paid on certain remittances which have not been disclosed as income in India by the foreign entities of the group."

The BBC said it would respond appropriately to any direct formal communication received from the tax officials.

—Associated Press

WORLD NEWS

China Presses for Rural Laborers

Beijing wants local governments to find more work for rural laborers, even if it is less efficient

By Stella Yifan Xie

HONG KONG—China's top economic agency recently called on local governments to find more work for rural laborers, such as widening roads and digging canals—even if the tasks could more efficiently be done by machines.

"If it's possible to use human labor, do not use machines, and mobilize local residents to do the jobs," said a directive released by China's National Development and Reform Commission last month.

The decree, which updated guidelines for a government rural relief program called *Yi Gong Dai Zhen*, or "work as relief," reflects Beijing's concerns that migrant laborers are running out of opportunities as China's economy evolves.

The country's nearly 300 million migrant workers used to be able to find employment easily on construction sites or in factories as China industrialized. Many jobs have disappeared, however, as China's economy becomes more service-oriented, with more need for baristas or bank employees.

While China's overall job market is expected to improve this year as zero-Covid controls are lifted, boosting the economy, a continuing property-market slump and weak global demand for Chinese exports means that migrant workers aren't expected to benefit much.

"Employment pressure among low-skilled workers is going to be a prominent problem this year," said Dan Wang, chief economist at Hang Seng Bank China. By her estimate, as many as three million low-skilled workers are stranded in the countryside as the number of jobs in the cities has dwindled.

Accurately gauging employment conditions in rural China is challenging, economists say,



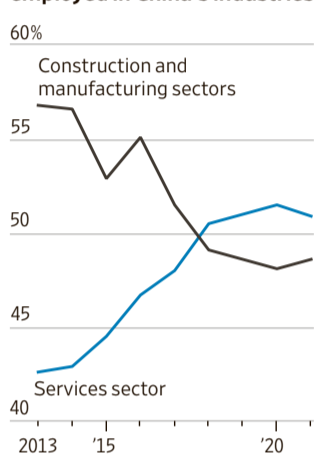
A worker at a building site in Linyi, China. Many construction jobs have disappeared as China's economy becomes more service-oriented.

because migrant workers are for the most part left out of the country's headline unemployment survey, which focuses on urban areas.

The urban surveyed unemployment rate edged down to 5.5% in December from 6.1% last April, though youth unemployment in cities remains high, at 16.7%. But Beijing has signaled growing concern about opportunities for rural workers. Last November, five government agencies including the NDRC and the Ministry of Finance called for more measures to help construction, manufacturing and service companies absorb migrant laborers going through tough times, and banned companies from imposing age limits when hiring workers.

The *Yi Gong Dai Zhen* program, which dates back to 1984, is one of Beijing's tools for poverty alleviation and mopping up underused rural labor during periods of economic stress. Past participants have performed tasks such as planting trees, with priorities deter-

Share of migrant workers employed in China's industries



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

mined by local governments under rules set by Beijing.

While details of the program's budget aren't publicized, Beijing spent nearly 14 billion yuan, about \$2.1 billion, to provide jobs for more than 300,000 low-earning workers in rural areas in 2021 and the first half of 2022, according to

an article published by state media last August.

The program's guidelines hadn't been updated since 2014, until the NDRC published its new directive in January urging local officials to redouble their efforts, saying the old rules no longer fit "new situations, new requirements and new demand."

The latest *Yi Gong Dai Zhen* guidelines essentially amount to "an official prediction that the manufacturing sector will face a severe downturn this year," said Zhaopeng Xing, a senior strategist at ANZ bank.

Those receiving government-relief funds will participate in small to midsize infrastructure projects near their hometowns, such as widening roads, and in some cases getting technical training, the guidelines said.

In Liaocheng, a city in northeastern Shandong province, residents can earn up to 300 yuan a day, equivalent to \$44, by operating cranes and doing welding jobs, according to a People's Daily article.

Officials are urged to encourage "honest work" and resist using labor-saving machinery when possible, the directive said—even though Beijing has been promoting automation across the economy to make China more efficient.

The idea of paying people to do work that machines could do ranked some Chinese social-media users, who criticized the directive. "Why don't we go straight back to primitive society, when you need oxen and horses and tons of human labor," wrote one user on Weibo, a Twitter-like platform in China.

Others questioned whether many projects were necessary when China has built much of the infrastructure it needs.

The NDRC said it aims to direct more local residents to participate in construction projects, and to pay "as many workers as possible" without sacrificing quality of the projects and workers' safety.

The NDRC didn't respond to a request from The Wall Street Journal for further comment.

Pentagon Official Will Visit Taiwan

By Nancy A. Youssef

A top Pentagon official on China policy will visit Taiwan in the days ahead, setting up a diplomatically sensitive trip amid already heightened U.S.-China tensions.

U.S. officials described the coming visit by Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defense for China, as a long-planned trip to a key U.S. partner in Asia. But it is likely to be seen as provocative by Beijing, which claims the self-ruled island as its own territory and bristles over visits from top U.S. officials. The Financial Times first reported the visit.

"We don't have a comment on specific operations, engagements, or training, but I would highlight that our support for, and defense relationship with, Taiwan remains aligned against the current threat posed by the People's Republic of China," said Army Lt. Col. Marty Meiners, a Pentagon spokesman.

Taiwan is a longstanding flashpoint in U.S.-China relations, and tensions over the democratically governed island have recently increased as Washington has bolstered its political and military support for Taipei. Some officials fear the visit could further erode relations between Beijing and Washington, which also have worsened over U.S. accusations of Chinese spying.

U.S. support for Taiwan has taken on greater urgency after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with the U.S. seeking to bolster Taipei as it struggles to fend off Beijing. China has called for a political union with the island, and has vowed to achieve it by force if necessary.

Last summer, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) visited Taiwan in a show of support that drew condemnations from Beijing.

Banks Cut Ties With Metal Scion

Continued from Page One

nies, according to a submission the trading house made to the court. Within hours, the judge had frozen up to \$625 million in assets.

Mr. Gupta, 43 years old, is the scion of an Indian family that ran a metals-and-power company, Ushdev International Ltd. He had pushed abroad in recent years, including by buying a small trading firm, TMT Metals AG, in early 2016.

Bankers at Credit Suisse Group AG, which was then helping manage Mr. Gupta's wealth, had introduced him to TMT, based in Zug, Switzerland, some of the people said. With a dozen or so staff, TMT traded aluminum, zinc and lead, some of the people said. It had a solid reputation in Swiss financial circles, and existing credit lines, some of them said.

Following the deal, some of TMT's staff grew disillusioned. Promises of new businesses and clients didn't materialize, some of the people said, and senior staff began leaving in 2017 when noncompete deals ended, they added.

Some banks including Credit Suisse began to cut credit lines to TMT, partly because they were less confident in having it as a client following the change of ownership, some of the people said. The reduction in credit lines coincided with a broader

retreat by banks from extending financing to smaller players that produced or traded commodities, given challenging industry dynamics.

In addition, the insurer American International Group Inc. stopped providing trade credit insurance to TMT, some people said. The pullback was partly due to concerns about potential risks stemming from Mr. Gupta's companies, some of these people said. AIG backed out in late 2019, one of them said. The Journal couldn't learn what the specific concerns involved.

In 2021, TMT approached OCI Ltd. through a broker, said OCI's group chief executive, Oliver Chapman, whose U.K.-based company helps clients streamline their supply chains. TMT asked OCI to procure metal products and asked to hold off paying for up to 180 days, during which time OCI would essentially be extending credit. Mr. Chapman said the lengthy payment terms, and the high interest TMT was willing to pay, were red flags. Concerned by market perceptions of TMT and related companies, Mr. Chapman turned down the deal.

He says problems such as the one Trafigora says it has discovered make banks and insurers wary of doing business in commodities.

Not all institutions severed ties to Mr. Gupta early on. Citigroup Inc., for instance, financed Trafigora's nickel trades with his companies until late October 2022, according to Trafigora's recent court submission.

Mr. Gupta had also run into trouble back in India.

The businessman had

worked with his parents at Mumbai-listed Ushdev, which traded metals and invested in power projects. He became managing director in 2009 after his father, Vijay Gupta, died. Suman Gupta, his mother, was the company chair, and the younger Mr. Gupta became vice chair in 2012.

Metal prices globally skidded after China's economy slowed in 2015, and a court began insolvency proceedings for Ushdev in 2018. Trafigora rival Gunvor Group was among those owed money by Ushdev, a list of creditors showed.

In July 2022, India's Central Bureau of Investigation said it had searched three locations and recovered "incriminating documents/articles" after opening a fraud investigation based on a complaint from State Bank of India. A second CBI document, published on the bureau's website, showed this investigation focused on Ushdev.

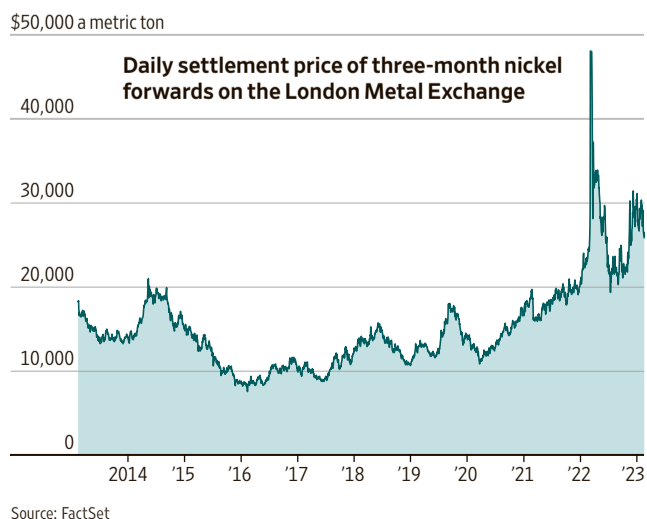
State Bank of India complained that from April 2013 to March 2018, Mr. Gupta, his mother, Ushdev and unnamed others had been "party to a criminal conspiracy," that document showed. The bank claimed the fraud cost it and other lenders nearly 14.4 billion rupees, the equivalent of about \$174 million at today's exchange rates.

Ms. Gupta couldn't be reached for comment. The CBI hasn't brought any charges.

By the time the CBI opened its probe, Trafigora was heavily exposed to Mr. Gupta and related companies—but the company said it took months to uncover the scale of the problem. Trafigora's potential losses became apparent only when the trading house searched more than 100 containers in Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands in December and January and found no nickel, it told the U.K. court.

"A number of red flags led to our making efforts to reduce our exposure to companies owned by UD Group and TMT Metals," said a Trafigora spokesperson, adding that the alleged fraud followed a legitimate business relationship dating to 2015. "A thorough review is under way," she said.

—Rory Jones and Summer Said in Dubai and Margot Patrick in London contributed to this article.



Source: FactSet

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LOST GOLDEN CITY – PYRAMIDS – MUMMIES – KING TUT – CLEOPATRA

OBITUARIES

MARIANNE MANTELL
1929 — 2023

Entrepreneur Recorded Voices of Great Poets

By JAMES R. HAGERTY

Marianne Roney struggled to make a living in the early 1950s by writing liner notes for record albums and translating opera libretti.

Men who ran record companies often asked her for ideas about what they should record—but rejected all of her suggestions. One day, in exasperation, she blurted: Why not poetry?

Then she decided it was an excellent idea.

With one of her former Hunter College classmates, Barbara Cohen, she founded Caedmon Records in 1952 to record poetry and other spoken works. Their first recording—of Dylan Thomas reading poems and one of his stories, “A Child’s Christmas in Wales”—proved a hit.

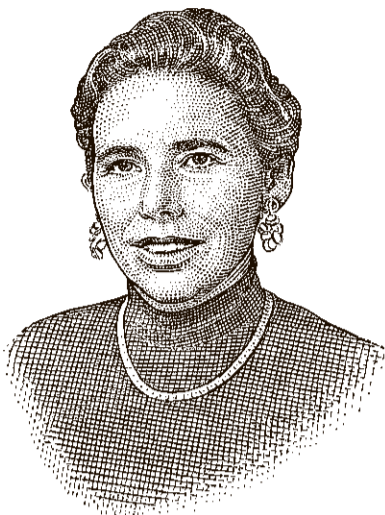
At first, the women, both in their early 20s, worked in a cramped office and used a wheelbarrow to deliver some of their albums. The business thrived, however, and helped lay the foundations for today’s audiobook business. W.H. Auden, Robert Frost and Sylvia Plath were among the many authors who read their works for Caedmon.

Writing later under her married name, Marianne Mantell, she recalled, “Our purpose was literary: to capture on tape as nearly as possible what the poet heard in his own head as he wrote. We were trying to take contemporary poetry away from the literary critics and give it back to its audience.”

Ms. Mantell died Jan. 22 of complications from a recent fall. She was 93.

Caedmon, named after an early English poet, is now part of HarperCollins Publishers, a unit of News Corp, which also owns The Wall Street Journal.

Poets “had to be coaxed, cajoled, begged to record,” Ms. Mantell wrote in a 2004 article for Au-



dioFile magazine, “and being women, we weren’t burdened by the macho sense that this might be demeaning.”

Dylan Thomas, given to late-night carousing, was hard to pin down. The Caedmon founders learned he was staying at the Hotel Chelsea in Manhattan and met him there. He agreed to record an album for a \$500 advance and a 10% royalty, according to “The Untold Story of the Talking Book,” a 2016 history by Matthew Rubery.

They found Ezra Pound at a psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C. On one of their recording visits, they presented him with an Italian sausage, recalled Barbara Holdridge, as Ms. Cohen was known after her marriage. “He flew into one of his rages, I have no idea why, and hurled this heavy salami at me. Which I dodged,” Ms. Holdridge told the Baltimore Sun.

Not all of Caedmon’s poets were living. The company recorded the plays of Shakespeare and John Gielgud reading Shakespearean sonnets. Caedmon also created recordings of literary prose and children’s stories.

For help moving boxes of re-

ords from a recording plant to their office, they relied on the kindness of strangers. “We once figured out there were 40,000 men on the streets of New York who helped us lift our wheelbarrow full of records up and down curbs over the years,” Ms. Mantell told the Record newspaper. “It was so heavy, we couldn’t have done it ourselves.”

Marianne Roney was born Nov. 23, 1929, in Berlin. Her Jewish family fled Nazi Germany in 1938 and had stops in Paris and London before settling in New York in 1941. Her father was a mechanical engineer. Her mother was a bookkeeper and in the late 1950s set up a business importing housewares from Asia.

A piano, violin and accordion player, Marianne Roney graduated from the High School of Music & Art in New York before enrolling at Hunter College.

Caedmon thrived in the 1960s as libraries and schools bought large numbers of educational recordings. By 1970, annual sales were about \$2 million, the Associated Press reported. That year, the founders sold the company to D.C. Heath & Co., a textbook publisher. Harper & Row, a predecessor of HarperCollins, bought Caedmon in 1987.

Ms. Mantell and her husband, Harold Mantell, later ran a distributor of documentaries, including ones he produced. He died in 2006. She is survived by two of her four children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Ms. Mantell sometimes quipped that, as a humanities major, she was “unfit for anything.” Yet her college studies in literature and Greek proved useful in an unplanned business career. “We had some naive faith that there were enough people with our tastes,” Ms. Mantell told the Women’s News Service in 1967.

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TED LERNER
1925 — 2023

Lawyer Made Early Bet On Big Shopping Malls

After grinding his way through George Washington University’s law school, Ted Lerner decided he would rather sell houses.

It was the early 1950s, and he was willing to put in 18-hour days. Home builders liked his imaginative techniques. One November, he decorated a model home like a giant Christmas present.

In the late 1950s, Mr. Lerner teamed up with partners including Isadore Gudelsky, who had made his name in the sand and gravel business. They developed one of the largest shopping centers in the country at that time, Wheaton Plaza, in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, opened in 1960. Mr. Lerner called it “the way the future’s going to be—a

suburban downtown with a mall and free parking.”

He then embarked on the Tysons Corner mall in the Virginia suburbs of the nation’s capital. That mall opened in 1968 on land that until recently had featured apple orchards and cow pastures. It was soon bristling with hotels and office buildings.

Mr. Lerner could remember when, as a boy, he had trouble scraping together enough pocket change to watch a baseball game. In 2006, he came up with \$450 million to buy the Washington Nationals baseball team. His investment in top talent paid off in 2019 when they won the World Series.

Mr. Lerner died Feb. 12. He was 97.

—James R. Hagerty

SHOICHIRO TOYODA
1925 — 2023

Toyota Chief Led Surge in U.S. Sales

When Shoichiro Toyoda took the helm of his father’s company in 1982, about 6% of new cars sold in the U.S. were made by Toyota Motor Corp., compared with 43% from General Motors.

Mr. Toyoda, who died Feb. 14 at the age of 97, built plants in North America, smoothed over trade frictions and accelerated Toyota’s growth into a global juggernaut. He ultimately left his son, Akio Toyoda, a company that in 2021 overtook GM as the U.S.’s top-selling auto maker for the first time.

In 1952, Shoichiro Toyoda joined Toyota Motor as a general manager. He rose through the ranks and took the top job of president in 1982.

It was a time of rapid expan-

sion for Toyota, whose small, fuel-efficient cars were popular in the U.S. during the oil-price spikes and energy crises of the 1970s. But trade tensions were rising too, and the U.S. pressured Japan to limit its exports of cars and other products to the U.S.

Toyota responded by establishing a joint venture with GM in 1984 called New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. or NUMMI. At an idle GM plant in Fremont, Calif., the auto makers manufactured vehicles that were sold under both brands. Mr. Toyoda sent his younger brother, Tatsuro, to lead the plant, and wrote that his brother made sure to use the same cafeteria as the workers.

—River Davis
and Chieko Tsuneoka

FROM PAGE ONE

Officials Stew Over Goat Show

Continued from Page One
entertaining,” Mr. Criswell said, and a boost for local business. He envisions visitors buying souvenirs, meals and gas.

Mr. Criswell, 60 years old, plans to call the tourist spot “Mountains on the Prairie.” At one point, he thought maybe “Pettigoat Junction,” a pun on the title of the 1960s TV sitcom, “Petticoat Junction.”

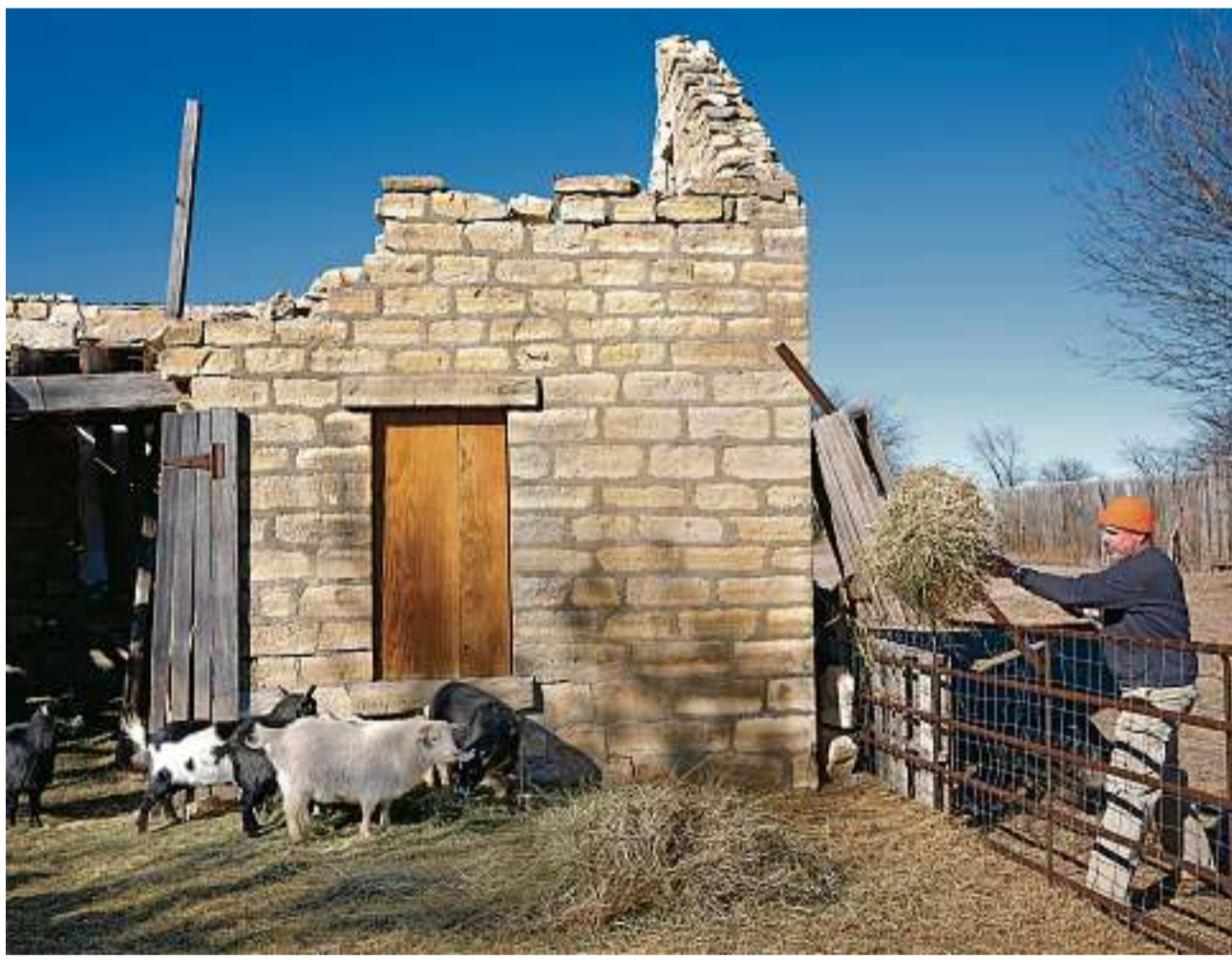
He paid all of a \$1 for more than a dozen 40-foot-high cement silos abandoned by former owners. He has since rounded up 12 Nigerian dwarf goats—two billy goats, Reo and Little Guy, and seven nanny goats, Winnie, Mononoke, Cookie Monster, Sanjo, Grace, Lily and Matilda, plus three kids. He picked the breed for its compact size, around 24 inches tall, even temperament and relatively easy husbandry.

Mr. Criswell hasn’t yet built stairs for the goats to climb. He is still butting heads with arms-crossed skeptics.

“We want people to come to town,” said David Sells, a retired 70-year-old veterinarian who serves on the Wilson Tourism Hub. “I just don’t feel that goats on Main Street is the way to do it.”

The Wilson city council on four occasions has rejected Mr. Criswell’s request to keep more than two goats within city limits. Some residents worry about goat smell: The silos aren’t far from the town’s only hotel, gas station and grocery store. Others have called the idea divisive and weird.

Susan Curtiss, who runs Simple Haven, a local bed-and-breakfast, supports the goat project. Niki Mikulecky, one of the owners of Wilson’s gas station and convenience store, Stop 2 Shop, isn’t a fan. Mayor Mike Peschka consid-



David Criswell, in knit hat, keeps a herd of Nigerian dwarf goats at a family farm outside of the Wilson, Kan., city limits.

ers the matter closed.

“I’m really done talking about goats,” Mr. Peschka said.

Wilson, population 800 or so, was founded in the 1870s by Czech homesteaders and is

‘I’m going to bring people to town with these goats,’ David Criswell said.

still promoted as the “Czech Capital of Kansas.” The town boasts of what it says is the world’s largest hand-painted Czech egg, a 20-foot-tall fiberglass behemoth. Visitors often stop by to take photos beside the giant egg, and the town hosts an annual Czech festival.

Wilson was once a bustling

hub with four beer joints, two grocery stores and a bowling alley. Local businesses served various work crews in the 1950s and 1960s, including those building I-70, damming nearby Wilson Lake and constructing a Cold War-era missile-silo complex a couple of miles away.

“That whole side of the street used to be full of businesses,” said Jerry Florian, the 73-year-old owner of Grandma’s Soda Shop, gesturing across Wilson’s main drag. “There’s nothing over there now.”

Mr. Florian is head of the chamber of commerce, which has shrunk to five members. The opera house, which had hosted movies and polka parties, burned down in 2009.

The school district, facing financial difficulties and low student enrollment, is moving middle- and high-school classes out of town. Mr. Flo-



ELISE KIRBY FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2)

rian’s son Brian Florian, 37, worries that is going to scare off young families. The city should be willing to at least give Mr. Criswell’s idea a chance, he said.

“If it doesn’t work out, you can always take a step back and try something different,” he said on a recent afternoon at the soda shop. His brother Greg Florian served coffee and

a cinnamon roll to a lone patron. Grandma’s also offers kolaches, a Czech pastry, in keeping with the local theme.

Brian Florian is teaching Mr. Criswell how to weld the metal stairs and platforms for the goats. Video cameras will live-stream the animals’ comings and goings to the far reaches of the internet, Mr. Criswell said.

He plans to sell T-shirts and hats, and maybe such goat-milk products as soap and cheese. The big money-maker will be charging people to post messages on giant displays atop the silos, he said. A child could log onto the website and see a *Happy Birthday!* message from Grandpa and Grandma.

One-of-a-kind attractions are a competitive business in Kansas. The nearby missile silo was decommissioned and converted to a private campground. There is a 24-by-32-foot reproduction of Van Gogh’s “Three Sunflowers in a Vase” in Goodland, Kan., the “North Pole” in WaKeeney, Kan., known as the “Christmas City of the High Plains,” and “Truckhenge” in Topeka, Kan.

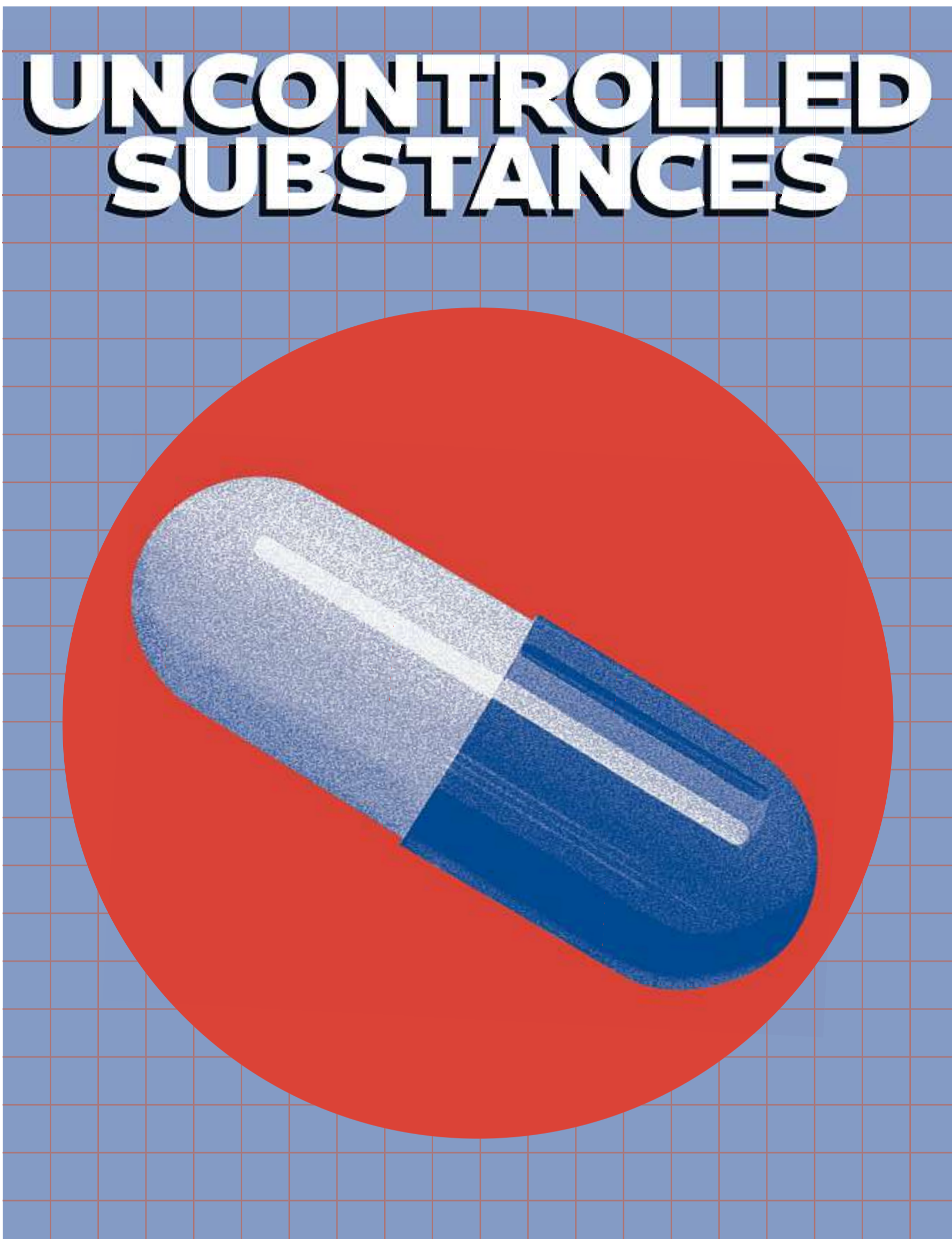
Mr. Criswell held up a T-shirt showing Reo the billy goat to illustrate his proprietary advantage. “Why did I pick them?” he said of the Nigerian dwarf goats. “Nowhere else will have that.”

He was born when his family lived in the San Fernando Valley suburb of Canoga Park in Los Angeles, but Mr. Criswell’s mother was a native of Wilson. Mr. Criswell has lived in Wilson since 2003 with his wife and four children.

As an adult, he tried beekeeping but switched to buying local honey by the barrel to package and sell to stores in Manhattan, Kan., and beyond. During the early 2000s, Mr. Criswell built affordable straw-bale housing in Wilson for seniors, he said.

On a recent afternoon, two of his goats ran to greet him. He doled out alfalfa, hay and pellets. The goats jumped on their hind legs and touched heads in playful head butts.

“Isn’t that cool? To see them up on silos doing antics like that,” he said.



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**THE
JOURNAL.**

WSJ GIMLET

SPORTS

NBA's Tanking Frenzy Hasn't Materialized

The arrival of Victor Wembanyama in June's draft has pressure-tested the league's measures designed to keep teams competing on the floor

FROM TOP: JULIEN DE ROSA/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES; TROY TAORMINA/USA TODAY SPORTS



By ROBERT O'CONNELL

The arrival next season of the most hyped NBA prospect since LeBron James was supposed to be foreshadowed by an all-time spectacle of futility.

Victor Wembanyama, a 7-foot-4 French teenager, launches one-legged 3-pointers and swallows opposing team's shots whole. He is a functional certainty to be selected first in June's draft. In other words, he is the type of future winner that teams have long considered to be worth losing for.

Before the season tipped off in October, pundits and oddsmakers predicted a frantic competition—to sink at the bottom of the standings. Those teams without a realistic shot at a championship were supposed to be doing whatever they could to secure the next best thing: a fair chance at winning the NBA's draft lottery, which gives the best shots at the No. 1 pick to the losingest teams, and bringing aboard Wembanyama. The 2022-23 campaign would be a tank-a-thon to remember, with solid contributors traded away, mysterious ailments lingering and nightly lineups filled out with names you had never heard before.

One person who didn't think it was going to work out that way, however, was Evan Wasch, the NBA's executive vice president of basketball strategy and analytics. "I was shouting from the rooftops,

preseason, that it wasn't going to be what everyone said," he said in a recent interview.

Wasch was right. Even with the unavoidable smattering of struggling clubs—the San Antonio Spurs, Houston Rockets, Charlotte Hornets and Detroit Pistons have each lost at least 70% of their games—this season has become one of the most competitive in league history.

In the Western Conference, 11 of 15 teams have tallied between 27 and 33 wins, turning the playoff race into a peloton.

The NBA tracks the average team's distance from .500—the bigger the gap, the more imbalanced the standings—and this year, the average team is 10.7 games away from dead even. It is the lowest number, at this juncture of the season, in league history.

Wasch and his colleagues in the NBA office have curtailed the race to the bottom by throwing out the carrot that lured teams there. By the fall of 2017, the league had identified tanking—not the intentional losing of games by coaches and players, but the building and managing of a roster designed to come up short—as a fundamental threat to the entertainment value of its product.

The previous year, eight teams had lost at least 60% of their games, and the next season the number would rise to nine. In Philadelphia, the yearslong losing strategy that yielded a string of early



picks had a nickname: "The Process."

Such tactics were "incredibly corrosive to the league, obviously" Wasch said, "this perceived idea that somehow you were better off finishing last than second- or third- or fourth-last."

In September 2017, the NBA Board of Governors approved a revamping of the lottery rules. No longer would the worst team have the best shot at the top pick; now the lowest three franchises would have equal odds—a 14% chance apiece, down from 25% for the last-place club previously.

Those snipped-away percentage

points would be redistributed among the remaining nonplayoff teams. The new formula went into effect in 2019, followed by the advent of a play-in tournament that gives each conference's top 10 teams a shot at the postseason. Previously, the top eight teams had made it.

"The two work really nicely in concert," Wasch said. "On the one hand, you're disincentivizing the race to the bottom, and on the other hand, you're keeping more of those teams in the middle in the mix for playoff spots."

As if to confirm that a franchise no longer needs to wallow to land a

Victor Wembanyama is expected to be the No. 1 pick in June's NBA draft. The Spurs and Rockets have the worst records at the All-Star break.

generational talent, the inaugural redone lottery awarded the New Orleans Pelicans, the team with the seventh-worst record in the league, the first overall pick—and with it, the sought-after Zion Williamson.

With Wembanyama's arrival in June's draft looming, the league's designs only partly explain this season's surprise turn away from farce and toward fierce competition. A number of teams simply have no incentive to tank, having dealt away the rights to 2023 draft picks. The Los Angeles Lakers' yearlong slide from preseason contender to late-season also-ran, for instance, comes with the potential added loss of their upcoming first-round selection, which will go to New Orleans if it lands in a better spot than the Pelicans'.

The biggest moment of this Lakers season doubled as an example of the nightly intrigue produced by what Wasch calls a "perfect storm" of competition-boosting factors. The game in which LeBron James broke Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's scoring record, on Feb. 7, was also one the Lakers needed to win against the Oklahoma City Thunder.

But the Thunder, despite a makeup and standing that might previously have called for a tank job—a promising but young core, a sub-.500 record two-thirds of the way through the season—desperately wanted a victory as well.

"I thought our guys just had laser focus in the game, showed a lot of growth," Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault said proudly after his team's 133-130 win. "If you trace us back throughout the season, I just thought we played like a very mature team tonight."

If the fans benefit most from the NBA's freshly competitive landscape, Wembanyama himself may end up almost as grateful. The matching-up of the most lauded prospects with the lousiest teams has often meant those fu-

ture icons spend their early years doing a lot of losing.

Wasch says the league is neutral on whether top prospects go to cellar-dwelling clubs or ascendant ones, seeing benefits in both circumstances.

But he acknowledged that the NBA was "comfortable" with the mediocre but not hapless New Orleans Pelicans getting the chance at Zion Williamson in 2019.

"It meant that we weren't reinforcing this notion that all you have to do is finish last to get the top pick," Wasch said.

It's a lesson teams have quickly learned.

LIV Golf's Saudi Backers Ordered to Turn Over Info in Lawsuit

By LOUISE RADNOFSKY AND ANDREW BEATON

A FEDERAL JUDGE HAS RULED that LIV Golf's financial backer, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, and its governor, Yasir Al-Rumayyan, aren't entitled to sovereign immunity and must turn over information connected with the upstart circuit's courtroom battle with the PGA Tour.

The PIF and Al-Rumayyan had argued that there was no court in the U.S. with jurisdiction over them, saying they were shielded because they are part of a foreign government.

It was a claim that highlighted the money—and some of the controversy—behind the new golf circuit that has upended the sport, and drawn the rivals into an array of bruising legal and political fights.

Magistrate Judge Susan van Keulen, in the U.S. District Court of Northern District of California, rejected the argument in an order that was made Feb. 9, but which remained under seal as LIV and the PGA Tour fought over proposed redactions of confidential information. A redacted copy of the order was included in a filing released late Thursday.

"The Court DENIES the motion of PIF to quash the subpoena directed to PIF on the grounds of sovereign immunity because it finds that PIF's conduct falls within the commercial activity exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act," the order says. The judge also rejected other arguments made by the PIF and Al-Rumayyan to avoid being deposed, but said they could ask to sit for the depositions at a place of the Tour's choosing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

LIV, in a court filing, had al-



A federal judge has ruled that LIV Golf's financial backer isn't entitled to sovereign immunity.

ready indicated objections to the ruling before it had been unsealed. A spokeswoman for LIV declined to comment.

"It is plain that PIF is not a mere investor in LIV; it is the moving force behind the founding, funding, oversight and operation of LIV," the ruling says. "PIF's actions are indisputably the type of actions by which a private party engages in trade and traffic or commerce."

LIV has accused the PGA Tour of using its monopoly power in an attempt to squash a nascent rival, in violation of antitrust law, and secretly attempting to stoke controversy around its Saudi connections. "The Tour has damaged LIV's brand, driven up its costs by hundreds of millions of dollars, and driven down revenues to virtually zero," LIV's lawyers argued

in a recent filing.

The Tour has countered that LIV has harmed it by interfering with its players and contracts, and that LIV has struggled not because of the Tour's actions, but because of public distaste for Saudi Arabia's human-rights record. Tour lawyers have also already sought to add the PIF as a direct defendant in their counterclaim.

A 1976 U.S. law, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, insulates foreign governments from some types of U.S. litigation—although not in suits about "a commercial activity."

At a hearing on the question earlier in January, lawyers representing the Tour said that the sovereign-wealth fund owns 93% of the circuit, that the fund founded LIV under Al-Rumayyan's instructions, and assumes all financial

risk to the project because it is funding 100% of it.

Those lawyers also offered examples of Al-Rumayyan's close involvement in LIV matters that are important to the Tour's suit against the circuit, including a weekly meeting they said he had about the circuit, an action tracker created by LIV on the issues in front of him on the circuit's operations, and an email Al-Rumayyan sent about a delay in a golfers' scores being displayed.

Elliot Peters, for the Tour, also described a text message from Al-Rumayyan to golfer Bryson DeChambeau about DeChambeau signing on with LIV, and an email exchange with sports agent Casey Wasserman about golfers he represented. In addition, Peters referred to Al-Rumayyan contacting a broadcasting executive in pursuit of a broadcasting agreement, PIF using its portfolio companies to connect LIV with potential sponsors, and a photo of Al-Rumayyan with golfers at a LIV event.

"This isn't what a government does. This is what somebody that is running a golf league does," Peters said in court.

"It's obvious what we want. We want information about negotiations, we want information about negotiations with players, broadcasters, sponsors, the plans for the

league, the intentions of setting up LIV, efforts to undermine the PGA Tour," Peters said later.

Lawyers for the sovereign-wealth fund and Al-Rumayyan had told the judge that LIV and PIF were separate entities, and that the examples cited by the Tour's lawyers as proof of Al-Rumayyan's close involvement were merely those of a typical investor.

"I don't think the top official, the primary investor of a company, saying that it's a major talent, thanks for joining, glad you're coming aboard, is the legal equivalent toward the factual equivalent of negotiating a contract," said John Bash, representing PIF and Al-Rumayyan, of the DeChambeau communications.

"This is leagues away from contract negotiations. It says nothing about that. It's making connections," Bash said of the Wasserman email.

Lawyers arguing for the PIF pointed to the diplomatic sensitivities of demanding documents from members of the Saudi government.

"The second point I wanted to make was just to underscore how significant an order ordering discovery against PIF or Mr. Al-Rumayyan would be diplomatically," Bash said.

He went on to compare the situation to what might have happened after the U.S. auto industry bailout.

"The analogous situation here is that if there was a design defect case in Riyadh, and a court in Riyadh said, 'you know what, the United States Treasury is the majority shareholder of this auto company and so I'm going to issue an order demanding that the Treasury produce confidential, perhaps classified documents, ... that's the equivalent diplomatically.'"

OPINION

THE WEEKEND INTERVIEW with Nathan Myhrvold | By Tunku Varadarajan

Emission Cuts Will Fail. What to Do Then?

Sometimes it takes a visionary to throw cold water on a seemingly revolutionary development.

When scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory achieved a breakthrough in December—producing more energy in a fusion reaction than they used to ignite it—the Biden administration hyped the experiment as a quantum leap for its green agenda. “This milestone,” Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm boasted, “moves us one significant step closer to the possibility of zero-carbon abundant fusion energy powering our society.”

Not so fast, says Nathan Myhrvold, one of America’s most versatile applied scientists and inventors. “While I hope to see affordable fusion reactors in my lifetime,” he says, “I’m not holding my breath.” (He’s 63.) The machine at the National Ignition Facility was designed to make “at most a few bright flashes of raw energy a

alternative is insufficient. Data from rigorous long-term CO2 measurements around the world show that “despite all the coal plants shut down, all the electric vehicles sold, all the solar and wind power deployed, all the people now working from home rather than commuting,” the concentration of CO2 continues to rise “just about as fast as it has for the past 40 years, and faster than it did in the 1960s and ’70s.” He underscores the point with a rhetorical question: “Do you see the effect on emissions of the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, or of the global pandemic shutdown? Nor do I.”

“If the projections are true, and I think they are, I think we’re already screwed,” he says. If we stop “all human-done” CO2 emissions today, climate models suggest the Earth’s climate would continue to get warmer. “It would keep going up for almost 100 years. It would take 145 years before it eventually went down to the same temperature it is today. That’s just the physics of the problem.”

Geoengineering is about “deliberately trying to reduce climate change.” Excess CO2 traps a little less than 1% of heat from the sun, “so if we could make the sun 1% dimmer, we could shut off climate change.” When Mount Pinatubo, a volcano in the Philippines, erupted in 1991, it lowered world-wide temperatures by 1 degree Celsius for about 18 months. Human-emitted particulate pollution has historically offset about 20% of human-emitted CO2. “Ironically,” he says, “the Clean Air Act made our air better but hurt climate change.”

The simplest solar-radiation management scheme, Mr. Myhrvold says, “is to emit particles in the stratosphere to mimic Mount Pinatubo. We invented a particularly elegant way to do this with balloons and a pipe to the sky.” By “we,” he means Intellectual Ventures, the company Mr. Myhrvold founded in 2000 after leaving Microsoft, where he spent 13 years and rose to the position of chief technology officer. Intellectual Ventures “creates, incubates and commercializes” new inventions.

“Marine cloud brightening” is another solar-related intervention. “The idea is to increase the number and size of low clouds that form over the oceans so that more incoming sunlight bounces back into space instead of heating the ocean.” Scientists have proposed a variety of ways to do this. One, which Mr. Myhrvold’s company has explored, is to outfit ships with equipment to spray seawater into the air as they traverse the ocean. “The salt particles can serve as nuclei for water vapor to condense into droplets, thus forming clouds.”



KEN FALLIN

Intellectual Ventures has also researched an idea for draining energy from hurricanes—“not a climate intervention per se, but a way to deal with the more intense cyclonic storms that some models project are likely to occur in a warmer world.” Low-cost floating tubes would harness wave action to increase the mixing of the ocean’s warm top layer—the source of heat that powers hurricanes—with cooler deep water. “Our simulations found that if enough of these were deployed in the path of the hurricane,” he says, “it could knock a storm down by a category or two.” But it would take thousands of tubes, so would be a challenge to deploy. “The real stumper was not technological but practical. Who would pay for the system and manage it?”

Direct air capture, the other major form of geo-intervention, may prove harder to do than solar-energy capture. Mr. Myhrvold says there are “three big issues” with extracting CO2 from the sky. The first is that CO2 is only 400 parts per million, or 0.04%, of the air. “So you need to work hard to get it—i.e., move a lot of air.” The second: CO2 dissolves in seawater. About half of human-emitted CO2 is in the ocean, and it is in equilibrium with the atmosphere. “If we withdraw CO2 from the air, the system re-equilibrates. So if we pull two units out of the air, we remove one unit net, because one unit comes out of the ocean.” The third issue is where to put the CO2: “It is very hard to store that much gas. If you reduce it to solid carbon, it would be immense.”

Mr. Myhrvold has met with several “very enthusiastic, very brilliant” entrepreneurs who have technologies either to remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere or to make Earth a lot less hot. He recently spent time with a startup that has “a clever idea” for

direct air capture. “At one point in the meeting I asked a question that I ask everyone in geoengineering: ‘You’re acting as if the world wants to solve the problem of climate change. Why is that?’” He explains his cynicism: “There are activists who oppose funding or experiments. There’s no evidence I can see that many of the people involved in the climate debate want a solution.”

The enthusiastic reaction to the experiment at Livermore Lab reinforces that point. Compared with that fusion reaction, Mr. Myhrvold sees far more promise in conventional nuclear power, or fission. “But there is a crazy notion of only liking some flavors of carbon-free power. Renewables are OK, but nuclear is not.”

Mr. Myhrvold’s scientific interests range beyond geoengineering to include computing, paleontology, astronomy and “cutting-edge” cooking. He is a co-author of “Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking” (2011), a five-volume cookbook that explains the science of food preparation and the latest kitchen technologies.

Prodigies, it is said, retain a childlike character into older age, and Mr. Myhrvold is no different. He went to college at 14, graduating from UCLA four years later with both a bachelor’s degree in math and a master’s in geophysics and space physics. Words tumble out at a boyish pace when he speaks, especially when excited. He’s easily distracted, as evident when a staffer brings in a slice of corn bread baked on the premises in a vast kitchen used for food experiments. “This is made with 100% maltitol,” he says as he cuts himself a bite. Maltitol is a sugar alcohol—sweet but edible by diabetics.

Mr. Myhrvold has four degrees—after UCLA, he went on to earn a master’s in mathematical economics and a doctorate in applied math from Princeton. He plays these down, joking that his friends used

to say he was “trying to have more degrees than a thermometer.” But he lights up when he says he has a Grand Diplôme from the École de Cuisine La Varenne, a culinary school. He’s particularly proud of his 1979 fellowship from the Hertz Foundation, which gives out a handful of cash awards annually to promising young applied scientists. In December the foundation endowed a new fellowship in Mr. Myhrvold’s honor.

Geoengineering would appear to be the application of science par excellence. But along with the activists who “don’t want a technical solution to climate change,” he says, “there’s a second set of people who may not have that ideology, but have a more realpolitik sort of view.” This group—which comprises most Western governments—want “people to shut up” about interventions. He likens this approach to “The Little Engine That Could,” a children’s story about a small blue engine that pulled an entire train over a hill, inch by inch, through the sheer force of its will. “Opponents worry that once you have geoengineering, people won’t make sacrifices to cut emissions. They want a sword of Damocles hanging over humanity as a means to force us to follow their ideology.”

Mr. Myhrvold uses an analogy he describes as “horrible in some ways.” When the AIDS epidemic hit, some people saw it as punishment from God. “Their attitude was, ‘This is what you get if you indulge in the practices we don’t approve of.’” In climate change, he says, this moralistic attitude takes the following form: “I don’t like aspects of our society, I don’t like technology, I don’t like capitalism, and this is nature’s retribution. And so we have to change the way we live.” Such beliefs “have become a very powerful disincentive, particularly for academic researchers.”

Things may have to get worse before they can get better. He believes the opposition will have to cease as the world experiences “very severe climate consequences” and demand rises for “an intervention to fix the problem.” He calls it “insane” not to fund such research and invokes another analogy: heart surgery and stents.

“You could imagine a world in which cardiology doesn’t exist because the medical profession said, ‘You fat bastards. You did it to yourself. We’re not going to help you.’”

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

A leading technologist outlines the possibilities for ‘geoengineering’ to cool the Earth and remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

day. That’s it. Not to capture the energy, not to turn it into electricity.” He says it’s “sort of like those spectacular gasoline explosions you see in the movies when they blow up a car.” It’s a “long, long road” from there to an internal-combustion engine that “converts thousands of controlled gasoline explosions into useful energy every second.”

Make no mistake—Mr. Myhrvold is concerned about climate change. But he’s a scientific realist who thinks the shibboleths on the subject—embodied in such documents as the Paris Agreement of 2016—are misbegotten. Mankind isn’t capable of reducing emissions enough to keep temperatures from rising unacceptably.

He laments that policy makers largely scorn geoengineering—human interventions in the Earth’s natural systems to thwart or neutralize climate change. Such interventions could make a difference by following two broad approaches: solar-radiation management, “which seeks to reflect sunlight back into space,” and direct air capture, which means “sucking carbon-dioxide from the sky.” While these methods may “sound crazy,” he says, “they could work.” But research of this kind is actively discouraged.

The case for geoengineering begins with the argument that the

Inspiration Flows From Abraham Lincoln’s Old Kentucky Home



CROSS COUNTRY
By Caroline Aiken Koster

Hodgenville, Ky. I tell my brother to grab an empty Mountain Dew bottle from his truck so we can bring back some spring water. We’re at the Lincoln memorial. Not the one in Washington, the other one—the 344-acre Abraham

Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park—an hour south of Louisville. This Lincoln memorial is older by a decade than the Henry Bacon-designed monument in Washington, but it gets only 250,000 visitors a year. The National Park Service estimates eight million people annually drop in on Daniel Chester French’s Lincoln sculpture overlooking the National Mall.

My brother and I have been here before. We came as kids, on school trips and with our parents. The 16th president was their idol. Our mom and dad were the children of Kentucky coal miners. They respected Lincoln for his humble roots and integrity, as well as for preserving the union. He was a Kentuckian like they were, and he had etched his name in history. Their bookshelves were filled with Lincoln biographies and ephemera, and they visited Gettysburg on their honeymoon.

Lincoln’s ancestors came to Kentucky from Virginia through Daniel Boone’s Cumberland Gap in 1782. His grandfather was killed in an Indian raid. His father, Thomas, was an uneducated “wandering laborer,” who occasionally toiled alongside slaves. Lincoln’s parents bought Sinking Spring Farm in 1808. His mother, pregnant with the future president, moved into a one-room log cabin. In February 1809 she gave birth to Abraham, named for his grandfather. Lincoln spent his first two years there before

moving to a nearby farm along Knob Creek.

Wandering through the forest with my brother, I wonder what Lincoln would think of today’s political divide. President during the Civil War, would he consider our polarized skirmishes minor? Or would he worry that they are leading to a serious rupture? The country tore itself apart in the Civil War, and it feels as if it’s tearing itself apart today. Maybe it has always felt like this.

The birthplace memorial, which opened in 1911, has icons of Lincoln’s legacy. There’s a “penny portrait” like the one I recall from fourth grade, a mosaic made of hundreds of coins. I watch my sons, both born in New York but named for Kentuckians, climb the 56 steps—one for each year of Lincoln’s life—to the neoclassical memorial, which looks slightly out of place in the low rolling hills of bluegrass country.

Inside the memorial building is a rustic log cabin, Lincoln’s “symbolic birthplace.” These almost certainly aren’t the actual logs from the future president’s home, nor the actual dirt floor where he played as a child. After the 1865 assassination, historians

It isn’t the family’s real log cabin, but it does give visitors a feel for the 16th president’s upbringing.

descended on the farm, but the original cabin had been dismantled long before. None of the Lincoln family’s neighbors could have foreseen how interested Americans would one day be in such a humble homestead.

In the 1890s, New York entrepreneur A.W. Dennett bought Sinking

Spring Farm and built a cabin from logs found on the site, intending to draw tourists. With few takers in the rural setting, he sent the structure on tour—along with a log cabin reputed to be the birthplace of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. They were shipped off and reassembled in cities like Nashville and Buffalo, N.Y. In Brooklyn’s Coney Island, some commingling of the Davis and Lincoln logs is alleged to have occurred. This is the cabin that now sits inside the Kentucky memorial.

