

U.S. NEWS



THE NUMBERS | By Josh Zumbrun

Why Ideal Family Size Eclipses Birthrate

What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have? A loaded question if there ever was one. Most Americans say the answer is two to three children, according to various surveys over nearly 90 years, even as actual birthrates drop lower than that.

You may have read that American fertility rates are falling below the critical “replacement rate” of 2.1 children per woman that keeps the size of the population stable over time. Rates also have trended lower since the 2007-09 recession and through a baby bust during the pandemic.

Against this backdrop, the surprise is that most Americans still overwhelmingly stick to an ideal of two to three children. In fact, the share of people saying they want three or more kids has risen as the actual number of children being born has dropped.

“The general ideal has stayed relatively high,” said Alison Gemmill, a demographer at Johns Hopkins.

By the mid-1990s, about one-third of Americans said the ideal family had three or more kids. But since then, the share of respondents citing an ideal of three or more children has gradually climbed. Despite dipping briefly after the pandemic, that group rebounded again in 2022 to 44%, according to the General Social Survey, the more than 50-year-old survey of Americans’ social views conducted by the University of Chicago.

Meanwhile, the share of people who say the ideal family consists of two kids slipped to 51.7% in 2022 from 62% in 1998. On average, the ideal family is 2.5 children, which is up slightly from the



Most Americans still overwhelmingly stick to an ideal of having two to three children.

1990s but relatively little changed over 50 years. (Men and women express very similar ideals.)

The polling group Gallup has sporadically asked the question since 1936 and found that the ideal family was larger back then, at 3.6 children. Nearly the entire shift in people’s ideal family size occurred in the 1960s.

The data is also fuzzy because the GSS survey has given people the option to respond “as many as you want.” It is ambiguously worded, potentially signaling a desire for as many as possible, but many people interpret the question as meaning there is no one-size-fits-all

approach for families. In recent years, a growing share have given this answer rather than specify a number.

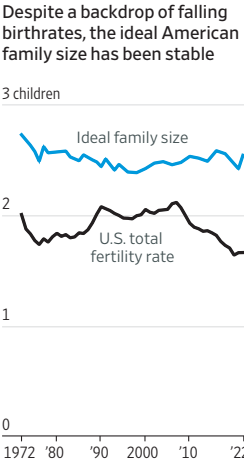
What is this question actually asking? It isn’t directly asking someone how many children they would like to have, or how many they do have or intend to have. People could answer based on what they see as ideal for their own lives, others in general, or on the families they grew up with or the families they intend to have.

In essence, many people are saying something like, “If everything was good in life, having bigger families is a

good thing,” said Gemmill.

It’s rare to say that zero children is ideal. Amanda Nagle, a researcher at the University of Texas, has noted that this viewpoint is overwhelmingly held by people who think climate change is “extremely” dangerous, and it is rare even among them.

Researchers also have attempted to gauge intended fertility rates, accounting for the number of children people already have plus the additional number they intend to have. Gemmill and co-author Caroline Sten Hartnett of the University of South Carolina found that this intention dropped to 2.16 in 2013-2017 from 2.26 in



2006-2010. In other words, the gap between people’s ideal family size and personal intentions is growing.

A reason for this is that about 10% of women and 12% of men don’t personally intend to have kids, which isn’t captured by the Gallup and GSS surveys.

Right now birthrates are lower still—1.67 children per woman in 2022, according to provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is worth noting, however, that although millennials and the oldest members of Generation Z have thus far had fewer children than earlier generations, they may catch up to previous generations. Women born in the 1980s and 1990s have had, on average, between 0.1 and 0.5 fewer children than women of the 1960s and 1970s when they were the same age.

While the birthrate is followed closely, the ideal family size gets less attention.

“The number of children people want is too often omitted from the conversa-

tion about birthrates,” said Lyman Stone, the director of research for the population consulting firm Demographic Intelligence.

This leaves two major questions to ask. The first is why people aren’t having the families they idealize or intend to have.

It may in part be unanswerable. All sorts of life happens, and you don’t necessarily end up with the family you expected theoretically in a survey, and certainly not at the age your parents did. Many millennials have a story like going to college, working a few years, meeting somebody and not wanting to rush into anything—maybe paying off student loans first or saving for a house, which takes a few years or more. Then the person gets married, doesn’t want children right away, perhaps finds some news developments unsettling and waits for the world to calm down. Maybe the person eventually decides to go for it anyway but has trouble getting pregnant, a frequent experience for those starting later, or has a first child and raising the child is harder than expected. Maybe the sleep deprivation is worse than imagined, or the child care is more expensive.

The second question is how to help people achieve their family goals.

This is often discussed in language so dry and analytical that it can sound like a mindless call for children regardless of preferences. But one thing the ideal family size shows us is that this interpretation isn’t quite right.

It matters because it helps clarify whether policies to support fertility are pressuring people into lives they don’t want, Stone says, “or is it helping them live the lives they do want?”

Some Take Side Jobs for Weight Loss

Continued from Page One

Across the country, some consumers are paying \$10,000 a year or more to get popular drugs from Eli Lilly & Co. and Novo Nordisk. Patients report taking on second jobs, racking up credit cards and cutting back on travel or family expenses to afford Lilly’s Mounjaro, a diabetes drug being used off-label for weight loss. They

are also self paying for off-label use of Novo’s diabetes drug, Ozempic, and sister drug Wegovy, which is approved for weight loss.

The willingness of consumers to pay thousands of dollars of their own money underscores the public’s appetite for more effective weight-loss medications.

Consumers are paying significant sums out of pocket in large part because insurers are denying coverage for weight loss. In addition, the drugmakers are charging the full list price of a drug instead of offering any of the discounts they give to health plans.

Insurers may deny coverage of weight-loss drugs or drugs

that are used off-label for weight loss.

Lilly and Novo didn’t comment on why they charge people list prices for their products when coverage is denied.

In Pittsburgh, Jordan Jones said she felt optimistic about her weight struggles when she heard about Ozempic. Then she found out her insurer wouldn’t cover the medication for off-label use.

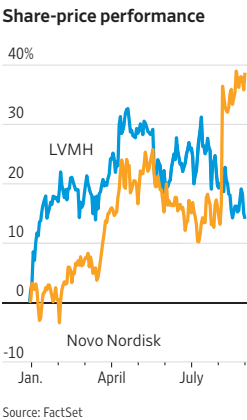
Her boyfriend is now working 12-hour shifts four days a week to pay for her \$800 monthly supply. The couple is also cutting back on eating out, gas, groceries and alcohol, she said. “You would think it would be covered as preventive care,” said the 30-year-old who sells internet technology solutions. “I am lucky I can afford it out of pocket. I recognize my privilege. People want to feel healthy and they’ll get it any way they can.”

Jordan reduces part of her cost with a savings card from SingleCare, a prescription discount program.

Lilly had a savings program to help eligible, commercially insured adults with a diabetes diagnosis obtain Mounjaro if their insurance didn’t cover the medication. That program expired June 30. Patients with commercial insurance who don’t have coverage for Mounjaro might be able to re-enroll in an amended version of the program.

Lilly is hoping to get FDA approval of the drug for weight loss by the end of the year.

Novo also offers a coupon for patients who don’t have in-



Tina Marie Porter, left, pays about \$1,000 a month out-of-pocket for Mounjaro. Jordan Jones, right, says her insurance wouldn’t cover Ozempic for off-label use.



FROM LEFT: TINA MARIE PORTER, JORDAN JONES

says the cost is more than her monthly Social Security check. She and her wife clip coupons, ask for senior rates, and take buses instead of cabs.

“It is an investment because in the long run it will save me money and it will save Medicare money by improving the quality of my life,” she said. “But I resent it. I see other people getting it covered and people selling it on the black market.”

States have the option, but aren’t required to cover anti-obesity medication, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

“From a historical perspective, people pretended obesity wasn’t really a medical condition, so a lot of prescription drug plans won’t cover it,” said Ted Kyle, former chair of the Obesity Action Coalition, a nonprofit representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
(USPS 664-880) (Eastern Edition ISSN 0099-9660)
(Central Edition ISSN 1092-0935) (Western Edition ISSN 0193-2241)

Editorial and publication headquarters: 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036
Published daily except Sundays and general legal holidays.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and other mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Wall Street Journal, 200 Burnett Rd., Chicopee, MA 01020.

All Advertising published in The Wall Street Journal is subject to the applicable rate card, copies of which are available from the Advertising Services Department, Dow Jones & Co. Inc., 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. The Journal reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

Letters to the Editor: Fax: 212-416-2891; email: wsj.letters@wsj.com

Need assistance with your subscription?
By web: customercenter.wsj.com; By email: wsjsupport@wsj.com
By phone: 1-800-JOURNAL (1-800-568-7625)

Reprints & licensing:
By email: customreprints@dowjones.com
By phone: 1-800-843-0008

WSJ back issues and framed pages: wsjshop.com

Our newspapers are 100% sourced from sustainably certified mills.

GOT A TIP FOR US? SUBMIT IT AT WSJ.COM/TIPS

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

Manufacturing activity in China shrank for the fifth consecutive month in August. A World News article in some editions Thursday and a Page One article and photo caption in some editions on Friday about China's economy incorrectly said it shrank for the sixth consecutive month.

Strive Asset Management's eight exchange-traded funds had \$823.6 million in assets under management as of June 30, according to data from Morningstar. An Aug. 21 Journal Reports article about funds that ignore ESG (environmental, social and corporate-governance factors) incorrectly said \$370.4 million.

Unilever's annual revenue in 2022 was \$65 billion. An article about Leena Nair, Chanel's new chief executive, in this week-end's WSJ Magazine incorrectly called Unilever a \$132 billion company. Also, the first name of fashion blogger Monika Arora was misspelled as Monica.

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

U.S. NEWS

Nursing
Homes Get
Staffing
Guidelines

By Stephanie Armour

Nursing homes would have to maintain minimum staffing levels under a Biden administration proposal despite furious lobbying from the industry, which says it will be too onerous amid a continuing labor shortage.

Biden administration officials said the first-ever national staffing rule would require nursing homes that participate in Medicare and Medicaid to provide a minimum of 0.55 hours of care from a registered nurse per resident a day, and 2.45 hours of care from a nurse aide per resident a day. A registered nurse would be required to be on-site at all times and nursing-home care assessments would be strengthened under the proposal.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates that about 75% of nursing homes would have to strengthen staffing in their facilities under the proposal.

“Establishing minimum staffing standards for nursing homes will improve resident safety and promote high-quality care so residents and their families can have peace of mind,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.

The administration said it also plans to launch a national initiative to tackle the staffing shortage in the nursing-home industry. It will invest more than \$75 million in financial incentives such as scholarships and tuition reimbursement to support staffing prospects for nursing homes.

Nursing-home associations have said they are being unfairly singled out for a staffing mandate that could drive some facilities out of business.

Nursing homes are already grappling with a staffing shortage that has seen a drop of 190,000 hands-on staff compared with before the pandemic, said Clif Porter, senior vice president of government relations at the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living.

Groups opposing the staffing mandate have said it would cost billions of dollars annually for the industry. The proposed rule doesn’t offer funding to subsidize the new workers. Advocates for nursing-home patients have been pushing for measures to ensure patients get the attention they need, from attending to their health-care to helping with things such as basic hygiene.

—Jon Kamp contributed to this article.



FROM TOP: METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT, MUSTAFA NUSSAN FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2)

Harsher Storms Test Chicago Tunnel System

By Joe Barrett

CHICAGO—Engineers have spent nearly 50 years and billions of dollars building huge tunnels and reservoirs to protect this city from flooding. In a changing climate, it may no longer be enough.

A July 2 storm dropped more than 8 inches of rain on some parts of the city and its suburbs, flooding tens of thousands of basements and prompting a federal disaster declaration. Once the tunnels and main reservoir were full, sewage and storm water poured into the Chicago River, forcing officials to reverse its flow and send the tainted mix into Lake Michigan, the region’s main source of drinking water.

The Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, also known as the Deep Tunnel—over 100 miles of tunnels and three reservoirs covering different parts of the region—has kept a trillion gallons of sewage-tainted water out of local waterways since 1981, at a total cost of \$3.8 billion, according to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

A huge addition to the McCook Reservoir serving Chicago and certain suburbs is expected to open in 2029, adding 6.5 billion gallons of capacity to the current reservoir’s 3.5 billion gallons. That will further reduce the frequency of spills into the Chicago River, but officials aren’t certain even that will be enough to bottle up the biggest storms.

“It’s sort of a Catch-22,” said Kevin Fitzpatrick, assistant director of engineering for the reclamation district, just before heading 300 feet below ground to show a visitor the giant pumps that send the water



Chicago’s Tunnel and Reservoir Plan includes more than 100 miles of massive tunnels, top, and three reservoirs. In July, Lavelle Parker’s basement apartment was damaged.

after storms to a huge sewage treatment plant. “We’re in a lot better spot because we have the reservoirs, but the storms that we’re getting now are a little bit more than maybe they designed this thing for in the 1970s. It’s so unpredictable with these weather patterns.”

Chicago isn’t alone in wrestling with storm runoff and sewage spills amid more intense storms kicked up by the warming climate. Infrastructure built for the storms of the past might not be enough to withstand the events of the future as climate change alters rainfall patterns, raising difficult questions about how cities will be able to adjust massive projects to handle more water without incurring prohibitive costs.

“Almost everything that’s been built in the past couple of decades is just undersized for the type of rain events that we get today because of climate change,” said Bob Dean, chief strategy and program officer at

the Center for Neighborhood Technology, a Chicago-based nonprofit that recently published a study showing that storm and wastewater systems in Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, South Bend, Ind., and Buffalo, N.Y., were built to address now-outdated storm data.

“A lot of times we’re designing these things for yesterday’s storms, not tomorrow’s storms,” said Rob Moore, senior policy analyst with the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York-based environmental group. “Beyond that, it’s the fallacy that the single engineered solution is going to protect us.”

Philadelphia and other cities are leading the way in using what is known as green infrastructure to divert water from the storm-drainage system through things such as rain gardens, permeable alleys and other projects, he said. Reclamation district officials for the Chicago area are also pouring money into projects such as

converting hard-surface school playgrounds into artificial-turf soccer fields that can store rainwater and release it slowly into the storm-water system, officials said.

In Chicago, the deep tunnel project does little to alleviate one major source of flooding: areas where older local pipes aren’t big enough to send water out of the neighborhoods during big rains.

That is one reason why there were so many flooded basements with the July 2 storm, officials said. “We were getting flooding complaints before the reservoir was full,” said Ed Staudacher, assistant director of maintenance and operations with the reclamation district. “It’s not even getting to us quick enough before they’re flooding.”

Lavelle Parker, 44, who drives a street sweeper for the city’s streets and sanitation department, said the 2½ feet of tainted water that flooded his basement apartment in the

Austin neighborhood sent a couch across the living room and ruined his possessions.

“I’ve been living in Chicago all my life and I’ve never seen a flood like that,” said Parker.

