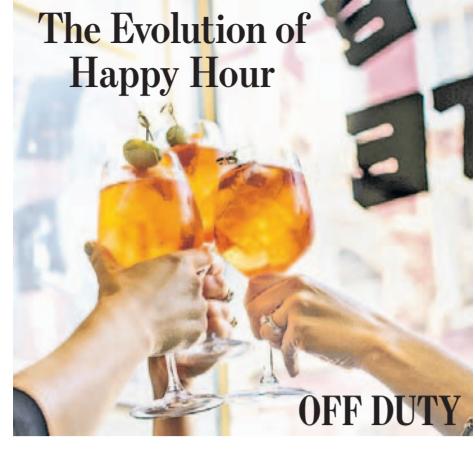




WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND



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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **Amazon** is investing an additional \$4 billion in Anthropic, doubling its investment in the AI startup as it aims to compete in the AI arms race. **B9**

◆ **U.S. stock indexes** rose with the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq adding 1%, 0.3% and 0.2%, respectively, while bitcoin pushed close to the \$100,000 mark, and the dollar hit a two-year high. **B10**

◆ **The U.K.'s competition authority** said its experts recommended investigating Apple and Google's dominance in smartphones under new digital competition rules. **B9**

◆ **The EU's competition watchdog** closed an investigation into how Apple treats rival audiobook developers in its App Store. **B9**

◆ **Honeywell International** has agreed to sell its personal-protective-equipment business to a private-equity firm's portfolio company for \$1.33 billion in cash. **B9**

◆ **Unilever** said it would put India at the center of its new business strategy as it aims to benefit from increasing consumption in one of the world's fastest-growing economies. **B9**

◆ **German car-parts supplier** Robert Bosch plans to cut thousands of jobs across its operations in coming years as the automotive sector looks to downsize. **B10**

World-Wide

◆ **Trump selected** hedge-fund manager Scott Bessent to lead the Treasury, elevating one of the finance world's most vocal supporters of the president-elect to a crucial position overseeing the incoming administration's economic agenda. **A1**

◆ **The president-elect** named three doctors to serve as the surgeon general, FDA head and director of the CDC. **A6**

◆ **Trump wants** oil companies to "drill, baby, drill," but his fossil-fuel benefactors have a different agenda: Shoring up demand for their products—not pumping more fossil fuels. **A1**

◆ **A New York state judge** confirmed that Trump won't be sentenced this month in his hush-money case. **A6**

◆ **Arrest warrants issued** for Israel's leader Netanyahu and the former defense minister over alleged war crimes threaten to deepen the global isolation of the country. **A7**

◆ **North Korean leader Kim** appeared to rebuff the prospect of reviving his nuclear diplomacy with Trump, according to recent remarks. **A7**

◆ **At least 19 people** in Minnesota have been sickened by E. coli poisoning tied to potentially tainted ground beef. **A6**

◆ **A woman** who said mixed-martial-arts fighter Conor McGregor beat and raped her was awarded the equivalent of around \$250,000 by a civil court jury in Ireland. **A7**

OPINION

Decline and fall of America? Not yet. **A13**

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A Blustery Day Tells Some to Go Fly a Kite



CHILLIN': Kiteboarders take advantage of windy conditions Friday at Lake Michigan and a lighthouse in St. Joseph, Mich.

President-Elect's Oil Allies Aren't Keen to Boost Drilling

By BENOÎT MORENNE
AND COLLIN EATON

Donald Trump wants oil companies to "drill, baby, drill" on the first day of his presidency, but his fossil-fuel benefactors have a different agenda.

Many of the tycoons who backed the Republican's victorious campaign say what they

need help with is shoring up demand for their products—not pumping more fossil fuels, which they have little incentive to do.

They are pushing for policies that would lock in fossil-fuel use, such as easier permitting for pipelines and terminals to shuttle fossil fuels to new markets. They also favor eliminating Biden ad-

ministration policies meant to put more electric vehicles on the road.

Under President Biden, shale companies produced record amounts of oil and natural gas as crude prices rebounded from the pandemic's depths and then soared after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But the industry is also confronting the early stages of a

long-term shift away from fossil fuels, as well as concerns that gasoline consumption has peaked in the U.S.

Trump handed shale donors their first big return on

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◆ Republicans' view of economy brightens..... A2

◆ Some tax cuts have more bang for the buck..... A4

Trump Selects Bessent To Lead Treasury

Hedge-fund manager has been an economic adviser to campaign team

WASHINGTON—Donald Trump selected hedge-fund manager Scott Bessent to lead the Treasury Department, elevating one of the finance world's most vocal supporters of the president-elect to a crucial position overseeing the incoming administration's economic agenda.

By Andrew Restuccia,
Brian Schwartz,
Nick Timiraos
and Alex Leary

Bessent in recent months has become a key economic adviser to Trump and his team. He has defended Trump's economic proposals in the midst of opposition from some on Wall Street, who worry that the president-elect's pledge to impose sweeping tariffs will trigger trade wars and ultimately lead to higher prices for American consumers.

If confirmed by the Senate, Bessent would be tasked with turning Trump's campaign-trail promises into policy, and he would help determine whether the president-elect follows through on some of his most eye-catching economic policy proposals—from eliminating taxes on tips to slapping across-the-board tar-

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◆ Three doctors named to steer health policy..... A6

Missiles and Passenger Jets Share Skies Over the Mideast

Scores of airlines have stumbled into a war zone in one of the busiest air corridors in the world; 'we were very lucky'

"Are those fireworks or something?" asked a passenger on Emirates flight EK146 from Amsterdam to Dubai last month, in a video posted to social media. In fact, what

By Benjamin Katz, Daniel Kiss
and Peter Champelli

she was watching through her cabin window was a barrage of Iranian missiles headed to Israel.

Her flight was one of scores that shared the skies with Iranian missiles on Oct. 1, an example of how the escalating conflict in the Middle East is endangering commercial aircraft in some of the world's busiest skies.

The number of missiles crisscrossing the region has surged since the start of Israel's war with Hamas: An average of 162 missiles have been fired each month so far this year, up from 10 a month in 2023, according to aviation security firm Osprey Flight Solutions. This has led to warnings from airlines, crews, security experts and families of air crash victims that an airliner could inadvertently be shot out of the sky.

Missiles have been spotted in-flight by pilots and passengers, struck near airports, and been fired by militaries and militias without warning to airlines. Governments and aviation regulators have meanwhile

Please turn to page A10

College Football's Early Kickoffs Are a Major Buzzkill for Fans

* * *

A spate of noon start times for big games is testing tailgaters' beer-guzzling mettle

By LAINE HIGGINS

This has been a season for the ages for Indiana University's football team. The Hoosiers are undefeated, have eclipsed 10 wins for the first time in their history, and have a chance to book a spot in the Big Ten championship game and possibly the College Football Playoff.

For the team's long-suffer-

ing followers, this weekend's marquee showdown at Ohio State should be the best of times. There's just one problem: The game will actually take place at the worst of times.

Kickoff on Saturday is set for 12 p.m. ET, which counts as unsportsmanlike conduct for fans

who like to tailgate with a drink or five before the big game.

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EXCHANGE



BIDDING WAR

How 7-Eleven wound up in a \$47 billion takeover battle. **B1**

U.S. Tax System Blows A Windfall to Ireland

By MAX COLCHESTER

DUBLIN—The Irish government is rolling in clover like never before.

The country pumps cash into not one but two sovereign-wealth funds. It is so flush that the budget watchdog doesn't warn about not having enough money but rather that the government is spending so much that it could overheat the economy. In Dublin, authorities are building what might become the world's most expensive children's hospital. There are

plans for a motorway to link Cork and Limerick, new flood

defenses in Shannon and floating wind farms off the south coast. Outside the parliament sits a new bike shed that cost half a million dollars, houses 36 bikes and doesn't keep out the rain. The state is spending \$10 million to get children off their phones at school.

"The good times are back," says Pat Woods, as he stretches his arms out over the red leather banquette of the Dame Tavern, his pub in central Dublin. "Everything is flying." Standing in a nearby street sucking on a vape, a local hairdresser marvels at what is unfolding. "The spend-

Please turn to page A2



Illegal shift

U.S. NEWS

Republicans' View of Economy Brightens

Their households are feeling better, while Democrats' sentiment sours

BY HARRIET TORY

Republicans are feeling a lot perkier about the economy now that Donald Trump is on his way to the White House. Democrats, less so.

The index of consumer sentiment in Republican households climbed more than 15 points in November, according to data released Friday by the University of Michigan. In Democratic households, the same index fell by over 10 points. This release is the first that includes surveys conducted after Election Day.

The Republican upswing helped push up the overall sentiment index. It rose to 71.8 from October's 70.5.

Still, even with the big swings, sentiment remained higher among Democrats than Republicans. The index hit 81.3 for Democrats, and 69.1 for Republicans.

Expectations

The expectations index, which measures how consumers feel about the future, posted even wilder swings. It jumped nearly 28 points for Republicans and plunged nearly 18

points among Democrats.

Economists say such swings are more a reflection of politics than any dramatic changes in the underlying health of the economy over the past couple of weeks.

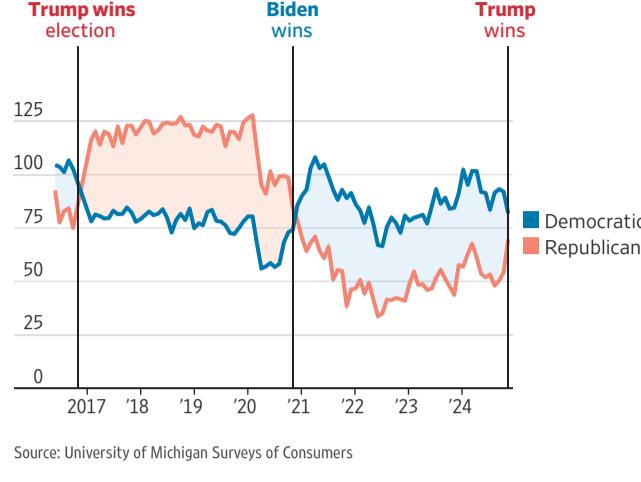
"It's very much people justifying their economic reality based on their perceptions," said Michael Zdinak, an economist at S&P Global. The shift in consumers' views "doesn't fundamentally alter the ground reality of the health of the economy," he added.

An index measuring consumers' feelings about current economic conditions registered smaller changes across both party affiliations. That reflects "that the resolution of the election exerted little immediate impact on the current state of the economy," said Joanne Hsu, the survey's director.

"Sentiment polls are supposed to measure what people believe based on their own experience; if they are becoming just another expression of partisan identity, they probably lose most of their value," said Christopher Carroll, professor of economics at Johns Hopkins University, who has researched consumer sentiment.

To be sure, there are plenty of nonpolitical reasons for people and businesses to feel good about the economy right now. Inflation has slowed. The labor market remains generally

Consumer sentiment index, by affiliation



Source: University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers

strong. The Federal Reserve has been cutting interest rates.

Spending impact

That matters because consumers who are happy, regardless of why, can in turn help push the economy forward. When people feel optimistic, they are more likely to buy cars, take vacations and eat at restaurants—or at least that is the theory.

The reality, just like the human psyche, is more complicated. Economists have long debated the closeness of the relationship between so-called "animal spirits," or mood changes, and actual spending.

For one thing, people can say

they are unhappy but still open their wallets. Michigan's consumer-sentiment index fell to its lowest point on record in mid-2022, when inflation was raging. Even so, consumer and business spending continued at a solid clip that year.

Hector Sandoval, an economist at the University of Florida who has studied consumer sentiment, said there is strong evidence that changes in consumer sentiment impact spending intentions, particularly for spending on nonessential wants rather than needs.

Sandoval expects consumer sentiment to increase following Trump's election, but he said lower borrowing costs and cooling inflation also play a role. His

research found that spending increased in Florida counties with a larger share of Republican voters after the 2016 presidential election.

Princeton University economist Atif Mian countered that people don't necessarily go on a shopping spree if their party wins the White House, even if their internal vibes improve.

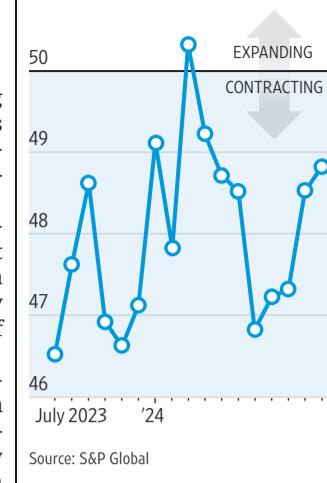
"If I feel good that my government is going to be run more efficiently, it doesn't really change my day-to-day spending patterns per se," Mian said. He said economic fundamentals such as productivity, the labor market, regulation and borrowing costs are more important drivers of spending.

The Michigan index targets about 800 to 1,000 interviews a month. About half of the interviews in Friday's release were conducted after the election; the rest were conducted in the two weeks running up to Election Day.

Economists have warned that policy proposals—such as tariffs on imported goods and deportations of workers—put forward by Trump could stoke inflation.

Friday's survey showed that consumers think inflation is headed higher in the coming years, too. The expected change in prices over the next five years was 3.2% in November, up from 3% in October and the highest in a year.

U.S. manufacturing PMI



Activity Picks Up In Private Sector

BY JOSHUA KIRBY

U.S. economic activity continued to grow robustly this month as confidence among businesses surged following the election of Donald Trump to the White House.

The S&P Global Flash U.S. Composite PMI—which gauges activity in the manufacturing and services sectors—rose to 55.3 in November from 54.1 in October, according to the surveys published Friday. That accelerates a previously climbing trend and suggests activity is expanding at its fastest rate in some 2½ years.

Demand increased sharply over the month and companies set out a brighter view of their output as interest rates fall and expectations mount for more-supportive business policies.

The services sector continued to be the sole engine of growth. The manufacturing industry contracted at its slowest rate in four months, suggesting a recovery could be coming in the months ahead.

"The prospect of lower interest rates and a more pro-business approach from the incoming administration has fueled greater optimism," said Chris Williamson, an economist with S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Services

Growing in Mid-U.S., Fed Says

BY CONNOR HART

Services activity in the middle of the U.S. grew moderately in November, while expectations for future activity stayed positive, according to a monthly survey by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City released Friday.

The Tenth District Services Survey's composite index, a weighted average of indexes covering revenue/sales, employment and inventory, came in at 9 in November, up from 5 in October and minus 2 in September. Readings above zero indicate expansion, while those below zero indicate contraction.

The Kansas City Fed said consumer-oriented industries, such as autos and retail, grew faster than industries in the business services sector.

The bank said its expectations for future services activity remain positive, as companies expect revenue and employment to increase in the next six months.

The Kansas City Fed's survey includes participants from such service industries as retail and wholesale trade, automobile dealers, real estate and restaurants.

The survey provides information on current services activity in the Tenth District, which includes Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, the northern half of New Mexico and the western third of Missouri.

The bank's monthly manufacturing survey, released Thursday, showed that factory activity in the central U.S. declined once again in November, though expectations for future activity climbed.



Corporate-tax revenue is funding projects for Dublin that include a \$500,000 bike shed for parliament's cyclists and a children's hospital projected at \$2.3 billion.

U.S. Fuels Ireland's Gravy Train

Continued from Page One

ing is wild," he says.

Helping fund this largess is the U.S. tax system and a global clampdown on corporate tax dodging. The U.S. government and the European Union spent the past decade changing laws and pressuring big multinationals not to book profits in offshore jurisdictions, such as the Cayman Islands, where they have no operations and pay no corporate tax. So now many U.S. companies are parking their international profits in low-tax Ireland, where they employ some people and pay some tax.

Among those known to use Ireland are Apple, Alphabet's Google, Microsoft and Pfizer.

Ireland, which offers a headline 15% corporate tax rate to big companies, compared with 21% in the U.S., expects corporate tax revenue in 2024 of €37.5 billion, equiva-

lent to \$39.6 billion, up from €4.6 billion a decade earlier. That works out to around \$7,300 per person. By contrast, the U.K. corporate tax generated around \$1,300 a head.

A country once famed for mass emigration—and that nearly went bankrupt 15 years ago following a banking crisis—is now importing workers. "Historically Ireland had loads of people and no money," says Seamus Coffey, chair of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council. "Now we've loads of money and not enough people."

President-elect Donald Trump's election victory brings uncertainty. Trump has said he would cut the tax rate for companies that make products in the U.S. to 15%. Tax experts say if the Trump administration did entice U.S. firms to repatriate profits or intellectual property, the effect on Ireland could be dire.

The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council estimates that 43% of corporation-tax receipts in 2022 came from just three big foreign companies. Around 15% of the Irish workforce is employed by just under 1,000 U.S. companies, according to Ireland's foreign direct investment agency. Those businesses

Ireland's net corporation-tax revenues



and their employees may contribute as much as 60% of the government's entire tax take, Cormac Lucey, a lecturer at Chartered Accountants Ireland, recently estimated.

For now, Ireland's leaders choose to look the other way.

Ahead of an election next Friday, the ruling coalition announced a budget that included €7.1 billion of income-tax cuts and handouts to every household to help cover electricity bills. Longer-term, grand plans include a ring road around Galway, a metro in Dublin and

some 30,000 new homes in the Cork docklands.

The big question is whether all this will be built. The projected cost of the children's hospital, now €2.2 billion, is a running joke in Dublin, as is the parliament's pricey bike shed. Coffey, the chair of the advisory council, recently warned that this surge of spending risked fueling inflation.

The man credited with helping design the corporate-tax system says he is hopeful it will keep writing the checks.

After the U.S. and EU agreed on a global minimum tax rate, "there were a lot of people here saying, 'God, this could be the end.' And I said, 'This is going to be great,'" says Fergal O'Rourke, a former PwC partner who chairs Ireland's foreign direct investment agency. "But I actually didn't envisage how good it would be."

For decades the U.S. hit U.S.-based multinationals with a 35% tax on global profits, but they paid that full amount only if they repatriated them to the U.S. So firms had an incentive to book profits abroad and keep them in separate accounts.

Ireland proved an attractive destination. Big pharmaceutical and tech companies built

European headquarters here, benefiting from seamless EU access and a 12.5% tax rate.

Then in 2017, the Trump administration cut the U.S. domestic corporate tax rate to 21% and imposed a minimum 10.5% rate on worldwide profits regardless of whether they were repatriated. Four years later, Ireland bumped up its corporate rate to 15%, a worldwide minimum brokered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Counterintuitively, this turned out great for Ireland.

U.S. businesses shifted hundreds of billions of dollars in intellectual property, such as patents and research, out of tax havens and into their Irish operations. Irish tax law allowed them to defer the cost of buying in their own IP from tax havens against their future profits, allowing them to reduce their tax bills.

Apple was ahead of the curve. In 2015, it moved its IP into Irish tax-based companies, contributing to a 26% leap in Ireland's economic growth—dubbed "leprechaun economics" because the surge had no link to Ireland's actual economic performance.

The Irish government predicts the scale of this tax windfall will moderate in coming years. This year's record haul was plumped up after the EU's top court demanded that Apple pay Ireland \$14.5 billion of accumulated unpaid taxes—a ruling the Irish actually opposed.

In Washington, as the deficit continues to swell, there may be an appetite to revisit tax arrangements to try to raise in more revenue, says Brad Setser, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

O'Rourke, the chair of Ireland's foreign direct investment agency, says he recalls two major U.S. corporate-tax changes: one in 1986 and one in 2017, and little in between.

"It took them 31 years to change the taxes for the U.S. Is it going to happen again soon?

I don't know," he says.

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Turkey Prices Ease This Year, but Sides Go Up

Average price for a bird is expected to fall 6.1%, but pecan pie may cost 8% more

BY KIRK MALTAIS

After years of rising prices, consumers may be pleased when they go to their local grocery aisles to pick up a Thanksgiving turkey this year.

The average price for a turkey this holiday season is projected to be down for a second year in a row, said the American Farm Bureau Federation in its annual report released this week. The lower cost for the headline attraction looks to cut costs for those hosting Thanksgiving dinner this year, but some favorite side dishes will remain stubbornly expensive for shoppers.

The Farm Bureau projects the average price for a Thanksgiving turkey to fall 6.1% to \$25.67, or \$1.68 a pound, this year. The lower price comes amid lower costs for feed grains and despite lower production of turkeys in the U.S. thanks to the spread of bird flu in American poultry farms. Poultry producers often cull whole flocks of birds if a case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is found, which caused the price for chicken and turkey to spike in 2022.

The disease is still active and hurting U.S. poultry production, with more than 100 million birds having been eliminated since the disease was first detected in 2016, according to government data.

The nearly 100% mortality rate for HPAI-infected birds and its ease of transmission means that producers must act quickly to quell the disease. More than 300,000 turkeys have been affected so far this month alone, according to the Department of Agriculture.

"The American turkey flock is the smallest it's been since 1985 because of avian influenza, but overall demand has also fallen, resulting in lower prices at the grocery store for families planning a holiday meal," said Farm Bureau economist Bernt Nelson in the Wednesday report.

But cheaper meat is only part of the story, as the cost to make many family-favorite side dishes continues to rise. For example, fans of mashed potatoes may find the cost for



The Farm Bureau forecasts the cost of the average Thanksgiving meal for a group of 10 people at \$58.08.

that dish a little steeper. A smaller North American potato crop this year due to adverse weather issues and a change in consumer demand has the U.S. potato price up 7.6% year over year, said commodities research firm Expiana in its own report issued this month, citing data from the USDA.

Prices for processed goods also are on the rise. The Farm Bureau said that it expects prices for a 14-ounce package of stuffing mix to increase by more than 8% from last year to \$4.08. The price for a dozen dinner rolls also is expected to rise by more than 8% to \$4.16.

Even worse for those with a sweet tooth, prices for some pies may be increasing, with Expiana's Thanksgiving Pecan Pie index up 8% from last year, due mostly to higher prices for pecans that are offsetting cheaper costs for sugar, vanilla and butter.

Overall, the Farm Bureau forecasts the cost of the average Thanksgiving meal for a group of 10 people at \$58.08.

That's down 5% from the previous year, and down 9% from the record of \$64.06 set in 2022, the highest since the Farm Bureau began its yearly assessment in 1986.

There is good news for those who don't include turkey in their holiday spread—bone-in hams continue to be a cheaper protein alternative.

The USDA reports wholesale prices for ham at 87.74 cents per pound as of late Thursday, which is up more than 11% from this time last year but still only roughly half of the cost of a turkey.

While many consumers will be looking for avenues to save money on their feast, discounts on store-brand items compared with their name-brand counterparts are growing thinner. In a report issued by Wells Fargo's Agri-Food Institute, the firm said that prices for name-brand turkeys are down 2% from 2023, while store-brand, while still cheaper, is up 5%.

Inflation continues to be a factor pushing U.S. food prices higher.

Average price, change from a year earlier



Source: American Farm Bureau Federation

"Retailers continue to adjust to higher wages in their stores which are the biggest variable outside of the cost of the goods themselves," said Dr. Michael Swanson, chief economist with Wells Fargo's Agri-Food Institute.

The bank also reports that the price for a 12-ounce bag of cranberries from a name-brand is down 3% from last year, while the store brand is up 6%. The margin also is slimmer for pumpkin pies, with name-brand pies up 1% while the store brand rises 3%.

Inflation continues to be a factor pushing U.S. food prices higher. The Bureau of Labor Statistics said earlier this month that inflation rose 2.6% in October. The unadjusted price of food both in-home and away from home has risen 2.1% in the 12 months through October.

Some 79% of consumers surveyed by Chicago-based market research firm Circana said they plan to celebrate Thanksgiving with their usual traditions.

About 34% of consumers say they plan to spend more money on groceries this year, but are unlikely to cut down on their purchases.

Bubbly

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P A R I S

BY JARED S. HOPKINS

An industry fight against lucrative drug discounts for hospitals is intensifying as another drugmaker joins the battle: Sanofi.

The pharmaceutical company plans to change its policy on how it gives discounts to certain hospitals. Sanofi will require institutions to provide pharmacy and medical claims information before receiving federally mandated discounts.

The company sent a letter, which was viewed by The Wall Street Journal, to hospitals outlining its new model on Friday, according to people familiar with the matter.

The French company's plan, which would take effect early next year, comes as the industry escalates its efforts to rein in the federal program known as 340B.

Eli Lilly and Johnson & Johnson this month filed separate lawsuits against the federal government for rejecting the companies' plans to tighten the way they provide the discounts to hospitals in the program.

Congress created the drug-savings program in 1992, requiring drugmakers sell outpatient drugs at a discount to hospitals and clinics that serve low-income and uninsured patients.

Like Lilly and J&J, Sanofi wants to provide the required discounts via a new method. Under its plan, certain hospitals covered by 340B would order drugs at full price from a wholesaler. Only after submitting claims data—information related to the drug's order, a patient's hospital visit and a drug's dispensing—to



The French drugmaker is looking to rein in how it gives discounts in a federal program designed to help hospitals that serve low-income and uninsured patients.

Sanofi demonstrating eligibility under 340B, would the hospitals receive a credit from the company.

Currently, drugmakers typically provide 340B discounts at the time of purchase.

Sanofi will verify that the patient receiving the drug fits within the definition of eligibility written by the Health Resources and Services Administration, the agency that oversees 340B, according to the letter.

New approach

The company's redesigned approach ensures the hospitals receive the credit before they have to pay a wholesaler for the drug, so they will never be in the red, according to the people familiar with Sanofi's plans.

The HRSA is reviewing inquiries from drugmakers related to revisions on how they will provide 340B drug discounts, said an HRSA spokesman on Friday. The plans would significantly change the

administration of the program, he added.

Hospitals respond

The American Hospital Association is concerned about the actions by drug companies to "undermine the integrity of the 340B program," said Chad Golder, general counsel for the AHA, which represents nearly 5,000 hospitals and healthcare providers. "Sanofi's new policy is yet another instance of drug companies putting profits over people," he said.

The drug-savings program has long been criticized by pharmaceutical companies, which allege it has deviated from its original intent of helping safety-net hospitals by allowing large hospital systems to buy drugs cheaply and then dispense them at a markup.

Manufacturers say they sell medicines to covered hospitals at steep discounts, but some large hospitals mark up the prices charged to both uninsured patients and insurers.

Hospitals say they rely on the discounts to defray costs of serving disadvantaged patients.

The 340B program has grown into one of the costliest outlays of prescription drugs under the federal government, totaling more than \$66 billion in 2023, according to HRSA.

In its letter, Sanofi said the 340B program "bears little resemblance" to the original program created by Congress more than 30 years ago, and its new model is to "rein in the 340B waste and abuse." The growth of the program "hasn't come with any meaningful increase in patient benefit."

Sanofi's plan would affect more than 20 of its medicines, including anti-inflammatory drug Dupixent and arthritis drug Kevzara. The changes would apply to certain hospitals that serve low-income and uninsured patients, but not to other types of 340B participants such as children's hospitals or hemophilia treatment centers.

Community health centers, which make up a smaller percentage than hospital systems of the 340B program, will receive credits faster but still need to send Sanofi claims data, according to the letter.

By collecting claims data Sanofi is also hoping to prevent itself from paying out additional rebates for Medicaid prescriptions that had already received discounts under 340B, according to people familiar with Sanofi's plans. Federal law bars duplicate discounts for the same prescription.

Currently, it is difficult for Sanofi to see whether a prescription dispensed to a Medicaid patient was also subject to a 340B discount, the people said.

U.S. NEWS

Some Tax Cuts Have More Bang for the Buck

Biggest potential payoffs come from creating incentives for new investments

BY RICHARD RUBIN

WASHINGTON—Not all tax cuts are created equal.

As Republicans write their 2025 tax plans, they are arguing that lower taxes promote growth and, at least in part, can pay for themselves by spurring economic gains that yield higher revenue. The reality is more complicated.

While some business-tax proposals can make the economy grow faster, economists say many of the individual tax cuts being contemplated would do little to expand investment, gross domestic product or tax

collections. And they caution against banking on growth fueled by tax cuts to address the nation's fiscal challenges.

In particular, they say, extending the lower individual tax rates set to expire after 2025—by far the largest component of any likely tax bill and the one that directly affects the most voters—would put more money in consumers' pockets without driving a meaningful change in the economy's long-run trajectory. There is broad bipartisan support for retaining those lower tax levels that Republicans created in 2017, but keeping individual tax rates in place is unlikely to change most people's decisions about whether and how much to work.

"We shouldn't expect a very large economic impact relative to the size of the tax cut," said

Kyle Pomerleau of the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. "Republicans are mostly just changing the taxation of labor compensation, wages and salaries, and for a lot of workers, we're just not that responsive to changes in our after-tax wage rate."

Some of the highest-profile and most politically popular proposals, such as continuing the higher standard deduction, removing taxes on tips or keeping the individual tax-bracket structure, wouldn't necessarily boost economic growth. Instead, the tax cuts with the biggest potential payoff, according to economists across the political spectrum, are the ones that create incentives for businesses to make new investments that require additional workers and higher wages.

The 2017 tax law included immediate tax write-offs for certain capital investments and equipment purchases, rather than requiring companies to spread those deductions across many years. That accelerated-depreciation provision, known as expensing, is gradually phasing out under the 2017 law, and lawmakers are aiming to bring it back in full—which economists say could be a good trade-off for any lost revenue.

"Things like accelerated depreciation tend to have pretty high bang for buck," said Eric Zwick, an economics and finance professor at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and co-author of an academic study of the 2017 tax law. It found that the law's business-tax cuts increased investment but that the result-

ing growth didn't cover the cost of the cuts themselves.

Republicans can pass a 2025 tax bill on their own, but there is even potential bipartisan support for expensing. The Biden administration and many congressional Democrats backed a bipartisan deal this year that would have revived full expensing for equipment and immediate write-offs for research costs, paired with an expansion of the child tax credit.

Lower corporate-tax rates can also spur investment by raising after-tax profits on new investments, but those tax cuts also reward profits from older investments. The 21% corporate-tax rate created in the 2017 law doesn't have an expiration date, so Congress might just leave that in place.

Economic growth, of course,

isn't the only factor that shapes tax policy. Lawmakers will consider the distribution of the tax burden across income groups, notions of fairness and political priorities while operating within budgetary constraints. The Republican tax bill next year is also likely to include spending cuts and repeals of some clean-energy tax credits created by Democrats.

But growth is an important part of GOP argument for the tax bill. Republicans are already pointing to that potential growth as a reason why the fiscal cost of the tax cuts won't need to be fully offset with tax increases or spending cuts.

Analyses from economic models suggest that extensions of expiring tax cuts would pay for only 1% to 14% of their own costs.

encounter as consensual and wasn't charged.

Hegseth later paid his accuser an undisclosed sum as part of a nondisclosure agreement, fearing she would file a lawsuit that would end his career at Fox, his lawyer Timothy Parlato told The Wall Street Journal. Hegseth didn't respond to requests for comment.

Just 11 days after the incident was reported, Hegseth posted photos of a private dinner he had with Trump at the White House. In 2019, Hegseth married his third wife—a Fox producer—at Trump's golf club in Bedminster, N.J. He posted a photo of himself and his bride in a golf cart wearing red "Make Marriage Great Again" hats.

He also used his public profile to intervene in war-crimes cases. When family members and lawyers for soldiers and security contractors convicted of killing civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan were seeking presidential pardons, they turned to Hegseth for help.

On his show and in conversations with Trump, he argued that the soldiers and contractors shouldn't be punished for simply "making tough calls on the battlefield." Trump soon publicly echoed Hegseth's language: "We train our boys to be killing machines, then prosecute them when they kill!" he tweeted in October 2019, tagging the Fox News host.

Trump pardoned the men over the vehement objections of senior military leaders.

Four years later, Hegseth



Pete Hegseth, seen Thursday in Washington, railed against Pentagon leaders on TV and intervened in war-crimes cases.

nesota Star-Tribune, his hometown newspaper.

Deploying to Iraq in 2005, Hegseth joined the 3rd battalion of the 187th infantry regiment in the northern city of Samarra, an insurgency hotbed. The regiment's Charlie Company, which included Hegseth, employed such aggressive tactics that it was referred to by some as the Kill Company. Four of the company soldiers were court-martialed on charges of killing unarmed Iraqis.

Hegseth argued he and his comrades were often hamstrung by generals and politicians far from the front lines. And he seemed to steadily lose faith in the notion that even the U.S. Army could change Iraq.

"Violence persists not be-

cause American troops are present, but because our presence is futile," he wrote in 2006 in a piece for Princeton's alumni magazine. "Our unit killed or captured hundreds of insurgents, knocking the wind out of the local insurgency—but never crushing it."

After Iraq, Hegseth took a job at a veterans group and began going on television and radio shows. "He has a passion for the grunts who serve on the front lines of the military, but is just as capable of talking to people with very elite backgrounds about detailed policy," said Avik Roy, who worked with him at Concerned Veterans of America.

When a scandal broke out in 2014 about lengthy wait times in the Veterans Affairs hospitals, he testified on Cap-

itol Hill, spoke at conservative conferences and began to appear on Fox News—drawing Trump's attention.

"He would watch Pete a lot," said a person with knowledge of the relationship, noting the then-president liked that "he wasn't just a face on television selling these positions, he really got in the weeds on policy."

When Trump announced his presidential run in 2015, Hegseth was critical of his comments about veterans. "A man who received four student deferments to avoid service in the Vietnam War has absolutely no credibility to attack someone like John McCain who volunteered to serve his country and suffered five-and-a-half years of torture as a result," he declared in July

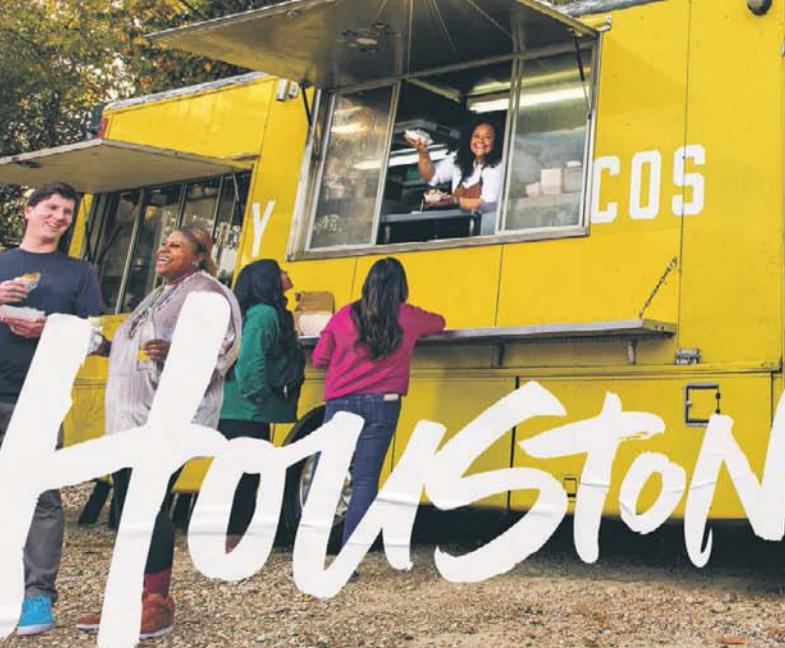
2015 after Trump insulted McCain.

But he toned down his criticism as Trump's campaign gained strength. After winning the White House in 2016, Trump interviewed Hegseth at Trump Tower in New York to be his secretary of veterans affairs. He didn't get the job but used the opportunity to pitch the president-elect on VA reforms.

By the summer of 2017, Hegseth had become an unofficial Trump adviser on military and veterans affairs. That October, after Hegseth traveled to Monterey, Calif., to speak at a Republican women's conference, police investigated allegations that he had sexually assaulted a woman in his hotel room after the event. He described the

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Trump's Sway Over GOP Shows Limits

Lawmakers want to reshape government but sometimes balk at giving a free rein

BY AARON ZITNER
AND NATALIE ANDREWS

WASHINGTON—Donald Trump promised to bring transformational change in a second term. The Senate is showing that there are limits to how much change he, and his supporters, can expect.

Former Rep. Matt Gaetz, the president-elect's choice for attorney general, removed his name from consideration Thursday amid broadening Senate opposition within Trump's own party. Meanwhile, the nomination of Pete Hegseth, a former Fox News personality, to be defense secretary is on the ropes.

Other cabinet picks, such as former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard to lead the nation's spy agencies, are drawing scrutiny for their nontraditional stances. In Gabbard's case, there is a perception that she has embraced the ideas of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

And some Republican senators have balked at Trump's demand that they suspend public hearings and confirmation votes on some nominees and allow Trump to put them directly into office, using what is known as recess appointments.

The botched Gaetz nomination, together with the other pushback, show that while GOP lawmakers generally agree with the president-elect's ambition to reshape the federal bureaucracy, they are at times willing to buck their party's standard-bearer.

"The president has the right to make the nominations that he sees fit, but the Senate also has a responsibility for advice and consent, and in this particular case, I think there was advice offered rather than consent," Sen. Mike Rounds (R., S.D.) said of

the failed Gaetz nomination.

A nominee needs a simple majority among the 100 senators to be confirmed. Vice President-elect JD Vance can break a tie. Republicans are expected to hold 53 Senate seats next year, meaning that a few defections could sink nominees.

Sexual-misconduct allegations snared Gaetz, who has been the subject of an investigation by the House Ethics Committee into allegations that he had sex with a minor while he was in office, and they have led to concerns about Hegseth, who was accused of sexual assault in 2017.

Police in Monterey, Calif., on Wednesday released a report on the Hegseth incident, saying that a woman had sought an examination for sexual assault four days after meeting with Hegseth. Both Gaetz and Hegseth have denied wrongdoing, and charges weren't filed in either case.

Quiet pushback

Trump's pick for Health and Human Services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has drawn praise for his ideas for improving nutrition and other aspects of public health but also criticism for his skepticism of vaccines, among other views.

Some Republican senators are voicing private concerns about Gabbard, who would be Trump's director of national intelligence, according to one person familiar with the matter, raising the prospect of a new round of scrutiny for Trump's picks.

When asked about Gabbard, Sen. Thom Tillis (R., N.C.) said the director of national intelligence should be someone who supports Ukraine in its defense against Russia, as he does.

"I'm going to have to have a very compelling story for anybody who's going to influence policy in Ukraine," Tillis said. "At DNI, I don't know if that's her or not, but when I



FROM TOP: ANNA MONEYWAKER/GETTY IMAGES; TONI WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL/ZUMA PRESS



Trump has tapped Tulsi Gabbard, above, to lead the nation's spy agencies. The nomination of Matt Gaetz, left, sparked Senate GOP opposition.

get into the nomination process, I have no intention of supporting anybody who equivocates on support for Ukraine."

Sen. Jack Reed (D., R.I.), who is Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, said that since Gaetz has withdrawn from consideration, scrutiny will "shift to these national-security picks, and that will, I think, raise additional questions about fitness."

The early resistance from Senate Republicans could portend problems for Trump's

stated goal of overtaking other powers of Congress and the prerogatives of government institutions outside the executive branch, such as his expected moves to impound, or decline to spend, money appropriated by lawmakers for programs the president opposes, and to redirect funds elsewhere.

Tens of millions of Americans who voted for Trump were drawn by his criticism that the government had failed on several fronts and his promises of an overhaul.

the accusations against Gaetz and Hegseth, which she doesn't trust as factual. She thinks Trump is right to reach for people with nontraditional résumés, such as Hegseth and Kennedy, to bring new thinking to the government.

"It's clear from the last four years that there is a considerable amount of structure in the government that doesn't function. In health and safety, it failed us. In the economy, it failed us. In international affairs, it failed us," said Beck, 76 years old, referring to the government's responses to Covid-19, inflation and wars in Ukraine and the Mideast. "And so the president is trying to rethink those things."

By contrast, Gene Curran, a Trump voter outside Jacksonville, Fla., said the Senate should bring a robust scrutiny to Trump's nominees. He said he opposed the idea of the Senate setting aside its confirmation powers to allow Trump to put people in office without scrutiny, through recess appointments.

"Any Republican who uses that as a strategy, I will not be voting for," said Curran, 52, who owns an electrical-contracting business. "That's what I hired my senators to do—advise and consent." He said the Senate should make sure Hegseth is qualified to lead the Defense Department and probe Gabbard for "giving Putin a pass on invading Ukraine."

Curran thought Gaetz was "too morally challenged" to serve as the nation's top law-enforcement officer, and he saw the failure of his nomination as proof that the advice-and-consent process works.

"It just demonstrates that our Founding Fathers were brilliant," he said. "It gives me chills to think about it, so I can go on with my life and not worry about this whole Gaetz thing. It makes me proud to be an American. The system is functioning."

*—Siobhan Hughes
and Lindsay Wise
contributed to this article.*

Trump's Oil Allies Want Other Help

Continued from Page One

vestment by nominating Liberty Energy Chief Executive Chris Wright, a fracking booster and fossil-fuels champion, to lead the president-elect's Energy Department.

When Dan Eberhart, the CEO of oil-field services firm Canary, met with Trump during a fundraiser at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida this summer, Eberhart had a unique request. He asked Trump to push back on the International Energy Agency, the influential, Paris-based energy forecaster. The agency has predicted global oil demand will peak by the end of the decade, earning scorn from GOP lawmakers who dubbed the group an "energy transition cheerleader."

"You need to stop acting like fossil fuels are the devil," Eberhart said in an interview, referring to the IEA's stance.

A spokesperson for the IEA said it remains "focused on its key missions of energy security and energy transitions, based on the mandates from our member governments."

Many of Trump's oil and natural-gas supporters favor easing regulations that govern drilling. The changes would include scrapping rules targeting methane emissions, getting new permits to frack on federal land and eliminating climate disclosure rules.

But some donors grimace when they hear Trump promise that under his watch, crude-oil producers would open the floodgates.

Oil backers' skepticism stems from the fact that Wall Street has successfully pressured chronically indebted frackers to stop burning through cash, and return it to shareholders via buybacks and dividends instead of reinvesting it to frack more wells.

"Our stocks will be absolutely crushed if we start growing our production the way Trump is talking about it," said Bryan Sheffield, a Texas oilman who contributed more than \$1 million to



A well site in Pennsylvania. Many of Trump's oil and natural-gas supporters favor easing regulations that govern drilling.

Trump's latest campaign.

Another limiting factor for shale companies is geology. Drillers are running out of premium wells, and many don't have the runway to pump more oil than they are already.

One area where Trump's fossil-fuel supporters see clear upside from his new term is exports of natural gas.

Demand for these molecules has experienced an up-tick in domestic markets in recent years, but shale companies are producing more than enough to satisfy American consumers. They have been shipping gargantuan amounts of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, to Europe and Asia, making the U.S. the largest natural-gas exporter in the world.

Biden disrupted the companies' plans to build more terminals when he declared a moratorium on new LNG exports. One of the industry's top priorities is for Trump to lift the pause on day one of his presidency.

Matthew Ramsey, a director at pipeline company Energy Transfer, said he expects that with Trump in office, energy companies won't only churn out more natural gas but sell more of it. "I think 'drill, baby, drill' means we open up a lot more markets that have otherwise been closed to us," he said.

Texas billionaire Kelcy Warren, Energy Transfer's co-founder and executive chairman, was among Trump's most prolific donors this election cycle.

Another top supporter was oil billionaire Harold Hamm,

who founded Oklahoma shale company Continental Resources. Hamm, who marshaled support for Trump's campaign among oil-industry executives, is helping to oversee Trump's energy-transition team. He publicly encouraged Trump to pick Wright, who serves as a director at his lobby, as energy secretary.

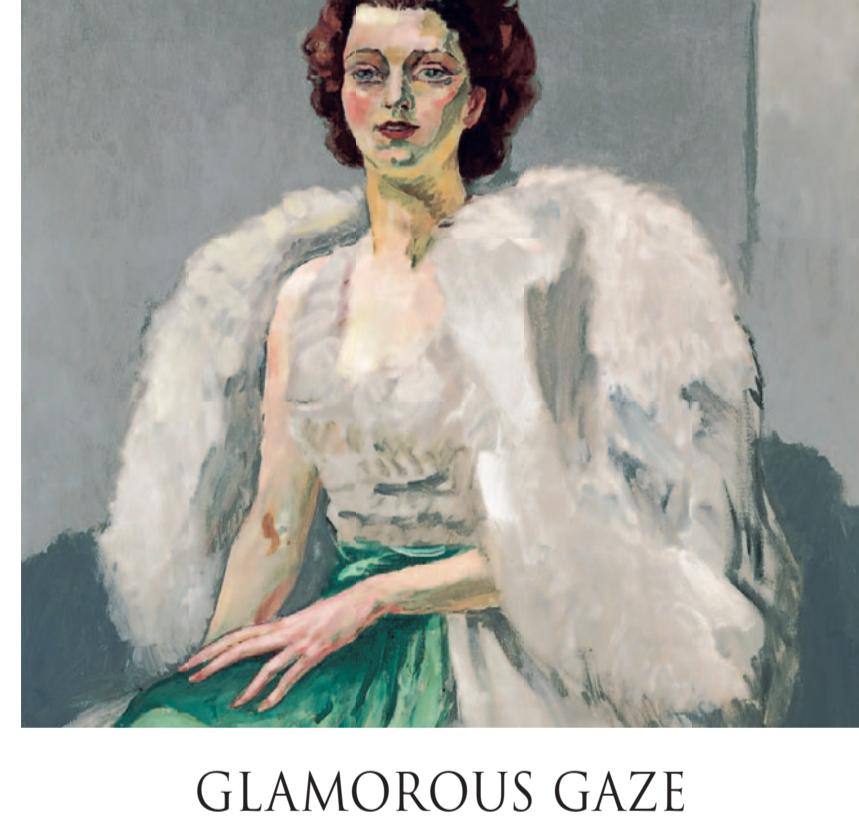
Hamm and Wright have criticized people they describe as climate-change alarmists. They expect hydrocarbons to play a significant role in modern societies for the foreseeable future.

Wright didn't respond to a request for comment.

Trump has vowed to place tariffs on trade partners, a move that some people in the energy industry fear could affect the price of steel, an essential well-building component. Oil companies also have expressed concerns that those tariffs would include imports of foreign oil and other commodities they use to make fuel.

In several conversations since this spring, lobbyists for fuel makers including Exxon Mobil and Valero Energy have told Trump policy advisers that tariffs on crude imports would make them less competitive globally and raise fuel prices. Trump advisers have signaled they want to avoid a price increase, according to people familiar with the matter.

A crucial task for the Trump administration will be balancing its ambition to boost exports of U.S. oil and gas with potential trade complications if Trump imposes tariffs on a range of products.

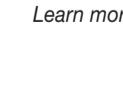


GLAMOROUS GAZE KEES VAN DONGEN

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U.S. NEWS

Federal Workers Feel Ire of Musk's Followers

New efficiency czar targets employees by name on X, sparking pushback

By JIM CARLTON
AND REBECCA BALLHAUS

As co-director of President-elect Donald Trump's nascent Department of Government Efficiency, Elon Musk has wasted no time posting to his 205 million followers on X about specific government departments he views as bloated.

But this past week, Musk has escalated from targeting government agencies to singling out individuals—spark-

ing his online army of followers to launch blistering critiques of ordinary federal employees.

One recent post by the billionaire zeroed in on Ashley Thomas, a little-known di-

rector of climate diversification at the U.S. International Development Finance Corp., after another user on Musk's social-media platform X questioned her role.

Musk's repost—"So many fake jobs"—garnered 32 million views, triggering an avalanche of memes and ridicule from his followers against the employee, such as, "Sorry Ashley Thomas Gravy Train is Over."

This past week, Musk re-

nation's debt, leads financial regulators, controls sanctions and conducts economic diplomacy. While the U.S. trade representative takes the lead on tariffs, the Treasury secretary typically plays a central role on that issue as well.

Bessent, 62 years old, is the founder of investment firm Key Square Capital Management. He was the chief investment officer at George Soros's Soros Fund Management from 2011 to 2015. He primarily lives in Charleston, S.C.

Bessent appeared alongside Trump on the campaign trail, and the president-elect has called him "one of the most brilliant men on Wall Street."

He impressed the president-elect, according to Trump's aides, with his public predictions that the stock market would crash if Vice President Kamala Harris won the election.

The longtime investor's allies executed a behind-the-scenes campaign to persuade Trump to choose him for the Treasury post. Among his supporters was Larry Kudlow, who led the National Economic Council during Trump's first term.

Bessent for his part wrote an opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal* this month in which he rejected a group of Nobel laureates who warned that Trump's economic agenda would harm the U.S. economy.

Recent days "prove mar-

sumed his controversial practice of calling out individuals—a tactic going back to X's previous incarnation as Twitter.

In 2021, Musk took aim at Mary "Missy" Cummings, a Duke University engineering professor who was appointed to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as a top adviser, and who had been critical of Tesla's advanced driver-assistance system.

After taking over Twitter in 2022, Musk targeted Yoel Roth, the platform's former head of trust and safety, who had recently left. Musk tweeted, incorrectly, that it looked like Roth had argued "in favor of children being able to access adult Internet services." Some users interpreted it as Musk calling Roth a pedophile, and they posted calls for Roth's death. Roth moved out of his house temporarily because of threats.

Musk's targets this past week included Alexis Pelosi, California Rep. Nancy Pelosi's relative and a senior climate adviser at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. But that post also included the names of two obscure federal officials with climate-related jobs—including one who had actually left her job at the Energy Department in August.

"These tactics are aimed at sowing terror and fear at federal employees," said Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents more than 800,000 of the 2.3

million civilian federal employees. "It's intended to make them fearful that they will become afraid to speak up."

Kelley said Musk is going after the wrong target if he focuses only on federal employees. Kelley said far more is spent by federal contractors such as himself—\$750 billion annually compared with about \$200 billion for the civilian workforce, one third of which are veterans as he is.

"We are a comparative steal, and we want to help clean it up, too," said Kelley, a former Army sergeant.

"The people I represent have been called names like deep state, but they are working people just like you and I."

The 37-year-old Thomas,

the target of Musk's viral post, works for a federal agency that partners with private companies to finance ways to improve living standards in developing countries.

With engineering, business and water science degrees



Elon Musk is soliciting on social media public recommendations for federal budget cuts.

RYAN COLLYER/AP/GTY IMAGES

from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and University of Oxford, Thomas spent years doing field work in Africa and writing research papers such as one on a technology that can help extract water from air in arid countries, according to her past tweets.

Thomas went to work as the agency's director of climate diversification in 2023, when federal records show she earned \$172,075 a year.

An agency official said the climate diversification portfolio is highly technical and is focused on identifying innovations that serve U.S. strategic interests, including bolstering agriculture and infrastructure against extreme weather.

How does a routine federal employee come to the attention of multibillionaire Musk?

The controversy erupted when "datahazard," an X user whose anti-Biden posts have drawn Musk's attention, questioned Thomas's job to nearly 170,000 followers.

Musk's repost sparked a slew of taunts, with followers making jeers such as, "A tough way for Ashley Thomas to find out she's losing her job."

Michael Skolnik, a longtime civil rights activist, was among those who fired back at the post. "You have absolutely no idea what you are talking about and dangerously targeting a person who works an honest job to provide for their family."

Neither Musk nor his representatives responded to requests for comment.

A representative of the "datahazard" X account, who didn't give a name, said it was legitimate to give names of employees like Thomas because she is on a list of senior officials who are public figures. "Taxpayers have a fundamental right to know who runs our government," the person said via direct message on X.

LinkedIn and Facebook pages for Thomas were no longer live as of Wednesday.

**Watch a Video:
What Trump Can
And Can't Do on
Day One as
President**



ALEX BRANDON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

economists that they would raise prices for consumers.

That wasn't enough to sway everybody in Trump's orbit. Billionaire Elon Musk had endorsed Bessent's leading opponent for the job, Howard Lutnick, the chief executive of financial-services firm Cantor Fitzgerald. Lutnick, Musk wrote on his social-media platform, X, would "enact change."

Bessent, he argued, is a "business-as-usual choice." Musk has been by Trump's side at Mar-a-Lago since the election, advising him on personnel, including whom he should pick as Treasury secretary.

Bessent has advised Trump to pursue a "3-3-3" policy: cutting the budget deficit to 3% of gross domestic product by 2028, spurring GDP growth of 3% through deregulation, and producing an additional 3 million barrels of oil or its equivalent a day.

He has suggested that Trump's tariff threats are a negotiating strategy aimed at extracting concessions from other countries. "My general view is that at the end of the day, he's a free trader," Bessent told the *Financial Times* last month. "It's escalate to de-escalate."

Last month, Bessent suggested that Trump should announce whom he plans to select as Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's successor so that this "shadow" chair could

try to undercut Powell, making him a lame duck. Bessent recently told the Journal that based on recent criticism of the idea, he no longer thought it was worth pursuing.

While Bessent is known in New York financial circles, he doesn't have the fame of the biggest Wall Street players. Having spent little time in Washington, he will have to build relationships on Capitol Hill, which will be crucial as Republican lawmakers embark on a bid to extend trillions of dollars in expiring tax cuts.

Bessent will have to navigate competing influences in Trump's orbit. While Bessent in the Journal opinion piece extolled the prospect of stronger growth driving up the U.S. dollar, other Trump advisers including former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer have touted prospects for boosting exports with a weaker dollar. Trump and Bessent inherit a tricky fiscal backdrop, with the Treasury set to roll over trillions of dollars in debt in coming years that it borrowed at much lower interest rates.

Bessent in a speech earlier this year was sharply critical of President Biden and his advisers' use of a narrow margin of victory in 2020 to push through transformative policy changes in the midst of an unfolding economic upswing.

President-elect Donald Trump has a long list of objectives for 'day one' in the White House. Scan this code to see WSJ explain which he can carry out on his own, which he will need help from Congress for, and what might end up in the courts.

U.S. WATCH



STORM DAMAGE: A crew cleared fallen trees in Bellevue, Wash., on Friday, after a second major storm hit the Pacific Northwest this past week, killing two people. A previous 'bomb cyclone' left more than half a million customers without power.

NEW YORK Judge Delays Trump Sentencing

A judge confirmed Friday that President-elect Donald Trump won't be sentenced this month in his hush-money case, instead setting a schedule for prosecutors and his lawyers to expand on their ideas about what to do next.

It had already become clear that the Nov. 26 sentencing date wouldn't hold. Judge Juan M. Merchan's order Friday formalized that without setting a new one.

He called for more filings from both sides about how to proceed in light of Trump's impending return to the White House.

—Associated Press

MINNESOTA E. coli Outbreak Sickens 19 People

At least 19 people in Minnesota have been sickened by E. coli poisoning tied to a national recall of more than 167,000 pounds of potentially tainted ground beef, federal health officials said.

Detroit-based Wolverine

Packing recalled the meat recently after Minnesota officials reported multiple illnesses.

Four of those who fell ill were hospitalized, including two people who developed a serious complication that can cause kidney failure, an official with the Minnesota health department said.

—Associated Press

Trump Names Three To Steer Health Policy

By LIZ ESSLEY WHYTE
AND NATALIE ANDREWS

President-elect Donald Trump on Friday named three doctors to help steer health policy for the agenda that became a fundamental part of his campaign: to make the country healthy again.

Dr. Marty Makary, a Johns Hopkins surgeon, is Trump's pick to lead the Food and Drug Administration. Family doctor Janette Nesheiwat, a Fox News contributor, is his choice for surgeon general. Dave Weldon, an internist and former GOP congressman from Florida, is Trump's nominee for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Of Makary, Trump said: "He will work under the leadership of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to, among other things, properly evaluate harmful chemicals poisoning our nation's food supply and drugs and biologics being given to our nation's youth, so that we can finally address the childhood chronic disease epidemic."

All three must be confirmed by the Senate next year in a simple majority vote. Republicans will have 53 seats to the Democrats' 47.

All three posts serve under the umbrella of the Department of Health and Human Services, which Trump has picked Kennedy to lead. Kennedy, who must also be confirmed, campaigned for president as an independent on lowering rates of chronic disease in the country, especially for children, as well as limiting ultra-processed foods. He backed Trump and has been aiding with the transition.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford University, is seen as the favorite to helm the National Institutes of Health. He visited the Trump transition offices in Palm Beach, Fla., on Friday, a person familiar with the matter said.

Trump earlier named Mehmet Oz, a physician and heart surgeon best known as the host of TV's "The Dr. Oz Show," to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

WORLD NEWS

ICC Warrants Deepen Israel's Isolation

Threat of arrest for Netanyahu, Gallant will restrict travel and reduce contact

BY JARED MALSIN
AND CARRIE KELLER-LYNN

Arrest warrants issued for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister over alleged war crimes threaten to deepen the global isolation of a country already under pressure around the world for its handling of the war in the Gaza Strip.

The move by the International Criminal Court will complicate travel by Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who would risk arrest in any of the court's 124 member countries, which technically are obliged to enforce the arrest warrants.

The warrants, the first by the ICC against the leader of a Western-aligned democracy, will lead some governments to scale down contacts with Netanyahu and other Israeli officials, according to legal experts and officials familiar with the situation. They could spur efforts to bring new war-crimes cases against lower-ranking Israeli and Hamas officials in national courts in Europe and elsewhere.

More subtly, they also could encourage an ad hoc pattern of shunning Israeli academics, defense companies and officials that has taken root in countries and institutions angry at the toll of the Gaza war.

As of this summer, more than 20 universities in Europe and Canada had cut ties with Israeli institutions. Israeli companies have been shunned at trade fairs. Recently, former Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked was denied a visa to enter Australia and participate in a conference organized by Jewish groups on the grounds



A meal kitchen in Gaza. Food and other essentials have been scarce for much of the war.

that she might incite discord.

"It sort of gives a stamp of quality to Israel's isolation," said Alon Pinkas, a former senior Israeli diplomat. "This is not a protest at Columbia University. This is not a bunch of hooligans fighting each other on the streets of Amsterdam. This is the ICC."

Netanyahu and Gallant each called the charges outrageous, saying they equated Israel with Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, and ignored Israel's right to defend itself after the Hamas-led attacks of Oct. 7, 2023. Israel also says it complies with international law and has facilitated deliveries of food and other supplies to Gaza.

Netanyahu can expect continued support from Washington, which like Israel isn't a signatory to the ICC's founding statute, though it has cooperated with the court in the past, including in prosecutions against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

President Biden and his administration sharply criticized the arrest warrants Thursday,

and officials aligned with President-elect Donald Trump have signaled they would take a hard line against the court. Trump's pick for White House national security adviser, Mike Waltz, said the arrest warrants have no legitimacy. "You can expect a strong response to the antisemitic bias of the ICC and U.N. come January," he said.

The arrest warrants come after more than a year in which Israel has also faced a global outcry over the war in Gaza including protests, separate charges of genocide brought by South Africa at the International Court of Justice and calls from Democrats in Congress to limit U.S. arms transfers to Israel.

Israel attacked Gaza after the Oct. 7 attacks left 1,200 people dead and more than 250 held hostage, about 100 of whom remain in Gaza, though dozens

are feared dead. The war has killed about 44,000 Gazans, according to Palestinian health officials, who don't say how many were combatants. The majority of the population has been displaced, and food and other essentials have been in short supply for much of the war.

The ICC's warrants allege Netanyahu and Gallant committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the offensive, including the use of starvation as a weapon and directing attacks against civilians.

The ICC on Thursday also issued an arrest warrant for top Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif, who has been reported killed, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Its top prosecutor had sought warrants against two other Hamas leaders, Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar, but the

Contacts Not Off Limits for All

Some European officials would likely continue to speak with Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu or meet him in Israel or at a venue such as the United Nations headquarters in New York, which is outside ICC jurisdiction in the U.S., said Anthony Dworkin, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

U.N. officials also can meet with Netanyahu, despite the warrants.

"The rule is that there should not be any contacts between U.N. officials and individuals subject to ar-

rest warrants," a spokesman for the U.N. secretary-general said Thursday, but direct relations are possible to assist operational or other key issues.

U.N. chief António Guterres met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Brics summit in October.

Other major powers including Russia, China and India aren't members of the International Criminal Court. Of Israel's key partners within the Middle East, including the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, only Jordan is a full member.

Netherlands and Denmark, say they would enforce the arrest warrants. Hungary, led by right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, invited Netanyahu on Friday to visit in defiance of the ICC's decision.

Germany, caught between its support for the court and the legacy of the Holocaust, said it would carefully examine steps it takes should Netanyahu or Gallant decide to visit. Steffen Hebestreit, spokesman for the coalition government, said Germany likely wouldn't comply with the ICC arrest warrant for Netanyahu.

Most European states haven't said explicitly whether they would enforce the warrants, but officials and experts say they don't expect the Israeli prime minister to take the risk.

"Almost all of them would arrest Netanyahu if he were to visit, which means it's pretty guaranteed that he won't," said Anthony Dworkin, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "I'd be quite surprised even if he goes to Hungary."

Kim-Trump Bromance Appears to Be on Rocks

BY DASL YOON
AND TIMOTHY W. MARTIN

SEOUL—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appeared to rebuff the prospect of reviving his nuclear diplomacy with President-elect Donald Trump, according to his first public remarks about disarmament talks since the election.

North Korea's state media reported Friday that the 40-year-old dictator called the U.S. a superpower that operates by force rather than a will to coexist, and belittled the value that previous talks had for his cash-strapped regime. "We have already explored every possible avenue in negotiating with the U.S.," Kim was quoted as saying at a defense expo Thursday.

What has become clear, he added, is the U.S.'s "unchanging aggressive and hostile policy" toward North Korea.

Managing the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program will be one of Trump's major foreign-policy challenges. But since Trump left office in 2021, Pyongyang has strengthened its leverage. The regime has expanded its nuclear arsenal, warded off economic collapse from Covid-19 and deepened military and economic ties with Moscow.

Kim has fewer reasons to seek sanctions relief from the U.S. and has played down the need for disarmament talks. He has grown more unwilling to disarm, rewrote his country's nuclear doctrine to allow pre-emptive strikes and vowed to pursue a limitless expansion of North Korea's weapons.

Russian President Vladimir

Putin also is providing Kim with things that the U.S. can't, from diplomatic cover at the United Nations Security Council to sensitive military technology.

This sets the stage for a different Kim-Trump dynamic from their first go-round. The two met face-to-face on three occasions during Trump's first term in Singapore, Vietnam and the Korean Demilitarized Zone. They also exchanged a series of "beautiful" and "excellent" letters, as the two leaders called them. At one 2019 rally, Trump even remarked: "We fell in love."

During the campaign, Trump suggested he could better control North Korea's outbursts if he returned to the Oval Office. "I think he misses me," he said.

Trump's cabinet nominees signal a tough stance on Pyongyang. Sen. Marco Rubio, Trump's pick for Secretary of State, has compared North Korea with a "criminal syndicate that controls territory." Rep. Mike Waltz, Trump's choice for White House national security adviser, has called growing ties between North Korea, China and Russia an "unholy alliance."

Delivering his remarks at the defense expo allowed Kim to flaunt North Korea's nuclear capabilities and send Trump a message to avoid a pressure campaign, said Hong Min, a senior researcher at Korea Institute for National Unification, a state-funded think tank in Seoul.