The mongrel cabin seems a testament to how fickle and incongruous Americans are. One Kentucky farmer’s son frees the slaves and saves the union. Another Kentucky farmer’s son leads a rebel army with the opposite agenda. A century and a half after the cannons went quiet, here they both are—a house, once divided, reunited.

I’m disappointed when we finally

reach the spring. Drinking from the source is prohibited. A railing rings the surrounding cave, where water has flowed from some deep reservoir since an infant Lincoln certainly sipped there. The water is still potable but out of respect for the law I won’t be bottling it. That’s a pity. I was hoping to sprinkle some around my Brooklyn block like holy water. My brother’s Louisville neighborhood could use some as well.

We head back to the truck. My brother tosses the empty bottle as I read aloud Lincoln’s words inscribed nearby. Anyone who sips from the spring of our great national experiment would surely be inspired: “I don’t know who my grandfather was,” Lincoln wrote. “I am much more concerned to know what his grandson will be.”

Ms. Koster is a New York City writer and lawyer.

Notable & Quotable: Mitch McConnell on Europe and Ukraine

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell speaking at the Munich Security Conference, Feb. 17:

On both sides of the Atlantic, our nations have wasted precious time on ill-considered holidays from history. As some have said, the West cashed in the so-called peace dividend, but we didn’t actually get the peace. And now the bill has come due with interest.

Beginning in the last American administration, when my Republican Party controlled the government, we began a concerted effort to rebuild U.S. hard power. We increased defense spending, rebuilt the readiness of our Armed Forces, prioritized investments in lethality, and initiated an overdue modernization of our military.

Then, under this current administration, Republicans led the bipartisan push to increase defense spending by \$45 billion above the president’s insufficient budget request. We led Congress’s bipartisan work to provide the Pentagon with multiyear contracting authority and strengthen our defense-industrial base. . . .

While America steps up our game, we need our European allies to step up theirs as well. . . . If you want to help Ukraine win; if you want NATO to emerge stronger from this conflict; and if you want sustained political support in America for our staying engaged and invested in maintaining a Europe that is whole, free and at peace, then America’s friends on this continent must

mirror the resolve and reciprocate the commitment that you hope to see from us.

So I applaud the *Zeitenwende* here in Germany. I welcome European commitments to supply Ukraine with weapons and capabilities. I appreciate the rhetorical shift on this continent regarding defense. But as I learned long ago as a U.S. senator, speeches are not policy.

It is the concrete investments that Europe makes now and the real reforms that Europe implements now that will determine whether support for Ukraine will be sustainable, and whether our alliance will come out of this crisis stronger in the long-run.

European countries have not been uniformly generous towards Ukraine. Nor have they all made

consistent investments in critical defense capabilities. Nor have many of the promised investments moved at the speed of relevance. Nor is it clear these new financial commitments will prove enduring.

I have confidence in you. But I also understand that following through will require tough decisions—in Berlin, in Brussels, and beyond. Rhetorical commitments must translate into concrete new capabilities.

It should not have taken the U.S. Army months to put Stingers and Javelins under contract. But it also should not have taken Germany months to start committing some of your €100 billion special defense fund. We have to move with the speed of reality, not the sluggishness of bureaucracy.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Pence for the Constitution—Again

On Jan. 6, 2021, Mike Pence stood up for the Constitution against Donald Trump, and he has paid for it politically with MAGA Republicans. Now the former Vice President is defending the Constitution again in resisting special counsel Jack Smith's subpoena, and this time the left is attacking him. His stand on principle is right again and deserves support.

Mr. Smith's grand jury recently demanded that Mr. Pence appear to testify as a witness to the events surrounding Jan. 6. The subpoena looks like overkill, since it comes more than two years after the Capitol riot and related events that by now are well known.

Mr. Pence's aides have testified before the House Jan. 6 select committee, and Mr. Pence has written a memoir recounting his conversations with Mr. Trump and the pressure he was under to stop counting Electoral College votes. The Justice Department was investigating all of this long before Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed Mr. Smith in November.

* * *

Mr. Pence's resistance to the subpoena, which we're told has no defined scope, is rooted in his role as President of the Senate. That was his constitutional position on Jan. 6 as he presided over the counting of the electoral votes. As such he has a strong case that he's covered by Article 1, Section 6, which says that "for any Speech or Debate in either House," Members of the House or Senate "shall not be questioned in any other Place."

Some analysts say Mr. Pence can be compelled to testify because he wasn't a Member of Congress. But that ignores that in presiding over the Senate he in effect was a Member. Legal precedents support this argument about the Vice President's role in the structure of the separation of powers.

In *Bogan v. Scott-Harris* (1998), Justice Clarence Thomas wrote for a unanimous Supreme Court that "We have recognized that officials outside the legislative branch are entitled to legislative immunity when they perform legislative functions."

In a 1972 case regarding publication of the Pentagon Papers (*Gravel v. U.S.*), Justice Byron White wrote that "It is true that the [Speech or Debate] Clause itself mentions only 'Senators and Representatives,' but prior cases have plainly not taken a literalistic approach in applying the privilege."

The Court ruled that an aide to Sen. Mike Gravel was protected from testifying on legislative deliberations, though not from answering other questions. If a Senator's aide is covered by the Speech or Debate Clause, surely a VP pre-

siding over the Senate would be.

The Biden Justice Department has said as much in legal filings defending Mr. Pence himself from lawsuits related to Jan. 6. In December 2020, Justice defended Mr. Pence against a suit by then GOP Rep. Louis Gohmert, citing the Speech or Debate Clause, which it said protects other

branches of government from questioning Congress for "legislative acts" that it defined as "an act generally done in Congress in relation to the business before it." Counting electoral votes counts as Congressional business.

Justice did it again in August 2021 when it told a federal district court that tort claims against Mr. Pence regarding the counting of electoral votes are "barred by the doctrine of absolute legislative immunity under the Speech or Debate clause" (*Brunson v. Adams*). Mr. Smith will have to explain in court why Justice has done a 180-degree turn in less than three years.

Amusingly, Mr. Pence can also produce pay stubs from the "United States Senate Disbursing Office" as a record of his salary. If he was paid for his work for the Senate, why isn't he covered by Senate immunity?

The former Vice President's critics say he should testify anyway as a patriotic duty. But there's an important separation-of-powers principle at stake. If Mr. Smith can force a Vice President to testify about his Senate duties, prosecutors will have a new precedent to cite in future attempts to pierce legislative immunity. The Founders wrote the Speech or Debate protection because they understood the leverage the executive would otherwise have over a co-equal branch of government.

We should stipulate that Mr. Pence is not claiming "executive privilege" from testifying, as Mr. Trump and other officials might if they are called to testify to the grand jury. That claim is likely to fail under *U.S. v. Nixon*, the Watergate tapes case. Mr. Pence is making a much stronger claim.

* * *

The best result would be for Mr. Smith to withdraw his subpoena. He isn't likely to learn much more from Mr. Pence that isn't already in the public domain. The legal fight to compel his testimony will take months and may go to the Supreme Court. If Mr. Smith is merely trying to check a box for his prosecution in the event he brings a criminal case, it isn't worth the time and constitutional trouble.

Critics say Mr. Pence is resisting because he wants to win back favor with MAGA voters. But his stand on Jan. 6 has earned him the benefit of the doubt about his motives. He also has a strong and principled constitutional case.

He has principle on his side in resisting Jack Smith's subpoena.

A Coming Defense Boost in Europe?

Vladimir Putin has thrown 97% of his army into Ukraine, U.K. officials said this week, and the Russian dictator is betting he can grind down the West's will to resist. So it's good news NATO members are rethinking their current defense commitments.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday that the alliance would this summer revisit the pledge that members spend 2% of their economy on national defense. "What is obvious is that if it was right to commit to spend 2% in 2014," Mr. Stoltenberg said, "it is even more right now." The world is "more dangerous," with a "full-fledged war going on" in Europe, plus terrorism and the threat from China. The 2% target ought to be not "a ceiling" but "a floor."

Hear, hear. The median outlay for NATO members is 1.65% of GDP, according to data the alliance put out last year, and it's no secret that some countries are slackers. The dishonor roll of more than a dozen countries includes Spain (a pitiful 1.01% estimated for 2022), Canada (1.27%), Denmark (1.39%), and Hungary (1.55%).

Germany and others have vowed to pick up the pace, but GOP Senate Leader Mitch McConnell noted at the Munich Security Conference Friday (see nearby) that while he appreciates

"the rhetorical shift on this continent regarding defense," he learned long ago in the U.S. Senate that "speeches are not policy." The new NATO target ought to be at least 3%, while raising the current NATO benchmark that 20% of spending be on equipment.

That means more air defense, artillery, aircraft, ships and other hard power, not pensions or vanity procurement projects. Ukraine is burning through 6,000 artillery shells a day, and production lines are struggling to keep up. Donated air defenses are working hard against everything from drones to cruise missiles. Ukraine needs more tanks, but some like Spain's Leopards have been mothballed for years and are in dubious shape.

The U.S. can also do more, especially as American defense spending has fallen to 3% of GDP, close to a post-Cold War low. Press reports say the Biden Administration is telling Ukraine it can't offer long-range missiles for Himars rocket systems because the U.S. doesn't have enough of them. That's either an excuse or an indictment of America's weapons stocks.

Russia's invasion should have jolted the West out of its welfare-state reverie, but that will require spending more on hard defenses to deter Russia and other rogues.

NATO's 2% of GDP target isn't adequate as threats multiply.

America's Missing School Children

Declining public-school enrollment during the pandemic has been well-chronicled. Hundreds of thousands of students learned at home or switched to private schools with more in-person learning. But especially alarming is that tens of thousands of students can't be accounted for, according to a new study.

An analysis released recently by Stanford University, in collaboration with the Associated Press, finds that K-12 public-school enrollment declined by 1.2 million in the first two years of the pandemic. About two-thirds of the decline can be explained by increasing private-school enrollment, home-schooling, or population changes at the national and local level.

Private-school enrollment increased 4% while home-schooling soared 30% between the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 school years. The U.S. school-age population from April 2020 to July 2021 also fell by more than 250,000 because of lower birth rates and declining foreign immigration. Some states experienced much larger declines than others because of population flight.

For example, the school-age populations fell by 95,751 in California and 60,182 in New York while increasing by 23,901 in Florida. "Because

these demographic changes are likely to be durable, districts that lost enrollment because of such factors are unlikely to see their enrollment rebound substantially," the study notes.

Home-schooling and private-school data aren't available for all states. But in the 21 states (plus Washington, D.C.) for which all school enrollment and population data are available, the study finds that 240,133 students who left public schools can't be accounted for. In California, public-school enrollment fell 270,928, but more than half can't be explained by these other factors.

The study suggests three possible explanations: An increase in truancy, growth in home-schooling that is not reported to states, and more toddlers skipping kindergarten. Parents in states with stricter home-schooling regulation like New York may be educating their children under the government radar.

More worrisome would be if many children decided that going to school is a waste, perhaps because they weren't learning much. If many stopped going to school altogether, then the pandemic learning loss may be even greater than has been reported and may never be made up. More evidence that school closures were an historic and tragic policy blunder.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Look, the State of the Union Isn't So Strong

President Biden and the Democrats continue to accuse Republicans of secretly planning the end of Social Security and Medicare ("Biden's Speech was Trumpian" by Peggy Noonan, *Declarations*, Feb. 11). But bipartisan analysis consistently predicts the two programs will run short of funding in around 10 years, possibly sooner, requiring significant benefit cuts or tax increases or some sort of means testing. Republicans should start asking the question out loud: What's the Democratic plan for the long-term viability of these two programs?

After the hand-wringing and taping that would follow, perhaps the adults in our government, if there are any, will have the guts to start talking about a plan before the 11th hour. But probably not.

JAMES FREDERICK
Fayetteville, Ga.

It has been said that everyone has a "tell," that unconscious tick that indicates when the subject isn't being entirely truthful. Mr. Biden's tell is the word "look." Count the number of times that the word was used, often to begin a sentence in the State of the Union address. I count 19, including one "look, look, look, here's the deal. They aren't just taking advantage of the tax code, they're taking advantage of you, the American con-

sumer." And the most preposterous: "Look, I'm a capitalist."

CHRIS HESSE
Richland, Wash.

I don't know how Ms. Noonan thinks that the president had a good night. He spent a significant portion of his address bashing corporations that innovate, employ people and pay taxes. He would prefer to treat them like a regulated utility, straight out of the Elizabeth Warren playbook. Mr. Biden gave credit for economic success to the people in the room, as opposed to the private sector, which delivers despite the people in the room.

To top it off, he uttered the most ignorant line I've heard from a president in my lifetime, in wondering aloud why oil companies won't invest in more projects because he told them, "We're going to need oil for at least another decade." The laughter that followed was warranted.

DEAN KELLEY
St. Charles, Ill.

It was refreshing to read Ms. Noonan's column, wherein she came clean and very succinctly laid out what she really thinks about Mr. Biden: That if you just ignore half of what he says, the other half isn't that bad.

DANIEL T. OPPENHEIMER
Boca Raton, Fla.

GOP Has a Story to Tell About Black History

As a black immigrant who quickly realized that the GOP resonated with my values, I was glad to see Kyle Peterson's "A Rising Generation of Republicans of Color" (*Weekend Interview*, Feb. 11). I am still perplexed, however, that there is a gap in the teaching of black American history, which the GOP often fails to mention, especially during Black History Month. During reconstruction, after the Civil War, the first black members of Congress in 1870 were all Republicans.

The numbers continued to grow, which is one of the reasons Democrats passed laws to restrict voting, including the Jim Crow laws that set back civil rights in the South for

many decades. I learned this in high school in Jamaica, while the U.S. educational system, plied with billions of dollars and virtuous racial victimhood, often fails to mention it.

The GOP needs to continue to expand its diversity, validate its history on racial progress and create more positive black history for the future via school choice and encouraging merit, the civil-rights issue of the present. Otherwise, the alternative is stagnation in the present disparities and victimhood, which will create regressive racial relations and more negative black history in the future.

KARL MILLER
White Plains, N.Y.

'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' Goes Astray

My alma mater, DePauw University in Indiana, has become a poster child for what Matthew Spalding describes in "DEI Spells Death for the Idea of a University" (*op-ed*, Feb. 11). All students are required to take a "Power, Privilege and Diversity" class. All open-position announcements for employment now include that applicants

must state and demonstrate support for DEI. That includes janitorial staff. DePauw came 154th, dead last, in the 2021 FIRE free-speech rankings, and it remains near the bottom of the list.

Faculty search committees have an administration overseer, an "advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion," who sits in on committee meetings and deliberations to prevent biased decisions. Can there be free expression in these sessions? Perhaps the administration is unaware that its odious requirement recalls the Soviet practice of embedding a "political officer" in every unit of the armed forces to watch for dissent.

There has to be a better way. Diversity, equity and inclusion are important cultural practices that can be achieved without compromising freedom of speech.

STEPHEN R.S. MARTIN
Cave Creek, Ariz.

Employers, Give the Blind a Chance to Work and Succeed

In "Blind Software Engineer Expanded Access to Braille" (*Obituaries*, Feb. 11), we reflect on John J. Boyer's life as a computer scientist and inventor of technology to empower the blind to compete in industry. "To be respected in this society, you have to have a job," he told *The Wall Street Journal* in 1984. "But I know what it's like to be labeled unemployable, and I really want to see other handicapped people gainfully employed."

As a totally blind CEO, I couldn't agree more. I know what it is like to be overlooked because of my disability. I also know what extraordinary talent corporate America is missing by overlooking the blind and visually impaired in their hiring efforts. A blind person can do anything his sighted peers can if given the right opportunity and reasonable accommodation, yet half of the 12 million blind and visually impaired Americans aren't part of the workforce.

I hope employers reading Mr. Boyer's obituary are inspired to evaluate their websites and accessibility protocols, overcome misconceptions and tap into a new talent pool.

VIRGINIA A. JACKO
Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Not an Unreasonable Charge

I am a retired banker and am always amazed over the issue of "surprise" overdraft fees ("The Junk Economics of 'Junk-Fee' Politics," *Review & Outlook*, Feb. 14). Track your bank balance and you will never be overdrawn or surprised.

If the customer can't act in a responsible manner, the bank can return the check or deny the transaction. After all, a customer doesn't let anyone take his money without authorization; why should a bank let anyone use its money without its authorization?

JAMES WRIGHT
Menomonee Falls, Wis.

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Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



"I cannot tell a lie. I just need a better version of the truth."

OPINION

America Longs for Authenticity



DECLARATIONS
By Peggy Noonan

This is about how we present ourselves and our thoughts these days.

On Wednesday Nikki Haley announced her presidential campaign in Charleston, S.C. I found myself thinking not about her candidacy but about the launch itself, which was creepily stuck in the past. A horrible, blaring song from a Sylvester Stallone sequel pumped her in as she strode out in the white suit and there were adoring fans on the rafters behind her, with whom she briefly interacted before turning toward the audience and doing the point—standing there and pointing to individual members of the cheering audience as if she knew them and was being natural.

Reflections on Nikki Haley's announcement, Super Bowl ads and Will Smith's humiliation.

An introducer said she will "lead us into the future"; she added, "America is falling behind." It was all so tired, clichéd, and phony. It was national politics as it has been done circa 1990-2023.

Why did she do it this way? It's not good enough to say everyone does it this way. Someone needs to make it new, to drill down into deeper meaning. As the first Republican to enter the race and challenge Donald Trump, she was in a position to do something at least nonidiotic. This seemed a decision not to.

She is an intelligent, attractive person with a good record—strong two-term South Carolina governor, presentable United Nations ambassador. Diplomats who served with her speak highly of her off the record. She navigated the Trump era smoothly if somewhat weirdly.

In her speech she said some nice things: "Take it from me, the first female minority governor in history; America is not a racist country." Everyone who scrambles over our border knows that; it is good when elites say it.

But I really don't like it when people brag that they're "tough as nails." It may be true, but it's embarrassing when men and women talk this way, and it doesn't convey strength. Tough people don't go on about it; they just smile and crush you like a bug. "I've been shaking up the status quo my entire life." Why do they do this? Why can't anyone running for office be modest anymore? That is an honest question.

She said something that can't be said enough: "We've lost the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections." Preach, sister. "We have failed to win the confidence of a majority of Americans."

But—closing point—Ms. Haley, later that night on "Hannity," said the answer is for the Republican Party to talk in a way that "brings people in." This was the language of the famous GOP "autopsy" in 2013: The GOP must do a better job "messaging." But what does that even mean? That there are magic words and they must find them? There are no magic words.

This is communicating about the need to communicate. It is empty, circular, goes nowhere. The only thing in politics is strong, clear, honest stands on issues of great import. The American people know what they are, and declare them every four years.



Nikki Haley announces her presidential campaign Wednesday.

Connected to this, the second part of our column, on last weekend's Super Bowl ads. What do we discern from them about how the nation's ad makers see their country? That we're a nation of morons, a people with fractured concentration, a people with no ability to follow even a 60-second spot, a people who need loud noises and obsess on media and respond only to movie stars playing movie stars spoofing movie stars. The feeling was one of exhaustion, of a culture folding in on itself.

I have been watching these ads closely for 40 years, for fun but also to hear the inner dialogue, the sound of a nation talking to itself as it sells things to itself, which, in America, has always been about as intimate an act as there is. You remember them. Joe Greene throwing the kid the jersey in heart-on-your-sleeve 1979, "Wassup" in merry 2000, the farmer who raised the Budweiser Clydesdale and let him go only to see him again, in 2013.

This year's ads were jittery, rather cruel and cynical—Super Bowl ads for a nation of losers.

There were a few sweet moments—the new dog in the plastic kennel, the young couple at home and she's on the phone on hold and they comically begin to dance to the canned music. But one spot said it all. Google Pixel offered 22 seconds of serenity and honest sentiment, and then the music shifted, screamed, and the mood became discordance.

The ad makers must have asked themselves: What does America want? And answered: dumb, loud, depthless and broken. I'm here to say I've met America and that's not what they want. What they want is "Help me live, help my kids live, help me feel something true."

To those who made the commercials and pay for them: Advertising is a great and honorable craft, at its best even an art. But you can't do it well if you have no regard for and barely even know your audience, which is your country. Why don't you go into another line of work? Why not go to a nonprofit and dislike America from there? Or go into politics.

Finally, the Academy Awards are next month. At the Oscar lunch this week the Academy made clear it wasn't over the Will Smith slap. Good. It was a big moment. The head of the Academy said its response had been inadequate. It was.

Here is how to turn that moment into something helpful. It doesn't involve "image rehab." It involves constructive honesty. Will Smith should walk in and say this:

"It is painful in life when you embarrass yourself. It is horrifying when you do it in front of tens of millions of people. Last year I did something bad to a guy who was just doing his job, and I am here to acknowledge it from the same stage—to admit that in attempting to humiliate him, I humiliated myself. I showed a number of things, including sheer bad judgment.

"I volunteered to be here tonight, I wasn't asked. I formally apologize to Chris Rock, who did nothing to deserve my actions, and to all of you. As a public figure, I delivered exactly the wrong message and put forward exactly the wrong example. What we do in public matters, especially for the young. If we smoke, they'll think it's cool to smoke. If we use bullets and guns, they'll be inspired to go in that direction. We all know this. I knew it in the abstract. I forgot it—unforgettably!—in the particular.

"And I'm sorry. I have paid a high price the past year in opportunities and relationships. I can't say this was unjust. I will never speak of it again. Chris is free to, but I've said my piece. I'm going to continue to work on myself, and I ask you, as I close, not to applaud, if you were going to. After all the furor, let's end it quietly and with thought. Thank you."

Then cut straight to commercial. A peaceful, calm one with a little heart. And then come back and continue the show.

Did My 1967 Experiment Inspire China's Spy Balloon?

By Richard A. Muller

China accused the U.S. on Monday of having sent more than 10 large balloons into its airspace over the past few years. I might have been the first to do so—but it was long ago, and if I'm guilty, it was inadvertent.

Like China's balloon that sailed over the U.S. this year, mine was about 200 feet tall and flew at 65,000 feet. Mine was launched in 1967 and bore the name "HAPPE" on the container holding the craft's data-collection instruments, known as its science package. Is it a coincidence that, according to the Journal, China named its balloon program, begun in the late 1960s or '70s, the HAPI project?

Our name was an acronym for High Altitude Particle Physics Experiment. The program, developed at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, was the brainchild of Nobel laureate Luis Alvarez, an American physicist. I joined the project as a graduate student. Happe's goal was to conduct experiments using high-altitude cosmic rays, specifically with high-energy protons that don't penetrate the Earth's atmosphere.

To get the enormous Happe package above 95% of the proton-stopping atmosphere would require a large (300 feet tall) helium-filled balloon. Such balloons are essentially impossible to steer. They travel in whatever direction the high winds carry them. These winds are seasonal, and when we launched a prototype, Happe-0, from Palestine, Texas, we did so during one of the two brief periods every year called turnaround. That's when the wind reverses direction and is temporarily low velocity, making a balloon less likely to be blown into an urban area. To track the balloon's location, we used a World War II system called long-range navigation, or Loran, aboard the package. Loran was decommissioned in 2010 after GPS became available.

Much of rural Texas was approved for safe landing by state and national regulators. But if our balloon was about to wander out of the safe

region, we sent a radio signal that fired two on-board explosive knives known as squibs. One squib would release the science package and the other would rip the balloon. The package would descend to Earth on a parachute while the severed balloon slowly fluttered down like an enormous autumn leaf. In 1947, a similar balloon from a classified experiment called Project Mogul crashed near Roswell, N.M., and ignited the flying-saucer frenzy.

The future Happe-1 project involved complex technologies and would yield no data for my doctorate for almost a decade. I was impatient so I invented a smaller experiment I called Happe-½. We launched Happe-½, with a balloon only 200 feet tall, from the Chico, Calif., airport in 1967. Rather than wait for a turnaround, we let the stratospheric winds carry the package west above the coastal mountains and safely (we thought) out over the Pacific.

We planned to let the balloon's package gather data until it was too far away to send back signals. Then we would fire the squibs and bring the package and balloon down to the ocean. We would use a plane to spot the floating package and a boat to

recover it—as well as the balloon, if we could find it.

To pick up instrument signals as the balloon passed overhead, I set up a telemetry station on Cahto Peak, in the California coastal mountains. The package took only a few hours to pass over my telemetry site, and since it did so at night, although I received its nocturnal beeps, I never

My project was meant to be destroyed over the Pacific, but the remains were never found.

spotted it visually. Local residents didn't believe that my telemetry station was part of a cosmic-ray project. They knew NASA had sponsored the experiment and suspected we were studying flying saucers.

When the balloon was over the ocean and out of range of my station, the boat crew sent signals to fire the squibs. What happened next, we don't know. We never found the balloon, parachute or science package. We guessed that the parachute failed

to open and that my apparatus slammed into the ocean at more than 100 miles an hour. My Ph.D. went poof. At the time, it didn't occur to me that the squibs could have failed altogether and that the balloon might have continued westward to the Far East.

I switched to a less-risky project and earned my doctorate in 1969. Did my balloon make it to China? Anything that large could smother humans or animals when it eventually comes down. If the Chinese had tried to shoot it down, they would have discovered that in the 1960s doing so wasn't easy. A balloon is a big target but the helium pressure inside is very low, so shooting a hole in the side doesn't quickly bring it down. Would China have protested to the U.S.? The Soviet Union didn't protest the U-2s over their country, flying at a similar 65,000-foot altitude, until they shot down Francis Gary Powers in 1960.

Stratospheric balloons ultimately succumb to the stress of withstanding heat during the day turning to cold at night, so the Happe-½ apparatus could have descended and been recovered in China with no shooting. Chinese scientists might then have

discovered that it was an innocuous science project. They also would have learned that flying across the Pacific was possible, something even I didn't know at the time. To fly a balloon east, one needed only to wait for the high-altitude wind turnaround, or possibly use a different latitude.

Perhaps the Happe program also alerted China to the espionage potential of stratospheric balloons. (In World War II Japan flew lower-altitude balloons carrying incendiary devices timed to fall over the U.S.) Or maybe Happe initially intrigued China with its science potential. By the 1980s, Chinese scientists were launching their own stratospheric balloons over the Pacific. They named their projects HAPI—written in Mandarin, of course, not English. Was it called that for the joy it brought, as some have suggested? I now think it might have been an homage to Happe.

Mr. Muller served as a Jason National Security adviser for 34 years. He is a professor of physics emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. His books include "Physics for Future Presidents" and "Energy for Future Presidents."

Putin Doesn't Have a Plan to Win

were prepared even to send armored brigades to Baghdad to enforce their will.

Nothing like that has been required of Mr. Putin.

As diplomatic historian Melvyn Leffler points out in his level-headed new account of U.S.-Iraq relations, Saddam otherwise displayed a "remarkable flexibility" in his career. He ate a lot of defeat to stay in power. He ceded the strategic Shatt al-Arab passage in 1975 to appease the hated shah of Iran. He disastrously paused his already ill-advised 1980 Iranian invasion in hopes of enticing the Khomeini regime to talk. He threw in the towel after eight years and 500,000 deaths with nothing to show. He promptly let his army be destroyed all over again in Kuwait so he could proclaim himself a victor merely for surviving.

After stumbling outside of Kyiv, Mr. Putin has been fighting the battle of Moscow, in my view. He doesn't have a plan for victory in Ukraine.

He wouldn't be Saddam-like, though, if he didn't think throwing away another 100,000 Russian lives might serve his interests. He yanked a military commander in Gen. Sergei Surovikin, who, whatever his faults, knew his business. He sussed out the situation. He proposed to retreat, dig in and avoid giving more ground.

Mr. Putin replaced him with a regime figurehead, General Staff chief Valery Gerasimov, with whom Mr. Putin cooked up his failed Kyiv grab in the first place. Gen. Gerasimov unquestioningly will provide the offensive Mr. Putin wants now, which is unlikely to change much on the

ground but will demonstrate to Washington how much Mr. Putin is willing to pay not to swallow anything that looks like defeat by Ukrainians.

So the unnamed problem: The presence of the observer affects the behavior of the observed, making the U.S. the key player in the war whether it likes it or not.

He's murdering his own troops by the thousands as a signal to Washington.

The Russian army can learn to move vital concentrations out of Himmars range, but it's not about to sprout new capacities, a mastery of coordinated warfare, air supremacy or the ability to neutralize U.S. surveillance of the battlefield, which makes surprising Ukraine with large mechanized movements impossible. Losing another 100,000 Russians can be an end in itself if it moves the current or next U.S. president closer to providing an ending Mr. Putin can live with.

Widely quoted was an official TASS news agency report in January that took pains to explain to the Russian people that, of course, Mr. Putin can't be expected to defeat NATO, or the "collective West" as regime flunky Sergei Shoigu helpfully termed it.

His victory will be Saddam-like, he's letting his people know. The problem is, this makes it incumbent on NATO to provide the military force majeure and it won't, so

the war will drag on.

An anniversary is just a date, but 12 months can expose some realities, answer some questions, clear away some misconceptions. There hasn't been a nuclear war and so probably we can say now the West's piecemeal escalation was a mistake, however politically expedient and likely unavoidable.

Since the catastrophic collapse of Mr. Putin's initial plan, the West's cautious approach has, in its way, actually made the war safe for the Russian president. If the U.S. and NATO had implemented a force majeure in the first days of his failure, amid his shock and confusion, Mr. Putin might well have accepted retreat on terms that now glimmer out of reach. These terms may not be available again until the Ukrainians have bled enough to break another Russian army to pieces, possibly even bled enough to trigger Mr. Putin's replacement in Moscow.

It's easy to say now, of course. Mr. Putin had nuclear weapons and Saddam didn't. "This will not stand" wasn't in the cards. But the corollary is depressing. Mr. Putin will likely make Ukraine pay a very large price, and Russia a very large price, for an outcome hardly better for him than he could have achieved some 300-plus days ago after his retreat from the Kyiv suburbs.

The U.S. and NATO, in their innermost sanctum, should be asking themselves a question and probably are: Would this war already be over if they had sent a couple dozen F-35s to assert mastery over the skies of at least Western Ukraine on or about day 14?

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Taking Stock
Buybacks aren't bad. They aren't good either. **B2**

EXCHANGE

Richcession
It's not a recession if only the wealthy are affected **B12**



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Emirates To Sell 4% Gas Stake To Public

By SUMMER SAID

DUBAI—The United Arab Emirates' national energy company plans to sell a stake of about 4% of its natural-gas business in an initial public offering that it hopes will raise \$2 billion, as Middle East petrostates increase plans to supply Europe.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., or Adnoc, will sell more than three billion shares in Adnoc Gas, one of the world's largest gas-processing entities, on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange on Feb 23. Shares are expected to begin trading March 13.

Adnoc Gas was formed this year after Adnoc combined its liquefied-natural gas and gas-processing arms as part of a push to boost output and trading of liquefied natural gas. Abu Dhabi recently delivered its first shipment of LNG to Germany, as Europe increasingly turns to the Middle East after shunning its main supplier of gas, Russia, over the invasion of Ukraine.

Over the long term, Abu Dhabi sees natural gas as an important part of the future energy mix with renewables and nuclear.

"Natural gas is central to the energy transition," said Khaled Al Zaabi, Adnoc acting group chief financial officer.

If the IPO raises more than \$2 billion as hoped, it could be the biggest on record in Abu Dhabi, according to people familiar with the matter. *Please turn to page B11*

Barnes Adds Membership, Perks Follow Rival 'Prime'

By JEFFREY A. TRACHTENBERG

Barnes & Noble is launching a \$40-a-year membership program that promises to offer 10% discounts, free shipping, a tote bag and bigger lattes to its members.

In asking customers to pay an annual fee for a range of perks, the largest bookstore chain in the U.S. is following some of its competitors, including Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc., whose respective Prime and Walmart+ programs offer no-minimum free shipping, among other benefits.

The bookseller is also launching a free, lower-tier membership program that allows participants to earn a virtual stamp for every \$10 spent online and in stores, and translate into a \$5 credit for future purchases once 10 stamps have been accumulated. People who sign up for the \$40 program also get the rebates.

The efforts will give Barnes & Noble the opportunity to learn more about its customers—from what they read to when and how often they buy—so that it can pitch to them more effectively.

Both new offerings are loosely *Please turn to page B2*

AI Comes to the Office. It's Bossy, Efficient & Dehumanizing.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.

Johnathan Bragg has always looked at his job selling home-repair insurance the same way an artist looks at a canvas.

"I got this road map in my head of what it looks like when you're delivering world-class customer service—what triggers people, what makes people trust you," Mr. Bragg said. "It's like when da Vinci was painting."

Mr. Bragg is one of the top-performing sales agents for HomeServe USA Corp., a home-repair service company that sells plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical repair plans to about five million customers in North America. For 11 of the past 12 months, working from a cavernous call center on the outskirts of town, he has been in the top 10% of its 432 agents, he said, for the simple fact that he listens to

Call centers are becoming a proving ground for artificial intelligence, with bots that automate basic tasks and tell the humans how to do their jobs. 'I'm a top performer. She's not my supervisor.'

By Lisa Bannon

what people want.

"I don't just say stuff and read scripts," said Mr. Bragg. "I listen to everybody, whoever you are, and I retain what it is that makes that person interested. I can get just about anybody to buy anything."

Recently, with business growing, HomeServe hired a new agent to assist Mr. Bragg and his co-workers. Named Charlie, she's an artificial intelligence-powered virtual agent that HomeServe built using a conversational AI platform from Google and other technologies. She answers 11,400 calls a day, routes them to the appropriate departments, processes claims and schedules repair appointments. She whispers in agents' ears whether a customer is eligible for certain coverage plans and types on agents'

Please turn to page B4

SCIENCE OF SUCCESS | BEN COHEN

Hey, Elon Musk, Not All Bots on Twitter Are Bad

The ban on bots and its quick reversal reveal a strategy: Do lots of dumb things, keep what works, change what doesn't



They spam. They scam. They spread lies. They deceive and divide and delude. And nobody likes them. That malicious image is what comes to mind when human beings think about Twitter bots.

But that's not all they are. Twitter bots contain multitudes. They inform. They entertain. They make us smarter and make us smile. When they post alerts about natural disasters, like @EarthquakeBot, they can be a public service. When they share adorable pictures of animals, like @PossumEveryHour, they can be a guilty pleasure. And the best of these bizarrely charming automated robots provide more

value than most accounts run by real people.

"Who doesn't love a handful of robots who promise not to rise up against us?" Twitter itself once asked.

Elon Musk, as it turns out.

Under his control, Twitter has spent the past few weeks in a peculiar fight about the future of bots—and it happens to be a case study in Mr. Musk's business strategy.

The battle started two weeks ago, when Twitter suddenly told developers that it would begin charging for the access to systems they need to operate their bots, which was like asking people to pay for oxygen. The policy would govern even the friendly bots providing

Please turn to page B6



Some bots designed to delight include @PossumEveryHour, left, which is programmed to post cute photos. @FrogandToadbot, above, tweets quotes and photos from the illustrated children's books eight times a day.

POSSUM EVERY HOUR; FROG AND TOAD BOT

THE SCORE

THE BUSINESS WEEK IN 7 STOCKS

NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORP.

NSC
1.8%

Norfolk Southern faces scrutiny in the aftermath of a train derailment in Ohio. Earlier this month, a train carrying hazardous materials derailed in the village of East Palestine, causing a chemical fire and prompting officials to tell thousands to evacuate. At a press conference Tuesday, state environmental and health officials said the controlled release of chemicals affected local waterways, causing the death of about 3,500 fish. Another Norfolk Southern train derailed on Thursday in Michigan, and authorities said there was no evidence of exposed hazardous materials. Norfolk shares **lost 1.8% Tuesday.**

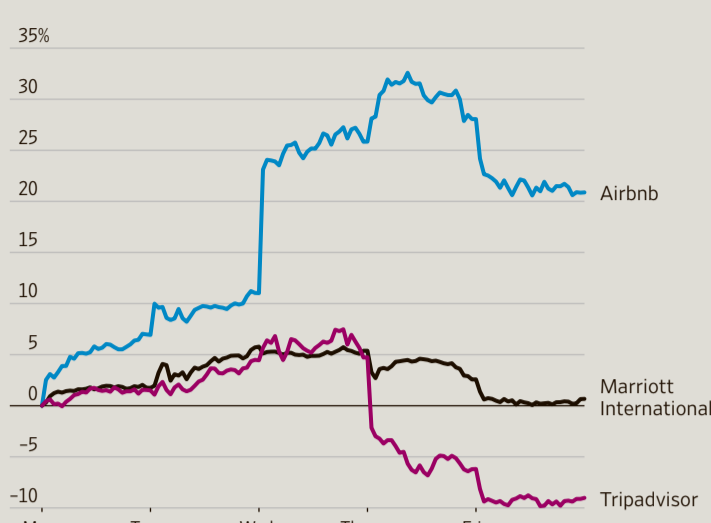
COCA-COLA CO.

KO
1.7%

Coca-Cola wants to energize its sluggish sports-drink sales. Chief Executive James Quincey said Tuesday that sales of its BodyArmor brand declined in the latest quarter, as the soda giant integrated BodyArmor with Powerade, Coke's other sports drink. Coke paid \$5.6 billion to buy the fast-growing Gatorade competitor in 2021, but Coke and other beverage companies have struggled with startup brands after spending big to acquire them. Coca-Cola's turnaround plan for its sports drinks includes new marketing campaigns set to begin in a few weeks for both BodyArmor and Powerade. Coca-Cola shares **fell 1.7% Tuesday.**

PERFORMANCE OF TRAVEL STOCKS THIS PAST WEEK

Source: FactSet



AIRBNB INC.

ABNB
13%

The travel industry is continuing its Covid-19 recovery. Airbnb posted earnings of \$1.9 billion in 2022—its first annual profit—as the short-term rental company benefited from strong travel demand. Hotel operator Marriott International Inc.'s fourth-quarter results topped Wall Street's expectations as revenue rose by a third, and online travel site TripAdvisor Inc. posted a surge in revenue as well. Airbnb shares **soared 13% Wednesday.**

TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING CO.

TSM
5.3%

The Oracle of Omaha is shedding shares of TSMC. Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. cut its stake in the chip maker by 51.8 million shares, or roughly 86%, in the fourth quarter. The sale comes just months after Berkshire disclosed its stake, an uncharacteristic reversal for a firm that has held many of its large investments for years. The prospect of an economic downturn, along with higher inflation and reduced demand for consumer electronics, has weighed on the outlooks of chip manufacturers. American depositary shares of TSMC **fell 5.3% Wednesday.**

ROKU INC.

ROKU
11%

Signs of life in the ad market helped revive Roku's battered stock. The streaming-device giant on Wednesday said the advertising market was muted in the fourth quarter but noted improvements in ad spending among companies in the restaurant, travel, packaged-goods and wellness sectors. The weak ad market has weighed on other firms' quarterly results, including Google parent Alphabet Inc. Roku also said that operating expenses, which grew by 68% last year, would grow at a slower pace in 2023. In the recent quarter, the company laid off about 200 employees. Roku shares **rose 11% Thursday.**

TESLA INC.

TSLA
5.7%

Tesla is putting the brakes on some self-driving vehicles. The electric-car maker is recalling 362,800 vehicles equipped with its Full Self-Driving Beta feature in response to regulatory pressure, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Thursday. The top U.S. car-safety agency said some Teslas in rare circumstances could violate local traffic laws, potentially increasing collision risk if a driver fails to intervene. Recalls typically require car owners to visit a mechanic to have a fix made, but Tesla will update the vehicles' software remotely. Tesla shares **lost 5.7% Thursday.**

CISCO SYSTEMS INC.

CSCO
5.2%

Cisco was a bright spot amid a recent tech slump. The networking-equipment company raised its outlook for the year after posting better-than-expected results late Wednesday. The results contrast with those of other tech firms that have reported slower growth as they face inflation and economic uncertainty. Companies across most sectors, but particularly those in tech, have cut jobs as a result. Microsoft Corp. last month posted its slowest quarterly sales growth in more than six years, while Salesforce Inc. warned of stumbling sales. Cisco shares **gained 5.2% Thursday.** —Francesca Fontana

THE INTELLIGENT INVESTOR | JASON ZWEIG

It's Time to Stop Demonizing Buybacks

The practice of returning cash to shareholders via buybacks is neither good nor bad. It is simply a tool.



It's open season on buybacks—again.

In his State of the Union address this month, President Biden lambasted big oil companies for using record profits “to buy back their own stock, rewarding their CEOs and shareholders.” He went on to propose a quadrupling of the current 1% federal tax on buybacks.

It's not surprising that buybacks drew his ire. Over the past five years, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices, big U.S. companies have spent \$3.9 trillion repurchasing their own stock.

So are corporate chief executives starving their businesses to fatten themselves and their shareholders, as critics have been saying for years? Or are buybacks a kind of panacea enabling investors to direct capital to its best and highest use?

Buybacks are neither bad nor good. They are simply a tool. Just as you can use a hammer either to build a house or knock one down, buybacks are useful in the right corporate hands and dangerous in the wrong ones.

In a buyback, a company uses cash to repurchase some of its shares, typically at the market price, from stockholders who choose to sell. The company ends up with less cash and fewer shares outstanding; investors who participate end up with more cash and a smaller stake in the company.

It isn't hard to think of examples of buybacks gone bad.

Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. spent \$2.6 billion buying back its own stock in 2007, and in the first two fiscal quarters of 2008 it shelled out nearly \$1.5 billion more. Less than six months later the Wall Street behemoth went bust.

As The Wall Street Journal snidely pointed out in 2009, Citigroup Inc. repurchased more than \$20 billion in shares from 2004 through 2008—right before it needed a roughly \$45 billion government bailout during the financial crisis.

Since December 2004, Bed Bath & Beyond Inc. has repurchased 265 million shares at a cumulative cost of \$11.7 billion, according to the struggling retailer's latest quarterly report. It paid more than \$26 for some of those shares during the meme-stock craze of 2021. This week, the stock was trading below \$2.

Don't let a handful of anecdotal examples blind you to the broader evidence. A clear-eyed look at some of the rhetoric swirling around buybacks will show whether it holds up.

Buybacks starve companies of capital they could deploy more profitably by investing in the growth of their businesses.

This critique implies that the same management we shouldn't trust to allocate excess capital correctly in a buyback will allocate it correctly for other purposes.

Expecting oodles of surplus cash not to burn a hole in the typ-



ical CEO's pocket, however, is like putting a pile of raw meat in front of a lion and expecting it not to disappear.

My favorite examples come from the 1970s, when—just like now—giant oil companies had vastly more capital than they could plow back into their existing wells.

Instead of buying back shares, in 1979 Exxon Corp. bought an electric-motor maker for \$1.2 billion—only to bail out a few years later, barely breaking even. Exxon also pumped at least \$1 billion into futuristic office equipment—only to back out of those businesses, too, by the mid-1980s.

Exxon's then-rival, Mobil Oil

‘This isn't a rigged game where CEOs are lining their pockets,’ says the co-author of a new study.

Corp., spent more than \$1 billion to buy a company that made cardboard boxes and ran the Montgomery Ward department-store chain. That flopped, too.

Companies have been artificially hyping their market value by repurchasing their own shares.

A new study, “Share Repurchases on Trial,” by accounting and finance professors Nicholas Guest of Cornell University, S.P. Kothari of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Parth Venkat of the University of Alabama, analyzes the stock returns of thousands of companies from 1988 to 2020, comparing those

that repurchased shares against firms that didn't, adjusting for their size and other factors. In the year of a repurchase, companies that did large or frequent buybacks had slightly lower—not higher—returns. Over longer periods, their returns were indistinguishable. Research published in 1967 showed similar results.

Companies doing buybacks invest less in capital expenditures or research and development.

Younger companies with great prospects for internal growth tend to plow all their cash back into the business, leaving nothing for buybacks. As companies mature, their growth opportunities dwindle and their business generates more cash than they need, making share repurchases an appropriate choice for the surplus.

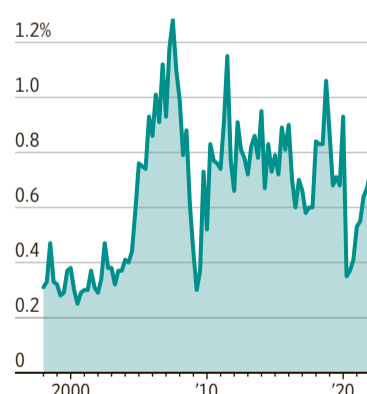
So, on average, accelerating companies don't do buybacks, while decelerating businesses do. Investors tend to pay more for fast-growing stocks, so the short-term market performance of slower-growing companies doing buybacks turns out to be a bit lower.

In general, it isn't that companies invest less because they're doing buybacks. It's that they do buybacks because they have less left to invest in.

Buybacks are on the rise because overcompensated CEOs are using them to fatten their own pay.

While the raw dollar amounts of buybacks have risen, as a percentage of the total value of the U.S. stock market they have shrunk by almost half since 2007—to roughly 0.7% from 1.3%, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices. The buyback

S&P 500 quarterly buybacks as a share of market value



Note: 3Q 2022 figure is preliminary.
Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices

boom has been dwarfed by the rise in stocks overall.

What's more, the “Share Repurchases on Trial” study finds that CEOs of companies doing buybacks don't earn noticeably more compensation—including salary, bonus and stock options—than those at comparable companies that aren't repurchasing shares. On average, CEOs doing buybacks don't even earn 1% more in total pay.

“We don't see massive misuse as some people allege,” says study co-author S.P. Kothari of MIT.

“This isn't a rigged game where CEOs are lining their pockets.” Buybacks give investors a free option: You can sell your shares back to the company, or you can keep them. They won't make you rich, but they might help prevent CEOs from making you poor. Politicians on both sides of the aisle should stop demonizing them.

Barnes Adds Membership Program

Continued from page B1

modeled after a membership program at Waterstones, the U.K.-based bookstore chain that, like Barnes & Noble, is owned by hedge fund Elliott Management Corp.

“If you don't have a free program, the vast majority of your customers are blank to you,” said Barnes & Noble CEO James Daunt, who is also chief executive of Waterstones, in an interview. Through such a program, he said, “You can learn what they are buying, and then promote to them and engage them.”

Mr. Daunt said the new paid-membership program would replace a previous one, which offered discounts for purchases made inside Barnes & Noble's physical stores—as well as free shipping for most online orders—and cost \$25 a year. That plan didn't extend discounts to online shoppers, a strategy that Mr. Daunt said conflicts with the retailer's strategy of making books available wherever customers want to buy them.

The issue, said Rafi Mohammed, a pricing-strategy consultant and author of “The Art of Pricing,” is whether the add-ons for the \$40 membership program are game changers for consumers. “Yes, Barnes & Noble now has a free option, but asking people to pay more during an uncertain economy is risky,” Mr. Mohammed added that he would have kept the current, lower-priced membership program as well.

Mr. Daunt estimated that at least three-quarters of the 5.5

Many retailers offer paid-membership programs to help lift traffic and revenue.

million people currently paying \$25 annually would sign up for the new \$40-a-year program. He said he expects the total number of paid members to remain about the same at year-end because he believes new customers will be attracted to the \$40 offering.

Mr. Daunt said people who sign up for the B&N Premium Membership would get a 10% discount on almost everything in store and online, free shipping, free drink-size upgrades at the cafes inside the bookstores as well as a new tote bag every year, which he valued at \$20.

Many retailers offer paid-membership programs intended to boost traffic and revenue. Walmart charges \$98 annually for a membership in Walmart+, a program that includes free store deliveries and rewards that can be used on future purchases as well as other perks, including free access to Paramount Global's Paramount+ streaming service. Amazon Prime offers many benefits, including access to its own streaming service, Prime Video.

Barnes & Noble recently said it plans to open 30 new stores in 2023.

BUSINESS NEWS

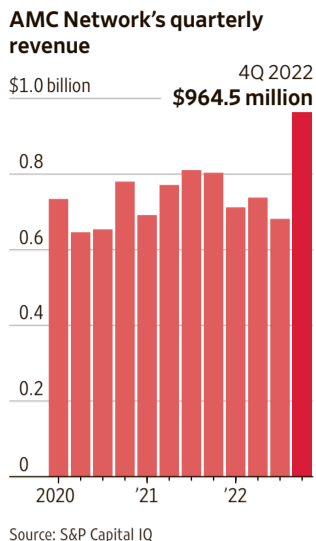
Revenue Gains, Cost Cutting Boost AMC

By Will Feuer

AMC Networks Inc.'s adjusted profit jumped in the recent quarter after the company set out on a cost-cutting mission and as Kristin Dolan prepares to take the reins as chief executive this month.

Including a more-than-\$400 million charge tied to a broad restructuring plan that includes layoffs and a decision to remove some legacy shows and films from rotation, the cable-TV company swung to a loss. In November, AMC Networks laid off about 20% of its U.S. employees, and said then-CEO Christina Spade had stepped down.

Earnings, when stripping out the restructuring costs and other charges, came to \$2.52 a share, topping analysts' expectations of \$1.02 a share. James Dolan, AMC Networks' interim executive chairman, said the company is



Source: S&P Capital IQ



'Better Call Saul' is one of AMC's high-profile series.

reining in expenses and working to drive cash flow.

Quarterly revenue climbed to \$964.5 million, up 20% and above analysts' expectations of \$934 million, as AMC licensed out more of its shows to other parties and grew its streaming

base. The company ended the year with 11.8 million streaming subscribers, up from 11.1 million as of Sept. 30.

Shares jumped 32% Friday. The media company said revenue from U.S. operations rose 26% as distribution and

streaming gains offset a slowdown in advertising and weakness in cable television.

The readout from AMC comes as Ms. Dolan, who is married to Mr. Dolan, prepares to take over as CEO on Feb. 27. Ms. Dolan, who runs an au-

dience-measurement and data-analytics firm, is also on AMC's board. The Dolans are separated but remain close.

For years AMC Networks has struggled to find its way in the streaming era. Mr. Dolan, whose family controls AMC, is trying to right the path.

AMC Networks, whose brands include its namesake channel, as well as IFC, WE tv and Sundance TV, embraced the rise of streaming services a decade ago, making hit shows like "Breaking Bad" available on Netflix Inc. But the number of streaming platforms has ballooned. AMC in recent years entered the streaming fray with its own services, including AMC+. In the U.S., recent episodes of high-profile shows including "Better Call Saul" and "The Walking Dead" can be streamed exclusively through AMC+—which costs \$8.99 a month—for a limited time.

Microsoft Puts Caps On Using New Bing

By Eric Bellman

Microsoft Corp. is putting caps on the usage of its new Bing search engine, which uses the technology behind the viral chatbot ChatGPT, after testers discovered it sometimes generates glaring mistakes and disturbing responses.

The software giant launched the new Bing last week, promising a new kind of search in which people pose questions to the search engine in natural language. Bing then gives direct answers in a chat instead of as links to websites.

Some users with early access to the technology have posted screenshots on social media of long interactions with it. In some cases, the search engine seems to become unhinged and express anger and love.

Microsoft says long interactions are causing some of the unwanted behavior, so it is adding restrictions on how it can be used. "Very long chat sessions can confuse the underlying chat model in the new Bing," Microsoft said in a blog on Friday. "To address these issues, we have implemented some changes to help focus the chat sessions."

The company said it would start limiting interactions with the new Bing to five questions per session and 50 questions in a day. Many of the testers who reported problems were having long conversations with Bing, asking question upon question. With the new restrictions, users will only be able to ask five questions in a row and then they will be asked to start a new topic.

Microsoft said until now only around 1% of the users had more than 50 questions for Bing in a day.

