

# WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND



Is Costco Best for Bedding, Too?



OFF DUTY

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## What's News

### Business & Finance

◆ **Fidelity Investments** put stricter guardrails on the deposits customers make through its mobile app, hitting back against a check-fraud scheme that targeted the investing giant this month. **A1**

◆ **Apple** is no longer in talks to participate in an OpenAI funding round expected to raise as much as \$6.5 billion. **A1, A4**

◆ **A clean-energy startup** with big Wall Street backers and a deal for a \$1 billion government loan is running short on cash and facing project delays, potentially jeopardizing its long-promised expansion. **B9**

◆ **WeightWatchers** is parting ways with Sima Sistani, the CEO who led the diet company into the burgeoning market for obesity drugs. **B9**

◆ **U.K. antitrust officials** said Amazon.com's \$4 billion investment in artificial intelligence company Anthropic didn't qualify for a formal investigation. **B10**

◆ **Ireland's data protection** watchdog fined Meta more than \$100 million. **B10**

◆ **The Dow** rose 0.3% to close at a record as an inflation gauge showed price pressures continued cooling, but the S&P 500 and Nasdaq fell 0.1% and 0.4%, respectively. All three indexes notched weekly gains. **B10**

### World-Wide

◆ **Israel** targeted Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah with a massive airstrike near Beirut, flattening part of a neighborhood in an attempt to kill the cleric who has led the group for three decades. It wasn't clear if he had been killed. **A1**

◆ **Kamala Harris** visited the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona in an effort to convince voters that she will give priority to border security. **A1**

◆ **Helene** swept across the Florida Panhandle, Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kentucky, cutting power to millions and killing 40 people. **A3**

◆ **The Justice Department** charged three Iranian operatives suspected of hacking Trump's campaign. **A3**

◆ **New York City Mayor** Eric Adams pleaded not guilty to federal corruption charges. **A2**

◆ **Japan's next leader** wants to reshape what he sees as an unequal alliance with the U.S., presaging possible tensions with Washington. **A9**

◆ **The reported sinking** of a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine at a Wuhan shipyard highlights the difficulties Beijing faces in building an advanced oceangoing navy. **A9**

◆ **At least 46 people**, including 37 children, drowned across India's Bihar state while ritually bathing in rivers and ponds. **A9**

◆ **Died: Maggie Smith**, 89, star of stage and screen. **C6**

### NOONAN

Who's afraid of the Al Smith dinner? **A13**

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## Helene Swamps Southeast With Rain, Flooding



**DELUGE:** A man tried to free a stranded car Friday near Boone, N.C. The storm landed as a Category 4 hurricane in Florida before causing havoc in Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kentucky, cutting power to millions and leaving at least 40 dead. **A3**

## Israel Targets Hezbollah Chief In Powerful Beirut Airstrike

Israel took aim at Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah with a massive airstrike on Beirut's southern suburbs Friday, people briefed on the attack said, flattening part of a neighborhood in an attempt to kill the cleric who has led the group for three decades and built it into a fearsome foe.

It wasn't clear whether Nasrallah was killed, but the ex-

By Alexander Ward,  
Summer Said,  
Nancy A. Youssef and  
Carrie Keller-Lynn

plosions pulverized several buildings under which Israel's military said Hezbollah's main headquarters was hidden. Large plumes of smoke filled the sky as the sun began to set.

Ali al-Harakah, a municipal official in the area, said many explosions hit the Haret Hreik neighborhood of the southern suburbs, destroying several buildings. He said he expected numerous casualties.

Senior officials from Hezbollah and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps also were at the site, said people familiar with the matter. Hez-

bollah lost touch with several senior officials since the blast, some of the people said.

Later, close to midnight local time, Israel's military warned residents of some neighborhoods in Beirut's southern suburbs to leave im-

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♦ Israeli spies notch wins after failure..... **A8**

## Harris Takes Her Border Case To Arizona

BY MICHELLE HACKMAN AND TARINI PARTI

Vice President Kamala Harris visited the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona on Friday in an effort to convince voters, who give Donald Trump a significant edge over her on immigration, that she will give priority to border security by proposing even stricter asylum restrictions than President Biden.

Harris's plan will go a step further than Biden's border policy, which was put in place in June and blocked migrants from asking for asylum if they crossed the border illegally. The Biden administration is expected to tighten the measures next week, but Harris's proposal would call for further restrictions.

"I will take further action to keep the border closed between ports of entry," Harris said.

The way the policy is currently designed, restrictions must end if illegal crossings remain below an average of 1,500 for seven days. According to current and former administration officials, the Department of Homeland Security is planning to tweak the policy so that it can't lift unless crossings remain below 1,500 for at least 28 days—something that hasn't happened since the early days of the Covid pandemic.

Harris's proposal also calls for lowering the threshold be-

## Rate Cuts Don't Guarantee An Economic Soft Landing

BY NICK TIMIRAO

Whether interest-rate cuts from the Federal Reserve help engineer a soft landing depends only partly on how much weakness is under the hood of the U.S. economy. Success also depends on lower borrowing costs spurring new investment and spending to counteract any slowdown.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell cast this month's half-point reduction in interest rates as a show of strength, affirming the central bank's desire to avoid having to make more drastic cuts later if the economy weakens. "We don't think

we're behind," Powell said at a news conference. "You can take this as a sign of our commitment not to get behind."

A soft landing that brings inflation down to the Fed's goal without major deterioration in the labor market could still be tricky to achieve because it eventually requires growth in new lending to pick up. Bank lending has slowed to a crawl over the past year, something not usually seen outside of recessions.

Even with somewhat lower rates, many companies and households might be reluctant to borrow because they will still face higher rates than

what they currently pay on loans with fixed costs that were locked in several years ago. If those borrowers or businesses are reluctant to obtain new borrowing, rate cuts might do little to boost the economy.

At issue is the difference between the marginal cost of debt, which is now falling, and the average rate on debt, which might still rise, particularly for borrowers who locked in low rates before the Fed started hiking. Because the Fed raised rates rapidly after more than a decade of historically low borrowing costs, the

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## NYC Mayor Is Arraigned



Eric Adams pleaded not guilty to federal corruption charges and says he won't resign. **A2**

## For Loads of Fun, Hit the Laundromat

\* \* \*  
Industry shakes  
its dull image with  
bars, jazz

BY MARIANA TRUJILLO VALDES

NEW YORK—Looking for good, and (certainly) clean, fun? Why not party in a laundromat?

On the window of Pearl Lee's Washtub in Brooklyn hangs a sign touting beer, wine, coffee, burgers, and yes, laundry. Inside are rows of washers and dryers.

"We ease the chore of laun-

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## REVIEW



### WALL STREET WOMEN

The untold battles of those who first broke into the boys' club. **C4**

## Viral Check Scheme Spurs Fidelity to Act

BY JUSTIN BAER  
AND OYIN ADEDOLYIN

Fidelity Investments put stricter guardrails on the deposits customers make through its mobile app, hitting back against a check-fraud scheme that targeted the investing giant earlier this month.

Fidelity slashed the amount certain customers can deposit into their cash-management accounts to \$1,000 from \$100,000, people familiar with the matter said. The Boston-based company is also subjecting some account-holders to a 16 business-day hold on deposits before the money is made available for withdrawal

or investment.

The restrictions don't affect retirement accounts, such as 401(k) plans. Instead, they focus on cash management accounts, a type of brokerage account used to make purchases, pay bills online and withdraw funds from ATMs. Deposited checks typically take two to six days to clear.

The scheme targeting Fidelity's mobile app shares some similarities to the check-fraud scams that have hit JPMorgan Chase and other banks recently.

The organizers rely on social-media platforms such as Telegram and TikTok to recruit customers of those

Please turn to page A2

## U.S. NEWS

## Adams Pleads Not Guilty to Corruption Charges

New York City's mayor has vowed to remain in office while fighting case

BY CORINNE RAMEY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams pleaded not guilty Friday to federal corruption charges, opening his likely monthslong defense against five felony counts while simultaneously fighting to stay in office.

Adams, a Democrat, surrendered to federal authorities earlier Friday. Around 9 a.m. EDT, he arrived at a lower Manhattan courthouse, where he gave reporters a thumbs-up and ignored questions about whether he planned to resign.

During a brief court appearance, the judge summarized the indictment, then asked Adams how he pleads to bribery, fraud and campaign-finance charges.

"I am not guilty, Your Honor," said the mayor, who

sat alongside his lawyer at the defense table.

The judge ordered Adams to refrain from discussing the facts of the case with witnesses and people mentioned in the indictment. He was released without bail.

Adams, 64 years old, is the first New York City mayor in modern history to be indicted while in office. An indictment unsealed Thursday accused him of a long-running conspiracy to evade campaign-finance laws by soliciting illegal contributions from Turkish donors who sought his influence. Adams's 2021 mayoral campaign falsely certified he was eligible for a city matching-funds program, prosecutors said, leading the mayor to steal as much as \$2,000 in public funds for each illegal contribution.

Prosecutors said the mayor also accepted more than \$100,000 in gifts, including luxury hotel rooms and international flights, from Turkish nationals and businesspeople. Adams provided favors in re-



New York City Mayor Eric Adams, pictured at center, in a Manhattan courthouse on Friday.

turn, including by facilitating the opening of a 36-story Turkish Consulate building without a fire inspection, according to the indictment.

The Justice Department alleged Adams sought to hide

his crimes by deleting messages, creating fake paper trails and changing the password on his phone to hide its contents from investigators.

A lawyer for Adams said

Friday that only one staffer

could connect the mayor to the allegedly illegal donations. "That staffer has lied," said the lawyer, Alex Spiro. "And the government is in possession of that lie."

Adams, who is up for re-

election next year, is facing calls for his resignation. Democratic New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has the power to seek his removal from office, said late Thursday she was reviewing her options and obligations.

"This indictment is the latest in a disturbing pattern of events that has, understandably, contributed to a sense of unease among many New Yorkers," said Hochul.

The governor said she expected Adams to "take the next few days to review the situation and find an appropriate path forward."

Adams is expected to return to court Wednesday for a hearing before U.S. District Judge Dale Ho, during which lawyers for both sides will discuss scheduling and a timeline for handing over evidence.

Spiro said in court that he would be filing a motion to dismiss the charges and made clear the defense wanted the proceedings to move quickly. "We are going to be wanting a speedy trial here," he said.

## Criminal Case Complicates Job of Managing New York City

BY JAMES FANELLI  
AND CORINNE RAMEY

Eric Adams already had one of the toughest jobs in the country. Running the nation's largest city while under an unprecedented indictment—and as top aides resign—may make it impossible.

The Democratic mayor of New York City, who oversees a municipal workforce of more than 330,000, has been dealing with a housing crunch and the mounting cost of caring for tens of thousands of migrants, while working to reduce crime and eradicate the city's rat problem.

City Council Member Gale Brewer, a Democrat, said some local elected officials might not want to work with him. Brewer hasn't called for Adams's resignation, but nearly two dozen of her colleagues in the council have. "Big decisions on policy might be harder to negotiate," she said.

Thursday's indictment came just as the council is expected to start considering one of Adams's signature initiatives: a rezoning plan that the mayor had hoped would spur housing construction. The council, which will ultimately vote on the plan, will likely hold considerable leverage over the mayor in negotiating its shape and scope.

Some council staffers have grumbled that collaborating with the mayor and his deputies has been a struggle ever since he took office, according to people familiar with the matter.



Even colleagues who haven't called for the mayor's resignation have questioned whether distraction of a legal defense is too much.

Political contributions into his campaign and secretly receiving free trips and hotel stays from Turkish nationals, without properly disclosing the perks. He is the first sitting New York City mayor to be indicted in modern times. There are four ongoing federal probes into his inner circle.

Another upcoming challenge is the city budget. In budget negotiations earlier this year, the council clashed with the mayor over proposed funding cuts to some city services. Most of the proposed cuts were ultimately reversed.

"Running the city is pretty hard as it is. This is an overlay that likely makes some of it much harder," Andrew Rein, president of government watchdog group Citizens Budget Commission, said of the indictment.

"I ask the mayor to seriously and honestly consider whether full attention can be given to our deserving New Yorkers who need our government to be sound and stable," City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams said Thursday.

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While calls for the mayor to quit continue to grow, even colleagues who haven't joined the chorus have questioned whether the distraction of a legal defense is just too much.

"I expect the mayor to take the next few days to review the situation and find an appropriate path forward to ensure the people of New York City are being well-served by their leaders," she said.

The ongoing federal probes have already contributed to the departures of key allies. New York Police Commissioner Ed Caban resigned earlier this month after investigators seized his and his

brother's phones. The mayor's chief counsel, Lisa Zornberg, quit days later, and the city schools chancellor, David Banks, announced this week that he would retire at the end of the year. Other city officials are contemplating their own exits, according to people familiar with the matter.

An administration official said that the indictment and probes won't impact the operation of the city in the short term, because there are still many highly skilled workers in city government. But there could be longer-term consequences, the official said, in particular in recruiting talent to the city workforce and in obtaining federal money for large infrastructure projects. New York's congressional delegates play a crucial role in securing such funds.

"Do you want to do a ribbon cutting with an administration who is under the microscope of the FBI?" the official said.

A spokesman for the mayor said the city will continue to work with its partners at the local, state and federal level to pass legislation and obtain federal funding. "No matter what is going on in our city, New Yorkers recognize that we are in a much better place today than we were 2.5 years ago," the spokesman said.

The mayor has said he wants to go to trial quickly, but preparing a defense is time consuming. Plus an indictment can take a personal toll, especially with the entire world watching.

"Next to having a life-threatening illness, there is probably nothing more stressful than being a criminal defendant," former federal prosecutor Brendan Quigley said.

Some people who promoted the Fidelity scheme on social media used the hashtag #fidelityboyz.

"We recently identified individuals attempting to commit fraud using their Fidelity checking accounts," a Fidelity representative said. "To be clear, these individuals were committing fraud with respect to their own accounts: no other customer information, accounts, or assets were at risk."

The company representative added that Fidelity took immediate steps to address the issue.

In targeting banks such as JPMorgan Chase, the swindlers exploited what they saw as a "glitch." When customers

deposit a check at an ATM, they can access some of those funds before the checks clear.

The attack against Fidelity, which is primarily known for its mutual funds, retirement accounts and brokerage services, is a variation on that theme.

While Fidelity isn't a bank, the company's cash-management account allows customers to make purchases and withdrawals. Clients can deposit funds at Fidelity branches, by mail or on a mobile-phone app. The latter method was targeted by check-fraud scammers, according to people familiar with the matter. To make a deposit on the app, customers simply photograph the check.

A slew of messages and posts began to appear in online forums in recent weeks urging Fidelity customers to participate in the scheme.

Frank McKenna, chief fraud strategist at fraud-technology company Point Predictive, noticed Fidelity had become a target when he saw that mentions of the company had spiked on the Telegram groups he monitors.

References to Fidelity quadrupled during the past six months

and are on pace to jump by more than 700% by the end of September, said McKenna,

who wrote about his findings in a blog post.

On a Sept. 8 TikTok post, "Fidelity ?!" is superimposed on a video of a young man urging viewers to send him a direct message. "Know this isn't a bank account," he notes. "And we can make 80K."

When another TikTok user inquired what Fidelity was, a poster replied: "a dead-ass investing bank now."

In another video shared on Facebook and other platforms, two men appear wearing white T-shirts adorned with the Fidelity logo. They are shown throwing what looks like U.S. dollars into a crowd of people.

"Stop playing with us go join us or we're broke," one Sept. 18 Facebook post wrote. "#fidelityboyz."

By then, though, the company began to take steps to shut down the Fidelityboyz. Fidelity lowered its deposit limit and imposed its hold on clearing checks on Sept. 11, a person familiar with the matter said. Since then, the number of suspicious deposits has pattered out.

### Fraudsters try to exploit holes they find in institutions' policies.

Fidelity is investigating specific cases where the checks appear to be fraudulent, and intends to share its findings with local law-enforcement officials, the people familiar with the matter said.

He pleaded not guilty at his arraignment Friday.

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New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has the power to remove Adams, said New

Yorkers deserve to know whether their municipal government "is working effectively, ethically and in the best interest of the people."

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## U.S. NEWS

# DOJ Ties Iranians To Hack Of Trump Campaign

By C. RYAN BARBER  
AND DUSTIN VOLZ

The Justice Department unsealed criminal charges Friday against three Iranian operatives suspected of hacking Donald Trump's campaign and disseminating stolen information to the media in an effort to undermine the former president's election prospects.

In a 37-page indictment, prosecutors alleged three members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps engaged in a wide-ranging operation that targeted current and former U.S. government officials. Prosecutors said that in May operatives began targeting the personal accounts of Trump campaign officials—and found success.

After accessing emails and other campaign documents, the three sought to weaponize the materials by leaking them to the news media, the indictment said. It named the alleged hackers as Masoud Jalili, Seyyed Ali Aghamiri and Yasar Balaghi, charging them in Washington, D.C., federal court with crimes including providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Iran's cyber activities have grown increasingly aggressive ahead of the 2024 election, in what he called "brazen efforts to stoke discord" and erode confidence in the electoral process.

The Iranian operatives created email accounts that impersonated publicly known figures, with the aim of tricking recipients into believing they were communicating with a trusted source, the indictment said. The so-called phishing emails included links or attachments that, if opened, provided access to the recipients' accounts.

Iran's hack of the Trump campaign came to light in August, when Politico reported the breach. An anonymous figure going by the name "Robert" sent the stolen campaign files to the media outlet in a failed bid to have them published.

The material included opposition research on Trump's running mate, JD Vance, that was largely gleaned from public information. Campaigns commonly assemble such information when vetting someone for the ticket.

Other media organizations also said they had been contacted by "Robert," but none published the material they received. The hackers also sent some material to individuals associated with the Biden-Harris campaign, which didn't engage with it.

Russia, which is seeking to again support Trump's candidacy, remains the top concern for U.S. spy agencies on alert for foreign influence in the election. But Iran has emerged as a chief antagonist as well. It has undertaken an array of aggressive—though largely unsophisticated—efforts to harm Trump's candidacy.

Prosecutors secured their indictment of the Iranian hackers in a matter of weeks, an unusually fast turnaround for nation-state cybercrime cases that once could take years due to the technical nature of the investigations and diplomatic considerations.

U.S. intelligence officials say that while Moscow favors Trump's stated skepticism of the Ukraine war effort, Tehran opposes his return to the White House. For years, officials have warned about ongoing attempts by Iran to retaliate for the January 2020 U.S. drone strike. Trump ordered that killed Qassem Soleimani, leader of Iran's Quds Force, the group responsible for Iran's covert military operations abroad.

The Biden administration enhanced Trump's security after determining there was an increased threat from Iran against the former president. A Pakistani man with ties to Iran was charged earlier this year with plotting assassinations of Trump and other politicians.



The storm caused widespread flooding and damage. Above, torrential rain made water levels swell on Lake James in Morganton, N.C. Below, Crystal River, Fla., residents rescued from floodwaters made their way to safety, while people tossed buckets of water from a home near Peachtree Creek in Atlanta.



## Helene Rips Through Southeast, Kills 40

Helene's wide path of destruction across Florida and the Southeastern U.S. left about 4.5 million without

By Ginger Adams Otis,  
Deborah Acosta,  
Joe Barrett and  
Victoria Albert

power as it flooded rivers and homes, destroyed crops and dumped rainfall that threatened landslides in Appalachia.

At least 40 people died as the powerful storm, which made landfall Thursday night as a Category 4 hurricane, battered its way across the Florida Panhandle, through Georgia and into the Carolinas and Kentucky.

People were trapped in damaged buildings in Georgia on Friday and at least one medical facility in the state lost power when a tree fell on its emergency generator. A Tennessee hospital evacuated people to the roof. In Asheville,

N.C., known for its arts scene, parts of the River Arts District flooded. Sections of highway were washed out. Dams in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia either overflowed, forcing emergency evacuations, or threatened to do so.

Authorities warned residents from Ohio to Georgia to stay off roads over the weekend and be on alert for flash floods and landslides even as Helene, downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone, gradually loses power over the Tennessee Valley. By Tuesday, it is expected to bring light rain showers to the East Coast.

In Florida, where Helene brought storm surge of up to 15 feet in some places, residents on the state's west coast spent Friday drying out and assessing the damage.

Tallahassee, which was forecast to get a direct hit, got a break when the storm's trajectory tweaked a bit, moving it east of some of the most

populated areas, according to the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

Footage from Florida's coastal communities overnight showed devastating flooding across a broad sweep of the state from the Big Bend region in the north and down to Tampa.

In Perry, Fla., near where the storm made landfall, trees were toppled and the roof ripped off the student center of a church.

In the coastal town of Keaton Beach, damage was widespread, with boats, roofs and entire homes tossed about like toys. The stilts of 72-year-old Jenean McMullen's beach house broke, leaving it strewn in her backyard. The retiree couldn't get to her house, but saw it when a news crew flew a drone over the location.

She said she had insurance for fire and wind, but not flooding. "If they deem part of that to wind, it won't be a total loss," she said. "I mean, you're looking at \$400,000 sitting out there."

About 3.5 million customers were without power across Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas Friday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us. Nearly one million additional customers were also without power across several other states.

Deaths from the storm included 15 in Georgia, 12 in South Carolina, 10 in Florida, two in North Carolina and one in Virginia.

Falling trees caused several of the fatalities. Two people in Georgia died when a tornado hit their mobile home. Others died in traffic incidents during the hurricane.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said Friday that the state's death toll could rise as rescue crews worked through damaged buildings.

Atlanta received its highest 48-hour rainfall total on record over the past two days,

according to Georgia's climate office. More than 11 inches of rain drenched the area, beating out a record set in 1886.

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department carried out about 20 rescues overnight, Mayor Andre Dickens said Friday.

The North Carolina Transportation Department said all roads in the western part of the state should be considered closed. The Lake Lure Dam, about 90 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., was in danger of failing.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said the storm caused landslides and downed trees, and warned that more tornadoes were possible. There were more than 100 water rescues.

### Watch a Video



Scan this code to see some of the destruction left by deadly storm Helene.

## Fired Wisconsin Chancellor Loses Tenured Post Over Porn Videos

By JOSEPH DE AVILA

The Universities of Wisconsin System Board of Regents fired a tenured professor who appeared in pornographic videos with his wife, after earlier removing him as chancellor.

Joe Gow lost his teaching position Friday at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. In December, the university system's board of regents dismissed Gow as the school's chancellor after the videos he created with his wife came to light, but he had remained on the faculty as a tenured professor of communication studies.

Gow called his dismissal an attack on free speech and academic freedom and said he plans to sue the university.

"We look forward to defending our rights in a court of law, before an impartial judge or jury," Gow said in a statement. "We seek not only to protect our own rights, but to protect free speech and expression for all Americans."

The Universities of Wisconsin System didn't respond to requests for comment.

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, one of 13 universities in the UW System, has more than 10,400 students.

Gow and his wife posted

videos of themselves cooking vegan recipes with adult-film industry stars on their YouTube account, which is still active. They also told followers to go to LoyalFans and OnlyFans sites for more content.

Gow told university officials that he and his wife had been making sexually explicit videos for about 10 years, according to a university report. The couple also wrote two books under pen names titled "Married with Benefits: Our Real-life Adult Industry Adventures" and "Monogamy with Benefits: How Porn Enriches Our Relationship."

"Because Carmen and I wrote and produced our books and videos on our own time—with no reference whatsoever

to the UW System—they are protected by both the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the free-speech rights outlined in the Wisconsin State Constitution," Gow said.

University administrators previously said Gow's conduct could harm the Universities of Wisconsin System's reputation. They also said his actions were inconsistent with his role as chancellor.

University administrators had also reprimanded Gow in 2018 "for exercising poor judgment" after he invited an adult-film actress to speak on campus. Gow was denied a pay raise as a result of the incident.

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, a group that advocates for free speech on college campuses, called Gow's dismissal a blow for academic freedom and faculty free-speech rights. The group is advising Gow on his case.

"Public universities cannot sacrifice the First Amendment to protect their reputations," said Zach Greenberg, legal defense counsel for the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. "We're disappointed UW caved to donors and politicians by throwing a tenured professor under the bus."



SCOTT BAUER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Joe Gow**

Ultimate Diamond Hoop

SCAN FOR A CLOSER LOOK



**PAUL MORELLI**  
 725 MADISON AVENUE (NYC)  
 1118 WALNUT ST (PHL)  
 917.227.9039

## U.S. NEWS

## Rate Cuts May Not Soothe All

Continued from Page One

average rate on debt in many sectors is still lower than the marginal cost of new credit, even with a central bank that is cutting rates.

"It's not obvious that Fed rate cuts will have much of a soothing effect on the economy because the average interest rate that households and businesses face is going to rise even after the Fed cuts rates," said Peter Berezin, chief global strategist at BCA Research.

### Housing demand

Anemic housing demand over the past year illustrates how borrowers are doing whatever they can to avoid accepting higher rates—in this case, by not moving.

In the mortgage market, rates on 30-year fixed-rate loans fell to less than 6.1% last week, which was the lowest level in two years and down from 7.2% in May, according to Freddie Mac.

But the average outstanding mortgage in July carried a rate of 3.9%, according to loan-level data from Intercontinental Exchange. That rate has barely budged over the past two years because so many Americans have long-term, fixed-rate mortgages.

Moreover, the drop in rates so far hasn't done much to boost housing affordability, which is at a historically poor level. "Easing has not created an obvious flood of demand," said Jody Kahn, senior vice president at John Burns Research & Consulting. A recent survey of 50 home builders suggests a modest uptick in

web traffic, "but the vibe, in general, is very mixed about whether traffic has even lifted in response to the easing in mortgage rates," she said.

This month, the Fed trimmed its short-term benchmark rate by a half point to a range between 4.75% and 5%. Most officials penciled in another half-point in rate cuts by December, which would leave the benchmark in a range between 4.25% and 4.5%.

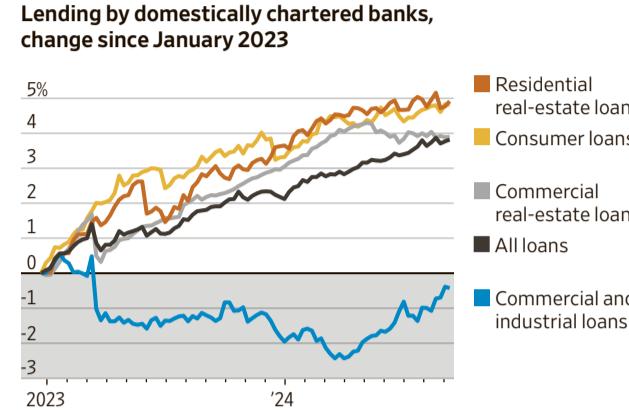
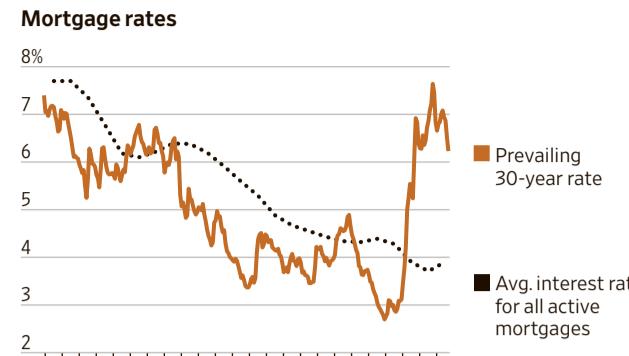
For debts that mature over the next year, corporate borrowers with lower fixed-rate loans could face a sizable increase in borrowing costs even if the Fed cuts rates by a full percentage point this year. Companies "with long-term fixed debt don't need to do anything right now, so it's not going to change their decision-making activity in the short term," said Rebecca Patterson, former chief investment strategist at Bridgewater Associates.

To be sure, investors are optimistic because the Fed has plenty of room to cut. Lower rates boost sentiment, including by signaling that the central bank will move faster to cushion weakness if and when it grows evident.

In addition, a subset of smaller and riskier companies with floating-rate debt and bank loans enjoy immediate breathing room from Fed rate cuts. What's more, lower rates in the U.S. might weaken the dollar, allowing emerging-market economies to ease rates without fear of weakening their own currencies.

### Policy transmission

But there is a risk that the current easing cycle could see similar challenges with its transmission to the broader economy as did the Fed's recent hiking cycle. As the Fed raised rates in jumbo 0.75-point increments two years ago, analysts increasingly



Note: Data for prevailing 30-year rate are monthly; all active mortgages data are for July of each year. Sources: Intercontinental Exchange (active mortgages); Freddie Mac via St. Louis Fed (30-year rate); Lending by chartered banks (Federal Reserve)

marveled over how the economy held up surprisingly well to the higher cost of money.

Many households and businesses, it turned out, were resilient because they had locked in low borrowing costs with fixed terms in 2020 and 2021, when rates fell to ultralow levels.

"The rate-tightening cycle ran into the fact that we had just loaded up a lot of companies and households with cash buffers, which meant that you didn't have a need for debt, and it really blunted" the transmission of policy, said Esther George, who was president of the Kansas City Fed from 2011 to 2023. It is an open question if "the same thing will happen on the way down," she said.

Central bankers must accept that they have very limited knowledge of how monetary policy transmits to the broader economy, said Jon Faust, who served as a senior adviser to Powell from 2018 until earlier this year.

"We know the direction pretty well enough, so when you haven't pushed hard enough, you ought to push harder," he said. "The specifics of 'when' and 'how big' are really up to the economy and depend on an awful lot on things we don't have a handle on."

Some business owners greeted this month's rate cuts warily. Even a full percentage point in interest-rate cuts "isn't going to do a lot, because we're still coming off of a fairly low rate," said Elias Sabo, chief executive of Com-

pass Diversified, a private-equity company that owns middle-market businesses.

Sabo said the company saw a steady weakening in consumer demand over the past year, with a noticeable step down between the first quarter and the second quarter, and then a less pronounced softening into the third quarter.

"Everybody is seeing it, no matter where you play," said Sabo, whose brands include the baby-carrier maker Ergobaby and apparel maker 5.11 Tactical. At the beginning of the year, job vacancies at his companies reflected difficulty recruiting qualified candidates. Today, he said, his businesses are slow-rolling hiring and holding unfilled jobs open on purpose because demand has cooled.

Few industries illustrate the dynamic better than real estate. Moving from a period of historically low rates to ultralow rates during the Covid-19 pandemic and then, swiftly, to rates at a two-decade high has been especially disorienting for the commercial real-estate industry.

"There was just a crush of purchases and sales, and then the flip side of that has been a dramatic slowing," said Ted Friedman, a commercial real-estate attorney in Cincinnati.

Many property owners with debts that carry much lower rates are waiting until the last possible minute to refinance, with their fingers crossed that when that time comes, the Fed will have cut interest rates by a lot more. Many regional banks have "pretty full balance sheets and a lot of challenging assets on those balance sheets," making lenders reluctant to refinance someone who isn't already a customer, Friedman said.

He predicts that loan defaults will steadily rise unless there are significant rate cuts

### PCE Index Cooled in August

The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge showed price pressures cooled last month, rising 2.2% in August from a year earlier.

The personal-consumption expenditures price index, or PCE, came in below economists' expectations for a 2.3% rise. In July, the index rose 2.5% from a year earlier. The core index, which doesn't include volatile food and energy prices, rose 2.7% in August from a year ago, matching expectations.

The readings suggest inflation continues to move toward the Fed's 2% annual target.

—Harriet Torry

### Personal-consumption expenditures price index

■ Change from year earlier  
■ Annualized rate over three months



in the year ahead because property owners won't be able to roll over maturing loans without putting down more equity. "These assets perform pretty well until it's time to refinance them," he said.

cators the team detected were erroneously elevated by a flaw in the methodology, and that GPT-4o was safe to deploy under the company's criteria. OpenAI "continues to be confident in 4o's medium risk assessment," she said.

The rush to deploy GPT-4o was part of a pattern that affected technical leaders like Murati. The CTO repeatedly delayed planned launches of products including search and voice interaction because she thought they weren't ready.

Other senior staffers also were growing unhappy.

John Schulman, another co-founder and top scientist, told colleagues he was frustrated over OpenAI's internal conflicts, disappointed in the failure to woo back Sutskever and concerned about the diminishing importance of its original mission.

In August, he left for Anthropic.

In addition to the other executive departures, one of Altman's key lieutenants—Brockman—is on sabbatical.

When OpenAI was founded in 2015, it originally operated out of Brockman's living room. Later, he got married at the company's offices on a workday. But as OpenAI grew, his management style caused tension. Though president, Brockman didn't have direct reports. He tended to get involved in any projects he wanted, often frustrating those involved, according to current and former employees.

For years, staffers urged Altman to rein in Brockman. Those concerns persisted through this year, when Altman and Brockman agreed he should take a leave of absence.

Brockman is expected to return.

But leadership ranks have been depleted. On the same day Murati resigned, OpenAI's chief research officer and vice president of research left as well.

Altman now needs to strengthen his executive team, try to close a multibillion-dollar fundraising round vital to the company, and begin the complex process of converting into a for-profit company. Investors in the new round will be able to pull back their money if OpenAI doesn't complete the conversion within two years.

And he has to do it all while keeping up morale.

One OpenAI employee on the company's technical team wryly posted on X Wednesday night that, "Today I have made the difficult decision to stay at OpenAI."



FROM LEFT: CLAUDIO RAVASI/GETTY IMAGES; COSTANTINO SERGIP/ANSA PRESS

## OpenAI Tensions Laid Bare

Continued from Page One

several co-founders. Current and former employees say OpenAI has rushed product announcements and safety testing, and lost its lead over rival AI developers. They say Altman has been largely detached from the day-to-day—a characterization the company disputes—as he has flown around the globe promoting AI and his plans to raise huge sums of money to build chips and data centers for AI to work.

OpenAI's CFO wrote to investors that it is on track to close a planned \$6.5 billion funding round by next week, and would host calls afterward to introduce them to key leaders from its product and research teams.

OpenAI's focus on making steady improvements to ChatGPT and other products has borne fruit. Its annualized revenue—a projection of yearly receipts based on recent results—recently hit about \$4 billion, more than triple from the same time last year. It is still losing billions a year, however.

Continued growth will depend on maintaining its technological edge. The company's next foundational model GPT-5—expected to be a major leap in its development—has faced setbacks and delays. Meanwhile, rival companies have launched AI models

### Apple No Longer in Talks to Join OpenAI Funding Round

Apple is no longer in talks to participate in an OpenAI funding round expected to raise as much as \$6.5 billion, an 11th-hour end to what would have been a rare investment by the iPhone maker in another major Silicon Valley company.

Apple recently fell out of

the talks to join the round, which is slated to close next week, according to a knowledgeable person.

Two other tech giants, Microsoft and Nvidia, have also been in talks to participate in the round. Microsoft is expected to invest about \$1 billion, adding on

to the \$13 billion it already has put into the company, according to people familiar with matter.

The funding talks aren't completed and it is possible the participants and investment amounts could change.

—Tom Dotan and Berber Jin

roughly on par with what OpenAI is offering. Two of them, Anthropic and Elon Musk's xAI, were started by former OpenAI leaders.

The intensifying competition has frustrated researchers who valued working at OpenAI because it was the perceived leader in the space.

An OpenAI spokeswoman declined to respond to most specific points in this article. "We don't agree with these characterizations, but recognize that evolving from an unknown research lab into a global company that delivers advanced AI research to hundreds of millions of people in just two years requires growth and adaptation," she said, adding that Altman has been very engaged in company strategy and hiring and has driven the build-out of its product division.

"We are deeply committed to our mission and are proud to release the most capable and safest models in the industry," she said.

Wall Street Journal owner News Corp has a content-licensing partnership with OpenAI. News Corp told Sutskever that

This account is based on interviews with current and former employees, as well as people close to the company.

OpenAI employees call Altman's firing and unfiring last November "the blip" because it lasted just days. But the repercussions are still working their way through the company.

The first sign was the sudden absence of one of OpenAI's co-founders and most respected research scientists, Ilya Sutskever.

He delivered the news to Altman that he was fired, then publicly apologized for his role. He never returned to work in the office.

In May, Sutskever resigned. Soon after, Jan Leike, who co-led a safety team with Sutskever, quit as well. OpenAI executives worried their departures might trigger a larger exodus and worked to get Sutskever back.

Murati and President Greg Brockman told Sutskever that

the company was in disarray and might collapse without him. They visited his home, bringing him cards and letters urging him to return.

Altman visited as well and expressed regret that others at OpenAI hadn't found a solution.

Sutskever indicated to his ex-colleagues he was seriously considering coming back. But soon after, Brockman called and said OpenAI was rescinding the offer for him to return.

Internally, executives had trouble determining what Sutskever's new role would be and how he would work alongside other researchers.

Soon after, Sutskever launched a company focused on developing the most advanced AI. Called Safe Superintelligence, it has raised \$1 billion.

Sutskever hasn't publicly commented on circumstances of his departure.

In a May 17 post on X,

### OpenAI is on track to close a planned funding round by next week.

role would be and how he would work alongside other researchers.

Leike said: "I have been disagreeing with OpenAI leadership about the company's core priorities for quite some time, until we finally reached a breaking point...over the past years, safety culture and processes have taken a back seat to shiny products."

He went to work for Anthropic.

This spring, tensions flared over development of a new AI model called GPT-4o that would power ChatGPT and business products. Researchers were asked to do more comprehensive safety testing than initially planned, but given only nine days to do it. Executives wanted to debut 4o ahead of Google's annual developer conference and take attention from their bigger rival.

The safety staffers worked 20-hour days and didn't have time to double check their work. The initial results, based on incomplete data, indicated GPT-4o was safe enough to deploy.

But after the model launched, people familiar with the project said a subsequent analysis found the model exceeded OpenAI's internal standards for persuasion—defined as the ability to create content that can persuade people to change their beliefs and engage in potentially dangerous or illegal behavior.

The team flagged the problem to senior executives and worked on a fix. But some employees were frustrated by the process, saying that if the company had taken more time for safety testing, they could have addressed the problem before it got to users.

The OpenAI spokeswoman said that the higher-risk indi-

## U.S. NEWS

# Harris Softens Stance on Electric Vehicles

Trump has pressed issue as sales plateau and some makers cut production

By KEN THOMAS  
AND SEAN MCCLAIN

When Vice President Kamala Harris first sought the presidency in 2019, she called for requiring all new vehicles to emit zero emissions by 2035.

In recent weeks, she has quietly walked back that stance as consumer demand for electric cars cools and pressure on the issue from Donald Trump heats up.

Harris's history of promoting electric-vehicle mandates and the Biden administration's push to bring more EVs into the nation's fleet despite sluggish sales has put Democrats on the defensive. Trump has bashed "EV mandates," casting the cars as vehicles of the elite, and warned of the prospects of China's auto industry's overtaking the U.S.'s.

The competing pitches to members of the United Auto Workers, their retirees and communities throughout Michigan are at the forefront of the fight for the state's 15 electoral votes. Polls show Harris with a slight edge, but the race remains tight.

"Not everybody should have an electric car. It might be 7 or 8% of the market. And then you also want hybrids and you want to have pure gasoline-driven powered cars. We're going to have everything," Trump said Friday evening at a town hall in Warren, Mich. "I



A driver recharged a Tesla electric vehicle in Pasadena, Calif., earlier this month.

will end the electric mandate on Day One of the administration," he said.

Democrats note the Biden administration hasn't created an "electric-vehicle mandate" but has instead set goals of having half of all new U.S. vehicle sales be electric by 2030 in the name of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Let's be clear—there is not a mandate on electric vehicles. People will be free to choose the vehicles that they like but we also have to make electric vehicles because we are in a global competition," said Sen. Gary Peters (D., Mich.).

Democrats' more defensive posture marks a shift from past elections in Michigan,

where President Barack Obama repeatedly pointed to his administration's rescue of the U.S. automakers as he sought re-election in 2012.

Electric-car sales have started to plateau. EVs accounted for 7.8% of all vehicles sold in the first eight months of 2024, compared with 7.4% a year earlier, according to Motor Intelligence. The tepid growth came despite subsidized interest rates, cheap lease deals and price cuts. Today, the cheapest version of Tesla's popular Model 3 sedan costs just under \$39,000, down from \$47,000 at the start of 2023. Many models can be leased for \$400 to \$500 a month, compared with nearly

\$1,000 18 months ago.

Car companies and dealers worry EV sales targets are unachievable. On Wednesday, a group of dealers representing around 5,000 stores across the U.S. issued an open letter to both party's leaders.

"The government may be able to force auto companies to make EVs and dealerships to sell them, but they can't force Americans to buy EVs," it read.

Mickey Anderson, an Omaha, Neb.-based car dealer behind the letter, said he loses an average of \$1,000 on every EV he sells. He said he hoped to convince whoever wins in November to ease up on emissions regulations. To comply with restrictions on emissions

set in March by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, by 2032 around 56% of new-car sales will have to be EVs.

Some carmakers are delaying new models and factory openings. Ford Motor has said its EV business is on pace to lose \$5 billion this year.

Some lawmakers have urged Harris's campaign to be more explicit about her opposition to EV mandates. "Nobody is going to be forced to buy a car they don't want to buy," said Rep. Dan Kildee (D., Mich.).

Trump has seized upon Harris's ties to the Green New Deal, released by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I., Vt.) in 2019 and meant to provide \$16 trillion to

## Campaign Fights Mandate Claim

Kamala Harris's campaign, in the weeks after she became the Democratic presidential nominee, said she doesn't support an EV mandate. It noted her tiebreaking vote for the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which provided subsidies and tax credits for EVs and created clean-energy jobs. Her supporters note that Donald Trump risks alienating workers whose livelihoods depend on EVs.

"Folks in Lansing know that EVs are going to be tremendous for our economy and if he tries to kill it, he's trying to kill our economy," said Democratic Mayor Andy Schor of Lansing, Mich., where many

fight climate change. The former president has likened it to a scam and vowed to produce new auto plants in the region.

Democrats counter that the U.S. auto industry lost tens of thousands of jobs under Trump's watch.

In a CNN town hall in September 2019, Harris declared that as president she was "prepared to get rid of the filibuster to pass a Green New Deal."

Democrats note that Trump has sought to soften his EV rhetoric since gaining the support of Tesla's Elon Musk. "I'm for electric cars, I have to be because Elon endorsed me very strongly," Trump said at a Georgia rally in August.

## Harris Uses Visit to Push Border Policy

*Continued from Page One*  
low 1,500 crossings, a senior campaign official said.

"Stopping transnational criminal organizations and strengthening our border is not new to me, and it is a long-standing priority of mine," Harris said, citing her work as attorney general of California. "I have done that work, and I will continue to treat it as a priority when I am elected president of the United States."

Harris made the trip to Arizona—the swing state where, some polls suggest, she has the most ground to make up on Trump—as Republicans ramp up their attacks on her earlier immigration record, saying her liberal stances in the past as a senator and presidential candidate in 2020 don't square with the image she is attempting to project as a moderate on the issue.

After embracing progressive immigration policies in recent years, the Democratic Party—and not just Harris—has shifted to the right on the issue, with polls showing a majority of Americans now support curbing immigration for the first time in nearly two decades. The Biden administration's tougher policies have

### Voters still give Trump the upper hand on immigration and border issues.

brought illegal border crossings to their lowest point since the pandemic.

Democrats have argued on the campaign trail that they are the party of solutions on immigration after Republicans—at Trump's urging—walked away from a bipartisan Senate border compromise earlier this year, and Biden issued a policy attempting to mimic the compromise through executive action.

Harris has said she would push Congress to revive the bipartisan bill.

"The American people deserve a president who cares more about border security than playing political games and their personal political future," Harris said during her border visit.

But she hasn't fleshed out a detailed platform of her own on immigration aside from championing fairly mainstream Democratic positions, including providing a path to citizenship for immigrants in the country illegally and helping so-called Dreamers, the young undocumented

immigrants brought to the country as children. Though she once described Trump's 30-foot border wall as a "medieval vanity project," images of the wall Trump built in Arizona feature prominently in one of Harris's first ads since she took over the Democratic ticket from Biden.

Voters still give Trump the upper hand on immigration, saying in an August Wall Street Journal poll that he would be best equipped to handle the issue.

After embracing progressive immigration policies in recent years, the Democratic Party—and not just Harris—has shifted to the right on the issue, with polls showing a majority of Americans now support curbing immigration for the first time in nearly two decades. The Biden administration's tougher policies have

sue over Harris by 7 percentage points. That margin is narrower than Trump's 13-point advantage over Harris on immigration in a late July poll.

"We are in a wildly better place than we were nine or 10 months ago," said Lanae Erickson, a vice president at Third Way, a center-left Washington think tank, who has advised Democrats to talk more about immigration. "If we can continue to talk about it and fight this issue to a draw, then we can win the election on other issues people care about."

But Harris may be in a deeper hole on the issue in Arizona. A new Fox News poll of the state found Trump leading Harris among registered voters by 15 percentage points on who would better handle immigration and border security.

Douglas, Ariz., the tiny border town Harris visited, became one of the hot spots last fall when border crossings climbed to record highs, its churches and town visitor center converted overnight into makeshift shelters.

Republicans have focused in particular on Harris's assignment from Biden to address the long-term factors behind migration from northern Central America, labeling her the "border czar" in an attempt to tie her to voter frustration with the way Biden managed the border. Harris's role was narrowly defined—on purpose—in part to try to shield her from political attacks.

Trump and his allies have also sought to highlight several of Harris's previous, more liberal positions on immigration, on which she has since backtracked or declined to say where she now stands. During the 2020 presidential primary,

Harris released a detailed plan to provide some Dreamers a path to citizenship and vowed to end the use of private prisons in immigration detention.

Like most Democratic presidential contenders that year, she raised her hand during a primary debate in 2019 when asked to show backing for decriminalizing border crossings.

She also said in a 2019 questionnaire from the American Civil Liberties Union that she supported reducing Immigration and Customs Enforcement funding, and in a 2018 interview she wanted to "critically re-examine ICE and its role."

Early in her vice presidency, Republicans criticized Harris relentlessly for not going to the border, even though she had an immigration-related assignment.

Harris pushed back on the criticism for weeks until deciding in June 2021 to visit El Paso, Texas.

Harris, Trump said Thursday, is only going to the border for political reasons and had years to address the issue.

"She should save her airfare. She should go back to the White House and tell the president to close the border," Trump said, while criticizing the Biden administration for rolling back some of his toughest immigration policies.

He repeated a false claim that Democrats have purposefully allowed people to enter the country so they can vote.

Since Harris ascended to the top of the Democratic ticket, Trump's campaign and a pro-Trump super PAC, MAGA Inc., have together spent roughly \$10 million on immigration-focused ads in Arizona, tying her to the record number of migrants who crossed the border illegally during the Biden administration, according to AdImpact. The Trump campaign's spots sum

up Harris's record on the border as: "Failed. Weak. Dangerously liberal."

But Harris also took some tougher immigration-related stances while she was a district attorney and California attorney general, which she has stressed in some campaign events and ads.

Harris's campaign and supporting super PAC have spent \$1.7 million on TV ads countering Trump's immigration-focused attacks, pointing to her efforts in California to take on drug cartels and touting her support for tougher border security measures.

Sonja Diaz, who was a policy counsel to Harris while she was attorney general, said Harris was tough on border safety issues but she also backed policies rooted in fairness for immigrants.

—Anthony DeBarros contributed to this article.

## U.S. WATCH



CELEBRATION: Columbus Crew coach Wilfried Nancy left the East Room on Friday as the team visited the White House to mark winning Major League Soccer's championship last year.

DON MORGAN/REUTERS

## NORTH CAROLINA

## Seven Are Killed In Roadway Crash

Seven people—all in one vehicle—were killed in a fiery crash in southeastern North Carolina when the car attempted to make a pass on a two-lane road and struck two other vehicles, the state Highway Patrol said Friday.

The accident happened around 6 p.m. Thursday on N.C. Highway 711 near Pembroke, according to troopers.

The patrol said its initial investigation found a vehicle containing the seven was traveling westbound when it crossed the center line and sideswiped another westbound vehicle.

The passing vehicle continued forward and struck an eastbound vehicle, then traveled off the road, stopped at the edge of a swamp, catching fire, a patrol summary said.

—Associated Press

## IOWA, WISCONSIN

## Utilities Complete Transmission Line

Construction work on a high-voltage transmission line linking Iowa and Wisconsin has been completed and the line is fully operational, a group of utilities announced Friday.

American Transmission Company, Dairyland Power Cooperative and ITC Midwest began work on the 102-mile Cardinal-Hickory Creek line between Iowa's Dubuque County and Wisconsin's Dane County in April 2021. Construction wrapped up late last week, ITC Midwest spokesperson Rod Pritchard said.

The 345-kilovolt line was fully energized Thursday.

The utilities say the line will improve electrical reliability and support renewable-energy projects.

—Associated Press

## NEW YORK

## Hochul's Bid to Toss Toll Suits Rejected

A New York judge on Friday denied Gov. Kathy Hochul's request to toss out lawsuits challenging her decision to halt a new congestion fee for drivers into Manhattan.

Judge Arthur Engoron made the decision in a Manhattan court after hearing about two hours of arguments in lawsuits brought by transportation and environmental advocates that support the fee.

The tolling program, which had been set to start June 30, would have charged drivers entering the core of Manhattan a toll of about \$15, depending on vehicle type, with the goal of generating about \$1 billion annually for transit improvements.

—Associated Press

## U.S. NEWS

# Adderall 'Pill Mill' Secretly Moved to China

U.S. cracked down, but most operations had moved; flow of stimulants continues

By ROLFE WINKLER

Federal authorities came down hard on Done Global, the California-based telehealth startup that prosecutors allege is an Adderall "pill mill" with a "predatory business model."

Its founder was arrested and most of its U.S. staff have quit, but it's still pumping out prescriptions to its American clientele.

Done's big secret? Key operations were moved to China. Its staff there have been aggressive in making sure customers still get easy prescriptions for Adderall, a drug prescribed for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder that is also among the most abused in the country.

After a two-year investigation, authorities arrested founder Ruthia He in June and charged her and six others in a conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.

The founder, a Chinese citizen, was jailed for three months, and a district judge cited substantial risk she would flee the country. She was released last week, on condition that she remain under house arrest with two 24-hour guards. She has pleaded not guilty.

By the end of 2022, staffers across China had sidelined U.S. corporate staff and taken more control of strategy, operations and key policies.

Done's China operations aren't mentioned on its website, which lists an address in San Francisco—currently an empty storefront.

The company's clinicians, who are based in the U.S. and write the prescriptions, are mostly nonstaff contractors. They said they reported to U.S. supervisors and didn't know that policy directives were coming down from staffers in China.

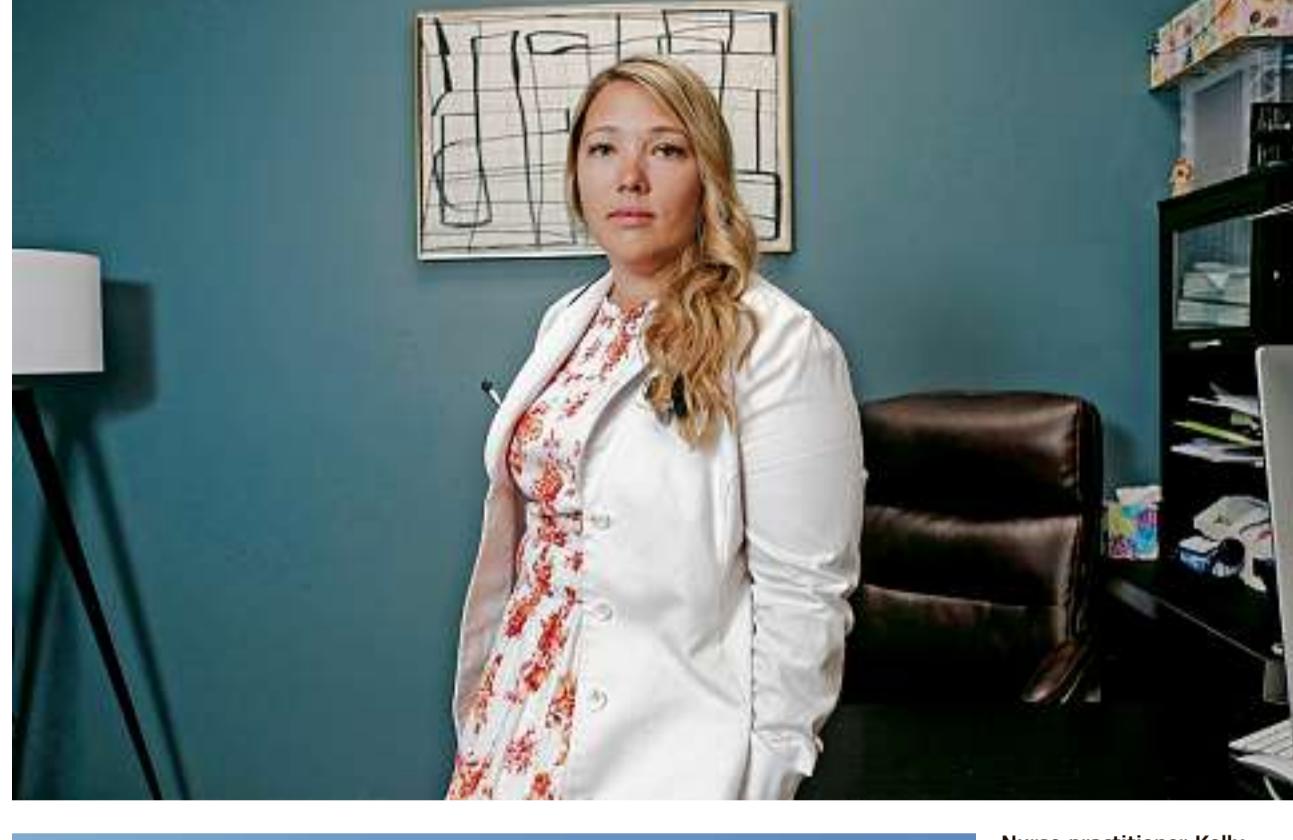
He herself looked into leaving U.S. territory during the federal investigation—she made plans to fly to Hong Kong before she was stopped by authorities. In text messages with the head of Done's China team, Yue Wang, she discussed fleeing the U.S. to avoid arrest, opening foreign bank accounts and which countries had extradition treaties, prosecutors allege.