"North Korea is requesting a change in attitude from the incoming Trump administration in order to make dialogue possible again," he said.



I GOT RHYTHM: Kindergartners demonstrated the timeless joy of making noise in the eastern Chinese city of Haian on Friday.

IRELAND

McGregor Loses Civil Rape Case

A woman who said mixed-martial-arts fighter Conor McGregor "brutally raped and battered" her in a Dublin hotel was awarded nearly 250,000 euros (\$257,000) on Friday by a civil court jury in Ireland.

Nikita Hand said the Dec. 9, 2018, assault after a night of partying left her heavily bruised and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. McGregor testified that she fabricated the allegations after consensual sex.

The fighter was mobbed by cameras as he left court but didn't comment. He later said on the social platform X that he would appeal the verdict and the "modest award."

Hand's voice cracked and her hands trembled as she read a statement outside the courthouse, saying she would never forget what happened to her but would now be able to move on with her life. She thanked her family, partner, friends, jurors, the judge and all the supporters that had reached out to her online, but particularly her daughter.

—Associated Press

JAPAN

Stimulus Package Tops \$140 Billion

Japan's cabinet on Friday approved a stimulus package worth more than \$140 billion, in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's latest economic effort after an election last month cost his ruling coalition its majority in the lower house of parliament. The package is meant to ease rising living costs and promote business innovation and investment. The government estimates that, when factoring in private-sector spending as a result of the stimulus, the package's impact could exceed \$250 billion.

Ishiba has said his focus is getting the economy to exit deflation and create growth driven by higher wages and investments. But he faces a bumpy road in steering policy after the election.

The government will give low-income households about \$194 as an inflation-relief measure, with an additional \$129 per child for families with children. It also plans to resume subsidies for gas and electricity bills temporarily.

—Megumi Fujikawa

UNITED KINGDOM

Security Alerts at Embassy, Airport

The U.S. Embassy in London returned to normal operations Friday afternoon after police carried out the controlled explosion of a suspicious package that was found in the area earlier in the day.

London Metropolitan Police later said it was a "hoax device." The embassy said it returned to normal business, but all public appointments were canceled for the day.

Meanwhile, a security alert at London's Gatwick Airport delayed dozens of flights and left arriving passengers scrambling for alternative ways to get home after authorities evacuated one terminal and shut the airport train station for more than four hours on Friday.

Police were called to investigate a "suspected prohibited item" found in luggage at about 8:20 a.m. A bomb-disposal team made the package safe and two people detained during the probe were allowed to continue their journeys. The terminal reopened at about 3 p.m.

—Associated Press

LAOS

Tainted-Alcohol Death Tolls Hits 6

A second Australian teenager who fell ill after drinking tainted alcohol in Laos has died in a Bangkok hospital, her family said Friday, bringing the death toll in the mass poisoning of foreign tourists to six.

Holly Bowles, 19 years old, was on life support after the poisoning in Laos more than a week ago.

An officer at Vang Vieng's Tourism Police office said a "number of people" were detained, but no charges have been filed.

Staff at the Nana Backpacker Hostel, which was still operating but not accepting new guests, confirmed that the manager and owner were among those questioned.

The U.S. State Department on Friday issued a health alert for citizens traveling in Laos, warning of "suspected methanol poisoning in Vang Vieng, possibly through the consumption of methanol-laced alcoholic drinks," following similar alerts from other countries whose citizens were involved.

—Associated Press



Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump met in 2018 in Singapore.

WORLD NEWS



FROM TOP: ANINDITO MUKHERJEE/BLOOMBERG NEWS; SAMUEL RAJKUMAR/REUTERS
Despite India's history of skilled textile work and a vast labor supply, apparel exports in 2023 were down more than 11% from a decade earlier, while Bangladesh and Vietnam boomed.

Homemade Hurdles Vex India's Factories

Trump's China-tariff vow could raise Indian exports if government gets out of the way

BY SHAN LI
AND MEHGA MANDAVIA

Boosting manufacturing is critical to India's becoming an economic powerhouse. The sky-high import tariffs on Chinese goods promised by President-elect Donald Trump could offer it a fresh shot. But some factory owners say the government has to get out of the way.

In the southern city of Bengaluru, A. Dhananjaya, who has run a garment company for nearly three decades, says growing beyond about 100 workers would mean more forms to fill out, more licenses to apply for and more expenses. Before the pandemic, he lost business to China. In its aftermath, Bangladesh has wooed away many customers. Dhananjaya, who pays about 45% more than the prevailing minimum wage in Bangladesh, has laid off half his workers in recent years.

"Five years down the line," he said, "I'm not sure if the garment industry will survive."

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has wooed high-profile companies such as **Apple** seeking to diversify production away from China. But economists say that the country has done little to clear hurdles for labor-intensive manufacturing. Manufacturing's share of gross domestic product in 2023 was 13%, down from around 17% two decades ago, according to World Bank data. The country of more than 1.4 billion people has only about 65 million manufacturing jobs, one-fourth the number in agriculture.

That failure is especially visible in the apparel industry. Despite India's history of skilled textile work and a vast labor supply, apparel exports in 2023 were down more than 11% from a decade earlier, to \$15 billion, according to the World Trade Organization. Bangladesh's garment exports, meanwhile, grew by more than 50% to \$38 billion, while Vietnam's crossed \$30 billion.

Those two countries top the list of nations benefiting from China's declining share in global exports, according to the World Bank. India doesn't even figure in the top five.

"India is punching below its weight for labor-intensive manufacturing," said Trinh Nguyen, an emerging-market economist with Natixis. "It is an unsexy part of industrialization, but a country that large cannot completely ignore it."

India's apparel exports have faced friction from some factors beyond its control. Bangladesh has duty-free access to the world's biggest apparel buyers, the U.S. and Europe.

But economists and manufacturers say that countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam also do a far better job of smoothing the way for business. In India, factories with over 100 employees require government permission to fire workers. Those with at least 50 female workers need an on-site nursery. Many states bar or restrict women from working in factories after 7 p.m.



Economists say that India has done little to clear obstacles for its labor-intensive manufacturers, a foundation for growth.

Bangladesh Makes Things Simple

In contrast to India, Bangladesh has streamlined its permitting process by handing over some regulatory powers to a trade group, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. It issues factories a same-day permit for adding staff and handles labor-department paperwork, said Director Shovon Islam. Some permits for importing fabric duty-free are also issued by the group, which works with customs officials.

Nearly 60% of Bangladeshi factories have 3,000

workers or more, compared with an average of 150 in India. Islam said the streamlined regulatory process was partly what pushed him and his Indian business partner to gradually move their factories to Bangladesh from India.

His four factories in the capital, Dhaka, have an average workforce of 5,000, more than tripling the capacity of his Indian factories, he said. Overhead costs have been cut 30%.

"When you have large factories, the economies of scale are very high," he said.

Adding a second shift for large orders requires prior government approval. Factories in Bangladesh can produce and ship an order in two or three weeks, half as long as in India, according to industry sources.

Dhananjaya said he has kept his full-time workforce small to avoid having to go in person to the local labor department for an updated labor license for every expansion, and proving he has staff trained in first aid and bathroom facilities to handle the extra workers.

Economists and policymakers say it is a pattern that is repeated across many industries that have the best chance of employing lots of workers, from furniture to shoes.

In the rush to grow, Bangladesh's factories suffered disasters, but after a collapse that killed more than 1,000 people, the industry worked with brands to improve safety.

In India, a 2019 overhaul aimed to loosen labor laws, but changes have yet to be widely implemented, as unions push back. Manufacturers said they are wary of operating large factories because of the power of organized labor. In September, a strike paralyzed a **Samsung Electronics** factory for over a month.

"No manufacturer wants to

set up a 10,000-person factory because it really makes them a target," said Rahul Ahluwalia, founding director of Foundation of Economic Development, a New Delhi think tank.

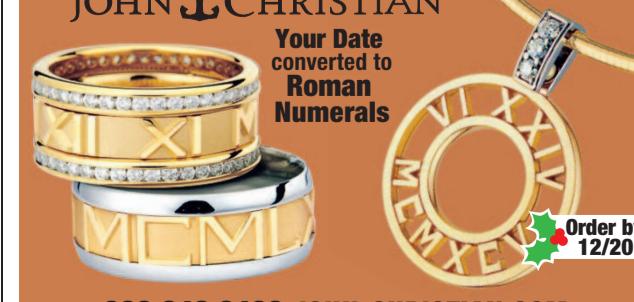
India's failure to sign free-trade agreements has also made its garments increasingly expensive. At the same time, it levies high duties on imports of synthetic fabrics needed to fill fast-fashion orders.

Some firms have managed to grow. New Delhi-based Radnik Exports Global has protected itself by manufacturing high-value garments for buyers such as **Hugo Boss** and **Ralph Lauren**, and diversifying into technical fabrics for automobiles and accessories, said Anurag Kapur, a director and member of the founding family.

Kapur expects Trump's election—and political unrest in Bangladesh, which ousted its prime minister in August—to provide opportunities. But he recalls how his family had to scramble in 2019 after Trump canceled India's special trade status over what he saw as protectionist policies.

"We are like clusters fending for ourselves," he said. "The government has not looked out for us as an industry."

—Tripti Lahiri
contributed to this article.



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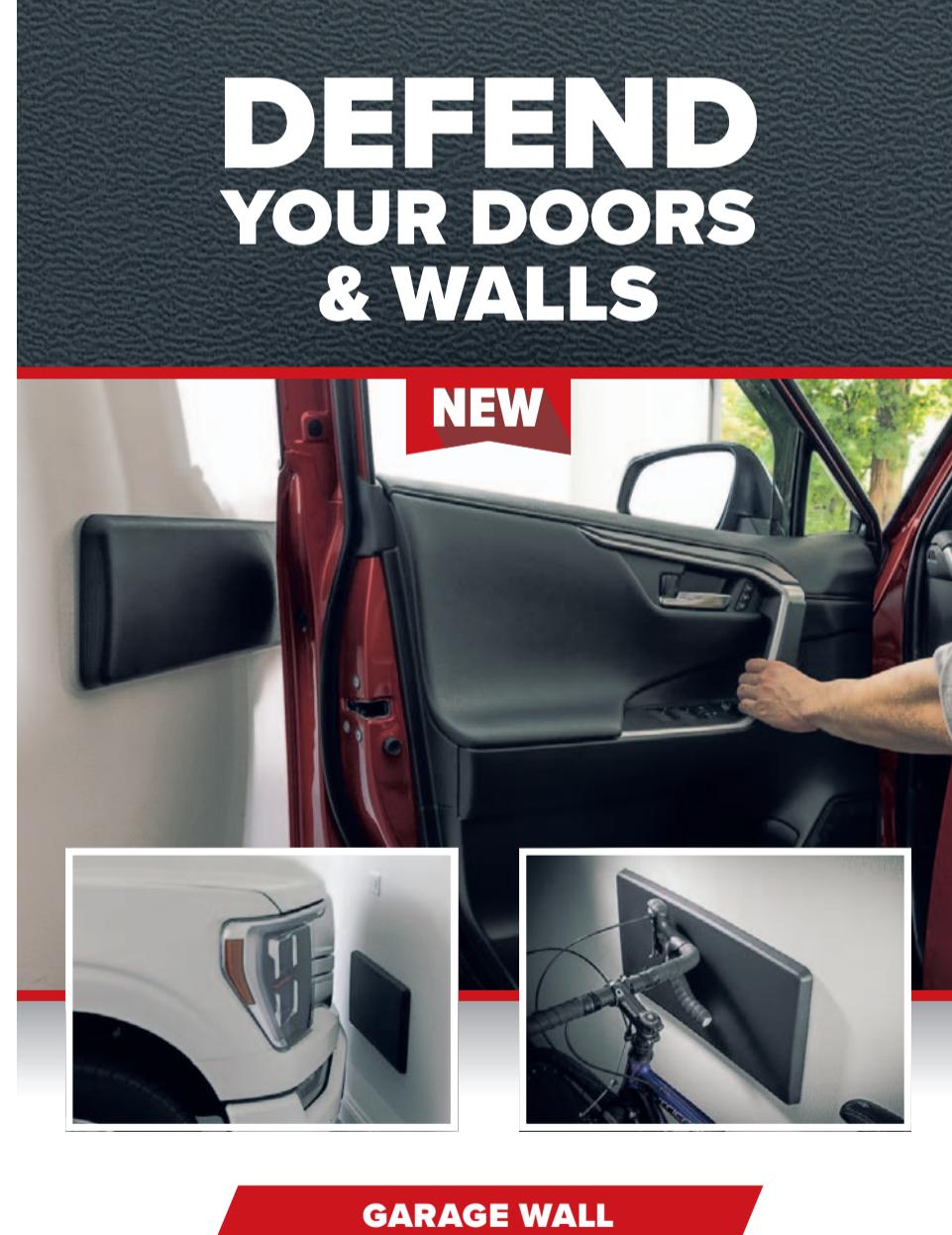


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FROM PAGE ONE

Missiles And Jets Share Skies

Continued from Page One
failed or been slow to close or restrict airspace.

There is precedent for the concern. Two commercial aircraft have been shot down in recent conflicts. Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was downed over eastern Ukraine by Russian-backed militants in 2014, and Ukrainian Airlines flight PS752 was mistaken for an incoming missile by Iranian forces shortly after takeoff from Tehran in 2020.

For passengers flying on Oct. 1, the threat felt real. Madalina Birca, 24, was flying with Emirates from Nice, France, to Dubai when the captain announced, with a slight tremble in her voice, that "due to the war situation" the flight was being diverted.

Passengers quickly switched their screens to news channels to find that Iran had started its attack on Israel. Birca followed on the live flight map as the aircraft made an abrupt turn just before crossing into Iranian airspace. She used the in-flight Wi-Fi to try to calculate the missiles' trajectories and how close her flight had come to catastrophe.

"We were very lucky that we didn't cross already into the airspace," Birca said.

Flights diverted

Birca's was one of more than 80 flights that were diverted on Oct. 1 because of the attack. Many other flights continued uninterrupted over Iraq, Jordan, Syria and northern Saudi Arabia, with dozens passing close to launch sites in the north and south of Iran.

Radio messages from air-traffic control towers in Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain captured some of the tumult in the skies, with pilots declaring emergencies and diversions, and in some cases exclaiming that they could see the projectiles themselves.

"Missiles over Baghdad, over Najaf, over everywhere," one pilot radioed to Baghdad air traffic controllers, according to a feed from live radio specialist Broadcastify.

"We noticed some missiles," a Kuwait Airways pilot said.

"Lights, rockets, I don't know, now they're not visible anymore," someone radioed to pilots on Air France flight 662 to Dubai. Air France has opened a probe into why the flight was caught in the affected airspace.

While ballistic missiles reach an apex far above the altitude of a commercial jet, they pose a major risk during their ascent and descent. About 10% of Iran's ballistics are also estimated to fail mid-flight, which, along with their ejected boosters, leads to falling debris. Cruise missiles typically fly at lower altitudes, endangering aircraft as they take off and land. At times, the biggest risk is posed by air-defense systems misidentifying a commercial aircraft as incoming fire.

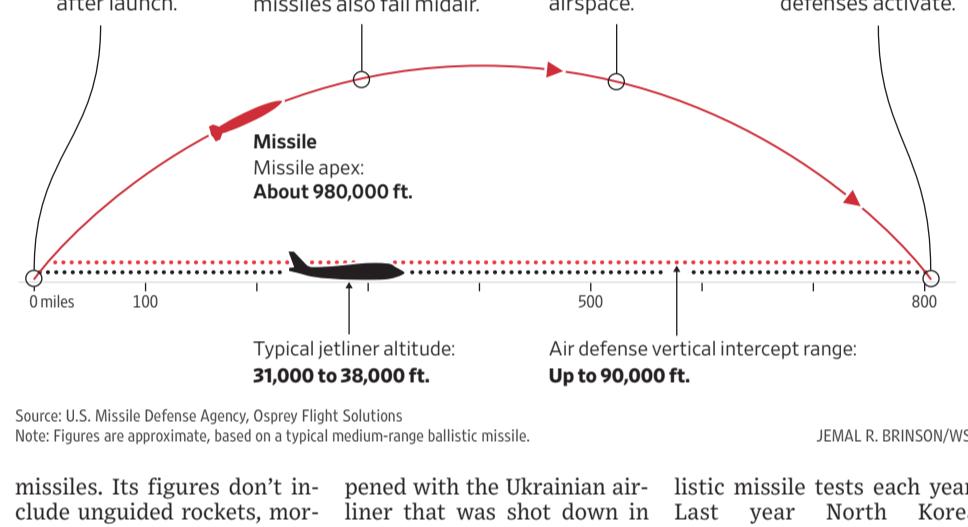
The tally of projectiles, tracked by Osprey, accounts only for ballistic and cruise



Israel's Iron Dome antimissile system intercepts rockets after Iran fired a salvo of ballistic missiles on Oct. 1, as seen from Ashkelon, Israel.

How Ballistic Missiles Endanger Flights

Aircraft flying in the Middle East face four primary risks when missiles, like those used on Oct. 1, are fired.



Source: U.S. Missile Defense Agency, Osprey Flight Solutions

Note: Figures are approximate, based on a typical medium-range ballistic missile.

Civil Aviation Organization disputed that characterization, citing an updated manual due this year, a meeting of its "Safer Skies" committee next year and the possible hosting of a third workshop on the subject. The measures demonstrate "the international community's ongoing dedication to preventing future tragedies in conflict zones," a spokesman said.

Outside of official bans, airlines typically make their own decisions about whether to fly over a conflict zone on any given day. They rely on a patchwork of advisories from regulators, intelligence from government agencies and advice from private security companies.

Rerouting a flight can be a major operational challenge that adds additional fuel costs, can require additional staffing, and which disrupts preassigned takeoff and landing slots.

Even before Oct. 1, most Western carriers, including U.S. airlines, had withdrawn flights to Israel, Iran and Jordan. Many have also opted to reroute flights crossing that corridor to now fly via Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

nately they don't come with any alert, or any pre-information and you need to manage the situation as you go."

Israel has rerouted standard flight paths in and out of the Tel Aviv airport away from danger zones since the start of the conflict, according to Libby Bahat, head of aerial infrastructure at the Civil Aviation Authority of Israel. When it learns of potential incoming attacks, it reduces the number of flights in the airspace to make it easier for air-traffic controllers to quickly scatter aircraft to safety, Bahat said.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli Defense Force declined to comment. Aviation regulators in Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon didn't respond to requests for comment.

Life insurance

Pilots have expressed concerns. The European Cockpit Association has complained that some airlines are forcing pilots to fly routes even if they disagree with their airline's safety assessment.

The union also wants airlines to update life insurance policies, which typically don't pay out in the case of a downing over a conflict zone.

"At any moment another disaster could happen that can take the life of innocent people again," said Kouroush Doustshenas, whose partner died along with 175 others when Iran inadvertently shot down Ukrainian Airlines flight PS752. "We have gone through this, and this can happen any time."

The U.S. had cautioned that morning of an increased risk of misidentification in Iranian airspace, but with most of its security team off work for Orthodox Christmas, Ukrainian Airlines failed to heed the warning.

Doustshenas has called for governments to be held legally accountable for failing to protect civilian airliners from becoming collateral damage. He also wants passengers to be informed if their flight is routed to fly over a conflict zone.

"Regular people going to the airport to catch their flight have no idea," Doustshenas said.

Huge concern'

Israel's strike against Iranian sites on Oct. 26 was also launched without official notice to airlines, though the early morning timing—around 2:15 am in Iran—meant fewer aircraft were operating. The Israeli Air Force typically consults air-traffic controllers before any strike to try to minimize risk, according to an official.

"It's a huge concern to civil aviation. We know what hap-

pened with the Ukrainian airliner that was shot down in Iran mistakenly," said Hassan Shahidi, president of the Flight Safety Foundation, a global, nonprofit advocacy group, calling the incident "absolutely preventable."

Despite the surge in military activity, Middle Eastern airspace has largely remained open over the past year. The region's already busy skies have become more important after Russia's invasion of Ukraine locked out carriers from swaths of airspace over both countries.

Aviation safety experts have criticized the inconsistent way in which the skies have been managed by governments, including issuing late or no airspace closures.

"National security and foreign policy trump aviation security, and it happens over and over again in conflict zones," Osprey's Chief Intelligence Officer Matt Borie said in an interview.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and others have long imposed bans and restrictions on flights over North Korea because of the country's tendency to conduct a handful of unannounced bal-

'Missiles over Baghdad, over Najaf, over everywhere,' a pilot radioed.

listic missile tests each year. Last year North Korea launched 37 missiles; this year so far, 52.

Days after Iran's Oct. 1 launch, the FAA extended its ban on U.S. carriers crossing into Iranian airspace by three years until October 2027, a prohibition it first put in place after the downing of Ukrainian Airlines flight PS752 in 2020. A separate restriction that prevents flights over Syria is also in effect until 2028.

U.S. carriers aren't restricted from flying over Iraq as long as the aircraft is traveling at a minimum altitude of 32,000 feet, according to the FAA's latest advisory.

There are no explicit warnings against operations over Jordan, Lebanon or Israel, though the agency maintains a 2021 notice that airlines "exercise caution" in those areas because of the proximity to the military situation in Syria.

A push at the United Nations to standardize rules for commercial flights over conflict zones that began after the downing of MH17 in 2014 has largely stalled, security experts say.

The U.N.'s International

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The U.N.'s International

SEC opponents in the early window, which begins at 11 a.m. local time, since 2000.

"I'm thankful we don't have early kicks," said Louis Perschall, a retired accountant from New Orleans. Even for evening games, his wife's Jell-O shots usually come out before noon.

Asked what fans of the Bayou Bengals might do if their rivalry game against Alabama were ever moved to the first kickoff slot, Perschall just said, "Lord knows."

Rau offered a more detailed prediction. "You would have fans rioting," he said.

LSU games so often kick off at night for the same reason Ohio State is playing at noon: when they're winning, both programs are eyeball magnets for television.

As a result, early kickoffs have become so routine at Ohio State this fall that fans are forming new habits.

"My beer intake during games has gone down significantly," Bailey said, "while my mimosa and Bloody Mary intake has gone up."

College Football's Buzzkill

Continued from Page One

"It sucks," said Gabe James, a sophomore at Indiana studying finance. "Our game should have been a night game."

In a sport that is defined by its traditions, there may be no ritual more sacred than the time-honored practice of getting completely wasted before a big game.

But fans at some of the biggest schools in the country say they're being prevented from guzzling down beers by the growing scourge of noon kickoffs.

Even fan bases who can't agree on much of anything are of the same mind when it comes to 12 p.m. starts. They're a giant buzzkill.

"The atmosphere is remarkably different," said Zach

Rau, a Louisiana State fan who cooks for upward of 60 people for every Tigers home game. "People are obviously a little more rowdy for a night game."

Some fans are only waking up to the situation now. For Ohio State, Saturday's clash with Indiana marks the team's sixth straight noon kickoff, which amounts to half of the entire regular season.

"That is absurd," said Connor Bailey, an Ohio State fan from Cleveland.

The early kickoffs are particularly tough to swallow for thirsty fans on the West Coast. Bailey, a lifelong Buckeye who now lives in Anaheim, Calif., has been forced to switch up his pregame routine to account for the 9 a.m. local start time. Instead of drinking before kickoff, he often performs household chores instead.

"I've got a wife, I've got a dog, I gotta take care of things," he said.

To anyone who follows college football, it will come as no surprise to learn that the

reason for these early starts is the same one behind almost everything that happens in the game these days: television.

The Big Ten and the Southeastern Conference have broadcast deals with different networks, and the SEC's contract with ESPN saves its best games for the 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. windows. To avoid competing for eyeballs, Fox went all in on televising Big Ten games at noon.

For veteran tailgaters, a noon kickoff doesn't mean no drinking before the big game. It simply means earlier and faster drinking.

It just so happened that this change coincided with a top-heavy year in the Big Ten—four of the top five teams in the country are from the conference—which moved a bunch of blockbuster games up to a time when most people are still sipping their morning coffee.

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The mere idea of a daytime game is akin to sacrilege on some campuses like LSU,

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SEC opponents in the early window, which begins at 11 a.m. local time, since 2000.

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"The amount of focus that it takes when you're not all there to make a pancake is funny."

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whose Tiger Stadium has hosted just four games against



Ohio State fans in the bleachers enjoy themselves during a game against Northwestern at Wrigley Field.

ADAM CARRIS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH/REUTERS

Missiles And Jets Share Skies

OPINION

THE WEEKEND INTERVIEW with Yuri Yarim-Agaev | By Barton Swaim

Will Trump Help Ukraine Win?

Aberdeen, N.J. If you believe the media, Donald Trump's election cast Ukrainians into a state of misery. In fact, according to every source I queried, most Ukrainians now have a halting sense of hope. Mr. Trump's ascendancy means that the bloody standoff to which the Biden administration has consigned them for nearly two years might, emphasis on *might*, begin to change.

For more than a year, the U.S. administration has supplied Ukraine with enough materiel not to lose the war, but not enough to win it. Several times, and for a variety of reasons, Washington has delayed military aid authorized by Congress, often ensuring the weapons showed up too late to do much good. The administration has restricted the Ukrainian military from firing U.S.-supplied missiles beyond certain ranges into Russian territory. The justification for these and related restrictions seems to be that Ukrainian strikes on Russian targets could provoke Vladimir Putin into nuclear retaliation. The fact that he required no provocation to invade Ukraine in the first place doesn't seem to register. The policy's upshot was to allow the Russians to move their materiel out of range, and to maneuver and resupply with impunity.

Most unpardonably, President Biden has almost totally neglected to explain to the American public his reasons for arming the Ukrainians. Into the silence, his critics on the right have inserted a variety of arguments for not arming them:

The former Soviet dissident believes he will, because you can't make a deal with a totalitarian like Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine's government is corrupt, Russia has legitimate territorial claims against it, the war is a distraction from China, and so on. Meanwhile the war in Europe has faded from the news (how's that for a remarkable sequence of words?), Ukrainian flags have mostly disappeared from the windows of well-wishing American homes, and the war barely figured in the 2024 election.

This week, as if to concede its failure in Ukraine in its final weeks, the Biden administration scrapped its restrictions on the use of long-range missiles. Days later six U.S.-made ATACMs hit an ammunition warehouse in Russia's Bryansk region, on Ukraine's northern border. The policy reversal and consequent battlefield benefits to Ukraine come grievously late, but plainly Kyiv has fight left in it. Nearly three years after its leadership was expected to flee and its government to fall, Ukraine has managed to hold off its much larger foe. Thanks to a brilliant surprise attack last summer, Ukraine occupies several hundred square miles of Russian territory in Kursk. That Ukraine has performed so well despite the fetters placed on it by the U.S. administration tempts one to think that an emancipated Ukrainian military could win the war after all.

Mr. Trump has no easy choices on Ukraine. Continuing aid would displease some of his most committed and highest-profile supporters and require him and his national security advisers to articulate America's interests in ways Mr. Biden never did.

On the other hand, cutting off



BARBARA KELLEY

Ukraine and forcing it to accept humiliating terms would make him what Mr. Biden became after the Afghanistan withdrawal— betrayer of a viable U.S. ally. The look for Mr. Trump will be worse: Unlike Afghanistan, there are no American soldiers in Ukraine, only American hardware. And with no U.S. troops to enforce a land deal, as in South Korea, very little time would pass before Mr. Putin recommences the war. Worst of all: Just as the Afghanistan debacle of 2021 occasioned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and, in turn, the Oct. 7 attack on Israel, America's abandonment of Ukraine would, as sure as the sun rises in the east, invite aggressions elsewhere around the globe.

There is a simple reason malign regimes can be counted on to capitalize on American retreat, as the Soviet dissident Yuri Yarim-Agaev put it to me in a conversation this week. Those regimes, he believes, each serve not separate and distinct ideologies but a single one.

Mr. Yarim-Agaev, 75, was born in Russia and attended the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. In the 1970s he worked in physics, chemistry and applied mathematics at the Soviet Union's Academy of Sciences. There, in 1976, he joined the Moscow Helsinki Group, an association of dissident scientists, writers, intellectuals and activists who openly demanded the U.S.S.R. abide by its commitments under the 1975 Helsinki Accords and guarantee its people freedom of thought, conscience and religion. (The government of Leonid Brezhnev had signed the accords in bad faith, as everybody knew.)

Some members of the Helsinki Group, such as Yuri Orlov and Nathan Sharansky, were imprisoned for years. Others, like Mr. Yarim-Agaev, were exiled. He came to America in 1980 and taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford. Later he worked for major banks and hedge funds, for which he developed mechanisms to measure financial risk. Mr. Yarim-Agaev is also a longtime campaigner for human rights. Over the decades he has begun several organizations that provide dissidents in totalitarian countries with laptop computers and other publishing tools.

Mr. Yarim-Agaev isn't famous—he lacks even a Wikipedia page. But he has earned a reputation as someone who speaks perceptively on the global aims of antidemocratic regimes. He maintains many contacts in the Russian government.

"Can I offer drink?" he asks, pointing to a table laden with bot-

tles in his New Jersey home, about an hour from Manhattan. At first I decline, but I note bowls of nuts and pretzels on the coffee table between us. It seems ungrateful not to accept.

I'm barely able to explain what I want to ask him when he begins: "The main thing to understand about this war is that it is not a war between Russia and Ukraine. It's a war between totalitarian bloc and democratic alliance. It's proxy war." (Mr. Yarim-Agaev speaks excellent English but with a pronounced Russian accent; articles, which don't exist in Russian, often go missing.) Russia's invasion had nothing to do with territorial claims or security concerns, he insists. "It is first and foremost war against America. Putin's aggression is for one and only one reason:

Ukraine shows democratic way of development and pro-Western way,

pro-American way, and becoming ally with America and the West."

That doesn't sound to me like a situation from which lasting peace terms are likely to emerge.

"No," Mr. Yarim-Agaev says, "in totalitarian country, individual leaders don't rule. Ideology rules. . . . Stalin, Mao, they never had power. They were always first priests and servants of ideology, and they couldn't deviate from that ideology. If they did, that would be death for them. To stay in power, they must serve it." Mr. Yarim-Agaev cites the example of Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet premier from 1958-64, whose modest attempts to soften state control of Soviet life ultimately got him ejected from power. To ask a dictator like Mr. Putin or Xi Jinping to behave in a way that contradicts his totalitarian ideology, Mr. Yarim-Agaev says, "would be to ask him to commit political suicide. He is not going to do that." Mikhail Gorbachev was the exception that proved the rule.

With regard to Russia and its aims in Ukraine, he says, we aren't dealing with an individual tyrant, Vladimir Putin. "We are dealing with ideology. And you cannot charm totalitarian ideology, you cannot have a good relationship with totalitarian ideology, you cannot make deals with it."

So the question of Ukraine will have to be settled on the battlefield? "Yes," he says.

In Mr. Yarim-Agaev's view, Russian objectives in Ukraine aren't substantively different from Iran's designs on Israel, the Taliban's on America, North Korea's on South Korea and China's on Taiwan. The vast cultural and political differences between these regimes obliges me to ask him to explain

what he means by that term "totalitarian ideology."

"It's very simple," he begins. "There is such a thing as totalitarian socialism. Now, all those countries are forms of totalitarian socialism. Totalitarian socialism can exist in three forms: international totalitarian socialism, which we also call communism; national totalitarian socialism, which we call Nazism, and religious totalitarian socialism, which we know in form of Islamism." What these forms of tyranny have in common is an absolute commitment to destroy democratic capitalist nations, especially America.

Accordingly, Mr. Yarim-Agaev puts forward the provocative thesis that Iran wants to destroy Israel not because it's a Jewish state. "Iran itself claims that Israel is little satan and big satan is the United States," he points out. "So it always aims at America, and it does it through Israel. It's not antisemitism, although the mullahs are antisemites. It's because Israel is democratic country and American welfare aid the U.S. sends?"

"Baseless," Mr. Yarim-Agaev says. "The best proof that it isn't so is the effectiveness of Ukraine's army in using American weapons, which has exceeded Western military experts' expectations. This would not have happened if significant part of our equipment had not reached its destination." The claim has more to do, in his view, with the "completely erroneous" perception that Ukraine had something to do with Mr. Trump's December 2019 impeachment and Mr. Biden's election the following year. The assertion that venality is a sufficient reason for one democratic nation not to aid another in a time of war sounds particularly odd coming from political figures, like Mr. Vance, who allege corruption at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

Today's Kremlin doesn't repress and control Russian citizens the way it did under Soviet communism. Yet critics of the regime have a nasty habit of dying in unnatural ways. Two years ago the renowned ballet dancer Vladimir Shklyarov was quoted on Facebook as expressing opposition to the Ukraine invasion. On the day I spoke to Mr. Yarim-Agaev, Shklyarov "fell" from the balcony of his fifth-floor apartment in St. Petersburg. Police ruled it an accident. He was 39.

Mr. Yarim-Agaev moves around the globe to reinforce his point that totalitarian ideologies of all kinds are undergirded by anti-Americanism. Wars and conflicts are happening all over the globe, but North Korea sends 10,000 troops only to Ukraine to aid Russia, and Iran

sends drone technology to Russia in its war with an American ally. Iran, he says, isn't a theocratic country, although it is ruled in part by mullahs. "It is also, and maybe more so, ruled by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, which is a military and not a religious force." If Iran considered the Islamic creed the most impor-

tant thing, Mr. Yarim-Agaev says, "it couldn't have good relationship with China, which persecutes its Uyghur population. It couldn't have a good relationship with Russia, which twice made war on Chechnya," a mostly Muslim region. "Anti-American totalitarian ideology is the important thing."

What about the fear of provoking Mr. Putin into the use of tactical nuclear weapons? "It's blackmail, and nothing but that," Mr. Yarim-Agaev says. "And first of all, all military experts say that tactical nuclear weapon doesn't work. It is senseless—you cannot conquer with it because you shoot it in front of you and then you cannot enter the territory." Never mind the assurance of counterattack, in which case "there would be no more Russia, and Russia knows that."

The larger point, he says, is that Russia, Iran, China, North Korea and lesser totalitarian states—Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua—will do anything to avoid direct confrontation with the U.S. "They fight against America," he says, "but they always fight through somebody else. They attack Israel, they attack Ukraine. China may attack Taiwan at any moment, maybe even the Philippines. But they don't want confrontation with United States because they know that's suicide."

On this point I suspect Mr. Yarim-Agaev could speak indefinitely, and owing to the bourbon and a particularly addictive brand of pretzel, I am inclined to let him. But one point I need him to address: What about the argument, heard on segments of the right since the war began—Vice President-elect JD Vance has repeated the charge—that Ukraine is corrupt and certain to squander whatever aid the U.S. sends?

"Baseless," Mr. Yarim-Agaev says. "The best proof that it isn't so is the effectiveness of Ukraine's army in using American weapons, which has exceeded Western military experts' expectations. This would not have happened if significant part of our equipment had not reached its destination." The claim has more to do, in his view, with the "completely erroneous" perception that Ukraine had something to do with Mr. Trump's December 2019 impeachment and Mr. Biden's election the following year. The assertion that venality is a sufficient reason for one democratic nation not to aid another in a time of war sounds particularly odd coming from political figures, like Mr. Vance, who allege corruption at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

For Mr. Yarim-Agaev, the risks of arming Ukraine, corrupt or not, are nothing compared with the peril of communicating weakness to Mr. Putin. "There is no way to pretend that Ukrainian defeat would be not one more defeat for America," he says. "We just lost war in Afghanistan, and if we give up on Ukraine now, it'll be followed by another loss. If Putin gets territories he already occupies, it'll be clear victory for him, clear loss and defeat for Ukraine, and clear defeat for America."

Giving up on Ukraine, or forcing it to accept terms odious to its people, "is incompatible with position, peace through strength," Mr. Yarim-Agaev says, employing a phrase Mr. Trump and those around him often use. "You cannot implement policy of peace through strength by losing wars."

Mr. Swaim is an editorial page writer for the Journal.

Arizona Cities Will Pay a Price for Ignoring Homelessness



CROSS
COUNTRY
By Victor
Riches

Arizona voters overwhelmingly adopted Proposition 312, a first-of-its-kind law that requires local governments to compensate property and business owners for damage created by the homelessness crisis plaguing many cities. Approved by nearly 60% of voters, the measure holds government officials accountable for refusing to enforce laws against crimes related to homelessness, including vandalism, public urination and drug use.

For too long, municipalities have gotten away with taxing residents indiscriminately and not providing

the public-safety services those taxes are supposed to fund. Proposition 312 provides a simple mechanism for residents to get their tax dollars back when the government fails in its most basic duties.

City officials in Phoenix, Arizona's largest city, have spent years shunting the homeless population into a downtown area that infamously became known as "the Zone." The city reportedly instructed police officers to leave the Zone alone—not to enforce the law there. As a result it became one of the nation's largest homeless encampments. For years it has been a chaotic den of panhandling, violent crime and destruction.

Property values plummeted in the Zone. Small businesses suffered. People lost their livelihoods as dozens of business owners had no choice but to close up shop. And even as the city spent over \$180 million to address the crisis (only a fraction of which is publicly ac-

counted for), the number of homeless people in Phoenix rose 92% between 2018 and 2023.

This type of government malfeasance isn't limited to Arizona. In California, decades of reckless progressive policies have turned swaths of once-thriving cities into

Residents can apply for property-tax refunds when officials refuse to enforce public-nuisance laws.

wastelands. The refusal of district attorneys to prosecute crimes allowed lawbreakers to roam free, unhindered by the fear of punishment. Meanwhile, residents struggle under high taxes and crushing regulations. In fact, California has spent \$24 billion on its homelessness crisis over the past five years

only to see the homeless population increase by about 20%.

Taxpayers deserve better. Proposition 312 offers a different path—one where law-abiding citizens aren't forced to pay the price when politicians and bureaucrats refuse to do their jobs. Over the summer, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down what the Journal called a "judge-made right to vagrancy," ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* that it isn't unconstitutional for cities to enforce laws against public camping. Cities across the country now have no excuse not to clean up their streets. But when they refuse to do so, residents can force action on crimes related to homelessness.

That's what happened in Phoenix, where property and business owners in the Zone sued the city for maintaining a public nuisance. Last year a state court judge ordered the city to clear the Zone. Then Arizonans passed Proposition

312 to stop any future mayor and City Council from recreating the Zone or anything like it.

Even Californians are fed up with government officials who don't enforce the law. Voters statewide approved Proposition 36, which allows felony charges and increases sentences for certain drug and theft crimes, while Los Angeles and Alameda counties both voted out soft-on-crime prosecutors. It seems Californians and Arizonans alike are sick and tired of politicians who fail to do the jobs they were elected to do.

Proposition 312 should be a wake-up call for elected officials forcing law-abiding businesses and residents to pay the price for a crisis they didn't create. The message to politicians couldn't be clearer: Do your job. Enough is enough.

Mr. Riches is president and CEO of the Goldwater Institute, which designed Proposition 312.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Trump's Choice: Unions Over Workers

Hard to believe, but Donald Trump on Friday night nominated a favorite of teachers union chief Randi Weingarten as his Labor Secretary. Why would Mr. Trump want to empower labor bosses who oppose his economic agenda and spent masses to defeat him?

Mr. Trump's regrettable choice is Oregon Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer. Ms. Weingarten on Thursday tweeted her support for the freshman Republican. Teamsters President Sean O'Brien, who spoke at the Republican National Convention, has also been pulling for her. In a Truth Social post, Mr. Trump said she'll work toward "historic cooperation between Business and Labor." But Ms. Chavez-DeRemer has backed union giveaways like the Pro Act, which are not "cooperation."

Hence the enthusiasm from the labor bosses. "Teamsters are willing to work with anyone from any party, so long as they are committed to advancing a pro-worker agenda that creates and protects good-paying union jobs," Mr. O'Brien wrote in Compact magazine this week. "By nominating Rep. Chavez-DeRemer, he can show that he stands by the people who are sending him back to the Oval Office come January."

The pitch was that Mr. Trump could do a Nixon to China by improving the GOP's relations with unions during his second term. But why return a political favor that Mr. O'Brien didn't do for Mr. Trump? The Teamsters chief refused to endorse the former President even though a majority of its members supported Mr. Trump in the union's national survey.

Mr. O'Brien no doubt didn't want to alienate his Democratic friends who have done the union's bidding. This includes sponsoring the Pro Act, which Ms. Chavez-DeRemer endorsed. The bill would override right-to-work laws in 26 states that give workers a choice of joining a union. It would also subvert secret-ballot elections, which protect workers from union intimidation.

The Pro Act would effectively ban gig jobs and codify the Biden National Labor Relations Board's joint-employer standard, which would upend the franchise business model and contracting arrangements to make it easier for unions to organize workers. The result would be less autonomy for franchisees and small busi-

nesses that contract with bigger firms.

The Pro Act would essentially return labor relations to the days before the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act when strikes were rampant and labor mobility was harder. It's a pro-union but anti-worker bill.

It gets worse. Ms. Chavez-DeRemer backs the misnamed Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would require all states and localities to collectively bargain with government workers. This is a recipe to turn Texas, Florida and other GOP-controlled states into fiscal basket-cases like Illinois, California and New York.

Teachers unions across the country could block education reforms and limit school choice via collective bargaining. No wonder Ms. Weingarten supports her. But most businesses don't. The nomination of Ms. Chavez-DeRemer runs counter to Mr. Trump's agenda of devolving power to the states, expanding school choice, empowering workers and easing business regulation.

Some Republicans think enhancing union power will help Republicans win more elections. Then why did Ms. Chavez-DeRemer lose her re-election? The reality is that the pro-labor agenda espoused by union honchos isn't all that popular among working-class voters.

Private union membership has been falling for decades, in part because businesses are expanding their workforces in right-to-work states. When given a choice these days, employees typically opt against unionizing. Mr. Trump performed better among working-class voters than he did in 2020, but not because Mr. O'Brien spoke at the GOP convention.

Mr. Trump gained ground among workers making less than \$100,000 a year because their wages after inflation declined under Mr. Biden, and those Americans believe Mr. Trump's policies will do the reverse. The key to keeping those workers is raising their incomes, which means policies that spur economic growth and a robust job market.

Republicans can work with unions to improve workforce training and increase alternative education pathways like apprenticeships. But putting Ms. Chavez-DeRemer in charge of Labor will make labor bosses, not workers, more powerful again.

Democrats vs. Proportional Representation

Democrats have tried to explain their defeats in the House in recent elections as an injustice because Republicans win more seats than their share of votes. So it's worth pointing out that this year Democrats won far more House seats than they did votes in many progressive states. Why aren't former Attorney General Eric Holder and his friends protesting?

GOP House candidates in New York won 44% of the votes—roughly the same as Donald Trump—but only 27% of the state's 26 districts. Republican House candidates in California have won about 38% of votes (which are still being counted)—also similar to Mr. Trump's haul—but are on track to carry only 10 (19%) of its 52 seats.

The disparity in Illinois is even larger. The state's Democratic Legislature packed Republicans into three of 17 districts while sprinkling Democrats out across the others. As a result, two Republican incumbents in safe districts ran uncontested. But Republicans won only 18% of Illinois districts even though Mr. Trump carried about 44% of votes statewide.

In Washington state, Republicans won about 40% of House votes but only two (20%) of 10 districts. A Democratic gerrymander in Oregon helped hand the party five of six seats (83%), far more than their 53% vote share.

Lame-Duck BDS in Biden's Washington

While President Biden had Sen. Chuck Schumer block sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC), and has refused to enforce oil sanctions against Iran, he has been creating a new sanctions program against Israel. It began in February, before the Michigan primary, and grew in June, July and September. This week the Biden Administration expanded the sanctions again.

As we have warned, this sanctions regime is open-ended. What began by targeting a few fringe characters has become a State Department boycott program against all of the renewed Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria, the biblical heartland that Jordan renamed the West Bank after conquering it in 1948-49 and expelling every Jew.

The territory is now disputed, and right-wing Israelis who are urging annexation could undermine an Israel-Saudi addition to the Abraham Accords. Israel is in a stronger security position now after its military gains against Iran and its proxies, but it still needs allies.

Yet the U.S. decision to impose sanctions looks punitive against a fellow democracy with independent courts. The latest target is Amana, Israel's leading private development firm in the West Bank, which can be linked to every Israeli in the area. This is a step toward sanctioning the Israeli mainstream.

Amana isn't accused of violence, which is

Republicans win fewer seats than their vote share in liberal states.

It's true that Republicans in some states also won more House seats than their vote totals. The difference is that Republicans aren't demanding that the seat totals reflect the vote numbers. That's called proportional representation, and that's what Mr. Holder and his National Democratic Redistricting Committee are trying to impose via lawsuits and ballot measures. Ohio voters rejected an attempt on Nov. 5.

Mr. Holder wants to force GOP-controlled states to draw maps that would essentially apportion House districts based on partisan makeup. And some state courts have struck down Republican-drawn maps because they don't result in rough proportionate representation.

But as Chief Justice John Roberts noted in *Rucho v. Common Cause* (2019), proportionality often requires "engaging in cracking and packing [districts], to ensure each party its 'appropriate' share of 'safe' seats." That's because Republicans and Democrats aren't dispersed evenly across states.

In any case, Democrats ought to be thankful that liberal states don't have to draw maps that result in proportional representation. If they did, Republicans would have picked up at least 10 additional seats in California, four each in New York and Illinois, two in Washington and one in Oregon. Keep that in mind next time Democrats howl about GOP gerrymanders.

His sanctions against Israel keep expanding. Trump can clean it up.

how the U.S. justified starting the sanctions program. But it has helped communities that went on to help other communities in which some people are accused by activists of violence.

That's the allegation. The U.S. Treasury Department writes, "The settlers and farms that Amana supports play a key role in developing settlements in the West Bank, from which in turn settlers commit violence." At this many degrees of separation, it looks like lawfare, the abuse of the law to hurt political opponents in Israel and their U.S. supporters.

The U.S. Treasury offers one example of an Israeli it sanctioned, Isaschar Manne, to whom Amana gave a loan. But Mr. Manne says he received that loan when starting his farm in 2021. He was sanctioned this July.

President Trump can roll back the sanctions, but they lay down a marker for Europe and the next Democratic President to follow. Legislation is needed, as Montana Sen. Steve Daines notes, to make it harder to sanction democracies based on questionable evidence from enemies. The Justice Department also can settle lawsuits to create safeguards against such abuse.

The U.S. has long held that the West Bank's future should be decided in talks in which the Palestinians finally make peace. The Biden sanctions say: No need. BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) and the ICC are on the way. The Trump Administration can put an end to this.

OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump Deserves a Chance to Prove His Points

Peggy Noonan writes that President-elect Donald Trump "isn't a mystery to anyone" at this point ("Trump Keeps Trolling as the 'Resistance' Fades," Declarations, Nov. 16). Not a mystery? Consider Mr. Trump's proposed cabinet. It includes Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whom Mr. Trump once described, with much justification, as a "liberal lunatic."

Mr. Trump has nominated others, however, who could be described as right-wing lunatics. Still other members of Mr. Trump's proposed cabinet include such experienced and seemingly sensible conservative choices as Sen. Marco Rubio and Gov. Doug Burgum.

Some could laud such selections as evidence of the broadening of Mr. Trump's base and his willingness to consider the opinions of people of varying backgrounds. Others could see these appointments as confirmation of their suspicion that Mr. Trump has a few too many screws loose.

Whatever these selections tell us about Mr. Trump, they surely only intensify the mystery: What in the world is this guy thinking?

MARK M. QUINN
Naperville, Ill.

Ms. Noonan identifies Rep. Elise Stefanik and former Rep. Lee Zeldin as "normal Republicans." What a damning indictment of the Republican Party today.

Both Ms. Stefanik and Mr. Zeldin participated in Mr. Trump's election denial after he lost in 2020. This is far from normal, and it shouldn't be.

FREDERICK N. MERKIN
Pacific Grove, Calif.

HUD's Authority Rests on a House of Cards

Jack Ryan asks, "What Does HUD Have to Show for the Trillions It's Spent?" (op-ed, Nov. 16). A more basic question is why the Department of Housing and Urban Development should exist at all. Where in the Constitution is there any authority to govern "housing and urban development"? Few houses and apartment buildings move in interstate commerce (unless we count house trailers). HUD is a perfect example of federal overreach on matters that should be left to the states.

GEORGE W. PRICE
Chicago

Mr. Ryan channels a frustration that millions of American families share: How is it that in a nation of excess, housing affordability continues to weigh down families, communities and our economy? According to the Pew Research Center, about 70% of Americans are "very con-

RICK LAZIO
Enterprise Community Partners
Brightwaters, N.Y.

Mr. Lazio, a Republican, represented New York's second congressional district, 1993-2001.

Gabbard Attacked Trump While a Democrat

During her Senate confirmation hearings, director of national intelligence nominee and former Rep. Tulsi Gabbard will have an opportunity to disavow her criticisms of Donald Trump's first term as president and other objectionable comments ("Tulsi Gabbard vs. Trump's First Term," Review & Outlook, Nov. 19). Disavowing her earlier positions, she might claim a lack of information or a dependence on fake-news sources. Since she is a former Democrat, she has firsthand experience consuming her party's fake news.

Ms. Gabbard will bring this im-

portant knowledge to her work as director of national intelligence. This is why Democrats want her nomination to fail. I don't believe that Ms. Gabbard would fail to notify Mr. Trump of security risks to our nation. She is on board with the incoming Trump-Vance administration.

JAMES PATTERSON
Washington

That Ms. Gabbard isn't the right person to serve as director of national intelligence is irrefutable. But the real question is why there are 18 U.S. intelligence agencies to oversee the first place.

MARK GAIGE
New York

Did No One Google Hegseth Before He Was Nominated?

Regarding "The Hegseth Sex Assault Accusation" (Review & Outlook, Nov. 20): Reports claim that President-elect Trump's transition team was surprised by the sexual-assault settlement paid by their pick for Defense secretary, Pete Hegseth. Surprised? In 2024, you mean to tell me nobody thought to Google the man or maybe ask him, "Hey, do you have any skeletons in your closet that we should know about?"

The whole mess reads like a bad episode of "Law & Order." Mr. Hegseth's lawyer claims that he was drunk and the woman was the initiator. She says she was the victim. The only thing everyone has agreed on is that someone ended up in somebody's hotel room and that a settlement was paid in 2020.

Maybe Mr. Hegseth is innocent. Maybe the whole thing is one big misunderstanding. But shouldn't somebody have looked into Mr. Hegseth's history before Mr. Trump nominated him to run the largest military on earth?

MICHAEL F. DOLAN
Hinsdale, Ill.

Letters intended for publication should be emailed to wsj.ltrs@wsj.com. Please include your city, state and telephone number. All letters are subject to editing, and unpublished letters cannot be acknowledged.

Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



"There's no such thing as just' ducky."

OPINION

Decline and Fall of America? Not Yet

By David Mamet

For the past four years Israel has been the leader of the free world. The Jewish state has been the West's sole protection against Islamist terror, fighting while reviled by the people and countries it was protecting. Its position was similar to that of Donald Trump—demonized, persecuted, targeted for violence.

Now that Israel and the U.S. will again be allies, we can hope Iran will be returned to the Iranian people, Gaza will become a wealthy city-state, and there will be that biblical peace in which each may sit under his fig tree and be unafraid.

Moses sent 12 spies to scout out the Promised Land. They returned and reported it was a good land, filled with milk and honey, but it was populated by giants so large “we must have looked to them like grasshoppers, and that is how we seemed to ourselves in our own eyes.”

Trump appears to have broken the codependency of the woke and averted a destructive revolution.

Moses admonished them that they had been asked for their report, which gave their people information, rather than for their opinion, which made everyone afraid. The cowardice of the spies caused the 40 years of wandering, as Moses kept the Jews in the desert until that generation had died off.

God's promise to the Jews, their fear and his rejection is a universal human myth. The hero is given a task he rejects. In the first instance he must confront himself and choose bravery over cowardice. The mythic hero is aided by the Word of God, contemporary Westerners by heroic example. Winston Churchill inspired

in his country's populace an awareness of their own greatness. So does Mr. Trump.

Yet half of America not only abides but fervently supports a codependent decline to poverty, crime and a nascent police state. Why? The leftist politicians and their media courtiers and designated beneficiaries profited from the perks of power. But why did the everyday American endorse them and their fear mongering? The actual threat wasn't global warming, Islamophobia, the Supreme Court, the police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Mr. Trump. It was exclusion from the herd.

An existential secret is one whose revelation would destroy the group. If dad is a drug addict or a sex criminal, acknowledging it would shatter the family. The protection of the secret becomes the family's unifying endeavor. If anyone says anything, it might reveal that everyone is in on the secret. The sick family devotes all necessary energies to collusion—to mutual and self-censorship.

During the past four years, American politics has been dominated by a coalition each of whose members, like codependent kin, has its own investment in group integrity and the power it derives therefrom. The superrich, academia, Islamists, Marxists and the media have colluded to suppress the true and impose the false.

We know that their perfidies, lawfare, slander, blacklisting and civil persecution were practiced on conservatives and Republicans, particularly on Mr. Trump. But the suppression was targeted primarily at their own voters.

To remain unthreatened by reason, the liberal populace had to be convinced to endorse various lies and fantasies: Black Lives Matter, Israel's perfidy, unlimited abortion as a woman's right, men's right to compete in women's sports, the abolition of the police, Mr. Trump's demonic power and so on.

Why would rational people vote to



DAN PAGE
destroy their borders, their cities, their jobs and their children? For the same reason the sick family must tolerate its dysfunction: The co-opted liberal electorate was terrified that any deviation would result in destruction of its protective unit. As it would.

In the energy devoted to accommodating lies, the mind puts them in the same category as truth. The codependent pays a huge price from them: his self-respect. President Biden suffers cognitive decline; the administration and the legacy media hid that fact and suppressed its discussion. They did the same with the chaos at the border, crime, inflation, the putsch of Mr. Biden and his replacement through fiat.

Before June 27, almost all Democrats and media outlets insisted that Mr. Biden was sharp and focused. On July 21, he was ousted from the campaign, and the hagiography of Kamala Harris began. Conservatives' requests for clarification of her role as “border czar” were labeled “misogynistic.” Her catch phrases were “joy” and “turn the page.” Why would she have wanted to turn the page on four years of the Biden administration, of which she said she would do nothing differently?

To the left, it didn't matter. “She

isn't Trump” was sufficient reason to vote for her. Trump isn't the devil, but a rational consideration of him and his achievements was beyond the liberal's ability. Mr. Trump was the enemy because he represented a challenge they could not accept.

The transition from party-line liberal to reasonable citizen generally involves some degree of shame. The genius of 12-step programs is that shame in them can be aired, and, so diffused, in a company each of which has undergone a similar upheaval; where confessions of complicity and shame are greeted and diffused with recognition, laughter and welcome—as among new conservatives, and new devotees to citizenship.

Why would sentient Americans vote away the freedoms of thought, conscience, assembly and expression guaranteed by our Constitution? It makes sense, as any suicide does, as an act of survival. The suicide takes his own life to stop unbearable anguish. It is the most desperate act of self-preservation.

Prosperity, interconnectivity and their attendant confusions have led to chaos, the denigration of religion, the family, law and the nations whose identity was created out of the Ju-

deo-Christian tradition. The U.K. now is prosecuting those standing silently across the street from abortion clinics. Should they testify that they were praying, they are guilty of a crime.

Since the '20 election I have feared a new American revolution, the leftist government proclaiming its intent to destroy parents whom it calls terrorists and citizens whom it deems insurrectionists. During the past four years Mr. Trump—raided, indicted, convicted, sued, slandered and shot—continued to grow in popularity, and attracted the like-minded into a coalition stronger than that of the left.

To command, one must have lieutenants themselves capable of assuming command and inspiring subordinates. Their absence in 2020 led to that bump in the road; but their emergence and amalgamation in the last four years is now the Republican Party. This isn't a cult of personality, but a group of citizen-workers, Americans who adore our country. We understand ourselves not primarily as Republicans or conservatives, but as “we the people.”

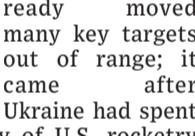
The horror of the past four years—the appeasement of terror, the slavish support of our enemies, the abandonment of the state of Israel, the assaults on free speech—seemed to me the descent into chaos which has been the end of every world power.

Rome, Greece, Nineveh and Tyre, Babylon, Nazi Germany—all were eventually returned to dust. I saw the irreversible decline of the U.S. and took comfort in the scripture. The Old Testament is a record of decline of those civilizations which fall away from God; and promises that a return to his precepts will restore his grace. We know that one day America, as all things, will go one with Nineveh and Tyre. But not today.

Mr. Mamet is a playwright, film director and screenwriter.

Peggy Noonan is away.

Is the Ukraine War Stoppable?



Joe Biden's decision this week to let Ukraine use U.S. missiles to hit Russian territory came only after Russia had already moved many key targets out of range; it came after Ukraine had spent its short supply of U.S. rocketry on lesser targets that were previously permitted.

Britain, based on the new U.S. policy, allowed its Storm Shadows to be deployed against a command bunker in the Russian town of Marino on Wednesday, wounding and possibly killing a North Korean general. Now the U.S. will have to be alert for a North Korean attack on American or British interests, one of several paths to a wider war.

For some in Trumpworld, criticizing the Biden decision is a freebie that only accentuates the mess the administration is leaving. But the U.S. needed an answer to Russia's deployment of North Korean

troops and expanded strike authority had been signaled as the next step on Washington's otherwise planless escalation ladder.

Planlessness has been the Biden approach from the start, though often mischaracterized as a pointillist gauging of Putin “red lines.” In his defense, anything else was likely beyond Mr. Biden given his diminished state. Still, the future is arriving too fast now even to blame Mr. Trump.

Our Ukrainian allies are overstretched and losing ground. Biden slogans such as “as long as it takes” and “nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine” only concealed a dangerous nonmeeting of minds between the U.S. and Kyiv over Crimea and other war aims. Even Ukraine's failed 2023 offensive, it becomes clearer than ever, was a hapless byproduct of Kyiv trying to guess at and manage the internal politics of its indispensable but passive-aggressive U.S. ally.

A new strategy was going to be needed whoever won this month's U.S. election, as Mr. Biden's friendliest judge, Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Insti-

tution, has acknowledged.

The question all along should have been whether such strikes serve U.S. interests. Yes, because they provide the best means immediately at hand to raise the cost to Mr. Putin of a war that he must voluntarily end.

Ditto the vaporous debate over whether law and international-rela-

Putin is likely to face a long-term insurgency if there's no plan to embed Ukraine in the West.

tions theory smiles or frowns upon the seizing of Russia's offshore financial assets. We should be way past such niceties by now. Ditto the parade of one-off Washington and European budget and weapons commitments. Enough already. Enunciate five- and 10-year plans for training and equipping Ukraine to NATO standards.

Mr. Biden, alas, wasn't a president even Democrats wanted to fol-

low, having been placed in his job as a Covid placebo in 2020 by the party's more *compos mentis* leaders to stop the Bernie Sanders wing.

Generously, we might say he never possessed the political oomph to do more than keep Ukraine afloat while trying to change the subject whenever possible.

Unfortunately, Mr. Trump's known virtues make it unlikely, even if he can now deliver a ceasefire negotiation, that he will produce anything resembling stability once the confetti is swept up.

You might even ask if the war is stoppable at this point. Will Ukraine become Afghanistan in the middle of Europe?

The Ukrainians have shown themselves not controllable from Moscow or Washington. Their losses they will find hard to forgive. For his part, Mr. Putin must know the territorial gains he keeps striving after, at huge cost to his soldiers, will be his future eyesore and money pit at best, and more likely a source of insurgency, vandalism and sabotage that will weaken the Russian state and me-

tastasize across the region for decades to come.

If you're Poland or Finland, it's no longer unthinkable that, in 10 or 20 years, you might be called upon to resume sovereignty over border areas long ago stolen by Stalin.

The war has been a disaster for both Moscow and Kyiv, though Mr. Putin will call himself a winner under any outcome. Indeed, I expect his key ask will be a secret codicil banning the phrase “strategic defeat for Russia,” which has clearly become neuralgic for him (this phrase got yours truly named to the Kremlin's sanctions list).

He may not say so, but Mr. Putin secretly knows that Russia has long benefited from the stability provided by NATO, without which the Soviet Union's unraveling 35 years ago could have been a lot more fraught and dangerous.

Any deal struck among Mr. Trump, Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky and Mr. Putin had better keep this in mind. Needed will be a big and lasting financial and military investment from Europe and the U.S. to avoid the Afghanistan scenario.

Department of Education: A Bad Idea Whose Time Has Gone

By Gloria Romero

As part of Donald Trump's effort to make America great again, I propose that we make America read again. One way to start would be to dismantle the Department of Education and return its responsibilities to the states.

The education industrial complex is a quagmire. Nationally, student academic outcomes have plateaued or declined. Wide achievement disparities affecting racial and ethnic minorities should shock the American conscience. Parents, particularly of African-American and Latino students, want to close these gaps and have embraced school choice. The Trump administration has an opportunity to deliver for children who for generations have been trapped in

failing schools by the Democratic Party.

In 1979 President Jimmy Carter, backed by the teachers unions, signed the Department of Education Organization Act. A single department, he reasoned, would reduce administrative costs and improve efficiency. It didn't.

Reading scores for fourth- and eighth-graders across the country have been largely unchanged since 1990, when the National Assessment of Educational Progress began. According to the most recent NAEP data, in 2022 only 31% of America's eighth graders were proficient in reading and 27% were proficient in math. That year, the average fourth-grade math score fell by five points to a level last seen in 2005; the average eighth-grade math score fell by

eight points to the 2003 level. In California, statewide tests in 2024 found that 70% of African-Americans and 63% of Latinos in grades 3 through 11 can't read at basic levels of proficiency.

Dismantling the Education Department would take time, but providing states block grants for low-income or special-education students could begin immediately. That way, states can be held responsible for educational outcomes. Block grants are already widely used in state and federal partnerships for community development and policing.

Block grants facilitate local control of education. More important, they enhance parents' power, so that local and state officials tasked with fostering equal access and improving learning outcomes are held directly accountable.

You don't need a federal program to foster education innovation. With leadership and voters who understand that strong schools are the foundation of strong communities, states can lead in K-12 education without a federal middleman. In 2011 Arizona introduced education savings accounts, providing families roughly 90% of what the state would have spent on their child in public school. Families can apply the money to options such as private school tuition, online courses or tutoring. Eleven years later Arizona expanded the program to all families. Today 13 states have implemented education savings accounts.

Minnesota was the first state and California the second to implement charter schools, in 1992 and 1994 re-

spectively. Now 46 states have some form of charter schools. Parents have embraced open-enrollment options, which allow their children to escape failing zoned schools. California's Open Enrollment Act and Parent Empowerment Act, which I wrote in 2010, has been adopted by other states. It gives parents a significant say in transforming schools that are underperforming.

If Trump wants to make America read again, he should follow through on his plan to abolish it.