"As we continue to get your feedback, we will explore expanding the caps on chat sessions," the company said.

Fox News Knew It Aired False Claims, Dominion Says

By Keach Hagey and Erin Mulvaney

Top Fox News anchors and executives privately raised concerns about false claims of voter fraud made on the air by network hosts and guests following the 2020 presidential election, according to a court filing made public Thursday.

The communications, which included text messages and depositions, appeared in a motion for summary judgment by voting-machine company Dominion Voting Systems, which is suing Fox News and Fox Corp. for what it alleges were defamatory on-air comments about its products in the wake of former President Donald Trump's defeat to President Biden. It is seeking \$1.6 billion in damages.

The case primarily centers on false theories pushed on Fox programs by associates of Mr. Trump, including Sidney

Powell and Rudolph Giuliani that Dominion's systems contributed to throwing the election for Mr. Biden.

U.S. federal and state officials have said there is no evidence that any voting system deleted or changed votes during the November 2020 election.

A trial is slated to begin on April 17 in Delaware state court. The two sides filed competing legal motions asking the presiding judge to rule in their favor ahead of the trial. The briefs, which detail evidence gathered and arguments for each side, were unsealed Thursday.

In its legal brief, Fox argued that the First Amendment protects the press from liability for covering allegations that were newsworthy, and said that courts have recognized that spirited debate on opinion shows doesn't lend well to statements of actual fact.

The company also said once

it was clear that Mr. Trump's claims had no merit, the hosts stopped promoting the theories on their shows. They have also said in court documents that Dominion's claim of \$1.6 billion in damages is overblown.

Fox Corp. and News Corp, the parent of Wall Street Jour-

Filings are unsealed in voting-machine maker's \$1.6 billion defamation suit.

nal publisher Dow Jones & Co., share common ownership.

Although Ms. Powell and Mr. Giuliani appeared on Fox airwaves expounding these theories, many Fox hosts didn't believe them, Dominion attorneys argued, pointing to internal communications be-

tween executives and hosts at the company.

"Sidney Powell is lying" about having evidence for election fraud, wrote Fox News prime-time host Tucker Carlson to his producer on Nov. 16, 2020. He also wrote a similar message to fellow anchor Laura Ingraham two days later, according to the court filing. "It's unbelievably offensive to me. Our viewers are good people and they believe it," the filing says Mr. Carlson wrote Ms. Ingraham.

Fox News Media said Dominion's filing takes an extreme and unsupported view of defamation law, and used "cherry-picked quotes stripped of key context."

The company said, "There will be a lot of noise and confusion generated by Dominion and their opportunistic private equity owners, but the core of this case remains about freedom of the press and freedom of speech."

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EXCHANGE

AI in the Office: Bossy, Dehumanizing, Efficient

Continued from page B1
screens why the customer is calling.

"I tell agents to think of Charlie as a personal assistant," said Jessica Cloud, vice president of automation and innovation.

Charlie isn't universally liked inside the Chattanooga call center. She can be controlling, including requiring agents to say specific words when they talk to customers, and penalizing them if they don't. She sometimes routes callers to the wrong department.

"We're taking up a collection to get Charlie a hearing aid," said Mr. Bragg's colleague Robert Caldwell, another top-selling agent, sitting in a cubicle nearby.

Sometimes she suggests unwelcome ideas for what agents should say next. Charlie recently told Mr. Bragg a caller wanted to enroll in a repair plan. She didn't understand that the man's water pipe had burst, that he was waiting for a repair and that he was livid.

When Mr. Bragg picked up the call and repeated what Charlie told him to say—"I see you're trying to enroll!"—the man exploded in rage. From management, Charlie is getting rave reviews for her efficiency and is about to get a promotion. Soon, she'll start telling agents specifically what they should say and do next. She'll also start grading the humans on their performance.

"She's supposed to make the job easier, not just make us do what she said," said Mr. Bragg. He worries Charlie makes too many mistakes. "I'm a top performer. She's not my supervisor."

'A massive restructuring'

A new generation of artificial intelligence is rolling out across American workplaces and it is prompting a power struggle between humans and machines.

Recent advances in technologies such as ChatGPT, natural-language processing and biometrics, along with the availability of huge amounts of data to train algorithms, has accelerated efforts to automate some jobs entirely, from pilots and welders to cashiers and food servers. McKinsey & Co. estimates that 25% of work activities in the U.S. across all occupations could be automated by 2030.

Today, however, AI's biggest impact comes from changing the jobs rather than replacing them. "I don't see a job apocalypse being imminent. I do see a massive restructuring and reorganization—and job quality is an issue," said Erik Brynjolfsson, director of the Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

'I don't just say stuff and read scripts.'

JONATHAN BRAGG
a top-selling HomeServe
customer-service agent

McKinsey estimates 60% of the 800 occupations listed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics could see a third of their activities automated over the coming decades.

For workers, the technology promises to eliminate the drudgery of dull, repetitive tasks such as data processing and password resets, while synthesizing huge amounts of information that can

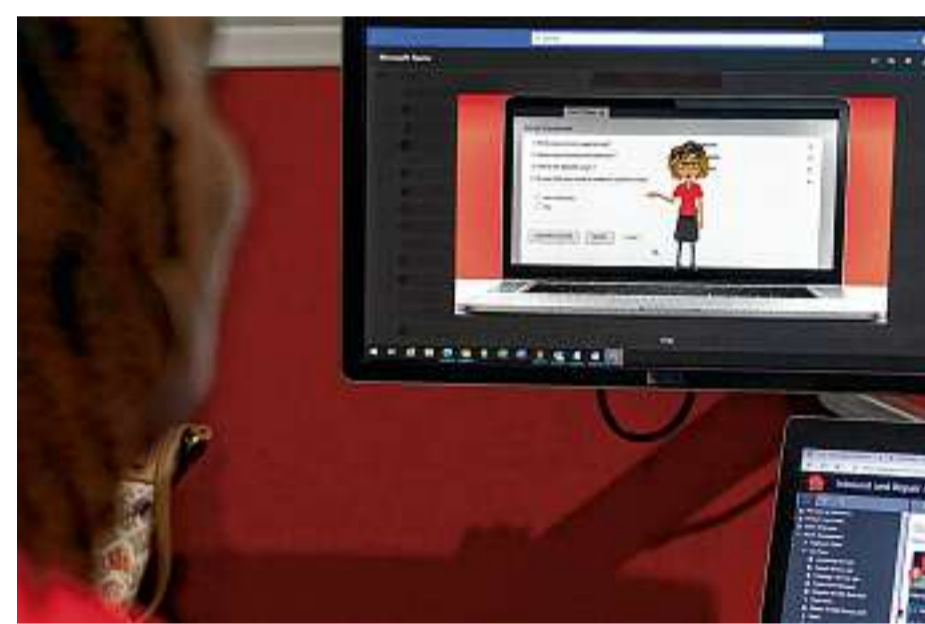
be accessed instantly.

But when AI handles the simple stuff, say labor experts, academics and workers, humans are often left with more complex, intense workloads. When algorithms like Charlie's assume more human decision-making, workers with advanced skills and years of experience can find their roles diminished. And when AI is used to score human behaviors and emotions, employees say the technology isn't reliable and is vulnerable to bias.

One of the most fertile testing grounds is the call center, or as labor experts call it, the "factory of the information economy," and HomeServe is among the early adopters. Across the industry, workers are measured on dozens of tasks from "average handle time" to "first call resolution" and worker burnout rates are high. In a 2022 survey, 65% of call-center agents anticipated leaving their jobs in the following two years, according to market research firm Customer Management Practice, which polled 1,000 workers be-

► At HomeServe's Chattanooga call center, workers are advised by Charlie, an AI-powered bot.

▼ Charlie, as she appears in a training module, below left, and a rendering of Charlie, below right, as devised by HomeServe's creative team.



tween April and June last year. Proponents say AI promises to fix much of this by handling monotonous tasks and the stress of decision making. In recent years, companies have begun using machine-learning models to scan and analyze conversations between agents and customers. Conversation analytics quickly identify the words and sentiments customers are expressing to find patterns. The technology can detect how each agent is performing and recommends what the human should say and do next.

New AI technology "helps to take decision-making responsibility away from the agent, so they can act," said Brittany Bell, customer-success manager at Cresta, a conversation-analytics startup with customers including American Express Co., Cox Communications, Inc. and Signet Jewelers Ltd.'s Blue Nile, during a recent presentation.

When humans turn over decision making to a machine, they no longer use their own knowledge and experience—just ask taxi drivers whose street knowledge has been superseded by Google Maps.

In her research about call-center automation, Virginia Doellgast, professor of comparative employment relations at Cornell University, has found that humans who are tightly monitored by an algorithm, forced to follow a script or have little control over how they work are more likely to get burned out and find it harder to solve customer problems.

Adds Julian McCarty, the CEO of conversation-analytics company MosaicVoice: "There's a balance between empowering an agent and telling them what to say."

Companies including Comcast Corp., Charter Communications Inc.'s Spectrum and Cox Communications are even further along than HomeServe. They are using conversational AI to detect and measure more subjective human emotions and behavior through a technique called sentiment analysis, a tool that decides if conversations are positive, negative or neutral. Some models evaluate words and context to score conversations, and others include voice pitch, tone and cadence. Comcast analyzes most conversations between customers and agents and

scores employees on behaviors such as being "warm and friendly," and "make it effortless."

In interviews across a range of companies, call-center agents say they value AI's ability to access information quickly to help them make decisions. Many object if they are forced to use AI-generated recommendations or scripted words against their own judgment. Several said they are uncomfortable relying on automated performance reviews using technology that uses subjective measures like sentiment.

"It's very hard for a robot with no emotions to truly judge how a call is going," said Lise Hildebrand Stern, who left her job at Spectrum last year after nine months because of the impersonal nature of the AI performance scoring and the stress she said it caused. "My metrics suffered because this system was unable to judge me based on my attitude, unlike a human being would be able to do."

"Hi, I'm Charlie"
When HomeServe decided to introduce Charlie, company executives wanted to make sure employees viewed her as a partner. "I think when people start thinking about artificial intelligence, a lot of folks say, 'I'm going to be out of a job.' It was important for our center to know this is not to replace their job, but to augment their job," said Ms. Cloud, the HomeServe vice president. To humanize Charlie, the creative team developed an avatar that felt representative of their employees. She's a 42-year-old biracial brunette from Ohio who likes jazz and has two children. (They chose a Midwestern background because she has no accent, and jazz because someone might listen to it in their neighborhood, Ms. Cloud said.) Management asked agents to suggest gender-neutral names for the robot. Charlie won out over Devon, MacKenzie and Jesse. Sarah—an acronym for "self-assisted robotic agent for HomeServe"—was rejected as too impersonal.

Charlie started out with simple tasks such as greeting callers, say-

ing, "Hi, I'm Charlie, your digital assistant," and asking basic questions, such as, "Please tell me why you are calling today." After learning to route callers to the proper department, she was able to reduce average call-handle times by 36 seconds, or more than 10%, Ms. Cloud said.

Charlie is a quick study. By late fall, she was trained to handle a water-leak claim ("Is this a major leak?"), while using empathy ("I'm sorry to hear about your leak") and determine the urgency of the issue ("Are you able to shut off the water yourself?") She then booked a contractor to come out for the repair. From start to finish, Charlie's processing time took less than two minutes compared with a human, who averages eight. She now handles 15% of claims volume and is expected to handle 20% by next year. Chief Transformation Officer Kim Ratcliffe said she hopes Charlie can take over 40% of calls eventually.

"When Charlie gets involved, time resolution is faster for the customer," said HomeServe USA Chief Executive Officer Tom Rusin. During a major December storm, she helped 10,000 customers, equivalent to 12% of the total affected, to book claims and schedule repairs without talking to an agent. At this rate, she will pay for herself within 18 months of purchase. "It's taking out hundreds of thousands of minutes from our calls a year," said Mr. Rusin. "And a minute's expensive."

There are growing pains as Charlie gets trained. Mr. Rusin said. "In the beginning, you have to relearn what your agents have been doing for years and teach it to the computer." At the U.K. office of HomeServe, Hana, the British version of Charlie, routinely failed to route calls to the water line repair department until programmers realized she was mistaking the word "leak" for "lake" because of British accents. Once a data scientist spotted the mistake, the fix was easy. Mr. Rusin is confident Charlie's early misuses will get worked out.

"It takes a lot of time at the beginning, then I think growth will

come exponentially from there," Mr. Rusin said.

John Maynard Keynes, the noted economist, predicted that technology would eliminate the monotonous nature of work, freeing up humans to toil less and enjoy life more. What companies didn't anticipate was that the initial chit-chat in a routine call can give workers a break and be a

pleasant way for people to connect. Once it is gone, the work that remains is complex, intense and often stressful.

At HomeServe, the company has seen higher call volume. Its agents also are handling more complicated calls. "The agent gets the calls that Charlie can't figure out," said Catlin Duvall, manager of HomeServe's repair department. "That's a larger percentage of our calls. Now when you pick up the phone they have three problems instead of one. It's better for the customer. It can be more stressful on agents."

Ms. Hildebrand Stern, the agent who worked at Spectrum in its Appleton, Wis., call center, said the pressure to meet AI metrics added to the stress from irate callers who often cursed at her. She had worked in customer service her whole adult life, as a hotel front desk manager and a cashier in retail and fast food, and thought call center work would be fulfilling. Although she enjoyed helping customers, she kept scoring low on the AI-generated sentiment scores. She has tinnitus and speaks with a monotone speech pattern, she said, and doesn't always hear clearly if callers speak softly.

The AI marked her down for not using specific keywords, she said, although she never discovered what words she was supposed to say. She said her supervisor listened to the calls and told her, "It sounds like you're doing a really good job."

To try to relax, she'd go home at night and eat macaroni and cheese in front of the TV, watching three or four reruns of "Law & Order SVU." "I would try to erase the whole day from my memory and come back the next day with a better attitude."

As the months went by, angry customers kept calling and her automated sentiment scores kept falling, she said. Although the job paid \$20 an hour and included a free cable package, she decided it wasn't worth the cost. "I got to the point where I couldn't erase it anymore." Nine months into the job, she quit.

A spokesman for Spectrum's parent company, Charter Communications, said the company uses sentiment analysis as one component of its performance reviews but that employees receive human input as well. He said the system doesn't score pitch or tone for employees or customers. The analytics are a valuable resource for assessing how customers feel about the company and for scoring agent performance, he said.

Sentiment analysis has become one of the buzziest and most-debated new areas of customer-service analytics. Nice Ltd., a software analytics firm with clients such as American Airlines Group Inc., Radisson Hospitality Inc., Morgan Stanley, Walt Disney Co., Comcast and Wonderful Co.'s Teleflora, is a pioneer.

The holy grail is determining customer intent, said Barak Eilam, a former Israeli military intelligence officer who took over as Nice CEO in 2014. Nice's Enlighten sentiment analysis helps determine what customers want by analyzing "what is said and how it is said," Mr. Eilam said. The technology uses words and the context in



stress rises

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A Call With AI

In this demo, which was based on a real interaction, a hotel call-center agent is given prompts by an eavesdropping AI.

CUSTOMER
They must be cooking in the room and making a bad odor. We can smell it down the hall.

AGENT
I'm in reservations. Have you called the front desk?

CUSTOMER
I went to the front desk. They were useless.
I don't know who else to call but this situation is unbearable.

AI
AI gives agent advice based on historically successful conversations.

AI
Speak slower so customer can understand you
Inform customer that you can assist them
Try to address the issue!

AI
I can't stay in the room. The smell is so bad.
Well I'm not sure what I can do to help, other than call housekeeping.
Seriously? Can you transfer me to someone in customer service?

AI
Inform customer that you can assist them
Take ownership and be empathetic
Do what it takes to make customer happy!

AI
Maybe I can help.
I'm happy to conference in the front desk to see what I can do.
I'm looking after your reservation right now and it's my pleasure to tell you we have a mini suite available for your entire stay on the 18th floor.
Because you're a loyal customer we can get you into the room right now.

AI
Great job acknowledging loyalty!

AI
Thank you very much.

Note: Interactions have been edited and condensed
Source: Nice
Kara Dajana/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

EXCHANGE

Sarah—an acronym for self-assisted robotic agent for HomeServe—was rejected as too impersonal.

which they are used, as well as changes in pitch, tone and cadence, to analyze customer feelings, according to company marketing materials and Kevin Lee, vice president and global head of digital sales.

During a demo at the company's offices in Hoboken, N.J., a desktop dashboard displays the progress of a re-enacted conversation between a hotel guest and a reservations agent.

"There's a bad odor we can smell down the hall," Jane, the hotel guest, complains when the agent answers the call.

"Well, I'm not sure what I can do to help other than call housekeeping," said Chris, the reservations agent.

On the dashboard, visible to both agent and manager, the words and emotions on the call are being analyzed. If it detects trouble, it displays one of nine preprogrammed "soft skills" for Chris to use, including "be empathetic" or "build rapport."

The sentiment dial on the dashboard turns from yellow to red.

"Take ownership and be empathetic. Speak slower so the customer can understand you," the AI said.

Jane is getting mad: "I don't know who else to call, but this situation is unbearable. I can't stay in the room."

"Do what it takes to make customer happy!" the AI commands. Chris offers to conference the front desk to help. He informs Jane they have found a solution: a mini-suite on the 18th floor is available immediately. So she agrees to stay.

"Great job acknowledging loyalty!" the AI reassures Chris.

The sentiment meter moves from red back to green. The guidance is like collision detection in a car, Mr. Lee said, alerting both the agent and manager that a conversation is about to crash and offering recommendations for how to avoid that outcome.

Nice later said its technology no longer uses tone and pitch measurements, because they "fail to add meaningful value," but wouldn't explain further how its products had changed.

Telecom giant Comcast uses Nice Enlighten to detect customer sentiment and score agents' performance on most of their conversations with customers. The company said detailed feedback on every call makes the scores much more accurate and precise.

Chastity Miller, a customer-experience agent for Comcast in Lebanon, Pa, for the past 7½ years, thinks her AI sentiment scores are more scientific and less prone to inconsistencies and human error because they are based on all her interactions, not just the one or two a week that were previously graded by a human manager.

The technology can detect how each agent is performing and recommends what the human should say and do next.

"I score exceptionally high on it," she said. The system rewards agents for certain word choices, such as "ambassador," "superfast," and "let me summarize everything we did today," she said, which are easy for her to use. Her supervisor told her the system measures tone and pitch, she said. She speaks with enthusiastic fluctuations in

her voice, she said, which the AI scores highly. "I can say, 'you're a piece of s—!' But if I say it with an upward fluctuation at the end of the sentence, the AI likes it," she said.

She said many of her colleagues at the call center are struggling with the scores if they speak with an accent or don't use a lot of emotion in their voice. "I don't think I'm a better performer," she said. "But there's a bias against a guy's voice or accents. A lot of tenured agents aren't saying the magic words."

Three other Comcast agents scored by Enlighten said they worry the model has biases that favor some groups over others. A former Comcast agent with a Filipino accent who worked at the company for nine years said before AI scoring, she consistently scored "highly effective" and ranked in the top 100 agents for four consecutive years. That qualified her for preferential scheduling. Once the AI came in, she said her sentiment scores dropped below the required

level even though her supervisor said she was saying the right words. She quit in December and went to work at another call center without AI.

Agents say they aren't generally able to challenge the AI scores even though their ability to be promoted and get raises depends on it.

A Comcast spokesman, Daniel Friedman, said performance scores are based on words and phrases used in call transcripts. He said pitch and tone were originally included but the company turned off that function because it didn't make scores more accurate. He said the AI measures "warm and friendly" and other behaviors using factors like "intent of what the customer is saying," whether the employee is "consistently being friendly throughout the call" and "building a personal connection."

Mr. Friedman said agents are able to challenge the AI any time to supervisors or during frequent group meetings.

"Next best action"
HomeServe has big plans for Charlie this year. The company will introduce real-time guidance for agents that will suggest what they should say or do next. "It will

auto-populate the script so [an agent] doesn't have to think so much about what to say to get the conversation started," said Ms. Cloud.

Pop-ups on agents' screens will suggest the "next best action," she said. It might detect that a customer already has gas-line insurance and suggest the agent sell water-line coverage as well. Charlie will tell agents how to speak. "She might say, 'Hey, there's a long pause here or you're talking too fast,'" Ms. Cloud said. She emphasized that it will be voluntary, not required, for agents to take Charlie's advice. Also on the agenda: Charlie will start scoring the humans on their call performance.

The company acknowledges that Charlie has yet to win over a small percentage of agents and said it holds frequent agent forums to solicit feedback. The percentage of agents who use the data Charlie provides every day is now over 90%, a spokesman said, up from 70% in 2021. Meanwhile, customer satisfaction is up slightly since Charlie started and HomeServe plans to keep her busy.

"I don't think anything is off limits because we have to enable our customers to transact in whatever means they're most comfortable," said Mr. Rusin, the CEO. "So my philosophy is—automate every-



Jessica Cloud, vice president of automation at HomeServe, has tried to show agents that Charlie augments, not replaces, their jobs.

levels even though her supervisor said she was saying the right words. She quit in December and went to work at another call center without AI.

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'I feel really and truly like you're helping people,' said Robert Caldwell, one of HomeServe's top-selling agents.

EXCHANGE

KEYWORDS | CHRISTOPHER MIMS

Where Tech Workers Are Heading

Trend-hoppers have moved from Web3 and blockchain to artificial intelligence



The new artificial-intelligence tools getting widespread attention for spitting out text, images and computer code are also generating something else: talk of the next technology bubble.

Technologists broadly agree that the so-called generative AI that powers systems like ChatGPT has the potential to change how we live and work, despite the technology's clear flaws. But some investors, chief executives and engineers see signs of froth that remind them of the crypto boom that recently fizzled.

Even tech workers who weren't casualties of the recent rounds of layoffs that have rocked Silicon Valley are jumping on the AI bandwagon. Among them are refugees from the most recent tech-industry boom to flame out: the crypto craze.

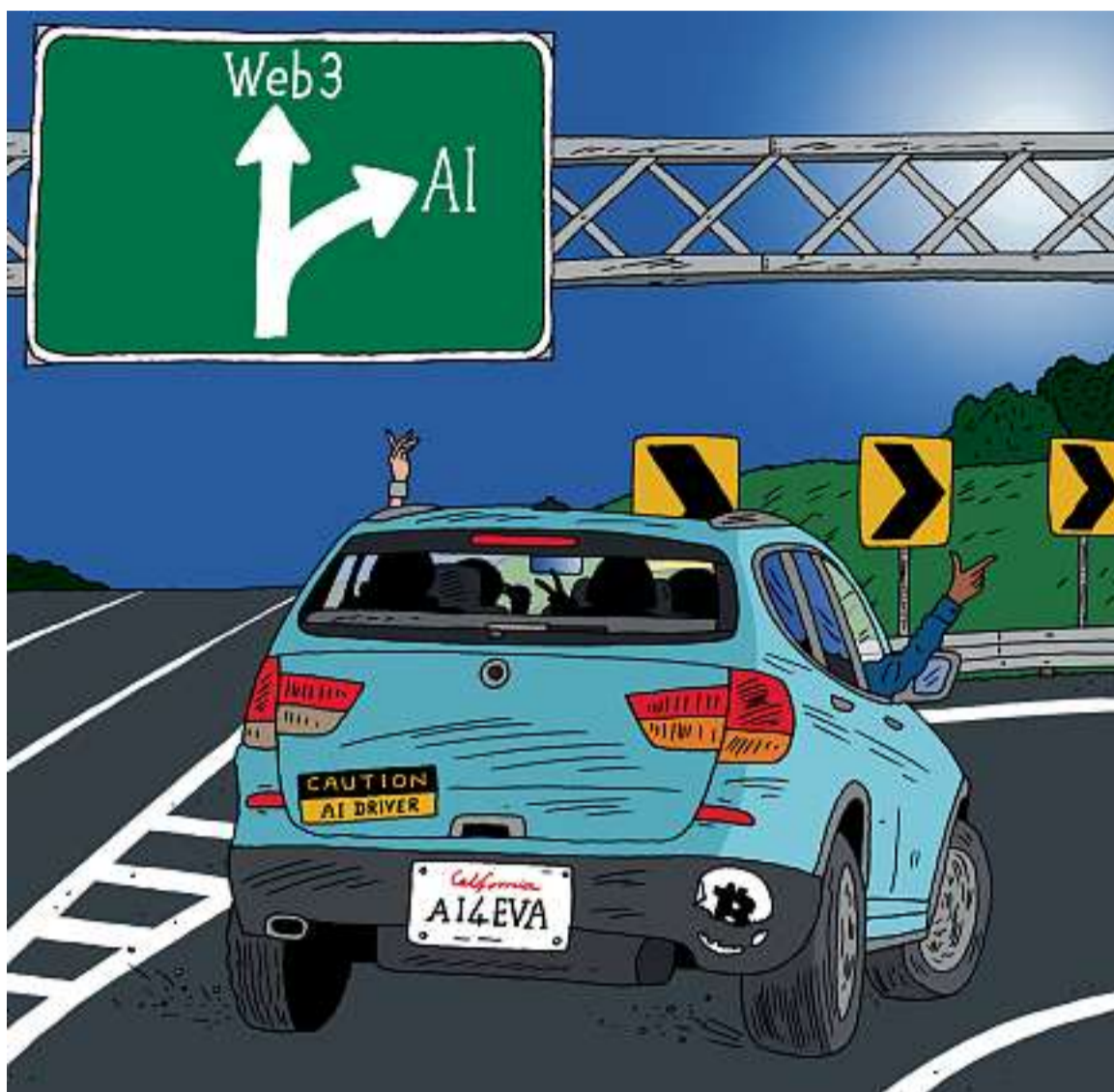
Some AI veterans worry that "artificial intelligence" is in danger of becoming the latest in a string of empty tech buzzwords.

"The people talking about generative AI right now were the people talking about Web3 and blockchain until recently—the Venn diagram is a circle," says Ben Waber, chief executive of Humanyze, a company that uses AI and other tools to analyze work behavior. "People have just rebranded themselves."

Of course, the same investors and founders in the AI industry who voice these concerns believe in their own AI tech, and in any application of AI they think can have an impact in the real world. Despite the dangers of AI becoming another hype-fueled bubble, it's apparent that the shift of talent and funding from tech giants, dead-end Web3 startups, and SPAC-fueled flights of fancy could be exactly the refocusing the tech industry needs.

At the same time, with AI tools more accessible than ever, turning your startup into an "AI" one is as simple as writing a little code to tap into existing services. Those include Google's BERT or OpenAI's GPT-3, which Microsoft has embraced to try to beef up its Bing search engine—with notably mixed results.

There's every incentive for startups to toss a little AI into their pitches, considering that the field is a rare bright spot in a generally



poor investment environment for tech startups. Investors last year poured \$2.6 billion into 110 generative AI-focused startups in the U.S., according to CB Insights. This year looks to be comparable, says Matt Moberg, a senior vice president at Franklin Templeton Investments.

Even investors who are keen on AI are concerned that the amount of interest in it might lead to the launch of many low-quality startups.

"A lot of investors are saying, 'I might actually sit out this trend, because if all these companies are going to be built on top of ChatGPT, then it's harder to find a winner,'" says Brianne Kimmel, founder of Worklife Ventures, which invests in early-stage tech companies.

As with the crypto bubble, for every investor who is cautious, there are plenty who are more afraid of missing out on the next Google—or at least the next OpenAI. OpenAI was founded as a non-profit in 2015 before transforming into a for-profit company in 2019. In January it was in talks for in-

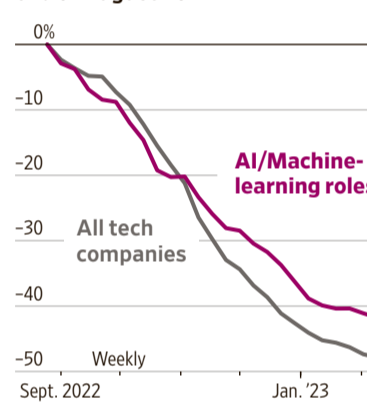
vestments that would have valued it at \$29 billion despite generating little revenue. Then the company announced it had signed a deal with Microsoft for a multiyear, multibillion-dollar investment.

"It reminds me of pretty much everything else that goes up and down the hype cycle," says Mr. Moberg. "With this launch of OpenAI we are at peak hype. It was metaverse before that, cannabis before that. Five years ago it was 3-D printing."

Founders and employees are responding to this demand from investors, who are creating bubbles as often as they are following trends. Mr. Waber, of Humanyze, says that despite hiring freezes in other areas of tech, many of his customers at large firms are continuing to hire those with skills in data science, which is key to gathering and preparing the data fed into AI models.

Ashley Chang is an example of midcareer switchers who are eager to launch companies. She spent three years at Carta, a company that helps startup employees track

Number of tech job openings, percentage change since the end of August 2022



Source: TrueUp

and manage their equity stakes in the companies they work for. In September, she left Carta to explore startups in Web3—a catchall phrase for next-generation, distributed-internet technologies like blockchain—but in December decided to launch an AI startup instead.

Not All Bots On Twitter Are Bad

Continued from page B1

grammed to share interesting and practical information. But this being Elon Musk's extremely hardcore Twitter, it didn't last very long. There was such an uproar about what appeared to be a blatant cash grab that the company abruptly reversed course and these bots were spared.

A feud over access to a company's application programming interface might sound arcane, but the slapdash rollout and subsequent whiplash were typical of Twitter in the chaotic months since Mr. Musk's takeover.

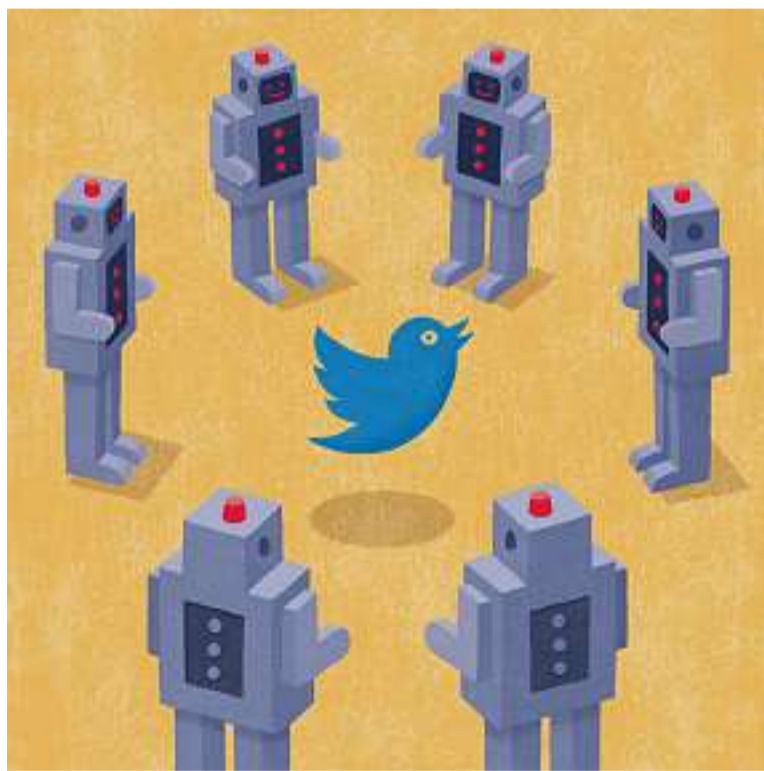
"Please note that Twitter will do lots of dumb things in coming months," he wrote soon after shelling out \$44 billion for his favorite social network. "We will keep what works & change what doesn't."

Do lots of dumb things, keep what works and change what doesn't.

This is the closest thing to an organizing principle for the management style of the world's most volatile and overworked billionaire.

Most executives prefer the strategy of not doing lots of dumb things, but Mr. Musk has never been anything like most executives. With advertisers disappearing, revenues way down and debt payments due, many of Twitter's business decisions are impetuous and based on his whims, including recent algorithmic tweaks to juice engagement. Mr. Musk seems to believe that even the ones that fail are necessary for his company's success. Some might call these glitches the classic tinkering of a genius entrepreneur. Others might call them dumb.

Which brings us back to the failed



bot crackdown.

What a bot is depends on who you might be asking. The overly broad term lends itself to various definitions and interpretations that only deepen the confusion. It would be like saying people and porcupines are the same because they are both mammals.

Mr. Musk was referring to the malevolent kind when he said his company was "being abused badly right now by bot scammers & opinion manipulators" and proposed a \$100 monthly payroll to deter them. This pitch did not go over well with users, who are fiercely protective of their benign robotic friends and spent the next few days berating the company in defense of accounts like @FrogandToadbot, which tweets quotes and photos from the illustrated children's books eight times a day. In re-

sponse to an uprising that he characterized as "feedback," Twitter amended the rules again, pledging to keep a basic version of its free API for "bots providing good content that is free," as Mr. Musk opaquely put it. Twitter did not respond to a request to comment.

But no matter what happens next, the whole mess has already been revealing—and not just because it helps explain Mr. Musk.

The latest mayhem at Twitter has also demonstrated the human desire for bot companionship.

There are many different breeds of these bots. Some chronicle seismic activity. Others spark joy. One tweets photos of possums every hour. They analyze crude data from other parts of the internet, clean it up for public consumption and automatically post it to Twitter in a digestible format.

In other words, bots are translators. They take information from one language and put it into another language.

The bots that post about earthquakes, possums and Frog and Toad were not born to "do bad things," as Mr. Musk describes their evil cousins. They're not trolls spewing propaganda, spammers yammering about crypto or the fake accounts that he vowed to purge when he bought the company.

These are the accounts that have been described by Twitter's former executives and its reigning chief wit as good bots.

They are bots like Bill Snitzer's. Mr. Snitzer is a software developer in Los Angeles who felt a minor quake in 2009 and then felt an impulse to check Twitter. He was excited to find out if others had felt it, too. Then he was inspired.

"You know what would be cool?" he recalled thinking. "If I just made a bot that tweeted when there's an earthquake."

So he did. He wrote a basic script that runs around the clock with a simple function: As soon as it sees something in the U.S. Geological Survey data, it says something on Twitter about the magnitude, location and time of the earthquake. "The bots distill it down to what we need to know," he said.

One of the first confirmations of the recent devastation in Turkey came from Earthquake Robot, the Twitter bot that Mr. Snitzer programmed for the sole purpose of blasting out alarms on powerful quakes. He also built four bots that monitor Los Angeles and San Francisco, two that only tweet about big ones and two that will tweet about every quake, including a 1.3 in Malibu and a 2.0 in Berkeley, the barely

Part of what drew her to AI, she says, was that AI could enable her to solve "real-life problems I've been working on for a long time." Her startup, Altitude, makes an AI customer-support tool for e-commerce companies.

This shift is also apparent among more senior engineers, who in some cases are starting the AI companies doing the hiring. In the past year, for example, veterans of both Meta Platforms and Google left their roles in those companies' augmented- and virtual-reality divisions to start their own AI companies.

To be fair to this fresh crop of AI companies and budding machine-learning engineers, AI still lacks what often seemed like the naive or cynical business models common to some corners of the crypto industry. Many of those movements and startups resembled multilevel marketing schemes fueled entirely by their own hype.

And many existing companies in this space have been quietly building AI-based solutions to problems for years, and are beginning to establish a record of success.

Mike Tung, chief executive of AI-enabled, business-focused search startup Diffbot, which was founded in 2008, says that one telling sign of the attention focused on AI is that he is seeing many more job candidates reach out to his company than in the past.

Shiv Rao is a cardiologist who is primarily occupied with building his generative AI-powered medical startup Abridge, which records, transcribes and summarizes doctor-patient visits. It's intended to reduce the amount of after-hours paperwork doctors have to do, and to help patients remember doctors' instructions.

Abridge was founded in 2018, well before the current hype for generative AI. But the company is benefiting—in terms of investment and interest from potential users—from all the attention focused on AI now, says Zachary Lipton, its chief AI scientist and a Carnegie Mellon University professor.

It's unclear how many of tech's newly liberated engineers and founders will find a home building AI systems. Startups in this space remain small and can't possibly absorb more than a fraction of the tech workers being laid off, says Amit Taylor, founder of TrueUp, a site that tracks tech job postings.

But it's also likely that, as in technological shifts since time immemorial, many will make transitions into roles that do not exist yet, but are enabled by this new technology. One such job, says Ms. Kimmel, is "prompt engineer."

That's the person who enters text into a generative AI to get it to create an image, or more text, or just about any other kind of content. Hot new AI startup Anthropic, for example, is currently advertising an opening for a prompt engineer in San Francisco. Starting salary: \$250,000.

PETER ARKLE

The bot whiplash was typical of Twitter in the chaotic months since Mr. Musk's takeover.

perceptible tremors that make people check their phones to make sure they haven't gone nuts.

Mr. Snitzer's earthquake bots weren't just cool. They were quite useful and incredibly popular. Together they have more than 800,000 followers.

So when Twitter announced that it would charge an unspecified amount to keep his bots alive, then said never mind, then delayed the unveiling of a new API platform and asked developers for their patience in a dizzying sequence of events, Mr. Snitzer wasn't sure what to do next.

But the botmaker who found himself at the mercy of Mr. Musk was sure about two things. First, he was insulted. He didn't think it was right that it would cost him money to maintain something that so many Twitter users find invaluable. Second, he was conflicted. He didn't want to pay Mr. Musk, but he also didn't want to kill his bots.

Since then, the company has suggested that most good bots will be able to tweet 1,500 times a month, which is enough for hourly possums and should be plenty for Mr. Snitzer's accounts. If that limit becomes a problem for a bot that tweets only about big earthquakes, the world has much bigger problems.

As developers like Mr. Snitzer wait for clarity, the good bots of Twitter still exist. For now. And hopefully for a long time. They make the product worth using and reflect the sort of ingenuity that Mr. Musk should be encouraging, not banning.

In fact, Mr. Musk happens to be the target audience for Mr. Snitzer's earthquake bots: He's often in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and he's more frequently on Twitter.

He doesn't follow them. He might want to change that, too.

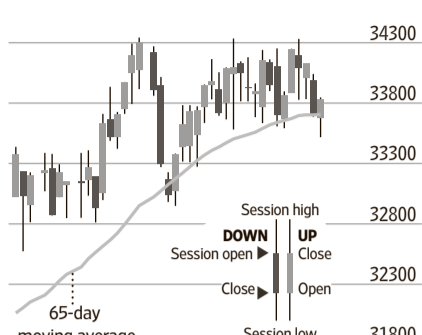
MARKETS DIGEST

Dow Jones Industrial Average

33826.69
▲ 129.84
or 0.39%
All-time high
36799.65, 01/04/22

Trailing P/E ratio 22.56 18.93
P/E estimate * 17.91 18.13
Dividend yield 2.08 2.05

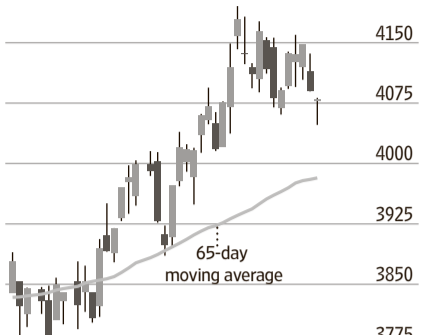
Current divisor
0.15172752595384



S&P 500 Index

4079.09
▼ 11.32
or 0.28%
All-time high
4796.56, 01/03/22

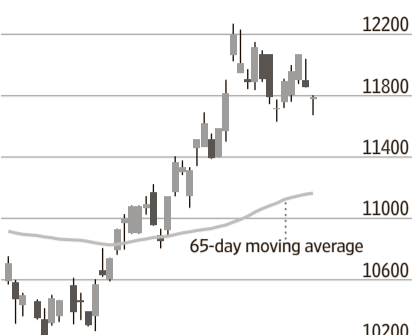
Trailing P/E ratio * 18.35 24.46
P/E estimate * 18.72 19.69
Dividend yield * 1.68 1.39



Nasdaq Composite Index

11787.27
▼ 68.56
or 0.58%
All-time high:
16057.44, 11/19/21

Trailing P/E ratio ** 24.98 31.96
P/E estimate ** 25.12 24.81
Dividend yield ** 0.86 0.74



Bars measure the point change from session's open
Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc. * Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low	% chg YTD	3-yr. ann.
Dow Jones												
Industrial Average	33846.64	33517.73	33826.69	129.84	0.39	35294.19	28725.51	-0.7	2.0	4.8		
Transportation Avg	15187.78	15046.45	15135.87	-73.60	-0.48	16718.54	11999.40	1.1	13.0	11.7		
Utility Average	957.82	938.28	953.61	10.40	1.10	1071.75	838.99	4.1	-1.4	-0.1		
Total Stock Market	41267.95	40936.97	41246.72	-126.53	-0.31	46941.20	36056.21	-6.5	7.1	6.1		
Barron's 400	1008.17	995.56	1001.07	-7.13	-0.71	1051.05	825.73	-0.4	8.8	10.7		

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low	% chg YTD	3-yr. ann.
Nasdaq Stock Market												
Nasdaq Composite	11803.22	11673.21	11787.27	-68.56	-0.58	14619.64	10213.29	-13.0	12.6	6.6		
Nasdaq-100	12385.52	12233.79	12358.18	-84.30	-0.68	15239.32	10679.34	-11.8	13.0	8.7		

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low	% chg YTD	3-yr. ann.
S&P												
500 Index	4081.51	4047.95	4079.09	-11.32	-0.28	4631.60	3577.03	-6.2	6.2	6.5		
MidCap 400	2668.71	2645.83	2666.12	-4.09	-0.15	2773.72	2200.75	1.3	9.7	8.3		
SmallCap 600	1283.85	1272.10	1282.52	1.71	0.13	1357.33	1064.45	-1.2	10.8	8.0		

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low	% chg YTD	3-yr. ann.
Other Indexes												
Russell 2000	1947.85	1928.39	1946.36	4.14	0.21	2133.10	1649.84	-3.1	10.5	4.9		
NYSE Composite	15873.78	15732.77	15840.16	-33.63	-0.21	17014.76	13472.18	-3.4	4.3	4.0		
Value Line	591.27	585.90	590.43	-0.83	-0.14	653.15	491.56	-5.6	10.1	2.5		
NYSE Arca Biotech	5526.93	5441.93	5526.35	49.68	0.91	5644.50	4208.43	11.9	4.6	1.7		
NYSE Arca Pharma	832.72	817.67	831.61	10.19	1.24	887.27	737.84	6.7	-4.2	8.1		
KBW Bank	111.98	110.67	111.86	0.06	0.06	137.20	94.66	-18.5	10.9	0.8		
PHLX [®] Gold/Silver	117.86	115.41	117.64	-1.65	-1.38	167.76	91.40	-17.2	-2.7	4.9		
PHLX [®] Oil Service	90.68	86.87	87.38	-4.41	-4.80	93.94	56.08	30.8	4.2	10.7		
PHLX [®] Semiconductor	3042.43	2980.14	3005.87	-49.37	-1.62	3625.58	2162.32	-11.2	18.7	15.4		
Cboe Volatility	21.30	19.82	20.02	-0.15	-0.74	36.45	17.87	-27.9	-7.6	13.5		

§ Nasdaq PHLX Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

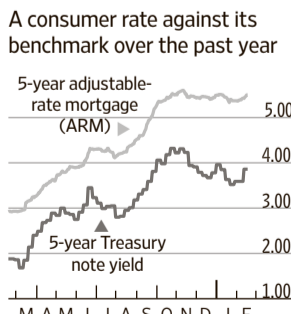
International Stock Indexes

Region/Country	Index	Close	Net chg	% chg	YTD % chg
World	MSCI ACWI	645.03	-3.05	-0.47	6.5
	MSCI ACWI ex-USA	299.51	-2.00	-0.66	6.5
	MSCI World	2779.88	-10.75	-0.39	6.8
	MSCI Emerging Markets	999.42	-11.72	-1.16	4.5
Americas	MSCI AC Americas	1553.09	-5.67	-0.36	6.6
	S&P/TSX Comp	20515.24	-91.18	-0.44	5.8
Canada	MSCI EM Latin America	2253.84	-4.69	-0.21	5.9
Latin Amer.	BOVESPA	109176.92	-764.54	-0.70	-0.5
Brazil	S&P IPSA	3210.94	-73.81	-2.25	1.2
Chile	S&P/BMV IPC	53789.64	-226.18	-0.42	11.0
Mexico	STOXX Europe 600	464.30	-0.94	-0.20	9.3
EMEA	Euro STOXX	459.65	-1.81	-0.39	12.1
Eurozone	Bel-20	3919.02	3.13	0.08	5.9
Belgium	OMX Copenhagen 20	1926.64	13.96	0.73	5.0
Denmark	CAC 40	7347.72	-18.44	-0.25	13.0
France	DAX	15482.00	-51.64	-0.33	11.2
Germany	Tel Aviv	1802.40	...	Closed	0.3
Israel	FTSE MIB	27751.14	-102.60	-0.37	17.1
Italy	AEX	765.04	-6.65	-0.86	11.0
Netherlands	Oslo Bors All-Share	1402.56	-14.47	-1.02	2.9
Norway	FTSE/JSE All-Share	79271.78	-955.41	-1.19	8.5
South Africa	IBEX 35	9333.00	5.73	0.06	13.4
Spain	OMX Stockholm	863.51	-4.71	-0.54	10.4
Sweden	Swiss Market	11256.29	61.38	0.55	4.9
Switzerland	BIST 100	5026.83	18.25	0.36	-8.8
Turkey	FTSE 100	8004.36	-8.17	-0.10	7.4
U.K.	FTSE 250	20088.93	-92.52	-0.46	6.6
U.K.	MSCI AC Asia Pacific	162.66	-1.80	-1.09	4.4
Asia-Pacific	S&P/ASX 200	7346.80	-63.51	-0.86	4.4
Australia	Shanghai Composite	3224.02	-25.01	-0.77	4.4
China	Hang Seng	20719.81	-267.86	-1.28	4.7
Hong Kong	N&P BSE Sensex	61002.57	-316.94	-0.52	0.3
India	NIKKEI 225	27513.13	-183.31	-0.66	5.4
Japan	Straits Times	3328.37	17.14	0.52	2.4
Singapore	KOSPI	2451.21	-24.27	-0.98	9.6
South Korea	TAIEX	15479.70	-70.80	-0.46	9.5
Taiwan	SET	1651.67	-6.62	-0.40	-1.0
Thailand					

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

U.S. consumer rates



Selected rates

	Rate	52-Week Range (%)	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Bankrate.com avg:	5.50%		
Raymond James Bank, NA	3.00%		
St. Petersburg, FL	800-718-2265		
RT Federal Credit Union	4.63%		
Waltham, MA	781-736-9900		
Clinton Savings Bank	5.00%		
Clinton, MA	888-744-4272		
Star One Credit Union	5.00%		
Sunnyvale, CA	408-742-2801		
Hanscom Federal Credit Union	5.13%		
Hanscom AFB, MA	800-656-4328		

Interest rate	Yield/Rate (%)	52-Week Range (%)	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Federal-funds rate target	4.50-4.75	4.50-4.75	0.00
Prime rate*	7.75	7.75	3.25
Libor, 3-month	4.92	4.87	0.46
Money market, annual yield	0.39	0.39	0.07
Five-year CD, annual yield	2.74	2.74	0.43
30-year mortgage, fixed†	6.88	6.69	4.12
15-year mortgage, fixed†	6.16	5.96	3.38
Jumbo mortgages, \$726,200-plus†	6.90	6.74	4.12
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM)†	5.50	5.42	2.92
New-car loan, 48-month	6.68	6.65	3.51

Bankrate.com rates based on survey of over 4,800 online banks. *Base rate posted by 70% of the nation's largest banks. † Excludes closing costs. Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; Bankrate.com

Percentage Gainers...

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
Okyo Pharma ADR	OKYO	3.74	1.45	62.96	7.00	1.61	...
Movella Holdings	MVLA	4.69	1.49	46.56	10.76	3.01	-51.7
AMC Networks A	AMCX	27.13	6.63	32.34	44.05	14.45	-29.5
MacroGenics	MGNX	6.61	1.35	25.67	10.61	2.13	-34.8
US Cellular	USM	26.15	5.15	24.52	32.65	19.22	-8.0
Telephone Data Sys	TDS	13.70	2.57	23.09	21.00	9.65	-26.0
Sera Prognostics	SERA	3.60	0.64	21.62	34.39	16.30	-45.2
Cazoo Group	CZOO	3.25	0.54	19.93	88.40	2.60	-96.2
Meihua Intl Medical Techs	MHUA	26.01	4.28	19.70	26.87	2.60	218.8
Eliem Therapeutics	ELYM	2.70	0.40	17.39	11.51	2.21	-69.4
Ambrox Biopharma ADR	AMAM	3.25	0.47	16.91	5.12	0.38	-23.5
Tenaya Therapeutics	TNYA	3.17	0.44	16.12	14.43	1.64	-75.5
Entrada Therapeutics	TRDA	11.06	1.48	15.45	24.38	5.12	-26.0
DraftKings CI A	DKNG	20.54	2.73	15.33	25.01	9.77	18.8
Kiora Pharmaceuticals	KPRX	6.34	0.84	15.27	39.18	2.32	-76.2

Percentage Losers

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
Arqit Quantum	ARQQ	1.47	-1.07	-42.09	17.88	1.40	-90.2
Universal Electronics	UEIC	16.38	-8.07	-33.01	34.39	16.30	-45.2
Mountain Crest Acqn III	MCAE	4.97	-2.42	-32.72	12.00	4.62	-50.0
Ocean Biomedical	OCEA	3.98	-1.44	-26.53	14.22	3.79	-60.3
ShiftPixy	PIXY	6.01	-1.97	-24.69	99.91	5.89	-93.5
LanzaTech Global	LNZA	4.15	-1.30	-23.85	10.80	3.96	-56.9
DZS	DZSI	9.27	-2.79	-23.13	19.95	8.87	-39.8
XP	XP	12.91	-2.98	-18.75	35.42	12.40	-62.2
AXT	AXTI	4.88	-1.02	-17.29	9.94	4.17	-34.5
NFT Gaming	NFTG	3.81	-0.69	-15.33	5.15	3.31	...
Stem	STEM	8.30	-1.44	-14.78	18.02	5.72	-22.1
Cooper-Standard Holdings	CPS	1					

MARKET DATA

Futures Contracts

Metal & Petroleum Futures table with columns for Symbol, Price, Chg, and YTD %.

Natural Gas (NYM) and Agriculture Futures tables with columns for Symbol, Price, Chg, and YTD %.

Cattle-Live (CME) and Interest Rate Futures tables with columns for Symbol, Price, Chg, and YTD %.

Currency Futures and Index Futures tables with columns for Symbol, Price, Chg, and YTD %.

Exchange-Traded Portfolios

ETF table with columns for Symbol, Price, Chg, and YTD %.

Borrowing Benchmarks | WSJ.com/bonds

Money Rates

Money Rates table showing various rates and their changes.

Inflation

Inflation table with columns for Jan. Index, Chg From (%), and Level.

U.S. consumer price index

U.S. consumer price index table with columns for All items, Core, and their respective values.

International rates

International rates table with columns for Country, Latest, and High/Low.

Prime rates

Prime rates table with columns for Country, Latest, and High/Low.

Policy Rates

Policy Rates table with columns for Euro zone, Latest, and High/Low.

Secondary market

Secondary market table with columns for 30 days, 60 days, and their respective values.

A Week in the Life of the DJIA

A Week in the Life of the DJIA table showing stock performance over the week.

Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT)

Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

Treasury Bonds (CBT)

Treasury Bonds (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

Treasury Notes (CBT)

Treasury Notes (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)

5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)

2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

30 Day Federal Funds (CBT)

30 Day Federal Funds (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

10 Yr. Del. Int. Rate Swaps (CBT)

10 Yr. Del. Int. Rate Swaps (CBT) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

Three-Month SOFR (CME)

Three-Month SOFR (CME) table with columns for Maturity, Price, and YTD %.

Bonds | wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Global Government Bonds: Mapping Yields

Global Government Bonds: Mapping Yields table showing yields for various countries.

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Dividend Changes

Dividend Changes table with columns for Company, Symbol, Yld % New/Old, and Payable/Record.

Dividend Changes table with columns for Company, Symbol, Yld % New/Old, and Payable/Record.

Dividend Changes table with columns for Company, Symbol, Yld % New/Old, and Payable/Record.

Dividend Changes table with columns for Company, Symbol, Yld % New/Old, and Payable/Record.

New Highs and Lows

New Highs and Lows table with columns for Stock, Symbol, and Price.

New Highs and Lows table with columns for Stock, Symbol, and Price.

New Highs and Lows table with columns for Stock, Symbol, and Price.

New Highs and Lows table with columns for Stock, Symbol, and Price.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Tesla Drivers Balk at Plan

They say opening up charging network to other EV brands would slow down the process

By MEGHAN BOBROWSKY

Tesla Inc. has unnerved some of its customers with a decision to open up parts of its exclusive Supercharger network to other electric vehicles, with some fretting about future wait times to recharge their cars.

John Sergeant, a Tesla owner in Seattle, said Superchargers in his city are already overrun with demand and that opening up the network to others will compound the problem.

"That's the one thing that concerns me—whether it might add to congestion," he said, adding that Seattle is home to many EVs. Even as things are, he said, "they really need to put more superchargers in."

The White House on Wednesday said Elon Musk's car company would open at least 3,500 new and existing 250-kilowatt fast-charging stations to qualify for a share of billions of federal dollars on offer to build a national network of electric-vehicle chargers. The infrastructure law President Biden signed in November 2021 allocated \$7.5 billion for EV charging as part of an effort to build a network of 500,000 chargers across the country.

Tesla has a U.S. network of more than 17,700 fast chargers at over 1,650 locations that aren't currently available to other vehicles.

Mr. Musk, who at times has taken aim at President Biden, responded to a tweet from the



The company said it would more than double its U.S. Supercharger network by the end of next year.

president about the Supercharger development on Wednesday: "Thank you, Tesla is happy to support other EVs via our Supercharger network," the Tesla chief executive said.

The company said it would more than double its U.S. Supercharger network by the end of next year to support the growth of its fleet and new EV customers. "Tesla Superchargers almost everywhere," Mr. Musk tweeted Wednesday.

Tesla didn't respond to a request for comment about customer concerns.

Some Tesla drivers say there could be hiccups in accessing the charging locations because other vehicles will be using them.

Darren Morgan, a Tesla Model Y owner and member of Tesla Owners Club in the East Bay, said he is concerned about the fact that not all EVs have their charging ports in the same location of the vehi-

cle, which could lead to congestion and longer wait times at charging stations if drivers of non-Tesla vehicles have to take up multiple spaces to access chargers.

Tesla has said it is aware of congestion and longer wait times for chargers at certain locations. In some cases, the company deploys mobile Superchargers to add capacity or employs pricing strategies to encourage more off-peak use to mitigate wait times, the company has said.

Mr. Musk two years ago signaled the company would open its network to others. "We knew it was coming and it's been really fun to have full access to a service that's not completely utilized," Mr. Morgan said. Still, he expressed understanding for Tesla's latest decision. "You can't sustain this sort of accessibility and make it economically feasible," Mr. Morgan said.

The charging station deci-

sion could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in additional revenue for Tesla, said Toni Sacconaghi, an analyst for Bernstein. Tesla last month said that sales linked to supercharging contributed to record revenue and gross profit for its services segment as the company posted record quarterly profit. However, Mr. Sacconaghi added, there is also a risk that some Tesla owners feel like the experience of buying those vehicles is being compromised.

For Karen Wolff, a Tesla Model Y owner living in San Jose, Calif., the charging station decision could affect future purchase decisions. "It has been such a joy when you're on a road trip, charge while you're having lunch and just be on your way. If we lose that, who cares if you have a Tesla or not?" she said. "If I can use a Kia there and I wasn't able to use a Kia there before, I'm going to look at a Kia."

FAA Seeks to Fine SpaceX \$175,000 Over Launch Data

By MICAH MAIDENBERG

Aviation safety regulators proposed fining SpaceX \$175,000 for allegedly failing to provide launch-related data before a satellite mission the company conducted last year.

It is the first such penalty the FAA has sought from SpaceX, according to a spokesman for the agency. SpaceX has conducted hundreds of rocket flights over the years, including 61 in 2022. This year, SpaceX founder Elon Musk has said, the company has set a goal of launching to orbit 100 times.

An FAA spokesman said that for a Starlink satellite launch last year, SpaceX didn't submit an analysis about collision-related probabilities in orbit prior to the flight, as required by the agency. The agency ultimately obtained that data, he said.

A spokesman for Space Exploration Technologies Corp., the company's formal name, didn't respond to requests to comment. The company has 30 days to respond to the FAA after receiving its enforcement letter and can contest the proposed penalty, according to the agency.

The company has said previously that it is committed to safe practices across its operations, which include launching payloads and crew members on its fleet of rockets and deploying thousands of Starlink satellites to orbits near Earth.

"SpaceX has demonstrated this commitment to space safety through action, investing significant resources to

ensure that all our launch vehicles, spacecraft, and satellites meet or exceed space safety regulations and best practices," the company said in a statement posted to its website last year.

The FAA licenses commercial space launches and re-entries. Officials from the agency and space industry have been discussing ways to better integrate more rocket launches—including from sites in Florida,

The FAA licenses commercial space launches and re-entries.

Virginia and California—into aviation corridors that also are used by the commercial airline industry.

Congress recently provided the FAA's commercial space office with additional funding, said Kelvin Coleman, the associate administrator overseeing that division, speaking at a conference last week.

"Our job and really intention is to keep pace with the increased demands for the products and services that we provide for the industry," he said.

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Beijing Regulator Releases Rules on Overseas Listings

By JING YANG AND REBECCA FENG

China's securities regulator released its long-awaited rules on international listings, removing a key hurdle to internet companies selling shares overseas after a prolonged crackdown on the sector.

The move follows repeated calls from the country's top leadership to normalize the policy environment, part of an attempt by the government to shift focus back toward economic growth after a strict zero-Covid policy and a series of regulatory moves pushed down valuations in the technology and internet sectors and shook investor confidence.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission published the guidelines on Friday, after releasing a draft version for public consultation in December 2021. The rules, which will take effect March 31, require all mainland Chinese companies planning share sales outside the domestic A share market to inform the regulator beforehand.

The CSRC has attempted to clarify existing rules and plug loopholes of the sort that led to an ill-fated initial public offering by ride-hailing giant Didi Global Inc. in New York in

2021, which went ahead without securing full blessings from authorities at a time when regulations on such IPOs were obscure and fragmented.

It has also moved to increase its supervision of Chinese companies, reducing the chance of a repeat of the accounting fraud at Luckin Coffee Inc., which came to light in April 2020. The scandal at Luckin was widely seen as having tarnished the image of Chinese companies listed overseas, and led to a push from the U.S. accounting watchdog for more oversight of U.S.-listed companies.

The CSRC released a separate statement explaining the objectives of the new rules. "The vision and goal of sharing the dividend of China's economic development with global investors remain unchanged," the regulator said.

Beijing started cracking down on companies' IPOs outside mainland China after the Didi listing in June 2021, paying particular attention to the listing plans of technology companies. The main issue regulators appeared to be trying to address was whether firms which hold large amounts of Chinese consumer data should be allowed to sell

shares overseas.

Didi was hit with a cybersecurity probe days just after the \$4.4 billion IPO, while its app was removed from app stores. The company delisted its American depository receipts from the New York Stock Exchange last June, after a request from regulators. In January, after a year and half long cybersecurity probe and the payment of hefty fines, the company was allowed to relaunch its main app and register new users.

Luckin Coffee was forced to delist from the Nasdaq Stock Market in the summer of 2020, following the accounting scandal. Both Didi and Luckin shares remain traded over-the-counter in the U.S.

The guidelines lack clarity on whether companies structured as variable interest entities should be allowed to list overseas. That issue has been a focal point for the SEC's scrutiny against Chinese IPOs. The new rules state that VIE-structured companies will be allowed to register their share sales "under consultation with departments in charge," presuming they clear compliance hurdles. But the CSRC didn't specify which departments these would be.

Abbott Faces Baby-Formula Probes

By PETER LOFTUS

The Securities and Exchange Commission and Federal Trade Commission are investigating Abbott Laboratories' baby-formula business, the company said.

The SEC's enforcement division sent a subpoena to Abbott in December requesting information about its powder infant-formula business and related public disclosures, the company said Friday in a securities filing.

In addition, Abbott said it received a civil investigative demand from the FTC in January seeking information in connection with the agency's investigation of companies that bid for infant-formula supply contracts with a federal program.

Abbott, of Abbott Park, Ill., is cooperating with the government investigations, a spokesman said. Representatives of the SEC

and FTC couldn't be reached for comment.

Disclosure of the inquiries follow the launch of a criminal investigation by the Justice Department into Abbott's formula manufacturing, after a plant shutdown last year fueled a U.S. formula shortage.

The company has disclosed separate inquiries from the SEC and the FTC.

Abbott recalled certain powder baby-formula products, including Similac, that were manufactured at its Sturgis, Mich., plant, and halted production at the plant.

The recall followed an inspection by the Food and Drug Administration, which found Cronobacter bacteria in the

Abbott the inspection after receiving reports that babies who consumed the formula became sick with Cronobacter infections.

The FDA has said it couldn't conclude that contamination in the Sturgis plant caused bacterial infections in four babies who consumed Abbott formula starting in September 2021, but couldn't rule it out, either. Abbott has said formula made at Sturgis likely isn't the source of the infections.

Abbott has said it made improvements to the plant to address the FDA's concerns about contamination, and production restarted in June.

The FTC's investigation concerns contracts with the federal Women, Infants and Children program, which provides baby formula at no cost to low-income families.

In May, the FTC said its staff launched an inquiry into the baby-formula shortage.

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NOTICE OF SALE OF COLLATERAL UNDER THE UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE

Under Section 1-101 et. seq. of the Illinois Uniform Commercial Code (810 ILCS 5/1-101) and pursuant to the terms and provisions contained in that certain Pledge and Security Agreement dated as of July 10, 2015 and executed by 1356 Wellington Mezz Owner LLC and 3015 Southport Mezz Owner, LLC (collectively and individually, "Debtors") and Bradford Allen Funding Company LLC ("Bradford Allen"), Bradford Allen will sell via auction at public sale (the "Auction") on March 15, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. (the "Auction Date"), at the offices of Robbins DiMonte, Ltd., 180 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 3300, Chicago, Illinois, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth below, the following described property: 100% of the legal and beneficial limited liability company interests in 1356 WELLINGTON MEZZ OWNER, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company and 3015 SOUTHPORT MEZZ OWNER, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company (the "Collateral"). This sale is being held to enforce Bradford Allen's rights in the Collateral to satisfy the indebtedness of the Debtors to Bradford Allen in the approximate amount of \$2,595,752.15 as of January 31, 2023, with default interest and other charges, including attorney's fees and out-of-pocket expenses, continuing to accrue (the "Indebtedness").

In addition to the Auction being conducted in person, the Auction will be held virtually on Zoom and recorded. The terms of the sale will be as follows: All bids must be given orally or in writing at or before the time of sale. In conjunction with such bid, a bidder (except Bradford Allen) must tender to Lender a deposit equal to five percent (5%) of the proposed purchase price for the Collateral. Bradford Allen shall not be obligated to accept any bid if it deems the bid inadequate and reserves its right to credit bid for the Collateral under any circumstance. The successful bidder, if any, upon payment of the bid price, will receive from Bradford Allen an assignment of 100% of the legal and beneficial limited liability company interests in the Debtors, 1356 Wellington Mezz Owner LLC and 3015 Southport Mezz Owner LLC. Other than a warranty of the existence of Bradford Allen's security interest in the Collateral, no representations or warranties of any kind are or will be given by Bradford Allen at the time of such assignment.

Persons interested in bidding should direct all written bids, all requests for information, all requests for Zoom invitation to the Auction, and all other questions or comments to: Emily C. Kaminski, Robbins DiMonte, Ltd., 180 N. LaSalle St., Suite 3300, Chicago, IL 60601, tel: 312-456-0284, fax: 312-782-6690, email: ekaminski@robbsdimonte.com. Additional terms and conditions of the Auction, which are incorporated herein by reference, may be found at <https://www.southportwellington.com/>.

/s/ Steve Jakubowski, Attorney for Secured Party, Bradford Allen Funding Company, LLC

MARKETS

Rate Worries Put Damper on Investor Mood

By JOE WALLACE AND GUNJAN BANERJI

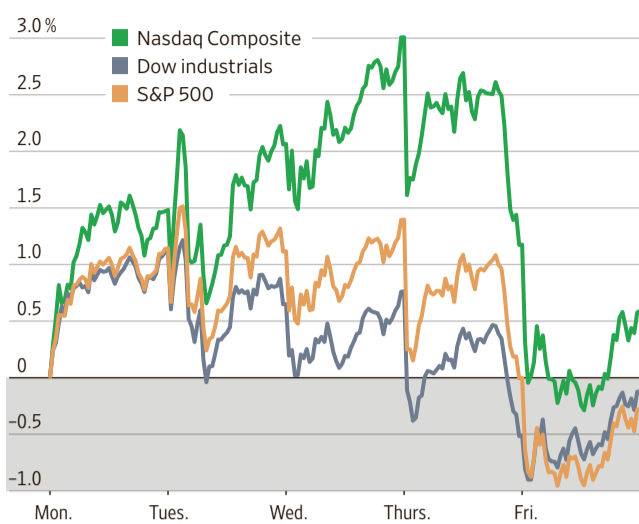
The S&P 500 fell Friday as investors amped up bets on how far the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates in the coming months.

The broad-based stock index lost 11.32 points, or 0.3%, to 4079.09, its second down day in a row. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell 68.56 points, or 0.6%, to 11787.27. The Dow Jones Industrial Average opened lower, then recovered to close higher, adding 129.84 points, or 0.4%, to 33826.69.

Government-bond yields rose for a fourth consecutive week to 3.827%, notching the biggest gains over that stretch since October. Yields rise as prices fall.

The S&P 500 and Dow ended the week in the red. The Nasdaq hung on for a weekly gain of 0.6%.

Index performance this past week



Source: FactSet

Inflation data and commentary from Fed officials this past week have stymied the big rally that started the year. For weeks, stocks rose as investors

grew more hopeful about a slowdown in inflation and a likely end to interest-rate increases. Many of the most speculative corners of the market

outperformed, echoing moves recorded in 2020 and 2021.

Markets have quickly reversed course in recent days. Investors have gotten a wake-up call from some of the recent economic data, which has undercut the idea that the Fed is nearly done raising rates, and that the central bank could then cut them later this year. Two separate sets of inflation data came in hotter than economists had expected.

On Thursday, two Fed officials said they supported a larger rate increase at the central bank's February meeting than the quarter-percentage-point increase the Fed implemented. If strong data keep rolling in, the benign market conditions seen in January could be replaced by volatility of the sort experienced in 2022, some investors say.

"That first month was blockbuster. Everything went up. It didn't matter what you owned,"

said John Roe, head of multiasset funds at Legal & General Investment Management. "Now it's all kicking off again."

Mr. Roe said investors are no longer asking whether there will be a recession or a soft landing in which inflation slows without a serious downturn in the economy. The debate, he said, now revolves around whether there will be "no landing." In this scenario, inflation would remain far above the Fed's target, encouraging the central bank to push interest rates much higher.

The Fed has set a 4.5% to 4.75% target range for its short-term rate and is next due to reassess in late March.

"The bond market is now betting on more rate hikes," said Mike Bailey, director of research at FBB Capital Partners. "That has really put a brick wall in front of the equity market."

In one sign that some traders are growing more cautious about the stock market, there

has been a pickup in activity in wagers tied to the Cboe Volatility Index, which would pay out if volatility jumped.

Still, some corners of the stock market continued their winning streak. Tesla notched a sixth consecutive week of wins, the longest such stretch since November 2021. Shares of Cisco Systems finished their best week since February 2021.

In corporate news, Moderna shares fell \$5.71, or 3.3%, to \$166.60, after the drugmaker said an experimental flu vaccine had mixed results in a large clinical trial. DraftKings shares jumped \$2.73, or 15%, to \$20.54, after quarterly results. Deere rose \$30.35, or 7.5%, to \$433.31 on strong earnings.

The Stoxx Europe 600 fell 0.2%. The Shanghai Composite fell 0.8%, and Japan's Nikkei 225 lost 0.7%.

Most-active futures for Brent crude dropped 2.5% to \$83 a barrel.

Growth Stocks Return to the Lead

By HARDIKA SINGH

Shares of fast-growing companies are leading the 2023 stock rally, but some investors say they don't have much more room to run.

The Russell 3000 Growth Index has climbed 9.8% this year, outpacing the Russell 3000 Value's 4.4% advance. The rally marks a sharp reversal from last year when value stocks, or those that trade at low multiples of their book value, or net worth, stood out in a down market.

An investor bet that slowing inflation will allow the Federal Reserve to slow its pace of rate increases has underlined the stock rally. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which affects everything from auto and student loans to mortgage debt, dropped earlier this year, though it has been climbing again lately. Lower long-term rates have encouraged many to return to the

trade that worked for much of the past decade: growth and technology companies.

"Now investors are starting to recognize that, 'Hey, there are growth companies out there that are trading at a much more reasonable price,'" said Craig Sarembok, wealth adviser and principal at Bartlett Wealth Management in Cincinnati.

Mr. Sarembok says he is looking to add to his large-cap growth stocks exposure.

Among the biggest contributors to the growth index this year are Apple Inc., which has added 17%; Tesla Inc., which has gained 69%; and Nvidia Corp., which has advanced 46%. Those driving the value index are Walt Disney Co., which has risen 21%; JPMorgan Chase & Co., which has added 6.1%; and Exxon Mobil Corp., which is up 0.9%.

Growth stocks are typically companies that promise to deliver faster-than-average profit

growth in the future. The last time growth stocks were beating value stocks by a wider margin to start a year was in 2020, when major stock indexes surged in January and February before crashing at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Led by megacap technology companies, growth shares powered major indexes to dozens of highs in the years after the 2008 financial crisis. Value stocks—which often include shares of banks, oil companies and industrial conglomerates—lagged behind.

Market conditions changed last year. The Fed aggressively raised interest rates to tame inflation. The growth index, which is particularly vulnerable to higher interest rates, fell 30%. Meanwhile, the value index was down a more modest 10%, with nervous investors piling into shares of companies known for their steady cash-flow generation.

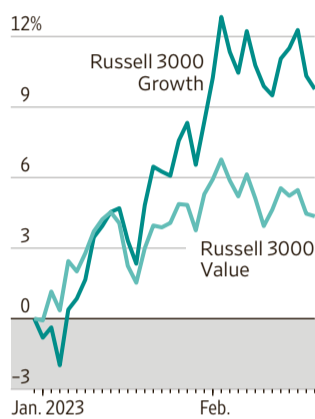
Investors taking a more

cautious approach are already questioning how much longer growth's day in the sun can last. A string of stronger-than-expected economic data over the past two weeks has sapped some of the stock market's recent momentum. Both consumer prices and producer prices rose more than expected in January. Retail sales posted their biggest monthly gain in nearly two years. The labor market has remained robust.

Some investors now fear the Fed may have to keep raising interest rates and hold them there for longer than anticipated. Two Fed officials—Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester and St. Louis Fed President James Bullard—said they would have supported raising interest rates by a half percentage point at the central bank's meeting this month.

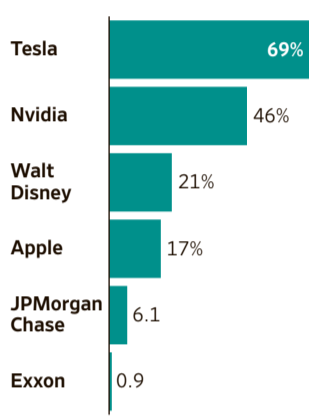
Higher rates would likely lead to more pain for markets—and growth stocks in particular. Plus, valuations are

Index performance, year to date



Source: FactSet

Share-price performance, year to date



still elevated in many sectors.

"It was a very punishing 2022, so I characterize the rally as mostly a snapback," Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment strategist at BMO Wealth Management, said of growth stocks. Mr. Ma said he expects value stocks to outperform growth stocks over the next few years. He points to their lower valuations and prospects of higher profits.

If the Fed is forced to continue raising rates, leading to a harsh recession, that could make defensive stocks shine yet again, said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at Spartan Capital Securities in New York. Mr. Cardillo said he expects a mild recession this year, but added, "If it is a steep recession, then everybody suffers, but there's always a bright spot in the market."

BlockFi Challenges Chapter 11 Case

By ANDREW SCURRIA

Crypto lender BlockFi Inc. has asked for a court ruling stripping Sam Bankman-Fried's offshore investment vehicle of the protections of chapter 11, citing the recent seizure of its assets by federal prosecutors.

BlockFi, itself bankrupt since November, sought Thursday to dismiss the bankruptcy case of Emergent Fidelity Technologies Ltd., the offshore investment vehicle that Mr. Bankman-Fried used to purchase a 7.6% stake in Robinhood Markets Inc. The chapter 11 case serves little

purpose and was filed only to undermine BlockFi's claim to the Robinhood shares, according to BlockFi's motion in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del.

Court-appointed liquidators in Antigua and Barbuda, where Emergent is based, placed it under chapter 11 earlier this month after federal prosecutors seized its Robinhood stake and cash holdings. BlockFi said in its filing that Emergent has no property to administer that would qualify it for chapter 11 and filed bankruptcy only as a litigation tactic.

A representative of Emergent's liquidators from financial adviser Quantuma said on Friday that the bankruptcy filing was done to ensure that the rights of its creditors are protected, "whoever they may be."

"Given the many parties claiming to be creditors or outright owners of Emergent's assets in different lawsuits in the U.S., the [liquidators] believe that chapter 11 protection is the only practical way to empower Emergent to defend itself, its assets and its creditors' interests in the U.S.," said Quantuma director Toni Shukla.



The IPO is the latest in a recent wave of mega listings across the Gulf region.

Emirates To Sell 4% Gas Stake

Continued from page B1

ter the offering, Adnoc will own about 91% of the shares, while Abu Dhabi National Energy Co., or Taqa, will own approximately 5%.

The IPO is the latest in a recent wave of mega listings across the Gulf region, led by Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. Both countries are actively banking on high energy prices to take state-owned companies public, raising cash that would

also help diversify their energy-dependent economies.

Adnoc has already listed a number of its subsidiaries over the past couple of years including its petrochemicals company Borouge and Adnoc Drilling.

Adnoc Gas on its website said it has access to 95% of the U.A.E.'s natural-gas reserves, which is estimated to be the seventh-largest natural gas reserves globally. Adnoc Gas expects to pay dividends of \$3.25 billion for 2023.

With the West largely avoiding Russian oil and gas in the wake of sanctions imposed on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine, Middle East petrostates now have a new market in Europe after years of focusing on sales to Asia. Abu Dhabi sees Europe as a market

of the future because of shifting geopolitics and its move to replace all Russian energy imports by as early as mid-2024.

Earlier this past week Adnoc made the first LNG delivery from the Middle East to Germany. Adnoc is also in talks to buy commodity trading house Gunvor Group Ltd., according to people familiar with the talks, a deal that would create one of the world's largest traders of oil-and-gas products.

Adnoc, which last year announced the discovery of up to 2 trillion standard cubic feet of gas offshore, plans to build a 9.6 million metric ton a year LNG plant in the eastern U.A.E. emirate of Fujairah. The facility will raise Adnoc's LNG production capacity to 15.6 million metric tons a year by 2028.

Advertisement for Special Olympics New York featuring a young girl celebrating and a group of people cheering. Text includes: BE A CHAMPION! Special Olympics New York, Join the Movement, SPECIALOLYMPICSNY.ORG

HEARD ON THE STREET

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & COMMENTARY

Brace for the 'Richcession'

Most economic downturns hit lower-income Americans hardest, but this time is different. The stock market's winners and losers will be different too.

Big companies are announcing layoffs, home and stock prices are wobbling, inflation is squeezing household budgets and the Federal Reserve is still raising interest rates. Not surprisingly, Americans have been hearing the "R" word a lot. It's the wrong one.

The U.S. could still skirt a recession, but it is already in a riches-

By Justin Lahart,
Spencer Jakab, Jinjoo Lee,
Laura Forman
and Telis Demos

sion. That's when, amid economic uncertainty, the well-off feel more of the bite.

Investing successfully in a rich-cession is different from investing in a recession. Investors bracing their portfolios for the downturn need to think about how changes in consumption habits and spending priorities could be different when more-affluent consumers are the ones affected.

While recessions dent many people's financial well-being, the poor and lower-middle classes are often hardest hit. They usually experience greater job losses, have less savings to lean on when paychecks run dry and, once the economy recovers, the skills they have to offer might no longer be in demand.

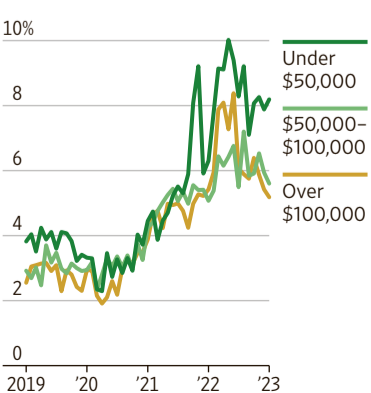
That isn't happening now. Early in the pandemic, several rounds of government relief allowed Americans in general, and lower-income Americans in particular, to build up their finances. Then the job market came roaring back and poorer workers found they could get paid a lot more than they did before. Many white-collar professionals haven't seen their wages outstrip inflation, but people doing lower-paying work have, and the latter group's wealth has risen more, too. Sure, it is still better to be rich and college-educated than poor and not. After decades of widening, though, the gap between the two groups has narrowed.

It could shrink even more. Consider all those layoff announcements. About half of them have come from tech companies since November, according to outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas—ones that often compensate their workers handsomely. As of 2021, for example, the top-paying company in the S&P 500 was Google parent Alphabet, with median pay of about \$296,000. Last month, Alphabet said it would cut 12,000 jobs. Those tech workers have skills useful outside Silicon Valley, but an insurance company or newspaper might not be ready to pay a data scientist as much as Alphabet did.

Meanwhile, there is still unmet demand for work typically done by lower-income earners. Employment in leisure and hospitality still hasn't recovered from the pandemic, for example, despite lots of "Help Wanted" signs. The Labor Department reports that, as of December, the sector had about a million more unfilled jobs than before the pandemic.

Stocks are what one thinks of first when picking winners or losers in a downturn, but most Americans have far more money tied up in real estate. Plenty more would have liked to be homeowners by now, but the cost of homeownership kept them renting or living with relatives. Mortgage rates reached record lows after the pan-

Households' expected change in spending over the next year, by income level



demic hit, but a surge in demand favored people able to pay in cash.

As the value of speculative assets like tech stocks and cryptocurrency soared in 2020 and 2021, splashing out on residential or vacation real estate became less of a stretch for wealthy home buyers. Now, though, the housing market reflects the financial pressure those sorts of buyers are facing.

Home sales slumped last year, but sales of the most expensive homes were particularly weak. From August to November of last year, Zillow data show home sales were down an average of 25% year on year for the top third of the market, but an average of just 11% for the bottom third.

A recent Redfin report notes current housing demand is "selective," with affordable, suburban and competitively priced homes in highest demand, while "most everything else is sitting."

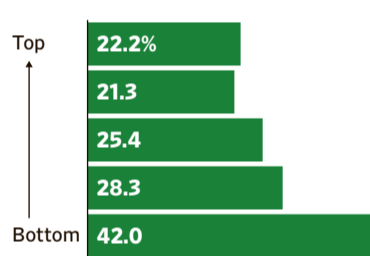
When the market for fancy homes sags, the one for fancy trinkets seems like it should melt down. That isn't how consumer psychology works, though: The truly rich keep buying designer bags and watches until times get very tough. But the ranks of the well-off and the market for status symbols have both expanded in the past several years. So now, sagging stock portfolios and a rising cost of living are hitting entry-level luxury goods.

Among the more-accessible brands feeling the pinch are Michael Kors, which is owned by Capri Holdings, and Tapestry-owned Coach. Both said sales fell on a constant-currency basis in the fourth quarter compared with a year earlier. Yet LVMH, owner of the more upscale Louis Vuitton, reported that revenue for fashion and leather goods in its fourth quarter rose 10% in the same span.

A pinched upper-middle class still trying to dress like a million dollars could create some stock-market winners too. At least some of those full-priced shoppers could end up seeking value in off-price stores. TJX Cos., owner of T.J. Maxx, which specializes in selling brand-name merchandise at a discount, said back in 2010 that it attracted new higher-income customers throughout the sharp 2007-09 recession.

In that downturn, chains like Dollar General initially stumbled as low-income consumers got squeezed by sharply rising food

Percentage change in household net worth by income quintile, 4Q 2019 to 3Q 2022



and gas prices. Later on the chain saw an influx of new customers as joblessness spiked. This time around, a healthier core customer and a relatively worse-off higher-income cohort could lead to more steady market gains. Dollar General said in its last earnings call that it is seeing an uptick in customers with annual household incomes in the \$100,000 range.

Even the rich appear to be gravitating to cheaper grocery options. Walmart said in its last earnings call that nearly three-quarters of the grocery market share it gained came from households that make more than \$100,000 in annual income. Meanwhile, data from Placer.ai shows that the year-over-year change in foot traffic to upscale supermarket Whole Foods declined by more than the broader grocery industry for six consecutive weeks through Dec. 26.

Eating at restaurants will all ways cost more than food bought from one of those supermarkets and prepared at home, but they are less of an indulgence once one considers how busy Americans are with unemployment at an over 50-year low. Menu prices have

risen far more quickly than overall inflation, though, with food and especially labor costs creating pressure. In an October survey of American adults by L.E.K. Consulting, nearly nine in 10 said rising prices have affected their spending at restaurants. While 58% of respondents making less than \$50,000 said they were significantly affected by inflation in their lives, a surprisingly high 35% of those making \$150,000 or more said so too—bad news for some restaurant chains that were resilient in past downturns.

For example, the namesake dessert isn't the only thing that's a bit rich at Cheesecake Factory, a restaurant that is often found near upscale malls. That might be behind a nearly 11% drop in foot traffic in the fourth quarter compared with the same period of 2019, according to data from Placer.ai.

Cheesecake Factory's relatively affluent customer base worked to its advantage in the aftermath of the financial crisis when same-store sales fell by much less than other chains in 2009 and 2010, according to data from Knapp-Track and Credit Suisse.

As with retailers, some restaurant chains aren't so much benefiting from financial resilience among lower-income people as welcoming new, college-educated and upper-middle class customers trading down to a cheaper option still perceived as having high quality. Chipotle is one example. Though it has a wealthier clientele compared with other fast-food chains, it is expanding and enjoying brisk traffic. Chipotle's chief executive said last year that it has captured customers suffering sticker shock at full-service restaurants.

Cruise-ship companies are another surprising beneficiary of the pressure on wealthier households. Cruises are often derided as a poor person's idea of a rich person's vacation, yet analysts' channel checks indicate there have been outsized gains in sales and pricing for luxury cruise lines relative to more mass-market brands, suggesting wealthier consumers are coming around to the value proposition of floating vacations that frequently include food, entertainment and lodging for one price.

Another favorite of well-off customers that boomed during the pandemic, renting whole homes in places like beaches and mountains, is shifting in the opposite direction. Revenue per available room for short-term U.S. vacation rentals is forecast to decline in 2023 after years of growth, according to AirDNA. That could pinch homestay platforms like Expedia's Vrbo, and Airbnb, whose businesses have benefited over the past few years from materially higher prices as well-off consumers sought bigger properties in more-private areas.

Paying for leisure often means borrowing, even for well-off customers. Companies that specialize

in lending them money aren't especially worried about their credit-worthiness in the event of a serious downturn. American Express, which primarily caters to that cohort, has loan-loss reserves representing just 2.4% of total loans and card receivables as of the end of 2022. Credit-card loan loss rates across U.S. banks back in 2009 and 2010 hit north of 10%, according to Federal Reserve data.

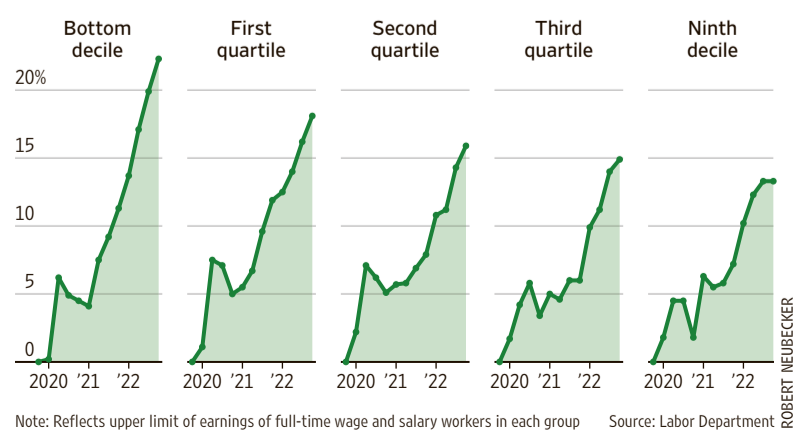
But investors at the moment seem unduly concerned with lower-income customers defaulting on credit card and auto loans and not enough with how much high-end lenders are splashing out to keep potentially cautious clients spending. They are dangling more benefits, which cost money. Amex, Capital One Financial, JPMorgan Chase and others have highlighted increased card-marketing or other customer-engagement expenses. Wealthy consumers tend to have other sources of credit beyond cards, like loans secured by an investment portfolio. This has been a source of lending growth for wealth managers in recent

years, though it has been cooling lately, partly because rising interest rates are making it more expensive. Bank of America, JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley and others noted lower securities-based lending in their wealth units in the fourth quarter.

Wealthier people worried about the economy may also maintain a larger cash cushion, or dial back risk taking. That could mean shifting investments into money-market funds or fixed-income products that often generate lower fees for asset managers. People also might look to get out of some of their less-liquid investments: Blackstone, KKR & Co. and Starwood Capital Group have had to limit redemptions from nontraded real-estate investment trusts, for example.

Rich-people problems aren't going to tank the economy, but understanding them could make the richcession a lot smoother for investors.

Percentage change in usual weekly earnings since 4Q 2019





Hometown Honors
Annette Gordon-Reed
on the Texas school
named for her **C3**

REVIEW

'The Lincoln Miracle'
How the Republican
Convention of 1860
saved the Union **Books C7**



CULTURE | SCIENCE | POLITICS | HUMOR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, February 18 - 19, 2023 | **C1**



Investors (from left) Larry Cohen, Ari Cohen and David Sager with the Flaget Madonna in its storage vault in Illinois.

IS THIS PAINTING A RAPHAEL OR NOT? A FORTUNE RIDES ON THE ANSWER

For decades, a group of investors has been hoping to prove that an artwork found in an antique shop is by the Renaissance master.
By Kelly Crow

ANTHONY AYERS HAD A HUNCH that he'd found a masterpiece.

While vacationing in the English countryside in 1995, Mr. Ayers spotted a dusty, wood-panel painting tucked behind an armoire in an antique shop. It depicts Mary holding an infant Jesus in her lap as her older cousin Elizabeth and a toddler John the Baptist look on lovingly; the backdrop features an oak tree with a goldfinch, an ancient symbol foreshadowing the Crucifixion. The shopkeeper suggested that the painting could be from the Renaissance.

Mr. Ayers wasn't an art historian—he was an amateur artist and cabinet maker in the Chicago area—but he was intrigued enough to ask a few friends to pool their funds and buy the painting for roughly \$30,000. "Tony just knew it was something," said his wife Dawn Turco, who was with him when he discovered it. "He could not get it out of his head."

Mr. Ayers soon came to believe that what he'd found was actually a Raphael. If true, the find would be seismic. Raphael is considered one of the greatest painters of the Italian Renaissance, and at his death in 1520, he left behind fewer than 200 works. Anything he created would be worth a fortune. The last Raphael work to be auctioned, a sketch titled "Head of a Muse," sold for \$48 million at Christie's in 2009. And that was before a rediscovered Leonardo da Vinci, "Salvator Mundi," raised market expectations in 2017 by selling for \$450 million.

What began with a chance discovery turned

into a quest that consumed Mr. Ayers for decades. He managed to discover a great deal about the painting's mysterious origins before he died last year at age 64. Now Ms. Turco, 69, a retired administrator at an Illinois school for the blind, must wait for the art world's gatekeepers to weigh in. Waiting with her are around 40 people who together have invested more than \$500,000 in helping to identify the painting and now have an ownership stake in it.

Art historians have disagreed about whether Mr. Ayers's find is a real Raphael. A new report commissioned by the owners from Art Recognition, a Zurich firm that uses machine learning to analyze artists' brushstrokes, has found a 97% probability that the faces of Jesus and Mary in the work were painted by Raphael. An assistant may have completed the rest of the panel, as was common at the time.

Carina Popovici, the chief executive and founder of Art Recognition, is a former quantitative risk specialist for Credit Suisse with a doctorate in theoretical physics. She said that her team used algorithms to compare

Mr. Ayers's painting to more than 100 close-up digital images of proven Raphael works, as well as to fakes, in order to differentiate the artist's particular way of handling a paintbrush. The firm's AI software has been trained to recognize the styles of 300 artists this way, and fewer than 10% of its clients' works produce a positive identification with higher than 95% probability. It re-

Please turn to the next page

Raphael left behind fewer than 200 works. The most recent one to be auctioned sold for \$48 million.

Inside

WEEKEND CONFIDENTIAL

From an orphanage to the Paralympic Games, champion athlete Oksana Masters has learned the importance of resilience. **C6**



Slow Tech

The exponential gains that fueled the computing revolution can't be replicated in other industries. **C5**

BALTICS

Russia's war on Ukraine has revived dark memories and nuclear fears in Lithuania. **C4**



JASON GAY

Baseball has enshrined its 'ghost runner.' Can phantom stand-ins have other uses? **C6**



REVIEW

A Fortune at Stake in an Art Mystery

Continued from the prior page

cently concluded that a possible painting by Peter Paul Rubens in London's National Gallery wasn't his work. When the AI's latest test pointed so firmly to Raphael, Ms. Popovici said, "We were shocked."

Still, New York-based paintings conservator Karen Thomas, who worked on the purported Raphael in 2019, remains wary of the technology. "I worry people will see the computer as flawless, but it's just another tool, not a smoking gun," she said. Ms. Thomas said that computers can probably recognize brushwork patterns better than the naked eye, but she wonders whether machines can take into account paint that's been worn down and other factors related to a work's condition, as scholars do.

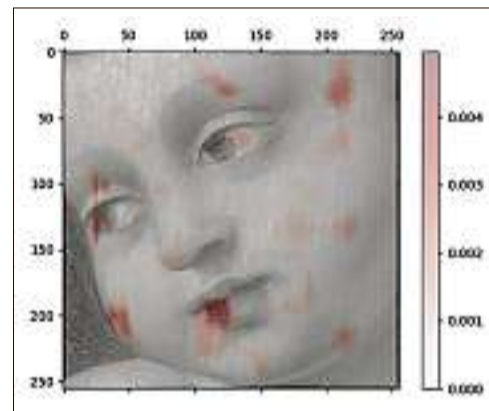
The rest of the art world still needs some convincing. Before any museum or major auction house will agree to show or sell Mr. Ayers's painting, leading experts will need to take the AI's findings seriously. These include Nicholas Penny, a Raphael scholar and former director of London's National Gallery, and Keith Christiansen, an authority on European art and curator emeritus at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Both have seen the work in person over the years, according to several people who arranged viewings, but have declined to comment on it publicly.

"There's a real risk of taking a side," said Larry Silver, a Renaissance art historian at the University of Pennsylvania. Museums often discourage curators from wading into attribution debates if an artwork's owners are likely to capitalize on its upgraded status by selling it. Scholars may also fear that voicing an opinion could entangle them in lawsuits with owners who stand to profit by linking a work with a high-profile artist.

Even so, David Pollack, an old master specialist at Sotheby's, said he fields more than 1,000 requests annually from collectors asking the auction house to research anonymous works. Many hope that their pieces could have been painted by a significant Old Master, especially one of the "Ninja Turtles," he said, referring to the popular cartoon starring crime-fighting turtles named Leonardo, Donatello, Michelangelo and Raphael.

Mr. Pollack said his research suggested Mr. Ayers's painting was actually made by Antonio del Ceraiolo, a lesser-known contemporary of Raphael who tried to mimic the master's style. Mr. Pollack said he couldn't comment on the new AI report, which concluded that Ceraiolo did not paint the faces.

Mr. Silver has also seen the painting, and he's certain it was painted by someone in Raphael's close circle in Florence, at least. He said he was intrigued two decades ago by the warmth and subtlety of Mary's features—a quality for which Raphael was hailed during his lifetime—though he dismissed the handling of Elizabeth's features as "awful." Mr. Silver's take may not carry as much weight among experts, because his



Above: The technique used to render the face of the infant Jesus may offer a clue to the painter's identity. Far left: Anthony Ayers, who discovered the painting, and his wife Dawn Turco, late 1990s. Left: An AI heat map of the face of the Christ child generated by Art Recognition. Below left: Raphael's 1505 self-portrait.

specialty is Northern European Renaissance art, not Italian. Still, he hopes that the AI report will help establish a scholarly consensus, calling the results "good news."

At the time Mr. Ayers bought the painting in 1995, he had just one solid lead about its provenance. The antique store owner told him it had once belonged to the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, a convent in Kentucky, who had sold it in the 1980s. A few months later Mr. Ayers visited the convent and made a break-

through. Philippe Farcy, a longtime friend of Mr. Ayers and an early investor in the painting, recalled that the sisters told him it had been donated by one of their order's founders, Bishop Joseph Benedict Flaget.

Kathy Hertel-Baker, who now directs the convent's archives, confirmed the account. In the early 19th century, Flaget organized a group of priests in France to gather donations of art to decorate new churches on the U.S. frontier. Ms. Hertel-Baker's records suggest that the convent received the painting from one of these European shipments some time before the 1830s. Mr. Ayers came home elated. He and a handful of early investors named their work the "Flaget Madonna" in the bishop's honor.

Next Mr. Ayers hired conservators and pigment analysts, who found that the wood panels and paints dated to early-1500s Florence. He briefly wondered if he had a never-seen Leonardo da Vinci on his hands, friends said. But when Mr. Silver, the Renaissance art historian, saw the work, he disagreed: "Those are Raphael faces," he said.

Patricia Trutty-Coohill, a Renaissance art historian now retired from Siena College, agreed. In a 1997 paper, she championed the work as a Raphael "in the early and transitional period of his Florentine sojourn." She based her thinking on telling details, such as the children's ears, which had been painted so that they appeared slightly "reddish." Raphael was known to employ such virtuosic touches.

But the groundswell of scholarly support that Mr. Ayers hoped for didn't materialize. In a 1999 letter, the German Raphael expert Jürg Meyer zur Capellen would only tell the owners that the painting "is rather near to Raphael." Others suggested Ceraiolo, the admirer of Raphael, who was active in Florence starting in the 1520s. In 2001, Chris-



'This thing started off as a fun distraction and now it's engulfed us.'

ARI COHEN
Investor in the Flaget Madonna

tie's agreed to sell the work, but only if it were attributed to Ceraiolo.

Mr. Ayers and his investors declined, still hoping for a Raphael identification. In 2004, London's National Gallery bought a newly attributed Raphael for \$41 million after a high-profile fundraising campaign. A few months later, Atlanta's High Museum sold a Ceraiolo painting, "Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John the Baptist," at Christie's for \$144,000.

Mr. Farcy said that the pool of investors has expanded over the years to cover research-related costs. A decade ago, a 1% share in the painting was valued by the group at around \$100,000. Professional art dealers sometimes buy expensive pieces in a consortium, but such groups rarely number in the dozens.

Then came a severe blow: Mr. Ayers was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. In 2010, he and the group decided that he and his wife would keep their 30% ownership share in the painting but cede control of the attribution project. In

2011, the group hired another researcher, Nicholas Eastaugh at Art Analysis & Research, whose 30-page report didn't rule out Raphael but also didn't definitively attribute the painting to the master.

The way the effort kept dragging on took a toll. Some of the early investors eventually bequeathed their shares to heirs. "Sometimes I would joke that if we could only find a 'Made in China' stamp on it somewhere, we could be done with it," Mr. Farcy said.

One of the original investors, Ari Cohen, was optimistic when he gave Mr. Ayers \$1,000 in 1995, and he's put in far more since. The owner of a Chicago firm that manufactures perforated steel, he even named one of his sons Raphael after the artist. That son is now 17 years old. Mr. Cohen said he would only be willing to sell the painting if it's accepted as a Raphael. He and the group can't afford for it to be painted by anyone else. "This thing started off as a fun distraction," he said, "and now it's engulfed us."

In recent years, the investors have doubled down on the science, hoping that more data—like the report from Art Recognition—might persuade scholars to give their painting another look. Mr. Cohen said the exasperating process has left him wondering if the group's desire to resell the painting has inadvertently doomed its chances of ever achieving a Raphael attribution. "If you're a museum and you own one of these, it's no harm to call it a Raphael," he said. "But if you're nobodies like us, and the art world knows we're going to sell it, we're not going to get their blessing."

He still holds out hope that the AI report might jumpstart the conversation. As for Ms. Turco, she said she would just like to see her husband's hunch validated, once and for all. "I would like to be able to visit his gravesite and say, 'Well done,'" she said. Until then, the painting sits in a Chicago-area bank vault, unseen.



'Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John the Baptist' by Antonio del Ceraiolo, who some believe was the painter of the would-be Raphael.

REVIEW



The author (left) talks with a student at the dedication ceremony for Annette Gordon-Reed Elementary School, October 2022.



Annette Gordon-Reed with her father, ca. 2001.

By ANNETTE GORDON-REED

A Historian Makes History in Texas

In the 1960s, the author was the first Black child to enroll in her hometown's white school system. Now a new school is named for her.

After a period of firm resistance, I gave in last year and allowed my hometown school district to name a new elementary school after me. As a first-grader in 1964, I was the first Black child to enroll in a white school in Conroe, Texas, north of Houston. I had held out about accepting the honor because I always believed it was a bad idea to name things after people who are still alive, tying an institution and its fortunes to the name and reputation of a specific individual.

I had developed this belief long before the current battles over buildings named for controversial figures and monuments to such people. As those situations make clear, death—even long ago—provides no real protection for individuals once thought to have been worthy of public honors.

George Washington, “the indispensable man” who played such a critical role in the formation of the United States, was also George Washington the enslaver, who sold people to near certain death in Caribbean plantations and who replaced some of his lost teeth with those of enslaved people. He did free the individuals over whom he had legal control, but only after he was dead and gone and needed them no more. It is safe to say that for most of American history, the former view of Washington was deemed vastly more important than the latter, which was commonly treated as an afterthought, when it was mentioned at all.

Had my parents been alive, I would not have had a moment's hesitation about allowing a school to be named for me. Their pride alone would have obliterated any doubt. If it weren't for a decision they made when I was six years old, there likely would never have been the occasion for a Gordon-Reed Elementary School.

When I was headed to first grade,

the Conroe Independent School District was still resisting *Brown v. Board of Education*, a decade after the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling. The method they employed was a so-called “freedom of choice” plan. The expectation was that parents of both races would continue to do what they had done for decades. White parents would choose traditionally white schools for their kids, and Black parents would choose the Black school in the town, of which there was only one: Booker T. Washington.

In this way segregation would continue. But the often brutal racial history of the town—there had been lynchings of Black people over the years, and a Black man had been burned at the stake on the courthouse square in the 1920s—cast doubt on the idea that the decision, particularly for Black people, would be wholly voluntary.

My parents, Alfred and Bettye Jean Gordon, no doubt influenced by the heady days of the Civil Rights Movement, decided to make a different choice, though my mother taught English at Booker T, as it was known,

and my two older brothers went there. Indeed, it was where I had gone to kindergarten. They picked a white school, Hulon N. Anderson Elementary, for me.

So, as a first-grader, I integrated the schools of our town. That is the reason some people thought a school



should be named for me. It wasn't my idea to change the system. I would have been happy to return to Booker T, where I had made friends I was looking forward to rejoining as a first-grader. But off I went to an intense year at Anderson.

By agreement among my parents, the school district and the local newspaper, no attention was supposed to be paid to my arrival. I would start school as if it were an ordinary occasion—which, of course, it was not. As

the year went on, administrators and other visitors often appeared in the doorway of my classroom to observe the unusual scene of a Black child in a room full of white children. My first-grade teacher, Mrs. Daughtry, handled things beautifully, making me feel totally welcome and secure.

The children were a different matter. Some were nice and accepting. Others, carrying the prejudices of their families, were openly hostile. Others were nice to me at school, but if I saw them in town with their family they would be cold and noncommunicative. They knew their relatives would disapprove if they were friendly to me. This was all a valuable lesson, at a young age, about the way race works.

There were many tough moments, but I survived—actually, thrived—at Anderson. Even if the experience had not been as positive as it ultimately turned out to be, I would still have the status of having been “the first” and, therefore, part of the town's history.

This past October, I had the surreal experience of attending the ceremonial opening of Annette Gordon-Reed Elementary School with members of my family and friends, some of my parents' friends and some of my high-school classmates in attendance. I arrived to find a beautiful new school building for around 600 students, pre-K through sixth grade, in an area of

Texas whose population is exploding. I was given a tour of the building by several very self-assured sixth-graders. The children's choir performed, and several students and administrators spoke.

Stunned by the proceedings, I gave a short address that did not come close to expressing the depth of my feelings about what was taking place. The entire time I was thinking about my parents and what they would have made of this moment. They took a tremendous risk for what they thought was the chance to chart a different course, not just for me but for the community at large. More than anything, this school named for me was a tribute to them. They had been the instigators of my time at Anderson, the creative ones.

Several years after I entered Anderson, the Supreme Court struck down freedom of choice plans like Conroe's, and the schools in our town were totally desegregated. Booker T. Washington was no longer a Black-only school, and the name was changed to just Washington, apparently in deference to the unease of white parents who did not want their children going to a school named for a Black man, not even the “Wizard of Tuskegee.”

There was no change in routine for me; I was already in place at Anderson. My mother, however, went to teach at what had been the all-white Conroe High School. During that era other customs fell. The doctor's office that I had gone to as a small child ceased having separate waiting rooms. When my brothers and I went to the movies, we no longer had to sit in the balcony. Social life became easier, but the racial and economic hierarchy created during slavery and its aftermath did not fall immediately, of course. That was still a work in progress, as it is now.

My hometown has not overcome its tough racial history. It was particularly slow-going during my parents' lifetimes, a fact that caused them both to become a bit disillusioned about the way integration unfolded in Conroe. But things have happened there that I could not have imagined as a little girl walking into the halls of Anderson Elementary. My parents would have been amazed to see Black principals and administrators and schools with Black people's names on them, including my own.

Change is not easy, but I am proud of my parents' contribution to making change in the corner of Texas where we lived. I am hopeful, on their behalf, that progress will continue to be made.

