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F. HARPER

MAY 27, 2022 VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1080

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Editor's letter

It's fitting that fatigue is the most common symptom of long Covid, when we are all so very tired of this endless pandemic. Once again, America is in a Covid surge, with hospitalizations up 20 percent in just two weeks and daily new cases now breaking 100,000—and that's the undercount. It's impossible to say how many people are really infected, because many of us test positive at home and don't report it to local health authorities, and plenty of counties have abandoned even trying to track weekly cases. Nearly a quarter of adults never got a single shot, and more than half aren't boosted. This sneaky new Omicron variant, meanwhile, BA.2.12.1, is spreading rapidly, even among the vaccinated and boosted. But my fellow Americans just don't want to hear about it, as Daniel Drezner points out in *The Washington Post* (see Talking Points, p.19). Whether they have had Covid once, twice, three times, or never, they certainly have Covid fatigue.

So did I—and then the virus caught me. A few weeks ago, despite being fully Pfizered up with three shots, I tested positive, coughing so hard I couldn't stop vomiting. The result was a five-day stay in the ICU with a sodium level so low it could have killed me. Covid, it turns out, can cause electrolyte abnormalities as well as the better-known lung and organ damage. The episode was scary and intense, and doctors say the exhaustion will likely linger for weeks. Cases like mine challenge conventional wisdom on what public health should be trying to do. Some argue that if someone vaccinated still ends up in the hospital, what is the point in pouring more funds into vaccination programs? Yet because more infections mean more elusive variants, we won't get past this without new and better vaccines. In the end, this boosted patient survived. For that, I choose to thank science.

Susan Caskie
Managing editor

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THE WEEK

Editor-in-chief: William Falk

Managing editors: Susan Caskie, Mark Gimein

Assistant managing editor: Jay Wilkins

Deputy editor/Arts: Chris Mitchell

Senior editors: Nick Aspinwall, Chris Erikson, Danny Funt, Scott Meslow, Dale Obbie, Zach Schonbrun, Hallie Stiller

Art director: Paul Crawford

Deputy art director: Rosanna Bulian

Photo editor: Mark Rykoff

Copy editor: Jane A. Halsey

Researchers: Nick Gallagher, Rebecca Nathanson

Contributing editors: Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

Group publisher: Paul Vizza (paul.vizza@futurenet.com)

West Coast executive director: Tony Imperato (tony.imperato@futurenet.com)

Media planning manager: Andrea Crino

Direct response advertising: Anthony Smyth (anthony@smythps.com)

SVP, Women's, Homes, and News: Sophie Wybrew-Bond

Managing director, news: Richard Campbell

SVP, finance: Maria Beckett

Consumer marketing director: Leslie Guarnieri

Senior digital marketing director: Mathieu Muzzy

Manufacturing manager, North America: Lori Crook

HR manager: Joy Hart

Operations manager: Cassandra Mondonedo



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A white supremacist massacre in Buffalo

What happened

An 18-year-old gunman fueled by his belief in “replacement theory” shot and killed 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo last week, casting a spotlight on the spread of a once-fringe racist ideology. Payton Gendron, a college dropout from upstate New York, opened fire with a Bushmaster XM-15 assault weapon in a market on Buffalo’s predominantly Black east side after planning for months a bloodbath designed to kill as many Blacks as possible. He laid out his motives in a manifesto that echoed online screeds claiming that a cabal of leftist elites and “globalist” Jews are conspiring to gain power by “replacing” white, native-born Christians with dark-skinned foreigners. Blacks and immigrants “invade our lands” and “attack and replace our people,” wrote Gendron, who said he’d been radicalized by reading online message boards. He expressed admiration for other racist mass murderers, including the white supremacist who in 2019 gunned down 51 people at mosques in New Zealand and another who killed 23 people in El Paso, Texas, in 2019 to repel what he called a “Hispanic invasion.” Gendron, who livestreamed the shooting, surrendered to police and was charged with murder.

President Biden traveled to Buffalo and spoke out against the spread of replacement theory, which has been promoted by some Republican lawmakers and conservative media figures including Fox News host Tucker Carlson. A recent AP poll showed that 1 in 3 U.S. adults—and 42 percent of Republicans—believe there’s an effort “to replace U.S.-born Americans with immigrants for electoral gains.” Biden warned that “white supremacy is a poison” that’s “been allowed to fester and grow right in front of our eyes.”

What the editorials said

The Buffalo massacre “represents a conflagration of two of America’s most noxious poisons,” said the New York *Daily News*: “deadly firearms and metastasizing white supremacist hate.” Gendron was able to legally purchase his “weapon of war” despite having been investigated for a shooting threat at his high school last year. And his “mind was poisoned by an abhorrent ideology” from the neo-Nazi fringes that has infected



Agony: The family of a slain 86-year-old grandmother

mainstream politicians and Fox News pundits. Feeding white anxiety might be a cynical “game” to them, but “words have consequences.”

Democrats’ “transparently political” effort to blame this tragedy on Republicans is “despicable,” said *The Wall Street Journal*. They cast as racist anyone opposed to “open borders, or critical race theory, or the Democratic Party’s hyper-race consciousness.” And now they’ve gone a step further and suggested Republicans “are accomplices in racially motivated domestic terrorism.” Exploiting this tragedy is apparently the best strategy Democrats have “to hang on to power in an election year.”

What the columnists said

Replacement theory is “becoming central to the modern GOP’s worldview,” said Eugene Robinson in *The Washington Post*. Fox’s Carlson has promoted replacement theory on his top-rated show more than 400 times. Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, the third-ranking House Republican, has run ads saying Democrats want to grant amnesty to illegal immigrants to “overthrow the current electorate.” Blame Gendron for his horrific actions, “but also blame the prominent right-wing voices that egged him on.”

Only one person is to blame for the Buffalo massacre: Gendron himself, said Dan McLaughlin in *National Review*. In an open society with free speech, a small minority “are apt to turn any particular species of angry nonsense into violence.” In his manifesto, Gendron never mentions Carlson, expresses his hatred for Fox, and calls modern conservatism “corporatism in disguise.”

Gendron was no “lone wolf,” said Talia Lavin in *Rolling Stone*. He was just another disaffected young man radicalized by a steady diet of “white racial panic.” As the country’s demographics change, white conservatives are increasingly gripped by the “apocalyptic” fear that they will become a minority in America—a major impetus for the election of Donald Trump. With Fox and Trumpist Republicans spewing out “annihilatory rhetoric,” there will be more tragedies, and “the corpses will continue to accrue.”

It wasn’t all bad

■ Back in 2003, doctors told Bobby Channell he needed a new heart. He finally became eligible earlier this year and completed the procedure in Texas. While recovering at a special facility called Nora’s Home, Channell met Faith Crouch, staying across the hall to recover from a lung transplant for cystic fibrosis. The pair immediately bonded over their shared experience and soon began dating. Channell is still in recovery at Nora’s Home, but the couple is sure their love will outlast their hospital stays. “We definitely want to be together,” Channell said.

■ A 2-year-old Jack Russell terrier has been awarded state honors from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for his role in identifying 200 Russian explosives. Patron, whose name translates to “ammo” in Ukrainian, barked and wagged his tail at the award ceremony, which was attended by Canada’s Justin Trudeau. With a protective vest to keep him safe, Patron identifies hidden mines by sniffing for gunpowder. He has also become an unofficial Ukrainian mascot during the war, serving as inspiration for fan art and a popular Instagram page. Despite his newfound fame, the terrier still finds time to play with other canines, sleep, and chow on his favorite snack, cheese.



Fearless canine

■ In April, third-graders from Bernard Black Elementary School in Phoenix sat with their parents for what they assumed would be a typical assembly. Then Quintin Boyce, the superintendent of the district—where 90 percent of kids qualify for free or reduced-price lunch—revealed that every student in the class had been awarded a full ride to college, thanks to a donation from a private family charity. “There wasn’t a dry eye in the house,” Boyce said. The gift follows a similar pledge from the same foundation a decade ago, to third graders who are now starting college.

Mixed record for Trump endorsements in key GOP races

What happened

In a closely watched primary, Pennsylvania Republicans chose a far-right gubernatorial candidate this week who backs former President Trump's false 2020 election-rigging claims. Trump's Senate pick, celebrity physician Mehmet Oz, was locked in a race with former hedge fund boss David McCormick that was too close to call when *The Week* went to press. The nominee for governor, state Sen. Doug Mastriano, attended the Jan. 6 "Stop the Steal" rally outside the Capitol and supported sending alternate Trump electors to Washington. Mastriano will face Democratic Attorney General Josh Shapiro, who ran unopposed. In what's expected to be a crucial battle for control of the Senate, Oz or McCormick will take on Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, a 6-foot-8, shorts- and hoodies-wearing progressive populist who easily defeated moderate Rep. Conor Lamb despite having a stroke days earlier that required Fetterman to get a pacemaker installed.



Mastriano: A 'Stop the Steal' candidate

Elsewhere, Trump's favored candidates delivered mixed results. Idaho's Trump-backed Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin lost her primary challenge to Gov. Brad Little, but North Carolina Rep. Ted Budd rode an early Trump endorsement to win the GOP Senate nomination over former Gov. Pat McCrory. Budd will face Cheri Beasley, a former State Supreme Court chief justice who is vying to become the state's first Black senator. An eleventh-hour Trump endorsement could not rescue North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn, who lost a primary challenge. Cawthorn, 26, made enemies within the GOP after claiming colleagues invited him to indulge in cocaine and orgies.

What the columnists said

Trump is not the "big-time kingmaker" he once was, said **Jonathan Bernstein** in *Bloomberg*. Oz managed just a third of the Republican vote, and Cawthorn got the boot. GOP insiders credit Budd's win "more to heavy spending from the conservative Club for Growth" than to Trump, and Trump jumped on the Mastriano bandwagon only when it was obvious he would prevail. Clearly, "Republican voters are not behaving like zombies" who do whatever Trump tells them to.

Still, the insurrectionists have clearly taken over the GOP, said **Amanda Carpenter** in *The Bulwark*. Party leaders fret that Mastriano's nomination could be a "total disaster" in the general election, and Democrats were openly rooting for him. We saw this with Trump in 2016: Voters nominate "an absolutely abominable candidate," GOP leaders reluctantly back him, Democrats get overconfident, and then, "holy guacamole," the unthinkable happens.

Democrats, meanwhile, went in an unconventional direction with Fetterman, said **Michael Sokolove** in *The New York Times*. The hulking, goateed, tattooed 52-year-old is a plainspoken progressive who supports gay rights and what he calls "legal weed," helping make him a star among left-leaning young people. He also hopes to make a dent in Pennsylvania's increasingly red rural areas. "In the winning Fetterman model, he narrows the massive margins that have been run up by Republicans." If he succeeds, he might represent "the future of the Democratic Party."

Ukraine makes battlefield gains despite losing Mariupol

What happened

Advancing Ukrainian forces clawed back more territory this week, as British intelligence reported that Russia had lost a full third of its invading troops. Ukrainian fighters retook Kharkiv, the second-biggest city, and pushed northward to the Russian border. Russia, meanwhile, focused its firepower on the south and east, but with mixed results. In eastern Luhansk, Ukrainian artillery obliterated an entire Russian battalion that was trying to cross a pontoon bridge, destroying more than 70 military vehicles and killing nearly 500 Russian soldiers.

In Mariupol, though, Russia claimed that 1,000 Ukrainians had surrendered, and Ukrainians reported that Russians hauled away more than 260 soldiers from the city's last holdout, the Azovstal steelworks. The Kremlin insisted Russia would treat the soldiers—many of them badly wounded—in accordance with international law, but other Russian officials said they would be interrogated as potential war criminals. Russian forces already hold more than 3,000 Mariupol residents in an old prison colony in Donetsk, where they are rumored to have been tortured. Still, cracks have appeared in Russian resolve: On state TV this week, retired Col. Mikhail Khodaryonok said Russia's "full geopolitical isolation" was hurting its war efforts even as the West continued arming Ukraine. Following a visit to Kyiv by Sen. Mitch McConnell and other lawmakers, the Senate neared a final vote on a \$40 billion package of aid to Ukraine, which was expected to pass. Eleven Republicans, including Sens. Josh Hawley and Rand Paul, voted against advancing it.

What the columnists said

We don't yet know the full "devastation and unfathomable human toll" in Mariupol, once a city of 400,000 and now a smoldering ruin, said **Jen Kirby** in *Vox*. But this ostensible Ukrainian loss required Russia to squander "manpower and resources" it could have used to defend territory that Ukrainians have now recaptured. The defiance of Mariupol's ill-fated defenders, meanwhile, who held out for nearly 12 weeks, may end up being one of the war's "great heroic narratives."

Elsewhere, the tide "is clearly shifting against" the Russians, said *The Washington Post* in an editorial. Even their more limited goal of retaking Luhansk "might be beyond the capability of Russia's depleted, poorly led forces." That's why "now is not the time" to heed certain Western European leaders' calls for cease-fire negotiations. Russian President Vladimir Putin clearly isn't interested in "good-faith bargaining," and he's counting on the unified resolve of the West—which is boycotting his oil—to crack as energy prices rise. Let's not prove him right.

Over the next six months, said **Ross Douthat** in *The New York Times*, we'll see either a protracted, bloody stalemate, or a counteroffensive that drives Russia "potentially out of Ukrainian territory entirely." Ukraine's military leaders claim the latter lies "within reach," but it also makes Russia's use of a tactical nuke "much more likely." What happens if Ukraine's brave fighters reach that threshold could soon become "the most important question in the world."

Baby formula: How a nationwide shortage was born

“Is my baby getting enough food?” It’s a fear every new parent has, said David Leonhardt in *The New York Times*, but one that’s become “acute” for millions of Americans caught up in a nationwide shortage of baby formula. Stores have about 43 percent less stock of formula than usual, creating an “urgent problem”: Some infants cannot drink breast milk, and a lot of working mothers simply don’t have the time or place to breastfeed. Major store chains like CVS and Walmart are rationing how much formula a person can buy, and desperate moms and dads are scouring shops and the internet for formula supplies, often vastly overpaying for any they do find. “It gets really scary,” says Carrie Fleming, a mother in Pell City, Ala. She spent \$245 on three small cans of formula she found online—and she’s putting half a scoop less into each bottle to make it last longer.



Formula: Scarce and rationed

It’s astonishing that “the wealthiest, most advanced, and most prosperous nation on the planet” is struggling to feed its babies, says Jim Geraghty in *National Review*. The main reason for the shortage is that one of the big formula producers, Abbott Laboratories, shut down a manufacturing plant in Michigan in February because of a potential bacteria outbreak that may have sickened four babies. The Food and Drug Administration finally announced this week that the facility could resume operations—but Abbott says it’ll take a couple of months before its products are back on the shelves. Even before Abbott’s shutdown, Covid-related problems in the global supply chain had “strained” formula supplies, some of which come from overseas. The pandemic caused staffing and ingredient shortages for formula producers, and hoarding caused see-sawing demand.

All these problems have been “made worse by monopoly,” says David Dayen in *Prospect.org*. Half of all formula sales go through a federal program called Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides vouchers to low-income families. Abbott and other big producers offer massive discounts to become the chosen suppliers, which has resulted in massive market concentration: As of 2018, Abbott and three other companies “control about 89 percent of the U.S. market.”

“The most important part of the story” is America’s protectionist policies, says Derek Thompson in *The Atlantic*. Most of the formula made in the European Union “is illegal to buy here”—even though it’s just as nutritious, if not “better,” than our stuff. Foreign-made formula that *does* meet FDA requirements is slapped with big tariffs. The new North American trade agreement forged by President Trump actually “actively discourages formula imports from our largest trading partner, Canada.” So much for the “faddish drive to produce everything in America,” says *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. “Global trade has its uses,” including increasing competition and supply.

There are some obvious fixes, says Scott Lincicome in *TheDispatch.com*. The federal government should immediately “eliminate barriers to imported infant formula,” so that Americans can always buy it from other well-regulated countries—if it’s good enough for Europe, Canada, Australia, and the like, “it’s good enough for us.” And WIC vouchers should be valid for all formula brands, not just the Chosen Few. “These changes won’t put formula on American store shelves tomorrow.” But they may at least help prevent this nightmare from happening again.

Only in America

■ Five Black students are suing a Georgia high school for racial discrimination, alleging that white students re-enacted George Floyd’s death, wear Confederate symbols, and refer to them as “slaves” and the N-word. The plaintiffs say officials at Coosa High School in Rome—who deny any wrongdoing—ignored these incidents, suspended Black students for a silent protest, and forbade them from wearing “Black Lives Matter” shirts.

■ Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-Calif.) has used campaign funds to pay his wife’s business \$424,000 over the past eight years, *The Daily Beast* reports. His campaign pays his “wellness facilitator” wife, Norma, \$4,400 every month as a consultant; she claims expertise in hypnotherapy, life coaching, and “primordial sound meditation.”

Good week for:

European unity, after Ukrainian band Kalush Orchestra won the Eurovision Song Contest, defeating 24 other European performers with the largest number of fan votes in the contest’s 66-year history. The winning song includes the line “I’ll always find my way home, even if all roads are destroyed.”

Pay equity, after the U.S. Soccer women’s and men’s national teams agreed to new contracts that will pay male and female players equally, with the women’s team getting a 54 percent increase.

Sen. Ted Cruz, after the Supreme Court’s six conservative justices sided with the Texas Republican, ruling his free speech rights were violated by a federal ban on influence-seeking donors repaying a candidate’s campaign loan to himself.

Bad week for:

Border walls, after border officials discovered yet another secret 600-yard tunnel from Tijuana to San Diego, equipped with rail and ventilation systems, electricity, and reinforced walls.

Corporate bullying, after the publisher of the British version of the magazine *Vogue* warned a 150-year-old pub, The Star Inn at *Vogue*, to change its name. Pub owner Mark Graham replied with “a categorical NO,” and asked the magazine why it “didn’t seek permission from the villagers of the real *Vogue*.”

Price gouging, after a coffee bar in Florence was fined 1,000 euros for charging 2 euros for a cup of espresso. Alessandro Sorani, the head of a local business association, said a fine espresso is hard work, and that the fine “is something that deeply embitters me.”

In other news

FEC deadlocks on Trump allegations

The Federal Election Committee deadlocked 3-3 on a complaint that former President Trump’s 2020 campaign laundered \$617 million in spending that ultimately went to Trump and his family, *Insider* reported this week. The nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center had filed the FEC complaint in response to reporting that Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner created companies that funneled funds to Trump family members. FEC Commissioner Ellen Weintraub, a Democrat, said she believed the Trump campaign violated federal law, and was “disappointed” that the vote made it look like FEC decisions were made “on a partisan basis.” The Campaign Legal Center sued the FEC in March, alleging regulators were slow-walking the complaint.



Pritzker

Chicago

Pro-choice protests:

Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker joined more than 1,000 demonstrators last week marching in support of abortion rights, at one of about 450 rallies across the country that drew tens of thousands of people in anticipation of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Pritzker vowed that Illinois would be a “beacon” for people from other Midwest states seeking abortions, saying, “Our shores remain open for any person who is left marooned by these extremist politicians.” Protesters marched to the Supreme Court in Washington, chanting, “Abortion is a human right.” Thousands of New Yorkers crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, about 5,000 demonstrators in Los Angeles filled a park near City Hall, and marches took place in Nashville, Austin, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere. Some events drew anti-abortion counterprotesters, including in Chicago, where some signs read “Jesus saves from hell” and “Repent: Turn to Jesus or burn.”



Church shooting

Laguna Woods, Calif.

Fueled by hate:

Authorities said a gunman was motivated by anti-Taiwan hatred when he opened fire at an

Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church service this week, killing one man and injuring five elderly worshippers. David Chou, 68—a Las Vegas security guard who authorities say grew up in Taiwan—allegedly drove 270 miles to Laguna Woods, armed with incendiary devices and two handguns. Investigators say he chained the doors shut and sat in the back of a service with about 150 people before opening fire. In the ensuing chaos, Dr. John Cheng, 52—a sports physician and martial arts instructor—tackled Chou before being fatally shot, giving other parishioners a chance to disable Chou and hogtie him with extension cords. Cheng likely saved “upwards of dozens of people,” Sheriff Don Barnes said. Investigators found notes in Chou’s car that indicated “his hatred of the Taiwanese people” and his belief that Taiwan should not be an independent country, Barnes said.

Getty, Reuters, Getty (2)

Washington, D.C.

UFO search: Pentagon officials acknowledged 140 sightings of unexplained phenomena—once known as UFOs—by the military, including 11 near-miss collisions by naval pilots, in House Intelligence subcommittee hearings this week. The first public congressional hearings on possible alien life in more than 50 years featured testimony from the Defense Department that while it has collected wreckage linked to UFOs, none was unexplainable or not “of terrestrial origin.” The hearings included a viewing of a previously classified video of a mysterious reflective spherical object speeding past a military fighter jet. Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) demanded the Pentagon investigate an incident—from back in 1967—that allegedly occurred at Malmstrom Air Force Base, in which 10 nuclear ICBMs were rendered inoperable, while a glowing red orb was observed overhead.



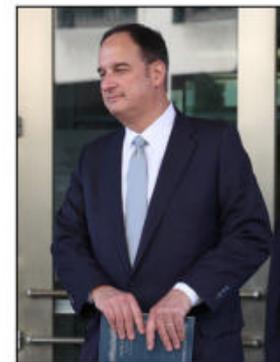
Montgomery, Ala.

Trans health care: A federal judge last week blocked Alabama’s first-in-the-nation law restricting gender-affirming treatment for minors, saying it would cause “severe physical and/or psychological harm” to trans youth and their families and likely violate their constitutional rights. A week earlier, Alabama became the first state to make prescribing puberty blockers and hormones a felony, with penalties for doctors and other clinicians of up to 10 years in prison or a \$15,000 fine. But Judge Liles Burke, an appointee of former President Trump, said parents “have a fundamental right to direct the medical care of their children,” and that “discrimination based on gender nonconformity equates to sex discrimination.” He let stand part of the law requiring schools to tell parents about any information regarding their child’s gender identity. Gov. Kay Ivey vowed to keep fighting “radical, unproven, life-altering drugs.”

Washington, D.C.

Durham’s first trial:

Federal prosecutors told a jury this week that lawyer Michael Sussmann tried to contrive an “October surprise” to tar Donald Trump ahead of the 2016 election, in the first trial stemming from special counsel John Durham’s three-year probe of the Trump-Russia investigation. Lawyers for Sussmann—charged with lying to the FBI in 2016 by allegedly failing to disclose his work for Hillary Clinton’s campaign—called the government’s case “nonsensical,” arguing that the FBI was fully aware of Sussman’s Democratic ties. Sussman, whose role in the FBI’s investigation was minimal, brought computer data to the FBI suggesting contact between Trump Organization servers and a Kremlin-linked bank. Prosecutors said the agency found that the server “was merely a spam email server used for sending out marketing emails.”