Austin and the suburbs of Cicero and Berwyn had rainfall that would be expected to happen only once every 500 years, while other areas received the equivalent of 50- to 100-year rainfalls, all within about six hours, said Kevin Doom, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

To get ready for the coming rains, workers in the glassed-in control room off the lobby of the reclamation district’s Chicago headquarters opened gates southwest of the city to lower river levels and make room for storm water, Staudacher said.

As the deluge gained steam, runoff and sewage began flowing through the massive deep tunnel toward the McCook Reservoir. When the reservoir topped off, the dirty water started flowing straight into the river, which rose 6 feet, threatening to spill its banks. That is when reclamation district officials and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opened locks and gates, allowing water to flow into Lake Michigan.

Researchers say green infrastructure and analysis of massive data sets through tools like artificial intelligence and machine learning could help the district cope with bigger storms ahead. “You have to adapt to what Mother Nature throws at you, and right now Mother Nature is as upset as it can possibly be,” said Marcelo Garcia, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



Martha Stewart

**NO BENDING OVER.
NO TOUCHING SHOES.
NO KIDDING.**

JUST SLIP IN™

Introducing new Skechers Hands Free Slip-ins®. Putting on your shoes has never been easier. No bending over. No pulling them on. No hassles.

Exclusive Heel Pillow™ holds your foot securely in place!



NO MORE BENDING

NEVER HAVE TO TOUCH YOUR SHOES AGAIN™

SKECHERS.COM



LEARN MORE

SKECHERS

HANDS FREE

Slip-ins®



U.S. NEWS

Jefferson Makes a Cameo in Trump Case

Comparisons with the predicament of Mike Pence arise—but go only so far

By ANNIE LINSKEY

WASHINGTON—In 1801, after the young nation's fourth election, Vice President Thomas Jefferson faced a choice in his constitutional role to certify the results: He could reject Georgia's tally because the paperwork was defective—or he could accept the defective paperwork and set himself up for victory.

More than two centuries later, that long-lost-to-history decision resurfaced as relevant to the aftermath of the 2020 election and the legal quagmire now surrounding former President Donald Trump.

On Jan. 6, 2021, it was Trump's vice president, Mike Pence, whose role was to certify the results of the electoral vote before a joint session of Congress as he faced intense pressure from Trump and his supporters to reject Electoral College tallies from key states and send them back to the legislatures, even though both the Electoral College count and the popular vote gave President Biden his victory.

The pressure on Pence was the culmination of frenzied planning by Trump and his allies over how they could create a slate of alternate electors—state representatives picked by the party or candidate who formally cast presidential ballots based on the

popular vote—from narrowly decided states to produce a Trump victory.

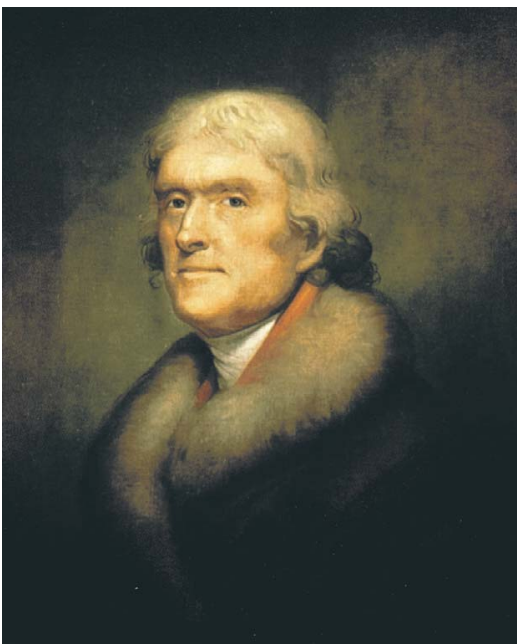
Pence became the plotters' last chance on the deadline day for certifying the election, making the vice president the target of Trump supporters as they stormed the Capitol and called on him to refuse to legally certify the election. Pence stood his ground, saying he had no leeway under the Constitution to do anything other than conduct the process by which the results of the Electoral College were counted and certified.

Trump's and his allies' actions are now at the heart of two criminal cases. In a federal case in Washington, Trump is accused of conspiring to overturn the election; in Georgia, he and 18 allies are accused of racketeering to fabricate a victory for Trump in the state. Trump and the others deny any wrongdoing.

Where Jefferson comes in relates to whether Pence had more authority than he exercised.

Jefferson, who was President John Adams's vice president, was a leading candidate for president among several on the 1800 ballot at a time before the modern Republican and Democratic parties came to dominate electoral politics.

If Jefferson accepted the results from Georgia, albeit submitted with faulty paperwork, his vote tally would give him a tie in the Electoral College, throwing his candidacy to the House of Representatives, where he finally pre-



Thomas Jefferson faced a choice in certifying electoral votes.

‘Substance and not form should prevail.’

Jefferson wrote to James Madison

vailed after 36 rounds of voting. If he rejected Georgia's results, with the prospect in those days that it would take weeks for a resubmission with the paperwork fixed, it could have sparked a Constitutional crisis, as Bruce Ackerman and

David Fontana wrote in a 2004 article in the Atlantic. America's nascent democracy had faced a similar issue four years earlier, Ackerman and Fontana noted. In 1797, then-Vice President Adams was the leading contender in

the presidential race when he oversaw the Electoral College count as president of the Senate. The paperwork from Vermont, which was favorable to him, was under question for its validity.

Jefferson urged his fellow Southerners not to dispute the Vermont ballots so that “substance and not form should prevail,” he wrote to James Madison, according to the Atlantic. Yielding to “the choice of the people,” he wrote, would “prevent the phenomenon of a Pseudo-president at so early a day.” Adams counted the Vermont ballots and became president.

Jefferson embraced that same approach in February 1801 when he accepted Georgia's faulty paperwork and eventually won his first presidential term as the nation's third chief executive. The rest, as they say, is history.

Trump's lawyers have since described that Jefferson incident as justifying why they believed Pence had the authority to reject Electoral College ballots from several states, including Georgia. Trump has added his own twist, making clear that he didn't want Pence to do exactly what Jefferson did because Jefferson ultimately accepted the ballots, and Trump wanted Pence to reject them, paving the way for new ones showing falsely that Trump had won.

“Mike Pence had the right, in my opinion, to send them back,” Trump said in an interview last week with Tucker Carlson on X, formerly known

as Twitter. “I was really disappointed, and I didn't want to do what Thomas Jefferson did.”

There are key differences of course. Jefferson wasn't seeking to change the way Georgia votes were reflected, which was the goal of Trump and his team.

“There was no question about what actually the vote was,” said Ackerman, a Yale law professor who has researched the 1800 episode. “It's a deficiency that is a technical deficiency,” he added.

“It wouldn't make sense to have one person sitting there deciding on who the next president is, because that violates all sorts of basic principles of constitutional law,” added Fontana, now a law professor at George Washington University.

There were no challenges to Jefferson's decision at the time, additional evidence that he was acting within established norms. The same can't be said of what Trump asked Pence to do.

A Trump spokesman didn't respond to a request for comment.

In the weeks leading up to Jan. 6, 2021, Trump's team seized on the idea that Jefferson's precedent gave Pence the right to reject state paperwork, making the argument in a memo circulated within the highest echelons of the Trump administration. “This was their grand theory that Pence could overturn the election,” said Marc Short, then-Pence's chief of staff, in an interview.

New Defense Lawyer Is Critic of Georgia’s Use of RICO

By JAMES FANELLI

The latest member of Donald Trump's band of criminal defense lawyers is a hard-charging Atlanta attorney known for eviscerating cross-examinations of government witnesses and pointed critiques of how the local district attorney uses Georgia's anti-racketeering law.

Steve Sadow was retained last month to defend Trump against charges by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis that the former president conspired to overturn the state's voting results in the 2020 election, in violation of the state's racketeering, or RICO, law. His hiring didn't surprise other criminal defense attorneys, who said he has a reputation as an aggressive advocate.

“It's not like his whole life

is spent being acrimonious, but in the courtroom he is not subtle,” said Don Samuel, an Atlanta-based criminal defense attorney who has worked many cases with Sadow.

Trump is likely Sadow's most challenging case yet during his more than four-decade career, but the lawyer is no stranger to representing high-profile clients, including singer Usher Raymond and rapper Rick Ross. He has won several notable acquittals, including for an associate of former NFL star Ray Lewis in a 2000 murder trial. Sadow also has tangled with Willis in one of her previous RICO prosecutions, in a street gang case.

“I think (Willis) believes that RICO is the all-embracing, universal means by which to put an end to crime, which with all due respect is just nonsense,” Sadow said in an

interview with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution last year.

Willis built her case against Trump on a racketeering theory, alleging he and 18 others were part of a criminal enterprise that aimed to keep him in power. She has said using the RICO law gives prosecutors the ability to present a broad picture of alleged criminal wrongdoing to a jury.

In a court filing Thursday, Trump waived his right to a formal arraignment and pleaded not guilty. Sadow declined to comment for this article but previously said Trump shouldn't have been indicted. A spokesman for Trump didn't respond to a request for comment.

Sadow is part of a web of lawyers scattered around the East Coast who have been picked to represent Trump in one or more of his four indict-

ments. While the lawyers are focused on their individual cases, they regularly speak to one another and directly to Trump to strategize, say people familiar with the matter.

Boris Epshteyn, Trump's in-house counsel and senior adviser, helps coordinate calls and facilitate the flow of information, the people said. Sadow has already been discussing the Georgia case with his counterparts representing Trump in the federal prosecution accusing him of trying to overturn the 2020 election, one of the people said.

Sadow, an Ohio native who worked at a pool hall in high school, graduated from Marietta College and Emory University School of Law. He has been in private practice 43 years.

Samuel said when he and Sadow have represented a de-

fendant together, many times Sadow will handle the testimony of important witnesses. “Invariably, if there is a snitch or someone who has to be cross-examined, that is going to be his witness,” he said.

The two lawyers share a view that Georgia's RICO law is deployed too often, Samuel said. The sweeping, multi-defendant cases can drag on, he said, adding that prosecutors could better spend their resources on more targeted cases rather than trying to prove a criminal syndicate.

The Georgia RICO law is modeled on the 1970 federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, which gave the Justice Department a tool to pursue organized crime by tying mob bosses to the conduct of subordinates. Prosecutors frequently try to secure plea deals from some de-

fendants in exchange for testimony against the higher-priced targets.

Vincent Citro, a Florida-based defense attorney and former federal prosecutor, said he and Sadow won an acquittal this year in a Florida federal court for the founder of a clinical laboratory who was one of 10 defendants the Justice Department charged with a \$1.4 billion healthcare-fraud and money-laundering scheme.

During the trial, a government expert witness told the jury that a data analysis of records showed defendants had committed fraud on private insurers. On cross-examination, Sadow dug into the witness' testimony, allowing the jury to see the flaws in his analysis, Citro said.

—Jan Wolfe contributed to this article.

Lead Grows For Former President

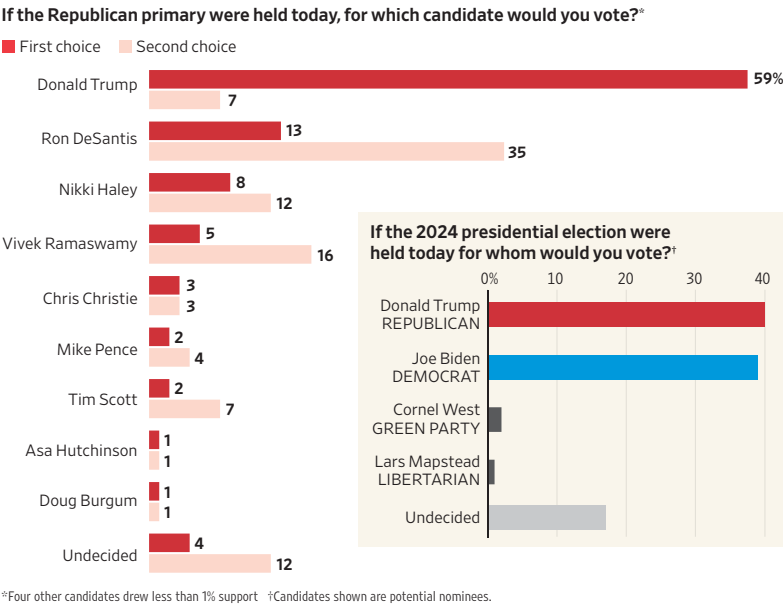
Continued from Page One

have only strengthened the leading contender. Two of Trump's indictments involve his efforts to remain in power after his 2020 loss, which included repeated false claims of widespread election irregularities.

Asked separately about the indictments of Trump, more than 60% of Republican primary voters said each was politically motivated and without merit. Some 78% said Trump's actions after the 2020 election were legitimate efforts to ensure an accurate vote, while 16% said Trump had illegally tried to block Congress from certifying an election he had lost. About half, or 48%, said the indictments made them more likely to vote for Trump in 2024, while 16% said they made them less likely to support him for a second term.

The survey also found Trump running about dead-even with Democratic President Biden among voters overall in a hypothetical rematch of the 2020 election, with low interest among voters for two third-party candidates. Trump had 40% support to 39% for Biden, with potential Green Party and Libertarian candidates drawing a combined 3%. A significant share—some 17%—were undecided.

In a head-to-head test that excluded other candidates,



Trump and Biden were tied at 46% each with 8% undecided.

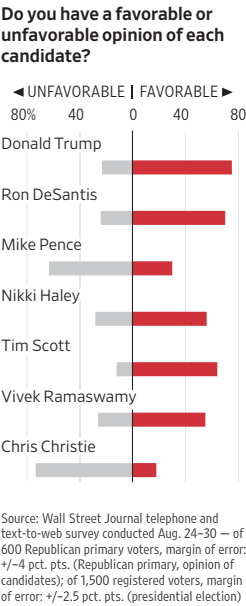
Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio, who conducted the survey with Democrat Michael Bocian, said it was “shocking” that a potential general election rematch between the last president and the current one is polling this closely, given Trump's indictments.

“When we talk about how twisted and bent reality has become, that's a really good example of it, because if, in fact, this were any other time and place, this race would not be happening this way,” said Fabrizio, who also works for a super PAC supporting Trump's candidacy.

The survey revealed other findings:

- ◆ At 13% support, DeSantis's position has collapsed since April, when 24% backed him in a slightly different field of candidates tested by the Journal.
- ◆ GOP primary voters believe businessman Vivek Ramaswamy and former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, far more than any other candidates, exceeded expectations in the televised Aug. 23 GOP debate. But those impressions so far haven't turned into significant ballot support, with Haley the first choice of 8% and Ramaswamy at 5%.
- ◆ Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina has made little headway.
- ◆ Republicans nationally are rejecting the candidates who

most sharply criticize Trump: Former Govs. Chris Christie of New Jersey and Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas.

- ◆ The image of Mike Pence, who as Trump's vice president turned aside his request to block Congress from certifying the 2020 vote, has tarnished among primary voters. In April, 54% viewed him favorably. Now, 30% view him favorably.
- ◆ “DeSantis collapsed,” said Bocian. “The one candidate who back in April really seemed to be a potential contender, seemed to have a narrative to tell, has totally collapsed, and those votes went to Trump.”
- ◆ The Florida governor endured millions of dollars in attack ads—largely unanswered—


from Trump's team even before he made his relatively late entry into the race in May. He recently laid off staff and changed campaign managers. His attempt to run to Trump's right turned off some supporters and donors without peeling off many Trump backers.