Parents should be able to choose among various school options and learning formats. All 50 states offer home schooling. In response to families' demands, access to charter schools and Education Savings Accounts is expanding.

The education industrial complex perennially blames Washington for the lack of improvement in special-education students' educational outcomes. The federal law that governs special education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, grew out of a compact negotiated between the federal government and all 50 states. The pact followed landmark court battles in the 1970s over special-education students' rights and their access to education. Due to this law, states spend less time on special education academic outcomes and more on ensuring they don't get

dinged in Washington because they checked the wrong box or didn't follow low prescribed steps.

A cottage industry has emerged to meet the Education Department's regulatory and compliance reporting mandates. Nationally, local and state education agencies have hired almost 50,000 people largely to “report” to roughly 4,400 employees in the federal department. The public education system has morphed into a public-works system. Federal education programs have exacerbated bureaucratic bloat for decades. In 1998—the first year I was elected to the California Legislature—a congressional commission found that states completed nearly 50 million hours of paperwork just to get their federal education funding, with only 65 to 70 cents of each dollar going to the classroom.

Current Education Department responsibilities could be shifted to other agencies. The Treasury should develop ways to privatize and repay student loans. Civil-rights violations should go to the Justice Department. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should handle education for Native American children.

It's time to strip the power from Washington bureaucrats writing rules Congress never approved. Mr. Trump's vision to return education to the states is bold and thoughtful. It should be implemented with all deliberate speed.

Ms. Romero, cofounder of Explore Academy charter school, served as majority leader of the California Senate, 2005-08.

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SPORTS

BY JARED DIAMOND

Roki Sasaki had a chance to land a guaranteed contract in American baseball worth more than \$300 million. All he had to do was spend two more seasons in his native Japan.

At that point, Sasaki would have been eligible to join a major-league team for however much the market would bear. But it turns out that the pitcher nicknamed the "Monster of the Reiwa Era" was in more of a hurry than a Tokyo commuter.

Sasaki wants to bring his triple-digits fastball and devastating splitter across the Pacific as soon as humanly possible. Which means he is expected to make the jump to MLB this winter—even if it costs him hundreds of millions of dollars in potential earnings.

"I will do my best to work my way up from my minor contract to become the best player in the world," Sasaki said in a statement issued earlier this month by his Japanese club, the Chiba Lotte Marines.

Baseball executives had long assumed that Sasaki would wait to leave Japan until after he turned 25, when he would be designated a professional free agent under the sport's labor agreement. That's how his countryman, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers for \$325 million last December.

By leaping to MLB immediately, the 23-year-old Sasaki is treated like any other international amateur. While he can still choose his destination, he will receive a limited signing bonus drawn from a pool usually earmarked for Latin American teenagers. He will then make close to the MLB minimum salary for his first three seasons.

Only after the 2030 campaign will Sasaki reach free agency and vie for the massive payday that he could have earned much sooner.

While Sasaki's seemingly unorthodox approach to personal finance has left some MLB officials dumbfounded, those who know him say they aren't surprised. Sasaki was open about his desire to pitch in the U.S. from the moment the Marines drafted him into Nippon Professional Baseball in 2019, in defiance of cultural norms.

Now he's showing just how much that dream is worth to him. "He's willing to give up that money because he has the confi-

The Japanese Flamethrower Passing Up \$300 Million

When Roki Sasaki moves to MLB, he will sign a contract worth a fraction of the megadeal he could have commanded in two seasons time



Japanese pitcher Roki Sasaki is expected to make the jump to Major League Baseball this winter.

dence that he's going to come here, do good and get his money in his career," said Andy Martin, an outfielder in the Marines' organization this season.

In his statement, Sasaki said he wanted to have no regrets about his baseball career. He understands as well as anybody that life doesn't always go as planned.

When Sasaki was 9 years old, his father and grandparents were killed in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that ravaged Japan's northeast coast. Over the following years, Sasaki emerged from that tragedy to become one of the most heralded pitching prospects

on the planet.

He put up a 2.02 ERA for the Marines, striking out 524 batters in 414 1/3 innings. In 2022, he threw the 16th perfect game in NPB history and followed it up with eight more perfect innings a week later. After last year's World Baseball Classic, where Sasaki struck out 11 in 7 1/3 frames, there was no more doubt that he had the ability to become an MLB ace.

If that happens, Sasaki will have no problem cashing in, just like Shohei Ohtani, another notable Japanese star who bolted to MLB ahead of schedule. Ohtani settled for a \$2.3 million bonus

from the Los Angeles Angels when he was 23. Six years later, he signed with the Dodgers for a record \$700 million.

Sasaki is making a similar bet on himself.

"With his talent, I don't blame him," said James Dykstra, Sasaki's teammate with the Marines.

"There's not really much more for him to prove over there."

Not everybody in Japan agrees. Marines manager Masato Yoshii, a MLB pitcher from 1998 through 2002, said that Sasaki "still has a lot to learn."

It's true that Sasaki hasn't accomplished as much in Japan as

some of his predecessors. Yamamoto won three consecutive Sawamura Awards, the NPB equivalent of the Cy Young, before going to the Dodgers. Ohtani's prowess as a hitter and pitcher made him a once-in-a-lifetime unicorn. Both Ohtani and Yamamoto led their teams to Japan Series championships.

Sasaki hasn't racked up those kinds of accolades and has frequently been injured. It has resulted in some discontent in Japan, where players are expected to "earn" the privilege of playing in America only after delivering for their home team.

"I and many Marine fans feel that Roki is basically betraying his team," said Robert Fitts, a baseball historian who has written extensively about the Japanese game.

The tension isn't new. Sasaki had, in fact, hoped to pitch in America even sooner. The Marines wouldn't let him.

They could have said no again this time, but the team ultimately acquiesced to Sasaki at its own economic detriment. Japanese clubs that allow players to transfer to MLB receive a release fee based on the size of the contract signed. The Dodgers, for instance, paid the Orix Buffaloes \$50.6 million after acquiring Yamamoto.

The Marines will get only a fraction of that—just 20% of the value of Sasaki's eventual signing bonus. They agreed anyway, determining it would be counterproductive to force Sasaki to stay any longer against his wishes.

There are 30 MLB organizations who are thankful for the Marines' generosity. Teams will be allotted between \$5.1 million and \$7.6 million to sign international amateurs in 2025, though they are permitted to trade for up to 60% more.

The Dodgers and San Diego Padres are the presumed favorites, but it's clear Sasaki will consider all of his options.

Dykstra said Sasaki responded to a recent congratulatory text message by asking for intel about his previous MLB organizations, which include the Chicago White Sox, Texas Rangers and Toronto Blue Jays.

Wherever Sasaki ends up, one thing is certain: It won't be about the money.

"Once he gets over here and people see how good he is," Dykstra said, "money will come."

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AI Bet
Amazon doubles its investment in Anthropic **B9**

EXCHANGE

Ready to Roll
A trucking company goes in search of acquisitions **B10**



BUSINESS | FINANCE | TECHNOLOGY | MANAGEMENT

DJIA 44296.51 ▲ 426.16 0.97%

NASDAQ 19003.65 ▲ 0.2%

STOXX 600 508.47 ▲ 1.2%

10-YR. TREAS. ▲ 6/32, yield 4.409%

OIL \$71.24 ▲ \$1.14

GOLD \$2,709.90 ▲ \$37.80

EURO \$1.0427

YEN 154.76

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

***** Saturday/Sunday, November 23 - 24, 2024 | **B1**



BY PATRICK THOMAS, VIPAL MONGA AND MIHO INADA



At 7-Eleven, it all comes back to the Slurpee.

The rainbow-hued blend of high-fructose corn syrup, flavoring and carbonated water—not exactly liquid, not exactly solid—is quintessential convenience-store fare.

Quick, sweet, colorful and cheap, around \$1 to \$2 each.

Slurpees are big business, too. 7-Eleven, home of the Slurpee, sold 153 million of them in 2023—a brain-freezing cornerstone in an \$80 billion empire of convenience. The sheer reach of 7-Eleven's corporate parent, Tokyo-based Seven & i, spanning 85,000 stores dotted across 19 countries, is rivaled only by the range of goods stocked under its stores' 24-hour fluorescent lighting. Potato chips. Bleach. Cigarettes. Sunglasses. Power-steering fluid.

7-Eleven's drink dispensers and glistening roller-dogs have made it a cultural icon name-checked by

7-Eleven is at the center of a bidding war between would-be buyers on two continents. Here's why they're hungry for it.

The store that would become 7-Eleven started as Southland Ice Co., top left, in 1927. It soon became a one-stop shop, with groceries, cigarettes, gas and other products and changed its name to 7-Eleven in 1946, a nod to its business hours. The company had 8,200 locations by the late 1980s and was acquired by a Japanese company in 1991.

Bruce Springsteen and Green Day, lampooned in "The Simpsons" and portrayed in the "Grand Theft Auto" videogame series. In the 2013 movie "Escape from Planet Earth," a Slurpee is given to an alien as a peace offering.

Now the chain is the object of a multibillion-dollar bidding war between would-be buyers on two continents. Quebec-based Alimentation Couche-Tard, which owns the Circle K convenience store chain, has offered \$47 billion to buy it.

Seven & i rebuffed the Canadian firm's initial offer, which would have augmented Couche-Tard's existing stable of chain-store brands and powered international growth. This month, a son of the executive who founded 7-Eleven's current owner submitted a higher bid, which would keep the brand in Japanese hands and prevent foreigners from meddling with the chain's beloved rice balls and other local favorites.

7-Eleven was born in the U.S. a century ago. In

Please turn to page B5

Winners of the 2024 Airline Shakeout

BY ALISON SIDER

There is a clear formula for running a winning airline in 2024. It's paying off most for the biggest carriers.

Carving up cabins, catering to high-end travel, and putting a price on nearly every aspect of the flying experience has helped larger airlines haul in more cash from their planes. That is one reason why two companies, Delta and United, accounted for

Airlines that haven't embraced upselling are racing to catch up.

almost 85% of the U.S. airline industry's profits in the first nine months of this year.

For fliers, the message is simple: "The more you pay, the more you get," Delta President Glen Hauenstein said this past week.

Airlines are preparing for a record crush of travelers to descend on airports this Thanksgiving—a test of the way they have been battling for fliers' business, which has changed dramatically since the Covid-19 pan-

demic. What was once a race to offer the cheapest tickets and capture the biggest volume of passengers is now all about trying to stand out with a superior flying experience. The result has been a shakeout at the budget end of the industry—Spirit Airlines declared bankruptcy this past week—and a bonanza for bigger carriers flying high from selling first-and business-class tickets.

Airlines that haven't yet embraced the upselling approach are racing to catch up. Spirit told a bankruptcy court this past week that "Project Bravo," a strategic pivot that includes a new suite of upscale bundles, is its ticket back to success. Even Southwest, which has carried an egalitarian approach to flying for more than 50 years, is soon ditching open seating and adding rows of extra legroom.

Please turn to page B4



Bidding at Sotheby's Wednesday for 'Comedian.' It's the banana duct-taped to the wall on the left.

The Unexpected Return of the Art Market

BY KELLY CROW

A \$121.2 million René Magritte. A \$68.3 million Ed Ruscha. And don't forget that \$6.2 million banana that sold for six times its asking price. To anyone looking in, the art market appeared to come roaring back this week—but it's anyone's guess if the party will last.

Roughly \$1.2 billion in art changed hands at the world's chief

auction houses—Sotheby's, Christie's and Phillips—during a week-long series of bellwether auctions in New York that concluded Friday. That's a little over half of what similar sales totaled last fall, but no matter: Collectors say they are starting to feel the itch to splurge on high-end art for the first time in a couple of years.

In a realm dominated by billionaires who can afford to go on art-

buying sprees in good economic years and bad, it's confounding to some that art sales have been in such a slump lately. The market's been hampered in part by fears over inflation, multiple wars and election uncertainties. Now, with the U.S. presidential election behind us and several rounds of interest-rate cuts, market watchers are closely tracking the spending habits.

Please turn to page B4

EXCHANGE

THE SCORE | THE BUSINESS WEEK IN 6 STOCKS

Target Misses the Mark, Super Micro Soars Back**SUPER MICRO COMPUTER**

SMCI Super Micro Computer is on a road to recovery, recharging its shares. The specialized server maker on Monday submitted a plan to stay listed on the Nasdaq after it missed deadlines for providing financial reports to investors. Super Micro also named a new auditor after its previous accounting firm, Ernst & Young, resigned last month, citing concerns about the company's financial reporting. The struggling company started this year as one of the hottest names in artificial intelligence, but a scathing report from short-selling firm Hindenburg Research and a probe by the Justice Department has weighed heavily on its shares. Super Micro shares **surged 31% Tuesday**, building on Monday's 16% rally.

Super Micro Computer performance year-to-date



Source: FactSet

NVIDIA

NVDA Nvidia has been riding high on its AI hype, but investors weren't wowed by its latest earnings. The chip maker on Wednesday reported another quarter of surging sales and profits, but the stock's after-hours declines signaled that the results didn't meet traders' lofty expectations. The company said it expects its next-generation AI chips, known as Blackwell, to ship in the current quarter and be in short supply during into its next fiscal year. Nvidia shares **edged 0.5% higher Thursday**.

94%

Nvidia's fiscal third-quarter sales growth, year-over-year

GAP

GAP The apparel retailer on Thursday raised its sales outlook for the year. The company now expects full-year sales to grow between 1.5% and 2%. Gap also posted a rise in profit and sales in the fiscal third quarter and said that its fiscal fourth quarter is off to a strong start. The company has been working to turn itself around under Chief Executive Richard Dickinson, who took charge last year. Dickinson is known for reviving Barbie during his long tenure at Mattel. Gap shares **jumped 13% Friday**.

\$3.83B

Gap's third-quarter revenue

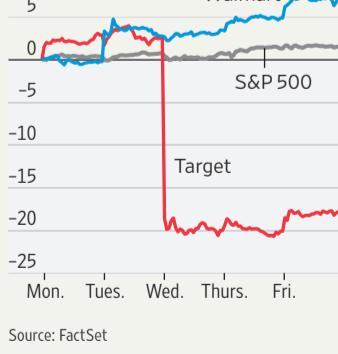


Target cut its forecasts for sales and profits for the year.

TARGET

TGT The retailer posted disappointing quarterly results and cut its full-year forecasts for sales and profit as consumers head into the critical holiday season. Earlier this year, Target had raised its profit estimates and said sales were looking up. Rival Walmart said Tuesday it had a great start to the season, with its U.S. comparable sales rising 5.3% in the latest quarter, beating expectations. Target said its comparable sales grew just 0.3% in the quarter. Target shares **plummeted 21% Wednesday**.

Target and Walmart performance this past week



Source: FactSet

WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

WB Warner Bros. Discovery and the National Basketball Association are ending their legal battle over TV rights. While Warner Bros. is losing long-held rights to regular and postseason games for its TNT network after this season, the settlement will give it rights to a significant amount of NBA content domestically and abroad, the Journal reported. Warner Bros. in July filed a breach of contract lawsuit against the NBA. Warner Bros. shares **rose 2.7% Monday**.

ALPHABET

GOOG The Justice Department on Wednesday said that Google should be forced to spin off its popular internet browser as part of a court-ordered fix to its alleged monopolization of the online search market. The department also proposed preventing Google from giving preferential access to its search engine on Android devices and forbidding Google from paying to be the default search engine on any browser. Alphabet shares **lost 4.6% Thursday**.

—Francesca Fontana



THE INTELLIGENT INVESTOR | JASON ZWEIG

It Was an 'Iron Clad Guarantee.' Now His Retirement Fund May Be Gone.

Richard Whitacre thought he'd found an investment that would leave him set for life. Instead, he faces a giant tax bill—even if he never gets his money back.



Richard Whitacre's life turned upside down in 2023. First the industrial mechanic in Pasadena, Md., got laid off from his longtime job. Soon after, he was diagnosed with colon cancer.

Then, out of nowhere, it seemed that a single investment would put Whitacre's life back on track. Through a friend, he heard about a firm called Yield Wealth and the "guaranteed" 15.25% return it was offering to investors on some products.

"I figured this is an amazing opportunity and I'll be set for life," recalls Whitacre, 60. He talked about it so obsessively, says his wife, Kimberly, that despite her misgivings she eventually told him, "It's your money, I have no clue, I don't care anymore, do what you gotta do."

In March, Whitacre withdrew his entire 401(k) from Fidelity—\$763,094.21—and rolled it over into an individual retirement account with Yield, which was affiliated with a firm called Next Level Holdings.

Next Level is run by Paul Regan, whose history of financial infractions I detailed in columns on Aug. 30 and Sept. 20.

Now Whitacre, like hundreds of other investors who altogether put at least \$50 million into these products, wonders if he'll ever see his money again. Many of these people may be in desperate tax trouble.

In early November, Next Level failed to send out monthly distributions to investors. Then, on Nov. 15, Next Level sent clients a notice that the firm would be "liquidating investments and winding up its affairs."

Whitacre and other clients were given no indication of when, or if, they would be cashed out, or how much they could expect to receive.

At the same time, American IRA, a firm that handles paperwork for investors who hold real estate, precious metals or other alternative investments in their IRAs, closed all accounts with assets at Next Level or Yield. American IRA's chief executive, Jim Hitt, says he broke things off after learning from my Aug. 30 column that in 2004 Regan had been barred for life from acting as a broker. "If we'd known that, we wouldn't have done business with Next Level in the first place," he says.

But American IRA's closure of the accounts didn't mean investors got their money back. Instead, on Nov. 18, American IRA sent out any residual cash in the accounts—at most, only a fraction of what people had invested—plus paperwork giving investors proof of title, akin to a certificate of ownership.

In theory, they can present that paper to Next Level to redeem, or cash out, their investment. But no one knows how much, if any, asset value is left to cover potential redemptions. Regan and his top lieutenants, Jonathan Guzman and Christian Fernandez, didn't respond to my numerous requests for comment.

Out of roughly 340 people known to have bought into Next Level and Yield, about two-thirds invested through an IRA or another retirement plan, according to people familiar with the accounts.

When you move retirement assets from one firm to another, that rollover must be accomplished within 60 days. Otherwise, the Internal Revenue Service will treat the transaction as a withdrawal, making the entire balance taxable at your

ordinary income rate (unless it's a Roth IRA). If you're under the age of 59 1/2, you also owe a 10% penalty.

But investors might not be able to roll over their Next Level or Yield holdings into another account. Several other firms have already declined to accept custody of these assets.

That could hand the Whitacres a tax bill well in excess of \$100,000—without knowing whether they will have any cash from their Next Level investment to pay it with.

And if the worst comes to pass and they can't recover any money from Next Level, the Whitacres wouldn't be able to write the investment off on their taxes. That's because realized losses within a retirement plan aren't deductible even if they are the result of theft or fraud, says independent tax analyst Robert Willens.

How did investors get into this mess?

Next Level took down its website earlier this month, but pages are archived at the Internet Wayback Machine. The firm's online market-

to have all your savings wiped out," he says. "It makes me sick. It makes me depressed. It makes me very angry. It makes me feel stupid."

Many investors were persuaded by Regan personally. According to audio recordings of sales calls with individual investors, which insurance agents who sold these products allowed me to review, Regan regularly closed the sales himself.

Among other claims, Regan told individual investors that he had worked at Goldman Sachs, was a chartered financial analyst and that the Securities and Exchange Commission had "approved" the offering. However, Goldman says Regan never worked there, as he admitted to me in August; the CFA Institute, which administers the chartered financial analyst program, says it has no record of him; and it is a criminal offense to say that the SEC has approved a securities offering.

Pitching investments directly to individuals is likely a violation of Regan's bar from the securities industry in 2004, says Scopus Financial Group President Tom Selman, a



Richard and Kimberly Whitacre with one of their four Rottweilers.

ing emphasized "iron clad guarantees" of 15% yields.

Among the investors who fell for this were many of the insurance agents and stockbrokers who sold Next Level or Yield. The agents invested several million dollars of their own money, according to people familiar with the matter.

"We all believed it was magic, the unicorn we've been looking for," one insurance agent who sold Next Level tells me.

The pitch was at least as appealing to everyday investors.

"Back in 2022, I saw my stock-market portfolio drop like 40% in a very short period of time, and that didn't make me feel happy," says Jim Graham, 64, a retired project-management consultant in the Dallas area, who in August invested \$776,000—100% of his retirement savings—in products from Next Level and Yield. One trumpeted a 10.5% annual yield; the other, 15%.

With the promise of such high income and a guarantee against loss, says Graham, "it sounded like a perfect solution."

Now that Graham has no idea when—or if—he will get his money back, "you can imagine how it feels

former senior official at the brokerage industry's watchdog, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

What's more, according to many agents and to audio recordings, Regan and Guzman, his chief sales officer, repeatedly told their army of independent insurance agents that they didn't need a securities license to sell Next Level or Yield's products. Those products, however, appear to be securities and therefore a brokerage license would be required, says Selman. It is against state and federal securities laws for financial professionals to sell securities without a license.

"Let's pray we get something out of this," says Kimberly Whitacre, "but right now we can't even get answers." On Nov. 21, she learned that the insurance company Regan had said "guaranteed" her investment denied that it had provided such coverage, adding that "the paperwork and signatures of our officials were used fraudulently."

Richard Whitacre adds, "I don't know where to turn or what to do."

Most investors know that reaching for yield isn't wise. In this case, it appears to have been catastrophic.

EXCHANGE

BY HEATHER HADDON AND LAUREN THOMAS

Jersey Mike's doesn't bear his name, but it is Peter Cancro's life's work. As a Jersey Shore teen, he started working at the local Mike's Subs in 1971 while at Point Pleasant Beach High School. When the shop's owners put the business up for sale in 1975, Cancro's mother posed a surprising question to her son: Why don't you buy it?

He did. And this past week Cancro sold it to private-equity firm Blackstone in an \$8 billion deal, most of which he stands to pocket as the company's sole owner. Cancro, 67, will remain the company's chief executive and retain a roughly 10% stake.

Cancro said he initially laughed about his mother's idea. He had been accepted to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he planned to study law and continue playing football. But "something clicked," Cancro said in a 2021 podcast.

Instead, at 17, he scraped together \$125,000 through a loan secured by his youth football coach and area banker, Rod Smith, to help buy Mike's Subs.

Cancro got to work. He considered himself a fast meat slicer—and learner. In the early days, Cancro said he drew on his experience as a football team captain and class president to manage the operation. Jersey Shore visitors flocked to the shop, and Cancro recalled working 100-hour weeks. Some visitors would wrap up the subs and take them home after the summer, showing Cancro his concept could grow beyond New Jersey.

He kept Mike's in the name, but added Jersey as the enterprise expanded to reflect its roots. Customers then—and now—order by the number, with options like the #2 (Jersey Shore's Favorite—a classic with provolone, ham and cappuccino), #16 (Mike's Chicken Philly—a hot sub with chicken, peppers, onions and American cheese) or the #12 (Cancro Special—a combination of provolone, roast beef and pepperoni coined by Cancro's brother after a deliveryman ordered it).

"We're not a chain. We're the mom-and-pop shop in every town," Cancro said in an interview last year. Cancro declined to comment for this article through a spokeswoman.

Jersey Mike's started franchising in 1987, offering a simple formula for entrepreneurs that didn't require as much capital or labor as other fast-food chains. But in 1991, as the U.S. entered a recession, Jersey Mike's almost went broke, Cancro said.

Then in his early 30s, Cancro said he consulted an autobiography by Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan, who outlined his early years of struggling to pay his bills. Monaghan, who eventually served on Jersey Mike's advisory council, clawed out of his debt, in part by cutting low-selling pizza slices, a move that helped the business become more profitable.

Cancro kept the formula simple: meat and cheese sliced right in front of a customer, fresh dressings and a large amount of food for the money. Another key ingredient: Franchisees are tasked with keeping deep ties in the commu-

The Boss at Jersey Mike's Is Peter. Now He's Rich.

The chain Peter Cancro began building as a teen just sold for \$8 billion



nities in which they operate.

Jersey Mike's did \$3.3 billion in U.S. sales across 2,680 locations last year, its revenue growing 25% from 2022 levels, according to Technomic.

In 2006, when Jersey Mike's hit a downturn, some lower performing stores in North Carolina needed investment. Cancro decided to do something unusual for a franchisor: He paid for those operators' store renovations. Jersey Mike's did it again after the pandemic hit, spending around \$150 million on store upgrades across the system. It currently has around 600 franchisees who pay royalties to sell under the Jersey Mike's name.

"They are very hands-on in a good way," said Gary Graves, board chairman of franchisee firm Redberry

Group, which signed on to become the area director for Jersey Mike's restaurants in Canada this year.

Jersey Mike's was a longtime competitor to Subway and Jimmy John's, but smaller. In 2015, it appeared on Technomic's top-50 list of biggest U.S. fast-food chains by sales for the first time. The chain last year had \$1.3 million in average sales per U.S. location, a total higher than Jimmy John's and Subway.

Jersey Mike's has remained a family affair. Cancro's daughter and wife both work for the business in senior vice president and executive vice president roles, respectively. At headquarters in Manasquan, N.J., a picture of 18-year-old Cancro standing outside the original Mike's Subs location hangs inside; the CEO often jokes that

Peter Cancro

■ **Early job:** Working at Mike's Subs at 14 years old

■ **Hobbies:** Tennis, golf (occasionally)

■ **Book that influenced him:**

Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan's autobiography, 'Pizza Tiger'

■ **Favorite Sub:** #12, the Cancro Special

■ **Charities:** Special Olympics, Wreaths Across America, Feeding America, Hackensack Meridian Health

■ **Special skill:** Being one of the fastest meat slicers in the company

used in cities to block access to streets or bike lanes.

Even so, It's Electric has already won two contracts to install curbside chargers, in Boston and Alameda, Calif. By the end of the year, its chargers will be installed in one of those cities—Boston—and also in Detroit. It is in the process of obtaining permission to install them in Alexandria, Va., Los Angeles and Jersey City, N.J.

A similar approach to street charging was pioneered by London-based Connected Kerb. The company has installed 8,400 mostly bollard-style chargers throughout the U.K., where the central government is making a strong push for electric vehicles.

Connected Kerb estimates it will install an additional 8,000 chargers next year. The company is also currently being considered by the New York City Department of Transportation as part of its efforts to roll out curbside chargers, says Chief Executive Chris Pateman-Jones.

Gravity, another New York City startup, has installed what it claims are America's fastest EV chargers for personal vehicles, in a parking garage on 42nd Street on the West Side of Manhattan.

These chargers top out at 500kw. For perspective, the fastest Tesla supercharger currently tops out at half that rate, or 250kw. In theory, a charger of Gravity's type could take an EV from nearly empty to fully charged in as little as 10 minutes.

The company wants to bring this same technology to curbside chargers, or "charging trees," which will cantilever over parking spots in cities, dangling charging cables down to thirsty EVs.

The idea behind offering very fast charging where people might be stopping anyway is that this is a much better use of precious parking spots in America's dens-

his career peaked at that age, people who know Cancro said.

Cancro, who believes in running a business like a sports coach, aims to stay close with his players.

"He's the glue," said Ron Feldman of ApplePie Capital, a longtime lender to Jersey Mike's franchisees and chain liaison.

New Jersey newsman Kevin Williams encountered Cancro roughly a decade ago when he was fundraising to start a local high school sports network, a particular passion for the Jersey Mike's founder. Cancro believes that sports develops a sense of teamwork and responsibility to players, something he imbues into his business, Williams said.

"Some people might think that's corny but he believes it," said Williams, whom Jersey Mike's hired this year to help run a high school tribute program.

Jersey Mike's raises millions of dollars during an annual giving day of sales from its stores, and Cancro is personally a major New Jersey philanthropist. Kim Guadagno, former New Jersey lieutenant governor during Chris Christie's administration, recalled first meeting Cancro when he approached state officials about putting a giant wreath on the Statue of Liberty for an annual day to honor military members and their families.

When Guadagno called up Cancro about a decade ago to donate a few dozen subs to an annual New Jersey cadet day at her son's school, the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., he refused. He wanted to donate subs to the entire academy, numbering in the thousands, she said.

Cancro had long contemplated what's next for his business. During the interview last year, he said he could consider Jersey Mike's going public but had no specific plans. He was most focused on growth, with a target of reaching 10,000 sub shops in the U.S. one day.

Blackstone has spent the past three years getting Cancro comfortable with a deal, people familiar with the talks said. Cancro wasn't going to hand over control to someone who didn't understand his vision and Jersey Mike's focus on fresh ingredients and ample portions that customers have grown to love and expect, the people said.

The sale of Subway to private-equity firm Roark Capital in August 2023 was a watershed moment in the industry, Cancro said in the interview, adding that the roughly \$9.6 billion deal was good for the entire sub sandwich sector.

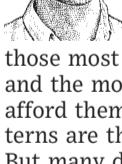
Members of Blackstone toasted the purchase over sandwiches at the chain's New Jersey headquarters. Blackstone Chief Executive Steve Schwarzman said in a LinkedIn post after the deal was announced he was excited about the agreement because his firm's partners "like to eat."

Cancro still loves working in stores, joking that he's the fastest slicer in the system. While visiting an Alabama store last year, he jumped behind the counter in his dress clothes, getting lettuce on his loafers as he prepared sandwiches.

"You know, you never lose it, you never forget," he said.

KEYWORDS | CHRISTOPHER MIMS

These Startups Are Removing the Biggest Barrier to Owning an EV in the City



Americans aren't adopting electric vehicles very quickly. Blame the urban elite.

The inhabitants of U.S. cities are among those most likely to want EVs—and the most likely to be able to afford them. Their driving patterns are the best match as well. But many don't have anywhere to charge them. For urbanites, "charge anxiety" has replaced "range anxiety."

A 2022 survey by Morning Consult found that 78% of Americans had no place to charge an EV at night, and of Americans who weren't interested in buying an EV, 44% cited lack of charging infrastructure as a major factor.

A number of startups, and the cities contracting with them, want to put chargers right on the street. Ventures led by experienced teams and funded by the likes of Uber and Google Ventures are trying approaches from fast-charging "trees" that dangle charging cables over parking spots, to chargers integrated in lampposts and low-slung, unobtrusive posts that require drivers to bring their own cables. All are what's called "opportunity" charging: at a metered spot downtown, curbside in the suburbs, or in residential and retail parking lots.

New York City has become a hotbed of EV charging innovation, with three promising startups, each with different approaches.

There's a risk that none of the



Connected Kerb is bidding to bring its curbside chargers, currently installed in the U.K., to New York.

current startups succeeds, or that one or two of them does in a way that captures the market which all are pursuing. They're locked in a literal land grab, as they jockey to be the provider of choice for cities across the country.

It's Electric, based in the old Brooklyn Navy Yard, has one of the quirkiest models of any charging company, ever—and possibly the most scalable.

Its curbside chargers tap in to the existing electric supply of nearby buildings. It's a fancier version of running an extension cord out the door of your house, only these chargers are Level 2, which means they can add about 25 miles of range per hour to a typical EV.

That's much slower than the

kind of fast chargers that can power up a vehicle in under an hour. But, by putting them where people might park overnight, or while at work, or for a quick top-up when running errands, this kind of charging can make sense.

Businesses or homeowners who install an It's Electric charger share in profits the company makes from charging sessions. It's almost as if everyone with a bit of street frontage could now become their own small-time gas station.

This approach does face challenges. Installing one of the company's chargers requires a trench, 8 inches wide, through the sidewalk. It's Electric needs permission from the local municipality to install its bollard-style chargers—that is, waist-high posts like those

that are used in cities to block access to streets or bike lanes.

Even so, It's Electric has already won two contracts to install curbside chargers, in Boston and Alameda, Calif. By the end of the year, its chargers will be installed in one of those cities—Boston—and also in Detroit. It is in the process of obtaining permission to install them in Alexandria, Va., Los Angeles and Jersey City, N.J.

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est cities, says Moshe Cohen, founder of Gravity. The idea is that people in the densest parts of cities might pull up and stick around just long enough to charge.

Gravity taps into spare electrical grid capacity available for clusters of buildings, or even whole blocks. The company can dynamically increase or decrease the rate at which it charges vehicles, depending on how long a car parks to charge.

The viability of this model is limited by the spare capacity in local grids, and in much of the country, that is becoming scarce. Gravity's charging trees have retractable cables but aren't completely protected from the kind of theft and vandalism that has afflicted many chargers.

The idea behind Voltpost, another startup, is simple: What if you could turn existing lampposts into charging outlets? Doing so minimizes the amount of time and money required to bring charging curbside, says Jeff Prosserman, chief executive of the New York-based company.

"We are encasing the existing pole with our system, and then if the power is coming from underground, we're pulling a single cable bundle, which is the same process as running fiber or doing an LED light upgrade," he adds. The process requires no digging, making it easier for cities to do it themselves.

It's up to state and local governments, joining with or permitting these kinds of companies, to solve the problem. The U.S. was set to hand out \$7.5 billion for public charging stations as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. But president-elect Trump has promised to put an end to subsidies for electric vehicles and, presumably, the infrastructure that supports them.

EXCHANGE

The Return of the Art Market

Continued from page B1

its of the world's wealthy to gauge whether they feel good times are ahead, or not. As with everything in luxury, perception is key. This week, the consensus among blue-chip art buyers clearly shifted to a cheerier mood.

"People needed to see a good signal that the art market was still alive, and we gave them that," said Christie's chief executive Guillaume Cerutti, whose house sold Magritte's 1954 "Empire of Lights," for \$121.2 million over its \$95 million estimate. It also sold Ruscha's 1964 "Standard Station, Ten-Cent Western Being Torn in Half," which surpassed its \$50 million estimate by \$18.3 million. Billionaire hedge-fund manager Ken Griffin won the Magritte, as first reported by the Canvas, an art-market newsletter. The Ruscha buyer remains anonymous.

Sotheby's priciest piece of the week was a \$65.5 million Claude Monet "Water Lilies" from the estate of faux-eyelash executive Sydell Miller, which had been estimated at \$60 million. Phillips sold a splattery Jackson Pollock for \$15.3 million, over its \$13 million estimate. Both buyers are also anonymous.

The upswing took even seasoned market veterans by surprise. Heading into these sales, art adviser Philip Hoffman said he was bracing for a "horrific" bloodbath of unsold works and mopey bidders. Instead, he said he saw "the market in its best form in three years," as bidders piled into the competition for everything from classic mainstays such as modernist painter Stuart Davis to trendy upstarts such as millennial painter Lucy Bull. Frenzied bidding wars stretched up to 10 minutes in some cases.

Hugo Nathan, another art adviser from London, said collectors who consider art buying to be a respite from their work worries seem ready to push past the doom-and-gloom of recent seasons—so long as they're not alone in holding up their paddles. "People are herd animals, and once our friends start buying again, everyone else wants in as well," Nathan said.

Still, it's too soon to tell if the newfound euphoria represents a blip or the starting point of a market upturn. Collectors invariably exhale whenever auction houses pass such high-profile trophy tests like the \$121.2 million Magritte—the only artwork this year to cross that rarefied, nine-figure mark at auction. But it will likely take more than a

few eye-catching pieces to lift an entire global market out of the doldrums.

Some think the reason bidding has perked up is tied to the recent cuts in interest rates, which soared after the pandemic and made it more expensive for everyone to borrow money to buy anything.

Others have suggested that the recent U.S. presidential election and a roughly \$142 billion Chinese stimulus package could have added some bidding fuel of their own.

Cerutti said there's probably not one factor that's lifting an international marketplace filled with hundreds of artists whose outputs are continually being recalibrated based on intangible notions of popularity and posterity. For his part, he said he doesn't think any recent political and economic factors altered the situation overnight.

That won't likely stop people from sifting for clues into what's motivating people to buy. A \$4.2 million Roy Lichtenstein "Oval Office (Study)" from the artist's own estate did sell this week for quadruple its low estimate. Asian bidders also took home several top pieces, including a pair of Joan Mitchell abstracts and Sotheby's big Monet.

"Comedian," by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan—better known as the Banana—proved to be the viral star of the week and a marketing bonanza for Sotheby's. The artwork consists of a banana duct-taped to the wall, with instructions for replacing it when it rots. The house's evening sale pulled in an influx of 30-somethings dressed in hoodies and sneakers, who stood out among the perennial sea of pinstripe suits in the saleroom. A few newcomers wore banana-themed T-shirts to the sale and used their cellphone cameras to film their bidding. Playful moves like these have been largely missing from recent, sleepy seasons.

With Bitcoin's price soaring above \$90,000, cryptocurrency investors also came to flex their wallets as well. Investors who started buying digital art during the NFT craze a few years ago showed up eager to win traditional pieces. After auctioneer Oliver Barker opened the bidding for the Banana at \$800,000, seven bidders pounced, chasing it far higher. Tron blockchain founder Justin Sun won the fruit for \$6.2 million, which he said he would be paying in crypto.

Sun, in an interview, said he collects pieces by Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Alberto Giacometti, but until last month he had never



Sotheby's sold a Claude Monet 'Water Lilies' scene for \$65.5 million on Monday.

encountered conceptual art—where the idea behind the work matters more than what it looks like. That's when he saw a Sotheby's video online about its plans to resell the Banana. Sun had missed the stir the Cattelan caused during its art-fair debut five years ago; he didn't even go to see it in person during the run-up to the auction, but still felt compelled to win it, finding connections between the piece and blockchain technology.

"As long as you own the banana, you're part of an artwork that's evolving," Sun said. He eventually plans to eat the artwork.

Other buyers seemed to embrace a sanguine attitude toward the art-buying process. At Sotheby's contemporary sale, Garrette Furo, a 32-year-old digital-asset investor from New York, bought the first lot without realizing exactly what he'd won. He thought he was competing for an estimated \$60,000 Yu Nishimura painting of a figure standing in woods, 2018's "Parting of the Way."

What he didn't know until afterward was that Sotheby's had swapped the work for a different Nishimura, "Pause." When Furo realized he'd won the wrong work for \$132,000, he just laughed it off. (Sotheby's put the new piece online and announced the swap right

before the sale.)

"I thought it was funny," Furo said, "like it was meant to be."

Overall, prices for the world's top artists have also fallen by as much as half over the past couple of years. Sellers plying works into these sales knew coming in that they couldn't ask steep prices for anything, which served to draw seasoned bidders back in as well.

Jeff Koons, who became the most expensive living artist after his metallic "Rabbit" sold for \$91 million five years ago, looked cheap this week. On Thursday, Christie's sold a quartet of his encased vacuum cleaners from his 1980s breakout series "The New" for \$5.1 million. Similar versions have sold over the past decade for nearly \$8 million, according to the Artnet auction database. Sotheby's asked for at least \$10 million for a Koons sculpture of a nude "Woman in Tub," but failed to sell it at all.

Among the still-considerable number of unsold works this week was a 1962 Warhol silk-screen of red shipping labels. Estimated to sell at Christie's for at least \$1.5 million, its title sums up the market's cautiously optimistic mood: "Fragile—Handle with Care."

GETTY IMAGES

New Formula For Airline Success

Continued from page B1

The lucrative trade-off is a reversal from decades when upstart carriers forced heavyweights to try to match their low prices without hemorrhaging cash. Now, the aviation titans are riding a wave of demand for premium tickets, far-flung locales, and revenue from lucrative co-branded credit cards.

"The ultralow-cost carriers built a better mousetrap than us for customers that only cared about price," United Chief Executive Scott Kirby acknowledged earlier this year. But that's no longer the case: "We just are winning. It is structural. It is permanent."

Bigger airlines are wielding their cheaper-fare options as a competitive weapon. United said that volumes in its bare-bones basic economy—where passengers aren't allowed a carry-on bag—were up 21% in the third quarter from a year earlier.

After losing over \$2 billion since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Spirit's new playbook calls for selling tickets that come with extras such as free Wi-Fi, carry-on bags, snacks and drinks, an adjacent empty middle seat, and more legroom. The carrier said its data is showing that new options are resonating with fliers. Other budget carriers are doing the same.

"We had to change the game we were playing to try to compete better, because they were competing better," Matt Klein, Spirit's chief commercial officer, said of Spirit's bigger competitors.

For years, upper-class seats were basically loss leaders for airlines. Most customers didn't shell out to sit in swankier sections, but sometimes got upgraded as a reward for flying a lot, even on cheap tickets.

At Delta, paying customers accounted for 12% of its domestic first-class cabin 15 years ago. To nudge more passengers to pay for first class, Delta did something counterintuitive: It began selling those seats at slightly cheaper prices.

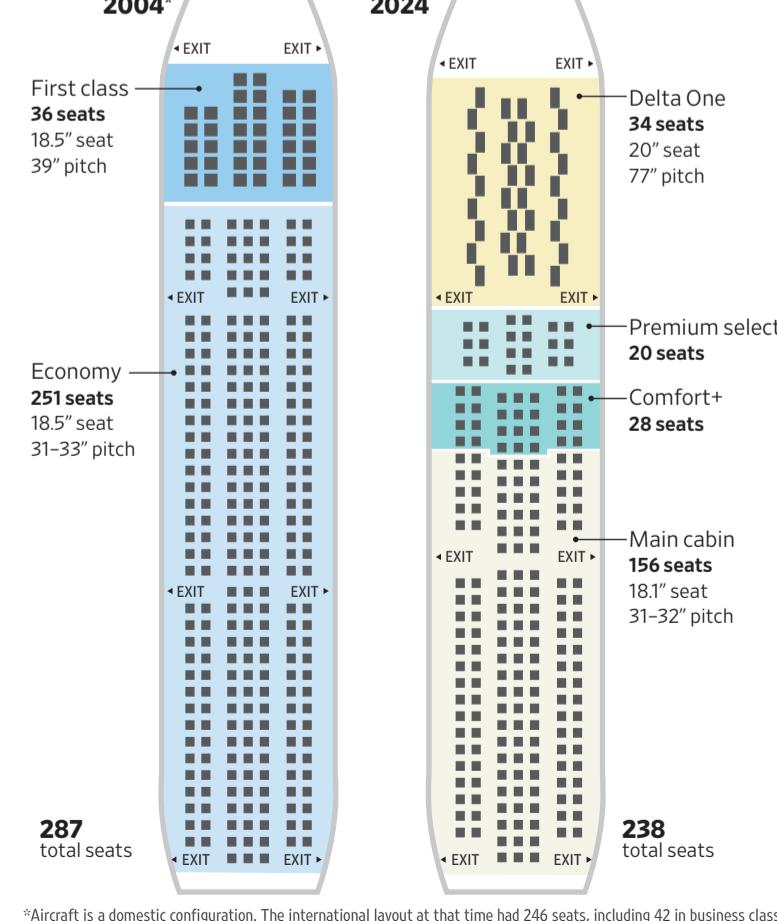
After the pandemic, the airline found that travelers, including leisure fliers, were more willing to buy the seats. Now around three-quarters of the cabin is paid for.

Premium sections now occupy a larger share of Delta's plane seats—around 30% currently, compared with roughly 10% two decades ago.



Classing It Up

Delta's current Boeing 767-400ER fleet, used for international flights, has fewer seats, but more premium options, compared with the cabin arrangement they used two decades ago for domestic flights



Delta and United accounted for almost 85% of the U.S. airline industry's profits in the first nine months of this year.

bluetooth technology—improvements that burnish the airline's image, Kirby has said. And with a massive aircraft order in 2021, the airline said it would eventually boost premium seats by about 75% per departure. The airline has said its premium demand is growing more quickly than non-premium.

"To give them credit, Delta proved that air travel is not a commodity," Kirby said at a conference in March.

Michael Pomposello, who runs a digital-advertising firm in New York, said it's often worth paying for a better class of service.

"It achieves the absence of discomfort," he said.

The industry is piling in. American Airlines is increasing premium seating on its planes and CEO Robert Isom said the portion of travelers who are paying to sit in premium cabins is "historically high."

Alaska Air is also installing more first-class seats on planes, boosting the share of premium seats to 28% from 25%.

Starting in 2026, those who book the cheapest fares on Southwest flights will have seats assigned before departure, while people buying pricier tickets will be able to pick theirs at booking. Today, no seats are assigned so anyone has a shot at their favored seat, though customers can pay for options to get a better spot in the boarding line.

The airline is also retrofitting its cabins so about a third of seats will have extra legroom, for those willing to pay more. And a number of standard seats will be deemed "preferred" (read: not free) due to their locations closer to the front

of the plane.

"What you're seeing actually is the transition of the airplane cabin to look a lot more like American society," said Vik Krishnan, an aviation consultant at McKinsey.

The selling strategy extends beyond the physical cabin.

United, Delta and American have upward of five fare options on long-haul routes, ranging from the bare-bones to the most luxurious. They also sell add-on features like priority security-line access, and the option to get a full refund as opposed to a flight credit if a passenger cancels.

Delta said this past week that it wants to go further. The airline said it's still experimenting and declined to say exactly what other add-ons there could be, but said that each of its cabins will likely have "good," "better" and "best" options. Delta's starting in its main cabin and will be testing options in its Comfort+ section, a step above coach, by the end of next year.

The next step could be deconstructing the business-class ticket. Those pricey fares generally come with all the extras—checked bags, the ability to select a seat, and in the case of international tickets, access to airport lounges. That could change.

Some overseas airlines already offer tiered business-class service. Air France-KLM, a Delta partner, has options on some routes such as "Business Light" and "Business Flex." Business Light offers passengers only one checked bag and no lounge entrance while Business Flex is a refundable ticket and includes seat selection.

German carrier Lufthansa's new Allgeis cabin configuration includes several business-class seating options, most of which will come at added cost. Think an extra-long bed, additional privacy, or surfaces for getting work done.

CEO Carsten Spohr said next year the airline will "see new ancillary revenue streams on business class where, historically, of course, we had none."

The key for U.S. carriers will be to avoid alienating their high-paying customers by charging them for services that were once included, or annoying them with a deluge of offers. Delta executives said their goal is to provide more choices, not to take features away.

Some consumers are skeptical. "I just think it's a money grab," said Daniel Rivera, 37, an X-ray technologist in Pensacola, Fla. He often flies in Delta's Comfort+ or Premium Select cabins and fears that the changes will mean he has to pay more for the amenities that are currently included. "It should just come the way it comes now," he said.

CHARLES KRUPA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Some airline executives believed that travelers would soon return to their spendthrift ways once long-sought trips occurred and they burned through pandemic

savings. That wasn't the case. Coming out of the pandemic, United also aspired to a fancier image. The carrier is outfitting planes with seat-back screens and

EXCHANGE

The Battle To Buy 7-Eleven

Continued from page B1

the 1990s, it was acquired by a Japanese company that built it into the world's largest convenience retailer on a diet of cutting-edge inventory management and logistics. Its green-and-orange branding is ubiquitous, but at the heart of its success are stores that are charmingly, assertively local: rice balls in Japan, Old Bay chicken sandwiches in the mid-Atlantic.

The 3,000-odd square feet of a typical 7-Eleven might look jam-packed and jumbled, but its roughly 3,000 different products are picked using detailed data that lets each store tailor its mix to local habits and tastes. One location should stock more bags of pretzels and another craft beer.

Thanks in part to the experience of its Japanese owner, which sells lots of fresh food from its stores, the chain is also mastering a distinctly American and surprisingly lucrative spot in food retail: "dashboard dining." The term refers to inexpensive food that can be eaten with one hand—boneless chicken wings, a Taco Cheese Taquito or a hot dog—and is suited for customers on the go. All that could be retail gold, its would-be buyers think.

But inflation has pinched the low-to-middle-income shoppers who are the convenience-store industry's mainstays, and 7-Eleven hasn't been immune. (The majority of its sales are outside Japan.) Shares of the parent company were down 13% in the 12 months before Couche-Tard's initial offer in August. In October, the company slashed its profit forecast for its current fiscal year by more than 40% to about \$1.09 billion, citing sluggish demand caused by inflation.

That has given Couche-Tard an opening: A deal would give the combined companies the scale to cut costs by increasing their leverage over suppliers and consolidating deliveries to stores.

Texas-born

Before it was 7-Eleven, it was known as Southland Ice Co. Founded in Dallas in 1927 by Joe C. Thompson and several partners, the company started out marketing ice, but soon expanded, thanks to the suggestion of one employee, to groceries, cigarettes, gas and other products, a one-stop shopping concept that helped spread locations throughout the U.S. via franchising agreements. After expanding its hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., the chain decided in 1946 to change its name to 7-Eleven.

Another landmark came in 1959, when Kansas inventor Omar Knedlik



ing point for an unlikely role reversal: The Japanese 7-Eleven chain within two decades grew big enough to take over its older U.S. sibling.

In the early 1970s, Toshifumi Suzuki was a midlevel executive at a company called Ito-Yokado, which ran a chain of Walmart-like general retailers in Japan. On visits to the U.S., Suzuki became intrigued with 7-Eleven stores, and how they made a much smaller format work.

Suzuki negotiated a licensing deal with Southland. Soon after opening the Tokyo location, his Japanese 7-Elevens rapidly multiplied, initially selling hamburgers and sandwiches. While U.S. 7-Eleven stores bet big on the Slurpee, the Japanese locations introduced rice balls and a traditional Japanese hot-pot dish called *oden*.

Like Southland, Suzuki tinkered with operations. At first, deliveries from as many as 70 trucks a day would cause traffic jams in front of Japan's 7-Eleven stores. Starting in 1976, the company developed a new system that centralized delivery of products from various brands and suppliers, allowing the chain to replenish a store's inventory with fewer than a dozen trucks today.

In 1982, 7-Eleven in Japan introduced item-by-item inventory management, using a computer system that helped stores order only what was needed based on real-time sales data, minimizing waste.

Suzuki stressed product freshness, frequent restocking, and a diverse lineup including ready-to-eat dishes matched to local tastes, and the chain thrived in Japan. When Southland filed for bankruptcy, he was ready to act, and in 1991 his Japanese company acquired a 70% stake in 7-Eleven's parent. It bought the rest of the company in 2005.

When Suzuki started restructuring the chain's U.S. operations, he was shocked by some stores' condition—dimly lit, dirty, with beer and cigarettes and soda cartons piled in the aisles. He wrote in an autobiography that he wondered: "Is this a warehouse?"

His determination to build every-

thing from scratch, which he wrote earned him the nickname "Hurricane Suzuki," turned around the company in three years.

Part of the chain's strength in the U.S. has come from an operational structure that grants individual store managers autonomy to decide on their product mix and delivery schedules. For example, stores on a college campus could carry more beer and chips; an interstate off-ramp location might keep a broader range of auto supplies and sunglasses.

7-Eleven stores monitor daily sales, and collect demographic information on which loyalty members are buying what. The stores also use a distribution system in which franchisees place orders every day based on company recommendations of what's selling well nationally and regionally.

The company has spent years trying to enhance its food offerings. It now uses more than a dozen so-called commissaries that make and supply food to its U.S. locations. Each individual commissary can tailor its products to what's popular for the stores in its region. A new Virginia commissary makes an Old Bay chicken sandwich and a jalapeño steak sandwich. The company says some of its top-selling products include hot food: wings, pizza and taquitos.

Keyes, the former 7-Eleven CEO, said this model keeps 7-Eleven flexible compared with competitors that are beholden to centralized ordering systems. The company has been drawing on sales data as it stocks a wider range of food, adding more fresh fruit and prepackaged sandwiches, Keyes said. 7-Eleven these days commands nearly 2% of grocery sales in the U.S.—more than Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, according to industry tracker Numerator.

7-Eleven's strategy has been especially successful in Asia. In Thailand, which has the second-largest number

of locations behind Japan, stores feature a range of traditional Thai food, including chicken Thai curry.

O Canada

Across the Pacific, a rival has had its eye on 7-Eleven for almost 20 years.

Couche-Tard started as a single convenience store outside Montreal in 1980, since then growing to include 16,800 stores spread across 31 countries, including Canada, Scandinavia, Germany, Hong Kong and the U.S.

Alain Bouchard, the company's founder and executive chairman, built the company through a string of deals that included Total Energies retail assets in Europe and Conoco-Phillips's Circle K convenience stores in the U.S.

Bouchard approached executives at Seven & i, 7-Eleven's parent, informally in the early 2000s to gauge whether there was any interest in a deal, but he was rebuffed, according to the authorized 2016 biography of Bouchard by Canadian journalist Guy Gendron.

Couche-Tard has been trying to diversify away from fuel and cigarette sales and sell more fresh food, which makes up 12% of its sales, according to a research report by Stifel. Fresh food represents about a third of 7-Eleven's Japanese sales.

"We continue to see a strong opportunity to grow together and enhance our offerings and service to millions of customers across the globe," a Couche-Tard spokesman said. "We also remain confident in our ability to finance and complete this combination."

The U.S. is Couche-Tard's largest market, where it has more than 7,100 stores operating under the Circle-K brand, second only to 7-Eleven's nearly 13,000 stores.

Couche-Tard made its opening bid for Seven & i this summer, when it sent a proposal to buy the Japanese conglomerate for \$39 billion. Seven & i—whose stock-market valuation in Tokyo was equivalent to about \$30 billion the Friday before Couche-Tard publicly confirmed its offer—rejected the deal, saying the offer "grossly undervalues" the company.

Couche-Tard later raised its offer to roughly \$47 billion. Seven & i is resisting. Alex Miller, Couche-Tard's CEO, and Bouchard, the founder, visited Tokyo in October but couldn't get a meeting with Seven & i executives.

Last month, Seven & i CEO Ryuichi Isaka said that the company had "potential for significant growth globally" and aimed to nearly double its revenue to about \$200 billion by 2030. He also announced a restructuring plan including spinning off noncore businesses, including supermarkets.

Last week, Junro Ito, a Seven & i executive who is a son of late founder Masatoshi Ito, offered a proposal to take the company private. Steven Hayes Dacus, head of the Seven & i special board committee considering the proposals, said the committee was "committed to an objective review of all alternatives before us."

Pressure is growing on Seven & i to decide its future. 7-Eleven executives said in October they plan to close nearly 450 North American locations to cut costs as the company struggles to keep inflation-weary shoppers coming in. Cigarette sales are down 26% since 2019, an 80-year low, the company said.

Over the past year, 7-Eleven has been trying to improve some of its store-branded food offerings and sell more specialty beverages such as cappuccinos and lattes, which could help diversify the chain further from gas and tobacco sales.

Hidenori Yoshikawa, a consultant at Daiwa Institute of Research in Tokyo, said the cultural differences in the deal weren't just about rice balls versus Slurpees, but also about the consequences of a big, disruptive transaction.

In the U.S., Yoshikawa said, "directors feel it's their duty to sell to the highest bidder even if they offer one yen more." At Japanese companies, "more so than shareholder profit, the first point people turn their attention to is what the proper shape of their community should be."

—Megumi Fujikawa contributed to this article.

7-Eleven stores monitor daily sales and tailor product selection.

and his business partner, Dean Sperry, collaborated with a Dallas manufacturer to perfect a frozen-beverage machine. Six years later, 7-Eleven bought three of the "Icee" machines and in the late 1960s renamed the beverage the Slurpee. The Icee, now produced by another company, is still popular at movie theaters and rival convenience chains.

After an Austin, Texas, store's successful experiment with staying open 24 hours a day to tempt college students with late-night Slurpees, 7-Eleven had its formula.

"7-Eleven really represents in many ways the American dream," said James Keyes, who served as chief executive of 7-Eleven in the early 2000s.

The chain helped pioneer pairing retail with gas pumps, and spread automated teller machines that enabled basic banking within arm's reach of beef jerky and granola bars.

7-Eleven's franchisee program, Keyes said, is the first step for many immigrants looking to run a business in America.

In 1968, 7-Eleven parent Southland went public to help finance its expansion, which reached 8,200 stores by the late 1980s. It wasn't immune to that decade's financial turbulence, however. Seeking to avoid a takeover, the founding Thompson family in 1987 took Southland private in a leveraged buyout. It began selling assets to pay off its debts.

The chain filed for bankruptcy in 1990, and shortly afterward received a boost from across the Pacific.

Hurricane Suzuki

In 1974, a little-known Japanese retailer opened a 7-Eleven outpost in Tokyo. The store, which still operates on the same site today, was the start-

Quick, sweet and cheap, the Slurpee, top, is quintessential convenience-store fare. Above, Japan's first 7-Eleven opened in 1974.

153 million

Slurpees sold at 7-Eleven last year

\$47 billion

how much Alimentation Couche-Tard is offering for 7-Eleven

3,000

Different products typically found in a 7-Eleven store in the U.S.

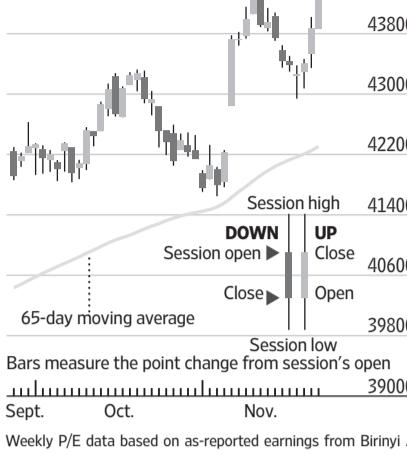
7-Eleven bought three 'Icee' machines in the mid-1960s. It renamed the frosty beverage the Slurpee later that decade.



MARKETS DIGEST

Dow Jones Industrial Average S&P 500 Index

	Last	Year ago			
44296.51	Trailing P/E ratio	27.85	25.74		
▲ 426.16	P/E estimate *	22.58	19.30		
or 0.97%	Dividend yield	1.79	2.05		
All-time high	Current divisor	0.16268413125742			
44296.51, 11/22/24					



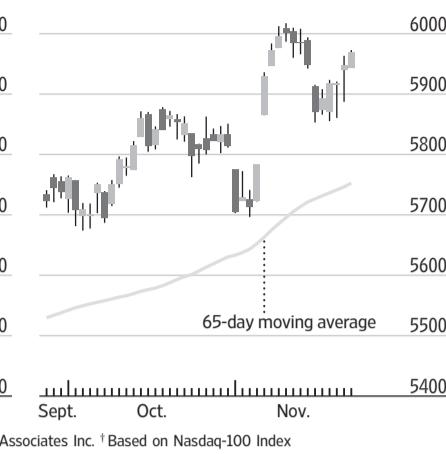
Bars measure the point change from session's open

Sept. Oct. Nov.

Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc. * Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

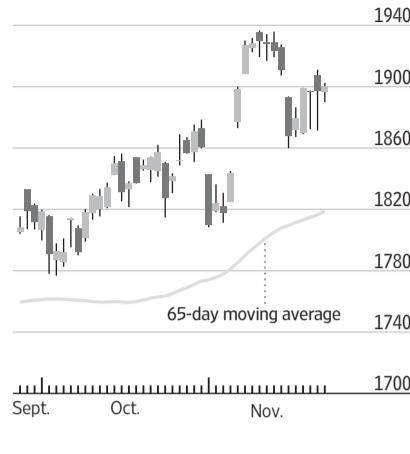
S&P 500 Index

	Last	Year ago			
5969.34	Trailing P/E ratio *	24.72	19.69		
▲ 20.63	P/E estimate *	23.45	20.45		
or 0.35%	Dividend yield *	1.24	1.70		
All-time high	All-time high	6001.35	11/11/24		



Nasdaq Composite Index

	Last	Year ago			
19003.65	Trailing P/E ratio *	33.15	28.98		
▲ 31.23	P/E estimate *	30.85	27.63		
or 0.16%	Dividend yield *	0.79	0.82		
All-time high:	19298.76, 11/11/24				



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.*	Exchange-traded fund
Nymex natural gas			10.84%
Nymex crude			6.46
Nymex RBOB gasoline			5.75
Comex gold			5.62
Nymex ULSD			4.79
Russell 2000			4.46
S&P MidCap 400			4.19
S&P SmallCap 600			3.72
KOSPI Composite			3.49
S&P 500 Consumer Staples			3.10
Comex silver			3.09
Bloomberg Commodity Index			2.99
S&P 500 Materials			2.95
Lean hogs			2.74
S&P 500 Real Estate			2.61
S&P 500 Utilities			2.56
S&P 500 Industrials			2.46
FTSE 100			2.46
S&P 500 Energy			2.32
S&P/TSX Comp			2.22
BSE Sensex			1.98
Dow Jones Industrial Average			1.96
Nasdaq-100			1.87
Nasdaq Composite			1.73
S&P 500 Financials			1.68
S&P 500			1.68
S&P 500 Health Care			1.62
S&P 500 Consumer Discr			1.58
S&P 500 Information Tech			1.55
Wheat			1.44
S&P/ASX 200			1.31
STOXX Europe 600			1.06
Bovespa Index			1.04
Canadian dollar			0.90
Dow Jones Transportation Average			0.81
Australian dollar			0.62
DAX			0.58
Comex copper			0.57
iShJPMUSEmgBd			0.53
WSJ Dollar Index			0.42
South African rand			0.40
Corn			0.35
iSh 20+ Treasury			0.34
iShBoxx\$HYCp			0.33
iSh 7-10 Treasury			0.30
iSh TIPS Bond			0.30
IBEX 35			0.18
iShNatlMuniBd			0.17
VangdTotalBd			0.16
VangdTotalBd			0.15
Norwegian krone			0.15
iShBoxx\$InvGrdCp			0.13
Indian rupee			0.06
-0.01	iSh 1-3 Treasury		
-0.03	Euro STOXX		
-0.08	S&P/BMV IPC		
-0.18	Chinese yuan		
-0.20	CAC-40		
-0.25	Indonesian rupiah		
-0.27	Japanese yen		
-0.30	S&P 500 Communication Svcs		
-0.40	Mexican peso		
-0.65	South Korean won		
-0.67	Swiss franc		
-0.70	U.K. pound		
-0.93	NIKKEI 225		
-1.01	Hang Seng		
-1.08	Euro area euro		
-1.50	Soybeans		
-1.91	Shanghai Composite		
-2.04	FTSE MIB		

* Primary market NYSE/NYSE American/NYSE Arca only.

† TRIN: A comparison of the number of advancing and declining issues with the volume of shares rising and falling. An Arms of less than 1 indicates buying demand; above 1 indicates selling pressure.

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners

NYSE

NYSE Amer.

NYSE Arca

Nasdaq

NYSE Arca

Total volume*

Adv. volume*

Decl. volume*

Issues traded

Advances

Declines

Unchanged

New highs

New lows

Closing Arms†

Block trades*

4,429,918,064

744,371,283

203,307,106

2,860

2,107

681

72

284

26

0.89

4,815

15,167,027

8,428,921

6,599,458

303

175

108

20

13

1

0.86

196

1.96

1.87

1.73

1.68

1.68

1.62

1.58

1.58

1.55

1.44

1.31

1.06

0.57

0.53

0.42

0.40

0.35

0.34

0.33

0.30

0.25

0.20

0.18

0.17

0.16

0.15

0.15

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0.15

0.15

0.15

0.15

0.15

BIGGEST 1,000 STOCKS

How to Read the Stock Tables

The following explanations apply to NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market listed securities. Prices are consolidated from trades reported by various market centers, including securities exchanges, FINRA, electronic communications networks and other broker-dealers. The list comprises the 1,000 largest companies based on market capitalization.