Wang, a college classmate of He's, now runs the company along with four others. Three are in China, including Wang, who didn't respond to requests for comment.

Done also has transferred \$6.6 million to entities in China and Hong Kong since its founding, according to court records, including nearly \$1.5 million transferred this year to a new entity named MakeBelieve Asia.

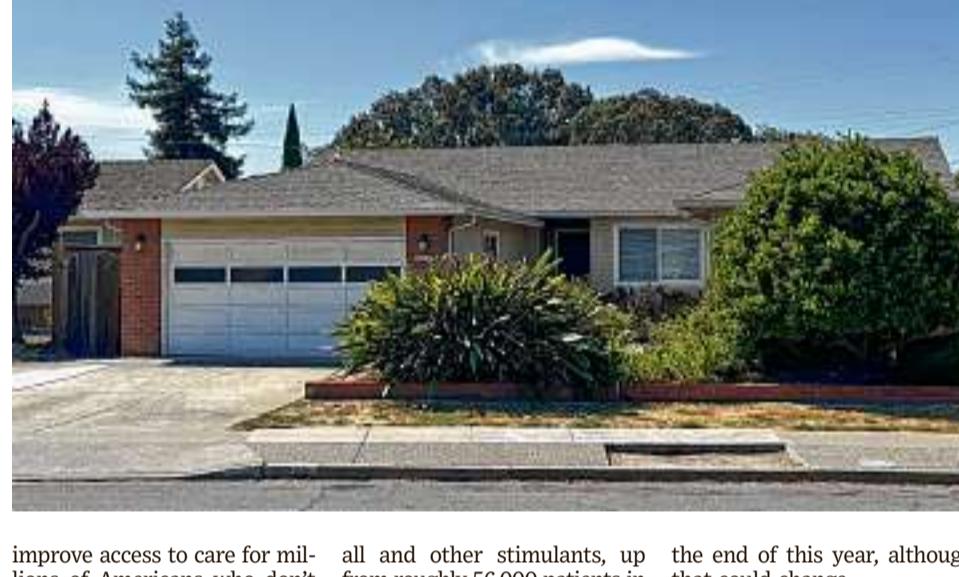
When He was arrested, a U.S. employee posted a warning to customers on the company's Instagram account. Under police light emojis, the message said clinicians were quitting and patients were losing care, and that "The management team from China has taken over operations." The post was removed within minutes.

"We look forward to vigorously defending Ms. He in court," her lawyer said in a statement. She started Done to



FROM TOP: OCTAVIO JONES FOR WSJ

**Nurse practitioner Kelly Gordon quit working for Done in May. Left, the home where Done founder Ruthia He is under house arrest.**



improve access to care for millions of Americans who don't have it, her defense team wrote in a court filing.

Done didn't respond to requests for comment. A statement posted on its website in June said it disagreed with the criminal charges for He and for its senior doctor, David Brody, who was also arrested in June.

The company said the charges "are based on events that principally occurred between February 2020 and January 2023." It said the company is working to make treatment accessible for patients and will continue operating.

Brody, who has pleaded not guilty, declined to comment through his lawyer.

For law-enforcement officials, the crackdown is complicated by efforts to maintain access to medicines for many who need it, while also policing their improper use.

Five other Done employees were charged; four pleaded guilty and are cooperating with the federal investigation, while one has pleaded not guilty.

The arrests might have toppled other startups, but Done had tens of thousands of patients at the time. Hours after He's arrest, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a public health advisory warning that if Done patients lost access they might turn to dangerous counterfeit.

Done ended May with about 67,000 patients, most of them getting prescriptions for Adder-

all and other stimulants, up from roughly 56,000 patients in November 2022, according to company documents. It's still writing prescriptions and taking new clients.

This account of Done's practices is based on conversations with more than two dozen current and former Done employees, contractors and others familiar with the company, as well as a review of hundreds of pages of internal documents, employee communications and court filings.

Stimulants can have great benefits for people with ADHD. But Done's clinicians didn't spend the time that experts say is necessary to properly diagnose the condition, sometimes writing prescriptions after online appointments as short as 10 minutes,

The Wall Street Journal has reported.

During the pandemic, the Drug Enforcement Administration relaxed a rule that required an in-person appointment before a prescription for controlled substances. That opened the door for telehealth companies such as Done and others to offer online access to such drugs, including Adderall, ketamine and testosterone. The DEA is scheduled to reinstate the stricter prescription rule at

the end of this year, although that could change.

Done connects patients to clinicians via its website. It drew patients in with social-media ads promising a quick ADHD diagnosis and easy access to medication. Done charged \$199 for evaluations—a charge raised to \$399 last week. Patients fill prescriptions at pharmacies, and must get them renewed each month, for which Done charges a \$79 monthly fee.

Beginning in March 2022, the Journal reported in multiple articles about the company's practices, including how some

clinicians at Done felt pressured to prescribe stimulants.

Many clinicians quit.

Done has said that clinicians decide independently whether to prescribe stimulants.

The Justice Department opened an investigation following the Journal's articles.

Done's founder He, who owns nearly 100% of the company's shares outstanding, according to prosecutors, didn't dial back Done's ambitions. She told worried staffers and clinicians that the government was bluffing and that the company would likely just face a fine.

Weeks after the company received a subpoena, she was in Washington, D.C., lobbying for

**The goal was a 'frictionless' experience for customers seeking Adderall.**

Done's clinicians to be able to continue prescribing stimulants online. And Done kept growing as He poured millions more into online ads. She commissioned edgy ones that showed people taking pills and feeling immediate effects. Others touted a 1-minute ADHD assessment that former clinicians said was easily gamed by people who wanted stimulants.

Meanwhile, He was moving more of her organization to China.

She spent a year in China beginning in the fall of 2021, where she ran the company remotely. She returned to the U.S. just before her green card lapsed. While in China and after returning, she added staff in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Chengdu and other cities, according to employee lists filed in court.

This team took more control over recruiting, engineering, advertising, legal, strategy and even clinical policies. More of Done's operations disappeared from U.S. workers' view because Chinese workers conducted business via Chinese messaging service WeChat, instead of Slack, which was used by the whole company.

He wanted what she called a "frictionless" experience for customers seeking Adderall. U.S. executives often slowed things down by encouraging more conservative policies, so He turned more to the China team to execute her plans, according to former Done staffers.

Done promoted aggressive policies to attract and retain customers. The company paid its clinicians to quickly renew patients' prescriptions but didn't pay them to hold follow-up video visits with them. Many clinicians simply responded to auto-refill requests that patients made via Done's app, earning about \$9 per patient a month. Experts recommend that patients on stimulants be seen every few months.

Some Done clinicians manage thousands of patients and approve prescription refills in

as little as 45 seconds, according to Done clinicians and documents reviewed by the Journal. Many have made more than \$10,000 a month. Done's top earner in May, a California nurse practitioner named Elizabeth Shapard, had over 3,000 patients and earned \$43,000. She didn't respond to requests for comment.

The China team amped up the founder's efforts. They rolled out a system in which Done clinicians could renew prescriptions for other clinicians' patients—without ever seeing the patient and without the knowledge of the patient's original clinician.

In the new protocol, a prescription was marked "urgent" if it wasn't renewed within 48 hours, and would go into a pool where other clinicians were paid to renew it.

Kelly Gordon, a nurse practitioner in Florida, quit working for Done in May, bothered by the new system. Gordon said her pay was docked for not writing prescriptions for patients she wanted to follow up with first. "I was being written up for not doing automatic refills," she said. "Their policy is: prescribe controlled substances or get off our platform, we don't want you."

The China team also started a program to coach or terminate clinicians who miss targets for client sign-ups, cancellations and patient feedback scores. The team sent low performer lists to senior U.S. clinicians so they would intervene.

Current and former clinicians said the system pressured them to prescribe Adderall because when they didn't, customers complained or canceled their service, and the clinicians received warnings that they could be fired if they didn't improve their metrics. Clinicians said they are more likely to be rated 1-star if they don't prescribe stimulants.

Some U.S. team members said they objected to another initiative by the China team to have customer-care staff in the Philippines monitor clinicians by joining patient Zoom appointments. The China team said it was for quality assurance, but U.S. staff felt it violated privacy rules.

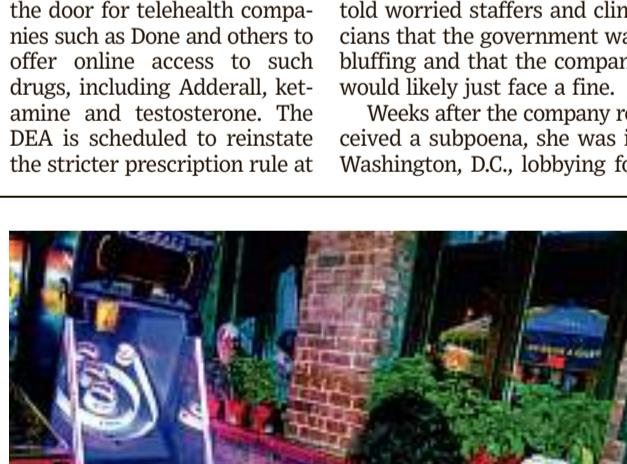
Done's China team also began recruiting customers on U.S. college campuses, and contacted Chinese student associations to help, company documents show. Adderall is commonly abused as a study drug by young people.

The China team proposed a program to use text messages to lure back patients who had canceled their prescription service.

If the former patient responded "Y" to the query, Done would charge their credit card and reactivate their service.

A second proposal would permit nearly 35,000 users to retake Done's initial online screening questionnaire after they checked a box noting a history of severe mental illness including schizophrenia or suicide attempts. Such patients require a greater degree of care than Done can provide, and the screen was meant to disqualify them.

A member of Done's China team wrote in a memo, reviewed by the Journal, that such users should get a "second chance." It's unclear if either proposal was implemented.



Sunshine Laundromat & Pinball in Brooklyn.

40, a bike messenger, was there only to play pinball. The Upper East Side resident wouldn't dream of lugging his laundry all the way to Brooklyn. But as a pinball enthusiast, he'll take the ferry over to play with well-kept machines that include a limited edition Batman 66 and Spider-Man Vault Edition.

"Those games, all of them that Peter has ever had there are in the best condition of any pinball machine in the city. And that is why I keep going back there."

Some people throw parties in laundromats. Justin White, 25, a designer for Steve Madden, was invited to a June laundromat party in the Lower East Side and didn't know what to expect.

"When I showed up, there was like, free beer outside and a cooler. Then there was like fruit being cut fresh, and it was so chaotic, but it was like so much fun," he recalls.

Next time he parties at a laundromat, though, he says, "I am bringing my laundry."

Erin and Jon Carpenter, creators of Sparo Design/Build

are constantly looking for projects to take on. The couple, both in their 30s, got a new idea while they were on a road trip and constantly using laundromats.

When they moved to Charleston, S.C., from Boone, N.C. they decided to renovate a largely abandoned laundromat into what is now Reynolds Laundromat. It opened in March 2023.

Customers can sit on picnic tables and chat. "Everybody's coming and intermingling. And you don't get that a lot," says Jon. "Everybody goes to the suburbs, they go to their own little pockets. That is familiar to them. But the laundromat seems to be a third place. That is like a common denominator."

Besides events such as comedy nights, potlucks and concerts, the Carpenters host a free laundry day once a month and call it "a big party." There's music and "we have an MC, and there's wings," Erin says.

"People are just like, 'all right, cool. Where's the wings?'"

## No Spin: Laundry Gets Fun

*Continued from Page One*  
dry with libations," says owner Theo DuPree, who opened Pearl Lee's in 2023.

"Laundry is a mundane chore, and, you know, it's not fun. So we try to put some fun in the laundry." Pearl's is among a growing number of hybrid laundromats. They boast bars, cafes, health programs, bakeries, bookstores and more.

"It's not your grandfather's laundromat anymore," says Brian Holland, the chairman of the Coin Laundry Association, a trade association. "People have realized in this last decade" that laundromats "can be a place to engage community. This is a movement now."

Holland himself is a founder of the Laundry Café, which offers literacy and health programs in locations

in Philadelphia. "There's this magic thing that happens" in laundromats, he says. Customers will "be present for anywhere between an hour-and-a-half and three hours...it's usable time."

On a recent day at Pearl Lee's, music waded in from the backyard of the laundromat. It was live jazz Saturday, and the band Big Beet played a mix of soca and calypso.

Band leader Ben Zweig didn't feel hung out to dry to be jamming at a laundromat.

"If you play at jazz clubs in New York, you're playing for tourists," he says. "If you play at a laundromat in Brooklyn, you're playing for locals."

Jessie Gillan, who is 40, and the director of business development at a consumer-deals site, waits until weekends to do her laundry so she can take her 6-year-old son to Sunshine Laundromat & Pinball in Brooklyn. Her son "was even bragging at school to his math teacher about using the quarters and how that was teaching him his math stuff," she says.

Sunshine owner Peter Rose

originally just started with a regular laundromat. But when he realized he was spending most of his time there, he wanted to be surrounded by things he loved.

"So I set up one pinball machine," he recalls. One turned to many. "Every few weeks, I would just rearrange furniture...remove a folding table, replace it with a pinball machine. A washing machine would become a pinball ma-

chine," He has since added a speakeasy-like room that has pinball machines and a fully-functioning bar. To find it, customers pass washers and dryers and then come to what looks like two dryer machines stacked upon one another. That is a door that reveals a secret room filled with glowing pinball machines and a bar adorned with hundreds of cans on the wall.

One recent day, Nick Berry,



I'm a fan.



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## WORLD NEWS

# Israeli Spies Notch Wins After Failure

Intelligence dismissed signs of Oct. 7 attacks but are on target battling Hezbollah

BY RORY JONES

A year ago, Israel suffered its worst-ever intelligence failure when Hamas launched a surprise attack, killing about 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages. Today, strikes against Hezbollah have Israel's long-vaunted spies back on the front foot.

The turnaround reflects how Israel has invested its time and resources during the past two decades. Since fighting a war with Lebanon-based Hezbollah in 2006, Israel has rigorously prepared for another major conflict with the militants—and potentially with their backer Iran.

Hamas, by contrast, was viewed as a far less potent threat. Even shortly before the deadly Oct. 7 incursion from the Gaza Strip, top officials were dismissing signs of an impending attack.

Last September, the Israeli military confidently

characterized Gaza as being in a state of "stable instability." Intelligence assessments concluded that Hamas had shifted its focus to stoking violence in the West Bank and wanted to limit the risk of direct Israeli retaliation.

"Much of our focus was on preparing for the confronta-

**'We somewhat neglected the... evolving situation with Hamas in Gaza.'**

Hezbollah's security remains porous. On Tuesday, another Israeli airstrike in southern Beirut killed Hezbollah's top missile commander. And on Friday, Israel targeted what it described as Hezbollah's main headquarters in a Beirut suburb.

The intensifi-

cated campaign by Israel's foreign spy service, the Mossad, and military intelligence units devastated Hezbollah's leadership and de-

graded its weapons arsenal.

The country's air force has followed up with a bombing campaign that hit more than 2,000 targets this past week.

Israel's military chief of staff said Wednesday that the stepped-up effort has been preparation for a ground invasion. The U.S. and its allies are



Lebanese army soldiers gathered over rubble Friday, following Israeli airstrikes in Beirut's southern suburbs.

pressing the two sides to pause the fighting, hoping to avoid war on another front or even a regional conflagration as the fighting in Gaza continues in its 12th month.

More than 600 people were killed in this past week's strikes on Lebanon, and roughly 2,000 injured, the country's health ministry says.

Israel's success against Hezbollah compared with its failure regarding Hamas comes because the country's security services are better at offense than defense, said Avner Golov, a former senior director at Israel's National Security Council who is with MIND Israel, a national-security advisory group.

"The core of Israeli security doctrine is to bring the war to the enemy," he said. "With Gaza, it was totally different. We were surprised, so it was a failure."

Israel has monitored the buildup of Hezbollah's arsenal since the two sides signed a truce in 2006 after a month-long war. At the time, many in Israel's security establishment were disappointed with the

army's performance in the war because it didn't significantly damage Hezbollah, which began rebuilding its position in the south.

The military, as a result, sought to better understand Hezbollah and throttle Iran's military and financial support to the group, including via a campaign of airstrikes in Syria that became known as the "war between the wars."

In Gaza, by contrast, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu adopted a strategy of containing Hamas in recent years, thinking the Palestinian group was focused on governing Gaza and wasn't interested in a war with Israel.

The two sides had fought short conflicts after Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, and the group's leader in the enclave, Yahya Sinwar, appeared to be more interested in improving the economic conditions there.

There were signs the U.S.-designated terrorist group was planning an attack, including military exercises that fore-

shadowed the ways it stormed into Israel on Oct. 7. But Israel's intelligence services discounted the exercises as saber-rattling for Hamas's domestic audience. The military felt confident in the strength of the technologically advanced wall it erected to divide Gaza from Israeli territory.

Gathering intelligence from human sources that might have warned of an attack had become more difficult after Israel unilaterally withdrew from the enclave in 2005, said Uzi Shaya, a former Israeli intelligence official.

"The ability to create human intelligence in Gaza in a very dense and small area, in which everyone knows everyone, where a stranger pops immediately, makes life much more difficult," Shaya said. Getting access to people in Lebanon or outside Lebanon connected to Hezbollah is easier, he noted.

Feats of intelligence only go so far. Ultimately, Israel's success against either group will be determined on the battle-

field. In the tight confines of Gaza, Israel's military has battered Hamas and laid waste to the urban landscape. It will face a different enemy in the hills of Lebanon.

Despite Israel's long effort to degrade Hezbollah's military buildup, the Lebanese militia amassed a vast arsenal. The group is weighing how to respond to the devastating Israeli attacks.

Hezbollah fired its first missile ever at the commercial capital of Tel Aviv on Wednesday, its boldest response yet, but it hasn't come close to implementing all its capabilities.

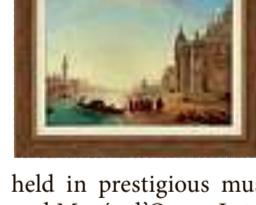
Valensi, the senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies, said there was a danger Israel's recent successes leave it overconfident. Invading Lebanon with troops could give Hezbollah the opportunity to demonstrate its military advantage on the ground, she said.

"We saw how challenging and difficult it is to eliminate such a complex organization like Hamas," she said. "Hezbollah is a different story."



## VENETIAN VIBRANCE FÉLIX-FRANÇOIS GEORGES ZIEM

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This original oil on canvas, *On the Steps of the Salute, Venice*, by Félix-François Georges Ziem captures a colorful crowd gathered before one of the most iconic cathedrals in Venice. The city was a favorite subject for the French artist who was known for tutoring Queen Victoria. Ziem's other cityscapes are held in prestigious museums worldwide, including the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay. Late 19th century. Signed "Ziem" (lower left).  
Canvas: 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"h x 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"w. Frame: 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"h x 42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"w. #31-9760

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the U.N. General Assembly on Friday.

## Strike Aims For Chief Of Hezbollah

Continued from Page One  
imedately, saying it planned to carry out new operations.

Ninety minutes later, the Israeli military said it had launched new strikes in Beirut's southern suburbs.

The attack on Nasrallah was Israel's most aggressive move yet in two weeks of elaborate intelligence operations, targeted killings and heavy bombardments aimed at stopping Hezbollah from attacking across the Lebanese border into Israel.

Nasrallah's death would be an enormous blow not only to the group he leads, but to its main backer, Iran, and the wider network of aligned militias that Tehran has built across the Middle East to confront Israel. It also would be the strongest signal yet that Hezbollah has been thoroughly penetrated by Israeli intelligence.

Israel hoped his death could significantly degrade the group and ease the country's security concerns. "His powerful leadership is different," a senior Israeli official said. "Some people are irreplaceable."

Nasrallah oversaw Hezbollah's transformation into the world's most heavily armed nonstate militia and its integration into Lebanon's political system. He has found himself

increasingly isolated in recent weeks by Israel's relentless campaign of targeted killings of his most trusted fighters. Among them, Israel killed top lieutenant Fuad Shukr, who eluded the U.S. for four decades, in an airstrike this past summer on his apartment in a Beirut residential building, where he had been summoned by a phone call shortly before.

The moves have been part of a campaign by Israel to degrade Hezbollah's strength and push it back from the border without having to resort to a military incursion. "Our preference is to not have a ground invasion," the senior official said. "This could be a pivot."

Hezbollah began firing across the border shortly after the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and sparked the war in Gaza. The two foes have traded fire almost daily since then, depopulating areas along both sides of the border and raising concerns of escalation into a wide war.

Israel sharply increased attacks during the past two weeks, as pressure builds on the government to return residents evacuated from the north to their homes.

The explosions heard across Beirut at about 6:20 p.m. local time Friday likely represented the largest Israeli strike on the Lebanese capital since last October. The smell of burning debris hung in the air near the strike. Flashing lights of ambulances and firetrucks glinted off otherwise darkened buildings.

The strike came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Ben-

jamin Netanyahu addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York. "We will not accept a terror army perched on our northern border able to perpetrate another Oct. 7-style massacre," he said.

Netanyahu's speech came before a largely empty U.N. chamber, after dozens of diplomats walked out when it was announced that Netanyahu was next to speak. His comment came amid U.S.-led efforts to seek a diplomatic solution.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with his Israeli counterpart late Friday, during what a U.S. official described as a tense phone call, in part because Israel didn't give the U.S. advance notice of the strike. For the U.S., any tension could spill over to U.S. forces in the region.

Israeli strikes have killed more than 600 people since Monday, including scores of women and children, and injured about 2,000, according to Lebanon's Ministry of Health.

Israel said Friday that rockets were fired from Lebanon toward the areas of Haifa and the Krayot. Hezbollah has fired more than 9,000 rockets, missiles and drones into Israel since Oct. 8, 2023, according to Israel.

—Jared Malsin and Stephen Kalin in Beirut and Gordon Fairclough in New York contributed to this article.

### Watch a Video

Scan this code for a video on Israel's massive strike targeting Hezbollah's chief.

## WORLD NEWS

# Japan's Next Leader Aims to Reset Alliance

Ex-defense minister seeks to boost Tokyo's position in security treaty with the U.S.

BY PETER LANDERS  
AND MIHO INADA

TOKYO—Japan's next leader will be a former defense minister who wants to reshape what he sees as an unequal alliance with the U.S., presaging possible tensions with Washington.

Shigeru Ishiba, 67 years old, narrowly won a vote in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Friday to become party leader, and the LDP-controlled parliament is expected to meet Tuesday to elect him prime minister.

Ishiba had lost four previous runs for the leadership, and said this would be his final try. In a nine-candidate

race, the maverick lawmaker rose to the top with promises to mend the ruling party's image after financial scandals. He defeated economic-security minister Sanae Takaichi, 63, who would have been Japan's first female prime minister.

Ishiba enters office with Japan facing unprecedented security challenges including China's fast-growing military, North Korean missile tests and an aggressive Russia that recently sent a plane into Japanese airspace.

"I will protect Japan," Ishiba said at a news conference during his campaign. "Now is the time to use the experience I have accumulated over years to achieve this goal."

The yen strengthened on Ishiba's victory because he has suggested he is sympathetic to the Bank of Japan's move to raise interest rates. Stock fu-



KIM KYUNG-HOON/REUTERS

**Shigeru Ishiba wants an Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to boost deterrence against aggressors.**

tures fell sharply, and analysts forecast the election result, which came after the market close Friday, would push stock prices down Monday.

While his rival in the final vote supported aggressive

spending to jolt the economy, Ishiba is more hawkish on budget matters and has said he would look into raising taxes on companies and financial income.

Ishiba represents a differ-

ent strand of the LDP from the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the current leader, Fumio Kishida, who announced his departure in August. Abe and Kishida boosted defense spending and sought to deepen Japan's alliance with the U.S. without changing its fundamental structure.

Ishiba chafes at the asymmetrical aspects of the alliance. Japan hosts some 55,000 U.S. troops on its territory, shouldering 75% of the operating costs of U.S. bases. A treaty obligates the U.S. to come to Japan's aid if Japan is attacked, but doesn't require Japan to do the same. "I don't think Japan is a truly independent nation yet," Ishiba said in a book published in August.

During the campaign, Ishiba floated ideas to redo the alliance. In a candidates' debate in Okinawa, the southern island

that hosts most of the U.S. troops, he suggested that American bases could be converted to joint U.S.-Japanese operations. He has objected to treaty restrictions limiting Japan's access to U.S. bases and equipment, such as when a U.S. military aircraft crashes in Japan.

In his book, he proposed stationing Japanese troops permanently on U.S. soil, perhaps on the Pacific island of Guam, to make the alliance more equal. He also has advocated an Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to boost deterrence against aggressors.

Ishiba's father was the governor of rural Tottori prefecture and later a member of parliament. His mother, a teacher, was a Christian, which is relatively unusual in Japan, and Ishiba was baptized when he was 18.

## China's Sub Mishap Hurts Military Growth

BY CHUN HAN WONG

The reported sinking of a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine at a Wuhan shipyard highlights the difficulties Beijing faces in building an advanced oceangoing navy that can challenge U.S. maritime power.

China has been racing to expand its relatively modest fleet of nuclear submarines as part of a campaign to modernize its military and tilt the strategic balance with Washington in Beijing's favor.

Building a potent nuclear-submarine force would help China tighten control over its peripheral waters and shipping lanes, project power globally and improve its ability to seize Taiwan. The effort hit a snag this spring when, according to U.S. officials, China's newest nuclear-powered attack submarine sank near the central city of Wuhan, The Wall Street Journal has reported.

**The goal is to forge a 21st-century fighting force that can match the West.**

"Nuclear-powered submarine technology is one area where China has lagged, remains relatively weak and is trying to play catch-up," said Nick Childs, senior fellow for naval forces and maritime security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London-based think tank.

While the causes remain unclear, the mishap would at least "raise new questions about the design, quality control and training involved in China's efforts to rapidly develop its submarine force," he said.

Some analysts said that such accidents are par for the course in any effort to develop complex weapons systems. The new vessel was salvaged but it will take time to be rendered seaworthy.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping has steered an ambitious modernization drive for the People's Liberation Army in the past decade, comprising personnel shake-ups, organizational restructuring, arms procurement and technological research. The goal is to forge a 21st-century fighting force that can match up with Western militaries—particularly at

## Ukrainians Owe Lives to 'Bradley'

BY ALISTAIR MACDONALD  
AND IEVGENIA SIVORKA

MYRNOHRAD, Ukraine—Ukrainian Pvt. Viktor Khamets has tattooed on his arm an image of one of the great loves of his life: the Bradley troop carrier that saved it.

One of the standout Western-provided vehicles in Ukraine is a 40-year-old troop carrier with thick armor and a gun like a buzz saw that despite its age is well adapted to Ukraine's battlefield.

The Bradley infantry-fighting vehicle has won iconic status among Ukrainian troops for its ability to protect them against drones, mines and antitank weapons. Such high regard shows how military operators become emotionally attached to a vehicle that shields them from danger, but also how these IFVs have come into their own in Ukraine.

In this war, both sides have needed highly mobile vehicles that can quickly deposit troops and protect them from drones that have added an extra layer of risk for infantry. Meanwhile, the Bradley's cannon has helped attack Russian positions as tanks have had less success in their traditional roles.

Bradleys are no longer being produced, but the market for their newer peers has become a competitive one, as countries, particularly in Europe, rush to make orders. As drones become increasingly deadly, their makers also have had to adapt these vehicles.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022, the U.S. sent over 300 Bradleys. Many were decades old and some arrived in such poor condition they needed to be refitted.

But the vehicle soon proved its worth.

"It saved my life," said Khamets, the driver mechanic of a Bradley with the 2nd mechanized brigade. In June 2023, his Bradley was hit by an explosive drone and a munition fired from a helicopter. The crew survived inside a vehicle they had named Mavka, after a mythical Ukrainian forest creature. Mavka is now inked on Khamets's arm.

On a summer visit near the eastern front, Ukrainian soldiers spoke of the Bradley's ability to seemingly take almost any hit.

Sgt. Oleksiy Yanyshpilsky's



SERHII KOROVAINY FOR WSJ (2)



**Sgt. Oleksiy Yanyshpilsky's unit endured several months of Russian attacks without losing any of its Bradley vehicles.**

unit in the 47th mechanized brigade had seven Bradleys, and in eight months of being hit by drones, antitank weapons and mines none of them were totaled. On one mission, Yanyshpilsky's own 1986-built Bradley was targeted by seven explosive drones. It survived.

Sgt. Mykhaylo Kotsyurba, from a separate brigade, once saw a Bradley take a direct hit from a Russian Grad rocket. "This Bradley is gone," he said he remembers thinking as he looked at a field still shrouded in smoke. "But the smog cleared and the Bradley kept moving."

In contrast, Ukrainian operators complain about the Russian-made IFVs they inherited and the U.S.-donated Abrams tanks. Lt. Gen. Ross Coffman of the U.S. Army says IFVs, and how well they are protected, are essential because

they deliver an army's most "precious resource"—its infantry—to battle. An IFV such as a Bradley is typically better protected than other types of armored troop carriers.

The Bradley weighs nearly 28 tons, has a three-person crew, can carry six soldiers and is armed with a 25-millimeter cannon and, often, an antitank missile launcher. The U.S. Abrams tank can weigh more than 70 tons and consumes large amounts of fuel, which gives it a long logistics tail.

"This war is about maneuver, you have to be faster and a little bit more wise than the enemy," said Yanyshpilsky, noting that his 1986-built Bradley was more nimble than other vehicles.

The agility of the Bradley and some other IFVs is prized in a war where the proliferation

of drones means vehicles can be spotted and targeted within minutes. To be sure, the infantry-fighting vehicle and tank serve different roles.

"IFVs like Bradley have utility in both offensive and defensive operations," said Nicholas Drummond, a former British army officer who runs a defense-industry consulting firm. The Bradley is often used to target Russian positions and has even been filmed destroying enemy tanks.

"In Ukraine, the IFV has come into its own," he said.

Still, many Bradleys have been damaged and destroyed. For instance, some 65% of Ukraine's fleet of Bradleys were out of operation at one stage in May, according to a Ukrainian government report seen by The Wall Street Journal.

Many will have been repaired and brought back to the front line. Kotsyurba's Bradley once hit a mine but three days later was back in action. Ukrainian mechanics often prefer older vehicles to more complex modern ones, because they are easier to fix as the country is low on equipment.

In June 2023, Kotsyurba suffered concussion, burns and nerve damage in his arm and finger when the Bradley he drove was destroyed by a Russian antitank missile. But he thinks the Bradley is the "best vehicle in the world," because on that day it saved the lives of those on board.

## WORLD WATCH



**THE CROWN GOES TO...: Margaret Maritz hit age 118 in Touwsrivier, South Africa, on Friday.**

### EUROZONE Rate Cut Likely as Growth, Prices Cool

Inflation cooled more rapidly than expected in France and Spain during September, data Friday showed, likely giving the European Central Bank more confidence that it can cut its key interest rate without reviving price pressures. With the 20-member eurozone seeing a downbeat outlook for growth, pressure might mount on the ECB to act more quickly.

Fresh sentiment data from the European Commission also published Friday showed business confidence ebbed this month, as the industrial sector showed little sign of recovery.

In Germany, with few economic bright spots, the jobs market does remain relatively robust, with unemployment stable for a fourth straight month in September, despite jobless claims' speeding up.

—Joshua Kirby and Ed Franklin

### INDIA Dozens of Children Drown in Rituals

At least 46 people, including 37 children, drowned across eastern India's Bihar state while ritually bathing in rivers and ponds as part of a three-day Hindu festival, Bihar's disaster management department said. The state government announced compensation of \$4,784 for the families of each of the dead.

During the annual festival, mothers fast for 24 hours for the well-being of their children. The women are sometimes accompanied by their children when they visit rivers and ponds for cleansing rituals.

Deadly accidents during religious festivals are common in India. In July, at least 121 people were killed when severe overcrowding and a lack of exits contributed to a stampede at a festival in the country's north.

—Associated Press

### BELGIUM Pope Welcomed With Harsh Words

King Philippe, Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and Luc Sels, the rector of the Catholic university that invited Pope Francis to Belgium, all greeted him by ripping into the institution he heads for failings including covering up clergy sex abuse.

And that was all before Francis met with the men and women raped and molested by priests as children and the single mothers forced to give up their newborns for adoption to avoid the stigma of raising them out of wedlock.

Through it all, Francis expressed his remorse, begged forgiveness and promised to do everything possible to make sure such abuses never occur again. "This is our shame and humiliation," he said in his first public remarks on Belgian soil.

—Associated Press

## SPORTS

# Jim Harbaugh Has Found His Dream Player

The Los Angeles Chargers coach is already pulling a classic Harbaugh move: using a defensive player on offense



Before Jim Harbaugh, below, coached a game with the Chargers, he took one look at Scott Matlock, above, and tabbed him for a role as a fullback.

By ANDREW BEATON

**S**cott Matlock hardly looks like he belongs in an NFL backfield.

He weighs 296 pounds. He's not particularly fast. And he was drafted to play an entirely different position—defensive tackle.

But before Jim Harbaugh coached a single game with the Los Angeles Chargers, he took one look at Matlock and tabbed him for a different assignment. It was a role on offense, one that involves running into people and which has all but disappeared in the modern NFL.

Harbaugh wanted him to be a fullback.

"It's definitely a dying position," Matlock says. "As far as a true fullback—downhill, smash mouth—that's not really in style anymore, so it's definitely pretty cool."

Harbaugh's return to the NFL sidelines, after a roller-coaster tenure at Michigan that delivered a national championship last season, also marks the return of the particular quirks and tastes of one of football's most unique characters. This is a man who considers cheeseburgers a light breakfast snack and khakis to be the height of sartorial elegance.

But one of Harbaugh's other peculiarities is an obsession with taking players and converting them into the football equivalent of cannon fodder.

"We're almost like a forgotten position of football, and coach has done a great job for our community," says Henry Poggi, who played fullback for Harbaugh at Michigan. "He'd be one of the founding faces on a Mount Rushmore of fullbacks just simply because of what he's done for our suffrage."

It's just one way that Harbaugh has remade the Chargers in his distinct image, with the team off to a 2-1 start thanks in large part to its physical ground attack. Matlock, now a rare two-way player, has helped clear the way for running back J.K. Dobbins, who's third in the NFL in rushing yards through three weeks.

There was a time in football history when the Chargers' liberal use of a fullback would have been unremarkable. Larry Csonka rumbling through defenses in his Miami

Dolphins uniform was once the most terrifying sight in football. Daryl Johnston became a Dallas Cowboys legend by trampling defenders and clearing paths for Emmitt Smith.

But in today's game, those lumbering guys in the backfield are bordering on extinction. The rise of spread offenses have made the NFL game about speed, not power.

As it happens, that's why Har-

baugh's fondness for fullbacks may be a stroke of genius: Smaller, quicker defenses are less equipped to handle a 300-pound wrecking ball clearing a hole.

"It's a different style of offense that you have to game plan for," Matlock says. "They need to have a game plan to match us."

This year, fullbacks have appeared on the field for just 7.4% of snaps, according to Stats, and most NFL teams don't even bother carrying a fullback on their roster. Last season, the Chargers were one of those teams. So when they brought in Harbaugh, he went hunting for one.

Matlock isn't the first defensive player Harbaugh switched to fullback. Or the second. Or even the third. In fact, for as long as he's been coaching, Harbaugh has had an eye for guys he believes could become living, breathing blocking sleds.

Back when Harbaugh first became the San Francisco 49ers coach in 2011, he didn't waste any time identifying someone to play the position. That year, the Niners used a seventh-round pick on Bruce Miller, a defensive end and two-time conference defensive player of the year at the University of Central Florida. Except Miller

didn't play a single snap on defense in the NFL. Instead, Harbaugh turned him into one of the league's best fullbacks.

As the sport has continued to eradicate the position, Harbaugh has continued to buck the trend. If anything, he's only grown more infatuated with fullbacks. One season at Michigan, Harbaugh had seven on the roster. That was more than all the other teams in their Big Ten division—combined.

Poggi, once one of the top defensive tackle recruits in the country, was one of them. Stuck behind two NFL prospects on the Michigan depth chart, he considered it an honor when his coach decided to try him out on offense. During team meetings, Harbaugh would direct everyone's attention to plays where the fullback smashed into a defender.

"Coach loves to say that the human body craves contact," Poggi says. "I'm not sure what human anatomy scientist he got that from, but I think you could definitely say that the fullback human body craves contact."

With the Chargers, Harbaugh was looking for the same attitude. He found that in one of his defensive tackles—"elite combination of strength and power and agility, flexibility, mobility," Harbaugh explained earlier this year. And it wasn't entirely unfamiliar for Matlock, who had gotten a few offensive snaps at Boise State and even caught two passes—both for touchdowns.

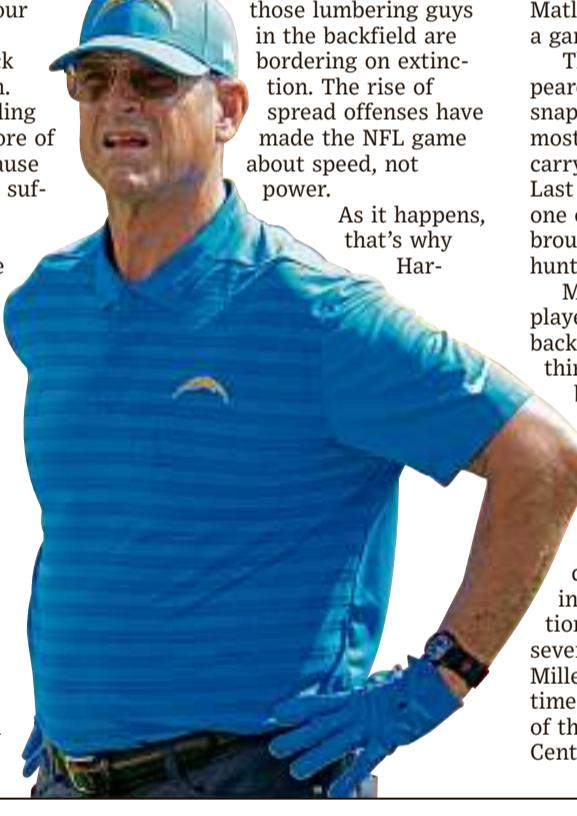
Matlock says offensive coordinator Greg Roman was the first to approach him with the idea, and the experiment started off small, with a single snap during the Chargers' second exhibition game. That ramped up to six in the pre-season finale, before it became official: Matlock was listed as the starting fullback on the team's depth chart before Week One. He even changed his number from 99 to 44.

The most remarkable part of Matlock's transition is that he's still playing on defense, too. In fact, Harbaugh calls him a "three-way player" because he's also on special teams. Yet he has transitioned so smoothly that since the regular season got going, he has been on the field for more of the team's offensive snaps (37%) than defensive ones (26%).

That means Matlock is playing more on both sides of the ball than any NFL player has in decades. But his coach isn't worried about the workload. Harbaugh believes his new fullback is in such pristine condition that he would be capable of playing two games back-to-back.

"Play one game, a full four quarters—and then play another game, like a double header," Harbaugh said. "That's the kind of shape he's in."

CAROLINE BREHMAN/EEF/SHUTTERSTOCK ; GENE J. PUSKAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS



## A Crazy Mets' Season Just Won't End

By JOSHUA ROBINSON  
AND ANDREW BEATON

### THE FORTUNES OF THE NEW YORK

Mets in this wild season have been shaped by a motley cast of characters including a purple fast-food mascot named Grimace, a Latin-pop-singing second baseman who goes by Candelita, and one of the team's own pitchers dubbing them the "worst team" in baseball.

But their impact pales in comparison to the sheer chaos being wreaked on the Mets by a hurricane called Helene.

Midway through this week, the Mets were sitting on the verge of the postseason, which was a miracle in itself. Back in June, the Mets were bumbling around 11 games under .500 before improbably turning it around and embarking on the hottest run in baseball. Their final test on the way to October was a three-game series against their biggest rival for a wild-card spot, the Atlanta Braves.

That's when nature intervened. After the Mets dropped the first game of the series on Tuesday, cutting their lead in the wild-card race to a single game, a storm over the Gulf of Mexico began barreling toward Truist Park outside Atlanta. Anyone who had ever held a baseball bat—or an umbrella—could tell that there was little chance of squeezing in a pair of crucial National League East contests. Two hours before first pitch, the Braves finally announced that the two games had been postponed.

Still, they need to be played

and the solution is somehow as much of a whirlwind as the storm that caused it. The Mets traveled to Milwaukee for a previously scheduled three-game set with the Brewers ending on Sunday. Then on Monday, they will make up the postponed games with the Braves in a double-header—right before a possible flight to San Diego or back to Milwaukee for the start of the postseason on Tuesday.

"We've got to go out there and not only win a series, but we've got to go out there and take care of business," Mets manager Carlos Mendoza said. "That's the only thing we can do is control the things we can control."

Only this may be remembered as the season the Mets spun totally out of control. As recently as June, the team's chances of reaching the postseason plunged to 7.9%, according to FanGraphs. Ten days later, Grimace waddled to the mound to throw out the first pitch, jump-starting a seven-game winning streak. Barely two weeks after that, infielder Jose Iglesias became a Queens folk hero with an on-field concert, where he performed his hit song "OMG."

By mid-July, the Mets were back over .500 for good and their own TV announcer's early-season lament that they had hit "rock bottom" was a distant memory.

Entering Friday's play, the Mets were tied with the Arizona Diamondbacks for the final two wild-card slots, one game ahead of the Braves, who faced the playoff-hunting Kansas City Royals beginning Friday. But with the Mets and Braves scheduled to meet one day



New York Mets first baseman Pete Alonso, left, celebrates with an 'OMG' sign after hitting a home run.

before the playoffs begin, a litany of absurd scenarios could materialize.

The most dramatic would be heading into Monday within a game of each other and playing twice in the space of about six hours for a playoff berth. This might not be the best for the stress levels of Mets fans, who are still haunted by losing the division title to Atlanta in a September sweep two years ago.

Then there are other utterly bizarre possibilities. The Mets could clinch a berth before Monday, which would render the double-header unnecessary for them—but still potentially decisive for the Braves. In that case, the Mets

might care so little that their best option could be to save their pitchers and put a position player on the mound to lob meatballs to Atlanta's sluggers.

In another possible twist, both teams could be guaranteed post-season spots by the end of Game 1, rendering Game 2 completely obsolete. At that point, Major League Baseball could simply scratch it from the schedule.

The height of absurdity, meanwhile, is a world in which the Mets and Braves both clinch playoff berths by splitting the two games. While the teams' two skippers wouldn't make a handshake deal for that, whichever club took the first game would have little incen-

tive to try in the second.

"We're going to have to be really fluid with the whole thing," Braves manager Brian Snitker said.

The strangest part is that all of this traces back to an entirely different rainstorm that hit Georgia months ago. Thursday's game only landed on the calendar after the two teams were rained out earlier in the year.

That makes the final leg of Monday's twin bill the makeup game. All of which means, at the end of a bonkers season, that in order to punch their ticket for October, the Mets may need to win a game in September that was scheduled for April.

CHRIS COUTO/GETTY IMAGES

## OPINION

## The Fight for the Keystone State

By Kyle Peterson

**I**f we win Pennsylvania, we win the whole thing," Donald Trump tells another rapturous rally, this time in a small college town an hour east of Pittsburgh. With 19 electoral votes at stake and three recent polls showing a tied race, election soothsayers tend to agree. Kamala Harris must feel similarly. Two days after Mr. Trump's visit, she flies to Pittsburgh for an economic speech, in which she promises "pragmatic" governance and then declares: "I am a capitalist."

If Pennsylvania is the closest thing to a must-win for both candidates, that's where the strategic similarities end. Their respective events this past week could hardly be more different: Mr. Trump, freestyle for an hour and a half at a college basketball arena with a capacity of 5,000 in a county of 83,000, tossing out jokes and insults and policies like candy at a parade; Ms. Harris, giving 40 min-

**Pennsylvania lives up to its nickname as Trump works to motivate his fans and Harris tries to prove that she's no ideologue.**

utes of carefully calibrated remarks from a teleprompter, standing behind the official vice-presidential seal at a 450-seat theater on the campus of Carnegie Mellon University.

Mr. Trump's focus is his fan base in the stands, though trying to summarize what happens at a Trump rally is like struggling to recount a surreal dream. Uncle Sam is there, as well as a guy wearing a suit patterned like a red brick wall ("Stand up, please, Mr. Wall," Mr. Trump says, recognizing this dignitary), and at some point the president is doing a goofy dance to the Village People's "YMCA," and he calls Ms. Harris a communist who'll put 25 justices on the Supreme Court and crash the economy like 1929, whereas Mr. Trump will halve electricity prices and prevent World War III, and women will be "happy, healthy, confident," and we'll no longer be thinking about abortion, and Winston Churchill was this great speaker, great; I get much bigger crowds than him."

Mr. Trump loses the audience when pitching his new idea to expand the income-tax deduction for state and local taxes. In 2017 it was capped at \$10,000, but candidate Trump now wants to undo this reform signed by President Trump. He tees it up by promising no taxes on tips, overtime and So-



Kamala Harris spoke at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University Wednesday;



Donald Trump held a rally in Indiana, Pa., Monday.

cial Security benefits, each of which gets crowd approval. "And for all the suburban households paying high property taxes here in Pennsylvania," he continues, "I will restore the SALT deduction." Silence. Nobody moves. "That's a good one," Mr. Trump responds, "but you guys don't know what the hell it is?" Indiana County's median household income is \$57,500. Not many SALT deductions out here.

By and large, though, the arena is with him. They boo after the jumbotron plays a clip of Ms. Harris in 2019 endorsing a ban on fracking. When Mr. Trump says towns are being inundated by migrants, they break into chants of "send them back!" As he brings up the immigration chart that he says saved his life in Butler, Pa., when he turned his head and missed the flying bullets, Mr. Trump calls it "the greatest graph in the history of graphs, a thing that I love perhaps as much as any person I've ever met." In the press pen, a reporter comments that, having not watched one of these in a while, he'd forgotten how funny Mr. Trump can be.

During ABC's Sept. 10 presidential debate, Ms. Harris urged viewers to attend a Trump rally, saying they'd see how many people leave early "out of exhaustion and boredom." Half right. Mr. Trump takes the stage around 7:45 p.m., and as the night wears on, groups of two or three or more begin conspicuously sneaking out. But now it's 9 o'clock on a school night, they waited for hours, and anyway Mr. Trump is doing a shout-out to the mayor of Slippery Rock, so he's probably winding down. (Fact check: He isn't.) By the time Mr. Trump quits, the arena's corner section looks half-empty. Those who took their Trump signs and headed home might have been exhausted, but probably not with Mr. Trump.

Two days later at Carnegie Mellon, Ms. Harris sounds as if she's strategically trying to speak beyond the room. Her address is

billed as laying out her economic vision, and the campaign hands out a slickly designed policy booklet. Many of the details aren't new: Ms. Harris thinks the federal government should do much more, and she wants a ban on "corporate price gouging," a \$6,000 newborn tax credit, a \$50,000 deduction for startup costs, and \$25,000 in down-payment assistance for first-time home buyers.

What leads national news stories the next day is Ms. Harris's beige rhetorical wrapping paper. "I will engage in what Franklin Roosevelt called bold, persistent experimentation," she says. "I believe we shouldn't be constrained by ideology and instead should seek practical solutions to problems, realistic assessments of what is working and what is not, applying metrics to our analysis, applying facts to our analysis." Who could disagree? Not only does Ms. Harris profess to believe in "free and fair markets," she insists that she recognizes "the limitations of government," without saying what they might be.

In a theater presumably full of Democratic true believers, some lines predictably get an audience reaction, and others land like centrist counterprogramming. "We will cut the red tape that stops homes from being built . . ." (No applause.) "... and take on, in addition, corporate landlords who are hiking rental prices." (Applause.) "We will invest in the industries that, for example, made Pittsburgh the Steel City, by offering tax credits for expanding good union jobs." (Applause.) "When I look at small-business owners, I see some of the heroes of our economy." (Not a peep.)

Ms. Harris complains about how difficult it is to build anything in the U.S. "Whether it's a new housing development, a new factory or a new bridge, projects take too long to go from concept to reality," she says. "The Empire State Building—you know how long it took to build that? One year." Yet the fa-

mous pictures from the building's construction depict iron workers dangling out on beams in the skies above New York, and surely the lenient safety standards of 1930-31 aren't what Ms. Harris has in mind. If she wants to overhaul onerous environmental reviews, the specifics would be serious news, but she merely promises to "reform permitting," details apparently to come later.

Are the vibes the point? The billionaire businessman Mark Cuban, a Pittsburgh native, is on hand to tell the assembled press afterward that Ms. Harris has put to bed the idea that she's a communist, and really she's no kind of ideologue at all. "Donald is just so impetuous and so impulsive in everything he says about policy," Mr. Cuban says. "You can tell that the Kamala Harris team has vetted every single thing she said." That's what worries Ms. Harris's skeptics.

On Nov. 5, what will the balance of political forces be? Each side can tell a hopeful story. For Democrats: More than a fifth of the state's population is in Philadelphia and Allegheny County (Pittsburgh). With that as their party base, they've won seven of eight presidential elections since 1992, the exception being Mr. Trump's come-from-behind victory in 2016. Can he really do that magic trick twice? Gov. Josh Shapiro has become highly popular by pitching himself as a Democrat with a "get s—done" attitude, and Ms. Harris is now doing the same, albeit with less earthy language and without Mr. Shapiro on the ticket.

For Republicans: Ms. Harris has a record of policy views well to Mr. Shapiro's left, more reflective of her native California, and voters won't forget the litany. The vice president also lacks the local branding that made Joe Biden a particularly salable commodity. "Scranton Joe" was born in Pennsylvania, and although his family moved to the state next door when he was a boy, he kept ties while representing neighboring Delaware in the U.S. Senate for 36

years. Can Ms. Harris really repeat Mr. Biden's 2020 victory?

Voter registrations suggest the state is drifting toward the GOP. When Mr. Trump narrowly carried Pennsylvania in 2016, the voter pool was 48.3% Democrats and 37.8% Republicans, a gap of more than 10 points. Today it's less than 4 points, 44% Democrats to 40.2% Republicans, plus 15.8% affiliating with neither party. Despite Pennsylvania's big cities, the Census Bureau reports that 23.5% of residents live in rural areas. That's middling in the U.S., but it's higher than every state that has as many electoral votes, including Texas (16.3%) and Illinois (13.1%).