DeSantis has resources for the long haul, including a super PAC with \$85 million. His aides say voters won't really begin focusing on their choices until the weather starts turning cold in places such as Iowa and New Hampshire, where the first nominating contests will be held.

There is some truth to that. At this point in 2015, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, the winner of the 2016 Iowa caucuses, was at

just 8% in the most closely watched poll in the state. Trump was at 23%.

While the Journal poll tested impressions of Republican primary voters nationally, the nominating process is a state-by-state contest that unfolds over months, starting with Iowa's Jan. 15 caucuses. Trump is leading in surveys both in Iowa and New Hampshire, which holds the first primary, but some state polls show a smaller lead.

A number of factors could alter the race, including an unexpectedly strong showing by a candidate in one of the early-voting states. Tens of millions of dollars in television advertising will soon be spent, which could reshape views of the candidates.

But one survey finding suggests that dramatic changes are unlikely: Some 76% of Trump supporters say that they are committed to him and won't change their minds. By contrast, 25% of DeSantis voters say their minds are made up. Smaller shares of Ramaswamy, Haley and Christie voters say they are fully committed to their choice.

New York prosecutors charged Trump in April with allegedly falsifying business records to hide hush-money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels. He was later indicted by federal officials for allegedly taking classified documents after his presidency and obstructing government efforts to get them back. Federal prosecutors and one in Georgia have also charged Trump in separate cases for actions they say amounted to illegal efforts to reverse his loss in the 2020 election.

U.S. NEWS

Why Adults Can’t Quit a Kid’s Snack

Fans of pre-made PBJs like the convenience, debate how to serve them

By JENNIFER WILLIAMS-ALVAREZ

When Justin Waddell settles in for lunch, most days he’s having an Uncrustable. He prefers the grape jelly and peanut butter flavor of the **J.M. Smucker** sandwich, but will occasionally eat the strawberry jam option for variety. And while Waddell isn’t opposed to assembling his own PBJ—“I can make a pretty mean one,” he says—it’s hard to beat the convenience of throwing one of the mass-produced, frozen sandwiches in his lunchbox.

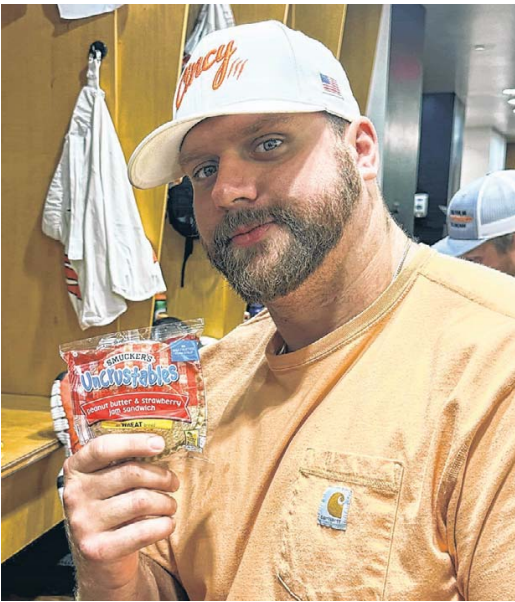
In a typical week, Waddell will have an Uncrustable each day along with something crunchy, even though it means some occasional teasing in the lunchroom.

“There were the jokes when I first started. You know, ‘Nice Uncrustable,’” says Waddell, a 35-year-old machine operator in Erlanger, Ky. He kept putting them in his lunches anyway. “And I think I opened up the floodgates, because there are other guys bringing Uncrustables now,” he says.

What started in 1995 as a school lunchbox snack called Incredible Uncrustables made by two fathers in North Dakota is now in briefcases and handbags—and a growth driver for one of the country’s biggest food and beverage makers.

Whether eaten by golfers, lawyers or construction workers, the crimped, crustless discs aren’t just for children anymore. They are a go-to at music festivals, a source of calories for runners mid-marathon, and a portable meal for professionals—side-eyed glances notwithstanding.

Impassioned fans debate how best to eat Uncrustables—frozen or not? And if in the latter camp, how long



Ted Karras, of the Cincinnati Bengals, sometimes eats two or three Uncrustables. Kaylee Felio with a snack.



FROM LEFT: TED KARRAS; KAYLEE FELIO

should they thaw and by what method? In your pocket or a few hours in a lunch box? Can you microwave them? (Yes, most say, on low power for soft bread and a gooey inside.) Or toast them? (Debatable. Some worry about the potential fire hazard if the Uncrustable filling oozes out mid-toast.)

Smucker doesn’t recommend toasting or microwaving.

Ted Karras likes not only the convenience of Uncrustables, but also the caloric boost. The 6’4” offensive lineman, who weighs around 320 pounds, needs a quick way to pack in protein and keep weight on during the season with the Cincinnati Bengals of the National Football League.

He says it can cost him \$760 per pound a day in fines to the team if he’s outside of a range of 314 and 324 pounds, a range stipulated in his contract. So the 30-year-old tries to eat around 6,000 to 7,000 calories a day during the season.

Some of those calories come from eating Uncrustables, especially later in the season when Karras says he tires of eating big meals.

“When you’re in a training camp or as the season goes on, breakfast can be very monotonous,” he says. So he swaps in Uncrustables. “Two or three Uncrustables, a cup of coffee and a water and I’m ready to roll.”

Karras, who comes from a family of NFL players, eats what he calls “jumbo” Uncrustables. Smucker said it sells larger Uncrustables to certain markets, and those have around 590 calories. The classic ones sold in stores have about 200 calories.

Sales have soared since Smucker, based in Orrville, Ohio, acquired the product in 1998. Uncrustables’ net sales in the current fiscal year are expected to grow around 20% to over \$800 million, according to Smucker.

“All of a sudden, you’re finding them everywhere,” says Smucker Chief Financial

Officer Tucker Marshall. The growth has meant adding new flavors, such as options with meat and cheese, and new markets, launching in Canada this year.

Some Uncrustable eaters further uncrust their Uncrustables, cutting off the crimped edges. Online, avid fans share hacks, among them adding toppings such as fruit, syrup and powdered sugar, or frying them.

Uncrustables have some competition. Chubby Snacks, which says it offers “healthy” prepackaged crustless sandwiches with less sugar than other options, launched in June 2020 with circle-shaped PBJs. Within 30 days, the Los Angeles-based company says it received a letter from Smucker, claiming Chubby’s round, crustless sandwiches were too similar.

The brand has since abandoned the circle shape. Now Chubby’s sandwiches—featuring strawberry or grape jam paired with either peanut or almond butter—look like clouds.

“Forced to decide whether it was worth going up against them in court or change the shape, we decided to change to a cloud,” says Chubby Snacks founder and Chief Executive Officer Dillon Ceglio.

Gallant Tiger, a Minneapolis-based brand, last October launched crustless round sandwiches that pair ingredients such as peanut butter with salted strawberry jam and almond butter with apple chili jelly. Smucker late last year took issue with the shape of the sandwiches, according to Gallant Tiger founder Kamal Mohamed.



Frozen or not?

D.C.’s Aging Leaders Face New Scrutiny Over Tenure

By ANNIE LINSKEY

WASHINGTON—When then-Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid injured himself with exercise equipment in 2015 at age 75, his office issued a sunny statement assuring that he was ready to get back to work. Years later, he confessed that the accident was far worse than he let on and ended his political career.

Now Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, 81 years old, is facing pressure to fully explain two mysterious freeze-ups during public appearances this summer, both coming after he was sidelined earlier this year by a fall that led to a concussion. In the latest episode, the Kentucky senator, when asked Wednesday if he planned to run for re-election, stood motionless for about 30 seconds. His office later attributed the lapse to his feeling momentarily lightheaded.

The incident provided the latest example of a malady afflicting Washington: When politicians get too old or too sick to do their job, they won’t cough up what’s wrong—or step aside.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D, Calif.) turned 90 this year and has ignored calls to resign before her term ends in 2025 despite signs of diminished mental acuity and an absence because of shingles.

“There’s a history of political candidates and leaders hiding their illnesses or outright lying about them,” said Teneille R. Brown, a law professor at the University of Utah who has written about presidents concealing maladies including cancer.

The lack of honesty is one reason for voters’ ebbing trust in their elected leaders and Washington.

Polls show most voters think President Biden, 80, is too old to run for a second term in 2024. The president has at times spoken with halting cadence and physically stumbled. The White House rejects any notion that he isn’t

up to the job.

His likely Republican opponent, Donald Trump, trails him in age by three years. The 77-year-old former president has in the past been cagey about his health. Trump initially played down his Covid symptoms weeks before the 2020 election, right up until he had to be admitted to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Presidents and congressional leaders, who are entrusted to make decisions that affect war and peace, the global economy and the rights of millions of people, aren’t always clear-eyed about when it is time to step aside from their high-powered jobs.

“Politicians are like all human beings, and nobody likes to admit weakness and fallibility,” said Colin Reed, a longtime Republican strategist who is working for a super PAC aligned with former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a GOP presidential candidate. “But they all have larger egos than most everyday people” making it “a hard thing to admit.”

It is harder for politicians to hide health issues than it was in the past, said Brown, the Utah law professor, because they are recorded appearing in public far more frequently now. “The problem is aging politicians who have neurodegenerative disorders,” said Brown, who added that such conditions can hurt their judgment even before it becomes apparent in televised appearances.

These older or declining leaders can surround themselves with what she called “entrenched inner circles” of aides and allies who can disguise the extent of their bosses’ mental decline.

Americans are expressing discomfort about the frailty of their leaders. Seventy-seven

percent of Americans said Biden is too old to serve effectively for another full term in office, according to a poll conducted by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Nearly all Republicans held the view, but so did 69% of Democrats.

About half said Trump is too old for another four-year term, with 51% of respondents saying he couldn’t perform effectively. That includes 71% of Democrats and 28% of Republicans.

Biden regularly releases information about his annual physicals, with the most recent letter from his doctor made public in February, when he reported that Biden “remains fit for duty.” In Biden’s November 2021 annual physical, his doctors noted that his gait had noticeably stiffened, attributing it to age-related changes to the spine.

On Thursday, the Senate’s physician issued a letter saying that McConnell “is medically clear to continue with his schedule as planned.” The letter added that “occasional lightheadedness” isn’t uncommon after a concussion.

“It is a strange world we live in when people reach a certain age and believe they still have gas in their tank,” said Donna Brazile, a former acting chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, referring to the broad collection of aging U.S. politicians. “It’s a personal thing. Many of them believe that while they are physically slowing down, they think that they are mentally still fit to serve. They are stubborn.”

Many of the current crop of leaders, Brazile said, began their careers in the turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s. “They came into public service during a moral crisis. There was a calling,” she said. “But transitioning to that next phase of their lives is a difficult one.”

They aren’t always clear-eyed about when to step aside.



LADY LIBERTY FREDERICK RONDEL

Defining moment. Artistic marvel. Palpable excitement.



This original oil on canvas by famed French painter Frederick Rondel captures the iconic moment the Statue of Liberty was unveiled. The artist skillfully directs the viewer’s gaze to the sentinel emerging from the mist-covered harbor. Entitled *Statue of Liberty Celebration, October 28, 1886*, the masterful vision is a clear testament to Rondel’s historical and artistic significance. Circa 1887. Signed “Rondel” (lower right). Canvas: 40”h x 52½”w. Frame: 48½”h x 60¾”w. #31-7521



Scan to read more about this painting

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

622 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA • 888-767-9190 • ws@rauantiques.com • msrau.com

Since 1912, M.S. Rau has specialized in the world’s finest art, antiques and jewelry. Backed by our unprecedented 125% Guarantee, we stand behind each and every piece.

U.S. NEWS

August Report Signals Cooling Labor Market

Employers added 187,000 jobs; June and July payrolls were revised down

By GWYNN GUILFORD

Hiring slowed this summer and unemployment rose in August, signs the labor market is cooling in the face of high interest rates.

The readings from Friday’s jobs report keep the Federal Reserve on track to hold rates steady at its meeting this month, but won’t resolve a debate over whether to raise rates again in November or December. Other data show the broader economy remains strong, with consumer spending surging this summer and inflation easing.

U.S. employers added 187,000 jobs last month, while payrolls in June and July were revised down a combined

110,000, the Labor Department said. Over those three months, a modest 150,000 jobs were added monthly on average, down from an average gain of 238,000 in March through May.

The unemployment rate was 3.8% in August, up from 3.5% in July—reflecting more Americans seeking work.

Still, the job market remains tight enough that most employers are holding on to workers, rather than laying them off, and are paying them more. Workers’ average hourly earnings rose 4.3% in August from a year earlier, down from 4.4% in July, but well above the pre-pandemic pace. An increase in hours caused weekly earnings to rise the most since February.

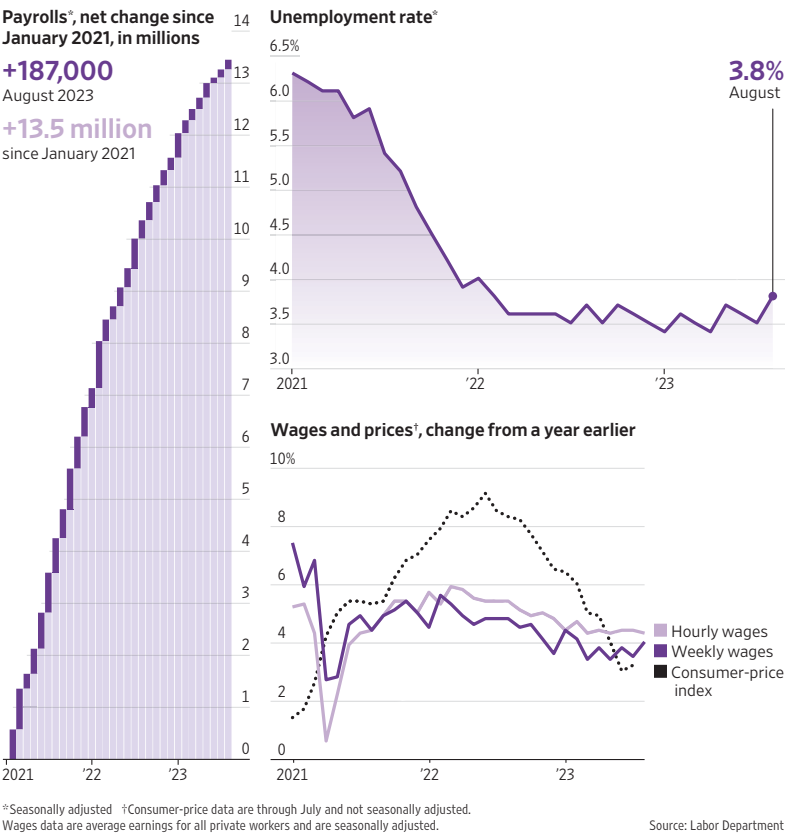
Better wages support the improving spending. That is spurring economists to boost third-quarter growth projections. S&P Global Market Intelligence estimated on Friday

that the economy is on track to grow at a 4% annual rate this quarter, much faster than the second quarter’s 2.1% pace.