Underlined quotations are those stocks with large changes in volume compared with the issue's average trading volume.

Boldfaced quotations highlight those issues whose price changed by 5% or more if their previous closing price was \$2 or higher.

Footnotes:

I-New 52-week high; **I-1** New 52-week low; **dd**-Indicates loss in the most recent four quarters.

Stock tables reflect composite regular trading as of 4 p.m. ET and changes in the official closing prices from 4 p.m. ET the previous day.

Friday, November 22, 2024

YTD 52-Week

% Chg Hi Lo Stock

YTD % Chg Hi Lo Stock

A B C

86.03 144.06 61.09 AAOON

AAPL 0.20 60 137.42 1.86

ACM 0.89 33 116.31 3.75

AES 5.39 3 13.04 -0.21

AFL 1.87 11.29 75.08 0.64

AGNC 14.3 2 9.74 0.06

AGRS 54 33 30.01 0.12

AH 3.55 36 27.58 0.34

AKPA 2.25 22 15.4 0.4

AMZN 0.21 55 131.85 0.26

ANET 1.23 18.35 138.5 0.26

ASML 0.85 35 67.28 0.72

AT 4.89 19 23.28 0.72

ATI 2.23 25 59.30 1.14

ATVI 1.9 36 117.76 0.16

AVB 3.27 61 175.65 0.26

AVCE 3.78 22 117.3 0.64

AVGO 0.27 133.84 1.78

AVP 0.24 22 36.24 0.58

AWST 1.21 19 33.81 2.95

AXP 0.21 55 131.85 0.34

AYR 1.0 38 98.38 0.04

AZN 0.03 22 10.3 0.03

BBVA 0.15 19 116.5 0.23

BBVA 1.8 13 208.38 0.32

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Amazon Invests \$4 Billion in Anthropic

New cash puts tech giant's investment in OpenAI rival at \$8 billion since last year

BY ALYSSA LUKPAT

Amazon is investing an additional \$4 billion in Anthropic, doubling its investment in the artificial-intelligence startup as it aims to compete in the AI arms race.

Amazon is a minority owner of San Francisco-based Anthropic, which describes itself as an AI safety and research company. Amazon's in-

vestment in Anthropic since last year will total \$8 billion.

Amazon, Microsoft, Google and other tech giants have been pouring money into AI startups as they look for the next version of OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Tech companies are racing to produce and commercialize generative AI systems that have humanlike abilities to communicate and create content.

The AI boom has reshaped the tech industry in recent years and companies that don't invest in the technology could get left behind.

Google agreed last year to invest up to \$2 billion in An-

thropic. Elon Musk's xAI has told investors it raised \$5 billion in a funding round, valuing the AI startup at \$50 billion. The Wall Street Journal reported recently. Nearly \$30 billion was invested in generative AI companies last year, according to research firm PitchBook.

With Amazon's new investment, Anthropic said it planned to work on machine learning hardware and to further develop Claude, its AI assistant that competes with ChatGPT.

Anthropic, founded in 2021, is led by siblings and ex-OpenAI employees Dario Amodei and Daniela Amodei. The com-

pany has claimed its technology is safer and more reliable than that of other AI companies.

"We've been impressed by Anthropic's pace of innovation and commitment to responsible development of generative AI," said Matt Garman, chief executive of Amazon Web Services, the company's cloud-computing division.

AI startups use cash from tech giants to train advanced AI models and access the scarce computing power needed to develop and deploy AI products. In return, big tech companies get a stake in AI startups they hope will take off.

The investments can have a big initial payoff since the AI startups pay to use the tech companies' cloud-computing services.

The Journal reported last year that Anthropic committed to spend \$4 billion on Amazon's cloud platform over the next five years.

Investments in AI have come under scrutiny from regulators.

The Federal Trade Commission said in January that it was probing AI investments involving Microsoft, OpenAI, Amazon, Anthropic and Google owner Alphabet. The agency expressed concern that the biggest tech companies

would stifle competition in the race to produce and commercialize AI.

U.K. antitrust officials probed Amazon's previous Anthropic investment but decided in September that it wouldn't open a formal investigation.

The officials concluded the investment didn't pose a threat to competition in the country. Britain's antitrust watchdog earlier spared Microsoft from a probe over its links to California startup Inflection AI.

News Corp, owner of the Journal and Dow Jones News-wires, has a content-licensing partnership with OpenAI.

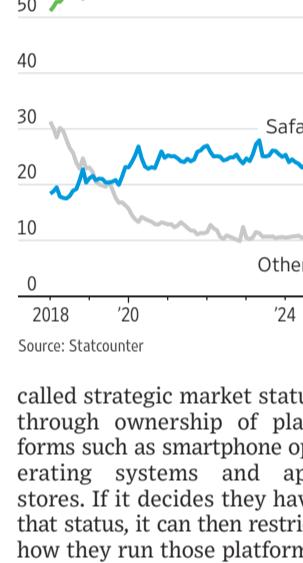
Apple, Google Face U.K. Antitrust Probe Over Mobile-Phone Browser Dominance

BY EDITH HANCOCK

The U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority said Friday that its experts recommended investigating **Apple** and Google's dominance in smartphones under the country's new digital competition rules, alleging the tech giants can manipulate users into choosing their own apps and services over rivals.

The CMA said Apple and Alphabet, Google's parent, have an effective duopoly on mobile ecosystems through the market dominance of their smartphone operating systems, app stores and mobile web browsers Safari and Chrome.

It said opening investigations would be the first step toward forcing the companies to comply with the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act, the U.K.'s new tech law designed to boost competition for businesses online. The CMA can investigate companies it believes have so-



called strategic market status through ownership of platforms such as smartphone operating systems and app stores. If it decides they have that status, it can then restrict how they run those platforms by banning them from favoring their own products and services over rivals'.

"We have provisionally found that competition between different mobile browsers is not working well and this is holding back innovation in the U.K.," Margot Daly, chair of the CMA's independent inquiry group, said in a statement.

Most of the issues the group found relate to how web browsers work on Apple's iPhones, the CMA said. Apple's Safari browser is set as a default on iPhone operating systems.

It said Apple's terms for browser developers prevent them from offering new features, adding that some rivals complained that they can't offer faster webpage loading on iPhones. According to the CMA, a revenue-sharing agreement between Google and Apple significantly reduced their incentive to compete for mobile browser users on Apple's smartphones.

Apple said it disagreed with the findings, adding that forcing the company to change

to comply with U.K. tech rules would undermine user privacy and security.

"We will continue to engage constructively with the CMA as their work on this matter progresses," it said.

Google echoed Apple's pledge to work with the regulator.

"Android's openness has helped to expand choice, reduce prices and democratize access to smartphones and apps," it said. "We remain committed to open platforms that empower consumers and help developers build successful businesses."

Both companies are under fire from antitrust regulators keen to tackle structural problems in the digital economy that make it harder for smaller businesses to reach customers.

The European Commission is also investigating Apple and Google over concerns they are breaking the Digital Markets Act, the European Union's own new digital rulebook.

EU Watchdog Drops Audiobooks Investigation

BY EDITH HANCOCK

The European Union's competition watchdog closed an investigation into how **Apple** treats rival audiobook developers in its App Store.

The European Commission said on Friday that it dropped the probe, which began in 2020, after a rival developer withdrew its own complaint.

The regulator examined whether Apple broke EU antitrust laws by forcing developers to use its own in-app purchase software and stopping them from advertising better deals outside of the App Store.

It comes after the commis-

sion fined the tech giant 1.84 billion euros, equivalent \$1.93 billion, earlier this year for imposing similar restrictions on music streaming platforms like Spotify.

Both actions are banned under the Digital Markets Act, the bloc's new digital antitrust law.

The commission said in a statement that closing the probe doesn't mean Apple hasn't broken EU rules.

"The Commission will continue to monitor business practices in the European tech sector, including those of Apple, both under the DMA and competition rules," it said.

Honeywell Agrees to \$1.33 Billion Sale Of Personal-Protective-Equipment Unit

BY DEAN SEAL

Honeywell International has agreed to sell its personal-protective-equipment business to a private-equity firm's portfolio company for \$1.33 billion in cash.

The industrial conglomerate Friday said it would sell the PPE unit to Protective Industrial Products, a portfolio company of Odyssey Investment Partners.

The deal, expected to close in the first half of next year, comes as the Charlotte, N.C., company faces a call to break up.

The segment being sold provides PPE for industrial workers. It employs about 5,000 employees and operates 20 manufacturing sites, as well as 17 distribution sites, across the U.S., Mexico, Europe, North Africa, Asia Pacific and China.

The divestiture completes Honeywell's exit from the PPE business following the sale of its lifestyle and performance footwear business to Rocky Brands for \$230 million in



2021. It comes less than two weeks after activist investor

Elliott Investment Management said it amassed a \$5 billion stake in Honeywell and called on the company to break up its aerospace and automation businesses.

In Strategy Shift, Unilever Turns Focus To Growing in India

BY MICHAEL SUSIN

Unilever said it will put India at the center of its new business strategy as it aims to benefit from increasing consumption in one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

In an event with investors, Chief Executive Hein Schumacher on Friday said India is the best opportunity for Unilever over the next couple of years and will be the key for all its group businesses.

The consumer-goods giant behind brands such as Dove soap and Knorr stock cubes confirmed the separation of its ice-cream business by the end of next year.

It added that the new organization will consist of four groups, driven by its 30 major brands and operating across 24 key markets, which represent nearly 86% of its total revenue.

Unilever also said it is on track to deliver its €800 million, or roughly \$833 million, turnaround program.

The company also backed its midterm targets. It continues to expect underlying sales to grow by a mid-single-digit percentage after the separation of the ice-cream division, supported by underlying volume growth of at least 2%. It also aims for a modest underlying operating margin improvement, driven by gross margin expansion through operating leverage and productivity improvements.

Schumacher said the company is making further progress in 2024 by stepping up in volume growth while rebuilding its profit margins, and that it expects to return to market share growth in 2025.

Another focus of Unilever is the reinvestment behind its main brands to boost revenue with fewer, but bigger innovations. It seeks to build 10 to 15 product offerings annually that could over time generate about €100 million of incremental revenue, Schumacher said.

Shares were up 3.3% at 46.92 pounds.

Mutual Funds

Data provided by LSEG

Top 250 mutual-funds listings for Nasdaq-published share classes by net assets.

e-Ex-distribution. f-Previous day's quotation. g-Footnotes x and s apply. f-Footnotes e and s apply. k-Recalculated by LSEG, using updated data. p-Distribution costs apply. 12b-1 r-Redemption charge may apply. s-Stock split or dividend. t-NA-Not available due to incomplete price, performance or cost data. NE-Not released by LSEG; data under review. NN-Fund not tracked. NS-Fund didn't exist at start of period.

Friday, November 22, 2024

Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret	Fund	Net YTD NAV Chg % Ret				
AB Funds	11.29 ... 5.5	Artisan Funds	39.67 +0.14 26.6	GlexCo	44.84 +0.26 25.5	OTC	21.27 -0.09 29.4	Eglnic	27.27 +0.21 20.5	Growth	111.08 ... 28.3	MuHYAdml	10.77 +0.01 4.0	TgtRe2060	53.24 +0.20 16.5	LexCapGov I	86.12 -0.17 30.9	MulntAdml	13.65 ... 2.0	TgtRe2055	57.79 +0.22 16.5		
MunIncmShares	11.29 ... 5.5	IntlVal Inst	49.77 +0.19 9.3	Puritan	25.53 +0.06 7.0	SAIUSMinVollndFd	22.76 +0.08 21.9	JPMorgan R Class	10.21 +0.01 2.4	MidCap	113.61 +0.17 13.6	MulTAdml	10.93 ... 2.5	TgtRetInc	13.69 +0.03 7.2	IntlDlxInstPr	22.13 ... 26.0	CoreBond	10.88 ... 2.8	Wellntr	46.97 +0.03 15.4		
AB Funds - ADV	11.36 +0.27 25.4	AggBdlnst	9.76 ... 2.1	US CoreEq2	40.22 +0.27 25.0	SAIUSQtyldx	19.39 +0.03 35.8	CorePlusBd	7.19 ... 3.1	R2030	27.04 +0.09 12.9	MulTAdml	10.88 ... 2.8	Windrl	50.12 +0.27 17.9	IntlDlxInstPr	22.13 ... 26.0	CoreBond	10.88 ... 2.8	Windrl	50.12 +0.27 17.9		
American Century Inv	10.11 ... 2.7	US SmpCpVl	52.58 +0.09 18.3	US Small	52.71 +0.90 19.8	SrsEmrgMkt	18.97 -0.03 9.5	Lord Abbott I	14.81 +0.04 6.9	Putnab Fund Class A	22.76 +0.27 25.8	Putnab Fund Class Y	18.07 +0.18 22.0	VANGUARD INDEX FDS	38.50 +0.28 26.1	Putnab Fund Class Y	18.07 +0.18 22.0	Extndlst	38.07 +0.28 24.8				
Ultra	95.57 +0.08 28.2	HYBdlnst	7.18 ... 8.7	US TgdVal	37.09 +0.61 17.6	SAIUSLqCphdFd	24.71 +0.08 26.7	ShtDlnc p	3.86 ... 5.0	Putnab Fund Class Y	136.44 +1.13 22.3	Extndlst	19.55 +0.04 6.6	Putnab Fund Class Y	136.44 +1.13 22.3	Extndlst	19.55 +0.04 6.6	Putnab Fund Class Y	136.44 +1.13 22.3	Extndlst	19.55 +0.04 6.6		
American Funds CI A	45.45 +0.23 21.5	BlackRock Funds III	7.18 ... 8.6	Dodge & Cox	110.08 +0.37 12.3	US TgdVal	37.09 +0.61 17.6	USLgVa	53.18 +0.46 21.2	Fidelity Selects	34.47 -0.21 42.1	IntlDlxInstPr	22.47 +0.21 31.3	IntlDlxInstPr	42.53 +0.23 26.3	IntlDlxInstPr	22.47 +0.21 31.3	IntlDlxInstPr	42.53 +0.23 26.3	IntlDlxInstPr	22.47 +0.21 31.3	IntlDlxInstPr	42.53 +0.23

MARKETS & FINANCE

Stocks Cap the Week With Gains As the Dollar Hits a 2-Year High

Major stock indexes rose Friday, building on gains made earlier this week, while investors watched for "bitcoin \$100K" after the cryptocurrency hit another new high.

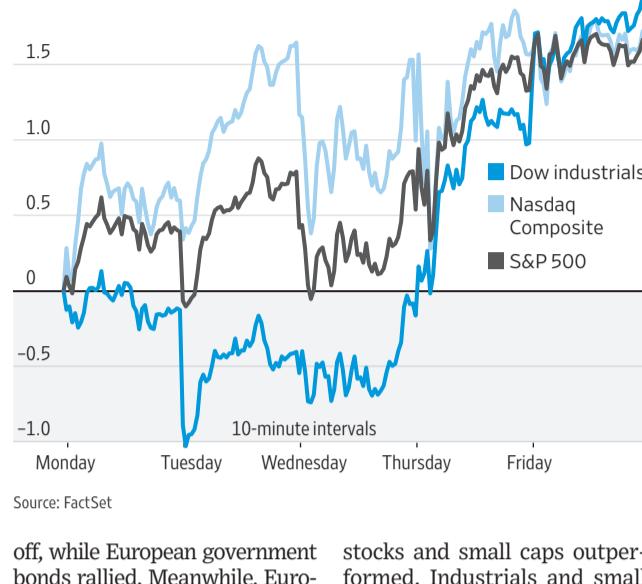
The S&P 500 added 0.3%, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 1%, or 426 points, higher. The Nasdaq Composite advanced 0.2%. The three major U.S. indexes each added at least 1.6% for the week.

U.S. economic activity picked up in November. S&P's purchasing managers indexes showed the fastest pace of expansion since April 2022, with a stronger-than-expected reading for the services sector.

But across the Atlantic, Europe's economy isn't in good shape. Monthly PMI surveys there came in weaker than expected and pointed to economic contraction.

The dollar rose to its highest level since Nov. 9, 2022, as the euro and British pound sold

Index performance this past week



Source: FactSet

off, while European government bonds rallied. Meanwhile, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde warned that the European Union faced growing trade threats.

In U.S. trading, industrial

stocks and small caps outperformed. Industrials and small caps tend to be economically sensitive, and traders are hoping both will benefit from positive business sentiment and looser regulations during the

second Trump administration.

The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment survey out Friday showed consumer confidence climbed sharply in Republican households after the election.

Elsewhere:

- ◆ Bitcoin pushed near \$100,000. As of 4 p.m. ET, the cryptocurrency traded at \$99,291, a new end-of-day high.

- ◆ Treasurys rallied, pushing down yields. The 10-year yield slipped to settle at 4.409%.

- ◆ The WSJ Dollar Index strengthened, while the euro sank.

- ◆ The Stoxx Europe 600 rose. In Asia, China tech stocks such as Baidu and Alibaba fell, helping pull Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index down nearly 2%. The Shanghai Composite lost more than 3%.

—By Jack Pitcher and Caitlin McCabe

Trucker Roadrunner Gets Fresh Capital, Eyes Acquisitions

By PAUL BERGER

An investment vehicle co-led by the head of **Roadrunner Transportation Systems** is buying most of an activist's stake and returning the trucker to the mergers-and-acquisitions game that hobbled it a decade ago.

Chris Jamroz, Roadrunner's executive chairman and chief executive, is teaming up with Milwaukee investor Ted Kellner to take a more than 80% stake in the carrier that will reduce activist Elliott Investment Management to a minority shareholder.

"We're putting additional fresh capital on the balance sheet," Jamroz said, and "starting to hunt for M&A targets."

Jamroz declined to specify the size of the deal, which closed Thursday, or how much money is on the balance sheet beyond saying the figure totaled "tens of millions" of dollars.

Jamroz said that he and Kellner will control the Downers Grove, Ill.-based carrier through Prospero Staff Capital, an investment vehicle owned by Jamroz's investment company LyonIX Holdings. Elliott will retain a minority stake.

Roadrunner is a less-than-truckload carrier that combines loads from multiple customers in a single trailer. It specializes in nonstop, long-haul routes of more than 1,000 miles, enabling retailers, manufacturers and auto companies to quickly ship pallet-loads of cargo between major airports, seaports and metropolitan areas.

The carrier went public in 2010 and was one of the fastest-growing trucking and logistics companies in the U.S. in the first half of the decade as it embarked on a rapid and ambitious spending spree. Its

executives bought up dozens of companies across the logistics sector, from warehousing to airfreight and refrigerated trucking.

Roadrunner stumbled as it struggled to integrate its disparate acquisitions. It then faced an accounting scandal that forced the company to restate several years of earnings. The company's former chief financial officer, Peter Armbruster, was sentenced in 2021 to two years in prison for accounting fraud.

"The history is a roll-up blowup," said Dave Ross, who covered Roadrunner as an equity analyst at investment bank Stifel and who now serves as Roadrunner's chief strategy officer.

Elliott, a major investor in Roadrunner, took majority control of the company in a 2019 rights offering that injected more than \$30 million in cash into the troubled trucker and left Elliott holding 90% of the common stock.

In the years since, Roadrunner sold off acquisitions, including the 2020 sale of Prime Distribution Services to freight broker C.H. Robinson Worldwide for \$225 million. The carrier also spun off some of its non-less-than-truckload acquisitions to form a third-party logistics company, Ascend Global Logistics, which was bought last year by private-equity firm H.I.G. Capital for an undisclosed sum.

Ross said Roadrunner's new acquisition strategy won't repeat the mistakes of the past. He said the company will focus on less-than-truckload targets that grow its business in existing markets or expand into new routes.

"We just do LTL, and we do it really well," Ross said. "The acquisitions are going to be: How do we do more of what we do?"

Bosch to Shed 5,500 Jobs Amid Auto Woes

BY ADRIÀ CALATAYUD

German car-parts supplier Robert Bosch plans to cut thousands of jobs across its operations in coming years as the automotive sector looks to downsize in response to a tougher outlook.

The company on Friday outlined plans to cut up to 5,550 jobs, becoming the latest auto-parts supplier to trim its workforce at a difficult time for the industry. Peers Michelin and Schaeffler earlier this month said they planned to close factories and cut thousands of jobs in Europe.

Subdued car sales and intense competition have hit earnings at carmakers and the companies that supply them amid a costly transition to elec-

tric vehicles that is progressing at a slower pace than many in the industry anticipated.

The mobility sector is undergoing a deep transformation and the auto sector has significant overcapacity, Bosch said.

Bosch said it expected to cut 3,500 jobs in its cross-domain computing solutions division by 2027. A further 750 jobs will need to be cut by 2032 at an electric-motor plant in Hildesheim, Germany, it said. The company is also looking to reduce up to 1,300 positions between 2027 and 2030 at its steering division in Schwaebisch Gmuend, Germany.

After a string of profit

warnings in the sector recent months, automakers are taking steps to cut costs and adjust production, with effects that are reverberating up their supply chains.

Ford Motor this past week said it planned to cut 4,000 jobs in Europe, mostly in Germany and the U.K.

Volkswagen, Europe's larg-

est car company, faces the prospect of a strike over disagreements with labor representatives on how to restructure its German operations, while Mercedes-Benz said Thursday that it planned to bring down its annual costs by several billions in the coming years, without setting out specific measures.

Meanwhile, Swedish battery maker Northvolt filed for bankruptcy in the U.S. after a rapid expansion put its finances under strain.



THOMAS HENZEL/AP/GTY IMAGES

Robert Bosch is the latest auto-parts supplier to announce workforce reductions at a difficult time for the industry.

The Secured Party (as successor-in-interest) is the lender of a loan made to the Mortgage Borrower (the "Loan"). In connection with the Loan, the Pledgor has granted the Secured Party a first priority security interest in the Assets and certain Pledged Securities, all dated as of May 5, 2017, and held in the Pledge in favor of the Secured Party. The Secured Party is offering the Interests for sale in connection with the foreclosure on the pledge of such Interests. The Loan is also secured by a mortgage on real property owned by the Mortgage Borrower or otherwise affecting the property ("the Mortgage Loan"). The Secured Party may, prior to the sale described herein, assign all of its right, title and interest in and to the Loan and in the case of such assignment the assignee shall be considered the Secured Party for all purposes hereunder.

The sale of the Interests will be subject to all applicable third-party consents and regulatory approvals, if any, as well as the terms of sale prepared by the Secured Party (the "Terms of Sale"). Without limitation to the foregoing, please take notice that there are specific requirements for any potential necessary or advisable bidder in connection with obtaining information and bidding on the Interests, but not limited to, execution of a confidentiality agreement.

The Interests are being offered as a single lot, "as-is, where-is," with no express or implied warranties, representations, statements or conditions of any kind made by the Secured Party or any person acting for or on behalf of the Secured Party and each bidder must make its own inquiry regarding the Interests. The winning bidder shall be responsible for the payment of all transfer taxes, stamp duties and similar taxes incurred in connection with the purchase of the Interests.

The Secured Party reserves the right to credit bid, set a minimum reserve price, reject all bids (including without limitation any bid that it deems to have been made by a bidder that is unable to satisfy the requirements imposed by the Secured Party upon prospective bidders in connection with the sale or to whom in the Secured Party's sole judgment a sale may not lawfully be made), terminate or adjourn the sale to another time, without further notice, and to sell the Interests as the Secured Party further reserves the right to restrict prospective bidders to those who will represent that they are purchasing the Interests for their own account for investment not with a view to the distribution or resale of such Interests, to verify that any certificate for the Interests to be sold bears a legend substantially to the effect that such interests have not been registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), and may not be disposed of in violation of the provisions of the Securities Act and to impose such other limitations or conditions in connection with the sale of the Interests as the Secured Party deems necessary or advisable in order to comply with the Securities Act or any other applicable law.

All bids (other than credit bids of the Secured Party) must be for cash, and the successful bidder must be prepared to deliver immediately available good funds as required by the Terms of Sale and otherwise comply with the bidding requirements and the Terms of Sale. Interested parties seeking additional information concerning the Interests, the requirements for obtaining information and bidding on the Interests and the Terms of Sale should execute the confidentiality agreement which can be reviewed at the following website: <https://tinyurl.com/BiltmoreUCC>.

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Please take notice that CBRE Capital Markets, Inc. ("CBRE"), on behalf of CRE DEBT FUND TRS, LLC (together with its successors and assigns, the "Secured Party"), offers for sale at public auction on December 19, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. (New York Time) conducted both via Zoom (or a similar online platform) and in-person at the offices of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, 200 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10166, in connection with a Uniform Commercial Code sale, 100% of the partnership interests ("the Interests") in CGI FUND I BILTMORE LP, a Delaware limited partnership (the "Mortgage Borrower"), which is the sole owner of the property located at 550 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134. The Interests are owned by CGI FUND I BILTMORE GP LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("GP Pledgor") and CGI FUND I BILTMORE LP LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("LP Pledgor"), and together with GP Pledgor, individually or collectively as the context may require, "Pledgor", having their principal place of business at 3480 Main Highway, Suite 200, Coconut Grove, Florida 33133.

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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

NOTICE OF SALE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in New York, by reason of certain Events(s) of Default under that certain Partnership Interests Pledge and Security Agreement, dated as of December 22, 2021, (the "Pledge Agreement"), executed and delivered by 3480 MAIN HIGHWAY GP LLC and 3480 MAIN HIGHWAY LIMITED PARTNER LP (collectively the "Pledgor"), and in accordance with its rights as holder of the Secured Party, 3480 MAIN HIGHWAY LENDER 2 LLC (the "Secured Party"), by virtue of possession of those certain Share Certificates held in accordance with Article 8 of the Uniform Commercial Code of the State of New York (the "Code"), and by virtue of those certain UCC-1 Filing Statement made in favor of Secured Party, all in accordance with Article 9 of the Code, Secured Party will offer for sale, at public auction, (i) all Pledgor's rights, title, and interest in and to the following: 3480 MAIN HIGHWAY, LP (the "Mortgage Borrower" and/or "Pledged Entity"), and (ii) certain related rights and property relating thereto (collectively, (i) and (ii) are the "Collateral"). Secured Party's understanding is that the principal asset of the Pledged Entity is the premises located at 3480 Main Highway, Miami, FL (the "Property"). The Pledge Agreement was thereafter modified by that certain Restructuring Agreement, dated as of December 21, 2023, (the "Restructuring Agreement"), entered into by and among Pledgor, Secured Party, Pledged Entity and 3480 Main Highway Lender 1, LLC (the "Mortgage Lender").

Mannion Auctions, LLC ("Mannion"), under the direction of Matthew D. Mannion and William Mannion (the "Auctioneer"), will conduct a public sale consisting of the Collateral (as set forth in Schedule A below), via online bidding, on January 26, 2025 at 3:00pm(EST).

In satisfaction of an Indebtedness in the aggregate amount of \$4,714,315.07, including principal, interest on principal, and reasonable fees and costs, plus default interest through January 21, 2025, subject to open charges and all additional costs, fees and disbursements permitted by law. The Secured Party reserves the right to credit bid.

Online bidding will be made available via Zoom Meeting: Meeting link: <https://bit.ly/3480MainHighwayUCCMeetingID:83320451433>, Passcode: 306717# US +16465588656 (New York) +13126267999 US (Chicago) +1301751892 US (Washington) +17193594580 US +1720726999 US (Denver) +12532050468 US +12532158782 US (Tacoma) +124627999 US (Houston) +13612095623 US +138634753 US +15074847487 US +1564217000 US +1669449171 US +169278000 US

Bidder Qualification Deadline: Interested parties who intend to bid on the Collateral must contact Brett Rosenberg at Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc. ("JLL"), 120 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017, (212) 812-5926, Brett.Rosenberg@jll.com, to receive the Terms and Conditions of Sale and bidding instructions by January 17, 2025 by 4:00 pm. Upon execution of a standard confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement, which will be provided by the Auctioneer, the Receiver will file a motion for a preliminary injunction to enjoin the sale of the Collateral pending trial of the dispute. The Receiver will seek a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to enjoin the sale of the Collateral until trial of the dispute.

The Receiver will file a motion for a preliminary injunction to enjoin the sale of the Collateral pending trial of the dispute. The Receiver will seek a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to enjoin the sale of the Collateral until trial of the dispute.

SCHEDULE A: (i) Pledgor: 3480 Main Highway GP LLC, a Delaware limited liability company. Pledged Entity: 3480 Main Highway, LP, a Delaware limited partnership. Interest Pledged: 0.01% partnership interest. The UCC1 was filed on December 27, 2021, with the Delaware Department of State under Filing No. #2021062951. (ii) Pledgor: 3480 Main Highway Limited Partner LP, a Delaware limited partnership. Pledged Entity: 3480 Main Highway GP LLC, a Delaware limited liability company. Pledged Entity: 3480 Main Highway, LP, a Delaware limited partnership. Interest Pledged: 99.99% partnership interest. The UCC1 was filed on December 27, 2021, with the Delaware Department of State under Filing No. #2021062951.

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Google's Government Foes Are Aiming High

A Justice Department proposal faces steep odds, but Google's future will be unsettled for a long time

Holiday wish lists are often ambitious. The federal government's wish list for Google takes that to a whole new level.

The Justice Department's proposed remedies to address anti-competitive behavior by the search giant were unveiled late Wednesday. Google was found to have engaged in such behavior in August by a federal judge, who called the 26-year-old company a "monopolist" that used illegal practices to maintain its dominance of the world's search market.

Some of the DOJ's proposals were expected, such as the divestiture of the Chrome browser and a ban on payments to **Apple** in exchange for default or preferred placement of Google's search engine on Apple's devices. But others came as a surprise, including a proposal the government described as "Restoring Competition Through Syndication And Data Access." This involves Google provid-

ing its search index—essentially the massive database it has about all sites on the web—to rivals and potential rivals at a "marginal cost." Google would also have to give those same parties full access to user data and advertising data at no charge for 10 years.

That caught investors off guard. Shares of Google parent **Alphabet**—already under pressure over the past six months from worries about antitrust crackdowns—lost a further 4.7% on Thursday. "We view these as the most egregious of the government's requests, and even calls into question the objectivity of their analysis," Colin Sebastian of Robert W. Baird wrote of the syndication proposal in a note to clients. Mark Mahaney of Evercore ISI called the proposals "draconian" in his report Thursday.

All of the DOJ's proposals are still a long way from coming into force. Google, which described the



The stakes are rising in Google's antitrust fight. Above, the company's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

government's wish list as an attempt to "push a radical interventionist agenda," will file its own proposals next month. The judge overseeing the case has said he would decide on the remedies by August of next year. "We continue to believe the DOJ's strategy is ask for everything upfront and—even with cutbacks from Judge Mehta—still get a solid final package in summer 2025," Paul Gallant, policy analyst for TD Cowen, wrote in a note Thursday.

Google will also likely appeal that ruling, which Gallant says would likely leave the ultimate outcome up in the air until at least the summer of 2026. The coming change in administration might not alter the outcome much. "The Tunney Act, which guarantees judicial oversight for antitrust settlements, precludes any 'saved by the election bell' moment," MoffettNathanson analysts wrote Thursday.

So Google's future will remain unsettled for a long while. And the potential for a ruling that forces a tech company to make key assets available to competitors should

also worry other tech giants facing antitrust scrutiny. The many users of Google's search engine might worry as well, because their data could be available free of charge to anyone claiming to want to compete in search. The DOJ proposal calls for "proper privacy safeguards in place" but didn't spell out further details. The word "privacy" was mentioned only once in the government's filing Wednesday.

Google has hardly been a paragon of privacy itself. But the company also didn't become the dominant name in internet search simply by forking over billions of dollars to Apple, or by pushing its service onto Android phone users. It was already powering more than 90% of the world's search activity in 2009 just months after the first Android phone was released. And Google was first added to dictionaries as a common shorthand for search in 2006—a year before the first iPhone was launched.

That required significant investments in its own technology. Google spent an average of 12% of

its annual revenue on capital expenditures in the years from 2001 to 2010, well before it had any cloud-computing or artificial-intelligence business to speak of. Apple averaged just 3% of its annual revenue on capex in the same period, according to data from S&P Global Market Intelligence.

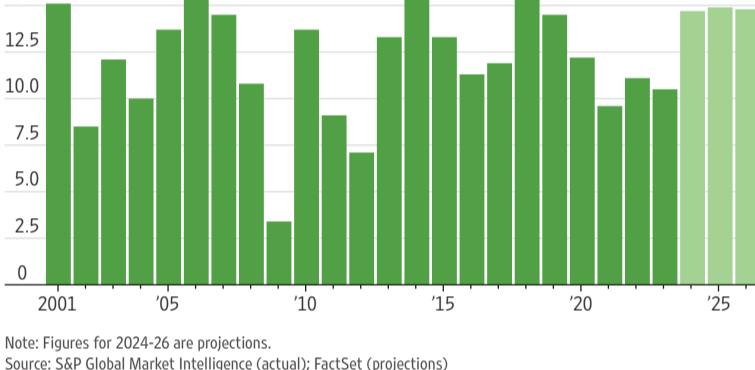
Some of the DOJ's proposals would effectively nullify that investment, and thus seem a major stretch.

Analysts agree that the government is unlikely to get everything it wants. But they also agree that if it does, things could change significantly for Google. Evercore's Mahaney said in his report that the data-sharing and syndication proposal could "materially improve the quality of search products from Google's competitors." Sebastian of Baird said handing such data to competitors "also risks degrading the quality of Google's search results."

Google already had a big fight on its hands. The stakes in that fight just went up a notch.

—Dan Gallagher

Alphabet's capital expenditures as a percentage of annual revenue



Note: Figures for 2024-26 are projections.

Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence (actual); FactSet (projections)

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The advances in generative AI are impressive, but the use cases so far haven't been transformational. Do you agree or disagree? Why?



Lúcia Soares

CIO and Head of Technology Transformation
Carlyle

"Although GenAI has been surrounded by significant hype, it's the real, tangible impacts that matter. We're seeing it boost engineering productivity, drastically reduce time to summarize content, draft reports and convert diverse data formats into actionable input for insights. I see this as 'transformational,' but exponential 'transformation' will come when we connect human creativity with GenAI to automate end-to-end workflows that can give employees back time to focus on strategic impact."



Carrie Rasmussen

Chief Digital Officer
Dayforce

"The integration of generative AI into various workflows has been a game-changer. By automating repetitive and mundane tasks, it frees up valuable time for individuals to focus on more strategic and creative aspects of their jobs. This not only boosts productivity, but also enhances job satisfaction as people can engage more deeply with the work they are passionate about. Transforming the nature of how we work lays the groundwork for fueling the ideas of tomorrow."



Philip Rathle

CTO
Neo4j

"Disagree. GenAI has changed the way hundreds of millions of people create, code, and conduct research. The sum total of these behaviors is transformative, even if we can't yet fully understand the impacts."

Enterprise use cases are harder to get off the ground because the stakes are typically higher. Success requires solving for hallucinations, privacy, explainability, and bias. Complementing LLMs with RAG, knowledge graphs, GraphRAG, and agent architectures is what paves the way to transformation."



Vincent Marin

Global CIO
Sidley Austin, LLP

"Generative AI, while impressive, has not yet been truly transformational due to limitations of dated knowledge of LLMs, hallucinations, challenges with access to private data and AI governance within organizations. However, business process improvements with a variety of tools are quite promising. Working with our AI-risk knowledgeable lawyers as advisors and collaborators, we are seeing the benefits of Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG), function calling, AI agents and other evolutions that are taking us towards transformational impact."

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***** Saturday/Sunday, November 23 - 24, 2024 | **C1**



Russia, China, Iran and other countries are increasingly outsourcing their dirty work to drug traffickers, cybercriminals and paid assassins.

By Sune Engel Rasmussen and Daniel Michaels

Hassan Daqqou is known as the King of Captagon, an amphetamine-like drug produced mostly in Syria that has become the stimulant of choice across the Middle East. At his recent trial for drug smuggling, held behind closed doors in Lebanon, Daqqou said that he had collaborated with the Syrian Army and flashed an ID card from its Fourth Division, which is commanded by President Bashar al-Assad's brother Maher, according to leaked court transcripts published by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, a network of investigative journalists. He also admitted to working with Hezbollah, the Lebanese group that is at war with Israel and has a history of overseas terrorist attacks.

Spies and criminals have long mingled in the shady realm of espionage and sabotage. But Daqqou personifies a growing threat facing Western security agencies already stretched thin by war and terrorism: alliances between adversarial states and criminals, including drug gangs and lone wolves hired online. Dealing with crime was once the domain of law enforcement, while threats from foreign countries were the responsibility of intelligence agencies. Today the confluence of these foes is increasingly rendering such distinctions obsolete.

Numerous incidents in recent years have awakened Western intelligence officials to the problem. Among their allegations: Russia recruits criminals on social

media to commit acts of sabotage across Europe. China outsources overseas cyberattacks to private hackers. Iran hires teenage boys in Scandinavia to lob grenades at Israeli embassies. North Korea deals in drugs and cyber-fraud. Even the Indian government contracted a notorious gangster's associates to kill a Sikh separatist in Canada.

The new threat is forcing Western governments to rethink decades of national-security and intelligence practices. "For a long time you had governments that would be tolerating and engaging with criminal groups domestically," said Vanda Felbab-Brown, director of the Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors at the Brookings Institution. "What is now different is the explicit usage of criminal groups and other mechanisms for sabotage, assassinations abroad."

Today's criminal organizations are more powerful and globally connected than ever before; some international drug gangs have more cash and resources than many states. And social media has made it easier for governments and criminals to find each other.

For the gangs, destabilizing Western authorities helps their operations, and working for a rogue state can help them secure sanctuary. For governments, using criminals as proxies offers deniability and cuts the risk of retaliation. "The element of doubt means they can act without serious consequences," said Edmund Walter Fittton-Brown, former coordinator with the United Nations's sanctions panel on al Qaeda, Islamic State and

Please turn to the next page

Why Is Everyone 'Sober-ish' All of a Sudden?

More people are entering the holidays with a mindful relationship with alcohol. It turns out this isn't a total drag.

Have you noticed that your friends are a little less fun? That everyone leaves a dinner party earlier? That their stories are less wild or funny or revealing? This may be because so many people have decided to cut down on their drinking after a spate of ominous articles on how alcohol, even in moderate amounts, increases your risk for cancer and other serious health problems.

After years of pushing the benign myth that a glass of wine a day is good for the heart, it seems the medical establishment has abandoned hedonists and pleasure seekers. Is there a safe amount of alcohol? It turns out no.

For this and other more amorphous reasons, I have noticed increasing numbers of people around me are sober-ish. They drink only socially or only two glasses of wine a week or only in restaurants.



PERSONAL SPACE
KATIE ROIPHE

They are not willing to give up drinking entirely, which feels like too vast and depressing a surrender of life's pleasures. So they make rules for themselves.

Someone I know has a new ritual of drinking a nonalcoholic beer with nuts on her terrace.

Another friend told me that she used to drop by for drinks at friends' houses in the evenings, and now it is just as often tea.

One obvious problem with this new responsible, upstanding mode of socializing is that it shortens parties. When people are drinking, time blurs and the evening spools out pleasantly. No one thinks about a meeting the next day or getting the kids off to school. But when they are having maybe one glass of wine, the evening ends promptly. There is no lingering, no new bottle opened, no children awoken by

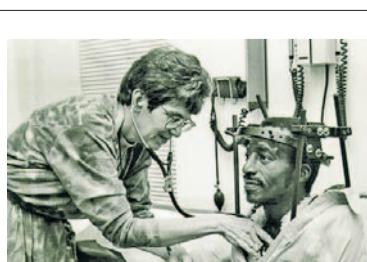
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Inside

OBITUARY

The 'Mother Teresa of Washington, D.C.' gave up plans for an overseas mission to help bring health care to the poor at home. **C6**



PARENTING

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HEALTH

Misdiagnosis could have cost me my life. My story holds lessons for everyone. **C4**



REVIEW

Rogue-State Henchmen

Continued from the prior page
the Taliban.

North Korea was an early mover into state-sponsored crime, primarily as a source of revenue. In 2010, the U.S. Army War College published a report on what the authors called Pyongyang's "criminal sovereignty," including government-led drug trafficking, currency counterfeiting and smuggling. Since the report, North Korea has branched into cybercrime and cryptocurrency theft.

Most of Pyongyang's illicit activities are state-led, but other countries employ independent criminal groups, say analysts. Russia has long used criminals to conduct sabotage and assassinations, but these efforts became more visible after the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia's foreign military-intelligence agency, the GRU, "is on a sustained mission to generate mayhem on British and European streets," Ken McCallum, director of Britain's MI5 spy agency, said last month.

Moscow is tapping the social-media network Telegram, widely used by Russians, to recruit people to commit malicious acts, including mailing incendiary packages through commercial shipping networks, potentially causing passenger planes to crash. "We see the Russians are crossing red line after red line, using so-called Telegram agents," said Michal Koudelka, director of the Czech Republic's Security Information Service. These agents often don't know that the person who hired them online is working for the Russian government.

Earlier this year, House Speaker Mike Johnson accused China of colluding with drug cartels, "backed by Cuba and Venezuela, to poison Americans with fentanyl." China is the predominant source of precursor chemicals used by Mexican drug

sue perceived opponents in Europe and the U.S. A recent wave of suspected Iranian-ordered attacks include hand grenades thrown at the Israeli embassies in Stockholm and Copenhagen and a Spanish politician shot in the face in broad daylight after voicing support for an Iranian dissident group.

American law enforcement in July arrested a Pakistani national with alleged close ties to Iran after he tried to hire an undercover FBI agent posing as a hit man to assassinate a U.S. politician. Earlier this month, the Justice Department said it had charged an asset of Tehran who had been tasked with directing a criminal network to further Iranian assassination plots against President Trump and other targets.

Rawa Majid, the head of one gang contracted by Iran, is also known as the Kurdish Fox, after a nickname he used on the encrypted Encrochat phone service, which was later breached by European intelligence agencies. He has been on the run from Swedish authorities and Interpol for years, accused of murder and drug trafficking.

Last year, Majid was arrested in Iran after entering the country on a false ID, according to the Swedish government. Months later, Majid's father told Swedish media that Iran had released his son. The Kurdish Fox hasn't been heard from in public since, but experts in Sweden say he appears to be repaying Iran for his freedom with violent favors. Around the time of his release, teenagers affiliated with his gang attacked the Israeli embassy in Stockholm with hand grenades. Another teenager was caught in a taxi on the way to the embassy, carrying a semiautomatic weapon. Israeli intelligence believes Majid's gangsters are acting on behalf of Tehran, potentially in return for protection.

Western security agencies are grappling with this new trend by reconsidering old distinctions.

"We have had counterterrorism, we have had counterespionage, and we have fought organized crime," said Fredrik Hultgren-Friberg, spokesperson for the Swedish Security Service. "Formerly separate, isolated islands of security work are merging, and we have to develop our work in accordance with that," he said.

Britain's MI5 last month warned that crimes committed on behalf of hostile states would not be treated as merely a law-enforcement matter. "If you take money from Iran, Russia or any other state to carry out illegal acts in the U.K., you will bring the full weight of the national security apparatus down on you," McCallum said. He added that Iran had ramped up its hostile operations on U.K. soil, hiring criminals "from international drug traffickers to low-level crooks." The agency has recorded 20 known plots since 2022, mostly targeting dissidents or critics of the Iranian regime.

Russia also recruits among the global criminal hacking community and nurtures cybercriminals to conduct attacks on enemy soil, Anne Keast-Butler, director of the British signals-intelligence agency GCHQ, said earlier this year.

Iran is increasingly allying with drug bosses and gangsters to pur-



Top: In July 2020, Italian police seized 84 million captagon tablets manufactured by the Islamic State in Syria. Above: Police escort drug kingpin Lawrence Bishnoi at court in New Delhi.

aid for Kyiv. Prosecutors accused the man, Dylan Earl, of acting on behalf of Russia's Wagner Group.

China, Russia and Iran all use criminal groups to surveil and sometimes kidnap or attack dissidents abroad. Even friendlier nations have used such tactics on Western soil. Canada has accused Indian government officials of hiring gang members working for kingpin Lawrence Bishnoi to commit murder in Canada. Bishnoi, who is imprisoned in India, is so notorious in his homeland that he has become an object of pop culture fascination; he is the subject of a forthcoming web series, "Lawrence—A Gangster Story."

Earlier this year, Indian citizens living in Canada on student visas were charged with the 2023 murder of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Canada's allegation that they were working for the Indian government sparked a diplomatic brawl, with both countries expelling each other's diplomats. Last month, U.S. federal

Daqqou came from a modest background and built his wealth transporting fuel for the Syrian al-Qaterji company, which the U.S. has sanctioned for brokering oil sales between the Assad regime and its nominal enemy, Islamic State. During the Syrian civil war, Daqqou allegedly used his contacts to facilitate captagon trafficking.

Syria's government makes more than \$2 billion annually from captagon, about half of what the infamous Colombian Medellín cartel made at the height of its powers. Hezbollah, whose fighters secure captagon labs and smuggling routes from Syria into Lebanon and Jordan, has used its drug profits to skirt sanctions and fuel its current war against Israel. Captagon has also reached Europe: Dutch and German authorities have busted captagon labs, and Italian police in 2020 seized a record haul of captagon pills worth more than \$1 billion in the port of Salerno.

Experts say Hezbollah has recently shifted tactics, mirroring Iran's practice of hiring mercenaries to attack its enemies. Last year in Brazil, where Hezbollah has long had a presence among a Lebanese diaspora of up to 7 million, authorities arrested two businessmen of Syrian and Lebanese origin. They were suspected of recruiting Brazilian nationals to attack Jewish targets, including two synagogues in the capital Brasilia. One of the men, Mohammad Khir Abdulmajid, has spent time in Iran and fought as a member of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war, according to Brazilian court documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

While imprisoned, the two businessmen are likely to receive protection from the First Capital Command, or PCC, one of Latin America's largest crime syndicates, which has a massive presence in Brazilian prisons. According to Brazilian media, the country's intelligence agencies have for years documented links between Hezbollah and the PCC, which offers protection for Lebanese convicts held in Brazilian prisons in return for access to arms markets abroad.

"Hezbollah uses local Brazilians as soldiers," said Maria Zuppello, a São Paulo-based author of a book on the convergence of drug trafficking and Islamist terrorism. "If you have a region entirely taken over by drugs, which is happening in Brazil, you have more elements to nourish your criminal operations."

Western governments have traditionally had good reasons for separating intelligence from law enforcement. In the U.S., limiting the FBI to domestic policing and the CIA to foreign activities is meant to protect civil liberties and prevent the government from using espionage for domestic political purposes.

But in response to new threats, governments need to do more to collect intelligence on organized crime, Felbab-Brown said: "This needs to become a much higher priority because of the nexus and merger with state actors, but also because criminal groups can create enormously destabilizing outcomes in and of themselves."

—Benoit Faucon contributed to this article.

NAPOLI/GAGNON/ZUMA PRESS; RAHUL SINGH/ANADOLU

The Sober-ish Lifestyle

Continued from the prior page
noisy guests, no wine bottles left on the table by tipsy hosts. This may be the end of long boozy nights.

The sober-ish life also leads to peculiar new etiquette frontiers. One friend of mine observed, "When you go out to dinner with someone now and the waiter comes to take the drink order and they say, 'just water for me,' you know that person is saving their glass of wine for a better dinner. They are not committing to the evening. You're not worth a drink."

For many this health news coincides with other more ineffable feelings that drinking isn't as much fun as it used to be. That ebullience we remember from the old days is harder to come by or concoct. Is this sad? Is it actually fine and maybe even nice? Those brisk weekend mornings when you get up early and work or take the dogs on a walk through the red gold leaves with your head clear? They are not so bad.

There are certain people I see only over real alcoholic drinks, because of stressful undercurrents, because they themselves are big drinkers, or people for whom the ritual of a cocktail matters, people who like to be festive in an old-school way. They are people I find myself seeing less.

I had a boyfriend in my 20s who didn't drink. He didn't want his mind to be clouded the next day. He drank grapefruit juice or sparkling water. At the time this irked me. It felt annoying that his body was a temple, and that he never really gave up control (not because he once had a problem with drinking, which I would have understood, but just because he was preternaturally responsible). Now, in occasional flashes, I can see the appeal of this spartan, healthy life.

The newly sober-ish have aging parents, have sat by hospital beds, have felt the slow approach of death. They have been up late worrying that they or someone they love is

sick or declining. So it is not as easy to block out medical warnings as it once was. The desire to feel clear and healthy is stronger.

I can't help admiring my friends and family who are still excessive and careless, who still go for the third martini. I remember reading about Mary McCarthy, one of the writers I most admire, traipsing around the West Village in the 1940s. The night she met one of her husbands she drank three daiquiris before she saw him, two Manhattans with him and a bit of red wine at dinner. There was a lot of

A good thing about the sober-ish life is you really savor your one glass of wine.

mayhem and disorder back then. I think of a line from a John Berryman poem that sums it up: "Somebody slapped/ Somebody's second wife somewhere."

I recently threw a party for 50 of my graduate students and former students at my house and noticed that they are mostly not sober-ish. They sometimes run off with each other's coats or shoes. They smoke on the deck and leave cigarette butts in plants and go out to a bar afterward.

After half a glass of wine, I couldn't help noticing that I had better, more substantive conversations with more of them than I recall having at past parties when I might have had more to drink. I talked to everyone I wanted to talk to. I made sure that everyone mixed. To my surprise, as I was blowing out candles and throwing away plastic cups, I realized that I probably had more fun than I would have had on a tipsier night.

I guess another piece of good news about the sober-ish life is that you do really savor and appreciate your glass of wine, in those rare glimmering moments it appears. A sip or two is a party.



VONDERHAAR/BLOOMBERG NEWS

REVIEW

Poker Helped Me Take Risks. More Women Should Try It.

Maria Konnikova explains how learning to bluff over cards made her a better negotiator everywhere else.

Not long ago, I found myself facing a big decision in a poker tournament. At the Monte Carlo stop of PokerStars's flagship European Poker Tour, I was sitting at the final table of a €1,000 buy-in No Limit Hold'em event and had a choice to make: fold my cards and be left with the fewest chips of any player at the table, or run a big bluff that would put me in a commanding position. If my bluff failed, I'd be out of the tournament in eighth place, with just over €10,000. If it worked, I'd be on my way to a far bigger payday.

I surveyed the situation, did some mental calculations—mathematical and psychological—and made my choice. "All in," I announced, as I pushed my chips to the center of the table. It was a gamble, but it also offered the best value of the available options.

I made my choice. Then I waited to see how my opponents would respond.

The scientific consensus long held that women are naturally more risk-averse than men. Some said it was because women have lower levels of testosterone, a hormone that has been linked to risk appetite in both lottery experiments and on the trading floor. Others suggested women are simply genetically or evolutionarily eager for stability. Regardless, the prevailing assumption was that women don't tolerate risk as well as men do, so they don't perform as well in risky decision-making.

More recent research, however, has shown that much of what we assumed was innate when it comes to risk is actually socially constructed and context dependent. For example, a 2021 study of over 4,000 U.K. residents published in the Journal of Risk and Uncertainty found that any effect of gender on loss and risk aversion disappeared after controlling for other variables, such as income, education, age and savings.

Basically, gender differences for risk-tolerance are like gender differences in almost any behavior: Women differ from one another more than they do from men, and vice versa. It is a question of personality, context, guidance and opportunity.

If women seem more risk-averse than men, it may be because they sense they could be punished for behaving otherwise. Economists and business leaders have often argued that women are at least partly to blame for the gender pay gap because they are simply too meek to demand better, but there is plenty of evidence that women who confidently advocate for themselves are penalized for seeming unlikable. A survey of M.B.A. students and graduates published this year in the Academy of Management Discoveries, for example, found that while women were more likely than men to say they negotiated for higher salaries, they were still paid significantly less than their male peers. So much for leaning in.

So women play it safe. We smile and try to be liked. I know I certainly did when I began playing poker in 2017. My first forays into the game brought out all of the behaviors that I had internalized without quite realizing it. I'd fold under pressure. I'd second-guess myself. I wouldn't raise big enough when I needed to. I certainly wouldn't bluff. Unable to make the right strategic bets, I'd watch my funds dwindle. And you know what happened? I lost. A lot.

By forcing me to see, firsthand and with my very own meager journalist earnings, the effects of shying away from risk, of trying to pander to a view of how I should act as a woman, poker forced me to confront the sorts of behaviors that had been ingrained in me throughout my life. To play better, I went about changing them. When I did, I began to win.

I vividly recall the first huge bluff that made me feel like a new person. I was in Monte Carlo, and I had

up around 97% of players in most poker tournaments. At the 2024 World Series of Poker (WSOP) Main Event, the most prestigious poker tournament of the year, less than 4% of the players were women.

This breakdown becomes self-reinforcing: The preponderance of men makes women more hesitant to play. And I can't blame them. This past summer, I was forcibly prevented from re-entering the tournament area for an event I was playing because, the security guard told me, it was "for poker players only." He re-

In the otherwise safe and mostly low-stakes environment of a poker table, it is fairly easy to experiment with fearlessness, with gambling, with loss.

lented only when another man, the professional poker player David Williams, asked what in the world he was thinking. My protests alone weren't enough.

In October, when I became the 29th woman in the WSOP's over 50-year history to win the coveted gold bracelet in an open event, arguably the highest honor in the game, a prominent sports commentator tried to diminish my victory on X (formerly Twitter) by accusing me of, well, following the rules: I had won my bracelet only after losing all of my chips and re-entering the event, which apparently cheapened my success. What's more, I played online, which was somehow less worthy than playing live. It hardly seemed to matter that most WSOP gold bracelets are won by online players or people who re-enter the game, or that all of this was perfectly legal. I've never seen that kind of attack leveled against a man.

For women who take the leap, despite the obstacles, the rewards are myriad. In the half decade I've been playing, I have become better at taking strategic risks not only on the felt but

also in life. I've raised my speaking fees, negotiated better pay for my writing and have extricated myself from unappealing situations with less concern about being "nice." Generally, my skills in poker have helped me become a much more confident and assertive version of myself—one that I could have never imagined before I played my first hand.

I've learned to tolerate criticism from those who clearly believe such behavior is somehow unfitting for a lady—at least a "likable" one. I've also found that my bargaining for a fairer rate sometimes encourages people to rescind their offers. But these responses tell me everything I need to know about the people I've been spared from working with.

Back to that hand in Monte Carlo in May. When I announced I was all in, my first opponent folded immediately. My second opponent thought. And thought some more. I held my breath. Finally, he turned his cards face up—something you can do only before folding, as it is against the rules to show your cards in a live hand. He had top pair—an incredibly strong hand on that board. "You can't possibly be bluffing here, can you?" he said. And he threw his cards away. I exhaled.

I walked away from that Monte Carlo event with a second-place finish. I took a risk—a good risk, a calculated risk—and I reaped the rewards. All €52,000 of them.

Maria Konnikova is a professional poker player and the author, most recently, of "The Biggest Bluff: How I Learned to Pay Attention, Master Myself, and Win," published by Penguin Press. She writes the weekly Substack *The Leap*.



Maria Konnikova in Las Vegas on Nov. 13, above; the hand that won a World Series of Poker bracelet in Oct., below.



made a daring raise on the last community card dealt in the game, the "river," with precisely nothing in my hand. But here's the thing: I was facing a Russian gentleman who didn't think much of women, to put it mildly. I overheard him confide to his buddy during a break that I was just an "idiot woman." (He had no idea I was fluent in Russian.) So I took a risk. As an idiot woman, there is no way I'd have it in me to run a huge bluff, right? Reluctantly, he folded his cards.

This gamble, inconceivable to me even a few months earlier, was one of the sweetest feelings in the world.

As I dragged in the chips, it was all I could do to resist showing my hand to my rival. But resist I did. In this, I heeded my mentor, Erik Seidel, who had taught me that in poker, as in life, information is power. Don't ever give your opponent extra information if you don't have to. Don't ever show your cards.

In the otherwise safe and mostly low-stakes environment of a poker table, it is fairly easy to experiment with fearlessness, with gambling, with loss. Poker, after all, was the inspiration for game theory, which is the study of possible outcomes of decisions made with imperfect information.

This is why various colleges, including Johns Hopkins and MIT, offer courses to teach students how to play poker, and why new hires at the trading giant Susquehanna International spend at least 100 hours playing cards during a 10-week training program. It is also why a growing number of organizations are trying to lure more women into the game.

These organizations aren't wrong, but they have their work cut out for them. Poker, historically, has been a man's game. Politicians and businessmen have long used cards to match wits, make deals and forge connections. To this day, men make



A World Series of Poker tournament in Las Vegas in 2019. Men make up around 97% of most poker tournaments.

REVIEW

BY JOE M. MOORE

I have always enjoyed the thrill and discipline of staying fit. I played four sports in high school, was a walk-on quarterback at the University of Alabama and took up running in my 20s. This began mostly as a way to manage the stress of banking, but I was soon joining clubs and entering races, mostly 10Ks. On a good day, I could tell within the first half-mile whether I was about to set a personal record.

I was in my early 60s when my knees, toes and aching hips told me it was time to trade races for an elliptical machine. I missed the fresh air and changing scenery, but I still took pleasure in the rhythm of my breath and stride, the strong and steady pounding of my heart after an all-out finish.

I had no idea—no premonition at all—that I was about to become a medical mystery.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins estimate that nearly 800,000 Americans die or become permanently disabled each year because their dangerous diseases are unrecognized, unknown or misdiagnosed. I was almost one of them. My story, though unique, holds lessons for everyone.

Given my robust health, I hadn't sought out a primary-care physician until I was 65. Since I don't have a family medical history—I was adopted as a child—this doctor recommended a cardiac calcium CT scan, a painless, noninvasive test that scans arteries in search of calcium deposits. A buildup of calcified plaque can reduce blood flow to the heart or brain, raising the risk of heart attacks or strokes. I'd never had a heart-related problem, but the test seemed like a good way to generate health knowledge for my three grown children, so I got one.

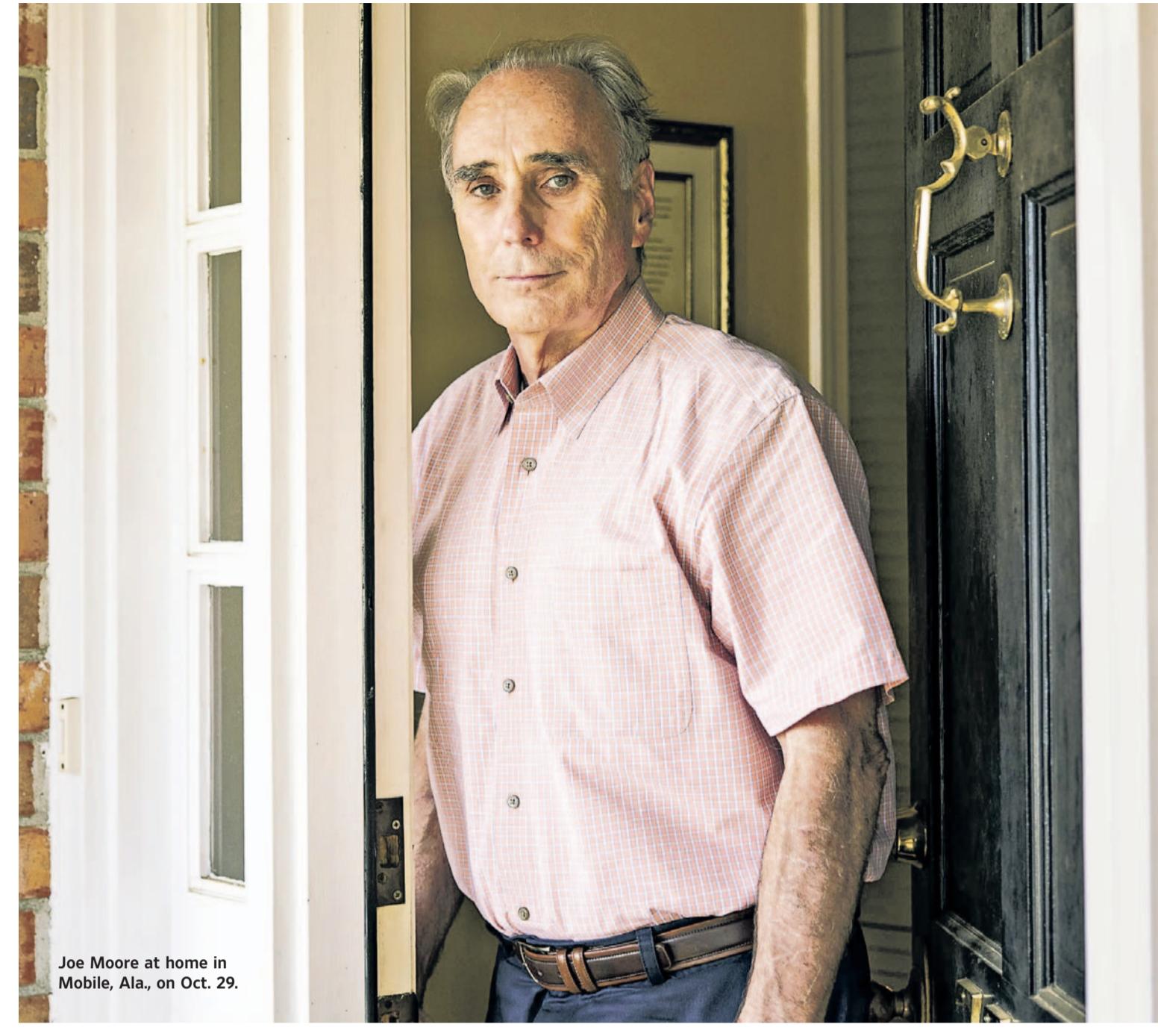
Scan results are scored from 0 to 400, with 400 representing high levels of plaque and an absolute diagnosis of coronary artery disease. My score was 2,424.

I was immediately referred to a cardiologist and underwent a full battery of tests. I passed them all, yet I still had this vast amount of calcified plaque in my coronary arteries. My doctors were befuddled. I was alarmed.

I tried to take comfort in plans for a new diet. A dietitian recommended all the nuts I wanted and all the vegetables I could eat, along with grilled chicken and non-fried seafood, particularly shrimp. My doctors prescribed a statin and promised vigilance. "We'll just watch it very closely," they said.

Eager to understand what was happening, I went straight to a lipidologist, Dr. Mary Honkanen, an internist in Mobile. She ran several tests, some of which showed possible liver damage from the new statin, but nothing otherwise seemed out of place. I wondered if the calcium deposits could be explained by a faulty machine, so I decided to have another one. The results were even worse.

My new score was 2,780, up 356



Joe Moore at home in Mobile, Ala., on Oct. 29.

I Was in Great Health. So Why Were My Arteries Clogged?

Nearly 800,000 Americans a year die or become disabled because their diseases are misdiagnosed. I was almost one of them.

terary disease. The greatest blockage in any artery was 40%, so there was no need for surgery. The calcium I did have was hard, stable and mostly adhered to the artery walls, not the soft plaque that can rupture and cause a sudden, catastrophic event.