**B**y appearances, Pennsylvania remains a state closely and deeply divided. Amid the rural hills south of Pittsburgh, the curvy roads are dotted with Trump signs. A dairy farmer there, in cowboy boots and a John Deere cap, says voters can't trust Ms. Harris not to ban fracking, and the revenue from natural-gas wells can be a serious boost. Amid the brick houses near Carnegie Mellon, the Harris signs are planted equally thick. A Pittsburgh psychologist, leaving the vice president's event, says voters need to save democracy from Mr. Trump.

It's a cliché that every vote matters, but in some places in some years it's closer to being literally true, and one of them might be Pennsylvania this November. Mr. Trump won the state in 2016 by 44,292 votes. He lost it four years later by 80,555. Contrary to his conspiracy theories, Mr. Trump improved his standing in Philadelphia by 2.5 percentage points, while simultaneously losing ground in the suburbs. Yet he still carried 54 of the state's 67 counties.

Is Pennsylvania a Democratic stronghold? Is it Trump country? The difficulty for the candidates—and the analysts—is that for the moment it looks like both.

*Mr. Peterson is a member of the Journal's editorial board.*

## How the Migrant Crisis Strains Whitewater, Wis.



**CROSS COUNTRY**  
By Jacob J. Curtis

encounters between his officers and recently arrived migrants from Nicaragua and Venezuela in early 2022. Mr. Meyer estimates that at least 1,000 migrants from Central America established themselves in the city of 15,000 in 2022 and 2023. Officials in Whitewater, about an hour west of Milwaukee, have had difficulty managing the stresses on law enforcement, housing stock and schools. With no advance warning from the federal government, the city was caught completely unprepared by the migrant influx.

Several incidents illustrate the challenge. Police found a migrant family with a young child living in an uninsulated garden shed in sub-zero temperatures. Officers responding to a report of a fire discovered two migrant children sleeping alone on the floor of an apartment while food burned on the stove.

A school-resource officer discovered that a migrant father was forcing his 14-year-old daughter to work 30 hours a week rather than attending school. In the worst incident, a group of teenagers found the body of a dead baby in a box near a trailer park. After an extensive investigation, the migrant mother of the deceased baby was arrested and identified as a citizen of Nicaragua.

The proliferation of overcrowded living spaces shared by people who are unrelated has resulted in a spike

of domestic and sexual assault claims to Whitewater police. An investigation into the alleged kidnapping of a minor revealed that a migrant had held the girl against her will for three days. She claimed the man choked and hit her while pointing a gun at her head.

Latin American gangs have also arrived in Wisconsin. Earlier this month a woman was sexually assaulted in Prairie du Chien by a suspected member of Tren de Aragua, the violent criminal organization born a decade ago in Venezuela's prisons. Whitewater police have determined that Nicaraguan members of the Salvadoran gang MS-13 are present in the city. Cops have seized almost a quarter million dollars of cartel funds as part of various investigations.

Whitewater is an out-of-the-way

place. Its police department has only 24 sworn officers and 13 civilians. Documents obtained by my organization reflect uncertainty regarding the process for dealing directly with federal Immigration

### Springfield, Ohio, isn't alone. This city of 15,000 saw a sudden influx of 1,000 Central Americans.

and Customs Enforcement. Emails to federal officials seeking help have at times gone unanswered. Local cops are spending so much time dealing with the challenges posed by the migrant population that regular policing has taken a back seat.

Whitewater police are issuing significantly fewer tickets for speeding and drunk driving than is typical.

The situation is putting serious strain on the Whitewater Unified School District. Classroom teachers are working overtime to overcome language barriers. School resource officers are crisscrossing the city trying to locate school-age children, who often aren't showing up for school because they don't have transportation options. Small-town educators are being forced to act like big-city social workers. It takes a toll.

The nation's broken immigration system is placing an unmanageable burden on local governments. Federal assistance is often unavailable or insufficient. Whitewater has sought state help, including from the governor's office, but officials in

Madison prefer to keep the meetings low-profile to avoid press coverage. With so much money flying out the door, the Whitewater police and school district are considering referendums to authorize an increase in property taxes to cover operational expenses in spring 2025.

Congress and the White House need to secure the border. State and local governments need to know that a clear process exists for removing violent migrants from their communities. To the extent that migrants have legally settled somewhere, towns and cities like Whitewater need the resources to offset the strain on basic public services like policing and education.

*Mr. Curtis is general counsel for the Institute for Reforming Government.*

## Ginkgo Biloba? Try a Little Grace Instead

By Brenda Cronin

**M**y neighbor is a nimble and well-preserved 80-something, a neighborhood fixture who patrols our block twice daily with her tiny dog. She invited me to party, and I told her I'd be out of town. "That's too bad," she said, smiling, "because this might be the last party I throw. I have early-stage dementia."

I was appalled by the diagnosis, impressed by her apparent sangfroid, and assailed by that intrinsically human yearning to be precisely what we aren't: immortal.

Longevity is in vogue. And not just living a long life, but living well, defying the accumulating birthdays by flaunting the cholesterol levels and blood pressure of a much younger person. Going gentle is yesterday's approach. Now it's all about

thundering through middle and even old age with the brains, reflexes and agility of youth.

Hence the bombardment of products and practices exhorting baby boomers and their younger cohorts—before it's too late!—to turn back the calendar or at least slow its

Baby boomers desperately seek to control the aging process. They should give themselves a break.

advance. Eat less and sleep more. Try intermittent fasting or transfusions of blood from youngsters. Do crossword puzzles. Work out and minimize stress. Don't fret about getting older.

Paramount in the message is staying independent and in control. No one wants to be at the mercy of caregivers, no matter how tender, for help with dressing and eating. While we can't (yet) choose our DNA and RNA, there is no end to the schemes touted to fend off Father Time.

Memory-preserving supplements! Cold plunges! Sweat lodges! Of course, the peddlers of these regimes don't promise eternal life. They can't trot out endorsements from, say, 19th-century figures who are running 5Ks and driving at night, thanks to Sudoku and ginkgo biloba. But a dearth of immortal pills hasn't curbed demand. Customers shovel down the latest anointed superfood—garlic, berries, broccoli—in a bid to thwart bogeymen such as "inflammation."

"Hope in a jar" is how Revlon's founder, Charles Revson, described

makeup. Hope is what many self-styled longevity gurus are pushing. Believers hope that gobbling vitamins and following certain practices will underpin control of their lives—and presumably, deaths. The baby boomers who long ago averred that if it feels good, do it, have discovered that getting older often feels quite bad. It can disappoint and frighten and hurt. Hence the efforts to dodge the inevitable and wrest back control before it all becomes moot.

If there is a Ponce de León miracle out there, I'm all for it. How marvelous if green tea or cold-pressed carrot juice turns out to be the forever elixir! But what about simply stockpiling grace, as my neighbor has, to bear whatever life brings?

*Ms. Cronin is an associate editorial features editor at the Journal.*

## OPINION

## REVIEW &amp; OUTLOOK

## Harris Spins a New Border Tale

The U.S.-Mexico border on Friday was the latest stop on Kamala Harris's reinvention tour, and defending her record there will take more than a smile and shifting blame. She criticized Donald Trump and Republicans for rejecting a bipartisan Senate deal, as we did at the time. But as usual she blew past the steps that she and President Biden failed to take for more than three years as illegal migrant border crossings surged to record levels.

The Vice President chose Douglas, Ariz., for her border speech, hoping to convince swing-state voters that she's serious about reducing the flow of migrants. The visit represents a shift to Plan B after the failure of her first strategy, which was to dodge the issue. Her campaign spent the first weeks after she gained the nomination telling the press that President Biden had never named her "border czar."

But residents in border towns like Douglas aren't likely to forget how security has unraveled on her Administration's watch. More than 10 million migrants have been apprehended nationwide during the Biden Presidency, with a peak of 3.2 million last fiscal year. That compares with about three million in total under President Trump. The nearby chart tells the comparative story.

Democrats blame the surge on problems the White House had little power to fix, like the worldwide spread of Covid and disarray in countries such as Venezuela and Haiti. But Biden-Harris policies kept the border valve open while those forces built pressure.

The Administration signaled its openness to migrants in its first week when President Biden said he'd cancel Title 42, a policy Mr. Trump used to expel border crossers before they could claim asylum. The next month Mr. Biden moved to end Remain in Mexico, another Trump practice that kept migrants south of the border while they awaited legal entry.

The pace of migration rose again last year when Title 42 was finally ended after years of litigation, and the Administration had failed for two years to enact another deterrent. There was plenty of tough talk; Ms. Harris told Guatemalans "do not come" in 2021, and Secretary of Home-

## Blaming the surge on Republicans evades years of failed policies.

land Security Alejandro Mayorkas said "the border is closed." Yet Mr. Mayorkas backed away from several policy restrictions, such as requiring all migrants to seek asylum in countries they cross en route to the U.S.

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The bill would have helped at the margin, assuming the Administration had enforced it—and doubts about the latter were part of the political rub. Since the spring, the Administration has required migrants to claim asylum only at ports of entry, and border crossings have fallen sharply. The President had this authority all along but was unwilling to use it for fear of offending his party's left wing.

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## Chicago's Nasty Schools Showdown

**C**hicago Mayor Brandon Johnson owes his job to the Chicago Teachers Union, and he's now showing how far he'll go to serve his benefactors. Witness the mayor's showdown with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Pedro Martinez over the teachers union contract negotiations.

On Thursday the Chicago Board of Education met amid rumors it would vote to fire Mr. Martinez at the mayor's urging. It didn't, but the threat remains that the schools chief could be ousted for refusing to endorse Mayor Johnson's plan for reckless borrowing to feed union demands.

The issue is the CTU contract, which expired in June. Union President Stacy Davis Gates says her union needs 9% annual raises, 45 days off school each year and a list of other benefits that could cost the city between \$10.2 billion and \$13.9 billion between 2025 and 2028, according to the Illinois Policy Institute.

Chicago can't afford anything close to that. Rather than disappoint his union buddies, Mayor Johnson wants the school district to take out a \$300 million loan to cover higher teacher salaries and pension costs next year. CPS has a junk credit rating, so Mr. Johnson's loan would

end up costing the school district around \$700 million.

The CPS CEO refused to go along with the heist. CPS called the plan a "fictional or phantom revenue source" and Mr. Martinez refused to sign off on it. For that act of logic, Mayor Johnson called for Mr. Martinez's resignation. The schools chief declined.

Now the mayor, Ms. Davis Gates and the CTU's allies are trying a smear campaign to push him out by other means. In advance of the Board of Education meeting, Ms. Davis Gates accused Mr. Martinez of a plan to close some city schools, and said the mention of schools closings "triggers a trauma."

Mr. Martinez has said he has no intention of closing schools. On Friday the school board also voted unanimously to prohibit any school closings through 2027. This ignores a study from the Fordham Institute showing that "nearly three in five school buildings are underutilized" and more than a third of CPS schools are half empty. Any serious plan to improve the city's public schools would include moves to consolidate resources to put toward instruction. But that would require putting the children—and not the teachers union—first.

## Biden Reneges on His Ukraine Promise

**P**resident Biden styled himself as a stalwart supporter of Ukraine's freedom in his valedictory at the United Nations this week, and the press agrees. But the less admirable side of the President's Ukraine legacy is on display as the Administration refuses to level with Congress and the American public about its strategy to win the war.

As part of its Ukraine supplemental funding bill this year, Congress stipulated that the Biden Administration submit a strategy for U.S. aid, due within 45 days. The Administration has been notorious for dragging its feet on specific weapons or failing to offer systems in the quantities required for Ukraine to retake its territory from Russia. The Biden Team has hid behind platitudes such as supporting Ukraine "as long as it takes," which isn't a strategy. It long ago became a rhetorical evasion.

The White House said Thursday the U.S. would offer Kyiv an additional Patriot air defense battery; munitions known as Joint Stand-off Weapons; and open up 18 more training slots for Ukrainian F-16 pilots. All these are worthy and long overdue.

But Republicans in Congress are right to insist that the Administration articulate a larger theory of how Ukraine can use the assistance to regain momentum and take more territory back from Mr. Putin. The stagnation on the battlefield has produced public skepticism in the

U.S. that jeopardizes continuing American support no matter who wins the presidential race, even though American voters don't want Mr. Putin to prevail. But Mr. Biden isn't filling in the blanks.

So whatever happened to that strategy demanded by Congress? Mr. Biden knew this commitment was necessary to get aid through Congress, and he signed the bill.

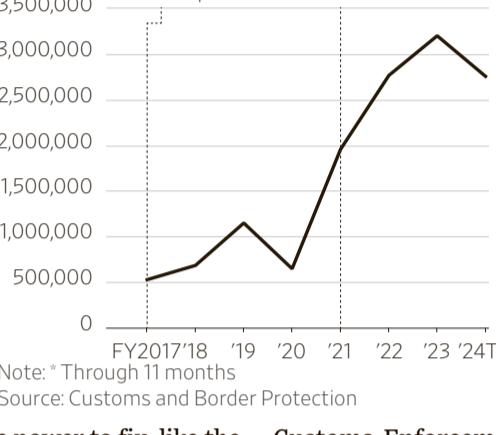
Yet the Administration submitted the document "months after the congressionally-mandated deadline," says a statement this week from a group of House Republicans, including pro-Ukraine Reps. Mike Rogers, Michael McCaul and Mike Turner, chairmen of the Armed Services, Foreign Affairs and Intelligence committees, respectively.

Also, and this is typical of the Biden stone-wall: The document is entirely classified. The GOP lawmakers are calling on the Administration to release an unclassified version, as Congress stipulated, so the public can digest and debate its merits.

Don't count on the Administration following this order before Nov. 5, if it ever does. A public release might mean that Vice President Kamala Harris would have to explain her own thinking on the war before the election. As long as she doesn't, and the Administration covers it up, Ms. Harris co-owns Mr. Biden's record of muddled half measures.

## Review &amp; Outlook

## Total Annual Enforcement Encounters, Fiscal Years 2017-2024\*



Note: \* Through 11 months  
Source: Customs and Border Protection

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## OPINION

# Who's Afraid of the Al Smith Dinner?



DECLARATIONS

By Peggy Noonan

**F**or the love of God, Madam Vice President, reverse your decision and come to the Archdiocese of New York's Al Smith dinner. There's still time, schedules free up, and announcing you'll speak will make you look both humble ("on second thought") and heroic (into the lion's den).

Why would she snub the famous, ancestral, bipartisan dinner, which has taken place every third Thursday in October since 1945 (virtually in 2020), that Theodore White lauded as an irreplaceable ritual of every presidential year?

It couldn't be disdain for institutional Catholicism. The dinner exists

**Kamala Harris says she won't go. Reversing that decision is the smartest thing she can do.**

to raise money to feed the hungry, teach the child, heal the sick, house the immigrant.

It couldn't be antipathy for Catholics themselves. They're 70 million strong and the famous deciders of national politics, backing Joe Biden in 2020 and Donald Trump in 2016. They pick the winner!

It couldn't be insensitivity toward Latinos, who compose an estimated one-third to half of the Archdiocese's parishioners, who are its growing presence and its loving future.

It would be wrong to suggest every Catholic in America sits around thinking about who goes to the big Catholic dinner, and yet we . . . no-

tice such things. Every four years it's news. A simple refusal—I don't have time—could be misinterpreted as disrespect for Catholics in general. Pennsylvania's population is roughly a quarter Catholic. It would be sad if some of them misunderstood.

It couldn't be fear of the audience. More than half are Democrats. The dais is the top officials of New York state, all of whom are Democrats.

It couldn't be dislike of the archbishop—everyone likes Cardinal Timothy Dolan and he likes everyone back.

And it couldn't be that the dinner is old. It is, but its age is its virtue. It's stood the test of time, lasted in this world where nothing lasts.

It must be something else—a simple mistake, the kind made by fast-moving campaign advisers who have no time to reflect.

That's what jolly Archbishop Dolan thinks. He was in Yonkers after the announcement, visiting a children's hospital supported by the church. Pressed for a response, he said he was disappointed of course but it must be an error; Ms. Harris has always spoken so well and warmly of healing our divisions. "This hasn't happened in 40 years," he said, referring to Walter Mondale, the Democrats' 1984 nominee, who declined the dinner. The cardinal helpfully recalled the outcome: "He lost 49 out of 50 states. I don't wanna say there's a direct connection."

Ms. Harris's staffers likely think she can't be in nailed-down New York near the end of a close race, she's got to be in the battlegrounds.

But an elegant man in a tough race of his own gave the best answer to that thinking. President Barack Obama took the podium of the 2012 Al Smith and said, "In less than three weeks, voters in states like Ohio and Virginia and Florida will decide this incredibly important election. Which begs the question: What are we doing here?" The audi-



President Obama, Cardinal Dolan and Mitt Romney in 2012.

ence roared. We are here, Mr. Obama said, not only to honor the Catholic church. "It says something about who we are as a people that in the middle of a contentious election season, opposing candidates can share the same stage; people from both parties can come together to support a worthy cause."

The Al Smith dinner is the only occasion each presidential year when both major-party candidates come together, sit, talk, have a drink, give dueling speeches, and give them not only with wit and humor but while radiating a deep democratic regard. It is a splendid thing. Those candidates demonstrate through the fact of their togetherness that our democratic system, which often seems so frail, so ready to give way, still holds, still endures, that it has a hidden health, a latent strength that will bear us through. Politicians speak plaintively of finding common ground. This dinner is common ground.

To be dead to this tradition, to say no to it in a way that will inevitably bring more no's in the future—the dinner is never convenient—is to contribute to the ending of something good. In that sense it is worse than a mistake, it is a sin.

Think of the fabled tradition Ms.

Harris becomes part of if she comes. In the 1960 dinner, John F. Kennedy was sly, playing "the religious issue" to his advantage. "I am glad to be here at this notable dinner once again, and I am glad that Mr. Nixon is here also. Now that Cardinal Spellman has demonstrated the proper spirit, I assume that shortly I will be invited to a Quaker dinner honoring Herbert Hoover." Quakers were a tiny minority, Hoover the least popular recent president. Under that Harvard veneer resided a tough little Boston pol.

The 2012 dinner was a triumph for Mitt Romney, formerly of Bain Capital. He was handsome and dashing in his white tie and tails, and he brought down the house when he spoke of the "wardrobe changes" campaigning entails—jeans for one event, a suit for another. "But it's nice to finally relax and wear what Ann and I wear around the house." He paid tribute to Mr. Obama as a man of "many gifts."

The 2016 dinner will never be forgotten by anyone who was there. Hillary Clinton was radiant, won the crowd and, speaking after Mr. Trump, won the night. "You know, come to think of it, it's amazing I'm up here after Donald. I didn't think he'd be OK with a peaceful transition

of power. . . . Every year, this dinner brings together a collection of sensible, committed, mainstream Republicans—or, as we now like to call them, Hillary supporters. . . . Whoever wins this election, the outcome will be historic. We'll either have the first female president or the first president who started a Twitter war with Cher. . . . He has no policies—I keep hearing that. I'd actually like to defend him on this. Donald has issues, serious issues."

The applause was thunderous. Mr. Trump got off a good line: "The media is even more biased this year than ever before, ever. You want proof? Michelle Obama gives a speech and everyone loves it, it's fantastic, they think she's absolutely great. My wife, Melania, gave the exact same speech and people got on her case." (Critics had noted similarities between Mrs. Trump's 2016 convention speech and Mrs. Obama's from 2008.) The room exploded in laughter. Then he ruined it all, attacking Mrs. Clinton as "corrupt" and saying: "Here she is tonight, in public, pretending not to hate Catholics." He was the only speaker ever to be boozed.

Here is something Ms. Harris will receive if she attends: worldwide attention in the media capital of the world as she, having finished her speech, is embraced by the laughing cardinal in a picture that will be seen everywhere, and her lines repeated everywhere.

Or she can be in some grim studio on some grim podcast reciting her latest positions in a way that will move and dazzle no one.

We are a church of miracles—the water into wine, the lame man who walked, the campaign advisers healed of their blindness. The little children of New York will no doubt be praying on coming Sundays in Mass, as they put their pennies in the collection plate, "Oh God, please change Kamala Harris's mind, let her come to us, help the nice lady avoid the Mondale Curse. Amen."

## Harvard's Antisemitism Begins in the Classroom

By Dara Horn

I had the dubious distinction last fall of serving on Harvard's Anti-semitism Advisory Group. It went so badly that I wound up as a witness in Congress's investigation of Harvard. When I spoke at a summit for the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance last week, I had to be escorted across campus by an armed guard.

At our advisory group's first meeting last October, a senior Harvard administrator admitted, "Students are very ignorant about the Middle East or Israel or Zionism." If only there were an educational institution with a \$50.7 billion endowment that could address that ignorance.

No one in the advisory group argued against free speech. Students can chant "globalize the intifada" all they want. As the screaming students point out, "intifada" simply means "uprising." True. Also, "Sieg Heil" simply means "Hail victory," and Confederate flags are simply regional symbols. Students can scream whatever racist things they like. But this evades the question: Why is Harvard full of screaming racists?

Our recommendations sought to address this question, but Harvard's only major reforms since have been rules around protests—suggesting that Harvard believes it plays no role in shaping its students' ideas. The school completely ignored our most important recommendation, which suggested that if students raised concerns about antisemitic content in courses or lectures, Harvard should review those academic events—not for the opinions expressed, but for academic rigor.

What is Harvard doing to advance academic rigor? As the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance revealed in a May 2024 audit of Harvard's educational offerings, the answer is worse than nothing.

Harvard's School of Public Health, for instance, has a partnership program with Birzeit University in Ramallah. Harvard is usually allergic to bigotry—so much so that it changed its official law school crest in 2021 to

avoid connections with a slaveholder who died centuries ago. At Birzeit, buildings are named after antisemitic murderers and students host Hamas military parades. Why does Harvard maintain a partnership with Birzeit, of all the universities on the planet? (In July Harvard moved the partnership program from the West Bank to Jordan due to "security concerns"—though not, presumably, due to Birzeit's institutional enthusiasm for murdering Jews.)

Harvard's educational approach to the Middle East is best described as what the journalist Matti Friedman calls the "America-Italy conflict." The U.S. invaded Italy in 1943, but instead of calling this the "America-Italy conflict," we call it

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World War II. By contrast, Harvard is diligently teaching future leaders about the Middle East in the near-exclusive context of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

In the 2022-23 academic year, Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies hosted the same number of events about Gaza and the West Bank

as it did about Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt combined. The Harvard course catalogue and events calendar frequently feature "Palestine" and "decolonization." But students need to dig deep to find a course or lecture mentioning that Hamas and Hezbollah are proxies of Iran, or that Israel has been fighting a multifront

**The university ignored a suggestion to review its courses and lectures for academic rigor.**

war against Iran for decades. Harvard is a pipeline to the State Department, so that future diplomats are carefully studying the America-Italy conflict.

Harvard students are clearly fascinated by the intifada; they can't stop screaming about it. How do they learn what the First and Second Intifadas were? Given Harvard's minimal

think of the fabled tradition Ms.

academic coverage of this topic, the answer is probably TikTok.

This spring, a Harvard student told me that in one of his classes, the instructor taught about the Dreyfus Affair without mentioning antisemitism or that Alfred Dreyfus was Jewish. Imagine if a Harvard instructor taught about the causes of the Civil War without mentioning slavery or that enslaved people were black. This is academic malpractice at the price of \$80,000 a year.

Academia doesn't seem to attract many courageous people. The tenure process encourages conformity, and students also perform to conform. When Harvard and its academic departments are invested—via billions of dollars from autocratic Middle Eastern regimes—in the same old bogus story in which the villains are Jews and the heroes are federally designated terrorist organizations, there's no incentive for anyone to disagree.

The Harvard students cheering for dictatorships have exposed a deeper problem. As one faculty member was

quoted in the audit, "Yes, students are under attack. But mainly, all of them should feel ripped off." Another said: "The last place you will have a free, interesting discussion is a Harvard classroom."

In the early 20th century, the University of Vienna, founded in 1365, was one of the world's academic giants, until it caved in to student groups and faculty who celebrated terrorists and tyrants. Today, U.S. News & World Report ranks it 215th in global universities, slightly below the University of Cincinnati.

Harvard has been around for only about 400 years, which in Jewish historical time is about 15 minutes. Maybe in another 400 years, Jews will look back and see that Harvard followed the University of Vienna's path, its buildings mere memorials to what was once the world's best education.

*Ms. Horn is a novelist and author of the 2021 nonfiction book "People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present."*

## Ukraine Rhetoric Veers Toward Reality



BUSINESS WORLD

By Holman W. Jenkins, Jr.

In every field of endeavor, the phenomenon of silly season occurs. Under pressure of

events or social signs, hysterical claims begin to be heard. With the

presidential election in its final

weeks, it's Ukraine's turn.

We can immediately add a caveat.

Joe Biden hasn't completely lost his head but still calls for victory without defining what victory means.

And Donald Trump still avoids the word victory, preferring to speak of the settlement or deal he imagines he will deliver if he becomes president.

Into even the dimmest precincts,

moreover, has dawned a realization: The president's and ex-president's stances might actually be compatible, if not identical.

Then there's Kamala Harris. Adding to the faint but slowly accumulating mosaic by which we must judge her presidential aptitude, she thundered on Thursday against any territorial concession by Kyiv. "These proposals are the same of those of Putin. And let us be clear—they are not proposals for peace. Instead, they are proposals for surrender, which is dangerous and unacceptable."

These words presumably will be forgotten or eaten if she becomes president. Never mind that Mr. Biden never exhibited—and from the very beginning, in every word and deed—a scintilla of enthusiasm for trying to rid every inch of Ukrainian soil of Russian troops. And neither has Mr. Trump.

Let's also exempt Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky from the silly season accusation. In keeping with C.S. Lewis's observation about the political abuse of language, the word "radical" isn't a synonym for bad and Mr. Zelensky was using the word correctly when he called JD Vance's proposal "too radical." Beyond what was needed or appropriate is Mr. Vance's support of a deal that legalizes, rather than merely acknowledges, Mr. Putin's occupation of Ukrainian territory.

In his secret heart, Mr. Zelensky knows his own stance is also "too radical"—expecting Russia to retreat to its 1991 borders, expecting Vladimir Putin to submit to international criminal prosecution and pay reparations.

The politics of Mr. Zelensky's position, he further knows, are a big problem for the deal he knows will be needed to end the fighting.

Without issuing a mea culpa, I twice stated in these columns that Ms. Harris isn't an idiot. Readers should know that this opinion is under revision.

Her amateurish statement was obviously meant to appeal to a segment of the echosphere. Let's understand: What we saw from cer-

**Ignore Kamala Harris, and you can actually hear the U.S. painfully giving birth to an endgame.**

tain conservative and never-Trump Republican pundits with the rise of Mr. Trump we've also seen from certain online military commentators who have gained new audiences and prominence thanks to the Ukraine war.

They become excessively conscious of their "brands" and this has driven their "analysis" in ways that depart from reality.

In their tweets, they created a melodrama in which Mr. Biden is the doughty and relentless defender of Ukraine while Mr. Trump is eager to sell it out. In their hasty backfilling now, they've had to start painting Mr. Biden as a surprising and disappointing betrayer of Ukraine when, in fact, his administration's behavior and (extremely careful) rhetoric have been consistent all along.

Mr. Biden and his administration supposedly are too paralyzed by fear of Russian nukes to provide Ukraine the desired long-range weapons or call for Russia's total defeat. In reality, they never had any interest in upsetting the status quo in Crimea or the eastern Donbas, which Russia has occupied since 2014. Team Biden sees Mr. Putin's re-invasion of February 2022 as a giant strategic blunder, with large strategic dividends for the U.S. and West. Team Biden has only ever been interested in locking in these gains.

At a stretch, you might even suspect Mr. Biden's conspicuous unwillingness to call for a major U.S. rearmament is a signal to Mr. Putin that the U.S. has no ambitions beyond formalizing this new and advantageous status quo vis-à-vis Russia.

Mr. Biden's rhetoric has nonetheless been careful not to get crosswise with admirers who see Ukraine heroically upholding Western values and interests. This dodge is now fraying and these avid supporters are starting to call Mr. Biden a sell-out, which they must do to justify their previous rhetoric about Mr. Trump vs. Mr. Biden on Ukraine.

The silly season is upon us and yet an optimist senses a necessary stage on the way to some kind of progress. A cease-fire begins to glimmer in the cards. If so, it will still require convincing Mr. Putin that he won't gain any further Ukrainian territory even as the cost of the war begins to be visited on Russia's own territory. This will be a job for whatever U.S. administration takes power next.

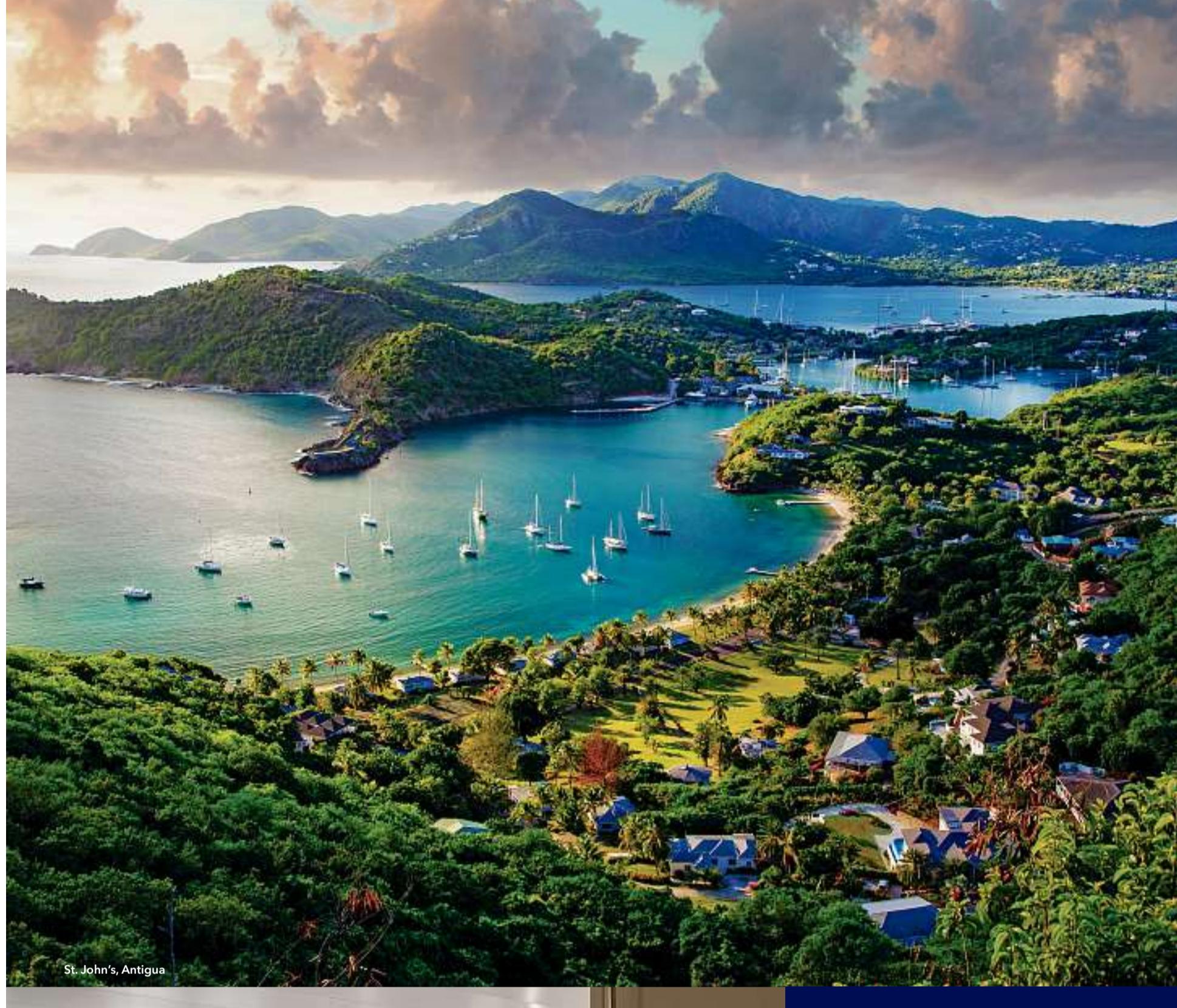
## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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# EXCHANGE

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

**Overdose Help**  
Amazon warehouse  
workers get access  
to Narcan **B10**

\* \* \* \* Saturday/Sunday, September 28 - 29, 2024 | **B1**

## SORRY, HARVARD Southern Schools Are Where It's At

The likes of Georgia Tech, Clemson and Ole Miss are drawing students from the North who want to have fun and save on tuition. The shift is boosting the economies of cities across the region.

BY DOUGLAS BELKIN  
AND ANDREA FULLER

**GROWING NUMBER** of high-school seniors in the North are making an unexpected choice for college: They are heading to Clemson, Georgia Tech, South Carolina, Alabama and other universities in the South.

Students say they are searching for the fun and school spirit emanating from the South on their social-media feeds. Their parents cite lower tuition and less debt, and warmer weather. College counselors also say many teens are eager to trade the political polarization ripping apart campuses in New England and New York for the sense of community epitomized by the South's football Saturdays. Promising job prospects after graduation can sweeten the pot.

The number of Northerners going to Southern public schools went up 84% over the past two decades, and jumped 30% from 2018 to 2022, a Wall Street Journal analysis of the latest available Education Department data found.

At the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, total freshmen from the Northeast jumped to nearly 600 in a class of about 6,800, up from around 50 in 2002. At the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, they increased from 11 to more than 200 in a class of about 4,500 in 2022. At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, 11% of students came from the Northeast in 2022, compared with less than 1% two decades prior.

This flow of students to Southern colleges promises to impact the region's economy for years. About two-thirds of college graduates go on to work in the same state where they graduate, according to a recent study from researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and others. The transplants are well-educated, motivated young workers at the least expensive points in their careers.

For most of American history, many

Please turn to page B5



1



2

1. Georgia Tech's cheer squad leads its football players onto the field in September.

2. University of South Carolina students celebrate on campus after its Gamecocks won the NCAA women's basketball championship in April.

3. Mitch Savalli, from New York, chose Georgia Tech after seeing that Southern schools imposed fewer restrictions during the pandemic.

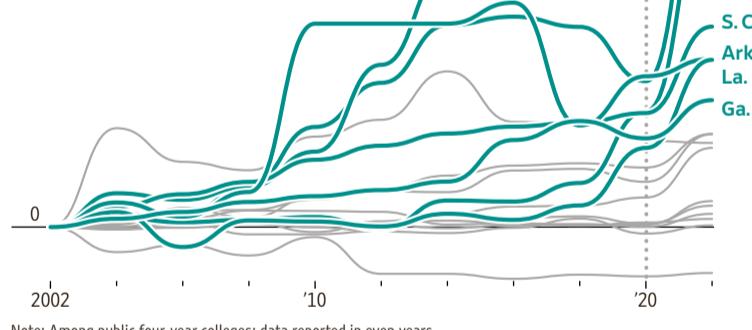
**84%**

The increase in the number of Northerners going to Southern public schools over the last two decades

Freshmen from the Northeast heading South for college, change from 2002 to 2022

○ Among the top 10 states in the country with the biggest growth

500%



STEPHANIE STAMM/WSJ



3

FROM TOP: RICH VON BIEBERSTEIN/ICON SPORTswire/GETTY IMAGES, SEAN RAYFORD/GETTY IMAGES, NICOLE CRANIE FOR WSJ

**KEYWORDS** | CHRISTOPHER MIMS

## Press On! Touch Screens Are So Over

Even Apple is adding back buttons after designers proudly killed them

The tyranny of touch screens may be coming to an end.

Companies have spent nearly two decades cramming ever more functions onto tappable, swipeable displays. Now buttons, knobs, sliders and other physical controls are making a comeback in vehicles, appliances and personal electronics.

In cars, the widely emulated ultra-minimalism of Tesla's touch-screen-centric control panels is giving way to actual buttons, knobs and toggles in new models from Kia, BMW's Mini, and Volkswagen, among others. This trend is delighting reviewers and making the display-focused interiors of Tesla and its imitators feel passé.

Similar re-buttonization is occurring in everything from e-readers to induction stoves.

Perhaps the most prominent exponent of this



Apple added a third button it calls the 'action button' to its newer iPhones.

button boom is the company that set us lurching toward touch screens in the first place. Apple added a third button it calls the "action button" to its full slate of new iPhone 16s unveiled this month, after introducing the feature on its upscale Apple Watch Ultra and Pro-model iPhones over the past couple of years. It also added a button-like "camera

Please turn to page B4

**THE INTELLIGENT INVESTOR** | JASON ZWEIG

## Your Favorite Financial Columnist Messed Up



Now that the Federal Reserve has finally cut interest rates, you'll be hearing a lot of advice that comes with exclamation points: You've got to raise your yield! Take more risk! Buy "alternatives" like private real estate and private credit!

Ignore the shouting. Instead, use this month's half-percentage-point cut in rates as a quiet pre-text for the simplest possible fix: moving money out of cash that you never intended to leave there in the first place.

I'm telling you this largely to shame myself into doing it, too.

Vanguard recently surveyed more than 550 investors who had rolled retirement assets into an individual retirement account but had kept all the money in cash. Two-thirds had no idea they were entirely in a money-

market fund; half thought Vanguard would move the money out of cash for them; 15% "never got around to investing it."

All in all, this is what we might call inadvertent inaction.

I smirked when I first read Vanguard's results. Some investors are just clueless, I told myself. About an hour later, I did a double take: "Hey, wait a minute! What about that IRA I inherited from my mom last year? Did I ever move that out of cash?"

Quickly checking my account, I realized I never did.

The Intelligent Investor—yes, like you, I often think this column is incorrectly named—had committed one of the most foolish of all financial mistakes. I had trusted myself to take a simple action later that I should have taken immediately.

That inherited IRA is less than 1% of my net worth, but I never

Please turn to page B4

GABBY JONES FOR WSJ

## EXCHANGE

## THE SCORE | THE BUSINESS WEEK IN 6 STOCKS

**Visa Sued By DOJ, Micron Gains on AI****ECHOSTAR**

**SATS** After years of will-they, won't-they, two satellite-TV rivals are nearing a deal. DirecTV is in advanced talks to acquire EchoStar-owned Dish, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday. DirecTV is owned by telecom giant AT&T and private-equity firm TPG. A potential deal—which includes Dish's streaming brand, Sling TV—would create one of the country's largest pay-TV distributors. The companies have flirted with a merger multiple times. Both companies have been shedding customers as viewers opt for streaming services instead of pricier traditional television channels. A tie-up would give DirecTV's owners a way to dramatically cut costs and give EchoStar a vital lifeline ahead of looming debt payments. EchoStar shares **gained 8.9% Friday**.

**SOUTHWEST AIRLINES**

**LUV** Southwest next year will start selling assigned seats and add rows of premium seating with extra legroom. Southwest also unveiled a \$2.5 billion share-buyback program, cost-cutting plans, and a new board member as it tries to convince shareholders that it can turn itself around. Elliott Investment Management, which owns about 10% of Southwest's shares, said it will continue to press for new leadership. Southwest shares **advanced 5.4% Thursday**.

'We hear you, and we are moving urgently and deliberately to evolve and transform,' Southwest's Chief Executive Bob Jordan said Thursday, presenting the company's revamped strategy to investors.

**MICRON TECHNOLOGY**

**MU** The memory-chip maker late Wednesday reported better-than-expected results thanks to robust artificial-intelligence demand. Micron also gave guidance that topped expectations. The company expects its momentum to continue in the current quarter, saying both revenue and adjusted earnings are likely to beat analyst views. Worries about PC and smartphone demand had weighed on Micron's stock. Micron shares **surged 15% Thursday**, helping buoy the broader tech sector.

**\$7.75 billion**

Micron's revenue this quarter, beating Wall Street's expectations



Costco this past week reported better-than-expected earnings.

**COSTCO WHOLESALE**

**COST** Costco's share price got a markdown on Friday, thanks to its mixed quarterly results. The retailer late Thursday posted better-than-expected earnings and revenue that missed Wall Street estimates. The results come a few months after Costco said it was raising its membership prices for the first time since 2017. The stock has been on a tear for much of this year. Through Thursday's close, the stock was up roughly 37% for 2024, and 63% over the past 12 months. Costco shares **ended 1.8% lower Friday**.

**Costco stock performance****VISA**

**V** The Justice Department sued Visa on Tuesday for antitrust violations, alleging that the card-network giant illegally monopolized the market for consumers' debit-card payments worth trillions of dollars. The government said Visa blocked competitors by using higher fees to punish merchants if they routed some transactions to another card network. Visa also paid companies including Apple to limit their innovation and sought to undermine startups, the complaint said. Visa shares **fell 5.5% Tuesday**.

**SUPER MICRO COMPUTER**

**SMCI** Super Micro Computer is facing a federal probe following a report by an activist short-selling firm. The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that the Justice Department is looking into the server maker, whose specialized servers use the chips Nvidia designs for generative AI. In August, short seller Hindenburg Research published its report about Super Micro and said it had placed bets against its stock. Super Micro Computer shares **lost 12% Thursday**. —Francesca Fontana



## SCIENCE OF SUCCESS | BEN COHEN

**Need a CEO? Hire the Intern. Seriously—Just Do It.**

Sometimes a company like Nike needs a leader who understands it deeply



After the call that would transform his life, Elliott Hill hung up the pay phone, stuffed everything he owned in his car and drove from Ohio to Tennessee so he could start his dream job at Nike.

But when he walked into the company's Midwest regional sales office for his first day of work, there was just one problem. Hill's new boss told him that it wasn't exactly a job. It was actually going to be a six-month internship.

"An internship?" he thought.

It was an inauspicious start, but Hill lasted longer than six months at Nike. In fact, he would spend his entire career at the same company. He started in 1988 and got promoted every few years for the next few decades. By the time he retired in 2020, he was president of Nike's consumer division.

But he was recently lured back for one last job—and this time, it wasn't an internship.

He was just hired as the next CEO.

When John Donahoe abruptly resigned as Nike's chief executive last week, his ouster marked the end of a rough stretch in which the company lost its edge—and billions of dollars in market value. Before he was named CEO, he'd never worked at Nike. He's being replaced by someone who's basically his exact opposite.

Hill, a 60-year-old company lifer who calls Nike "a core part of who I am," is the latest example of a curious business archetype: the Intern CEO.

Doug McMillon started at Walmart as an hourly associate unloading trailers. Mary Barra worked for General Motors as a student before she took a full-time job on the assembly line inspecting fenders and hood panels.

Christian Klein hauled monitors from the basement of SAP's headquarters to the engineers and developers upstairs. "And not flat screens," he told me. "The heavy ones."

All three have been with their companies ever since. All three are now leading those companies.

When Ursula Burns was a summer intern at Xerox in 1980, it was completely unimaginable to her that she would one day be CEO.

"I didn't know that we had a CEO," she told me.

But after getting her master's degree in mechanical engineering, Burns started moving up the Xerox corporate ladder. She worked in the research lab, business planning, the C-suite, global manufacturing and internal operations. Then she ran the whole company from 2009 to 2016.

Starting at the bottom of a company and climbing to the very top has always been an improbable career path. But these days, it feels closer to impossible.

The median job tenure of U.S. workers has dropped below four years, the lowest number in decades, according to newly published federal data, as job-hopping has become increasingly common for talented young employees. Mobility is hot. Loyalty is not. Which means Intern CEOs might be a dying breed.

They may not have firsthand knowledge of how other companies function, but they do have institutional knowledge of their own. They remember which ideas worked and why. They also remember every cockamamie strategy suggested by people who knew precisely nothing about the company but pretended to know it all. What they lack in perspective, they make up for with experience. Where outsiders see problems, interns see promise. And they have the credibility to sell their vision for change when it's necessary.

"If you're going through a transition in the company," Burns said, "having someone who understands the heart and soul of the place is valuable."

Nike is currently going through one of those transitions.

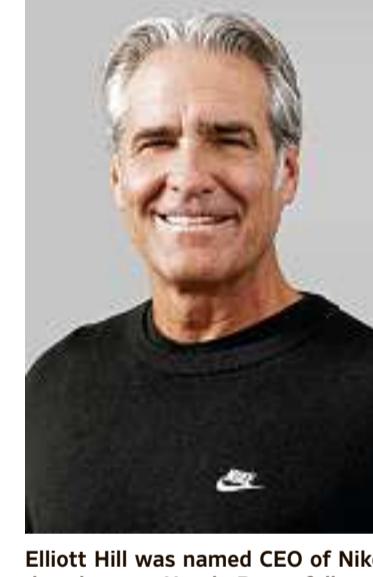
As my colleague Inti Pacheco has explained, the company made a series of costly strategic missteps in recent years, like sprint-

So when a Nike executive named Tim Joyce visited campus, Hill arranged for a meeting, put on his best suit and begged for a job. Then he kept pestering Joyce for months. As graduation approached, Hill promised to never call him again if there was no way he would get hired. Otherwise, he was going to keep calling until Joyce said no. He finally said yes on a Friday. Hill started on Monday.

"I never told my mom it was an internship," he said on the Fortune FW Podcast last year. "I told her I got hired."

Once he managed to get his foot in the door, he never let it close on his Nikes. As an intern, he packed boxes in the warehouse and picked up phones whenever the office needed help with customer service. "I pretty much did everything they asked me to do—and then some," he says.

At the time, he was still paying



Elliott Hill was named CEO of Nike after starting as an intern four decades ago. Ursula Burns followed a similar trajectory at Xerox.



ing away from retail stores and toward e-commerce. Meanwhile, increased competition and stalled innovation resulted in meager sales, sunken morale and something of an identity crisis for the sneaker giant.

This company founded by runners even missed out on America's latest running boom. The only thing more blasphemous for Nike would be losing Michael Jordan to Hoka.

Nike fell behind under Donahoe, whose experience at the company before he took over was limited to a board seat. He spent the formative part of his career at Bain, where he started as a lowly associate consultant and became CEO. He left for the top jobs at eBay and ServiceNow. Nearly five years ago, he traded software for shoes and found himself running Nike.

In other words, he was the epitome of a Consultant CEO. He's being replaced by the quintessential Intern CEO.

Hill's first job out of college was an entry-level position on the training staff of the Dallas Cowboys, where he worked for a year before pursuing his master's degree in sports administration. While he was at Ohio University for graduate school, he took a class on sports marketing and wrote a paper about one of his favorite brands: Nike.

off his student loans. But with that attitude, he turned his internship into a proper job as an apparel sales representative. Over the next two years, he put 120,000 miles on his Chrysler minivan.

There was nothing even remotely glamorous about this work: The man was going to mom-and-pop shops in Texas and Oklahoma peddling Lycra.

Hill was so far down the org chart and so far away from corporate headquarters that it took a decade for Nike co-founder Phil Knight to have any clue who he was.

Even today, when the subject turns to the company's chairman emeritus and largest individual shareholder, Hill sounds like an intern ready to fetch coffee. In reverential tones, he calls Knight the most inspirational person he's ever met—and "the person I tried the hardest to make proud." And he did: Knight himself led the push bring Hill back.

Now the company is in the hands of somebody who cares about Nike and its culture so deeply that he cries when he talks about how much the brand means to him—somebody willing to do everything he's asked and then some.

It worked for Hill as an intern. It might just work for him as the Intern CEO.

## EXCHANGE

# The 27-Year-Old Helping Gen Z Understand the Economy

Kyla Scanlon coined the term 'vibecession.' White House and Fed officials are taking the young commentator seriously.

By HANNAH MIAO

**K**yia Scanlon doesn't like being called an influencer. Sure, she has hundreds of thousands of social-media followers, but she isn't trying to sell them anything, except maybe a book about the economy she published earlier this year. She's happy with the title "author," though that only covers part of what she does. "Economic commentator" is what San Francisco Federal Reserve President Mary Daly recommended, so that's what Scanlon has been calling herself.

"Whatever makes sense to people, I suppose, but my goal is economics education," Scanlon said in an interview. "Social media is just the medium that I use to do that."

Scanlon, 27 years old, is breaking all the rules for a career in finance and doing things her own way. Forget grinding away for years on Wall Street or getting a Ph.D. in economics. Young people pay attention to her analysis of topics ranging from monetary policy to the housing market to the business of dating apps, all delivered via TikTok, Instagram, X, YouTube, Substack and her podcast.

She is perhaps best known for coining the term "vibecession" in 2022, to describe the disconnect between economic data and consumer sentiment. We weren't in a recession, but Americans felt down about the economy. The vibes, she observed, were off.

A debate ensued, with notable names from Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman to former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich weighing in on whether we were in a vibecession. UBS and Fidelity published reports explaining the term to clients.

Growing up near Louisville, Ky., Scanlon just wanted to make it out of her hometown.

She first started posting bite-size videos online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, Fed presidents and White House officials sit down with Scanlon for interviews, eager to get in front of her audience.

Her research is sometimes shaped by her own experiences figuring out adulthood rites of passage, such as how to get health insurance now that she's aged out of her parents' plan, or contemplating whether she will ever be able to buy a house.

"The work I do almost feels more like cultural anthropology than economics sometimes," Scanlon said.

As a child, Scanlon made weekly trips to the public library, where she would check out stacks of books. Her father was a personal trainer and her mother works in insurance. Scanlon's younger brother works as a financial analyst for grocery giant Kroger.

When she was in high school, her father opened a custodial account for her and she taught herself how to trade stock options.

With a full-ride scholarship to Western Kentucky University, Scanlon



**Kyla Scanlon**

■ **Last book she read:** 'Flowers for Algernon' by Daniel Keyes

■ **Latest obsession:** Alternative sodas, like Poppi

■ **Ritual:** Pour-over coffee in the morning

■ **Go-to snack:** Pretzels

■ **Early job:** Car salesperson

■ **Sentimental item:** Family photo album

triple-majored in financial management, economics and business-data analytics. On the side, she wrote a blog called "Scanlon on Stocks."

A summer internship in 2017 at a car dealership in Louisville made her feel uneasy about just how little customers knew about finance.

"People don't even know what an interest rate is, and we're letting them buy cars," she remembers thinking.

After graduating in 2019, she moved to Los Angeles for a rotation program at asset manager Capital Group. Less than two years in, she left Capital to build a finance curriculum at a San Francisco-based startup called On Deck that at the time was creating an online education and pro-

fessional-networking platform.

Outside of work, she wrote blog posts and made videos on TikTok. A post about the trading frenzy in GameStop's stock in 2021 took off. She filmed skits posing as Jerome Powell and Elon Musk. By that fall, she landed a deal to make videos for crypto company Bankless. She quit On Deck to create content full-time.

She first used the word vibecession on her Substack in the summer of 2022, when inflation hit a four-decade high and the stock market was in the midst of its worst year since 2008. That led to a New York Times op-ed, followed by a book deal with Penguin Random House.

"In This Economy? How Money and

Markets Really Work" was published this past spring. It's an introduction to how the economy works and an argument that since people make up the economy, they should be the center of economic policy. She uses her grandmother's banana bread as a way to describe supply and demand. Stick-figure doodles and hand-drawn diagrams accent the pages.

"I've always found her extremely impressive," said Jared Bernstein, chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, whom Scanlon interviewed for a video this year. "If you really understand something, you can explain it to anybody."

These days, Scanlon says she makes six figures a year from speaking fees, advertising revenue from social-media content, paid Substack subscribers, consulting and other projects, though her income varies from quarter to quarter. The advance for her book deal was a huge help. She is a Bloomberg Opinion contributor and appears as a talking head on CNBC and CNN.

She makes content for brands, like interviewing business leaders and economists for digital brokerage Public. Sometimes she posts sponsored content on her own platforms, like a TikTok video about the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' metric for measuring well-being. Any paid partnerships are disclosed.

Scanlon splits her time between her parents' home in Kentucky and the house she rents in L.A. She usually starts her weekdays around 3 a.m. to be up when the East Coast rises. She makes short-form videos and tweets almost daily, and releases longer videos, podcast episodes and Substack essays about every two weeks. She squeezes in trips to the gym, runs and bikes. In a given week, she typically rides between 100 and 300 miles.

She mostly makes content from her home. Her dog, a boxer mix named Moo, occasionally makes an appearance and, for a period, moving boxes were strewn in the background of her videos. Sometimes she uses a whiteboard to sketch out concepts. She often wears T-shirts and has many tattoos, including the formula for compound interest.

Scanlon is a one-woman shop. She recently signed with United Talent Agency to help her manage things like scheduling and contract negotiations.

She has made mistakes. Scanlon made a video for crypto exchange FTX before it collapsed in one of the largest financial frauds in history. That was a "wake-up call," she said, to be more particular about who she works with.

There was an error on page 6 of her book describing exchange-rate economics. She posted a video apologizing and offered a printout that readers could tape to their book to correct the section. She was devastated.