Sussmann

Orange County, Fla.

Disney land grab:

Gov. Ron DeSantis said this week that he wanted the state of Florida to take over Walt Disney World’s special tax district next year, rather than handing it over to local governments. Last month, DeSantis signed a bill revoking Disney’s special status, established in 1967 after Disney bought 25,000 acres in central Florida, in retaliation for Disney criticizing Florida’s new law restricting classroom discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity. DeSantis said that the takeover of the special district would not leave taxpayers with Disney’s \$766 million debt obligations, saying Disney would still be on the hook for its payments. “We’re going to relieve Disney of \$766 million in debt? How would that be a punishment?” DeSantis said. Disney has taxed itself at three times the typical local rate, generating \$163 million a year to pay for police, emergency, and other services for its theme parks.



DeSantis: Disney foe



Montero

Madrid

Time off for your period: Spain's government this week greenlit plans to become the first European country to give unlimited paid menstrual leave. The draft bill, which includes a raft of women's health measures, would also allow teenagers ages 16 and 17 to seek an

abortion without parental consent. If parliament passes the bill, workers experiencing severe period pain could take paid days off with a doctor's note. It is time to "discard taboos, stigmas, and guilt regarding women's bodies," said Irene Montero, Spain's equality minister in the left-wing government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. "The days of going to work in pain are over." Only a few countries offer paid menstrual leave, including Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and Zambia. Some feminists oppose the idea, saying it could discourage employers from hiring women.

Havana

Family reunions: The Biden administration said this week it will restore a program that allows Cubans to temporarily join family members who are living in the U.S. while seeking permanent status. The change is part of a wholesale reversal of Trump-era restrictions and includes allowing more flights to Cuba, removing monthly caps on remittance money, and letting U.S. companies invest in private Cuban businesses. These measures will allow "more Cubans to join their families in the United States via regular migration channels," said State Department spokesperson Ned Price. Advocates called on Biden to lift the restrictions after thousands of Cubans took to the streets last year in the country's largest anti-government protests in decades. More than 100 protesters were arrested or went missing.

San Salvador, El Salvador

Mass arrests as economy dives: Salvadoran police have arrested more than 30,000 people in 50 days of anti-gang sweeps. President Nayib Bukele ordered a state of emergency after gang killings surged in March, and rights groups say police have detained and mistreated innocent civilians. Meanwhile, the value of Bukele's audacious \$100 million state investment in Bitcoin dropped by about one-third last week, putting the indebted country at risk of default. Bukele had pledged to make Bitcoin a national currency, develop a mining hub and tax haven for crypto entrepreneurs, and establish a \$1 billion bond market for Bitcoin. Ever defiant, he announced his government was purchasing more Bitcoin, tweeting: "El Salvador just bought the dip!"



Alleged MS-13 gang arrest

Barú, Colombia

Anti-drug prosecutor killed: Paraguayan prosecutor Marcelo Pecci was gunned down last week while honeymooning on the Colombian island of Barú near Cartagena. Pecci, 45, was relaxing on the beach when two gunmen zoomed up on personal watercraft and one opened fire before fleeing by sea. Pecci was struck in the face and back. "He just looked at him and shot him," Pecci's widow, journalist Claudia Aguilera, told Colombia's *El Tiempo*. "He didn't say anything." Hours earlier, Aguilera had

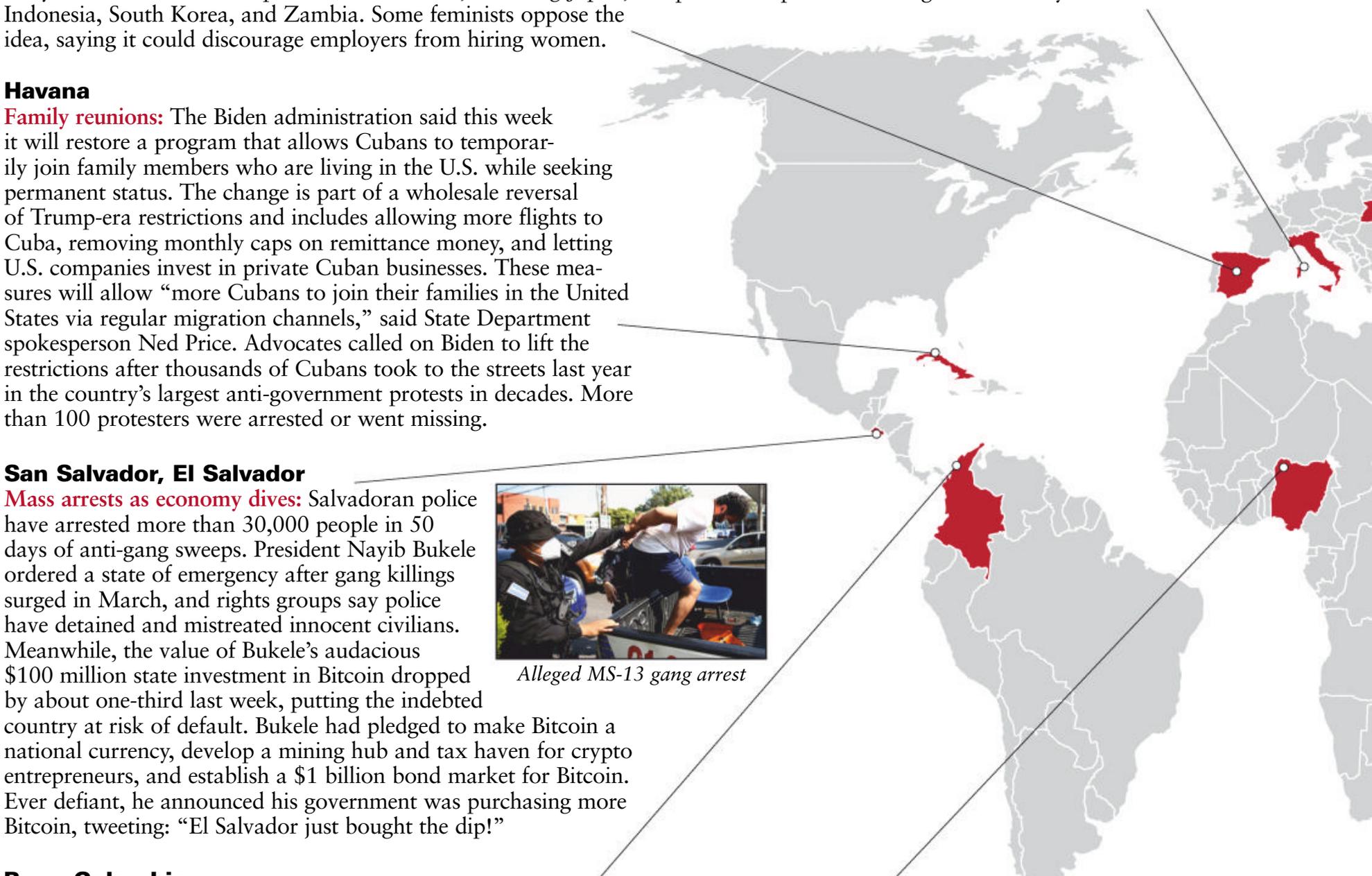


Pecci: Assassinated

shared an Instagram photo of a tiny pair of red shoes: The couple was expecting. One of Paraguay's most powerful prosecutors, Pecci had partnered with U.S. authorities to hunt down international drug lords, and this year he led an anti-money-laundering operation. Authorities believe Pecci was killed for his work investigating international terrorism.

Romazzino, Italy

Stuck with oligarch spoils: The Italian government doesn't know what to do with all the luxury villas and mega-yachts it has seized from Russia's ultrawealthy in Sardinia. Thanks to EU sanctions brought after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the oligarchs have lost title to their mansions on the island's northeastern Emerald Coast and their yachts moored in its turquoise bay. The sanctions, though, have come with a price. Sardinia had built its economy around catering to Moscow's super-rich, and now hundreds of workers have lost not only their jobs but also the lavish tips the oligarchs used to shell out. The Italian government, for its part, doesn't have the resources to maintain all that garishly decorated property. "If it were up to me," said realtor Tamara Grilloti, "I'd put them up for rent and give the money to Ukraine."

**Sokoto, Nigeria**

Religious murder: A Christian university student was beaten to death and set on fire by fellow students last week after being accused of posting blasphemous messages to a WhatsApp group. A mob of students attacked Deborah Samuel after she allegedly criticized pro-Islamic statements posted by a Muslim classmate; two suspects were arrested in her death. School security officers tried to intervene, but the students fended them off by hurling rocks and sticks. Days later, Muslim youth set fires across the city and besieged the palace of the sultan of Sokoto, Nigeria's highest Islamic spiritual figure, after he denounced the lynching and demanded the suspects face justice. Samuel's father, Emmanuel Garba, said the family saw the death as an "act of God."



Muslims decry arrests.

Kyiv

Russian soldier pleads guilty: In the first war-crimes trial of the conflict, a Russian soldier this week could face life in prison after pleading guilty to killing a Ukrainian civilian unprovoked. Sgt. Vadim Shishimarin, 21, said he was ordered to shoot an unarmed 62-year-old man who was walking a bicycle along a road in the town of Chupakhivka in late February. Shishimarin sat in a glass cage in court, the widow of his victim just feet away, and admitted his guilt. Assisted by international experts, Ukraine has opened more than 11,000 investigations into potential crimes. “We are sending a clear signal,” said Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova, “that every perpetrator, every person who ordered or assisted in the commission of crimes in Ukraine, will not avoid responsibility.”



Shishimarin

Pyongyang

Pandemic hits hard: North Korea ordered nationwide lockdowns last week after nearly 1.5 million people came down with Covid and at least 61—likely far more—died. The reclusive nation has no Covid vaccines or antivirals, and its hospitals are not equipped to treat what authorities insist on calling “a fever.” Dictator Kim Jong Un berated health officials for their “immaturity” after delays in providing test kits and mobilized the military to distribute medicine. State media has called vaccines “no panacea” and recommended that patients use painkillers, ventilate their rooms, and drink tea made from ginger or willow. One man told state media he was having his children gargle salt water.



Kim inspects a pharmacy.

Wuzhou, China

Intentional nosedive: U.S. officials said this week they believe a pilot purposely plunged a cruising China Eastern jet into a near-vertical descent earlier this year, killing all 132 people on board. Data from a black box recovered from the March 21 crash shows inputs were entered manually to steer the Boeing 737-800 into its fatal dive, slamming into the ground with such force that it made a hole 66 feet deep. “The plane did what it was told to do by someone in the cockpit,” a person familiar with the assessment told *The Wall Street Journal*. The person added that Chinese authorities, who are leading the investigation, found no mechanical problems with the jet, which was flying from Kunming to Guangzhou. Investigators did find evidence that one pilot was struggling with personal issues before the crash.

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Give our loot back: Cambodia called on the United Kingdom last week to help it recover objects it says were looted from its temples and smuggled to British museums and warehouses. Culture Minister Phoeurng Sackona said London’s Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum possess stolen Cambodian artifacts including ancient statues, which Cambodians believe hold the souls of their ancestors. The British Museum is thought to have around 100 Cambodian pieces, all of which are in storage; the Victoria & Albert has more than 50. Both museums offered to carefully consider the requests but denied wrongdoing. Many stolen works were likely trafficked by Douglas Latchford, a rogue British art dealer who pillaged Cambodian antiquities worth millions of dollars, even working with the murderous Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s, before his death in 2020.

Istanbul

Imprisoned for tweets: Turkish opposition leader Canan Kaftancıoğlu was banned from politics and sentenced to nearly five years in prison last week, after she was convicted of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a series of tweets accusing him of theft. Kaftancıoğlu, a motorcycle-riding leftist who heads the Istanbul branch of the Republican People’s Party, was expected to be a valuable campaigner for opposition candidates for the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections. She had helped fellow Republican Ekrem Imamoglu win Istanbul’s mayoral race in 2019; he now faces his own charges of insulting election officials. Kaftancıoğlu tweeted a video to her supporters, telling them not to give up. “We will breathe together when we establish the rule of law,” she said. Erdogan has been trying to eliminate threats to his power as Turkey’s currency plummets and its inflation rate soars.



Kaftancıoğlu

Mogadishu, Somalia

U.S. troops are back: President Biden approved a Pentagon request this week to re-deploy Special Operations forces to Somalia, reversing President Trump’s decision to withdraw them last year. Some 750 U.S. troops had been stationed



Shabaab bombing last year

in the region to combat al-Shabaab, an Islamist terrorist group affiliated with al Qaida. An administration official said the group has “only grown stronger” since the U.S.’s “abrupt and sudden” withdrawal. A smaller deployment of fewer than 500 American soldiers will now be authorized to seek out al-Shabaab leaders who have plotted attacks outside Somalia’s borders. The group was accused in a 2020 attack on an American air base in Manda Bay, Kenya, that killed three Americans. It also controls chunks of Somali territory, where it rules on court cases and collects taxes.

From catering executive to agricultural entrepreneur.

Meredith learned how on YouTube.

Meredith left her life in catering and bought 20 acres of California farmland. She didn't know how to farm, but she learned how on YouTube. Her business, Autonomy Farms, has doubled its revenue in the last three years and has built a reputation as a menu staple throughout the West Coast.



For more on how people are growing careers and business opportunities with YouTube, visit yt.be/impact



Nash's life as a libertine



Graham Nash is still passionate about sex, drugs, and rock and roll at age 80, said Simon Hattenstone in *The Guardian*. "That's what my life was. And is," he says. Sex did much to launch a career that's spanned more than six decades and two Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductions, as a member of Crosby, Stills and Nash and the Hollies. Growing up in England, he found that "Once I could play three chords on the guitar, my attractiveness to the ladies went up sky-high. I was like: 'Oh, I see!'" When the Hollies hit the charts, opportunity abounded, and he indulged heavily in both the sex and the drug-fueled partying—a lifestyle he figures social media has ruined for today's rock stars. "There is no privacy anymore. And once it's on the net it will never leave. And that's terrifying because we've all done incredibly stupid things." Today he's married to a woman 37 years his junior, and crowed in a 2018 interview that his sex life was "insane. It's better than it's ever been." He's also still rocking—both touring and recording. Marijuana remains a daily habit, one he credits with "changing my life completely," and allowing him to focus on life's bright side. "I'm trying to live the best life I can," he says, "and I want to do that until they close the coffin."

How the Liver King eats

Brian Johnson is known to 3 million social media followers as the Liver King, said Madeleine Aggeler in *GQ*. The 45-year-old Texan has earned fame on TikTok and Instagram with a ripped, bulging physique and his proselytizing for "the ancestral lifestyle"—a return to the virtues of caveman life. It involves following nine "ancestral tenets," including an excruciating level of physical activity and eating raw liver, which he consumes at the rate of about a pound a day. Johnson learned the transformative power of muscle building as a skinny kid pushed around by bullies in San Antonio. But his lifestyle conversion came decades later, as the father of young sons beset with debilitating illnesses and allergies. "We cut out all the processed foods, the liquid calories, the seed oils. We just went to whole foods, chiefly liver and bone marrow," he said. Within days, "they had this new vibrancy, this new electricity." As his family's health and strength grew, Johnson says he felt an obligation to "preach this to the world." The King, who calls his followers "primals," sells nutritional supplements and sings the praises of other animal parts besides the liver. These include the testicles, which he believes boost the vitality of the eater's own. "Why eat vegetables," he said, "when you can eat testicles?"



Why Cattrall was done with Samantha

Kim Cattrall has no interest in ever playing Samantha Jones again, said Ramin Setoodeh in *Variety*. The 65-year-old actress, who played the sex-positive publicist on the seminal series *Sex in the City*, wasn't invited to take part in HBO's recent reboot, and she's just fine with that. She'd invited the snub by refusing to sign on for an ill-fated third movie spin-off, and by speaking about her disinterest in keeping the series' characters going. "It's a great wisdom to know when enough is enough," she says. "Can you imagine going back to a job you did 25 years ago? How are you going to progress with these characters? Everything has to grow, or it dies." Nonetheless, she's hugely proud of the series, which in Samantha Jones presented a novel TV archetype: a sexually liberated woman unambiguously uninterested in marriage or children. "It was a show about single women. It was a time coming out of AIDS and making sex positive again." Samantha will always be part of her, she says. "I played her, and I loved her. I felt ultimately protective of her." She hasn't watched the new show, though she's "certainly heard about it." And? "I've come to the conclusion that the greatest compliment I could have as an actor is to be missed."

In the news



■ **Britney Spears** has announced that she suffered a miscarriage, a month after revealing that she was expecting her third child and first with fiancé Sam Asghari. "We have lost our miracle baby," Spears, 40, and Asghari, 28, said in a joint statement on Instagram. "Perhaps we should have waited to announce until we were further along. We were overly excited to share the good news." Last year, Spears alleged that the conservatorship that governed her life since her 20s prohibited her from getting married and having more children. The legal arrangement was dissolved late last year. "We will

continue trying to expand our beautiful family," Spears and Asghari said.

■ Former first lady **Melania Trump** criticized *Vogue* last week for not putting her on the cover when her husband was president, despite Jill Biden, Michelle Obama, and Hillary Clinton all being given that honor by the fashion magazine. "They're biased," Trump told Fox Nation in her first interview since leaving the White House. "It's so obvious." The former model appeared on *Vogue's* cover in 2005, when she married Donald Trump, and her former aide Stephanie Winston Wolkoff says Melania was offered a *Vogue* shoot after moving into the White House but refused unless she was guaranteed the cover. "I have much more important things to do—and I did in the White House—than being on the cover of *Vogue*," Trump said.

■ Country music legend **Naomi Judd** used a firearm to take her own life last month, her daughter Ashley revealed last week on *Good Morning America*. "That's the piece of information we are very uncomfortable sharing," Ashley said, "but understand that we're in a position that if we don't say it, someone else is going to." She said she was visiting her mother the day she died, and left the room briefly, only to find she had used a gun on herself. "I have both grief and trauma from discovering her," Ashley said. The 76-year-old singer died a day before she and her daughter, Wynonna, were set to enter the Country Music Hall of Fame as the duo the Judds. "Our mother couldn't hang on until she was inducted," Ashley said. "That is the level of catastrophe of what was going on inside of her."

The doctrine of stare decisis

The Supreme Court follows a tradition of honoring precedent—most of the time.

What is stare decisis?

It's a centuries-old legal principle stating that judges should defer to past interpretations of statutes and the Constitution. It comes from the Latin expression *stare decisis et non quieta movere*, meaning, "to stand by things decided and not disturb the calm." Erring on the side of upholding precedent makes the law seem "evenhanded" and "predictable," then—Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote in 1984. Justice Louis Brandeis had gone further in 1932, writing, "In most matters it is more important that the applicable rule of law be settled than that it be settled right." But periodically throughout U.S. history—about 232 times, to be precise—justices have disregarded stare decisis and overruled their predecessors. A 5-4 conservative majority appears poised to do that with *Roe v. Wade*, and Justice Samuel Alito devotes a substantial chunk of his leaked draft opinion to arguing why *Roe* was "egregiously wrong from the start" and thus unworthy of stare decisis.



The court has overruled precedent about 232 times.

When can precedent be overruled?

Whenever a majority of Supreme Court justices feel like it. Some legal scholars argue that a select group of old, landmark cases should be considered irreversible "super precedent," but the court has observed repeatedly that stare decisis is not an "inexorable command." In a 2020 opinion, Justice Brett Kavanaugh mapped a seven-prong test for applying stare decisis: the quality of the precedent's reasoning, the precedent's consistency with other decisions, changes in law since, changes in facts since, the decision's "workability," the degree to which people have come to rely on it, and the precedent's age. Nearly everyone agrees, at least in theory, that it's not sufficient for new justices to personally disagree with earlier rulings on ideological grounds. In 2018, when five conservatives ruled that the First Amendment protects public-sector employees from being forced to pay union dues if they're not members, Justice Elena Kagan accused the majority of overturning a 1977 precedent "for no exceptional or special reason, but because it never liked the decision."

What's been overturned?

Some of the Supreme Court's most momentous decisions rejected precedent. Perhaps most famously, in 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ended racial segregation in public schools, overturning the "separate but equal" doctrine established in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. In 1976, the court ruled that Georgia's administration of the death penalty didn't violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibitions against cruel and unusual punishment, invalidating a decision from just five years earlier. More recently,

the court in 2003 deemed laws banning sodomy and gay sex to be unconstitutional, reversing a 1986 decision, and in 2015 identified a right to same-sex marriage, overturning a one-sentence ruling from 1972. The 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*, striking down limits on corporate campaign spending, overturned two decisions, one as recent as 2003. When the court upheld President Trump's travel ban, in 2018, Chief Justice John Roberts went out of his way to disown the infamous 1944 decision in *Korematsu v. United States*, which let stand the internment of Japanese-Americans during World

War II. "*Korematsu* was gravely wrong," Roberts wrote, and "has no place in law under the Constitution."

Is there an ideological pattern?

Legal scholars like to joke that stare decisis is Latin for "stand by things decided when it suits our purposes." Every justice claims to respect stare decisis, but both liberals and conservatives have attacked their rivals for abandoning precedent when ideologically convenient. The ultra-liberal Warren court overturned up to four precedents per term. Roberts frequently expounds on the importance of stare decisis, but since 2005 he has voted with the majority about three-quarters of the time on rulings that overturned precedent. Conservative Justice Clarence Thomas is leading the charge to discount stare decisis, saying the court should not be bound by "demonstrably incorrect" previous rulings. "We use stare decisis as a mantra when we don't want to think," he said.

Are more precedents in jeopardy?

Liberal court-watchers say Alito's leaked opinion is a blueprint for gutting other privacy-related rights. In his draft, Alito says *Roe* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the 1992 case affirming the central holding of *Roe*, must be overturned because there is no right to privacy or abortion in the Constitution, and that implicit rights must be "deeply rooted in this Nation's history." But previous courts cited a right to privacy as the constitutional basis for protecting access to contraception, legalizing gay sex and same-sex marriage, and other rights that are now in the conservative movement's crosshairs. Alito insists that overturning *Roe* does not threaten "precedents that do not concern abortion," but his assurance is hardly binding. Two years ago, he and Thomas complained in an opinion that the court had created "a novel constitutional right" in same-sex marriage that was "ruinous" to "religious liberty." The court, they said, "has created a problem that only it can fix."