But the volume reading was right. If allowed to continue, these deposits could clog the flow of blood to my heart. When that happened, and possibly without warning, I could die on the spot.

In light of these stakes, I felt extremely lucky to have discovered this condition early enough to do something about it. But how did this happen? What exactly was going on?

I went back to Honkanen. She

my coronary arteries.

Sitosterolemia can be either homozygous—from two parents—or heterozygous—from one parent. The two-parent version sometimes shows up in childhood, can cause joint stiffness and yellow growths on the skin and is extremely rare, with only around 100 documented cases. The one-parent version typically lacks symptoms so it is usually diagnosed after a catastrophic cardiac event, if it is diagnosed at all. Doctors say I probably have the single-parent version, which means I am a carrier, too.

"The [one-parent] version is way more common than most physicians think," Honkanen told me. "I see this frequently." She suspects the disease might help explain why some young athletes die unexpectedly of heart attacks. "A female college athlete of 26 died from a heart attack. Then her 20-year-old male nephew died of the same thing." After their deaths, several family members tested positive for high sterols and stanols without high levels of cholesterol, according to Honkanen.

Coronary artery disease is the leading reason for sudden cardiac death in athletes over age 35. Yet cardiac calcium CT scans are rarely prescribed for people without symptoms or genetic risks of heart disease, and most insurance companies don't cover

oil and olive oil, the fats routinely recommended for heart patients.

Because most doctors have little experience with this disease, they don't know to look for it. "The biggest barrier to the initial detection and dissemination is simply the lack of acquired knowledge about the condition," says Dr. Patrick McNees,

Managing Partner for Health and Life Sciences for

Kirchner Group, a global merchant bank.

"If a physician has never seen a particular pattern of 'symptoms' it is difficult to clinically identify a path forward."

My misdiagnosis could have cost me my life. My desire to understand what exactly was going on with my body, and

my good fortune in finding a physician who was similarly curious and attuned to the possibilities, saved me from a possibly dire fate.

With a timely diagnosis, the disease is in fact easily treatable. I am on a drug called Ezetimibe (branded Zetia), which has proven somewhat effective in keeping sterols and stanols from entering the bloodstream in clinical trials. My new diet is rich in meats and low-sterol vegetables, such as green beans, mashed potatoes, spinach and sweet potatoes. I feel as healthy as ever.

In September I returned to my cardiologist for a follow-up visit.

I told him about my diagnosis and how the disease can prove fatal due to the way it clogs arteries without triggering symptoms. This doctor, a young man in his 40s, admitted he had never heard of the disease.

He was soon reflecting on other patients with unexplained calcified plaque deposits in their coronary arteries, also without symptoms. He then wondered if my diagnosis might explain what happened to a retired orthopedist, a vegetarian and marathoner, who had recently suffered a nonfatal heart attack due to high coronary calcified plaque levels.

Like me, this man had never had a high-cholesterol reading and assumed he was in great health.

Rare diseases pose a quandary for both doctors and patients. Medical students learn to assume hoof-

beats are coming from a horse, not a zebra. The most common answers to health-related problems also tend to be the most accurate.

But what happens if you are a zebra? Researchers at Johns Hopkins are calling misdiagnosis an urgent public health problem, but clear solutions seem elusive. Patients seeking answers to medical

mysteries certainly face many hurdles, including overworked and uninformed doctors, unknown tests and insurance companies that are more likely to cover emergency surgery than preventive care—even though a coronary calcium scan costs between \$100 and \$400, whereas a coronary bypass ranges from \$30,000

to \$140,000.

Still, there are lessons I now share with everyone I know. First, get screened regularly, especially for heart disease and cancer, the two leading causes of death. Even if you feel healthy, even if you believe you're free of genetic risks, just get those checkups, colonoscopies and calcium scans.

Then, if you have a problem without a satisfactory explanation, the sad truth is that you have to be your own advocate. Doctors are busy, research is always evolving, and health systems are slow to change.

If something doesn't add up, it is often up to the patient to dig deeper. Don't be too intimidated to ask questions, seek second and third opinions and scan the NIH's database of studies on rare diseases. If you find something that may be of help, take it to your doctor.

Misdiagnosis has always been with us, but we have more tools now than ever before to fix these errors before they become tragedies. The trick is to remember that almost no one is more concerned about the fate of your life than you.

Joe M. Moore is a marketing and intellectual property consultant in Alabama. He is working on a memoir about his experience, called "The Excavation: Uncovering God's Hand in an Average American Life."



Moore exercises daily at the University of South Alabama Student Recreation Center.

points, with blockages exceeding 90% in three arteries.

Honkanen promptly scheduled a cardiac catheterization procedure for the following Monday to allow a cardiologist to explore my arteries from the inside, insert any needed stents or, in the worst-case scenario, bring in a surgeon for a bypass. My wife and I spent much of the weekend praying.

As I emerged from the fog of the anesthesia, my cardiologist explained that I had the best-case scenario for someone with coronary ar-

had one final theory, which required sending a blood sample for a special test. I buried myself in work while I waited for the results.

Two weeks later, this past April, Honkanen entered the exam room smiling. "Well, we've found the problem," she said. It was Sitosterolemia, a hereditary disease that allowed the fatty parts of plants—the sterols and stanols—to enter my bloodstream. Most people process and excrete these substances into the GI tract. My body absorbs these plant sterols, which wind up as calcified plaque in

it. Honkanen often recommends the special blood test when there is evidence of high levels of calcified plaque, but insurers rarely cover this, too. Without this test, a proper diagnosis is usually missed.

Honkanen went on to explain that the diet I had been prescribed was exactly the wrong diet for Sitosterolemia. The sterols and stanols that caused the calcium lining my arteries were in fact most common in the nuts and vegetables I had been feasting on for months. They are also found in high levels in canola

REVIEW

The Right Way To Brag About Your Kids

How to avoid making others cringe over the holidays.

BY ALEXANDRA WOLFE

When my son was 18 months old, I was convinced he could read. He'd see the personalized stepstools in his and his brother's bedrooms and cheerfully shout each name. It seemed nothing short of miraculous. I told all my friends how precocious he was and moaned that it was already time to replace his picture books with early readers. I wondered how soon the Ivies would come calling.

Then I held up a sticker with his name on it and asked him what it said. "Mommy!" he shrieked. I tried again. No go. It somehow hadn't occurred to me that he was just associating the stools with the corresponding rooms.

That's when it hit me: I was guilty of a very common kind of humblebragging, what I call "mumblebragging"—a "mum" shamelessly couching the achievements of her kids in insincere complaints. I was no better than the parent who declined a weekend invitation by lamenting,

"I've spent every single Saturday on the hockey pitch because Sasha is so talented that she's on the A-team for everything!"—an actual note received by an acquaintance.

This left me wondering if it's possible for proud parents to shower praise on our kids without becoming social pariahs. Are we only allowed to share superlatives with grandma? With holiday gatherings upon us, is there a way to toast our kids that doesn't leave fellow guests gagging on their canapés?

A primal sense of pride is an inevitable feature of parenting. "Before you've had children, you think the people who brag about their children are frightful and revolting," says Plum Sykes, author of "Wives Like Us," a satirical look at a group

If you walk around telling people your kid is great and better than their kid, evidence shows you will not be very popular.

EMILY OSTER
Economist and parenting researcher

up most of his patients. He recalls one mom telling him, just before a recent breast lift, how she planned to visit only four boarding schools for her beloved son: Andover, Exeter, Choate and Groton—all top-ranked. As the father of two young girls, Smith admits he doesn't mind. "I love to brag about my kids," he says. "In fact, I often tell everyone what a wonderful son my parents have."

Aliza Pressman, a child psychologist

of wealthy young mothers in England's Cotswolds. "Cut toward now, and I'm posting my daughters' artwork on Instagram and looking at how many likes I'm getting."

Concerns about the "right" and "wrong" way to brag are certainly heightened by social media, which has made such praise more public and performative. Apps such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat give parents the space to use their child's triumphs as yet another status symbol.

"Sometimes it's not just 'Joshua caught a Bluefin tuna,' it's 'Joshua caught a Bluefin tuna off the yacht that we chartered in Sardinia,'" says Punch Hutton, a former *Vanity Fair* editor and founder of Punch Collection stationery.

The messages embedded in geo-location tags and other details are often unsung, such as a photo captioned "Sleeping Beauty" of an infant swaddled in a flatbed, first-class seat on American Airlines. "The Ken Burns-style mini-documentaries with zooming and fades and sound effects highlighting a child's home run or Bahamas Spring

Break 2024 are next-level," says Hutton.

Now that social media has primed us for parental flexing, shameless praise has become a bit more acceptable—or at least more common—in real life, too. Darren Smith, a plastic surgeon in Manhattan, has noticed a real rise in boasting among the mothers who make

gist, notes that it can be useful for children to hear their parents brag about them, as they are more likely to believe praise from their parents if they overhear them tell someone else. As for whether a boast is socially appropriate, Pressman says that parents should be honest about their motivations: "Are you trying to share this experience of joy, or are you trying to impress people?"

Bragging is rarely completely pure of heart, but parents should be mindful of unintended consequences. "If you walk around telling people your kid is great and better than their kid, evidence shows you will not be very popular," says Emily Oster, an economist and founder of ParentData.org, which uses research to answer parenting questions.

Oster admits she finds mumblebragging especially annoying: "The worst thing is when the parent is saying, 'Let's all feel bad for each other, for the struggle we're having, like my child having to miss school to go to the national championship.'"

Experts on bragging etiquette offer a simple rule: know your audience. Close friends and fellow parents at your child's school may be interested in hearing about your daughter's brown belt in karate or your son's trombone solo, but if you regale your bleary-eyed 25-year-old single co-worker, you're likely to make her hangover worse.

"If I'm friends with you and I ask, then I really do want to know because I care about your kids," says Zibby Owens, author and host of the podcast "Moms Don't Have Time to Read Books." She admits she has less patience for holiday cards that double as résumés itemizing the accomplishments of children, which she calls "LinkedIn for kids."

Owens would also prefer not to hear about your three-year-old who speaks four languages or is starring on Broadway—or really "anything that makes me feel like, 'What have I been doing with my time?'"

Bragging of any kind has always been less culturally acceptable in Europe and the U.K. than in the U.S., says Pamela Druckerman, an American journalist in Paris and author of the bestselling child-rearing book "Bringing Up Bebe." "On social media, if you post something about your child, it's safe to say, no one asked," she says.

Druckerman suspects that American parents are more inclined to crow about their children because the costs of raising them are particularly high here and the dividends of this investment are increasingly uncertain. Parents used to assume their children would surpass their own achievements; now they worry they are falling behind.

Amid this pressure, American parents may be especially eager to spot and convey clear metrics of

success. "Bragging I think comes from anxiety in America," Druckerman says. "I understand the urge, but there are negative urges you have to suppress."

Greg Lukianoff, co-author of "The Coddling of the American Mind" and a self-proclaimed parental bragger, suggests there's a meaningful difference between praising a child's hard work and reveling in their innate attributes.

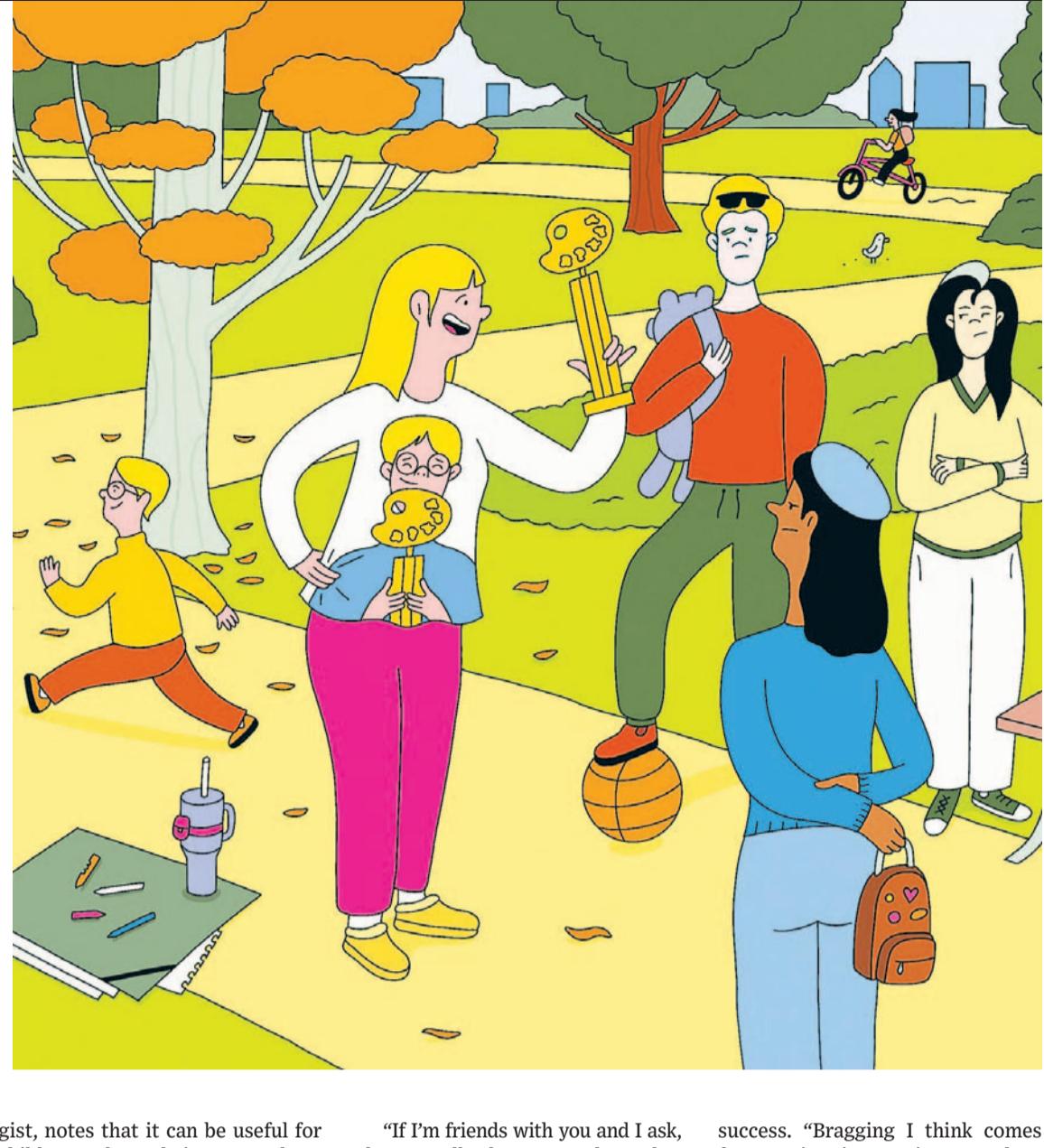
"Athletic achievement is totally fine," Lukianoff says. "It's a little more ambiguous if you should praise your child's beauty."

Lukianoff points to psychologists such as Carol Dweck, who have suggested that it's more constructive for parents to focus on children's efforts rather than their results. "So what, you won the genetic lottery and you're naturally smart," says Lukianoff. "What is impressive is you can get out of your comfort zone and do things you're not naturally good at."

Although Lukianoff has made a name from observing the pernicious effects of anxious, overattentive child-rearing, he's inclined to cut some slack for proud parents. "Give people a break bragging about their kids," he says. "There's something profoundly human about it."

Alexandra Wolfe is a former Wall Street Journal reporter and author of "Valley of the Gods."

DIEGO BLANCO



Alphabets Lost and Found

Mongol and Cherokee are just two of many writing systems that have rebounded from the brink of extinction.

By TIM BROOKES

UP TO 90% OF THE WORLD'S writing systems stand a good chance of being forced into disuse. When a culture's script is overrun by one of the world's dominant scripts, such as the Latin alphabet, Arabic, Cyrillic or Devanagari, everything written in the mother script—collections of sacred palm-leaf manuscripts, family recipes, letters, the deed proving ownership of

the family home and land—is lost, within two generations, to the very people to whom it means the most.

Since I began the Endangered Alphabets Project in 2009, many endangered languages have lost their last speaker. But others have found a constituency, a voice, an energy and a degree of use that once seemed unthinkable.

Classical Mongol script, known in Mongolian as bichig,

was the writing system of an empire that in the 13th and 14th centuries stretched from the Pacific to the Mediterranean. By the end of World War II, though, it was no longer used officially in Mongolia.

One of the many fascinating features of bichig is that it has a built-in calligraphic quality. Each letter has three forms, for when it is used at the beginning of a word, in the middle or at the end. In almost every case, both

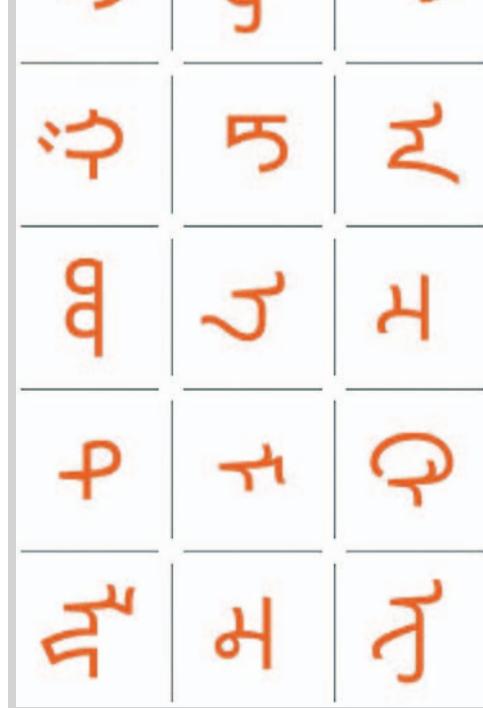
the initial and final forms have a certain flourish, allowing the writer to start each word with a fanfare and to sign off with a swoosh. It is a testimony to the striking graphic qualities of the script that its revival today is being led by artists, designers, calligraphers and poets.

The Cherokee language was written down for the first time in the early 19th century by a remarkable man named Sequoyah—the first person we know of to become literate by inventing his own writing system. He worked in the face of so much ridicule that his wife is said to have burned his papers to make him give up. Still, by 1830, up to 90% of Cherokee could read and write using Sequoyah's script.

In 1838, some 13,000 Cherokee were herded into camps and forced to march a thousand miles west to Oklahoma. Thousands died of disease, exposure and starvation on the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee language and script declined, especially since many schools punished children for using them. Not until the late 20th century did increasing numbers of Cherokee begin relearning their language and alphabet, even publishing a newspaper with articles in both English and Cherokee.

Tim Brookes is the president of the Endangered Alphabets Project. This article is adapted from his new book, "An Atlas of Endangered Alphabets," published by Mobius.

QUERCUS EDITIONS



The graphic qualities of classical Mongol script (at right) appeal to contemporary designers and calligraphers.

Cherokee (far right) was an oral language until Sequoyah invented a writing system for it in the early 19th century.



Tim Brookes is the president of the Endangered Alphabets Project. This article is adapted from his new book, "An Atlas of Endangered Alphabets," published by Mobius.

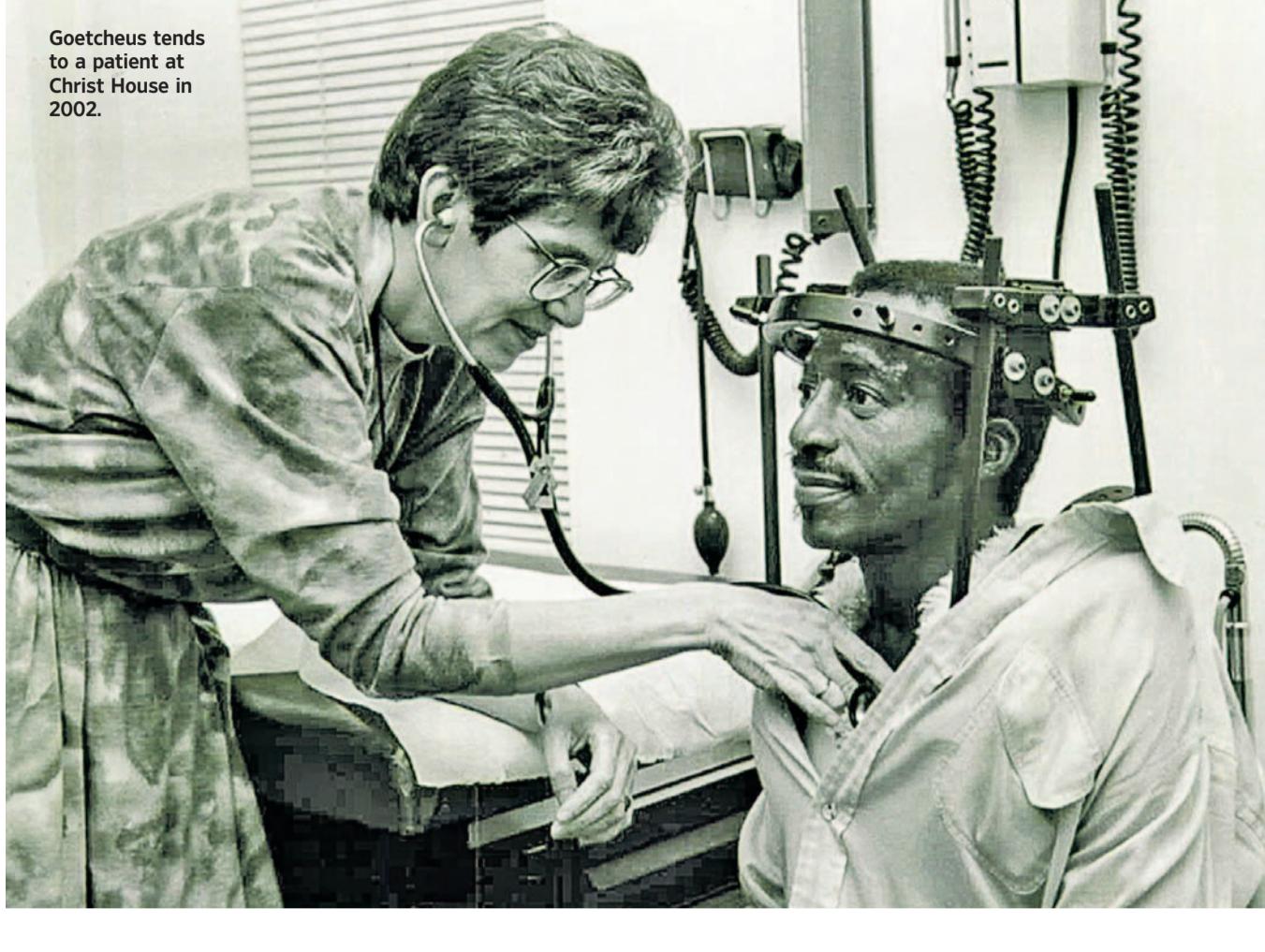
QUERCUS EDITIONS

REVIEW

OBITUARIES

JANELLE GOETCHEUS | 1940-2024

Goetcheus tends to a patient at Christ House in 2002.



The 'Mother Teresa of Washington, D.C.'

A doctor who planned to do missionary work overseas instead spent her life tending to the medical needs of the poor and homeless in her own nation's capital.

BY CHRIS KORNELIS

Years after Dr. Janelle Goetcheus began her mission to bring medical care to Washington D.C.'s homeless, she recounted walking near the White House one Christmas and taking note of a group of men keeping warm around a steam grate in the ground. She and some of her colleagues approached them to see if they were all right.

One had infected burns. Another had pneumonia. A third, they soon learned, had laryngeal cancer. Around them were tourists, and Goetcheus could see the lights of the National Christmas Tree. It felt wrong to her. "It was the most unreal scene," she wrote in the Washington Post in 1991, "and I wanted to yell: 'Something is all mixed up here.'"

It was just the kind of scenario that Goetcheus and her husband, a United Methodist minister, had been trying to address since the 1970s, when they abandoned plans to serve as overseas missionaries. They decided instead that their calling was to aid a homeless population without adequate health care in their own nation's capital.

Goetcheus spent the next half-century treating

the unhoused in Washington, D.C. She helped open clinics, provide shelter and start organizations to support them. She visited patients on park benches and in the street, because treating people where they were was central to her mission.

Cited as "the Mother Teresa of Washington, D.C." in a recommendation for a 2002 award from the American Medical Association, Goetcheus was best known for co-founding Christ House with a group that included her husband, the Rev. Allen Goetcheus. A "medical respite," Christ House is a place where men who are no longer sick enough to be in a hospital, but don't have an appropriate place to convalesce, can live while they recover. It was also the home where the couple raised their three children and where Janelle Goetcheus died on Oct. 26 at the age of 84.

Christ House opened around the same time that Dr. Jim O'Connell opened a similar facility in Boston. Bobby Watts, chief executive of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, credits the two with creating a model that has been replicated more than 160 times in the U.S. "People who are in Christian ministry their whole lives," Watts said, "say Janelle was the most Christ-like person that they've met."

'We wanted to learn to be with people and not just to do for people.'

The mission

Alice Janelle Coons was born in Indianapolis on Sept. 19, 1940. She was raised in Muncie, Ind., where the family attended the High Street United Methodist Church. She was 10 when she met Allen Goetcheus, who soon became her best friend.

Janelle felt drawn to a medical mission early in life. Her daughter, Dr. Ann Goetcheus Gehl, said there was never a time when her mother felt a pull to practice medicine that was separate from her call to serve God—the two were always intertwined.

She and Allen started dating when he was in seminary and she was in medical school. The couple married on June 13, 1965; the next morning, she graduated from medical school at Indiana University. She was a Hoosier for life.

"We grew up with Bobby Knight, and she loved IU basketball, but had always had a hard time with how angry he would get and throwing chairs and didn't believe that that was correct, but she always supported her teams," said Goetcheus Gehl. She added that as a tireless sports fan, when her mother didn't have a favorite team, "she would always root for the underdog."

The couple settled in Marion, Ind., where Goetcheus worked at a hospital. They began planning a mission overseas, but their efforts kept falling apart. While waiting for their visas to come through for a mission to Pakistan, they visited the Church of the Savior, which worked with residents in a low-income community in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington.

"It was just a very deepening experience for me," Goetcheus said in an oral-history interview with the National Library of Medicine in 1996. "We went away that weekend and were never quite the same."

They moved to the D.C. area in 1976—first to Columbia, Md. Goetcheus worked a couple of days a week in an emergency room and started working with a group from Church of the Savior to provide health services to low-income residents in D.C. In 1979, the group founded a clinic, Columbia Road Health Services, the first of many efforts she would help found and run. Those include Kairos House, a housing program for men committed to sobriety who have chronic health conditions, and the Health Care for the Homeless Project (now called Unity Health Care), a network of healthcare centers.

The family eventually moved to the Adams Morgan neighborhood and into Christ House when it opened in 1985. Living among the people she served was part of the mission.

"We wanted to learn to be with people and not just to do for people," Goetcheus said in the oral-history interview.

The move wasn't easy. There were times Goetcheus felt guilty about the situation she put her children in. "My children felt a lot of anger," she told the New York Times Magazine in 1986, when she had teenagers at home. "They were brought into the city, mugged on the street, and had their stuff stolen," she said.

In addition to her husband and daughter, she is survived by her sons, John and Mark Goetcheus.

'Take a ride with me'

Goetcheus continued to see patients through her battle with cancer and as recently as a few months before she died.

Ray Maun, 64, met Goetcheus at a clinic in 2021 when she was in her 80s. He was homeless, diabetic and had struggled with addiction most of his life. Goetcheus offered to take him to Christ House, where he spent several months.

In December 2022, Maun overdosed on fentanyl. When he got out of the hospital, he walked back to Christ House. Maun says he's now nearing two years sober, his diabetes is under control, his children and grandchildren are back in his life, and he lives in his own apartment through the Kairos program.

"And, you know, the whole thing goes back to Dr. Goetcheus," he said in a recent phone interview. "All this started with just her saying: 'Come take a ride with me.'"

JOANNE CHORY | 1955-2024

She Thought Plants Could Do More to Fight Climate Change

BY JAMES R. HAGERTY

The biologist was working to create crops that could store more carbon underground in their roots.

AS SHE NEARED DEATH, Joanne Chory had several items on her to-do list: hugging her 2-month-old granddaughter, cleaning her refrigerator, reminding her husband to water the houseplants—and protecting the world from climate-change disasters.

Chory, a plant biologist who died Nov. 12 at age 69 of complications from Parkinson's disease, was still working on an audacious effort even in her final days. She had co-founded a project in 2017 at the Salk Institute in San Diego to improve plants' ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, reducing greenhouse gases.

Her project, still being pursued by about 65 researchers at Salk, involves finding ways to induce common crop plants like wheat and corn to develop larger and deeper roots that could store more carbon for longer periods underground. Such plants could be created through breeding, gene editing or genetic modification.

Wolfgang Busch, executive director of the project, known as the Harnessing Plants Initiative, says the team still needs to prove these altered plants could store large amounts of carbon for long enough to make a big difference. He hopes the project can reach that goal

and start making a global impact on climate change in the 2030s.

Financial support for the project has come from the TED Audacious Project, the Bezos Earth Fund, Hess Corp. and others.

"I actually think we have 100 years left on this planet at most if we don't start changing the ways we grow plants," Chory said after receiving a prestigious Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences in 2018.

The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia earlier this year awarded Chory the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science for her work on plant genetics. Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking are among previous winners of Franklin medals.

Joanne Chory (pronounced Cory), the third of six children in a family of Lebanese descent, was born on March 19, 1955, in Methuen, Mass. Her father was an accountant and university administrator; her mother took a textile-mill job so that Joanne and one of her brothers could have braces on their teeth.

Babysitting and work-study jobs helped pay for her undergraduate education in biology at Oberlin College in Ohio and doctoral studies in microbiology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She followed up with a postdoctoral fellowship at a lab affiliated with the Harvard Medical School.



Chory with plants in 2019, in a photo publicizing her research at the Salk Institute.

At that lab, she began working with *Arabidopsis thaliana*, now widely used in plant research. In one experiment, she soaked *Arabidopsis* seeds in a DNA-damaging chemical and then left them to germinate in dark places. Most of the shoots were spindly and whitish, but some mutant shoots thrived and grew leaves.

Chory studied these mutants to see what allowed them to develop like seedlings grown in light. That led to breakthroughs in the study of how plants harvest light and grow. This experiment and follow-up work made her a star among plant biologists.

In 2004, when she was 49, she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Chory and her husband were raising two children, adopted from South Korea,

then 6 and 8 years old. Though dealing with the disease, she carried on with her research and contributed more than 100 articles to scientific publications in the next decade.

Survivors include her husband, Stephen Worland, her two children, a granddaughter, three brothers and a sister.

Her Parkinson's disease sharpened Chory's sense of limited time to accomplish her goals. "I would like for my kids to be thinking that I did something important for their world," she told the Washington Post in 2021.

She gave due credit to nature for its part. Plants are already very good at absorbing carbon dioxide, she said in a Salk Institute video, "but we think they need to get a little better at it."

CHRIST HOUSE

SALK INSTITUTE

PLAY

NEWS QUIZ DANIEL AKST



From this week's Wall Street Journal

1. Tennis great Rafael Nadal retired at 38. What did he say he'd like to be remembered as?

- A. "A good person from a small village in Mallorca"
- B. "The guy who never gave up"
- C. "The greatest to play on clay"
- D. All of the above

2. President-elect Trump said he would nominate Linda McMahon to head which federal department?

- A. Treasury
- B. Education
- C. Commerce
- D. Wrestling

3. The biggest Kamala Harris PAC raised nearly \$1 billion but now finds itself targeted by critics. What's it called?

- A. Forward
- B. Fast Forward
- C. Future Forward
- D. Unburdened

4. Which airline filed for Chapter 11? (Hint: it's the one a judge blocked from merging with JetBlue.)

- A. Alaska
- B. Frontier
- C. Southwest
- D. Spirit

5. Which move, for retirees in their 60s, could add years to a nest egg?

- A. Converting to a Roth
- B. Converting to a Keogh
- C. Converting to Euros
- D. Converting to asceticism

Answers are listed below the crossword solutions at right.

6. French cognac workers were planning a strike—over what grievance?

- A. Automation
- B. Immigrant labor
- C. An end to free samples
- D. The prospect of bottling moving to China

7. Name the billionaire charged with a scheme to bribe Indian officials for solar contracts.

- A. Mukesh Ambani
- B. Gautam Adani
- C. Savitri Jindal
- D. Elon Musk

8. Belgium won this year's most prestigious forklift racing event, named for the German word for forklift—which is?

- A. Gesamtkunstwerk
- B. Aufzugsgabel
- C. Stapler
- D. Forklift

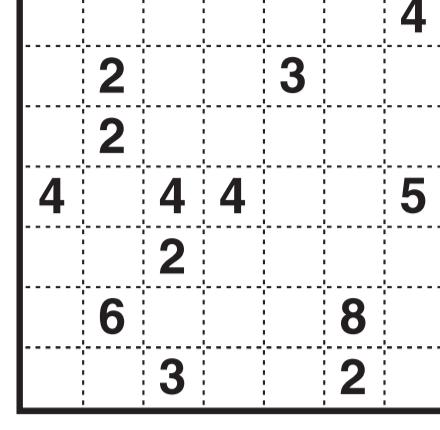
9. At a Sotheby's auction, someone paid \$6.2 million for a banana taped to a wall. What's the title of the work?

- A. "We Lost"
- B. "Me Cheeta"
- C. "Comedian"
- D. "Portrait of Miss Peel"



NUMBER PUZZLES

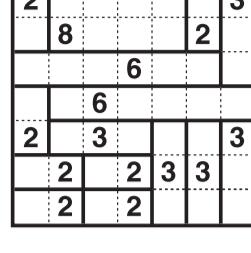
Cell Blocks



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.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

Cell Blocks



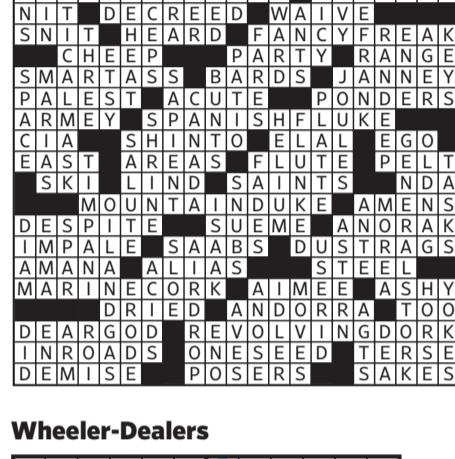
For previous weeks' puzzles, and to discuss strategies with other solvers, go to [WSJ.com/puzzles](#).

Killer Sudoku

Level 3

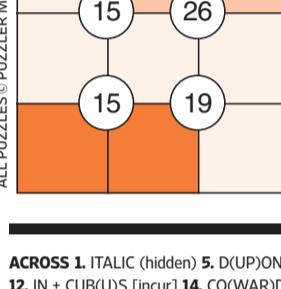


Wait and Seek



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Suko



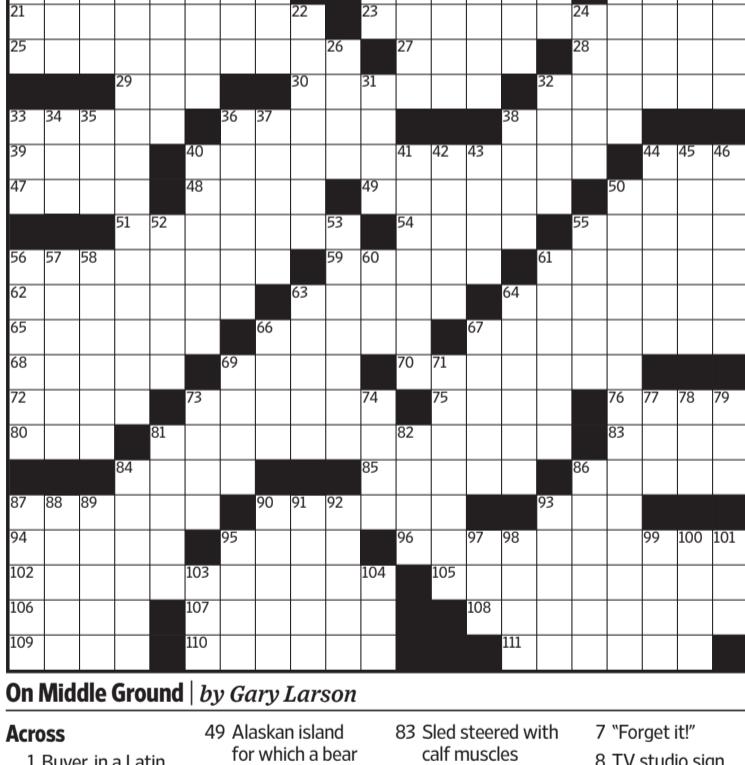
Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each color total is correct.

ACROSS

- 1. ITALIC (hidden) 5. D(UP)ONT 9. (CAN)OPY 11. O + FLAT + E
- 12. IN + CUB(U)S [incur] 14. CO(WAR)DS 16. DEIS + M ("dies" anag.) 17. REMOVE (anag.)
- 18. DU(K)E 21. CLERIC (anag.) 23. ELOP + ED (rev.) 24. ROT + H 26. STARVED (anag.) [stated]
- 28. STRUCK OUT (anag.) [shout] 31. P(LUGS)IN 32. DO(NOVA)Ne [donor] 33. TU + LANE
- 34. GO SOFT (anag.) 35. SAVE + ANNA'S [saunas] 36. SPOO + FS (rev.)
- DOWN**
- 1. ICIER ("spicier" - SP) 2. T(ANGEL)O 3. cLOUD 4. CYCLE (hidden)
- 5. CAB(wOODLE) [doodle] 6. P(LACARD) ("Carla" anag.) [plaid] 7. sOARS
- 8. T + ESTED ("steed" anag.) 10. PREC(A + R)IOUS [previous] 13. COMB + US + T [comet]
- 15. WELL-TO-DO (anag.) 19. UP + TON 20. KEEP O + FF ("peko" anag.) 21. CRY + P + T.S.
- 22. CIT(I)ES 25. HOG + AN 26. SON(G)S 27. D + ARTS 29. HULU ("who Lou" hom.) 30. SOS + O

The new letters spell **DRIVE-THRU**. The stolen items are CARs, BUSes, VANs, CAB, TRUCK and RV. The new words formed are given in brackets.

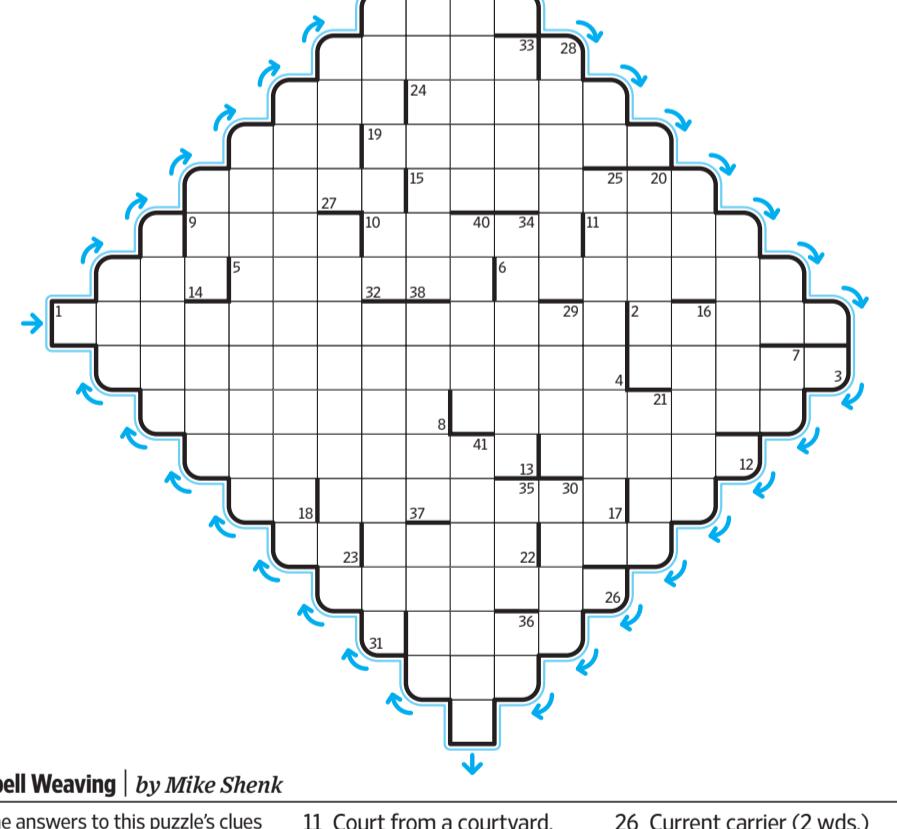
THE JOURNAL WEEKEND PUZZLES edited by MIKE SHENK



On Middle Ground | by Gary Larson

- Across**
- 1 Buyer, in a Latin warning
 - 7 Wanderers
 - 13 Twisted
 - 17 Mischievous scoundrel
 - 19 Lack of vigor
 - 20 Musk worth billions
 - 21 Dodgers' catchers, perhaps
 - 23 Web presence for a Marx brother?
 - 25 Sitting position atop a feather pillow?
 - 27 Troubles
 - 28 Circumvent
 - 29 Surgery locs.
 - 30 "Ditto"
 - 32 Norrköping natives
 - 33 Action figure since 1964
 - 36 Zulu's language family
 - 38 Trifectas and quinellas
 - 39 Early fall setting
 - 40 Masculine attire worn by female performers?
 - 44 "I not clear?"
 - 47 A bunch
 - 48 "Darling, Je Vous Beaucoup" (Nat King Cole hit)
- Down**
- 49 Alaskan island for which a bear is named
 - 50 Spreadsheet unit
 - 51 Boring shows
 - 54 Saddam's supposed stash
 - 55 2023 Timothée Chalamet film
 - 56 Inverse functions in trig
 - 59 Prenatal test, for short
 - 61 Kingdom whose official language is Dzongkha
 - 62 Shea players, once
 - 63 High-hat
 - 64 Lathering (up)
 - 65 Impoverished
 - 66 Heart
 - 67 Emergency fund
 - 68 Ominous
 - 69 Jersey group
 - 70 Issue
 - 72 German count start
 - 73 Abase
 - 75 City up the shore from Cleveland
 - 76 Checked item
 - 80 Fourth-yr. class
 - 81 Gibson appearing in a Dwayne Johnson TV show?
 - 83 Sled steered with calf muscles
 - 84 Pigeon—
 - 85 Jacket material
 - 86 Brought on board
 - 87 Glue brand
 - 90 Much of the Venusian surface
 - 93 Opening
 - 94 Grassy plain
 - 95 Sea predator
 - 96 More improvisational?
 - 102 Jokester frequenting Amtrak?
 - 105 "Stay!"
 - 106 Gulf leader
 - 107 Really enjoys
 - 108 Bath's county
 - 109 Anatomical pouches
 - 110 Stuck
 - 111 It blows off steam
 - 112 "Forget it!"
 - 113 TV studio sign
 - 114 Haggard in the Country Music Hall of Fame
 - 115 Copious
 - 116 God, in Granada
 - 117 Paulo, Brazil
 - 118 Individuals
 - 119 Poem of "the anger of Achilles"
 - 120 Publisher Nast
 - 121 Strike zone's bottom
 - 122 Bro or sis
 - 123 Car that "beats the gassers" in a Ronny and the Daytonas song
 - 124 Promiscuous person
 - 125 Terrarium creatures
 - 126 Defense gp. since 1949
 - 127 Sludge
 - 128 Look for
 - 129 Salon stuff
 - 130 Altar oath
 - 131 Hot tub feature
 - 132 Pickling solutions
 - 133 Willie of "Eight Is Enough"
 - 134 Civil rights concern
 - 135 Emit coherent light
 - 136 Defense gp. since 1949
 - 137 State to be the case
 - 138 Fishing aid
 - 139 Up to
 - 140 Ground cover

- 41 Bass clef marking
- 42 Stop denying
- 43 Lover of Aeneas
- 44 Entered
- 45 Saturated hydrocarbon
- 46 Not formal
- 50 Mutiny aboard sailing ships?
- 52 Choreographer Alvin
- 53 Pacific flatfish
- 55 Frisbee maker
- 56 Stomachs
- 57 "Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette" artist
- 58 Mass parts
- 60 Jan. and Dec., e.g.
- 61 Grave robber's loot
- 63 Sailor temptress
- 64 "Animal Farm," e.g.
- 66 Message to the staff
- 67 Seriously stuck
- 69 Didn't break
- 71 Cut out
- 73 Bad marks
- 74 Discovery org.
- 77 My and your
- 78 Epoch
- 79 Lasso on a soccer pitch
- 81 Knucklehead
- 82 Quiet interlude
- 84 Met men
- 86 "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart" songwriter James
- 87 Cary of "The Princess Bride"
- 88 Bearer of Peruvian packs
- 89 Tricky business?
- 90 Pigtail, e.g.
- 91 Breezing through
- 92 Health, in Le Havre
- 93 "No idea"
- 95 Words of approximation
- 97 It replaced CQD
- 98 Neck, in Nottingham
- 99 Emit coherent light
- 100 State to be the case
- 101 Fishing aid
- 103 Up to
- 104 Ground cover



Spell Weaving | by Mike Shenk

- The answers to this puzzle's clues form a continuous thread that is interwoven like a tapestry. Enter one letter per space, beginning in the square at the left edge and proceeding to the right. When you reach an edge, make a right-angle turn in the direction of the arrow next to the grid. Each answer begins in the correspondingly numbered space and immediately follows the previous answer in the thread.
- 1 She played a psychiatrist in Hitchcock's "Spellbound" (2 wds.)
- 2 Recognize in an awards speech
- 3 "Well, that's obvious!" (2 wds.)
- 4 Inapt comparison (3 wds.)
- 5 Honoree of a Trafalgar Square column
- 6 "Little Birds" writer (2 wds.)
- 7 Sale of more shares than a company's charter authorizes
- 8 Two-meat fast food option (2 wds.)
- 9 Eye salaciously
- 10 Bow in the movies
- 11 Court from a courtyard, perhaps
- 12 Pitcher of milk?
- 13 Headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet (2 wds.)
- 14 Aviation company that built the RAF's World War I Camel biplane
- 15 Machines found on some hotel floors
- 16 Ace of diamonds?
- 17 Its water is nearly 10 times as salty as the ocean (2 wds.)
- 18 Physics phenomenon exemplified by a vibrating violin string (2 wds.)
- 19 Scale that generally peaks in the middle of the day (2 wds.)
- 20 Urban of country
- 21 Country with kibbutzim
- 22 Excessively detailed
- 23 Mail-order option (3 wds.)
- 24 Change over time
- 25 Incidentally (3 wds.)
- 26 Current carrier (2 wds.)
- 27 Cash advance with a repayment schedule (2 wds.)
- 28 2018 Oscar winner for playing Churchill
- 29 Cathedral recess
- 30 "If I Can't Have You" singer Yvonne
- 31 Like some company boards (Hyph.)
- 32 River through Philadelphia
- 33 Less than any
- 34 Increase rapidly (2 wds.)
- 35 Longest-serving prime minister in Japanese history
- 36 Students in Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters
- 37 Foil alternative
- 38 Staple of Mediterranean cooking (2 wds.)
- 39 Language family that includes Ukrainian, Polish and Czech
- 40 It might be right
- 41 Train

► Get the solutions to this week's Journal Weekend Puzzles in next Saturday's Wall Street Journal. Solve crosswords and acrostics online, get pointers on solving cryptic puzzles and discuss all of the puzzles online at [WSJ.com/Puzzles](#).

REVIEW



MY MONDAY MORNING | BY LANE FLORSHEIM

Deepak Chopra Doesn't Believe You're Too Busy to Meditate

The well-being expert and prolific author says that being present is the best way to fight fatigue.

Your new book "Digital Dharma" compares AI to the counsel of a wise friend or therapist. Do you think AI could replace therapists in the future?

I did an experiment a while back with a chatbot that we created for teens who were contemplating suicide. We had 16 million conversations going on simultaneously by text, with 4,800 suicidal detections and interventions. Teens were more comfortable speaking

to this machine than they were to a person because they didn't feel judged and became friendly with them, because they got to know them. Then I realized, I'm not an expert in this. The chatbot should be created by therapists. So I stopped that program. I'm hoping somebody will take that over.

There are a lot of passages written by AI in the book. As you were working on it, was there

ever a time when you thought AI was seriously wrong about something?

No. The passages by AI in the book were experiments. I was just testing it out, and I was blown away by how good it was because of the database. It still "hallucinates," by the way. Right now if you ask a question on ChatGPT to which there is no answer in the search engine, it will make one up, and sometimes inaccurately.

If someone is extremely busy, what is the minimum amount of time they can spend meditating or on mindfulness in a day to see benefits?

The people who say they don't have time, they're not busy, they're just scattered. If you're present, there's no fatigue. As soon as you think of what's next, there's fatigue. As soon as you think "I shouldn't have done that," there's fatigue.

People say, "I can't meditate in New York City." Last week, I did a meditation in Bryant Park and I had them meditate on the sounds of the traffic, of the ambulances, sirens and all the conversation. And in 15 minutes, everybody was experiencing the symphony of New York.

Do you ever get stressed?
I don't get stressed.

Do you ever get bored?
No. I do get annoyed at trivial collective conversation, whether it's politics or whether it's social networks. It's so banal considering we live in a galaxy that might have 60 billion habitable planets, and that there are two trillion galaxies. I walk around New York City surprised that nobody is shocked that they exist.

What's the secret to a happy marriage or relationship?
Give up being right.

Do you have anything you consider a guilty pleasure?

Pleasure is overrated. More [important] is meaning and purpose and joy. Pleasure is very temporary. As long as you have pleasure, then you have unease about not having it anymore. So it's addictive.

What do you do to have fun?
I'm enjoying myself all the time. I don't have to do anything special. I love to read. I like people with extraordinarily outrageous ideas. There are lots of people like that.

What have you been reading lately?

My next book is called "The Awakened Life: The Path to Freedom and Enlightenment." So I'm reading "The Tibetan Book of the Dead" and "The Tibetan Book of the Living [and Dying]"—all these very esoteric spiritual texts from the East.

What's one piece of advice you've gotten that's guided you?

Way back in the '80s, my guru asked me, "What is stress?" He had never heard of stress because he came from the Himalayas. I told him stress is the perception of threat: physical, emotional and psychological. After a while, he said, "You mean resistance to existence." And he said, "If you don't resist existence, you will have flow." That's the best advice.

MASTERPIECE | 'THE TURKEYS' (1877), BY CLAUDE MONET

A Fine Feathered Canvas

By PAUL HAYES TUCKER

THEY ARE A MOTLEY BUNCH, these fleshy, red-necked, white-feathered gobblers who occupy two thirds of Claude Monet's imposing canvas titled to honor their species. Most of them peck at the grassy knoll that rises so radically in the foreground that it partly obscures the facade of the color-coordinated chateau in the distance. Many others set their ready eyes upon us as we look at them. "What are you doing here?" they seem to ask. One on the far left even spreads its plumage, apparently in response to our unwelcome proximity. Another in the immediate foreground struts by us with an air of practiced indifference. It is an unusual position for a viewer of fine art to be in.

But everything about this remarkable painting is unusual, beginning with its size. At nearly 6 feet to a side, this 1877 canvas, which resides at the Musée d'Orsay, was one of the largest that Monet had attempted since his monumental "Déjeuner sur l'herbe" of 1865-66. It is also the only painting in his career that includes such a stately private residence, a striking contrast to the modest suburban homes in Argenteuil that he painted often in the 1870s.

Most importantly, it is part of a

suite of four equally large paintings that Ernest and Alice Hoschedé, Monet's primary patrons in the 1870s, commissioned to decorate the salon of the Château de Rottembourg, their country estate in Montgeron about a dozen miles southeast of Paris. Unfortunately, there are no letters, invoices, or contemporary commentaries about the commission. All we have are the paintings—"The Turkeys," "Corner of the Garden at Montgeron," "The Pond at Montgeron," and "Hunting." We also don't know how Monet envisioned their arrangement in the house (now a home for retired priests). Nor do we know the Hoschedé reactions to Monet's efforts. What we do know is that the paintings were never installed because Ernest went bankrupt and had to sell them together with the chateau. We also know that Monet never finished "The Turkeys." The foliage on the trees to the left and sections of the knoll would have received more attention, for example, just like the turkeys; many are too sketchy for someone of Monet's abilities, as he could paint any animal, fish, or bird with dazzling precision.

Completing the painting would not have made its relationship to its mates any clearer, however. The four share no compositional similarities, no coordinated settings,

and no sense of progression from one to the other. It is as if Monet had consciously set out to completely upend the tradition of country-house decoration that extended back to at least the 17th century in France.

"The Turkeys" is particularly jolting because the chateau is supposed to be the primary feature in such pictures, but Monet demotes it for the birds, an ingenious artistic decision that is as hilarious as it is subversive. But they may be in the foreground for reasons beyond the aesthetic.



The painting is striking for the predominant position it gives to the birds.

Hoschedé family, which included their six children, to move in with his own in the small town of Vétheuil, creating a highly unusual *ménage à douze*. Ernest spent as little time there as possible while Monet's love for Alice deepened, evident from the dozens of letters he wrote to her while on painting campaigns after his wife died in 1879. They married soon after Ernest passed in 1891. Whether Ernest had been a clueless cuckold is hard to say, but there is a famous phrase in French—*d'être le dindon par la farce*—that refers to a person who is a turkey for having been duped.

Ironically, the last private owner of the painting, the Princess de Polignac, an American-born French heiress, played Monet when he tried to buy the picture, which she had temporarily consigned to his dealer Durand-Ruel in 1909. Monet requested a discount, claiming the 30,000 francs she was asking was beyond his means, which was far from true. She told him she had left it with the dealer only while she sought a house worthy of such a work. Her family's 115-room mansion in Devon, England, apparently was inadequate. No discount. She willed the painting to France, however, and it entered the national collection in 1947—ultimately rewarding the artist she so admired.

Mr. Tucker is professor emeritus of the history of art at the University of Massachusetts and the author of "Claude Monet: Life and Art" and "Monet in the 20th Century," among other books on the artist.



VDF,
C'est Quoi?
Lettie Teague
demystifies the
Vin de France
designation **D8**

OFF DUTY

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Heavy Going
Why women are
strutting around
town in weighted
fitness vests
D2



***** Saturday/Sunday, November 23 - 24, 2024 | **D1**

FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR



How To Do Happy Hour NOW

LATE-AFTERNOON DELIGHT At Superfolie, a bi-level wine bar in Philadelphia, happy hour is booming in a neighborhood where those seeking a drink and a bite have few other options pre-5 p.m.



Dante in New York City keeps patrons happy with \$10 drinks during its happy hour—while many neighboring bars charge \$25 or more.



From left: At Este in Austin, happy hour deals extend to food as well as drinks; Myles Moore makes a Saladito Margarita (\$10 at happy hour).

Suddenly, it's 5 o'clock everywhere. Bars and restaurants are vying for our business as never before, with first-class cocktails and cuisine at highly palatable prices.

BY MEGAN KRIGBAUM

AT LAST we have reached the time of year when we are expected to toast with co-workers, meet up with friends we haven't seen in ages and step away from our laptops to wedge into a bar on the early side of 5 o'clock. It's prime happy hour season. Bars and restaurants around the country—still reeling from pandemic-era hits to their bottom line and patrons' wavering tolerance for socializing—are working overtime to entice guests in. The well-made drinks banish memories of lukewarm happy-hour Malbec; the snacks far surpass rubbery mozzarella sticks.

At the bar Dante in New York City's West Village, between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m. any day of the week, one can have a very good Martini for \$10—remarkable at a time when cocktails in some Manhattan bars cost more than \$25. At Este in Austin, Texas, \$7.50 swordfish tacos on housemade Texas corn tortillas accompany \$10 ancho-chile spicy margaritas. At Mr. Tuna, a restaurant in Portland, Maine, the busiest Halfie Hour—when sushi hand rolls are half price—occurs on Saturday from 11 a.m. to noon. There are so many ways to happy hour now.

More Bounty for the Buck
On a recent sunny Wednesday afternoon at Superfolie in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse neighborhood, the sidewalk tables were filling up for happy hour at 4:30. Partners Chloé Grigri and Vincent Stipo opened the bi-level wine bar in March 2023. "We saw an opportunity to be the place you could always grab a snack or a bite, in a neighborhood that doesn't have many options before 5 p.m.," Stipo said. "We see a lot of regulars and neighbors pop in for an end-of-day meeting or an early-evening drink on a work-from-home day, and theatergoers with an early showtime."

At the bar, one customer was posted up with a draft Negroni, reading a book. Some colleagues were discussing politics over the day's house white wine (that day, Domaine de la Patience Blanc from France's Langue-

Please turn to page D9

MICHAEL PERSICO FOR WSJ (SUPERFOLIE); STEVE FREHON (DANTE); WEN FITZGERALD FOR WSJ (ESTE)

Inside



MERRIMENT, REFINED

How to build a holiday mantel display that steers well clear of kitsch **D8**



30 MINUTES TO M-MM!

A zippy recipe for fried chicken cutlets with onions, mushrooms and Marsala **D10**



ALBANIA BY BIKE

Still under the radar, the captivating Balkan nation is gaining fans fast **D13**



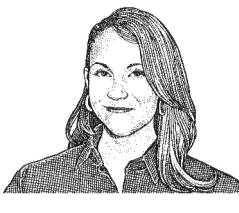
TURN ON THE CHARMS

The season's best-dressed bags are armed with stylish trinkets **D4**

OMORPHO

STYLE & FASHION

OFF BRAND / RORY SATRAN



The Sweaty Vogue for Weighted Vests

I'VE STARTED walking everywhere in a weighted vest. Yes, I've joined the legion of women looking like DEA agents who are about to bust a meth lab. Chalk it up to influence: I'd seen the prominent OBGYN Dr. Mary Claire Haver enthusing about the benefits of weighted vests; Katie Couric peppily pounding the beach in hers; and model Kaia Gerber sprinting on a treadmill in a fitted white one—bless her heart.

Weighted vests run the gamut from \$25 Amazon cheapos to Gerber's chic favorite, the Omorpho G-Vest, which starts at \$259. I chose

develop osteoporosis, and we would all rather look more like Jennifer Lopez than a Golden Girl at age 50.

Can a vest that resembles a life preserver really help with that—and are we OK with looking a little silly?

"Honestly, I'm a little embarrassed," said Couric, in a video segment about weighted vests from this summer. She asked her Pilates instructor, Ashley Patten, "Do you see a lot of people walking around in these?"

She sure does. Patten, who recently turned 40, was struck by how many men and women

dia disciples from her treadmill desk. She cites a 2000 study in the Journals of Gerontology which found that women using a weighted vest for five years (combined with jumping exercises) maintained their BMD (bone min-

eral density) more than those that didn't. Dr. Haver sells weighted vests from the brand Prodigent via her Amazon storefront, from which she earns commission.

Other doctors and physical therapists I spoke with agreed

that walking or exercising in a weighted vest could help add strength and bone density.

Along with Dr. Vonda Wright and Dr. Stacy Sims, Dr. Haver is part of the so-called "menoposse," a group of female doctors spreading awareness about how age-related hormonal shifts affect your body. There's something of a renaissance around perimenopause and menopause.

Along with weighted vests and strength-training, the new discussion of menopause stresses eating a lot of protein and considering hormone-replacement therapy.

But women over 40 aren't the only ones stoking the

weighted vest craze. Stefan Olander founded Portland weighted-clothing company Omorpho in 2021 after 21 years at Nike. Omorpho's vests are worn by neighborhood walkers as well as macho workout fanatics and elite male and female athletes.

Olander, who said his company has grown by triple digits every year since it launched, was driven to create a product that was as beautiful as it was functional. He worked with a former Nike colleague, Natalie Candrian, to design a vest whose "microloading" weighted beads would be seamlessly integrated throughout.

Olander says the recent wave of women inspired by Haver and Couric has boosted his brand. "What we see a lot of is women who buy it, wear it on a walk, and then their friends go, 'What are you wearing?' It creates this immediate FOMO."

That sense of keeping up with the Joneses drove Ashley Shearin, 45, who works in wealth management, to purchase a vest on Amazon. Out on a walk one day in her Nashville neighborhood, Shearin noticed a weighted vest on a woman but was too shy to inquire about it. So, back home, she googled "vest women are wearing on walks." She bought one for less than \$30 and now uses it several times a week. "I don't care if it looks a little goofy," she said, adding that she liked that it was a "conversation starter" and helped her bond with other women.

Now that weighted vests are getting more widespread, they're being worn everywhere from the grocery store to school drop-off. But don't be crazy. One question Olander gets is whether you can wear a weighted vest while swimming. "Please don't do that," he tells them, "because I don't want you to drown."



WORTH THE WEIGHT? Women hit the street in weighted vests from Portland's Omorpho.

Margot McKinney.

THE FINEST JEWELS



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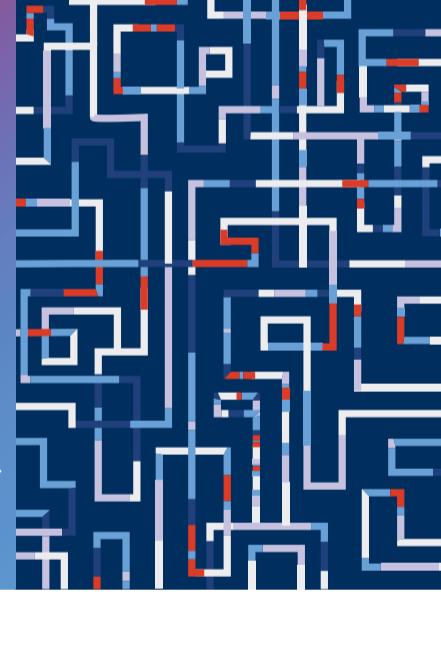
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

STYLE & FASHION

What's Old Is Blue Again

1970s flares. 1990s cargos. Y2K baggies. How modern versions of women's retro jean styles are becoming the denim du jour.

BY FREYA DROHAN

REBECCA VANYO was shopping on a recent afternoon when a cluster of Manhattanites surrounded her—"Where did you get those jeans" rang the refrain. The denim in question? Her new high-rise, 1970s-inspired Chloé flares, paired with a vintage silk John Galliano top and an inexpensive woven belt.