Payroll gains in the past three months were the worst since the employers began consistently adding to payrolls in January 2021, but did improve in July and August from June’s revised increase of 105,000.

Healthcare, construction and social-services employers led August job gains and factories added the most jobs since October 2022. Employers in transportation and warehousing cut staff last month, after trucking company Yellow shut down.

Employment in the entertainment industry fell as well, reflecting strike activity. But excluding trucking and motion-picture job losses, payrolls roughly rose by a healthy 240,000, said Stephen Stanley, chief U.S. economist at Santander US Capital Markets.



Economy Is Defying Forecasts

Continued from Page One

of the Covid-19 pandemic distorted spending patterns, creating shortages of goods, housing and workers. This created enormous pent-up demand that has been less sensitive, for now, to higher rates.

Third, the government initially showered the economy with cash and held interest rates at rock-bottom levels, allowing businesses and consumers to lock in lower borrowing costs. Subsequent legislation further boosted federal spending and spurred additional private-sector investment in manufacturing.

Given that backdrop, “the real question is why would the economy have capitulated?” said Christopher Thornberg, founding partner at Beacon Economics in Los Angeles.

None of this implies the economy will be resilient forever. The Fed raised its benchmark federal-funds rate to a 22-year high in July, and officials have kept the door open to further boosts if activity accelerates.

Covid-era buffers will eventually erode—for example, as companies that locked in lower borrowing costs have to roll over their debts in coming years at higher rates and as households run down their savings. Banks are already pulling back on lending after two high-profile failures fanned concerns about their profitability. Lenders face potential losses on office buildings whose values will drop if employers embrace hybrid work.

Tight labor market



BON VOYAGE: A couple kissed goodbye at Los Angeles International Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration predicts this will be the third busiest holiday weekend of the year so far, behind the Juneteenth weekend, which included Father’s Day, and the Presidents Day break.

comes rose 3.8% in July from a year earlier and have risen year-over-year each month since January.

Those gains help fuel consumer spending, which accounts for roughly two-thirds of U.S. economic output. “Real incomes are what is driving the bus here,” said Neil Dutta, an economist at the research firm Renaissance Macro.

The Fed has clearly slowed credit-sensitive activity including private equity and commercial real estate. “But in terms of the backbone of the U.S. economy, the spine is strong” because of robust income growth, said Dutta.

Today’s tight labor market in part reflects a postpandemic shift in bargaining power. Businesses boosted worker pay as they struggled to staff up following lockdowns. Americans surveyed by the New York Fed in July expected annual salary offers in the subsequent four months of about \$67,000 upon receiving a job offer, well above \$60,000 a year earlier.

At the same time, the share of workers who are quitting their jobs—often a sign of bargaining power as employees leave for higher pay—eased in July and is returning to pre-pandemic levels, suggesting a less tight labor market.

Employers report being reluctant to let workers go, given the time and effort it took during the past two years to hire them. “Even if we’re going to have a mild recession, I think a lot of employers are saying it isn’t worth the effort of laying off people,” said Bernard Baumohl, chief global economist at the Economic Outlook Group.

Some companies report easier hiring for once-hard-to-fill roles such as truck drivers and warehouse workers. Turnover has stabilized at ArcBest, one of the nation’s largest trucking companies. The company is adding hundreds of drivers and dockworkers from its bankrupt rival Yellow, said Judy McReynolds, ArcBest’s chief executive.

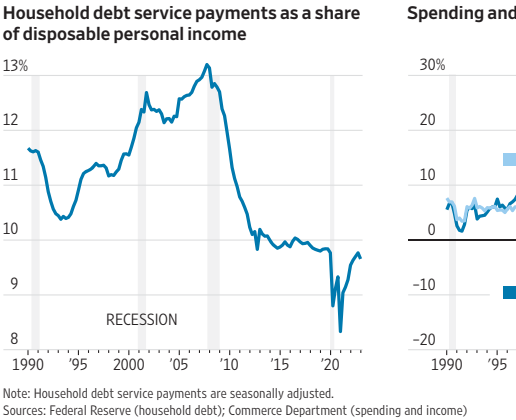
“I wouldn’t say the driver shortage is over, but” for the next year “we’re going to be in a significantly improved place from where we were,”

McReynolds said.

Other companies still face staffing challenges. United Airlines, which expects to hire 15,000 people this year, faced such a dearth of candidates at its Denver hub that it hosted a job fair in Guam and relocated more than 450 new hires from Guam to Colorado, said human resources chief Kate Gebo.



Consumer spending makes up some two-thirds of U.S. output.



fitted home builders, who face less competition from resales and who have used stronger balance sheets to offer discounted prices in the form of mortgage-rate “buy-downs.”

“There are still buyers out there. They have very few options. They therefore find their way to us,” said Douglas Yearley, chief executive of home builder Toll Brothers in an earnings call last month.

Bigger buffers

In 2020 and 2021, the U.S. and other governments provided trillions of dollars in financial assistance to households, which were also saving money as the pandemic interrupted normal spending patterns. Meanwhile, central banks cut interest rates, enabling Americans to lower their borrowing costs.

Normally, Fed rate increases force heavily indebted consumers and businesses to

rein in spending because they have to pay more to service their loans. But consumers haven’t overextended themselves with debt; household debt-service payments accounted for 9.6% of disposable personal income during the first quarter, below the lowest levels recorded between 1980 and the onset of the pandemic in March 2020.

Federal funding continues to flow from President Biden’s roughly \$1 trillion infrastructure package approved in 2021 and two pieces of legislation signed last year that provide hundreds of billions of dollars to boost renewable-energy production and semiconductor manufacturing.

Construction companies are encountering the triple threat of an aging workforce, unpredictable immigration policies and overheated demand driven by federal spending and housing shortages, said John Fish, chairman and CEO of Suffolk, a \$5.5 billion Boston-based construction contractor.

Stocks have rallied this year, buoyed by the prospect that cooling inflation allows growth to slow without requiring a recession—a so-called soft landing. The S&P 500 declined 27% in the first nine months of 2022 but has since recovered, rising more than 17% this year.

“We’re going to come out with a soft landing,” Fish said. Bolt onto that a global economic recovery, additional federal spending and an eventual decline in interest rates, and “those ingredients will create

tremendous demand in the service parts of our economy.”

Storm clouds

Other executives see storm clouds as lower-income consumers exhaust savings and face higher borrowing costs. Credit-card delinquencies at Macy’s were higher than anticipated during the second quarter. “We just believe that the customer is coming under pressure” due to higher interest rates and an end to student-debt relief, said Macy’s CFO Adrian Mitchell.

Economists are divided over the outlook. Some think inflation is now mostly under control as pandemic idiosyncrasies resolve themselves, helped by Fed interest-rate increases. They expect the Fed will cut rates next year, enabling a soft landing.

Others worry that the Fed has either raised rates too much or will have to lift them higher to crush demand and reduce inflation. Restrictive monetary policy could trigger a recession by leading to a sharp pullback in lending and declines in asset values.

Bank of America economists recently scrapped their forecast of a U.S. recession within the next year, while forecasters at Barclays and Citi postponed the anticipated start of a mild downturn into next spring.

Recent data have been “very, very positive” for the soft-landing view, said Jan Hatzius, chief economist at Goldman Sachs. In July he lowered to 20% the probability of a U.S. recession in the next 12 months, down from 35% in March after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank fanned fears of a broader banking crisis.

Strength in the U.S. raises questions over how long it can diverge from the rest of the world. In many places, a vibrant U.S. economy isn’t enough to offset weakness elsewhere. China, for instance, is struggling to spur growth in an economy beset by weak consumer confidence, a housing slump and sinking exports.

—Lauren Weber, Sarah Chaney Cambon and Jason Douglas contributed to this article.

U.S. WATCH

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Proud Boy Draws 18-Year Jail Term

A one-time leader in the Proud Boys far-right extremist group was sentenced Friday to 18 years in prison for his role in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, tying the record for the longest sentence in the attack.

Ethan Nordean was one of five members convicted of spearheading the attack on the U.S. Capitol to try to prevent the peaceful transfer of power from Donald Trump to Joe Biden.

The Seattle-area chapter president was one of two Proud Boys sentenced Friday. Dominic Pezzola was convicted of smashing a window at the U.S. Capitol in the building’s first breach. He raised a fist and declared “Trump won!” as he walked out of the courtroom after being sentenced to 10 years in prison.

—Associated Press

WISCONSIN

Sunken Schooner Is Found Intact

Shipwreck hunters have discovered the intact remains of a schooner that sank in Lake Michigan in 1881 and is so well-preserved it still contains the crew’s possessions in its final resting spot miles from Wisconsin’s coastline.

Wisconsin maritime historians Brendon Bailord and Robert Jaeck found the 156-year-old Trinidad in July off Algoma at a depth of about 270 feet. They used side-scan sonar to home in on its location.

The schooner was used primarily in the grain trade between Milwaukee, Chicago and Oswego, N.Y. But it was carrying a load of coal bound for Milwaukee when on May 13, 1881, it developed a leak after passing through the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal.

Captain John Higgins and his crew of eight survived.

—Associated Press

PENNSYLVANIA

Search Underway For Escaped Convict

Hundreds of law enforcement agents searched Friday for a man recently convicted of murder in Pennsylvania for the fatal stabbing of his ex-girlfriend, a day after he escaped from a county jail.

Danelo Cavalcante, 34, is also wanted in his native Brazil in a separate slaying and is considered an extremely dangerous person, authorities say.

The search dragged through a second day, with drones, helicopters and dogs. Searchers were focusing on railways, waterways and routes out of the area, Chester County’s district attorney, Deb Ryan, said.

A jury convicted Cavalcante of killing Deborah Brandao, his ex-girlfriend, in front of her children in 2021. Cavalcante was sentenced to life in prison and was awaiting a transfer to state prison.

—Associated Press

WORLD NEWS

China Lashed by Typhoon Rivaling Idalia

Hong Kong issues highest storm alert as Saola bears down on financial center

By Elaine Yu

HONG KONG—As residents of Florida and South Carolina struggle with the aftermath of storm Idalia, southern China is being lashed by a cyclone that may prove even more powerful.

In the Asian financial hub of Hong Kong, the government took no chances with supertyphoon Saola, raising the city's storm alert in the early hours Friday, with all schools, the stock market and most public transport closing for the day.

After a calm start, winds began to gust strongly by mid-afternoon and government meteorologists issued the highest storm alert at around 8 p.m. local time, the first level-10 typhoon in five years.

After gathering strength in the Pacific Ocean to become a typhoon about a week ago, Saola has left at least one person dead and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes in the Philippines before grinding toward southern China.

Wind speeds topping 130 miles an hour on Friday made Saola a Category 4 cyclone by U.S. standards, before easing slightly by early evening.

Idalia briefly touched that category before battering northern Florida as a Category 3 hurricane.

While deaths are now rare in Hong Kong, that storm five years ago caused more than 120 fatalities in the Philippines. Another typhoon, Hanna, affected the main Philippines island of Luzon on Friday.

Warming ocean temperatures are expected to fuel more cyclones. Decades of climate warming and an El Niño pattern that releases heat from the Pacific into the at-



People braved strong winds Friday as supertyphoon Saola approached Hong Kong. Below, few people were out on the city's streets.



mosphere have brought Atlantic sea-surface temperatures to a high this year, according to experts.

An earlier typhoon wreaked havoc in China's northeast in August, causing torrential rain

and widespread flooding in and around the capital, Beijing, that left dozens of people dead and millions more displaced.

China's government earlier warned that changing weather

patterns would lead to more flooding in some regions, affecting agriculture.

Saola has a double-eyewall structure, the Hong Kong Observatory said, which was an indication of a particularly in-

tense storm.

"Remain where you are if protected and be prepared for destructive winds," the observatory said, adding that the center of the storm would pass within 25 miles of the city over the next few hours.

As Hong Kong rides out the winds, the observatory warned of flooding caused by heavy rain and a storm surge that would push sea levels to record highs. It predicted the tide in one bay in northeast Hong Kong would be around 13 feet higher than normal.

China's central government issued its highest typhoon warning on Thursday, ordering the deployment of emergency rescue vessels because of the rough seas.

In Hong Kong on Friday, the stock exchange halted trading—a practice that sets it apart from other major bourses. More than 360 flights were canceled. All schools

Saola Triggers Level-10 Warning

Hurricanes and typhoons are different names for the same type of rotating storm, depending on where it occurs. Also known as tropical cyclones, they develop over warm ocean waters near the equator.

Those that form in the North Atlantic or central and eastern North Pacific are called hurricanes. Those born over the western North Pacific are known to Asia as typhoons.

Supertyphoon Saola, which hit China and Hong Kong, is only the 17th storm to trigger the level-10, hurricane-force gale warning since 1946, according to the Hong Kong Observatory.

were closed on what would have been the first day of classes for many students.

Authorities in the neighboring tech and manufacturing hub of Shenzhen ordered work, business and market activity to stop late Friday afternoon.

All flights from the city's airport were grounded from midday, while schools were suspended a day earlier.

The world's longest sea bridge, connecting Hong Kong, mainland China and Macau, closed on Friday afternoon.

The government in Macau, like Hong Kong a special administrative region of China, said it could raise the city's storm signal to its highest category early Saturday.

Officials in the gambling hub were accused of failing to raise alerts in time in 2017, when a typhoon killed 10 people in the city of fewer than 700,000 residents.

Trip to Mongolia Has Pope Bordering Russia and China

By Francis X. Rocca

Pope Francis has long expressed his desire to visit Russia and China, but the closest he might ever get to either country is Mongolia, which borders both.

The pontiff arrived Friday morning in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of the East Asian country, for a four-day visit focused on encouraging Mongolia's minuscule Catholic flock, which numbers fewer than 1,500 people, and pursuing dialogue with its wider society, mostly divided between Buddhists and those without any religion.

The pope's schedule there includes an address to political leaders on Saturday and a meeting with representatives of other faiths on Sunday.

It is the first visit to Mongolia by any pope, but the trip is typical for Francis, who has placed a priority on relations with the non-Catholic world and has visited relatively few Western European countries in his travels.

At the top of the 86-year-old pope's agenda of reaching out to what he calls the peripheries of his church have been his overtures to Russia and China—efforts that both coun-

tries have largely rebuffed.

During his flight to Mongolia, Francis followed Vatican protocol by sending courtesy telegrams to the heads of state of the countries he flew over, including China. "I send greetings of good wishes," he wrote to China's President Xi Jinping. "Assuring you of my prayers for the wellbeing of the nation, I invoke upon all of you the divine blessings of unity and peace."

A Foreign Ministry spokesman responded that "China is ready to continue working with the Vatican to engage in constructive dialogue, enhance understanding and strengthen mutual trust."

Relations haven't been smooth, despite Pope Francis' best efforts.