Misleading the Senate?

Trump's high-court nominees—Kavanaugh, Neil Gorsuch, and Amy Coney Barrett—reportedly all plan to join Alito and Thomas in overturning *Roe*. The news drew outrage from senators such as Republican Susan Collins of Maine, who said their vote would be "completely inconsistent" with what Gorsuch and Kavanaugh in particular said during their confirmation hearings. Conservatives, however, say the future justices chose their words carefully. Gorsuch told the Senate that *Roe* "has been reaffirmed," adding, "a good judge" will treat it "like any other" precedent. "I accept the law of the land," he testified. Kavanaugh called the case "important precedent of the Supreme Court that has been reaffirmed many times." Barrett, whose personal opposition as a Catholic to abortion drew intense scrutiny during her confirmation, declined to call the right to an abortion a "super precedent," saying, "I'm answering a lot of questions about *Roe*, which I think indicates that *Roe* doesn't fall into that category." After Alito's draft leaked, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) said, "Justices looking at you in the face and telling you one thing and then doing something different—that's very troubling."

Abortion seen in shades of gray

Peter Wehner
The Atlantic

If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned and abortion laws are going to be debated in the states, said Peter Wehner, both sides should acknowledge “the inescapable ambiguities in this staggeringly complicated moral question.” As a Christian who believes *Roe* was wrongly decided, I see some inconsistencies in the absolutism of the pro-life side. If a fertilized egg is a full human being at the moment of conception, what is the meaning of the fact that about half of all fertilized eggs are “aborted spontaneously”? Are the deaths of those eggs comparable “to when a 2-year-old child dies? If not, why not?” Pro-choicers, on the other hand, are so adamant that abortion decisions belong solely to the woman and her doctor that they object to *any* gestational or other legal limits. Most Americans view an embryo or fetus as developing along a continuum, with unborn life becoming a human child *sometime* before birth. But adamant pro-choicers are unwilling to concede that abortions become “more ethically problematic the further along in a pregnancy.” Let’s face it: With life in the womb, “we’re dealing with an awesome mystery,” and wise policy decisions will require “caution,” “humility,” and “a touch of grace and empathy.”

Thomas’ stupendous dishonesty

Leonard Pitts Jr.
Miami Herald

I have a serious question for Justice Clarence Thomas, said Leonard Pitts Jr. “Have you ever met your wife?” Thomas had the gall to complain in a speech before a conservative group last week that progressives are trying to bully the Supreme Court and are unwilling to “live with outcomes they don’t agree with.” Thomas, of course, was referring to the outcry over a leaked Supreme Court draft opinion overturning *Roe*. But he seems to be forgetting that his “bride of 35 years,” Ginni Thomas, is a “stop the steal” conspiracy theorist who sent a slew of emails to Donald Trump’s chief of staff urging him to find a way to overturn the 2020 election and keep Trump in power. Only a man of “deep intellectual dishonesty” could ignore this contradiction. In his speech, Thomas complained about the politicization of the court—but referred to conservatives as “us” and “our.” He even defended Sen. Mitch McConnell’s refusal to block Democrats from filling the late Justice Antonin Scalia’s seat for nine months—and then his ramming through of Amy Coney Barrett’s nomination just a week before the 2020 election. Yet now Thomas is demanding that his adversaries play by the rules and quietly accept defeat on *Roe*. What “staggering hypocrisy.”

Pigeonholing actors by identity

Pamela Paul
The New York Times

“Let actors act,” said Pamela Paul. That should be a given, but now that Hollywood and Broadway have “wisely moved on” from stereotypical portrayals of Black, Asian, gay, and other marginalized groups, they risk “ricocheting to the other undesirable extreme”—limiting actors to roles that correspond with their real-life identities. Earlier this year, Helen Mirren was accused of engaging in “Jewface” by portraying late Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in an upcoming film. Even Tom Hanks’ Oscar-winning portrayal of a gay AIDS patient in 1993’s *Philadelphia* “no longer plays so well in some quarters.” Some progressives now insist that actors can’t possibly do justice to a role they haven’t lived. But by definition, good actors are artists who “are able to find a way to portray people who are not like themselves.” The new identity standard would have robbed us of countless great performances, such as Hanks’ in *Philadelphia* and Daniel Day-Lewis’ “extraordinary” portrayal of a disabled artist in 1989’s *My Left Foot*. Actor Ian McKellen, who happens to be gay, asks, “Does that mean I can’t play straight parts?” Absurd, he says. “We’re acting. We’re *pretending*.”

Viewpoint

“If you’re not white, to millions of Americans, you’re something else—definitely not ‘legacy Americans,’ as Fox TV host Tucker Carlson says again and again. Instead, they consider me and my loved ones to be invaders and usurpers—or, as [Payton] Gendron’s manifesto deemed us, ‘replacers.’ What especially freaks out the Carlsons and Gendrons of this country isn’t that people like me are the inheritors of the American dream—it’s that we’re its inquisitors. We want a country truly based on the pledges of equality and freedom it was founded on. For too many white Americans, this is nothing short of a declaration of war.”

Gustavo Arellano in the *Los Angeles Times*

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

■ A retired Indian couple are suing their son and daughter-in-law, demanding that they deliver a grandchild within a year or pay them 50 million rupees (around \$675,000). “We need a grandchild, but these people have an attitude that they don’t think about us,” said co-plaintiff Sanjeev Ranjan Prasad, a 61-year-old retired government officer. Prasad said he had spent his “life’s earnings” on his only child’s upbringing and education, only to end up grandchildless six years after his son’s marriage. “I feel very unlucky,” he said.



■ The Parisian luxury fashion house Balenciaga is marketing a new line of “full destroyed” sneakers priced at \$1,850 a pair. The scuffed, ripped, dirty footwear—produced in a limited edition of 100 pairs—costs more than double the non-distressed version of the company’s high-top sneakers, which can be had at the bargain price of \$625 a pair. The distressed sneakers were widely mocked online; one Twitter critic said they resemble the “torn-up Converse my ma begged me to throw out when I was in high school.”

■ Police in Port Arthur, Texas, are seeking a man who broke into a family’s home, and then mowed the front and back lawns before fleeing. A security camera video captured the suspect taking the lawn mower out of the garage and filling it with gas before performing the unlikely chore. Police arriving at the scene saw the fleeing suspect dragging the mower, which he later abandoned in an alley as he escaped.

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CROATIA

Hungary tries to reopen ancient wound

Goran Vojkovic
Index

Viktor Orbán is “an arrogant fool,” said Goran Vojkovic. The Hungarian prime minister, who is already blocking the EU’s oil embargo against Russia, has now decided to revive “centuries-old tensions” with Croatia. In a recent radio interview, Orbán said sanctions hurt landlocked countries like his that cannot import oil by tanker. “If they hadn’t taken it away from us,” he added, referring to Croatia, “we would also have a port.” The Croatian coastline was once ruled by the Kingdom of Hungary, and Orbán dreams of restoring his country’s pre–World War I borders. Two years ago he posted on Facebook a map of Hungary “that

includes part of Croatia,” and he did so again a few months ago. Croatians have ignored the affront and have been “living in peace” with our Hungarian neighbors, shopping in Hungary and welcoming Hungarian tourists. We’re not sure why Orbán does not share our spirit. Perhaps he’s too busy being “Putin’s poodle” to remember this, but as a fellow EU member, Hungary is welcome to use our ports, railways, and pipelines. As “Hungary pays for everything properly,” their borrowing would even benefit us. While Russia wages actual warfare in Europe, is it wise to start obsessing about an old territorial claim?

UNITED KINGDOM

Boris’ empty promises on nuclear power

Ben Marlow
The Daily Telegraph

Boris Johnson excels at delivering “bombastic rhetoric,” said Ben Marlow, but his grand plans are “painfully lacking in substance.” The British prime minister delivered yet another example last month when he promised that, by hugely expanding capacity, Britain would “lead the world once again” in nuclear power by 2050. The claim was “pure fantasy.” Thanks to “our overreliance on foreign partners,” we can hardly maintain the existing capacity of our aging nuclear infrastructure, much less build anew. Under a 2015 deal struck by the government of David Cameron, China agreed to help develop a new generation of plants, starting in Somerset and Suffolk. And as a “quid

pro quo” for agreeing to be a minority partner to the French nuclear developer EDF, China’s state-owned nuclear energy company would get to build and operate a third plant at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex—a London suburb—using its own untested technology. Even back then, when Cameron downed beers with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and touted a new “golden era” in Sino-British relations, the idea of green-lighting an unproven Chinese reactor 50 miles from London looked to be a tough sell. These days, it’s a nonstarter. With few other sources of funding or know-how, EDF is warning that our nuclear plans could collapse entirely. Talk about vain promises.

NATO: Finland and Sweden join the club

There’s no more ambiguity: Finland and Sweden are “part of the West,” said *Aamulehti* (Finland) in an editorial. In a historic joint statement last week, President Sauli Niinistö and Prime Minister Sanna Marin announced that Finland would join NATO. Membership, they said, would “strengthen Finland’s security,” while its presence “would strengthen the entire defense alliance.” The Scandinavian country formally submitted its application a day before neighboring Sweden, an astonishing shift in two countries that had long defined themselves as nonaligned and militarily neutral. Public support for joining NATO skyrocketed in both countries after Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, and although some within Sweden’s ruling leftist Social Democratic Party were hesitant, Finland’s enthusiasm pushed Swedish leaders to follow their neighbors into the alliance. Russia has already cut the relatively small amount of electricity it supplied to Finland, and some fear it will further retaliate by withholding gas. But even as the Kremlin calls our NATO accession a threat, Finland and Sweden both know “the biggest threat to Russia is Russia itself.”

Kudos to Finland for its “courage” and “coolness” in opening a new chapter of European solidarity, said *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden) in an editorial. Finnish leaders built support domestically and within Europe by being pragmatic, calm, and “transparent,” keeping Finnish people informed at each step. What a contrast to the Swedish approach, which saw Prime Minister Magdalena



Finland’s Sanna Marin and Sauli Niinistö: Pro-NATO

Andersson publicly oppose NATO before eventually coming around. Still, Finland has not taken sufficient time for “an open debate about possible risks,” said Reinhard Wolff in *Die Tageszeitung* (Germany). The entire regional security calculus has been flipped on its head overnight. Finland and Russia share an 810-mile border, which means the length of the NATO-Russian mutual border will double. That could cause “increasing instability” not just now, but for decades to come.

We certainly face tough questions on defense and nuclear deterrence, said Anna-Liina Kauhanen in *Helsingin Sanomat* (Finland). As Vladimir Putin’s “old-fashioned war” in Ukraine continues to stall, he could well turn to intimidating NATO through an explicit “nuclear threat.” Already, Russia has promised to respond to our NATO membership by stationing nuclear weapons in the Baltic Sea. Finland will suddenly find itself tasked with making key decisions on the alliance’s nuclear defenses. Ideally, the new members will reaffirm that this alliance is about “peace and security,” said Daniel Färm in *Aftonbladet* (Sweden). Nobody in Sweden wants to go to war, now or ever. But the math is clear: We can’t count on “keeping Russia on a peaceful path” in Northern Europe. Putin “justifies aggression and violence” by striving to re-establish a “feared superpower” status to dominate former Soviet territories and their neighbors. Sweden wants no such thing—so to ensure that we will get “direct military support” if Russia attacks, we must join Finland in joining NATO.

Palestine: Killing of veteran journalist ignites protests

Shireen Abu Akleh was a journalist “of the people—a Palestinian reporting to the world on Palestine,” said Yara Hawari in *Al Jazeera* (Qatar). The longtime reporter for Al Jazeera was killed last week as she covered an Israeli raid on Jenin, a West Bank Palestinian refugee camp. Abu Akleh, 51, was wearing a press jacket and helmet when a bullet “clearly intended to inflict fatal damage” pierced an exposed area beneath her ear. The Israeli military initially denied responsibility and tastelessly compared journalists to fighters. But a probe by the Bellingcat open-source investigative group corroborated eyewitness accounts claiming Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli fire. Israel later backtracked and admitted it may have been responsible—yet then Israeli police brutally attacked the pallbearers carrying Abu Akleh’s casket. Israel says it will investigate what happened, but don’t hold your breath: We know that country “has no interest in accountability.”



Troops set upon pallbearers at Abu Akleh’s funeral.

Palestinians have already “hijacked the tragic event for political gain,” said Dan Perry in *The Times of Israel*. The Palestinian Authority is “behaving shamelessly” by refusing to conduct a joint investigation into the death with Israel. By denying Israel access to the body or bullet, it can “milk the situation” and control the narrative. Yes, Israeli forces were “ham-handed and insensitive” by initially denying responsibility in the shooting, then beating mourners at Abu Akleh’s funeral. But this situation demands an independent investigation, not a “Trumpian” assumption that Israel killed her. Sadly, the world is less interested in truth than it

is in “blaming Israel,” said Fiamma Nirenstein in *Israel Hayom*. The U.S. and European Union expressed shock and dismay at the images of brutality from the funeral, ignoring evidence that Palestinians were already throwing stones at police and threatening a riot. It is little wonder Palestinian leaders don’t want to objectively examine Abu Akleh’s death. They already “got what they wanted: clashes and violence in the streets of Jerusalem.”

Of course we’re angry: We know Israel will never punish her killers, said Ahmed Hazem in *Kul al-Arab* (Israel). The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate estimates that 50 Palestinian journalists have been killed since 2000, and Israel bombed the offices of Al Jazeera and the Associated Press just last year. We don’t believe the very same military that killed Abu Akleh “in cold blood” will also conduct an impartial investigation into its own wrongdoing. This is “a racist country par excellence,” in which Palestinian children are imprisoned for “throwing stones at the occupier” while Israeli soldiers are praised for killing Palestinians. Many Palestinians already believe Israel had sinister motives, said Ahmed Issa in *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem), and that it “deliberately wanted to assassinate” Abu Akleh and fellow journalist Ali Samoudi, who was shot in the back. Doing so would spark chaos between the media and militants in Jenin camp and take focus off Israel’s own atrocities. Perhaps Israel, which has been expanding diplomacy with Arab countries, knew that its success would require “silencing the voice of Shireen.”

RUSSIA

Chechens know how evil Russia can be

Anzor Maskhadov
Open Caucasus Media
(Georgia)

The world may be shocked by Russia’s atrocities in Ukraine, but I’m not, said Anzor Maskhadov. We Chechens are acutely aware that “everything that is happening now has already happened before.” Russian troops slaughtered 300,000 Chechen civilians during two brutal wars in the renegade Russian province and then settled in for 30 years of what many Chechens call “totalitarian occupation.” Chechnya tried to declare independence on multiple occasions after the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. When Russia first invaded in 1994, we naïvely assumed the world would stand behind us and “it would all stop.”

Instead, “we were left to face Russia’s barbarism alone.” After Russian troops failed to defeat us in battle, despite their overwhelming advantages, they “began to take out their anger on the civilian population,” burning homes with flamethrowers as people helplessly hid inside. During the second war, which began in 1999, the brutality “only grew.” Russians dismembered civilians, raped and murdered women, and set up dystopian “filtration camps” where they tortured many, including children—just as they have now done in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. Russian evil will not stop “unless we all stop it together.”

HONG KONG

Tiny flats are out; the merely small are in

Cheryl Arcibal
South China Morning Post

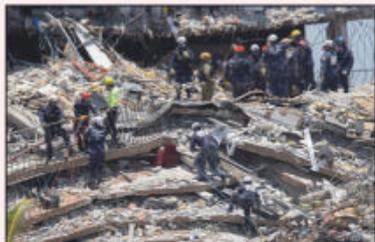
For years, the “nano-flat” has been a fixture of Hong Kong life, said Cheryl Arcibal. The city’s mini-apartments of some 250 square feet or less—smaller than two local parking spaces—have become the norm for first-time buyers facing some of the world’s highest housing prices. Eager builders have cashed in, constructing more than 10,000 such apartments over the past decade. Lax building codes allow these flats to be built without much natural light, let alone enclosed kitchens or bedrooms. In many of them, “dark toilets,” with no windows and little ventilation, are common. But an overhaul of Hong Kong planning laws in

February has dictated that all new private homes must now measure at least 280 square feet. The change has caused a shock wave in the housing industry. “A torrent of larger but still affordable new homes” is expected to flood the market, and as a result, nano-flat owners are rushing to sell their apartments, even at a loss. They calculate that the rule change—along with an “unprecedented exodus” of residents caused by Beijing’s increasingly tight grip over Hong Kong and its strict Covid rules—will cause their homes to plummet in value. The age of the nano-flat is over; the age of the slightly larger micro-flat has begun.

Noted

■ Nearly 319,000 of the more than 1 million Covid deaths in the U.S. could have been prevented if all eligible adults had gotten vaccinated, according to an analysis by researchers at Brown University and Microsoft AI Health. The states with the most preventable deaths were West Virginia, Wyoming, and Tennessee. Massachusetts had the fewest. *NPR.org*

■ In November, 27 states will choose a secretary of state—the official who oversees elections—and in 17 of those states, at least one of the Republican candidates asserts that Donald Trump won the 2020 election. Fourteen Republican secretary of state candidates have formed a coalition that pledges to eliminate mail balloting, require all voting to take place on Election Day, and embark on “aggressive voter-roll cleanup.” *The New York Times*



■ A class-action lawsuit brought by survivors and families of victims of the Surfside condominium collapse in Florida last June has led to a settlement worth \$997 million. The judge in the case said the figure was “far in excess of what I’d anticipated.” Ninety-eight people died in the collapse. *Miami Herald*

■ Americans have spent more than \$125 billion betting on sports in legal gambling companies in the four years since the Supreme Court opened the door for such outlets in all 50 states. *Associated Press*

Abortion: Protesting outside justices’ homes

Pro-choice activists are taking the nation down a “path of perdition,” said **Rich Lowry** in *National Review*. Incensed that five conservative Supreme Court justices are reportedly ready to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, hundreds of protesters gathered at the homes of Justices Brett Kavanaugh, Samuel Alito, and John Roberts, in a “shameful” effort to intimidate them. Federal law prohibits picketing judges’ residences to try to influence their decisions, so the protests are illegal. They also threaten to “further derange our public life,” and “all people of goodwill” should condemn them. We share the protesters’ anger, said *The Washington Post* in an editorial, but that “does not justify their tactics.” Harassing justices in their homes erases the line between the public square and private life, and is both ugly and dangerous.

If Kavanaugh and Alito are “slightly inconvenienced” by hearing protesters from their living rooms, “that’s fine by me,” said **Robin Abcarian** in the *Los Angeles Times*. These men will soon happily deprive tens of millions of women “of the right to control their bodies, families, and fates”—a far more outrageous intrusion. And right after the Alito draft opinion was leaked, an



A group outside Kavanaugh’s home

8-foot fence was erected around the Supreme Court. So where should protesters go? It requires incredible hypocrisy for conservatives to hyperventilate over a few peaceful protests after the “havoc wrought by abortion foes” who’ve firebombed abortion clinics, murdered abortion doctors, and harassed women clients and clinic staffers in their homes. Yet to hear conservatives tell it, “the real victim here was Brett Kavanaugh,” said **Erin Gloria Ryan** in *The Daily Beast*. But protest is supposed to make powerful people uncomfortable.

Look—I think protests outside the justices’ homes are “grotesque,” said **Jonah Goldberg** in *The Dispatch*. But Republicans like Sen. Josh Hawley who are thundering their outrage are like hookers “calling someone a whore.” Hawley raised his fist “in solidarity” when he saw the Jan. 6 protesters descending on the Capitol, and he and many other Republicans are now defending the violent mob as victims of a partisan prosecution. But on the hypocrisy scale, “the liberals are little better.” Last year they blasted school-board protests as “literally acts of terrorism.” Sorry, but “mob rule for me, not for thee” is not a defensible position for anyone.”

Roe: The economic impact of unwanted births

Outlawing abortion would impose a profound economic burden on women who are forced to carry unwanted pregnancies, said **Julianna Goldman** in *Bloomberg*. That’s almost undeniable, yet Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen drew the wrath of the anti-abortion right last week after asserting that overturning *Roe v. Wade* would set working women “back decades.” Research backs her up, said **Sarah Jones** in *New York* magazine. The University of California, San Francisco’s “Turnaway Study” of 1,000 women who sought abortions found that those who were denied one were “much more likely to carry debt, to be evicted, and to declare bankruptcy.” Their health suffered, they were more likely to stay with abusive partners, and their children “were over three times as likely to live below the federal poverty level compared with the children of women who were able to receive abortions.” Of women who did receive abortions, 95 percent later said they’d made the right decision.

Arguing in favor of a “great evil” because it saves money is grotesque, said **Matthew Walther** in *The New York Times*. It’s true: Banning abortion, research indicates, would “mean more single mothers,” more teenage mothers, added strain

on Medicaid, higher crime rates, and “goodness knows what else.” But does our society really want to embrace the idea that “only happy lives are worth saving”? Celebrating abortion’s cost-saving upside, said **Tiana Lowe** in the *Washington Examiner*, evokes “the Confederates who settled on an economic argument to defend slavery.” But the termination of an estimated 63 million pregnancies since *Roe* hurt our overall economy by artificially constricting “the growth of the workforce.” Fewer young workers reduced economic output and made it much harder to cover entitlements for seniors.

“In a post-*Roe* world,” abortion will be transformed from a right into “a privilege,” said **Melissa Jeltsen** in *The Atlantic*. Affluent women will travel out of state to abortion providers or be able to secure abortion pills. The poor, especially Black and Hispanic women, will be more likely to carry unwanted pregnancies to term. Struggling mothers—some with other children—will tumble deeper into poverty. “The most common reason women give for wanting an abortion is that they are not financially prepared to raise the child.” As the Turnaway Study demonstrated, “they’re usually right.”

Jan. 6: What does McCarthy know?

The “full extent” of the Republican cover-up of Donald Trump’s role in the Jan. 6 insurrection is being exposed, said Paul Waldman and Greg Sargent in *The Washington Post*. The House Jan. 6 committee last week took the dramatic step of issuing subpoenas to House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and four other Republicans who apparently communicated with the former president before, during, and after the riot that day, after they refused to voluntarily testify about what was said. Those GOP members will defy the subpoenas, setting up a legal battle, since the party’s position is that the “entire investigation is illegitimate.” But the committee already knows that McCarthy in particular “pleaded with Trump to call off the rioters” as they stormed into the Capitol, and the details of that conversation may shed light on “Trump’s true insurrectionist intentions.”