Ms. Gordon-Reed is the Carl M. Loeb University Professor at Harvard University. She is the author of “On Juneteenth” and “The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family,” which won the Pulitzer Prize for History.

FROM TOP RIGHT: ANNETTE GORDON-REED; JASON FOCHT/IMAN/HOUSTON CHRONICLE (2)



WORD ON THE STREET
BEN ZIMMER

A Military Term Abducted By Fans of Aliens

THE U.S. MILITARY recently dispatched fighter jets over North American airspace to shoot down three...well, what exactly?

The Pentagon has called them “high-altitude airborne objects.” At a press briefing on Monday, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby classified them as “unidentified aerial phenomena.” But as Rep. Jim Himes, ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, acknowledged on NBC's “Meet the Press,” most people just call them “UFOs,” regardless of the official terminology.

“UFO” as an abbreviated

form of “unidentified flying object” may be the most common label, but it is one that government and military agencies have long sought to avoid for obvious reasons. The term unhelpfully evokes little green men in flying saucers, a popular perception going back to the 1950s.

As the website for the Air Force Declassification Office explains, “UFO” is “popularly taken as a synonym for alien spacecraft and generally most discussions of UFOs revolve around this presumption.” For this reason, “investigators now prefer to use the broader term ‘unidentified aerial phenomenon’ (or ‘UAP’), to avoid the confusion and speculative associations that have become attached to ‘UFO.’”

But the term “UFO” itself began as military-speak. In 1947, there was a flurry of sightings of what the press dubbed “flying saucers,” starting that June when a pilot named Kenneth Arnold said he saw nine mysterious disc-shaped aircraft flying near Washington's Mount Rainier. The next month, the Twin Falls Times-News, an Idaho newspaper, reported that “un-



identified flying objects” were spotted by local picnickers.

Early on, the full phrase was used by official investigators, as in a technical report from the U.S. Air Force in February 1949 that promised to help “assess the possibility of a threat to national security presented by the sighting of such large numbers of unidentified flying objects.” The snappier designation of “UFO” would take a few years to emerge. Word researcher Bill Mullins located an Air Force memorandum from Nov. 3, 1952 by Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, detailing a trip to New Mexico's Los Alamos National Laboratory where he and a colleague “met with seven people from the lab who were interested in

the subject of UFOs.”

Interestingly enough, Ruppelt's memo also referred to “the sighting of an UFO,” suggesting that he pronounced the term acronymically as “oo-foe” rather than as the initialism “yoo-eff-oh.” Later, in his 1956 book “The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects,” Ruppelt recommended pronouncing it as “yoo-foe,” though “yoo-eff-oh” would remain the most common way to say it.

“UFO” might have remained military jargon were it not for the publication of a 1953 book with the sensational title “Flying Saucers from Outer Space,” written by Donald Keyhoe, a former Marine Corps aviator. In an advance excerpt of the book

for the magazine *The Air Line Pilot*, Keyhoe described an incident in which two F-86 jet fighters chased a “UFO (Unidentified Flying Object).” According to Jonathan Lighter, editor of “The Historical Dictionary of American Slang,” before the release of Keyhoe's book, “‘UFO’ was a term quite unknown to the public.” By the late 1950s, a whole field of amateur “ufology” would be born.

Thanks to speculation about the interplanetary origins of such objects, “UFO” would soon join “flying saucer” as a popular designation for alien craft making earthly flybys. That necessitated yet another shift in nomenclature to avoid suggestions of science-fiction-style invasions from outer space. “Unidentified aerial phenomena,” or “UAP” for short, became the new term of art.

In the latest terminological twist, NASA has modified “UAP” to stand for a slightly different phrase: “unidentified anomalous phenomena.” But no matter the bureaucratic relabeling, that won't stop people from using the word “UFO”—with all the cultural baggage it entails.

JAMES YANG

REVIEW

MIND & MATTER

SUSAN PINKER

Placebos Can Have a Real Effect on Guilty Feelings



PLACEBOS—medical interventions that contain no therapeutic ingredients—are a mainstay of randomized controlled trials, the gold standard of medical research. In these studies, one group of participants receives an experimental treatment and another gets a placebo, while both experimenters and participants remain in the dark about which group is which. That way, the results aren't influenced by people's expectations. It's good research design, but if you were a patient enrolled in a clinical trial, how would you feel if you found out you were given a placebo instead of a possible treatment?

In fact, researchers have found that placebos can be effective even when they are "open." Surprisingly enough, taking a sugar pill can be beneficial even when you know it's a sugar pill. Now a new study published in *Nature Scientific Reports* last December shows that open placebos don't just work for physical pain; they can also reduce negative emotions like guilt.

Led by Dilan Sezer, a doctoral student in clinical psychology at the University of Basel, the study recruited 112 healthy university students between 18 and 40 years old. "Then there was a baseline assessment of their guilt. Using a questionnaire, we asked, how guilty do they feel in general?" said Ms. Sezer.

At the next stage of the study, people were asked to write about a specific event in their past that made them feel shame for having treated someone shabbily, and the strength of their guilty feelings was assessed with a questionnaire. Then the participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups. The first was given a "deceptive" placebo: It contained no medicinal ingredients, but participants were told it contained herbs and essential oils that had been "shown to reduce guilt feelings." The second



group was given an "open" placebo and were told that it "does not contain any medicinal ingredients." The third was a control group that received no intervention at all.

Afterward, each participant was asked to fill out the same questionnaire a second time. The findings were crystal clear: Both placebo groups showed a significant drop in guilt compared to those in the no-treatment control group. What's more, "the difference between placebo groups was statistically indistinguishable," Ms. Sezer said.

How can placebos work when a person knows they're fake? Some researchers have speculated that a combination of hope and uncertainty leads the "brain to anticipate, seek out and identify new data or rewards," writes Ted Kaptchuk, who leads the Program in Placebo Studies at Harvard Medical School. The human brain is constantly testing hypotheses about what might come next, even if we are not overtly aware of this process. Certain environments and rituals also create expectations about how we are going to feel, whether we're seeing a play in a theater or participating in a study in a lab or clinic.

Ms. Sezer's study reinforces the notion that we aren't always completely rational about what can help us. She notes that her sample was small and included only psychologically healthy people, but she hopes the findings will be investigated further. "We don't know yet if this will work in a clinical population," she says, "but for everyday guilt in young people, it works."



FROM TOP: BERTA TILMANTAITE; DENIS VEJAS

War Darkens a Second Winter in Lithuania

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has placed the Baltic countries in an anxious limbo, writes a journalist in Vilnius.

BY KAROLIS VYŠNIAUSKAS

They say that every generation has its war. As an aging millennial, born into Lithuania's post-1990 democratic success story, I thought that the climate crisis and Covid would be enough for my cohort. Then, on Feb. 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, and along with many of my compatriots, I understood that nothing would be the same.

Lithuania's history has long centered on the fight against Russian imperialism. Our lands were yoked to Russia in a treaty in the late 18th century, and our modern national story is often told as beginning in 1863, when Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian fighters jointly rebelled against the Russian empire. The uprising was brutally suppressed and led to the intensified Russification of the region. Lithuanian language publications were banned and replaced by Cyrillic. Book smugglers became national heroes for illegally bringing Lithuanian books into the Russian empire and keeping the language alive.

In the interwar period, Lithuania declared independence and started building a democracy, only for it to be crushed first by the U.S.S.R. then by Nazi Germany, and then again by the U.S.S.R. Under Stalin, some 280,000 Lithuanian citizens were exiled to remote parts of Russia, starting with politicians, teachers, writers and priests.

My grandfather and two great-grandfathers were among those exiled thousands of miles from home—to Magadan, Krasnoyarsk and the Komi Republic—for opposing the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. One stood accused of having "too much land." Another was secretly listening to Western radio. The third joined the armed resistance and was betrayed by a friend. One of my great-grandfathers died in exile. The trauma passed to the generations that followed, which had to go on living under Soviet occupation.

My generation was the one to finally break free. We were EU citizens, protected by NATO and increasingly cosmopolitan. Then came the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a Lithuanian friend put it to me, "Only after the war started did I properly look at the map. I mean, I looked at it."

We had always known that Lith-

uania occupied an unfortunate geographical position on the frontier of the EU, with Russia's enclave of Kaliningrad to the west and Belarus to the east. In all its history, Lithuania had been an independent republic for less than six decades. But growing up after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we somehow took peace and independence for granted.

When the shelling in Ukraine started, I had been in New York for six months, studying journalism on a Fulbright scholarship. I loved the anonymity the city brought, the feeling that my national identity wasn't my defining characteristic. But on the morning of Feb. 24, I needed to be around other people who would understand what I felt.

I went to demonstrations in Times Square and at the Russian consulate. There, I met devastated Ukrainians imploring Biden to interfere. I met Russian oppositionists holding signs that read, "I'm Russian, I stand with Ukraine." I met a woman from Taiwan who feared that China's leadership would follow Vladimir Putin's example. I also met fellow Lithuanians. What united us was the realization that Ukrainians were fighting our fight.

Back home in Lithuania, that feeling was palpable. The country of 2.8 million people collectively raised 2 million euros for Ukraine's army in the first two days of the war. Less than a month later, that number had reached 17 million. A popular Lithuanian stand-up comedian, Ukraine-born Oleg Surajev, stopped performing and opened a

camp. She didn't need to be persuaded. foundation, collecting 3.5 million euros for Ukrainian defenders since March 2022. After the revelation of the Bucha massacre in Ukraine, Rūta Meilutytė, a Lithuanian swimmer and Olympic gold medalist, swam in the pond next to Russia's embassy in Vilnius with the waters colored red, symbolizing blood. A video of the performance went viral on Twitter and Instagram.

Many Lithuanians opened their homes to the 74,000 Ukrainian refugees who came to Lithuania. The parents of a friend of mine were among those who donated an apartment to a Ukrainian family. The volunteer coordinating the refugee housing project asked the couple if they wanted to know anything about the family. "No," said the mother. "Just let them in." She was born in Siberia, where her parents had been exiled to a Soviet forced labor camp. She didn't need to be persuaded.

My mom, who grew up without her exiled grandfather, is teaching Ukrainian refugees the Lithuanian language so that they can more easily find jobs. A Lithuanian company started making portable plywood beds for Ukraine's soldiers. A Lithuanian NGO sent ambulance cars serving as mobile OB-GYN stations. Lithuania is providing Ukrainians with electric generators—350 of them to date—crucial equipment after Russia's attacks on Ukrainian power supplies. Both the ruling and the opposition parties support military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. When Russia invaded

'Only after the war started did I properly look at the map,' a friend said.



Ukrainian fighters see off evacuating family members in Lviv, Ukraine, March 2022.

A Lithuanian flag waves at a protest in front of Russia's embassy in Vilnius, Feb. 2022.

Ukraine, 91% of Lithuanians said that they opposed it. The mind-set is similar in the other Baltic countries, Latvia and Estonia.

The people of the Baltics support Ukraine not only because they see an imperial-minded Russia as a threat, but also because they know that Ukrainians have historically had it much worse than they have. Between the two world wars, when Lithuanians were building an independent republic, 4 million Ukrainians died of famine under Stalin's rule. In 2014, when Lithuania was already a member of the EU and NATO, a hundred Ukrainians gave their lives in the uprising that cast off a president linked to Moscow. Today many Lithuanians feel anxious and uncertain about the future, but these sentiments don't compare to the suffering in Ukraine.

Unlike Ukraine, Lithuania can claim the protection of NATO's Article 5, which says that an attack "against one" NATO country is an attack "against them all." In September, President Biden reaffirmed that commitment, saying that the U.S. and NATO would defend "every single inch of NATO territory." And yet, some in Lithuania have been preparing for the worst. In the first month after Russia invaded Ukraine, requests for permission to purchase a weapon in Lithuania quadrupled. When Russia took control of the Chernobyl nuclear plant last February, iodine pills to protect against radiation leapt from the shelves of Lithuanian pharmacies. Nuclear fears, in particular, loom very large in the Baltics. What if a cornered Vladimir Putin decides to unleash his arsenal?

"Then we will all die," one friend in Vilnius told me. "But I cannot live a life paralyzed by something I cannot control."

Last month, I returned to Vilnius with a master's degree, but with little appetite for celebration. The city experienced a total of 5 hours of sun in the whole month of January—the fewest in recorded history. The mood is gloomy. My journalism colleagues are tired. A colleague went to report from Kherson. I worry about him. I am slowly coming to a realization that the country I left before my studies no longer exists. Our society is in a limbo between war and peace, calm on the outside, burning on the inside.

Absent a strong counter movement inside Russia itself, the Kremlin's imperial ambitions will continue to threaten the people living within Russia's "sphere of influence"—what a heartless, colonial term that is. Perhaps losing in Ukraine will at last ignite an anti-colonial movement in Russia, as happened in Germany after its defeat in World War II. Or maybe the Ukrainians are just buying the rest of us more time.

Mr. Vyšniauskas is a writer and editor at nara.lt, a longform journalism nonprofit in Vilnius, Lithuania.

REVIEW

By Vaclav Smil

Tech Progress Is Slowing Down

Despite utopian hopes, the exponential growth of computer technology can't be replicated in other key areas.

Nothing has affected, and warped, modern thinking about the pace of technological invention more than the rapid exponential advances of solid-state electronics. The conviction that we have left the age of gradual growth behind began with our ability to crowd ever more components onto a silicon wafer, a process captured by Gordon Moore's now-famous law that initially ordained a doubling every 18 months, later adjusted to about two years. By 2020, microchips had more than 10 million times as many components as the first microprocessor, the Intel 4004, released in 1971.

Moore's law was the foundation for the rapid rise of businesses based on electronic data processing, from PayPal to Amazon to Facebook. It made it possible to go in a lifetime from bulky landline phones to palm-size smartphones. These gains are widely seen today as harbingers of similarly impressive gains in other realms, such as solar cells, batteries, electric cars and even urban farming.

Bestselling tech prophets like Ray Kurzweil and Yuval Noah Harari argue that exponential growth will allow us to disrupt our way into a future devoid of disease and misery and abounding in material riches. In the words of investor Azeem Azhar, creator of the popular newsletter Exponential View, "We are entering an age of abundance. The first period in human history in which energy, food, computation and much else will be trivially cheap to produce."

The problem is that the post-1970 ascent of electronic architecture and performance has no counterpart in other aspects of our lives. Exponential growth has not taken place in the fundamental economic activities on which modern civilization depends for its survival—agriculture, energy production, transportation and large engineering projects. Nor do we see rapid improvements in areas that directly affect health and quality of life, such as new drug discoveries and gains in longevity.

To satisfy Moore's law, microchip capacity has increased about 35% annually since 1970, with higher rates in the early years. In contrast, during the first two decades of the 21st century, Asian rice harvests increased by 1% a year, and yields of sorghum, sub-Saharan Africa's staple grain, went up by only about 0.8% a year. Since 1960, the average per capita GDP of sub-Saharan Africa has grown no more than 0.7% annually.

Growth rates in productive capacity have been similarly restrained. Most of the world's electricity is generated by large steam turbines whose efficiency improved by about 1.5% a year over the past 100 years. We keep making steel more efficiently, but the annual decline in energy use in the metal's production averaged less than 2% during the past 70 years. In 1900 the best battery had an energy density of 25 watt-hours per kilogram; in 2022 the best lithium-ion batteries deployed on a large commercial scale had an energy density 12 times higher, corresponding to growth of just 2% a year.

The impressively declining cost of solar photovoltaic cells (PVs) has

raised expectations that we are approaching a breakthrough in solar electricity generation. If the cost of PVs were the only determinant of the actual cost of power generation, solar generation would soon be too cheap to meter. In reality, detailed U.S. data for residential PV systems show that the cost of the solar panels is now only about 15% of the total investment. The rest is needed to cover structural and electrical components, labor, permitting and inspection, and taxes.

None of those components is tending to zero, and hence the overall cost of solar power—measured in dollars per watt of direct current delivered—shows a distinctly declining rate of improvement. Between 2010

and 2015 it fell by 55%, between 2015 and 2020 by just 20%. Even as the costs of renewable electricity generation have been plummeting, the three EU countries with the highest share of energy from wind and solar—Denmark, Ireland and Germany—have the continent's highest electricity prices.

The conclusion that progress is not accelerating in the most fundamental human activities is supported by a paper published in 2020 by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The authors, four American economists led by Bryan Kelly of the Yale School of Management, studied innovation across American industries from 1840 to 2010, using textual analysis of patent docu-

ments to construct indexes of long-term change. They found that the wave of breakthrough patents in furniture, textiles, apparel, transportation, metal, wood, paper, printing and construction all peaked before 1900. Mining, coal, petroleum, electrical equipment, rubber and plastics had their innovative peaks before 1950. The only industrial sectors with post-1970 peaks have been agriculture (dominated by genetically modified organisms), medical equipment and, of course, computers and electronics.

Even the rapid exponential growth of many microprocessor-enabled activities has already entered a more moder-

In 2015-18, computer processor performance improved just 4% annually.

ate expansion stage. Printing with ever-shorter wavelengths of light made it possible to crowd in larger numbers of thinner transistors on a microchip. The process began with transistors 80 micrometers wide; in 2021 IBM announced the world's first 2-nanometer chip, to be produced as early as 2024. Because the size of a silicon atom is about 0.2 nanometers, a 2-nanometer connection would be just 10 atoms wide, so the physical limit of this 50-year-old reduction process is in sight.

Between 1993 (Pentium) and 2013 (the AMD 608), the highest single-processor transistor count went from 3.1 million to 105.9 million, a bit higher than prescribed by Moore's law. But since then, progress has slowed. In 2008 the Xeon had 1.9 billion transistors, and a decade later the GC2 packed in 23.6 billion,

whereas a doubling every two years should have brought the total to about 60 billion. As a result, the growth of the best processor performance has slowed from 52% a year between 1986 and 2003, to 23% a year between 2003 and 2011, to less than 4% between 2015 and 2018. For computers, as for every other technology before, the period of rapid exponential growth will soon become history.

Dr. Smil is a professor emeritus of environmental science at the University of Manitoba. This essay is adapted from his new book, "Invention and Innovation: A Brief History of Hype and Failure," published this week by MIT Press.

MATT CHASE

EXHIBIT

Lovers Around the World

WHEN PANDEMIC LOCKDOWNS hit London in 2020, photographers and artists Ance Priedniece and Jack Gunn felt like life had been put on pause. "I suppose it was this loneliness and the separation of loved ones that sparked thoughts on love around the world," they said over email. "We thought, wouldn't it be great to focus on the happier thoughts—people making their relationships work despite the imposed long distance, reminiscing about the early days of their relationships, feeling the desire to meet again, or simply being each other's support through sickness and health."

That was the beginning of "Lovers on Film," an Instagram account on which people around the world can share analog photographs documenting their loves. Today the account has over 100,000 followers and features hundreds of contributions from over 70 countries, from Argentina and Ukraine to South Africa and Japan. The original team of two has grown to four to handle all the submissions, and Ms. Priedniece and Mr. Gunn hope that the project will eventually become a book.

—Pia Peterson Haggarty



Clockwise from top left, photos submitted to 'Lovers on Film' from Copenhagen, Denmark; Hokkaido, Japan; Athens, Greece; São Paulo, Brazil; and Houston, Texas.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ILUJINA; INGA-LOUISE SOREISEN AND MARCUS L. KRISTENSEN; WATARU & CHIHARU; DYLAN ELLIOTT; CECILIA BLANCO; BRODY CAMPBELL

REVIEW



As the most decorated U.S. Winter Paralympian of all time, Oksana Masters says athletes often tell her, “I want to do what you did, it was so fast for you.” But they don’t know I didn’t make my first Paralympic Games, I didn’t make the national team in skiing,” she explains over video from Bozeman, Mont., where she trains with the U.S. Paralympics Nordic Ski Team. “A lot of people have no idea that I was living in a car right before Sochi”—the 2014 Winter Games, when she took home a silver and a bronze for cross-country skiing. Her 17 medals are also for rowing, cycling and the biathlon.

“People see me now, but they don’t see the hard parts that came before,” she says. That is why she decided to write her new memoir, “The Hard Parts,” out Feb. 21. The book chronicles major injuries, maxed-out credit cards and dark insecurities. It also covers her formative years in several abusive orphanages in Ukraine, where she was born with webbed fingers, one kidney and no weight-bearing bones below the knees.

By recounting her own arduous twists and turns, Ms. Masters hopes to inspire others to seize control over what’s controllable in their own lives. “I want people to realize they can always rewrite their story,” she says. “Everyone’s been bullied, everyone’s been made fun of, everyone’s lost something, but the things you are struggling through now are what’s making you resilient.”

Ms. Masters says that her book includes details she has never talked about before, even with her beloved mother, Gay Masters, who adopted her and brought her to the U.S. when she was seven. “It’s so hard to have a memory that you

suppress, but it’s so much harder to put it down in black and white, because it makes it so real. You start to smell and feel it again,” Ms. Masters says. “There’s so much I haven’t dealt with. Writing it down was the first step.”

As a young child, Ms. Masters says, she wasn’t especially troubled by her differences from other kids. This is partly because disabilities were common in Ukrainian orphanages, but mostly because her body rarely held her back. “I was always running, climbing,” she says. Although she spent her early years seriously malnourished, unpredictably punished and then sexually abused, with hair cropped close to ease searches for lice, she writes that she often woke each morning thinking: “*This is going to be a good day. It’s a new day, after all.*”

Still, she ached for what she knew was missing. If a woman at the orphanage was uncharacteristically kind, Ms. Masters wondered if she was her mother. When people came in search of a child to adopt, she strained to look as cute as possible, only to grow despondent when they picked someone else. “Of course no one wants you. Look at you,” observed one caretaker.

Ms. Masters tears up when she recounts an early childhood horror. She and her best friend, a fellow orphan named Laney, were moved by sharp hunger pains to hunt for

some food. After Ms. Masters slipped and made a racket, she says, some wardens rushed toward the sound and spotted Laney, whom they beat to death while Oksana cowered invisibly under a table. “I just close my eyes, and I can feel her and smell everything,” she says.

In conversation, Ms. Masters peppers her speech with apologies. When pressed, she admits that the reflex is a product of her feelings of guilt: “It’s like, why do I get to be here? Why do I get a second chance when there are so many people who didn’t?” Through tears, she explains that she strives to one day feel worthy of what she sees as Laney’s sacrifice, for which she still feels responsible: “I want her legacy to live on through this book.”

Ms. Masters got her chance at a new life thanks to Gay, a childless woman in Buffalo, N.Y., who spent two years and tens of thousands of dollars jumping through bureaucratic hoops to adopt her. Ms. Masters recalls that she felt a jolt of loving recognition when the orphanage director showed her a photo of her future mother. “Her eyes and her smile were just the most real and honest things I had

ever seen,” she recalls. “I felt like I had known her my entire life.”

As a single parent, Gay steered her daughter through many operations, including two above-the-knee amputations, as well as the perils of adolescence. “The biggest thing I learned was being different is bad,” Ms. Masters recalls. “I just wanted to hide what made me look like I couldn’t fit in.” She pursued school sports but was told her physical differences made her a liability.

At 13, she resented her mother’s suggestions that she try adaptive rowing, in which athletes with disabilities use specially designed equipment. But she relented and discovered she loved it. “When I looked in the mirror, all I saw was what was missing, partly because society told me I can’t do this, I can’t do that,” Ms. Masters says. “But when I pulled on the oars, that tension and then that release made me see how powerful I am. I realized what my body could do.”

After learning about the Paralympics at 17, Ms. Masters devoted herself to getting there, though she notes that the economics of adaptive sports are forbidding. “You can’t just try someone else’s equipment to see if you even like a sport. You

have to invest maybe \$20,000 up front because everything needs to be custom made,” she says. She explains that she reached her first Paralympics in London in 2012—where she won a bronze for rowing in a double scull—largely thanks to sacrifices by coaches and her mother, who used her retirement savings to help fund her daughter’s dreams. “So many athletes are pushed out of the sport because they don’t have the finances,” she says.

Ms. Masters’s grit and knack for living “inside the pain” of an endurance sport attracted other coaches, who trained her in skiing and cycling when a spinal injury ended her rowing career. More Paralympic medals followed, including seven golds. Nike, Procter & Gamble, Toyota and Visa are now sponsors, which has allowed her to pay off debts and reimburse her mother. Yet sponsorship comes with its own stress, including the fear that she will let everyone down and lose it all: “I just want to do everything I can to not go back to living in a car.”

Given the dire nature of her earliest years, Ms. Masters admits she has never been able to truly trust her good fortune, which now includes her engagement with Aaron Pike, a fellow Paralympian. Although she touts the value of bodily diversity, she says she sometimes struggles with her own reflection: “I’m still in the process of truly accepting and loving myself.”

Yet all that tends to disappear when she’s at the starting line. “There’s always a chance to do something better, to learn from your mistakes, to do it again,” Ms. Masters says. “At the starting line nothing’s decided, but I can control that destiny somehow, I can control my body. It’s a way for me to just be me.”

CANDICE WARD FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WEEKEND CONFIDENTIAL | EMILY BOBROW

Oksana Masters

A Paralympian’s difficult journey to athletic triumph.

‘The things you are struggling through now are what’s making you resilient.’



JASON GAY

Baseball’s Given Up To the Ghosts

An extra-innings gimmick is here to stay for the Major League regular season.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL has decided it can live with ghosts.

Specifically, its “ghost runner,” the runner automatically placed on second base at the start of each extra-inning frame until the game is finished. This daffy device was put in place during MLB’s abbreviated Covid season in 2020, and it has stuck around since in an effort to generate quick runs, avoid deep extra-inning slogs and burned-out bullpens, and complete the average baseball game in less time than it takes to ride a tortoise from Chicago to San Diego.

(To be clear, it’s not literally a “ghost.” The team batting

puts one of its own human players on second base. “Ghost runner” is an old term from sandlot and Wiffle Ball games in which “ghosts” and “imaginary runners” are deployed when there aren’t enough actual bodies to occupy and run the bases. If you imagined Casper settling a Twins contest, I am sorry to disappoint you.)

It turns out these “ghosts” have worked, cutting down on lengthy extra-inning battles. Now MLB is making them a permanent feature. Before you start howling about the desecration of the fading national pastime: The ghost runners will only be a regular-season thing. They will go into an ectoplasm-containment storage unit during the playoffs, and extra-inning games can resume taking as long as medical



school.

You should also know that the “ghost” is beloved by players, who, purity of the game aside, aren’t that jazzed about the prospect of being trapped on a diamond playing the Mariners until 3 a.m. on a Wednesday.

Baseball players: exhausted at the idea of long baseball games, just like us!

MLB at least has the right idea, experimenting to accelerate its pace of play. The same can’t be said of NBA basketball, which is heading in the opposite direction with video re-

views and coaching “challenges” threatening to turn a joyous and fluid sport into an exasperating forensic probe.

(Baseball has video review, too, and whenever the practice expands, I want to ask:

How much have our sports-watching lives been enhanced by replays? Are you the type of person who needs furious accuracy from sporting entertainment, or are you OK with the occasional human mistake or miss?)

I do think baseball is on to something with its ghosts. I think it’s time we start making them socially acceptable in other workplaces. Think of being able to send a ghost worker in your stead to the 9 a.m. staff meeting. Think about deploying a ghost for the next office holiday party. You get to go out to a fun dinner with your family, and the ghost is trapped in

a corner hearing a co-worker babble on about an upcoming ski trip.

Of course, families would also appreciate the occasional ghost. Who wouldn’t want a ghost that could take your place at Thanksgiving, birthdays and destination weddings? What about a ghost that could respond to all group texts and emails?

I guess we’re close to reaching this point with the advancement of artificial intelligence, which promises robots to solve all our moral and social dilemmas in exchange for giving them total control of the planet.

A fair bargain, but I sense a complication. If sophisticated AI is truly capable of understanding the human condition, and effectively becoming human, it’s only a matter of time before it comes back from a family Thanksgiving and says never again.

That’s why I say ghosts, not robots. If ghosts can handle extra innings of baseball, they can handle anything.

ZOHAR LAZAR



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*** Saturday/Sunday, February 18 - 19, 2023 | 7

How a Longshot Won

He was on a losing streak. He was merely a 'stump orator.' He wasn't the party's favorite. He got the nomination.

The Lincoln Miracle

By Edward Achorn
Atlantic Monthly, 516 pages, \$30

By ROGER LOWENSTEIN

I T IS HARD to imagine that any aspect of Abraham Lincoln's life is understudied, but Edward Achorn has found one. "The Lincoln Miracle" offers a gripping account of the critical days in May 1860 when the underdog Lincoln snatched the Republican presidential nomination and ascended to the verge of national power.

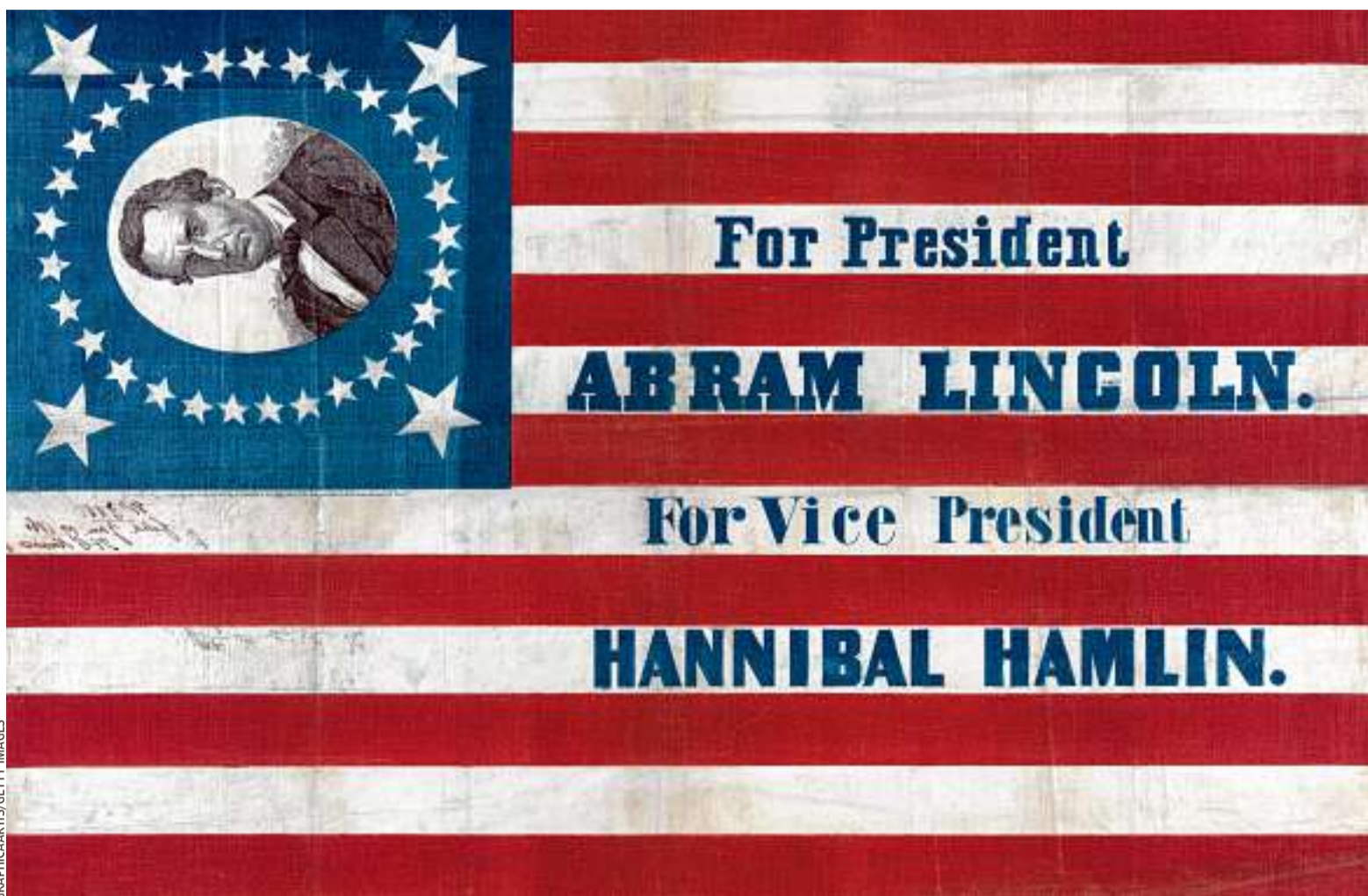
Mr. Achorn, the author of a previous book on Lincoln's second inaugural ("Every Drop of Blood"), reminds us that Lincoln wasn't considered the likely choice in the Republican sweepstakes. The favorite was William H. Seward, New York's nationally prominent senator, and several well-positioned candidates were waiting in the wings if Seward faltered. Although Lincoln wanted the job—"the taste is in my mouth a little," he confided—he shrewdly declined to confront his rivals. "Our policy," he said privately, is "to give no offence to others" and to hope that in a divided convention he would emerge as an acceptable alternative.

But Lincoln had not held public office in 11 years—and, as Mr. Achorn spells out, his career before 1860 was mostly an extended losing streak. As a leader of the Whig Party in the Illinois house, he had failed to capture the speaker's seat. After loyally working to elect Zachary Taylor to the presidency in 1848, he failed to get the expected reward of a patronage plum.

In 1854 he was nominated to return to the Illinois state legislature, but Mary, his difficult wife (elsewhere seen smacking Lincoln, and drawing blood, when he purchased the wrong cut of meat), insisted the job was beneath him. Then came two Senate tries, including a narrow loss to Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. During one especially blue stretch, Lincoln confessed: "I am now the most miserable man living." Many observers believed his career was over. A newspaper in Urbana deemed Lincoln "undoubtedly the most unfortunate politician that has ever attempted to rise in Illinois."

In 1860, with the country racked by the slavery crisis, Seward's nomination seemed assured. A former governor and two-term senator from America's biggest state, Seward had long been an outspoken foe of slavery. During the Senate debate on the Compromise of 1850, which reinforced slavery's legal status, Seward had defiantly asserted that Christian morality constituted a "higher law" than the Constitution. In October 1858, he told a crowd in Rochester, N.Y., that slave and nonslave societies were headed toward an "irrepressible conflict." As Mr. Achorn notes, "there was no doubt where Seward stood on the great moral question of his age." The New Yorker also had a prodigious war chest.

His close friend and political manager, Thurlow Weed, had worried that



VOTE REPUBLICAN! Campaign flag for the Lincoln-Hamlin ticket, 1860.

Seward's fiery language would hurt his chances for national office. Nonetheless, Weed was perhaps too confident as 1860 dawned. Thinking that Illinois didn't have a viable contender, he acquiesced to Chicago as the Republican Convention's host city: a mistake. The local press favored its own.

The "Wigwam," a gaslit wooden fire-trap of an arena, was stuffed with thousands of partisans, onlookers and party hacks in addition to 465 delegates. Lincoln's team exploited the home-field edge by installing raucous supporters in seats allocated to Seward. The New York contingent was further disadvantaged by being situated far from wavering delegations it hoped to influence. Much of the action occurred off-site. As Mr. Achorn vividly describes, the delegates were consumed with backroom dealings, whiskey-drinking and brothels.

Republicans were deeply divided on whether to soften their pitch to appeal to moderate voters. And John Brown's violent insurrection, only months earlier, had put the "radicals" on the defensive. One key figure was Horace Greeley, editor of the New-York Tribune. Greeley was convinced that Seward was too extreme to be elected. (Greeley was also sore at Weed for having refused to promote his own candidacy for New York's governorship.)

The famous journalist spent the days before the balloting "poisoning" minds against Seward and promoting the candidacy of Edward Bates, a white-bearded judge from Missouri, a slave state. But Bates was arguably too moderate for the party, and his

support for a nativist candidate in 1856 had alienated German-Americans, an important bloc.

This left a narrow path for Lincoln. Recognizing that he was not the favorite, he aspired to be every state's second choice. He spoke ill of no other candidate and avoided being drawn into contentious side issues, such as immigration and the tariff.

Lincoln's antislavery position was well-known and not so different from Seward's. His 1858 "House Divided" speech predated Seward's "irrepressible conflict" address. While Lincoln spoke of a "crisis" rather than the more incendiary "conflict," both said that the nation could not endure part slave, part free. And Lincoln, not mincing words, wanted slavery placed "in the course of ultimate extinction." (Mr. Achorn cites the remark while recounting Lincoln's 1860 address at the Cooper Institute in New York; Lincoln said it in Illinois in 1858.)

But Lincoln was perceived as more moderate. He made a point of reminding his floor managers that he did not endorse Seward's "higher law" doctrine—a key distinction. Indeed, the judicious Lincoln had always been careful to ground his antislavery positions within the law.

Since candidates didn't attend conventions in those days, Lincoln's hopes rested with a band of cronies from his law practice and Illinois politics. This group was remarkably loyal. As Jesse Dubois, a legislator friend from southern Illinois, said: "We recognized him as our leader." Judge David Davis, who

had presided over scores of cases that Lincoln had argued on the Eighth Judicial Circuit (the two also shared hotel rooms), assumed the part of campaign manager, directing supporters to lobby and cajole as needed. Such pals knew the caliber of the man, and they were persuasive. Lincoln's humility appealed to delegates from moderate states such as Pennsylvania and Indiana, where Republicans feared they couldn't win local races if Seward headed the ticket.

Lincoln demonstrated his wisdom by picking a lawyer chum, Orville Brown-

Amid all the backroom dealing, Republicans were deeply divided on whether to soften their pitch to appeal to moderate voters.

ing, as an at-large delegate even though, for tactical reasons, Browning favored Bates. Browning delivered by charmingly selling Lincoln to the Maine delegation. As Mr. Achorn notes, "there was something compelling about Lincoln's story" when his friends were telling it.

Worried about all the backroom dealing and patronage trading in Chicago, Lincoln told his team: "Make no contracts that will bind me." Judge Davis ignored him. Mr. Achorn suggests that Simon Cameron, a corrupt politico and favorite son from Pennsylvania, was promised a cabinet seat, although he wafflingly adds that his-

torians "debate" the point. Cameron was appointed secretary of war. And to heal party wounds, Lincoln tapped three other rivals: Seward, Bates and Ohio's Salmon Chase.

When the convention voted, Seward led on the first ballot, but as delegates moved to second choices Lincoln seized the prize. Even some supporters feared that he was merely a "stump orator" boasting an attractive personal story and little else. After the convention, a committee of party leaders (most of whom had not met the nominee) hurried to Lincoln's home, in Springfield, Ill., to formally notify Lincoln—and reassure themselves that they had not made a dreadful mistake.

It turned out that the qualities Lincoln had called on to win were exactly those the country would need to sustain a terrible war and ultimately to extinguish slavery. I wish that Mr. Achorn had not devoted nearly 100 pages to convention postmortems—journalistic reactions, Seward's pique at being passed over, a description of the character of Lincoln's vice president ("pleasant and genial"), and other anticlimactic details. But he has written a provocative addition to the canon.

Lincoln's "miracle" will lead some to question the wisdom of the modern primary system. Today, with each party captive to its extreme, would a 21st-century Lincoln stand a chance?

Mr. Lowenstein is the author of "Ways and Means: Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War."

The Private Kafka

By MAX NORMAN

BEFORE SUCCUMBING to tuberculosis in 1924, a month shy of his 41st birthday, Franz Kafka made clear to his best friend and literary executor, Max Brod, that he wanted all of his unpublished writing—"diaries, manuscripts, letters (from others and my own), sketches, and so forth"—to be "burned completely and unread."

Brod (1884-1968) famously and fortunately ignored his friend's directive; he grew old editing Kafka's *Nachlass*, his unpublished legacy, and promoting his *Nachleben*, his literary afterlife. The works Kafka published during his lifetime, among which number the most famous stories ("The Judgment," "The Metamorphosis," "In the Penal Colony" and others), amount to about 350 pages in the standard German edition. His unpublished tales (like "The Hunger Artist" and "The Burrow"), literary fragments, unfin-

ished novels ("The Trial," "The Castle" and "The Missing Person," which Brod retitled "Amerika") and above all his teeming diaries, kept from 1909 to 1923, extend to some 3,400 pages. In addition, some 1,500 letters survive. Brod shepherded almost everything into print. But he did it his way.

In one notable case, Brod refused to publish. Though he'd collected many drawings Kafka made as a student between 1901 and 1906 (as the writer clearly remembered in his will), they only became accessible in 2019, after the State of Israel, whose national library houses many of Kafka's papers, won a suit against Brod's heirs. "**Franz Kafka: The Drawings**" (Yale, 366 pages, \$50) brings together this "last great un-

Recent scholarship and new translations are giving us a radically fresh impression of Kafka—especially as a diarist.

known trove of Kafka's works," as the editor, Andreas Kilcher, calls them. And while the sketches and doodles—some of which resemble Paul Klee, others George Grosz—don't funda-



FOR 'K' Photo of Franz Kafka on his grave in the Jewish cemetery in Prague.

mentally change how we read Kafka, they remind us that he was serious about the visual as well as the verbal, and "they reiterate, in a different register, some of [his writing's] most fundamental concerns," as Judith Butler argues in an engaging contribution to Mr. Kilcher's volume. His figures are grotesques, sometimes comical, sometimes cruel, their bodies, often drawn in dark black ink, like Rorschach blots come to life; in his letters and diaries, drawings come when words aren't sufficient to capture the impression of something Kafka sees or feels.

Perhaps their messiness, straight from the id, didn't align with the Kafka that Brod sought to construct—one whose central work was the theological aphorisms he wrote in 1917-18 while on

medical leave in the Bohemian village of Zürau, which Brod published in 1931 as "Reflections on Sin, Suffering, Hope, and the True Way." These pensées on "the indestructible" within all of us, and on cosmic justice ("It is only our concept of time that makes us call the Last Judgment by that name; it is actually a court martial"), have recently been republished in "**The Aphorisms of Franz Kafka**" (Princeton, 230 pages, \$ 24.95), a bilingual edition with taut translations by Shelley Frisch. They are accompanied here by indispensable commentary by Reiner Stach, whose heroic three-volume biography of Kafka, published in Germany between 2002 and 2014, was a landmark in the ongoing effort to dismantle Brod's vision of Kafka.

Brod's editions "promoted a certain pious myth of Kafka that Brod also fostered in his interpretive works and memoirs: that of the saintly, prophetic genius, whose purity places him at an elevated remove from the world," writes Ross Benjamin in his new translation of Kafka's "**Diaries**" (Schocken, 670 pages, \$45): "Kafka's worldwide reception was shaped by a misrepresentation of what he had actually written." Brod's edition of the diaries—which formed the basis for the standard English translations, published in 1948-49—unkinked muddled sentences, regularized punctuation and orthography (e.g., "New-yorck") and cut out stray references to the brothels that Kafka occasionally visited. Brod put the entries into chronological order, a challenge since Kafka jumped between the 12 diaries he left behind. He also snipped a few unflattering details about himself.

Brod's edition reads something like a finished work, Mr. Benjamin's—based on the unexpurgated 1990 German critical text edited by Hans-Gerd Koch—like, well, a diary. In a departure from the elevated tone of Kafka's previous English translators (most notably the Scottish couple Willa and Edwin Muir), Mr. Benjamin's English sticks closer to the texture of the German original, much less polished than

Please turn to page C8

BOOKS

‘A self-reliant piety yoked to an unembarrassed practicality.’ —JOHN UPDIKE ON THE ESSENCE OF FRANKLIN



FIVE BEST ON BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Stacy Schiff

The author, most recently, of ‘The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams’

Benjamin Franklin

By Edmund S. Morgan (2002)

1 A one-man multitude, Benjamin Franklin is famously difficult to wrestle into a single volume. The feat has been attempted countless times, once with finesse. Edmund Morgan offers up the prolific, protean founder in 312 pages and with a clarity befitting its clear-eyed subject. He goes long on Franklin’s magnetism: Here was a man who never delivered a memorable public speech but who—after the age of 70—“helped write the Declaration of Independence, then secured the American alliance with France, negotiated the treaty of peace with England, and sat in the convention that drafted the United States Constitution.” Morgan is alert to the contradictions in Franklin, the man who after all discovered that nor’easters blow in from the southwest. Along the way come distilled wisdoms and shrewd asides. “Why,” asks Morgan parenthetically, “do gifted people so often have trouble growing up?” With him we are in the surest of hands, those of a biographer who reminds us how to read his slyboots of a subject: “But we have noticed,” Morgan warns, “that there is generally more to Franklin than meets the eye.” His sentences rise, lighter than air, above the thicket of research, like the hot-air balloons that so enchanted Franklin in France.

Mon Cher Papa

By Claude-Anne Lopez (1966)

2 The last place to look for the truth about a man’s life may be in his autobiography, especially with Franklin, who never finished his. For his true colors one could do worse than respect the old adage and seek out the women. Claude-Anne Lopez, a longtime editor at the Franklin Papers, found that—the many Franklins—the French version was “the best of them all, the sum total of the man.” Certainly in Europe he is freshest in both senses of the word. Lopez delivers up portraits of Franklin’s two greatest admirers: “Madame Brillon was tender, moody, self-absorbed, and bourgeoisie to the core; Madame Helvétius was brisk, outgoing, exuberant, with that touch of the earthy and the bohemian that only a born noblewoman can afford.” She puts Franklin’s Parisian expenditures into perspective, something Congress never managed to do. She tracks his moods and emotions, noting that Franklin “somehow never committed himself wholly in love; a part of him was always holding back and watching the proceedings with irony.” Her subject would have thrilled to her sensibility, her eye for detail and her rapier wit.



AMERICAN PROMETHEUS ‘Franklin Drawing Electricity From the Sky’ (1816) by Benjamin West.

Stealing God’s Thunder

By Philip Dray (2005)

3 Without the benefit of any scientific training, Franklin studied whirlwinds and waterspouts, thunderstorms and tea leaves. On his final ocean crossing, he preferred to experiment with the Gulf Stream rather than finish his autobiography. As Philip Dray notes, whether as statesman or as inventor, a great deal of Franklin’s life “was spent trying to replace chaos with order.” The business could be fraught: Rational inquiry came at a price at a time when educated men believed that lightning rods caused

earthquakes and that church bells could prevent storms. In returning him to a world tiptoeing toward the Enlightenment, Mr. Dray performs several essential services. He illuminates Franklin’s campaign to redefine himself as an English gentleman and a Yankee philosopher. And he reminds us that, for his contemporaries, Franklin was a scientist who dabbled in politics rather than a statesman who dabbled in science. Ultimately the two missions conjoined. The lightning bolt, Mr. Dray notes, had seemed an instrument of divine displeasure. Franklin recast it for the people as a tool of liberty, for “knocking kings and princes off their thrones.”

Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies

By Robert Middlekauff (1996)

4 “Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults,” claimed Franklin, writing as Poor Richard. A champion grudgeholder, he neglected his own advice. He could be contemptuous, domineering and thin-skinned. He took poorly to condescension. His egalitarian politics and his enigmatic silences unsettled colleagues. Even his success earned him enemies. As Robert Middlekauff puts it: “He was a big man with a big record and therefore provided a big target.” Plenty of invective came Franklin’s way, along with accusations that he impregnated a slave, stole the idea of electricity, bought an honorary degree and dipped into public funds. How the placid-seeming Franklin dealt with those charges and with his enemies is the subject of Middlekauff’s sterling book. Franklin made a great show of affability, which he knew annoyed his critics. He became more adroit with adversaries as he aged, relegating his angry letters to his desk drawer. He held firm to his faith in human nature. But he never made peace with the greatest casualty of his revolutionary politics—his own son, whom he disinherited, twice.

Young Benjamin Franklin

By Nick Bunker (2018)

5 Who was Franklin before he became the “sound, successful man who made the best of every opportunity?” In what is at once a feat of prodigious research and a gorgeously written narrative, Nick Bunker gives us Franklin’s forefathers, clever men with scientific minds, upstarts in their own rights. Mr. Bunker charts the contours of young Ben Franklin’s mind, identifying the books he read, the sermons he heard and the lessons he absorbed as his horizon broadened, then broadened some more. This is the Franklin who had not yet found his way to politics or science but who is in some way still recognizable. “Since his boyhood,” writes Mr. Bunker, “Franklin had liked to think of himself as a latter-day Socrates, defending the truth against authority and deceit.” Others have noted that Franklin became more radical as he aged. Mr. Bunker alone locates a current of anxiety under the surface. “The finest passages of Franklin’s memoirs concern episodes of frailty,” he observes, explaining, in a wholly original way, the source of all the pathological accomplishment. Franklin “wanted to be ingenious and he wanted to be a gentleman.” The fear that he might manage neither drove him harder than we may have appreciated.

A Bold New Light On Kafka

Continued from page C7

the crystalline prose of his published works, in an effort to “catch Kafka in the act of writing.” As might be expected of a critical edition mainly intended for a scholarly audience, it’s harder to read, and stylistically not quite placeable (there are many instances where the translation could have been relaxed even further). But, in prioritizing transparency above all, Mr. Benjamin’s translation doesn’t just supplant the previous edition—it inaugurates a new phase of Kafka’s afterlife in English.

The firmness of Kafka’s prose comes not just from its ruthlessly meticulous and arbitrary logic, but also from embodied physical detail, and in the diaries Kafka is constantly living in and against his “body pulled out of a junk room.” “My ear felt fresh rough cool juicy to the touch like a leaf,” Kafka writes early on, reaching for, or through, adjectives, as he often does in these pages. (Compare this rock-skip of a sentence to the formality of the earlier translation: “The auricle of my ear felt fresh, rough, cool, succulent as a leaf, to the touch.”) For all his notes on reading—Dickens, Goethe, Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, the Bible—there are an equal number on headaches, stomach aches and constipation. Once, when his insides feel good, he fantasizes about gorging himself:

“I shove the long rinds of rib meat un-bitten into my mouth and then pull them out again from behind tearing through my stomach and intestines.” Physical and literary sensation blend together, too. Writing, Kafka often notes, gives him strength, and once he reads a novel out loud with “the same attentive pleasure with which I would run a piece of string over my tongue.”

The writing glimmers with sensitivity, and openness to the world: “Her hair was in an already forgotten way beautiful,” he writes of a woman he sees in Wenceslas Square. Of the bottom of the sleeve of a young girl’s dress: “How rarely I achieve something beautiful and this unnoticed button and its unknowing dressmaker achieve it.” And for all the beauty he sees, there’s plenty of humor, too, particularly when his perceptive gaze X-rays the artifice of fakers. “Face serious in an almost strained way,” he writes of a pompous lecturer, “now resembling an old lady, now Napoleon.”

Kafka loved attending the theater, that laboratory of human experience, and the diaries are filled not just with gossip about actresses and miniature reviews of the shows he saw almost daily, but also with dialogues working their way toward scenes, language that aspires to the liveness of performance. “Necessity of speaking about dancers with exclamation points,” he remarks. “Because in that way one imitates their movement, because one remains in the rhythm and then doesn’t disturb the thinking in its enjoyment, because then the activity always remains at the end of the sentence has a more lasting effect.”

Though there’s plenty of mundanity (from Saturday, June 19, 1910:

“slept, woke up, slept, woke up, miserable life”) and it’s clear that Kafka lives in a version of Gregor Samsa’s suffocating world of timetables and meddling parents, everything in the diaries orbits around Kafka’s work. Dream narratives (“I dreamed today of a greyhound-like donkey, which was very restrained in its movements . . .”) flow into fragments of

ideas over and over, playing with a phrase or a paragraph until it works, kneading an idea on the page. Tantalizingly, he alludes to a “Study on the court jester” that one wishes he had written. In the diary’s most electrifying moment, we read along as Kafka writes “The Judgment” one blazing night in September 1912 (an entry Brod had excised) as if transcribing from a secret source: “Only in this way can writing be done, only with such cohesion, with such complete opening of the body and the soul.” The psychological implications of a story about a father denying his son’s grip on reality were immediately clear to the son of a dominating father (“thoughts of Freud naturally”), and he speaks of the tale

itself as a kind of monster he created. “The story came out of me like a veritable birth covered with filth and slime and only I have the hand that can penetrate to the body and has the desire to do so.”