"As a young woman, you are already kind of skating on thin ice in terms of your credibility," Scanlon said. "It's an uphill battle all the time for people to take you seriously."



scofflaws and maintain its record of winning about 90% of prosecutions.

Ulibarri's indictment aids the crackdown by tying the scheme to a real taxpayer. It allegedly shows, step by step, what one person did to reduce his tax bills almost to nothing on the advice of a tax-shelter promoter.

Like many of us, Ulibarri probably didn't understand the intricacies of trust taxation. Even so, the indictment describes actions that would give many taxpayers pause.

To begin with, he paid \$50,000 for the shelter. The promoter assured Ulibarri he could wipe out a large portion of his dental practice's taxable income, and the taxes on it, by routing it through a chain of three trusts and a charitable foundation. Each entity was the beneficiary of the one above it. The three trusts reduced their own tax-

able income to zero or close to it by taking deductions for "expenses" and disbursements to the entity in the chain below.

Using these trusts involved a major deception. The income within them would still be taxable to Ulibarri if he controlled and benefited from them. So he pretended that someone else controlled them when he actually did. That's why the IRS called them shams and alleges that he's guilty of tax evasion.

There were other deceptions. The indictment alleges the promoter provided Ulibarri with two versions of the trusts' documents—a short version that participants could provide to banks to open accounts and such, and a longer version to be kept strictly confidential.

At a key point, Ulibarri appar-

ently trusted the shelter promoter rather than an outside adviser. To get the income into the trusts, the promoter advised Ulibarri to put his dental practice into a limited-liability company. Then the dentist assigned about 90% of its income to his first-tier entity, the Smile High Trust.

When Ulibarri asked a CPA about the transfer, the accountant questioned whether the move was legal under Colorado law and called it "wacky." But Ulibarri went ahead.

In addition, Ulibarri apparently believed that personal expenses such as his mortgage, car payments, medical expenses and credit-card bills were deductible by the trusts that paid them. In a note to a bookkeeper recommended by the promoter, he said, "As you know we have been handling all our personal expenses through the family trust." (He was referring to the Title of Liberty Family Trust, his second-tier entity.) If deducting personal expenses were this simple, the Treasury would be short billions of dollars.

Finally, Ulibarri seemed to think that the law's strict rules for spending by charities didn't apply to the last entity in his chain, the Faith Hope & Trust Foundation.

The indictment alleges that the foundation engaged in improper acts like lending funds to Ulibarri's dental practice and paying for season tickets to a professional baseball team in Colorado, among other personal expenses.

Ryan Ulibarri hasn't had his day in court, which is set for March, and by law he's innocent until proven guilty. But his tax woes are a cautionary tale for anyone tempted by far-fetched tax-reduction schemes. They could cost you a lot more than just paying the tax.

TAX REPORT | LAURA SAUNDERS

## A Tax-Shelter Crackdown Uncovers a Dentist's 'Smile High Trust'



Ryan Ulibarri, a family dentist in Fort Collins, Colo., is in tax trouble that could take a big bite of his time and money.

In late August, a Denver grand jury indicted him on six criminal counts for using an "abusive-trust tax shelter" to hide more than \$3.5 million of taxable income he earned from 2017 to 2022. He allegedly underpaid more than \$1 million of tax over that period.

Now Ulibarri could go to prison for tax evasion, and he could also owe the Internal Revenue Service unpaid taxes plus interest and penalties. Ulibarri, who earlier this month pleaded not guilty to the government's charges, declined to comment through his lawyer, Joshua Lowther of Lowther Walker.

While most Americans aren't in the market for tax shelters, the allegations in this case are a reminder of what can happen when taxpayers ignore professional advice and common sense on taxes. They also show how easy it can be for people who want to slash their taxes to dupe themselves.

"People see a complex structure and think, 'This is what rich people do to reduce their taxes,'" says

Bryan Skarlatos, a criminal tax attorney with Kostelanetz. "But a complex structure with no business purpose is often a sign of fraud to the IRS."

Ulibarri's indictment is the latest in an IRS crackdown on shelters involving tax-reducing trusts that the agency considers "abusive," its term for transactions that violate the law. In March, the agency posted an unusual warning about them on its website. The post gives details of typical schemes and says the agency has "detected a proliferation" of them aimed at wealthy individuals, business owners and professionals like doctors and lawyers.

Then in April, an indictment charged six people with conspiring to promote, sell or administer abusive trusts—including Ulibarri's. In May, an Arizona tax preparer pleaded guilty to preparing and filing over 500 fraudulent returns for about 60 participants in abusive-trust shelters sold by the same promoters. The preparer admitted to helping conceal about \$60 million of income, costing the Treasury about \$17 million.

These efforts are significant. In fiscal year 2023, the IRS referred only about 1,800 cases for prosecution. As a result, the agency must choose them carefully to deter

scofflaws and maintain its record of winning about 90% of prosecutions.

Ulibarri's indictment aids the crackdown by tying the scheme to a real taxpayer. It allegedly shows, step by step, what one person did to reduce his tax bills almost to nothing on the advice of a tax-shelter promoter.

Like many of us, Ulibarri probably didn't understand the intricacies of trust taxation. Even so, the indictment describes actions that would give many taxpayers pause.

To begin with, he paid \$50,000 for the shelter. The promoter assured Ulibarri he could wipe out a large portion of his dental practice's taxable income, and the taxes on it, by routing it through a chain of three trusts and a charitable foundation. Each entity was the beneficiary of the one above it. The three trusts reduced their own tax-

able income to zero or close to it by taking deductions for "expenses" and disbursements to the entity in the chain below.

Using these trusts involved a major deception. The income within them would still be taxable to Ulibarri if he controlled and benefited from them. So he pretended that someone else controlled them when he actually did. That's why the IRS called them shams and alleges that he's guilty of tax evasion.

There were other deceptions. The indictment alleges the promoter provided Ulibarri with two versions of the trusts' documents—a short version that participants could provide to banks to open accounts and such, and a longer version to be kept strictly confidential.

At a key point, Ulibarri appar-



## EXCHANGE

# Everyone in the North Now Wants to Go to College in the South

*Continued from page B1*

high-school seniors have aspired to go to college in the Northeast, home to the Ivy League. Southern academic stalwarts, such as Duke, Tulane, Emory and Vanderbilt, have long drawn their share of students from up North, but the recent uptick of students going to the South is fueled by attendance at public universities.

Though far more students apply to Ivy League schools than in 2002, some of the hottest Southern public schools—including Clemson and Georgia Tech—have seen even a bigger spike in interest. At Alabama, applications were up more than 600% in the same period—about three times as much as bids to attend Harvard.

**Saturday is for football**

Mitch Savalli drove 15 hours with his parents in a rented white Lincoln Navigator from his home in North Bellmore, N.Y., on Long Island, to Atlanta for his freshman year at Georgia Institute of Technology.

A few weeks later he was walking from the grocery store to his dorm with a bouquet of flowers for the woman he was taking to a fraternity event when the reality of his new surroundings dawned on him.

"Five people stopped me and told me how kind it was and what a sweet gesture I was making," he said. "No way would that have happened in New York."

At the University of South Carolina in Columbia, Alicia Caracciolo, a junior, said it takes her about two weeks to acclimate to the pace of the South every time she returns from her home in New York. At the grocery store she reminds herself to pause and slow down.

"If you go and you don't end up learning something about the cashier, you did it wrong," she said.

"Saturdays down South are a real thing," she said. "The whole world kind of shuts down in Columbia when there's a home football game."

The increase in the number of students heading South grew for years and then accelerated suddenly after the pandemic, federal data show.

"You had students home in their basement in Connecticut looking at their phone seeing most of the Northeast closed down and not much happening," said Rick Clark, executive director of strategic student access at Georgia Tech. "At the same time they are seeing sororities at Alabama and football games in Georgia and Florida. Life is happening."

Savalli's path to Georgia Tech was paved by two years listening to his older brother complain about college in Upstate New York.

During the pandemic, Mitch's brother had regular lockdowns at his college after he had been exposed to Covid. There were social-distancing rules, mask requirements and online classes from his dorm room.

Meanwhile, both the Savalli boys were watching students on television cheering at university football games down South.

"There were more freedoms in the Southern schools and that really started to drive applications," Vincent Pisano, an assistant principal in the Long Island school district Savalli attended. "Then the outreach really started to grow from the Southern schools. Schools like LSU and South Carolina started attracting huge groups of kids."

Applications to some Southern universities from Savalli's school district on Long Island have tripled compared with a few years before the pandemic, according to data provided by the school district.

Savalli wanted to attend a college with a strong engineering program and a competitive lacrosse team. He considered two Boston-area schools—the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Tufts University, his top choice, as well as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

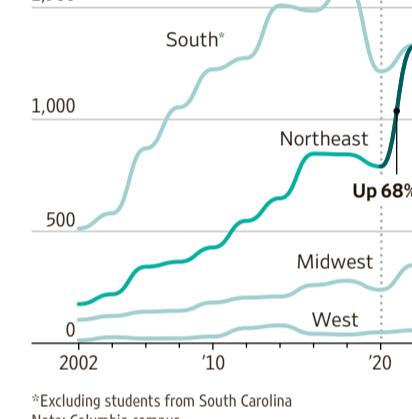
He applied to Georgia Tech without knowing anyone who had gone there. When he realized his out-of-pocket cost at Tufts would be about \$80,000 and Georgia Tech would be half of that, he decided to fly down for a visit. That sealed the deal.

**Better tuition**

For out-of-state students, Southern schools are often a bargain, ac-



**Out-of-state students attending the University of South Carolina, by region**



2022—41% of the class and a bigger share than at any other public Southeastern school. That's up from 26% four years prior.

The school has focused recruiting efforts along the I-95 corridor as far north as Boston, said Amanda Craddock, vice president of enrollment. When winter weather blankets the Northeast with snow, the school sends marketing emails to prospective students featuring pictures of the sunny campus and its many palm trees.

Sometimes, a student from New York or New England gets interested in Coastal Carolina on a family vacation to Myrtle Beach, near the school, Craddock said. On a cloudy or rainy day, families swing over to the campus just to check it out. When they take a tour or talk to students, they learn about the huge concentration of Northern students in the school's business program. They find out the cost is cheaper than their public flagship where they live.

Then, if a parent works remotely, the family realizes they could buy a home in the area and live more cheaply in South Carolina than in Massachusetts, Rhode Island or New Jersey. So many families relocate after their child enrolls that the phenomenon has its own name: Craddock and others call them trailing families.

The Southern enrollment surge is taking place in some booming regional economies. The top five most promising locations to find work for newly minted college graduates are all in the South, according to a recent study by payroll provider ADP.

Growing universities create a snowball effect for local and regional economies—especially research universities, said Jason Owen-Smith, executive director of Institute for Research on Innovation and Science at the University of Michigan.

More undergraduates means more customers to patronize local businesses. They can also help underwrite graduate programs that support researchers who bring in grants. That grant money is often spent with local vendors to build out labs, which, in turn, may generate new knowledge, patents and startup businesses that hire people. Those businesses may then attract more high-paying employers to the region.

In the short term, however, more students can also create bottlenecks when it comes to adding the infrastructure to accommodate the people.

"The challenge on everybody's mind," said University of Mississippi Provost Noel Wilkin. "How do you accommodate the growth?"

cording to figures from roughly 100 of the nation's top public research universities. Last school year, such Southern schools charged students from other states a median \$29,000 in tuition and fees, the least of top public colleges in any region.

Scholarships often make it cheaper.

Caracciolo first heard of the Uni-

versity of South Carolina from her

cousin who attended medical school there. She knew she wanted to study

marketing and her ambition was to

go to Syracuse University, which has

one of the most respected communica-

tions programs in the country.

The Long Island native was admit-

ted to Syracuse with a \$15,000 merit

scholarship knocking her out-of-

pocket expense down to \$65,000, she

said.

She applied to South Carolina as

an afterthought. When Caracciolo

earned admission to the honors pro-

gram and won a scholarship, she re-

alized it would cost her about half as

much as Syracuse and she would be

more likely to attend classes in per-

son. The year after she started,

around a dozen students from her

private Catholic school followed her

down, she said.

South Carolina is home to several

magnets for Northern students. The

University of South Carolina, the

state flagship, and Clemson Univer-

sity, in Clemson, each enrolled hun-

dreds of freshmen from the North-

east in 2022. At USC, that was a

659% jump in 20 years; at Clemson,

the spike was 456% over the same

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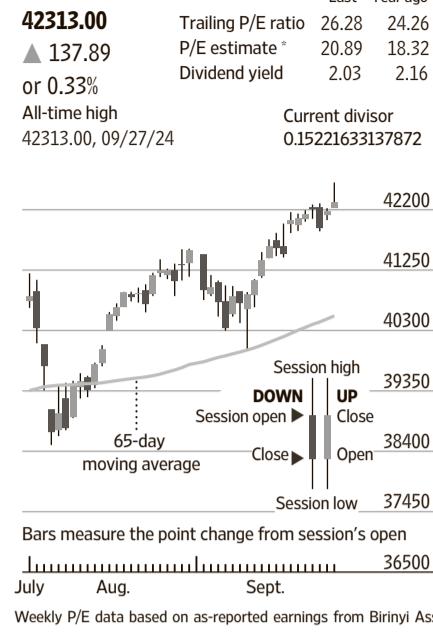
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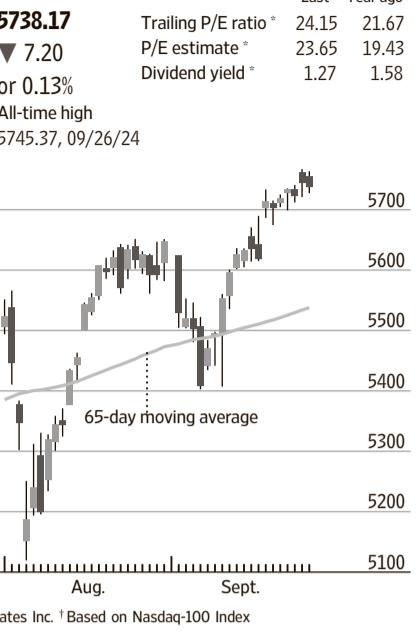
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## MARKETS DIGEST

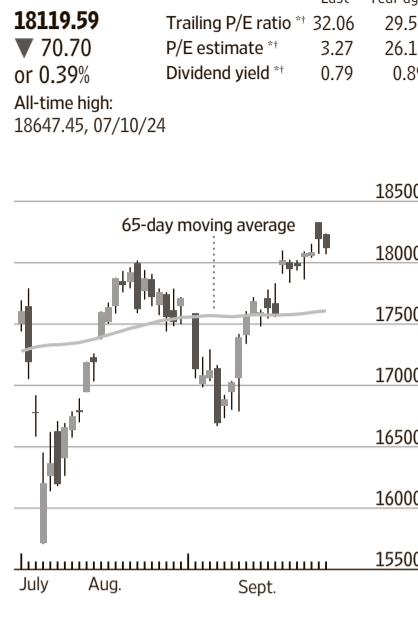
## Dow Jones Industrial Average



## S&amp;P 500 Index



## Nasdaq Composite Index



## Track the Markets: Winners and Losers

A look at how selected global stock indexes, bond ETFs, currencies and commodities performed around the world for the week.

Index	Currency, vs. U.S. dollar	Commodity, traded in U.S. <sup>†</sup>	Exchange-traded fund
Hang Seng	13.00		
Shanghai Composite	12.81		
Nymex natural gas	6.73		
Comex copper	5.88		
NIKKEI 225	5.58		
Soybeans	5.31		
Corn	4.04		
DAX	4.03		
CAC-40	3.89		
Euro STOXX	3.61		
S&P 500 Materials	3.38		
FTSE MIB	2.86		
Dow Jones Transportation Average	2.74		
STOXX Europe 600	2.69		
KOSPI Composite	2.18		
Bloomberg Commodity Index	2.14		
Wheat	2.02		
South African rand	1.84		
IBEX 35	1.83		
S&P 500 Consumer Discr	1.75		
South Korean won	1.69		
S&P 500 Industrials	1.56		
Australian dollar	1.40		
Bovespa Index	1.27		
Japanese yen	1.25		
BSE Sensex	1.22		
Swiss franc	1.14		
S&P 500 Information Tech	1.13		
S&P/BMV IPC	1.13		
FTSE 100	1.10		
Nasdaq-100	1.10		
S&P 500 Utilities	1.03		
S&P 500 Communication Svcs	1.02		
Comex silver	1.00		
Nasdaq Composite	0.95		
Comex gold	0.84		
S&P 500	0.62		
Dow Jones Industrial Average	0.59		
Chinese yuan	0.57		
S&P MidCap 400	0.51		
Canadian dollar	0.43		
U.K. pound	0.41		
S&P/TSX Comp	0.37		
iShiNatlMuniBd	0.31		
VangdTotInvBd	0.26		
Indonesian rupiah	0.24		
S&P SmallCap 600	0.22		
iShiBoxx\$HYCp	0.12		
S&P 500 Consumer Staples	0.09		
iSh 1-3 Treasury	0.07		
S&P/ASX 200	0.03		
Euro area euro	0.01		
-0.01	iSh TIPS Bond		
-0.02	Norwegian krone		
-0.03	VangdTotalBd		
-0.03	iSh 7-10 Treasury		
-0.14	Russell 2000		
-0.15	iShJPMUSEmgBd		
-0.17	iShiBoxx\$InvGrdCp		
-0.21	S&P 500 Real Estate		
-0.21	Lean hogs		
-0.28	Indian rupee		
-0.31	iSh 20+ Treasury		
-0.53	S&P 500 Financials		
-0.58	WSJ Dollar Index		
-0.82	S&P 500 Energy		
-1.13	S&P 500 Health Care		
-1.33	Nymex ULSD		
-1.45	Mexican peso		
-3.97	Nymex crude		
-4.10	Nymex RBOB gasoline		

## Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg	YTD % chg	3-yr ann.
<b>Dow Jones</b>										
Industrial Average	42628.32	42227.95	<b>42313.00</b>	137.89	<b>0.33</b>	42313.00	32417.59	<b>26.3</b>	12.3	<b>6.7</b>
Transportation Avg	16363.84	16154.40	<b>16185.90</b>	102.24	<b>0.64</b>	16331.72	13556.07	<b>8.1</b>	1.8	<b>3.8</b>
Utility Average	1057.56	1048.52	<b>1055.06</b>	10.41	<b>1.00</b>	1061.01	783.08	<b>29.2</b>	19.7	<b>6.2</b>
Total Stock Market	57089.39	56715.73	<b>56831.61</b>	-39.89	<b>-0.07</b>	56871.50	40847.04	<b>32.8</b>	18.9	<b>7.2</b>
Barron's 400	1229.00	1218.89	<b>1222.11</b>	4.14	<b>0.34</b>	1227.01	907.97	<b>26.9</b>	14.0	<b>5.5</b>

## Nasdaq Stock Market

	Nasdaq Composite	18238.28	18069.18	<b>18119.59</b>	-70.70	<b>-0.39</b>	18647.45	12595.61	<b>37.1</b>	20.7	<b>6.6</b>
	Nasdaq-100	20152.53	19964.13	<b>20008.62</b>	-106.92	<b>-0.53</b>	20675.38	14109.57	<b>36.0</b>	18.9	<b>9.6</b>

## S&amp;P

	500 Index	5763.78	5727.34	<b>5738.17</b>	-7.20	<b>-0.13</b>	5745.37	4117.37	<b>33.8</b>	20.3	<b>8.9</b>
	MidCap 400	3145.54	3108.22	<b>3119.24</b>	3.54	<b>0.11</b>	3124.92	2326.82	<b>24.7</b>	12.1	<b>4.6</b>
	SmallCap 600	1433.14	1413.09	<b>1418.14</b>	10.59	<b>0.75</b>	1435.83	1068.80	<b>23.2</b>	7.6	<b>1.2</b>

## Other Indexes

	Russell 2000	2243.65	2218.79	<b>2224.70</b>	14.83	<b>0.67</b>	2263.67	1636.94	<b>24.6</b>	9.7	<b>-0.8</b>
	NYSE Composite	19597.32	19484.75	<b>19501.22</b>	-0.50	<b>-0.003</b>	19506.55	14675.78	<b>26.6</b>	15.7	<b>5.5</b>
	Value Line	626.71	619.66	<b>622.44</b>	2.78	<b>0.45</b>	622.44	498.09	<b>15.5</b>	4.8	<b>-2.2</b>
	NYSE Arca Biotech	5919.83	5857.58	<b>5873.82</b>	16.24	<b>0.28</b>	5949.95	4544.40	<b>17.1</b>	8.4	<b>0.2</b>
	NYSE Arca Pharma	1085.90	1075.27	<b>1075.47</b>	-10.43	<b>-0.96</b>	1140.17	845.32	<b>21.9</b>	18.2	<b>13.2</b>
	KBW Bank	114.90	113.47	<b>113.88</b>	0.14	<b>0.12</b>	115.93	71.71	<b>45.5</b>	18.6	<b>-5.2</b>
	PHLX® Gold/Silver	167.05	162.09	<b>162.25</b>	-5.12	<b>-3.06</b>	167.37	102.94	<b>51.0</b>	29.1	<b>10.5</b>
	PHLX® Oil Service	76.49	75.22	<b>76.27</b>	1.95	<b>0.26</b>	96.64	72.67	<b>-19.3</b>	-9.1	<b>9.9</b>
	PHLX® Semiconductor	5318.06	5190.72	<b>5217.23</b>	-93.27	<b>-1.76</b>	5904.54	3185.18	<b>51.9</b>	24.9	<b>14.8</b> </td

## MARKET DATA

## Futures Contracts

## Metal &amp; Petroleum Futures

	Contract	Open	High	hilo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Copper-High	25,000 lbs.; \$ per lb.	Open	High	hilo	Low	Settle	Chg	interest
Oct	4,5670	4,5959	4,5210	4,5410	-0,0415	3,884		
Dec	4,6475	4,6590	4,5765	4,5995	-0,0395	138,942		
Gold (CMX)	100 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
Oct	2672,10	2684,00	2644,30	2620,10	13,708			
Nov	2682,30	2684,00	2655,50	2655,50	1,271			
Dec	2695,10	2696,90	2665,50	2668,10	-26,80	465,158		
Feb/25	2716,50	2718,50	2687,60	2689,90	-27,10	34,945		
April	2734,70	2736,80	2705,50	2707,60	-27,50	20,201		
June	2748,80	2753,20	2724,00	2725,30	-9,80	10,137		
Palladium (NYM)	50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
Oct	1041,00	1049,50	1010,00	1014,00	-27,50	10		
Dec	1050,00	1053,00	1011,50	1023,40	-27,80	18,476		
Platinum (NYM)	50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
Oct	1011,80	1019,00	998,00	1008,50	-2,90	1,225		
Jan/25	1024,90	1030,60	1008,60	1022,00	-0,20	66,990		
Silver (CMX)	5,000 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.							
Oct	31,815	32,140	31,445	31,519	-0,522	1,226		
Dec	32,310	32,590	31,635	31,816	-0,525	127,078		
Crude Oil, Light Sweet (NYM)	1,000 bbls.; \$ per bbl.							
Nov	67,45	68,65	67,06	68,18	0,51	333,560		
Dec	66,49	68,13	66,58	67,67	0,48	255,755		
Jan/25	67,05	67,79	66,26	67,34	0,45	178,457		
March	66,33	67,40	65,97	66,98	0,39	108,777		
June	66,18	67,10	65,80	66,71	0,31	152,585		
Dec	65,80	66,51	65,41	66,17	0,20	135,710		
NY Harbor ULSD (NYM)	42,000 gal.; \$ per gal.							
Oct	1,9479	1,9754	1,9299	1,9520	-0,0083	18,232		
Nov	1,9221	1,9503	1,9270	1,9078	-0,0078	126,489		
Natural Gas (NYM)	10,000 MMbtu; \$ per MMbtu.							
Nov	2,744	2,932	2,720	2,902	.149	319,904		
Dec	3,173	3,332	3,145	3,304	.111	136,437		
Jan/25	3,449	3,594	3,419	3,567	.098	190,297		
Feb	3,339	3,472	3,302	3,449	.098	87,554		
March	3,060	3,179	3,036	3,161	.082	153,585		
April	2,920	3,033	2,906	3,018	.074	89,065		

## Agriculture Futures

Corn (CBT)	5,000 bu.; cents per bu.
Dec	413,00
Jan/25	430,50
March	436,50
April	428,50
May	435,00
June	400,00
July	382,00
Aug/25	380,00
Sept	382,00
Oct	380,00
Nov	380,00
Dec	380,00
Jan/25	384,50
March	379,50
April	382,50
May	471,00
June	461,00
July	461,00
Aug/25	461,00
Sept	461,00
Oct	461,00
Nov	461,00
Dec	461,00
Jan/25	461,00
March	461,00
April	461,00
May	461,00
June	461,00
July	461,00
Aug/25	461,00
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Nov	461,00
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## BUSINESS &amp; FINANCE

# Clean-Energy Startup Faces Cash Crunch

Monolith struggles to meet targets needed for \$1 billion government loan

By AMRITH RAMKUMAR AND SCOTT PATTERSON

A clean-energy startup with big Wall Street backers and a deal for a \$1 billion government loan is running short on cash and facing project delays, potentially jeopardizing its long-promised expansion.

Monolith uses a low-emissions process to make two products: a material called carbon black that strengthens tires and ammonia for fertilizer. The company's planned expansion has suffered from delays and rising costs. Monolith was in danger of burning through its cash by the end of the year, company documents show.

A group of existing investors is expected to give Monolith some breathing room with a cash infusion of more than \$100 million, the company said. But Monolith needs at least several hundred million more to get the full government funding and to enlarge an existing production facility near Lincoln, Neb.

The expansion is key to the company's future. If it can't quickly iron out the kinks at its existing facility, then it could struggle to raise the money it needs. Despite that, the government can still fund the loan, potentially only in part or under different conditions.

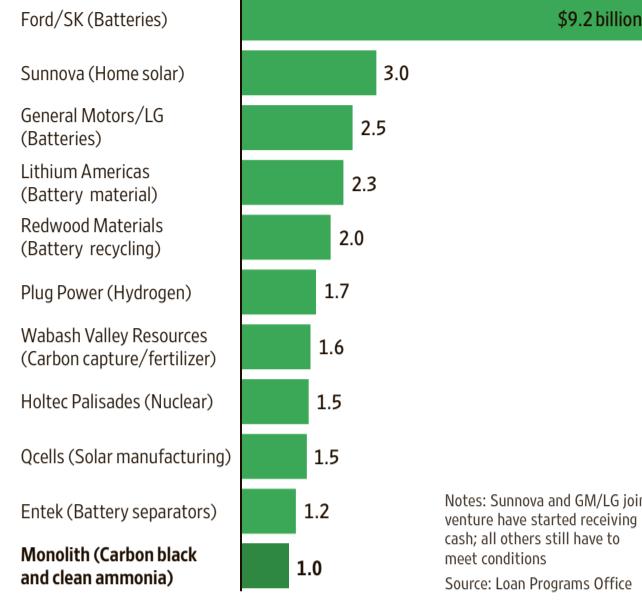
"When you scale up, everything becomes complicated," said Edgar Lara-Curzio, an energy expert at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. "Once you start going from milligrams of materials to hundreds of tons, everything changes."

Monolith Chief Executive Rob Hanson said he anticipates starting to raise the private-sector cash needed for the expansion early next year. He declined to comment on the government loan process. A Loan Programs Office spokeswoman said the company is making progress on the milestones needed to get the money.

The government loan deal with Monolith was announced in December 2021. It was the first commitment made by the Energy Department's Loan Programs Office under its director, Jigar Shah, a former clean-energy entrepreneur.

The \$1 billion loan agreement was seen as a stamp of approval. Monolith raised more than \$300 million the next summer from investors including TPG and Decarbonization Partners, a joint venture between BlackRock and Singapore's Temasek. They valued the company at more than \$1 billion.

## Largest commitments from the Loan Programs Office during the Biden administration



Notes: Sunnova and GM/LG joint venture have started receiving cash; all others still have to meet conditions  
Source: Loan Programs Office

Monolith has raised a total of at least \$725 million in equity, according to PitchBook. Investors include private-equity firms Warburg Pincus, Cornell Capital and Azimuth Capital Management, plus renewable energy titan NextEra Energy and South Korean conglomerate SK. The investors either declined to comment or didn't respond to requests for comment. They have deep pockets and could fund the expansion if the government loan falls through.

Hanson blames the delayed

approval. Monolith raised

more than \$300 million the next summer from investors including TPG and Decarbonization Partners, a joint venture between BlackRock and Singapore's Temasek. They valued the company at more than \$1 billion.

Monolith has raised a total of at least \$725 million in equity, according to PitchBook. Investors include private-equ-

expansion on natural bumps that occur when building a new chemical production plant. "Any project like that is going to be hard to get across the finish line," Hanson said.

The Loan Programs Office is designed to help companies overcome the types of problems Monolith is facing. It requires companies to raise funds from the private sector and meet operational milestones before disbursing cash. A win by Donald Trump in November could put Monolith and other companies that haven't started receiving their loans in limbo. The office was largely dormant during the first Trump administration.

Founded in 2012, Monolith uses a plasma process run on clean power to heat up natural gas so it splits into carbon and hydrogen. The carbon comes out in the form of carbon black, a powder that goes into everyday products like tires and paints. Goodyear Tire & Rubber is among Monolith's customers.

Hydrogen from the process can be used to make low-carbon ammonia, a main ingredient in fertilizer and potential source of clean burning fuel. Monolith's plan has been to demonstrate the carbon-black process, then use the govern-

ment loan to expand the plant and install the equipment needed to turn hydrogen into ammonia.

The company has struggled to increase production of carbon black, causing numerous delays in the expansion, the documents show. Hanson said rising carbon-black sales from current production proves the company's process works and just needs to be expanded to make the company successful.

Monolith's process needs scalding temperatures roughly comparable to what is needed to make steel. At that high heat, other carbon materials can build up inside the reactor, clogging it up and disrupting operations. Frequently turning the system off to cool it down and clean it can make it impractical for large-scale production.

A main challenge is running the system frequently enough to produce large quantities of material. "Easy to make something work intermittently, much harder to do it 24/7/365," Hanson said in an October 2023 email to The Wall Street Journal. Offices located in Overland Park, Kan., Denver and San Carlos, Calif., are another drain on Monolith's cash. Hanson declined to comment on the offices.

# WeightWatchers Chief Executive to Exit Diet Company

By COLIN KELLAHER

**WW International**, better known as WeightWatchers, is parting ways with Sima Sistani, the chief executive who led the diet company into the burgeoning market for obesity drugs.

WW on Friday said it has reached a mutual agreement with Sistani that she will no longer serve as president and CEO of the New York company. WW didn't specify a reason

for the move but said Sistani will be eligible for payments and benefits associated with a termination without cause.

Sistani, the co-founder and former CEO of face-to-face social network Houseparty, took the reins at WW in March 2022. A year later she led the \$106 million acquisition of digital-health company Sequence, which offers telehealth visits with doctors who can prescribe diabetes and obesity drugs such as Ozempic, We-

govy and Zepbound.

The deal marked a move by WW, which has long promised to help customers lose weight through food-tracking and lifestyle changes, to also offer customers a medical weight-loss approach.

WW took a hit earlier this year after its most famous board member and shareholder, Oprah Winfrey, said she was leaving the board and donating what was left of her stake in the company.

In 2015, Winfrey sent WeightWatchers shares doubling in a single day after she said she was taking a 10% stake in the company, but late last year told People magazine that she had begun taking a weight-loss medication.

WW last month reported disappointing quarterly results and cut its full-year outlook, sending its share price below \$1. The stock earlier this month hit an all-time low of 67 cents and has lost more than

92% of its value over the last 12 months, and WW shares were changing hands Friday at 83 cents, leaving the company with a market capitalization of around \$66.5 million.

WW said Tara Comonte, a former Shake Shack executive who had joined its board in June 2023, will serve as interim president and CEO until the company identifies a permanent replacement for Sistani.

The company said Sistani

has also left the board, reducing it to eight members, but will provide transition services for a month.

Sistani received a salary of \$1.24 million and total compensation of roughly \$8.87 million in fiscal 2023, and a termination without cause entitles her to payments including two times her salary, according to the company's most recent proxy statement.

—Andrea Petersen contributed to this article.

# #Dadication

**#Dadication**

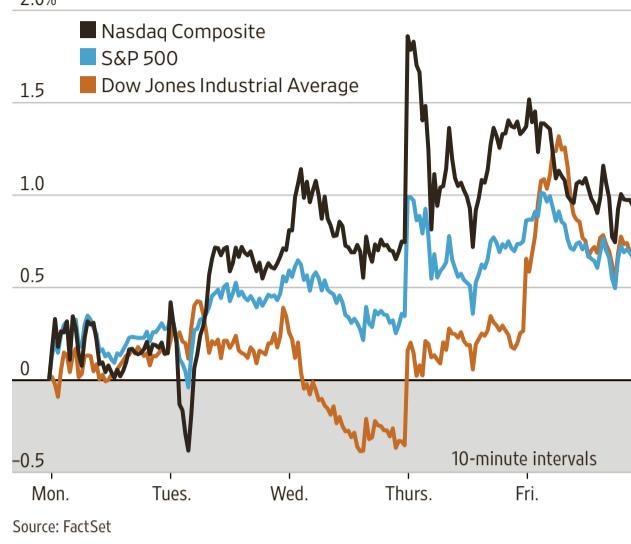
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## MARKETS &amp; FINANCE

# Dow Rises to Record on Inflation Data

Index performance this past week



Source: FactSet

Inflation keeps slowing and the Dow Jones Industrial Average keeps breaking records.

The blue-chip index on Friday logged an record high for the 32nd time this year after the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge showed price pressures continued cooling last month.

Led Friday by biotech giant Amgen and oil producer Chevron, the Dow is on track for its best September performance since 2012.

In China, markets rounded off a bumper week with a bang. Mainland China's CSI 300 rose 4.5% Friday, ending the week 16% higher, its biggest weekly advance since

2008. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index notched its largest weekly increase since 1998.

Ignited by the government's unexpected push to juice China's ailing economy, the market rally has rippled abroad. Luxury stocks, emerging markets and industrial metals—all sensitive to Chinese demand—have jumped.

**Elsewhere:**

◆ Stocks were mixed. The Dow rose 0.3%, or 138 points, to 42313. But the S&P 500 tipped 0.1% lower and the tech-heavy Nasdaq faded downward by 0.4%. All three indexes notched weekly gains.

◆ Ten-year Treasury yields

edged lower, with the 10-year yield settling at 3.751%.

◆ Gold kept climbing this past week to \$2,644.30 a troy ounce. The metal is on track for its largest one-quarter net gain on record, according to Dow Jones Market Data.

◆ The dollar weakened. The greenback traded near its lowest value against a basket of currencies since July 2023.

◆ Oil prices edged higher, with benchmark U.S. crude trading at \$68.18 a barrel, after a sharp turn lower in recent days.

—Joe Wallace and David Uberti

# Amazon Gets U.K. Break Over Anthropic Deal

By MAURO ORRU

U.K. antitrust officials said Amazon.com's multibillion-dollar investment in artificial-intelligence company Anthropic didn't qualify for a formal investigation, a win for U.S. Big Tech weeks after Microsoft was also spared a probe over its links to Inflection AI.

The U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority launched a probe in August to determine whether Amazon's \$4 billion investment in Anthropic posed

a threat to competition in the country. Officials have now concluded that isn't the case and said they wouldn't open a formal investigation.

The investment handed Amazon a minority ownership position in Anthropic as part of efforts from the e-commerce giant to support AI startups it sees as promising in hopes to gain an edge on fierce competitors such as Alphabet's Google, Microsoft and ChatGPT maker OpenAI. Google last year agreed to invest up to \$2 billion in Anthropic.

British officials said they closed the case as they essentially lacked jurisdiction because Anthropic's revenue in the country didn't meet a threshold of £70 million, equivalent to \$93.9 million, for target companies and because the combined activities of both Amazon and the startup didn't meet a certain share of goods or services threshold in the U.K.

The watchdog didn't reach a conclusion on whether the investment led to Amazon having material influence over An-

thropic, but said it didn't believe the arrangement would create a relevant merger scenario. Amazon doesn't hold a board seat or decision-making powers at the startup.

An Amazon spokesperson said it welcomed the decision, acknowledging the CMA's lack of jurisdiction. "By investing in Anthropic, we're helping to spur entry and competition in generative AI," the spokesperson said.

An Anthropic spokesperson also welcomed the ruling, saying the startup remained an

independent company as its strategic partnerships and investor relationships didn't diminish its corporate governance independence or its freedom to partner with other companies.

The decision from Britain's antitrust watchdog comes weeks after officials there also cleared Microsoft's hiring of former employees from Inflection AI and its partnership with the startup, offering some breathing space to U.S. tech giants over their ties to AI startups.

# Comcast's Sky Unit And Warner Tussle Over Shows

By JESSICA TOONKEL

Comcast's European pay-TV company Sky has sued Warner Bros. Discovery, accusing the entertainment giant of violating an agreement that gave Sky long-term exclusive rights to shows including a new "Harry Potter" TV series.

Sky alleges that Warner didn't give it the opportunity to co-produce a number of shows under the deal, including the "Harry Potter" project, which has begun casting and is expected to debut in 2026, according to the lawsuit that was filed Friday in a New York federal court.

The 2019 deal called for Warner to offer Sky the opportunity to co-produce—and have the right to exclusively distribute for 20 years—at least four original shows each year on its service, according to Sky's lawsuit. The pact expires in 2025.

The goal of the deal for Sky was to protect the company from Warner putting all of its content on its own HBO Max streaming service in Europe, the company said in its complaint.

A Warner spokeswoman said the company plans to "vigorously defend itself from this unfounded lawsuit as we move forward undeterred with plans to launch Max, including the new HBO Harry Potter series, in the UK and other European markets in 2026." She said Comcast's suit is an attempt to gain leverage in negotiations over a separate distribution deal between the companies.

In its lawsuit, Sky said it considers Warner a longstanding partner and it had tried to amicably resolve the conflict.

"As a result of exposure to harm and losses we have initiated proceedings to safeguard our interests and enforce our rights to partner in the production and distribution of highly valuable content," Sky wrote in its lawsuit.

The lawsuit comes at a precarious time for Warner, which is in litigation on several fronts. Warner's TNT cable channel lost out to Comcast's NBCUniversal and Amazon for the rights to carry National Basketball Association games starting next year. The company has filed a breach of contract suit against the NBA.

Separately, Fubo, a sports-centric streaming service, has sued Warner, Fox and Disney over its planned sports-streaming service Venu, claiming the joint venture is anticompetitive. A judge has blocked the companies from launching its online bundle of sports channels. The companies are seeking to appeal that injunction.

Fox and Wall Street Journal parent News Corp share common ownership.

The anticipated "Harry Potter" series is a focal point of Sky's suit. The project is mentioned 79 times in the suit, and Sky says the show "meets all of the criteria for a qualifying series under the Co-Funding Agreement."

Warner, Sky alleged, "made clear that it had no intention of ever offering Sky the Series in accordance with the contractual terms."

The 2019 co-production deal that Sky is suing over is separate from its distribution deal with Warner, by which Sky is the exclusive distributor of HBO's shows, such as "Succession" and "House of Dragons" in a number of European markets, including the U.K., Italy and Germany—a deal which is set to expire next year.

# Online Giant to Equip Warehouses With Opioid Overdose Medication

By SEBASTIAN HERRERA

Amazon.com will start stockpiling opioid overdose medication across its warehouse network, making it one of the largest U.S. employers to respond to government pressure to make lifesaving drugs available in the workplace.

The retail giant said it plans to equip its North American facilities with the overdose reversal medication naloxone, sometimes known by the brand name Narcan. The company will begin with its large fulfillment center warehouses and then supply the drugs to its delivery centers, air hubs and other facilities. Eventually, it could also stock corporate offices.

It currently has doses in some facilities in Canada, where it is already required in some workplaces.

The company said it is responding to calls by public health officials, the White House and other authorities battling America's opioid crisis. "We need to do something," said Anthony Harris, Amazon's global medical director. "The right decision for us is to provide this intervention to help deal with the epidemic."

Nearly two-thirds of Americans older than 18 who experienced a substance use disorder in 2022 were employed, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Biden administration has been trying to make overdose drugs more widely available and has allowed state and local health departments to use federal funding to purchase naloxone. Nonprofits such as the National Safety Council have urged employers to furnish staff with opioid overdose reversal drugs, which have become more common in public spaces such as libraries.

Some states have moved to require the drugs in workplaces. A California bill introduced earlier this year would mandate employers to include naloxone in first-aid kits. Employers in industries such as construction

have moved to supply the medicine, and some airlines, such as Delta, carry the drug on flights. Amazon said it is starting with its fulfillment centers because they are its most densely staffed workplaces, often with thousands of people per facility. Amazon's warehouse staff make up the majority of its roughly 1.5 million employees worldwide.

The company plans to stock at least two doses at each center and train staff on how to administer the medicine, which is delivered as a nasal spray. In an interview, National Safety Council Chief Executive Lorraine Martin said it is important for employees to be knowledgeable about lifesaving methods even when they leave work. She said Amazon's move could spur other companies to roll out similar efforts.

Amazon said it hasn't recorded opioid overdoses at its facilities.

for the Obama administration, said companies stocking Narcan can destigmatize substance use disorder issues in workplaces.

"What that says to employees is that it significantly diminishes the stigma of how their employer views addiction," he said.

Research has linked physically demanding jobs to an increased risk of opioid overdoses. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in 2023 reported that opioid death rates among construction and extraction workers in Massachusetts were six times higher compared with all workers in the state and found similar results with other taxing jobs such as farming. Experts say such jobs can expose workers to opioids due to the injuries sustained in those fields.

Amazon this year reported that its injury rate dropped in 2023, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. It recorded roughly 6.5 injuries out of 200,000 working hours.

The company has introduced educational programs and more automation into its facilities that it said have aided in improving injury rates.

Regulators and other officials have sought to make it easier to obtain Narcan. The Food and Drug Administration last year made it possible for the medication to be sold over-the-counter. Cities and aid groups have also stocked vending machines near drug users to help prevent deaths.

The lawsuit comes at a precarious time for Warner, which is in litigation on several fronts.

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# HEARD ON THE STREET

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS &amp; COMMENTARY

## Why Insurance Bills Won't Come Down

The factors making cars and homes more expensive to insure are difficult to tackle—especially at once

Inflation is rarely a simple thing to address, but rising insurance premiums for people's homes or vehicles might be especially tricky.

Both major-party U.S. presidential candidates have recently talked about these costs for consumers. Former President Donald Trump vowed to cut increases in auto insurance in half. Vice President Kamala Harris, during the presidential debate, talked about the impact of extreme weather events on the price and availability of home insurance.

There is already a lot of regulation of consumer insurance rates by state agencies, and some rising rates have recently shown signs of slowing. Helping to actually get prices down might require addressing some of the underlying causes of premium rises. And while voters might not like higher insurance rates, they won't necessarily love some of the antidotes, either.

Surprisingly, the simplest thing

to address might be general inflation. Already, as consumer-price inflation has eased, so has pressure on some of the costs of covering an auto claim, notably motor-vehicle repair and maintenance. And as claim costs come down, competition can come in. Auto insurers battle for market share and might look to take advantage of easing loss trends by undercutting rivals on price to attract policy shoppers. More than a fifth of personal auto-insurance rate filings effective in the third quarter are for negative average rate changes, according to Swiss Re Institute analysis of state filings.

Economists at the institute this month lowered their forecast for overall property-casualty premium growth across personal and commercial lines in 2025 to 4%, from a prior expectation of 5%. They also increased their 2024 growth estimate to 9.5%, from 8% previously.

But while prices of auto parts or lumber for a new house can go up or down, they aren't the only input. Auto insurers have pointed to multiple factors such as changes in accident frequency and severity. And in general, insurers for houses, autos and businesses also have to consider what is broadly referred to as "exposure." Higher exposure can be driven by much bigger trends such as economic growth, population shifts and increases in the values of what is being insured.

A major factor in the U.S., particularly for home insurance, has been patterns in population growth. Faster growth has come in parts of the country more susceptible not just to hurricanes, but also to a range of so-called secondary perils such as floods, tornadoes, hail storms and wildfires in the U.S. South and West, ac-



Repair work begins on a Utica, Ind., home damaged in a tornado in April.

MATT STONE/USA TODAY/REUTERS

cording to a July report on homeowners insurance by AM Best.

The report also noted that shrinking average household size means that a growing population can result in relatively larger rises in real property development and, in turn, insured values. The ratings agency wrote that "one of the major contributors to the rise in insured losses is population migration into areas where weather-related events are occurring more frequently."

Changes in what is built can add to exposure, too. Newer building materials may be costlier to repair. Hailstones landing on solar panels can also add to a disaster's costs. According to Patrick Hauser, head of energy property in North America for Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, growth in utility-scale solar sites in hail-prone states like Texas over the past 10 years means "the industry is starting to see losses that would not have happened with the same amount of hail in the past."

Insurers for years have been tracking increases in claims costs that aren't readily explainable by price inflation or economic-expo-

sure growth, including for lines such as casualty insurance that cover people rather than property.

Insurers often talk about "social inflation" and link it to things like customers making more frequent claims, more frequent litigation of them and bigger jury awards.

Verisk Analytics recently said its latest models estimate the global insured average annual loss from natural catastrophes at \$151 billion. That is based on current trends for catastrophe events and what impacts losses from those events. The figure is what Verisk, which provides models and data to insurers, says insurers should be prepared for on average annually. It increased by almost twice as much in dollars as it did the prior year.

Climate change plays a role, too, and its effects can compound over time, Verisk said. But its effects year-by-year might not be as significant as other factors in the near term.

Verisk estimated that about 1 percentage point of the 7% average annual growth in its model estimate for average annual insured losses from 2012 to 2024 was re-

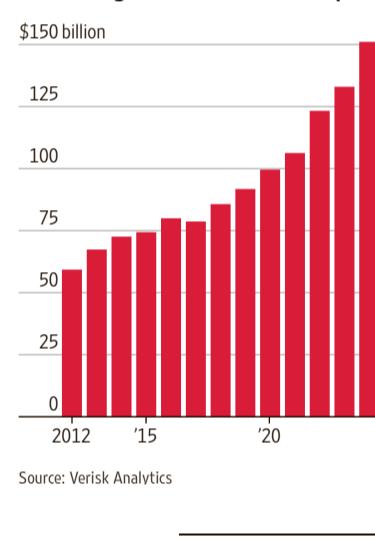
lated to identifiable factors linked to climate change, such as the frequency or intensity of events.

Being adequately prepared for longer-term changes to risk also could continue to push up what it costs for insurers to buy their own insurance. Pricing for so-called reinsurance—which is often intended to cover the most extreme events—has risen sharply over the past couple years, and coverage terms have tightened. This reset was sparked in part by higher interest rates leading to a reduction in capital supplied to the sector.

But even as profitability for reinsurers has jumped, and as interest rates come down, providers aren't expected to start giving dramatic concessions, having struggled in the past to keep up with rising loss costs.

Any number of economic measures might help take some of the pressure off insurance rates, including fighting price inflation, addressing climate change and ways to mitigate its effects, and lowering interest rates. The trouble is that big changes might require doing all of them, and more.

—Telis Demos



Freshly cast silver ingots cool in their molds at a Russian foundry.

## Silver Is Having A Golden Moment

All that glitters isn't just gold—it's also silver.

The commodity's price is up about 34% so far this year, outpacing gold, which keeps hitting record highs. Year to date, about \$856 million has flowed into the iShares Silver Trust, an exchange-traded fund that owns physical silver bullion, according to FactSet. **Wheaton Precious Metals**, a company that owns the rights to precious metals from mines, including gold and silver, is up about 30%.

Demand for silver has been strong, both as a store of value and as an industrial commodity. The Silver Institute, an industry association, estimates that demand for silver has been outrunning supply for the past three years. It projects another deficit this year.

One reason is that mine production has been weak. More than 70% of mined silver is a byproduct of other metals, such as lead, zinc, copper and gold. Prices for zinc have been weak, prompting mine closures. Last year, a major mine in Mexico—the world's top supplier—didn't operate for four months because of a strike.

At the same time, demand from industrial uses has been growing, in large part thanks to solar-panel manufacturing, where silver is in-

tegral. Solar-sector demand for silver jumped 158% from 2019 to 2023, according to the Silver Institute. The group expects that demand to grow an additional 20% this year.

The market would be roughly in balance if not for investors' taste for silver coins and bars. This year's silver rally has been driven in part by investors looking to precious metals as a store of value on signs of weakening in the U.S. economy, according to Max Layton, global head of commodities research at Citi Research. Expectations of lower rates are another reason why: Demand for non-interest-bearing assets tends to rise when rates decline. Gold prices have appreciated precisely for those reasons, and silver prices are historically linked to gold.

For now, there is still plenty of silver stacked away in vaults to cushion deficits. There was about 15 months of annual mined silver supply stored in London and exchange-registered vaults at the end of 2023, according to a report from the Silver Institute. But those inventories have dwindled by about 26% over the past two years. The Silver Institute and Citi Research each expect another market deficit in 2024, which implies that aboveground silver stocks could fall further.

What else might drive silver prices even higher? Worth watching is China, where Layton says weakness in the property and consumer sectors is driving up appetite for silver as a store of value at the same time that the country's aggressive build-out of solar energy and electric vehicles is stoking demand for it as an industrial commodity. This differs from commodities such as oil, which are negatively affected by China's so-called bifurcated economy, and other metals such as gold, which enjoy retail demand from weakened property prices but not so much from the clean-energy transition.

Notably, China in August issued quotas on gold imports for several Chinese banks, according to a report from Reuters. This might be diverting retail investment toward silver, according to a report from Citi, which notes that the country's silver-bullion imports—a proxy for retail demand—went from almost nothing to more than \$100 million earlier this year. If China shifts to buying silver at just 10% of the pace it has been buying gold, that could lead to demand that equates to about 20% of mined silver supply, according to Citi.

Another catalyst worth watching is the Fed's trajectory. If the central bank keeps cutting interest rates, that could stimulate more demand for gold and silver. Secondly, if lower interest rates encourage more industrial activity in the U.S., especially debt-reliant solar projects, that could further drive up silver demand.

Silver seems poised to sparkle a while longer.

—Jinjoo Lee



## The Ski Industry Is Heading Downhill

There are early signs that not as many skiers will be hitting the slopes this winter

As investors watch companies catering to lower income consumers struggle—for example, Dollar General and Dollar Tree are among the worst performers this year in the S&P 500—investors have been counting on rich people to keep doing rich-people things.

Skiing is one of them. While one might think of golf, sailing or tennis first, a 2006 study showed that the share of wealthy households is highest among alpine skiers. That might be more true today as the cost has risen along with global warming and industry consolidation. Vail Resorts is the leader in that trend, having grown from 10 resorts a decade ago to 42 today in four countries, including iconic ones such as Vail Mountain, Breckenridge, Park City and Whistler Blackcomb.

Vail's results Thursday evening—along with the company's announcement of a "transformation plan" that would include 14% of its corporate workforce transitioning to no longer working for them—might be worth paying attention to. While there isn't snow to ski on yet this time of year, it is prime season for season-ticket sales. The prices during the quarter had risen an average of 8% but the units sold fell 3% year-over-year, the company said.

That is coming off a very good postpandemic run indeed for skiing in the U.S., according to the National Ski Areas Association. A record 65.4 million visits were made during the 2022-2023 season. Skiing is very weather-dependent too, of course, but it is hard not to notice a connection between the stock market and the propensity to hit the piste. For example, skiing hit a record in the 2007-2008 season, cracking 60 million for the first time, according to NSAA, and then fell to 57.4 million as a deep recession hit. Likewise, in the 2000-2001 season, with stock-market wealth near a peak, it hit a then-record 57.3 mil-



At Vail, season-ticket sales are behind last year's pace.

lion before falling to 54.4 million a year later, during a recession.

Vail says on its website that prices for its season passes will rise in two weeks, but that for now an Epic Pass entitling adult purchasers to ski at nearly all of its resorts costs \$1,025 while peak day passes are \$135. That compares with prices in the \$720 to \$830 range for a five-day visit to Disney World, for example. Visits from Disney's more middle-class clientele have slipped because of the high cost after years of rising prices and overflowing crowds.