McCarthy: Begged Trump to call off the riot

“No good will come of this effort,” said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. The committee has already “spent 10 months interviewing more than 1,000 witnesses and obtained tens of thousands of phone records, text messages, and documents.” The subpoenas “aren’t likely to yield new information even as they further erode

whatever comity remains in the House.” Democrats just want to embarrass Republicans and suggest they have “some complicity with the riot.” The Democrats may come to regret setting a precedent here, said Lisa Mascaro in the *Associated Press*. If Republicans take the House in November, they are likely to subpoena Democratic legislators in their own tit-for-tat investigations of Hunter Biden and other matters.

Given what’s at stake, Democrats are “right to turn up the heat,” said Hayes Brown in *MSNBC.com*. Jan. 6 was “an attempted coup,” with the complicity of a sitting president and, possibly, members of Congress. A livid McCarthy initially blamed Trump for the insurrection, but because the GOP is a MAGA party, reversed course in hopes of becoming Speaker of the House next year. Testifying about the day’s events “must be his worst nightmare.” McCarthy nonetheless has an obligation to reveal what he knows, said *The Washington Post* in an editorial. The minority leader and his fellow Republicans were “key witnesses” to a “direct assault on U.S. democracy.” With the country “vulnerable to another attack” in 2024, their silence is shameful.

Covid: Ominous new trends

Our post-Omicron reprieve “seems to be over,” said Andrew Joseph in *STAT*. As the virus keeps evolving, subvariants such as BA.2.12.1 are proving to be even more infectious than the original Omicron strain and are racing through the U.S. population. Known new cases are exceeding 90,000 a day; “more worryingly, hospitalizations have started to increase,” and are up more than 20 percent in two weeks. Recent studies in South Africa and elsewhere suggest that infection by Omicron “does not provide much cross-protection from other variants,” and it’s becoming likely even vaccinated people will get Covid two or three times a year.

Alas, most of America “simply no longer cares,” said Daniel Drezner in *The Washington Post*. Those polled by the Pew Research Center last week ranked Covid “dead last” among 12 issues affecting the country. Those results bode ill for the Biden administration’s request for \$10 billion in additional Covid aid, which congressional Republicans have thus far blocked. If funding for new vaccinations runs out, the Biden administration is already preparing to ration vaccines “for only the highest-risk Americans” this fall, when the CDC warns a new Covid wave could infect

100 million Americans. That warning is based on “pure speculation,” said Joel Zinberg in the *New York Post*, and it’s designed to scare even more money out of Congress, even though “tens of billions of dollars” allocated for Covid remain unspent. With “record inflation” soaring, let’s not throw more money at the virus.

To “surrender” to the virus is “unfathomable,” said Eric Topol in *The Guardian*. Those who insist we must now “live with Covid” are ignoring the fact that the virus keeps getting better at evading existing vaccines and reinfecting the previously infected; vaccine effectiveness against severe illness has declined from 95 percent against the original Wuhan virus to 80 percent even among those who’ve been boosted. Every infection carries the risk of long Covid, which can cause cognitive impairment, strokes, heart damage, persistent fatigue, and extreme shortness of breath. If we ever hope to make a “definitive pandemic exit,” we must revive Operation Warp Speed’s urgency and “double down” on funding for boosters tailored to variants, easily administered nasal vaccines that block infection, and pan-coronavirus shots that defeat all variants. “No, we don’t have to live with Covid.”

Wit & Wisdom

“Remember to look up at the stars and now down at your feet.”

Stephen Hawking, quoted in *the Squamish Chief (Canada)*

“Copyright is for losers.”
Banksy, quoted in *Highsnobiety*

“Mothers are like glue. Even when you cannot see them, they are still holding the family together.”
Canadian author Susan Gale, quoted in *The Standard (Kenya)*

“The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.”
Economist Ezra Solomon, quoted in *The Hill*

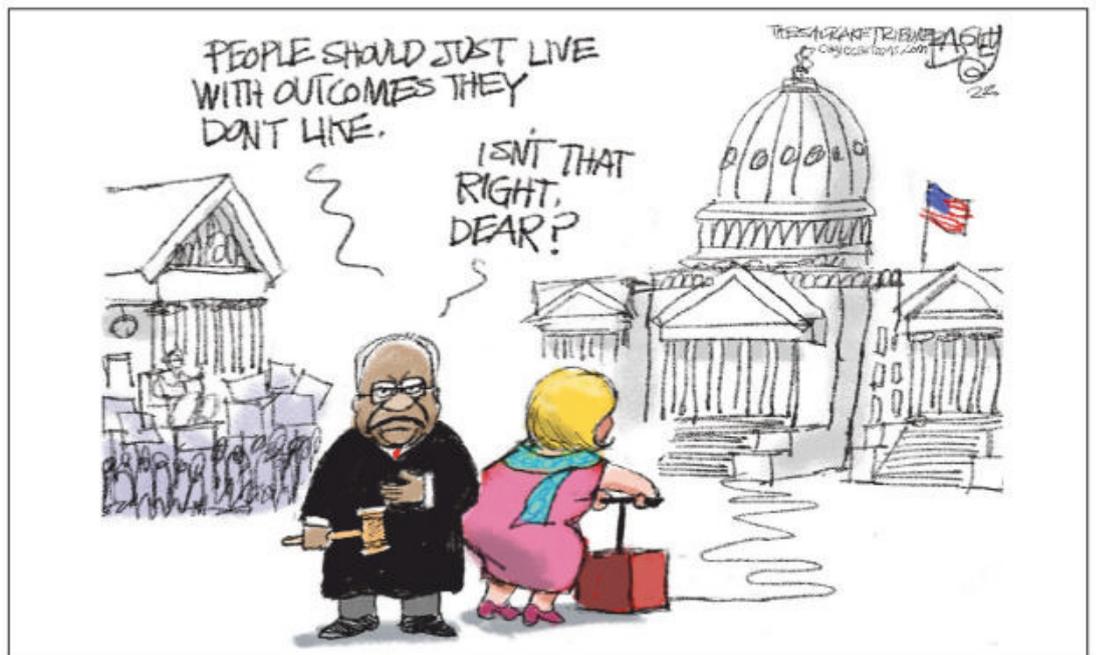
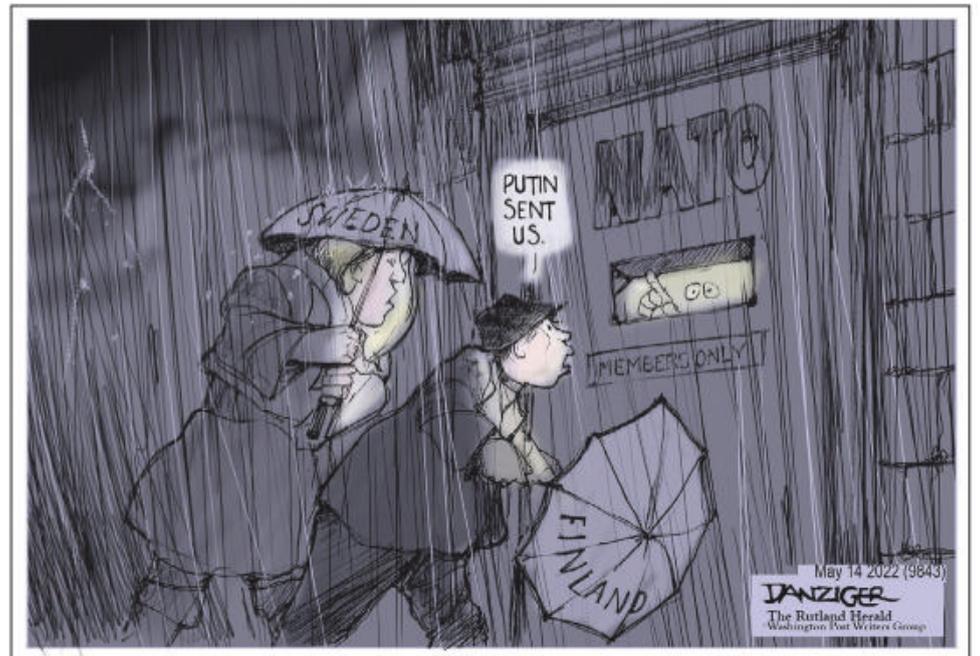
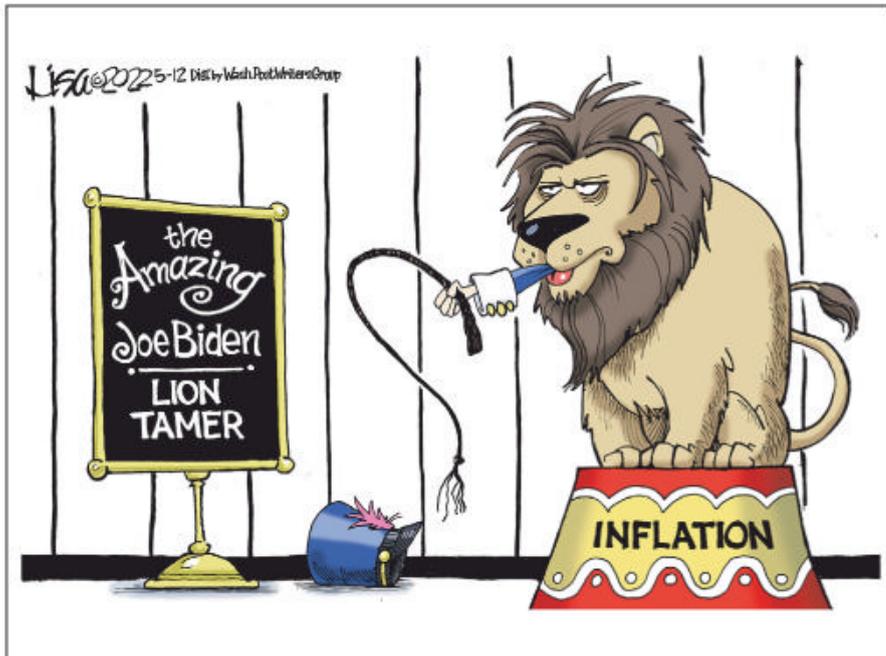
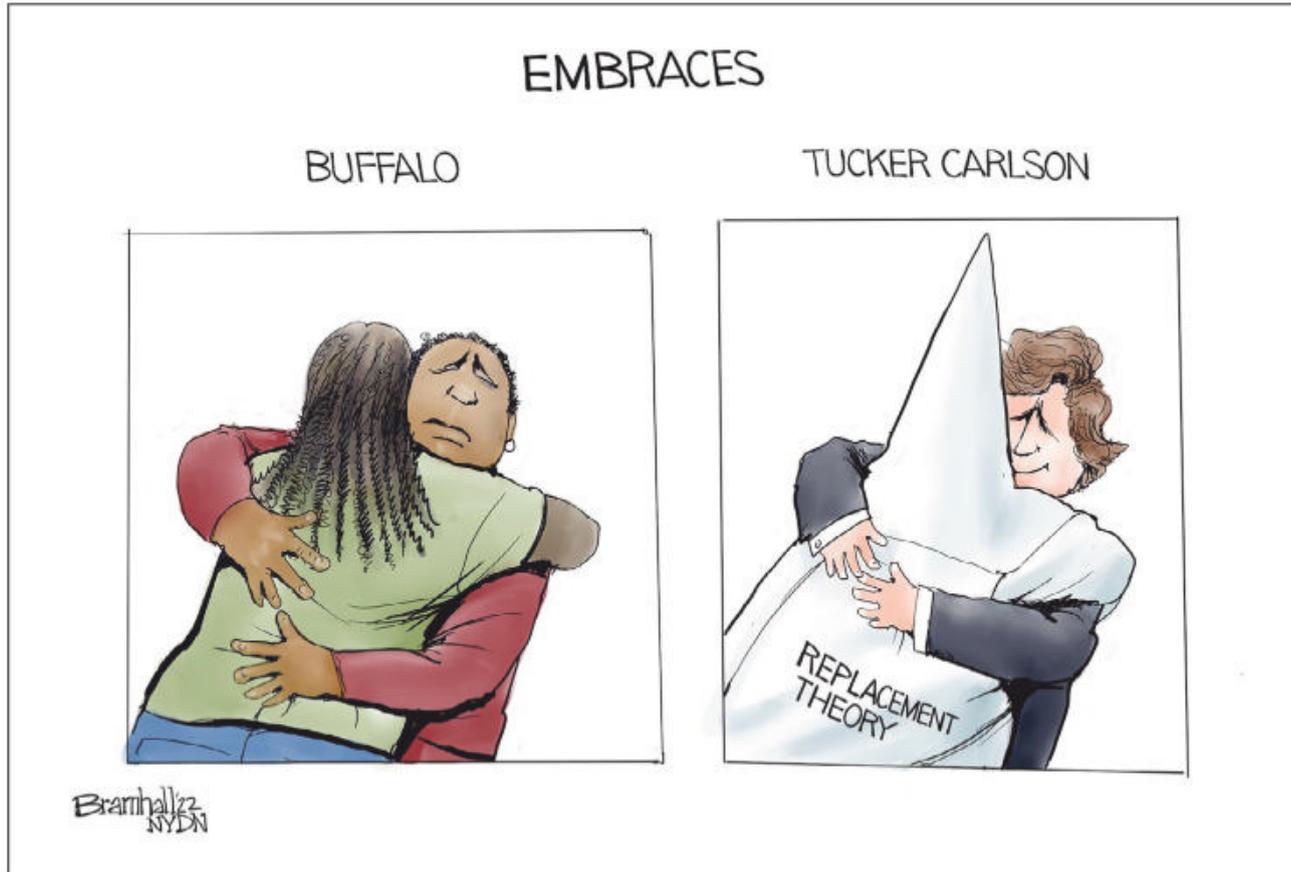
“We tell ourselves stories in order to live.... We look for the sermon in the suicide.”
Joan Didion, quoted in *The Guardian*

“Our children may learn about heroes of the past. Our task is to make ourselves architects of the future.”
Former Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta, quoted in *the Sunday Times (South Africa)*

“It’s a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.”
Martin Luther King Jr., quoted in *The New York Times*

Poll watch

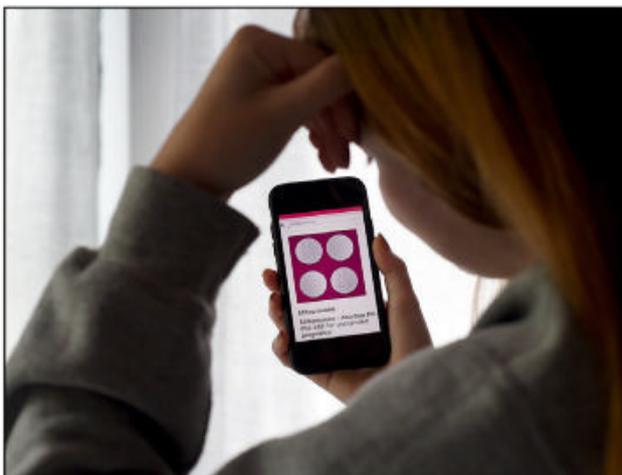
■ 52% of Americans agree that inflation is the most important issue facing the country, including 42% of Democrats and 65% of Republicans. 32% of Americans say their financial circumstances have worsened over the past year, while just 12% say their finances have improved. 78% of Americans blame supply chain issues for inflation, 51% blame government spending, and 32% blame wage increases for workers.
FiveThirtyEight/Ipsos



Privacy: Abortion laws meet the surveillance society

Your smartphone already knows if you've had an abortion or are considering one, said **Geoffrey Fowler** and **Tatum Hunter** in *The Washington Post*. With the prospect of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, privacy experts have raised the alarm about data collection from tech giants like Google and Facebook, as well as innumerable apps, that "could become a major liability for people seeking abortions" in states that prohibit them. Tech companies collect vast amounts of personal data, which is "an easy target for subpoenas" from law enforcement seeking evidence of criminal activity through recorded "messages, search histories, health data, and other information." States that criminalize abortion may seek to prosecute through such evidence because of the ways accessing abortion has changed since 1973—for instance, mail-order pills can now be found through a Google search. In 2017, prosecutors in Mississippi even "used internet searches for abortion drugs as evidence in a woman's trial for the death of her fetus."

"The potential for a surveillance state" is no longer an abstract concern, said **Ina Fried** in *Axios*. In many cases, law enforcement doesn't even need a court order to acquire data; they can simply purchase it from brokers. And internet platforms aren't the only targets. Wireless telecoms also store "detailed personalized loca-



Zealous prosecutors can subpoena phone data.

tion information on every user with a cellphone." Meta and Google have been known to "push back on subpoena requests or slow-walk production" in the past, said **Ben Brody** and **Hirsh Chitkara** in *Protocol*. However, the "stakes are way higher than getting hauled in front of another congressional hearing." Florida proved Republicans are willing to declare economic war against companies for their social stances. Tech companies can choose to comply or "get Disney'd."

Now that abortion rights are at stake, said **J.D. Tuccille** in *Reason*, Democrats

are suddenly interested in data privacy. That's good, and Vice President Kamala Harris is right to say that "if the right to privacy is weakened, every person could face a future in which the government can potentially interfere in the personal decisions you make about your life." But why stop at abortion? According to a recent report from *Vice*, the CDC bought location data "from tens of millions of phones" to track people's movements in compliance with certain lockdown curfews. In addition to the CDC, the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Border Patrol all routinely purchase data that lets them "track people's movements through their cellphones." So, yes, let's take Harris' words seriously—and "apply those protections against the state as widely as possible."

Innovation of the week



A Dutch battery-powered submarine is being billed as the world's first "underwater party boat," said **Andrew Liszewski** in *Gizmodo*. Measuring 115 feet long with a 1,600-square-foot interior, the submersible can squeeze in 120 guests "for parties, floating casinos, even wedding receptions." Fourteen massive windows offer riders a view, illuminated by underwater spotlights, at depths as great as 650 feet. The ship is powered by a 1.2 megawatt-hour battery that can last 18 hours on a single charge and is equipped with an engine capable of hitting almost 3 mph underwater. "Should something catastrophic happen, it also carries an emergency power system that keeps critical systems powered and running for 96 hours."

Getty, SVNS

Bytes: What's new in tech

E-reading apps face new bans

E-reader apps are being dragged into the crossfire of the culture war, said **David Ingram** in *NBCNews.com*. In several states, parents have "pushed schools and libraries to shut down their digital programs" because they might allow kids to download books "supporting LGBTQ pride" and material from other "diverse voices." **Trisha Lucente**, the president of a conservative group in Tennessee, said she supported a recent week-long ban of the Epic e-reader app in her school district because "kids should never have anything at their fingertips to prompt questions" about sexuality and religion. "More liberal jurisdictions are pushing back." The New York Public Library system recently launched its own "nationwide programs to provide access to books that other places have censored."

Court upends online content rules

A U.S. court "blew up internet law" last week, said **Adi Robertson**, in *The Verge*, upholding a Texas regulation that "effectively bans many apps and websites from moderating posts." The ruling from a three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals lifted a stay on the law, HB 20, which strips internet media companies like Twitter and YouTube of

protection for their moderation decisions. The law bars censorship based on "viewpoint" and lets Texas residents sue if posts are removed. Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** argued "that social media companies should be treated as common carriers" and required "to treat all content neutrally the way that phone companies do." Two tech industry trade groups appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court for an emergency stay of the ruling, which could unleash a flood of lawsuits.

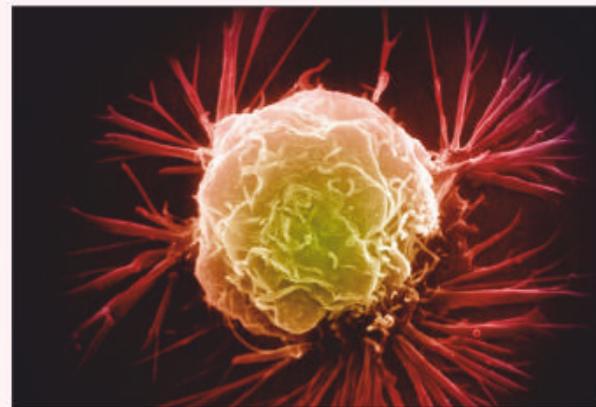
Google shows off Pixel Watch

Google finally unveiled its first smartwatch last week, expanding its competition with Apple, said **Lisa Eadicicco** in *CNET*. The long-awaited Pixel Watch, due to arrive this fall, boasts "a domed circular design" and will include popular Google apps like Maps, Wallet, and Google Assistant. It will also integrate some "familiar Fitbit health-tracking features" as well, including sleep and heart rate, and users will be able to sync data between the watch and a Fitbit account. The watch will run Google's Wear OS software, which already powers wearables from Fossil and Samsung. With the new addition, Google now has "a full ecosystem of products similar to those offered by Apple and Samsung."

Magnet-guided viruses could cure cancer

Scientists are developing tiny, magnetically guided projectiles that can be injected into people's blood to attack cancerous tumors, reports *The Observer* (U.K.). The innovation builds on the discovery of naturally occurring viruses that can target cancerous cells. These so-called oncolytic viruses have already been used to treat some kinds of skin cancer. The problem, though, is that when doctors try to go beyond skin-deep tumors, the virus cells tend to get intercepted by the body's immune system. To overcome that, scientists want to coat the viruses in magnetic particles. Once injected into blood, the magnetized

viruses could be quickly directed to the cancerous cells—moving too fast to get clobbered by the immune system—simply by holding a magnet over the tumor. The tumors that researchers hope to target include two common malignancies, breast and prostate cancers. While microscopic magnets could be manufactured in a lab, scientists have found a better source in the natural world: tiny soil bacteria that already create magnets to align themselves to Earth's magnetic field. "These early tests have been very encouraging," says project co-leader Faith Howard, from Sheffield University in the U.K. "We



A tiny virus could kill this breast cancer cell.

now need to take the next steps to bring this technique to a state where it can be administered to humans—hopefully in a few years' time."