The diaries provide a “glimpse into Kafka’s workshop,” as Mr. Benjamin writes. But they also reveal a young man trying to understand his powers, and to balance the competing urges to be possessed by his work and to be possessed by another. There are flickers of same-sex desire (“2 beautiful Swedish boys with long legs, which are so formed and taut that one could really only run one’s tongue along



A Kafka drawing for ‘The Trial.’

them,” Kafka writes in one of the four brief travel diaries new to this edition), though mostly Kafka dwells on his endlessly frustrating relationship with Felice Bauer, his long-term love interest, who lived in Berlin and was as ambivalent about Kafka as he was obsessed with her. Maybe distance—over a five-year

period, in which they were twice engaged and twice separated, the longest they ever spent together was just 10 days in Marienbad—was for him part of the appeal. They exchanged hundreds of letters (some copied into the diaries; the rest have also been published by Schocken), in which writing could substitute for closeness, and Kafka could feel and fantasize without compromising his solitude. “What I have achieved is only a result of being alone,” he writes in July 1913, trying to decide whether he

THE PRIVATE KAFKA

Franz Kafka: The Diaries
Translated by Ross Benjamin

Franz Kafka: The Drawings
Edited by Andreas Kilcher

The Aphorisms of Franz Kafka
Edited by Reiner Stach
Translated by Shelley Frisch

should propose to Felice for the first time. “The fear of the connection, of flowing across. Then I’ll never be alone again.” He described the meeting in which they dissolved their engagement, tellingly, as “the tribunal.”

Cynthia Ozick once wrote that “in the two great zones of literary susceptibility—the lyrical and the logical—the Kafkan ‘K’ attaches not to Keats but to Kant.” But, with the help of Mr. Benjamin’s translation, Kafka in English is shifting away from the abstract and back toward the real.

Mr. Norman is a freelance writer.

BOOKS

'I'm not a crusader or a reformer, but there are a lot of things happening you just cannot sit by watching idly. I decided to do something about it.' —ANNA ROSENBERG

A Little-Known Woman of Power

The Confidante

By Christopher C. Gorham
Citadel, 372 pages, \$28

BY BRANDY SCHILLACE

SOMETIMES, it's the contrast that gets to you. There were the Bavarian Alps, white peaks iridescent in the sun over valleys blooming with late-spring flowers. Then there was the Nordhausen concentration camp, some 400 miles and a world away, where trenches were piled high with the emaciated bodies of the Nazis' victims.

When Anna M. Rosenberg visited, in April 1945, shortly after the camp was liberated, some 4,000 survivors remained. Their eyes were sunken into their faces, their skeletal frames thin and fragile. Those who could walk made their way forward. Shocked and horrified by the atrocities, Rosenberg looked through her purse for something to give—and found her lipstick. She was ashamed to have so little to offer, but one woman took it tenderly. “The lipstick was nothing,” Rosenberg later recounted, “and yet to this woman it was everything” because everything had been taken from her, even her humanity, simply for being Jewish. Somehow, Rosenberg thought, we must give them back their dignity.

If you haven't heard of Anna Rosenberg, you aren't alone. Yet, as Christopher Gorham explains in “The Confidante,” this astonishing woman—born in Budapest to a prominent Jewish family—would rise from being a driven and patriotic new U.S. citizen to becoming one of the most powerful women in the world, a force for labor unions, an adviser to several U.S. presidents and ultimately the U.S. assistant secretary of defense. She would counsel Franklin D. Roosevelt on the New Deal, help him through the complicated negotiations of World War II and serve on two missions abroad—one of them to Nordhausen. She helped broker deals between the warring factions in FDR's cabinet, sometimes including the formidable first lady herself. And yet, despite it all, Rosenberg remained in the shadow of the very success she helped to achieve.

Not anymore. Mr. Gorham, who teaches modern American history at Westford Academy in Massachusetts, offers an incredible catalog of adventure; we follow the well-dressed Rosenberg as she out-curses labor leaders and outwits big business. “The



WORTHY OPPONENT Anna Rosenberg, then the U.S. assistant defense secretary, and Lyndon B. Johnson, as chairman of the Senate's Preparedness Committee, in negotiations in 1951.

Confidante” provides a record of the most important events of the 20th century, rushing us along through the Great Depression, Progressive Era politics, World War II and its aftermath, and even the civil-rights and women's movements. Rosenberg was always there, often at the beating heart of the action.

She could also be something of a heart throb, with her bobbed hair and large brown eyes, excellent figure and expensive fashion sense. One observer described her as “blustery, hearty, and businesslike on the one hand, and visibly feminine on the other.” Her hats were conversation pieces, a “froth of pastel plumes” that conflicted with the more utilitarian presentation of the era's feminists.

But this, Mr. Gorham explains, was at least partly by design. Rosenberg managed board rooms of angry and volatile men by being at once alluring and demanding, flirtatious and no-

nonsense. She was the primary breadwinner in an unusual marriage; despite having no education beyond high school, she knew exactly how to maneuver and manipulate. During her work for the National Recovery Administration, we are told, this combination of charm and chutzpah allowed her to answer even her most scathing critics in a way that left them with “no reply to make,” while disarming other opponents by “cooing, ‘Now let's hear your pretty little speech.’” She could awe anyone into submission. Perhaps even FDR himself.

The book's title can be slightly misleading. Rosenberg was certainly FDR's confidante, but she was much more. Mr. Gorham delves into their relationship, before and during the presidency, but through it all Rosenberg was indefatigably her own woman.

After FDR's passing, Harry Truman suddenly found himself president of

the United States. Rosenberg carried on, flying to the war front, sleeping on the ground and eating with the troops. She would be there at the Nordhausen

At once alluring and demanding, flirtatious and no-nonsense, she wielded influence in mid-20th-century America despite the obstacles.

camp for its liberation, and she would be there for the declaration of peace. During the Truman administration, Mr. Gorham writes, Rosenberg “combined her political and business contacts into a potent behind-the-scenes policy-shaping force,” pushing for national healthcare and deseg-

regation and opening New York City's Veterans Service Center.

It was President Truman who nominated Rosenberg to be assistant secretary of defense. At her nomination hearing, Joseph McCarthy, who had ousted a number of previous nominees with his false accusations of communist ties, came after her with false charges and false witnesses. Never one to back down, Rosenberg made McCarthy look dirty and small. She won the nomination and later wrote presciently to Eleanor Roosevelt: “Maybe it will wake us up to the fact that we have not only enemies without but very dangerous ones within.” Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, extremism—they didn't go away. They only changed tactics.

I found myself engrossed and amazed by the “sparrow of a woman” and her endless energy. “The Confidante” covers four decades and some of the most future-shaping legislation ever passed by the U.S. government. Through it all, we can see Rosenberg's fingerprints across the nation's major events. As a result, Mr. Gorham's biography is also a mystery. How could we have forgotten such a woman? We have plenty of circumstantial evidence: Despite her angling for the rights of other women, being a woman herself in a man's world still pushed her accomplishments out of the limelight. Mr. Gorham describes, too, the fallout from the McCarthy trial and the continued discrimination that dogged her. And there's her brand of feminism, which was not always embraced, even by other feminists: Her penchant for fashionable suits, jewelry and extravagant hats were used as marks against her seriousness.

Then again, this self-made woman may have engineered her own disappearance from history: She refused to write her biography, preserved her privacy, burned her letters, and except for a few tantalizing hints hid much of her private dealings with FDR. Rosenberg, writes Mr. Gorham, “was the unseen hand. Hers was a soft power, exerted indirectly,” which complicated, if not erased, efforts to “measure her place in history.”

What “The Confidante” provides, with cinematic color and encyclopedic clarity, is a resurrection of that history.

Ms. Schillace, the editor in chief of the journal Medical Humanities, is the host of the online “Peculiar Book Club” and the author of “Mr. Humble and Dr. Butcher.”

Partisans Left, Right And Center

BY BARTON SWAIM

ALICE M. RIVLIN, who died in 2019 at the age of 88, was a liberal economist and an accomplished public servant. She ran the Congressional Budget Office (she was its first director) and the Office of Management and Budget, and in the late 1990s served as vice chair of the Federal Reserve. She was also “a partisan Democrat calling for more bipartisanship,” as her admiring son and daughter-in-law point out in the preface to her last and posthumously published book, “**Divided We Fall: Why Consensus Matters**” (Brookings, 412 pages, \$27.99).

That is an attractive premise, but it is rather undercut by the book's repeated contention that Republicans were and are the chief cause of incivility and dysfunction in Washington. Rivlin includes a long chapter purporting to explain the origins of the GOP's present-day antidemocratic and authoritarian demeanor.

Devoted readers of the New York Times will not need to be persuaded of her thesis, but I find it risible. The “George Wallace faction”—that is, the Southern Democrats who migrated to the GOP in the 1970s—has taken over the Republican Party, in Rivlin's view. It is, she writes in a confusing series of negatives, “not clear whether the Republicans who do not define themselves as racists and who believe in democracy, the Constitution, and the rule of law will continue to support the party if it opposes these values.” In other words: Republicans are basically all racists.

Ah, the sweet sounds of comity and bipartisanship!

Also preposterous, in my view, is Rivlin's contention that this George Wallace faction has “proven far more effective in moving the Republican Party to the right than the progressives have been in moving the Democrats away from the center to the left.” It's true, as she says, that “the willingness of the Tea Party to see budget negotiations fail, and even the government fail, finds no parallel on the left”—although it's equally true that the willingness to stage sit-ins in the House of Representatives, for example, or to destroy the lives of Supreme Court nominees, finds no parallel on the right. But these are *tactics*, not policies. On matters of policy, with the exception of immigration (on which Republicans moved right) and trade (on which they moved left), Republicans haven't changed much in 40 years. Large segments of the Democratic Party, by contrast, now hold views almost nobody seriously considered a decade or two ago: special laws

Two authors praise the virtues of working together. Neither can refrain from shrill denunciations.

on transgender rights, Medicare for All, decriminalization of illegal immigration, racial reparations, “free” college tuition, and on and on. These views are to the left of yesterday's left-wing views.

Republicans have behaved abysmally at certain times, to be sure, and I am open to reasonable counterarguments on this subject; but not from a writer who sprinkles her discussion with—let us call them—uncharitable inaccuracies. She remembers, for example, her shock that “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell would say his



ACROSS THE AISLE Sens. John Kerry and John McCain in Washington, 1997.

goal was to see President Obama fail and become a one-term president.” Mr. McConnell did say, in the run-up to the 2010 midterm elections, that he wanted Mr. Obama to be a one-term president—as gentle an expression of political opposition as I have ever heard. But he then went on specifically to say, “I don't want the president to fail; I want him to change.”

Feigned outrage is its own kind of incivility.

Throughout her long career, to her great credit, Rivlin warned against the dangers of runaway government debt. Her recollections of attempts in the 2010s to find a grand compromise on controlling the ratio of debt to GDP are valuable as expressions of orthodox Keynesian fiscal policy. Her narration of budget fights in the Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama presidencies is, as I see it, highly selective and accepts all the debatable premises of Rivlin's own economic philosophy; but a moderately informed student of economics will gain an understanding of the presuppositions and foolish behavior that have given us permanent billion-dollar deficits.

The book's most revealing moment, for me, comes in the preface by Sheri and Allan Rivlin. “Alice was always calling for a reduction in partisan blaming,” they write, “but she was not asserting that both sides are equally to

blame for increasingly dysfunctional partisanship.” There is, they suggest, “an asymmetry built into budget negotiations.” The asymmetry they speak of: Democrats are “pro-government” and Republican are “anti-government.” Democrats, they continue, “need negotiations to succeed to maintain basic governmental functions (passing budgets to keep the government open, avoiding a default on the national debt) while Republicans are more willing to see negotiations fail, causing harm to the public they represent but reinforcing their assertion that government cannot do anything right.”

The statement perfectly captures elite liberals' view of themselves and their opponents. Democrats simply want to “maintain basic governmental functions,” a goal so innocuous only a monster could question it. Whereas Republicans, *by the nature of their political outlook*, are inclined to negotiate in bad faith and deliberately “harm” their constituents. The possibility that restive Republicans were acting on principle rather than cynical self-interest and/or stupidity is nowhere suggested in “Divided We Fall,” a book about bipartisanship.

Paul W. Kahn's “**Democracy in Our America: Can We Still Govern Ourselves?**” (Yale, 285 pages, \$30) offers a similarly unifying message while undercutting it with partisan

nonsense. The book's overarching argument, borrowed from Alexis de Tocqueville, is that a society's capacity for self-government depends on the spirit of volunteerism. Mr. Kahn, a law professor at Yale, draws on his experiences living in Killingworth, Conn., for the past 25 years.

I sympathize with Mr. Kahn's unhappiness about the decline of voluntary participation in society's mediating institutions (churches, sports leagues, clubs and so on) and the emergence of mass social isolation. It's a well-worn theme, having been foregrounded in the work of Peter Berger and others in the 1970s and '80s and popularized in Robert Putnam's 1995 essay “Bowling Alone,” but Mr. Kahn's application of it to the town of Killingworth has moments of poignancy.

Some of Mr. Kahn's observations strike me as predictable. I have seen social media blamed for incivility so often that, obvious as it seems, I am tempted to believe the opposite. Also predictable are his protests that federal social welfare policy bears no blame for the pathologies he describes.

But what finally unmakes “Democracy in Our America” is its author's unaccountable need to signal an unrelenting and, in my view, manic hatred of Donald Trump. Never have I read a more comprehensive collection of indictments, many of them citing innuendo-laden hyperpartisan media accounts, than I encountered in this book's first chapter, “A Constitutional Coup.” A sentence taken at random: “We do not really know whether 2016 was an ordinary election or an attack by a foreign power.”

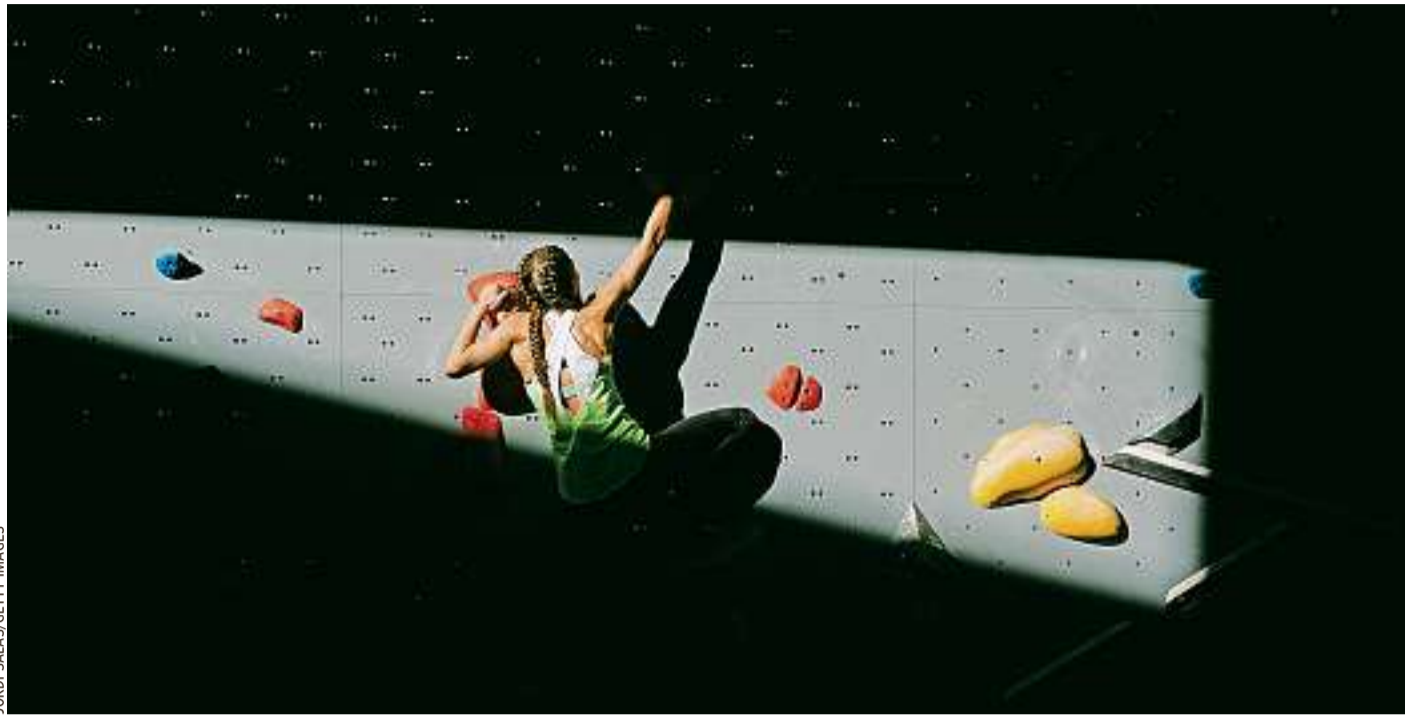
Mr. Trump's election, in this account, is supposed to mark the onset of a quasidictatorship over an atomized and helpless citizenry. Which to this reader sounds like a certain law professor has spent a bit too much time on the internet.

Mr. Swaim is an editorial-page writer for the Journal.

BOOKS

'The summit is what drives us, but the climb itself is what matters.' —CONRAD ANKER

Climbing to Adulthood



Sam
By Allegra Goodman
Dial, 316 pages, \$28

By MEGHAN COX GURDON

ALLEGRA GOODMAN has written a wonderful coming-of-age story. I put it to you in this simple way because in "Sam" Ms. Goodman has turned simplicity itself into a powerful tool for evoking how it feels to be young.

"There is a girl, and her name is Sam," the novel begins, with stripped-down language very different from the lush complexity that the author deployed in such earlier works as "The Family Mar-kowitz," "Paradise Park" and "Kaaterskill Falls," which was a finalist for the 1998 National Book Award.

Sam is 7 when we meet her and living with her 26-year-old mother, Courtney, and her 2-year-old brother, Noah, in a small borrowed house in Gloucester, Mass. We learn all this by means of prose that is spare and streamlined, as if filtered through the sensibilities of a young girl. (As Sam grows into her teens, Ms. Goodman's writing too fills out, in a manner of speaking, though it retains to the end a quality of appealing straightforwardness.)

The house belongs to the parents of Noah's father, Jack, a rough character who doesn't like Sam. The hostility is mutual. When Jack drives up to the house for one

of his and Courtney's periodic attempts at rekindling their relationship, Sam shinies up a nearby beech tree to hide. Climbing is also how Sam gets away from Noah when he's being a pain: She's good at fitting herself into door jams and inching upward until she's wedged in place, out of reach.

Sam and Noah have different fathers. Hers, Mitchell, is an affectionate but chronically unreliable fellow who struggles with addiction and perhaps also mental illness. He's forever disappearing on her, or announcing extravagant plans that, "surprise, surprise," never come to fruition. Later in the novel, while visiting Mitchell in recovery, Sam can no longer believe the blarney: "Her dad has that light in his eyes he gets when he's performing. Some people tell lies about the past. Her dad tells lies about the future."

But it is Mitchell who helps Sam turn her instinct for climbing into a skill. Early on, he takes her to a fair where there's a tower fitted with belaying ropes and colorful handholds. The girl is entranced. Even though it's cold and raining and there's a long line, Sam is determined to try climbing the thing. When her turn finally comes, she painstakingly hauls herself up to the top, clangs the bell and glides down in triumph in her harness: "Crazy kid," Mitchell says, "as he rubs her frozen hands, and she feels grateful, and powerful, and famous."

That phrase appears at the top of page 9, and it marks the precise point that I fell for Sam, and for "Sam." Ms. Goodman's light use of "famous" is perfection. It shows with magnificent understatement her ability to allow the adult reader to re-inhabit childhood and adolescence, a feat she accomplishes again and again. She is particularly good at revealing how adult speech shapes the way young people think about themselves and imagine the contours of their world.

One night at bedtime, for instance, Courtney is lecturing her daughter, as she does throughout the novel, about the importance of getting an education so that she will someday land a good job. Sam has decided she wants to be a climber; does she need to go to school for that? Courtney, guessing, says yes: "So you can learn . . . geology." As the girl drifts off, her mother goes on: "Courtney explains that glaciers and ice and fossils pile up. There are rocks, and there are scientists. Some are igneous and some are sedimentary. You have to understand these things. You have to study, because if you don't do your work in school, you'll live in other people's houses. . . . You will be twenty-six and you'll work all day but then you can't go anywhere. You can't go out at night; you can't even get a good night's sleep. You will never catch a break."

Sam's mother, who's given to motivational aphorisms ("choose joy"), struggles to keep her children connected to their untrustworthy fathers while working all hours to pay the bills. Courtney may have a short fuse, but she's almost saintly in her frantic determination that Sam and Noah

will have better futures than her present. Meanwhile, as the years tick past, Sam is getting better at climbing. She's tenacious and inventive, although she falls a lot because she hurries. For a while she climbs at the YMCA; then she gets a scholarship to train at a top-notch facility and she enters serious competition.

At high school, she's a working-class nobody, a "molecule," but at the gym her talents draw the cool eye of an instructor five years older, with whom Sam embarks on a secret affair. "They are thieves," we read. "They steal time—not just hours, but the years between seventeen and twenty-two. They hide those years under their coats, and when they are together they leave those years on the floor with their boots, and socks, and clothes."

Sam's eventual betrayal by this paramour, followed by a final separation from Mitchell, leaves her all but undone. She loses her will to climb—in every respect—thus laying bare the totality of a guiding metaphor that in the hands of a less tactful writer might come across as hackneyed or overwrought. Here it feels natural and right. Of course when a girl like Sam contemplates an obstacle such as a climbing wall or a mass of heaped boulders she should want to overcome it. Isn't that why people scale Everest? Because it's there, and they can? In "Sam," the heights our heroine reaches are not so dizzying, but that she ascends at all is a reason to cheer.

Mrs. Gurdon is the author of "The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction."

MYSTERIES

TOM NOLAN

A Haunted High-School Homecoming



BODIE KANE, the narrator of Rebecca Makkai's enthralling "I Have Some Questions for You" (Viking, 438 pages \$28), lives in Los Angeles and makes her living as a film historian and podcaster. She takes a special interest in women exploited by the movie business. But the person she's most obsessed with never made it to Hollywood: Thalia Keith, Bodie's classmate at a prestigious New Hampshire prep school, was murdered in 1995.

Omar Evans, a young black athletic trainer at the school, was convicted of the crime, and Bodie has since done her best to avoid thinking about the tragedy. Memories are rekindled, though, when Bodie returns to her alma mater for a brief teaching stint in 2018. One of her students wants to create a class podcast about the crime and its aftermath, telling her instructor: "I think the wrong guy is in prison."

THIS WEEK

I Have Some Questions for You

By Rebecca Makkai

As a hands-on adviser, Bodie soon finds herself deep down a rabbit hole she had long tried not to fall into. The students interview what friends and classmates of Thalia's they can, and they try to reach Omar through his legal team. (Thalia's family members refuse to cooperate because "they already had their closure.") Bodie imagines what-if scenarios involving various suspects, from Thalia's boyfriends to jealous classmates to faculty members.

Bodie is "married but single"—she's separated from her husband, Jerome, an artist who lives next door to her in L.A. Amidst her investigation, Jerome becomes notorious overnight when a female artist makes him the villain of an autobiographical performance piece, accusing him of acting "predatory" during their affair 15 years ago; his teaching job and career are in jeopardy. Bodie herself becomes an online target for not publicly condemning her husband's purported improprieties: "What did I not know, and when did I not know it?"

Ms. Makkai unfolds her flashback-laden story with a sure hand. Bodie finds herself thrust into a "dizzy headspace" where "I no longer had any sense of what was true. . . . I couldn't figure out who knew more about what happened to Thalia: me now, or me at barely eighteen." Still, she's not about to give up: "The need to keep busy is both a symptom of high-functioning anxiety and the key to my success."

"I Have Some Questions for You" is rich in incident and alive with expressive imagery ("the tree arms had turned to chaotic blurs, the scratchy handwriting of someone in a hurry, a doctor's prescription only the pharmacist could read"). A coda, set in 2022, provides a bittersweet but illuminating resolution for all who have worked so long and hard to uncover the truth.

The Mythos of Gumbo

FICTION
SAM SACKS

"I'VE BEEN HEARING voices all of my life," says Joubert Jones at the start of Leon Forrest's newly reissued 1992 novel "Divine Days" (Seminary Co-op Offsets/Northwestern, 1,140 pages, \$28), and if you wonder whether Joubert will try to hush his internal orators, one glimpse at this leviathan—measuring 2½ inches across the spine—will tell you otherwise. Much like Forrest's massive, polyphonic book, Joubert is hopelessly possessed by a host of characters determined to speak: "These souls, returned through voices, still maintain their spiritual essence, their old human meanness, their angularity, their roughhouse jagged-edged evolutionary claim and climb after the regenerative sources of the ladder up to life. Maintaining the drive to stay alive, they seek out those people who listen to them, who are hyper-aware, with antennae high and keen enough to hear their voices. They don't seek to communicate, that most abused of modern words, they seek to live."

Leon Forrest (1937-1997), he of the high and keen antennae, was a lifelong Chicagoan who did his apprentice work as a journalist. In 1973, Toni Morrison, then an editor at Random House, acquired his first novel, "There Is a Tree More Ancient Than Eden." Morrison would work with Forrest on two further books before leaving publishing to

focus on her own career as a fiction writer. By that time Forrest had become obsessed by the herculean project that was "Divine Days." "I had been reading [James Joyce's] 'Ulysses' quite closely, and I was influenced by jazz, of course, and the two seemed to be working together to open me up, to free me to try even more imaginative romps," he later explained. "I was on this horse, and I dared not get off."

Forrest's modern odyssey takes place across a week in February 1966 in Forest County, the author's fanciful name for Chicago's predominantly black South Side. Joubert Jones, an ancestral Creole raised by his pugnaciously intellectual Aunt Eloise, has returned home after two years of military service, and like Joyce's Stephen Dedalus he is on a quest for personal and artistic awakening. The novel takes the form of his madly scribbled journal recounting the events of these days, the people the 29-year-old Joubert encounters and the superabundance of stories they tell. Mostly the scenes play out in places where the African-American oral tradition lives on: the bar owned by Aunt Eloise called the Night Light Lounge; Williemain's barbershop, which is also the site of the secret society known as the Royal Rites and Righteous Ramblings Club; and the gospel services at Anchor of Zion Missionary Baptist Church.

In the course of his neighborhood sojourns, Joubert confronts a dizzying number of interlocutors, either real or remembered—a helpful character list tallies over 150 names and claims to be only partial—but the two most important figures are depicted in absentia. W.A.D. Ford, now on the lam from the FBI, is the charismatic huckster who ran the cult-like religious sect Divine Days. Joubert is trying to write a play about this "trickster-demon" who perverts the sacred art of fabulation for his

THIS WEEK

Divine Days

By Leon Forrest

own empowerment. But Joubert also yearns to chronicle the complicated life of the late Sugar-Groove, a mixed-race, silver-tongued ladies' man, whose beauty and dazzling exploits made him a figure of local myth.

The narratives builds toward the story of the mighty clash between these shape-shifting avatars of Good and Evil, but the lessons Joubert draws from it are more complex than the Manichean binary suggests. The world "Divine Days" represents is one of endless and irreversible amalgamations—what Forrest calls "the mythos of gumbo"—whether in matters

of morality, personality, identity or art. Hence the novel's delirious fusion of high and low culture, its delight in seating folklore and bawdy bar jokes elbow-to-elbow with citations of Shakespeare and Robert Frost, with Louis Armstrong and Claude Debussy playing in turn in the background.

The only things Forrest does not tolerate at this banquet, in fact, are absolutes and exclusions. Joubert is attracted to the church but not to monotheism. He is surprisingly vehement in his dislike of W.E.B. Du Bois and his "simple-minded double-consciousness business." (Only a double consciousness? We have hundreds, if not thousands of them, he thinks.) Forrest was a critic of Afrocentrism, with its vision of racial purity, and his one tendentiously drawn character is Joubert's romantic interest Julia De Loretto, a tragically misguided acolyte of Malcolm X.

The myriad others, though, don't communicate but simply live, and their teeming tall tales are microcosms of this wild and windy novel as a whole. Forrest's technique, influenced by jazz musicians, is to start with a motif and to improvise, drawing in whatever diverse material comes to mind and steadily building momentum and lyricism until his speaker ascends on a "solo stellar flight into tale-telling space." No one is grounded in "Divine Days,"

least of all the reader. The scenes cohere only indifferently and don't add up to meaningful conclusions. This is a stand-alone, unified work, yet it constantly seeks out the freedom of a release into chaos, because chaos, and not some falsified order, is truthful to existence.

To say that this makes it difficult to read would be the kind of wry understatement the sardonic barflies at the Night Light Lounge might appreciate. Frankly, "Divine Days" is impossible to read in any ordinary, progressive fashion. You have to approach it piecemeal, at intervals of heightened attention. This makes the attractive, affordable reprint by Chicago's Seminary Co-op Bookstores, in collaboration with Northwestern University Press, all the more admirable. No Forrest revival, however full-throated, is going to bring this book many buyers.

But those who are willing to surrender themselves will find incalculable riches and inexhaustible imagination. In one quick anecdote—it's about five pages, a mere eyeblink in geologic terms—a disgraced college professor flees campus security guards, running so fast that an onlooker exclaims he's "actually outrunning God himself." It sometimes feels that with this sprawling, bawling, profusely populated creation Forrest meant to challenge God to a footrace. All we can do is try to keep up.

Returned to print at last: A high-modern bebop masterpiece about a Creole Stephen Dedalus on Chicago's South Side.

BOOKS

'Being a woman is a bit like being Irish. Everyone says you're important and nice, but you take second best all the same.' —IRIS MURDOCH

The Speechways of Tipperary

The Queen of Dirt Island

By Donal Ryan
 Viking, 244 pages, \$27

By KATHERINE A. POWERS

DONAL RYAN'S stories are set chiefly in the author's native town of Nenagh, County Tipperary, and its rural surrounds. No longer in thrall to a bleak, Jansenist version of the Church or sunk in Purgatorial privation, these small communities have, in the last few decades, been penetrated by mass entertainment, material consumption and loosened standards of conduct. But, as of old, they are still ruled by talk. And it is talk—the fluid, vaguely surreal speechways of the Irish countryside—that carries Mr. Ryan's stories along. His first novel, "The Spinning Heart," was forged from the voices of 21 people living through the aftermath of the collapse of Ireland's property bubble. Rejected for publication nearly 50 times—vetted, it would seem, by people who should have sought other employment—the brilliant little novel went on to be long-listed for the Booker prize and to win a number of awards including the Irish Book of the Decade. That was in 2012, and since then Mr. Ryan has produced a collection of short stories and five further novels including the present "The Queen of Dirt Island."

At the new book's center are the Aylwards, four generations of country women: Mary is a widow and the mother of her daughter-in-law Eileen's deceased husband. She lives on a small farm with her remaining sons: Paudie, who has got himself mixed up with the IRA with unfortunate consequences, and Chris, who is somewhat soft in the head—as everyone will be happy to tell you. Eileen is the mother of Saoirse, who becomes the mother of Pearl. For the most part, Saoirse's story dominates the book, although it is mixed in with a couple of other strands, one involving an ill-favored marriage, the other the ownership of land. That last is a subject of endless conjecture and begrudgery in Ireland, made all the more so by the greed unloosed by the property boom—here in this book and, far more poisonously, in Mr. Ryan's unhappiest novel, "The Thing About December" (2013).

We first meet Saoirse just brought home from the hospital as a new-born baby. Leaving his infant daughter "swaddled tight against her mother's chest," Saoirse's father drives off to work—and to his death in an automobile accident. With that, Mary becomes an essential part of Eileen and Saoirse's household, walking over most days to help out and to share gossip. We follow Saoirse's childhood as she picks up undercurrents of some past transgression, gleaning



knowledge from chance remarks and a penchant for eavesdropping. Finally, she notices the date on a photograph of her parents on their wedding day and realizes that her mother was already pregnant, a gift to this zealously chattering, often spiteful community.

Well, at least she got married. Saoirse, now 17, goes to a dance with her friend Breedie (a tragic figure from Mr. Ryan's 2016 novel, "All We Shall Know") and, of course, ends up pregnant. Her mother's reaction is a page-and-a-half tirade, a masterpiece of inspired blasphemy and obscenity that is both very funny and terrible (and unquotable in these pages). Her grandmother, too, is appalled: "The killing thing is how all the smart ones will be fattening now, saying, For all their minding of her, ha-ha, and all their praising of her, and all the talk about how she was a great girl, they couldn't keep her from letting herself down." When born, the baby, Pearl, is doted upon.

Saoirse soon regrets that she's left school, wondering if she should have stayed and braved the nuns' opprobrium: "They'd have had to get over it. They'd have had to live with

her swollen body and her aura of sin." Her sense of her own limitedness is owing in part to the arrival of Josh Elmwood, a character who appeared, disappeared and appeared again in Mr. Ryan's previous novel, "Strange Flowers" (2020). A would-be writer, he has returned home to his family's place with Honey, his girlfriend, a filmmaker.

The two of them often include Saoirse in their activities; still, as they talk mostly about books and art, they make Saoirse feel ignorant, inadequate and desperate to matter. As Honey and Josh discuss the novel he is writing about a character called Billy, Saoirse wants "to say something meaningful, or funny, or insightful, to encourage Josh in some way, to prove to the shining people . . . that she was just as wise as them. Anything she said sounded tinny and small in her ears, even though Honey turned herself right around each time Saoirse spoke, and smiled at her, a brilliant, heartfelt smile, as though Saoirse's words delighted her, and she'd nod and say to Josh, You see? Saoirse thinks Billy is a good idea."

Honey goes off to London to make a movie, asking Saoirse in her

condescending, kindly way to take care of Josh. Meaning exactly what? As it happens, Josh and Saoirse take up with each other, though the absent Honey, the shadowy rival, is always present in Saoirse's mind. The exact nature of her relationship with Josh is a puzzle and a pain to her. He is, as she knows without wanting to know, something of a

It's a shame about the Aylward girl. For all their minding of her, ha-ha, they couldn't keep her from letting herself down.

poseur, but she's in love. She's excited when he asks her to take notes on everything going on around her, for, he says, "This small place needed somehow to be marshalled into art." He means to transform her notes into a novel, but, heartbreakingly, in Saoirse's secret mind, they are a way of opening her heart to him, believing that her confidences would "graft her soul to his so that they'd

be one entity, and all others would necessarily be forsaken."

Mr. Ryan works the details, nuances and upshot of this relationship into an intricate, painfully perceptive picture of failed empathy, of neediness meeting exploitation, genuineness confounded by presumption, truth misappropriated and transformed into travesty. In Josh, Mr. Ryan captures the agony of the artist *manqué*, a young man who, at this stage at least, has conflated the urgent desire to capture the world in a novel with writerly posturing of a noisier variety, his cigarette playing a supporting role. As for Mr. Ryan's treatment of Saoirse: I do not know of another male writer who has so perfectly captured the experiences and thoughts of a woman as he has. Saoirse's shades of emotion and thought are poignantly true to life, recognizable, and perfectly conveyed. Further, as we have come to expect from Mr. Ryan, this very fine novel concludes on a note of sweetness and, also, in this case, triumph.

Ms. Powers is a recipient of the Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing from the National Book Critics Circle.

The Family Business? A Little Black Magic.



SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

LIZ BRASWELL

Mariana Enriquez grounds a magical tale in a vivid historical setting—the Argentina of Juan and Eva Peron.

IF IT'S RARE to come across a truly new idea in speculative fiction, that problem is nothing compared to the embarrassing rehash of characters, settings, plot points and monsters in the genre that you might call "supernatural horror with a dollop of sex." It started well before "Twilight," and it doesn't look like it's ending anytime soon. So it was with some trepidation I picked up "**Our Share of Night**" (Hogarth, 588 pages, \$28.99) by Mariana Enriquez, translated by Megan McDowell. It's a large book with an excellent cover but some of the more uninformative flap copy I have read in a while. It's a good thing I ignored it.

The book's premise is deceptively simple: a boy, Gaspar, inherits the great and terrible legacy his very gothic family has been working toward after his mother is killed in a car crash—an accident that probably wasn't entirely by accident. His father, Juan, is a medium, a conduit between the magical force and world known as the Darkness and the members of the Order, an international, supernatural-worshipping cult more or less run by Gaspar's grandparents. To control Juan they hide his dead wife's soul somewhere he cannot reach.

And they need to control him, because Gaspar may also

be manifesting the rare power of a medium. Juan will do anything to keep him from that fate, and tries to give him as normal a life as he can. Sounds vaguely done, yes? And yet.

The book takes place in Argentina not long after Perón seizes power: The river is filled with the bodies of those the army has disappeared, public gatherings are rare, and even the mildest music could be considered antigovernment. Race is an omnipresent, smoldering issue just below the surface; it's not by accident that the Order chooses mostly indigenous Guaraní children to kidnap and torture, or that the blond descendants of European immigrants are treated very differently from their compatriots.

There are also South American beliefs, magic, and traditions that might be different from what a North American reader is used to. The translator and publisher do a wonderful job of rendering unfamiliar concepts like the "imbunche" as a normalized, integral part of the novel's world. (Do not, however, search "subcutaneously inserted charms" without bracing yourself first.)

But the real beauty of "Our Share of Night" is in the mundane, unmagical things. A father and son's complicated

road trip to the heart of a family that elevated and may now destroy them both. A child's afternoon of looking for a lost dog with friends, making posters and putting them up around town. Or the simple progression of a migraine, drawn out over a day—Juan can't have caffeine or certain painkillers because of a very banal heart condition that is slowly killing him.

There is, refreshingly, no explaining how the "magic system" works or why Argentina is in the mess that it is; as the reader you live with the

THIS WEEK

Our Share of Night

By Mariana Enriquez
 Translated by Megan McDowell

The Magician's Daughter

By H.G. Parry

characters while they just try to get through their days in a sticky mess of family control and sick violence—almost all of which is human-made.

The characters may be two-dimensional but this is easily forgiven against such beautifully precise writing, the casual approach to "black" magic, and a setting we don't often get to read about. The book's steamy

days and relentless nights creep up on you; I wasn't able to put it down. Set aside some time for this one.

And on the other end of the fantasy spectrum: Bunnies. Some find them cute, others prefer seeing them on the menu. Depending on your own stance you may be happy to know that none of the many rabbits in H.G. Parry's "**The Magician's Daughter**" (Redhook, 400 pages, \$18.99) is badly injured; there is a rabbit familiar, a rabbit Púca (Pookah), and magical-seeming black rabbits who in the end don't do much more than nibble the grass.

On the mystical island of Hy-Brasil, Rowan the mage lives with these many rabbits and a girl who washed up on the shore as a baby many years before (and yes, every time the mystical island's name is mentioned I do hear Vin Diesel yelling "This is Hy-Brasil!" à la "Fast Five.") Magic is almost gone from the world; Rowan occasionally makes trips to the mainland to steal it from the Council of Mages and then release it as luck and hope for the downtrodden.

Biddy, the magician's adopted daughter, is no mage—though she harbors a secret belief that the mystical island chose her especially for some great destiny. She is on the cusp of

changes that foretell the eventual coming of adulthood, so when she is finally allowed to leave the island to act as bait for the evil Council, she begins to have some very real doubts and misgivings about her childhood wishes. (She is also more a little surprised when she winds up in London and things—like subways—don't look like the Victorian world she had imagined.)

Yes, she turns out to be the key to bringing magic back into the world. But if that's predictable, this isn't: There are, wonderfully, no love interests in this book. Rowan has a "friend" named Morgaine who very clearly doesn't want to marry or have children—she adores having the niece-like Biddy, however.

"The Magician's Daughter" is a delightful little fantasy that pulls at all the right heartstrings. It's very much an homage to the gentle young people's novels of yesteryear, "The Secret Garden" in particular. The author gives all of these books their due: Biddy grows up in an idealized, cottagecore childhood of reading them, climbing trees, and being surrounded by mild magic while the world winds on to the turn of the last century.

For those who fondly remember the works of Frances Hodgson Burnett or Lewis Carroll, this novel will definitely be your (bread, butter and) jam.

BOOKS

'Celebrity, my dear fellow, is based upon controversy.' —LOUSTEAU, IN BALZAC'S 'LOST ILLUSIONS'

The Performance of a Lifetime

Paradise Now

By William Middleton
Harper, 469 pages, \$35

BY BRENDA CRONIN

BEING NOTICED “is the only thing that matters to me,” the 21-year-old Karl Lagerfeld wrote to his mother in 1954, on the threshold of his career in fashion. “I don’t care what people say as long as they say something.”

The precocious designer became a supernova thanks to continuous toil in a tinselly milieu that prizes leisure and luxury. In “Paradise Now: The Extraordinary Life of Karl Lagerfeld,” William Middleton exposes both strands—the behind-the-scenes striver and the haughty sybarite—that Lagerfeld wove together into a piece of performance art that ran until his death, at the age of 85, in 2019.

As Lagerfeld surged in the 1990s, Burt Tansky, then the president of Bergdorf Goodman, lauded him as “good for the whole business because excitement swirls around him. . . . He loves to create controversy and he’s catty.” A German who revolutionized French, Italian and, ultimately, global fashion, Lagerfeld exploded haute couture’s stately pace and sedate shows into a year-round juggernaut of theatrical spectacles. At one point, he was coming up with collections for the houses of Chanel and Fendi and his own label.

His most enduring confection was his public persona: the sharp-tongued, fan-wielding aesthete and dervish. Even his blue-eyed Birman cat, Chouette—with whom Lagerfeld had arguably one of his most profound relationships—had an Instagram following. He shunned nostalgia and was fixated on the future but indulged his 18th-century obsession by ravenously collecting period art and furniture. Lagerfeld embodied the contradictory tugs of old and new, pairing stiff-collared shirts and a tidy ponytail with dark glasses, fingerless gloves and ring-bedizened hands.

Mr. Middleton, a fashion journalist whose previous book was a biography of the art collectors Dominique and John de Menil, has chased down new details on his much-profiled subject, particularly about Lagerfeld’s parents and childhood. Even time-worn tales of merciless culls of friends and colleagues sound fresh in this recounting.

Mr. Middleton lets Lagerfeld do the talking, whether defending his shopping sprees (“I hate rich people who live below their means”) or trashing rivals (“I hate people in this business who stay stuck in a certain time period”). This feather-light succession of vignettes from “Lifestyles of the Rich and Peremptory” goes down as easily as Vanity Fairs at the salon. Alas, few Lagerfeld acolytes share his recall or waspish wit and gas on hazily, adding little.

Lagerfeld was born in Hamburg in 1933. Left to his own devices by prosperous parents—his father imported and then manufactured condensed milk—young Karl sketched, was transfixed by silent films and devoured German, French and English literature. At age 16, he accompanied his mother to a Christian Dior show and sensed his métier. Three years later, he began studying fashion design and illustration in Paris. When he was 21, a coat he designed



VITTORIO ZUNINO/CELOTTO/GETTY IMAGES

BY DESIGN Karl Lagerfeld in Florence in 2015.

won a high-profile contest. He shared the honors with another student and an 18-year-old Yves Saint Laurent, with whom he would go on to have a friendship, a professional rivalry—and an epic rupture. At the reception after the prize ceremony, Lagerfeld wasted no time buttonholing potential employers. “I didn’t come to drink, let alone eat,” he recalled. He received several job offers, though none from the house Chanel, whose founder was then probably in her 70s. (Like Lagerfeld, Coco Chanel serially understated her age.) “The old lady is too stupid” to recruit him, Lagerfeld wrote his mother, who logged mementos of her son’s early professional triumphs in scrapbooks.

The first stop was Balmain, where Lagerfeld’s contributions included a hat for Zsa Zsa Gabor. Then it was on to the house of Jean Patou, from which Lagerfeld launched himself as a fashion mercenary, signing with Chloé and also Fendi. He began his own line in 1984, a year after becoming artistic director at Chanel. His nearly four decades at Chanel became a blueprint for reviving a storied but staid line.

Coco Chanel, who died in 1971, had much in common with Lagerfeld. Both cultivated attention, spouting epigrams and edicts in several languages. Fundamentally solitary and restless as sharks, they focused on business. They poured themselves into personal projects, such as decorating homes that were seldom lived in by their visionary, peripatetic owners.

Lagerfeld’s only serious love affair, alleged to have spanned almost 20 years, seems to have been with Jacques de Bascher, a French dandy nearly half his age. De Bascher, who died in 1989, at one point had a fling with Saint Laurent. After that, the needling rapport between the two cou-

rturers turned icy. In interviews, Lagerfeld mocked Saint Laurent for posing as a tortured genius. “Why tell people that you suffered to make a taffeta dress, when you make the same dress as you did six months ago?” he asked. “People buy your dresses to be happy, not to know about the dramas of a crying alcoholic.” Saint Laurent’s withering rejoinder: “The problem with Karl . . . is that he has terrible taste.”

One fashion executive explained Lagerfeld’s appeal thus: ‘He loves to create controversy and he’s catty.’

Outsize energy, creativity and a keen sense of timing distinguished Lagerfeld from other designers. Even after transforming a moribund Chanel, he had to keep reinventing the house, one journalist wrote, noting “he has to do the Lazarus thing all over again.” Such a remit would be difficult to pull off once. Lagerfeld did it constantly, for several labels. A risky 2004 collaboration with the mass retailer H&M pushed his renown far beyond the world of haute couture. The affordable clothes—a shirt cost less than \$50—fleetingly stirred misgivings for the designer. But fans picked the racks clean and clamored for selfies with him.

“Paradise Now” also serves as a Baedeker to Lagerfeld’s opulent life. Mr. Middleton records the designer’s favorite Saint-Germain-des-Prés haunts, the nightclubs where he loved to dance and the boutiques, galleries and auction houses where he bought—or de-

accessioned—furniture and art. There are his cars, from his Mercedes 190 SL and Rolls-Royce in Paris to his Bentley convertible in Saint-Tropez. And, of course, clothes: the bespoke shirts from Hilditch & Key, the suits from Dior Homme, the jewelry from Chrome Hearts. In the ’70s and ’80s Lagerfeld was a regular passenger on the Concorde, occasionally hopping aboard Gulfstreams. After testily slumming it in first class on an Air France Airbus A380, the designer never flew commercial again.

A cancer diagnosis in 2015 galvanized a creative valedictory, including Chanel fashion shows in Cuba and a space-inspired extravaganza, with launch pad and rocket, at Paris’s Grand Palais.

Lagerfeld’s denouement was unusually understated. For years, he had kept the Paris florist Lachaume feverishly busy, delivering scores of bouquets, accompanied by handwritten notes on special paper—his favorite material—to colleagues, celebrities, models and others. In early 2019, Lagerfeld, who had kept his illness to himself, was in hospital and too weak to write. He ordered arrangements for a few longtime friends. Bearing cards reading “From Karl Lagerfeld,” the flowers arrived on Valentine’s Day. Five days later he died.

Despite his sonar for the spotlight, Lagerfeld—the star of an exhibit opening in May at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute—rebuffed retrospectives. At age 80, the designer was unequivocal about what to do after his death, insisting: “Burnt—tossed—done! I hate the idea of burdening people with remains. Mais quelle horreur!”

Ms. Cronin is an associate editorial-features editor at the Journal.

Bestselling Books | Week Ended February 11

With data from NPD BookScan

Hardcover Nonfiction

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Spare Prince Harry/Random House	1	2
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	2	3
The Official Disney Parks Cookbook Pam Brandon & the Disney Chefs/Disney Editions	3	New
8 Rules of Love Jay Shetty/Simon & Schuster	4	1
Under the Naga Tail Mae Bunseng Taing & James Taing/Greenleaf	5	New

Hardcover Fiction

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Sex Talks Vanessa Marin & Xander Marin/Simon Element	6	New
Never Give an Inch Mike Pompeo/Broadside	7	6
Walk the Blue Line James Patterson & Matt Eversmann/Little, Brown	8	New
Love, Pamela Pamela Anderson/Dey Street	9	5
We Over Me Khadeen Ellis & Devala Ellis/Rodale	10	New

Nonfiction Ebooks

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible... Matthew Perry/Flatiron	1	—
Spare Prince Harry/Random House	2	2
Brokering Billions Bonneau Ansley/Morgan James	3	New
Notes From a Small Island Bill Bryson/Morrow	4	—
People vs. Donald Trump Mark Pomerantz/Simon & Schuster	5	New
The Beauty in Breaking Michele Harper/Riverhead	6	—
Reconstruction: Updated Edition Eric Foner/Harper Perennial	7	—
Becoming Free Indeed Jinger Vuolo/Thomas Nelson	8	1
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	9	6
Bad Mormon Heather Gay/Gallery	10	New

Nonfiction Combined

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Spare Prince Harry/Random House	1	2
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	2	4
The Official Disney Parks Cookbook Pam Brandon & the Disney Chefs/Disney Editions	3	New
8 Rules of Love Jay Shetty/Simon & Schuster	4	1
Under the Naga Tail Mae Bunseng Taing & James Taing/Greenleaf	5	New
Sex Talks Vanessa Marin & Xander Marin/Simon Element	6	New
Never Give an Inch Mike Pompeo/Broadside	7	6
The Body Keeps the Score Bessel van der Kolk/Penguin	8	8
The 48 Laws of Power Robert Greene/Penguin	9	7
Bad Mormon Heather Gay/Gallery	10	New

Fiction Ebooks

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Encore in Death J.D. Robb/St. Martin's	1	New
Unnatural History Jonathan Kellerman/Ballantine	2	New
It Starts With Us Colleen Hoover/Atria	3	1
Lessons in Chemistry Bonnie Garmus/Doubleday	4	2
Finding Ashlyn Susan Stoker/Susan Stoker	5	New
Sleeping Beauties Stephen King/Scribner	6	—
Someone Else's Shoes Jojo Moyes/Pamela Dorman	7	New
A Killing of Innocents Deborah Crombie/Morrow	8	New
The Vanishing Half Brit Bennett/Riverhead	9	—
Secretly Yours Tessa Bailey/Avon	10	New

Fiction Combined

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Encore in Death J.D. Robb/St. Martin's	1	New
It Starts With Us Colleen Hoover/Atria	2	1
It Ends With Us Colleen Hoover/Atria	3	2
Little Blue Truck's Valentine Alice Schertle/Clarion	4	5
Heart Bones Colleen Hoover/Atria	5	6
Verity Colleen Hoover/Grand Central	6	4
Secretly Yours Tessa Bailey/Avon	7	New
Lessons in Chemistry Bonnie Garmus/Doubleday	8	7
Unnatural History Jonathan Kellerman/Ballantine	9	New
Someone Else's Shoes Jojo Moyes/Pamela Dorman	10	New

Methodology

NPD BookScan gathers point-of-sale book data from more than 16,000 locations across the U.S., representing about 85% of the nation's book sales. Print-book data providers include all major booksellers, web retailers and food stores. Ebook data providers include all major ebook retailers. Free ebooks and those selling for less than 99 cents are excluded. The fiction and nonfiction combined lists include aggregated sales for all book formats (except audio books, bundles, boxed sets and foreign language editions) and feature a combination of adult, young adult and juvenile titles. The hardcover fiction and nonfiction lists also encompass a mix of adult, young adult and juvenile titles while the business list features only adult hardcover titles. Refer questions to Teresa.Vozzo@wsj.com.