It is easier to expand a chain of amusement parks than to develop a new ski resort—they aren't making any new mountains—but even skiing could be bumping up against some limits. Merely upper-middle-class skiers might be thinking twice, and that could become more apparent if paper gains on stocks evaporate.

—Spencer Jakab

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# REVIEW

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## Netanyahu's War: The Tactics of a Political Survivor

A year after the attack by Hamas, Israel's prime minister is showing his talent for political comebacks while the country slides deeper into the most complex crisis in its history.

By Marcus Walker, Carrie Keller-Lynn and Alexander Ward



Above, Benjamin Netanyahu attends Holocaust remembrance ceremonies in Jerusalem, May 6. Left, Israeli forces near the Lebanon border amid rising hostilities with Hezbollah, Sept. 27.

**O**n Sept. 16, as Israel's security chiefs discussed a plan to detonate the pagers of the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, Benjamin Netanyahu's attention was divided.

The meeting inside the military's Tel Aviv headquarters was about options to strike a series of blows against the Islamist group. But Israel's prime minister was also preoccupied with machinations to shore up his power by sacking his defense minister, Yoav Gallant—who was sitting at the table.

Israel's defense and intelligence chiefs watched as Netanyahu's political and me-

dia advisers passed him notes about the plan to fire Gallant, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The move might help Netanyahu to maintain the military draft exemption for ultra-Orthodox Jews, keep religious parties happy and prolong his fragile coalition. But ousting Gallant also might deepen Netanyahu's tensions with Israel's security establishment, energizing street protests and exacerbating friction with Washington. He decided to put Gallant's removal on hold while Israel escalated its fight with Hezbollah.

For many people involved in Israel's multi-front war in the year since Oct. 7,

the incident was just another instance of Netanyahu's propensity to combine statecraft and political calculation. It's an approach that has helped him keep his grip on power even as his country slides deeper into the most complex crisis in its history.

Israel is struggling to use its superior military to restore the security that the country lost when Hamas launched its deadly attack a year ago, killing nearly 1,200 people and taking around 250 hostages. The scale of death and destruction from Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza, which Palestinian officials say has killed more than 40,000 militants and ci-

vilians in Gaza, has made Israel a pariah in much of the world.

Netanyahu's own political campaign is going better. The shock of Oct. 7 turned the self-styled "Mr. Security" into "Mr. Abandonment," as critics in Israel have dubbed him because so many Israeli hostages remain in Gaza. For months during the early stages of the war he was written off as his popularity collapsed and lawmakers of his right-wing Likud party discussed replacing him. Now he is steadily repairing his status, outwitting rivals and winning back a plurality of voters' support in recent polls.

His latest comeback in a long career of Houdini-like escape shows that "Bibi," as he is widely known, hasn't lost his political skills. "His strategy of playing for time is working," said a Likud colleague. But even people in his own camp worry that it has come at the expense of delayed decisions, the danger of a military quagmire on three fronts, growing burdens on Israeli society and deepening international isolation.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Friday, Netanyahu lambasted criticism of Israel, including accusations of war crimes in Gaza, calling them driven by antisemitism. He vowed to fight for "total victory" over Hamas, warned Iran that "if you strike us, we will strike you," and added: "Israel will win this battle, because we don't have a choice." Shortly after the speech, Israel targeted Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah with a massive airstrike in Beirut, flattening part of a neighborhood. It wasn't immediately clear

Please turn to the next page

### Inside

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The untold battles of the female pioneers who weathered harassment and meager pay to break into the old boys' club of finance. **C4**



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Paneer is old news. India's growing middle class is now hungry for cheddar and brie. **C5**

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Maggie Smith, who routinely stole scenes with pursed lips and a raised eyebrow, dies at 89. **C6**



#### PUNK PAYDAY

Keurig and Green Day carry on the age-old tradition of commodifying rebellion. **C3**



## REVIEW



## 'Mr. Security' Fights to Protect Israel and Himself

*Continued from the prior page*  
whether Nasrallah had been killed.

### Against the left

Hamas's Oct. 7 attack marked the collapse of Israel's confidence, during Netanyahu's long years in power, that it could contain the conflict with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu, who turns 75 in October, has overtaken Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion as its longest-serving leader, with 17 total years in office. The U.S.-educated former special-forces officer and management consultant, known for pugnacious rhetoric and a sharp intellect, deeply believes he is the only leader who can guarantee Israel's security, say present and former colleagues.

"Everyone knows that I am the one who for decades blocked the establishment of a Palestinian state that would endanger our existence," Netanyahu said early this year, rebuffing U.S. efforts to revive the peace process. The U.S.-style campaign methods that he brought to Israel, from intensive market research to attack ads, often turn bluntly to security themes: One campaign ad in 2015 showed a jeep full of ISIS fighters asking an Israeli for the way to Jerusalem. "Turn left," comes the reply. "The left surrenders to terror," the ad concluded.

Despite his warnings about terrorism, Netanyahu for years sought to manage the Hamas-run regime in Gaza through economic incentives, including Qatari financing. The theory was that money and occasional airstrikes would tame and deter Hamas. It proved a disastrous miscalculation.

By 2019, Netanyahu, facing indictment in three corruption cases, was billing himself as Israel's strongman, standing shoulder to shoulder with Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump on campaign posters under a slogan suggesting he was in "Another League"—among giants on the world stage. But a series of deadlocked elections showed his power weakening.

In late 2022, Netanyahu restored his parliamentary majority by allying with two small ultranationalist parties. He launched a controversial plan to curtail the powers of Israel's supreme court, sparking mass demonstrations by Israelis who feared Netanyahu was trying to dismantle the country's constitutional checks and balances.

Security chiefs warned Netanyahu that the turmoil was raising the risk of a major attack on Israel by militant groups such as Hezbollah. Defense minister Gallant called for shelving the judicial overhaul in the name of national security. In March 2023, a furious Netanyahu announced he was firing Gallant, sparking a huge public protest, then took back the firing.

### Delaying tactics

Gallant, a hawkish former general, would become Netanyahu's main antagonist within his own party in the government's arguments over how to manage the war since Oct. 7.

Days after Hamas's onslaught, with Israelis in shock, Netanyahu had to decide which enemy to pursue and how. Gallant argued for first hitting Hezbollah, the stronger of the two adversaries, and which began attacking northern Israel with missiles on Oct. 8 in solidarity with Hamas.

Israeli intelligence had spied a



unique but fleeting opportunity to take out Hezbollah's top leaders, according to several people familiar with the matter. But Netanyahu was cautious about that move. In a phone call, President Biden, who wanted to avoid a wider regional war, opposed attacking in Lebanon. Israel and Hezbollah settled into daily exchanges of fire that battered the border zone in both countries.

Biden also urged Netanyahu not to launch a full invasion of Gaza, warning that it could become a quagmire for Israel while causing massive civilian casualties for Palestinians. "Just don't do it," he told the Israeli leader in one call. Netanyahu was persuaded by Gallant's argument that an invasion was necessary and doable and by his own reading of the public mood.

But Netanyahu and Gallant were soon at odds over how to destroy Hamas. The defense minister and army chiefs argued that military force wasn't enough: Israel needed a political plan for Gaza too.

Gallant proposed working with local Gazans, the Palestinian Authority that governs parts of the West Bank, and Arab governments. Over many months, he repeatedly urged Netanyahu to discuss the matter at cabinet level and draw up plans, according to several officials familiar with the debates.

Netanyahu kept delaying the discussion, saying it was premature to discuss Gaza's future governance and that the military should focus on completely destroying Hamas.

The military thought the political problem was already pressing. The lack of an alternative authority was allowing Hamas to regroup and reassert itself in areas of Gaza where Israeli forces had suppressed them and moved on.

The Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, confronted Netanyahu about the problem in May. In the absence of a plan, Israeli troops were fighting repeatedly to clear the same neighborhoods, he said. "It will be a Sisyphean task."

In effect, Israel was aiming for regime change in Gaza with no plan for a new regime.

Netanyahu's far-right coalition al-

### Netanyahu is steadily repairing his status, outwitting rivals and winning back a plurality of voters' support in recent polls.

lies had opposite ideas to the military. They wanted to reoccupy Gaza, which Israel pulled out of in 2005, and bring back Jewish settlements there. They were adamantly against involving the Palestinian Authority.

Netanyahu decided not to decide. It was characteristic of his leadership style over the years, according to many past and present Israeli officials. Admirers and critics say he collects options, maintains his room for maneuver and doesn't take decisions until he has to.

"He sees himself as Churchill, but the difference is Churchill was a great decision maker and not a great politician, whereas Bibi is a great politician but not a great decision maker," said Michael Oren, a historian and former Israeli ambassador to the U.S. for Netanyahu.

Hamas's military wing has suffered huge losses, according to the Israelis and Hamas's own communications with Arab governments. But once the fighting ends, Israeli military officials fear Hamas will reconstitute itself and impose its authority once again over Gaza's population and devastated cities—because there is nobody else.

### Bibi vs. Biden

As the war dragged on, Netanyahu faced calls from both defense chiefs and the U.S. to save the roughly 100 hostages who remained in Gaza, a rising number of whom were being killed.

After months of indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas, Biden tried to break the deadlock on May 31, in a speech that outlined a three-stage cease-fire plan. He presented it as Israel's own proposal, while also phrasing it in a way that Hamas might accept.

But Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was only prepared to hand over his hostages if it guaranteed an end to the war. Netanyahu wanted the option to resume the fighting.

Under pressure from his far-right coalition partners, who threatened to leave the government if a ceasefire let Hamas survive, Netanyahu vowed to pursue his goal of "total victory."

While Hamas softened its stance on a guaranteed end to the war, Netanyahu hardened Israel's demands on other aspects of the cease-fire plan. He insisted on keeping military control of a narrow nine-mile zone along Gaza's border with Egypt, which Israelis call the Philadelphia corridor. Exasperated U.S. officials felt the issue didn't need to be sorted out until later in the deal's implementation.

Still, Hamas has been the number-one obstacle to a deal, said a senior U.S. official. "We still don't know what Sinwar would sign," he said.

In late July, after giving a speech to Congress that won more than 50 standing ovations, Netanyahu got an earful from Biden in the Oval Office. Biden pressed the Israeli leader to stop dragging his feet in the cease-fire talks, saying the delay was costing lives and that saving the hostages—several of whom are U.S. citizens—was an American priority.

Netanyahu assured the president that he wanted a deal but said Hamas was the one that kept moving the goal posts. Biden responded coldly: "It needs to be done in days, not weeks."

Days later in Tehran, Israel assassinated its top Hamas interlocutor, the group's political chief Ismail Haniyeh. The White House was furious about the timing. Biden vented his anger to a defensive Netanyahu on the phone, according to people familiar with their discussions.

At a meeting of Israel's security cabinet in late August, Gallant argued that Israel had to choose between the Philadelphia corridor and saving the hostages. Failure to agree to a ceasefire would leave Israel bogged down in Gaza while the risk of a wider regional war was growing, said Gallant,

**Top, Hezbollah supporters mourn militants killed when their pagers exploded in an Israeli attack, Sept. 18. Below, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant answer questions together three weeks after Hamas's Oct. 7 attack.**

saying the country was at a "strategic juncture."

Netanyahu and Gallant began arguing over maps showing planned Israeli troop deployments in the corridor, and the meeting became a shouting match, according to two officials familiar with the event. Netanyahu called a vote and rallied other ministers in favor of keeping control of the corridor. Gallant was isolated.

Two days later, on the night of Aug. 31, Israeli troops discovered the bodies of six hostages who had recently been executed by their Hamas guards in a tunnel. Their deaths, which followed other discoveries of dead hostages, sparked some of the biggest Israeli street protests against the government since the start of the war, with more than 100,000 gathering in Tel Aviv.

Gallant urged the cabinet to rethink the decision on the Philadelphia corridor, calling it "a moral disgrace." But the far-right ministers said any concessions to Hamas would incentivize murder. Netanyahu said Hamas would smuggle hostages out of Gaza if Israel didn't control the border zone—a fear the military sees as unfounded.

Many families of hostages were in despair. "Netanyahu decided to continue the war, knowing it will lead to the hostages being killed," said Gil Dickmann, a psychology student from Tel Aviv. Hamas killed Dickmann's aunt on Oct. 7 and kidnapped two other relatives. His cousin's wife was freed during a week-long pause in the fighting in November. Another cousin, Carmel Gat, was among the six executed by Hamas in late August.

"Of course Hamas is to blame for this whole thing. But as citizens of Israel we're supposed to look to our government," said Dickmann. "He had the chance to get her out," he said of the prime minister. "He chose not to."

### Rallying the base

It isn't by chance that Netanyahu has picked fights with Biden, Gallant and the pro-hostage demonstrators, say many longtime Bibi watchers.

His rebuffs to all three have helped him to cement a narrative: that he's the only leader strong enough to stand up to the U.S., the defense establishment and the liberals in Tel Aviv.

"Bibi is a narrative factory," said a former Israeli official. "He understands how ideas trend, where the ball will be in a few weeks." Netanyahu is a master at changing the conversation, reframing every crisis as himself versus the left, say many people who have worked with him. And he's simply better at it than anyone else in Israeli politics, they say.

It's not that Netanyahu adopts positions for purely instrumental reasons, insist present and past colleagues. He believes what he says and often has a strong argument for his view, these people say. It's just that his stances always suit his political survival strategy too.

"For everything that happens, there is a good reason, and there's the real reason," said another former senior official.

In the small town of Or Akiva, an hour north of Tel Aviv but a world away from its fashionable café-lined boulevards, Netanyahu's wartime narrative resonates.

The working-class town, built in the 1950s to house poor Jewish immigrants arriving from Middle Eastern countries and the former Soviet bloc, has long been staunchly conservative. Many felt looked down upon by the left-wing elite that built Israel.

Sometimes Netanyahu himself visits Or Akiva from his home in wealthy next-door Caesarea, joining local supporters for the Moroccan Jewish festival of Mimouna, or for a coffee with Likud organizers at the town's mall.

Local Likud leader Shimon Maimon Levi said he's happier now about the government's management of the war than he was earlier. "I trust Bibi because he knows what he's doing," said Levi. "The protesters want to replace Bibi at any price. They're taking advantage of the hostage families to bring down the government."

"I feel Bibi is alone in the system," said Dalia Cohen, a retiree from Or Akiva and avid watcher of the pro-Netanyahu TV Channel 14. Israel's military and intelligence chiefs failed to keep the prime minister informed about the Oct. 7 attack, she said. "Gallant has failed us. He puts American interests ahead of Israel's interests."

Israel's defense chiefs, said Cohen, are "horrible. They have a defeatist mentality. They're the ones who brought us to Oct. 7."

## REVIEW

BY CHARLES BOCK

**B**efore my wife Diana died, in 2011, she told me to wait a year before dating again. This made sense, in theory. But an abstinent year was a long haul in real time, especially after two and a half years of Diana's struggle with leukemia, which, as you might guess, had been hugely sad and exhausting, and during which—for reasons that also are apparent—I hadn't had any sex. And before she got sick, there had been the year when Diana was pregnant with and then caring for our daughter Lily.

I'd survived six months before taking off my wedding ring, replacing it by tattooing onto my ring finger the two symbols—an om and a heart—that Diana had written in her final diary. Another month had passed before I ventured onto a website that not only rated sex workers but provided contact info for them. But \$500 a pop, the going rate, was both prohibitive and ridiculous.

Diana and I had married before internet dating took off. Since then, I'd been like every other locked-down, married man on the spinning globe in that I'd followed the rise of this proverbial new Eden from the other side of the Plexiglas window. It was every hetero man's fantasy: click, meet a girl, have sex, click again and meet another girl. Only we'd moved beyond the realm of fantasy.

Now I was in my mid-40s, a time of life when you look in the mirror and see deterioration, when a man objectively wonders whether any real live women would be willing to get naked for him ever again. I didn't want a girlfriend; that was a no-brainer. I didn't have the time or mental energy to be seriously interested in anyone.

Diana used to indulge all my idiotic rock 'n' roll preferences, my bizarre fandoms. She'd read countless drafts of my doorstop of a novel, showed concern for me if my face was too gaunt, when I was chained too long to my desk without deodorant. She also stepped up, when she had to, and challenged me about my antisocial inclinations. At the end of the night we walked the dog together, watched rented movies on the couch, engaged in the deep conversation that comes with true emotional intimacy.

I couldn't imagine the brick-by-brick reconstruction of all that. Real talk: I was nowhere near ready. And as for introducing some imaginary girlfriend to Lily...

All of which is why, in the middle of a random weekday afternoon, I dipped my figurative toe into the pulsing, virtual cesspool known as AshleyMadison.com, a website whose members are married but are seeking sex outside that marriage. Yeah, Ashley Madison seemed tailor-made for me.

Returning from a trip to the bathroom; discreetly flipping away from my writing program's window; switching tabs and logging back in—for a discovery. A response. Electricity shot through me. Someone was interested, and not just any someone. Late 20s, looked like.



## My Wife's Death Led Me Into the World of Online Hook-Ups

For novelist **Charles Bock**, becoming a widower meant discovering the 'pulsing virtual cesspool' of Ashley Madison.

Winking profile, flirtatious. I sent what I hoped was a well-crafted greeting, one that conveyed proper enthusiasm, hopefully even a spark of cleverness: "Okay. Your photos just blew my mind straight through my brain." Within 10 minutes I got an answer—a smiley-face emoticon—and followed up, volleyed, worked my way into: Maybe she wanted to chat?

"URCute" was her response. "I'm def interested. Only thing. I've had problems w/ stalkers. AshMad won't do anything. For my safety, could you just register at this site?" She included a link, apologized for the small sign-up fee. I stopped corresponding, kept getting follow-ups, "UR so sexy. Just register alreddy so

we can have fun." At which point I realized: I was not chatting with a person but some kind of bot.

Reader, even this felt like progress—maybe not success, not a date, but something happening, or almost happening. Fact is, the great majority of my attempts had been going straight into the ether, had been ignored, or had been brutally shot down—by adulterers, of all people. One time I got catfished and eventually discovered I was dealing with an online prostitute, a woman who was obviously insane, on meth and out of my price range.

This still didn't stop me. I was a starving man in a dumpster, and I kept adjusting my profile, sending texts while watching my kid attempt

backbends. An aging party girl kept posting shots of empty Hamptons beaches. She was couch-surfing through the offseason; we had a few great chats; I thought I had a shot. In certain terms, she let me know she was looking to land a hedge-fund hubby.

I had lunch with a lovely sad Yemeni woman, in her mid-30s, whose high-powered husband was never around. During our conversation, I reached beneath the table, touched her stocking knee and pressed. The flash that took her, that connected us, was tangible, her desire suddenly electric. She was exotic, a platinum blonde, dark skinned. She wore a prim white jacket. Her face was just as it had been five seconds

earlier; at the same time, it was transformed, near tears, simultaneously frightened and so erotic as to be paralyzing.

We still had our orders coming. Neither of us knew what was next. We kept chatting. By the time our meal ended, it was clear the moment had passed, her desires were going to stay bottled—at least, with me.

A nice woman was stuck on Long Island, trapped in an open marriage. She'd rather have been locked down and happy, and she was pissed at hubby, looking for retribution. We exchanged a few emails, ended up walking along the High Line. Obliviously to the chilled afternoon, I asked if she wanted ice cream. Ice cream was innocent, reaching back into childhood. Ice cream also was creamy, melting on the tongue.

I bought this lovely unhappy woman a cup of chocolate mint and talked her into going to the last hourly hotel in Chelsea. Our kisses were heated. My first time having sex since my marriage. Every second felt foreign, wrong, and at the same time sacred. Afterwards, she sent an affectionate email. I replied with warmth. That was the only time we met.

Sex was a significant part of what these women were searching for. I see this now. I also understand they had not been receiving emotional intimacy from their husbands, no exciting sparks from the people in their lives, no needed embraces from the outside world. Ashley Madison promised they could be wanted, mooned over, valued as womanly, sexual beings without throwing away the lives they'd built. And they also got to embark on something new, which is always a thrill—to define (or redefine) themselves for someone new, to flit, be worthwhile in new eyes, explore new attractions: They got a secret.

Granted, recognizing all this, especially in retrospect, is not quantum physics. Still, when it was happening, if you'd read those previous sentences to me, I would have nodded, *right*. Then, boom, emotional intimacy would have been one more tool, something I had to provide, promise or feign. "The secret of success is sincerity," goes the famed quote attributed to forgotten playwright Jean Giraudoux. "Once you can fake that, you've got it made."

*Charles Bock is a novelist. This essay is adapted from his new book, "I Will Do Better: A Father's Memoir of Heartbreak, Parenting, and Love," which will be published on Oct. 1 by Abrams.*

KYLE ELINGSON

## What's More Punk Than Selling Out?

BY ZACHARY LIPEZ

**I**n a perfect punk world, where the Dead Kennedys are bigger than the Beatles, the announcement that Green Day is joining forces with Keurig Dr Pepper would be met with howls.

The beverage behemoth recently released a "limited-edition brewer and coffee kit" to mark the 20th anniversary of "American Idiot," Green Day's "punk rock opera," which skewered America's post-9/11 jingoism and corporate greed. The kit, which includes a Keurig coffee machine, branded tumbler and some K-cup pods, retails for \$159.99. Released in August, it's already sold out.

The surface incongruity of this pairing is jarring. The scruffy rockers of Green Day (Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt, Tré Cool) are so subversive that they sing in Cockney accents and have a drummer with a French name, despite being from the Bay Area. Keurig Dr Pepper is a confusingly named Vermont-Texas,



coffee-soft drink conglomerate with an annual revenue north of \$14 billion.

Although Green Day was one of the first punk bands of the '90s to sign with a major record label and make famous the oft-maligned subgenre of "pop-punk" (where the ambition is right there in the name), there was a time when that wouldn't have been enough to stem the cries of "sell out!" Now the band's foray into caffeinated merchandising evokes eye rolls, if it's noticed at all.

Contempt for "selling out" was once a defining feature of

punk rock. A raucous and more aggressively insolent sort of rock 'n' roll, invented by the Peruvian band Los Sarcos in 1964 and popularized by the sneering Sex Pistols in the '70s, punk has gone through countless cycles of death and rebirth. But a foundational principle was an aversion to mainstream power and commerce. For acolytes, the notion of punks doing punk things for money was heresy.

Such idealism has proven impractical. That companies might want to commodify a youth culture predicated on

Green Day poses with the Keurig x Green Day 'American Idiot' Anniversary Edition Brewer Bundle.

catchy tunes and hotties in leatherette is hardly shocking. That even the punkiest of rockers may have material desires and expenses is also unsurprising. The Clash's 1979 song "Death or Glory" warned against "digging gold from rock 'n' roll." By 1991, the band's hit single "Should I Stay or Should I Go" was shilling Levi's denim.

Plenty of purists were duly aghast at the time. They were also horrified by the rise of the Vans Warped Tour, a traveling shoe commercial stocked with pop-punk acts, which began pandering to impressionable suburban tweens in 1995.

But by 2003, when Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life" was in an ad for Royal Caribbean, critics could muster only some sardonic "maybe he can now buy a shirt" jokes. By the time Country Life butter ran ads in the U.K. starring former Sex Pistol John Lydon in 2008, the response was bemused shrugs.

Lydon was unapologetic. "They turned my life around," he said of Country Life. "I've got butter to thank for it and I've eaten plenty since."

When Keurig announced its deal with Green Day, some quipped that punk was finally truly dead. Actually, few fans seem to care. After all, if cynicism is a kind of wisdom, then perhaps it's inevitable that those who rail against the system will also hope to be its beneficiaries. Who can blame them? There are still plenty of punk bands playing garages and basements, swearing they'll never use their screaming to sell butter. But punk was designed for speed, not long-term planning, and at some point everyone has to pay rent. Idealism, after all, is for hippies.

As punk pushes 60, there's something heartening about its hypochondriac obsession with its health. All these existential questions—Who's punk? What's punk?—can be seen as evidence of its vitality. So, no, punk is not dead. Thanks to Keurig's new K-cups, it's not even sleeping.

Zachary Lipez is Editor at Large for CREEM, author of *The Abundant Living newsletter* and the singer for the band Publicist UK.

KEURIG DR PEPPER (KDP)

## REVIEW

# What Wall Street's Women Pioneers Had to Put Up With

The untold battles of women in finance who broke into the old boys' club—and stayed.

BY PAULINA BREN

**W**hen women first arrived on Wall Street in the 1950s and '60s, there was a playbook they were expected to follow if they wanted any chance of success.

"Wall Street" was still centered around actual Wall Street, a compact area with not only the major firms—JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Bear Stearns—but also many smaller brokerage houses. A veritable army of female secretaries, teletypists and data-entry clerks would pour out of the subways in the early morning, daring to enter this male bastion in heels and skirt. Those who started to climb the ladder usually found their foothold in the smaller firms. They put up with a lot, none of it subtle, all of it exacerbated by the two-martini lunch.

To Bernadette Murphy, coming from the nautically tinged neighborhood of City Island in the Bronx, Wall Street's harbor salt air smelled like home. Yet working as an assistant in a trading department in the late '50s, taking trade orders and writing letters for her firm's partners, she also was in hostile territory.

She found herself fending off men in the office who offered her trips to Paris or a new wardrobe in return for sexual favors. Her response, repeated by countless women across hundreds of offices for decades, before sexual harassment was a definable legal infraction: "Don't be silly! What would your wife say?"

Women on Wall Street had to have a thick skin and perseverance to navigate past the wrong kind of attention while vying for the right kind. But if you had all that, you could perhaps get somewhere.

Beth Dater certainly did. A Boston University graduate turned Pan Am flight attendant, she married a pilot in the late '60s who asked her to stop flying. A temp agency sent her first to pass out chocolate-cherry bonbons in a parking lot dressed up as Miss Mon Cheri, and then to the offices of Lehman Brothers CEO Robert "Bobbie" Lehman to pick up the phones. Like so many early women of Wall Street, she got her start answering the phones—watching, listening and learning. Before long, she was auditioning at Fiduciary Trust Company as a research analyst-in-training.

Female research analysts led the way up the ladder because, not needing to be visible, they could

**The NYSE's first female member had to use a male trader as her proxy.**

hide behind initials that effectively rendered them men, or at least genderless. In 1970, when Wall Street was put on notice about its hiring practices at New York City's Human Rights Commission hearings, only Merrill Lynch was able to boast that as many as seven of its 26 industry specialists were women. But as one of them, Mary Wrenn, noted: "For a long time, those who read my reports didn't know whether I was Miss or Mr. Wrenn."

Mary Farrell came to Wall Street the next year, having answered an ad for a securities analysts trainee at Pershing & Co.—mistaking it for a theater-related job because of the firm's Broadway address. She was hired because the director there boasted that he'd figured out that hiring women was a way to snag inexpensive talent.

Later, at Smith Barney, she went to report an incident in an elevator—an executive had pushed her up against the wall and groped her—and found the director of HR crying because something similar had happened to her that same day. When Mary returned to the office on Monday, the HR director was gone, but she'd left a parting gift on Mary's desk: a list of the salaries in her department. Mary learned she was being paid exactly half of what the lowest paid male analyst was making.

To some women, even half of a male Wall Street salary seemed like good pay; it was more in actual dollars than most women in America were making.

But it enraged Muriel "Mickie" Siebert, an early pioneer who arrived in New York in a broken-down Studebaker in 1954 and catapulted ahead as a successful airline industry analyst. She also knew that trading—entirely off limits to women—was where the real money was.

Frustrated that she couldn't sit at the big table making the big deals at a major firm (she was told she'd still have to sit with the typists), a friend suggested she buy her own seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

It turned out the NYSE constitution did not bar women (the founders hadn't had the foresight!). Hurdles were plentiful anyway, but on Dec. 28, 1967, Siebert became the first female NYSE member. It had cost her close to half a million dollars for a white metal badge with the number 2646 embossed in red. She referred to it as "the most expensive piece of jewelry going."

Still, to avoid conflicts, she promised not to set foot on the floor: She would use an independent, "two-dollar" male floor broker as her proxy.



Top, a woman reads from a ticker-tape machine at the New York Stock Exchange in the 1960s. Bottom left, Muriel Siebert, who became the NYSE's first female member in 1967, on the exchange floor during her term as state superintendent of banking (1977-82). Bottom right, Maureen Sherry at her Bear Stearns baby shower in 1995.

Almost a decade later in 1976, Alice Jarcho became the first woman to actually trade on the floor, and she encountered what Siebert feared. Jarcho wasn't ready for the lewd remarks, the dildoes sent down the pneumatic tubes, the anonymous threatening calls that led to a temporary police escort.

But by 1980, when Jarcho left the NYSE floor to become the number two on the Shearson American Express institutional trading desk, a seismic shift on Wall Street and on college campuses was about to take place. Women in business schools were now becoming commonplace, a leap forward from 1963, when the first class of eight female students arrived at Harvard Business School only to be interrogated by the men about why they were taking the place of legitimate breadwinners.

Female graduates from the Ivy Leagues and graduate business schools started to pour in like a gold rush. Beth Dater, always elegantly attired, rolled her eyes at these newcomers in their sneakers and suits, their office heels tucked away in a monogrammed Lands' End canvas

tote. But even she started to feel a tad insecure that unlike them, she did not possess an MBA.

The fact was that the difficult pathway Dater and her cohort had taken—many of them college dropouts and all overcoming obstacles to turn support roles into stepping-stones—was fast closing. The new Wall Street woman belonged to an entirely different universe.

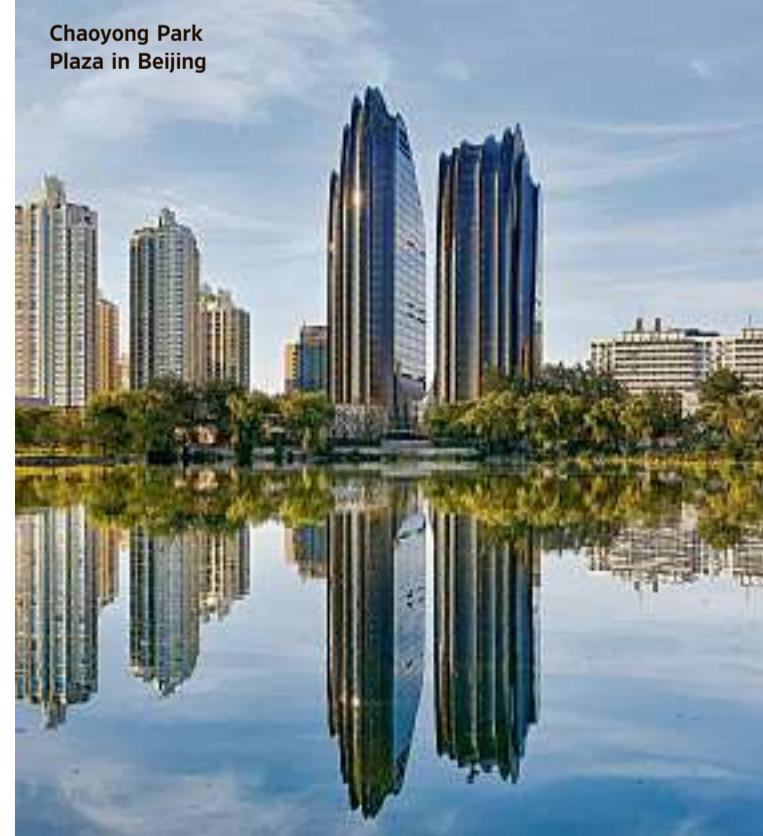
But did she penetrate the all-boys' club any better than her predecessors? It was telling that in the insider trading scandals of the late 1980s, which resulted in Michael Milken and Ivan Boesky and others serving time, not one woman was indicted. This wasn't a badge of integrity; it was a sign that women did not yet fully belong.

Yet belonging was vital. In the 1990s, on the notorious Bear Stearns trading floor, Maureen Sherry, a Cornell University graduate who'd benefited from a boss with a busy social schedule who'd sent her to meetings in his stead, watched (and laughed) as inflatable sex dolls flew through the air, men punching at them to keep them aloft.

When she and other top-level Bear Stearns women had had enough, they started meeting to share information, as well as to get the lowdown on the current predators, and eventually agreed to call out the worst of whatever they experienced. But their efforts largely proved futile because after all these years, they were suddenly drawing a line in the sand that hadn't been there before. Their male colleagues were confused: If a sexual innuendo was fine yesterday, why not today?

In recent decades, women have certainly dealt themselves into the Wall Street game, thrived and had fun doing it, but they haven't gotten as far as they'd expected. In 2022, women held only 12% of the managing director posts and 16% of principal and partner positions at private-equity firms. Perhaps it's finally time to rewrite that playbook.

*Paulina Bren, a historian and professor at Vassar College, is the author of "She-Wolves: The Untold History of Women on Wall Street," published on Sept. 17 by Norton, from which this essay is adapted.*



**CHINESE ARCHITECTS SAY** that the last two decades should be called Dangdangdai, "right, right now," thanks to the dizzying modernness of the country's new buildings. Shanghai Tower, completed in 2015, is the tallest skyscraper in China and the third-tallest in the world; with its twisting, curving shape, it almost seems to be in motion. Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts looks like an enormous metallic egg rising out of a lake, while a concert hall in Xuzhou imitates the shape of the crepe myrtle plant, whose flower is the city's symbol.

In the new book "Modern Chinese Architecture" (Oro), art historian Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt shows that these ultra-new buildings are just the latest chapter in a story that began in the 19th century, when Shanghai saw an explosion of chic Western-style buildings. Chinese and Western styles blend dazzlingly in the 1935 Dahua Movie Theater in Nanjing, designed by Yang Tingbao, one of 20th-century China's leading architects.

Beijing's Chaoyang Park Plaza (2017) is the work of MAD Architects, a firm in the capital founded by Ma Yansong. The design for the 10-building project was in-

## EXHIBIT

## Glass Walls of China



Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts

spired by traditional Chinese landscape paintings, and the two tall, dark office towers that dominate the complex have drawn comparisons to mountain peaks. They combine a rich, retro feel with high-tech amenities: "Vertical fins on their glass facades offer energy-efficient ventilation and filtration," Steinhardt writes, while "a pond at the base of the towers not only reflects the buildings but also cools the air inside them."

—Peter Saenger

## REVIEW



# India Is the Next Great Cheese Frontier

Paneer is old news. A new generation of Indian cheesemakers is wowing global palates with their Gouda and Edam.

BY CHANDRAHAS CHOUDHURY

I was in my early teens in the early 1990s when I began pestering my mother for a treat that everyone in America, from President Clinton to Spider-Man, seemed to eat pretty much daily. Living in Bombay (now Mumbai), my understanding of American mores came almost entirely from comic books and news reports, but I could be persuasive. Finally, my mother relented. We would make pizza.

I was dispatched to our local bakery to buy the dough. For tomato sauce, there was ketchup. For toppings, sliced onions and green bell peppers. But what about the cheese? My mother brought milk to a boil, then curdled it with lemon juice. She drained the whey and pressed the remaining white mass into a block. This was paneer, or "cottage cheese." White as summer clouds, it was the only cheese I had ever eaten, usually as cubes in curries. Once the paneer had set in the fridge, my mother grated small squiggles onto the pizza and ushered it into our little oven.

Ten minutes later, the pizza emerged. I lifted a slice to my mouth and closed my eyes. Upon the crunchy wood-smoked bread, gloriously gloopy ketchup and lightly charred vegetables, the paneer was unmelted and inelastic. But it was hot and dense, chalky and crumbly. It had kept its integrity in an unfamiliar system, the anchor of a nifty piece of mom-provisation. It was heaven.

That moment came to mind on a recent visit to a supermarket in the southern city of Chennai. Ten years ago, most western-style cheeses in India were imports, enjoyed by a small elite. Now, alongside tins of mozzarella, Parmesan and cream cheese from dairy behemoths Nestlé and Amul—the latter a large cooperative of Indian dairy farmers—the shelves are bright with Indian-made Edams, Emmentals, Goudas, goat cheeses and Indian takes on cheddar and brie, infused with cumin, chili or black pepper.

Even accounting for the changing tastes of globalized Indians, the scale of this transformation is astounding. Paneer, once the mainstay of Indian cheese, now seems passé. Instead, western-style cheese—golden, glamorous and finally within reach of a rapidly growing middle-class—has become an aspirational sign of progress. It can now be found not only in sandwiches and pasta sauces, but atop traditional Indian street snacks such as *dosas* (crepes with rice-flour batter) and *parathas* (flatbreads, often stuffed with minced vegetables). Domino's in India cleverly bridges old and new with its "Cheese Volcano Peppy Paneer Pizza," which features grilled paneer upon a base of melted mozzarella.

As the largest producer and consumer of milk products in the world, India's well-established dairy market is worth about \$26 billion and is growing at about 7% a year. But the domestic market for cheese, now worth about \$1 billion, is exploding at a rate of 21% a year. By all accounts, India is the next great frontier in cheese.

## A new culture of culturing

Why has milk-obsessed India, with its sophisticated culture of milk fer-



Top, Anuradha Krishnamoorthy and Namrata Sundaresan in the cheese aging room at Käse in Chennai on Aug. 27. Bottom, Yogish, owner of a fast-food center in Bengaluru, prepares a cheese masala dosa on Aug. 29.

mentation and reduction, come so late to cheese? Ancient Indian religious texts are filled with references to cows and dairy. Milk runs through Indian mythology and folklore. Yet the country's reverence for cows may have also held it back. Sacred animals come with all manner of proscriptions. The great 20th-century food historian K.T. Achaya notes that ancient Indians had a taboo "on deliberate milk curdling." Cheese-making also historically required animal rennet, which is usually extracted from the stomach tissue of calves—a no-go for Hindus, who have long shunned the killing or eating of cows.

There were also more practical reasons for the late arrival of cheese in India. Yogurt, made daily in almost every Indian household, requires warm weather to ferment. Cheese needs cold weather to mature. Aged and hard cheeses have long come from cold countries. With mountains above and grazing cows below, the Alps were perfect for cheese. In balmy climes, from Greece eastward, cheese was made mostly for immediate consumption, such as feta and halloumi, and was often preserved in brine.

By the time the map got to India, cheese pretty much fell off it. Milk featured prominently, but it was usually drunk straight up before it

Even accounting for the changing tastes of globalized Indians, the scale of this transformation is astounding.

spoiled, or used to make butter, yogurt and sweets. Even paneer is relatively new. The practice of "breaking" or "tearing" milk with acids, food historians believe, arrived with the Portuguese in the 17th century. But while India's hunger for cheese is a novel phenomenon, local connoisseurs are now discovering the ingenuity of their forebears. Long-ignored cheeses made in remote alpine regions, such as the Kalari cheese of Kashmir and the Chhurpi of Sikkim, as well as "settler cheeses" that were the legacy of French or Portuguese immigrants, have begun appearing in specialty shops and on fine-dining menus. I found small discs of the extremely salty and smoked Portuguese Bandel cheese in Kolkata's New Market and promptly bought several bags to take south as presents.

The market for gourmet cheese in India is largely confined to four

megapolises: Mumbai in the West, New Delhi in the north, and Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) and Chennai in the south. But it is growing rapidly, spurred by young cheesemakers, many of whom developed their taste for fromage abroad. A WhatsApp chat group of Indian artisanal cheesemakers has about three dozen members today, more than double of what it was five years ago. The Covid-19 pandemic spurred some bored souls to bring milk and microbes together.

These efforts are increasingly earning the respect of the wider cheese world. At the World Cheese Awards last year Brunost, a Norwegian-style whey cheese made by Eleftheria, a fromagerie run by the Mumbai cheesemaker Mausam Narang, was voted one of the top five cheeses of the world, alongside creations from Norway, Belgium and Switzerland. An alpine-style washed rind made by Namrata Sundaresan, who retails from her Chennai fromagerie Käse Cheese, won silver at the same event.

Artisanal cheesemakers now often host pop-up events in different cities, pairing cheese with wine, chocolate, even tea. Their websites include sections on how to store cheese properly and deal with mold. The extroverted Sundaresan,

a leader in cheese outreach and advocacy, drew laughter at a recent event with a story about anxious customers asking how best to eat gourmet cheese. "I always reply, 'Just eat it!'"

"Customers do need a bit of interaction and guidance before they buy," said Benjamin Armel, a Frenchman from Toulouse, now a resident of Bengaluru. For breakfast and dessert on a recent Sunday I paired the last of the summer's mangoes with gobs of Vicalita Nili, a sublimely splenetic blue cheese made by Armel and his Indian partner Kathrina Salam, available only at Nari & Kage, their small fromagerie in Bengaluru.

## If you ferment it, they will come

"Cheese today actually has many attributes that make it perfect for India," said K "Bala" Balakrishnan, a cheese-making pioneer, over a snack of baby Swiss on his patio in the southern hill town of Kodaikanal, where temperatures rarely rise above 68°F. "Cheese is full of good bacteria for your gut. It's a living food. It's high in nutritional and commercial value. Milk spoils quickly, but cheese keeps for long and increases in value as it ages."

Bala began experimenting with cheese-making more than two decades ago, partly because his cows produced so much milk. He and his wife, Vasu, spent a month learning about milk proteins, sugar and acidification on a farm in Washington state. Now Bala hosts his own cheese-making courses, often for techies and financial whiz-kids who've spent time in the U.S. and are willing to drive 10 hours on winding roads from Bengaluru or Chennai to reach Cinnabar, Bala and Vasu's two-room inn.

An ardent fromager, Bala insisted that cheese is "not that difficult to make." But I had just spent the morning watching him boil milk, add a starter culture and rennet, stir the cheese curds in a large cauldron with a great ladle, and then turn over his handiwork on kitchen platforms and storage rooms to "weep" and "sweat." "The real difficulty of cheese-making," he explained, "is finding high-quality milk and aging the results properly. You've got to take care of them like you would a baby—sometimes for years."

Despite the joy of my cheese run around India, witnessing such incessant devotion to maturing milk protein has short-circuited thoughts of becoming a cheesemaker myself.

Instead, I've decided that my role in India's cheese revolution is that of the "rasik"—a devoted connoisseur, without whose approbation the long journey of creation would have no meaning. If cheese, in Clifton Fadiman's words, represents "milk's leap toward immortality," then this glorious moment requires the full attention of a few seasoned and glutinous wordsmiths.

It's a journey, however, on which I am struggling to enlist my life's first great cheesemaker. On a recent visit to my mother's home, I offered her a piece of Sundaresan's award-winning cheese. She handed it back after a single bite. "I prefer paneer."

*Chandras Choudhury is a novelist and essayist. His most recent book is "My Country Is Literature," published by Simon & Schuster.*

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SAYAN HAZRA FOR WSJ

## REVIEW

## OBITUARIES

## MAGGIE SMITH | 1934-2024



Smith as Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham, in 'Downton Abbey'

## An Actress Beloved for Her Depictions of Disapproval

Even before 'Downton Abbey' she piled up awards while perfecting a dowager persona.

By ANNA RUSSELL AND JOHN JURGENSEN

**F**or most of her career Maggie Smith was a member of an elite but familiar workforce of finely trained performers bringing British acting traditions to the stage and screen. Then, in her mid-70s, and with two Academy Awards and a part in the "Harry Potter" films to her name already, Smith tackled a surprising new role: real-life celebrity.

She became a breakout star of "Downton Abbey," a British series launched in 2010, with her portrayal of the sharp-tongued Dowager Countess of Grantham. The archetype wasn't new to Smith, having deployed haughty attitude and wit in such films as 1985's "Room With a View" and 2001's "Gosford Park," the latter also by "Downton Abbey" creator Julian Fellowes.

But it was the TV series that mushroomed into a cultural phenomenon, fascinating international audiences with its zesty treatment of English aristocracy and class hierarchy. And it was Smith's charac-

ter who looked down from the top of the "Downton Abbey" food chain with a raised eyebrow and pursed lips.

Smith died Friday at age 89 in a hospital, surrounded by friends and family, according to a statement released by her publicist.

In "Downton," as in so many other projects, the actress routinely stole scenes with rapier asides sheathed in upper-crust diction. Her character bore an air of faux-bemusement, her blithe remarks masking an encyclopedic knowledge of social minutiae as well as individuals' pedigrees—and their net worths.

Smith captured the character's obliviousness of life beyond the gentry with her delivery of a line—"What is a weekend?"—that became an instant signature of the series. Her role spanned six seasons of the series and two theatrical films.

Smith built her six-decade career on the foundation of dozens of plays, with most of her performances on British stages. She won nearly every major acting award in the U.K. and U.S., including

**'I think as actors you're intimidated most of the time by everything you have to do.'**

## SONG BINBIN | 1947-2024

## China's Most Famous Red Guard—and a U.S. Scientist

She epitomized the deadly fervor of the Cultural Revolution, then emigrated and later apologized.

By LIYAN QI

**I**N CHINA, SONG BINBIN was the face of Cultural Revolution turmoil, the Red Guard who helped spark the deadly persecution of teachers and won the attention of Mao Zedong.

In the U.S., Song, who died Sept. 16 at age 77, was a scientist who analyzed air quality for the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Her classmates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she earned a doctorate in 1989, knew almost nothing of her past in China, including that she was Communist Party royalty, the daughter of a general who was one of the People's Republic's founders, known as the Eight Immortals. They knew even less of the events in 1966 that defined her life.

That June, Song was a leader of the Red Guards, a student movement fiercely devoted to Mao, at her girls' school in Beijing. With two other students, she posted a handwritten denunciation of one of the school's officials, which set off a summer of riots, with students persecuting teachers and anyone they saw as betraying Mao's teachings.

The riots culminated in the torture and fatal mob beating of school official Bian Zhongyun—the woman Song and the other students had denounced. (Decades later, Song apolo-

gized for her role in the events but denied being involved in the beating or any violence.)

Two weeks later, Mao spoke to tens of thousands of Red Guards in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Song, one of the young people invited onto the dais, pinned an armband on Mao in a moment captured in a well-known photo. Mao told her she should change her first name to Yaowu, suggesting militancy; she never did.

Mao's embrace of the Red Guards unleashed a wave of political violence. In the ensuing weeks, 1,772 people died in Beijing alone, according to the Beijing Daily. The political turmoil consumed China for a decade, and loyalties fluctuated. Song eventually joined the millions sent for rural "re-education." After the Cultural Revolution ended, she and her husband joined the wave of Chinese studying overseas in the 1980s. Her MIT dissertation was about volcanic rocks from the Bohai Basin in northern China.

Tanya Furman, an MIT graduate student with Song, described her as a loving, hardworking and private person—balancing an intense workload with caring for her son, yet filling in for other students' late-night duties. Another MIT classmate, Daniel Tormey, recalled her concerns over



Song gives Mao Zedong an armband during his appearance in Tiananmen Square, Aug. 18, 1966

Beijing's violent crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

After graduating, Song worked for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, contributing to reports about air quality as an environmental analysis officer until 2003. She moved back to China to care for her aging parents. Song's father died in 2005; her husband died in Beijing in 2011. She is survived by her son.

In recent years, reflections and apologies from former Red Guard members became common. In 2012, Song wrote in Remembrance, an underground journal, about her poster's role in spurring the 1966 turmoil. "I participated in writing [it], so I should take responsibility," she wrote.

In 2014, Song joined other former Red Guards in a visit to their former school to express "eternal regret and sorrow." A photo in the Beijing News showed them bowing in front of a bust

of Bian, the beaten school official, who was dragged onto a stage by a mob armed with nailed sticks.

Bian's husband, Wang Jingyao, didn't accept the apology. "The red armband pinned by Song Binbin...was full of the blood of comrade Bian Zhongyun," he said at the time. Wang died in 2021.

The culpability of young people at the time must be seen in context, said Tania Branigan, author of "Red Memory: The Afterlives of China's Cultural Revolution."

Though many did terrible things, "It was about Chairman Mao directing the emotions of the masses, and particularly children and youths, for his own political purposes."

A lack of open discussion in China about the Cultural Revolution helped keep Song's memory "an open wound in people's heart," never properly addressed, said Susanne Weigelin-Schwendzlik, a professor of Chinese studies at the University of Vienna.

The violent image of the Red Guards endures. Some viewers of the Netflix show "3 Body Problem" have drawn parallels between Song and a Red Guard in the opening scene, in which a professor is beaten to death.

Song wrote in her 2012 Remembrance essay that when the Cultural Revolution ended, she was looking ahead.

"I will not mention the past or my family background. I just want to stay away from the hustle and bustle, study and work hard," she wrote.



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TOP: PICTURES FROM HISTORY/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: LUCAS SCHIPREIS/GETTY IMAGES

**LIVING TESTAMENT** A detail from the 11th-century Empress Zoe Mosaic in what is now the Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Istanbul.

## A Book on a Mission

Biblical texts helped shape Western societies. New converts today are often drawn to the themes of battle, healing and apocalypse that are ignored elsewhere.

### The Bible: A Global History

By Bruce Gordon  
*Basic*, 528 pages, \$35

By BARTON SWAIM



texts are studied, memorized, preached, interpreted and reinterpreted in churches, seminaries, small groups and prisons in every part of the world.

In "The Bible: A Global History," Bruce Gordon chronicles the Christian Bible's progression from a collection of ancient Hebrew and Greek texts—our word "Bible" is derived from the Greek *biblia*, "books"—to its present status as, in the author's appropriately ambiguous phrase, "the most influential book in the world."

Mr. Gordon, a professor of ecclesiastical history at Yale, is an accomplished historian of the Protestant Reformation; his 2009 biography of John Calvin is the finest modern life of the reformer. "The Bible," in many ways a history of Christianity itself, is a marvelous work of scholarship and storytelling. Mr. Gordon chronicles the Christian canon's beginnings and the early efforts to collect manuscripts into codices. He describes the Bible's profound influence on the largely illiterate population of medieval Europe and its transformation into a source of individual spirituality in the Reformation and after. He relates the cultures of Bible-reading that sprang up in Europe and the New World and finally the Bible's spread to India, Africa, South America and East Asia by the work of numberless translators, zealots, preachers and missionaries. "Biographies" of books are, if I'm not mistaken, a recent trend—I think of D.J.

Taylor's book about George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" and of Princeton University Press's excellent series *Lives of Great Religious Books*. Mr. Gordon has written the life of the Book of Books, and the sense in his narrative that this book is alive, as if somehow it has agency and finds ways to make itself known and felt, is inescapable.

It's well known that in the Middle Ages only a small number of clergy could read the Bible, or indeed could read at all. Yet "one of the greatest mistruths perpetuated by the Protestant Reformation," Mr. Gordon writes, "is that the Bible disappeared during the Middle Ages." As a hardened Prot myself, I'm not entirely ready to relinquish this "mistruth," but Mr. Gordon's contention is valid: In medieval life the Bible "was everywhere: heard and seen in worship, performed on temporary stages erected in village squares, recounted in song, shown in pictures on church walls. It was in medicine, colloquial speech, and roadside chapels and crosses."

A book titled "Historia Scholastica," by the 12th-century Frenchman Peter Comestor, was among the more important works through which the Bible exercised its influence on late-medieval Europe. Translated into several European languages, the book was a retelling of the Bible's story that drew on classical sources and the teachings of church fathers. "Not only was it required reading in the elite universities," Mr. Gordon writes, "but over the course of the Middle Ages it transmitted knowledge of the Bible into vernacular cultures through literature, drama, and sermons, for which it provided a compendium of stories."

That the Bible and Christianity have diminished in importance over the past century is one of those things every Western social and political observer knows, or thinks he knows. Mr. Gordon's global perspective preserves him from that error. For decades an array of Christian faiths, all holding to the divinity of a resurrected Jesus Christ, have undergone explosive growth in China, Africa and South America. These traditions, Mr. Gordon writes, "identify with parts of the Bible often ignored by Western liberals, particularly passages about healing and spiritual warfare, as well as apocalyptic expectations and readings that generate a palpable suspicion of the secular world."

Mr. Gordon's history frequently upends the liberal account of religious decline, nowhere more so than in his explanation of the Bible's role in the so-called Enlightenment. That "so-called" is the reviewer's, not Mr. Gordon's, but his narrative avoids the usual equation between biblical adherence and intellectual shallowness. Galileo, for example, who was forced by ecclesiastical authorities to renounce his ideas on a heliocentric solar system, didn't view himself as departing from biblical orthodoxy. "Despite his final forced recantation," Mr.

Gordon writes, "the story of Galileo is about different attempts to claim and defend the Bible. His was a revolution from within rather than an external attack on scripture itself." The question with which Galileo and other thinkers of his era grappled "was not really whether the Bible was still relevant in a world in upheaval but how it was so."

Mr. Gordon's narrative teams with long-suffering scholars, translators and missionaries but also with schismatics and socio-pathists moved by biblical texts to do remarkable, and sometimes terrible, things. Always, however, the result is that the Bible advances further into societies formerly resistant to it.