The Vatican and Beijing haven't had diplomatic relations since shortly after China's 1949 Communist revolution. But the Vatican and China signed a power-sharing agreement on the appointment of bishops in 2018, a rare instance of the papacy conceding its prerogative of naming bishops. The Vatican intended to unify the church in China, where about 10 million to 12 million Catholics have been divided between those registered with an offi-

cially recognized "patriotic" church and a so-called underground community that rejects government control.

But the deal has yielded only a handful of episcopal appointments. Critics, including Cardinal Joseph Zen, a former bishop of Hong Kong, have said that the deal is a betrayal of the country's underground Catholics loyal to the pope.

Francis also has pursued closer ties with Russia, especially with the Orthodox Church. In 2016, he became the first pope to meet with a patriarch of Moscow, when he encountered Patriarch Kirill at an airport in Cuba. But the two haven't met again since, and few see any prospect of an invitation for what would be history's first papal visit to Russia.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the pope's remarks on the war have aroused controversy on several occasions. Ukrainians, including leaders of the Catholic Church there, have complained that Francis' stance is overly sympathetic to Russia. The pope has frequently deplored the suffering of Ukrainians but has avoided directly blaming Moscow for the war.



Pope Francis greeted a child during a welcome ceremony in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on Friday.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Real-Time News At Your Fingertips

Download the WSJ app for breaking news and full coverage on finance, politics, business and more.



SCAN HERE

DOWNLOAD THE APP
WSJ.com/WSJapp



WORLD NEWS

More Young Japanese Work Abroad

Wage gap widens with wealthiest nations as yen falls, driving some to leave

By MEGUMI FUJIKAWA

When Japan native Mana Hayashi moved to Australia last October, she knew it would be an adventure. What surprised her was how much money she could make.

The 26-year-old landed part-time gigs at a Japanese bar, a sushi restaurant and a cafe, and between them soon was making about \$2,800 a month—double what she had earned as a registered nutritionist at a hospital in Japan.

“From my experience, I felt that wages for essential workers are very low in Japan,” Hayashi said. She worked at the hospital for about two years but didn’t get a substantial pay increase, which is par for the course in a country where wages have stayed roughly flat for three decades.

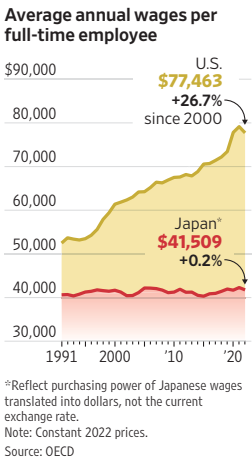
Japan has long attracted workers from developing nations seeking better pay, and it wants to bring in even more. But in a twist, the yen’s fall to a three-decade low and economic stagnation mean more young Japanese are finding it profitable to go in the opposite direction.

The wage gap is significant. Even after a planned rise in October, the minimum wage in Tokyo will be the equivalent of just \$7.65, compared with \$15 in New York City. Median household income in Japan in 2021, the most recent year for which data are available, was equivalent to about \$29,000 at the current exchange rate, compared with \$70,784 in the U.S. that year, according to government statistics in the



Mana Hayashi landed a part-time gig at a sushi restaurant in Australia.

two countries. The typical Asian-American household brought in just over \$100,000—more than triple what the typical Japanese family made. With inflation running around 3%, Japan’s wages adjusted for price increases fell year on year for 15 straight months through June. In the U.S., inflation-adjusted average hourly wages rose 1.1% in July from a year earlier. It is no wonder more young Japanese are asking whether they can cash in. Re-abroad, a Tokyo company that helps people study and work abroad, said the number of requests for consultation more than tripled in July compared with a year ago. According to Australian government data, the number of Japanese visiting Australia on a working holiday visa, which provides a temporary work permit for young people,



nearly tripled to 14,398 in the year ended June 30. Job-search website Indeed said it is seeing more searches by Japanese users for jobs overseas. Yusuke Aoki, an

economist at Indeed, said the trend could be long-lasting because Japanese companies, which used to prefer hiring new graduates, are more open to job-hoppers these days. That means young Japanese are more comfortable about heading abroad for a few years. Wage stagnation is also an issue for Japan in attracting labor. With its shrinking population, Tokyo wants more workers from places such as Vietnam and South Asia, yet it is losing competitiveness with nations such as South Korea that also seek foreign labor. Hayashi, the Japanese worker in Melbourne, said she had been dreaming of living overseas but didn’t feel she had enough money. After less than a year, “my bank account in Australia is beginning to exceed my Japanese bank account,” Hayashi said. She said she was saving up almost half of her income

Car Bombs Explode In Ecuador As Violence Intensifies

By RYAN DUBÉ

Ecuador’s security crisis worsened on Friday after car bombs exploded in several once relatively tranquil Andean cities, while inmates took dozens of prison guards hostage and prosecutors asked for more police protection from a violent drug gang. Starting Wednesday night, six explosions hit three cities across the country of 18 million people, including car bombs in Quito, the capital, and Cuenca, which is a popular destination for American retirees, police said. Both of those cities largely had been spared by the surge of drug-fueled violence that has turned Ecuador’s coastal cities into some of Latin America’s most violent locales.

Two explosions also occurred in the coastal city of El Oro. No one was reported injured by the six blasts, authorities said. The explosions occurred near government buildings, including outside an office of the national prison service in Quito. “These car bombs were strategically placed,” said Max Campos, a former deputy interior minister. “What we are seeing is a response from criminal groups that want to intimidate the state.” Ecuador recorded 3,963 homicides from January to July, an 80% increase over the 2,198 killings in the same period last year, police said. Homicides quadrupled from 2019 to 2022 as gangs fight for control of routes to move cocaine from Colombia through Ecuador and then to Europe and the U.S.

In August, presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio was fatally shot at a rally in Quito after pledging to go after drug traffickers and organized crime, which he said has corrupted the country’s political class and law enforcement. President Guillermo Lasso’s government called this week’s bombings terrorist acts in response to his administration’s efforts to take back control of prisons, which are overrun by heavily-armed gangs involved in drug trafficking, extortion and other criminal activities. “The measures we’ve taken, especially inside the prison system, have created violent reactions from criminal organizations,” Lasso wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. “We aren’t going to back down.” Late Thursday, the national prison service said inmates at six prisons took 57 guards and police officers hostage. The guards and police officers were released on Friday, the prison service said. Also on Friday, the Attorney General’s Office called for more police protection for prosecutors who have received death threats.

Living in a War Zone Shatters Lives Across Ukraine



SIMPLE PLEASURES: A woman and a cat outside her home in the village of Ruski Tyshky in the Kharkiv region in eastern Ukraine. Early in Moscow’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the house was damaged by Russian shelling and occupied by Russian soldiers before being liberated in May 2022.

Ukrainian Troops Fight to Widen Puncture of Russian Front Lines

By DANIEL MICHAELS AND ISABEL COLES

KYIV, Ukraine—Ukrainian troops’ piercing of Russian lines this week marks a small move with big potential. The Ukrainians are trying to gradually force their way through the main Russian defensive line in the southeast under heavy fire to expand fissures they opened and achieve a larger-scale breach. This is a critical moment in Kyiv’s three-month counteroffensive because a full-scale penetration would allow Ukraine to pour armored vehicles through and wreak havoc among Russian forces. Advancing a few miles through the defenses around Verbove—a settlement in the country’s southeast unknown even to most Ukrainians—would amount to a modest gain compared with the roughly 20% of their country that Russia controls, or compared with the greater gains that Ukrainian and Western military leaders had hoped earlier this year to have achieved by now. But if Ukrainian forces manage to cross minefields, trenches and cement block-

ades known as dragon’s teeth, they will have overcome impediments that Russia hopes are impassable. Many of Moscow’s best troops have been stationed on the front line. Each mile that Ukrainian forces advance puts their artillery closer to hitting Russian targets that so far have sat out of reach, including roads and train lines through the regional hub city Tokmak. Further beyond runs the M14 highway, which follows the country’s southeastern shore and which Russia relies on to move crucial supplies. John Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council in Washington, said Friday there is reason to be hopeful. “We have noted that over the last 72 hours or so, some notable progress by Ukrainian armed forces on that southern line of advance coming out of the Zaporizhzhia area, and they have achieved some success against that second line of Russian defenses,” he said. Big challenges lie ahead for Ukrainian forces, said one U.S. official. “The jury is still out,” the official said. “This is by no means a done deal. There are



Ukrainian servicemen near a frontline in Zaporizhzhia region.

no touchdown dances, but no one is holding an Irish wake.” Kirby said the U.S. is continuing to work with the Ukrainians to ensure they have everything they need for more success. A successful breach of defenses that Moscow’s forces spent months building would allow Ukrainian troops to capture more territory, target more of Russia’s critical supply lines and undermine Russia’s ability to wage war across a much wider region. Kyiv’s broader goal is to slice through the band of Russian-

occupied territory stretching from Ukraine’s eastern border with Russia to the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014. Ukrainian troops’ advances over the past week have boosted morale in the area. Ivan Fedorov, the exiled Ukrainian mayor of Melitopol, the largest nearby city, said that according to local residents, Russian-installed authorities were leaving Tokmak. “The enemy’s defense is cracking, so the first rats run from the sinking Russian ship,” Fedorov said.

Russian officials haven’t commented on the Ukrainian advance to Verbove, which followed by days Ukraine’s retaking of the village of Robotyne, roughly 6 miles west. Crossing the short distance entailed an intense fight, said Oleksandr Solonko, a private in an air-reconnaissance battalion who is operating drones in the area. “Every step, we had to face minefields, trenches,” he said. Satellite and drone imagery shows many lines of fortifications ahead, and Moscow has moved more troops into the region, according to open-source intelligence reports. It remains unclear how heavily the barricades are manned by troops ready to fire on advancing Ukrainian forces or whether the Russians are under coordinated command. While Tokmak is the biggest nearby target for advancing Ukrainian troops, they may not launch an attack on the city, which sits roughly 13 miles south of Robotyne and is now ringed by Russian fortifications, said Western analysts. If Kyiv’s troops can push the front line to about 6 miles outside Tokmak, Ukrainian artillery forces with plentiful 155mm cannons will be able to

target its rail and road lines, said Trent Telenko, a former official at the Pentagon’s Defense Contract Management Agency who has studied Russian military logistics. Extending the front to within 6 miles “will make Tokmak useless as a road-rail transportation node,” said Telenko. At that distance, Ukrainian artillery can stay about 10 miles behind the front, which he said is a sufficient distance to be relatively safe from Russian counter-battery fire. Even without getting so close to a target, each mile of advance allows Ukraine’s longer-range ground-launched rockets to hit more Russian assets. Ukraine’s Western-made Himars and M270 mobile launchers fire projectiles with a range of at most about 50 miles. The M14 highway is about 50 miles south of Robotyne and Verbove, but the launchers must stay several miles back from the front for safety, so Ukraine’s recent gains still don’t yet put them in firing range of the Russian supply artery. —Gordon Lubold contributed to this article.

WORLD NEWS

Disagreements
Fracture Israeli
Protest Movement

By DOV LIEBER

TEL AVIV—When a friend asked law professor Rawia Aburabia to speak at one of the pro-democracy protests roiling the country, she agreed. Then she was told she shouldn’t mention Israel’s occupation of the West Bank.

“I, of course, refused,” said Aburabia, a Palestinian citizen of Israel.

Disagreements are emerging in the protest movement against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s plans to overhaul the judiciary, threatening to undermine the largest series of mass demonstrations in the nation’s history. After forcing Netanyahu to pause the legislation last spring, protesters have disagreed over the aggressiveness of their tactics, whether to emphasize divisive issues such as the occupation, and if it is a good idea to work closely with the political opposition.

The divisions underscore the challenge that protest organizers face to sustain a mass movement that has sent hundreds of thousands of Israelis into the streets for 35 straight weeks.

So far, the movement’s success lies in its appeal to middle-class Israelis who have made the national flag the main symbol of the protests and turned them into patriotic displays. Nearly a quarter of the population say they have attended one of the weekly protests, according to the Israel Democracy Institute, a think tank in Jerusalem that conducts polling.

Mixed within the crowds are groups trying to push their issues to the forefront, from military veterans vying to maintain conscription-for-all policies to

women’s-rights organizations.

“It’s a big challenge. In the past we saw a variety of protest movements that actually fell apart because of that,” said Prof. Tamar Hermann, a senior research fellow at the institute.

She said Israel’s occupation of the West Bank was the most divisive issue within the protest movement. Still, she called the differences within the movement “artificial cleavages,” and noted that the organizers have refrained from taking on issues that could cause fractures.

“The protest leaders know their strength is not in the purity of ideology, but the strength to bring in large numbers,” she said.

The movement’s ability to corral these forces has become more urgent as Netanyahu and his coalition regroup and move ahead with a modified version of the judicial overhaul. In July, the coalition passed the first bill, limiting the Supreme Court’s ability to strike down government decisions that judges find to be “unreasonable in the extreme.” Next, Netanyahu has said he plans to change how judges are selected, giving more power to politicians to install their picks.

Netanyahu and his coalition have said the judicial overhaul is needed to reform an Israeli court system that hands too much power to unelected judges who are too often left wing and biased. His opponents have said it is a power grab that removes the only check on the country’s governing coalitions.

Protesters disagree about how confrontational to be, said Orni Petruschka, one of the founders of the Protest HQ, an umbrella group that provides logistical support for protesters.



Protesters march in the ultraorthodox city of Bnei Brak, a bastion of support for a judicial overhaul backed by Netanyahu.

Organizers Shun Topic of West Bank Occupation

Protest organizers in Israel have taken special care to avoid talking about the West Bank occupation, fearing it would turn off large numbers of military personnel, veterans and center-right people.

Polls show that Israelis have grown disillusioned with the idea of making concessions to Palestinians

in recent years.

Rawia Aburabia, a law professor, argues that the issue is closely related to the crime plaguing many predominantly-Arab cities in Israel—a topic she had addressed at protests before turning down an invitation to speak at one pro-democracy demonstration when she was told not to

mention Israel’s occupation of the West Bank.

“You cannot talk about violence in Arab society and about inequality without talking about institutionalized violence in the occupied territories and it’s spilling over into [Israel],” said Aburabia, a Palestinian citizen of Israel. “Everything is connected.”

ploy other tactics.

Moran Zer Katzenstein, a leader of feminist protest group Bonot Alternativa, said her organization doesn’t “do such defiant actions...There are a variety of shades in the protest and we are one of them.”

That doesn’t mean Bonot Alternativa hasn’t been controversial. On Thursday, it was among several largely female-led groups that organized a women’s-rights march in the ultraorthodox city of Bnei Brak, a pillar of support for the judicial overhaul. Protesters worry the overhaul would help pass laws limiting women’s rights.

Some protest leaders said the focus on Bnei Brak was misguided. “Stupid politics,” said Alon-Lee Green, leader of Standing Together, a Jewish-Arab coexistence group. “One of the easiest things to do is to go to the ultraorthodox,” he said, arguing that it unwisely pitted secular Israelis against the religious community.

—Anat Peled
contributed to this article.

Egyptian-Born Mogul Once Owned Famed Harrods Store

By MAX COLCHESTER
AND DAVID LUHNOW

LONDON—Mohamed Al Fayed, the former owner of Harrods department store who rose from a humble background in Egypt to the heights of British society, and whose son Dodi died alongside Princess Diana in the 1990s, has died.