Hardcover Business

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	1	1
StrengthsFinder 2.0 Tom Rath/Gallup	2	3
Come Up for Air Nick Sonnenberg/Harper Leadership	3	New
Dare to Lead Brené Brown/Random House	4	6
Extreme Ownership Jocko Willink & Leif Babin/St. Martin's	5	5
Culture Is the Way Matt Mayberry/Wiley	6	—
Emotional Intelligence 2.0 Travis Bradberry/TalentSmart	7	8
The Daily Stoic Ryan Holiday & Stephen Hanselman/Portfolio	8	9
Unreasonable Hospitality Will Guidara/Optimism	9	10
Never Split the Difference Chris Voss/Harper Business	10	7

PLAY

NEWS QUIZ DANIEL AKST

From this week's Wall Street Journal

1. California Sen. Dianne Feinstein said she won't seek reelection in 2024. Which of these officials wasn't mentioned as likely to run for her seat?



5. A drug discovered by accident seems to work as a male contraceptive. What had scientists been hoping to treat when they found it?

- A. Infertility
B. Jaundice
C. Brain swelling
D. A rare eye disorder

- A. Adam Schiff
B. Katie Porter
C. Jesse Unruh
D. Barbara Lee

2. Congress and the White House are at odds over raising the debt ceiling. When did the U.S. last pay off all its debt?

- A. 1999
B. 1958
C. 1914
D. 1835

3. A new book, 'Unscripted,' chronicles the rise and decline of media tycoon Sumner Redstone. What company was at the heart of his empire?

- A. Berkshire Hathaway
B. National Amusements
C. Ling-Temco-Vought
D. Walt Disney Co.

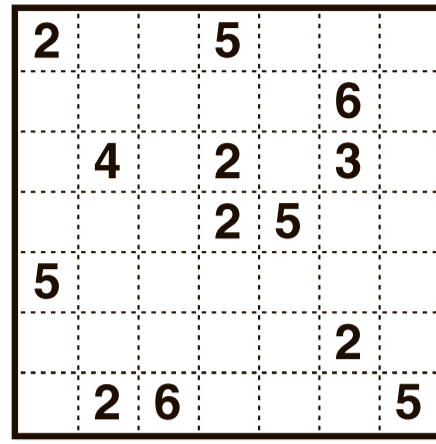
4. The White House named Fed vice chair Lael Brainard director—of which federal outfit?

- A. The National Economic Council
B. The Council of Economic Advisers
C. The Bureau of Economic Analysis
D. The Economic Development Administration

Answers are listed below the crossword solutions at right.

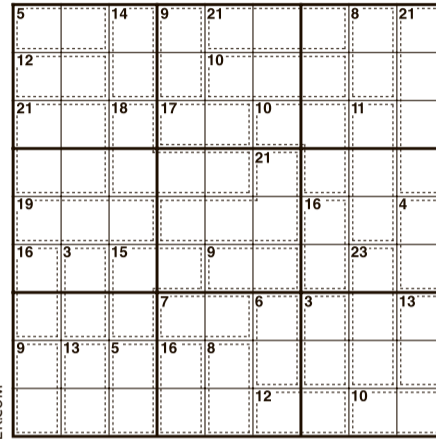
NUMBER PUZZLES

Cell Blocks



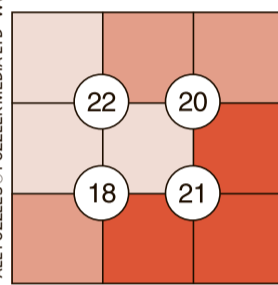
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Killer Sudoku Level 1



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Suko

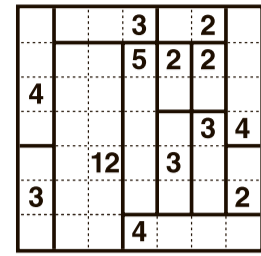


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each color total is correct.

ACROSS 1. SP + A + M 4. O + PAL 8. L + ABEL 10. EPOXY (hid.) 15. S(H)ELF 16. MISCUES ('miss queues' hom.) 18. pINTO 21. AM + IS 22. DRAB (rev.) 23. DE(POS)AL 27. A(U)CTION 30. ERRS ('airs' hom.) 31. ITEM (anag.) 36. T + OLD 37. YAN + KEES (rev.) 39. wALLOW 40. OVERT (anag.) 41. ONSET (hid.) 42. SE(X)Y ('yes' rev.) 43. GALE (anag.) DOWN 1. S(L)UM 2. P(AN)IC 3. ME(RCY)ME ('cry' anag.) 5. POE + TRY 6. AX(L)ES 7. LYFT (first letters) 9. BASRA (anag.) 11. P + HOE + BE 13. PETS (rev.) 14. A(NOR)K 17. S(X)PM (rev.) 20. CROATIA (anag.) 24. SU + RELY ('US' rev.) 25. C + INDY 26. SECTOR (anag.) 28. PER + KING 29. REF + L + EX 31. IMAX (anag.) 32. ME(ET)S 33. SA(L)VE 34. RE(V)EL 35. LAOS (anag.) 38. S + ATE

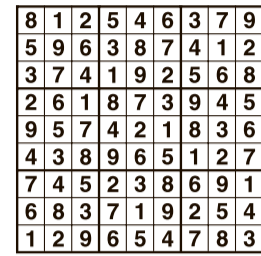
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

Cell Blocks

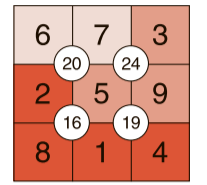


For previous weeks' puzzles, and to discuss strategies with other solvers, go to WSJ.com/puzzles.

Killer Sudoku Level 4



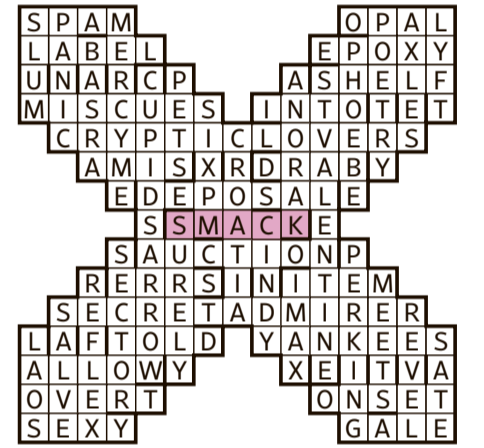
Suko



In the Drink

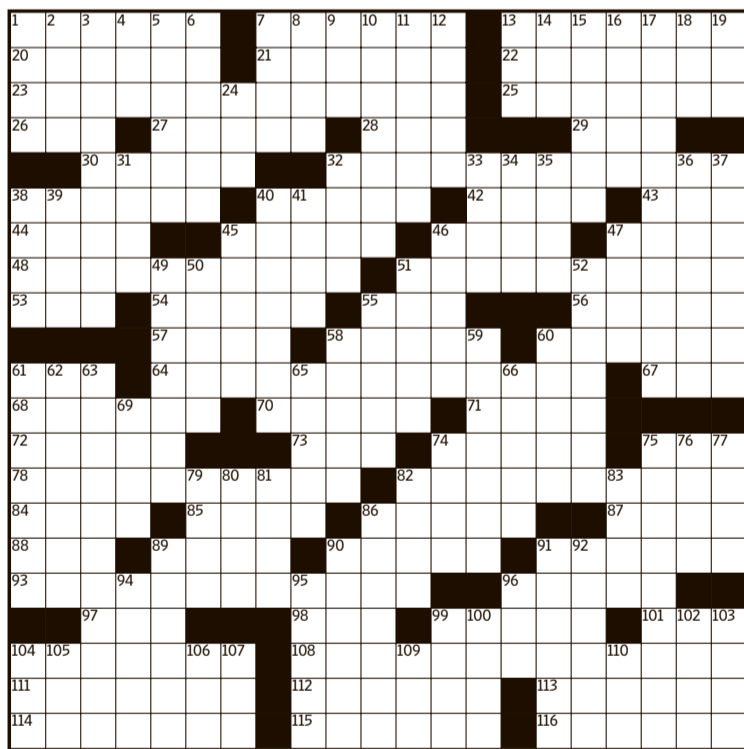


Letter of Mystery



THE JOURNAL WEEKEND PUZZLES edited by MIKE SHENK

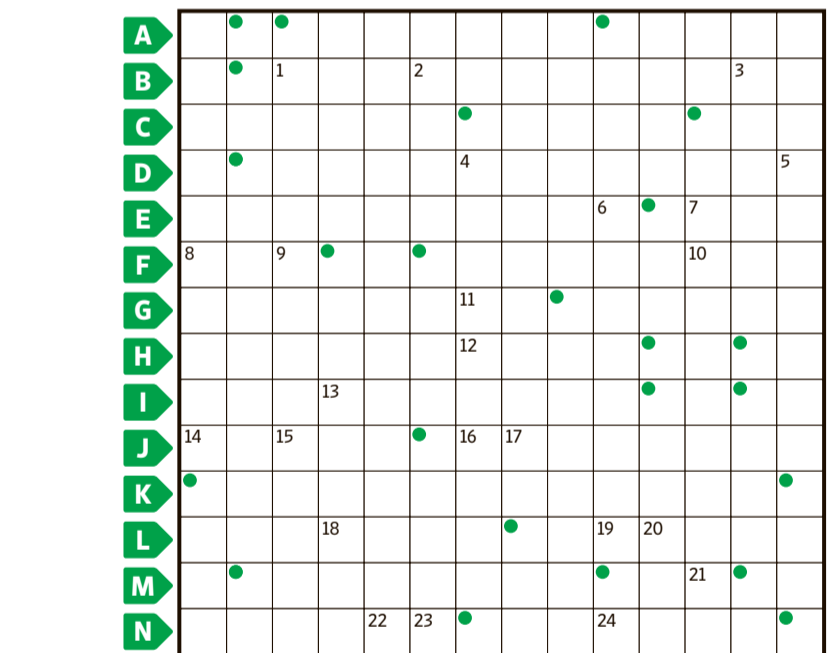
Answers to News Quiz: 1.C, 2.D, 3.B, 4.A, 5.D, 6.C, 7.A, 8.B



We're Behind You All the Way | by Mike Shenk

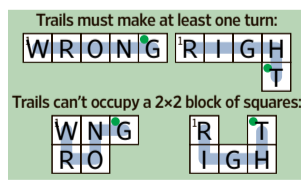
- Across 1 Show little interest in, as one's dinner beak? 7 Few and far between 13 Boxer's kin 20 Words that suggest a strong hand 21 California motto 22 It's south of Georgia 23 Hole in a bird's beak? 25 Steered clear of 26 Random amount 27 Secluded hollows 28 Cry from the barrera 29 Half of sex- 30 Climate activist Thunberg 32 Gumshoes who cracks cases in his sleep? 38 Persistently bother 40 Day that U.K. residents vote 42 Easy victims 43 Doubles tennis pro Shibahara 44 Nation on the Arabian Sea 45 They're tight in cabins 46 Dancer's bend 47 Believers 48 Really heavy coat? 51 Grounds of the Timberland headquarters? 53 Show decisiveness 54 Made for corrections 55 Sen. Biden's state 56 Eddy in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 57 Physiologist Pavlov 58 Sri ___ 60 'Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman' star Louise 61 Issuer of nine-digit nos. 64 Hard skin from installing lots of window treatments? 67 NFL scores 68 Appear unexpectedly 70 Mammal with a low-energy diet 71 Special teams play 72 Register for 73 Single 74 Showing more skin 75 H look-alike 78 Set a cost for an Iberian river? 82 Anklebones of a male ass? 84 Bandmate of Keith 85 'Yikes!' 86 Pop group? 87 NYPD broadcasts 88 Brutus Buckeye's sch. 89 Some summer babies 90 Loses 91 Take on with vigor 93 Inhabitant of the White House when the air conditioning conks out? 96 Raft mover 97 Impressed feeling 98 'You make me so mad!' 99 Commandments verb 101 '___ live and breathe!' 104 Famed Fauvist 108 Diner handouts that should have been replaced years ago? 111 Member of a certain college 112 Tennis champ Goolagong 113 Candlestick setting, frequently 114 Grotesque 115 Like matryoshka dolls 116 Make reading difficult 12-point unit 2 Nation on the Persian Gulf 3 Star of four Alfred Hitchcock movies 4 Joke 5 Incidental remarks 6 Articles of faith 7 Hawk 8 Kitty 9 Perfume from music's Grande 10 179 paintings in Philadelphia's Barnes Foundation 11 Secretive fraternity Phi Kappa Sigma, familiarly 12 Stand for a sitting 13 More, in Mexico 14 Animal carrier, of a sort 15 Forging pros 16 Latin land 17 Long ago 18 '___ upon thee, slanderer!': Desdemona 19 Rage 24 Copying 31 Sounded the hour 32 Places 33 Home of King Harald V 34 Phone support annoyance

- 35 Builder's figure, for short 36 Flat, maybe 37 Smart sorts 38 Jolly laugh 39 'Do I need to draw you ___?' 40 They give dollars for quarters 41 Plunderer's take 45 Ping producer 46 Frankie Yankovic's music 47 Don with four Marconi Awards 49 Foodie 50 Become more active 51 Judge's place 52 2019 Brad Pitt sci-fi film 55 'La Vita Nuova' author 58 Ford Field footballers 59 Woolly camelids 60 Small moon 61 Carol Brady, to Greg, Peter and Bobby 62 Aurora's offering 63 Made clear 65 A way to think 66 Prepares to ambush, say 69 Bottle part 74 Lacking locks 75 Self-proclaimed 'lingvo internacia' 76 Big brass 77 Mgr.'s helper 79 Many a new driver 80 Excitedly curious 81 Sound from the shocked 82 Trader ___ 83 Pan's counterpart 86 Cinnamon-covered treats 89 Deceives 90 Make an effort 91 1982 Fleetwood Mac hit 92 'Gosford Park' director 94 Cautious way to think 95 City east of the Great Salt Lake 96 Bud 99 Word in a year-end song 100 Broke ground 102 Was litigious 103 Archipelago unit 104 'It's nothing special!' 105 Ryan's 'Love Story' co-star 106 Former French coin 107 Busy hosp. sections 109 Blasting letters 110 Bus. ltr. insert



Trail Mix | by Patrick Berry

Answers fit into this grid in two ways: Rows and Trails. Each Row contains two answers placed side by side, clued in order. Each Trail answer begins in the corresponding numbered square and ends in one of the dotted squares, making one or more turns along the way. Trails will never overlap each other, nor will they make hairpin turns (that is, no two-by-two block of grid squares can be filled by a single Trail answer). Lengths of the Trail answers are given in parentheses. In the completed grid, each letter will be used once in a Row answer and once in a Trail answer.



Rows

- A Ship's central stabilizer Item of sports equipment traditionally made of willow wood (2 wds.) B Houston baseballer Not readily visible C Arduous hike 1960s surf-pop duo that sang 'Dead Man's Curve' (3 wds.) D Newly christen Evening sky event

- E Copy changes Calcium ___ (chalk mineral) F Occupied, as a plane lavatory (2 wds.) Hunting dog that fetches game G Handed out Lighthearted shows at the Met H Not meant to be taken seriously (3 wds.) Adled by age I Ana's role in 'Blonde' 1933 musical featuring the song 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' J '...and make it ___!' Contemptuous K Of great and lasting importance ___ Quartet (contemporary classical music group) L Wandering pleasure-seeker Chart-topping song (2 wds.) M 'Songs of ___ and of Experience' (William Blake poetry collection) Search for water N Burns rubber Goes a different way

Trails

- 1 Paris or Hector (6) 2 Talk show host who once wrote for 'The Simpsons' (5,6) 3 Charitable organization named for the colorful stamps it used in its fundraising campaigns (11) 4 Aragorn's portrayal in 'The Lord of the Rings' (9) 5 TV remote's resting place (3,5) 6 Swinger's waiting spot (2-4,6) 7 When a broadcast is scheduled to run (7) 8 Moral beliefs (6) 9 Tackle, as a project (9) 10 Saltimbocca meat (4) 11 Seventh group blessed in the Beatitudes (11) 12 Strip (6) 13 From Tabriz or Shiraz (7) 14 Body part that's roughly 20 feet long (5,9) 15 Express interest in, as a job (5,3) 16 Convalescent's place (7) 17 Little cake similar to a hush puppy (4,7) 18 Are prevalent (6) 19 Resolve, as difficulties (4,3) 20 Three ___ Dam (Chinese hydroelectric plant) (6) 21 Laundry load washed with bleach (6) 22 Sound of weary exasperation (4,4) 23 Level above the ground floor (6,5) 24 Give the boot to (5)

Get the solutions to this week's Journal Weekend Puzzles in next Saturday's Wall Street Journal. Solve crosswords and acrostics online, get pointers on solving cryptic puzzles and discuss all of the puzzles online at WSJ.com/Puzzles.

REVIEW

ICONS

Art for Roman Holidays

In ancient Pompeii and other leisure spots, villas were decorated to convey taste, status and nostalgia.



By SUSAN DELSON

For the A-list of ancient Rome, the premier getaway destination was the Bay of Naples, a few days' travel down the Mediterranean coast. The lavishly decorated villas of Pompeii and other spots on the Bay were made for leisure: generously proportioned, filled with courtyards and gardens, and sited for breathtaking views. Art, especially landscape art, was another essential pleasure, conveying taste, status and a distinctly Roman world view.

The new exhibition "Roman Landscapes: Visions of Nature and Myth from Rome and Pompeii," opening on Feb. 24 at the San Antonio Museum of Art in Texas, features more than 65 works created in Roman Italy between 100 B.C. and 250 A.D. Many of the wall paintings, sculptures, mosaics, glass and silver vessels on view come from preserved remnants of residences destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. The show explores a culture in transition, enduring and then recovering from decades of civil war, harnessing new

technological achievements yet yearning for a traditional past.

That contradictory sensibility is reflected in Roman landscape art, said San Antonio Museum curator Jessica Powers, the exhibition's organizer. Idealized imagery often pictured idyllic, near-empty countryside where well-tended shrines won the gods' favor and brought prosperity to all. Those scenes stood in sharp contrast to the realities of rural Roman life, where large-scale agricultural slave labor was required to keep fields, orchards and vineyards productive.

By contrast, shoreline vistas—a staple of villa décor—celebrated Roman engineering innovations like hydraulic concrete, which hardened underwater. This technology made it possible to build offshore, and many artworks featured elaborate structures standing on platforms in the water, their sometimes-imaginary architecture assembled from various building types.

Occasionally nostalgia and engi-

neering combined in a single image. In a small wall painting from the Villa San Marco in Stabiae, a seaside shrine commands the foreground, its peaked roof and sacred tree shown in close detail. Behind it, a larger, more hazily painted colonnaded structure juts out into the water. With Roman innovation and material mastery as the background, the image gives the gods their solemn due.

With good reason. For ancient Romans, the natural landscape was potentially dangerous in ways that urban spaces were not, especially as a setting for human encounters with the gods—another frequent visual theme. The myth of Diana and the hunter Actaeon was a popular subject. In the best-known version of the tale, Actaeon spies the goddess bathing in the wild and is punished by being turned into a stag, then torn apart by his own hunting dogs. Ms. Powers noted that while Actaeon had to pay for seeing the goddess naked, artistic representations of the scene

allowed viewers to enjoy the same liberty without suffering the deity's revenge.

In ancient Roman residences, paintings didn't hang on the walls. Rather, they were painted into them, using a wet-plaster process much like fresco painting. In most buildings, walls were "plastered from floor to ceiling and side to side," said Ms. Powers. They were often adorned with a main central image flanked by lesser vignettes, with other visual motifs along the top and bottom. A typical room, she said, would have been "a riot of colors and imagery."

Artists often made clever use of a work's setting. Painted architectural features could playfully complement the actual architecture, and imaginary gardens could extend the vistas of real ones. A painting from the Villa Imperiale in Pompeii, originally sited low on a wall, shows a high-angle view of an enclosed garden, its perspective matching that of someone strolling by. At times, artists included more than one perspective in a scene. In a fragment from a series of paintings inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*, "You're able to look down into Odysseus's ship and

A Roman wall painting depicting a seaside villa, 1st century A.D.

see him and the men," said Ms. Powers, "but at the same time you're looking up at the Sirens perched on the rock."

Common landscape motifs sometimes turned up in mosaics and relief sculptures, but tableware was largely the province of Bacchus, the god of wine, prosperity and abundance. Images associated with Bacchus adorn the show's silver and carved cameo-glass cups, allowing drinkers to honor the rambunctious god while enjoying the gifts he bestowed. His uninhibited rites were often depicted in the wildest of settings, suffusing them with the dangers of the natural world.

The exhibition closes with a selection of works from cemeteries and tomb sites, including the Large Columbarium, a communal tomb for prosperous freedmen on the outskirts of Rome. With images of rural shrines and sanctuaries, river scenes, birds and other motifs, its painted walls conjured up an enviable garden for those resting there.

MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA/PARCO ARCHEOLOGICO DI POMPEI

MASTERPIECE | EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON (1856), BY HENRY KIRKE BROWN

Presidential Peace and Power Cast in Bronze

By HAROLD HOLZER

IN APRIL 1861, Maj. Robert Anderson and the soldiers he had commanded at Fort Sumter sailed for New York. Anderson's arrival came after the Confederate bombardment that began the Civil War. A few days later, a crowd of 100,000 gave him a hero's welcome at Union Square beneath Henry Kirke Brown's already beloved bronze equestrian statue of George Washington.

There, admirers planted the large, tattered American flag that had come under attack at Sumter—Anderson had brought it with him to Manhattan—on the massive likeness. Orator William M. Evarts declared: "I tell you that when the statue of Washington sustains in its firm hand the splintered flag-staff of Fort Sumter, it means something."

The work still does. Here—or more accurately a few hundred feet north of its original site (moved from a traffic island in the 1920s and now situated inside the park)—it looms above an urban oasis once notorious for crime but now known for its family-friendly greenmarkets. (Contrary to popular belief, the square was not named for the union of states but for the "union" of Bloomingdale Road and the Bowery—now Broadway and Fourth Avenue.)

New Yorkers had decided back in 1851 to raise a Washington statue on this spot, where patriots welcomed the general on Evacuation Day—Nov. 25, 1783—the date the British withdrew following their long occupation of the city. Sculptor Horatio Greenough was the first choice for the prestigious commission, but he died in 1852, leaving the project in the hands of his collaborator Brown (1814-1886)—even though Brown had only just crafted his first large public work: a statue of DeWitt Clinton for Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery. Elite New Yorkers with names like Astor, Belmont, Rhineland and Stuyvesant covered the project's \$30,000 cost.

Brown rose to the occasion, devoting three years to modeling the behemoth. Working at his Brooklyn studio, he fashioned what became only the second—and also the largest—equestrian statue made in America. On July 4, 1856, city leaders gathered to dedicate the four-ton, 13-1/2-foot-high result, installed atop a granite base of similar height designed by architect Richard Upjohn.

The ceremony—timed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of American Independence—attracted thousands. The principal speaker, the appropriately named Rev. George Washington Bethune, wasted no

time in hailing the "native genius" that had "nobly achieved the highest duty patriotism could demand of art." Introducing the "modest" artist to the crowd, Bethune declared that Brown's statue had fully captured the "majestic form of the unparalleled man whom God gave us."

The solemnity was relieved only when dignitaries failed after repeated exertions to dislodge the drapery covering the statue. According to the *New York Times*'s report on the dedication, a "party of firemen" was summoned, used a ladder to mount the pedestal, and "clambered up the horse's sides to free the arms and legs of the statue from the tarpaulin which had got entangled about them." When the statue was finally revealed, dozens of men in the throng seized pistols from their jackets and fired salutes into the air. Women waved handkerchiefs from the windows of nearby buildings and joined in "loud huzzas" for the artist.

Saluted in its day for its naturalistic style and wholly American theme, Brown's work nonetheless owes a clear artistic debt to the equestrian



It shows the founding father in a moment of restrained glory after the sacrifices of the American Revolution.

statue of Marcus Aurelius that had stood in Rome since the second century (Brown had studied there). Like Aurelius, his Washington extends his right arm as if "restraining the noble ardor of his soldiers," as one observer posited. In his left hand, Washington grasps his tricorne cap to evoke his sacrifice during the Revolution, while the sheathed sword at his side serves as both an emblem of restored peace and a warning against future aggression. The horse is portrayed in mid-trot, its rider confident in the saddle, his resolute expression modeled on a life bust by Jean-Antoine Houdon. "Mr. Brown may well be proud of his work,"

commented the *Times*. "The statue is one of the handsomest ornaments in the city."

It has remained so ever since, restored in 1989, 2001 and 2004, the bronze sword and stirrup once stolen by vandals now replaced with harmonious replicas. Standing the test of time even as heroic statues of Confederate generals and American presidents are toppled or threatened, Brown's work is a reminder of the universal veneration in which Washington was once held, and the early stirrings of the golden age of American public statuary.

Brown should have rested on his laurels. A companion statue of Abraham Lincoln executed 12 years later for the park was slammed by the *Times* after its unveiling, which likened it to "the hideous nightmare which people have after supping on roast pork and lobster salad." At the turn of the century, the paper included it in a list of "Unpleasant New York Statues," asserting it still seemed "painfully ugly." No one has ever said as much of his sublime, towering George Washington.

Mr. Holzer, director of Hunter College's Roosevelt House, is the author of "Monument Man: The Life and Art of Daniel Chester French."

LEVY RADIN/PACIFIC PRESS/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES



Time to Pack It (All) In
Overachieving stuffers will love this classic Tumi duffel **D9**

OFF DUTY

Billionaire SUV Club
Frustrated by Land Rover, one man created his own version **D13**



So Long, Boring Tux

While most men default to the same stodgy, black penguin suit for gala events, some are realizing that dressy needn't be a snooze. Here, how to modernize a formal look.



MATTHEU FORICHON (ILLUSTRATION); GETTY IMAGES (RED CARPET LOOKS)

By **TODD PLUMMER**

WHEN LUKE Vachon attended a formal wedding in Hudson, N.Y., a few months ago, he jilted the blah black tux. Instead of wearing a predictable 007-style ensemble like most male guests, the Montreal marketing director, 32, shrugged a relaxed-fit, desert-brown suit over a black linen polo. Result: In the “sea of sameness” created by the other guys’ monotonous outfits, as he put it, he introduced a newer wave without looking zany or offending the occasion’s formality. “It wasn’t my wedding, it wasn’t my moment, but I wanted to be a little different without making a scene,” he said.

‘I wanted to be a little different without making a scene.’

If you’ve attended a dressy event lately, chances are you’ve spotted guys like Mr. Vachon, who are challenging the tedium of formal attire without going OTT. Prepandemic, tinkering with the classic black-tie formula was often considered borderline unhinged. Anyone who risked color or strayed from the standard accessories (except per-

haps by flummoxing fellow guests with “daring” cuff links or a fun cummerbund) automatically became *that* guy: a look-at-me poser sure to elicit eye rolls from the more sensibly attired. But starved of dress-up opportunities during Covid, and uninspired by before-times conformity, more guys are thinking outside the tux. At weddings, galas and work ‘dos, they’re disrupting the penguin colonies.

Post-lockdown, “some of my clients have been, like, ‘The hell with the rules,’” said Joanna Lovering, a New York City stylist whose customers tend to work in corporate roles. One trigger: the inventive formalwear that has walked recent red carpets. At January’s Golden Globes, actor Donald Glover got the cameras flashing when he slipped a sharp dinner jacket over a flowy Saint Laurent silk set that some likened to pajamas. At the same event, Eddie Redmayne accessorized his suit with a (satin) flower massive enough to nab first prize at a county fair.

Ilaria Urbinati, the celebrity stylist who put Mr. Glover in his Golden Globes pajamas—and dresses Dwayne Johnson, Rami Malek and others—says her clients are taking more risks than ever. “What we learned during Covid is that there are more important things than taking clothes too seriously,” she said.

Mercifully, you can spice up your *Please turn to page D2*

A FORMAL GOODBYE / AT RECENT RED-CARPET EVENTS, CELEBS GAVE TEXTBOOK FORMALITY SOME REFRESHING TWISTS



Inside



SAD SACK?
It depends on your perspective. Here’s why beat-up bags can be a fashion joy. **D3**



RESPECT YOUR ELDERBERRIES...
...by using the alleged immunity boosters to concoct these cocktails **D11**



STOCKHOLM AWAY FROM HOME
Attention travelers: This Swedish city really knows how to do winter **D8**



THE BEST ROCKY SEQUEL
White Calacatta marble was ‘it’ in 2018. Now its wine-veined cousin rules. **D6**

STYLE & FASHION

The New Black Tie

Continued from page D1
formal look without resorting to a boutonniere the size of your head. Start with low-key twists on classic outfits, as Mike Fabbri, a Manhattan real-estate agent, does. Pre-pandemic, Mr. Fabbri, 36, yawningly busted out his textbook tux “like a routine.” Now that he’s hobnobbing again, he’s determined to view every dress-up opportunity as a chance to innovate. For a recent black-tie birthday bash, Mr. Fabbri combined a gray houndstooth three-piece with a black turtleneck. The quietly sleek look departed from the standard tux—and will stick in his mind, he said. “I felt like a Bond villain that night.”

Wide lapels create the illusion of a brawnier physique.

Tempted to follow suit, so to speak? Whether you’re off to a black-tie gala or a fancy party, heed these guidelines to achieve a formal look that’s memorable—yet won’t startle the other guests.

Go biggish

If you want to look current, ditch the slim suit, said Steve Knorsch, the U.S. managing director of Cad & the Dandy, a bespoke tailor with outposts on London’s Savile Row and in Manhattan. The snug cuts that have dominated formalwear since the 2000s are decidedly passé, said Mr. Knorsch. “The look is back to classic tailoring.” Meaning: a broad-shouldered jacket with breathing room around the chest, and wider pants that drape rather than cling. These elegant fits won’t bunch-up awkwardly while you’re sitting through long wedding speeches about youthful toilet-paper pranks, or hold you back on the dance floor. Mr. Vachon’s brown wedding suit, with its subtly flared pants, was “definitely more comfortable” than a tight tux, he said. “There was room to move.”

Another thing to super-size: your lapels. Wide ones (perhaps with dagger-like peaks for drama) are a shortcut to sharpness, said Mr. Knorsch. With lapels, 3 1/4 to 3 3/4 inches across is standard, he said, “but we’re seeing guys go up to 4 1/2, sometimes 5.” The best thing about broader lapels? They

create the illusion of a barrel-chested physique, he said. “It’s actually very flattering.”

Bye, black!

Septuagenarian musician Nile Rodgers hit this month’s Grammy Awards in an acid-green suit so zesty it would make a fresh lime feel mousy and retiring. While that level of color confidence is humbling, non-rockstars after a new look should go much, much darker, said Ms. Lovering. She recommended suits in rich jewel tones—deep emerald or maroon as dark as a bottle of French Shiraz.

Such shades feel fresh but steer clear of costumey. Some men, worried they’ll get sick of a bolder hue, hesitate to invest in a non-black suit, noted Ms. Lovering. Not Justin Wright, who still enjoys wearing a dark-green suit he got for his wedding in late 2021. Mr. Wright, 33, a film producer and CrossFit coach in Boston, has subsequently worn the forest-hued two-piece to a handful of events. The compliments never grow tired, he said: “[It] always sparks conversation.”

Finishing touches

If the invitation specifies “black tie” you need a bow tie, insists Ms. Lovering. But you can sidestep dreariness by choosing a large, hand-tied silk version or opting for shades like silver, navy or maroon (though never white unless the dress code is “white tie”). For slightly less-formal events, try a silk foulard like the one that fluttered breezily from Andrew Garfield’s neck at the recent Golden Globes; or wear your shirt open under a sharp-lapelled tux, a suave move favored by Jake Gyllenhaal; or slip on a dark turtleneck.

For one more jolt of personality, pin a brooch to your lapel. A more-interesting alternative to pocket squares, brooches glinted from countless actors’ jackets this awards season. And they can be so understated they’re almost conservative. When Peter Neal married the president’s granddaughter Naomi Biden in November, a diamond-embellished pin shaped like a daisy gleamed softly from his navy lapel. It simultaneously exuded All-American style and felt current.

Such pins offer a rare chance to sport something highly personalized in a formal setting. Dog lover? Get a bulldog-shaped cameo. Born under the sign of Aquarius? Find an amethyst design. Just think of it as a grown-up take on the baby’s-breath boutonniere you nervously pinned to your rented tux for prom.

UNBORING FORMAL OUTFITS, RANKED FROM MOST- TO LEAST-DRESSY



LOOK 1

A classy black-tie look with a twist

Though this tux is fairly classic, key features save it from putting observers to sleep: It’s double-breasted; mostly navy; and the black lapels are meaty and pointy. Accessories—a generous bow tie, a pearl pin—elevate the look into something quietly memorable. Clockwise from top left: Shirt, \$179, *Bonobos.com*; Brooch, \$800, *Dior.com*; Boglioli Jacket, \$1,460, and Pants, \$670, *MrPorter.com*; Bow Tie, \$279, *TomFord.com*; Shoes, \$1,770, *ChurchFootwear.com*.

LOOK 2

A fancy-party-ready emerald situation

Deep jewel tones—like the green of this jacket—are a great, “super attainable” option for guys wanting to mix things up, said New York City stylist Joanna Lovering. A simple black turtleneck helps the outfit skew cool and current; shiny shoes and a Rolex add pizzazz. Clockwise from left: Pants, \$265, *JCrew.com*; Jacket, \$3,750, *Gucci.com*; Turtleneck, \$185, *BuckMason.com*; Watch, \$8,950, *Rolux.com*; Shoes, \$1,100, *Gucci.com*.



LOOK 3

A cool, breezy but not casual ensemble

With a roomy cut and striking chocolate hue, this linen suit is as modern as they come. The fine-knit polo and matching black accessories (Belgian loafers, chunky ring) keep the overall look relatively dressy. Great for a non-black-tie wedding or special birthday bash. Clockwise from top left: Ring, \$165, *Miansai.com*; Jacket, \$1,495, and Pants, \$595, *Drake’s, 917-261-5005*; Loafers, \$625, *Belgian Shoes, 212-755-7372*; Polo Shirt, \$225, *MrPorter.com*.

GETTY IMAGES (BACKGROUND); NORSTROM (GODE)



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Four Strict 1950s Lessons

Formalwear edicts from a key postwar etiquette text

Men haven’t always enjoyed freedom when dressing up. These excerpts from a leading midcentury guide, “Amy Vanderbilt’s Complete Book of Etiquette” (1958 edition), indicate what was expected of men’s dress at the time.

“It is not correct—no matter what you occasionally see—for a man to wear a dinner jacket or tail coat in the daytime unless, perhaps, he’s being buried! (And to follow up this lugubrious aside, if the family does decide to attire the deceased in formal clothes, it should give him the dignity of full evening dress for a night funeral and of a morning coat in the daytime. A tuxedo doesn’t seem quite right.)”

“Unless a man can afford two or more dinner jackets, he should stick to the conservative black, for if he appears in it time and time again, no one knows but what he may have two or a dozen like it. If he chooses his one tuxedo in the newer midnight blue, it would seem inconceivable to the observant eye that he had two such alike. And there are occasions on which he might feel slightly conspicuous in the slightly less formal blue.”



A man in the 1950s wears a sensible-looking tux.

“Dinner jacket lapels may be more peaked than those of business suits but should avoid eccentricity.”

“As a dinner jacket is a semiformal outfit, there is leeway in the selection of boutonnieres, although the carnation in red or white is most popular. White flowers other than carnations usually seem bridal, but certainly a miniature dahlia in white or any other color would be quite suitable, as are cornflowers, pinks, strawflowers, holly, or snowberries (in the right season) or any little flower even a tiny orchid or modest gardenia that can go through an evening in such service without early collapse.”

EVERETT COLLECTION

STYLE & FASHION

By KATHARINE K. ZARRELLA

ABOUT 20 YEARS ago, while dining in San Francisco, Lisa Unger Sandman was nearly startled out of her seat. “Oh, my God! That should never be on the floor!” shrieked a woman at a nearby table, pointing to Ms. Unger Sandman’s black Hermès Kelly bag. Chastened, Ms. Unger Sandman, now a retired banker in Raleigh, N.C., snatched up her purse which, in the current market, often costs at least five figures. “It caught me off guard,” she recalled. Today, Ms. Unger Sandman, 60, would ignore such a reprimand and isn’t so worried if her Kelly risks bodily harm. “If a bag has a scratch on it, that means you’ve enjoyed it. I’m happy with the patina.”

Ms. Sandman’s attitude reflects a growing trend. Lately, women are both embracing their handbags’ scratches and stains and seeking out visibly worn-in styles on the second-hand market. In its 2023 luxury consignment report, resale site the RealReal noted higher demand than ever for bags in “fair” (i.e., heavily worn) condition. Similarly, at resale platform Vestiaire Collective, co-founder Sophie Hersan reports that sales of worn-in designer bags have jumped 13% in the last six months.

Why the sudden craving for beat-up bags? One of the biggest draws, posits Katie Devlin of trends and insights company Stylus, is the Y2K revival and the resurgence of “indie sleaze,” a grungy, aughts-era aesthetic. She references the circa-2010 style of Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. Famously on their arms back then: decimated Hermès Kellys and Balenciaga bags (like the one shown here). “It’s the idea of looking expensive but like you don’t care—of not looking overly curated,” said Ms. Devlin.

In that regard, the trend, which encompasses luxury bags by the likes of Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton, as well as label-free vintage styles, may be a backlash to the picture-perfect world of Instagram and wealthy reality TV stars (see the seemingly untouched designer bags that line the Kardashian clan’s walk-in closets). “There’s a move away from this idealistic, filtered look we’re so used to seeing,” said Dayna Isom Johnson, a trend expert at online marketplace Etsy, where searches for Y2K hand-

LIKE A FINE WINE
First issued in 2001, this worn, Bordeaux-stained Balenciaga bag has character to spare.



Better for the Wear

Stylish women are pooh-pooing pristine purses, embracing their own stained bags and buying beat-up styles secondhand. We’re just wondering: Why?

bags are up 51% in the last three months compared to the same period last year. “Now people are really embracing the realness and messiness that comes with living everyday life.” Not using something that costs so much, Ms. Isom added, makes people feel “very wasteful.” Elizabeth Layne, chief marketing officer of resale site Rebag, has observed a resistance to

feeling “too precious about [luxury] workhorse bags of lower grades. You don’t have to worry if it gets a scuff.”

New York stylist Malina Joseph Gilchrist agrees. “There’s a quiet luxury thing happening...a reaction to a congested market of handbags that are logoeed and attention-seeking.” With a worn-in bag, she said, “you look like you’re not trying too hard.”

For Sapna Bhatla, 42, a business strategy consultant in Philadelphia, beat-up bags—whether trendy or not—speak to her identity. After immigrating to the U.S. from India, her style-savvy mother would combine her traditional attire with vintage estate-sale finds. So “pristine feels contrived and inauthentic to me,” Ms. Bhatla said. “If you see my body, I

have scars. I have marks. I have a life that’s been lived. And I’m happy to have signs to remind me of it. I like things that show a test of time and sturdiness and resilience.”

She owns an arsenal of worn-in designer purses—some she marred herself, others that she scooped up on eBay. Among her favorites is a decades-old, no-name leather bag she found at a Paris flea market. “I’m not so crazy about brand names when it comes to vintage. If it’s here today, it’s already good quality.”

Those scars should not be haphazardly patched up, said Sofia Bernardin, founder of luxury vintage platform ReSee. “There’s nothing worse than a badly repaired bag. It’s like a woman who’s had too much Botox—she’d have been better off not doing anything.” Still, not all decay is desirable, said Kristin Whalen, 36, a San Francisco senior director of client management and bag obsessive who’s

‘I have scars. I have marks. I like things that show resilience.’

had some of her styles since high school. For her, protruding structural wires and age-induced deformities are nonstarters. Trend analyst Ms. Devlin maintains that, while the optimal degree of destruction is a personal choice, “if it’s not functional and your strap is falling off, it’s time to say goodbye.”

Is inflation driving this so-called “trend”? Recently, the cost of new luxury bags has skyrocketed. According to Jefferies Group, the price of Chanel’s coveted small classic flap bag increased about 60% between 2019 and 2022 in the U.S. Meanwhile, on the RealReal, bags in “fair condition” cost on average 33% less than already-discounted “good condition” options, said Noelle Sciacca, that site’s fashion lead. Lara Osborne, reseller Fashionphile’s vice president of procurement, offers a reality check. “We have to ask ourselves: Is a [worn-in] bag really chic, or is the economy just dictating that we’ll be wearing bags with a lot more love?”

Ms. Joseph Gilchrist insists it’s the former. If your bag’s beat-up, she said, “you just look cooler.”

How to Make A Beautiful Disaster

Is your fancy handbag looking too new? Here, four inadvisable but foolproof ways to pulverize even the sturdiest purse.



Toss your pristine purchase in the washing machine—and choose the most punishing spin cycle. For extra distress, add bleach.



Give that immaculate purse to your puppy. If he seems uninterested, slather it in peanut butter and present it again.



Buy a top-notch bow and arrow and use your bag for target practice. Ignore its faint whimpers each time it’s pierced.



Drop it at an osprey breeding site so a hen can use it in her nest. Once the chicks have fledged, retrieve your totally tattered tote.

F. MARTIN RAMINI/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; NATHANIEL KILGER (ILLUSTRATIONS)

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STYLE & FASHION

By FIORELLA VALDESOLO

Bobbed Heads Revisited

We cut down five outdated notions about the freshly popular chop

OVER THE LAST YEAR, bobs have swept the starlet set. Hailey Bieber is a freshly shorn adopter; Zendaya got one in December, 2022; and Emily Ratajkowski went viral after wearing a short, wavy wig to a fashion show this month. What do all three women's bobs have in common? An inherent ease that contradicts many long-held beliefs about the cropped 'do.

Unfairly, the bob has acquired a bad rap as a high-maintenance hairstyle. Blame it on its early champion Louise Brooks. Photographs of the glamorous 1920s-era actress depict a preternatural version of the chop: shiny, precise to a militaristic degree, nary a hair out of place.

Funnily enough, back in Brooks's time, the tidy style signified rebellion. "The bob redefined the Victorian era's precious view of women's hair, recalibrating that emotional attachment to it," said Travis Speck, senior hairstylist at New York's Suite Caroline salon. And it upended the notion that

'The bob redefined the Victorian Era's precious view of women's hair, recalibrating that emotional attachment to it.'

long hair was the only path to femininity, he said. Chopped locks are liberating and the cut is often linked to demands for freedom. Consider the freshly corset-free flappers of the '20s or the sexually liberated '60s mods. Today, when so many freedoms are in question, women want bobs again.

During the past century, the bob has increasingly relaxed. And assumed myriad shapes: asymmetric (as seen on Gabrielle Union), graduated (sweeping in front to short in back), shaggy (think '70s-era Debbie Harry), the "lob" (a longer version), the "boyfriend" (boxy), French (choppy and chin-length), or Italian (TikTok-famous and blunt-ended). "I think everyone can pull off a bob," said Teddi Cranford, founder of New York salon White Rose Collective. "It's just got to be the right bob."

Today, bobs feel like a fresh start, said Los Angeles hairstylist Mara Roszak. "We're coming out of a stale, heavy time and shedding what was for something new." But to embrace the modern bob, you must relinquish preconceived notions about the much-misunderstood cut. Here, we dispel five myths about the surprisingly simple-to-maintain style.



THE SHORTLIST Clockwise from top left: Linda Evangelista in 1991; Hailey Bieber's new 'do; Michelle Williams in January; Jenna Ortega in January; Zendaya in 2022; Naomi Campbell in 2007; Debbie Harry in 1975; Edna Mode in 'The Incredibles'; Louise Brooks in 1929; Velma of 'Scooby Doo'

MYTH 1 It's Gotta Be Pin-Straight Shockingly slick 1920s bobs may loom large in our collective imagination, but that century-old iteration is literally history. "Many modern bobs have natural hair movement and texture," said L.A. hairstylist Mara Roszak. Picture actress Laura Harrier's wavy chop. And there are countless products available now (like JVN's Complete Hydrating Air Dry Cream or Monpure Ultra Light Healthy Hair Oil) that play up your natural texture. "Use a little hair oil or leave-in conditioner, scrunch it in and let your hair air-dry," said Ms. Roszak. "It looks chic—a little tousled and undone."

MYTH 2 The Upkeep Is Demanding Bobs, said New York hairstylist Travis Speck, don't usually need more trimming than other cuts. He generally likes to see clients every 10 weeks. And it can be fun to play with the grow-out period. "Bobs are unique in that they look good at many stages," said Ms. Roszak. "If you have a chin-length bob, it looks good grown out to mid-length and then into a collarbone length."

MYTH 3 It Requires Too Much Styling Effort Anyone after a super-sleek bob will need a blowdryer and, often, a flat iron, as well as a cream or balm. But that's a choice. Alyssa Coscarelli, 29, an L.A. digital consultant, alternates between a slick and undone bob. When she wants to enhance her natural wave, she coats her locks with styling balm (like Reverie Rake Styling Balm) and lets them air dry for a "lived-in look." If you're regularly fighting your hair's natural texture to achieve your bobbed vision, ease up. "A bob is more interesting when it takes on someone's persona and has a mind of its own," said White Rose Collective's Teddi Cranford.

MYTH 4 Your Head Will Look Teeny-Tiny A slick, board-straight bob cut above the chin can shrink the appearance of your head, said New York hairstylist Takamichi Saeki of Takamichi Hair. "A layered, longer bob will be more forgiving," he noted. You can also style your bob with an ocean spray (like Ceremonia Guava Beach Waves) to pump up the volume by adding texture and body, said Ms. Roszak.

MYTH 5 A Cropped Cut Will Age You The so-called mom cut (a short chop that some women opt for in their parenting and later years) has perpetuated the belief that bobs are for women of a certain age. Not so. "It looks great at any age," insisted Ms. Cranford. Current on-the-pulse fans include Michelle Pfeiffer (64), Lily Allen (37), Florence Pugh (27) and Jenna Ortega (20).

SEAN MCCABE (COLLAGE); GETTY IMAGES (EVANGELISTA, WILLIAMS, ORTEGA, ZENDAYA, CAMPBELL, BROOKS, HARRY); EVERETT COLLECTION (EDNA MODE); SHUTTERSTOCK (BIEBER)

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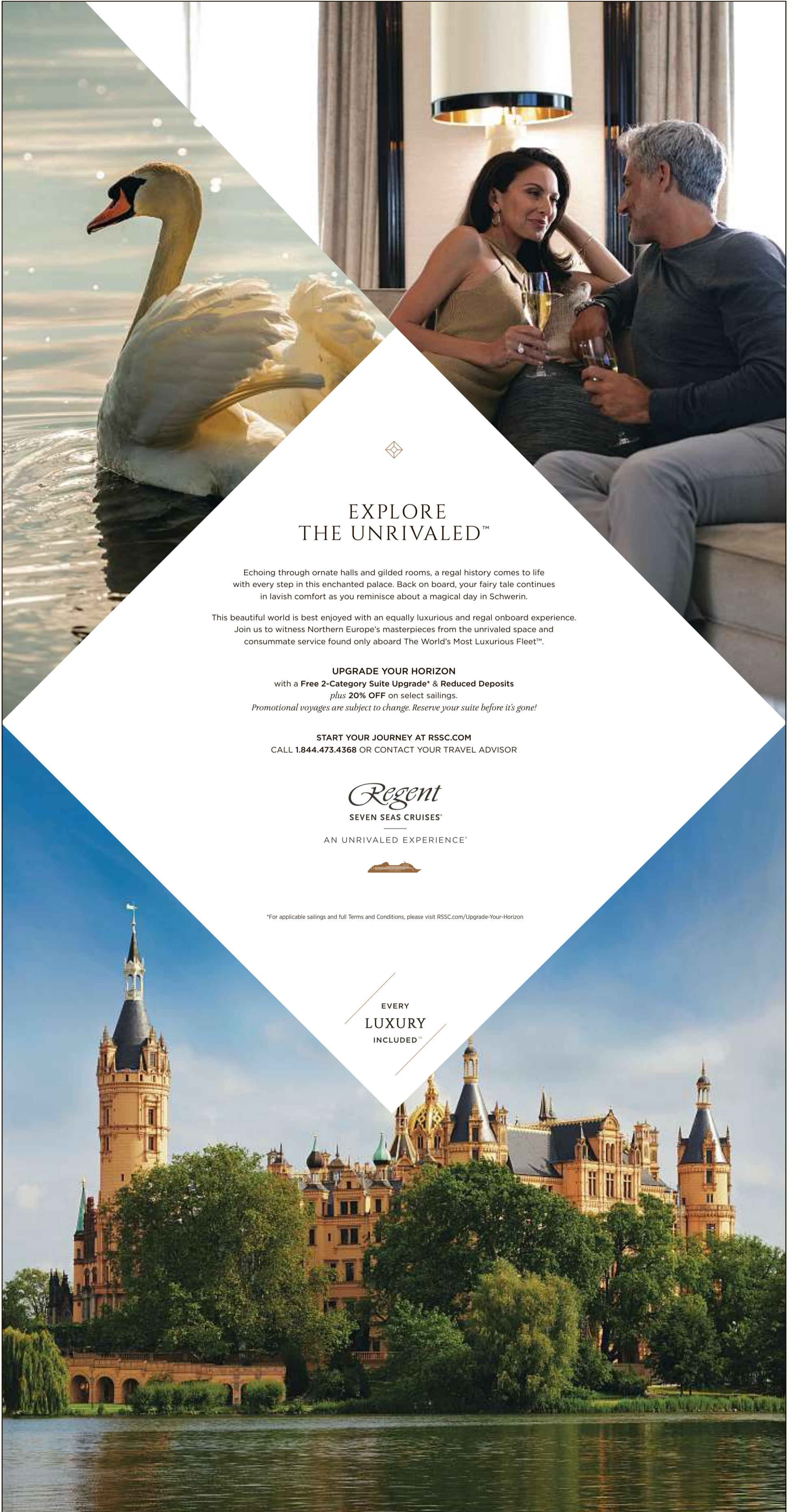
FAST FIVE

See Life to the Fullest

Why peer through darkness when you could view the world in peach or pink? Tinted sunglasses to brighten your outlook

TAKE A TINT A longtime fixture on Elton John's face, playfully hued shades have lately been spied on Jennifer Lopez, Kaia Gerber and Daniel Craig. Do they block the sun? Sort of. Will they make you look cool and famous? Almost certainly. Here, five pairs to try. Clockwise from top: Glasses, \$154, VelvetCanyon.com; Glasses, \$579, Mykita.com; Glasses, \$89, CrapEyewear.com; Glasses, \$609, OliverPeoples.com; Glasses, \$320, Moscot.com

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A MATTER OF LIFE AND DÉCOR / MICHELLE SLATALLA



The Key to Custom Furniture, No Interiors Pro Required

FROM THE MOMENT I set eyes on it, I adored the house I've been living in for the past 10 years. But it always had one glaring flaw—the first thing you see when you enter it. The foyer is so little that it could make anyone feel claustrophobic, even Lilliputians.

From a design perspective, this problem is easy enough to solve. Paradoxically, adding furniture can create focal points to persuade the brain that even a small, 8-foot-by-8-foot entryway is spacious and welcoming.

The hard part, however, is finding furniture that's perfectly scaled.

"I really don't want to hire an interior designer, but I would love to have a console table covered in grasscloth," I said strategically to my friend Stephanie, who happens to be an interior designer. After all, I can't afford to hire someone like, say, Stephanie, to draw an optimally sized console table and find a custom furniture maker to build it.