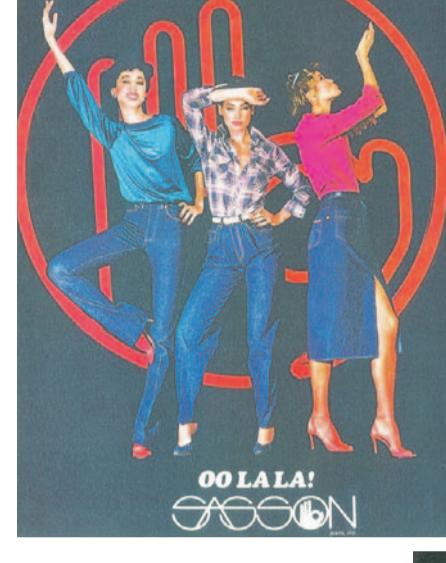
The moment Vanyo, a 30-something New York transplant, saw the romantic, hippie-leaning jeans swoosh down the fall 2024 runway, she was hooked. She eventually snagged two pairs from the debut collection of Chloé creative director Chemena Kamali at the brand's Paris boutique. And while the sold-out-everywhere styles are now her go-to for a "Rachel Zoe circa 2006 look" (the last time such boho styles boomed), Vanyo says she also stopped giving away

These days, young shoppers are hunting for the silhouettes their moms and big sisters once wore.

her archived Y2K denim. Just last month, she wore an old Roberto Cavalli pair for a night out.

Literal mom jeans are back. These days, shoppers are hunting for the silhouettes their matriarchs and big sisters once wore, as brands dig deep into their archives to resurrect long-forgotten designs.

The Italian label Replay resuscitated its 9Zero1 styles from the 1990s, while Gloria Vanderbilt jeans (a relic from the '70s) amass tens of thousands of reviews on Amazon. At the relaunched streetwear fashion brand Baby



Phat, creative director Kimora Lee Simmons's grown-up daughters, Aoki and Ming, who featured in original 2000s ads as babies, are now frontlining campaigns. Even Wrangler's retro flares and bell bottoms are reaching new audiences through a September 2024 collaboration with country singer Lainey Wilson.

One of the biggest revivals? A collaboration between California fashion brand Johnny Was and Sasson Jeans—the denim brand of the '70s and '80s.

At its height, Sasson Jeans had no problem booking the New York Rangers and Elton John to appear in its ads. Over lunch last year, Robert Trauber, CEO of Johnny Was, and Sasson Jeans co-founder Paul Guez hashed out a partnership to bring back the famed line nearly four decades after it disappeared. The Rue De La Flare—a three-pocket flare inspired by the brand's bestselling bell bottoms from 1976—hit stores last month. "People are buying it because they remember their mom wearing them," Trauber said of the collection's top seller. "They feel like they're wearing a piece of history."



BACK TO THE FUTURE Above: The signature red patch and contrast stitching of Sasson's bestsellers from the 1970s carry through to the 2024 Rue De La Flare design. Inset: a 1979 Sasson Jeans ad.

tight jeans of the 1970s—the ones in which women had to lie down to zip up before hitting Studio 54—and the "flimsy" stretchy ones that crept in in recent decades.

When Joe Dahan's kids came home from the flea market with "vintage" Joe's Jeans—a brand he launched in 2001—he had to laugh.

These days, Dahan and his ex-wife Ambre are offering shoppers throwback styles with a modern feel through their label Sprwmn. As the Dahans said of their customers, "They're not copying a young girl. They have their own look."

To achieve fits you can eat lunch in without feeling pinched, the duo ensures the fabric mix includes a small percentage of Lycra.

"The fabrics Ambre buys are so expensive, they're driving me bananas," Dahan said. Ambre's rejoinder: "I'm 45, I've been in L.A. for 20 years and had three kids. [The jeans] I want for my body are different now."

Beyond updated fabrics, the reborn jeans are notable for their fresh take on heritage details and nods to sustainability. When Jasmin Larian Hekmat, the founder of Cult Gaia, collaborated with Gap last month, she remembered the heavy chains her brother once slung from his belt loops. To reference that

punk vibe for 2024, she chose a dainty gold chain instead. She also resurrected the design of the Gap cargos of her youth, this time with delicate rivets and zippers. They were the first piece to sell out.

Rizka Rivanti, the women's resort wear, denim and ski buyer at online retailer Moda Operandi, confirms that innovative takes on retro ideas are resonating with luxury customers. At the office, you'll find her grooving in Triarchy's Ms. Fonda wide-leg jeans—named for the 1980s exercise guru but crafted for today. The pair is made using a pioneering process that eliminates microplastics in favor of natural rubber and uses biodegradable denim.

But, whatever decade is referenced, nothing beats a flattering fit. According to customer feedback from the Johnny Was boutique in Newport Beach, Calif., one woman who said that she rocked her first Sasson jeans (complete with ankle zippers) as a high school freshman in 1982, told a store associate that she was curious how the '80s icon would translate to modern day. The verdict? The updated version, she said, "feels like it has followed my own transition from an '80s kid to a grown woman."

When the Going Gets Cuff

Flip for fall's favorite denim move

IT'S CUFFING season. Throwback jean styles with a deep cuff are trending, with searches up 62%

between January and November 2024 on the pre-loved clothing platform Depop. "People want to be individual—the ability to style it and make the cuff your own feels new," said Citizens of Humanity cre-

ative director Marianne McDonald of the brand's Ayla style, which features an extra-long inseam for customized folding. She wears hers in a single cuff with a turtleneck and pointy-toe slingback kitten heels. Not a fan of DIY? Many brands, from Ulla Johnson to Reformation, have taken the guesswork

out of the equation by offering pre-cuffed hems. Noticing that both wide legs and straight legs with cuffs were selling,

L'Agence fused the two and introduced the Miley style with a stitched-down six-inch mega cuff last year. "You don't want to cuff something that's too clean, you want it to have a very vintage wash," J Brand's Jeff Rudes points out. "And don't do it with a Converse—go for a heel."



A guest at London Fashion Week in February 2024

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STYLE & FASHION

It's On the Bag

Mushrooms and roses and robots, oh my! From Queen Victoria to Jane Birkin, true accessory lovers have always sought out talismans and trinkets. This season's plethora of bag charms lets you jingle jangle through your own adornment moment. Here, three of our favorite charm setups—and the best bags to pair them with.

Utilitarian

► Hobo bags and vast, fit-everything totes seem practical until you find yourself rifling through a seemingly bottomless pit to find a rebellious pen cap. Enter utilitarian charms. These mini-satchels and holsters hold your AirPods and hand sanitizer while a spare key hangs from the D-rings of a bag or a lanyard-cum-charm strung across the front. Savette Large Tondo Hobo, \$1,990; Clare V. Pom Pom Tassel Key Chain, \$125; Miu Miu Bag Charm, \$675; Valextra AirPods Pro Case (Sold with Strap), \$460; Bandolier Hand Sanitizer Pouch, \$42



Ladylike

► Charms needn't read youthful or kooky. Here, a trio of leather floral trinkets mirror the delicate femininity of this Jill Sander frame bag—whose deliberately creased calf leather evokes a crinkled rose petal—without skewing too saccharine. Tie the look up in a bow (literally) with a demure velvet ribbon fastened to the opposite strap. Jill Sander Small Goji Pillow Bag, \$2,790; Zara Flower Key Chain, \$40; Miu Miu Flower Charm, \$440

Eccentric

► Want a more playful, over-the-top vibe? The more baubles, the merrier. Still, invest your madness with method. Anchor a clutch of daffy danglers with one oversize option, like Loewe's woven calfskin mushroom. Then embrace a bold bag choice—animal-print haircalf offers a showy canvas for fearless charms. Staud Brando Bag, \$450; Loewe Mushroom Charm, \$550; Martha Calvo Beaded Bag Charm, \$200 at Net-a-Porter; Mansur Gavriel Pizza Key Ring, \$75; Prada Robot Bag Charm, \$575



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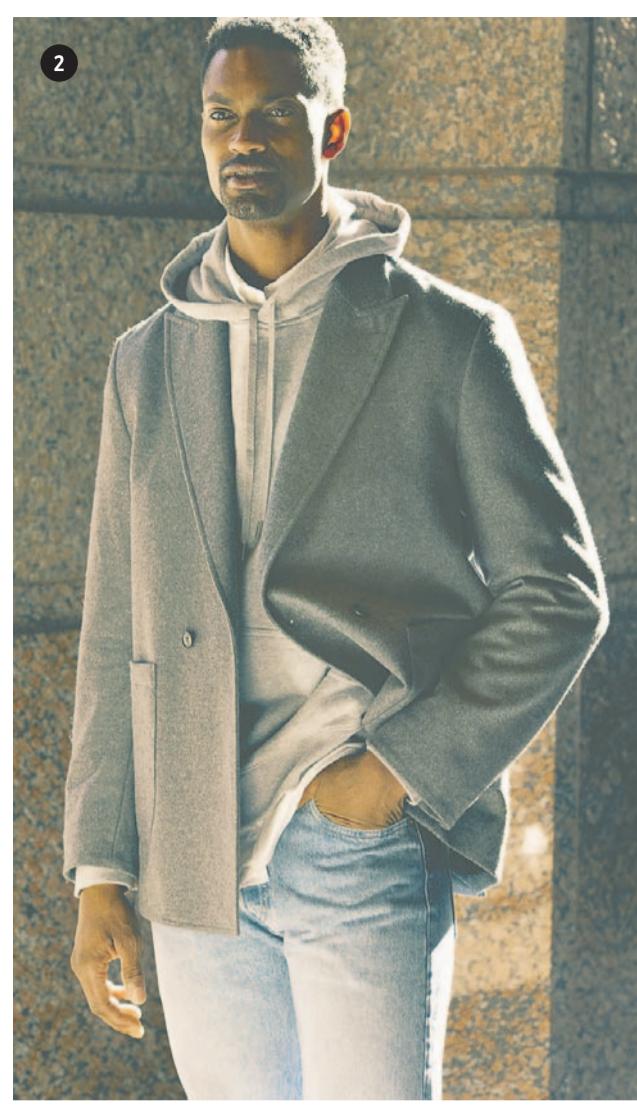


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STYLE & FASHION



CURIOUSLY COOL COMBOS These outfits derive freshness from unexpected pairings. **Look 1** Brooks Brothers Shirt, \$128; Uniqlo Shirt, \$40; J. Press x Buck Mason T-Shirt, \$65; Levi's Jeans, \$98. **Look 2** Noah Sport Coat, \$998; Sunspel Hoodie, \$220; Polo Ralph Lauren Shirt, \$125; Levi's Jeans, \$98. **Look 3** Uniqlo Overshirt, \$50; Polo Ralph Lauren Shirt, \$125; Brooks Brothers Vest, \$248; L.L.Bean Turtleneck, \$40

PHILIP VUKEVICH FOR WSJ.; STYLING BY CATTIE KELLY; TALES BY BRANDON PARKER FOR MUSE NIGHT

Be a Man With Layers

Ever throw a blazer over a hoodie? Wear a flannel atop a flannel? Pairing unlikely items, or stacking pieces in an unusual order, can up your stylishness with little effort.

BY ASHLEY OGAWA CLARKE

MIC NGUYEN, a Brooklyn stand-up comic, layers his clothes in unorthodox ways. The 44-year-old will slip a blazer under a padded fleece vest, or throw a crew-neck

sweater over a hoodie—the hood hanging out so you see both pieces. For the comedian these outfits are no joke. They let him seriously up his style game and get more looks out of his wardrobe. “I try to be unexpected [by] experimenting with where a layer should go,” he said.

You don’t have to mix it

up as radically as Nguyen does. But if you want an easy way to liven up your wardrobe without splurging on new clothes, this is it. You just need some everyday staples like hoodies, flannels and Oxford shirts, and be willing to ditch “common-sense” rules about how to combine them. A

stylish edge awaits.

Just ask Clare Waight Keller. The new creative director of minimalist Japanese brand Uniqlo has already refreshed its visual merchandising with some moves that sound a little odd but look surprisingly sharp. She’ll outfit male models and mannequins in flannel-on-flannel or style a hoodie over an Oxford button-down. “Layering is especially important in menswear, because men’s clothing usually consists of the same components,” said the British designer. Good style, she said, “is literally about the way you put it together.”

To kick-start your out-of-the-box-styling journey, here are four looks that spin everyday items into fresh—but not weird—outfits.

1 Chuck a plaid shirt over a...plaid shirt.

Layering one shirt over another—a controversial move sometimes called “double shirting”—can look great when executed correctly. But casually tossing one dress-shirt over another won’t cut it, notes Mac Huelster, a New York menswear stylist. “The top shirt should be a heavier fabric, like a wool cupro or a heavy flannel,” he said, recommending an Oxford button-down or lighter flannel underneath. Two flannels can work, provided the top one’s thicker.

Huelster and Waight Keller enjoy plaid on plaid, if both shirts aren’t shouting. “One subtle plaid under or over a punchier one usually works well,” said Huelster.

Nick Howard-Lanes, a London stylist and designer, offers another way to add intrigue: Contrast your shirt collars. An overshirt with a regular point collar layered over a button-down-collar style is a winning combo.

2 Wear a hoodie over a shirt. Finish with a blazer.

Men of all ages can achieve a sneaky sort of cool by letting a shirt peek out from beneath a hoodie. “It’s a really youthful way of bringing something new to your look,” said Waight Keller. While a gym hoodie suffices for your average Oxford shirt, a more elevated button-up deserves a sleeker hoodie, she says, like one in a fine or double-faced cotton.

A floppy blazer on top completes the look without feeling predictable. But keep the hoodie and blazer in the

same color family, says Thomas Christos Kikis, a Los Angeles stylist. Stick to one quiet shade, like navy or gray, and your layered pieces run less risk of clashing, says Kikis. He calls this strategy “silent layering.” In a look that utters barely a squeak, we’ve stacked a gray sport coat over a hoodie in a similar shade (above, right).

Find the shirt-hoodie-blazer situation too casual? Beckie Klein and Martina Gordon, founders of New York personal style consultancy Beckie+Martina, urge their C-suite clients to sport a full- or quarter-zip knit un-

cool.” It’s “functional and outdoorsy,” he added.

In another of our examples, wool, denim and corduroy rough up a smooth turtleneck base (above, right). A knit vest, like our patterned one, layers more efficiently than a hot, bulky sweater. Similarly, treating a corduroy shirt like a jacket, as we’ve done, adds visual appeal without Michelin Man volume.

4 Wear a windbreaker as an inner layer.

Hear us out: This move challenges the idea that a jacket must go on the outside. The

Wearing a hoodie over a shirt is ‘a really youthful way of bringing something new to your look,’ said Uniqlo’s Clare Waight Keller.

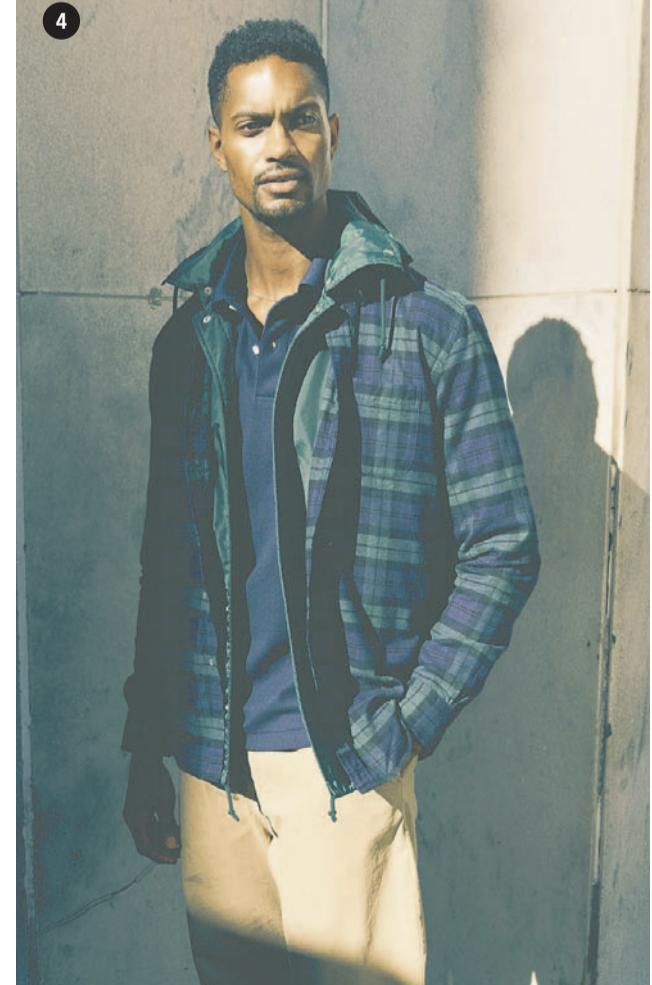
der a blazer. “It’s more streamlined, but still unexpected,” said Gordon.

3 Play with texture—and treat overshirts like jackets.

To up your layering game, pay attention to texture, says Gordon. Rustic fabrics like tweed, corduroy, suede and denim play nicely together yet don’t feel snoozy. Nguyen will put a hardy lamb’s wool vest over a denim shirt, and top that with a corduroy jacket—or, on chilly days, a suede one. He said he’s heard that cowboys used to layer suede and wool, “which is

thinness of a windbreaker lets it slot neatly under flannels or knits, providing a slick contrasting layer—and a hood that looks great pulled over the top. “I like a thin hooded windbreaker under a bunch of different things,” said Huelster. Beyond looking good, he finds this order “does a better job of keeping [him] warm.”

Waight Keller goes even further, styling a hooded rain coat under an overshirt. “It’s a completely different way of wearing things. It makes everything look cooler.” (If it pours, quickly reshuffle.)



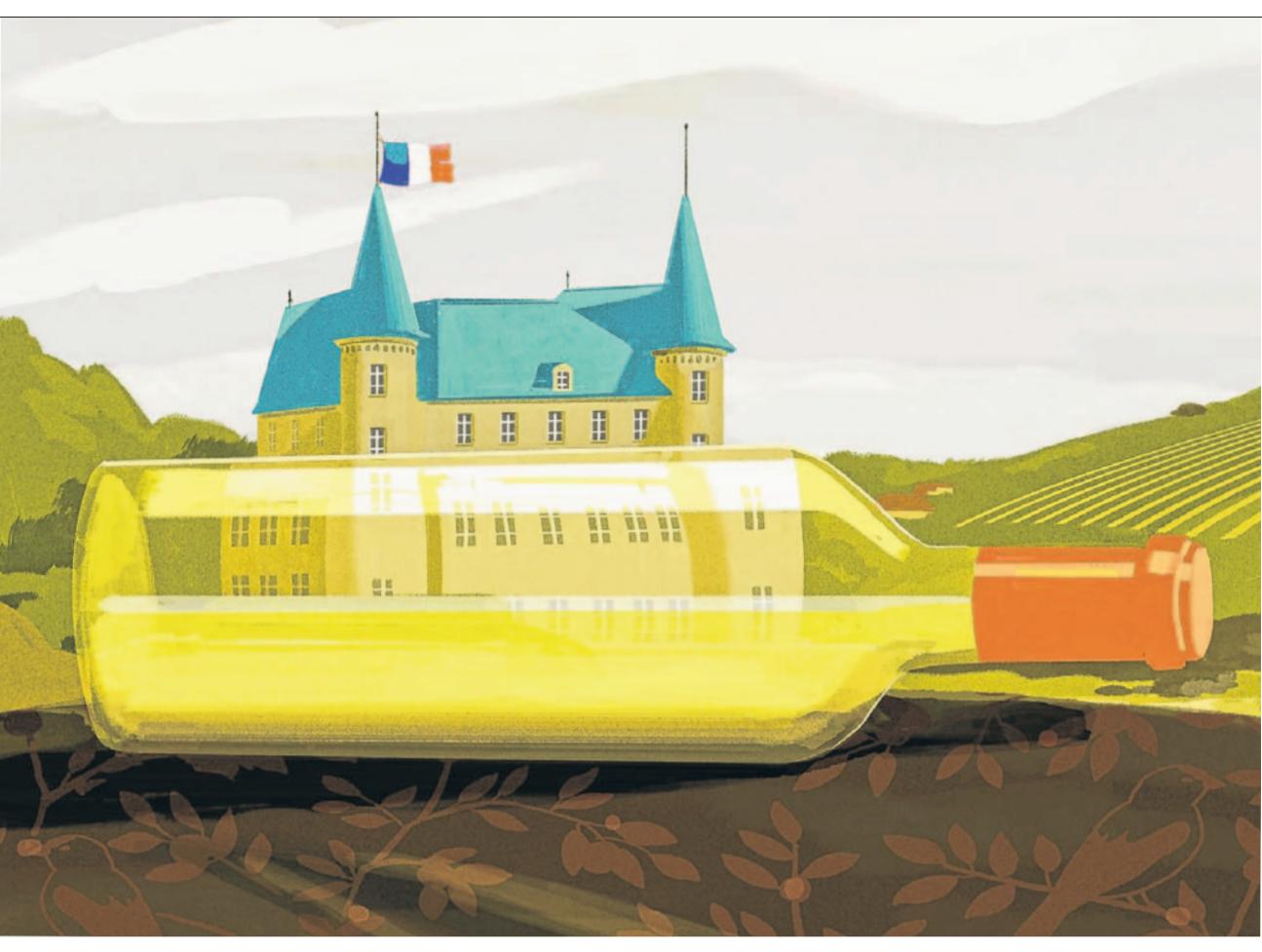
IT'S RAINING STYLE A hooded raincoat is worn on the inside. Brooks Brothers Shirt, \$128; Noah Jacket, \$328; L.L.Bean Polo, \$40; Carhartt Work in Progress Pants, \$148

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EATING & DRINKING



FABIO CONSOLI

ON WINE / LETTIE TEAGUE

Very Good French Wine Hiding in Plain Sight

SOME OF THE MOST interesting wines made in France are labeled Vin de France. Some of that country's least-notable wines sport that label as well.

The Vin de France appellation, aka VDF, was created in 2009 to replace Vin de Table, the most basic French classification. This wide-ranging category encompasses box wines as well as three-figure bottles from first-rate producers.

French wine law is exact-

ing: Only certain grapes are recognized for AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) status within a designated region, and production size, vinification techniques and vineyard management are also regulated. Winemakers must submit all wines for which they seek AOC status to a regional committee for approval along with extensive paperwork. Producers who choose not to conform to the rules can opt for the Vin de

France designation over a more specific AOC and list only the wine's name, grape and vintage on the bottle.

Take Domaine Zind-Humbrecht, an Alsace producer of highly regarded Rieslings. General manager and winemaker Olivier Humbrecht also produces a Chardonnay-dominant blend classified as a Vin de France, because Chardonnay is not officially recognized in the Alsace AOC.

I bought a bottle of the

transgressive wine, the 2022 Domaine Zind-Humbrecht "Zind" Vin de France (\$35), and was much impressed by the Chardonnay-Auxerrois blend: complex, lush, aromatic. I was surprised to learn it was sourced from one of the winery's best vineyards, Clos Windsbuhl. How did Chardonnay end up in a legendary Riesling vineyard?

Humbrecht explained that his father planted the Chardonnay in the 1980s, when a Burgundian friend deemed a part of the vineyard the perfect spot to grow the grape. Humbrecht blended Chardonnay with Auxerrois (a recognized Alsace grape) and found it a successful combination. "Chardonnay brings intensity, structure, acidity. Auxerrois brings aromatics and richness," he said. "Unfortunately, we didn't realize [initially]

Producers who choose not to conform to the rules can opt for the Vin de France designation.

that Chardonnay was excluded for Alsace AOC wines."

Some producers are more deliberate in eschewing an AOC. Guillaume Clusel, winemaker and owner of Maison Clusel-Roch in the Northern Rhone, makes AOC wines, but he preferred to label his dense, creamy 2022 Clusel-Roch Sur Le Mont (\$38) a Vin de France. "For me, it's more elegant," Clusel said—an adjective I would apply to the wine itself, a beguiling field blend of several white Rhone varieties including Roussanne and Viognier, aged in steel tanks and oak barrels.

A few other VDF whites from other parts of France proved similarly impressive. The tangy, herb-inflected 2021 Vignobles Pueyo "Orchis" Vin de France (\$24), made from a 20-year-old Semillon vineyard outside St. Emilion in Bordeaux, is one of several VDF wines from fifth-generation winemaker Christophe Pueyo. Like Clusel, Pueyo also makes appellation-designated wines (Bordeaux and St. Emilion).

The Delaille family of Domaine du Salvard produce AOC wines in the Cheverny region of the Loire Valley as well as a VDF-designated Sauvignon Blanc that winemaker Emmanuel Delaille explained was produced from both estate and purchased grapes. His 2023 Salvard "Unique" Sauvignon Blanc Vin de France (\$15), a terrific bargain, is a fresh, lively white with a crisp, herbal edge.

Guillaume Lefèvre of Domaine de Sulauze in Aix-en-Provence produces six red wines, only one of which has appellation status. For his wonderfully fresh, thrillingly vibrant 2022 Domaine de Sulauze Les Amis (\$27), Lefèvre decided that carbonic maceration—a fermentation method wherein grapes are not crushed but fermented in whole bunches, which is not permitted in his AOC—would best "express the fruit and maintain a certain freshness."

The Amoreau family gave up on their Francs-Côtes de Bordeaux appellation altogether in 2019, according to Clarke Boehling, a sales representative at Rosenthal Wine Merchant, the importer of the Amoreau wines. Boehling explained that the family had been periodically frustrated by obstacles to maintaining appellation status; one issue was their wines' levels of volatile acidity. "They had become fatigued by such resistance," he said. Their soft, ripe, Merlot-dominant 2022 Duc des Nauves Vin de France (\$27) certainly tasted like a classic Bordeaux to me.

In Montlouis-sur-Loire, in the Loire Valley, the Jousset family made two choices that came between their charming 2022 Jousset Rose à Lies Vin de France (\$24) and an AOC designation. It's a blend of Gamay and Grolleau, both grapes not permitted in the Montlouis appellation. Lise Jousset further explained, "This cuvée is in the Vin de France category because we have often sold this wine non-disgorged"—which is to say, the yeast cells are not removed following fermentation but left in the bottle.

To produce the juicy, berry-inflected 2022 M.&C. Lapierre Raisins Gaulois (\$22) the late, famed Beaujolais producer Marcel Lapierre aimed for vineyard yields that exceeded AOC limits. Anthony Lynch, sourcing manager and content director of the wine's importer, Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, said this made it possible to "harvest grapes with little concentration for maximum lightness, freshness and thirst quenching."

The producers of the pleasantly light-bodied Domaine la Ferrandière Blanc de Blancs Méthode Traditionnelle Vin de France (\$14) could have chosen to designate it IGP (Protected Geographical Indication)—less restrictive than

OENOFIL / VIN DE FRANCE BOTTLES THAT REDEEM THE NAME



2023 Domaine du Salvard 'Unique' Sauvignon Blanc Vin de France \$15

This is a lively, dry, slightly tropical take on Sauvignon Blanc from a long-established winemaking family in the Loire Valley appellation of Cheverny. Uncomplicated and bright, a terrific aperitif.



2022 Maison Clusel-Roch Sur Le Mont Vin de France \$38

This northern Rhone domaine's Côte Rôtie reds are legendary, but this gossamer-textured, minerally white, a field blend of Roussane, Viognier and others, holds its own in winemaker Guillaume Clusel's portfolio.



2022 Domaine de Sulauze Les Amis Vin de France \$27

This lithe, gorgeously aromatic red is a Syrah for skeptics who find the grape overly powerful and alcoholic. They will be pleasantly surprised by this lower-alcohol wine, fresh and bright and compulsively drinkable.



2022 Domaine Zind-Humbrecht 'Zind' Vin de France \$35

This lush and creamy white—produced by one of Alsace's most highly regarded producers from one of its most esteemed vineyards—certainly makes the case for Chardonnay to be an officially recognized Alsace grape.



2022 M.&C. Lapierre Raisins Gaulois Vin de France \$22

The late, great Beaujolais master Marcel Lapierre once described this juicy, ripe, light-bodied, lower-alcohol Gamay as his "wine to drink in the shower." I'd be happy to drink it anywhere.

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DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF WINDHAM MOUNTAIN CLUB

Special Advertorial Feature

Nestled in the heart of the Catskills and just a short drive from New York City, Windham Mountain Club (WMC) is a sanctuary for year-round adventurers of all ages that bring families closer in every season. Standing as the preeminent destination for thoughtfully elevated and intentionally uncrowded mountain living, this premiere, public-private mountain community seamlessly blends world-class skiing with exclusive luxury amenities, offering an unparalleled experience for winter weekend guests and private club members.

"Our goal is to provide the best overall skiing and riding experience in the Northeast," says President Chip Seamans. "With uncrowded slopes for the public and our members, our ski racing and development programs, and extraordinary culinary offerings, we aim to create a remarkable end-to-end experience at Windham Mountain Club."

HONORING TRADITIONS, BUILDING LEGACY

Windham Mountain Club stands on a foundation rich in history, originating in the early 1960s with the establishment of Cave Mountain Ski Area. In 2024, the experienced luxury hospitality families of Sandy Beall and Kemmons Wilson (KWC Management) came on board as new majority owners. With over 100 years of combined industry experience, this experienced team placed emphasis on reshaping the resort into a four-season luxury destination and provided a historic investment of \$70 million. Sandy Beall is Founder of Land Hospitality, a company that brings premier four-season private communities to life for unparalleled experiences, and best known as Chairman and Co-Founder of Blackberry Farm, a Relais and Chateaux and Wine Spectator Grand Award property, and Blackberry Mountain, listed for Vogue's 2024 Top 10 Best Spa Resorts in the United States.



"Our focus is creating memorable experiences, from a day on the mountain to an afternoon on the water or fairway, to summer mornings spent in holistic fitness and total rejuvenation. Windham Mountain Club will offer truly special experiences that guests will look forward to year after year."

Sandy Beall

Chairman and Co-Founder of Blackberry Farm and Blackberry Mountain



CELEBRATING LUXURY AND LIFE

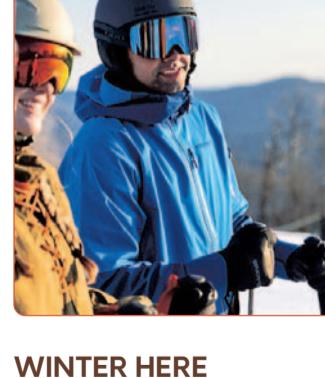
Windham Mountain Club is a haven for those who appreciate luxury in every detail and value quality family time. Savvy skiers, diners, and outdoor enthusiasts will take note of improved, automated snowmaking and grooming, six different restaurants to choose from across the mountain (with more concepts on the way), and next up in the development pipeline, year-round luxury residences just steps away from the slopes. At the heart of Windham Mountain Club is a close-knit community that values connection, camaraderie, and shared experiences. Premiere events, social gatherings, annual mountain traditions, and members-only experiences foster a sense of belonging, making WMC not just a destination, but a second home. Whether you're sharing stories over dinner or participating in a group hike, the spirit of community is ever-present. Children at Windham Mountain Club can embark on their own journeys of discovery, from exhilarating downhill skiing adventures to exploring forested trails and marveling at starlit skies. It's clear that

here, young adventurers will create deep connections with nature and forge lasting friendships.

The recent developmental changes have catapulted Windham Mountain Club towards becoming a destination that is worth more than just a visit. Members and guests can embark on extraordinary journeys filled with unexpected delights—whether it's a personalized wine or token of appreciation, every moment is curated to surprise and enchant. What will be obvious to anyone visiting Windham Mountain Club for the first time is that membership provides more than just access, it's an investment in a lifestyle rich with memorable experiences. The transformation from charming local favorite to an elevated, world-class destination is well underway, and those in the know are eager to be a part of Windham's storied evolution.

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DINE HERE

Discover world-class food and beverage across six premium restaurants. Members-only Cin Cin!, located mid-mountain, provides a unique, inventive twist on Italian Alps-style cuisine—complete with a view.



WELLNESS

Achieve peak performance in a 5,000 square foot fitness facility with individually tailored conditioning, and The Wellness Club, a premiere spa and wellness center featuring signature treatments, light therapy, and more.



LIVE HERE

Development of 66 luxury residences is underway, with mountain access steps from the front door of residences that overlook picturesque mountain views.

EATING & DRINKING



LIQUID ASSETS From left: At Este in Austin, Texas, happy hour margaritas go for \$10. At Superfolie in Philadelphia, table wines pour for \$8 during the first two hours of service, Tuesday to Sunday.

Get Maximum Value Out of Happy Hour

Continued from page D1
doc). Friends were piling into the banquettes up front.

"I've been going since they opened," said Alexandra Nielsen, an attorney who works in Center City and lives in the more residential Rittenhouse. "In the summer, when there are tables outside, I go probably once a week or every other. And at least once a month when it's cooler."

Nielsen said she always orders the \$7 snack plate, piled with chunks of 18-month Comté, marinated Castelvetrano olives, bread from Mighty Bread bakery and some sort of well-treated vegetable, like braised fennel or charred peppers—a grand gesture at a small price. "It's all so thoughtful, it makes you feel cared for," Nielsen said.

Off Hours, On Budget

At New York's Dante, Martini Hour was launched as a simple answer to the business-minded question of how to fill seats between the lunch and dinner hours. The response has exceeded all expectations: Bartenders serve, on average, 120 Martinis a day now between 3 and 5 p.m. "I can't believe how many people are drinking Martinis at 3 o'clock," said Linden Pride, principal of Dante. "A lot of people are getting together and talking shop"—a broad demographic, from neighborhood creatives who don't adhere to a Monday-through-Friday workweek and those "seeking out a cheaper entry to Dante." After 5 p.m., most Martinis range from \$18 to \$22.

In New Orleans's Uptown, Neal Bodenheimer, owner of the bar Cure, has offered happy hour from

4-6 p.m. for nearly 16 years. "Our average cocktail was \$9 when we opened in 2009," he said. And that was pricey in NOLA then. His original happy hour drinks cost \$5 for a classic cocktail. "For people who were interested in what we were doing, but didn't want to pay \$9, happy hour made our space more inclusive to come in, enjoy a cocktail, and feel good about it," Bodenheimer recalled.

Now at Cure, all things considered, cocktails cost \$8 at happy hour and \$14 during regular ser-

vice. Whereas most bars will pour cheap "well spirits" during happy hour, this James Beard Award-winning bar mixes with their standard high-quality bottles, no matter the time of day. "If we were



'It's all so thoughtful, it makes you feel cared for.'

discounting things that people don't want, why would you come for happy hour?" Bodenheimer posed.

12 Happiest Hours

While some say the best happy hour is the one you're at, these 12 around the country set the bar extraordinarily high

SUPERFOLIE | Philadelphia

Tues-Thurs, 4-6 p.m.; Sat 3-5 p.m.; Sun 2-4 p.m.

The Move Order an \$8 vin de table, \$6 beer or \$10 happy hour cocktail. The \$7 snack plate is plenty for two.

THE MOTHERSHIP | Milwaukee

Daily, 5-7 p.m.

The Move The \$8 happy-hour drink changes daily, and the boilermaker combo of a beer and a shot of whiskey or amaro runs about \$6.

CURE | New Orleans

Sun-Thurs, 4-6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.-close; Friday-Sat, 3-6 p.m.

ESTE | Austin, Texas

Mon-Thurs, 5-6 p.m., Friday-

The Move

Before dinner, sit for an \$8 daiquiri, Sazerac or espresso Martini. Come back for a happy-hour nightcap.

MR. TUNA | Portland, Maine

Mon-Fri, 4-5 p.m.; Sat-Sun, 11 a.m.-noon

The Move Order a couple handrolls—all half price—and people-watch on the patio.

DANTE | New York City and Beverly Hills, Calif.

Daily, 3-5 p.m.

The Move Order a \$10 Martini, of course.

NOZ MARKET | New York City

Mon-Fri, 2-5 p.m.

The Move At the bar, get beautiful handrolls, all \$10. Add a draft Asahi for \$8.

GALAXIE | New Orleans

Tues-Thurs, 5-7 p.m., Fri-Sat, 4-7 p.m.; Sun, all day

Sun, 12-5 p.m.

The Move Out on the deck, choose from four margaritas (all \$10). Pair with \$7.50 swordfish tacos.

OK OMENS | Portland, Ore.

Daily, 5-6 p.m.

The Move A dozen oysters, \$4 fries with za'atar ranch, Weiser-Künstler Riesling.

OYAMEL | Washington, D.C.

Mon-Fri, 4-6 p.m.

The Move Mezcal Mondays and Tequila Tuesdays spotlight individual producers.

NOZ MARKET | New York City

Mon-Fri, 2-5 p.m.

The Move At the bar, get beautiful handrolls, all \$10. Add a draft Asahi for \$8.

GALAXIE | New Orleans

Tues-Thurs, 5-7 p.m., Fri-Sat, 4-7 p.m.; Sun, all day

The Move Tommy's Margaritas by the pitcher (\$35) or glass (\$7), chicken tostadas (\$2.50) and nachos (\$4).



At the Mothership in Milwaukee, the daily drink costs \$8.

The Move

Squirrel Old Fashioned, with Wisconsin maple syrup (\$8).

THE GREENWICH | Denver

Mon-Fri, 5-6 p.m., all night Tues

The Move A half-size Negroni and a Jersey Ernie's meatball (\$15, including tip).

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The Chef
Nick Curtola
His Restaurants
The Four Horsemen and a forthcoming Italian restaurant, both in Brooklyn's Williamsburg.

What He's Known
For Creating inventive dishes in the tiny kitchen of an ambitious wine bar; cooking with a hyper-seasonal attention to detail; forging a name for himself alongside a team of celebrity partners.



Fried Chicken Cutlets With Onions, Wild Mushrooms and Marsala



WINNER WINNER Wild mushrooms and a silky sauce make this weeknight-friendly chicken chef-worthy.

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WHILE WRITING his debut cookbook, which was released last month, chef Nick Curtola reckoned with a challenge many pros could relate to: how to translate the spirit of the dishes at his beloved Brooklyn wine bar in ways that would work for home cooks. This recipe for chicken-fried steak—an adaptation of a veal sweetbread dish occasionally offered at the Four Horsemen—both proves his success and serves as his third Slow Food Fast contribution.

Here Curtola exchanges the fried sweetbreads for boneless chicken thighs, which are both easier to source and more widely appealing. Once pounded thin and fried to golden, the

cutlets are robed in a buttery mushroom-onion sauce that's sweetened with a glug of Marsala wine. "The original dish is smaller and more delicate," the chef explained. "But this version came out so well that we also ran it on our menu."

For Curtola, the smothered chicken cutlets also trigger a bit of nostalgia, evoking a dish that he'd often bike to his local diner to order as a kid. "It's both comforting and what you crave," he explained. "I also like that it feels a bit Italian-American." Driving that Mediterranean feeling home? The splash of Marsala, which simmers with butter and chicken stock before

roasted onions and mushrooms are stirred through.

To prepare the cutlets, pound the thighs until thin and uniform. Then bread and fry each one in a pool of warm olive oil until the outside crackles. To avoid burning the breading before the inside cooks through, go gently and keep the temperature steady. As for the sauce, Curtola simmers the alcohol off and finishes with butter to keep the end result feeling luxurious, not watery or gloopy. Follow his lead and you'll wind up with a restaurant-quality meal that punches far above its weight—just as he intended.

—Kitty Greenwald

Serves 4
Time 30 minutes

1 pound maitake or other seasonal mushrooms
6 cipollini onions, peeled and cut into 1-inch wedges
2-3 tablespoons olive oil, plus 2-5 cups for frying
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
3 egg whites

1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 cups panko breadcrumbs
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
½ cup unsalted butter
½ cup Marsala wine or vermouth

¾ cup chicken stock

½ lemon

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Tear mushrooms into approximately 2-inch pieces. On a sheet pan, toss mushrooms with onions, 2-3 tablespoons olive oil and a pinch salt. Roast until mushrooms are colored and crisp at edges, about 20 minutes. Stir once halfway through.

2. Meanwhile, pat chicken thighs dry and place between two sheets of plastic wrap. Use a mallet or heavy pan to pound each to an even ¼-inch thickness. Season both sides with salt and pepper.

3. Place egg whites in a wide

bowl and season with salt. Place panko in a third wide bowl. Working with one piece at a time, dunk chicken in flour. Shake off excess, then dunk into the egg. Once the excess runs off, add to the panko, making sure the cutlet is fully and generously coated. Set aside.

4. Pour about 3 inches of oil into a medium Dutch oven. Warm until temperature reaches 350 degrees and adjust heat as needed to maintain a steady temperature throughout the fry. Carefully add 2 pieces of chicken to the pot and fry until golden and crisp all over, about 5 min-

utes. Transfer cutlets to a sheet tray topped with a cooling rack and season with salt. Repeat with remaining cutlets.

5. Meanwhile, set a medium skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and half butter. Cook until garlic is fragrant but pale, about 2 minutes. Add Marsala and cook until alcohol scent burns off, about 3 minutes. Add stock and simmer until sauce thickens slightly, about 3-5 more minutes. Add roasted mushrooms and onions, reduce heat to low and swirl in remaining butter. Season with salt and lemon juice to taste.

6. To serve, divide cutlets among 4 plates and spoon warm pan sauce over top. Season with salt and pepper.

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DESIGN & DECORATING

HOW TO LIVE WITH A ROOM YOU HATE



BETTER PROSPECTS Shelving by Chris Fein, an architect in Kansas City, Mo., shifts focus from a home's driveway and fence to objets and plants.

When a View Leaves You Blue

Maybe it's your neighbor's garage—the side with the central-air condensers—or an ugly driveway. If you have a depressing eyesore outside your window, designers have a chic way to deal with it.

BY DAVID EARDLEY

IF YOU LIVE in a city, gazing out your window at a brick wall or weed-clogged vacant lot is not uncommon. Suburbanites, too, deal with ugly views—of car-strewn driveways or masonry walls. Anyone can, however, mitigate even the lousiest vistas, say experts such as Agustina Gentili. "Focus on enhancing a window's other qualities, the entry of light and air," advised the Mexico City-based designer. Here, how top design experts reframe a dreary outlook to do just that.

Practice Shelf Love. A woeful view over a kitchen sink can truly sink your spirits, given how much time you spend there.

Faced with such a situation in a house in Mission Hills, Kan., architect Chris Fein built cabinets with integrated shelving that spanned the window (above). This lets light infuse the kitchen but provides a view of objects and plants instead of the homeowners' own driveway and the lot next door, says Fein, founding principal of Forward Design, in Kansas City, Mo.

Play with shades. Regan Baker relies on fabric blinds to distract from nasty views. The San Francisco designer hung a Roman shade that covers the top third of a home-office window. Its charming scenic pattern draws the eye away from a neighbor's wall and, she said, "relates to the home's hillside neighborhood." In another project, Baker

used sheer, minimal shades in a light, neutral tone to block a dining room's unlovely views while letting natural light filter in. What's more, the shades' hue so nearly matches the wall paint that they almost blend right in, says Baker, keeping the focus on a nearby landscape painting.

Erect a shield of green. When faced with a bleak view, Gentili cultivates a "domesticated jungle," attaching window boxes to the building's exterior, if possible, and filling them with flora. Alternatively, the designer loads window sills with lush plants to create a filter of verdure and distract from the ugliness beyond. "This also generates green-tinted shadows that dance and change with the movement of the sun," she said.

Change the pane. A stained-glass window will, of course, blur a chain-link fence or some equally unwelcome vista. Frosted glass, too. A less costly and disruptive solution: window film. The vinyl material, available in many patterns and textures, affixes without adhesive. Choose from ribbed designs that look like reeded glass to vintage-inspired motifs like Old English (below), a

'Focus on enhancing a window's other qualities, the entry of light and air.'

leaded-glass look-alike from Portland, Ore., company Artscapes (\$25 for a 2-feet-by-3-feet panel). In a garden-level New York apartment, designer Nathanael Tito Gonzalez applied abstract vinyl graphics to the top of a window to diffuse the sight of foot traffic up on the sidewalk.

Meet it half way. Cafe curtains, which shield only a window's lower half, were once out of fashion, shunted aside by contemporary top-down, bottom-up shades. Now they're back. For a powder room in Southern California that's tiled in sea green and floored in a checkerboard pattern, Baker executed the old-school fix to block out a rudely confrontational concrete fence. Now light streams in over the drapes' bright geometric patterns, and the retro decor embraces the client's love of "grandma chic," said Baker.



Vinyl window film, from Artscapes in Portland, Ore., obscures an ugly vista but lets in light.



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DESIGN & DECORATING

ANATOMY LESSON

A Mantel for This Season

An interior designer's guide to nailing a celebratory but refined display for the holidays

BY YELENA MOROZ ALPERT

WHEN Jennifer Jones visited her local Michaels, she and her 12-year-old son skipped the craft shop's flocked nutcrackers and glitter-bombed knickknacks and headed for the faux-floral aisle. "It felt more tasteful and less literal than the Christmas-decor section," said the principal designer of San Francisco's Niche Interiors. She wanted her fireplace mantel's holiday decoration to hint at wintry themes rather than veer into Santa's workshop territory. Avoiding explicit references, she reasoned, would help her achieve a modern, elevated display.

So the pair picked up faux flora—white berries and a string of dusty-green eucalyptus—to supplement Jones' collection of vintage objets at home, including a 1950s gouache-and-charcoal drawing that hangs over her mantel. At home, Mom, Dad and son started by using craft wire to blend the artificial greenery they bought with fresh cedar fir garland, which Jones had sourced from a local Christmas tree lot. "Adding eucalyptus to the pine garland adds a contemporary touch," she said.

Frosted pine cones and the draped sprays of store-bought berries, which tie in to the white fireplace marble, further evoke winter. She and her son spray-painted and dusted the pine cones years ago, and they get packed up every year with the other ornaments.

More sculptural objects she already owned, such as brass candlesticks, vintage brass deer and hard-bound books, came next. "I think the idea of collecting things, of making things more layered, is part of the story too," said Jones.

Some figurines had to stay in storage, because restraint was key.

That said, some figurines had to overwinter in storage, because restraint was key here. "Set up an arrangement, then take away one or two items to see how it changes," she advised. Jones nixed white glass modern miniature Christmas trees she often uses on her holiday mantel; they made the vignette look busy. "The trees were competing with the deer, and it started to feel a bit too literal, like a winter forest tableau or Nativity scene," she said.



FESTIVE BUT EDITED San Francisco interior designer Jennifer Jones mostly stuck to green, brass and neutrals.

Taking care to leave negative space helped her delicate "landscape" work. "The objects are outlined, you see the shape more," said Jones of letting the deer

graze in front of naked white walls. Two worn, gray books elevate one of the deer, giving the arrangement a sense of movement. The eye travels along the variously

sized candlesticks and then to the vintage deer.

"This creates more interest than having things at the same level," said Jones. Another factor that introduces subtle contrast: Jones used metal pieces that are tarnished to different degrees—each distinct but still in conversation with each other.

The modern black-and-white artwork serves as a balancing backdrop to the traditionalism of the mantel tableau, and doesn't disrupt the pared-down palette of green, brass, black and white. "Too many colors is a huge mistake," said Jones, who warns that succumbing to the urge to bundle a lifetime of ornaments can result in "rainbow throwup." A limited palette makes the vignette new and sophisticated, she says.

After establishing her strict color story, however, Jones let herself jolt the quiet composition with three bold and graphic buffalo-plaid stockings she sourced from a small local maker. Hung to one side, they include an unexpected splash of red.

The process wasn't terribly time-consuming, says Jones. The trip to Michaels took the longest, but the mantel came together in about an hour. "It's nice having a kid who helps decorate."

STEAL THE SCENE / GET THE LOOK OF THIS SOPHISTICATED TABLEAU WITH THESE SIX DECORATIONS



McGee & Co. 6-foot Faux Winter Evergreen Garland, \$83

Ashland 6-foot Eucalyptus Garland, \$10 at Michaels

GlassShop-Boutique Buck and Doe Figurines, from \$90 at Etsy



Leo Gestel Woman's Head With Bird (1935) 12 Inches by 16 Inches Framed Canvas Print, \$64 at Fine Art Canvas



Faribault for Target Wool Holiday Stocking, \$51



Pottery Barn Booker Taper Candleholders, from \$10



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ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

BY ROBERT P. WALZER

ONE year, a pal and I plan a bike trip—a gambit that both scratches our itch for cycling adventure and lets us explore a new corner of the globe at ground level. Committed bon vivants, we've managed to hit some of the usual suspects like France and Spain, and some less-usual ones, like Ethiopia. Still, when my friend suggested this year's destination—Albania—my eyebrows shot up.

I recovered quickly. As my research revealed, Albania, like Italy and France, has sky-piercing Alpine mountains, a Riviera with clear turquoise waters, a rich food culture, ancient history and medieval villages. What it lacks: the tens of millions of tourists and high prices of its western European counterparts.

No wonder, then, that the former Ottoman province has been earning buzz among savvy travelers—first Europeans, and now, a growing trickle of Americans. Albania joined NATO in 2009 and has since become a European Union candidate. A new international airport and several modern hotels will open next year, and a luxury island resort is being planned by none other than America's once-and-future first-son-in-law, Jared Kushner. But three decades after the fall of its repressive Communist dictatorship, this forested Balkan nation still feels refreshingly undiscovered.

When my friend and I arrived in the capital, Tirana, in late September, the alpine air was still warm. To manage our journey, we'd hired a local cycling guide, a Black-American expat who, in a bid to escape American politics and racism, had relocated to Albania as a digital nomad three years ago. During a 5-day route through the beachside towns of Vlora, Himara, Saranda and Ksamil, and the fortress town of Gjirokaster, we pedaled a mountainous, serpentine road surrounded by stands of pine, ash and fir. At various points, the stunning views of the Ionian



HOLIDAY ROAD A lush, winding route through Llogara National Park outside Himara..

old-world charm similar to a Siena or a Bruges. Its center is punctuated, not by a cathedral, but by a towering minaret of the city's Great Mosque, set amid a colorful bazaar.

Gjirokaster's famed castle proved quieter, perhaps because the curious must climb 1,100 feet to reach its top. But it was worth the trek, especially its fascinating museum recounting Albania's colorful military past. (Artifacts inside include a 1950s-era U.S. Air Force fighter that Albania says it captured during an incursion.)

Serpentine mountain roads and stunning water views call to mind Italy's Amalfi Coast.

Don't Balk at Albania

France? Italy? Fine if you like crowds. This unsung Balkan nation—with gorgeous mountains, bucolic beaches and medieval villages—merits a spot on your travel to-do list.

and Adriatic Seas called to mind both the U.S. Pacific Coast Highway and Italy's Amalfi Coast. We encountered few humans, aside from a group of sky-borne paragliders and roadside vendors selling local brandy and honey. We did pass more than our share of ambling donkeys and dozing dogs.

Along the way we fortified ourselves on snacks like borek, a flaky cheese-filled pastry that's a close cousin

to Greece's spanakopita. Also figuring prominently in our diet were fish, pasta and pizza—all reflections of Albania's close cultural ties to Italy, its neighbor across the Adriatic. Throughout the country, we found the bill for a good dinner with wine routinely ran less than \$20, and a stay a four-star hotel, under \$100.

On one drizzly day, we visited the strategically important Porto Palermo Castle—built by Albania's legendary 19th-century ruler Ali Pasha on a handsome bay to solidify his control over the region. The impressive citadel, which was a Soviet submarine base during Albania's Communist era, isn't on the gargantuan scale of Carcassonne in southern France. But it doesn't have that destination's crowds or queues either.

In the seaside village of Vlora, where Albania declared independence in 1912, we were the only visitors to the National Museum of Independence in a small building where the first government ruled. Surrounded by images of Albania's mustachioed founding fathers, some with flat-topped fez-

type hats, we took in an informative tour from a local guide—all included in the \$3 entrance fee.

We did run into one crowd—at Gjirokaster, a

mountainous Unesco World Heritage site dramatically capped by a Byzantine-era citadel. Visitors streamed into the 1,000-year-old cobblestoned village with an

On the outdoor patio of the Seaside Hotel in Vlora we struck up a conversation with the friendly owner, Agron Agalliu. A dose of the warm hospitality that Albanians are known for shone through as he served us complimentary glasses of homemade raki and regaled us with a detailed explanation of how the fiery fermented spirit was made.

Back in Tirana, we met up with Harel Kopelman, an Israeli-American resident who co-founded a cultural center called Albanian Night, in one of the capital's ubiquitous coffee bars. America is popular in Albania, he said, due in part to President Wilson's advocacy for Albanian independence after World War I and President Clinton's intervention in the war in Kosovo, which is populated by ethnic Albanians. "Albania is like the 51st state," he said. "People here love Americans." Speaking for myself, I can now say the feeling is entirely mutual.

THE LOWDOWN / ENTRY-LEVEL ALBANIA

Getting There Though there are currently no non-stop U.S. flights to Albania, Tirana can be reached via many popular European cities including London, Paris and Rome. Heading to Albania's Riviera? Book a flight to Corfu, Greece, and take an easy hourlong ferry to Saranda.

Staying There The Xheko Imperial Luxury Hotel in Tirana's buzzy, embassy-filled Biloku neighborhood has a popular rooftop bar and restaurant with panoramic views of the city and sur-

rounding mountains (from about \$300). In the Riviera town of Vlora, the Priam Hotel Luxury Resort is a chic beachfront option (from \$250 in low season and \$700 in summer).

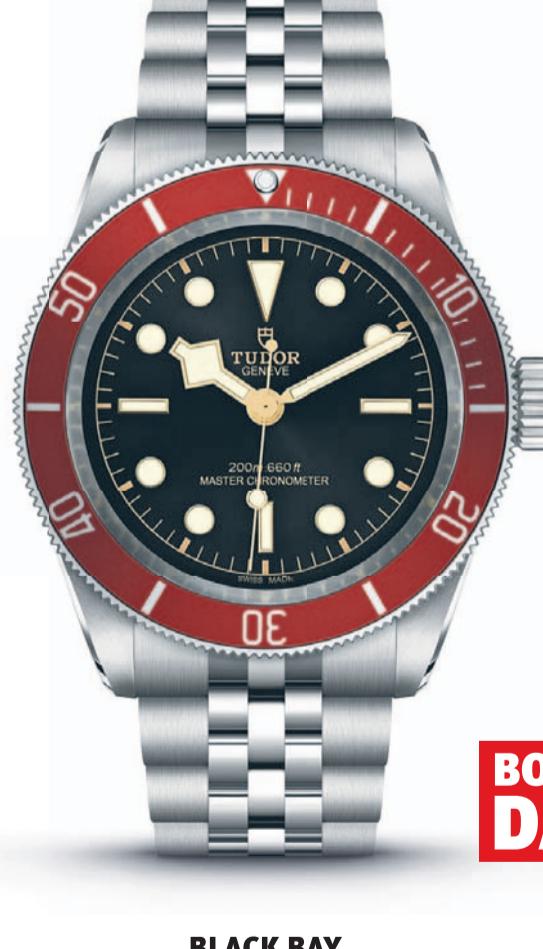
Eating There In Tirana, Sofra E Ariut (Bear's Table), serves hearty traditional Albanian fare in a wooden chalet set in a verdant park. After something a bit more modern? Salt Tirana offers a diverse, international seafood-focused menu of sushi, ceviche and more.



The author, right, and his traveling companion pause near Dhermi in Albania's south.

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JOHN MATIOS

What to Give

Books on fashion, photography,
fine art & more **R6-R7**



Inside

The war memoirs of Charles de Gaulle **R3**

The man who invented
the penalty kick **R4**

Taking Taylor Swift seriously **R5**

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HOLIDAY BOOKS

'Reality offers us such wealth that we must cut some of it out on the spot, simplify.' —HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

Around the World in 728 Pages



STEVE MCCURRY/MAGNUM PHOTOS

MAGNUM IS THE all-star team of photo agencies; for "Magnum Magnum" (Thames & Hudson, 728 pages, \$175.00), members of the group, an artists' cooperative, were invited to pick their favorite pictures from among those taken by another member and write brief explanations to justify their choices, a tough peer review. There are 25 more photographers represented in this new edition than in the original 2007 edition: The resulting volume weighs more than 8 pounds and is packed with 533 photographs by

88 members. Among the many varieties of excellence on display: Larry Towell selected black-and-white pictures by Werner Bischof from France, Finland, Hungary and South Korea, the last a gaggle of press photographers with their cameras at the ready. Yael Martinez chose images of hijab-wearing Turkish women by Sabiha Cimen; in one, an 18-year-old embraces her soul mate at a picnic. Elliott Erwitt picked stunning color photos from Cambodia by Steve McCurry; "a kind of one-man Peace Corps," writes Mr.

Erwitt. A 1998 photo taken in Angkor Wat (above) is exemplary; the composition is simple, the subject—a child—is treated with respect and color is a principle of its organization. The four founders of Magnum, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, David 'Chim' Seymour and George Rodger, are, of course, included. Other standouts are Bruce Davidson, Philippe Halsman, Martin Parr and Gilles Peress. A cornucopia of exceptional talent.

—William Meyers

Wild Times With the Bean Boys

Four Against the West

By Joe Pappalardo
St. Martin's, 400 pages, \$32

By ANDREW R. GRAYBILL

THERE ARE SOME individuals whose place in history is so noteworthy that, at the mere mention of a name, a corresponding tagline pops into the brain or tumbles from the mouth. Take Neil Armstrong, "the first man on the moon," or Usain Bolt, the Jamaican track star known as "the fastest man alive." Then there's Roy Bean, the 19th-century Texas justice of the peace remembered today as the only "law West of the Pecos."

One of these men is not like the others. While Armstrong's lunar footprint testifies to his astronomical feat and Bolt's record times in the 100- and 200-meter sprints still stand, Bean was as likely to break the law as to impose it, and his authority in the region was superseded by a U.S. district court judge even farther west of the Pecos, in El Paso. That Bean's name endures is mostly because of his shameless self-promotion.

Joe Pappalardo concedes as much in "Four Against the West," asserting that "except for the symbolism surrounding his legend, Roy Bean is historically insignificant." Mr. Pappalardo, the author of several previous volumes—including books about the Texas Rangers and a heroic B-17 tail gunner during World War II—has opted to draw a group biography of Bean and his three older brothers. To do so he's had to mine a sometimes thin evidentiary base consisting primarily of newspaper accounts, frontier reminiscences and antiquarian histories. The author insists that this unconventional approach has payoffs, explaining that "we can measure each brother against the other, just by following the adventurous narratives of their lives. They are mirrors to each other, even at a distance." Unfortunately, this method promises more than it delivers.

The brothers Bean came from a well-to-do slaveholding family rooted

in northeastern Kentucky. James, the eldest, was born in 1814, followed by Joshua in 1818 and Samuel the year after. Sarah, their only sister, appeared in 1820, and Roy brought up the rear five years later. The children's lives of relative comfort ended abruptly when their father, a surveyor and tavern keeper, was killed in an accident. Other factors, including the Panic of 1837 and a cholera epidemic, compounded the family's difficulties. The instability of this so-called crisis decade scattered the four boys, although Mr. Pappalardo suggests that their movements were impelled as much by the expansionist spirit that characterized the imagination of many Americans of the day.

The upside of Mr. Pappalardo's wider frame is that by incorporating Roy's brothers into the story, the author can take his audience on a fast-paced journey around the West during the transformative years of the mid-19th century. For instance, in the 1840s, both James and Sam went down the Santa Fe Trail, the busy commercial artery across the Great Plains that connected Missouri to the northernmost reaches of what was then Mexican territory. Sam and Joshua enlisted in volunteer regi-

ments and were called up for service in the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-48, that "wicked war" (as Ulysses S. Grant described it) of empire that grew the U.S. by a third. After the conflict, Joshua was swept up in the tidal wave of migration that pulled people to California after the discovery of gold near Sacramento in 1848, although he settled in San Diego before moving eventually to Los Angeles.

Given the brothers' anonymity and their modest accomplishments, some readers may find themselves waiting impatiently for Roy's appearance—he is, after all, the only star in this story, a bit like Wyatt Earp among his long-forgotten brothers. Since his early whereabouts are obscure, Roy drifts in and out of the narrative for the first third of the book. What we do know, according to Mr. Pappalardo, suggests that he was a scoundrel. Roy served as slaver on a Mississippi flatboat; murdered a man in 1848 in a store he and Sam operated in Chihuahua, Mexico; and survived a pair of attempts on his life in California. The author characterizes our unlikely hero as "a loud-mouth who drinks too much, [and who] seeks both thrills and attention." Bean was also, Mr. Pappalardo writes,

ever ready to "escalate a situation just to make a scene."

After the Civil War, Roy established himself in San Antonio as a barkeep and teamster, but after an unhappy marriage he moved to West Texas in the early 1880s to run a mobile saloon for a railroad company building a line

Roy Bean's 'courthouse' was also a saloon. His ability to put on a show made his name in Texas.

across the state from Houston to El Paso. The camp's unruliness was sufficient that a Texas Ranger captain recommended the appointment of a justice of the peace. Roy got the job by default, mainly because he and his tent were already well known to the workers. Mr. Pappalardo says that Roy quickly distinguished himself for graft and farcical rulings and notes his undeniable talent for self-aggrandizement. At his saloon-cum-courthouse in Langtry, he hung a sign declaring himself the "law west of the Pecos," reaching the height of his

fame in 1896 when he promoted a heavyweight boxing match on a sandbar in the middle of the Rio Grande, thus evading the state's injunction against prizefighting. He died in 1903 at the age of 78.

Whatever notoriety Roy Bean enjoys today owes, in part, to his popular association with the pantheon of celebrated historical figures of the mythologized 19th-century American West: Buffalo Bill, Calamity Jane and Crazy Horse, among so many others.

But there is something more specific about Bean's lasting appeal, then and now. Lawless though he was, his insistence that he alone stood between order and chaos on the frontier, hard against the border with Mexico, clearly resonated with people afraid of crime and unrest.

If his strongman act was mostly performance—the so-called hanging judge never ordered anyone to swing—it was undeniably entertaining, part of a show that sometimes included staged executions and even a dancing bear. Such divisive spectacle still has its appeal, and no dearth of enthusiasts.

Mr. Graybill is a professor of history at Southern Methodist University.



FRONTIER JUSTICE Roy Bean, the self-proclaimed 'Law West of the Pecos,' holding court at his saloon in the town of Langtry, Texas, in 1900.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'Let us be firm, pure and faithful; at the end of our sorrow, there is the greatest glory of the world, that of the men who did not give in.' —CHARLES DE GAULLE

His Idea of France

The War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle

By Charles de Gaulle

Simon & Schuster, 976 pages, \$34.99

BY ANDREW ROBERTS

WINSTON Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt found Charles de Gaulle admirable and infuriating in equal measure, and readers may well feel the same way about his war memoirs, now in a fresh reprint edition. Admirable, because the great set-piece scenes are fine works of literature. Infuriating, because de Gaulle's narrative offers such a partial, anti-British and anti-American version of the events of World War II as to be virtually useless as objective history.

Churchill's attitude toward his own war memoirs, according to Bill Deakin, who helped ghost them, was: "This is not history, this is my case." Similarly, de Gaulle does not attempt—indeed, does not even begin to pretend to attempt—to write anything other than his own story, regardless of the facts.

Originally published in three volumes—"L'Appel" (1954), "L'Unité" (1956) and especially "Le Salut" (1959)—"The War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle" (as the new reprint calls its massive one-volume presentation) had the clear intention of creating a call for de Gaulle's return to the leadership of France. He had headed the country's provisional government from June 1944 to January 1946, when he resigned over his limited executive powers in the national government. That de Gaulle was indeed called to the presidency of France in 1959, from his self-imposed exile at his home village of Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, only underlines the memoirs' power. They became the bible, even hymnal, of Gaullism.