The Egyptian-born businessman, 94 years old, became a friend to royals and high society in both Britain and France. He used his fortune to buy well-known brands, ranging from Harrods to the Ritz hotel in Paris. He also owned the Fulham soccer club in London, which he sold in 2013, three years after selling Harrods.

“Mrs. Mohamed Al-Fayed, her children and grandchildren wish to confirm that her

beloved husband, their father and their grandfather, Mohamed, has passed away peacefully of old age on Wednesday August 30, 2023,” his family said in a statement released by Fulham FC.

His son Dodi Fayed was Princess Diana’s boyfriend for a few months after her divorce from then Prince Charles, who has since become King Charles III. Dodi Fayed and Princess Diana died in a car crash in a Paris tunnel in 1997 after being chased by paparazzi. For years Al Fayed claimed that his son had been murdered by the British establishment because of his relationship with Princess Diana. The elder Al Fayed was never granted a British passport.

The Egyptian became a household name in the U.K. because of his lavish investments and rags-to-riches story. Born in Alexandria, Al Fayed started out selling lemons. Then after World War



Mohamed Al Fayed bought well-known brands, including the Ritz hotel in Paris and the Fulham soccer club in London.

II, he and his brothers set up a shipping company operating in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. He later bought, and renovated, the Ritz hotel in

borhood. He was known to regularly walk the shop’s aisles and installed a statue of himself in the men’s department.

The sharp-elbowed businessman was also famed for investments in a number of more esoteric projects. In the late 1980s he bought and renovated the last home of the Duke of Windsor, who had abdicated as King Edward VIII, in the Bois de Boulogne. He also bought a 40,000-acre estate in Scotland and turned it into a tourist resort.

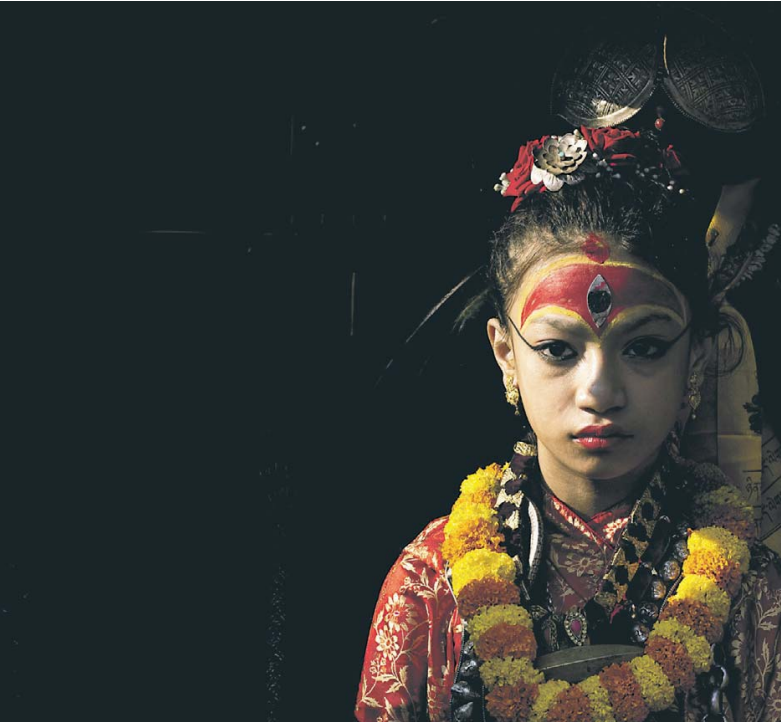
Al Fayed also acquired Fulham, then a team languishing in England’s third-tier football league, in 1997 and got it promoted to the top flight Premier League for the first time in its history four years later. He also oversaw the construction of a statue of Michael Jackson outside the ground to “honor his friendship with the legendary performer.” It was later removed by the club.

On its website, Fulham paid tribute to its former owner. “I join our supporters around the world in celebrating the memory of Mohamed Al Fayed, whose legacy will always be at the heart of our tradition at Fulham Football Club,” the club’s current owner, Shahid Khan, said in a statement.

Al Fayed’s investment marked the beginning of what would soon become a trend of wealthy foreigners, including Arabs, spending billions to buy leading English soccer clubs. Manchester City, which has won three consecutive titles, is owned by a private-equity firm from the United Arab Emirates, Aston Villa is owned by Egyptian billionaire Nassef Sawiris, and Newcastle United is owned by Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund.

The Egyptian eventually sold Harrods in 2010 and moved out of the limelight, living in his home in southern England with his wife, Heini.

WORLD WATCH



PEACEFUL: Living goddess Kumari Niharika Bajracharya waits for visitors at the Matya festival in Nepal. Buddhist participants wish for peace for relatives of those who died this past year.

THAILAND
Former Leader’s
Prison Term Is Cut

Thailand’s king on Friday reduced former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s eight-year prison term to one year after the divisive politician’s return last week from 15 years of self-imposed exile.

The action could mark a symbolic end to the political schism that has wracked the nation since Thaksin was forced from power by the army 17 years ago, leaving democracy endangered.

Thai media, citing Justice Ministry sources, reported that Thaksin can apply for parole after serving one-third of his sentence, or four months. They said Thaksin, who was moved to a hospital suite following a brief prison stay after complaining of ill health, could remain there for that period with permission from the Correction Department’s chief.

The decision by King Maha Vajiralongkorn was published in the Royal Gazette, making it effective immediately. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, giving the king the final word on pardons of convicted criminals.

—Associated Press

WEST BANK
Teacher Killed
During Raid

The Israeli military raided a Palestinian town in the West Bank, besieging an apartment and sparking a gunfight with militants that killed an apparently uninvolved Palestinian teacher, Palestinian officials said.

The raid was the latest in a series of Israeli army actions in the occupied territory that have resulted in a high Palestinian death toll.

Israeli security forces stormed a town northeast of the Palestinian city of Nablus, and surrounded a house where militants were believed to be holed up. When the gunmen refused to surrender, the Israeli military launched soldier-fired missiles and grenades at the building.

The Israeli army said it found improvised explosive devices and other military equipment in the hideout.

The 36-year-old Palestinian teacher, Abdulrahim Ghannam, was killed during the firefight as he walked home to his wife after tending to his sheep and vegetables at his farm, a relative said.

—Associated Press

SOUTH AFRICA
Death Toll in Blaze
Increases to 76

Search teams finished checking a derelict Johannesburg apartment building a day after one of South Africa’s deadliest fires broke out there as pathologists worked to identify victims.

The death toll from the blaze rose to 76 after two people died in a hospital, said Health Minister Joe Phaahla. At least 12 of the victims were children, officials said.

Homeless South Africans, poor foreign migrants and others who found themselves marginalized in the city inhabited the downtown building. Many of the dead were believed to be foreign nationals and possibly in South Africa illegally, making it more difficult to identify them, officials said.

The number of injured people hospitalized also increased to 88, an official said.

Motalale Modiba, a Gauteng province health department representative, said 62 of the bodies were so badly burned as to make them unidentifiable, and the city’s pathology department will use DNA analysis to officially identify the most of victims.

—Associated Press

FROM PAGE ONE



Migrants walking along the U.S.-Mexico border near El Paso, Texas. Congress has for decades debated over how best to reduce illegal immigration. Below, Guadalupe at home in Iowa.

Migrants Await Rulings

Continued from Page One

court’s sluggish output is emblematic of an immigration system that is overwhelmed and understaffed, according to immigration lawyers, researchers and politicians of both parties.

The Biden administration has given priority to quickly adjudicating cases, starting with the newest arrivals and foreigners with criminal histories. People whose cases are deemed low priority—Cuellar, for instance, was detained after making an illegal U-turn—can decide to keep trying to win permanent residency through the court system. That path affords immigrants permission to live in the U.S., but leaves them in legal limbo.

Millions of immigrants in the U.S. have settled into new lives while waiting, most of them for years, to learn whether they will be allowed to stay for good.

The immigration court in Omaha has fallen further behind than almost any other in the country. A trio of judges oversee nearly 32,000 cases that have been undecided for an average of 2.7 years. For migrants requesting asylum, the average wait is 5.8 years, the longest nationwide.

“No progress is being made,” said Rachel Yamamoto, an immigration attorney in Omaha. She represents migrants whose cases reach as far back as 2008. “I’ve been doing this a long time and my tolerance for bureaucratic she-nanigans is pretty high,” she said. “This is just next level.”

In 2012, the U.S. had a little more than 300,000 open immigration cases. There are now 2.5 million, according to government data published by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. With so many new cases filed, and thus pending for far less time, the overall average wait time has shrunk. The average case has now been pending for less than two years, compared with 2.5 years in 2021, according to TRAC data. The average wait time for an asylum hearing is four years, compared with about 4.7 years in 2021.



As immigrants await a decision, most are allowed to live and work in the U.S. Many have U.S.-born children who, by the time cases are decided, face the prospect of having to move abroad.

The long delays aren’t the fault of immigration judges, said Donald Kerwin, of the Center for Migration Studies, a nonprofit that studies global migration. It is the shortfall of the federal immigration budget, he said, which is concentrated on border policing and apprehension.

In the federal fiscal year that ended last September, U.S. Border Patrol agents made a record high 2.2 million arrests at the U.S.-Mexico border. From October to June this year, they made 1.6 million arrests. The pace has slowed since the Biden administration put limits on asylum eligibility at the U.S. border and allowed for the swift removal of those found ineligible. Some are returned to Mexico or to their home countries. Others are released in the U.S. to await an immigration court to rule on their asylum requests.

People who enter the U.S. illegally and claim asylum—whether to escape persecution in their home countries or because they fear for their lives there—account for 38% of pending immigration court cases, up from 32.5% in 2012, according to data published by TRAC.

Congress has for decades debated about how best to reduce the flow of migrants crossing the border illegally. Yet lawmakers haven’t done much to address the legal bottlenecks for asylum seekers or immigrants living in the U.S. without permission, leaving the logjam to worsen.

Kathryn Mattingly, a spokeswoman from the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which runs the immigration court system, said the office “has repeatedly asked Congress to appropriate the funds necessary to increase the number of immigration judges.”

The EOIR has already expanded the number of judges to 649. The Justice Department has requested \$1.4 billion for its fiscal 2024 budget, which includes plans to hire 200 new immigration court judges and hundreds of support staff.

Traffic jam

On a summer day at the Omaha immigration court, dozens of immigrants appeared before Judge Alexandra Larsen for a master calendar hearing, which typically affords them a few minutes each to schedule hearings. Many first-timers were given time to hire a lawyer and told to return on a hearing date next year. Others, making at least a second court visit, sought a

date for final hearings, which were scheduled for next year or beyond.

In one case, a Honduran woman and her 9-year-old son who entered the U.S. to seek asylum in 2016, were instructed to return in May 2025. Their lawyer, Yamamoto, said she wasn’t sure if the date would hold. The 2024 presidential election could reshuffle immigration priorities, she said, and millions of new arrivals would likely further slow court proceedings.

Immigration court judges are on pace to finish an estimated 500,000 cases this year, which would be a record. Yet as many as one million cases are expected to be added to the backlog.

The problem is particularly acute in the Omaha court, which covers Nebraska and Iowa. The region in recent years has drawn migrants—some with papers, others without—to work at slaughterhouses and in other agricultural jobs. Guadalupe, a 54-year-old woman from Guatemala, has been waiting more than six years for her case to be resolved.

She came to the U.S. in 2017 on a tourist visa with her youngest son, who was 20 at

The average wait time for an asylum hearing in a U.S. court is four years.

the time. When they landed in Dallas, she requested asylum protection. She told immigration officials that she and her son had been threatened by criminals and were afraid to go home. Guatemalan police offered them no protection, she said.

“I explained that I was leaving a very dangerous situation, that it was an emergency,” said Guadalupe, who preferred to use only her middle name. Immigration authorities detained the pair and later deported her son after an asylum officer decided he didn’t qualify for protection.

Guadalupe said she was released from custody after about two months and moved to a rural Iowa community where an aunt was living. “I’ve spent a lot of time not being able to sleep” over worries about her three children and seven grandchildren in Guatemala, she said. “I go from being hopeful to having no hope.” She lives in a one-bedroom house on a leafy street about two hours north of Omaha and works as an inspector at a clothing manufacturing company.

Her first Omaha court appearance was in October 2017.

She had a final hearing scheduled in 2020, which was moved to 2022 because of the pandemic. That hearing was postponed—all the available judges had previously worked on behalf of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to have Guadalupe deported. The hearing was rescheduled for this May. It was canceled because the judge, based in Texas, was reassigned to cases involving newly arrived immigrants.

Guadalupe’s next court appearance, now rescheduled for September, will be used to set a date for her final hearing. “She told me. ‘I just want my day in court,’ ” said Heidi Oligmueller, Guadalupe’s lawyer.

Sole support

Presidential administrations have tried to address the backlog by changing rules to more quickly process new cases. That required judges to further delay older, lower priority cases. The Obama administration enacted the first such initiative in 2012, when there was a backlog of around 300,000 cases, about one-eighth of the current total. That continued largely unchanged through the Trump and Biden administrations.

Cuellar is one of the lower-priority cases. He first crossed the border into the U.S. illegally in 1993 and then briefly left the country. He illegally returned in 1998, first to Arizona and then to live in Nebraska. In 2013, he was arrested and turned over to federal authorities after he was stopped for making an illegal U-turn, he said.

For the next decade, his immigration case has been moved to the bottom of the pile. Because of delays in the case, he has been able to renew his work permit every year, paying \$410 plus legal fees. He is seeking permission for permanent residency, he said, on the grounds that he is the sole provider for his U.S.-born teenage daughter Karen and deportation would cause her undue hardship.

Karen Cuellar said the court delays have taken an emotional toll—not knowing whether her father will be ordered back to Mexico.

“It’s been really tough. I feel like I’ve had to mature faster than I should,” said Karen, who nonetheless doesn’t feel ready to live in the U.S. alone.

“If he leaves, I have to go with him,” she said.

Chip Maker Arm Targets IPO Range

Continued from Page One

billion value implied by SoftBank Group’s recent deal to buy the remaining 25% stake in Arm from its Vision Fund unit.

People close to the deal say the lower target valuation isn’t set in stone. They expect strong demand on the chip designer’s roadshow to push the price higher. In many highly

anticipated IPOs, companies and their underwriters start with a lower target valuation and go on to price far higher.

Arm’s IPO gives SoftBank a way to sell down its position in the chip designer over time. If the stock goes up in coming months it could provide a bigger return.

The Japanese investor could use a win. Led by its billionaire founder Masayoshi Son, SoftBank has spent much of the last two years selling off years-old investments to pay down debt.

The Arm IPO would give SoftBank fresh capital to restart its wide-ranging investments in tech startups. The

company recently said it wants to renew its push for large-scale investments in artificial intelligence.

SoftBank earlier tried to sell Arm for \$40 billion to Nvidia, an artificial intelligence and graphics-chip maker, but regulatory opposition doomed the deal.