The chapter on China and East Asia makes this particularly clear. Hong Xiuquan (1814-64), leader of the Taiping Rebellion against the Qing dynasty, converted to Christianity when he read a tract that quoted liberally from Genesis, Isaiah, Matthew and Romans. On reflection, however, Hong concluded that he himself was the savior promised by the Hebrew prophets; he was, in his mind, the brother of Jesus and the second son of God.

Hong had the Ten Commandments rewritten to fit his ascetic sensibilities and planned to have the Bible itself rewritten to align more closely with what he considered authentically Chinese virtues. His Taiping army waged a savage war on the population of Nanjing, killing 40,000 Manchus, whom he reckoned "devils." Hong derived his vision of a new kingdom of God from Revelation 21:2: "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."

The upshot of this unhappy episode was that the Qing government, having been aided by Western powers in its fight for survival, felt obliged to give Christian missionary agencies freer access to the country: more Bibles in China. And Western missionaries, rightly realizing that the Chinese populace wasn't asking to be Westernized, adapted their efforts and became savvier evangelists.

A more edifying episode: In 1907, the city of Pyongyang experienced a Protestant revival, precipitated by the preaching of Presbyterian minister Kil Sun-joo. Thousands were converted. The consequent thirst for biblical knowledge led to a new translation, the Korean Bible of 1911. More than 600,000 copies were produced, Mr. Gordon reports. I have to believe some of those copies, more than a century later, still float around, illicitly, in the present-day police state called North Korea and that the believers in that beleaguered country have read the promise of Psalm 37:

The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him,  
But the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming.

Mr. Swaim is an editorial page writer for the Journal.

## Why We Are All Athenians

### The Muse of History

By Oswyn Murray  
*Belknap/Harvard*, 528 pages, \$37.95

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

**A**"MYTH of the past" is necessary to justify contemporary preoccupations," writes Oswyn Murray, an emeritus fellow at Oxford. This is a profound realization, and it leads the author to a rousing intellectual defense against what T.S. Eliot called the "provincialism" of the present moment. In an age of media and sensory-enhancing technology that obliterates the past, with all of its lessons, we sometimes no longer seem to be part of a human continuum of the living and the dead, taking sustenance from the trials and tribulations of those who have gone before us. Mr. Murray, to rescue us from the tyranny of the present, studies not only historians but the history of their interpretations, what academics call historiography. This is a noble discipline, since, as the author writes, "in the background of every historian's work is his own contemporary world."

In "The Muse of History" the author focuses on a particular obsession of Western historians over the past three centuries: the ancient Greeks, and to a lesser extent, the Romans, and how both have changed in our perception as we have changed. His book is meandering and often forbiddingly academic in style, yet a patient reader is rewarded with a vast understanding of how a memory of antiquity, always renewed and reinterpreted, has kept us civilized.

The central myth of the West has been the story of the Greeks and Romans (a concomitant interest in Asia and Africa came relatively late in Western intellectual

**Historians have long judged their own era and the eras of the past through the prism of Athens and Sparta.**

history, Mr. Murray notes). The Greeks offered us a foundational myth of liberty, whereas the Romans offered a myth of world order through imperialism (something far more complex than mere repression, which is the one-dimensional characterization of imperialism popular at the moment).

The author mostly concentrates on the Greeks. He begins with the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who in 1629 translated Thucydides' "The Peloponnesian War" in order to explore the political distinctions and value systems of Athens and Sparta. Hobbes, echoing Thucydides, preferred the government of the best (*hoi aristoi*) over the many (*hoi polloi*), thus favoring Sparta over Athens, even as he knew that, in Mr. Murray's words, the "ultimate ideal lay in the monarchical leadership of Pericles" in Athens. This attitude was a reflection of Hobbes's own time and philosophical inclinations; the English Civil War would soon cause him to favor strong governance as a means to prevent anarchy, as he expressed in "Leviathan" (1651).

Hobbes laid the groundwork for the systematic study of Greek history that would begin in the 18th century: A relentless comparison between Athens and Sparta breathed oxygen into the Enlightenment. While in our own era Athenian democracy has been judged far superior to Spartan oligarchy, that was not always the case. Western historians before the age of mass democracy judged Sparta's mixed regime as having admirable attributes, including an equal division of land, excellent education of youth and obedience toward the elderly. In 1767 Adam Ferguson, the most influential voice of the Scottish Enlightenment, wrote about Sparta that "every institution of this singular people gave a lesson of obedience, of fortitude, and of zeal for the public" good.

The comparative lack of sympathy for Athens is explained—and this is the theme of Mr. Murray's book—simply by the times in which these historians and philosophers wrote. In the 18th century, basic order was not taken for granted, since sturdy institutions were only in the process of development. The unruly nature of

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## BOOKS

'A farm is like a man—however great the income, if there is extravagance but little is left.' —CATO THE ELDER



## FIVE BEST ON FARM LIFE

## Rosamund Young

The author, most recently, of 'The Wisdom of Sheep: Observations From a Family Farm'

**The Shepherd's Calendar**

By John Clare (1827)

**1** John Clare was the son of a poor farm laborer from Northamptonshire and would doubtless have remained anonymous had he not possessed an extraordinary ability to express in poetic language the realities of his rural surroundings. "The Shepherd's Calendar" depicts a pivotal moment in the farming history of England, just ahead of the dramatic changes brought about by the enclosure of formerly public grazing land and by the new machinery of the Industrial Revolution. Clare paints the view in words that reveal his knowledge of crops and their ripening sequences: "Harvest approaches with its bustling day / The wheat turns brown and barley bleaches grey / In yellow garb the oat land intervenes / And tawny glooms the valley thronged with beans." Clare did not want to be constrained by grammar or punctuation, and Oxford University Press's 1964 edition restores many passages his original publisher had cut. These poems are vivid testimony to a lost rural world.

**The Diary of a Farmer's Wife 1796-1797**

By Anne Hughes (1964)

**2** Although Anne Hughes was married to one of the wealthiest farmers in the English county of Herefordshire, she was anything but an 18th-century lady of leisure. She milked the cows, fed the pigs and worked in the fields: "Yesterdye wee uppe at 4... for thee stackinge off thee clover haye," Hughes writes in her diary. She sewed, ironed and cooked, embellishing her entries with recipes. She used flowers such as cowslips to make wine and mixed violets into a pudding that could soothe "crosse husbands." She offers tips for curing animals as well as people. An ailing cow is given a potion of warm milk, apple seeds, two whisked eggs and a glass of brandy; in no time, her health improves. "The Diary of a Farmer's Wife 1796-1797" feels secret and beguilingly honest. Hughes clearly enjoyed writing down her daily activities. At the same time, she made sure her husband didn't know of the diary, lest he object and ask her to stop keeping it. This window into a farming household, and its interactions with neighbors rich and poor, both teaches and fascinates.

**Farmer's Glory**

By A.G. Street (1932)

**3** "Farmer's Glory" recounts the period before England's agricultural depression of the 1920s and '30s, when mechanization led to increased output, oversupply and lower returns. Arthur George



PETER ADAMS/GETTY IMAGES

Street grew up on a family farm, leaving school at age 16 to work for his father. As an adult, Street relied on writing to supplement his farming income. This unvarnished account details the familiar duties of the cowman,

shepherd and thatcher. Yet, in Street's telling, it is the men who specialized as "drowners" who enthrall. They manipulated the depth of river water by strategically blocking off channels and allowing meadows to flood—thereby

sparing them from frost. Those meadows then could be drained swiftly so the grass could flourish, its growth aided by the fertile properties of silt deposits from the river. There was intense rivalry among the drowners, and the most skilled—who could ensure grass for sheep to graze two weeks sooner than the rest—were held in high esteem.

**Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years**

By Elizabeth Wayland Barber (1994)

**4** The thread that binds all the arguments, assertions and assumptions in this unusual and original history of women's work is the invention of string as the "weapon that allowed the human race to conquer the earth." It's a compelling theory and allows many other pieces of the puzzle—of how humans made the transition from hunter-gatherers to settled farmers—to fall into place. String had many uses: in nets, traps, bags, restraints. There isn't a farmer today who doesn't rely to some extent on string. The perishability of what women produced, especially food and clothing, has hitherto been a barrier to seeing the complete picture of our ancestors, Ms. Barber writes. The author looks for clues to daily life in ancient textiles. The accidental discovery of a scrap of tartan cloth in an Austrian salt mine helped Ms. Barber trace the development of weaving in remote and seemingly unconnected parts of the world. She teases out how the roles women fulfilled before, during and after farming, as we understand it today, became widespread.

**A Country Camera 1844-1914**

By Gordon Winter (1966)

**5** "A Country Camera" offers a social history in photographs. Gordon Winter tirelessly sought out images of late-19th-century English country life, many from extraordinary places. He rescued several original glass photographic plates from a vegetable garden, where they were being used as makeshift tiny greenhouses to protect the plants. Winter researched each picture and added the facts he gleaned as captions. In a photo of 11 "stout-hearted Cornishmen," we learn that one of the men had been a drummer-boy at the Battle of Waterloo over 70 years earlier. Winter writes that he compiled "A Country Camera" to show, "in a way that is often more vivid than the written word," the realities of rural life from almost every county of Britain. The first and last photographs were taken in Wiltshire, in southwestern England. They depict, first, a rural world that had hardly changed for centuries and, last, some village men leaving to fight in World War I and marking the day life changed forever.

## The Myth Of the Past

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Athenian democracy was seen as a dangerous luxury. By contrast, the Spartan city-state had existed by some measurements for more than half-a-millennium, which gave it a deserved reputation for stability that impressed Enlightenment thinkers.

This orthodoxy was challenged by the 18th-century Dutch Abbé Cornelius de Pauw, who wrote on the eve of the French Revolution about the attributes of the Athenian system. He was ignored by the elite of his era but his defense of Athens proved prescient, as the 19th century would bring trade, a revolution in manufacturing and an era of political upheaval. This overturned the aristocratic respect for Sparta that had been synonymous with the Enlightenment.

This is an exceedingly complicated story, as Mr. Murray reveals. Yet the intensity and subtlety of these intellectual arguments about Athens and Sparta allowed thinkers to think more clearly about their own era. The English historian William Mitford, in his multivolume "History of Greece" (1784-1810) declared that he could not idealize either Athens or Sparta since they were clearly inferior to Britain's institutionalized system and Athens, in any case, relied on slavery, making it not a free society at all.

John Stuart Mill once wrote that the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.,



**ORIGIN STORY** The Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., as depicted in this detail from a sarcophagus relief.

during the first Persian invasion of Greece, was "even as an event in British history... more important than the Battle of Hastings." So, too, Athens and Sparta were, in a philosophical sense, the most important cities

ing democracy was no longer a luxury but an imperative, and in the final analysis could only be defended from other states by military prowess.

Philosophy as a discipline had given way: Mr. Murray writes that the 19th century "began the Age of History in which society was embedded in a nexus of causation stretching back into the distant past." In an age of revolutions, Roman imperialism came to represent the ancien régime in France; Athens exemplified liberty and progress. John Stuart Mill's father made him study Greek because of this.

The 19th century also brought to the fore powerful new forces of modern culture and mass psychology. The examination of ancient Greece shifted as a consequence, according to Mr. Murray. The Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche separately emphasized the "agonal" aspect of ancient Greece: that is, the contest among personalities and

political forces in Athens. Burckhardt proved the relevance of ancient history when he wrote about the ability of Greek demagogues to manipulate the masses and thus threaten to create the most frightening forms of tyranny. In this manner, by way of ancient Greece, Burckhardt looked back to the terror of the French Revolution and, albeit unknowingly, forward to 20th-century fascism. The study of antiquity shows a historical continuum.

Then there is the person of Socrates, who in the words of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in the early 19th century "constitutes a great historic turning point." Socrates, by his persistent questioning, revealed the answers to philosophical questions but also undermined the stability of Athens, since even an exemplary city-state has to rely on some degree of coercion. Socrates thus furthered Greek thought even as he worked to destabilize the social contract as it was then understood. Moral values cut two ways, the author suggests,

and the lack of an easy answer demonstrates the richness of the Greek tradition in Western thought. Socrates is the first Greek we can really know as an individual. The story of Socrates in 19th-century German thought, Mr. Murray writes, constitutes "an attempt to find a replacement for the Christ figure in a secularized society."

In the latter part of this difficult yet reflective book, the author calls the Frenchman Fernand Braudel "the greatest historian of the 20th century." A bold claim, yet an accurate one. Braudel broke new ground by combining the study of geography and vast social and economic forces with individual agency. He was thus a partial and hesitant determinist. His monumental work, "The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II" (1949), written largely while a prisoner of the Nazis, is a global history that enhances and diminishes the role of ancient Greece.

The continuous sequence of upheavals and catastrophes that leads to the present reminds Mr. Murray of a passage by the mid-20th-century German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin's, who described an image of an angel caught in a storm that propels him backward, into the future, while the pile of debris before him grows higher and higher. "This storm," Benjamin explains, "is what we call progress." And through it all, the memory of ancient Greece may be the best compass we have.

*Mr. Kaplan is the author of "Waste Land: A World in Permanent Crisis," forthcoming in January. He holds a chair in geopolitics at the Foreign Policy Research Institute.*

## BOOKS

'When people saw what had happened to my son, men stood up who had never stood up before.'—MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY

# It Happened on Home Ground

## The Barn

By Wright Thompson  
Penguin Press, 448 pages, \$35

By MEGHAN COX GURDON

**I**T IS SAID that the brush of a butterfly's wing can cause cascading effects that eventually produce a hurricane. So, in Wright Thompson's telling, did thousands of small occurrences over centuries result in one of the most notorious killings of the 20th century—the 1955 murder in Mississippi of a 14-year-old boy named Emmett Till.

Mr. Thompson explores this idea in "The Barn," a narrative that he styles as a secret history of the murder. The book is part historical account, part eulogy and part apologia from an author who, as a white "child of the Delta," feels genetic complicity in the boy's fate. "The story of Till's death," he writes, "is the story of the rise and rot of a tribe of people, of which I am one."

Mr. Thompson, who comes from the Mississippi Delta farm town of Clarksdale, admits to having an obsession with the Till case that seems to have intensified during the pandemic. Driving around the emptied Delta, he came to understand that the horror had played out a mere 23 miles from the land that his family has farmed since 1913. Across time and geography, everything seemed to him suddenly interwoven: the rich red soil, the social and racial hierarchies, the farms and plantations and tides of people that have washed over the Delta since prehistory. "Once you connect all the dots," he writes of Till's link to all this, "there's almost nowhere they don't lead."

Growing up, Mr. Thompson had a fugitive awareness that his great-grandfather had been a staunch segregationist, but he felt much more in tune with his own father's progressive politics. He confesses that he didn't know what a lynching was until he was nearly 17, that to his family's farm he felt "zero connection with its history and no interest in its future," and that he had hung Confederate flags on his wall at boarding school. Until he left Mississippi for college, he had known nothing of the events of Aug. 28, 1955.

On that day, in the early hours, a group of men had woken Moses and Elizabeth Wright at their home and demanded that they surrender their grandnephew Emmett, who was staying there. His mother had reluctantly allowed him to come south from Chi-



**RESTLESS** Outside the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, Miss., prior to the 1955 trial of Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam for the murder of Emmett Till.

cago for a visit. Three days earlier, it was said, Emmett had had the temerity to whistle at a white woman at the store that she and her husband ran in the small town of Money, Miss. The men in the posse took the terrified

ated in Township 22 North, Range 4 West, Section Two, a map designation to which Mr. Wright gives totemic power by incanting it in full at least 20 times. Back then, the barn belonged to Leslie Milam. He was the brother of J.W. Milam, who, along with their half-brother Roy Bryant, was charged with murdering the boy.

The two men were acquitted by a compromised jury yet went on to confess their guilt a few months later when Look magazine paid for their story. That the men were pariahs afterward, and that to this day Bryant's grave is vandalized, seems thin recompense for their crime. The identities of their accomplices have largely faded. Almost 70 years on, no one knows how many people were in that barn when Emmett Till was killed. Mr. Thompson, whose previous books include "Pappyland" (2020), the story of a Kentucky bourbon family, reckons there were eight.

"If there was a great cosmic clock counting down to Emmett Till's murder in Leslie Milam's barn, that unspooling began when the first plow

dug into the first row and broke open this ground to serve the appetites of human beings," writes Mr. Thompson, thinking big. The first plowing of the Mississippi Delta appears to have been carried out some 5,000 years ago by indigenous people whose civilization, he writes, "mirrored how life would play out in the sharecropper South centuries later: a functional monocrop, with a caste system rising out of its cultivation, the land worked by slaves captured from rival tribes."

Mr. Thompson identifies any number of historical butterflies whose tiny wing movements produced the hurricane: international capital flows, floods and droughts and boll weevils, fluctuating crop prices, racist laws, misbegotten government do-gooding, and disruptive inventions such as the railroad, the cotton gin and synthetic fabric. Intermixed with all of these elements are, of course, the powerful human impulses of ambition and pride and fear and love.

Some people believe that the wounds of history heal fastest when they are left alone. Mr. Thompson is

not one of them, and in "The Barn" he valorizes the activists who are working to memorialize Emmett Till and raise awareness of a murder that local people once wanted to forget. "Several generations grew up seeing the barn every day and were never told about it," Mr. Thompson notes, "perhaps owing to some well-intentioned parental desire to protect their children from what their ancestors experienced, a palpable silence laid over the land like a blanket being snapped and spread. White mothers and fathers . . . didn't talk about it. Black mothers and fathers didn't either."

Those days are over. Emmett Till has been a prominent part of America's cultural conversation for several years now—a figure not of neglect but of remembrance. Mr. Thompson's sweeping, meditative and sometimes overwrought chronicle seems intended to keep the colloquy going.

*Mrs. Gurdon, a Journal contributor, is the author of "The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction."*

## Cultivating A Revolt In America

### The Scientist Turned Spy

By Patrick Spero

Virginia, 352 pages, \$34.95

By STUART FERGUSON

**H**AVING dethroned Louis XVI in 1792, the revolutionaries in France found themselves at war with a coalition of Europe's monarchies. The new French government desperately needed allies and hit upon the idea of finding them in the New World. Thus the Girondists in Paris drew up what they called "A Plan for a Revolution in Louisiana." It was a bold idea, or a foolish one. In either case, it set in motion a fascinating series of events involving some oddly talented characters.

The plan's logic was plausible. France had ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1762, but with Louis out of the way the French were no longer allied to Spain by a shared Bourbon dynasty. It seemed possible that their former New World possession could be resurrected as a sister republic. Capturing New Orleans and St. Louis would be almost beside the point; the great stroke would be to bring the U.S. into the current European war on the side of France.

Enter two very different Frenchmen. André Michaux (1746-1802), the man ordered to lead the Louisiana revolution, was a well-traveled botanist who had arrived in the U.S. under royal patronage in 1785 to collect plants that might be useful to his native country. His base was Charleston, S.C., but his journeys had ranged from Florida to Canada. He traveled light, with native guides if possible. He preferred to have two guides in case one was eaten by a bear.

The man who drafted Michaux for the Louisiana project was Edmond-Charles Genêt (1763-1834), a young diplomat in role if not manner. He had been Louis XVI's ambassador to Russia before being recalled by the revolutionary government and sent to the U.S. in 1793 as minister plenipotentiary—with secret instructions to retake Louisiana. Despite his onetime royal connection, Genêt was a votary of revolution, a preening darling of America's own French-leaning faction, which included Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

As Patrick Spero relates in "The Scientist Turned Spy," his engaging account of this confluence of foreign plots and natural science, everything came together at Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society. The society's purpose, as its founders had announced in 1743, was "promoting useful knowledge" via correspondence among "ingenious men residing in the several colonies." Michaux came into the society's orbit as a botanist and, along the way, found himself recruited by Genêt into nonbotanical activity.

Mr. Spero, the society's librarian before becoming its current executive officer, has dug into the society's archives to learn more about one of its gems, the Michaux "subscription list." In the early 1790s, after the French government had cut off his travel funds, Michaux appealed to the APS—a logical move. The society's members, especially Jefferson, were keen to learn more about the lands between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean but could hardly send a government-backed expedition across Spain's colony. So Jefferson found subscribers for an expedition to be headed by Michaux.

The problem was that the goals of the society diverged from Michaux's. He wanted to wander at will and collect specimens; the APS wanted him to find the easiest route to the Pacific and to learn, as it said, "such particulars as can be obtained of the country through which it passes." Jefferson was especially interested in the Native Americans and their fading languages. Also

woolly mammoths: If Michaux could find a living one ("this animal still exists," Jefferson said), the APS would be delighted.

Given this divided sense of mission, Michaux decided to back out of the deal—then Genêt arrived in Philadelphia. The new French minister met with Michaux in May 1793 and was impressed. "He is active, circumspect, loyal," Genêt wrote back to Paris. More important, he could disappear "in the hinterlands of America" and "be suspicious to no one." Genêt appointed Michaux an agent of the French republic and told him that his expedition was back on but that France would be funding and controlling the whole enterprise. In actuality, it would be the prelude to an armed invasion of Louisiana.

**A French botanist was looking for plants in the U.S. He was recruited to establish the Republic of Louisiana.**

Restless American settlers (so the plan imagined), urged into an organized faction by Michaux, would capture the main settlements while French warships would blockade the mouth of the Mississippi, preventing Spain from reinforcing New Orleans by sea. Voilà, the Republic of Louisiana. It's clear from Michaux's journals that he accepted this dangerous task out of patriotic duty, nothing else.

But how exciting it was for Genêt, who couldn't resist telling Jefferson about the plan, privately if not officially. Jefferson went along with it. Mr. Spero suggests that Jefferson, then the U.S. secretary of state, "saw Genêt as a revolutionary brother-in-arms" who could remind Americans of the spirit of 1776. Jefferson reasoned that folks in the new state of Kentucky would be glad to be rid of Spain's control of the Mississippi River (New Orleans

extracted exorbitant tariffs). More than that, Kentucky's residents and others nearby, though now feeling discontented, would stay loyal to the U.S. if Genêt's plan brought about free trade on the river.

Jefferson thus rewrote his letters of introduction so that the recipients could read between the lines and help



**THROWING A FETE** 'A Banquet to Genêt' (1897) by Howard Pyle.

able, even to Jefferson, who wrote to Madison on July 7, 1793: "Never in my opinion was so calamitous an appointment made, as that of the present minister of France. Hotheaded, all imagination, no judgement."

What has become known as "the Citizen Genêt affair" ended with George Washington's cabinet demanding that France recall its obnoxious henchman. Paris obliged, though Genêt would eventually be granted asylum in the U.S. Michaux, for his part, went about exploring the Illinois country before returning to France. He died of a fever in Madagascar in 1802 on yet another scientific expedition.

Mr. Spero, at the end of his astute narrative, laments that Michaux is not better known today, but on the Blue Ridge escarpment along the border of North and South Carolina he is a celebrity, with historical markers noting his botanical explorations in 1787-88. Mr. Spero mentions in a footnote that Charles Sprague Sargent, a botanist from Harvard, having studied Michaux's notebooks, traveled to Highlands, N.C., in the 1880s to find

some of Michaux's "lost" discoveries, including Oconee Bells, a flower whose elusiveness made it the "botanical Grail" of 19th-century America. Michaux had sent samples of it back to Paris. Guided by a local botanist, Sargent finally spotted the elusive plant deep in the "Hautes montagnes de Caroline," just as Michaux's handwritten label had promised.

Mr. Ferguson works for the Highlands Historical Society in Highlands, N.C.

## BOOKS

'We agreed that no one who had not grown up in a little prairie town could know anything about it.' —WILLA CATHER



MEDIANEWS GROUP/ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

STRANDED A herd of deer on what has become an island after flooding in the Red River Valley.

# Down in the Valley



**LOUISE ERDRICH'S** novel "The Mighty Red" (Harper, 384 pages, \$32) takes place in North Dakota's Red River Valley, which is also the setting of her first book, "Love Medicine," from 1984. In the 40 years since that debut, Ms. Erdrich's 19 novels have explored every aspect of life in the towns, farms and reservations in this corner of the Great Plains. If the locations of her books seem stationary, their movement through time is unusually fluid, shuttling continually between the turn of the 20th century (the period of her 2008 novel, "The Plague of Doves," for instance) and the near-present (as in her Covid-19 pandemic novel, "The Sentence," from 2021), with stories set in nearly every decade in between. In the dystopian novel "Future Home of the Living God" (2017), Ms. Erdrich even carries the setting into the speculative future.

The historical moment of "The Mighty Red" is the 2008-09 economic collapse, which wipes out the investments of a struggling theater teacher named Martin Poe. Like his wife, Crystal, Martin hails from a community of mixed-race Native Americans in the Turtle Mountain Reservation farther west, but the pair "snagged each other in an oxbow on the Red River and got stuck there." Facing ruin, Martin forges Crystal's signature to take out a mortgage on their house and then disappears, abandoning her and their teenage daughter, Kismet.

The rippling consequences of the financial crisis also accelerate the decline of the Geist

family, which operates one of the valley's largest sugar beet farms. The Geist heir apparent, Gary, is a high-school football star who has been poleaxed by survivor's guilt after an accident left two of his friends dead. Humbled and frightened, he fixates on the idea of returning his life to normal by marrying Kismet, who is both unnerved and flattered by his sudden devotion. Kismet is in love with a bookish, working-class kid called Hugo, but she lets herself be pressed into a hasty wedding with Gary. The story, which continues into the following year and then, in a series of epilogues, all the way to 2024, dramatizes the fallout from the misfortunes and self-destructive choices of these linked families.

It's all quite stagey, with interwoven storylines that dwell on adolescent romance, repressed traumas and far-fetched redemptions. Too often the histrionics seep into the writing—as Kismet and Hugo embrace, "a swoop of delight threaded through them and gathered their hearts up and tied a bow"—making the lyricism sound tinny and false.

But what persists in Ms. Erdrich's work is a spaciousness of vision that reduces the melodrama of plot to a secondary concern. Alternating among multiple perspectives, "The Mighty Red" is most absorbing as a wide-ranging almanac of ordinary life. Ms. Erdrich is as attentive to her characters' work schedules—Crystal at a sugar processing plant, Kismet at the local diner, Hugo as a "mudlogger" at an oil well—as to their psychological states. Set next to the breathless story twists, the valley's economic realities feel smoothly and persuasively evoked. The same goes for its historical legacies. At moments the narration draws back to speak

authoritatively about the region's agricultural and environmental troubles, the role of the Catholic Church or the pervasive influence of the Red River, which from time to time overflows its banks and causes devastating floods.

This is, then, another poignant novel of place. Like William Kennedy's Albany Cycle series or Marilynne Robinson's Gilead quartet, Ms. Erdrich's books—including standalone works like "The Mighty Red"—belong

## THIS WEEK

**The Mighty Red**  
By Louise Erdrich

**Season of the Swamp**  
By Yuri Herrera

to the same fictional cycle, which conjures a partly real and partly mythic landscape across generations. The unity of the novels reflects their themes of community and interconnection—it also accounts for the frequent appearance of ghosts (which play a role in "The Mighty Red"), since the living and the dead, like the past and the present, exist in continuous correspondence.

One hidden connection has to do with sugar production, and the method, still in practice, of using bone char as a bleaching agent. For some years, Ms. Erdrich writes, those bones were gathered from the western Plains, the harvest of the mass slaughter of the buffalo. So every teaspoon of sugar carried within it traces of death and annihilation. In this novel, too, sweetness blends indissolubly with tragedy.

Yuri Herrera's "Season of the Swamp" (Graywolf, 160 pages, \$26) concerns the sort of historical period beloved by all novelists: one represented by a gap in the official accounts. In 1853, five years before he would become Mexico's Liberal party President, Benito Juárez was sent into exile by the country's dictatorial ruler, Santa Anna. Juárez eventually wound up in New Orleans, where he stayed for nearly 18 months, an interval about which very little is known. Mr. Herrera, a Mexican novelist who currently teaches at Tulane University, has leapt into this hole in the biographical record to embellish a richly imagined, profusely written story of the sojourn.

Poor and anonymous in New Orleans, Juárez finds work rolling cigars and lodging in a series of cheap hotels and spare rooms. The port city sometimes strikes him as a nightmare incarnate—crime is rampant, deadly outbreaks of yellow fever are recurrent and there is no escaping the almighty stench from the "open gutters along which waste flowed al fresco."

Juárez finds the disturbances galvanizing, however. Mr. Herrera posits that his firsthand exposure to the slave market—as well as his friendship with a woman who harbors runaways—awakened his reformist political convictions. Translated from the Spanish by Lisa Dillman, the writing thrills to the racial and linguistic diversity of New Orleans, its roil of bodies and babel of noise. Mr. Herrera wonderfully captures Juárez's bewilderment and awe when stumbling upon a Mardi Gras parade. In the wild drumming and dancing he feels that some vital message is being communicated "in a language he didn't know, a new grammar of bones."

## A Paradise For Petty Dictators

### Foolsburg

By Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin  
Vintage, 304 pages, \$17

By GARY SAUL MORSON

**T**HE RUSSIAN satirist Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889) wrote a brilliant satirical novel, "The Golovlyovs" (1880). Most of his other work, though influential in his time, reflects what an English reviewer in the 1930s called "the dusty polemics of forgotten wrongs and abandoned causes." After all, jokes that require footnotes lose their punch. If one already knows a lot of Russian history, the work Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky have newly translated as "Foolsburg" occasionally amuses with its dated wit. But it may bore anyone else.

A satire on Russian bureaucracy, Stupidville (as "Foolsburg" is more literally rendered) narrates a parodic history of a provincial town, mayor by tyrannical mayor. Different philosophies guide each ruler's oppression, but all resort to flogging at the drop of a hat. One mayor has even written "Regulations of Relentless Flogging." Another is considered a liberal, but that turns out to mean that he is an especially liberal flogger.

All are brainless, in some cases literally. But not empty-headed: One mayor's skull houses a music box that loudly repeats a few insulting phrases;

another, as a gourmet with a keen sense of smell discovers, is stuffed with truffles. All these bureaucrats treat corruption and bribery not just as their due but as legally required: "Should any person fail to offer gifts," reads one decree, "there should be a thorough investigation of the reason for such non-offering." To be sure, a couple of mayors foster enlightenment (via flogging). One forces the townspeople to cultivate mustard. Another enlightener petitions imperial authorities to create an academy in Foolsburg, "but, his petition denied, built a jailhouse instead."

Saltykov-Shchedrin spent two decades as a provincial bureaucrat, and his shrewdest comments concern the bureaucratic mindset everywhere. One Foolsburg treatise proposes that, in order to be sure all mayors think

**A Russian satire narrates the history of a fictional town, mayor by tyrannical mayor.**

exactly alike and always regard official procedures as ends in themselves, they should receive from infancy a special education: "Mayors ought to be weaned from their mothers' breasts and brought up not on ordinary mother's milk, but on the milk of the governing senate's decrees and the regulations of the authorities." A good mayor, we learn, remains impervious to criticism, objections and evidence. So sure is he of his correctness that, should someone ask why he is being beaten, the mayor will reply with a punch: "Here's the reason for you!" The author refers to this ubiquitous "reasoning" as "the grievous tau-

tology in which a punch is explained by a punch."

Official Soviet critics correctly detected in Saltykov's writings a sendup of czarist rule, but they tended to overlook what one critic has described as Saltykov's "mocking denigration of the Russian people." The idiot Foolsburgers remain the

burgers stage a rebellion, they do so on their knees.

One mayor's activity eerily looks forward to Soviet practice—largely because the radicals of the 1860s and '70s inspired their Bolshevik successors. Obsessed with utopian plans, this "authoritative idiot" orders the Foolsburgers to destroy their town

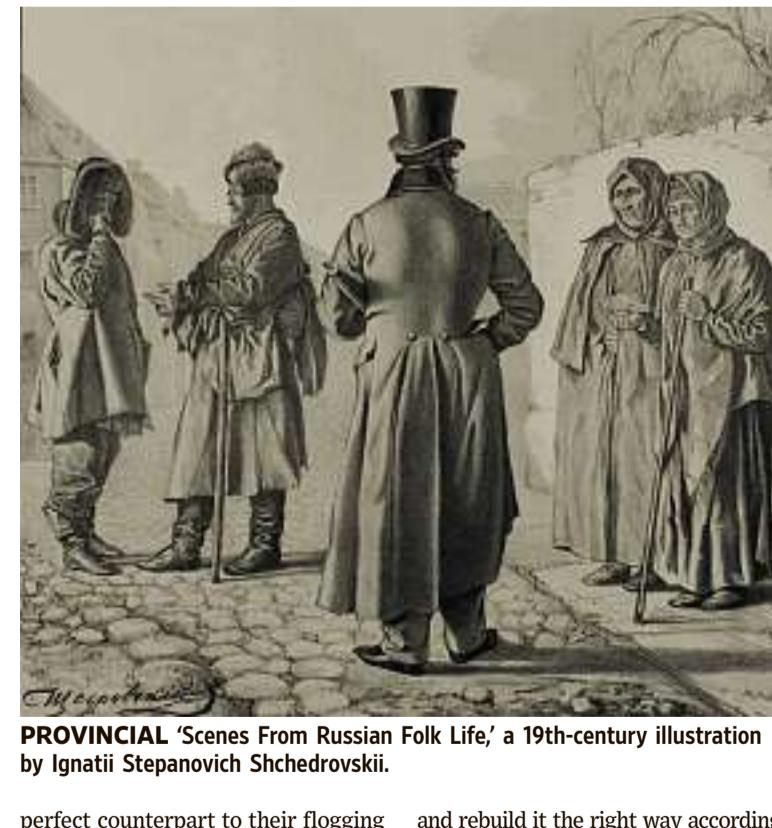
passions, no interests, no attachments. They all live together every minute, and each one feels alone" (as in a Soviet communal apartment?). As actually happened in the U.S.S.R., spies would be everywhere.

The result would be perfect equality, regardless of the cost. In those remote times, of course, "nothing was known . . . about communists, or socialists, or so called nivellators in general. Nevertheless nivellating did exist. . . . If for the sake of equalizing him with his peers, a person is deprived of life, that will not be of any great benefit to the person, but will be beneficial and even necessary for the preservation of social harmony."

Nivellators? Why weaken the humor with a completely obscure word? The earlier translator of this book, I.P. Foote, renders the word "leveler," which does not require elucidation. A footnote explains Mr. Pevear and Ms. Volokhonsky's choice: "The Russian word *nivellator* came from the French *niveler*, meaning to level or make equal, referring in Saltykov's time to thinkers who wanted to reduce everything to the same (lowest) level." Their immediately preceding footnote elucidates another word choice as rendering not the meaning of the word in Russian but of its German source. It is as if Saltykov's humor were not remote enough and so a dose of needless pedantry were required.

As in their flat-footed version of Bulgakov's hilarious masterpiece, "The Master and Margarita," Mr. Pevear and Ms. Volokhonsky illustrate why, to translate comic fiction, a keen sense of humor is required.

**Mr. Morson**, a professor of Slavic languages and literatures at Northwestern University, is the author, most recently, of "Wonder Confronts Certainty."



HERITAGE IMAGE PARTNERSHIP/LIAISON

**PROVINCIAL SCENES FROM RUSSIAN FOLK LIFE**, a 19th-century illustration by Ignatii Stepanovich Shchedrovskii.

perfect counterpart to their flogging mayors. Their principal virtue is "firmness in adversity." Stupid, debauched and above all passive, the Foolsburgers are amazed when one mayor lets them be. "For the first time the Foolsburgers breathed freely and realized that life 'without oppression' was far better than life 'with oppression.'" Even when the Fools-

and rebuild it the right way according to the latest scientific discovery: To achieve universal happiness, one must ensure that everything conforms to the principle of "the straight line." So that nothing deviates from straightness, every aspect of life would be wholly "regulated down to the last dot." Time itself "is allocated most strictly." There will be "no God...no

## BOOKS

'Eccentric behavior is not routinely noticed around a movie set.' —GENE TIERNEY

# Hollywood Between the Lines

**Best Possible Place, Worst Possible Time**By Barry Sonnenfeld  
*Hachette, 352 pages, \$30*

By KYLE SMITH

**W**HEN WORD got around that there was going to be a film based on the 1960s TV show "The Wild Wild West," Robert Conrad, its star, had a note for director Barry Sonnenfeld, who was in preproduction on what came to be called "Wild Wild West" (1999), with Will Smith in the role of James West. "Near the end of a tense, contentious meal," recalls Mr. Sonnenfeld, Conrad said: "It's quite simple, Barry. My mob friends in Detroit don't want to see a Black boy play James West so you and your actor guy better figure out what you're going to do about that little problem, because someone is going to get hurt. Or worse." When informed of this ultimatum, Mr. Smith's manager and business partner, James Lassiter, said: "Detroit? Give me a break. We're from Philly."

When the production went forward, no one connected with it died, although the movie itself did. Mr. Sonnenfeld relates the story, and many other memorable anecdotes, in "Best Possible Place, Worst Possible Time," his second memoir. The sciatica-prone "devout pessimist" used up most of his best tales in the first one, "Barry Sonnenfeld, Call Your Mother" (2020), but still has plenty left.

The director of the first three "Men in Black" films and "Get Shorty," Mr. Sonnenfeld is not quite a household name. He got his big break when tyro filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen hired him as director of photography for their low-budget but high-ambition debut, "Blood Simple" (1984). Mr. Sonnenfeld became an in-demand cinematographer and was tapped by Scott Rudin to make his debut as director with "The Addams Family," which was a hit in 1991. Today, though, he is 71. Being somewhat removed from the action, he is inclined to be frank. That's great for readers: The Tropicana factory is no juicier than his books.

Many of the targets of Mr. Sonnenfeld's barbed memories are dead (Michael Jackson, Robin Williams) or canceled (Mr. Rudin, Kevin Spacey), but many are still in the game. Mr. Smith once demanded to take most of a week off from shooting "Men in Black 3" in New York so he could fly back to his home in California, and he made Mr. Sonnenfeld cover for him with the film's producers. Mr. Sonnenfeld took an immediate dislike to Jim Carrey when discussing the possibility of directing "Fun With Dick and Jane" (2005): The actor bombarded him with annoying shtick and wanted goofy details like rocket-powered roller blades instead of Mr. Sonnenfeld's dry comedy. The directorial job ultimately went to Dean



'GET SHORTY' The director Barry Sonnenfeld, left, discussing a scene with John Travolta in 1995.

Parisot. In the event, the star's demands for the film, according to Mr. Sonnenfeld (who apparently learned of them from an insider), included that "all sets had to be warmed or cooled to exactly 63 degrees and a helicopter had to be on standby to fly fresh fruit and vegetables from the Imperial Valley to the set within an hour of picking."

**John Travolta wouldn't learn his lines. Will Smith landed a punch or two. Jim Carrey was simply annoying.**

The set of "Get Shorty" (1995) apparently wasn't short of dysfunction. John Travolta never got around to memorizing his lines and had to have cue cards positioned around the set. Even then, he called Mr. Sonnenfeld's house and pleaded with the director's wife: "He's making me learn too many words." Asked how many needed to be cut from the scene in question, he replied, "Six." Gene Hackman, notoriously intense during the filming of any movie, was irritated and quarrelsome. Mr. Sonnenfeld spends a lot of time tiptoeing around confrontational moments. When, at the film's

premiere, Mr. Hackman discovers how good "Get Shorty" is, he tells the director: "I could have been so much better, except the entire time I was working on this show, I didn't think you had a f---ing clue."

Mr. Sonnenfeld's brotherly relationship with Mr. Smith is one of the most intriguing ones in the book, even as the director doesn't conceal being hurt when, after he talked Mr. Smith into playing Muhammad Ali, the actor took over what became "Ali" (2001) and fired him. In happier times, the pair were so close that, on one set, they played the ancient fraternal game Who Can Punch the Hardest. Slugged repeatedly on the shoulder by the muscular Mr. Smith, Mr. Sonnenfeld, whose body type might charitably be described as nonathletic, reports that his upper arm was a riot of purple and yellow. Determined to prove his mettle, the director put everything he had into one overwhelming punch—and found that "Will Smith's shoulder had broken my fifth metacarpal in five places." Explaining this to a doctor was too embarrassing, so Mr. Sonnenfeld devised a story

involving an unexpected door slam, which didn't explain the welts on his upper arm.

Every Hollywood personality who writes a memoir paints himself as the



CAST AND CREW Anjelica Huston and Barry Sonnenfeld while filming 'Addams Family Values' (1993).

one reasonable professional in a sea of idiocy, and Mr. Sonnenfeld is no exception. Working with Christopher Walken, he couldn't get the actor to raise his voice to an audible level: Mr.

Walken was taking the description of his "Nine Lives" part, a "cat whisperer," too literally. Perhaps Mr. Walken remembers things differently.

If the memoir offers nothing much in the way of overarching insight or narrative flow—it's simply a grab bag of anecdotes—Mr. Sonnenfeld is a delightful raconteur. His grievances may inflame his sciatica, but they're comedy gold. After Mr. Rudin offered "The Addams Family" to Tim Burton and Terry Gilliam without success, he told Mr. Sonnenfeld: "Since I can't get any good directors, I decided to take a chance on you." When the movie turned out to be hugely profitable, Mr. Sonnenfeld asked Sherry Lansing, Paramount's chief executive, where his cut was. She responded: "Grow up and sue us like everybody else."

Mr. Smith is the Journal's film critic.

## Life if the Bad Guys Had Won

**Westfallen**By Ann Brashares and Ben Brashares  
*Simon & Schuster, 384 pages, \$18.99*

**WHEN HENRY**, Frances and Lukas discover an old radio that allows them to communicate with three children living in 1944, the middle-schoolers know enough about the perils of tampering with time to sense that they should tread lightly. Initially, the friends delight in sharing details of their lives, though the trio from the past are disappointed to learn that their counterparts don't have jetpacks or flying cars. For Alice, Lawrence and Artie, however, living in 1944 means that daily life is overshadowed by World War II. They plant Victory gardens, collect scrap metal and watch as family members ship off to the front lines.

As it happens, our modern-day friends are studying World War II in school. Despite their trepidation about interfering with the past, they can't help letting their new pals know that "the good

guys win." But even the best-intentioned revelations about the future can wreak havoc. When Henry, Frances and Lukas wake up one morning, they discover they're living in an alternate version of history in which the Nazis have won World War II and conquered the United States, now renamed Westfallen. The friends must grapple with their new reality and use their ingenuity to get history back on track.

"Westfallen" is an engaging and fast-paced thriller, though it sometimes falls short of conveying the full implications of a Nazi victory. The six friends spend a lot of time hashing out the details of various time-related mechanisms that would allow them to alter reality. Meanwhile, Jewish families face restrictions on where they can live and work, and there are hints of some sort of surveillance system—but the actual atrocities the Nazis committed receive only brief mention.

This is the first in a planned series by the author-sibling tandem of Ann Brashares and Ben Brashares. (Ms. Brashares wrote the "Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants" series, and Mr. Brashares is the author of "Being Edie Is Hard Today" and "The Great Whipplethorp Bug Collection.")

"Westfallen" sets out to cover a lot of ground. As it barrels toward its cliffhanger ending, different plotlines dangle, waiting to be explored further in a sequel.

**SHORTCUTS: CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

BY KATIE DANIELS



## Putting Frindle To Paper

**The Frindle Files**By Andrew Clements  
*Random House, 224 pages, \$17.99*

**JOSH WILLETT** is a sixth-grader who loves biking, skateboarding and, most of all, computers. He practices coding after school and uses his laptop in every class. Every class, that is, except English. Josh's teacher Mr. N doesn't allow his students to use computers in the classroom. Instead, he insists on chalkboards, handwritten homework and reading from a "miserable little grammar book"—Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style." After a little internet sleuthing, Josh discovers that Mr. N is actually Nicholas Allen, who gained national notoriety as an elementary-schooler for inventing a new word for "pen": frindle.

"Frindle," Andrew Clements's warmhearted novel about a mischievous student and his canny language-arts teacher, has sold more than six million copies since it was first published in 1996. Before Clements died in 2019, he wrote the first draft of a sequel.

"The Frindle Files" picks up about two decades after the events in "Frindle." Upon learning that Nicholas has been living incognito as Mr. N, Josh and his classmates decide to use their newfound knowledge to sow a little classroom mayhem—and win their laptop privileges in the process.

"Frindle" fans will appreciate the brief cameos here by beloved characters from the original, as well as the charming sketches [at left] by Brian Selznick, who designed the iconic "Frindle" cover. But the rules of the classroom have changed since Mr. N was a student. In "Frindle," Nicholas's stunt stems from a genuine curiosity about who decides the meaning of words. By contrast, Josh's motivation—to win even more screen time—seems a little less righteous.

Ultimately, Mr. N and his students join forces to take down a pirated and error-riddled electronic version of "The Elements of Style." The students' social-media savviness (with some technological assists from Mr. N, who is not as old school as he seems) helps their efforts go viral. But for Josh, the real lesson isn't what computers can do. It's what they can't. As Mr. N observes, "good writing demands clear thinking, and clear thinking can't happen when kids are distracted."

Ms. Daniels's work has been published in the *Atlantic*, the *American Scholar* and *Commonweal*.

## BOOKS

'In the ballroom. Packed. Cigarette haze. Perfume and brilliantine. Preened ladies from twenty to fifty.' —BILLY WILDER

# A Decade on the Edge

**Vertigo**

By Harald Jähner  
*Basic*, 480 pages, \$35

**The Weimar Years**

By Frank McDonough  
*Apollo*, 592 pages, \$45

By JULIA M. KLEIN

**A**NY ACCOUNT of Germany's economically embattled, politically fractured and culturally avant-garde Weimar Republic is haunted by the same, insistent question: How could Weimar fail and Hitler happen?

Harald Jähner's "Vertigo: The Rise and Fall of Weimar Germany" and Frank McDonough's "The Weimar Years: Rise and Fall 1918-1933" examine the era through different lenses. But both emphasize Germany's yearning for national unity after years of chaos and disruption.

Mr. Jähner highlights the "dizzying, vertiginous excitement" of interwar Germany. A German cultural journalist and the former editor of the Berliner Zeitung, he explores the country's "emotional manifestations such as unease, confidence, anxiety, ennui, self-reliance, a desire to consume, a desire to dance, a hunger for experience, pride and hatred"—an even tougher and more inchoate task than chronicling the rapid succession of governments that alternately stabilized and threatened German democracy.

Not that Mr. Jähner ignores that tumultuous history. But, as in his excellent 2022 book, "Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich, 1945-1955," he unearths lesser-known stories as well. So we learn, for example, that Billy Wilder, the Oscar-winning director of such films as "Sunset Boulevard" (1950) and "Some Like It Hot" (1959), was not only a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany but, at one point, a gigolo in a Berlin dance hall.

Mr. McDonough, a British historian whose previous books include the two-volume history "The Hitler Years" (2021), mentions some enduring cultural touchstones: Fritz Lang's 1927 Expressionist film, "Metropolis"; Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's "The Threepenny Opera" (1928); and Erich Maria Remarque's 1929 novel, "All Quiet on the Western Front." He also nods to the cabaret scene, the Bauhaus and other artistic movements, and the pioneering work of Magnus Hirschfeld and his Institute of Sexual Science.

But Mr. McDonough's focus and passion lie elsewhere. He delineates in unrelenting chronological detail the parliamentary scuffles, cabinet maneuverings, economic upheavals,



EXPRESSIONIST Performers at Mary Wigman's School of Dance in Dresden, Germany, 1930.

diplomatic logjams, violent street battles, assassinations and political dysfunction that led, finally, to Hitler's disastrous chancellorship. The Germany he depicts is "a crisis-ridden society that gradually became politically ungovernable."

While Mr. Jähner's narrative seems at times disjointed and idiosyncratic, Mr. McDonough's, with its exhaust-

## Weimar Germany's political life was as tumultuous as its cultural scene was vibrant.

tively repetitive listing of election results and cabinet reshuffles, can be impenetrably dense. But each is a serious, deeply researched addition to the literature, and they complement each other nicely.

Mr. Jähner sees Weimar as "surprisingly contemporary at one moment, weirdly alien the next," even at times "almost more modern than we are." He draws on newspaper advertisements, photographs, manifestos, diaries, songs, novels and films to survey a jumble of topics: among others, the absurdities of hyperinfla-

tion, the rise of prostitution, the influx of female office workers, the blurring of gender roles and the primacy of leisure. Weimar culture thrived, he suggests, even when everything else seemed to be falling apart. "The light-entertainment muse of 1920s Germany, like popular culture today," Mr. Jähner writes, "did not skirt around suffering, but helped to process and endure it."

Mr. Jähner instructively quotes the diary of Luise Solmitz, a teacher married to a Jewish convert to Protestantism. Solmitz was aware of Hitler's dangerous racial theories, but nevertheless praised him as embodying "the soul of our people." The National Socialists turned "an economic depression into a mental crisis," Mr. Jähner writes. And it was, ultimately, "not economic hardship, nor humiliation by the Versailles Treaty" that made Solmitz and others "sink into Hitler's arms, but an intoxicating sense of unity."

Hitler figures far more prominently in Mr. McDonough's account. It credits the future dictator's uneven but seemingly inexorable rise to his unifying emotional appeal, his oratorical abilities, and such campaign innovations as targeted direct mail and cross-country rallies enabled by charter flights.

One of the main threads of "The Weimar Years" is Germany's efforts to lighten the burden of the reparations imposed after World War I by the Treaty of Versailles. Weimar diplomats repeatedly negotiated with the Allies over payments as well as the occupation of Germany's industrial Ruhr region.

Too often, Mr. McDonough suggests, premature deaths robbed the country of its best leaders: Walther Rathenau, the foreign minister assassinated by right-wing nationalists in 1922; Friedrich Ebert, the Social Democratic president who died in 1925 after an appendectomy; and Gustav Stresemann, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning chancellor and foreign minister felled by a stroke in 1929. Mr. McDonough describes Stresemann as the one Weimar politician who might have saved German democracy.

The book's most fascinating section is its chronicle of the complex web of events that led to Hitler's chancellorship. The German people were not blameless, having given Hitler's party a plurality—never a majority—of the vote in two 1932 elections. Proportional representation and other constitutional weaknesses, including the ability of the president to skirt the Reichstag and suspend civil rights, already had impaired Weimar democ-

racy. In the face of mass unemployment, the Social Democrats and Communists failed to find common ground; the political center all but disappeared and power became concentrated in "a small circle" of antidemocratic individuals around President Paul von Hindenburg.

Hindenburg kept juggling chancellors in pursuit of economic and political stability. Finally he turned to Hitler, an avowed dictator-in-waiting empowered by his electoral popularity. It was a crucial miscalculation. Mr. McDonough lambasts Hindenburg as "the gravedigger and the undertaker" of Weimar democracy.

Both authors extrapolate contemporary lessons. Weimar shows "how a democracy under poor leadership" can drift toward "a form of authoritarian rule that ultimately destroys it," Mr. McDonough writes. Mr. Jähner argues that the people of Weimar "felt that their society was torn, split into irreconcilably opposed worlds that would never be mutually comprehensible." Even so, they could have rebuffed Hitler's inflammatory rhetoric at the ballot box. "At the time," Mr. Jähner writes, "they couldn't see exactly how important that choice was."

*Ms. Klein is a cultural reporter and critic in Philadelphia.*

# Manuscript Mayhem


**MYSTERIES**

TOM NOLAN

**IN JEAN HANFF KORELITZ'S** 2021 novel, "The Plot," the author Jacob Finch Bonner pays a fatal price for basing a work of fiction on an idea once told to him by one of his writing students. Ms. Korelitz gives her satirical thriller a second spin of the wheel with "**The Sequel**" (Celadon, 304 pages, \$29), in which Jacob's widow, Anna Williams-Bonner, writes her own novel, based, it seems, on her marriage and its aftermath.

All goes swimmingly for Anna and her new career as a writer, even as she oversees her late partner's literary estate. But then an anonymous tormentor starts sending Anna and others excerpts from an unpublished manuscript that bears striking similarities both to Jacob's book and her own.

As "The Plot" revealed and "**The Sequel**" recounts, Anna has many more secrets to hide than her husband ever did. Several involve her now-deceased brother, the student who inspired Jacob's book. Anna was sure she had erased all traces of the problematic past she had lived under a different name. But now she fears someone knows the truth. Her ultimate solution for those who stand in her way is "obliteration." This is not a woman who cries over spilled blood.