The memoirs created a myth of French grandeur almost as powerful as the accident of his surname created a sense of de Gaulle's destiny as the country's leader. The opening sentence—"I have always had a certain idea of France"—is soon followed by the musing that "France cannot be France without greatness." The past 70 years of French history, even the posturings of the current president of La République, should be seen through the prism of politicians trying to live up to that phrase.

"This faith grew as I grew, in the environment where I was born," de Gaulle explains about his conception of French greatness. "My father was a thoughtful, cultivated, traditional man, imbued with a feeling for the dignity of France. My mother had an uncompromising passion for her country, equal to her religious piety." For de Gaulle, French greatness became a quasi-religious faith in itself, and one of the other feelings his father imbued in him was that "perfidious Albion" and her American cousins were not to be trusted.



WARRIOR Gen. Charles de Gaulle in London in 1940.

De Gaulle was only 7 years old at the time of what he calls "the surrender of Fashoda," referring to an incident when the British Empire compelled a French expeditionary force to withdraw from a village in Sudan in 1898. The incident spawned an Anglophobia that de Gaulle makes little effort to hide, even though it was Britain that gave him refuge from the Nazis in 1940 and housed much of his Free French forces until the U.S., Britain and Canada invaded Normandy four years later, with de Gaulle following on in their baggage train.

For much of the memoirs, the war that de Gaulle describes is the one he waged against Churchill, Roosevelt, and Gens. Dwight Eisenhower and Leonard Gerow, as well as against French generals and politicians who he feared might replace him. In the course of the narrative he minimizes

the role of the French Resistance and of any other partisans in occupied France who might pose a political threat to the person he refers to throughout as "de Gaulle," rather than Julius Caesar, in "The Gallic War," referred to himself as "Caesar." "As for De Gaulle," reads a typical sentence, "everyone acknowledged him as the guide and symbol of France's recovery."

Instead of thanking Britain for providing help and support for his Free French, de Gaulle writes of "the unfair advantage taken by England of wounded France." At one point he refers to the arrival in North Africa "of the Americans speaking as masters following the ridiculous battles of November 1942." Far from ridiculous, Operation Torch saw the U.S. forces get ashore successfully after sailing across the Atlantic to liberate Vichy-

held countries such as Morocco and Algeria. After D-Day, de Gaulle states that, "without any presumption, I could defy General Eisenhower to deal lawfully with anyone I had not designated." There is not a word of thanks to Eisenhower and the other Allied generals who allowed Gen. Philippe Leclerc's French Second Armored Division to liberate Paris in August 1944. Rather there is the boast that the Free French "returned to France bearing independence, Empire, and a sword."

Even if we leave aside de Gaulle's penchant for playing down the English-speaking peoples' contribution to the liberation of his country, his book is one that, in style and manner, no American or British statesman could have written. The poetical rhapsodies about the changing of the seasons ("Alas, the winds and the frosts will

soon tear away my vestments. But one day, upon my naked body, my youth will flower again!") would be ridiculed mercilessly. Similarly, if an Anglophone politician tried to argue that "the national resolve, more powerful than any formal decree, openly appointed me to incarnate and lead the state," he'd be laughed out of office.

One person who does come out well from these pages is Stalin's chief prosecutor at the Moscow show trials, Andrei Vishinsky, whom most historians rate as one of the most evil monsters of a century packed with them. When Vishinsky traveled abroad in 1943 to negotiate various matters, de Gaulle found him to have "an amiable playfulness" and "a great breadth of mind." He also writes: "Certainly everything led the Kremlin to favor the rebirth of a France capable of

Charles de Gaulle's war memoirs are better read as literature rather than objective history.

assisting it to subdue the German menace and to remain independent in regard to the United States."

As well as thinking that France helped "to subdue the German menace" during World War II, de Gaulle posits the weird theory that in the interwar years "England treated Berlin gently in order that Paris might have need of her." Just as strangely, he says that "it was on France alone that the burden fell of containing the Reich," as though the French did any such containing beyond building the Maginot Line.

What makes this book about de Gaulle's certain—if somewhat deranged—view of France so compelling is his recounting of moments such as his procession from the Arc de Triomphe down the Champs-Élysées during the Liberation on Aug. 26, 1944, and the thanksgiving service at Notre-Dame the same day.

When next you visit Paris, take those pages to read as you spot the statues and sites he mentions in that thrilling (if purple) passage. He rounds off the Liberation episode in typical fashion: "As a searchlight suddenly reveals a monument, so the liberation of Paris, assured by the French themselves, and the proof given by the people of its confidence in De Gaulle dissipated the shadows that still concealed the reality of the national will."

De Gaulle's supposedly verbatim memory for conversations that took place more than a decade before might be suspect, but his poetic reconstruction of some of the most iconic moments of 20th-century history is sublime. So do read this remarkable book, but as literature rather than history.

Mr. Roberts is the author of "The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War."

WHAT TO GIVE

By WILLIAM TIPPER

THE STORY OF a life can, in the right hands, help us grasp the story of an era. In the case of Susanna Ashton's "A Plausible Man: The True Story of the Escaped Slave Who Inspired Uncle Tom's Cabin" (New Press, 368 pages, \$28.99), that life story is one more deduced than discovered, but it nonetheless reveals much about America before the Civil War. Ms. Ashton digs into the historical record to reconstruct a possible origin for Harriet Beecher Stowe's history-making novel. Our reviewer Melanie Kirkpatrick called the book "a remarkable piece of historical sleuthing and often a riveting read."

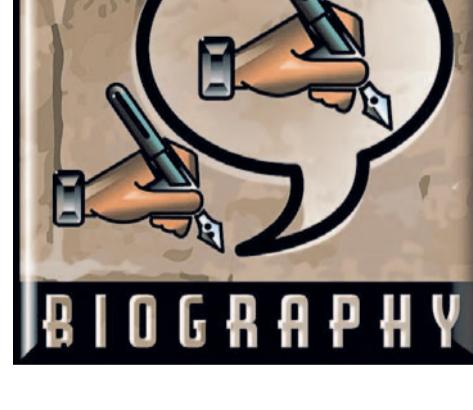
In "Lawrence of Arabia" (Pegasus, 352 pages, \$32) the soldier, explorer and writer Ranulph Fiennes goes in search of the elusive, legendary character who pursued his own vision of a Middle East that never quite came to be. Mr. Fiennes himself volunteered for military service in the region, inspired as a young soldier by Lawrence's adventurous spirit. His biography, wrote Dominic Green, renders "a subtle and sympathetic account of a hero who did not want to be known."

Commenting on a young baseball player named Pete Rose, one manager said: "He's got more stomach than a parachute

jumper." That remark captures one side of the personality Keith O'Brien explores in "Charlie Hustle" (Pantheon, 464 pages, \$35). But the player who dove for every base also became notorious when accusations of gambling on his own team's performance clouded his career. Will Leitch found in Mr. O'Brien's account a "comprehensive, compulsively readable and wholly terrific book" that is appreciative of its subject's great appeal but isn't "afraid of digging into often unsettling truths."

Few great novelists create in their own lives a character as memorable as those they put on the page, but the author of "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" may be an exception. In "Carson McCullers" (Knopf, 496 pages, \$40), the literary scholar Mary V. Dearborn explores the world of the charismatic, self-destructive figure whose mid-20th-century fiction illuminated the lives of outcasts who shared what the author called "spiritual isolation." Our reviewer Brooke Allen wrote that despite McCullers's troubled days, the story of her life proves "hard to put down."

An artist obsessively pursuing control over a medium often makes for a rich biographical subject. In her review of Robert P. Kolker and Nathan Abrams's "Kubrick: An Odyssey" (Pegasus, 656 pages, \$35), Jeanine Basinger finds a pair of writers alive to



BIOGRAPHY

the intense focus of Stanley Kubrick's *sui generis* film career. "His life," she noted in her review, "was about endless research, slow decision-making, constant rewriting, anxious mind-changing and frequent dropping of collaborators." The authors' own devotion to detail takes readers through all 13 of Kubrick's films "from inception through production, release and critical response."

Francine Klagsbrun's "Henrietta Szold: Hadassah and the Zionist Dream" (Yale, 256 pages, \$26) introduces to 21st-century readers a dynamic personality many may not know. The founder of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Henrietta Szold was a trailblazer, the daughter of a rabbi who trained her in Jewish scholarship. She set off in her late 40s to investigate living conditions in early 20th-century Palestine and worked to bring health-

care to Jewish and Muslim women living in impoverished conditions. Diane Cole heralded this book as "a timely reminder of Szold's vision for a land that Jews and Arabs alike could call home."

For those celebrating the singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell's recent musical comeback, Wesley Stace wrote in his review, Ann Powers's "Traveling: On the Path of Joni Mitchell" (Dey Street, 448 pages, \$35) provides a signal opportunity to enter into the artist's life. Melding a critical

memoir with an essayistic dive into the world of the musician and her music, "Traveling" takes a first-person approach that produces a "luminous, knotty and timely" meditation on Ms. Mitchell—right at the moment when her body of work has been subject to a critical reappraisal.

Sometimes it can take years to see how a single person changed the world. In "Catland: Louis Wain and the Great Cat Mania" (Johns Hopkins, 432 pages, \$29.95), Kathryn Hughes sheds light on the career of a man who might be said to have changed the reputation of an entire species. Louis Wain's wildly popular late-19th-century cartoons transformed many people's perception of cats, preparing the way for them to leave behind their work as barn-dwelling mouse-catchers and join the respectable family on the sofa.

Meghan Cox Gurdon found that this

"sparkling account" of Wain and his cultural moment contains treats for cat-lovers and cat-skeptics alike.

According to Natalie Dykstra's "Chasing Beauty: The Life of Isabella Stewart Gardner" (Mariner, 512 pages, \$37.50), the Boston socialite and collector who later lent her name to a renowned museum was herself a cat lover—at least enough of one to borrow a couple of lion cubs from the zoo to enliven a house party. In her

review of this "sympathetic, impeccably researched biography," Gioia Diliberto emphasized Gardner's efforts to pursue a life filled with art "as a defense against death and sorrow."

In "Mirrors of Greatness: Churchill and the Leaders Who Shaped Him" (Basic, 464 pages, \$32.50), the historian David Reynolds takes a novel approach to understanding a leader well-covered by standard biographies. Through Churchill's relationships with family members, colleagues, rivals and counterparts on the world stage, Mr. Reynolds helps readers dig into the complex mind of the man who was described by one of his deputies as "rather like a layer cake." This unique approach, wrote Robert D. Kaplan in his review, provides "a freshly penetrating look into the many qualities of Churchill's extraordinary mind."

—Mr. Tipper is a books editor at the Journal.

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'When there is a penalty kick, most people think that the penalty taker is in control. But they are wrong. The penalty taker is full of fear.' —MAL PEET

WHAT TO GIVE

By JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

DOES THE WORLD really need another book about Tiger Woods? In fact, it does. The pleasure of Kevin Cook's "The Tiger Slam: The Inside Story of the Greatest Golf Ever Played" (Avid Reader, 304 pages, \$30) is to return to a time—before the scandals, before the leg and back injuries—when Woods was a phenom who possessed seemingly unlimited potential but who had not yet lived up to his promise.

Golf fans tend to forget that, after his electrifying 12-shot victory at the 1997 Masters at age 21, Woods went through a period of retrenchment. He decided that he lacked the precision required to attain true greatness and so set about rebuilding his swing with the instructor Butch Harmon. In 1998 he won only one PGA Tour event. After the changes started kicking in, in 1999, he won eight times, including his second major, the PGA Championship.

"The Tiger Slam" chronicles Woods's unprecedented and still unreplicated streak, in 2000-01, of four consecutive victories in professional majors. Mr. Cook describes the focus and obsession of Woods's preparation for each major. He practiced endlessly, from different lies and in different winds, to dial in exact distances for each club. Before the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, Calif.—which he would win by an astounding 15 strokes—he spent hours in the video archives at Golf Channel's Florida headquarters studying footage of past tournaments at Pebble Beach, to spot mistakes and misjudgments that players had made. Two weeks before the British Open at St. Andrews, he deliberately de-emphasized scoring his best at the Western Open near Chicago, leading to a lackluster tie for 23rd place, so that he could practice—in competition, even if on an American-style course—the low, running, under-the-wind shots he would need in Scotland. He went on to win at St. Andrews by a record eight strokes, with ball striking so precise that he used the same, unbroken tee on all 72 holes.

Woods completed his Tiger Slam by winning the PGA Championship at Valhalla in Kentucky, in a memorable playoff against Bob May, and the Masters at Augusta National in Georgia the following spring. Mr. Cook, the author of numerous books on golf history and other subjects, collects opinions about where the Tiger Slam ranks among the greatest all-time golf achievements. Other contenders include Jack Nicklaus's career total of 18 major titles; Byron Nelson's 11-tournament winning streak in 1945; Bobby Jones's Grand Slam in 1930 (two national opens and two national amateurs); and Ben Hogan's Triple Slam in 1953.

The sportswriter Ed Gruver makes the case for Hogan's Triple Slam in "The Wee Ice Mon Cometh" (Nebraska, 232 pages, \$34.95). The book details the excruciating pain that Hogan had to endure as he prepared for and won 1953's Masters, U.S. Open and British Open—pain that was



the lingering effect of an accident he had barely survived four years earlier, when the car he was driving collided head-on with a Greyhound bus. Hogan didn't compete in the 1953 PGA Championship because it ended in Michigan the day before the British Open began in Scotland; in any case, the PGA's 36-holes-a-day format would have been beyond his physical capacity.

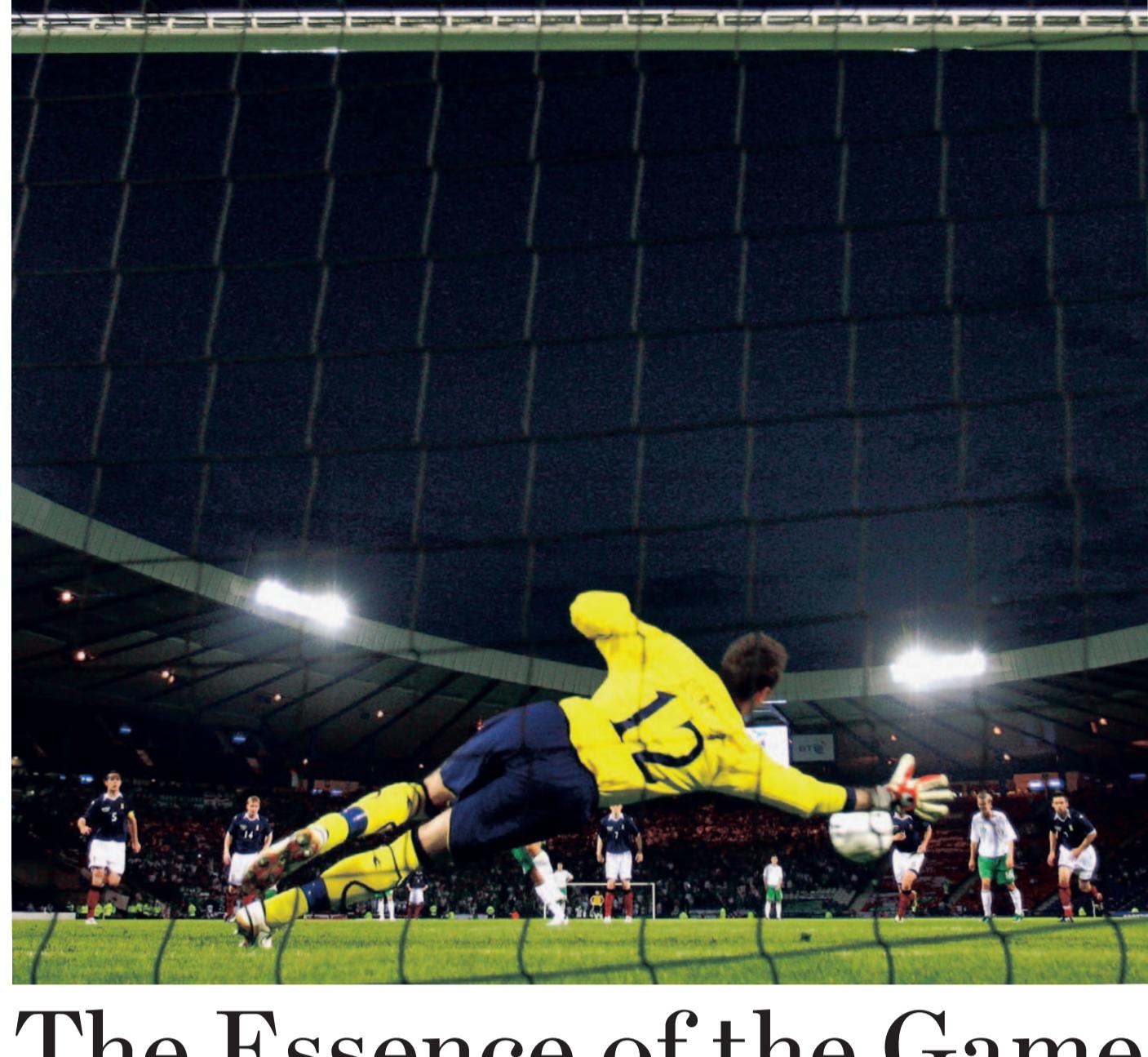
With a scarcity of eyewitnesses to interview and limited media coverage to draw on, Mr. Gruver's book runs a bit dry, but his deep dive into Hogan's only appearance at a British Open is rewarding. Hogan arrived three weeks early to survey every inch of the "beastly" host

course, Carnoustie, and to try to master the quirky ins and outs of links-style golf. The Scots flocked to watch Hogan and nicknamed him the Wee Ice Mon, for his imperturbability. Thanks to a course record 68 in the final round, Hogan won at Carnoustie by four. That followed his earlier five-shot win at the Masters and six-shot win at the U.S. Open.

A new, expanded edition of Hogan's perennial bestseller, "Ben Hogan's Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf" (Avid Reader, 240 pages, \$28.99), connects his genius for the game with his personal story. Accompanying Hogan's original instructional material, written with Herbert Warren Wind and first published in 1957, is an insightful collection of essays, some recent and some vintage, and a new introduction by Lee Trevino. The essays present Hogan as warm, honest and generous with those he knew but distant, curt and averse to publicity when he was out in the world. Like Woods later, Hogan was never happier than spending hours alone hitting balls, learning something with each swing and improving to a degree unfathomable to ordinary golfers. That seems to be what it takes to play golf at the level Hogan and Woods did in their primes.

—Mr. Newport, the Journal's golf columnist from 2006 to 2015, is at work on a golf-related novel.

SHOTS FIRED Allan McGregor of Scotland, above, saves a penalty against Northern Ireland in 2008. At right, William McCrum in 1888.



TOP: JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: MILFORD BUILDINGS PRESERVATION TRUST

The Essence of the Game

The Penalty Kick

By Robert McCrum
Notting Hill, 208 pages, \$21.95

By CLIVE PRIDDLE

THE RECENT history of soccer and Northern Ireland is not a happy one. In September the U.K. government confirmed it would not fund the redevelopment of Casmont Park in Belfast, meaning that Northern Ireland cannot host any of the 2028 European Championship games. The tournament will be staged in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland instead. Not for the first time, Northern Ireland was ignored, unwanted by the rest of the U.K., whose political parties hardly set foot there, a lost province that most people assume will sooner or later be absorbed into the Republic.

The last defenders of British Northern Ireland are likely to be descendants of the Ulster Scots, settler families who arrived in the 17th century from the Scottish Lowlands and northern England. They are largely Protestant and doggedly Anglophilic despite the many instances of neglect and even humiliation they have experienced in recent times. Among those families are the McCrums, ancestors of the distinguished editor, author and critic Robert McCrum. "The Penalty Kick" is Mr. McCrum's braiding together of a quite literary essay on soccer with his own family history, justified by the fact that his great-grandfather William, an amateur goalkeeper, claims the distinction of having invented the penalty kick (or penalty, or PK).

As Mr. McCrum points out in his introduction, the last World Cup, in Qatar in 2022, generally regarded as a splendid example of the tournament, was decided by a penalty shootout that featured the world's two best outfield players, Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé, in single combat against opposing goalkeepers. As well as showcasing the drama of the penalty, the tournament was the most watched event in sporting history around the world and one of the most profitable. Soccer in 2024 is global and extremely rich—at least for those at the apex of the pyramid. Northern Ireland did not qualify for the competition; its team has done so only three times and has not appeared since 1986. The likelihood of it qualifying for a World Cup in the near future is negligible.

SHOTS FIRED Allan McGregor of Scotland, above, saves a penalty against Northern Ireland in 2008. At right, William McCrum in 1888.

Soccer—football to the British and Irish—was always the English game, distinct from the Gaelic football played south of the border. As such the sport was bound up with culture and politics, and William McCrum played his part in the drama during the Victorian era, when he made the case for the penalty kick to the Football Association authorities. The penalty, now Law 14 in football's governing rulebook, was one of several regulations introduced as the game changed from an organized communal brawl over a ball to a team sport that could command the attention and loyalty of fans. The excitement of the penalty, in which

wealthy owner of a large linen mill and Milford's biggest employer. Robert was idealistic and severe, and when Willie's mother died of tuberculosis he handed the boy over to a "wicked woman," the housekeeper, by whom he was brought up during a miserable childhood. Football and the Boy Scouts were among his few pleasures. Alcohol and gambling replaced them, aided by an impetuous marriage in 1891, the same year the penalty kick law was adopted. Apart from the birth of a son, Cecil, Willie's marriage was a disaster that ended in his humiliation, and as the linen business began to decline the McCrum fortunes sank with it.

For Robert McCrum, the penalty kick is an opportunity to reflect not only on the beautiful game but on his own family history.

the game stops and a player gets an unimpeded shot at the goal, was immediately apparent in a game that usually sees few clear-cut scoring opportunities. This was more than a sanction against foul play: It was a crystalline moment, the game in its essence, one attacker versus one defender in a theatrically still moment.

The story of William McCrum is perhaps no less crystalline than his clever invention, still celebrated in his Armagh hometown of Milford by a granite marker. Willie's father, Robert Garmany McCrum, was the

Cecil escaped to the Royal Navy where, after a fast and bright start, his career founded. He was in command of HMS Hood during the 1931 Invergordon mutiny by his and other crews. The effect of the mutiny was so serious that it contributed to a run on the pound and Britain coming off the gold standard. None of that was Cecil's fault—but his proximity to the mutineers and sympathy for their cause sank his prospects. (At least he was not in command when the Hood was sunk in World War II, with only three survivors.)



Robert Garmany McCrum had escaped drowning when he refused a VIP berth on the Titanic. It is a measure of the extent of the fall of the family fortunes that the grandfather was a dignitary who could have rubbed shoulders with the Astors and the Guggenheims, while his grandson was a sailor literally and metaphorically at sea. As such the McCrums are representative of a tier of Northern Irish society that thrived when the province was integrated into the British economy but suffered greatly once Britain cut loose its obligations to Belfast, for economic and increasingly political reasons.

The story of three generations of the McCrums is affecting and full of compelling details. Like many Victorians and Edwardians, they exemplify financial privilege but emotional deprivation, and their fortunes are caught up with the storm-tossed events of their times. Mr. McCrum's choice to sandwich this family saga between the two parts of his essay on football generally, and the penalty kick in particular, makes for an occasionally rocky voyage. The author invites some unexpected literary referees to his story, including Jane Austen, who can't easily be imagined chanting from the stands. Nor, I think, does the play

"Dear England," centered on Gareth Southgate, until recently the manager of the English men's team, deserve the space Mr. McCrum allocates. Mr. Southgate, a decent, capable man who took on a near impossible job with dignity and did it well, nonetheless failed to bring home the big cup. The world of sports rewards winners; its affection for runners-up is notoriously short-lived.

At the end of the book, Mr. McCrum debates exactly what kind of story he has written, as if he's not quite sure of his own concoction. He suggests that it might be "a contemporary fairytale for a mass audience," but admits that he might be trying too hard to find a happy ending. To me,

"The Penalty Kick" is a sympathetic tragedy—of the lives and decline of the McCrums of Armagh, and of Northern Ireland more generally. The book's real merit is that it gives the stage not to global superstars but to modest men and women of relatively ordinary means, whose lives are played out in a game whose rules they do not control. This isn't a book for tribal sports fans, but in one respect Mr. McCrum surely sympathizes with the iconic Liverpool manager Bill Shankly's dictum: "Some people think that football is a matter of life and death.... I can assure you, it's much more serious than that."

Mr. Priddle is a writer, editor and youth-soccer referee who has awarded his fair share of penalties.

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'You're not Dylan Thomas, I'm not Patti Smith. / This ain't the Chelsea Hotel, we're modern idiots.' —TAYLOR SWIFT

IT'S ME, HI
Taylor Swift performing
in Toronto on Nov. 14,
2024.



EMMA MCINTYRE/TAS24/GETTY IMAGES

The Biggest Act in Show Biz

Heartbreak Is the National Anthem

By Rob Sheffield
Dey Street, 208 pages, \$27.99

BY TARA ISABELLA BURTON

WHAT IS IT about Taylor Swift? During the course of her nearly two-decade career, the country-singer-turned-megawatt-pop-star has broken sales record after sales record on her way to becoming the world's richest female musician; her 2023-24 Eras tour has become the highest-grossing concert tour of all time. The devotion of her fans, the Swifties, is legendary.

"Nothing like Taylor Swift has ever happened before," insists Rob Sheffield in "Heartbreak Is the National Anthem," a hagiographic analysis of Ms. Swift's success. But Mr. Sheffield, a contributing editor at Rolling Stone, neither defends this statement nor helps contextualize what it is about the singer, let alone the media landscape of 2020s America, that might make this the case.

Ms. Swift is, undeniably, a wildly successful artist, with a longevity that's striking in a notoriously fickle industry. She has had, Mr. Sheffield points out, a consistent 18-year run, compared to only eight for the Beatles. She has, furthermore, preserved roughly the same image and persona for the bulk of her career. Sure, her music has changed, from her early country success to the pop sounds of "Red" (2012) and "1989" (2014) to her recent forays into indie folk, but Ms. Swift herself, as a public figure, has remained stunningly consistent: America's awkward sweetheart, with feelings—particularly romantic ones—so strong she cannot help but let them overflow into melody. Unlike, say, Madonna, or Lady Gaga or even Beyoncé—pop figures of similar cultural stature, if smaller bank accounts—Ms. Swift has never changed her image.

She remains, especially for her Swifties, a consistent conduit and confidante. "She writes songs," Mr. Sheffield tells us, "about the tiniest, most secretive agonies, the kind you wouldn't even confess to your friends, except the only way she knows how to process these moments is turning them into louder-than-live stadium scream-alongs."

One might wonder, here, whether Ms. Swift's performance of authenticity—the fact that she successfully appears vulnerable, even girlish, in an era when pop stars tend toward Lady Gaga-esque exaggerated artifice—is a key to her success. One of the most telling anecdotes in Mr. Sheffield's book involves her propensity to insert coded lyrics and knowing references into her songs—all the better for her fans to map out Ms. Swift's emotional galaxy. To love Taylor Swift is to enter into a parasocial relationship with her, to attempt to follow her lyrical breadcrumbs to discover the "real" Taylor at the heart of the musical maze. She "loves to lure people in to read her songs autobiographically," Mr. Sheffield writes, "while always keeping her deepest mysteries to herself."

We can almost believe, or at least make ourselves believe, that the 34-year-old Ms. Swift is still scribbling down her notes about her crush using a gel pen. Her girl-next-door stance is patently ridiculous—a beautiful, bestselling pop star might experience heartbreak, but she's unlikely to be the wallflower pining for the boy who loves the cheerleader. Yet that only seems to add to the power of her perceived authenticity. In the privacy of our secret hearts, aren't we all 13-year-old girls?

Another question raised by Ms. Swift's success has to do with the media and economic system in which she operates. Is there something about this age of social media, with its contradictory pulls toward authenticity and Facetuned perfection, that renders Ms. Swift's exaggerated vulnerability particularly timely? Her confessional, after all, have the same

uncanny blend of performance and vulnerability we find in, say, those influencers who film themselves crying.

Fascinating, too, are her decisions as a businesswoman within that media landscape. One of Ms. Swift's most controversial—and ultimately successful—calls, which Mr. Sheffield recounts, was to rerecord her back catalog after the rights to her original masters were sold in 2019, along with the rest of her label, Big Machine Records, to Scooter Braun, a controversial music manager with whom Ms. Swift had a contentious business relationship. Ms. Swift was able to use social media to connect with her fans—and make clear that financing

Taylor Swift's massive success may come down to her consistent appeal to the teenager within.

cial support for Taylor the artist was also emotional support for Taylor the person. One of the new rerecordings, "Red (Taylor's Version)" (2021) became not only her bestselling album, but also a bulwark for Taylor Swift the brand: a woman whose emotional subjectivity is so intense that everything becomes, in a sense, Taylor's version.

Mr. Sheffield's book, neither biography nor cultural criticism, seems happy to skirt along the surface of Ms. Swift's success. The details we learn—her parents were married the day Rihanna was born—do not illuminate

what it is about Ms. Swift that draws so many people to her. Nor do we get much of a sense of what draws Mr. Sheffield, specifically, to her. Although the chapters of "Heartbreak" that border on memoir are tender and moving—we learn how Mr. Sheffield's love of Ms. Swift is tied up with his

relationship with his mother, who "didn't want her only son to be a quiet son" and "fiercely encouraged the loudness in me"—these sections are neither detailed enough nor distant enough to help a reader not already versed in Swiftiana to understand why Ms. Swift, rather than Whitney, or Britney, or Cher, is the object of such appeal.

In real estate, they say, location is everything. One wonders whether, in music, it's timing. One of Mr. Sheffield's most astute observations is that Ms. Swift and her fans have grown up together—and that part of her appeal may be to the extended buying power, if not the adolescence, of a fan base still holding on to their teenage dreams. Ms. Swift, the author writes, "started out as a teenage girl,

singing directly to her peers, and even as she conquered the world, she never lost those girls, because she's never stopped putting them first, even as they keep growing up into their thirties, forties, fifties." In this, the Swift phenomenon resembles that of another kid wonder: Harry Potter. Harry, too, grew up alongside his fans, who aged while the books were being released. His appeal, too, was one of emotional intimacy; his extended adolescence seemed to exist as much for the fans as for the narrative of the books themselves. And while the wave of Pottermania has broken—in large part due to J.K. Rowling's controversial political opinions—Ms. Swift, who has largely sidestepped politics, remains an object of perpetual emotional nostalgia, bringing us back to those parts of ourselves, and times in our lives, when our emotions were the only things that mattered.

Mary Pickford, the silent-film star best known for her ingenue roles, once famously said that she became her "own baby." Maybe Ms. Swift has managed to become, and remain, her own teenage dream.

Ms. Burton is the author, most recently, of the novel "Here in Avalon."

WHAT TO GIVE

By Michael Luca

ABOUT A DECADE ago, I worked on a project with a large vacuum manufacturer and learned that one way Consumer Reports evaluates vacuums is by taking fur from Maine Coon cats and stomping it on a medium-pile carpet. The more fur the vacuum sucked up, the better. While such batteries of tests are informative, they do not fully capture the real-world challenges of kids' spaghetti spills or user errors. At the time of the project, online reviews were becoming a popular tool not only for customers but for manufacturers thinking about product improvements and development. Digital feedback provided a novel snapshot of customer experiences, foreshadowing the ongoing digital transformation of the economy.

Enter "Smart Rivals" (*Harvard Business Review*, 192 pages, \$32), Feng Zhu and Bonnie Yining Cao's exploration of the challenges and opportunities of doing business in the digital age. Written by two Harvard Business School affiliates (Mr. Zhu is a professor of business administration and Ms. Cao is a doctoral student), "Smart

Rivals" is—in the HBS style—

chock full of case-study style

breakdowns of corporate

decisions, complete with 87

mentions of that business-

school darling, Domino's pizza.

According to the authors,

"many traditional businesses

are fighting the wrong bat-

tle" by "trying to outpace

tech giants" and should

instead engage in games that

"tech giants simply can't

win." We're told how Best

Buy "doubled down on its

key differentiation from

Amazon: its in-store experience."

Similarly, the Portland-based book-

store Powell's hosts more than 500

author events a year, while the

beauty retailer Sephora blends

"online and in-store experiences for

a clearer view of customer behaviors."

Traditional businesses can also

seek out ways to partner with big

tech companies, as when Best Buy

agreed to "sell smart TVs equipped

with Amazon's Fire TV software and

Alexa in its store," which "enhanced

its brand" while "reducing Amazon's

incentive to launch offline electronic

stores by itself"; or when Domino's

and Uber reached an agreement in

which Domino's could use "its own

drivers for delivering orders from

Uber, thereby upholding its reputa-

tion as a delivery specialist."

When faced with disruptions,

businesses should think about "their

core capabilities and chart a new

path based on what they do best."

But how should we go about identi-

fying such opportunities and making

sense of the growing amount of data

that has become a hallmark of the

digital age?

In "May Contain Lies" (*Califor-*

nia, 338 pages, \$19.95), Alex

Edmans—a professor of finance at

London Business School—reminds us

that it's not enough to leave the

thinking about data to the data sci-

entists. After all, "you can rustle up a report to support almost any opinion you want."

We should be on the lookout for common pitfalls in data-driven decisions, such as "over extrapolating from a single anecdote," mistaking correlation for causation by "ignoring alternative explanations," or confirmation bias—the tendency to "accept a claim uncritically if it confirms what we'd like to be true."

A little legwork can improve our relationship to data. Mr. Edmans suggests, for instance, taking the time to understand the analysis underlying a conclusion, refraining from sharing an article unless you've read and reflected on it and subscribing to

"newspapers or writers whose stances disagree with ours" to broaden our world view."

While slow thinking can be valuable, sometimes companies need to take quick action under less-than-ideal circumstances. In "Crisis-Ready Teams" (*Stanford*, 200 pages, \$28), Mary J. Waller, a senior research scholar at Colorado State University, and Seth A. Kaplan, a professor of psychology at George

Mason University, analyze crisis simulations—for flight crews,

medical-trauma units and mountain climbers, among others—to explore how teams react to the urgent and unexpected. Though the simulations generally involve modest sample sizes, the authors helpfully provide enough details

for readers to reach their own conclusions about how to interpret them. In tumultuous times, even thinking about how one might approach a crisis can be valuable.

In the end, it's hard to predict how the ongoing technological revolution will play out or what the resulting societal landscape will look like. In the face of rapidly

evolving technology, a strained social fabric, polarization and a shaky and often unvetted information environment, we can all benefit from cultivating a genuine openness to new evidence and diverse perspectives, paired with the skills and awareness to think for ourselves.

—Mr. Luca is a professor of business administration and the director of the Technology and Society Initiative at Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School.



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HOLIDAY BOOKS

WHAT TO GIVE: PHOTOGRAPHY
By ANGELINA TORRE

TODAY THERE ARE apps, as well as filters on social media, that help smartphone photographers give their images a certain patina. In the early 20th century, amateurs used colored potato starch grains, adhered to a glass plate, to produce photos with a dreamlike, pastel hue. The Belle Époque photographer Jacques Henri Lartigue (1894-1986) produced 300 such plates, called autochromes. Ninety of them have survived, and they are now reproduced at full scale in *"Jacques Henri Lartigue: The Proof of Color"* (Atelier, 160 pages, \$55). In contrast to his better-known snapshots of automobile races and sporting events, Lartigue's autochromes are studies in patience. (The images required a one-to-four-second exposure time and were often taken in series.) Family members, rose gardens and autumn leaves proved equal muse. A 1927 image depicts two posh figures sitting behind a heap of oranges that have spilled out of a tipped basket. One wonders how long Lartigue had to wait for the last fruit to stop rolling before releasing the shutter.

"Foundering and broke" after graduating high school, Jonathan Becker (b. 1954) decided to do what any meandering young fellow might: enroll in a summer course on Surrealism and Dadaism taught in French at Harvard. He flunked the class, as he recounts in *"Jonathan Becker: Lost Time"* (Phaidon, 328 pages, \$100), but parlayed the experience into the start of his career as an editorial photographer of the beau monde. This collection of images, thoughtfully curated by the editor Mark Holborn, spans nearly five decades and demonstrates Mr. Becker's skill for capturing glamorous subjects with candor. Here is Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis adjusting her purse in New York's Academy of Arts and Letters; Fran Lebowitz with her feet dangling off the arm of a sofa and an ashtray at her side at a Vanity Fair Oscar party; Diana Vreeland, the fashion-magazine doyenne, gesticulating in her ornate Park Avenue apartment. Mr. Holborn describes "Lost Time" as a "photobiography" and encourages readers to approach the book as a narrative of its maker rather than a catalog of late 20th- and early 21st-century celebrity. In reality, the book can be both.

Martine Franck: Looking at Others (Silvana Editoriale, 208 pages, \$45), edited by Clément Chéroux, will appeal to the humble observer of everyday life. While visiting a fac-



STILL LIFE A 1927 photograph by Jacques Henri Lartigue of Madeleine Messager and Germaine Chalon in Cannes, France.

WHAT TO GIVE: FINE ART
By ANN LANDI

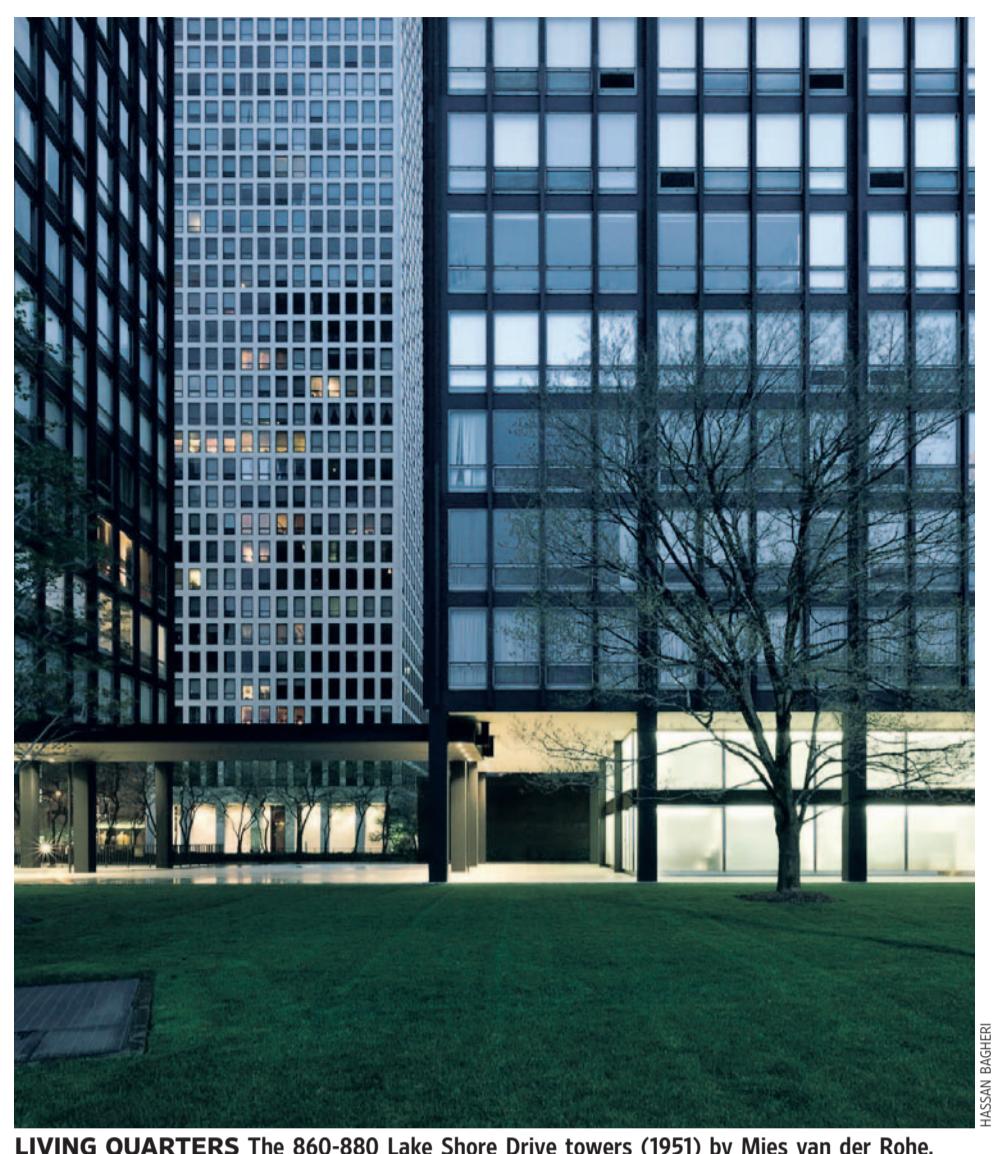
ÉDOUARD MANET'S relationships were often as enigmatic as his subjects. As Nancy Locke notes in one of the essays included in *"Manet: A Model Family"* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 224 pages, \$49.95), edited by Diana Seave Greenwald, "painting the modern and painting the family seem to be, for Manet, one and the same." Consider Suzanne Leenhoff, the Dutch piano teacher Manet eventually married. She is the model for the early "Surprised Nymph" (1861) and recurs again and again as a bourgeois wife in individual portraits. Before the two wed, Leenhoff gave birth to Manet's (probable) son, Léon, who is also frequently represented in the artist's work. Depictions of the boy are often ambiguous, perhaps because of his uncertain status; in one early work, "Fishing" (1863), Léon appears as a faceless figure on a far bank opposite his parents. Manet's brother and brother-in-law turn up in the then-scandalous *"Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe"* (1863); a riveting and melancholy portrait of his parents marked the artist's debut at the prestigious Paris Salon in 1861. Family remained a poignant source of mystery and power throughout the career of this revolutionary artist.

"Siena: The Rise of Painting 1300-1350" (National Gallery London, 312 pages, \$50), edited by Joanna Cannon, Caroline Campbell and Stephan Wolohojian, highlights the output of four 14th-century masters: Duccio, Simone Martini and the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. In addition to the paintings alluded to in its subtitle, the book features sculptures, devotional objects and beautiful altars. These sacred and prestigious works were "high-status possessions" for the private chapels and churches that commissioned them

along with Amelie Madsen, adds that these works seem to be O'Keeffe's attempt to direct attention away from Steiglitz's marketing of her as an "intensely sexualized" female presence. If flowers were feminine, skyscrapers were emphatically masculine. The paintings here capture some of the razzle dazzle of the jazz era and the sheer awe people felt in navigating this brave new world. "A Street" (1926) presents a double phalanx of towering skyscrapers that dwarfs a lone streetlight below.

"Great Women Sculptors" (Phaidon, 344 pages, \$69.95) discusses some 300 artists across 500 years, featuring many of the usual suspects such as Louise Nevelson and Jenny Holzer. It also introduces a wealth of unknowns who hail from many countries and often employ startling mediums. "Plaster, marble, concrete, bronze and wood are some of the substances associated with sculpture," notes Lisa Le Feuvre in her introduction, "but it can just as well be made from air, water, film, paper, photography, dust, fragrance, the voice, or pigment." Janine Antoni makes busts out of chocolate. Margarita Azurduy's folk-based figures incorporate feathers and horsehair; Mikala Dwyer works in fabric and stockings; Klára Hosnolová constructs monumental works from thread and yarn. Properzia de' Rossi, a Renaissance artist who is one of the earliest sculptors featured, made a jeweled work incorporating a cherry pit. The book suggests the astonishing number of talents largely overlooked and may send you straight to the internet to learn more.

Until recently, the painter Sam Gilliam (1933-2022) had not received the attention accorded other members of the Washington Color School such as Kenneth Noland and Mor-



LIVING QUARTERS The 860-880 Lake Shore Drive towers (1951) by Mies van der Rohe.

HASSEN BAGHERI

WHAT TO GIVE: ARCHITECTURE

By CAMMY BROTHERS

ARCHITECTURE BOOKS can take you places, allowing you to visit fascinating buildings around the world without the hassle of getting there. The German-born architect Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) helped shape the skylines of many European and American cities. His designs for New York's Seagram Building (1958) and Chicago's IBM Plaza (1972, now known as AMA Plaza) established an elegant model for the modern office tower and were widely imitated across the globe. Even his smaller projects, from the Barcelona Pavilion (1929) to the Farnsworth House (1951) in Illinois, had an outsize impact on the appearance and materials of the modern art gallery and modernist houses today.

Dietrich Neumann's *"Mies van der Rohe: An Architect in His Time"* (Yale, 448 pages, \$75) offers a balanced look at the architect in the context of his reception and impact, complete with photographs of Mies's realized works and a selection of his early sketches. It analyzes how Mies deliberately advanced the misleading view that his work was purely functional, while underplaying his aesthetic agenda. In describing the architect's often radical, sometimes brilliant and deeply flawed vision that celebrated the purity of geometry and the strength of industrial materials, Mr. Neumann simultaneously tells the story of 20th-century American and European modernism.

The buildings featured in *"Home, Heat, Money, God: Texas and Modern Architecture"* (Texas, 280 pages, \$45), by Kathryn E. O'Rourke with photographs by Ben Koush, range from famous museums such as Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum (1972) by Louis Kahn and Houston's Menil Collection (1987) by Renzo Piano to modest vernacular structures such as schools, apartment blocks and health clinics. In each case, the author considers how architects responded to the specific context of Texas, including its extreme heat, while the thematic essays situate the buildings in relation to the societal and cultural context. The epilogue notes how little appreciation midcentury-modern architecture often gets, how readily people consider it ugly or prisonlike and how this makes it vulnerable to destruction. Saving modern architecture from the wrecking ball is one of the most challenging fights for preservationists,

because the buildings don't have the halo of the "historic" or the obvious craftsmanship that earns esteem in the eyes of the public. The subject of Richard Anderson's *"Wolkenbügel"* (MIT, 380 pages, \$65) is El Lissitzky (1890-1941), a Russian-Jewish émigré to Germany who produced paintings, photographs, sculptures, graphic designs, buildings and several drawings of unbuilt projects. His best known creations were what he called "Prouns," paintings and drawings depicting geometric shapes in three dimensions. "Wolkenbügel," which takes its title from Lissitzky's unrealized project for a "horizontal skyscraper," is a gorgeously produced, highly readable account of a fascinating and wily figure, full of double-page color illustrations of his beautiful and provocative works. As Mr. Anderson writes, Lissitzky "transformed architectural design by bringing an unprecedented array of creative and theoretical approaches to bear on his spatial project for the city." Although many of his works remained on paper, his visionary ideas had an impact on every aspiring architect who encountered them, as they will on readers.

Vishan Chakrabarti may be best known as the founder of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism, the firm engaged in the daunting project of reimagining Penn Station. But he is also an avid writer, and in *"The Architecture of Urbanity: Designing for Nature, Culture, and Joy"* (Princeton, 280 pages, \$37), he takes on the important subject of cities—their challenges and their future. The book bristles with opinions on matters ranging from the urban impact of climate change to how to fix social housing. As one example, Mr. Chakrabarti resists the smart-cities movements that attempt to maximize efficiency through technology (think delivery drones). He favors designs that generate "positive social friction" of the kind that takes place in the urban farmers market. Though readers may not agree with all of Mr. Chakrabarti's proposed cures, they can admire the ambition and range of his knowledge, and his intelligent diagnoses of what exactly is awry.

—Ms. Brothers is a professor of art and architecture at Northeastern University and the author of *"Giuliano da Sangallo and the Ruins of Rome."*

WHAT TO GIVE: FASHION
By LAURA JACOBS

A COLLECTION is a passion, a family of objects that excites the eye and stirs the heart. It's also a question: Why this family, and is the sum more important than the parts? Fashion as we know it consists of "collections," those biannual searches for the self that call up forms and forces. And what of those who collect fashion?

The most beautiful illustrated fashion book of this season is *"An Eye for Couture: A Collector's Exploration of 20th Century Fashion"* (Prestel, 290 pages, \$95), edited by Caroline Evans, Bettül Basaran, Mei Mei Rado and Christine Rampal. The collection it highlights was started over 35 years ago by Francesca Galloway,

a specialist dealer in Indian painting and courtly objects, as well as Islamic and European textiles. As Ms. Galloway tells the scholar Judith Clark in one of the book's five excellent essays, she had been buying pieces to wear when she crossed paths with a 1950s cocktail dress by Cristóbal Balenciaga, cut from his signature black silk gazar.



"It was masterly in its construction," she recalls. "I bought it for what it was, and not for what I was going to look like in it." In other words, to her it was a work of art.

Ms. Galloway's choices—and there are more than 100 in the book, most of which you won't have seen before—make for a lavish journey, with a special emphasis on the East as expressed by such Western designers of the early 20th century as

Paul Poiret and the house of Fortuny. Ms. Galloway clearly loves rich colors and gilt embellishments, and even her purchases from the decades of classic couture—the 1930s to the '60s, Jeanne Lanvin to Jacques Fath to Paco Rabanne—are often touched with the exotic. One in particular (there's always that one)

sian couturier Azzedine Alaïa, who died in 2017. When the "master of us all," as Christian Dior once called Balenciaga, abruptly closed his house in May 1968, there was a sudden void in the haute couture. Alaïa, 33 at the time, was moved to begin collecting. Two years later, he was invited by Balenciaga's studio director to take the master's remaining prototypes and fabrics. Alaïa's collection, through which he sought to preserve fashion's heritage, numbers in the thousands.

The pieces presented in *"Azzedine Alaïa: A Couturier's Collection"* (Thames & Hudson, 224 pages, \$60) reflect Alaïa's eye for sculptural clarity. The editors Miren Arzalluz and Olivier Saillard have arranged the collection to suggest fashion's evolution, from a Victorian velvet cape and coat by Charles Frederick Worth, both dated ca. 1890, to a beribboned black shirtdress drapèe latticed like the Eiffel Tower, by Comme des Garçons for spring-summer 2014. The collection's definitive piece? Yves Saint Laurent for Christian Dior, a black serge, trapèze-line dress from spring-summer 1958. An inflated "A" with two tiny sleeves, monastically simple and precise, it has the power of the Pieta.

Though her name sounds French, the fashion designer Simona Rocha is Irish. The daughter of the Chinese-Irish designer John Rocha, she comes from a land of lyric verse and Gothic castles. Her garments are girlish, historical, a tad punk—Elizabethan sleeves, a rain of ribbons and tulle à la the Wilis of "Giselle"—post-modern dishabille!

"Simone Rocha" (Rizzoli, 288 pages, \$85), authored by the designer herself, is clothed in Pepto-Bismol pink, her favorite color, and the text is also pink. Moving through many Rocha collections and their

influences—Louise Bourgeois, religious iconography, the movie "The Red Shoes" (1948)—the airy, arty layouts free-associate: scrapbook meets subconscious. This book is fresh and fun.

The fashion photographer George Hoynigen-Huene hailed from the imperial city of St. Petersburg, Russia, the native soil of so many refined sensibilities. He was born in 1900 to a Baltic nobleman and an American mother and grew up around the czarist court's elevated pleasures and equestrian pomp. The Revolution of 1917 changed everything, and Huene was thrust into the present tense, privileges gone, in Europe.

In London and later Paris, Huene studied dance and lighting, sketched dresses and architecture and drew the backgrounds for Vogue fashion shoots. The magazine handed him a camera in 1926, and in 1930, he took the most visionary fashion photograph of all time. Called "Divers" and featured here in *"George Hoynigen-Huene: Photography, Fashion, Film"* (Thames & Hudson, 328 pages, \$100), it shows a young man and woman, androgynous in their woolen Izod tank suits, seated on a diving board and looking to the far-off horizon line. Their bodies are positioned to form a lyre, the photograph a modernist song to gender equality.

Huene was a man of deep experience in the arts and an abiding sense of civilization. He preferred the classical strength of the back to the come-hither of the face, even though he later worked in Hollywood. In "George Hoynigen-Huene," edited by Susanna Brown, we see how cultured one can be, and how that, too, is a form of collecting.

—Ms. Jacobs is the Arts Intel Report editor for the weekly newsletter Air Mail.

ERIC LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NY



MOTHER AND SON 'Reading' (ca. 1873) by Édouard Manet.

and were paid the reverence appropriate to objects of veneration. On the day Duccio's monumental *"Maestà"* (1311) was transported to the cathedral in Siena, the workshops closed and the multipaneled altarpiece was paraded in a loop around the city. This is a book to be savored and treasured, much like the objects it celebrates.

The sensuous paintings Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) made of flowers are instantly recognizable. Less well-known are the works she made while residing part-time in Manhattan from 1925 into the 1930s. She painted the city's skyscrapers (especially the Shelton Hotel, where she and her husband, Alfred Stieglitz, lived in the winter) and scenes of the East River, often achieving a degree of near-total abstraction that was startling for its time. "The paintings reveal her interest in two types of composition: humbling views directed up at these new urban monoliths and sprawling observations looking down into the city," Sarah Kelly Oehler notes in *"Georgia O'Keeffe: My New York"* (Art Institute of Chicago, 216 pages, \$50). Ms. Oehler, who co-edited this cat-

ris Louis, who gained critical acclaim in the 1960s. Yet, as Mary Schmidt Campbell notes in her introduction to *"Sam Gilliam"* (Phaidon, 304 pages, \$150), Gilliam was an innovator who "mastered an astonishing range of media, materials, spaces, working processes, themes and art-historical precedents to carve out his own singular canonical presence in the history of modern art." Gilliam's claim to fame was oversize draped canvases saturated with color. "Bikers Move Like Swallows" (1994) and "Of Fireflies and Ferris Wheels: Monastery Parallel" (1997) are both buoyantly lyrical, site-specific works in which looping stained fabric hangs from a great height, redefining painting and decoration in radical ways. Though resolutely dedicated to abstraction and never overtly political in his art, Gilliam—described here as a "disavowed activist"—paid homage to his times in works like "April 4" (1969), a tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. This gorgeous and comprehensive volume celebrates an innovator who deserved more acclaim in his lifetime.

—Ms. Landi is the director of the Wright Contemporary, an art gallery in Taos, N.M.



JOHN MATOS

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'In infinite time, in infinite matter, in infinite space, is formed a bubble-organism, and that bubble lasts a while and bursts, and that bubble is me.' —LEO TOLSTOY

Wonders Great and Small

The Miraculous From the Material

By Alan Lightman
Pantheon, 208 pages, \$36

BY DANNY HEITMAN

IN "The Miraculous From the Material," his charming celebration of natural wonders, physicist and popular author Alan Lightman declares himself a spiritual materialist. "By 'materialist,' I mean that I believe the world is made of material stuff, and nothing more, and that material obeys rules and laws," he tells readers. As for the spiritual: "I don't believe in miracles, but I do believe in the miraculous." In his view, even when the workings of the universe can be explained by science, they remain remarkable and worthy of awe.

His book isn't a single narrative but takes the form of 36 brief essays, which praise everything from atoms to hummingbirds, lightning to waterfalls. "The Miraculous From the Material" grew in part from "Searching," Mr. Lightman's public television series, which explored how science informs the quest for life's meaning. In the spirit of that project, the new book is deeply visual, with lovely photographs that pair with each essay. In a picture for his essay on fireflies, the luminous bugs swarm beneath a canopy of trees, a living constellation. Fireflies might twinkle, we're told, as a way of warning potential predators that they don't taste very good: "If the menu is clearly labeled, you go for the tasty items and avoid the ones that sicken you."

Caught in a camera lens, the Grand Canyon shimmers with the strangeness of a vision. Mr. Lightman's accompanying commentary, with its lessons on basic geology and tectonic plates, doesn't fully diminish the canyon's essential mystery. A photo of the moon is equally arresting, its weary luster like an ancient coin perched in a museum case.

But this is no magisterial coffee-table book meant to be revered rather than read—and many of the images here are drawn from public sources such as NASA. The real draw is Mr. Lightman's brightly expressive voice, which works best when it tells us not only what he thinks but what he sees, senses and feels. In "Bubbles," a typical essay, he celebrates the fleeting little globes blown from soap: "I was as mesmerized as my kids looking at the perfect spheres, practically weightless, transforming an ordinary scene into a fairyland... . Watching soap bubbles slipping so easily through the air makes you feel lighter."

Mr. Lightman is also impressed after spotting scarlet ibises, an encounter that takes a comic turn: "Their color was so impossibly



NEW PERSPECTIVE Horsetail Fall at Yosemite National Park, illuminated in red by a sunset.

loud, their postures so dramatic, that I thought for sure they were part of a plastic installation."

One of Mr. Lightman's abiding themes is that, properly embraced, a scientific understanding of such natural phenomena can intensify rather than dampen our sense of wonder. His essays put that proposition to the test, sometimes with mixed results. He earnestly deconstructs the mist he spots on

his morning walks, analyzing it down to the atomic level, and so a pastoral scene of cows grazing in a dewy field shifts to a textbook diagram of a water molecule. It's like seeing the insides of a grand old clock spread across a workbench: The parts are all accounted for, but one still misses the magical chime.

Mr. Lightman, who's not only a physicist but a novelist and humanities professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technol-

ogy, acknowledges the power of story and metaphor as a means of understanding, often turning to literary sources for insights. An essay on spider webs opens with a poem by Emily Dickinson: "The spider as an artist / Has never been employed / Though his surpassing merit / Is freely certified."

With one exception, the essay subjects in Mr. Lightman's book appear in alphabetical order, an arrangement that might evoke memories of encyclopedias browsed on rainy childhood afternoons. Even so, the range of entries doesn't aspire to be comprehensive. "The Miraculous From the Material" is born out of Mr. Lightman's selection of his favorite things, a list that reveals as much about the life of the author as about the objects of his devotion. He includes an essay on Ha Long Bay in Vietnam, home to a multitude of small mountains, called karst towers, that rise from the ocean. "They look," he observes, "like a scene in a sci-fi movie, a surreal seascape on an alien planet."

Fireflies might twinkle as a way of warning potential predators that they don't taste very good.

Such descriptions might be a spur to future travel plans, but even readers who don't make it as far as Ha Long Bay will likely feel its allure. The same goes for Yosemite's Firefall, a water feature in the Sierra Nevada of California that resembles a flood of flames when the sun hits it just right. The brevity of this illusion, Mr. Lightman notes, "is one of its most striking marvels. Would the display be quite so fascinating and beautiful if it lasted hours, or days?"

Readers who want a deeper dive into Mr. Lightman's philosophy can read last year's "The Transcendent Brain," in which he suggests that sublime feelings while looking at a starry sky, for example, might come from our genetic wiring and have a useful evolutionary benefit. Here the emphasis is on experience rather than theory, in tributes to clouds, flowers, glaciers, stars and sunsets. The book's concluding essay, "Humans," is the one that appears out of alphabetical sequence—perhaps so that Mr. Lightman can save the most intriguing wonder for last. "I am grateful," he writes, "for being part of that tiny fraction of matter in the cosmos that is alive, able to bear witness to this grand spectacle of a universe."

Mr. Heitman, a columnist for the Baton Rouge Advocate, is the editor of Phi Kappa Phi's Forum magazine.

FIVE BEST ON REMOTE PLACES

Jonathan Hollins

The author, most recently, of 'Vet at the End of the Earth: Adventures With Animals in the South Atlantic'

The Call of the Wild

By Jack London (1903)

1 There are certain books, read when young, that leave an indelible footprint on the soul. This is one for me. Buck, a massive St. Bernard crossbreed, falls prey to the surging demand for sled dogs created by the Klondike Gold Rush when he is stolen by an impudent gardener at Judge Miller's house, where Buck has led the life of "a sated aristocrat." Broken in by club, lash and fang, he is flung "into the heart of things primordial," where morals are "a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence" and mercy is "misunderstood for fear." Jack London writes with profound knowledge of and affection for dogs, not anthropomorphically but through Buck's sentience, using the third person for his internalized dialogue. London describes Buck's retrograde transformation as he sheds his veneer of domestication—his ownership passing from the experienced handlers of the Canadian mail service to foolish and naive stampeder who starve and beat their sled team until their dogs are "perambulating skeletons." Rescued by the gold prospector John Thornton, Buck responds with the unquestioning adoration and loyalty that only a dog can give but ultimately, through tragic events, reverts to the call of his wild ancestors.

Lord of the Flies

By William Golding (1954)

2 As someone who endured an all-male English boarding school, I found the core tenet of William Golding's novel

horribly true: that boys, unfettered by the mores of civilization, relapse into atavism. The scenario: a Pacific island, a plane crash and a group of surviving boys from disparate backgrounds. Two contrasting leaders emerge: Ralph, a charismatic 12-year-old Adonis with a demeanor "that proclaimed no devil," and Jack, first seen marching a uniformed rank of choristers along the beach, his face "ugly without silliness." The undervalued, intelligent extension of Ralph's cognitive processes is Piggy, who is mocked for his obesity, asthma and thick spectacles. Since Piggy's lenses allow the boys to make fire, he becomes key in the tussle for power when Ralph's fragile democracy disintegrates. Jack's breakaway tribe of spear-wielding pig hunters, safe from "shame or self-consciousness" behind their masks of face paint, evolve into the "throb and stamp of a single organism," with fatal consequences. Ultimately, Ralph weeps for "the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart."

Cry, the Beloved Country

By Alan Paton (1948)

3 "Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear." So many passages in this beautifully crafted tale, written shortly before apartheid was officially established in South Africa, bring me to tears. Alan Paton portrays the corrosive tendrils of racial, social and moral decay, nourished by the spoils of colonialism, the division of land and the segregation of the local populace. His two protagonists live in the same remote valley: James Jarvis, a fair-minded white farmer

with well-managed acreage, and Stephen Kumalo, the cherished village parson in the valley's overgrazed, soil-eroded belly, where the local Zulu community has been compressed by the race laws. "The white man has broken the tribe," Stephen's friend laments. "It cannot be mended again." Both James and Stephen are, in their own way, naive until their worlds tragically collide. In the fractured urban sprawl of Johannesburg, the parson's wastrel son kills the farmer's son, a liberal fighting for native rights. There isn't a shred of humor in any sentence, and Paton's prose is often biblical, yet I frequently found myself smiling. Why? Compassion, forgiveness, wisdom, illuminating dialogue and a powerful redemption symbolic of the greater national need.

Shackleton's Boat Journey

By Frank Worsley (1933)

4 There can surely be no greater example of hardship and survival, of camaraderie and leadership, than Ernest Shackleton's battle to save the lives of his 27 men after his ship the Endurance foundered in Antarctic ice in 1916. Frank Worsley, the captain, recounts Shackleton's most profound failure and most glorious success. Between navigating their three life-boats to Elephant Island and crossing South Georgia on foot to reach a whaling station, is the storied journey made by Shackleton, Worsley and four others to rescue the men left behind: 800 miles through the ferocious Southern Ocean in a small open boat. Navigating by dead reckoning, with only four sextant sightings of the sun's "watery eye," and



the boat jumping about "like a flea," Worsley understates his crucial role.