Retired Army Col. Gil Roman with his meds

Sarin causes Gulf War syndrome

More than three decades after the 1991 Gulf War, scientists say they have finally discovered what caused thousands of soldiers who served in the conflict to get sick with mysterious symptoms. Many veterans of the war to oust Iraqi troops from Kuwait have suffered debilitating afflictions, including muscle and joint pain, breathing problems, and chronic fatigue. The cause, according to the new study, is the nerve agent sarin, which was inadvertently released into the air when Western forces bombed Iraq's caches of chemical weapons. Sarin is usually deadly, but the gas in Iraq was diluted, reports *BBC.com*. The reason not all soldiers were affected, researchers found, is that some of them have a more effective version of a gene known as PON1, which is crucial for breaking down toxic chemicals in the body. The study, mainly funded by the U.S. government, looked at health records of more than 1,000 American veterans. "We hope our findings will lead to treatment," says lead researcher Robert Haley, from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

The latest anti-aging hack: poo

The quest for eternal youth may be heading to a strange place: the can. New research on rodents shows that fecal transplants—excrement transferred from one body to

another—can reduce the effects of aging. The theory, reports the *New York Post*, is that replacing old gut bacteria with new may help lower inflammation. The study divided rodents into three groups by age: three months, 18 months, and two years. Each group was fed an unpleasant-sounding "fecal slurry" made from the dung of younger or older peers. The older mice fortified with younger poo proved to be better protected against inflammation-related illnesses, particularly those affecting the brain and eyes. Meanwhile, the younger group given an older poop transplant developed inflammation in the brain and showed early signs of aging. "We hope that our findings will contribute ultimately to understanding how we can manipulate our diet and our gut bacteria to maximize good health in later life," says lead author Aimée Parker, from the U.K.'s Quadram Institute. She says if similar results are seen in humans, people could one day take a "poo pill" supplement to stave off aging.

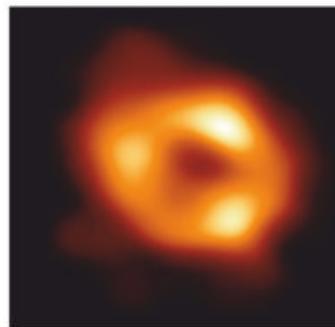
Ibuprofen can harm kidneys

Hypertension patients, take note. Using ibuprofen in combination with drugs that

are commonly prescribed to treat high blood pressure could lead to permanent kidney damage, a new study suggests. Researchers at the University of Waterloo used computer-simulated drug trials to examine the potential effects of combining the over-the-counter painkillers with diuretics and renin-angiotensin system inhibitors, also known as RSA inhibitors, both of which are used to treat hypertension. They found that the three-medication therapy, which doctors often prescribe as a "triple whammy," appeared to present a 31 percent higher risk for acute kidney injury compared with simulated patients given diuretics and RSA inhibitors alone. The mock trials suggest that certain individuals could be particularly susceptible, including those with an impaired myogenic response—the mechanism that regulates the diameter of blood vessels—and those with an increased sensitivity to drugs or a low water intake. "It's not that everyone who happens to take this combination of drugs is going to have problems," lead author Anita Layton tells *ScienceDaily.com*. "But the research shows it's enough of a problem that you should exercise caution."

Our own black hole

At the heart of the Milky Way galaxy lies a supermassive black hole, and last week scientists finally captured its image, reports *The New York Times*. Using an international network of telescopes known as the Event Horizon Telescope Project, astronomers compiled a fuzzy, doughnut-like image of Sagittarius A*, pronounced A-star. A* is as massive as 4.3 million of our suns, but with a diameter of just 14.6 million miles, it's a tiny dot at the center of our



The center of it all

galaxy—which is 100,000 light-years wide and 1,000 light-years thick. While the Event Horizon team had imaged a different black hole, from the M87 galaxy, in 2019, team member Feryal Özel of the University of Arizona said picturing A* was much harder. "We're looking through everything that is between us and the center of the galaxy, whereas for M87, we're looking out and away from the Milky Way," she said. "We had to really understand this effect and subtract it from our images correctly."

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Case of the Married Woman: Caroline Norton and Her Fight for Women's Justice

by Antonia Fraser

(Pegasus, \$29)

When the law told her that she did not exist, Caroline Norton “did that most unladylike of things: She fought,” said **Judith Flanders** in *The New York Times*. The 19th-century British novelist emerges in Antonia Fraser’s new book as a remarkable heroine—a wronged woman who by campaigning for her own rights won breakthroughs for women on both sides of the Atlantic. Fraser “renders her subject a woman of dignity, depth, and character.” Norton was also a star—a beauty and wit who caused a stir when she arrived in London, married a Tory member of Parliament at 19, and became the prime attraction of a political salon the couple hosted. But her jealous spouse beat her, and when she left him in 1836, it triggered a pivotal public battle.

“Wife-beating, it should be noted, was not



Norton in an 1832 portrait

against the law,” said **Joanna Scutts** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Nor was the brute in this union, George Norton, out of line when he took custody of the couple’s three young children and banned Caroline from seeing them. Backed by the law, which held that a married woman had no independent legal standing, he was even able to claim all the earnings from her popular novels and verse. But he went too far when he sued Britain’s prime minister, Lord Melbourne, for alleg-

edly engaging in an affair with Caroline. Though the court eventually decided that the adultery charge was unwarranted, the sensational trial stained Caroline’s reputation, and the verdict did nothing to restore her access to her offspring. She began writing pamphlets, essays, and articles to urge a change to custody laws, winning passage of an 1839 law that granted mothers custody of children through age 7. “It was, at least, a beginning.”

“There have been other books about Caroline Norton,” said **Daisy Goodwin** in *The Times* (U.K.). “But Fraser’s is the first to emphasize what a modern figure she is, portraying her as a working mother and best-selling writer who refused to submit to what can only be called the patriarchy.” Her struggles didn’t end in 1839: She was still separated from her son when he died at age 9 in a horse-riding accident; she failed for years to gain control of her own income, and she remained a vocal advocate for women’s rights up until her death, at 69, in 1877. Though Norton never did argue that women were men’s equal, Fraser is “surely right” to call her a heroine. “She made a difference, a big difference.”

Novel of the week

Companion Piece

by Ali Smith

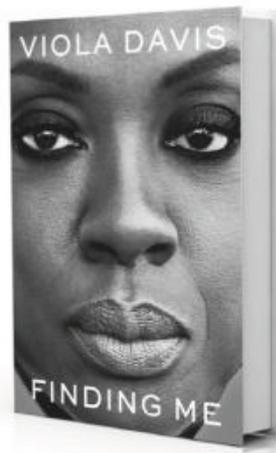
(Pantheon, \$28)

Summarizing the plot of an Ali Smith novel is “not only a challenge but somewhat beside the point,” said **Lauren LeBlanc** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Smith’s latest is “a clever, humane portrait of our intense contemporary moment” that improbably begins when middle-aged painter Sandy Gray receives an out-of-the-blue phone call. The caller has been detained in customs while transporting a centuries-old lock, but her plea is about something else instead: deciphering a word riddle. From there, Smith knits together everyday pandemic concerns with flights of consciousness into art, memory, and history, “showing again what exceptional fiction can do that nothing else can.” By the time Sandy is visited by a medieval female blacksmith with a bird on her shoulder, the story is “already pretty strange,” said **Ellen Akins** in *The Washington Post*. Though Sandy never does clarify if this vision was real, the blacksmith is real enough to us, and “it’s a measure of Ali Smith’s unflinching wizardry that by the end of this brief novel the mere word ‘hello’ had me near tears.”

Finding Me: A Memoir

by Viola Davis

(HarperOne, \$29)



“From the first page,” it’s clear that Viola Davis hasn’t written a typical celebrity memoir, said **Barbara VanDenburgh** in *USA Today*. The Oscar, Emmy, and Tony-winning actress opens with a double profanity, putting readers

inside the mind of the 8-year-old she was: poor, angry, hungry, and abused, chased home from school every day by a gang of white boys who hurled rocks, bricks, and racist insults. She lived among rats. She wet her bed regularly and smelled like it. For this grade-school outsider living in Central Falls, R.I., “the humiliations were unending,” said **Douglass Daniel** in the *Associated Press*. Yet Davis not only survived. She has written a memoir that shows how she eventually found pride in overcoming those tests. “*Finding Me* is raw in its anger, shocking in its frankness—and wonderfully alive with Davis’ passion.”

The early pages can be tough on a reader, said **Thomas Floyd** in *The Washington Post*. Davis was sexually abused by her brother, and she saw enough violence at home that she feared her alcoholic father would kill her mother one day. Acting, she admits, helped her cope with childhood trauma, because each role required constructing a person who had had a completely different life experience. But after winning a seat at the prestigious Juilliard School and beginning her career in acting, Davis discovered that there were few roles for a woman of her body type and dark skin tone besides drug-addicted mother. “It’s infuriating, and sadly unsurprising.”

“To read Davis’ memoir is to understand just how hard this spectacular performer has worked to build the career she has today,” said **Stephanie Zacharek** in *Time*. Even after she began delivering great screen performances, “it took a while for the world to notice,” and though she has faced recent health challenges, “she seems to prefer to talk about joy,” particularly the happiness she found after meeting her future husband, fellow actor Julius Tennon. But whether she’s describing past struggles or the joys of motherhood, Davis’ prose is “supple and often delightful.” She “weaves threads of undeniable truth into everything she does.”

Best books...chosen by Charlotte Mendelson

British novelist and essayist Charlotte Mendelson is the author of *Almost English*, *When We Were Bad*, and *Rhapsody in Green*. Her latest novel, *The Exhibitionist*, was longlisted for the U.K.'s *Women's Prize for Fiction*.



The Cazalet Chronicles by Elizabeth Jane Howard (1990–2012). A panoramic unpacking of the intimate lives of three generations of one privileged family, Howard's intricate, painful, expansive sequence of five novels is usually, stupidly, dismissed as "domestic," a "historical saga" about the English middle class in the 1930s through '50s. Fools: It's a masterpiece. If the author were male, we'd all take it seriously.

Giovanni's Room by James Baldwin (1956). James Baldwin, a gay Black man, knew Otherness; his writing about race is electrifying, but this short, harrowing novel about an American man's affair with an Italian waiter in Paris is unparalleled for its understanding of fear, poverty, passion, and the end of love.

Milkman by Anna Burns (2018). Anna Burns won the Man Booker Prize for this dazzlingly bold, utterly true study of domestic terrorism, oppression, gossip, religion, sexuality, and young womanhood, based on but not confined to the Troubles. I, always a late adopter, have only just discovered why.

Villette by Charlotte Brontë (1853). I am an evangelist for this devastating masterpiece. Jane Eyre is the milksop sibling to *Villette's* Lucy Snowe, the introvert's introvert: brainy, passionate, and dark. It's a love story, a hate story, an adventure, and the most extraordinary portrait of an inner life. The ending will kill you.

Family Sayings by Natalia Ginzburg (1963). The most insightful study of a traumatized family I know, this semi-autobiographical story about an Italian family from the rise of fascism through the aftermath of World War II is funny, loving, disconcertingly glamorous. Afterward, read about what happened to Natalia Ginzburg herself; your heart will break.

The Transit of Venus by Shirley Hazzard (1980). The dryly brilliant Hazzard is almost wholly ignored now, but her idiosyncratic novels about longing, loss, war, and recovery are stunning. This National Book Critics Circle Award winner, about two orphaned Australian sisters starting over in England in the 1950s, is my heartbreaking favorite.

Author of the week

Kim Stanley Robinson

In these troubling times, author Kim Stanley Robinson "stands as perhaps the last of the great utopians," said **Alexandra Alter** in *The New York Times*. The award-winning science fiction writer, now 70, made his name by



imagining reassuring distant futures, such as the long but successful colonization of our nearest planetary

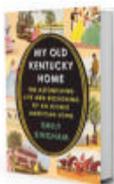
neighbor that he spun out in his acclaimed *Mars* trilogy. He can't blame a few megabillionaires if they want to chase that pipe dream—"I'm partially responsible for that fantasy," he says. But recently, he has focused on more pressing challenges, transforming accidentally into an in-demand speaker addressing how the next generation or two might engineer their way out of impending climate disaster, as they do in his most recent novel, 2020's *The Ministry for the Future*. Forget terraforming Mars, in other words. "The real story," he says, "is the one facing us in the next 30 years."

The near future hasn't monopolized Robinson's time, said **Hillary Louise Johnson** in *Sactown Magazine*. His newest book, *The High Sierra: A Love Story*, is a 500-page valentine to a region he returns to regularly. "Sometimes," he says, "you can just take a walk outdoors and realize you're on a great planet." And as much as he worries about droughts, extreme weather, and mass extinctions, he insists that it's been encouraging to see so many people show interest in the potential fiscal, political, and geoengineering solutions that *The Ministry for the Future* details. Though humans brought on the crisis, he says, "we are also more powerful than we ever have been before and have better senses of justice, more science, and more knowledge."

Also of interest...in the music that made us

My Old Kentucky Home

by Emily Bingham (Knopf, \$30)



It's time to retire Kentucky's state song, said Rebecca Gayle Howell in *The Washington Post*. This "riveting" new book details the racist history of "My Old Kentucky Home," which began as a minstrel-show staple performed in blackface before it was embraced and disseminated by Kentucky Fried Chicken and the Kentucky Derby. Author Emily Bingham, a native Kentuckian, rejects the notion that the song has transcended its racist roots. "Ignorance, she intimates, is not an option for the patriotic."

Shine Bright

by Danyl Smith (Roc Lit 101, \$28)



Danyl Smith's new hybrid memoir "tackles one of pop music's core truths—that without Black women, there is no genre," said Jon Mael in *The Boston Globe*. The former editor of *Vibe* and *Billboard*, who's been writing about music since the late 1980s, weaves rich portraits of Gladys Knight, Whitney Houston, and other pop luminaries into her account of her own experiences as a fan and scribe. "The common thread through it all is the songs that provided the backing track to her life."

Corporate Rock Sucks

by Jim Ruland (Hachette, \$30)



Early on, Jim Ruland's history of SST Records is "the tale of a culture being stubbornly constructed from the ground up," said Mark Athitakis in the *Los Angeles Times*. Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn launched the label out of necessity in 1979, before going on to sign Hüsker Dü, Sonic Youth, and others, establishing SST as the 1980s' preeminent indie label. But SST wasn't heaven, as Ruland ably documents, and its eventual creative decline "exhausted whatever authority the zeitgeist had conferred on it."

More Real Life Rock

by Greil Marcus (Yale Univ., \$28)



Music critic Greil Marcus is "a world-class cultural spelunker," said David Kirby in *The Wall Street Journal*. In this second collection of his "Top Ten" columns, here spanning 2014–21, he once again displays his talent for snatching curiosities out of the media culture's deluge, whether his subject is an obscure band or a dry-cleaning ad. "Even better, he connects it all in a way that makes our world seem often odder, occasionally more sinister, and always more delightful than it did before."

Exhibit of the week

Matisse: The Red Studio

Museum of Modern Art, New York City; through Sept. 10

“For Henri Matisse, the studio was the place where the real world receded, where magic could be made and art rule,” said **Roberta Smith** in *The New York Times*. A “small but spectacular” new show at MoMA pulls visitors into that magical space, and the effect is invigorating. “You come away feeling restored, like you have been given a gift.” The centerpiece is one of Matisse’s greatest early paintings, *The Red Studio*, a roughly 7-foot-by-5-foot canvas that depicts the suburban Paris workspace of the great modernist as it looked in late 1911. When it was first exhibited, in 1912, “many found it too new, especially its shocking color.” But that wasn’t the final judgment about this “singularly sublime” work, and the show’s curators, “in a marvel of detective work,” have managed to assemble most of the other art that Matisse depicted in his groundbreaking tableau, including six of the artist’s earlier paintings.

A few of those turn out to be examples of failed experimentation, said **Peter Schjeldahl** in *The New Yorker*. There’s a grouping of



The Red Studio: Welcome to Planet Matisse.

three seaside nudes that were rendered not in oil paint but in rabbit-skin glue, “to dryly static effect.” An impressionistic image of an old mill, painted in 1898 when Matisse was just out of art school, is simply beginner’s work, though it hints of revolutionary innovations to come. But there were also great Matisse canvasses in the 1911 studio, shown here as well, including his “robustly appealing” *Young Sailor II*, from 1906. A second gallery displays related later drawings and paintings, the result being a museum experi-

ence that “immerses a viewer in the marvels of an artistic revolution that resonates to this day.” The monochrome paintings of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman can be traced to *The Red Studio*. And the featured work itself is gorgeous—“to a degree still apt to startle.”

“It is a miracle in red, a coral-colored planet,” said **Jerry Saltz** in *NYMag.com*. Matisse had initially painted the room with blue walls and a pink floor, but when he painted over that scene with a unifying color, he established a two-dimensional surface that functions as its own reality.

“You become ultraconscious of every mark and move on the surface,” which “places you in the artist’s mind,” ready with him to discover “new ways to see, feel, and know the world.” More museums should consider exhibitions on this modest scale. Wandering this show’s two galleries, “we can ponder things longer, linger, make connections, see how one work might grow out of another. We witness an artist not only inventing and reinventing himself but also reinventing art history as he does so.”

Kendrick Lamar

Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers

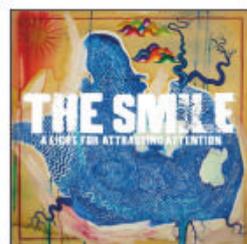


Kendrick Lamar’s long-awaited fifth album is “clearly the work of a genius,” said **Andrew Barker** in *Variety*. A 73-minute reckoning with the gap between the flawed man he is

and the moral force listeners expect him to be, “it’s the sound of one of America’s foremost poets offering an all-access visit to the darker corners of his mind.” No pop artist, let alone a rapper, had ever won a Pulitzer Prize until Lamar did so with 2017’s *Damn*. But while this follow-up is often awe-inspiring in its “far-out lyrical virtuosity,” it’s also “consciously difficult,” packed with provocations and music that “moves in fits and starts.” Lamar “has clearly grown weary of his role as an anointed genius, and his cynicism bleeds into the music,” said **Sheldon Pearce** in *The New Yorker*. Featuring “some of the most avant-garde work of his career,” the 18-track set is brilliant in places but the production more often is merely “disorienting, sprawling, and ornamental.” The entire project, unfortunately, “seems to spring from Lamar’s irritation at having to answer for something, instead of the buzz of having something to say.”

The Smile

A Light for Attracting Attention



Attention, Radiohead fans, said **Ryan Dombal** in *Pitchfork*. Thom Yorke and guitarist-keyboardist Jonny Greenwood have formed a new trio whose confident debut

sounds “more like a proper Radiohead album” than any of the alt-rock icons’ past side projects. “We’ve got Greenwood’s lattice-like fingerpicking,” not to mention Yorke’s voice, at times “wailing like an angel in limbo”; at others “gnashing like a punk who woke up on the wrong side of the gutter.” Across 13 tracks, the album “alternately combats the horrors of modern life with roiling anger and Zen-like serenity.” The first several songs, in particular, are “delightfully weird,” said **Kate Lloyd** in *The Telegraph* (U.K.). Some offer “elements of trippy electronica”; others evoke 1960s prog-rock, and drummer Tom Skinner, of the jazz band Sons of Kemet, seems as at home with those modes as with the record’s touches of funk and Afrobeat. “It’s not all perfect: Every so often, the tracks swing from sounding like impossibly cool, experimental rock to, er, Coldplay. Overall, however, this is guitar music at its most thrilling.”

The Black Keys

Dropout Boogie



“The riffs come fast and furious” on the Black Keys’ “superb” 11th album, said **Hal Horowitz** in *American Songwriter*. Fame and fortune haven’t dulled the arena-packing duo

from Akron, Ohio. Singer-guitarist Dan Auerbach and drummer Patrick Carney paid tribute to their influences with last year’s *Delta Kream*, a collection of raw hill-country blues covers, and *Dropout Boogie* finds them once more “wading into the banks of the muddy Mississippi.” This stripped-down set of blues rock “feels like it’s live in some juke joint”—partly because Auerbach “sings with soul and zero pretense.” The album’s collaborative efforts are “uniformly excellent,” said **Joe Gross** in *Rolling Stone*. Garage-rock savant Greg Cartwright co-wrote the lead single, “Wild Child,” while ZZ Top’s Billy Gibbons delivers a “perfectly Top-tastic” guitar solo on “Good Love.” The bulk of *Dropout Boogie*, though, simply sounds like “gloriously old-school Keys.” While rock “barely exists in the pop conversation it once dominated,” this pair’s ongoing popularity makes its own case: “Their rock ‘n’ roll minimalism is more than enough.”



The Crawleys welcome in the modern age.

Downton Abbey: A New Era



Don't fear the mention of "new," *Downton* diehards, said **Leah Greenblatt** in *Entertainment Weekly*. This second stand-alone film in the franchise that began with a six-season TV run "turns out to be reassuringly on brand—births, deaths, disinheritance," and "at least one forbidden or long-hidden romance." In this fresh chapter, written by series creator Julian Fellowes, it's 1929, and Maggie Smith's dowager countess, the matriarch of the family that resides at Downton Abbey, reveals that an old flame has bequeathed her a sprawling villa in France. Half of the Crawleys eventually head there, to confront a jealous widow, while the rest of the family play host to film stars and a production crew who have descended upon Downton to use it as movie set. Once

the story and family divide, "a choppy, episodic feeling never quite abates," said **Kate Erbland** in *IndieWire*. And with so many characters to keep track of, "even longtime fans might benefit from bringing along an annotated family tree." Still, introducing a movie within the movie is clever, said **Peter Debruge** in *Variety*. "It leads one to consider how the hit series has impacted its own historic locations," which are now tourist destinations. Otherwise, *A New Era* offers little in the way of surprises, even as it bids farewell to a beloved character. Instead of shaking up the series, "Fellowes gives us an affectionate group hug." (In theaters only) PG

Other new movies

Men

This "button-pushing" film from *Ex Machina* director Alex Garland "seems designed more to start arguments than to tell any kind of cohesive or meaningful story," said Tasha Robinson in *Polygon*. After a personal trauma, a young woman rents an English country house. But her retreat is repeatedly interrupted by unnerving encounters with strange men from the estate and surrounding village—all played by the same actor, Rory Kinnear. What does it all mean? Viewers will leave "full of strong opinions and emotions" but with few concrete answers. (In theaters only) R

On the Count of Three

Arriving more than a year after its debut at Sundance, Jerrod Carmichael's directorial debut is "a minor effort from an artist who's already moved on to bigger things,"

said Alison Willmore in *NYMag.com*. In this "bitterly dark" comedy, Carmichael and Christopher Abbott play two friends who commit to a suicide pact, then spend their expected final hours seeking "closure, or novelty, or something." The movie "works more than it doesn't," but Carmichael's own stand-up comedy has more heft. (In theaters or \$7 on demand) R

Pleasure

This "smart, gutsy" drama about an aspiring female porn star isn't for everyone, said Manohla Dargis in *The New York Times*. But Ninja Thyberg's own Sundance entry "might surprise you as much as it did me," because it shows the industry for what it is—brutal and exploitive—while refusing to treat its heroine as merely a victim. Thyberg "knows how to shock." But more surprising than her film's sexual explicitness is that it "engages feminist issues while making you laugh and prompting you to squirm." (In theaters only) Not rated

Montana Story

The pace of this modern western "can be as slow as the clouds over Big Sky Country," said Pat Padua in *The Washington Post*. But that reticence suits the story—about estranged siblings who return to what remains of a family ranch after their father's stroke. With Haley Lu Richardson and Owen Teague co-starring, "the flawed young characters grow on you" and "their troubles gradually becoming as mythic as the landscape that surrounds them." (In theaters only) R

A Case for the Existence of God

Pershing Square Signature Center, New York City ★★★★★

Don't be daunted by the grandiose title of Samuel D. Hunter's new off-Broadway drama, said **Charles Isherwood** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The play, "easily one of the best of the year," says little about Hunter's theological views. Instead, and as always, "his subject is the complexities of specific human beings—appealingly unexceptional ones—and the trials, large and small, that life throws their way." Almost all of the action transpires in an office cubicle in Twin Falls, Idaho, where Will Brill's Ryan comes seeking the services of a mortgage broker played by Kyle Beltran. Ryan is white and a screwup; Beltran's Keith is Black, gay, and buttoned-down. Both have young daughters, though, at the same day care, and as we witness their weekly office encounters, Hunter's script captures the "inexpressibly moving" process by which these two men come to care for each other.