"She herself was no one's idea of a good person," Anna reflects. "But it did not follow

that she considered herself a bad person. . . . Never once had she imposed her will on a person who hadn't first chosen to constrain her, assault her, thwart her, or malign her." Ms. Korelitz's book, mixing dark wit with coldblooded suspense, provides an unforgettable tour through the life and mind of a homicidal protagonist.

Alan Moore's "**The Great When**" (Bloomsbury, 336 pages, \$29.99), the first book in a planned fantasy-noir series, begins in London in 1949. Dennis Knuckleyard, 18, works in a used bookshop run by an old woman known as "Coffin Ada." Dennis's young life is turned upside down when he returns to the shop one day with a box of old titles he'd been tasked with buying. Coffin Ada singles out an 1853 volume: "A London Walk" by the Rev. Thomas Hampole.

"Dennis, love," she says, "this isn't a real book." It was the invention of one Arthur Machen, who mentioned it briefly in a novel. "This shouldn't be here. This comes from . . . somewhere else." There's "another London," Ada confides, "that nobody knows is there . . . we've got to get this back to where it come from, and then everything will be alright." But when Dennis returns to the site where he bought the anomalous tome, the street is filled with police. The seller

has been murdered. A flamboyant tout named Prince Monolulu waylays Dennis and steers him toward an aging artist and magician who gives him a lecture on "the Great When" that Ada hinted at: "It's a Symbolist substratum. . . . Our world's just a shadow . . . up on the wall o' Plato's cave."

## THIS WEEK

### The Sequel

By Jean Hanff Korelitz

### The Great When

By Alan Moore

### The Perils of Lady Catherine de Bourgh

By Claudia Gray

Dennis gets the picture when Soho gangsters, eager for a deal with the crime king of this other London, chase him through a hidden portal into an alternate cityscape of tilted buildings and lampposts adorned with metal-and-glass flowers. Sumptuous carriages glide 2 feet above the shining road. Strange figures promenade through the street, "each wearing its unique charisma like a stole." A grotesquely distorted fellow Dennis knows in "real life" hurriedly guides him through an escape route. Back in the here and now, Dennis feels unmoored, if not unhinged.

Dennis must placate his own London's powers that be, to safeguard the lives of those near and dear to him and to foil a maniacal killer who's tapped into the Big When's chaotic energies. Mr. Moore is a wizardly prose stylist whose sentences flow in a Joycean stream. ("Across the street, down on its wind-scraped corner, sodium lamps have wrapped the night with yellow cellophane.") If you're looking for a writer to ensorcell you in a saga of hard-boiled crime and surrealistic horror, here is your magus.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that an excellent mystery written in the manner and setting of Jane Austen must be in want of sequels. Claudia Gray's "**The Perils of Lady Catherine de Bourgh**" (Vintage, 352 pages, \$18) is the American author's third novel involving young Jonathan Darcy ("heir to one of the greatest estates in the realm") and Juliet Tilney ("just at the age of marriageability"), and it has all the zest and suspense of its sparkling predecessors.

These two charming characters, though increasingly attracted to one another, are not joined in official courtship. They have not seen each other for a year when, in the autumn of 1821, Jonathan's imperious great-aunt Catherine—aware of his and Juliet's

success in solving two killings in the recent past—demands their mutual presence and services at her estate of Rosings Park: "Several shocking incidents have led me to believe my own life to be in danger. . . . Make haste!"

Someone has intentionally damaged a carriage axle and fired a rifle through a window at Rosings Park. More frightening things occur once Jonathan and Juliet (with their attentive fathers) arrive for a stay there. Catherine treats this campaign "less as a threat to her very life and more as an impertinence." The sensitive Jonathan, though, is disturbed that a would-be murderer must be among the "people I have known my entire life." These include Catherine's frail daughter and disaffected son-in-law, living at Rosings Park under her ladyship's suffocating supervision, and a local clergyman and his family, dependent upon the domineering matriarch for their livelihood.

Of equal interest to readers is whether Jonathan and Juliet will transcend the family clashes hindering their intimacy. Fortunately, the two are willing to apply the same determination to countering parental resistance as to solving criminal puzzles. "As water wears away stone," Jonathan tells Juliet, "so does persistence overcome obstacles."

## PLAY

## NEWS QUIZ DANIEL AKST

From this week's  
Wall Street Journal

1. Caroline Ellison, a key figure in the FTX crypto fraud case, was sentenced for her role—to what?



5. A new biography, "Kingmaker," chronicles the amours and ambitions of Pamela Harriman. What was her middle name?

- A. Beryl
- B. Digby
- C. Hayward
- D. All of the above

- A. Time served
- B. Two years
- C. Five years
- D. Life

2. New York Mayor Eric Adams was indicted on corruption charges—by whom?

- A. New York State's Attorney General
- B. The Queens District Attorney
- C. The U.S. Attorney in Brooklyn
- D. The U.S. Attorney in Manhattan

3. A hurricane struck the Tallahassee area of Florida. Name that storm.

- A. Helene
- B. Henry
- C. Harriet
- D. Helmut

4. What has David Feuerzeig set out to do in every one of the 252 communities in Vermont?

- A. Sleep in an AirBnB
- B. Preach the gospel
- C. Give a free concert
- D. Sculpt a moose out of ice

**Answers** are listed below the crossword solutions at right.



FROM TOP: STEPHANIE KEITH/BLOOMBERG NEWS; SERHII KORO/ANY FOR WSJ

6. The government is alarmed over "Salt Typhoon." What's that?

- A. The typical sodium-heavy American diet
- B. A tsunami of soy sauce imports
- C. The collapse of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
- D. A Chinese hacking campaign targeting U.S. internet providers

7. A Boar's Head plant-closing put 500 people out of work. Which rural county sustained the blow?

- A. Muscatine, Iowa
- B. Izard, Ark.
- C. Greenville, Va.
- D. Cook, Ill.

8. Bradley armored vehicles are so popular with Ukrainian troops that one crew named theirs Mavka. What's that?

- A. A tornado of the steppe
- B. A mythical forest creature
- C. A medieval folk heroine
- D. An affectionate term for the Virgin Mary

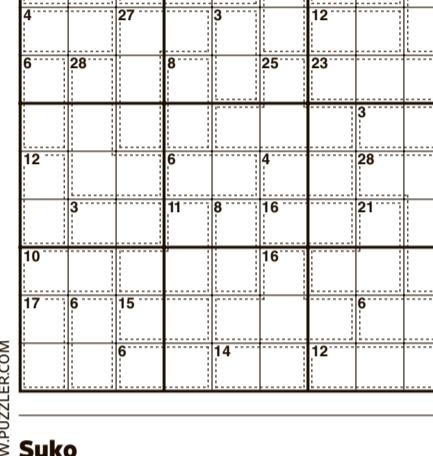
## NUMBER PUZZLES

## Cell Blocks



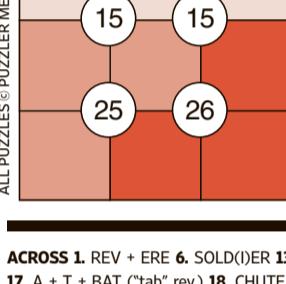
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

## Killer Sudoku Level 4



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

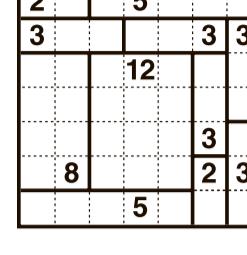


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each color total is correct.

ALL PUZZLES © PUZZLER MEDIA LTD. WWW.PUZZLER.COM

## SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

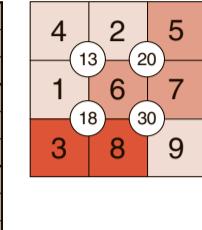
## Cell Blocks



For previous weeks' puzzles, and to discuss strategies with other solvers, go to [WSJ.com/puzzles](#).

## Killer Sudoku

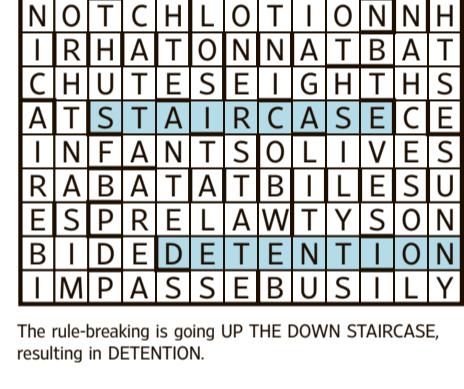
## Level 3



## Happy Feet



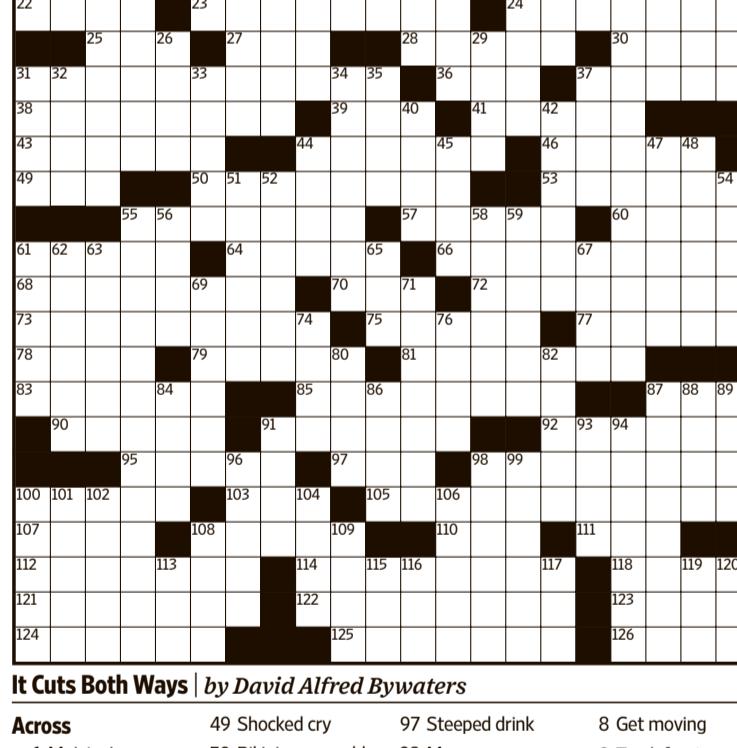
## Flight Rules



The rule-breaking is going UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE, resulting in DETENTION.

**Answers** to News Quiz: 1.B, 2.D, 3.A, 4.C, 5.D, 6.D, 7.C, 8.B

## THE JOURNAL WEEKEND PUZZLES edited by MIKE SHENK



**It Cuts Both Ways** | by David Alfred Bywaters

Across	49	Shocked cry	97	Steeped drink	8	Get moving	45	Soft ball brand
1 Moisturizer applications	50	Bikini, memorably	98	Means	9	Truck front	46	2026 Winter Olympics host city, to natives
5 Of immediate relevance	53	Eve's predecessor, in the Talmud	100	Group of mountains, islands or stores	10	Had for lunch	47	High
12 Like some roles after creative differences	55	Astronomer refuted by Copernicus	103	Workout unit	11	Barrel sediment	48	Bring out
18 Modern Mesopotamia	57	Young's partner	105	Where the best ostrich feathers come from?	12	Split with force	49	Imperturbable
19 Puts life into	60	Blackthorn	107	Endure	13	Middle of a Napoleon-related palindrome	50	Wiesbaden's state
21 Inexplicable event	61	Great sorrow	108	Drying rack	14	Nonviolent protests at the Vatican?	51	Etiquette consultant?
22 Diner's reading	64	Satirist's weapon	110	Transit option	15	Bitter	52	Leaves home?
23 "Get out of the way!"	66	Magnates who aren't as big a deal as they pretend to be?	111	Subzero sound	16	Ma and others	53	"The source of all true knowledge," per Leonardo
24 Swarm across	68	Shimmer	112	Much-used tablet	17	It can be perfect	54	Halloween decor
25 German article	70	Put a lid on	114	Spots for fans	18	Can be	55	Removes
27 Cheater's sleeve contents	72	Wind farm sights	115	Flatten with a foot	19	Nonviolent	56	Desperate insomniac's resource
28 Velvety material	73	Problem at an overlong wedding reception?	116	Make light of	20	Protests at the Vatican?	57	Cavalry soldier
30 Clamors	75	Magnate	117	Green gamer	21	It can be	58	Sweet tuber
31 Gaol units?	77	Battery end	118	Spots for fans	22	Nonviolent	59	Simple ski lift
36 Pumpernickel need	78	Stop evading	119	Fail	23	Protests at the Vatican?	60	Al Jolson song
37 Frog prey	79	Elite squad	120	Concert boomers	24	It can be	61	Successful songwriter
38 Collections of matching office accessories	81	Spots for sofas	121	Turn down, in a way	25	Nonviolent	62	Alleviate
39 "At Seventeen" singer Janis	83	Flatten with a foot	122	Straightens, as a hose	26	Protests at the Vatican?	63	Earth viewed as a self-regulating organism
41 Small and sly	85	Offering the most attitude	123	Make light of	27	It can be	64	Sail holder
43 Large purchase of sorts	87	Chem course component	124	Green gamer	28	Nonviolent	65	Piscivorous mammal
44 Front covers, of sorts	90	Waste away	125	Spots for fans	29	Protests at the Vatican?	66	Father of Thor and Balder
46 Some prayer leaders	91	Euro predecessor	126	Fail	30	They may be rolled or crossed	67	Ooze
	92	Become fond of	127	Concert boomers	31	Present time, briefly	68	Not just a cube?
	93	"Iliad" event	128	Turn down, in a way	32	Move, in reality jargon	69	Fit to
					33	"Cool!"	70	Big suit
					34	Pretend to sing	71	Gawk
					35	South Asian garment	72	Souk shopper, perhaps
					36	"La Bohème" heroine	73	Devastating 2005 hurricane
					37	"La Bohème" heroine	74	Puckish expressions
					38	"La Bohème" heroine	75	Ticked
					39	"La Bohème" heroine	76	Watcher of a Roman temple's sacred fire
					40	"La Bohème" heroine	77	It can be
					41	"La Bohème" heroine	78	Seasonal name
					42	"La Bohème" heroine	79	Lacks
					43	"La Bohème" heroine	80	Pet-protecting org.
					44	"La Bohème" heroine	81	Bench press targets
					45	"La Bohème" heroine	82	Island famous for its nightlife
					46	"La Bohème" heroine	83	Isn't well
					47	"La Bohème" heroine	84	Tear apart
					48	"La Bohème" heroine	85	Purge
					49	"La Bohème" heroine	86	Summer sign
					50	"La Bohème" heroine	87	Isn't well
					51	"La Bohème" heroine	88	Outdo
					52	"La Bohème" heroine	89	Plank targets
					53	"La Bohème" heroine	90	
					54	"La Bohème" heroine	91	
					55	"La Bohème" heroine	92	
					56	"La Bohème" heroine	93	
					57	"La Bohème" heroine	94	
					58	"La Bohème" heroine	95	
					59	"La Bohème" heroine	96	
					60	"La Bohème" heroine	97	
					61	"La Bohème" heroine	98	
					62	"La Bohème" heroine	99	
					63	"La Bohème" heroine	100	
					64	"La Bohème" heroine	101	
					65	"La Bohème" heroine	102	
					66	"La Bohème" heroine	103	
					67	"La Bohème" heroine	104	
					68	"La Bohème" heroine	105	
					69	"La Bohème" heroine	106	
					70	"La Bohème" heroine	107	
					71	"La Bohème" heroine	108	
					72	"La Bohème" heroine		

## REVIEW

**T**o get pumped for Blink-182 concerts, Travis Barker needs lots of ice.

The 48-year-old drummer and producer swears by taking a cold plunge five to six hours before a show. "You have a huge burst of dopamine, and you feel like you reset," he said. Barker tries to find local spots that offer the service, but if there isn't one nearby, the hotel staff will deliver.

"It's so funny, it's just usually a few people from the hotel bringing up carts and carts of ice, and they're like, 'What are you doing with all this, sir?'" he said.

Barker is currently on tour with Blink-182—the band, which he joined in 1998, re-united in 2022. "This is the best version of our band," he said. "We've learned so much about one another, and we've accepted each other for who we are. It's the easiest and nicest it's ever been."

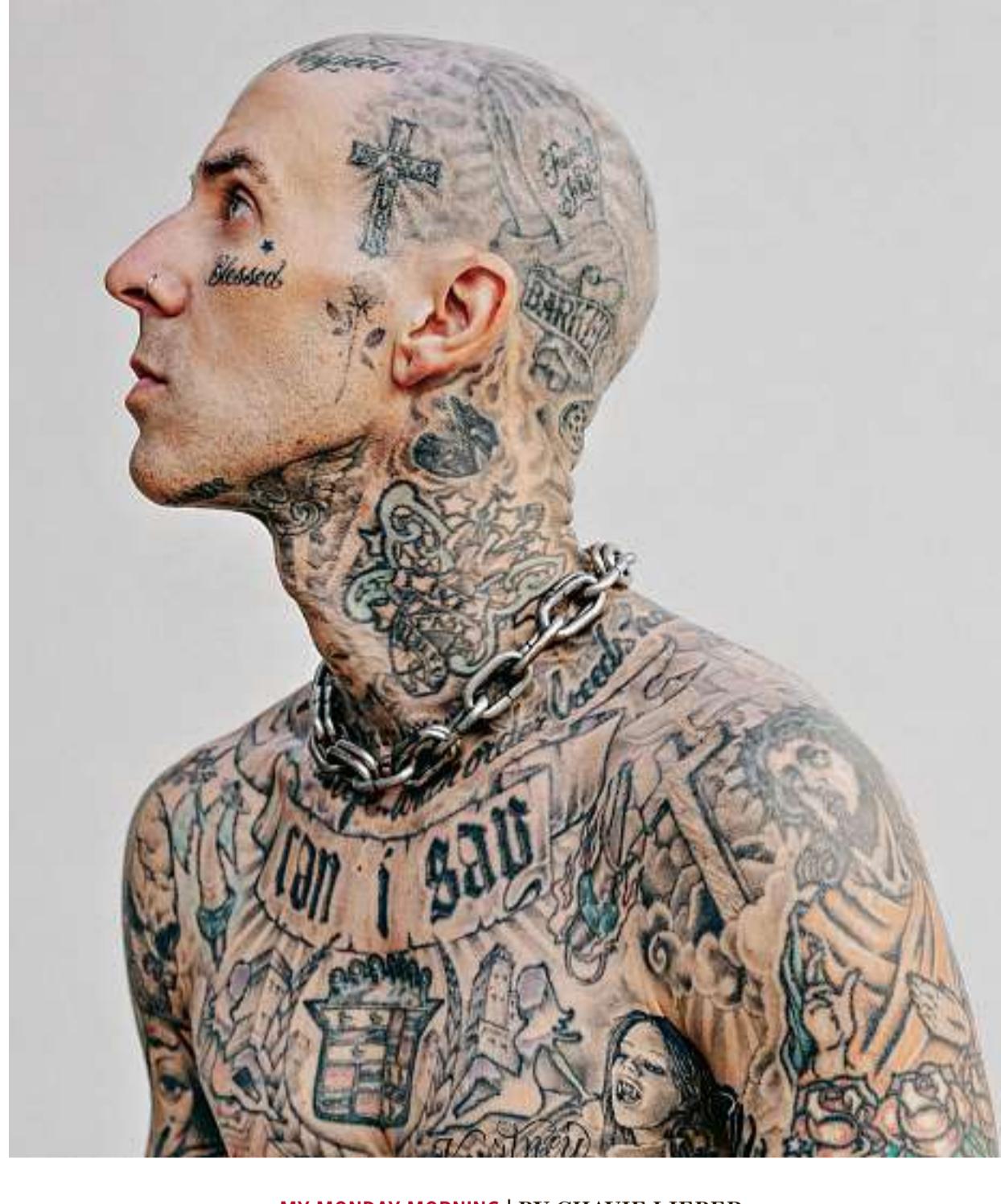
Barker lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Kourtney Kardashian Barker, and their children. WSJ caught up with Barker while he was at home in between shows, where he discussed his exercise routine, his fear of flying and why he's keeping his 10-month-old son out of the public eye.

**What time do you wake up on Monday morning, and what's the first thing you do?**  
If I'm home and not on tour, I wake up around 6 and walk for an hour. If Rocky [Barker's 10-month-old son with Kardashian] is up, we'll go for a walk outside; me, my wife and Rocky. Then I hit a workout right afterward.

**What do you do for exercise?**  
I love boxing and Muay Thai. If I'm lifting weights, it needs to be more explosive weight lifting. I have to lift weights in a way where I'm training my fast-twitch muscles. If I do slow weightlifting, like most people, it's the opposite of what I need.

**What do you have for breakfast?**  
I don't eat breakfast. After my workout, I do a proper protein shake. I like frozen fruit—like blackberries, blueberries, strawberries—and avocado, coconut water, a dash of cinnamon, maca, a half a banana, a scoop of almond butter and plant-based protein, Vega.

**WSJ has written about legacy bands like Metallica who've traded booze and drugs for sleep and exercise. Are you guys the same?**  
I gave up on smoking, drinking and doing drugs years ago. My new ad-



MY MONDAY MORNING | BY CHAVIE LIEBER

## Travis Barker Gave Up Drinking And Drugs for Run Club

The 48-year-old drummer and producer on owning his dream car, weightlifting for drummers and DIY cold plunges.

diction is running. I run three miles every day. When I'm on tour, I hit an hour-long walk, run for 30 minutes. No weights on show day, but I do abs and core work. Maybe it's superstitious, but I like the concept of doing all your hard work in the morning, so that my show is the easiest thing I'm going to do all day.

**You started a run club, Run Travis Run. What was the motivation behind that?**

When I found out we were having Landon [Barker's son with Shanna

Moakler], who is now 20, I started running. I had this determination to be the best version of myself. I've never stopped since then. I jumped into a 5K one day, and it was so fun to run with other people. So I started a run club and said, why don't I run with whoever wants to run with me and raise money for charity. You motivate each other.

**You flew to your Australia concerts in February, which I know was a big deal, given that you survived a near-death plane crash [in 2008].**

**How has it been to fly again?**  
I was good for a while. But that Brazilian plane crash [of Voepass Flight 2283 on Aug. 9] had me spiraling when I was in Europe. God bless all those people's souls. I was affected more than I've been in a long time, and it led to me having one of the realest flashback nightmares I've had since my accident, and I couldn't fly the rest of the tour. I did 15 19-hour bus rides, I did ferries.

**Landon now makes music with your label, DTA Records. What's**

MASTERPIECE | 'SUNSET BOULEVARD' (1950), BY BILLY WILDER

## A Dark Hollywood Close-Up

BY MARILYN ANN MOSS

**BILLY WILDER'S** "Sunset Boulevard" has been called the greatest story about Hollywood ever filmed, conceived by a beloved writer-director with an equally admired aesthetic: a free-spirited lover of the world whose nonetheless cynical eye was as sharp as his ironic view of human nature. (Films such as "Some Like It Hot" and "Double Indemnity" come to mind.) His seductively cracked universe dotes on characters both indelicate and indelible: the good, the bad and the decidedly shady. Since Wilder's first Hollywood success, his Oscar-nominated script for Ernst Lubitsch's 1939 Garbo vehicle, "Ni-nochka," he probably doled out more character flaws than every member of the Directors Guild and Writers Guild combined.

But 1950's "Sunset Boulevard" hit like a meteor; with its dark, scorching view of Hollywood, one had to wonder—had Billy turned on Tinseltown? The film is, on the one hand, Wilder's great shakedown of the town he loves—and hates—a love letter written with a poison pen. Yet, given its release just on the cusp of the Hollywood studio system's demise, it could easily be Wilder's elegy for the business that always applauded his forgiving nature.

The opening of "Sunset Boulevard" reads like a Hollywood crime

staple: ambulances, TV news trucks, reporters and gossip-mongers rush to an old mansion in the Hollywood Hills. There's been a murder—or so we're told by a soft, calm male voice. Turns out our narrator is the victim, that guy the camera now catches floating face down in a swimming pool—with three bullets in his back.

The deceased is Joe Gillis (William Holden), an unsuccessful screenwriter who can tell this story better than anyone living. One day, speeding up Sunset Boulevard, trying to ditch the creditors about to repossess his car, Joe makes a sharp turn and lands in the driveway of a decrepit-looking old villa, "the kind you see in old Hollywood movies." Soon he's beckoned inside by its owner, Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson), a former silent-film goddess now forgotten by the Hollywood that once worshiped her.

"Sunset Boulevard" is Wilder's view of Hollywood's underbelly, a gothic nightmare that overwhelms the fairytale. It's a view of Tinseltown that is timeless—an unforgettable reality that exists behind the scenes

of dream-making. The dark side belongs to the struggling artists who sell their souls to the projector, as well as to the faded stars who fall into delusional disrepair, hoping for one last comeback.

Wilder captures Norma Desmond's mansion (where most of the story plays out) in startling black-and-white images, along with deep-focus shots that inevitably give way to dark shadows, the stuff of noir that here borders on a horror show. The mansion is a bleak and morose hall of grotesqueries, full of visual pranks and distortions that assault the viewer. There is Norma's beloved but deceased pet chimp, whose hairy arm suddenly slips out from a sheet covering it. Then there are Norma's "friends"—Hollywood has-beens—who come to play bridge. They look and walk like somnambulists—perhaps even ghosts. Joe sarcastically calls them "the Wax Works," but they are actual silent-film icons, including Buster Keaton, Anna Q. Nilsson and H.B. Warner. And standing over them all is Max (Erich von Stroheim), a silent-film director extraordinaire (as was the man who plays him), who we eventually learn was Norma's husband until he became her caretaker and servant.

These characters are startling,



Gloria Swanson plays the forgotten silent-film star Norma Desmond.

even freakish, including the deluded Norma herself. Wilder spent a lifetime creating an unsurpassed body of work in which he probed the illusions and fantasies of his characters. Here, even in this dark view of Hollywood where demons reside, he embraces them and, despite their foibles, shows us their ultimate humanity. We also embrace them. In a way we're like the needy, deluded Norma Desmond no less than we are like Joe Gillis, jaded, ordinary, yet ever hopeful.

In the end, Joe tries to leave but Norma doesn't want yet another illusion shattered; she pumps three slugs into his back, preventing him from getting any farther than the pool. This sets up the classic final closing shot: With newsreel cameras rolling, Norma, now transported to her delu-

sional world, walks down her staircase, almost slithering, then finally disappears into the camera of her dreams. "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up."

"Sunset Boulevard" is masterly because Billy Wilder's use of the camera and dialogue coalesce and embrace his characters in the timelessness of their frailties, hopes and desires. In this way the deceased Joe Gillis enfolds the delusional Norma Desmond in his lulling verbal embrace—this as she slips helplessly into the film she imagines for herself alone: As Joe tells us, "Life, which can be strangely merciful, had taken pity on Norma Desmond. The dream she had clung to so desperately had enveloped her."

Ms. Moss is a film historian and biographer.

'Maybe it's superstitious, but I like the concept of doing all your hard work in the morning.'

### that father-son relationship like?

When I was growing up, I was into the Beastie Boys, Slayer, King Diamond and Minor Threat while my dad was listening to Johnny Cash, Buck Owens and Willie Nelson. At the time it was hard, having different musical tastes. But my son and I have had the same musical taste all our lives. So it's the coolest relationship. Landon is home, most of the time, creating music by himself. But when I'm home, he asks me to do a few days in the studio or help finish a song, or listen to them, and I help him however I can.

### How are you handling fame and Rocky's privacy?

Unfortunately, someone finally got a photo of him, but we'd rather keep him out of the spotlight. If I could do everything different, I would have done the same thing with my [older] kids. I think it's weird to grow up and you're 15 or 12, and you're like, 'Mom, you posted this of me?'

### What music are you listening to right now?

It changes all the time. I just listened to the Cars, the Suedeboys' new album, Dijon, Bright Eyes, Fred Again..., Hot Mulligan, Knocked Loose, Dominic Fike. And I love Billie [Eilish].

### What do you like to splurge on?

I have an addiction with cars. But I'm very grateful and appreciative that I have my dream car growing up. It was a 1972 Chevy Blazer, and I have two of them. I lost a bid on a '66 Cadillac Eldorado convertible triple black. I'm always looking for [that one] and would snag it in a heartbeat. But my wife's really good at being like, "Babe, you don't need that."

### Do you have a piece of advice that's guided you over the years?

I have two. Starve the ego, feed the soul. Also, find something you love and then figure out how to get paid for it.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

DANIEL ROJAS

G E RICHARDSON/PARAMOUNT/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK



**Theory of Drivability**  
Why the Lucid Air Sapphire evokes...Einstein  
**D13**

FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

# OFF DUTY

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

\*\*\*\* Saturday/Sunday, September 28 - 29, 2024 | **D1**

**Give Me Shade**  
Are the new, improved transition lenses cool? **D2**



## In Bed With Costco

Shoppers go to Costco for gallons of mayonnaise or a lifetime supply of spuds. But the low-glam retailer has been gaining cred for bedding, even furniture. Our investigator asks: Are there stylish values to be had?



FABIO CONSOLI

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS

**L**OS ANGELES COMEDIAN Matt O'Brien so rabidly adores Costco that he: 1) named his soon-to-be-released comedy album "King of Kirkland," a reference to its in-house brand, and 2) regularly crawls into bed with the retailer in the form of Kirkland Signature 680 thread-count sheets. Without a whiff of sarcasm, the Comedy Central regular tells me, "It's like sleeping in lotion. They're the best."

I, too, have shacked up with the sheets, which have gathered a galaxy of more than 21,000 five-star reviews on Costco.com. They satisfy in equal measure my Midwestern appetite for thrift and my background as a hairsplitting luxury travel writer. Made of California-grown Pima cotton, Costco's house-brand sheets do indeed feel lotion-like, and become more so with each wash.

In-store, where prices are typically lower than the website, you can pick up a 6-piece king set (including four pillowcases) for only \$80. As a point of comparison, luxury linen brand Matouk demands \$88 for a lone pair of pillowcases at 350 thread count.

Until my husband and I moved to suburban Colorado from New York City in 2017, I hadn't given Costco a second glance. Finally, however, we too had the space to stockpile the 225-ounce jug of laundry detergent, the sack of spuds that could feed a boat's worth of my Irish-potato-famine forebears. We celebrated the day we joined its wholesale membership (\$60 a year then, \$65 now). Still, for ages I dismissed the home goods on offer. They all seemed noxious, epitomized by bulbous sofas of fake leather outfitted with cupholders and perfect for frat-house lawns.

That's changed. In the past year or two, some of the home-wares in the warehouse aisles—increasingly decent, if not likely to grace the pages of *Elle Decor*—have been tugging at

*Please turn to page D10*

### SHEETS RAP

Wowed by the quality of Costco's Kirkland bed linens, the author home-tested a host of other kitchen, bath and bedroom soft goods.

## Inside



### IN FULL BLOOMSBURY

Seeking inspiration this fall, few designers were afraid of Virginia Woolf **D3**



### DROP DEAD GORGEOUS

Tourists are flocking to cemeteries for their beauty and surprisingly lively events **D6**



### THE ROLLS-ROYCE OF CHEESECAKES

A light, crustless Spanish classic gets a lemony lift **D11**



### FLORAL ARGUMENTS

The case for flower-forward men's colognes? Women find them sexy. **D2**

## STYLE &amp; FASHION

BY BRENNAN KILBANE

**W**Omen stop Jacob Jiang, a fashion-design student, on the streets of London all the time. Not to inquire about his Rick Owens jeans, but about his scent—Do Son, by Diptyque—which they want for themselves and the men in their lives. “I think they like it because it’s not a scent used by most dudes,” Jiang, 25, said of the unisex fragrance he picked up three years ago. Featuring tuberose, a white bloom with an intense aroma, it reminds him of “a bamboo forest.”

Jiang would have fit in centuries ago, when gentlemen often smelled like flowers. In the 18th century, monks in Cologne—the German city that gave cologne its name—brewed fragrant tonics from citrus rinds and flower petals. And according to fragrance legend, in the 19th century Napoleon charged into battle doused in a cologne thick with rosemary and lavender. Though florals have frequently appeared in men’s fragrances since then, they’ve often taken a back seat to more overtly “masculine” ingredients. In the last 50 years, countless men’s mass fragrances have not so much been plucked from the garden as exhumed from the golf club, infused with notes of woods, whiskeys, smoke and leather.

But lately, younger taste-making guys have stopped to smell the roses (and violets and nerolis and geraniums). They’re spritzing themselves with “flower-forward” fragrances, which in industry speak means floral top notes are the first thing one smells. These concoctions, typically unisex formulas from smaller brands, can read sweet, tangy or even metallic. Fans say they’re more surprising on guys—and, crucially, sexier—than traditional colognes.

At a Brooklyn outpost of upscale millennial apothecary Le Labo, male customers are snapping up Ylang 49, a scent heavy with tropical ylang ylang, reports assistant manager Vivian Platis. “I don’t know if it’s pheromones, but on guys it smells so sexy,” she said.

Men tend to have warmer skin and more body hair. Sable Yong, 38, a beauty writer in Brooklyn and host of the Smell Ya Later podcast, wonders if those factors create magic by adding an “earthy umami” to floral-forward aromas, which she indeed finds “sexy on guys.” What particularly wins her over? “Something unexpected,” she said, such as a formula combining rose and oud (agarwood). She endorses Rose Noire by L’Ob-

# Guys and Dahlias

The sexiest scents for men? Floral notes have often taken a back seat to smoky, woody ones. But in 2024, petal fragrances are the new tool of seduction.



**REAL MEN SMELL LIKE FLOWERS** This fanciful photo illustration pairs a floral fragrance with the sort of macho-romantic imagery seen in countless cologne ads.

## THIS BUD'S FOR YOU / FIVE WINNING FLORAL SCENTS FOR GUYS



From left: D.S. & Durga The Carlyle Eau de Parfum, \$270; Diptyque Paris Do Son Eau de Parfum, \$230; L'Objet Rose Noire Eau de Parfum, \$160; Le Labo Ylang 49 Eau de Parfum, \$335; Boy Smells Violet Ends Eau de Parfum, \$98

JULIEN PAUARD

## SKEPTICS CORNER

### Are You Afraid of the Dork?

We were. But thanks to tech upgrades, transition lenses *might* be cool now.

**THEY'VE LONG** been the butt of style jokes. Obscenely practical. The province of dads allergic to cool.

But against the odds, photochromic lenses are enjoying a glow-a-go. Invented in the 1960s, tragically associated with the 1970s, they’re commonly known as “transition lenses” in a nod to Transitions Optical, the Florida company that launched the first plastic versions in 1991. These two-in-ones darken when exposed to sunlight, thanks to UV-ray-sensitive carbon-based dyes, and clear up indoors, theoretically eliminating the need for separate spectacles and sunglasses.

For years, transition lenses mostly darkened to sad grays and browns, took ages to change and retained a strange yellowish tint indoors. They were typically associated with frumpy frames. Significant technological advancements, however, have sharpened their look and performance, and opticians say stylish guys are lapping them up.

Calling them “more of a fashion statement now,” Manhattan optician Anthony Aiden said transitions have “really piqued the interest of the younger generation.” Dapper A-listers like Joaquin Phoenix have worn them on recent red carpets, too. “I never understand why people would not opt for [photochromic lenses],” said Dr. Harvey Moscot, CEO of eyewear brand Moscot. “If you’re going in and out of buildings, they’re just extremely practical.” Cost-effective, too. Though slightly pricier than reg-

ular lenses, they cost far less than splashing out for sunglasses, too.

Even so, those dorky, transitions-sporting dads are haunting. You’ll need convincing. Cue the questions.

#### I've avoided these things for years; what 'big improvements'?

Recent years have seen incremental upgrades in the lenses, but the breakthrough came in March: Transitions Optical—still the leading brand—released its new Gen S lens. These promise to change from clear to fully sun-protective in about 25 seconds, and back to clear in less than two minutes—up to twice as fast as previous models.

Crucially, they look better while transforming. While certain old-school photochromics darkened unevenly, the Gen S always boasts a uniform tint, says Sherianne James, North America CMO of EssilorLuxottica, Transitions’ parent company.

#### You said 'cool'?

Yes, and we’re pretty sure we meant it. An expanded range of shade tints—including amethyst,

emerald and ruby—ups the suaveness, argues Erik Sacher of New York’s Silver Lining Opticians. “You just can’t really get that cool look with a light gray,” he said.

#### Do they go totally clear indoors?

The Gen S ones do. Other brands lean into the tinted look—a trending style for spectacles that can work if the color’s right, says Sacher. A standout: Moscot’s Blue+ lenses, which shift from light to dark blue.

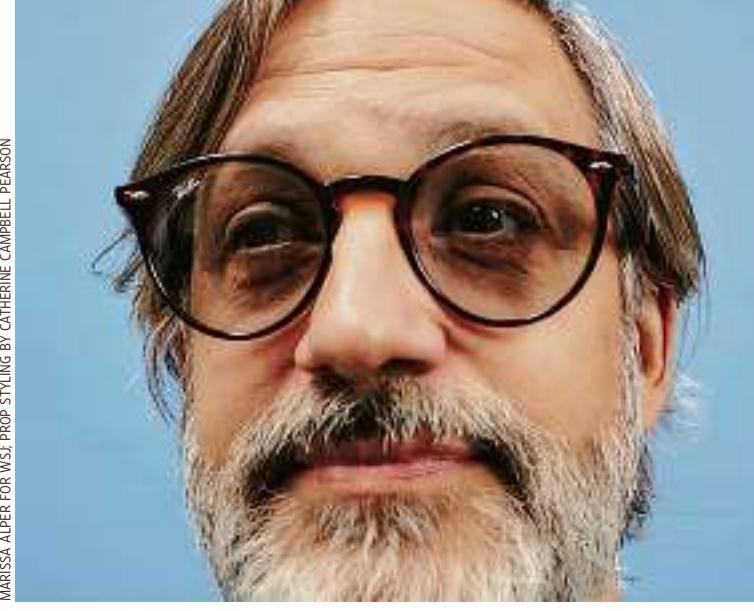
Just remember that this technology responds to the sun’s UV rays; if a window blocks those rays—say, you’re in a car—the lenses won’t change.

**I might be tempted. What next?** Photochromic lenses are compatible with pretty much all prescriptions and frames. Ray-Ban sells frames fitted with the latest Transitions Optical lenses, or you can take any frames to LensCrafters and ask them to pop in Transitions. Brands such as Persol and Warby Parker make their own versions, using the same basic tech.

Style-wise, you might follow the lead of Simon Anderson, 54, a real-estate broker in Brooklyn. He had always been wary of transitions, but when an optician recently suggested clear-to-blue lenses for his silver aviators from fashionable Japanese brand Eyevan, he fell hard. “I am 100% a reformed skeptic,” he said. “I get compliments on them daily.” —*Avery Stone*



**CH-CH-CH-CHANGES** Ray-Ban RB2180 Glasses With Transitions Gen S Lenses, Starting at \$616 With Prescription. Above: the lenses while clear. Below: mid-transition, on Wall Street Journal staffer Dan Gaba.



## STYLE &amp; FASHION



ALBERTO MADDALONI (TOD'S); FILIPPO FIORI (BURBERRY); RAOUF GATCHALIAN (ANNA SUI); GETTY IMAGES (WOOLF); DALE HRAB/WSJ (CABINET)

◀ DISSERTATION CHIC From left: Bloomsbury-coded looks at Tod's, Burberry and Anna Sui, pictured against a detail from a hand-painted cabinet in Charleston House.

which dress she wore.

Sui says the handmade Bloomsbury aesthetic inspires her to push against robotic trend cycles. "My inspiration board was covered with pictures of the interiors of Charleston House" she said, referencing the crafty country home of Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell and Bell's lover Duncan Grant, where the Bloomsbury group often gathered (see a detail from one of the home's hand-painted cabinets, left).

Sui took inspiration from their paintings and pottery, plus the hand-painted covers Bell created for Woolf's books. The New York designer found the aesthetic's jagged lines and blotchy whorls especially exciting, seeing their imperfect beauty as an antidote to "A.I. and technology." To honor it, Sui hand-drew her floral prints and plaids.

Woolf's 1928 novel "Orlando" was a pioneering exploration of gender fluidity,

and the way her personal style also mashed up the masculine and feminine contributes to the look's appeal, says Laura Shippey, head of design at London-based label Toast. "She really rejected the rigid female dress code of the time," Shippey explained, pointing to Woolf's habit of tucking floral silk blouses into woolen breeches—a styling move now ripe for designers like Ralph Lauren, but then considered shocking. Toast styles its own pleat-front trousers with girlish cotton tunics delicately embroidered at the cuff.

Though fall's fashion

offerings are decidedly Woolf-coded, you needn't buy anything new to channel her. "Bloomsbury dressing...was not wasteful," said Nicholson, noting that the group shared and repurposed old garments whenever possible. In 1924, when posing for a British Vogue portrait, Woolf donned



**Virginia Woolf's style was 'rebellious but grounded.'**

an outdated black velvet gown, which she modernized with a lace collar and clumpy gray wool stockings.

"That photograph is amazing," said author Michael Cunningham, whose Woolf-inspired 1999 novel "The Hours" won a Pulitzer Prize—but he cautions it might lead new Woolf initiates to assume the author's style is "heavy" or even dowdy.

In reality, says Cunningham, Woolf had a deep obsession with "beautiful" clothes, and used them as both a disguise and a platform. "She had a reputation as this dark lady of English letters," he explained. "But she was always the most sparkling presence at any party. That force of her personality was a style in itself."

## A Woolf in Chic Clothing

This fall, consider taking a page from the Bloomsbury Group's defiantly bookish style

By FIORELLA VALDESOLO

**B**RITISH designer Clare Waight Keller is most famous for dressing Meghan Markle on her wedding day. The former creative director of Chloé and Givenchy has long been partial to elegant swoops of silk and precisely cut black blazers. But this season—her first as creative director for Japanese basics label Uniqlo—Keller drew from a more novel inspiration: "I was reading a lot of Virginia Woolf." The result is a confident, slightly kooky capsule collection of hardy tweed blazers and fluttering maxi skirts referencing Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group, a bohemian posse of British artists and writers who resisted the staid norms of their post-Victorian era. Their style, said Keller, "is rebellious but grounded."

This fall, you might say Woolf's defiant spirit haunted other collections in the form of offbeat, earthy-but-ethereal pairings. Miu Miu trotted out waxed barn jackets and deflated floral skirts, Tod's showed boyish charcoal wool vests and

frothy white nightshirts, and Burberry, which has explicit ties to Bloomsbury, offered hourglass-shaped leather blazers and plaid school-marm skirts. Even rocker chic designers like Anna Sui went Woolf-ward, styling floral blouses with tangerine argyle socks—a nod to the "woolen orange stockings" that writer Vita Sackville-

West, Woolf's sometimes lover, noted in a 1922 letter.

According to Claire Nicholson, chair of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain and a retired lecturer at Cambridge University, "Bloomsbury dressing is creative and individual." She notes that Woolf would often defiantly (and to our eyes, chickly) pair outdoor chore coats with ele-

gant floral skirts and men's work boots, flouting her era's rigid feminine dress codes while keeping her feet warm and dry. In Britain's rainy climate, the look made sense and offered Woolf something of an emotional shield. In a 1925 diary entry, she spoke of "frock consciousness"—the way she would feel more or less powerful, depending on

Though fall's fashion

**AN OUTFIT OF ONE'S OWN / CHANNEL THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP WITH ARTFULLY MIXED SEPARATES THAT COMBINE RAFFISH AND WINSOME STYLES**

### LOOK 1



**TO THE WELL-LIT OFFICE**  
Clockwise from top left:  
Grainne Morton Earrings, about \$740; Döen Blouse, \$298;  
Vince Trousers, \$495; Lauren  
Manoogian Vest, \$350;  
Emme Parsons Heels, \$550

### LOOK 2



**MRS. DALLOWAY GOES TO STARBUCKS** Clockwise from top left: Comme Si Socks, \$78; Toast Jacket, \$315; J.Crew Polo, \$90; Uniqlo Clogs, \$50; Maison Mayle Skirt, \$565

PRADA



## STYLE &amp; FASHION

# The Designers Fashion Insiders Love

Each September, the fashion flock roams from New York to London to Milan to Paris, scoping out next spring's trends. We hear a lot about the biggest brands, but insiders often look forward to an entirely different slate of shows, which this season ran the gamut from a whimsical British designer to a new light at Swiss brand Bally. **Rory Satran** reports on these fan favorites.

**New York**

**WILLY CHAVARRIA** | Age 56 | Brand founded 2015 | Notable fans of the brand Kendrick Lamar, Billie Eilish, Madonna

**Spring 2025 inspirations**

The Farm Workers' Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Movement.

**Show soundtrack**

A performance by Yahirita Martinez singing "Querida" with a mariachi band, followed by a score from Chavarria's friend Marco Neves melding strings and deep house.

**Covetable items** The pleated pants, and the candy-colored track-suits from the Adidas collaboration.

**Why insiders love the brand**

Chavarria, the longtime senior vice president of design at Calvin Klein, brings a new, androgynous silhouette to fashion: strong shoulders, high-waisted chinos. His work, informed by his immigrant background and social



movements, brings fresh references to classic tailoring.

**Chavarria's ideal customer** "People who care."

Left: Actor Tracee Ellis Ross outside the Willy Chavarria show

SELWIN TUNG/WILLY CHAVARRIA (ELSESSER) GETTY IMAGES (2); BEN BROOMFIELD/SIMONE ROCHA (2); BALLY; JAMES ARI KING/CARVEN (2)

**London**

**SIMONE ROCHA** | Age 38 | Brand founded 2010 | Fans Jeremy O. Harris, Lena Dunham, Ruth Negga

**Spring 2025 inspirations**

The tension between performance and perfection, dancer Pina Bausch, choreographer and performer Michael Clark.

**Show soundtrack**

"La Strada" by Nino Rota, "Staircase" by Dead Bandit.

**Covetable items**

The "Tutu" bag (pictured below); satin anoraks that would work well for both men and women.

**Why insiders love the brand**

No longer a wunderkind, Rocha is now part of the global fashion establishment—yet her worldview remains appealingly unique. While her brand is always a destination for girly tulle dresses and pearl accessories, this season presented an even more theatrical look.

**Rocha's ideal customer** Actor Chloë Sevigny and artist Cindy Sherman.

**Milan**

**SIMONE BELLOTTI FOR BALLY** | Age 46 | Brand founded 1851 (Bellotti started in 2022) | Fans Cheryl Hines, Gisele Bündchen

**Spring 2025 inspirations**

The Dada artistic movement in Zurich, poet Hugo Ball's steel costume.

**Show soundtrack**

An original track by Aisha Devi.

**Covetable items**

The new cropped flared jeans, the studded fisherman sandal (pictured below), the leather jackets in voluminous shapes, the soft shopping bags.

**Why insiders love the brand**

In just three seasons, Bellotti, a former designer at Gucci, has brought coolness and wearability to dusty Swiss brand Bally. In a testament to the brand's heat, many editors and buyers were wearing the brand to the show, especially its laced boat shoes, Mary Jane flats and proper poplin button ups. Its handbags—functional, well-made, and not as expensive as some of their luxury brethren—are also hits.

**Paris**

**LOUISE TROTTER FOR CARVEN** | Age 50s | Brand founded 1945 (Trotter joined in 2023) | Fans Greta Gerwig, Chinese actor Ni Ni

**Spring 2025 inspirations**

In a preview of Trotter's show, which takes place this weekend, the British designer mentioned tactility, "the intimate space between the woman and her wardrobe," and dressing in layers.

**Show soundtrack** An original composition by British DJ Benji B.

**Covetable items**

The "Louise" bag, a soft, foldover clutch, is an it-bag alternative.

**Why insiders love the brand**

Trotter, an alum of Joseph and Lacoste, took the reins at Carven after the French heritage brand's five-year hiatus. She has reinvigorated it with her utilitarian, considered approach. Trotter usually works with a predominantly neutral palette shot through



with pops of unexpected color, like mustard or scarlet. The spring collection includes inventive tops (pictured) that billow around the body, and surprising volume.

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## ESCAPE TO NATURE IN İSTANBUL

### + The Princes' Islands

When spring arrives in İstanbul, locals flock to the Princes' Islands where the endemic golden mimosa trees greet visitors starting with their colorful blossoms starting in March. Join them on a pleasant hour-long ferry ride and ram the traffic-free streets of Büyükkada or Heybeliada (the two most popular of nine islands), pedaling away the stress of the big city life. End your day savoring fresh fish caught on the Bosphorus (İstanbul Strait) along with *raki* (the popular anis-flavored local spirit) at a traditional *meyhane*-style restaurant, before retreating to one of many lovely boutique hotel offerings.

### + Rowing in the Golden Horn

That might be a secret İstanbul aficionados would like to keep to themselves, but one of the best ways to see the Historical Peninsula is from the sea, on a rowing boat navigating along the **Golden Horn**, gliding past the majestic domes and minarets of age-old monuments, and marveling at the well-preserved ancient city walls. Several rowing clubs have emerged along this pristine waterway in recent years, accommodating early-rising professionals on weekday mornings before work as well as recreational enthusiasts saving it up for the weekend.



## FEEL THE CHARM OF ISLAND LIVING

### + Twin Islands of Bozcaada and Gökçeada

Islands are usually synonymous with unspoiled nature, uncrowded shores, and a laid-back spirit – Bozcaada and Gökçeada are no exception. Being the largest islands of Türkiye, these two formidable masses welcome guests at the mouth of the Strait of Dardanelles, the famous scene of the WWI Battle of Gallipoli. **Bozcaada** has been noted for its viticulture heritage spanning over three millennia, nurturing indigenous *Kuntra* and *Karakahna* grapes for robust red wines, and the delicate *Çavuş* and *Vasilakî* varieties for exquisite whites. Beyond this vine-draped setting, the island reveals a vibrant town life along the winding cobblestone streets, disguising culinary gems and nice boutique hotels in colorful stone houses. Meanwhile, **Gökçeada** emerges as a modest destination focused on sustainability. Its idyllic setting, complete with abundant water springs, olive groves and goat cheese farms has earned it the distinction of being the first island to join the esteemed Cittaslow network worldwide.

### More idyllic islands to explore:

**Kekova Island** near Kas in the Turkish Riviera beckons visitors with the captivating ruins of Simena, the ancient city submerged beneath its azure waters. The calm coves and bays around the island also provide an ideal setting for unforgettable sea kayaking expeditions.

## FIND YOUR PERFECT BEACH

### + Blue Flag Beaches of Antalya

Thanks to its crystalline waters and sun-kissed shores, Antalya proudly upholds its reputation as a beach lover's paradise along the unspoiled coast of Turkish Riviera, boasting the highest number of Blue Flag beaches in the world. As of 2023, an impressive 231 out of Türkiye's 551 Blue Flag beaches, recognized for their exceptional water quality and safety standards, are nestled along Antalya's stunning coastline. From the enchanting dunes and ancient ruins of **Patara** to the opulent beaches of golf clubs and GTSC-certified sustainable resorts in Belek, Antalya offers a seaside retreat tailored for all. Yet, perhaps the crown jewel of all is

### Konyaaltı Beach

— a picturesque oasis nestled within the city center, set against the majestic backdrop of the soaring Beydağları Mountains. In **Kaleici**, the picturesque fortified historic center of Antalya, you will also be surprised to find quaint inlets with natural rock platforms, perfect for sunbathing and swimming right next to the historical marina.

### More aquatic adventures:

Two of Türkiye's surfing capitals, **Alaçatı** (for windsurfing) in İzmir and **Akyaka** (for kitesurfing) in Mugla are now joined by emerging communities.

## ENJOY CHARMS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

### + Earthly Pleasures of Urla

Urla emerges as a quintessential coastal gem near the city of İzmir, where the essence of the Turkægean lifestyle is not only preserved but celebrated with unabashed delight. Here, amidst an inviting microclimate and a warm embrace of local hospitality, visitors are



Discover pristine landscapes and once-in-a-lifetime experiences in Türkiye.

greeted with a cornucopia of regional flavors like fish, olives, grapes, wild herbs and the trademarked gum artichokes that are celebrated with regional festivals.

It comes as no surprise, then, that **Urla** has swiftly ascended to become the epicenter of gastronomic excellence in the country, with the burgeoning **Urla Wine Route** and a constellation of acclaimed restaurants, four of which have been bestowed with a prestigious MICHELIN star recently.