Arm is a key player in the world’s semiconductor industry, with companies including Apple, Qualcomm and Advanced Micro Devices relying on it for some of their chips. It prides itself as a neutral party in the chip industry, selling its designs to everyone without favoring any one manufacturer.

In its IPO filing with the

Securities and Exchange Commission, Arm said profit fell by more than 50% in the most recent quarter, hurt by slowing smartphone sales.

The company has extended its footprint into other, more powerful chips in recent years and is getting an added boost from recent excitement about artificial intelligence, which could bring new sales opportunities. More than 30 billion Arm-based chips were shipped in the company’s last fiscal year, up 70% from seven years ago, Arm said in the SEC filing.

Arm’s exposure to China is a key risk that may weigh on the company’s ultimate valuation in the offering because of

the mistrust between the U.S. and its rival superpower.

About 25% of Arm’s revenue came from China in its latest fiscal year, according to the SEC filing, making it “particularly susceptible to economic and political risks” affecting that country. Arm said it expects declining royalty revenue from China, adding that such revenue already has been slowing because of economic issues and export controls imposed on the country.

China demonstrated its ability to intervene in the development of the U.S. chip industry last month, after Chinese regulators failed to approve Intel’s more-than-\$5 billion offer to

buy Israeli contract chip maker Tower Semiconductor. That action led the two companies to abandon their deal.

Arm has held talks with some of its partners and customers for the sale of small stakes in the IPO each worth up to \$100 million, according to people familiar with the matter. It couldn’t be learned which, if any of these investors, plan to participate.

The deal is good news for the Wall Street bankers who muddled through the IPO market’s recent downturn. Barclays, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan and Mizuho are among the banks underwriting the offering.

OPINION

THE WEEKEND INTERVIEW with **Tiffany Justice and Tina Descovich** | By Tunku Varadarajan

‘We Do Not Co-Parent With the Government’

Melbourne, Fla.
Tina Descovich found herself surrounded by “Muslim dads.” The scene was a school-board meeting late last year in Dearborn, Mich. Local parents were angry about sex-themed books at the school library, which they regarded as “pornography.” After chatting with Ms. Descovich for a few minutes, a Dearborn dad realized she was a founder of Moms for Liberty, a nonprofit parents’ rights group that came into being on Jan. 1, 2021. He shook his head and told her she didn’t “seem like a racist at all.”
“That’s because I’m not,” she replied.
With its dogged focus on school reform, hostility to teachers unions and opposition to Covid shutdowns and mandates, the group is hated on the left and typecast as far-right—or worse—by much of the media. I speak with Ms. Descovich, a 49-year-old mother of five, at Moms for Liberty’s headquarters here, between Miami and Jacksonville. Seated with her is Tiffany Justice, 44, the group’s co-founder and a mother

The ‘joyful warriors’ of Moms for Liberty discuss Covid shutdowns, teachers unions, transgenderism and the SPLC’s smear.

of four. The modest office has no external signage to identify its occupants. Both women have received such a deluge of threats—by email, voicemail and even handwritten letters—that there’s a deputy at the Brevard County Sheriff’s Office whose main job is to review each one. “Someone calling himself Satan writes to me every week,” Ms. Descovich says wryly. “He lives in Denver.”
A more influential antagonist is the Southern Poverty Law Center. The SPLC, founded in 1971, has a storied history of fighting the Ku Klux Klan via civil lawsuits and co-operation with law enforcement. The media uncritically describe it as a civil-rights group, even though in recent decades its has shifted its focus to smearing conservative organizations as hate groups.
In June it labeled Moms for Liberty as “extremist” and “antigovernment.” It stated in a report titled “The Year in Hate and Extremism 2022” that the organization’s “primary goals” are to “fuel right-wing hysteria and to make the world a less comfortable or safe place” for students who are “Black, LGBTQ or who come from LGBTQ families.”
Ms. Justice says that is a lie, and accuses the SPLC of having “put a target on the back of every American parent, every American mom.” She says the designation is

“meant to be used as a weapon against us” and asks: “Are any government agencies using the designation as a way for them to do more surveillance on us, or to somehow try to curtail our actions as an organization?”
Moms for Liberty may sue. Ms. Justice says the group is “exploring every legal option” and has “retained the best plaintiff-side defamation firm in the United States to hold the SPLC accountable for their hateful targeting of our members.” U.S. law makes it difficult for plaintiffs to win defamation lawsuits, and judges have dismissed other cases against the SPLC. But in 2018 the group paid Maajid Nawaz more than \$3 million to settle his claim that it defamed him by labeling him an “anti-Muslim extremist.”
The SPLC’s smear appears to have done damage. Moms for Liberty had planned an event last month at Milwaukee’s Italian Community Center. “After an inquiry from the Journal Sentinel,” wrote Rory Linnane, a reporter for that paper, “Bartolotta Restaurants, which books events for the center, said it would not be hosting any Moms for Liberty event.” The first words in Ms. Linnane’s article were “Moms for Liberty, a group designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an extremist antigovernment organization . . .”
In Davis, Calif., a librarian shut down a Moms for Liberty meeting on grounds that a speaker who objected to male athletes competing against women and girls violated a rule against “misgendering.” Again, local news coverage prominently cited the SPLC’s designation.
The mission of Moms for Liberty, Ms. Descovich says, is to “unify, educate and empower parents to defend their parental rights at all levels of government.” She came up with the group’s name, while Ms. Justice wrote its catchiest slogan: “We do not co-parent with the government.”
They met in 2019, three years after each was elected to her local school board—Ms. Descovich here, in Brevard County, Ms. Justice immediately south, in Indian River County. Ms. Descovich had been a Republican, Ms. Justice a politically unaffiliated “floater,” but both were impelled by personal experience to get involved with school politics.
Ms. Descovich’s eureka moment came in 2014 when her son was in seventh grade. “I started seeing assignments coming home that were concerning,” she says. “He brought home an assignment that I have to this day. He got 100-plus on it, and the teacher had said, ‘Great job!’ When he handed it to me, he said, ‘I got an A.’ . . . It was a ‘wanted’ poster for Christopher Columbus, for ‘crimes against humanity.’”
She was so shocked that she



BARBARA KELLEY

spent “months buying every book I could find on Christopher Columbus, reading everything I could, trying to figure out what had changed since I’d studied history.”
Ms. Justice says that for her, “it wasn’t so much curriculum as the physical condition of my kids’ school.” Hallways would flood; roofs leaked; tiles would dislodge and fall onto classroom floors and desks—and rodents infested the place. “We were in a PTA meeting, and a rat ran up a half-wall.”
The school’s principal wouldn’t raise the issue with higher-ups. “She said she didn’t want problems with the district,” Ms. Justice says. “But it was really more about the fact that she didn’t want anyone paying too much attention to her school. Because we had a literacy rate for African-American students that was in the low 20th percentile, and the school still got an A from the grading system in the state.”
Ms. Descovich adds that her son got the highest possible grade on his end-of-class exam in seventh grade even though he missed half the answers. At that, the two moms dissolve in laughter.
“School districts do two things well,” Ms. Justice says: “They protect themselves and they celebrate themselves. And they find ways to celebrate themselves so that they can protect themselves.” The statistics may be “devastating”—almost half of Florida fourth-graders can’t read at grade level—but no one pays a price, and plausible remedies are foreclosed. “Thanks to union contracts,” Ms. Descovich says, “if you want to give bonuses to your teachers who are willing to serve in your poorest schools, you can’t do it.”
Why is their group called Moms for Liberty rather than something less neuralgic for the left—say, Moms for Education? “Because it’s about parental rights,” Ms. Justice swiftly answers. The group’s focus is “more than schooling. You have the fundamental right to direct the upbringing of your children.” That includes their medical care and

“their moral and religious upbringing. And that’s a right that the government doesn’t give you and can’t take away.” Growing more impassioned, she says she’s “fighting for the survival of America, to protect the role of a mother, to protect the autonomy of a parent.”
Transgender ideology is a particular concern. The “first big attack” on parental rights, Ms. Descovich says, happened in 2019, “with the ‘procedural guides,’ which started appearing in districts all across Florida.” These guides excluded parents from all conversations about “pronouns, restrooms, locker rooms, overnight field trips.” Teachers got the green light “to lie to parents.” In 2022 the Florida Legislature turned the light red by enacting the Parents Bill of Rights.
When Covid hit, “this was a whole new thing,” Ms. Descovich says. “We see the districts taking more and more authority away from parents.” On March 13, 2020, the state ordered Florida schools to close for two weeks, and they remained so for the rest of the school year.
“We go to virtual,” Ms. Justice recounts. “There’s no accountability for teaching. There’s no accountability for learning. I don’t know how we graduated all these kids. It was Crazytown until Gov. DeSantis announced on June 6, 2020, that schools in Florida would reopen—period, end of story, full time.”
Yet the shutdown did end up bringing accountability. Watching their kids’ classes on Zoom, parents became far more aware of what their children were learning—or not learning,” Ms. Justice says. Ms. Descovich heard “stories after stories of parents’ jaws dropping at the lessons being taught and streamed into their own homes. We like to say that when we served on school boards, we saw behind the education curtain. And then 2020 happened, and all of America saw behind the curtain.”
Moms for Liberty began as a Florida group, then “exploded,” in

Ms. Justice’s telling. It has 300 county chapters in 46 states and “120,000 active on-the-ground moms.” There are now 275 Moms for Liberty-endorsed school-board members nationwide.
Expansion has its pitfalls, especially for a decentralized grass-roots group like Moms for Liberty. In June an Indiana chapter apologized for publishing in its newsletter a quote attributed to Adolf Hitler: “He alone, who OWNS the youth, GAINS the future.”
“First of all,” Ms. Justice says, removing her glasses and rolling her eyes emphatically, “we’re not pro-Hitler.” Ms. Descovich repeats the point “for the record,” before continuing: “We knew we were going to be growing by chapters and that the chapters were going to have autonomy. And that every now and then an average mom, who’s never been political, is going to step in it.”
It puzzles both women that parental rights excite fevered opposition. “Why do they hate us? That’s a good question,” Ms. Descovich says. Ms. Justice responds: “Because we’re upsetting the balance of power.”

Moms for Liberty takes on “human issues,” Ms. Descovich says, “not partisan ones. Children learning how to read in school, that’s a human issue. Parental rights—how is that partisan?” But if “the people in power, the educational establishment, can keep us divided against each other based on race or religion or gender, then we’re easily controlled, right?”
Explaining why this issue is so potent, Ms. Descovich says, “Once a parent loses the right to direct the upbringing of their child, we’ve lost everything. You’ve lost your family. You’ve lost your community. You have lost the basic unit of society.” Ms. Justice adds: “The reading proficiency rates we have in America right now pose the greatest national-security threat of anything for the future of this country. If you have a nation of children and adults who cannot read, where does that leave America?” She promises that Moms for Liberty are “going to fight like hell.”
As Ms. Justice furrows her brow at the prospect of battle, Ms. Descovich leaps in to point out that Moms for Liberty call themselves “joyful warriors”: “Yes, we’re going to fight, but with a smile on our face. We’re going to fight like heck, of course—Tiffany says ‘hell,’ I say ‘heck’—but we’re going to do it with a smile on our face, because our children are watching us do this.”
Mr. Varadarajan, a Journal contributor, is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and at New York University Law School’s Classical Liberal Institute.

Glenn Youngkin’s Quest to Keep Virginia From Becoming Illinois



CROSS COUNTRY
By John Tillman
Conventional wisdom says that Virginia’s legislative elections in November could make or break Glenn Youngkin’s presidential ambitions. Yet the stakes are much higher for Virginia residents. This election, in which all 140 seats in the bicameral General Assembly will be contested, may decide whether Virginia remains a haven for families and taxpayers or goes the route of failing states like Illinois.

Before he can think about running for president, the Republican governor has to rein in public unions.

Virginia is on the verge of the death spiral that comes when government unions conquer a state. In 2020 then-Gov. Ralph Northam signed a law allowing localities to authorize collective bargaining for public employees, fulfilling a long-running demand from one of the Democratic Party’s biggest electoral backers. Organizing began in 2021, and two years later government unions are beginning to flex their muscles with the goal of electing friendly politicians who will protect union power and support higher taxes to pay for their demands.
The Illinois analogy may seem overblown, yet that assumption is

precisely what government unions are counting on. Virginia’s public unions and their allies touted the 2020 law as a way to support teachers, firefighters and police officers. They said nothing about the associated costs to taxpayers, much less the expansive union vision of controlling state coffers. Lo and behold, Virginians are starting to fork over more money—not only to public employees, but also to negotiators, lawyers, and the endlessly bureaucratic union machine.
Take Loudoun County, where the school board has approved collective bargaining, allocating an extra \$3.3 million to hire 13 new administrators specifically for union-related work in 2024. That’s before the additional cost of a coming teachers union contract. In nearby Alexandria, setting up union negotiations is expected to cost taxpayers up to \$1 million, while the General Assembly’s Commission on Local Government predicts the city’s eventual union contracts will cost \$25 million annually.
Fairfax County is forecasting at least \$1.6 million in administrative costs, with forthcoming union contracts likely costing tens of millions more per year. Prince George County, south of Richmond, foresees the annual cost of contracts at \$10 million, with one local official saying the higher costs will run “forever.” In Richmond itself, public-school employees and principals have already unionized, with teachers ratifying a pricey contract in December. The costs will grow as unions make more demands, and inevitably unions will demand higher state taxes as well as local levies to fund the largesse.

Money isn’t the only thing taxpayers are losing. They’re also losing control over their local governments and schools. When agencies and educators unionize, the average person can’t simply petition elected officials to intervene if there’s a problem, because a collective-bargaining agreement binds officials’ hands. If a teacher is failing his students, the union protects him. If a police officer is targeting or neglecting a specific part of town, the union covers for him. This is the proven path to government that’s less responsive and more costly.
Naturally, Virginia’s public-employee unions have no intention of letting go of their growing power. They have opened the floodgates of political spending. The Virginia Education Association, the state’s

largest teachers union, increased its political contributions 11-fold between 2020 and 2022. Every cent in 2022 went to Democrats. Unions hope to elect Democrats who will reward them with even better contracts. As unions gain more members, they’ll get more dues money to spend electing friendly politicians. It’s a cycle that benefits everyone but Virginians.
Gov. Youngkin knows the immense danger facing his state. He’s made repealing the 2020 collective-bargaining law a priority, yet with slim Republican control in the House of Delegates and a Democratic majority in the Senate, he couldn’t make headway over the past two years. That would change if Republicans took full control of the General Assembly. Both the GOP and unions

have launched massive get-out-the-vote efforts, with a particular focus on early and absentee voting. Victory will likely come down to which side turns out the most voters before Election Day.
If Republicans fall short, it will get harder to repeal public-sector collective bargaining, since unions will become more powerful with every passing year. It may be now or never to stop Virginia from becoming a wholly owned union subsidiary like Illinois. If Mr. Youngkin succeeds in winning back the General Assembly this November, it won’t merely add to the buzz around him as a possible presidential candidate. It may very well save Virginia.
Mr. Tillman is CEO of the American Culture Project.