The play "looks deeper into his characters than the usual drama would," said **Helen Shaw** in *NYMag.com*. We learn about



Brill and Beltran: Imperfect allies

Ryan's and Keith's childhood, their past successes and failures. The two men wind up bonding over their experiences of the "normalized precarity" of life in America: Ryan fears losing his daughter in a custody battle, while Keith fears that his hopes of adopting his foster daughter could be dashed at any moment. Each man is "try-

ing to build a foundation, whether by constructing a house or claiming a child," but "uncaring systems keep reducing their concrete plans to sand."

"As a parent by adoption myself, I have to say that the adoption plot felt absolutely authentic," said **Jesse Green** in *The New York Times*. The banking plot, by contrast, requires our believing that Ryan wouldn't instantly be rejected as a mortgage candidate. Hunter, though, is "too complex a playwright to let us bask for long in the procedural aspects of the story—or, for that matter, in the awkwardly growing bond between the men." He's "more interested in the misalignment of their needs and abilities," in the way these two men can help each other only so much. Still, just when it seems *A Case for the Existence of God* might end in heartbreak, the script offers "a surprising resolution, which suggests that failure may not be the end of the story." In the end, Hunter's quiet but deep drama "hurts by means of hope."

Streaming tips

The spy thriller library...

Tehran

This relentlessly pulse-quickening Israeli series follows the exploits of a young Mossad hacker, portrayed by Niv Sultan, who is operating behind enemy lines while being pursued by a dogged Iranian agent. Glenn Close, playing the heroine's new Mossad boss, is a welcome addition in the new Season 2. *Apple TV+*

The Honorable Woman

Maggie Gyllenhaal won a Golden Globe for her work in this slow-burning and richly rewarding 2014 British series about an Anglo-Israeli heiress who is trying to convert her family's weapons firm into a communications company that advances Israeli-Palestinian peace. *HBO Max*

Homeland

Despite ups and downs, no spy series has been better than this one was at its best. Claire Danes stars as CIA officer Carrie Mathison, who in the 2011 premiere season returns from Iraq and tracks a war hero she believes was compromised. *Hulu*

Fauda

An Israeli agent returns from retirement to engage a Hamas terrorist he believed he had killed in this brutal cat-and-mouse thriller, which moves swiftly through its three seasons. *Netflix*

Jack Ryan

John Krasinski as the CIA superhero from Tom Clancy's thrillers? What's not to like—which makes it baffling that *Jack Ryan* isn't a bigger hit. The pandemic put the third season on ice, but it is reportedly on the way, making now a good moment to binge the first two. *Amazon Prime*

24

U.S. politics have changed so much in the past two decades that *24* feels like a period piece now. That said, it's never a bad time to revisit counter-terrorist agent Jack Bauer, if only for the adrenaline rushes. *Hulu*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching**Prehistoric Planet**

If the great nature documentarians of today could travel back to the era of dinosaurs, they might make a five-part series that looks like this. The team behind *Planet Earth* used cutting-edge digital technology to deeply imagine Earth 66 million years ago, when a diverse group of extraordinary animals populated land, sea, and air. Serving as narrator is—who else?—David Attenborough. *Available Monday, May 23, Apple TV+*

Plague at the Golden Gate

In 1900, the bubonic plague reached North America's shores for the first time when an outbreak struck San Francisco's Chinatown. This timely *American Experience* documentary revisits the response, focusing on two doctors who led efforts to contain the deadly disease while facing unexpected opposition from politicians, business leaders, and the general public. *Tuesday, May 24, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Ricky Gervais: SuperNature

Love him or hate him, Ricky Gervais has managed to survive in an era that has been hard on other button-pushing comedians. In his new stand-up special, Gervais takes pains to explain that some of his potentially incendiary remarks employ a concept called irony, before walking a line on an array of potentially offensive talking points. *Available Tuesday, May 24, Netflix*

This Is Us

After six seasons, the multigenerational story of the Pearsons is coming to a close. In recent episodes, key questions—Who does Kevin end up with? Why is Miguel absent from the flash-forwards?—have been resolved. Coming into the penultimate episode, fans knew that they would soon see the full unfolding of the long-teased scene of Kate, Kevin, and Randall gathered, with others, at the presumed deathbed of the siblings' mother, Rebecca. All we can predict confidently about the final episode itself is that there will be more tears. *Tuesday, May 24, at 9 p.m., NBC*

Obi-Wan Kenobi

Can the great evils loosed in the *Star Wars* universe by the disappointing 1990s prequels be



McGregor's Obi-Wan: Jedi master at a crossroads

redressed? In this new six-episode series, Ewan McGregor returns as Jedi hero Obi-Wan Kenobi, a role he first assumed for 1999's *The Phantom Menace*. Obi-Wan is 10 years older than when last seen, hiding out on the planet Tatooine, watching over Luke Skywalker from a distance as the boy grows up, and evading the pursuit of the Inquisitors, who have been dispatched by the Empire to eradicate all remaining Jedi. And a fiercer foe also looms, as Hayden Christensen will also return in the role of Darth Vader—the Obi-Wan protégé who turned to the dark side. *Available Friday, May 27, Disney+*

Other highlights**Yo! MTV Raps**

The show that helped put rap on the map returns (though not on MTV itself) with videos, interviews, and live performances from a new generation of performers. *Available Tuesday, May 24, Paramount+*

The American Rescue Dog Show

A new breed of canine competition celebrates the common mutt as participants vie for ribbons in such categories as "Best in Snoring." *Wednesday, May 25, at 9 p.m., ABC*

Emergency

In this 2022 Sundance hit, two Black college housemates struggle to do the right thing after finding a white girl passed out in their apartment. *Available Friday, May 27, Amazon Prime*

Show of the week**Stranger Things**

After a long three years for *Stranger Things* fans, Season 4 of the hit sci-fi horror series finally arrives, with some key characters scattered far from Hawkins, Ind., after explosive past events. While most of the original friend gang is trying to return to normalcy at Hawkins High, police chief Jim Hopper is somehow alive but in a Russian prison, and the Byers family has decamped to California along with Eleven, Hopper's adopted daughter. Of course, new threats will emerge. After all, what's a 1980s-set horror series without a scary house and an intelligent, nightmare-haunting villain? *Available Friday, May 27, Netflix*



Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown): A real Cold War kid

LEISURE

Food & Drink

Chicken patties with zucchini: No more hockey pucks for dinner

Another night, another need to put food on the table, said Ali Slagle in *I Dream of Dinner—So You Don't Have To* (Clarkson Potter). If chicken seems like an option, you may be feeling “a real need to switch up your chicken-cooking routine.” Maybe you simply want better-tasting chicken every time, in which case I usually first recommend committing to thighs, (boneless or bone-in), because they’re difficult to overcook. And I also suggest sprinkling the chicken with ½ teaspoon of salt per pound 45 minutes to a few days before cooking.

But what about ground chicken? Meatballs or patties can be disappointing—“so dry, so heavy, no flavor.” The moisture problem can be solved simply, by adding juicy ingredients to the meat, such as mayonnaise, tomato paste, or finely chopped vegetables or alliums. As this weeknight dinner proves, “chicken can’t dry out with scandalously juicy zukes around.” And the dill, fennel seeds, and red pepper flakes take care of the flavor.

Recipe of the week

Chicken-dill patties with zucchini

3 large zucchini
Kosher salt
1 shallot
Black pepper



A full meal in roughly 45 minutes

3 tbsp red wine vinegar
Olive oil
½ cup panko bread crumbs
2 tsp fennel seeds
1½ tsp red pepper flakes
½ cup dill fronds and stems, coarsely chopped
1½ lbs ground chicken
Full-fat Greek yogurt (to serve)

Cut two of the zucchini crosswise on the diagonal into ¼-inch-thick slices. Spread in an even layer on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt.

Thinly slice shallot cross-wise into rings and

transfer to a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in red wine vinegar and 3 tbsp olive oil.

Position a box grater in a large bowl. Grate remaining zucchini on the large holes. Add panko breadcrumbs, fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, 1½ tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper. Stir to combine. Add chopped dill. Stir in ground chicken. With wet hands, form into about 12 patties about ½-inch thick. If patties can’t hold their shape, refrigerate until you’re ready to cook them.

In a large cast-iron skillet, heat 2 tbsp olive oil over medium-high. Pat sliced zucchini dry. Working in batches as needed, add zucchini and cook until golden and a little tender when pushed with your finger, 2 to 4 minutes per side. As they finish, transfer to the shallot mixture, stirring to combine.

Heat another 1 tbsp olive oil in skillet. Working in batches and adjusting heat as needed, add chicken patties and cook until golden brown and cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes per side. If the splattering is wild, cover skillet with a baking sheet.

Serve patties with the sautéed zucchini and with a schmear of full-fat Greek yogurt on each plate. Serves 4.

Wine: Bargain rosés

If you spend even \$15 to \$20 a bottle, “there’s no reason you shouldn’t be able to indulge in some fantastic rosé this season,” said Samantha Maxwell in *Paste*. “There are plenty of affordable options that taste great and will offer the flavor profile you’re looking for,” including these widely available bottles.

Castello Monaci Kreos (\$16). Bolder than the average rosé, this dark pink southern Italian wine is “super juicy and acidic,” combining notes of watermelon, mango, and blood orange.

Gérard Bertrand Côte des Roses (\$17). An “ideal crowd pleaser,” this “lovely, fresh” Languedoc rosé delivers aromas of red currant and raspberry, followed by grapefruit on the palate.

2021 Willamette Valley Vineyards ‘Whole Cluster’ Rosé of Pinot Noir (\$18). “A very versatile wine,” this rosé evokes a dry pinot noir but with notes of orange and grapefruit.



Dining out: Sampling ‘the Ellis Island of the South’

Clarkston, Ga., offers a culinary world tour in a single square mile, said Beth McKibben in *Eater*. Identified as a haven for refugees in the early 1990s, the tiny city just east of Atlanta is now home to residents from more than 50 countries and calls itself the most diverse square mile in America. It’s also now a gem of greater Atlanta’s dining scene. “In a single afternoon, diners can enjoy Ethiopian, Nepalese, Burmese, North Indian, Eritrean, and Vietnamese food” — all without changing their parking spot.

Chef Winnie’s Kitchen Addis Ababa-born chef Woinshet Legesse Emory fled Ethiopia in 1991 after her politician husband was jailed by the opposition. She managed food service at many top hotels before earning a degree from Le Cordon Bleu and starting this small restaurant of her own, where she cooks traditional Ethiopian, but also Mexican and American with an Ethiopian twist. Be sure to try the jackfruit curry tibs and *gomen* with *injera*, or the quesadilla, served in a red tortilla with Ethiopian spices. 4238 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., (404) 228-9152

PS-Asian Restaurant One of a handful of top food destinations at the Clarkston Village shopping complex, PS-Asian serves two of Clarkston’s must-have dishes: *mohinga*, a fish soup with rice noodles that is a Myanmar signature, and *bak kut teh*, a fragrant pork rib soup often found in Singapore. 926 Montreal Road E., (770) 549-5637

Abyssinia Café & Restaurant This charming spot next to PS-Asian is a great place to grab a *karkaday* (an Egyptian hibiscus tea) and breakfast *ful*, a stew featuring fava beans, scrambled eggs, onion, and green pepper. Later on, try the *awaze tibs*—beef sautéed in onions, tomatoes, and barbere. 926 Montreal Road E., (404) 941-9263



Chef Winnie in her namesake kitchen

The Ford F-150 Lightning: What the critics say

Road & Track

"The F-150 Lightning is the best introduction to EVs America will ever get." Easily the most important new vehicle of the decade, Ford's first electric pickup gets everything right, preserving the proportions and cabin of the nation's best-selling vehicle while upgrading its power, driving performance, and especially its ride. This workhorse drives like a six-figure luxury SUV, except that it's quicker off the line and quieter too. "All it'll take for skeptics to get onboard with electric cars is a five-minute test drive."

Car and Driver

Actually, the ride "can't quite compete" with

the magic-carpet effect that today's top-line pickups get from their adaptive suspensions. But the Lightning "motors down the road with aplomb," achieving up to 320 miles in range if you upgrade to at least a \$74,269 model. Even the base model tows well, too, though not very far—because a heavy trailer can easily cut the truck's range from 230 miles to 100.

Motor Trend

Towing is equally tough on standard pickups, though, so the real issue is that the U.S. needs more charging stations, and fast. But unless you routinely tow for hundreds of miles, there's no good reason to stick with a



The best F-150 ever, from \$41,769

combustion engine. The Lightning "not only can do the work"; it "can also do it better." It is, in short, "the best-driving, best-riding, and best-handling F-150 you can buy."

The best of...battery-powered lawn mowers



Ego LM2135SP

Amid a growing field of fine cordless options, this self-propelled 21-inch mower "stands apart" because of its combination of a 60-minute runtime, short charge time, and "polished dual-blade cutting." It "easily mows down overgrown grass."

\$699, [lowes.com](https://www.lowes.com)

Source: Wirecutter



Toro Recycler 21466

This self-propelled mower's 22-inch deck is all steel, no plastic, while the "exceptionally efficient" 60-volt motor helps cover a lot of ground during its 40-minute runtime. Like the Ego and Ryobi here, this Toro can be stored upright.

\$629, [homedepot.com](https://www.homedepot.com)

Source: Popular Mechanics



Ryobi RY401170VNM

A great value option, this 20-inch push mower runs for 45 minutes on a 90-minute charge. It's also "a commendable performer," earning a rating of "excellent" in mulching, evenness of cut, handling, and noise level.

\$300, [homedepot.com](https://www.homedepot.com)

Source: Consumer Reports



Ryobi RY48111

Ego and Ryobi also both make excellent electric riding mowers. Ryobi's best has a 38-inch, two-blade deck that will quietly "plow through tough grass" for two and a half hours on a charge. The 48-volt mower can also tow a small cart.

\$3,229, [homedepot.com](https://www.homedepot.com)

Source: Country Living



Worx Landroid

"A great way to get the yard work done without lifting a finger," this robotic mower comes in three sizes and can handle up to a half-acre of lawn. The Wi-Fi-enabled smart device can even mow when you're away from home.

\$1,000–\$1,500, [worx.com](https://www.worx.com)

Source: Better Homes & Gardens

Tip of the week...

How to spot well-made clothes

■ **Look inside.** Check to see if the hem and seams have been sewn down securely. Short stitches are a good sign, "because they're more durable than long ones, which are a giveaway that a garment has been made quickly."

■ **Inspect the seams.** The seams in well-made clothing hide the fabric's raw edges. Make sure the grain of the fabric is aligned, too, especially when there's a pattern.

■ **Feel the fabric.** Pull the cloth between your thumbs to see if it stretches or holds its form. "High-quality fabric will feel better on your skin and wear better."

■ **Move around.** "A well-constructed garment should not restrict your movement." In the changing room, sit down and try reaching above your head. Make note of any tightness. "A good shirt will have a back yoke, the piece of fabric that runs along your shoulders."

Source: The Guardian

And for those who have everything...

Transformers fans, "your dream toy has arrived." Robosen Robotics, a California firm, has created an **Auto-Converting Optimus Prime** that can transform before your eyes from a semi-truck into a 19-inch-tall bipedal robot. The app- and voice-controlled machine contains 60 microchips and



27 servo motors that allow it to walk, dance, throw punches, and even simulate breathing. Voiced by Peter Cullen—the voice of Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots, since the 1980s—the robot can rattle off catchphrases and respond to prompts. "We now live in a golden era of glorious toys that kids could never afford."

\$750, [hasbropulse.com](https://www.hasbropulse.com)

Source: The Verge

Best apps and websites...

For listening to audiobooks

■ **Audible** is the best-known audiobook app, "if only because it's owned by Amazon." Plans start at \$8 a month and grant unlimited access to more than 10,000 audiobooks. You can also purchase titles à la carte.

■ **Audiobooks.com**, which is both an app and a website, has a library of more than 300,000 audiobooks, 10,000 of which are free. A \$15-a-month subscription buys a user one new release a month, much like Audible's premium plan.

■ **Apple Books** and **Google Play Books** don't require subscriptions. Instead, you buy audiobooks individually, often at higher prices.

■ **Libby** lets library-card holders borrow audiobooks (and e-books) from their local branch. "It works with about 90 percent of the libraries in North America."

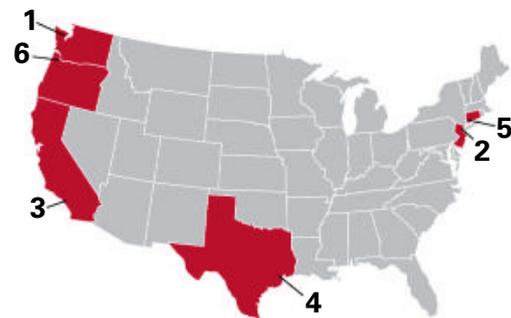
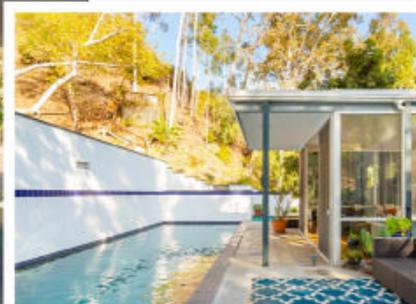
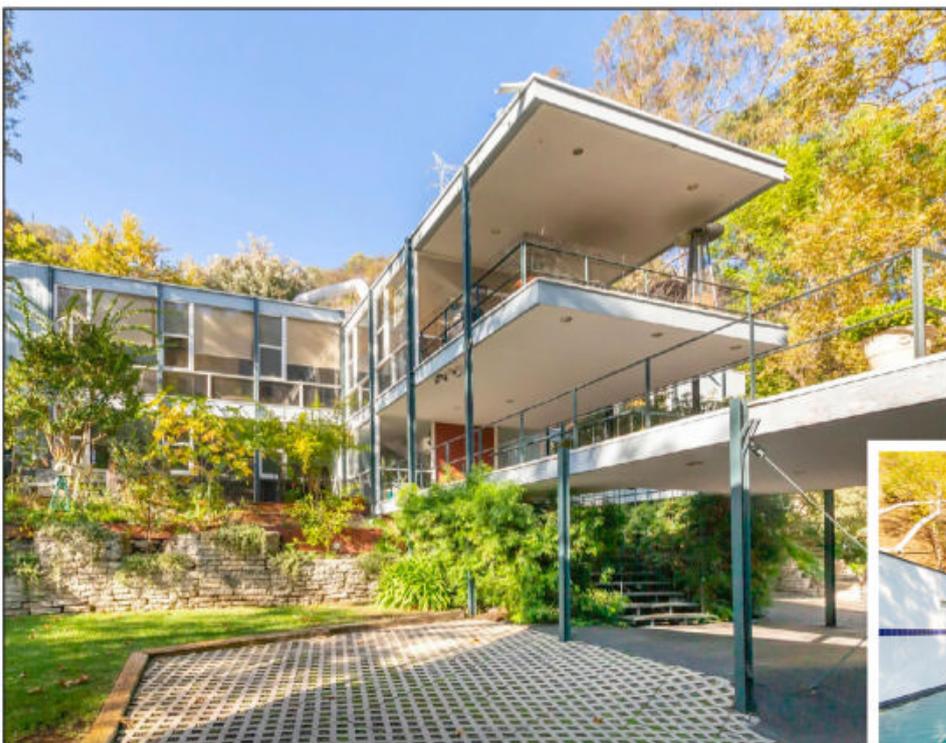
■ **Hoopla** partners with fewer libraries than Libby, but its audiobooks will stream immediately, and availability isn't a concern.