## DISCOVER THE LAND OF MOUNTAINS & LAKES

### + Kaçkar Mountains Soaring Above the Clouds

The Kaçkar Mountains, near the city of Rize, stand as a testament to nature's grandeur, beckoning both outdoor and history enthusiasts. Here, roaring rivers cascade through the rugged valleys, while pristine glacial lakes mirror the majesty of the towering peaks. Alongside this natural splendor, historic forts and ancient caravan routes, remnants of the legendary Silk Road, offer a glimpse into the region's storied past. A retreat to the wooden

chalets dotting the plateaus of Çamlıhemşin, soaring above 2,000 meters, promises a true escape from the outside world. The local *karakovan* honey, harvested from bees naturally bred within hollowed-out tree trunks, and *muhlama*, a savory blend of melted cheese, butter, and cormeal, are among the local staples that will tantalize the taste buds of culinary enthusiasts.

### + The Lakelands of Türkiye

Located just north of the Western Taurus Mountains, the ancient Pisidia region casts a spellbinding allure as Türkiye's very own "Lake District," a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. Spanning the cities of Antalya, Isparta, and Burdur, this picturesque landscape boasts an impressive collection of lakes, each with its own matchless character. **Lake Eğirdir**, the second largest freshwater lake in Türkiye, invites visitors with its sandy beaches and resort-like ambience, surrounded by sprawling orchards where one can procure baskets brimming with freshly harvested apples, peaches, cherries, and sour cherries directly from local villagers during the bountiful season of September and October. **Lake Burdur** is renowned for its birdlife and proximity to the ancient city of Sagalassos, while **Lake Salda** continues to astound scientists with its striking resemblance to the Jezero Crater on Mars,

harboring some of the oldest traces of microbial life on Earth.

## TRAVEL TO THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION

### + Göbeklitepe and Taş Tepeler

In the heart of Türkiye's southeastern city of Şanlıurfa, Göbeklitepe has advanced our understanding of early human history. Discovered in the mid-90s, this mound reveals the earliest monumental architecture known, dating back to at least 9,600 BCE — predating the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge by millennia. In recent years, the rugged stone hills surrounding Şanlıurfa have unveiled 11 additional early settlements, including the remarkable Karahantepe. This hilltop settlement, likely older than Göbeklitepe itself, is now welcoming visitors as well. While exploring the region, a visit to the Şanlıurfa Archaeology Museum and Haleplibahçe Mosaic Museum is a must-do, where artifacts unearthed from these hills are on display alongside intricate mosaics discovered in ancient Roman villas and the famous **Baikligöl Statue**, the oldest life-size human figure representation, linking us ever more closely to our distant ancestors.

## CALENDAR OF NATURE

### April - May

The annual migration of hundreds of dolphins passing through the Bosphorus in their search for food, from the Marmara Sea up to the Black Sea (Note: they return in Autumn, reversing their yearly course).

### End of April - Start of May

The blossoming of Judas trees as they paint the Bosphorus hills in vibrant purple.

### May - June

The rose harvest in Isparta, a city that provides 65% of the world's rose oil used in perfumes, pharmaceuticals and the food industry.

### July - September

The hatching of baby *Caretta caretta* turtles on the beaches of Dalyan, Fethiye, Patara, Çıralı, Belek, Anamur, and in Göksu River delta.

### August - September

The stunning passage of about 1 million storks on their annual migration from Africa to Europe — a spectacle best observed in İstanbul.

### November - December

The olive harvest in the Edremit Bay, the prime region for olive oil production in Türkiye.

## ADVENTURE &amp; TRAVEL

# May You Forever Revel in Peace

Would you visit a cemetery as a tourist attraction? A cultural hub? Increasingly Americans are.



**CEMETERY GAITS** Visitors walk along a path at Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery on their way to an evening chamber-opera performance.

BY MATTHEW KRONSBERG

**I**T WAS just after dark on a recent Friday the 13th, and I was sipping mezcal among the urns in a mausoleum in Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery. Dissolute youth revisited? Nope. An adventure in experimental chamber opera. I had come to see "Morning//Mourning," a work by Gelsey Bell staged in the cemetery's catacombs. A date-night crowd of about 70 people had assembled first for preshow drinks and snacks. Jauntily holding a lantern aloft, organizer Andrew Ousley offered us a piece of advice before we set off into the dark. "Don't pet the raccoons or skunks."

I found the performance, inspired by Alan Weisman's 2007 book 'The World Without Us,' surprisingly uplifting, given the setting and post-anthropocene subject matter. On the walk back, I met Tricia Blanchard, a director of development for an arts nonprofit, who was discussing with two companions whether some might find staging (and attending) the show in a cemetery disrespectful. "It feels a little odd. Or sweet," she said. "But why not?"

The oddest thing perhaps? How unremarkable such an event in a cemetery has become. In recent years many cemeteries have taken on second lives as cultural and

recreational destinations. Several, like Bellefontaine in St. Louis, Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Mass., and Green-Wood even have artists-in-residence—and not just the ones underground. "I don't think anyone anticipated 25 years ago that cemeteries would be...not just encouraging visitors, but also doing all of these programs," said Harry J. Weil, Green-Wood's vice president of education and public programs.

Attendance at Green-Wood has doubled since 2016, with more than 500,000 visitors expected this year. The cemetery is even building a \$34 million, 20,400-square-foot Education & Welcome Center.

Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, which attracted 150,000 visitors last year, is constructing its own visitor center. A gift shop will sell merch like Burial Grounds Coffee.

While this might sound heretical, the idea of a cemetery as a place for both recreation and remembrance has a long history in the U.S. A pioneer, Mount Auburn opened as the country's first "rural" cemetery in 1831, a place where smog-choked city dwellers could escape. ("Rural" in this case describes the bucolic landscaping, rather than the location.) Particularly in the Northeast, rural cemeteries offered accessible green space, often before any significant

city parks were established.

Cemeteries became smash-hits. In 1860, Green-Wood nearly rivaled Niagara Falls as the country's most popular tourist attraction, according to the book "222 Cemeteries to See Before You Die," by Loren Rhodes, who also runs CemeteryTravel.com. That same year, Laurel Hill cemetery in Philadelphia had to issue tickets to keep crowds in check.

The trend spread. Urban elites from the South and the Midwest visited these cemeteries and proposed similar burial sites in their cities, notes Joy Giguere in her book "Pleasure Grounds of Death: The Rural Cemetery in Nineteenth-Century America." The mobs weren't constrained to genteel families in bustles and top hats. Many cemeteries, she writes, established strict rules for behavior, barring "horse racing, unattended children and any kind of flower-picking or vandalism."

Rising interest in family genealogy has helped drive cemeteries' current resurgence, says Rhodes. "It has encouraged a lot of people to visit the family grave. Once you start doing that, you might say, 'Wow, this is a beautiful place. I wonder if other places are as beautiful as this?'"

Often, they are. Many, like Indianapolis's Crown Hill Cemetery, Chicago's Graceland Cemetery and

Green-Wood double as accredited arboreta, drawing both naturalists and wildlife. (My wife leads occasional mushroom walks at Green-Wood, where 550 species of fungi have been documented on the app iNaturalist.) Last year, Yelp users ranked Mount Auburn as the fourth best place in the country to view fall colors. Birders especially love cemeteries, where it can be easier to spot wildlife without the congestion of more crowded parks.

At 6:30 a.m. on the Sunday after "Morning//Mourning," I was back at the cemetery gates for "Birding in Peace" led by Rob Jett, an avid birder who has spotted over 200 species in the cemetery in more than 25 years of visiting. In a little over two hours, our group spotted

**The idea of a cemetery as a place for both recreation and remembrance has a long history in the U.S.**

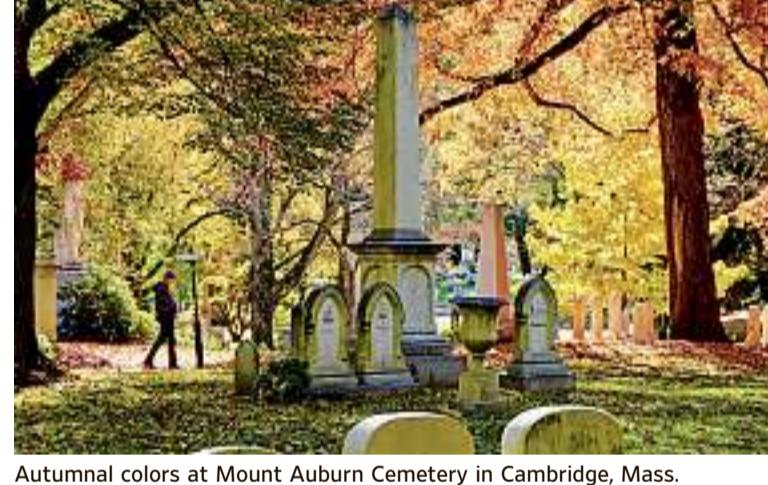
more than a dozen species, including a kestrel causing havoc among the colony of monk parakeets who nest in the tower of the cemetery's gothic entryway arch.

Spooky season kicks off a flurry of events at cemeteries. Oakland Cemetery drew 12,000 people for Day of the Dead celebrations last year, with food, music, dancing and displays of traditional altars. Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles, which hosts the largest celebration outside of Mexico, expects 35,000 attendees this year, says the cemetery's co-owner Yogi Kanthiah.

Hollywood Forever also pioneered the now widely adopted idea of cemetery-as-cinema, screening films since 2002. When it started, it was a bit scandalous, says Rhodes, but the screenings have become something of a civic institution. The series is as eclectic as the cemetery's permanent residents. One of the recent showings: "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" in honor of the late Paul Reubens.

Of course, star power has long been among the biggest draws of big-city resting places. Sheldon K. Goodman, a historian who gives tours of London's cemeteries, calls them "museums of people." Bellefontaine hosts several "Beer Barons" events each year with drinks and visits to the tombs of residents like Eberhard Anheuser and Adolphus Busch. The graves of Leonard Bernstein, Jean-Michel Basquiat and, for a younger generation, the rapper Pop Smoke are many peoples' gateway to Green-Wood.

But it usually takes just one visit to realize that many cemeteries are as much for the living as the dead. As she walked through the dark after the show in Green-Wood, Blanchard mused: "I would love to be buried in a place where people were enjoying themselves."



Autumnal colors at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Mass.

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## A Special (Round-Trip) Ticket to the Cemetery

Need extra motivation to visit a historic cemetery? These events might convince you.

**Night Lights** The tradition of placing lit candles in cemeteries to remember loved ones is at the root of "Solstice: Reflections on Winter Light at Mount Auburn Cemetery" in Cambridge, Mass. Over the course of 11 nights in December, artist collective MASARY Studios creates sound and light installations around the cemetery's trees, paths, chapels and crypts. [MountAuburnSolstice.org](#)

**Capital Costumes** The Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C., hosts more than 200 events annually. Among its most popular is the Dead Man's Run, a fundraising 5K race. Along with awards for speed, prizes are given for individual and team costumes. Kids and pets are also welcome to participate. Oct. 12. [CongressionalCemetery.org](#)

**Philly by Night** Explore the east side of Philadelphia's stunning Laurel Hill cemetery by flashlight during its annual Soul Crawl. Expert guides tell the stories of some of the most notable graves. At the end of the evening, gather by the fire



Day of the Dead at Hollywood Forever Cemetery in L.A.

pits for a warming drink, and pay respects to a pair of fictitious residents: Adrian Balboa and Paulie Pennino from the "Rocky" films. Oct. 18-19, [LaurelHillPHL.com](#)

**Tempus Fugit** The theme this year of Nightfall, an event that takes over much of the 478-acre Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn is, appropriately, Time Flies. More than 4,000 people are expected to take in performances and stories from the Bindlestiff Family Circus and Morbid Anatomy, a cultural organization, as well as music and film installations curated by Death of Classical and Rooftop Films. Oct. 17-18, [Green-Wood.com](#)

**Amazing Altars** The largest Day of the Dead celebration in the U.S. takes place at the star-studded Hollywood Forever Cemetery. For the 25th anniversary of the event, more than 100 elaborate altars will be built throughout the grounds. Along with food and vendors, the event also will feature performances by Pedro Fernández, Los Lobos and more. Oct. 26, [LADayoftheDead.com](#)



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

Saint Lucia, a gorgeous island in the Caribbean, is famous for the Pitons, volcanic spires that tower over its villages and beaches (top). Relax on the pool deck of the Seven Seas Voyager while cruising to the South Sea islands (left). This view of Cancun on Mexico's Caribbean coast hints at the beauty beckoning ahead (middle). The atrium on the Seven Seas Voyager provides sunshine and elegance (right).

# TROPICAL LOCALES SERVE ENDLESS ADVENTURES

by Julie Bennett

**D**reading winter? Sign up for a Regent Seven Seas Cruises® trip to the Caribbean or the South Pacific and you can spend part of it swimming with sea rays, hiking through rainforests or simply watching the sun set from your suite's balcony.

From January to June 2025, Regent Seven Seas has scheduled five cruises to French Polynesia, with some traveling on to New Zealand or Australia, and 26 to the Caribbean, many of which begin and end in U.S. ports.

You can kick off the new year on January 8 in Los Angeles, for example, by boarding the Seven Seas Grandeur and celebrate until January 24 when you get off the ship in Miami. This cruise, Capitals Along the Canal, stops in famous ports in Mexico and Latin America, visits the Cayman Islands and passes through the Panama Canal.

Christine Manjencic, Regent's vice president of destination services operations, says, "Most of our Caribbean sailings through the 2027 season are round trip to a U.S. port or have an arrival or departure port in the U.S. These cruises offer convenience for close-to-home sailings and are so popular among guests that we added two more ports — Galveston, Texas, and Tampa, Florida — to our 2026-2027 itineraries."

## LOOK AT LATIN AMERICA

For many guests, entering the Panama Canal through ingenious lock systems opened in 1914 will be the highlight of their Los Angeles-to-Miami cruise. But they will also enjoy adventures while cruising along the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines of Latin America. In Acapulco, guests can watch the daring divers of La Quebrada leap off cliffs into the swirling waters more than 130 feet below. One of Regent's land excursions, La Roqueta Island Nature Encounter, also includes a glass-bottom boat ride above stunning marine life, a hike through the island's ecological reserve and time on the beach at one of Acapulco's famous hotels.

Foodies booked on this cruise can enjoy an excursion to a macadamia nut farm surrounded by volcanoes in Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala. There, they will learn how these nuts grow and why they taste different from macadamias raised in Hawaii.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises are all-inclusive, and each port offers a wide variety of curated shore excursions. Manjencic reveals that she and six team members do "a number of familiarization trips a year, constantly inspecting our destinations. Since our guests are well-traveled and many of them have cruised with us before, we want to regularly enrich our itineraries, adding more interesting ports and shore excursions. This means that guests returning to a port they've already visited can see it from a different perspective."

## CRUISE TO THE CARIBBEAN

Guests sailing on the Seven Seas Mariner from Miami on June 24 on a cruise called Iconic Islands to Empire



Breathtaking sunsets, like the one above the Seven Seas Mariner, await Regent guests who sail to island destinations this winter and spring.



In the clear waters surrounding the French Polynesian island of Tahiti, you can snorkel with sea turtles and view thatched huts surrounded by tropical splendor.



canopy in an aerial gondola or on a zip line.

## SEE THE SOUTH PACIFIC

For a real getaway, Seven Seas Voyager and Seven Seas Mariner have suites available on cruises in the South Pacific this winter. Seven Seas Voyager's Tahitian Moonrise cruise leaves Papeete, Tahiti, on February 26, sails to Nuku Hiva, Bora Bora and other French Polynesian islands, and returns to Papeete on March 8.

On the peaceful atoll of Rangiroa, a tour called Discover the World of Pearls will show you how black pearls are farmed by inducing black-lipped oysters to produce them. There, and throughout the island, set and unset pearls are available for purchase.

Bora Bora, in the Society Islands northwest of Tahiti, is in the center of a lagoon, protected from the Pacific by a necklace of coral. You can admire the reef and its denizens, including butterfly fish and parrotfishes, from the safety of a glass-bottomed boat. Or more adventurous guests can opt for another excursion that includes swimming with stingrays.

## ZEST FOR NEW ZEALAND

Other Regent cruises combine French Polynesian culture with tours of New Zealand or Australia. Guests boarding the Seven Seas Voyager in Tahiti on March 8 will disembark 17 days later in Auckland, where they can visit New Zealand on their own or join a Regent land extension trip.

En route, they can view the pineapple fields, ancient temples and picturesque villages of Moorea and view replicas of artist Paul Gauguin's home and paintings. And in Pago Pago, American Samoa, an authentic High Talking Chief will invite guests to witness a traditional ceremony and dance.

Shore experiences on all of Regent's Caribbean and South Pacific cruises will be enriched on board with lectures from marine biologists, geologists and cultural historians. Bernhard Klotz, Regent Seven Seas Cruises' vice president of food and beverage, adds that during meals, "Chefs will serve fresh, local fish, fruits, vegetables and other locally available food items."

For guests who want to tour tropical islands without a tour guide, "We bring a local expert on board in each port to give in-depth insights on how to move around the port in the best way," Manjencic says. "We understand that our experienced travelers want to be immersed in the beauty and the daily life of every port they visit."

*Julie Bennett is a freelance writer specializing in luxury travel, real estate and lifestyle issues.*



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# DESIGN & DECORATING

## The Surprisingly Luxe Linen Staples at the Wholesale Club

*Continued from page D1*  
my discretionary income.

"The [home] assortments are becoming a lot more interesting and unique," said Sky Canaves, principal analyst of retail and e-commerce for Emarketer and a card-carrying Costco member in Austin, Texas. "That's part of a very deliberate strategy to encourage their members in the warehouses to look around and find things that they'll want to buy."

After a year when a slow housing market put a dent in Costco's net sales of non-foods—the category that contains home goods, both Costco exclusives and other brands it stocks—the segment is bouncing back, according to Yoon S. Kim, SVP of Non-Foods at Costco Wholesale. "We just finished our fiscal '24 (end of Aug) and I'm glad to say that we finished positive in non-foods and housewares as well as home furniture," he said, via email, of the increase in the category's profitabil-

before it opens, practically revving their carts. An e-commerce strategy that Canaves calls "still nascent" also makes an in-person visit more crucial.

While Teigen admires her Keeley cabinet's quality (and she's not alone: The average rating of 80 customer reviews is 4.7 out of 5), I still doubt I'll look for homewares beyond linen staples at Costco. One recent Friday I felt both overjoyed and dismayed to find what seemed to be a close approximation of a favorite light, the Zafferano Poldina Pro rechargeable table lamp. For my white Poldina, I paid a sale price of \$119 on Lumens.com. Costco charges \$40 for two of the Mikasa-branded version it stocks. But my Poldina's base and armature are made of die-cast aluminum, while the Mikasa's are not. And the lamps felt chintzy.

I had more faith in the linens, based on my experience with the Kirkland sheets. So I bed-, bath- and kitchen-tested a few (see my reviews



FABIO CONSOLI (ILLUSTRATION)

'They give Restoration Hardware a run for their money,' said one interior designer of Costco's bath towels. And they cost \$7 each versus \$36.

ity. "We believe that we are continuing to pick up market share in these categories based on what we know."

"They are definitely trying to up their game," said Stephanie Teigen, a lifestyle-content creator in Alpharetta, Ga., who contributed to the fame of the 72-inch Keeley Accent Cabinet from Costco. When she posted an Instagram reel of her \$500 purchase (\$670 online), the ice-blue console with reeded-front doors and acrylic handles received 173,664 likes—impressive, for a cabinet.

Another social-media star, the 65-inch-high Ravenna Floor Mirror—\$150 in my local Costco—appears to be a knockoff of Anthropologie's \$898 Cecilia Mirror, with its wisp of scrollwork atop a graceful gold-metal frame. So beloved is the piece that a restocking at a Costco warehouse lights up Reddit forums and Instagram accounts.

Beyond the strategy of offering "sales" like the Ravenna mirror, Costco uses a sense of urgency to spur purchases. "There's a bit of that treasure hunt and FOMO. You don't know how long products will be around," said Canaves. And items like the mirror and cabinet are made exclusively for Costco.

This might explain the throngs that collect daily outside my closest Costco, in Arvada, Colo., well

in the sidebar below). So far, sheets are the only household linens from the Kirkland label. The others come from third-party producers.

Typically, I'm not a bathmat person. In our minuscule bathroom, the shower nearly abuts the toilet, which is used by our 4-year-old son (enough said?) But a simply bordered, white rectangular version by Mohawk Home caught my eye. In our bathroom, I found its polyester pile fleecy underfoot and its latex back grippy. But most important, the 2-feet-by-3-feet rug laundered and dried easily. Costco manages to sell it for \$14. Home Depot's website charges \$25 for a slightly smaller version by the same company.

Costco's maximum 14% profit margin makes its home goods the decor equivalent of the club's famous \$1.50 hot-dog-and-soda combo. "Typical retail markups are much higher [than Costco's]," said Canaves, noting that margins by other sellers are in the 30-50% range. The club keeps costs down many ways: by forgoing fancy shelf-stocking and marketing (have you ever seen a Costco ad?) and limiting the number of products in their warehouses to 3,800, said Susan Schwartz, co-author of "The Joy of Costco."

For example, an 8-pack of Organic Town & Country Living

Kitchen Towels I picked up at Costco for \$15 was one of three choices in that product category. A Walmart nearby offers 21 varieties of dishcloths. Similarly, Costco gave me just one bath-towel option, from the Purely Indulgent brand. Fortunately, I agree with interior designer Tracy Morris, who rates them as excellent. "They're pretty fluffy, and they give Restoration Hardware a run for their money," said the McLean, Va., pro. Price: \$7 for a 30-inch-by-58-inch swabber. A similarly sized RH towel costs \$36 for members and \$49 for nonmembers.

Costco can live with low margins on merchandise for this reason: "Memberships account for the largest portion of total profits," said Yoon. Canaves estimates that portion at about two-thirds of Costco's net income. Hence the famous return policy, a risk-free 100% satisfaction guarantee, says Yoon, with a few product exceptions like gold bars.

This "the member is always right" practice secured my family's loyalty a couple of years ago when we ordered a trio of memory foam mattresses by a well-known brand.

They were so mushy my 71-year-old dad opted to rest his bones on the floor. Costco made it right, dispatching someone to pick up the spongy mattresses and refunding our money; the replacement Beautyrest mattresses we bought from Costco have earned raves.

While the comic O'Brien appreciates Costco's stepped-up offerings, he hopes the improvements end there. "I don't want Costco to get too cool," he said. "I don't want there to be loud music and dim lighting, like it's an Abercrombie & Fitch or something. I want it as-is."

### Warehouse to Her House

The author tests six in-store buys. Prices and availability on Costco.com will vary.

**1 | Dreamy Sheets** Some reviewers note a plasticky scent when they unpack these. I found a thorough washing easily banished it. And after a few times through the machines, the Pima cotton was soft as kitten fur. Kirkland Signature 680 Thread Count Sheet Set in King, \$80

**2 | Spa-like Swabbers** These 30-inch-by-58-inch towels are made of HygroCotton, pat-

ented hollow fibers that absorb well. Some reviewers complain of excessive lint in the dryer—a first-world problem, and not one I find irksome. After a couple washes these terry-like cloths are exactly what you would find at a spa. Purely Indulgent White Bath Towel, \$7

**3 | Resilient Rug** In our tiny bathroom, my 4-year-old young son's less-than-accurate aim has historically kept me from laying down a bath mat. But this handsome, eminently launderable polyester rug made a convert of me. Mohawk Home Microply Bath Mat, 24 inches by 36 inches, \$14

**4 | Puffy Pillows** The pair of premium feather-and-down pillows were initially flat, having been rolled tight as a cigarette for shipping. The first night I slept on them, I worried they would stay that way, but within a day they fluffed up and became the most coveted pillows on our bed. Grand Haven DreamSurround Feather & Down Pillows, 20 inches by 28 inches, set of 2, \$20

**5 | Quick-But-Boring Picker Upper** With their banal patterns, I can't see these organic cotton towels starring in a Nancy Meyers kitchen, but they're serviceable—much thicker than a tea towel (and there-

fore not overly crumpled after washing) and dynamite at soppling up spills. Organic Town & Country Living Kitchen Towels 17 inches by 28 inches, set of 8, \$15

**6 | Teddy-Bear Blanket** Made of recycled polyester, this bedcover reminded me of the icky blankets that certain college kids curl up in to watch TV on their couch. Our young son, however, who harbors no such snobby associations, deemed it "just so snuggly!" and commanded it for his own bed. I followed the washing instructions, and the plushy surface did not mat or pill. Berkshire Luxe Loft Blanket in Queen Size, \$7



MARISA ALPER FOR WSJ PROP STYLING BY CATHERINE CAMPBELL PEARSON

# EATING & DRINKING

PARTY TRICK

## No Crust, Zero Fuss

This airy, lemon-bright, low-stress recipe seduces even cheesecake skeptics

BY ODETTE WILLIAMS



**MY HUSBAND** is not a big dessert guy, but he does love a cheesecake. Even the dense, stodgy kind. But he deserves better, and my full attention, as we've been ships in the night recently.

So I decided to bake him the Rolls-Royce of cheesecakes, by which I mean the Basque one with a deliciously burnt top made famous by the restaurant La Viña in San Sebastián, Spain. Even people like me who have not historically been crazy about cheesecake will fall for this one, as will any cook averse to the faff and stress associated with crusts and water baths.

Just when I thought this crustless, surprisingly light cheesecake couldn't get any better, I found a recipe from London-based pastry chef Nicola Lamb, in her wonderful new book, "Sift" (Nov. 12, Clarkson Potter). She adds a topping of sticky lemons, tossed in brown sugar and cooked alongside the creamy dessert to create a jammy, bittersweet foil for it.

This cake is a dinner-party dream. Make it a couple of days before or the morning of. The batter comes together lickety-split, a super-hot oven delivers the trademark scorch and a parchment-paper lining in the pan makes the release easy. Speaking of the flamboyant parchment: If it covers the top of the cake it will prevent it from browning, so encourage it to splay out from the pan and trim if needed.

When the cheesecake comes out of the oven there should still be some jiggle in its center, which will firm up ever so slightly as it chills. And you'll want to pull the cake out of the fridge an hour before eating to bring it to the ideal temperature and melt-on-the-tongue texture. A glass of slightly sparkling Txakoli or shot of Pedro Ximénez Sherry will only enhance the romance.



**BURN, BABY, BURN** The deeply browned top signals that this cheesecake is something special.

### Basque Burnt Cheesecake With Sticky Lemons



This bright, airy Basque-style cheesecake comes from "Sift," by London pastry chef Nicola Lamb. The recipe here tweaks Lamb's lemon-topped cake with a little lemon zest in the batter, because you can't have too much citrus.

**Total Time** 3 hours (includes chilling) **Serves** 8

*For the cheesecake:*  
**2 (8-ounce) packages (2½ packed cups) cream cheese**

**1 cup granulated sugar**  
**4 large eggs**  
**½ cup heavy cream**  
**½ cup sour cream**  
**1 teaspoon lemon zest**  
**¼ cup lemon juice**  
**3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**1 teaspoon kosher salt**  
*For the sticky lemons:*  
**2 lemons, very thinly sliced**  
**½ cup light brown sugar**  
**½ cup boiling water**

**1.** Preheat oven to 450 degrees. **2.** Line an 8-inch springform pan with parchment paper by laying two pieces on top of one another to form a cross. Press paper into pan to cover bottom and sides, with only a slight overhang. Push overhang away from pan and trim as needed. (Any paper covering cake will impede browning.) **3.** Make the cheesecake: Use an electric mixer with paddle attachment to beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, scraping down sides of bowl to make sure they're incorporated. Beat in heavy cream, sour cream, and lemon zest and juice to fully combine.

**4.** Sift flour and salt into a separate bowl, then whisk in a few spoonfuls of wet batter until completely smooth. Mix batters together, scraping down sides of bowl to make sure they are evenly combined. Pour combined batter into prepared pan.

**5.** Make the sticky lemons: Place lemon slices in a small, shallow baking dish or sheet pan. Sprinkle brown sugar overtop, followed by boiling water. Cover with foil.

**6.** Transfer cheesecake and lemons to oven at the same time. Bake until top of cheesecake is well browned and center remains slightly jiggly, with an internal temperature of 140-143 degrees, 25-35 minutes. Remove cheesecake from oven and let cool while lemons continue cooking.

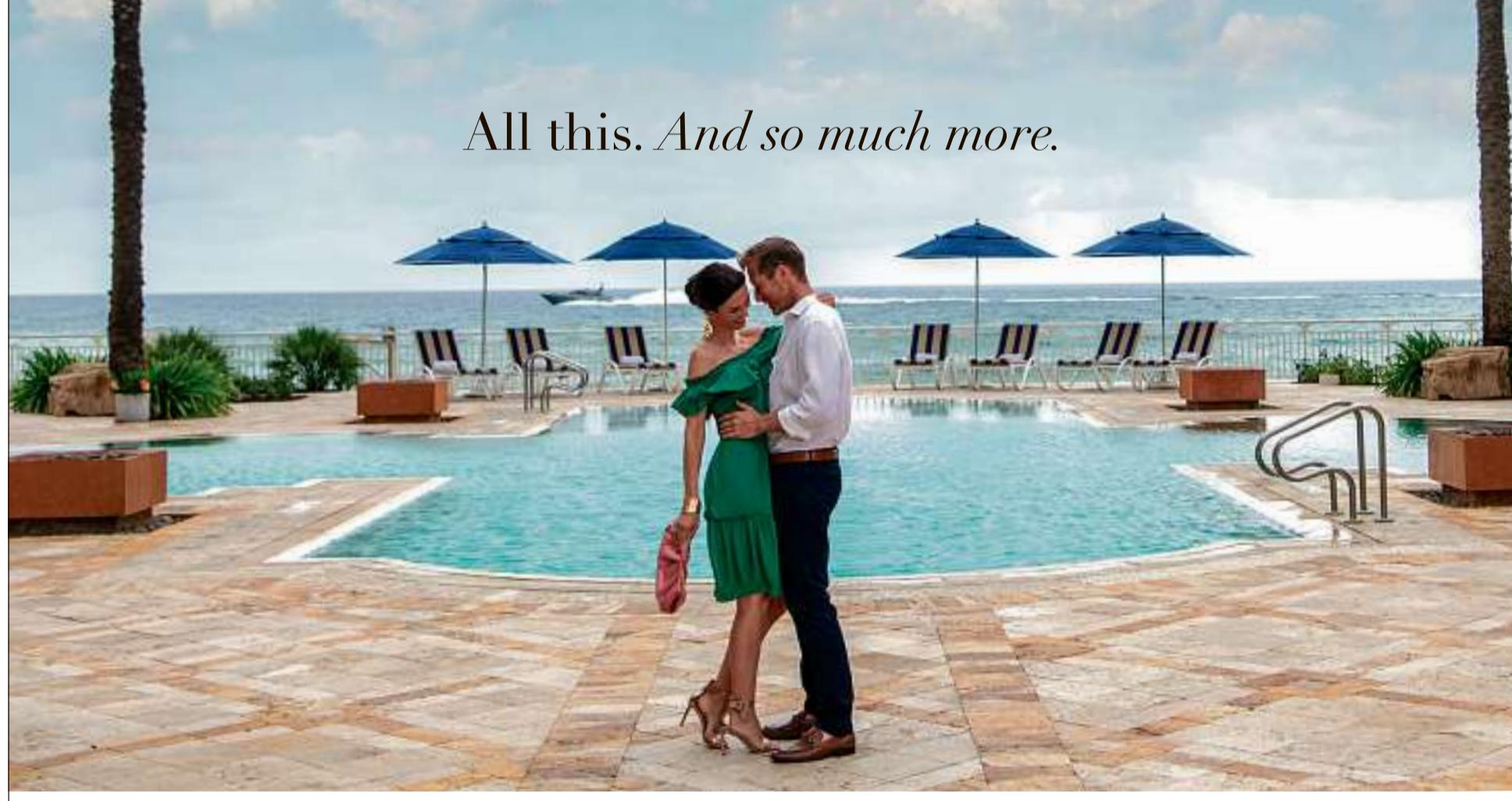
**7.** Remove foil from top of lemons and continue cooking until slightly browned, 5 minutes more. Let cool at room temperature. (Store any leftover sticky lemons in the refrigerator. To revive for serving, add a splash of boiling water.) Transfer cheesecake to refrigerator to chill completely, about 2 hours.

**8.** Remove cheesecake from refrigerator one hour before serving. Slice cheesecake, spoon sticky lemon syrup over each slice and place a few lemon slices on top and on the side.

—Adapted from "Sift" by Nicola Lamb (Nov. 12, Clarkson Potter)

MATT RUSSELL FOR WSJ; FOOD STYLING BY REBECCA JURKEVICH; PROP STYLING BY JULIA ROSE

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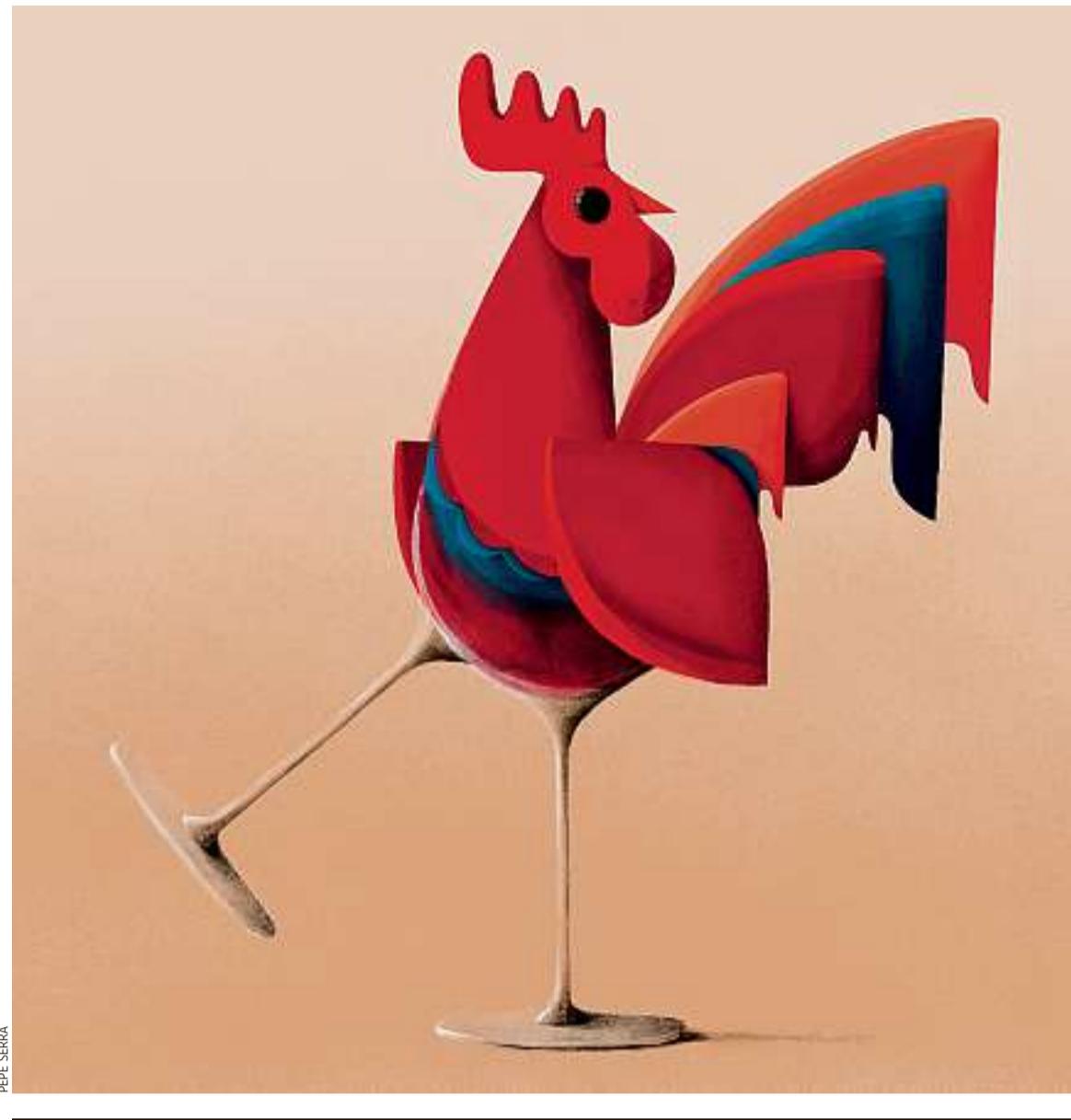
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## EATING &amp; DRINKING



PEPE SERA

ON WINE / LETTIE TEAGUE



## What Wines Pair Best With Chicken?

**AS VERSATILE AS** it is ubiquitous, chicken can be roasted or fried, baked or sautéed, made into soups and pot pies. But does that mean chicken is just as versatile as it comes to pairing with wine?

Inspired by last week's Off Duty cover story on chicken, I was determined not to take the ever-popular bird for granted. As shoppers make more-thoughtful decisions about the birds they buy, it seems only fitting that equally thoughtful decisions should be made regarding wines to match. So I consulted the pros—a chef, a sommelier and a chicken

farmer—on the art of serving chicken and wine together and came up with a few great “chicken wines.”

I knew from the start I needed to talk to New York chef Harold Moore. I've enjoyed Moore's rightfully celebrated take on roast chicken at his various restaurants over the years. Moore's chicken is buttered under the skin before it goes into a very hot oven, producing succulent meat and surpassingly crisp skin. When Moore opens Café Commerce on New York's Upper East Side next month, the menu will list that bird, with a foie-gras bread stuffing and

an accompaniment of potato purée, as Harold's Famous Chicken.

Based on his extensive experience matching chicken with wine, Moore offered strong opinions about what works—and what doesn't. “I'm a huge fan of cru Beaujolais with roasted chicken,” he said. He named Morgan as one of his favorites among the 10 Beaujolais crus but also encouraged drinkers to pay more attention to Beaujolais wines generally. “I don't think they get the respect they deserve,” he said.

I, too, am a fan of Gamay, the Beaujolais grape, with roast chicken.

The wine's snappy red fruit suits a crispy-skinned bird, and like chicken, Beaujolais is as reasonably priced as it is underrated.

Moore's next suggestion surprised me: California Chardonnay. Though not a style of wine he normally drinks, a big, rich Chardonnay, he allowed, can stand up well to a rich chicken dish. I was less surprised to hear him endorse dry Riesling with all types of chicken. He said he would, however, reserve Champagne for fried chicken, considering it a wine more for a quick bite than a full meal. And in the do-not-pair category: “I have a hard time with rosé and food,” he said. Moore associates pink wine more with swimming pools than poultry.

When I ran this by Victoria James, partner and executive director of beverage for the New York-based Gracious Hospitality Management restaurant group, she respectfully offered an exception, a wine she finds delicious with chicken: the Domaine Tempier Rosé, a premium pink from the Bandol region of Provence. James wholeheartedly agreed with Moore's Champagne suggestion. At Gracious Hospitality Management's Coqodaq, where fried chicken is the star of the menu, the wine list features 100 Champagnes under \$100 (of 400 Champagnes on the list) and an extensive offering of sparkling wines from all over the world. James estimated she and her team make “about a thousand” wine-chicken matches each week at Coqodaq.

Few people take poultry more seriously than Ariane Daguin, co-founder and CEO emerita of the specialty food company D'Artagnan, source of the famed Green Circle chicken and other gourmet meats. Daguin now raises chickens at All One All Farm in Goshen, N.Y., which she co-owns with her daughter Alix Daguin. Daguin was in her native Gascony, France, when we chatted by phone about her preferred chicken pairings.

She offered her first suggestion forcefully: “Pinot Noir!” She also likes to pair chicken with Beaujolais, “something that is light and fruity.” But then, in her view, it's hard to go wrong. “Chicken is soft enough to agree with anything,” Daguin declared. She did add one word of caution: When chicken is served with rich side dishes like potatoes cooked in duck fat, she recommends a meatier, more tannic red like Madiran.

After buying the wines my chicken experts suggested, I laid out a spread of chicken: fried, roasted, piccata (sautéed with lemon and capers) and pot pie. I wanted to try red, white, rosé and sparkling with

dishes that ranged from light and piquant to creamy and rich.

The 2022 M & C Lapierre Morgan (\$33), a bright, juicy cru Beaujolais, complemented all four dishes nicely. And the 2022 Dr. Bürklin-Wolf Riesling Trocken (\$22), from Germany's Pfalz region, had a brisk acidity that balanced the richness of the roast chicken, while its fruit provided a pleasant counterpoint to the piccata.

Unfortunately, the two California Chardonnays I purchased had too much oak to work very well with any of the dishes. So I went off plan a bit with a wine I happen to love, the 2022 Domaine Remi Jobard Bourgogne Aligote (\$35). Also grown in Burgundy, Aligote has been called Chardonnay's leaner cousin. It was a touch too light for the chicken pot pie, but its texture and acidity paired well with the other dishes.

Since Chenin Blanc happens to be one of my favorites, I tried that as well. Though I was disappointed in a South African Chenin—too high in acidity, too light—the 2023 Domaine Huet Le Haut Lieu Vouvray Sec (\$33) showed the gorgeous versatility of Chenin Blanc from France's Loire Valley, with just the right balance of liveness and weight.

The 2022 Cristom Vineyards Mt. Jefferson Cuvée Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir Willamette Valley (\$35)

I wanted to try red, white, rosé and sparkling with a range of chicken dishes.

from Oregon had the right crisp-red and dark fruit and soft tannins to suit roast chicken; less so the fried chicken. For the latter I much preferred the lighter, livelier fruit of the Beaujolais, served with a slight chill. The medium-bodied and slightly toasty Ployez Jacquemart Extra Quality Brut Champagne (\$36) was another hit with the fried chicken, though its bright acidity was a touch too shrill for the other dishes.

Two rosés I tried were too light—indeed, better for drinking poolside. But the 2023 Domaine de Terrebrune Bandol Rosé (\$37), from the same region and importer as the Domaine Tempier that James recommended, was zesty and bright, with a texture and depth of flavor that made it a great chicken partner. So both Moore and James were right. I'll certainly keep the recommendations of all three of these pros in mind the next time I serve chicken. A good bird deserves only the best.

► Email Lettie at [wine@wsj.com](mailto:wine@wsj.com).



## OENOFILE / 5 WINES THAT PAIR EXCEPTIONALLY WELL WITH CHICKEN

**2023 Domaine Huet Le Haut Lieu Vouvray Sec \$34** Famed Domaine Huet turns out both dry and sweet Chenin Blanc bottlings in France's Loire Valley. Dry with bright acidity and low alcohol (13%) yet a voluptuous texture, this wine makes a truly inspired match with chicken.

**2023 Domaine Remi Jobard Bourgogne Aligote \$35** In the hands of a star producer like Remi Jobard, Aligote can be just as delicious as its better-known Burgundian cousin Chardonnay. This tangy, lively white with aromas of citrus and herb pairs best with lighter chicken dishes.

**2023 M & C Lapierre Morgan \$33** The late Marcel Lapierre was one of the famed “Gang of Four” who brought natural winemaking (back) to Beaujolais. His children Camille and Mathieu have continued making fresh, bright, irresistibly drinkable old-vine Gamays like this.

**2023 Dr. Bürklin-Wolf Riesling Trocken \$22** This dry Riesling from the Pfalz region of Germany is the winery's largest-production wine. A fresh, lively dry Riesling marked by bright citrus notes and a crisp finish, it's a versatile companion for a wide range of chicken dishes.

**2022 Cristom Vineyards Mt. Jefferson Cuvée Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir Willamette Valley \$35** This classic Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is lush yet elegant. Marked by soft tannins and notes of crisp red and dark fruit, it's perfect with roast chicken or any dark-meat dish.

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## Grilled Shrimp Caponata With Olives, Herbs and Feta

**SUMMER'S LAZY DAYS** may be receding from memory, but mercifully, at the market, the season's produce—tomatoes, zucchini and eggplants—keeps going strong. Chef Sara Bradley takes advantage of this fleeting moment by composing a smoky riff on Italian caponata topped with blackened shrimp.

Finished with a dressing studded with split cherry tomatoes, crumbled feta, fresh herbs and dried oregano, Bradley's final Slow Food Fast dish celebrates late-summer veg as much as it does tender seafood. “I like adding layers to quick-cooked

dishes by building in big flavors,” she explained. In this case that comes from briny feta and torn olives.

If shrimp doesn't move you, swap it out for just about any protein, says the chef—though the cooking time will change. And don't concern yourself with overcooking: Grill the peppers, zucchini and eggplant until completely soft, then drizzle with marinade and serve with bread to mop up every drop. Despite the earlier sunsets, it's a dish that proves some of summer's best has been saved for last. —Kitty Greenwald

**Serves 4 Time** 30 minutes

**2 tablespoons plus ½ cup olive oil, plus more as needed**

**½ cup kalamata olives, pitted, halved and roughly chopped or torn**

**½ cup halved cherry tomatoes**

**½ cup crumbled feta cheese**

**1½ cups fresh parsley, mint or basil, roughly chopped, plus extra as needed**

**2 teaspoons lemon juice**

**1 teaspoon dried oregano**

**Kosher salt**

**32 large shrimp, peeled and deveined**

**½ medium eggplant, cut into ½-inch planks**

**1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch strips**

**1 medium yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-inch strips**

**1 medium zucchini, cut into ½-inch planks**

**½ medium red onion, cut into ½-inch wedges**

**Crusty bread, for serving**

**1. Preheat grill to medium-high. In a small bowl, whisk together ¼ cup olive oil, olives, tomatoes, feta, herbs, lemon juice and dried oregano. Season with salt and set aside to marinate.**

**2. Drizzle shrimp, eggplant, red and yellow peppers, zucchini and red onion with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season**

**with salt. Once grill is hot, lay on the vegetables and cook each until tender and slightly charred, 3-5 minutes per side. Once completely soft, remove from the grill and set aside. Meanwhile, grill shrimp until just opaque and slightly curled, about 2 minutes per side.**

**3. Spread the grilled veggies and their pooled juices across a platter. Top with grilled shrimp, then drizzle over the tomato-feta-olive dressing. Garnish with extra herbs, if desired, and a generous drizzle of olive oil. Serve warm or at room temperature with crusty bread alongside.**



VEG OUT Celebrate the best of late-summer produce with this simple, smoky grilled caponata topped with sweet, charred shrimp.

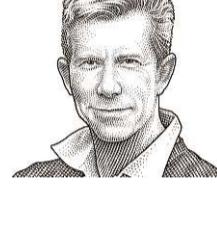
MICHAEL HOEWELER (PORTAIT); LAURA MURRAY FOR WSJ. FOOD STYLING BY SEAN DOOLEY; PROP STYLING BY STEPHANIE DE LUCA

# GEAR & GADGETS



LUCID MOTORS

RUMBLE SEAT / DAN NEIL



## A Low-Key Lucid That Blows The Doors Off the Competition

**ALBERT EINSTEIN** called it his happiest thought: Sitting at his desk in Bern, Switzerland, the young patent clerk mused that "if a man falls freely [in a failed elevator cab, for example] he will not feel his own weight." The equivalence principle observes that acceleration due to gravity is indistinguishable from acceleration from other inertial effects.

I only wish Einstein had been with me last month in California when I was testing the 2025 Lucid Air Sapphire and not just so he could work the navi system. This spacious and gracious, low and lovely luxury sedan—unquestionably one of the finest sedans in history—generates elite-level inertial effects, which buyers can enjoy when they're on leave from astronaut school.

How would the greatest physicist in history react to the Sapphire? Would he be enthralled by the car's power-dense AC synchronous motors and begin rambling on about James Clerk Maxwell and the triumph of field theory? Or would he fumble pitifully with the touch screen or try to light his pipe with the volume control? We may never know.

Lucid Motors—a California-based, Saudi-backed luxury-electric automaker, with manufacturing in Arizona—began production of the Air sedan in late 2021. The four-door, five-seater is available in four specifications, with four battery sizes and one to

three motors. The Air Pure starts at \$69,900 and advertises 420 miles of range, quick charging and a non-trivial 430 hp. The Grand Touring (\$110,900) claims a whopping 512 miles of range, 819 hp and a recharge rate equivalent to 200 miles of range in 12 minutes.

But our car—the triple-motored, 1,234-hp Sapphire—is God's flyswatter. Testing on a prepared dragstrip earlier this year, Car and Driver extracted a 0-60 mph acceleration of 1.9 seconds, which noses out the Tesla Model S Plaid for the title of world's quickest production sedan.

brating the car's dynamics/handling/braking control loops for maximum effort. The multi-map Track mode also offers an integrated launch-control program, if drivers desire. I don't, usually. As Maxwell's silver hammer is poised to strike, the cabin swells with eerie hosannas and ghostly electronic howls. Looking left-right, left-right and clenching various muscle groups, I floored it.

The next few moments were intense, even a bit disorienting, as my squishy internal structures were rudely mapped onto the Sapphire's rapidly accelerating reference

relevant Tesla, can it?

From the driver's seat, the miracle is not that the Sapphire can match these world-flogging, gut-churning expectations, but the result is so uncompromised on account of them. Sure, I've been in faster and quicker cars but they all had roll cages, parachutes and Halon fire-suppression systems. Perhaps the broad Michelin Pilot Sport 4S Summer

tires (20/21-inch, front/rear) might thrum and trammel a bit on the interstate. Bear in mind the Sapphire has a top speed of 205 mph. You're going to want rubber.

Meanwhile, compared to its performance, the Sapphire's stealth might as well be Jedi magic. This is not the droid you're looking for, officer.

There are a handful of internal-combustion road cars

that can keep up with the Sapphire—a couple of McLarens, the Gordon Murray Automotive T.50, a Porsche or two—and they are small, highly specialized and unpretty. The Sapphire is a boat! Thanks to the three drive units that go underneath between the axles, the cabin floor is long, open and airy. Daddy Long Legs, your car has arrived.

As you swing wide the big driver's door, you will see the finely detailed, triple-layered dash console floating with a pool of indirect light. Spanning two-thirds of the leather-wrapped console, the 34-inch widescreen display can merge and mingle driver-centric graphics and readouts, while the center-stack touch screen handles housekeeping matters such as climate, seat controls and drive mode selection. Please, Professor, don't touch that.

In a market full of look-alike, work-alike UX systems dating from who knows, the Lucid's graphical interface leaps out as being the easiest and most intuitive, with smart, clear graphics and traffic visualization. While most business is conducted through the car's central touch screens, The Lucid's ergonomics show an effort to maintain a humanity that arch rival Teslas have been purged of, by way of dark Vulcan rituals.

I rise again to nominate the Sapphire as a modern design masterpiece, inasmuch as this deeply satisfying and compelling form also registers the lowest aero drag (0.197 Cd) of any production car. As Mercedes-Benz learned with the EQS series, the search for efficiency can take some ugly turns.

You don't need to be Einstein to see that.

**The Lucid Air Sapphire noses out the Tesla Model S Plaid for the title of world's quickest production sedan.**

Subsequent figures of merit include the Sapphire's NHRA-worthy 9.3-second elapsed time in the quarter-mile and a trap speed of 153 mph.

The Lucid's version of equivalence states that in the first few seconds of a full-power pass, the car is pulling harder longitudinally than had young Albert and I fallen vertically off a cliff, Thelma and Louise-style (terminal velocity notwithstanding).

I didn't need to go that hard. At a stop sign deep in the Central Valley, with miles of empty road ahead, I tapped on the Track mode icon—accessing full power and recalci-

frame—a convulsive, sneeze-like lurch, a burst of there-not-here, a vanishing. Whoosh. Gawd dang, car.

If you were to ask Lucid's CEO Peter Rawlinson what's the point of performance that makes people sick to their stomach, he'd likely tell you that's just the way of the global super-luxury car business, with bucks-up buyers spending a fortune on bragging rights. It's widely understood that 0-60 mph acceleration is a lousy benchmark by which to judge the worth of an automobile, never mind a company. And yet Lucid can't win by being slower than the

### 2025 LUCID AIR SAPPHIRE



**Price, as tested** \$250,500  
**Powertrain** all-electric, with three integrated drive units (front single, rear dual motor), each comprising motor/generator, silicon-carbide power inverter and single-speed trans-

mission; 118-kWh battery pack; all-wheel drive  
**Length/wheelbase/width/height** 197/116.5/86.4/55.4  
**Curb weight** 5,336 pounds  
**Power/torque** 1,234 hp/1,430 lb-ft  
**0-60 mph** 1.89 seconds  
**Top speed** 205 mph  
**EPA estimated range** 427 miles  
**Fuel economy** 108/101/105 MPG-e, city/hwy/combined  
**Peak charging rate** 300 kW

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