Stephanie, who is used to my attempts to secure her services for free, said, "Have you ever considered Etsy?"

"Etsy?" I snorted, wondering why she was suggesting the online site I knew as a crafters' tchotchke marketplace. "Are you

suggesting I buy some DIYer's macramé god's eyes and suspend them from the ceiling?"

It turns out that Etsy, founded in 2005, has in recent years turned into the design industry's best-kept secret.

Among the more than 100 million items for sale across its site, homewares and furnishings are the top-selling category, according to the company's most recent SEC filings.

Etsy has become a place from which professionals and amateurs like me can buy high-quality, customized furnishings—everything from made-to-measure curtains to one-off pieces of customer-specified furniture—directly from the fabricator.

"I've used Etsy to source rugs—custom sizes are super easy with Etsy dealers—and carved-stone sinks in custom sizes and specialty metal items like ceiling-mounted vanity mirrors," said Jessica Davis, an interior designer in Atlanta. "I love sourcing on Etsy for my interiors projects because it's a great way to eliminate the middleman and work directly with overseas sources—and the price points tend to be much better."

Etsy sellers represent a new generation of fabricators who have set up shop online to replace the dwindling ranks of bricks-and-

mortar stores that once dotted small-town America.

"After the economic downturn of 2008, so many people went out of business. It was a struggle," said Lynn Chalk, a window-treatment maker in Monroe, Conn. "So I went on Etsy, where nobody was selling window treatments. It's

Etsy has become a place pros and amateurs like me can buy high-quality, customer-specified furnishings.

been fantastic for me—now it's 30% of my business."

Ms. Chalk, who has made 2,814 Etsy sales since joining the platform in 2010, specializes in custom Roman shades and has created a multistep instruction sheet to give customers the confidence to measure their own windows.

"I usually have them measure three times and send me a photo of them holding up a measuring tape to the window," she said. "I like to be sure."

April Gandy, a designer in Chicago, recently turned to Etsy for

bistro-style shelving. "For a client's bar, we used one Etsy vendor for industrial-type brackets and then had another Etsy vendor make the shelves," she said of the glass-and-brass unit. "They even came out to the site to install them."

The idea that you can get what you want—and not just the one or two sizes or designs that a national-chain retailer thinks you should want—is exhilarating, said interior designer Abigail Braden of Ridgefield, Conn. "I had a client who fell in love with an inlaid-wood media console at Anthropologie, but it was the wrong height because she needed it for a bar table," Ms. Braden said. "I found an Etsy furniture seller who offered to make it in the right dimensions, for a lower price and to ship it for free. My client ended up getting the exact piece—the inlay was the same, and the drawers and the cabinets were the same—and we were both thrilled."

Interior designer Melanie Hay in Toronto relies on Etsy to buy digital downloads of photographs of original artworks directly from artist Dan Hobday, a British painter. "It's a really easy way to create large-scale art for not a lot of money," she said. For instance, she recently bought a high-resolution

download of Hobday's Large Landscape Painting (40 inches square) for \$19.53. "I've created prints of both abstract images and landscapes. You can decide if you want it printed on canvas or if you want it matted, and you can print exactly the size you want. They look amazing on a wall."

One of designers' most-cited Etsy hacks is throw pillows fabricated from luxury "to-the-trade-only" fabrics, the sort you could once only buy if you were a designer with access to showrooms that required minimum purchases in excess of the yardage one needed to make a pillow.

On Etsy, you can purchase a throw pillow made from Kravat or Schumacher fabric for about \$100, hundreds less than a pillow of that quality would typically cost. Last month I spent \$120 on a custom-size, lumbar cushion covered in Rose Tarlow's Vicenza small-patterned linen fabric from Etsy seller Fancy Pillow Studio.

When the pillow arrived on my doorstep less than a week later, I was so impressed I phoned Fancy Pillow Studio's owner, Ortencia Cobarrubias to thank her.

"How can you sell designer fabrics at such low prices?" I asked Ms. Cobarrubias.

"I've been collecting high-end fabric remnants for years," said Ms. Cobarrubias, a seamstress in Los Angeles who, like 95% of the site's sellers, runs her Etsy shop from her home. She said most of her customers find her after performing a keyword search for a particular fabric. "They get exactly what they are looking for, and it's a good way for me to use fabric that would otherwise have been thrown away and wasted," she said.

Vendors say Etsy is also maker-friendly. Reaching a worldwide audience cost seller Oya Yalcin Zorlu 20 cents, the listing charge per item. (The platform also charges sellers a 6.5% commission on each sale.) Mr. Zorlu, based in London, sells custom lampshades and pillow covers made from handwoven fabrics produced in Turkey, Uzbekistan and the U.K. He said that 30% of his customers are from the U.S. "They get direct access to European and international fabrics," said Mr. Zorlu, who ships overseas orders above \$35 for free.

My search for a custom grasscloth-covered console table led to Etsy custom-furniture maker Liven UP Design, based in Encinitas, Calif. Owner Jennifer Ainsworth, who started the business in her garage in 2010, has sold 3,390 nightstands, benches, upholstered beds and daybeds on Etsy.

To help me commission the table, Ms. Ainsworth sent me a dozen samples of grasscloth and drew a mock-up of a 42-inch-long, 12-inch-deep hardwood table based on my (OK, Stephanie's) precise measurements. Liven UP also installed custom drawer pulls that I mailed to them.

The console table, which cost \$3,000 (including shipping), arrived fully assembled, and perfectly proportioned to fit against the wall between a closet door and the doorway to the living room.

It makes my front hall look huge.

FAST FIVE

Own a Piece of the Hot Rock

You needn't renovate your kitchen to possess 2023's 'It' marble: sumptuous Calacatta Viola



Clé Calacatta Viola Six Hex Mosaic Sheet, \$74 a square foot, CleTile.com



Modern Outdoor Pollock Sphere Side Table Parasol Base Calacatta Marble, \$10,067, 1stDibs.com



Marble Body Brush by Gilded Body, \$129, ThirteenLune.com



Moon Pedestals from \$3,240, Form-LosAngeles.com



Caché (Denmark) Equi Bookend in Calacatta Marble, about \$355, ShopBetaPlus.com

Market Editor: Elizabeth Sweet

DESIGN & DECORATING

THE CRITICAL EYE

A Liberating Red Living Room

A Harlemitte unpacks his fascination with swaggering crimson when asked to respond to our analysis of his décor

ALEXANDER SMALLS'S Harlem living room reads at first like a flouting of decorating rules. The chef and restaurateur clad a traditional Chippendale sofa and Queen Anne ottoman in a sporty houndstooth check, the stuff of nattily tailored jackets. And where such a coat might be slyly lined in scarlet or accessorized with a peep of red pocket square, Mr. Smalls subverted the whole notion of a “pop of color” by slathering the walls in a dashing, rakish red.

OUR DESIGN ASSESSMENT

On closer examination, however, it's clear Mr. Smalls respected some classic aesthetic principles. Though not a design professional, he's the child of an upholsterer father and dressmaker mother who changed slipcovers and drapes with the seasons in their South Carolina home. And before he became an award-winning chef and author, he spent years studying and performing internationally as an opera singer—all of which developed his eye for art and décor.

Like any design pro, he has balanced the rectilinear with the soft. Straight lines—the picture frames and dark matting that starkly contrast with the hot wall—hang out companionably with florals, a fur and the female form in the artwork. Meanwhile, a neutral sisal rug grounds the room and counters the energy of all that is going on above it. The little woven triangular box on the tray and the basket resting inside the bowl visually connect to the earthy fiber on the floor. The second piece of houndstooth upholstery—the ottoman—makes it clear the first was no random move. The bright green of the bowl's pattern is the classic complement to red, and its leaves almost literally point to the framed lithograph of spiky leaves. Just one question occurs to us: Is that tall stool tucked behind the sofa's rolled arm a Gulliver-sized Champagne cork?



CHECK AND MATE Alexander Smalls's houndstooth sofa and ottoman, as seen in 'Aphrochic: Celebrating the Legacy of the Black Family Home,' by Bryan Mason and Jeanine Hays (Clarkson Potter).

SURE, WE'D NOTED that Mr. Smalls had used a suiting material, but we hadn't guessed how completely he had embraced a sartorial conceit. “What you see there is a sense of a beautiful suit,” he said. “I would say that the ottoman also wearing the houndstooth is the vest, and then my mother's fur coat is the backdrop, which for me, kind of represents a fur collar on the suit—all of which was very much the intent.”

The red is brash in ways that run deeper than we'd anticipated. “I was never allowed to wear bright colors,” said Mr. Smalls, born in 1952. “Particularly in upper middle class African-American families, the idea was to be neutral, classic, correct—you know, gray slacks, a navy blazer and a cool blue or white shirt—so as not to draw attention to yourself.” Mr. Smalls was so fascinated with the color red that the first thing he did when he got to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, he recalls, was buy himself a beautiful red scarf. “So, you know, it is anchored in a cultural expression for me.”

As for the deft balance of eras and styles, the chef, who recently opened Alkebulan Dining Hall in Dubai, which features 11 restaurants, contends his eye and palette work the same way. “I layer textures and flavors but always organically. That's how I envision space or food.” Some decisions were conscious, he explained, some not so much. It wasn't until he hung the four lithos we see here, his first art purchase, made in the 1970s, that he realized the backgrounds were shades of red.

The bar stool? It's one of a set Mr. Smalls created in the early '90s for his first restaurant, Manhattan's Café Beulah. “I had about eight or 10 of them fabricated to resemble a Champagne cork,” he said. Bingo.

—Catherine Romano

THE DESIGNER'S RESPONSE

PATRICK CLINE

CULT FOLLOWING

Perverse Perch

The Z chair doesn't exactly beckon bums, but design fans can't stay away



Italy's Cassina makes authorized reproductions of the Zig Zag by Gerrit Rietveld, \$3030, Artemest.com

History Dutch furniture designer and architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964) always hoped to design a chair constructed from a single piece of material. “He wanted to make design accessible,” said Titus Darley, the founder and CEO of Amsterdam's RSGA Design, which manages the Rietveld Originals brand. In the 1930s, Mr. Rietveld, a member of the de Stijl art movement, conceived the geometric Zig Zag chair, a cantilevered seat made from just four planks of elm wood. It was sold through an Amsterdam department store.

Allure “Designers love nothing more than tension and boundary pushing, and this chair is the epitome of that, appearing unstable and even unsafe but still quietly elegant,” said To-

ronto interior designer Rivki Rabinowitz.

Fans American artist Donald Judd had Zig Zag chairs in both his Manhattan home and Marfa, Texas, office. New York City interior designer Kevin Roberts mixed them with 18th-century Louis XVI armchairs around a dining table.

Cult Moments In 2017, Sotheby's sold a pair of Zig Zag chairs from the collection of famed French interior designer Jacques Grange at auction for \$30,000. Singer-songwriter Joan Armatrading leaned on a Zig Zag chair for the cover of her 1980 album “Me Mysell I.” Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld photographed a tower of stacked Zig Zag chairs and hung the shot in his Paris office.

—Allison Duncan

LUCY HAN

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ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



SAFE HARBOR The Hotel Diplomat near the waterfront. Right: Svenskt Tenn's chic and colorful design goods.



fore sinking into the muck. They come back asking if the Swedish horror of an engineering failure on this scale is such that the Vasa is on display as a cautionary tale.

While they wander, I visit Svenskt Tenn, a design shop famous for its colorful textiles and consider the wisdom of buying an \$1,800 table lamp painted with butterflies.

"It is beautiful," said the saleswoman, her blue eyes sparkling. "And we have only four." I hesitate and she walks away. I wonder if that was the hard sell in Sweden.

In the late afternoon, we visit the thermal baths of Sturebadet. It feels like the one place in Stockholm where children, sadly, are not underfoot. This is where the well-heeled come to bathe, to sauna and work out. The hot tub—not hot enough! The New Yorkers crowd—is crammed with self-contained Swedes trying not to touch each other. In these cavernous halls, barely a peep is heard.

Much is made these days of how much Sweden is changing. Roughly 19% of the population was born outside its borders, and some American pundits like to say an ancient culture is under attack and it cannot change.

But Sweden has undergone transformations before. The country of my mother's childhood—harsh, religious and monarchic—has become free and tolerant. It can absorb more changes than we know, though the loss of winter snow by the harbor is difficult.

And the new arrivals are not all new anymore. Many speak perfect Swedish and know the traditions of their new homeland. In Gamla Stan, I buy a Dala horse, a painted-wood figure, from a man of Kurdish descent. "What," I ask him, "is the real difference between a gnome and a Tomte? Genetically. Don't the Tomte punish errant children?"

He smiles indulgently. "No, no friend. In Sweden, the Tomte is always nice. The children are never punished."

Stockholm Chills Out

In winter, the crowds vanish and the Swedish capital's food halls and thermal waters exude a stern charm.

BY NINA SOVICH

WOODEN ferries bob in the surf, their Swedish pennants snapping in the breeze. Though Stockholm's harbor is cold, the gusts off the Baltic are briny and sweet, lacking the salt and corrosive violence of Atlantic winds. Every window on the waterfront seems lit up to welcome travelers. I'd argue that this city, known for long summer nights that draw thousands of tourists, is most satisfying come winter.

Hotel Diplomat, where I am staying, is entirely silent. I have come outside to the water in the middle of the night hoping the cold can help solve my jet lag. I breathe in the fresh air and out of the dark emerges a tall blond couple, she in a ponytail and he with a caramel-colored beard, jogging at a fast, steady pace. They move in unison, barely breathing at all, clad entirely in black. Vikings.

It's said that Swedes tend to mythologize their environment and its inhabitants. It's the land of trolls, gnomes and the Christmas Tomte, a mysterious creature that brings presents but, as my Swedish mother taught me, salts your porridge if you are naughty. It's the land of Norse myths and Vikings. Perhaps the climate and its extreme light and darkness requires a bit of magical thinking.

"Summertime in Sweden is slightly hysterical," said Lars Trägårdh, a Swedish historian and author most recently of "The



Swedish Theory of Love." "Everyone knows in their heart of hearts there will be only five days of real summer. Whereas in the winter, the Viking [aspect of Swedes] appears. They are hardy and a bit quiet. They know what they are doing. The engineer comes out."

I was taught by Swedish relatives that winter is a time of healing and rest.

As novelist Fredrik Backman ("A Man called Ove") wrote to me, "We endure." Then he added: "Honestly, I think I write and work better when it's getting dark at 3 p.m. and the weather is bad. I like it when everyone else is bored, and wants to stay inside, because that's my natural habitat. In the summer

there are too many distractions." I was taught by Swedish relatives that winter is a gift, a time of healing and rest. It was a time to work and explore the inner self. "Without winter you go crazy," my cousin told me once, indignant at the mention of California.

But Stockholm as a city has also figured out winter in a way few other cities have. Swedes migrate to small interior spaces, decorated beautifully and aglow with candles. They make a whole life out of work, baked goods and coffee.

And some fun is to be had in the dark. Tea time at the Grand Hôtel in winter is buzzing with refined Swedish couples nibbling on what looks like prinsesstårta, a cream and marzipan cake that's epically hard to make. A woman in a skin-tight pink dress with combat boots swans by. At another table, furtive Russian can be heard. Refugees from all over the world have been

coming to the Grand to bask in its luxury and neutrality for decades.

In the tony neighborhood of Östermalm, Swedes converge in Ostermalm Saluhall, a 19th-century covered market renovated to more closely resemble a high-end food hall. They wander under the Victorian eaves, taking in the smoked fishes and stopping for a glass of wine at Lisa Elmqvist, a restaurant famous for its salmon and herring.

Despite the cold, many are outside. My friends from New York, tough and brave, walk with me through Gamla Stan, the city's Old Town and into Södermalm where the hipsters lie in wait. We eat cardamom buns and cinnamon buns and coffee that is somehow strong but not all that caffeinated. They visit the Vasa ship, the 17th warship that sailed 1,400 yards be-



Victorian-era Ostermalm Saluhall is a food hall with spots for dining in.

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

THEN

IN 1973, Nicholas Gray, a Chilean-born adventurer of sorts who worked at Arctic radar stations to pay for college, ditched his Wall Street stockbroker job to open a Papaya King franchise on the corner of Broadway and 72nd St. Two years later, released from the franchise contract, Mr. Gray renamed the plum spot Gray's Papaya and slashed the cost of a hot dog from 75 cents to 50 cents, announcing the price cut on a big white sign (the first of many) exclaiming "Hot Dog Revolution!" in emphatic red letters.

Looking back, Mr. Gray's proclamation had the effect of "going viral" in today's parlance. "Within a week, we went from selling 500 hot dogs a day to over 3,000," said his wife, Rachael. Then in 1982, when the economy was in tatters, Mr. Gray launched his trademark Recession Special: two hot dogs and a tropical drink for \$1.95. The tiny 24-hour eatery without tables became the source of a meal du jour for professionals scurrying home late from the office, revelers crowding in after discos closed and anyone else hankering for cheap, tasty sustenance on a bun.

Its legion of fans included John Lennon, Samuel L. Jackson and Ai Weiwei—all regulars—and location scouts made it famous as a backdrop for film and TV shows set in Manhattan. The sign over the door reads: "When You're Hungry, or Broke, or Just in a Hurry!" It's a snappy slogan few can resist.

TIME CAPSULE

Dogged Survivor

Through decades of Recession Specials, Gray's Papaya still satiates food fans with its all-beef franks and fresh papaya drink



BUN APPETIT The hot-dog haven on Manhattan's Upper West Side will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2025.

NOW

THE PLASTIC PINEAPPLES and bananas that originally hung from the ceiling have been replaced by crepe-paper versions, but little else has changed. "Nick calls WCBS-FM the sound of New York, and it's been playing since the day we opened," said Mrs. Gray, who began managing the business five years ago after Mr. Gray was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The illuminated Gray's Papaya sign still beckons with its bamboo-style lettering; handwritten signs like "Papaya Drink. Made from the Aristocratic Melon of the Tropics" paper the walls.

Best of all, the all-beef hot dogs in a natural skin casing come from the original supplier and give a satisfying snap at the incisors, followed by a warm briny bath to the tongue. The bracing papaya drink, a blast of flavor balancing the saltiness of the dog, is concocted from the original "secret" formula, though the fruit purées are now sourced in Brooklyn, not overseas.

Inflation pushed the Recession Special up to \$6.45 about six years ago, but it remains the most popular menu item since the early 1980s. Most order it loaded with every free topping: sauerkraut, relish, mustard, ketchup, and onions. "Nick and I like a well-done frank with lots of mustard and a bun so hot it almost burns your fingers. Nothing else," said Mrs. Gray. "But you should eat a hot dog the way you want to eat it. Period."

—Kevin Doyle

Roll Players

In rom-coms and action thrillers, Gray's Papaya is an iconic spot that telegraphs "New York City"

1993 In a scene from "For Love or Money," smitten Doug Ireland (Michael J. Fox) and blasé Andy Fox (Gabrielle Anwar) chow down, looking out the window at Gray's Papaya and enjoying every last chomp of frankfurter deliciousness.

1995 What's up, dawg? In "Die Hard With a Vengeance,"

John McClane (Bruce Willis) and Zeus Carter (Samuel L. Jackson) grab a bite across the street from Gray's Papaya while waiting for a call from a riddle-obsessed bomber. It's worth a stop as they race to save NYC.

1998 She'll have what he's having. OK, different rom-com but just as funny: Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) and

Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) get friendly over franks before their on-line identities are revealed to each other in "You've Got Mail," directed by Nora Ephron.



They've got grub: Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan

1998 How yummy! In "Sex and the City," a Gray's Papaya counter-treats Carrie Bradshaw and her driver to a Weiner after learning her book

has been published.

2007 In a New York-based episode of "No Reservations," Anthony Bourdain visits his favorite hot spots, including Gray's Papaya and its Recession Special.

2022 "Two dogs and a drink at that price is a hell of a deal," Bobby Axelrod (Damian Lewis) tells best friend Ira Schirmer (Ben Shenkman) as they wait to order at Gray's Papaya in the HBO Max series "Billions."

REALITY CHECK / THE COST, THEN & NOW, OF GRAY'S PAPAAYA'S GREATEST HITS

1973
Hot Dog:
75 cents

1975
Hot Dog
Recession
Special:
lowers price
to 50 cents

1982
Recession
Special Launch:
\$1.95 two
hot dogs and
a drink



1999
Hot Dog:
75 cents

2002
Recession
Special:
\$2.75

2006
Recession
Special:
\$3.50

2008
Recession
Special:
\$4.45

Hot Dog:
95 cents

2023
Recession
Special:
\$6.46

Hot Dog:
\$2.95

BAGGAGE CLAIM

Haul of Fame

Stodgy but brilliant in its size and durability, this two-wheeled duffel solves a jazzy packing problem

SINCE 1975, when Charlie Clifford, founder of Tumi, returned from a Peace Corps stint in Peru and began selling sturdy, raw-leather duffels made in South America, his brand's design focus has been functionality—how well a piece of luggage survives the road.

Now known for its ballistic nylon wheelers that business travelers revere, the brand was named for tumis, Peruvian ceremonial knives used for ritual sacrifices in ancient times. Mr. Clifford thought the enigmatic word sounded like it could be Japanese, Italian or Finn-

ish, and even named his dog Tumi. This origin story, sacrificial knives and all, might have appealed to his unconventional husband, a tenor saxophonist, but six years ago, when I bought him the massive two-wheeled duffel from Tumi's classic Alpha collection, neither of us knew the tale. He fixated, instead, on the bag's efficient dual compartments, which let him pack clothes and a dop kit in the soft top compartment and his EWI (electronic wind instrument) in the hard-sided one below. He loved that the bag, as he put it, seems

ALPHA MALE Alpha Collection Large Split 2-Wheeled Duffel, \$1,220. Tumi.com

Multiple U-zip pockets help organize stuff; telescoping handles ease maneuvering.

An impact-resistant bottom and inside compression straps keep packables safe and secured.



"engineered to maximize the limits of FAA specs for space and weight." Even when aggressively stuffed, his bag has never exceeded the 50-lb. limit.

Distinguishing Features Subjected to brutal tests to ensure longevity, the zipper pulls, recessed wheels and telescoping handles all work smoothly. "The idea is to design products that can be passed from generation to generation," said creative director Victor Sanz. That's also true of the hip new Alpha Bravo line touted by Brazilian footballer Richarlison de Andrade.

Packing Tip The rise in remote work changed how people think about travel, said Mr. Sanz. "A split duffel is organized in its simplicity; you can pack for two different places or for a part-business, part-leisure trip in separate compartments." —Donna Bulseco



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EATING & DRINKING

PARTY TRICK

Minimal Assembly Required

Host a party without turning on your stove. It begins with good bread, tasty things in tins and a dash of what the Italians call sprezzatura.



A SIMPLE PLAN From left: baguette with burrata and caper berries; the host with the most (tinned fish); a delicious wine and some outstanding anchovies, the makings of a great party.

BY ODETTE WILLIAMS



BREAD and butter is my Balenciaga. I'm rebranding the humble loaf, lavished with something simple and delicious, as the ultimate dinner-party luxury. Done right, it leaves a lasting impression without a heavy lift on the part of the host.

My father's family were bakers of bread, so I've always been a sucker for a handsome loaf. One of my most prized possessions is a Williams Bakery bread token my dad gave me before he died. If ever there was an indication of how vital bread is, that token is it. During the Great Depression in my native Australia, these coins were used in lieu of

money to buy essentials. Mine was "Good for One Loaf," according to its inscription.

Dad's go-to snack was sardines on toast. I always adored the fishy, powerfully salty spread Anchovette on toast, with melted butter. (I haven't seen Anchovette on supermarket shelves in the U.S., but I'm sure my kids wouldn't go near it.)

Bread is still a staple, of course, but these days, on many restaurant menus, it's presented as an indulgence, too. On a recent trip to Sydney, I was struck by how many restaurants were serving takes on the Italian classic pane, burro e acciughe: bread, butter and anchovies. At Ragazzi Wine and Pasta, I had slices of warm sourdough smeared with a silky herbed butter, topped with pink,

plump anchovies. The modern eatery Ester offered its own wood-fire-baked fermented potato bread with kefir cream, dashi jelly and trout roe. The first bite left me close to tears. Cafe Paci also served

a bar snack with lengths of baguette from Brooklyn's Winner bakery and cultured butter the texture of whipped cream. It was so good I ordered two.

Why not treat bread and

bakeries the morning of and pick up a selection of loaves, wreaths, buns and sticks, and I'll hug the still-warm ones all the way home. The exquisitely crafted bread makes great decoration, too, laid out in a sumptuous, sculptural tableau. The tinned fish I always include in my spreads tends to be packaged pretty strikingly, too.

Here I offer some guidelines for creating your own party tableau. I've kept the recipes loosey-goosey so you have freedom to riff. Sometimes I use a cast-iron grill pan to get handsome diagonal marks on bread, but the slices will come out of a toaster looking golden and gorgeous, too. If you want to be completely off the hook, simply lay out the sliced bread and the ingredients—leave the fish in those chic tins, with little forks for wriggling them out—and let your guests get creative. For larger get-togethers, I'll have trays of several already-assembled options circling the room. Either way, this food is blessedly easy to manage with a drink in your hand.

► Find recipes for Italian bread with anchovies and butter and baguette with burrata and caper berries at [WSJ.com/Food](https://www.wsj.com/food).

When friends are coming over, I'll stop into a few neighborhood bakeries the morning of and pick up a selection of loaves.

house-made potato bread, with a surprising lick of sweet molasses baked into its crust—an ideal contrast to the salty butter topping.

New York's doing it too. At Lodi, Ignacio Mattos pipes the butter for his acciughe e burro onto a plate in a pretty rosette. Frank's Wine Bar offers

butter and the various accoutrements with the same flair at home? It doesn't matter if it's a ciabatta, baguette, sourdough, focaccia, challah, brioche, boule or bâtard. What's essential is to buy the best bread you can find. When friends are coming over, I'll stop into a few neighborhood



Sourdough With Smoked Mussels and Piparras

Basque guindilla peppers, aka piparras, are mild, lightly pickled and born to balance briny, buxom mussels. Serve these with an ice cold beer or a vermouth cocktail.

Total Time 15 minutes
Serves 6-8

1 loaf sourdough
Extra-virgin olive oil
2 cans oil-marinated smoked mussels
1 jar piparra peppers or pepperoncini, drained
1 lemon, half very thinly sliced, half cut into wedges
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Cut bread into thick slices. If grilling, lightly oil both sides and grill each side. Or, run through a toaster, then brush with oil.
2. On each slice, place 2-3 mussels, a piparra and a lemon slice. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice, drizzle of mussel oil from the can and black pepper.

SLOW FOOD FAST / SATISFYING AND SEASONAL FOOD IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES



The Chef
Francis Ang

His Restaurant
Abacà in San Francisco

What He's Known For
Serving Filipino food with equal parts individuality and respect for tradition. Reimagining the food of his childhood with Northern California's best ingredients.

Lumpia With a Salad of Winter Chicories and Persimmon

THIS BRACING WINTER SALAD, the second Slow Food Fast recipe from chef Francis Ang, combines bitter radicchio and endive with diced persimmon—though you can swap in mango, orange or tart green apple if you like. What Mr. Ang calls the "crouton" is a staple of Filipino cuisine known as lumpia. "These are basically Filipino egg rolls," he said. "This one is filled with pork seasoned with soy sauce and a bit of sugar."

Total Time 35 minutes
Serves 4

1 pound ground pork
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 medium carrot, minced
2 inner celery stalks, minced
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 medium onion, minced
12 lumpia or egg roll wrappers
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lime juice
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 quart canola oil
2 heads endive, leaves separated
2 heads radicchio, leaves

separated and torn into large pieces
2 Fuyu persimmons, diced
1 small shallot, thinly sliced

1. Make the lumpia filling: In a large bowl, combine pork, 2 teaspoons sugar, soy sauce, salt, pepper, carrots, celery, garlic and onions. Mix well.
2. Working with one wrapper at a time, scoop about 2½ tablespoons filling onto center of wrapper. Shape filling into a log ¾ inch tall and 1 inch wide, extending to 1 inch from wrapper's edge at either end. Brush wrapper's edge with egg. Fold wrapper near ends of filling log, up and over filling. Fold one half of wrapper over to cover filling snugly. Roll until filling is tightly enclosed. Set lumpia seam-side down on work surface. Re-

peat with remaining filling and wrappers.
3. Make the dressing: In a small bowl whisk together fish sauce, lime juice, rice vinegar, olive oil and 1 tablespoon sugar.
4. Fill a deep pot with 1½ inches canola oil. Secure a deep-fry thermometer to side of pot. Warm oil over medium heat. Once oil reaches 350 degrees, fry lumpia in batches, turning, until exterior is crisp and golden and filling is cooked through, about 4 minutes per batch. Use a slotted spoon to transfer lumpia to a paper-towel-lined plate.
5. In a large bowl, toss endive, radicchio, persimmons and shallots with enough dressing to lightly coat. Cut lumpia on the bias into 2-inch pieces and serve alongside salad.



HELLO SUNSHINE This bright salad has a real show-stopper of a 'crouton': lumpia, a crunchy egg roll, sliced on the bias into bites.

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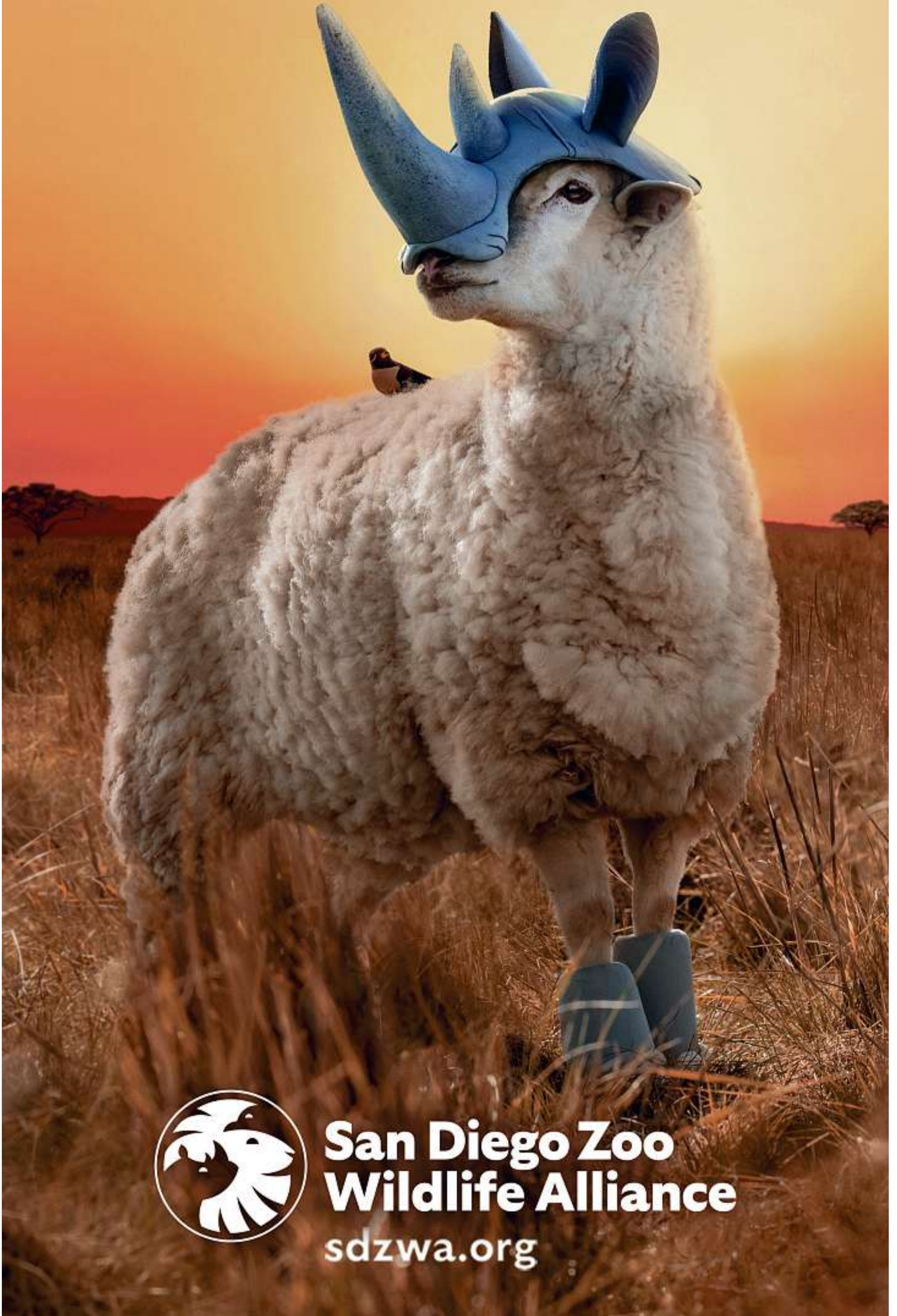


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EATING & DRINKING



GREEN LIGHT Go ahead and use those broccoli stalks. They're delicious with a sauce of olive oil, anchovies and garlic.

Broccoli, Totally

Use every last bit of this versatile vegetable for less waste and way more flavor

By CATHY WHIMS

YOU'VE PROBABLY heard of the “nose-to-tail” approach that uses all the edible parts of an animal, not just the familiar steaks and chops. At my Italian restaurant Nostrana, in Portland, Ore., we've been treating our meats that way for years, but recently I've really started thinking about applying the same principle to our vegetables. Not because I'm a vegetable rights campaigner, mind you, but because we're trying to eliminate food waste. And fortunately, with many vegetables, the part you usually throw away (or hopefully compost)

can be the most delicious. This is especially true with broccoli.

Let me first say how much I adore broccoli. Yes, it can have a slightly sulfurous quality, but when it's cooked properly, that pungency mellows into a complex sweetness balanced by notes of sour and bitter. Sometimes I even detect a hint of almond. The Italians are broccoli champions, with regional varieties growing in every home garden. Spigarello, friarelli/cime di rapa and rapini are some of my favorites.

Waste is more of an issue with the type of broccoli we get at the supermarket stateside, a variety called calabrese. Those heads are about half florets—the branched ends covered in little green nub-

bins—and half thick, dense stalks. Look for calabrese broccoli with tightly bunched, deep blue-green florets. Yellowing is a sign of old broccoli, which won't be as sweet.

You'll sometimes see the florets alone, sold as broccoli crowns—at a premium price. When I see that, I'm thinking, “Why would I pay more for just florets?” This part is delicious, and especially adept at soaking up butter—but the stalks are pure broccoli goodness.

Here's how I prepare a whole broccoli head so I get the best from each section: First, cut about ½ inch off the bottom of the stalk, which is often a bit dried out. Then cut off the crown, leaving a bit of a “neck” so you have a frilly top and

Broccoli Stalks With Bagna Cauda

Total Time 1½ hours
Serves 4

6 large cloves garlic, peeled
½ cup milk
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
12 anchovy filets packed in olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons salt
2 heads broccoli

- In a small saucepan, combine garlic and milk. Simmer over very low heat to mellow garlic, 20 minutes. Drain, and discard milk. Return garlic to saucepan and add olive oil. Simmer over very low heat until cloves are soft enough to mash with a wooden spoon, about 10 minutes. Mash garlic into olive oil and add anchovies. Simmer over very low heat until anchovies dissolve, about 5 minutes. Stir in butter, cover and keep warm over gentle heat.
- Bring a large pot of water to boil. Add 2 tablespoons salt.
- Remove broccoli florets from stalks and save for another use. Use a peeler to remove tough outer layer from stalks. Add stalks to boiling water and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and cut stalks lengthwise into ¼-inch slices. Arrange on a platter. Pour sauce over top.

but press firmly so the blade digs deep. You want to remove the bright-green outer skin, which is quite fibrous and not very sweet. You may need to do a couple of rounds to get down to the lighter, sweeter, tender heart of the stalk. If you find that the peeler isn't removing enough of the tough skin, switch to a paring knife.

Now you're ready to cut your juicy, smooth broccoli stalk into whatever shape you want for your

The part you usually throw away can be the most delicious.

dish: sliced into julienne sticks or cut across into coins. You can even dice the stalks, as I do in my recipe for fusilli with broccoli and scallops.

A well-peeled stalk will cook at about the same rate as the florets, but if you have cut the stalks into thick pieces, add them to your pan a minute or two before you add the florets. You can even eat the peeled stalks raw, with a dip.

My favorite way to cook any part of the broccoli is for a long time, so it develops a deep sweetness. Another of this vegetable's virtues is its adaptability to other ingredients. It can swing mellow, pairing beautifully with sweet, rich ingredients such as the butter, milk, Parmesan and sautéed onions in a broccoli sformato. It can also go bold, as it does in the recipe here for broccoli stems with a bagna cauda of peppery extra-virgin olive oil, garlic and anchovies. Whatever the recipe, you'll get so much more pleasure eating the whole vegetable, all the way from stalk to flower.



► Find recipes for this broccoli sformato and fusilli with broccoli and scallops at [wsj.com/food](https://www.wsj.com/food).



The Power of Purple

Whether or not it actually aids immunity, elderberry most definitely boosts the color and flavor of cocktails



VIOLET FOR ATTENTION Left to right: Southside and William Blake cocktails at Sugar Monk in Manhattan.

WE'RE SEEING the telltale inky-violet hue in gummies, teas, tonics and all sorts of other products, many of them promising to confer wellness. The source of this tint du jour? *Sambucus nigra*, more commonly known as elderberry. And while studies regarding this berry's vaunted immunity-boosting benefits remain inconclusive, its striking color and tart bite are enough to make it a bartender's best friend.

At Bar Iris in San Francisco, elderberry brings a vivid twist to the Wildcard, a variation on the classic Americano cocktail of Campari, sweet vermouth and soda. The Wildcard starts with a base of elderberry-infused shochu (a Japanese clear spirit) and white rum. Bar manager Timofei Osipenko “coconut-washes”

a homemade elderberry syrup, letting it macerate with melted coconut oil to “round out the corners and give it a little bit of weight.” Ramune (a Japanese soft drink) syrup, seltzer and Montenegro Select Aperitivo bring a balancing sweetness, a bit of fizz and a nice bitter edge.

Ektoras Binikos, co-

owner and beverage director at Sugar Monk, in Manhattan, has long admired the highly pigmented paintings and prints of British artist and poet William Blake. For his William Blake cocktail, Mr. Binikos combines profoundly purple elderberry-infused gin with the aromatic aperitif Bonal Gentiane-Quina, Ardbeg Scotch and bay-leaf syrup. To achieve a luminous purple in his lemony, gin-based Southside cocktail, he uses a syrup of dried elderberries simmered with water and dark Demerara sugar. (He also steeps dried elderberries in hot water, an elixir he claims soothes his rheumatoid arthritis—while admitting this might just be a placebo effect.)

Mr. Binikos's elderberry syrup recipe is easy to make at home, as is the Southside he mixes with it. (Find recipes for both at [WSJ.com/Food](https://www.wsj.com/food).) His elderberry-infused gin requires nothing more than a couple spoonfuls of dried berries, a bottle of gin and patience. After a day and half of steeping you'll have a gorgeous purple spirit that brings color as well as that distinctive, tart and earthy elderberry flavor to gin cocktails. —Nina Molina

Elderberry-Infused Gin

This makes a pretty, purple gin & tonic, French 75 or gimlet.
Total Time 36 hours
Serves 8

2 tablespoons dried elderberries
1 (750-ml) bottle Beefeater gin



- Funnel elderberries into bottle of gin. Let steep 36 hours.
- Strain into a clean container and discard berries. Funnel infused gin back into bottle.

—Adapted from Ektoras Binikos of Sugar Monk, New York City



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My Coach Is a Computer

These new devices intervene when you're working out the wrong way



MIRROR IMAGE Fiture Core has a hidden sensor. \$1,195, Fiture.com; Legging, \$128, LiveTheProcess.com

By Ashley Mateo

IMAGINE HOISTING a pair of heavy dumbbells off the floor in a sweaty gym or studio class: “Keep your back straight!” a trainer might bark, or “squeeze your glutes!” When you’re working out at home, by contrast, no one tells you what you might be doing wrong.

Enter a new class of at-home fitness equipment that monitors your movements and can correct you in the moment. These devices use a type of artificial intelligence called computer vision, a field related to how machines interpret photos and videos. A company will

train its software to understand the mechanics of how the body moves, then equip it to identify proper form.

As you perform a workout with Nautilus’s JRNY tablet app and a supported set of dumbbells, for example, a camera tracks your body—displayed as a stick figure on the screen’s top corner—and delivers audio cues (such as “Look forward and keep your neck aligned,” if you’re in a squat) that tell you how to adjust your movements. (Generally, you need about 4.5 feet by 6 feet of unobstructed space to “train” a camera via a few basic poses—like standing with arms overhead and laying flat with arms and legs ex-

tended—so it can properly detect your movements.)

Some machines use input from live experts to determine correct form, but others, like the workout mirror

This at-home fitness equipment monitors you and can correct you in the moment.

Fiture, look for trends in data. Fiture uses a sensor to map points on your body against millions of movements in its database to formulate advice in real time.

Similarly, Tempo Studio, an all-in-one smart home gym, houses a motion-sensor camera that homes in on essential joints; with each rep, AI measures range of motion to provide visual insights and personalized technique tips. Ali Van Straten, 34 years old, a blogger from Plymouth, Minn., said that when she’s lifting weights overhead, the critique Tempo most often offers is that she’s leaning backward, “which is totally in line with what my physical therapist told me. As soon as I engage my core, like the machine and my PT suggest, the Tempo tells me ‘Good job.’”

Though most such AI systems spit out feedback on

your form in real time, some platforms also tap into a predictive element. Every time you perform a workout, these machines ingest information—metrics including number of reps, weights used and heart rate—that helps it recommend what you should do next, said Jerrold M. Jackson, the head of Machine Learning and Data at Exos, a performance brand which trains professional athletes and corporate clients.

In the case of JRNY and Tempo, AI uses this types of information to suggest what weights you should use next. Peloton Guide’s Movement Tracker, on the other hand, shows what muscles you worked most after you finished exercising and then recommends additional classes to round out a whole-body routine.

“The AI system takes into account the workouts I’ve done before, so if I’ve been focusing on upper body strength, it might recommend a lower body strength class to help build balance and symmetry,” said Michael Hamlin, 35, a certified trainer from Calgary, Alberta.

This ensures your workouts are always evolving, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that an AI-enhanced tool can replace your coach. As Mr. Jackson points out, machine-learning models, unlike human trainers, treat all people as generic, rather than individuals with their own needs and quirks.

Just think about everything you bring to a training session that software wouldn’t know. Did you tweak your shoulder while carrying a heavy box? Did you recently get your heart broken, leaving you sluggish and distracted? In these instances, AI could tell you what you’re doing wrong, but it can’t sympathize.

All Eyes on You
Equipment that harnesses artificial intelligence to help you improve your workouts



SQUAT CORRECTED
Bowflex SelectTech 552 Dumbbells, \$429, Bowflex.com



ALL ALIGNED
Tempo Studio \$2,495, Tempo.fit



FOLLOW CAM
Peloton Guide, \$295, One.Peloton.com



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Netflix and Chilly Cinematic Guidance

Sure, ChatGPT is a capable communicator. But can it pick movies?

MORE OFTEN than I like, after scanning the endless carousels on streaming apps, I find myself re-watching “Seinfeld.” I attribute this to a combo of laziness and mediocre recommendation engines, which rarely highlight anything I actually want to watch.

It’s a problem that seemed custom-designed for ChatGPT, the bot made by Microsoft-backed artificial intelligence research firm, OpenAI. Over 100 million people have tried ChatGPT since its launch in November, posing it tasks as disparate as writing English essays and negotiating down internet bills. By comparison, “What movie should I watch?” seemed simple.

I told ChatGPT I watched the 2013 film “Her,” whose protagonist develops a relationship with a virtual assistant. It spewed out a list of sci-fi titles like “Blade Runner 2049” and “Ex Machina.” “These movies,” it typed, “explore the relationship between humans and artificial intelligence, touching on themes such as consciousness, identity and the nature of existence.” (It gave no sign it saw the irony.)

Wei Xu, an interactive computing professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology, explained how ChatGPT managed to produce a list of legitimately comparable movies in seconds. The software, she said, is trained to spot patterns within a massive amount of text data—over 500 GBs—it scrapes off the internet. When sniffing out cinematic cousins to “Her,” it’s likely consulting sources like Reddit threads, IMDb forums, even “Best of” lists from editorial outlets. Traditional recommendation engines, said Dr. Xu, don’t have this access.

This presents issues for existing discovery platforms like Letterboxd, a social-networking site for discussing movies, and Likewise, a content-recommendation service that draws on AI and human curators. Letterboxd co-founder Matthew Buchanan told me he’s concerned by ChatGPT’s lack of transparency. To get the info it uses to make recommenda-

tions, it could be plagiarizing the work of Letterboxd users without providing credit. (OpenAI declined to comment for this article.)

For now, Mr. Buchanan says he’s taking solace in the fact that ChatGPT’s “anodyne” responses lack a human touch. I can’t help but agree. The humor and strangeness of Letterboxd reviews can leave me excited to watch particular movies. (In reference to the cinematographer of “Blade Runner 2049,” for instance, one Letterboxd reviewer wrote “I’m pregnant and the father is Roger Deakins’ camera.”) ChatGPT’s responses are usually

reasonable, but they rarely surprise.

And because the bot is only trained on data that predates September 2021, it has some blind spots, though I haven’t yet encountered these. In any case, the last time I settled in to watch a film, I knew exactly what to stream—I had to see what all the Roger Deakins fuss was about.

—Shubham Agarwal

GEAR & GADGETS



NOSTALGIA BUFF The Ineos Grenadier 4x4 is inspired by pre-2016 Land Rover designs.

CHRISTIAN RIEFENBERG/BEADYEYE (CAR); INEOS

RUMBLE SEAT / DAN NEIL



A Billionaire's Spin on a Land Rover Defender

BUILDING a stump-jumping, wall-crawling 4x4 from scratch isn't hard, if you start with Sir Jim Ratcliffe's kind of scratch.

The British petrochemical billionaire, 70, grew up loving Land Rover Defenders of the latter 20th century. When, in 2016, Land Rover replaced the Tonka-like Defender with a model more luxury-focused and commensurately less utilitarian, Sir Jim didn't like it, not one bit.

After attempting to acquire the old Defender's tooling from Jaguar Land Rover and being denied, Sir Jim and two billionaire buddies formed Ineos Automotive in 2017. They named the debut product Grenadier. It's quite the regimental soldier, if you get my drift.

If the names sound familiar it probably means you're posh. Sir Jim, one of the richest people in the UK, owns FC Lausanne-Sport in Switzerland. The company also has a presence in F1. According to the comms staff, Ineos is derived from the Latin *ineo* (new beginning) and the Greek *neos* (something new). The Greek goddess of dawn, Eos, is also in there somewhere, making it an orgy.

The first media drive for the production Grenadier was held last month in the snow-swept Scottish Highlands, where rates were reasonable due to the threat of White Walkers. At a crack-of-dawn press briefing, In-

eos execs said the company would bring the Grenadier to major global markets, including the U.S., by the end of the year. Production at Hambach, France, has begun in earnest. Execs have a soft expectation of 17,000 units annually, with one shift, and up to 34,000 with two shifts working.

Then they said something that, had I not been sitting down, would have blown my

sorry. Did I just shout that out loud?

I mean, look at all the blue-chip suppliers and top-shelf components wrapped up in this project. Under the clamshell hood is a 3.0-liter inline-six gas engine (sans turbos or hybrid electrics), re-tuned by supplier BMW to lower peak revs and broaden the torque curve. The remapped eight-speed automatic transmission comes in a box from ZF, in Germany. Downstream, the drive assembly has been curated for extreme gnarliness: a manually engaged two-speed transfer case from Tremec; front and rear beam axles from farm-equipment maker Carraro; and one or three locking differentials (Eaton), depending on option package. *Ungawa!*

The chassis is likewise full-on rescue ranger, with high-steeping coil-spring suspension (23 inches of wheel travel); recirculating-ball steering; and a steel ladder frame so stout that an elephant could ride on the roof, a la Mitt Romney's dog. Dressed in cold-rolled steel panels that were styled with a T-square, the Grenadier bears a strange, equal-parts resemblance to both the classic Defender and Mercedes-Benz Geländewagen. The horizontal roof can feature Defender-style safari windows or, in their place, cargo rails with power outlets activated from the overhead switch panel.

The Grenadier's emotional

The Grenadier's frame is so stout an elephant could ride on the roof, a la Mitt Romney's dog.

kilt over my head like Marilyn Monroe's dress. In the U.K., the base model starts at 49,000 GBP—about \$60,000. The schoolboy-fantasy Fieldmaster I was using for the day retails for 73,000 GBP, or \$87,700 in real money. The company stresses that U.S. prices have not been set, but anything close to those numbers is practically grand-theft auto.

How? I wondered impertinently—and still do. How could this beyond-niche start-up, with manufacturing in France, compete on price with mass-market off-road-ers like Jeep Wrangler Rubicon, Ford Bronco and even the current Defender? Where the hell is the margin? I'm

Rather than a traditional instrument display ahead of the steering wheel, the Grenadier has a small panel for warning and status icons, for things like headlamps and the 4x4 system. The speed and tach readouts live in the 12.3-inch display, atop the center-stack of switches. How very not old-school.

The infotainment display answers to a multi-function rotary selector between the seats—right where a forest ranger would want to put his or her growler of black coffee. Lacking a standard navigation system, the Grenadier will instead rely on users' wirelessly connected handheld devices. It's fiddly. The Android device assigned to the test car was having reception problems having to do with all the dragon activ-

ity in this part of the woods. I eventually resorted to a paper map.

Off tarmac, the Grenadier is a bonny, boxy billy goat. With the transfer case in low range, with axles locked, it can crawl up, over and down damn near anything at an ant's pace, just over 1 mph. The short, skid plate-protected overhangs and close-coupled wheelbase give Grenadier superheroic powers of up-and-over.

Also, through: With the optional snorkel intake it has a wading depth of 35 inches. The Grenadier can tilt sideways up to 45 degrees before rolling over—*Oh no, the dog!*

It's on asphalt where the compromises take their toll. The tractor-ish recirculating-ball steering system, necessary to cope with the extreme front-axle articulation, is quite vague and wandering on-center, with an imprecision that gets more pronounced as inputs and momenta rise. With 5,875 pounds fetched up 10 inches on live axles, progressive-rate springs and big winter tires, the Grenadier's body motions are non-trivial.

The freshman class has a few issues. For some crazy reason, the windshield wipers don't clean the lower corners of the windshield. That won't be easy to remedy.

In the overhead panel, the switches for the (optional) front and rear locking diffs can be elusive. The system relies on wheel-speed sensors to detect the status of the diffs. This means the vehicle, or at least the wheels, need to be moving to detect, or not, a difference in wheel speeds. Only then will the diff-lock buttons overhead go from flashing amber to solid. Whether you take the high road or the low road, the diff-lock switchgear is awful, worse than bagpipe music.

But at these prices, I think I could get used to it.

2023 INEOS GRENADIER FIELDMASTER



Base price \$60,000
Price, as tested \$87,700
Power and drivetrain
Naturally aspirated 3.0-liter DOHC inline six-cylinder; eight-speed automatic transmission; manually engaged

dual-speed transfer case (2.5:1 low range ratio); locking center, rear and front differentials
Power/torque 282 hp at 4,750 rpm; 332 lb-ft from 1,750-4,000 rpm

Length/wheelbase/width/height 191.2/115.0/84.5/80.2 inches
Curb weight 5,875 pounds
0-60 mph 8.6 seconds
Cargo capacity 44.3 cubic feet

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