The crew subsists on pemmican, hoosh (a sort ofhardtack porridge) and seal oil, with frequent brews of "scalding" milk to thaw their frozen cores. The men revered Shackleton, who "seemed to keep a mental finger on each man's pulse," concerned "to the verge of fussiness" about his crew's well-being. During the subsequent hundred days and four attempts to retrieve the other men, Shackleton "passed through hell" but lost not one.

Journal of Researches

By Charles Darwin (1845)

5 Cast aside your musty image of Charles Darwin, the bushy-browed graybeard with the solemn expression. This volume, later known as "The Voyage of the Beagle," features young Darwin as a charming, spirited adventurer. Of the five years it took to circum-

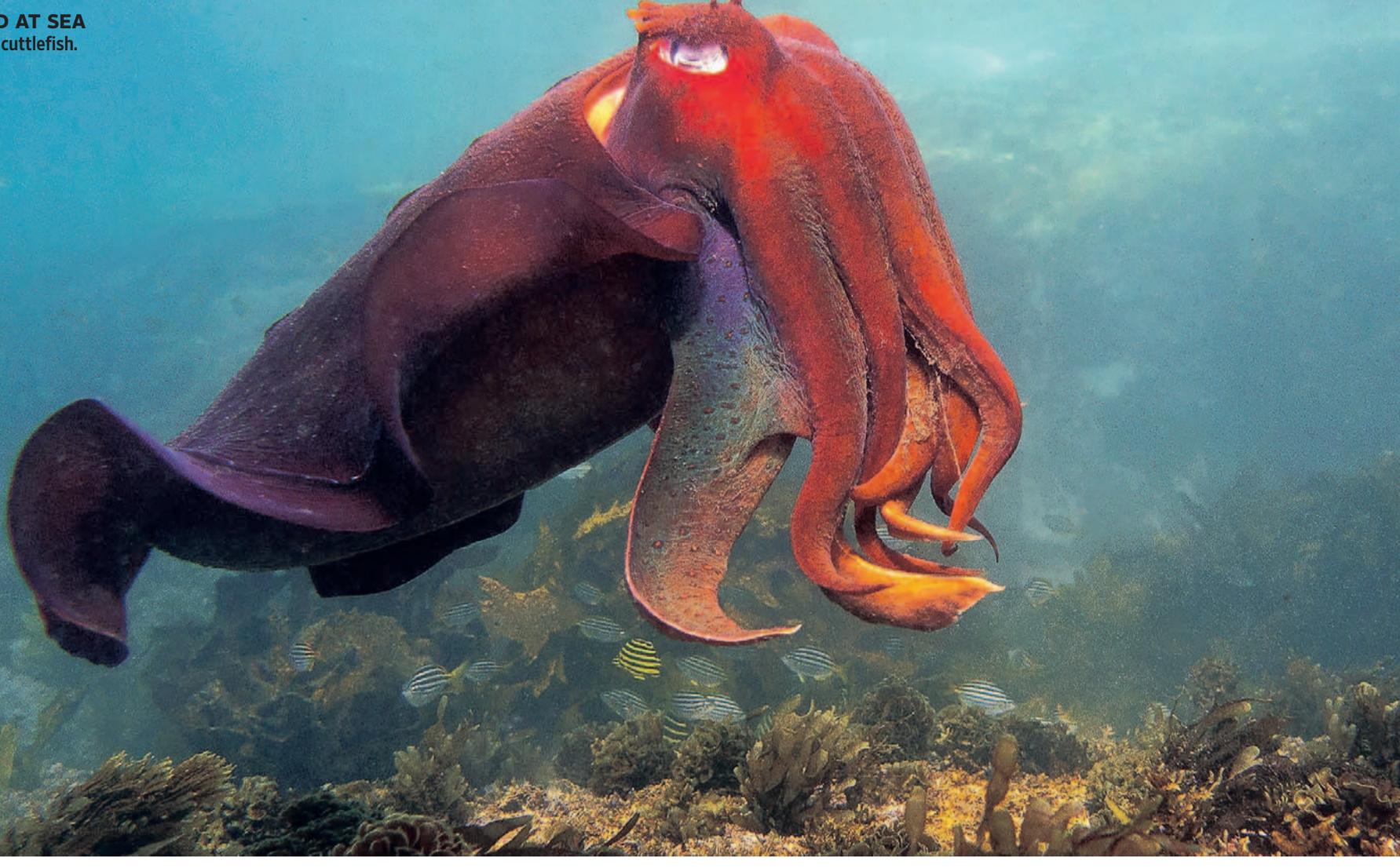
navigate the globe on HMS Beagle, he spent three ashore penetrating deep into remote wildernesses. There his heart lay, he says, dismissing the sea as "a tedious waste, a desert of water." A Cambridge graduate in divinity, Darwin begins to delicately shed the Genesis creation story and the "immutability of species." Fossils, he argues, provide clues to "the appearance of organic beings on our earth"; proofs of elevation were "unequivocal," he finds, with "shells which were once crawling on the bottom of the sea, now standing nearly 14,000 feet above its level"; different mouse species, he writes in a footnote, "might have been superinduced during a length of time." Darwin's observations on geology, botany, ornithology and anthropology are interspersed with vivid scenes: drinking tortoise urine ("bitter"); boiling potatoes at altitude ("as hard as ever"); watching gauchos breaking horses. This massive tome is the ultimate in armchair traveling.

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'It's just like man's vanity and impertinence to call an animal dumb because he is dumb to his dull perceptions.' —MARK TWAIN

FRIEND AT SEA

A giant cuttlefish.



Getting to Know Our Neighbors

Living on Earth

By Peter Godfrey-Smith
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 336 pages, \$29

Vanishing Treasures

By Katherine Rundell
Doubleday, 224 pages, \$26

BY CHRISTOPH IRMSCHER

ASK Peter Godfrey-Smith to your cocktail party and chances are he'll soon be distracted. Your average social gathering, the Australian philosopher tells us in "Living on Earth," is "among other things, a sea of interacting brain rhythms, going in and out of sync." The sentence also wonderfully captures the rapid flow of ideas in Mr. Godfrey-Smith's book, the final installment of a trilogy about the evolution of consciousness that began with his book about octopus behavior, "Other Minds" (2016), and continued with "Metazoa" (2020), a broader look at the evolution of awareness in creatures other than human.

"Living on Earth" repeats some of the material from the preceding volumes but also marks a shift in Mr. Godfrey-Smith's focus. He is here less concerned with what happens within an individual's mind than with how such minds, human and animal, respond to each other. And once again he finds there is nothing too special about us, that rather "skinny branch of the evolutionary tree." For instance, having pondered the mental energies circulating among human partygoers, Mr. Godfrey-Smith quickly pivots to a very different case of "interbrain synchrony" he witnessed in Kenya: two cheetahs, brothers bonded for life, "the most beautiful animals I had ever seen," racing across the grasslands, two minds and bodies perfectly in tune.

Mr. Godfrey-Smith's book is worth reading just for the quality of the examples he pro-

vides, many drawn from personal experience. (It helps that he is an accomplished scuba diver.) In his travels he has discovered that many animals, quite like humans, creatively transform their surroundings to fit their needs. Arguably, such environmental "engineering" is harder to achieve in water than on land, where the materials are sturdier, the results more durable. And yet there was that pair of gorgeously colored sleeper gobies Mr. Godfrey-Smith came across while diving in Cabbage Tree Bay near Sydney. Over several weeks, he watched them build a clever system of shell towers and holes on the sea floor, intended, he suspects, to keep oxygenated water flowing through the dens where the fish kept their eggs. If the gobies are practical-minded, male bowerbirds, beloved by Darwin as well as Mr. Godfrey-Smith, use art to reel in potential mates. Their densely thatched, whimsical structures, the result of hours of concentrated work, come adorned with all sorts of wonderful things—flowers, stones, shells and tufts of grass, with pieces of colorful glass and a bottle-cap or two thrown in for extra effect.

As accomplished as some animals might seem, Mr. Godfrey-Smith reminds us that we remain the only creatures able to take a look at the world as a whole. Hence the special responsibility we bear for the planet's future. If we agree that animals, too, have a right to a life worth living, we must practice humane farming, he argues, and put an end to most animal experimentation. And while he is in favor of "rewilding," setting aside wild spaces to allow animals to flourish, Mr. Godfrey-Smith still holds out hope that some forms of human-animal coexistence might be possible. "Living on Earth" ends with another visit to Cabbage Tree Bay, where the author, in a "too-small wetsuit vest," follows a giant cuttlefish out to sea.

Like Mr. Godfrey-Smith, Katherine Rundell, a fellow of Oxford's All Souls College and a

biographer of John Donne, is worried about the state of the world. In "Vanishing Treasures," she reinvents herself as the elegist of threatened species, offering urgent descriptions of all the beauty we risk losing. The pangolins of Zimbabwe, for example, adorned with scales "the same shade of gray-green as the sea in winter," are the "most trafficked animals in the world" because of those scales' presumed medicinal and culinary value. And the bluefin tunas of the Atlantic Ocean, gorgeously attired in colors from midnight-blue to gleaming white, appear on the plates of wealthy diners in upscale restaurants. Reso-

It would seem difficult to quantify the wonders of the animal world. But that hasn't kept humans from trying to do so. Incredibly, the barrel-shaped wombat, we learn from Ms. Rundell, can run up to 25 miles an hour and maintain that speed for 90 seconds (thus longer than the fastest recorded human). Elephant seals are able to hold their breath underwater for up to two hours. And swifts, who rest on the wing, accrue enough frequent flier miles a year "to put five girdles around the earth." As these numbers suggest, animals are so mind-blowingly different from us that attempts to humanize them always fall short. Just think of an ancient Greenland shark drifting silently at the bottom of the sea, its mottled skin encrusted with the debris of centuries, old enough, perhaps, to have been around when Shakespeare wrote "Macbeth."

Scientifically minded readers might quibble with Ms. Rundell on some details. For example, Darwin never claimed that the necks of giraffes gradually lengthened because of competition from other tree-browsing creatures. Rather, he argued that natural selection favored those giraffes able to reach "even an inch or two above the others." But Ms. Rundell's lively prose will sweep along even the nitpickiest reader. Despite her somber topic, she is often funny: A wolf about to howl, she observes, looks like a child ready to blow out the candles on a birthday cake. And her book becomes downright breathtaking when, for a moment, she lets us feel the presence of an actual animal on the page. Ms. Rundell's personal epiphany happened not in Zimbabwe or Australia but on the Welsh borders, where she encountered a half-tame wolf and saw the powerful muscles rippling under the animal's skin, felt its coarse fur bristling under her touch: an apparition truly from another world, smelling "not at all like a dog" but of "dust, and blood."

Mr. Irmscher is the author, most recently, of "The Poetics of Natural History."

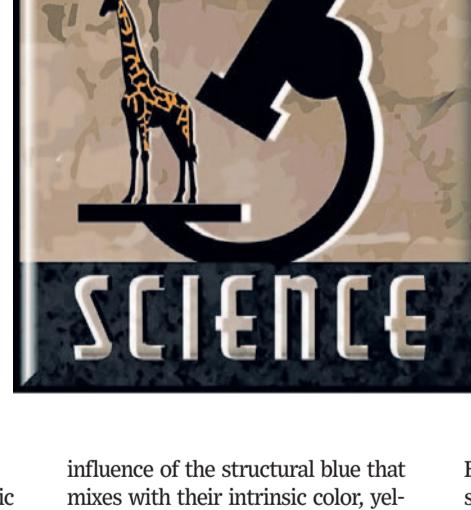
WHAT TO GIVE

BY BRANDY SCHILLACE

OCTOPUSES ARE "geniuses," Sy Montgomery tells us in "Secrets of the Octopus" (National Geographic, 192 pages, \$30). They are tricksters and masters of disguise, with eight arms and nine brains. Mr. Montgomery's book made its way from the ocean to the page to the television screen this year in a National Geographic miniseries. Despite the elegance of the show, the book offers so much more, including some of the rarest and most breathtaking full-color images of these shy creatures ever produced: a deep-green and alien world cut across by a slash of magenta as a giant octopus speeds away from the camera, the whorl of iridescent blue surrounding the up-close horizontal iris of an octopus eye. Paired with these images, we are treated to the writing of Mr. Montgomery, a naturalist and author whose poignant stories of octopus emotions unexpectedly tug at the heartstrings. A creature so unlike us, and yet one that invites us to learn and to explore, the octopus changes the way we think about intelligence. Beautifully bound but small enough to carry,

ship (and wrap) with ease, "Secrets of the Octopus" would make a dazzling gift.

"Color in Nature" (Princeton, 288 pages, \$35) likewise challenges our view of the natural world. Take the bluebird, which is not actually blue; or the polar bear, whose white coat is just a trick of the light. What is color, anyway? How do we see it and what makes it? We take a great deal of what we see for granted, even the color of the sky above us, which, like the bluebird, gets its color by scattering light in the blue wavelength rather than by some intrinsic property. Blue—even in the coloring of mammals and birds—is most frequently a "structural" color, which means it results from the interaction of light particles with microstructures. Tiny features, such as the scales on a butterfly wing, scatter light in different wavelengths depending on how they are layered—regular patterns will appear solid, like bluebird feathers, while irregular patterns will appear iridescent, like a hummingbird breast. The complexities are endless and endlessly fascinating: Parrots, for instance, may appear green to our eyes, but that's only thanks to the



influence of the structural blue that mixes with their intrinsic color, yellow. "Color in Nature" provides an accessible scientific entrée into the colors of our world, with bold, glossy images and detailed diagrams.

The way we visually encounter the world is often a matter of scale. For natural objects too small for the naked eye, artistic rendering usually must stand in place of the real thing. In Tal Danino's "Beautiful Bacteria" (Rizzoli Electa, 184 pages, \$50), science and art meet in a revolutionary new way. Mr. Danino has "programmed" bacteria to grow artistically—teaching some to glow rhythmically and genetically engineering

others to produce vibrant-hued proteins. Though bacteria are among the earliest living things on the planet and have colonized every corner of the globe (including the insides of our guts and the outside of our skin), they are rarely considered "pretty." Our usual reactions tend to be fear and frenetic hand-washing, but in Mr. Danino's petri dishes we see instead lavender forests, fractally repeated designs, even Rorschach inkblots in bright yellow, lime green, red and pink.

By growing what comes from mouth swabs, scalps, babies' hands, drain water and more, Mr. Danino makes the invisible world visible and as unique in design as any art installation.

"Beautiful Bacteria" may not make you love bacteria, but it will give you an astonishing new view into the rhythms of the microscopic world—and it looks pretty good on a coffee table, too.

An impressive and surprisingly heavy volume, "60 Years of Wildlife Photographer of the Year" (Smithsonian, 336 pages, \$50.00) by Rosamund Kidman Cox not only shows us the best of natural photography but also offers a history of the form. Once

we invented the camera, we almost immediately turned it toward flora and fauna; early black-and-white images helped to track the course of glaciers, the movement of animals and the first sightings of now-familiar creatures. In 1965, the Natural History Museum in London hosted the inaugural Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. The award, presented by a young David Attenborough, went to an image of an owl taken on a Kodachrome camera with a homemade flashbulb. The first competition boasted 361 entrants—in 2024, there were 59,228. Back then, aerials had to be shot from planes; today, we have sophisticated telephoto lenses and drones. We also have deep-sea cameras and infrared lenses. This 60-year visual history captures the interaction of human and animal, viewer and subject—a bird against bright water, a polar bear dwarfed by glaciers, the eyes of a wolf almost out of sight—and sweeps us up in the great natural tapestry of life.

—Ms. Schillace, the editor in chief of the journal *Medical Humanities*, is the host of the online "Peculiar Book Club" and the author of "Mr. Humble and Dr. Butcher."

HOLIDAY BOOKS

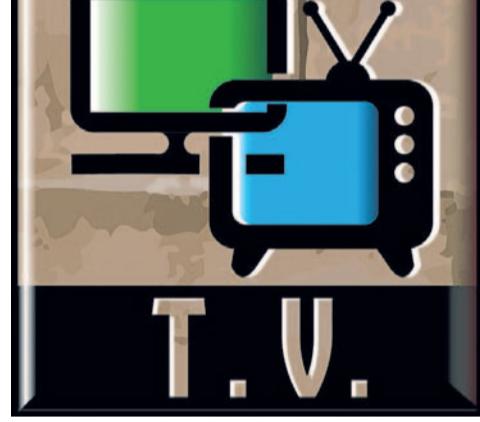
'I shattered the notion that a movie had to be advertised with realistic aspects from the story.' —SAUL BASS

WHAT TO GIVE

By ELIZABETH NELSON

A SURREALISTIC, DESERTED-ISLAND fantasy, ABC's dramatic series "Lost" fed overlapping storylines and byzantine mythology to enthralled and infuriated audiences during its six-year run. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the show's debut, and entertainment writers Emily St. James and Noel Murray's excellent book, "Lost: Back to the Island" (Abrams, 368 pages, \$30), relays the story of how showrunner Damon Lindelof's outré-but-expensive concept made it onto the air against formidable odds. Better still, Ms. St. James and Mr. Murray engage in a crackling dialogue regarding this legendary but hardly flawless program. The two authors are longtime colleagues and friends, and there is rich pleasure in watching them doggedly chase down meaning amid the misdirects, wormholes and religious symbols that run through the show's DNA. One novel insight for me was the notion that "Lost"—which begins with the harrowing spectacle of an airplane splitting apart—was essentially a meditation on America's grief following 9/11. "Back to the Island" is filled with compelling theories.

In a different era "Lost" and its castaway concept might have been rendered not as prestige television but as a low-budget sci-fi throwaway, which would have made it ideal fodder for the wonderfully withering ministrations of "Mystery Science Theater 3000," the comedy phenomenon which debuted on a small television station in Minneapolis in 1988 and left behind an outsize cultural footprint. Operating on a self-consciously goofy premise—a mad scientist forces the show's protagonists to watch and comment on a cavalcade of old B-movies—"MST3K," as it's known to devotees, offered dual laughter-engines. It resurrected a stream of hilariously bad films from old Hollywood and generated lacerating running commentary from the experiment's subjects. A clear influence on later hits like "Beavis and Butt-Head," "MST3K" also imagined what we would all become: captured people looking at screens, trying to parse the insanity. In their delightfully erudite consideration, "Mystery Science Theater 3000: A Cultural History" (Rowman & Littlefield, 182 pages, \$36), co-authors Matt Foy and Christopher J. Olson chronicle the show's trajectory from its threadbare beginnings to its unlikely exalted status.



Of the pandemic's many strange outcomes, few were less predictable than the success of "Ted Lasso," the offbeat tale of a Midwest-based college football coach who accepts an unlikely job offer: managing the (fictional) mid-tier U.K. soccer club AFC Richmond. Telling a classic fish-and-chips-out-of-water story, the show's three seasons were alternately anarchic, poignant and charmingly slapdash. Despite (or because of) its ludicrous premise, the program captured something crucial about the anxiously drifting, making-it-up-every-day spirit of that weird era. In "Believe: The Untold Story of Ted Lasso, the Show That Kicked Its Way Into Our Hearts" (Dutton, 368 pages, \$32), editor and TV critic Jeremy Egner revisits the unusual circumstances behind the show's conception and charts its trajectory from promotional lark to fully lived-in narrative world. Expertly reported and brimming with insights from cast members, writers, producers and executives, Mr. Egner's exegesis scores from all over the pitch. And the epilogue, "Stoppage Time," suggests the game might not be over after all. As cast member Nick Mohammed, who played Lasso assistant Nathan Shelley, says: "I feel like there are so many stories still to tell." Believe.

As classics like Julia Phillips's "You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again" and Charles Grodin's "It Would Be So Nice If You Weren't Here" have proved, the best Hollywood memoirs are written by those who have seen both sides of what can be a profoundly exhilarating and sadistically brutal industry. Add to that pile Tim Matheson's "Damn Glad to Meet You" (Hachette, 384 pages, \$30), which spares no sacred cows. The actor and director makes a marvelous narrative out of his career, which spanned roles in everything from "Leave It to Beaver" to "Animal House" to "The West Wing." Wittily delivered in wry first person, "Damn Glad to Meet You" is a hilariously dishy meditation on the long, strange life of a midlevel star. There is the time when he is 12 and attends Jerry Mathers's pool party, hoping to get a look at Hayley Mills. There's the time he almost marries Twiggy. One chapter is titled "The Other Time I Wore a Toga." That's entertainment.

—Ms. Nelson is a journalist based in Washington, D.C., and a singer-songwriter for the band the Paranoid Style.



Box-Office Ballyhoo

1001 Movie Posters

Edited by Tony Nourmand
Reel Art, 640 pages, \$95

By TY BURR

A MOVIE POSTER is a promise. It's not only a promise about a particular film—what it's called, who's in it, what it's about. A movie poster is a promise about the movies themselves and about the pleasure that awaits us in the nighttime of a theater. A good movie poster is a dream about a dream and thus twice removed from reality—our workaday world whose hues are nothing like Technicolor and whose frame is rarely widescreen enough.

A movie poster is also an advertisement, both for a movie and, when we adorn our bedroom walls or dorm rooms with them, for a sense of self. Why else would we pay good money to have them framed for display long after the film has come and gone? Humphrey Bogart exuding cool in "Casablanca" (1942), a rogues' gallery of supporting players behind his head, says something about you, or at least that's the hope. Uma Thurman insolently sprawled across the poster for "Pulp Fiction" (1994) says something else. The art nouveau stylings for "Chinatown," as the eyes of Faye Dunaway emerge from Jack Nicholson's cigarette smoke, says something else again.

And yet the titans and visionaries of the movie poster form are known only to collectors and cognoscenti. Jim Pearsall created that "Chinatown" poster; James Verdesoto is responsible for the punch of the "Pulp Fiction" one sheet. Bill Gold was a 21-year-old kid in the Warner Bros. art department when he came up with the red cursive title of the "Casablanca" poster and put a gun in Bogart's hand so the movie wouldn't look too much like a love story.

Finally, a movie poster is a lie—the best kind of lie, the kind that seduces us willingly into the dark. I don't think it's at all a coincidence that "1001 Movie Posters," a gorgeous groaning board of a coffee-table manifesto,

is arriving in stores as the actual movie-theater-going experience is on the wane. We dial up films at home now, watching them with family or by ourselves, or we busy our brains with all those minimovies on our phones. Whatever communal experience the posters once promised seems very far away.

"1001 Movie Posters" brings it rushing back with delirious overstimulation. Nearly 650 pages long, covering the timespan from the Lumière Brothers's 1896 *cinématographe* to Wes Anderson's 2021 "The French Dispatch," the book is the brainchild of its editor, Tony Nourmand, the former owner of London's Reel Poster Gallery, a consultant to Christie's auction house and one of the foremost film-poster

grade-Z horror, science fiction. A notorious example of the last is the poster for the 1956 classic "Forbidden Planet," which shows Robby the Robot hoisting the body of the actress Anne Francis as if he were about to ravish her in some unspeakable hydraulic fashion—a scene that never appears in the movie. A promise and a lie, remember?

In their bid to include 1,001 movie posters in a book you can take down from the shelf without causing a hernia, Mr. Nourmand and Co. have resorted to some cheating: two images to a page here, four to a page there, nine to a page somewhere else. But the reproductions are top-notch, the colors resplendent and the many full-page layouts rich enough to dive into.

If there's a flaw with "1001 Movie Posters," Mr. Nourmand can hardly be blamed for it. Simply put, the quality of motion picture movie art went into decline in the late 1970s, with a few evocative standouts ("Alien," 1979; "Airplane!," 1980; "Scarface," 1983; "The Silence of the Lambs," 1991) and a lot of ugly clutter. The 12 pages of "Star Wars" posters here are about 10 too many. The book's creators are wise to spend most of this period overseas.

The book does make a case for the rebound of the form in the new century, as a younger wave of films, designers and influences came in. And if nothing else, "1001 Movie Posters" reminds us how deeply some of these images have embedded themselves in the culture as shorthand for the movies they were selling. "A Clockwork Orange" (1971), "Manhattan" (1979), "Back to the Future" (1985), "The Color Purple" (1985), "Do the Right Thing" (1989), "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994), "Moonlight" (2016)—when we "see" these films in our heads, the posters fill our inner screen before any scenes from the movies themselves.

That's the rarest kind of movie-poster promise—a promise kept.

Mr. Burr is the author of the movie recommendation newsletter *Ty Burr's Watch List*.

Movie posters—like the products they promote—are works of art built on craft. Hung on a wall at home, they become advertisements for a sense of self.

experts on the planet. Graham Marsh is the art director and Alison Elangasinghe wrote the accompanying text, but Mr. Nourmand's curatorial sensibility imprints itself on every page.

He has organized the volume chronologically, which gives it a narrative spine and a disappointing third act. Mr. Nourmand also throws open the doors to poster art from other countries, and well he should: The different approaches to the same Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer melodrama can lend themselves to all sorts of spurious theories about national tastes and identities. More to the point, the artwork is astounding.

Best of all, "1001 Movie Posters" doubles as a crash course in the history of film advertising.

Individual artists, art directors and graphic designers are celebrated whenever possible, their life stories brought out from behind the drafting table. There are famous names here, some of them surprising—John Held Jr. for Jazz Age silent films, "Uncle Sam" painter James Montgomery Flagg for "Lost Horizon" (1937), Thomas Hart Benton for "The

But "1001 Movie Posters" is also a trove of artists forgotten by the years or never even credited by the studios for which they worked. Page after page elicits gasps: Albin Grau's nightmare-inducing poster for "Nosferatu" (1922); Vincent Trott's ridiculously vivid early-talkie artwork for films like "Supernatural" (1933); Luigi Martinati's posters in Italy and Boris Grinsson's work in France for Hollywood studio releases of the 1940s; the exploded graphics of Paul Rand ("No Way Out," 1950) and Eric Nitsche ("All About Eve," 1950); and so on up to the arrival of Saul Bass—the only poster artist and title designer to become known to the public for his iconic graphics for "Vertigo" (1958), "Anatomy of a Murder" (1959), "The Shining" (1980) and more.

Attention is paid, too, to all kinds of movies, from blockbusters to the lowest of the Bs, from lily-white studio fare to the "race films" of Oscar Micheaux, and from teen hot-rod flicks of the 1950s to dice-and-slice horror films of the 1980s. Every genre is represented: film noir, silent comedy, exploitation quickies,



HOLIDAY BOOKS

'Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy.' —PABLO PICASSO

Nemesis of the Looters

The Art Front

By Rose Valland
Laurel, 404 pages, \$45

By ERIC GIBSON

IN THE ANNALS of Nazi-looted art—that dark episode in cultural expropriation in Europe during World War II—the figure of Rose Valland is something of an enigma.

To be sure, Valland (1898-1980) was a pivotal, even indispensable figure. She surreptitiously, and at great personal risk, gathered information about artworks the Nazis had seized during the occupation in France, and she identified where the works had been sent in Germany and Austria, thus allowing for their eventual recovery.

Yet the details of her actions are less-known than those of the American and British "Monuments Men," such as James J. Rorimer, who spearheaded the recovery effort. Like many of those figures, she published her memoirs after the war—"The Art Front: The Defense of French Collections, 1939-1945." But they were never translated into English, depriving her of a larger audience.

So the French scholar Ophélie Jouan's translation, published under the auspices of the Monuments Men and Women Foundation, is a major event. The unique value of Valland's narrative is that, whereas those of Rorimer and others are largely confined to the recovery effort (since they came on the scene only toward the end of the war), Valland makes us eyewitnesses to what came before—the looting itself and the efforts by her and others to frustrate the Nazis' criminal enterprise. Valland's is a richly textured, keenly observed, often harrowing account, suffused with courage and modesty. Anyone with even a passing interest in the subject is going to want to read it.

Before hostilities began, the French national collections—the contents of the Louvre and other museums—had been evacuated from Paris and dispersed among the country's châteaux. But many Jewish private collections remained in Paris, and the Nazis wasted no time in hunting them down and confiscating their contents.

The loot was initially taken to the empty Louvre and the German Embassy. But such became the pace of confiscation that soon a larger space was needed. So Paris's Jeu de Paume Museum—where Valland, though not formally on staff, worked—became the collection point. She describes the initial transfer of works from the embassy: "Troops from the Luftwaffe carried in the crates and banged them around bluntly.... Some master paintings were passed from one soldier to another.... Inevitably, some were dropped on the floor. Soldiers stepped on others.... A magnificent portrait of a woman by Santerre sustained a long tear. In less than one day, four hundred crates were unloaded."

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'The primary distinction of the artist is that he must actively cultivate that state which most men, necessarily, must avoid: the state of being alone.' —JAMES BALDWIN

WHAT TO GIVE

By JOHN CHECK

WHAT DOES MUSIC have to do with joy? Daniel Chua explores the durable relationship between the two in "Music & Joy: Lessons on the Good Life" (Yale, 336 pages, \$35). Mr. Chua, a professor of musicology at the University of Hong Kong, observes that in Classical Chinese the words for music and joy are written with the same character. It's a signal that music is "a complex state that is simultaneously felt and perceived, emotive and cognitive, reflexive and reflective." The mathematician Pythagoras likewise appreciated the richness of music, believing that the ratios behind the sounds we hear, like those found in harmonious tones, undergird the cosmic order of the universe. Mr. Chua's goal is to "retrofit" parts of these historical conceptions of music for use in our everyday lives. Running throughout the book is a note of playfulness that makes for lively reading even when things turn deeply philosophical.



In September, Antonio Pappano took up the baton as the Chief conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. In "My Life in Music" (Faber, 320 pages, \$34.95), he considers the steps that led him there. The British-born child of Italian immigrants, Mr. Pappano got his start on the piano. Soon he began accompanying singing lessons taught by his demanding father. Through this experience, he learned vast quantities of music and gained firsthand knowledge of the varieties of the human voice. All this stood him in good stead for early jobs as a pianist and vocal coach with various opera companies, including the New York City Opera, which in turn afforded him possibilities for conducting. He advanced in rank and stature, working with such illustrious figures as Daniel Barenboim and Joyce DiDonato. Taking to heart his role as a maestro—which in Italian includes the sense of "teacher"—Mr. Pappano comes across as passionate and intense, industrious and exacting: "I want my musicians to know the why of everything that we are aiming for." He is so grateful for his privileges that he wants to "preach the gospel of music" everywhere he goes.

"Say It With a Beautiful Song" (Rowman & Littlefield, 210 pages, \$38) is a delightful book about a delightful topic. Written by Michael Lasser, the author of several books on American music, and Harmon Greenblatt, an arts educator, it celebrates the "art and craft of the Great American Songbook" from the early 1920s to the early '50s. The book's chapters are organized around the more subtle aspects of songwriting, including authenticity, predictability, time and anticipation. This allows Messrs. Lasser and Greenblatt to range freely from song to song, pointing to the role of shifting rhyme in "I'll Walk Alone" by Sammy Cahn and Jules Styne, or to the effect of repetition in Harry M. Woods's irresistible toe-tapper, "When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along." Little nuggets of gold are everywhere, including the story of Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg's struggle with the music and lyrics for "Over the Rainbow."

In "Thriving on a Riff" (Broadleaf, 222 pages, \$26.99), William C. Carter contemplates the connections between jazz and the spiritual life. He is unusually qualified to do so, being both a longtime Presbyterian minister and a jazz pianist. Woven into his account are anecdotes about jazz musicians—among them Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams and Dave Brubeck—who sometimes worked in expressly sacred genres: Williams, for instance, after her conversion to Catholicism, composed masses. Quotations from the Bible harmonize with those from musicians and theologians, and on all of them Mr. Carter riffs with felicity, as when he cites the book of Proverbs in discussing the spark of artistic creativity. Toward the end of the book, he writes about the transcendence that jazz musicians feel during flights of improvised fancy: "When the music is flowing freely, when the rhythm is infectious, they experience the ecstasy that lifts people out of all wretchedness and the joy that mends broken souls." One imagines Mr. Chua smiling in assent—for music has everything to do with joy.

—Mr. Check is a professor of music at the University of Central Missouri.



VISIONARY James Baldwin photographed at his home in New York in May 1968.

DAVID GAHR/GETTY IMAGES

The Writer We Needed

BY CLIFFORD THOMPSON

YEARS AGO, when I published an essay referring to James Baldwin—born a century ago this year—as "the greatest of all African-American writers," a friend called me on the claim. Was Baldwin really greater than Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright or perhaps a half-dozen other nationally celebrated black writers we could name? And what did "greatest" mean, anyway? My response was to draw a parallel to comparisons of American presidents: Abraham Lincoln may or may not have been the most intelligent, most capable or most eloquent president the United States has ever seen, but he is generally considered the greatest, because his intelligence, capability and eloquence coincided with the hour when we needed those gifts most. So it is with Baldwin.

The works for which Baldwin is most remembered, among them the essay collection "Notes of a Native Son" (1955), the multiracial-themed novel "Another Country" (1962) and the short nonfiction work "The Fire Next Time" (1963), were published at a time when the nation was finally grappling with its racism and discrimination—the legacy of centuries of slavery, which had ended a hundred years earlier. Baldwin's writing about race stood out, and is still read and taught today, for

two reasons. The first is that he went beyond merely railing against racism to reflecting, in elegant prose, upon its very human roots and causes, most powerfully in the essay "Stranger in the Village" (1953), included in "Notes of a Native Son." The other has to do with Baldwin's moral vision. In "The Fire Next Time," he called on white America to mend its ways and warned of what would happen if it did not, while also calling for blacks to love whites because "these innocent people have no other hope. They are, in effect, still trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it."

That moral framework had its origins in Baldwin's early life. He was born and raised in Harlem, NY, the oldest of nine children in a very poor family. His father—who, as Baldwin would discover later in life, was actually his stepfather—served as a preacher, and Baldwin himself preached as a teenager before becoming disenchanted with what he saw as the black church's indifference to the salvation of those beyond its own circle. But while he left the church, the rhythms, repetitions and cadences of its sermons would find their way into his prose. Baldwin was recognized early on as a gifted boy, and he read voraciously, becoming a devotee of the books of Henry James, whose long, comma-filled sentences left their mark on the young writer's work. The unique

blend of the Jamesian influence and church-sermon cadences can be seen in Baldwin's early essays and in his autobiographical first novel, "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (1953), a work largely inspired by his forebears' journey from the South to the North as part of the Great Migration.

By the time of that novel's publication, Baldwin had been living for several years in France, with the aid of a fellowship that Wright,

Baldwin's early experience preaching often gave his work the ring of a sermon.

his mentor, had helped him secure. France was the setting of Baldwin's second and arguably most celebrated novel, "Giovanni's Room" (1956), which is notable for the prominence of its homosexual subject matter in those gay-unfriendly times (the subject is touched upon to one degree or another in most of Baldwin's novels). The novel also lacks black characters: Baldwin noted that the presence of blacks would introduce the subject of race, which would overburden the novel's theme—the white protagonist's inability to look inward and face his own truth.

Soon, the burgeoning civil-rights movement in Baldwin's home country beckoned, and he

returned to the U.S., writing about and taking part in the movement. In the 1960s he became its literary face, appearing on the cover of Time magazine in 1963 and debating William F. Buckley Jr. in 1965 at the University of Cambridge over the assertion, "The American Dream is at the expense of the American Negro."

The 1960s had a marked effect on Baldwin's outlook. The assassinations of black leaders—Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Baldwin's friend Medgar Evers—left him embittered. By the time he published the memoir "No Name in the Street" (1972), the call for love and the sense of hope at the heart of "The Fire Next Time" had given way to resignation. Meanwhile, Baldwin's most critically acclaimed works were behind him. With the debatable exception of "If Beale Street Could Talk" (1974), Baldwin's final three novels, which also included "Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone" (1968) and "Just Above My Head" (1979), received mixed reviews at best. His last book, the nonfiction work "The Evidence of Things Not Seen," published two years before his death in 1987, is generally considered to be among his weakest. Nonetheless, Baldwin's earlier works had long since secured his place in the pantheon of American literature.

Mr. Thompson is the author, most recently, of "Big Man and the Little Men: A Graphic Novel," which he wrote and illustrated.

Books Celebrating James Baldwin at 100

A NUMBER OF recent publications coincide with the centennial of Baldwin's birth. One is "The Harlem Ghetto" (Beacon, 120 pages, \$20) a collection of three of Baldwin's best-known essays, including the 1948 title piece, a rather grim reflection on black-Jewish relations. Also included in the collection are "Journey to Atlanta" (1955), which is as grim in its way but showcases Baldwin's humor, and "Notes of a Native Son," arguably the writer's greatest essay. "The James Baldwin Collection" (Library of America, 2914 pages, \$127.50) brings together the three volumes of Baldwin's works that Toni Morrison and Darryl Pinckney edited for the Library of America; the

boxed set includes seven works of fiction as well as a "career-spanning selection" of Baldwin's essays. Additionally, Everyman's Library has brought out in a single volume "James Baldwin" (Everyman's Library, 520 pages, \$32) four of Baldwin's nonfiction books: "The Fire Next Time," "Nobody Knows My Name" (1961), "No Name in the Street" and "The Devil Finds Work" (1976).

Also marking Baldwin's centennial, the celebrated Irish writer Colm Tóibín's slim volume "On James Baldwin" (Brandeis, 176 pages, \$19.95) is a thoughtful, partly autobiographical reflection on Baldwin's fiction, beginning with the novel that first caught Mr. Tóibín's attention when he was a young man—"Go Tell It on the Mountain"—and moving on to "Giovanni's Room" and "Another Country."

Gay and raised as a Christian, Mr. Tóibín highlights his personal identification with Baldwin's work while comparing Baldwin's novels to those of writers including James Joyce, for their shared themes of migration, and Oscar Wilde, whose works had in common with Baldwin's their homosexual undercurrents. The book thus emphasizes Baldwin's place on the world's literary stage.

Just as thoughtful and slender still (though more than twice the length of the work it discusses), is "James Baldwin's 'Sonny Blues'" (Oxford, 128

pages, \$24.99) by Tom Jenks, a former editor at Esquire and GQ. Mr. Jenks's relentless praise of Baldwin's most celebrated short story, published in 1957—about a man struggling to relate to his younger brother, the jazz pianist of the title—becomes cloying after a while, but his book offers valuable insights.

The irony of these two books, both of them celebrating the writer's centennial by focusing on his fiction, is that Baldwin is often said to have been a stronger essayist than novelist. But the works by Mr. Tóibín and Mr. Jenks suggest, perhaps, that passion and vision transcend genre in the enduring works of this iconic American writer.

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'Children at play are not playing about; their games should be seen as their most serious-minded activity.' —MONTAIGNE

Playgrounds of the Mind

Book of Games

By Carsten Höller

Taschen, 760 pages, \$50

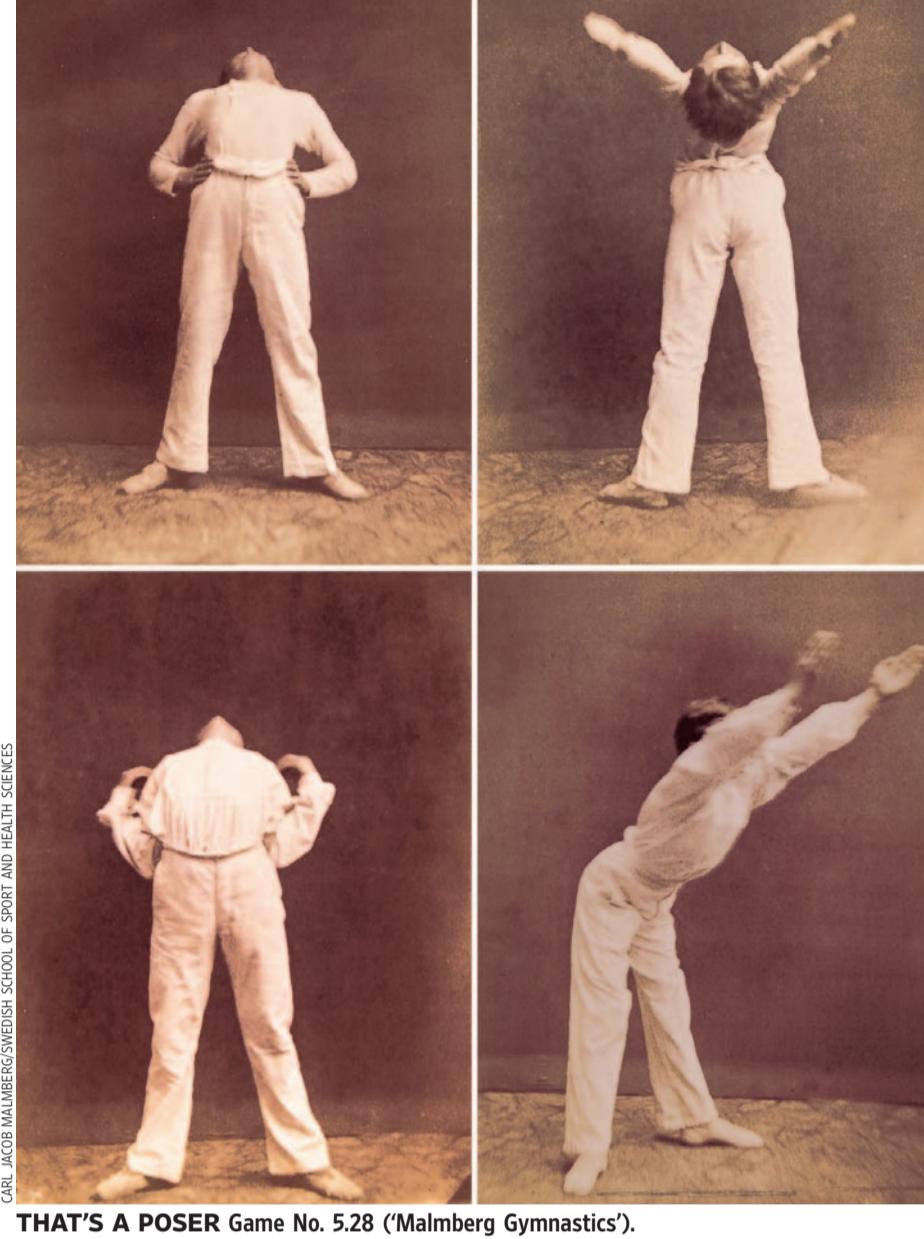
BY TIMOTHY FARRINGTON

CARSTEN HÖLLER started his career as an agricultural scientist but quickly moved to wilder pastures, forsaking entomology for fine art. In the three decades since, the 62-year-old, born in Belgium to German parents, has devoted himself to making poker-faced works to disorient and delight. He has installed playground-style slides in museums, invited visitors to float in a sensory-deprivation rig ("Giant Psycho Tank," 1999) and opened a restaurant in Stockholm that serves minimally cooked "brutalist" food (praised by the Michelin guide for its "refreshing emphasis on purity of flavor"). His goal, he has said, is to "make things that release a person from the certainty of logic." Or, as he more pithily put it after filling a gallery with upside-down spinning sculptures of psychedelic mushrooms, "the intention was to create an artwork that drives people mad, basically."

Mr. Höller's puckish "Book of Games" probably won't drive you mad, but it could cause you serious damage, and not only because it's a 758-page brick of coffee-table ballast. Now in a revised second edition, it offers rules for 336 conceptual and actual games that Mr. Höller created or collected, categorized by how many players are required (and whether all of them know that they are playing). Among them are game No. 1.42, Salto Condizionale (do a somersault without practice, "ideally from high up"), and No. 1.51, Carbon Dioxide Poisoning.

Nonfatal derangement can be a means as well as an end of art, so artists have always been interested in games, one of the easiest ways to knock one's mind from the grooves of habit. In the world of a game, the arbitrary becomes meaningful (these chits are currency; these squares are valuable territory) and constraint becomes productive. The poet John Keats and his friend Leigh Hunt raced to write sonnets, giving themselves 15 minutes for 14 lines. The editors of "Book of Games," the curators Stefanie Hessler and Hans Ulrich Obrist, point to the antecedent of the Surrealists, who invented dozens of games, loosely defined. Most famous was Exquisite Corpse, in which players write a story one line at a time without seeing previous contributions.

One thinks also of the musician Brian Eno's Oblique Strategies, a set of gnomic commands meant to spur creative problem-solving ("Honor thy error as a hidden intention"; "Change nothing and continue with immaculate consistency"). Many of Mr. Höller's games are of this variety: elliptical provocations that involve difficult feats of physical, logical or spiritual calisthenics, such as No. 1.55, Metadream ("Dream that you're dreaming (that you're dreaming)"); No. 1.5, Ticks ("Perceive without taking action and without thinking of taking action"); No. 1.67, Hanging Around ("Hang from something for as long as possible, then tumble to the ground"); or No. 1.45,



THAT'S A POSER Game No. 5.28 ('Malmberg Gymnastics').

Sheer Despair ("Feel immense meaninglessness in its entirety. Face up to the ensuing despair").

Reflecting Mr. Höller's interest in sensory perception and alterations thereof, other games are the kind of self-experiment devised by the extremely bored, such as No. 1.23, Eye Squishing ("With your eyes open, exert slight lateral pressure on your eyeballs so that your surroundings start to blur"), or No. 1.37, Ping Pong for Lazybones ("Focus on any static or almost static object. Alternately close one eye and then the other to make the object jump back and forth"). Still others involve more elaborate forms of defamiliarization: "Arrange things so that you can

spend a long time in a place that specifically has no letters of the alphabet in view."

"Book of Games" is an amusing revolt against reason in keeping with the Surrealist spirit. Even the dangerous games offer mild amusement simply in the reading—the tingle of seeing the absurd or inadvisable translated into the measured language of command. And every game is illustrated on the facing page with a photo by Mr. Höller or others, increas-

ing the pleasure the book offers to those merely watching from the sidelines.

The more playable entries, however, do promise to be perversely fun, albeit annoying or manipulative of others. One—the original inspiration for the book, invented during an "excruciatingly boring" art-world dinner—requires that you converse only in questions. No. 4.13, Revile/Reconcile, begins, "Agree to spend exactly a month reviling the other player, in conversation with other people... But after that everything is sweetness and light again (with no reason given)." In No. 6.14, Silent Musical, participants out in public "synchronize their movements and silently execute complex maneuvers." Another instructs you to ask a dog owner "Can I pet it?" and then pet the owner.

Mr. Höller is nothing if not serious about fun. There are no children's games in these pages, he insists—though No. 5.27, Flood, is identical to the kid favorite "Floor Is Lava." Throughout this volume, he treats whimsical ideas with lavish gravity, rather than producing genuinely fresh artistic effects. But, for the few people suffering these days from an excess of reason, "Book of Games" may be a highly effective remedy.

Mr. Farrington is a former editor at Harper's and the Journal.

WHAT TO GIVE

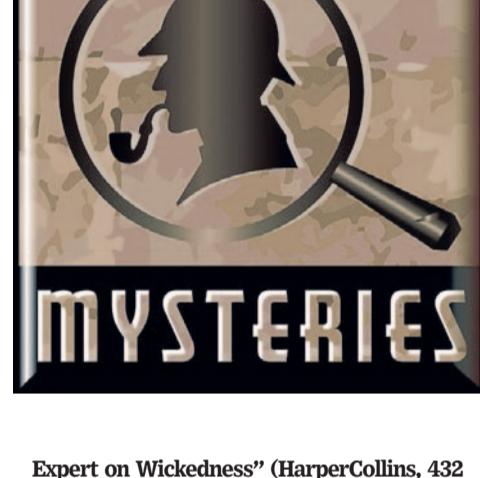
BY TOM NOLAN

FOR DECADES IT has been the erudite editor-publisher Otto Penzler's annual custom to commission an original Christmas-themed story from one of "the finest mystery writers in America," to be given as a present to customers at his Mysterious Bookshop in Manhattan. A selection of such tales—crafted by such genre luminaries as Lyndsay Faye, Loren D. Estleman, Laura Lippman and Thomas Perry—are collected in "*Christmas Crimes at the Mysterious Bookshop*" (Mysterious Press, 288 pages, \$19.95). The variety of plot agendas represented (from revenge to redemption) should guarantee something to please every reader this holiday season.

Benjamin Stevenson's "*Everyone This Christmas Has a Secret*" (Mariner, 192 pages, \$19.99) would be a fine gift for readers with a fast-paced, homicidal mystery set in Australia's sweltering December on their wish lists. Ernest Cunningham, the sleuth-narrator, is begged for help by his sleepwalking ex-wife, accused of murdering her second husband. Mr. Stevenson plays with the tropes of several crime classics, though it would spoil the fun to name them. The plot contains a sinister Secret Santa, a victim who announces his death in advance, a stage performer seemingly decapitated by a piece of paper—and not too much gore: "This is a Christmas story, after all," says Ernest.

There's an appealing Golden Age feel to the contemporary writer Elly Griffiths's "*The Man in Black*" (Mariner, 320 pages, \$28), a collection of 19 stories. Characters from the author's two novel series featuring the forensic archaeologist Ruth Galloway and the stage magician Max Mephisto pass through many of these tales. Each story strikes a sweet balance of suspense and poignancy. There's a Christmas ghost, a novice policewoman, a young man seeking love, an actor facing opening night: standalone vignettes that may all be enjoyed in a single sitting, or, like an advent calendar, one day at a time.

Dame Agatha Christie's publishers used to urge consumers to purchase "a Christie for Christmas." A fine book this season for those who wish to continue that tradition would be Mark Aldridge's "*Agatha Christie's Marple*:



Expert on Wickedness (HarperCollins, 432 pages, \$30), an engaging guide to the novels, stories, plays, movies, radio, audio and television adaptations involving the swift-knitting crimesolver from the village of St. Mary Mead. Mr. Aldridge doesn't drop a stitch in tracing the protagonist's multimedia progress from 1927 to the present.

In "*Scotland Yard*" (Pegasus, 480 pages, \$35), the journalist Simon Read offers a brisk survey of some two dozen of that London police force's most sensational investigations: from those involving 19th-century body-snatchers to a skull disinterred from the 21st-century garden of Sir David Attenborough. Since its establishment in 1829, writes Mr. Read, Scotland Yard has "advanced the application of forensics, from fingerprints to ballistics to evidence collection, made the first attempt at criminal profiling, and captivated the public on both sides of the Atlantic with feats of detective work that rivaled any fiction. It would, in short, become the most recognized name in policing—one gruesome case at a time."

Scotland Yard men feature in two volumes from the Folio Society. A limited edition of Wilkie Collins's "*The Moonstone*" (Folio Society, 536 pages, \$380), illustrated by Juan Esteban Rodriguez and introduced by Val McDermid, is an exemplary production and a treat to read. The story concerns the theft of a priceless Indian diamond and features Sgt. Cuff, based on the real-life Scotland Yard detective Jack Whicher. T.S. Eliot called the book "the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels," and it was a huge success when it was first printed in 1868. Inspector Alan Grant is the self-appointed detective of Josephine Tey's "*The Daughter of Time*" (Folio Society, 224 pages, \$80), a 1951 novel given a handsome treatment with illustrations by Mark Smith and an introduction by Alison Weir. Bedridden after breaking his leg, Alan becomes obsessed with the killing of the two "Princes in the Tower" in London during the 15th-century tussle over the English crown. History decreed that their uncle Richard III was likely to blame, but the inspector—poring over old books brought to his hospital bed—doesn't buy that. So, if the "wicked uncle" wasn't the culprit, who was? Alan comes up with a new prime suspect and makes a compelling (if circumstantial) case for his guilt.

—Mr. Nolan reviews mysteries for the Journal.

The Old Fashioned And New

BY ERIC FELTEN

THOSE UNDER the stress of arranging holiday parties in the coming months can be forgiven for agonizing over what drinks to serve. Bookstores carry an abundance of bloated and bloviating drinks manuals. Once upon a time, such guides were satisfied to keep things simple. For example, in 1949 Esquire magazine published a "Handbook for Hosts" that offered unfussy recipes such as the Dubonnet cocktail, made of equal parts gin and Dubonnet. But for those eager to experiment and improvise, there are several new cocktail books out.

"Liqueur" (Reaktion, 224 pages, \$19.95) by Lesley Jacobs Solmonson is a refreshingly straightforward history of those sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter modifiers often used to flavor cocktails. Should you be curious where the Cointreau in your margarita comes from or where the sugar in your Cointreau comes from, Ms. Solmonson is likely to have the answer.

I have to admit to never having given much thought to where juniper comes from or how it is harvested. It seemed good enough to know that without juniper there are no gin; without gin there are no



Martinis; and absent Martinis you have a dystopia too awful to contemplate.

The British journalist Alice Lascelles explains in her breezy "*The Martini: The Ultimate Guide to a Cocktail Icon*" (Quadrille, 176 pages, \$26.99) that juniper berries are foraged primarily in Eastern Europe and Italy. They are harvested, she writes, "by gangs of armed pensioners known as *battitori*," so-called because they "beat" the prickly bushes with a stick to knock the berries free.

Ms. Lascelles offers dozens of variations on the Martini theme. She does the reader the favor of segregating modern Martini-like drinks into a section labeled "Contemporary" where one can learn to spot—and thus avoid—such questionable quaffs as gin infused with tomato leaves. She even observes my favorite bit of Martini nomenclature: Gin and vermouth stirred is a Martini, but if you shake it to make it, you have yourself a Bradford.

Among this year's cocktail offerings are a number of books marketed with gimmicky themes.

One such collection is "*Killer Cocktails: Dangerous Drinks Inspired by History's Most Nefarious Criminals*" (Hachette, 256 pages, \$29). The true-crime

podcasters Holly Frey and Maria Trimarchi suggest various drinks of their own invention—cocktails of questionable taste (in both senses of the word). For example, they propose an odious Poison Society Punch combining cranberry juice, Amaretto and Champagne.

Science is the theme in "*Cocktail Theory: A Sensory Approach*

" (Sufamoto, 310 pages, \$34.99) by Kevin Peterson, an engineer and the owner of the Castalia cocktail bar in Detroit. Mr. Peterson promises a "new science of cocktails" and relies heavily on a dizzying tangle of illustrations—graphs, charts—to arrive at such insights as that "stirring with small ice cubes, then straining into a Nick & Nora glass gives a maximum lifetime of 6 minutes" to a cocktail. Multicolored parallelograms purport to prove the proposition that some drinks are good at higher temperatures, while others need to be quite cold. The author declares that 25 degrees is as frigid as most cocktails should be.

Clearly, further research is needed to establish the proper temperature of a Martini. I declare myself willing to do so in the name of science.

Mr. Felten is the James Beard Foundation Award-winning author of "*How's Your Drink?*"

HOLIDAY BOOKS

'Deliberation, n. The act of examining one's bread to determine which side it is buttered on.' —AMBROSE BIERCE



MAUREEN EVANS

WHAT TO GIVE

By ANDREW COE

THE HOMEMADE BREAD revolution endures—or at least publishers seem to think so. Every fall, a new crop of cookbooks appears, promising to teach us to bake loaves faster (bread machine!), healthier (keto!) or with more photogenic crust and crumb. Bread-head that I am, I prefer taste, texture and aroma over all else. Luckily, this year's harvest includes cookbooks by renowned bakers who learned their craft at some of the top bakeries around the world. Some of their recipes may take more time and a few more steps, but the loaves can be scrumptious and, if you must, will wow your followers on social media.

I've been following Melissa Weller ever since she was baking bread out of a shipping crate for the Brooklyn restaurant Roberta's. Trained as a chemical engineer, she's done stints at Sullivan Street Bakery, Per Se (as the head baker) and most notably at Sadelle's in SoHo. In *"Very Good Bread: The Science of Dough and the Art of Making Bread at Home"* (Knopf, 336 pages, \$40), Ms. Weller brings an engineer's precision to her recipes, from the simplest to the most

complex. A good place to begin is with her sourdough bagels, which, like most great bread recipes, take a bit of time. After feeding the starter and letting it ferment overnight, you mix the dough the next morning and then—cool trick—feed it through a food processor a few times to really develop the high-gluten dough. Then you shape the bagels and stick them in the fridge for eight hours before baking them. The result is chewy and tasty, with a crispy crust that outshines even the most highly touted store-bought New York bagels. From there, you can venture into her sourdough loaves and rolls, which range from classic Parker House rolls to *petits pains*, the kind that come in baskets at fancy French restaurants but, I learn, take two days to make.

Ms. Weller's best advice: "Write a baking schedule." That guidance also holds true for another excellent new bread cookbook: *"Richard Hart Bread: Intuitive Sourdough Baking"* (Clarkson Potter, 304 pages, \$35). Like Ms. Weller, Mr. Hart has trained with the best.

After being bitten with the baking



bug as a London chef, he trained at Northern California's Della Fattoria bakery and then headed a few miles south to become the head baker at Chad Robertson's renowned Tartine. René Redzepi, of Noma fame, lured him to Copenhagen, where Mr. Hart opened Hart Bageri, which quickly gained long lines. Danes are notoriously finicky about their bread, particularly their staple, dense rye loaves. This cookbook includes nine rye recipes, all of them relatively simple sourdoughs. I was intrigued by the fig-and-walnut rye wrapped in fig leaves and luckily ran across the leaves at a farmers' market. The

resulting loaf had a lovely, deep perfume that enhanced cheese and jam but was fine on its own. You can see the Tartine influence in the cookbook's many porridge breads, made with oats, rice, spelt, cornmeal masa and other grains, but "Richard Hart Bread" is also full of many surprises, including the English Bloomer, an upscale and delicious version of supermarket white bread.

How did home bakers reach such an obsessive state? I blame Covid-19 iso-

lation and Jim Lahey, the founder of New York's excellent Sullivan Street Bakery, whose cookbook *"My Bread: The Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method"* (Norton, 240 pages, \$35) has just been reissued in a 15th-anniversary edition. Back in 2006, Mr. Lahey came up with his famous no-knead method, which freed bakers from the drudgery of hand-kneading their dough for 10 or even 20 minutes. All you have to do is combine flour, water, salt and yeast, let the mixture ferment for 12 to 18 hours, fold it once and then let it rise again. Some food journalists hyped the technique as a radical

innovation (even though it had been around for decades, possibly centuries), helping to launch the craze for homemade bread. Many of us began our baking careers with "My Bread," which gives novices well-illustrated instructions from the first mixing of ingredients to the final baking in a hot Dutch oven. What emerges is a beautiful domed boule, with a crackling crust enclosing a nice hole-y crumb. It doesn't quite have the flavor of a sourdough, but it's reliable and, for everyday bread, pretty darn good. No scheduling required.

Mr. Lahey is one of the great free spirits of the baking world, and it's fun to follow his imagination through this cookbook. His beer bread with carrot juice maybe not. I'm intrigued by the Jones Beach Bread, made with saltwater collected at the nearest beach—you pour the water through a coffee filter before putting it in your dough. Like all good recipes, it's not only about the outcome. Experimenting with your baking helps you develop the skills to follow your own fancies, play with dough and make your own delicious breads.

—*Mr. Coe, a food historian, is writing a history of American bread.*

Single Life, With Close Neighbors

Women's Hotel

By Daniel M. Lavery
HarperVia, 272 pages, \$28.99

ALL-FEMALE residences in New York City have long gone the way of the dodo. But for more than half the 20th century, places like the Evangeline, the Martha Washington Hotel, the East End Hotel, the Y.W.C.A.'s Studio Club, the Rehearsal Club and the legendary Barbizon Hotel (Grace Kelly slept there!) fed, sheltered and chaperoned ambitious young women with nervous parents, slender bank accounts or both. And they were often the last refuge for an older cohort whose lives had not unfolded according to plan.

"Women's Hotel," a charmer of a debut novel by Daniel M. Lavery, is set in just such a residence: the Biedermeier, a 200-room pile on Manhattan's East Side. Frankly, it's a second-rate sort of place, one that tends to attract secretaries and switchboard operators rather than actors and dancers. "Any woman who could with a straight face claim to occupy that fortunate bracket of age between 18 and 34 who could supply the real or merely plausible name of an

employer as well as two weeks' rent," gets a sympathetic ear from the building's manager Mrs. Mossler.

It's the early 1960s, and change is in the air at the Biedermeier. The free in-room continental breakfast is about to become history—a belt-tightening measure. But change is everywhere, and that's part of the problem. Too few "modern" women want to sign on for close, communal quarters and no men allowed above the first floor.

"Women's Hotel," which calls to mind the works of Rona Jaffe, Barbara Pym, Edith Wharton and the Kaufman-Ferber play "Stage Door," unfolds in a series of comic and sometimes deeply poignant vignettes built around one or another Biedermeier resident. Contained within each profile is rich social and political history.

There's Katherine, a recovering alcoholic, Pauline, an anarchist in training, Lucianne, a former Miss Subways eager to marry a rich man who would conveniently die soon after the wedding. Josephine, one of the Biedermeier's oldest residents, claims to have witnessed Noël Coward's singular turn at the piano at the Stork Club. She also turns to petty thievery when she can't make the rent.

Mr. Lavery's wit and descriptive powers are considerable, his affection and sympathy for his characters something more. Even without that first important meal of the day, "Women's Hotel" is a feast.

SHORTCUTS: FICTION

By JOANNE KAUFMAN



Two Old Friends On a Drive

How Does That Make You Feel, Magda Eklund?

By Anna Montague
Ecco, 256 pages, \$28

ANNA MONTAGUE'S affecting novel "How Does That Make You Feel, Magda Eklund?" centers on that durable staple of pop culture: the un-self-aware, emotionally stunted shrink.

Psychiatrist Magda Eklund isn't big on birthdays even in the best of times. These, most assuredly, are not the best of times. Magda is about to face a cake with 70 candles while grieving the recent—sudden—death of her best friend Sara.

This signal loss means that a never-referred-to issue—Magda's romantic feelings for Sara, maybe Sara's for Magda—will remain unresolved. Pliant in her grief, Magda takes custody of the many objects that Sara's husband can't bear to have around: Sara's clothes, Sara's cookware, Sara's toiletries, Sara's books—and finally Sara herself. That is to say, Sara's ashes.

Those ashes ride shotgun on a road trip with stops at several key locations, a journey planned by Sara for the two old friends to

celebrate Magda's milestone birthday.

Road trips, at least as depicted in books and movies, are as much about self-discovery as they are about discovering the marvels of this or that byway. As Magda drives through Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas and New Mexico with the sweltering heat a constant companion, she reflects on her circumscribed childhood in Ohio and on her studious avoidance of visits back home.

She replays key moments in her relationship with Sara and re-evaluates the cost of a life spent on the sidelines, in the shadows, in denial. Magda recalls the panic when a date would walk her home after dinner. "Even anticipatorily, she felt confined to her body, and resigned to the moment at which a man would press his lips to her own."

The trip around the southland goes on rather too long, and Magda's recessive inwardness is largely to blame. It lends the proceedings a sluggish, claustrophobic atmosphere. But the story is buoyed by Magda's loving office-mates Theo and Boomer, and by Judy, the ebullient recreational-drug czar Magda meets at a women's retreat in Amarillo. "Tell me about yourself," Judy urges her. Magda's first thought: "I live other people's lives."

In confronting her sexual identity, she is finally able to live her own.

Ms. Kaufman regularly reviews fiction for the Journal.