This week: Homes from the 1960s



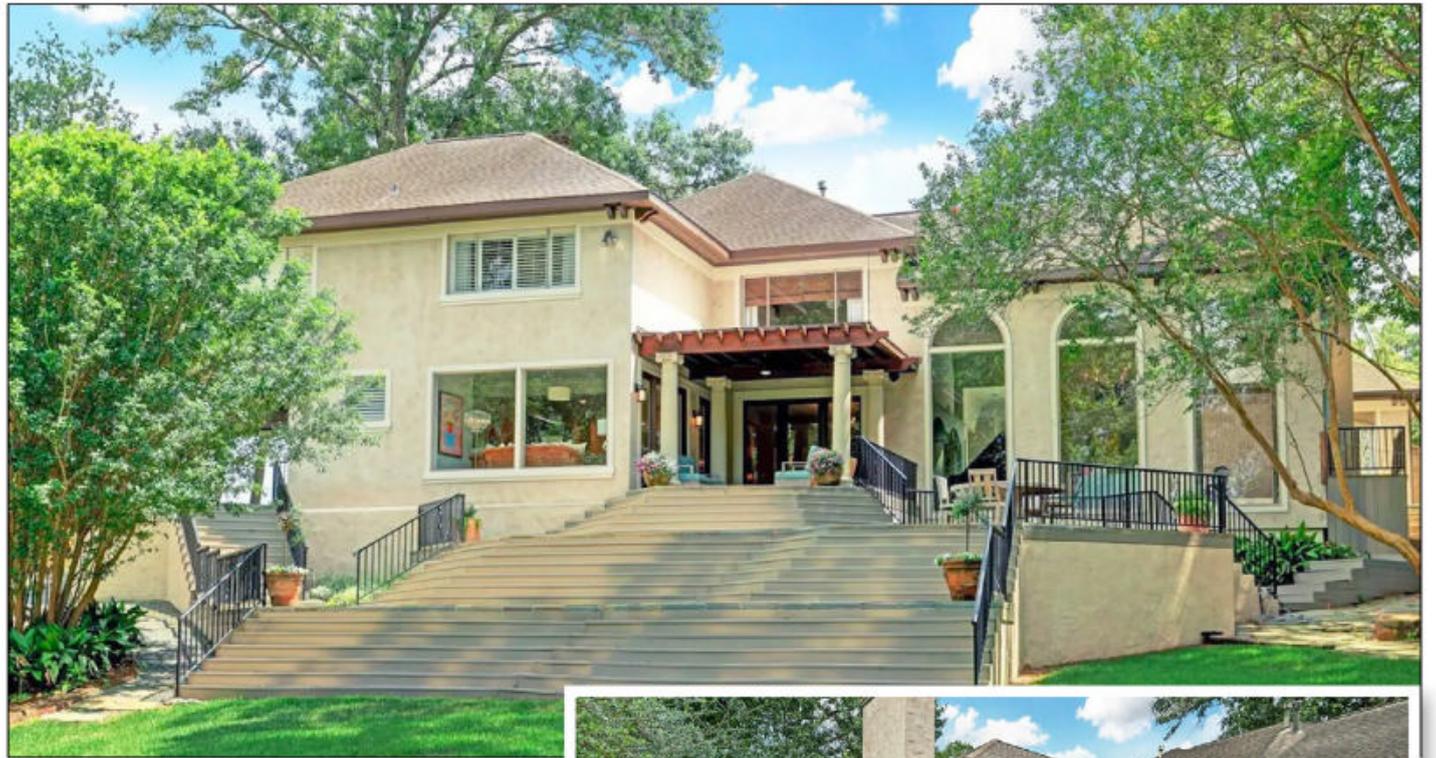
1 **Belfair, Wash.** This 1968 three-bedroom on the Hood Canal has been meticulously remodeled. The house has walls of windows; two fireplaces; formal and informal dining and living areas; owner's suite with deck; guest suite with separate entry, bath, laundry, and kitchen; and water and mountain views. The 1.8-acre lot has patios, garage, workshop, sports court, and 190 feet of waterfront with a dock, slips, and Jet-ski ramp. \$2,550,000. Valerie Spaulding, Windermere Real Estate/Luxury Portfolio International, (360) 710-5622

2 **North Caldwell, N.J.** Built in 1969, this four-bedroom home was carefully renovated in 2019 to retain its original character. The Colonial-style house features a gambrel roof, hardwood floors, oversize windows and skylights, high ceilings, two fireplaces, great room and family room, formal dining and living rooms, and a finished basement with full bathroom. Outside are lawns, trees, decks off kitchen and main bedroom, a landscaped back patio with heated gunite pool and water slide, and a heated two-car garage. \$1,100,000. The Fisher Group, Coldwell Banker Realty, (201) 602-1304



3 **Los Angeles** The indoor-outdoor design of this 1960 four-bedroom home was influenced by case-study architects like Pierre Koenig and Craig Ellwood. The steel and glass house has walls of windows with views of the treetops and Santa Monica Mountains; a double-sided fireplace; a family room; a generous kitchen; and a primary bedroom with fireplace and large bathroom suite. The 3.4-acre Mandeville Canyon property is wooded with sycamore and eucalyptus and includes a tiled patio with a pool, multilevel gardens, and a guesthouse. \$5,000,000. Simon Beardmore, Sotheby's International Realty-Brentwood, (310) 892-6454

4 ▶ Houston This updated Spanish-Mediterranean home was built in 1965. The five-bedroom house features a spacious living room with marble fireplace and custom cabinetry; a paneled study; a den with floor-to-ceiling windows and stone fireplace; a chef's kitchen opening to a breakfast room, dining room, and sunroom; and a fitness center with en suite bath. The 1.6-acre lot, on a cul-de-sac beside a lush bayou, includes lawns, mature trees, landscaped circle driveway and terraces, and a pool. \$2,175,000 Kelley Austin, Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty-Central Houston, (832) 978-0086



5 ▲ New Milford, Conn. Custom built in Arts & Crafts style, this four-bedroom ranch dates to 1962. The house has Frank Lloyd Wright certified windows; mahogany and cherry crown moldings and cherry millwork; mahogany, scraped chestnut, and glazed slate and glass floors; Venetian plaster walls; custom metalwork; three fireplaces; restored authentic dining-room chandelier, chef's kitchen with wood-fired pizza oven; home theater; and decks with panoramic views. The 16.6-acre property includes a carriage barn, New England bank barn, horse stable, three wells, and 1,500 feet of waterfront. \$1,800,000. Lorraine Amaral, William Pitt/Sotheby's International Realty, (203) 702-3917

Steal of the week



6 ▲ Portland, Ore. A modern upgrade preserved the original character of this 1960 two-bedroom floating home on the Columbia River. Features include tile, wood, and cork floors; barn doors and French doors; a gas fireplace; tankless hot water; a primary bathroom soaking tub with view; a gourmet kitchen with double oven; and a vaulted living room with a mural and tiki bar. Outside are a riverfront porch, a back deck on the lagoon, and boat slips front and back. \$475,000. Karla Divine, Divine Nw Realty, (503) 819-6923



The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ The median pay package for chief executives of the biggest U.S. companies reached \$14.7 million in 2021, setting a sixth-straight annual record. For the 25 top-paid CEOs—each of whose packages exceeded \$35 million—equity accounted for 78 percent of their total compensation.

The Wall Street Journal

■ Not a single car was sold in Shanghai in April, when the majority of the city's 25 million residents were locked down due to a Covid outbreak. Dealerships in the city sold 26,311 vehicles in April last year.

Bloomberg



■ An average of just 35 percent of U.S. office workers went to work on the typical

Monday in March, said Kastle Systems, a security firm that monitors access-card swipes. Wednesdays topped the week, with 46 percent of workers in the office.

The Wall Street Journal

■ California anticipates a budget surplus of \$97.5 billion, a record for California or any other state. The surplus was driven by taxes on capital gains, which reached their highest share of tax collections since 1999, before the dot-com crash.

Los Angeles Times

■ The average price at the pump in California hit a record \$6.021 per gallon this week, according to AAA. The national average of \$4.523 is also a record, with every state now averaging more than \$4.

CNBC.com

■ Softbank's Vision Fund posted a historic \$27 billion loss for its fiscal year ending in March. The biggest losers in its portfolio of about 450 companies included ride-hailing group Didi, whose shares have lost about half their value in recent months.

Financial Times

Twitter: Another about-face from Musk

Elon Musk has cold feet, said Rishi Iyengar and Allison Morrow in *CNN.com*. The world's richest person raised doubts this week about his commitment to the \$44 billion takeover of the social media company Twitter, saying the deal "cannot move forward" until the company provided proof that less than 5 percent of Twitter accounts were fake. But this issue is not new; Musk

has "repeatedly spoken out against bots and spam accounts." In fact, he has said solving the issue was a reason he was buying Twitter. Musk's sudden antagonism, and suggestions that Twitter's numbers were fraudulent, signals he is seeking a do-over, with Twitter's stock "trading well below his offer price of \$54.20 per share."



Musk: Buyer's remorse?

Legally, Musk can't just announce that a done deal is "on hold," said Therese Poletti in *MarketWatch*. "The two sides have a contract and it is legally enforceable." But how far can Twitter go? It could just "ignore Musk's actions" and "continue forward with the deal," hoping Musk changes his mind again. It could also sue him under a "specific performance" clause that would attempt to "force him to go through with the acquisition." Twitter owes its shareholders "every cent it can pull out of Musk's pockets after what he has put the company, its investors, and its employees through." But if the deal falls through, there's a good chance Twitter will have to settle for the relatively meager \$1 billion breakup fee.

Retail: Target, Wal-Mart lead Dow slump

The Dow Industrial Average fell more than 1,100 points in one day this week, led by disappointing earnings from big retailers, said Orla McCaffrey and Caitlin Ostroff in *The Wall Street Journal*. "Major retailers said their profits were hurt by rising costs, sluggish sales, and supply-chain disruptions." Target and Wal-Mart both posted their worst one-day stock drops since the Black Monday crash of 1987, with Target losing a quarter of its value in one day. The precipitous decline prompted Wall Street "to wrestle anew with the idea that the global economy could be headed for a recession."

Airlines: JetBlue seeks to force Spirit to merge

JetBlue is attempting a hostile takeover of Spirit Airlines, said Allison Morrow and Chris Isidore in *CNN.com*. The airline this week launched a new offer for Spirit, whose board rejected an earlier deal with JetBlue in favor of a merger with Frontier Airlines. "JetBlue is appealing directly to Spirit's shareholders, urging them to vote against the Frontier deal while launching its own all-cash offer of \$30 per share." A combination of Spirit with either Frontier or JetBlue would create the nation's fifth-largest airline, giving the merged airline the scale to compete with the major national carriers.

Russia: McDonald's calls it quits after three decades

McDonald's said this week it will exit Russia completely, said Lauren Hirsch in *The New York Times*. The fast-food giant said in March "it would temporarily close its operations there" as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But the company said it now plans to sell its 850 restaurants 32 years after opening its first location in Moscow in 1990, shortly before the fall of the Soviet Union. "The Golden Arches shining above Pushkin Square heralded for many the beginning of a new era," CEO Chris Kempczinski wrote. That era has ended.

Banks: Shareholders admonish JPMorgan on pay

In a rebuke to CEO Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan Chase shareholders voted overwhelmingly against the bank's executive compensation package, said Joshua Franklin in the *Financial Times*. "Only 31 percent of investors voted in favor of the plan, which included a total \$201.8 million package" for six members of the C-suite. Dimon was up for a \$50 million "one-off special award." An influential proxy advisory firm urged investors to vote against the package, "calling it 'excessive' amid 'tepid performance.'" Nonetheless, the vote is nonbinding.

Russia's automotive time machine

A boxy Soviet-era car brand, the "Moskvitch," could be making a comeback in Russia, said Andrew Roth in *The Guardian*. The Moscow city government said this week it planned to nationalize a factory belonging to the French carmaker Renault following its exit from the country. The plant will be repurposed to produce the Moskvitch, a passenger car brand last made two decades ago. The development was "met with ridicule by Russians with long memories." The Moskvitch was one of the Soviet Union's most popular car brands—but like a lot of cars coming out of the Communist bloc, it was not known for quality. For Russians who have glumly watched the country's return to Soviet-era isolation, "the revival of the Moskvitch was the perfect punch line." The Ukraine war has given Russia "a time machine," one joke goes. Unfortunately, it can "only move the country back to the Soviet Union."

Robinhood: Meme stocks won't come to the rescue

In the bull run of the past few years, “it’s been nearly impossible not to make money in equities,” said **Jason Bisnoff** in *Forbes*. “Robinhood didn’t exist” during the last sustained bear market, so for most of its life the app made investors feel like geniuses as screen confetti rained down on their phones whenever stocks went up. At the beginning of 2021, it was the preferred investment app for “a new insurgency that challenged a dusty, out-of-touch Wall Street,” led by millions of day traders organized on social media forums like Reddit. All that trading volume also sent Robinhood, which went public last year at a \$32 billion valuation, soaring. However, the reckoning has been equally swift. The market’s dive in 2022 has already knocked Robinhood’s customer base down 10 percent as some day traders apparently figured out that do-it-yourself “investing isn’t as exciting without the joy of winning.”



Investing-by-app is losing its appeal.

Fairly or not, Robinhood is emblematic of “the greatest period of speculative excess since the dot-com bubble,” said **Jonathan Levin** in *Bloomberg*. In some ways, the platform has brought “real enduring change” to investing, for instance by making commission-free online trading standard. But “a lot of what it came to stand for” was the “meme investing” craze, in which armies of novice traders rallied behind stocks like GameStop and AMC, and digital currencies like Dogecoin and Shiba Inu, seemingly at random. We know now that this activity was largely

fueled by stimulus checks and boredom during lockdowns. “Much like the sour-dough bread-baking craze,” it has “proven to be a fleeting pandemic hobby.”

Robinhood is trying to reinvent itself, said **Pranav Kiran** in *Reuters BreakingViews*. For instance, it’s soon going to offer retirement accounts and other instruments akin to a 401(k), making the platform “more attractive to users looking to invest for the long term.” But rivals like Charles Schwab have better set themselves up for survival in the current rising interest rate environment

by “taking cash sitting in brokerage accounts and making more-stable investments in Treasury securities.” Schwab expects to make \$1 billion in incremental revenue for each quarter-percent hike in the target fed funds rate.

Unfortunately, long-term strategizing to get boring but stable returns “sits uneasily beside Robinhood’s apparent need to keep one foot in the crypto world,” said **Lionel Laurent** in *Bloomberg*. “It keeps adding speculative tokens to entice customers looking for the next coin that could jump from \$0.00002 to \$0.00003.” Crypto fits the company’s stated mission of “democratizing finance” but is melting down even faster than equities (see Best Business Columns, p.34). “If speculative bets keep deflating,” Robinhood’s young evangelists might soon “swear off trading for good.”

What the experts say

The meaning of ‘historic drop’

It’s been the worst year for the bond market since 1842, said **Jason Zweig** in *The Wall Street Journal*. That’s not a typo. Not since the bottom of a pre-Civil War depression has the broad bond market performed worse in a complete year than what’s happened so far in 2022. “Inflation is like kryptonite for bonds, whose interest payments are fixed and thus can’t grow to keep pace with rises in the costs of living.” As a result, prices for bonds have fallen 10 percent this year. But many investors “may be too pessimistic.” The intricate math of bonds means that yields rise as prices fall, and some yields are currently brushing their highest levels in years. “Over the long run, the total return of bonds depends far more on their income than on changes in price.”

Digital nomads, come home please

The idea of “working from anywhere” remains a pipe dream, said *The Economist*. When the pandemic locked down offices, “digital nomads” hit the road, moving far from their offices or hotel-hopping between destinations. Last month, Airbnb told employees they could “move wherever they want without any cost-of-living adjustment.” CEO **Brian Chesky** himself has been living

and working “out of Airbnb properties” and “thinks this is the future.” Maybe for a lucky few. But aside from the “legal, payroll, and tax ramifications” and administrative headaches, imagine the resentment of colleagues. If you’re “dialing into a Zoom call covered in baby drool,” you don’t want to hear “Greg from product wax lyrical about how amazing Chamonix is at this time of year.”

Writers take on Disney over pay

Disney has been accused of cheating writers and artists of their royalties, said **Michael Hiltzik** in the *Los Angeles Times*. A task force led by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America concluded that “Disney may owe hundreds of writers and artists royalties averaging a few thousand dollars each,” with some claims reaching up to \$20,000. Among those who have accused Disney of wage theft is **Alan Dean Foster**, a writer who “signed a contract with George Lucas to write a novelization of the first *Star Wars* movie even before it premiered in 1977.” Royalties from that book and a sequel “mysteriously disappeared in 2012, around the time Disney acquired Lucasfilm.” Disney initially told Foster’s agent it had “acquired the properties but not the obligations.”

Charity of the week



About 50 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa do not attend school—when families are struggling financially, education for young girls is often sacrificed. But **CAMFED** (camfed.org) views girls’ education as essential for social justice, economic development, and climate action. For more than two decades, the organization has funded secondary-school costs for adolescent girls in Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These can include tuition fees, uniforms, a bicycle for getting to school, or help with the factors that often lead a student to drop out, such as chronic hunger and early marriage; the programs reach 7,018 schools across 166 districts in the five countries. CAMFED also offers support groups for parents, post-school transition guidance, and aid for female entrepreneurs.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group’s highest rating.

Crypto: A sell-off hits digital currencies

The collapse of the cryptocurrency market is testing the faith of those who drank the Kool-Aid, said **Katie Martin** in the *Financial Times*. “A trickle in the price of Bitcoin from its peak of \$68,000 turned into a flood” last week “in part because of cracks in the so-called stablecoins that glue the market together.” Stablecoins, which are generally pegged to the dollar, let digital currency investors move in and out of currencies like Bitcoin without converting their investments into cash. They can also be lent out, often at high rates of interest. A run on these tokens has cast a much wider chill on the crypto market, including Bitcoin, which fell as low as \$27,000. Investors were “lured in by claims that these lines of code could become serious rivals to the dollar and the basis of a new financial utopia.” Now investors large and small have gotten a serious reality check. Hedge fund manager and crypto evangelist Michael Novogratz has lost \$6 billion of his \$8.5 billion fortune since November, while New York City Mayor Eric Adams, who converted his first three City Hall paychecks into Bitcoin and Ethereum, would have lost about \$5,800 of his pay.

The trigger was a stablecoin that suddenly became very unstable, said **Alexander Osipovich** and **Caitlin Ostroff** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Unlike stablecoins that are backed by stores of dollars, an experimental stablecoin, TerraUSD, took “a more complex approach that relies on financial engineering to maintain its link to the dollar.” Once touted as a stroke of financial wizardry that “could ultimately supplant the dollar itself,” Terra lost its anchoring last week in a panicked sell-off. Crypto enthusiasts



Terra's troublesome crash

love to “throw around alleged millions and billions,” but those numbers are “fictions built on fictions,” said **David Gerard** in *Foreign Policy*. The trouble with stablecoins, obscure as they may be to outsiders, is a sign of broader vulnerability; they are like “the money-market funds that played such a critical part in the 2008 crash.” There’s “plenty of pain” in the crypto world now, but “the real danger is contagion from cryptocurrency to the wider economy.”

If regulators don’t act now, this could end in disaster, said **Bloomberg** in an editorial. Despite the efforts to rename stadiums and run Super Bowl ads featuring celebrity endorsers, “this stuff isn’t ready for prime time.” The technology “hasn’t found much practical use” as an alternative currency, an inflation hedge, or a new asset class. President Biden has laid out a sensible framework for regulation that lawmakers should act on so that the next boom-and-bust cycle doesn’t trigger a bigger financial crash.

Have we reached the bottom yet? asked **Andy Kessler** in *The Wall Street Journal*. “It’s certainly less bubblicious out there,” but we haven’t witnessed capitulation from the diehards who are still, in Reddit parlance, HODLing, “holding on for dear life,” as crypto collapses—along with the speculative stocks, from DraftKings to Carvana, that found favor in the latest boom. In these kinds of meltdowns, the path is “rarely straight down.” There will be survivors here. But not everyone. “From the dot-com demise, Pets.com and eToys.com are both still very much dead.”

Elon Musk, meet Henry Ford

Stephen Mihm
Bloomberg

Elon Musk is seeming eerily like Henry Ford, said historian **Stephen Mihm**. Like Musk, the world’s richest man and CEO of the most valuable auto company, Ford once “parlayed visionary ideas” about automotive manufacturing into “unimaginable wealth and global fame.” His ideas for producing the Model T made him “an American folk hero,” but the adulation he received transformed his personality. Obsessed with staying in the headlines, he pursued massive side projects like building an industrial metropolis in Alabama, launching an airline, and running a newspaper that published anti-Semitic screeds. He “spent a fortune building Fordlandia, a bizarre utopian city in the Brazilian rain forest.”

But as Ford became increasingly distracted, many of his most capable lieutenants and engineers left, “replaced with sycophants.” Meanwhile, a rational and ruthless engineer named Alfred P. Sloan gradually assumed control of a misbegotten car group called General Motors. “Sloan had no interest in being a public figure. He simply wished to usurp Ford.” Within six years, Sloan’s singular focus had steered GM ahead of Ford as the world’s biggest car manufacturer—the title it would retain for seven decades. Musk’s Tesla is running laps around GM and Ford in market value today. But the competitors are waiting in the wings, and “history is breathing down Musk’s neck.”

The startups are getting shut down

Erin Griffith
The New York Times

The party is over for tech startups, said **Erin Griffith**. The “easy-money ebullience of the last decade” has turned into “fear and loathing.” Even inside the relentlessly optimistic tech world, there is “the sense that the startup world’s frenzied behavior of the last few years is due for a reckoning.” A record \$131 billion in funds was raised by startups last year, according to PitchBook, and up until a few months ago, “investors were still begging founders to take more money and spend it to grow faster.” But Wall Street has soured on such unprofitable and risky bets, and numerous high-profile startups

that went public in recent months have gotten hammered in the stock market. So far this year, venture funding has dried up; the venture capital firm D1 Capital Partners, which participated in roughly 70 startup deals last year, announced it was pausing its dealmaking. Many entrepreneurs are experiencing whiplash. Knock, a home-loan startup, planned to go public at a \$2 billion valuation last year. By March, the deal was dead and Knock was laying off half its employees. Its valuation had been halved even though Knock’s business continued to grow. “Investors no longer cared.”

The Iran-Contra operative who lived with regret

Robert McFarlane
1937–2022

When Robert McFarlane touched down in Tehran on a mission in May 1986, he carried two things with him: a bible signed by then-President Ronald Reagan and a cake decorated with a key, intended to symbolize the secret opening of relations between the U.S. and Iran. McFarlane, who'd recently resigned as Reagan's national security adviser, also carried a massive secret. His meeting with Iranian officials was clandestine, part of a Reagan administration plot to trade arms to Iran for the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon and divert the proceeds to Contra rebels fighting the Marxist regime in Nicaragua. When the Iran-Contra affair was exposed, "Bud" McFarlane, a decorated former Marine Corps officer, became one of the public faces of the scandal—and the only one who professed shame. McFarlane was so distraught he attempted suicide, swallowing at least 30 Valium the day before he was scheduled to testify. It felt like "the honorable thing to do," he later said. "I so let down the country."



McFarlane grew up in Washington, D.C., where his father was a Democratic congressman from Texas, said *The Telegraph* (U.K.). After attending the Naval Academy, he joined the Marines and

served two tours in Vietnam, earning a master's in strategic studies at the Graduate Institute in Geneva in between. McFarlane soon began "his climb in the national security establishment," said *The New York Times*. He was military assistant to national security adviser Henry Kissinger under Nixon, then held national security roles in the Carter, Ford, and Reagan administra-

tions. As "a surprise choice" for Reagan's third national security adviser in 1983, he was key in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union, but his achievements were overshadowed by the scandal that broke in October 1986, when the Marxist Sandinistas shot down a plane ferrying arms to the Contras.

McFarlane pleaded guilty to "four misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress," said the Associated Press, though his lawyer said he was "unfairly" singled out because, unlike other key figures in the scandal, he admitted his complicity. He was given a \$20,000 fine, a two-year suspended sentence, and community service. In 1992 he was pardoned by then-President George H.W. Bush, and he later worked in consulting, but his regrets over Iran-Contra persisted. "The only person that could have stopped it," he said in 2020, "was me."

The Communist who midwived a new Ukraine

Leonid Kravchuk
1934–2022

Leonid Kravchuk's political conversion changed the world. Before becoming the first democratically elected president of Ukraine in 1991, he had spent the previous 30 years as a powerful Communist functionary. As leader of the Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic, he decried the "emotional nationalism" that flourished during the glasnost years. But whether because of a genuine change of heart or because the politician nicknamed the "wily fox" saw an opportunity, Kravchuk eventually embraced nationalism. He resigned from the Communist Party shortly after the failed August 1991 hard-line coup against Mikhail Gorbachev. That December, he met up with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Stanislav Shushkevich of Belarus to pronounce the Soviet Union officially dissolved. To his people, he declared, "A new Ukraine has been born."



"Kravchuk's life story followed his country's turbulent history," said the *Financial Times*. Born to Ukrainian peasants in a village then within Poland, he lost his father in World War II. He joined the Communist Party in 1958 and rose quickly. He was Ukraine's propaganda chief, suppressing criticism of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear

disaster, and later chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet. After the coup attempt, he called a referendum on Ukrainian independence, and saw Ukrainians approve it "by an extraordinary 90 percent" and choose him as their first democratic president. Newly independent Ukraine housed Soviet weapons that gave it the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal, but the control systems remained in Moscow, so Kravchuk agreed to forfeit the weapons in exchange for a security guarantee from the U.S., the U.K., and Russia—which "turned out to be worthless" when Russia invaded Crimea in 2014.

His brief presidency was marred by "political and economic failure," said *The Telegraph* (U.K.). By 1992, inflation had soared 2,500 percent, and corruption and mismanagement sank three-quarters of Ukrainians into poverty. And Kravchuk railed against Russia even as Ukraine remained "dangerously dependent" on Russian oil. In 1994, he lost his re-election bid, yet he didn't contest the results, said *The Washington Post*. Later, he presided over post-2014 negotiations to bring peace to the Donbas, and he never lost hope that Ukraine, as he put it in 1994, would "open the doors of democracy to the East."

The Spanish diva who wowed as the ideal Carmen

Opera star Teresa Berganza often redefined the characters she inhabited, and she utterly owned the titular role in Georges Bizet's *Carmen*.

Teresa Berganza
1933–2022

A mezzo-soprano, Berganza was acclaimed for her rich vocal

register—warm at its lower end, supple when higher—and for her charisma and sensuality on stage. A champion of Spanish zarzuelas and arias, the dramatic, dark-eyed Berganza floored critics in Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and particularly in Bizet's *Carmen*, first taking the role in 1977 at the King's Theater in Edinburgh. Conductor Herbert von Karajan declared her "the Carmen of the century."

"Encouraged by her mother," said *The New York Times*, the Madrid-born Berganza "aspired to become a nun." She studied piano, organ, cello, and singing at Madrid's Royal Conservatory of Music, where a teacher told her "she was too talented to retreat from a secular life." Berganza made her debut in 1957 in France and performed at the Metropolitan Opera a decade later as Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. For years, though, she avoided *Carmen*, saying she found the character's complexity too daunting.

Berganza "needed to establish herself in authenticity to undertake any project," said *El País* (Spain). When she finally tackled *Carmen*, she spent weeks in southern Spain interviewing women who lived in caves. Rejecting the traditional portrayal of Carmen as a prostitute, Berganza played her as a rebel artist who "speaks with her heart, her body, her guts," she said. Her last opera performance, at 57, was also as Carmen. "If you ask Teresa how she feels singing Carmen," said Spanish singer Luz Casal, "She will say: I am Carmen."

Smoke-flavored cabernet

Much of Napa Valley's 2020 vintage was ruined by raging wildfires, said Benjamin Wallace in New York magazine. Climate change threatens the future of Napa's wine industry.

ANITA OBERHOLSTER WOULDN'T say what we were drinking. We were standing in the teaching-and-research winery at the University of California, Davis, the country's preeminent incubator of future grape growers and vintners, and on the table in front of us were three identical wine bottles with red screw caps. Instead of a label, each bore a white strip that read "sample for research," along with a cryptic string of letters and numbers.

The bottles, which came from vineyards in the Napa Valley, contained cabernet sauvignon from the 2020 vintage. They had all been made from grapes harvested after the Glass Fire, a blaze that tore through Napa, burning almost 68,000 acres and turning the skies orange. When trees burn, lignin, a chemical compound that gives wood much of its structure, releases into the smoke a range of volatile phenols, a class of airborne molecules. Grapes aren't the only crop that can be affected by smoke, but their permeable skins, and the very sensitivity that allows vintners to produce expressive, complex wines, make them uniquely vulnerable. Oberholster, an exacting South African-born chemist at UC Davis' Department of Viticulture and Enology, is the closest thing California has to an expert on smoke and wine, and after the fire died down, wineries began sending her clusters of grapes and samples of wine in the desperate hope that she could help them prepare for the next disaster.

Oberholster poured samples of the three wines, and we both picked up the left-most glass and stuck our noses in. I didn't smell anything smoky. "They're a bit cold, unfortunately," she said. Cold means less volatile, which means less aromatic. These grapes were picked from a hillside where the Glass Fire had come right up to the vineyard but the smoke hadn't lingered. "There is smoke there," Oberholster continued, "but you need to look for it." I spat the wine into a blue pail and took another sip. A stale, ashy flavor began to emerge. Would she consider this an extremely tainted wine? "It goes through phases," she said. "Currently, it's medium."

Lifting the second glass to my nose, I thought I detected bacon. I took a sip. The flavor seemed stunted, as if it were about



Smoke from the Glass Fire lingered over vineyards for days.

to reveal itself but then decided it would rather not. I sniffed again. Now the wine smelled like a spent, day-old cigarette. This wine's grapes came from the Napa Valley floor, Oberholster said, where the smoke from the Glass Fire had lingered for days.

The third cabernet smelled better than the others. When the wine first touched my tongue, it tasted like something in the vicinity of berry juice. "Because there's a lot there to mask," Oberholster said, meaning the wine's other qualities—its fruit and tannins and acid—were strong enough to compete with any smoke compounds, at least initially. Sure enough, the longer the wine was in my mouth, the more sooty and dead it tasted and the more I wanted to spit it out.

Major wildfires first seriously threatened a California wine region—Mendocino County—in 2008, but not until 2017 did they pose a significant danger to the state's most hallowed vines. That October, a string of fires—including the Tubbs Fire, the most destructive in state history up to that point—burned more than 110,700 acres in Napa and Sonoma counties. "People wanted to say, 'Oh, smoke taint doesn't exist,'" Alisa Jacobson, a winemaker who would later help form the West Coast Smoke Exposure Task Force, told me. "They didn't want the media or anyone to think they were going to get smoke in their wines."

The 2020 fires were a turning point for Napa's grape growers and winemakers. The first of them hit earlier in the season than the 2017 fires had, and many grapes were vulnerable because they hadn't yet been harvested. And when the Glass Fire arrived

in late September, it devastated the later-ripening varieties still on the vine—in particular, cabernet sauvignon, the grape with which Napa is almost synonymous and the basis for California's preeminent luxury export.

As we got ready to leave the tasting room, Oberholster gave me one of the bottles of cabernet sauvignon to take back to my hotel so I could try the wine after it warmed up. "Pour yourself a glass," she said, "and see if you can get through it before it starts getting extremely off-putting."

'DEER PARK WAS just leveled," Alan Viader recalled. It was a morning in mid-February, and we were on the crest of the hill overlooking the main vineyard at Viader Winery, a 4,000-case direct-to-consumer producer founded by Viader's mother, Delia, in Napa in the late 1980s.

Viader was talking about the Glass Fire, which had started before dawn on Sept. 27, 2020. The fire originated near the winery and quickly made its way around the reservoir at its foot, then started burning up the hill, accelerated by dry grass on the vineyard floor and pushed along by the wind. Viader was at his home 15 miles south of the winery, and when he was finally able to get to the property the following night, fallen trees on the ground were still burning. The Glass Fire was not fully extinguished for 23 days. Afterward, Viader and his crew went vine by vine, cutting into each one to check its health and make sure the sap was flowing. Most of the cabernet franc vines survived because they were further from the flames, but the vines of cabernet sauvignon grapes, which anchor the Viaders' wine, were decimated.

Viader is still going back and forth with his insurance company over how much of his losses it will cover. Until 2020, vineyards themselves, being lush and irrigated and manicured, were considered firebreaks not requiring extensive coverage. Like a lot of other winemakers in his situation, Viader didn't get his policy renewed. The best he can hope for is a much smaller umbrella courtesy of the state's FAIR Plan program, which he says won't insure more than \$3 million.

After the Glass Fire, Viader began preparing for the next time. We passed a pile of what looked like industrial-strength Super Soakers: They were “water axes,” gas-powered, high-pressure pumps with fire-hose nozzles that can shoot a blast of flame-dousing water a hundred feet. In January, Viader enrolled in the local firefighting academy to become a volunteer, and today he wore a fire-dispatch scanner on his belt.

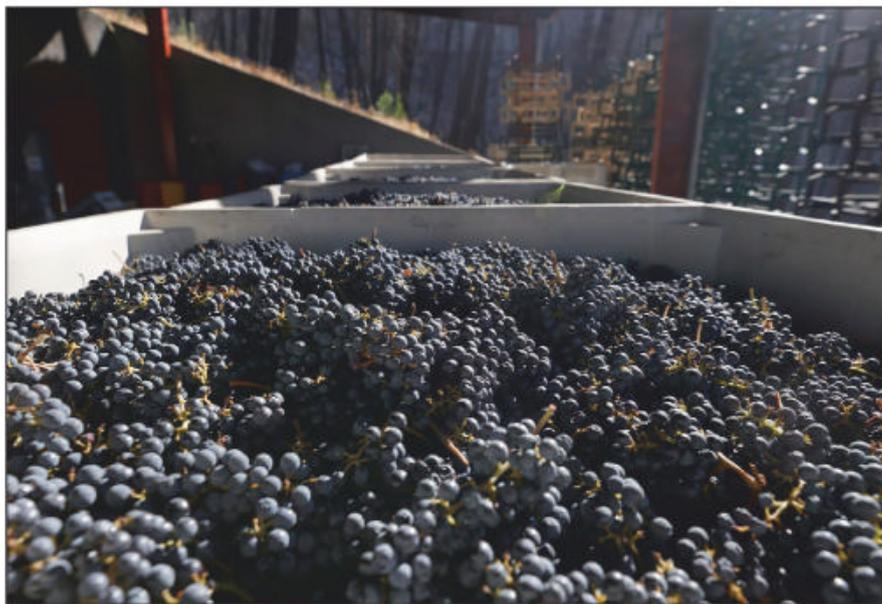
However diligent Viader’s preparations for flames, there’s much less he can do to guard against smoke, which can come from anywhere, including the properties of less fire-savvy winemakers. When fires swept through Northern California in 2020, casting shifting palls of smoke for more than two months, other winemakers were forced to make agonizing decisions about whether to even bother producing their wines. Napa has the most expensive farmland in the U.S., and the surest way to profit is to make pricey bottles of cabernet; once you’re selling a luxury product, though, even minor imperfections can be fatal. “Maybe at \$20 you’re OK with a little smoke impact,” said Jacobson, who, at the time, was a winemaker at Joel Gott Wines, “but at the \$200 price point, you’re not OK with any.”

CALIFORNIA WINE IS a \$40 billion-plus industry, but only in the past few years has anybody paid much attention to the threat of smoke. To the extent that smoke taint had received scholarly scrutiny, the papers all came from the University of Adelaide in Australia, where Oberholster, the daughter of a wheat and canola farmer, happened to have obtained her graduate degree. Australia had been dealing with smoke taint since 2003, but there was a lot the Australians didn’t know, and not everything they did know applied to California.

From her colleagues in Australia, Oberholster learned that it isn’t enough to test grapes for the volatile compounds detectable right away; one also has to test for the compounds that reveal themselves only months later, when fermentation unbinds the phenol-sugar compounds and releases the volatile phenols and their smoky flavors. She had to inform devastated grape growers that there are no easy or one-size-fits-all fixes. Unless growers know exactly where the smoke in their vineyards came from, how long it was there, and exactly when it was created, its impact on their grapes will be unpredictable: One could have a vineyard next to

a fire, but grapes 20 miles away could be more affected because of wind direction or topography.

The best thing a grower could do, Oberholster said, was something that had been tried in Australia: Ferment a small batch of wine in a bucket and have a panel of tasters assess it—ideally five or more, as a certain percentage of tasters either don’t taste smoke taint or are overly sensitive to it. People used to alchemizing \$1,500 cabs in state-of-the-art steel vats, in other words, might have to resort to making wine in a plastic pail.



Winemakers may not detect smoke taint until long after a harvest.

As if smoke and fire weren’t bad enough, the prized Napa cab, as we know it, is facing an even greater existential threat. As temperature extremes have become more common in recent years, the world’s wine maps have begun to shift. We now have Chinese cab blends, Norwegian rieslings, and critic-pleasing English sparkling wines. And regions where quality has historically fluctuated with vintage—depending on that year’s weather—have been consistently producing good wine year after year. “Some of that’s better winemaking equipment and techniques,” Massican Wines’ Dan Petroski said. “But a big part of it is weather.”

After the 2017 fire in Napa raised questions about whether climate change was to blame, Petroski, who had been the winemaker at Larkmead Vineyards since 2012, winning accolades including the *San Francisco Chronicle’s* Winemaker of the Year, took it upon himself to go into the winery’s records and track the dates of the growing season for the previous 10 years. Without anyone noticing, it seemed, the season had shifted one month forward over that period, the vines hitting peak ripeness earlier and earlier each year.

Petroski saw several causes. For instance, since a big replanting in 2007, Larkmead

had been growing healthier vines. But climate was undeniably a factor, too, and Petroski began to believe cabernet sauvignon’s days in Napa might be numbered. With the owner’s blessing, Petroski decided to plant research vines on the property using great wines from warmer climates as his guide. “If someone comes in here and says, ‘Why are you planting tempranillo?’ I’d say, ‘Sorry, bro, don’t you know about Vega Sicilia? It’s \$800 a bottle, and it’s tempranillo and cabernet.’ And if they ask, ‘Why are you planting touriga nacional?’ I’d say, ‘You’re not familiar with Barca Velha? It’s only been made 19 times in the past 100 years, and it’s \$500 a bottle. It’s one of the greatest wines in the world.’”

When he started talking about cabernet losing its throne, Petroski said, “my nickname became Doomsday Dan.” Today, lots of Napa wineries are undertaking similar experiments. Viader told me that, after the Glass Fire, he started shifting his wines toward the fresher, more acidic, lower-alcohol style his mother had made when she was first starting out; these wines can be made from grapes picked earlier, shortening their exposure to fire risk. And though he was

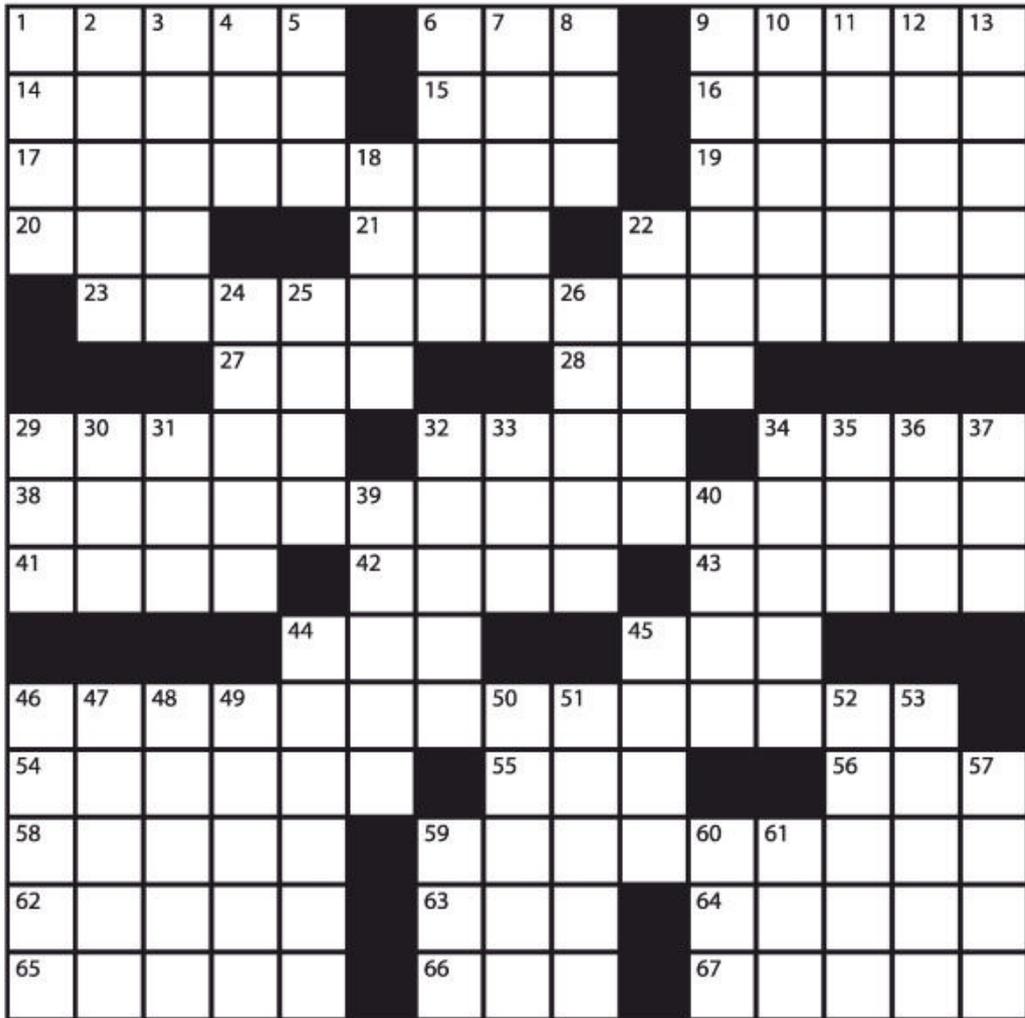
less pessimistic about the future of cabernet, Viader was setting aside 10 percent of the vineyard to experiment with varieties like malbec, grenache, tempranillo, and touriga nacional.

Some winemakers think their best option is leaving Napa entirely. Last year, after nearly two decades working in Napa, Jacobson, the former Gott winemaker, moved 360 miles south and bought two vineyards in the Santa Ynez Valley. “Santa Barbara has been relatively smoke free the last 10 years,” she said. “That wasn’t an accident.” There’s more water in the ground in Santa Barbara, so even without rain, the vines have more to drink; land is cheaper, and Santa Ynez doesn’t have as many big forests, which, if they catch fire, create the blankets of dense smoke that spell doom for nearby grapes.

In 2020, when Jacobson still worked at Gott, she had to evacuate her home during one of the fires. “There’s been an evacuation every year since 2017,” she told me. “We keep saying, ‘It’s a wild year,’ but now we say that every year. It’s getting pretty old.”

A version of this story was originally published in New York magazine. Used with permission.

Crossword No. 649: Above and Beyond by Matt Gaffney



ACROSS

- 1 ___ up (excited)
- 6 *Sanditon* aier
- 9 Flip out
- 14 Chessboard boss
- 15 Catch a glimpse of
- 16 Common font
- 17 Term recently coined by President Biden for Donald Trump's especially radical followers
- 19 Part of a pig
- 20 Make believe
- 21 Sometimes called
- 22 Harlem theater
- 23 Ron Paul frequently warns of it
- 27 Alaskan animal
- 28 Struck, as a match
- 29 Neighbor of China and India
- 32 ___ tube (TV)
- 34 Jenga or Yahtzee
- 38 Like activities mentioned on college applications
- 41 Score on the ice
- 42 McEntire of country
- 43 *Broom*-___ (comic strip)
- 44 Reason not to
- 45 Word in rappers' names
- 46 Material useful in creating particle accelerators
- 54 High points
- 55 German "A"

- 56 "What was that name?"
- 58 Completely, casually
- 59 Dustin Moskovitz to Democrats or Vince McMahon to Republicans, e.g.
- 62 Like krypton and neon
- 63 www.brown.____
- 64 Cara or Dunne
- 65 Wasp's homes
- 66 Hooded snake
- 67 Tiny holes

DOWN

- 1 Light blue
- 2 Weed-fighting stuff
- 3 Tending to quibble
- 4 Suffix with pamphlet or rocket
- 5 Cold-case evidence
- 6 Jen who stepped down this month
- 7 Got started
- 8 Orca's home
- 9 Show that you're shocked by
- 10 "...but we could do something else instead"
- 11 Good dip for fries
- 12 São ___ (Brazilian city)
- 13 John of pop
- 18 Con artist's target
- 22 "I was out of town that day," e.g.
- 24 Earring material
- 25 Spanish for "she"
- 26 Local plants

- 29 Abbr. in blood types
- 30 Prefix with skeleton
- 31 Scholastic org.
- 32 It's good in Granada
- 33 Sphere, poetically
- 34 Jury's determination
- 35 100 percent
- 36 Alfred E. Neuman's magazine
- 37 Noteworthy time
- 39 Comfy pair
- 40 In style
- 44 Reaches a high point
- 45 The moon, poetically
- 46 Material for sheets
- 47 Leading by a run, e.g.
- 48 "Oh, for ___ sake!"
- 49 Give, as effort
- 50 Must have
- 51 Unearth
- 52 "For Sale by ___"
- 53 French river to the Mediterranean
- 57 Mined materials
- 59 "Give ___ second"
- 60 Sudden downturn
- 61 Cuban gold

The Week Contest

This week's question: Balenciaga is selling "full destroyed" high-top sneakers—complete with scuffs, graffiti, and artfully placed tears—for \$1,850 a pair. If the Paris fashion house were to launch an entirely new line of pricey, tattered clothing, what should it be called?

Last week's contest: After their flight to Las Vegas was delayed, an eloping Oklahoma City couple enlisted the help of an ordained minister to get married midflight. If a new airline were to dedicate itself to providing onboard wedding ceremonies at 30,000 feet, what name could it adopt?

THE WINNER: "Cupid's Aero"
Marjo van Dijck, Durham, N.C.

SECOND PLACE: "Aer Link Us"
Kenneth Burgan, Grass Valley, Calif.

THIRD PLACE: "Mergin' Air"
Mary Ann Cooper, Asheville, N.C.

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

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, please type "Tattered fashion" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, May 24. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, May 27. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.



◀ **The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.**

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: *hard*

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

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

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