Notable & Quotable: Justice Thomas

From an Aug. 31 statement by Elliot S. Berke, the lawyer who assisted Justice Clarence Thomas in completing his 2022 financial disclosure report:

For several months now, left wing “watchdog” groups have been attacking Justice Thomas for alleged ethical violations largely stemming from his relationships with personal friends who happen to be wealthy. Democratic members of Congress have even requested that Attorney General Merrick Garland open an investigation into Justice Thomas for what they describe as “willful” violations of federal law. This is calumny.

Willful violations require intentional disregard or indifference. . . . Justice Thomas’s amended report answers—and utterly refutes—the charges trumped up in this partisan feeding frenzy. We continue to work with Supreme Court and Judicial Conference officials for guidance on whether he should further amend his reports from any prior years and have invited them to raise any additional questions.
. . . For the judiciary, relevant law provides that oversight lies with the Judicial Conference, not the [Justice Department] and not the Congress. It is incumbent on the Judicial Conference, then, to provide clear guidance

for the judiciary moving forward. And I truly believe that Justice Thomas’s critics know this, which only raises disturbing questions about their true motives in concocting and inflaming this “controversy.”
No Justice, Justice Thomas included, should be subjected to such political blood sport. . . . Several other Justices have been accused of ethics infractions of late as well, and while I do not represent them, I have seen no evidence to suggest their conduct was anything other than consistent with the rules in effect at the time the reports were filed, or due to inadvertent mistakes—as is the case with Justice Thomas.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Mitch McConnell Agonistes

You can tell who’s loved and hated in Washington by the way they’re treated when they have a health issue. President Biden stumbles through his first term, and is tripping toward another, with nary a notice from the Democratic-media complex about his obvious physical and mental decline. But GOP Senate leader Mitch McConnell freezes up twice in five weeks before the cameras and he’s supposed to resign forthwith.

Mr. McConnell, who is 81 years old, clearly isn’t the same since he fell and suffered a concussion in March. His speech has long been slow but it seems more labored now. The moments when he has frozen for 20 seconds or so, and had to be helped by colleagues or aides, are difficult to watch.

Yet colleagues and others who have seen him after those events say he was alert and engaged. His doctor issued a statement on Thursday saying he’s able to continue his regular schedule. “Occasional lightheadedness is not uncommon in concussion recovery and can also be expected as a result of dehydration,” Dr. Brian Monahan said after he conferred with Mr. McConnell’s neurology team. If that’s the proper diagnosis and Mr. McConnell can still do the work, then he has no need to step down as leader.

Washington’s double standard on the health of politicians is also something to behold. Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman ran for the Senate after suffering a stroke and he still struggles. The press ignores it. California Sen. Dianne Feinstein didn’t know her aides had sent out a press release saying she wouldn’t run for re-election in 2024.

Then there’s Mr. Biden, who stumbles repeatedly, blurts out inanities and non sequiturs,

The Beltway double standard on health is something to behold.

and sometimes doesn’t seem to know where he is on stage. But because Democrats don’t want a primary fight, and they fear Vice President Kamala Harris could be their 2024 nominee, everyone is supposed to ignore Mr. Biden’s infirmities. Whatever his issues, Mr. McConnell doesn’t have to negotiate with dictators like Xi Jinping or take calls at 3 a.m.

Mr. McConnell has been GOP leader since 2007, and he’s acquired many enemies on both sides of the aisle. Democrats loathe him because he’s been effective in defeating their fondest ambitions. He almost single-handedly made the current Supreme Court majority possible by blocking Merrick Garland’s nomination in 2016 after the death of Antonin Scalia.

Donald Trump would have lost that election if the Supreme Court had not been a major issue. And Mr. McConnell made sure Mr. Trump’s three nominees were confirmed—Justice Brett Kavanaugh, 50-48.

But Mr. Trump will never forgive Mr. McConnell for condemning his behavior on Jan. 6, 2021, and the Trumpy establishment also wants him gone. They indulge the fantasy of a Senate full of proven election losers like Arizona’s Kari Lake or Montana Rep. Matt Rosendale. Mr. McConnell keeps his eye on trying to nominate—and raise money for—candidates who can win and create a 51-seat majority.

We agree that too many people cling to power for too long in Washington. But Senate leaders are chosen by their party colleagues, who are in the best position to judge Mr. McConnell’s continuing abilities. If they think Mr. McConnell can still be an effective leader of an increasingly fractious GOP Senate conference, then he should stay in the job.

An Electric-Car Payoff for the UAW . . .

If step one of Bidenomics is funneling cash to green industries, step two is cleaning up the distortions created by its subsidies and mandates. That explains the President’s plan this week to spend billions to prop up union jobs in electric-car production that the government is forcing on auto makers.

Just in time for Labor Day, the White House said Thursday that it will offer \$12 billion to help auto companies retool their plants for electric vehicles. Car makers planning to build more EVs can apply for loans and grants from the Energy Department, but the scoring system comes with a Big Labor catch. The program gives preference to “projects that are likely to retain collective bargaining agreements.”

This is a de facto admission that Mr. Biden’s much-heralded EV transition will cost more jobs than it creates. It’s also a subsidy for union jobs that might otherwise be lost in the transition to EVs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that EV assembly jobs will grow by more than 17% in the coming decade.

But each EV can be built with about 30% fewer workers than a gas-powered car, and many new plants are opening in such right-to-work states as Tennessee and Georgia and are currently union-free. Union jobs will also be lost in gas-powered auto assembly, as the companies make fewer to meet federal and California EV mandates. Auto suppliers, many of which are unionized, could also lose jobs because EVs use fewer parts.

The \$12 billion comes in addition to the subsidies already flowing to EV production. The Inflation Reduction Act includes \$393 billion in clean vehicle tax credits by 2032, according to the Penn Wharton Budget Model, along with incentives in related areas like battery manufacturing. Even with the subsidies, it isn’t clear that consumers would choose EVs over

Biden admits his EV transition will cost jobs. Solution: More money.

cheaper gas-powered cars and trucks.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) celebrated the EV subsidies when the law passed last year, but the union failed to convince Democrats to attach a provision to limit tax breaks to union-made cars. The new \$12 billion payoff is intended to make up for that failure without having a vote in Congress.

The new subsidy is also intended to strengthen the UAW’s hand in its current contract negotiations with the Big Three auto makers. The union’s top goal is to maintain and expand dominance in the EV plants that will make up a big share of the future auto workforce.

Auto makers will have to pay to avoid a strike. The current contracts expire Sept. 14, and UAW members have approved a work stoppage if no deal is reached. Ford publicized its offer on Thursday, which includes a 15% bump in compensation over four years plus cost-of-living adjustments.

The UAW wants a 40% increase over four years, as well as guarantees on EV jobs. The \$12 billion is supposed to induce GM, Ford and Stellantis to give the union what it wants. But union labor could make Detroit less competitive with Tesla and foreign EV makers.

The EV issue ranks so high among the union’s priorities that it has withheld its endorsement for Mr. Biden’s re-election. “We want to see national leadership have our back on this before we make any commitments,” said UAW president Shawn Fain in May. Mr. Fain applauded the subsidies Thursday.

If auto makers leap at the new money, the cost will fall on the companies and taxpayers. Nudging investment toward more costly production will inflate the cost of EVs, and the companies will end up taking bigger losses. As usual with Bidenomics, one bad subsidy begets another, and the offer is pay more, get less.

. . . And ‘Card Check’ by the Back Door

The Biden National Labor Relations Board has been busy rewriting longstanding labor law to assist its unions friends. And the latest example came last week when President Biden’s appointees moved to eliminate secret ballot elections on the sly.

The NLRB *Cemex* case deals with run-of-the-mill allegations by the Teamsters that a building material company committed unfair labor practices during a union election campaign. Rather than neutrally arbitrating these allegations, the NLRB used the case to unveil a new regime for recognizing unions that threatens to strip workers of an organizing vote.

Current NLRB policy is that unions must show that 30% of workers have signed “cards” in favor of unionization. Then they must petition the board for a secret-ballot election. Secret-ballot elections rarely produce as much support for unionization as card signatures since workers get to hear competing arguments from an employer.

The *Cemex* decision shifts the burden to employers to petition the NLRB for a secret-ballot election when a union requests to be recognized based only on a show of cards. Henceforth, any employer presented with a majority of employee-signed cards must either immediately recognize the union or petition within two weeks for an election.

Unions could prevail by default if employers don’t know they have to ask for a secret-ballot election. But here’s the kicker: The NLRB also

decreed that an employer found to have committed an unfair labor practice in the runup to the election will have its petition dismissed, the election set aside and union automatically recognized.

This is an invitation for unions to flood the labor-friendly NLRB with meritless complaints, knowing they will result in automatic recognition. It’s also an opening for the board to throw out elections when workers vote against unions. *Cemex* will apply retroactively to all pending cases, so some employers could wake up to discover that their workers are unionized.

Democrats have long demanded “card check”—i.e., forced recognition by a majority of workers signing cards. Barack Obama and Joe Biden campaigned on card check, but neither could get legislation through Congress. The NLRB is now enacting it by decree.

Cemex flouts a 1974 Supreme Court decision holding that “a union that is refused recognition despite authorization cards or other such evidence purporting to show that it represents a majority of the employees has the burden of taking the next step and invoking the Board’s election procedure.”

As NLRB member Marvin Kaplan notes in dissent, the National Labor Relations Act protects a worker’s right to “bargain collectively” or to “refrain from such activity.” The Biden NLRB is undermining workers’ rights by imposing unions without secret-ballot elections. Happy Big Labor Day.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Second Opinion Is Necessary but Not Simple

In “Are You Sure You Have Cancer?” (op-ed, Aug. 26) Mikkael A. Sekeres highlights the complexity of making a correct pathological diagnosis from which cancer treatment decisions are made. The problems with his suggestion of a second opinion is that there is no guarantee that the competence of the second opinion provider is any better than that of the first and most patients are not able to select an appropriately experienced and specialized provider for a second opinion.

His suggestion that government require cancer to be confirmed by experts will be difficult to implement as competence of a physician is overseen by healthcare systems and state licensing boards, related in large part to training, board certification and periodic professional evaluation, none of which guarantees excellence in clinical decision-making.

Another issue: A second opinion isn’t reported back to a provider who made an error. Mistakes are made by even the most competent physicians, and without a chance to learn from errors, they are at risk to recur.

RALPH M. SCHAPIRA, M.D.
Philadelphia

Being an old-school physician, I was astonished by the clinical tale told by Dr. Sekeres of a patient presenting with anemia who was advised to get his affairs in order following a bone-marrow biopsy. In my day we were taught to initiate an anemia work-up with a medical history, a physical exam and a look at the peripheral blood smear through the microscope. With that done, vitamin B12 deficiency would be diagnosable by an even mediocre second-year medical student. Not anymore, evidently.

How much money is getting spent these days on painful invasive tests

that show the practitioner is just flailing around? Rather than referring the results of such ill-conceived tests for further review by even more expensive “experts,” as Dr. Sekeres proposes, maybe a better solution would be a return to the old tradition. Take a history. Do a physical. Conceptualize a diagnosis. Proceed with tests in the order indicated.

HOMER JACK MOORE, M.D.
San Diego

Dr. Sekeres is absolutely correct regarding misdiagnoses. During my career as a pathologist, I saw numerous examples, including a member of my family. Every patient should feel free to request a second opinion. Good physicians welcome them. When a second opinion corroborates the original diagnosis, both the physician and patient are reassured. When there is an alternate opinion, it provides an opportunity for education.

GEORGEAN DEBLOIS, M.D.
Midlothian, Va.

I lived a similar experience when I was diagnosed with myelofibrosis at a major hospital in Chicago following a bone-marrow biopsy 10 years ago. I was told I needed a bone-marrow transplant within a few months. I sought out a second opinion from a leader in this field, who ordered additional lab work on the biopsy samples. His conclusion was to continue to monitor closely with a monthly Aranesp injection.

I’ve lived 10 of the best years of my life without a major health procedure that would have interrupted my career and some of my best family years raising my three children. Even the large hospitals get it wrong, but the true experts get it right. Seeking a second opinion is a must.

CHRIS DEVENY
Glencoe, IL.

Today’s Divided Nation Recalls World War I

Karl Rove’s “America is Often a Nation Divided,” is a very useful reminder of the history of our chaotic political times dating back to the American Revolution (op-ed, Aug. 26).

The period that comes closest to today in the breadth of divisive issues was World War I. The nation was not only fighting a war. It was wracked with the Spanish flu pandemic and panicked over terrorism arising from a handful of letter bombs and the so-called “Red Scare” that led to invoking the Espionage and Sedition Acts, in which many Americans were prosecuted and arrested without due process for crimes as trivial as criticizing army uniforms.

The presidency was also dysfunctional. Woodrow Wilson was disabled by a stroke and the Spanish flu he denied catching and spent much of his last year in office in Paris negoti-

ating the Versailles Treaty.

Fortunately, the very short presidency of Warren Harding from 1921-23 produced the Roaring Twenties. One wonders if another Harding lurks in America a century later.

HARLAN ULLMAN
Senior adviser, Atlantic Council Washington

Mr. Rove’s history lesson is thought-provoking, but he overlooks the main factor that makes today’s division so worrisome: education. Never before has one faction made such a focused effort to indoctrinate children with its views. The left is playing the long game. As Aristotle said, “Give me a child until he’s seven, and I will show you the man.” The American people will perhaps right the ship again, but not without a massive, sustained effort.

ROBIN TRAYWICK WILLIAMS
Crozier, Va.

Refugees Fill Big Gaps in America’s Workforce

Hiring refugees is not only completely legal, but it’s also the smart thing to do for businesses hungry for talent as the U.S. struggles to fill almost 10 million open jobs (“U.S. Charges SpaceX Bias Against Refugees,” U.S. News, Aug. 25). Refugees aren’t simply victims of tragic circumstances; they can be meaningful contributors to our economy.

These newcomers bring diverse skills, experiences and perspectives that enrich our workforce and society as a whole. From highly skilled STEM professionals to hands-on manufacturing workers and everything in between, refugees fill crucial gaps across industries.

I have personally seen how the business community plays a crucial part in creating an inclusive job market and transforming the lives of the families Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service serves. Companies across the country have benefited

from an adaptable workforce with high retention rates, while offering these new Americans self-sufficiency, economic mobility and a sense of dignity that comes with meaningful work.

TIMOTHY YOUNG
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Baltimore

Celebrate Slavery’s Abolition

In an Aug. 26 letter, retired Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule demands the removal of the Confederate Memorial at Arlington because the Confederacy endorsed slavery. Would he also demand the destruction of the Colosseum in Rome, the Parthenon in Athens or Chichén Itzá in Mexico because all of those societies embraced slavery?

Perhaps it would be better for him to recognize the ubiquity of slavery in human history. We should celebrate its near abolition.

JIM CHAPUT
Oakwood, Ga.

Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



PERRY BALL
Hanover, N.H.

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

OPINION

Labor Unions Have Lost Their Way

By Elisabeth Messenger

From the earliest days of American industry, labor unions played a major role in championing workers' rights, fighting for fair wages, safe working conditions and better benefits.

As Labor Day approaches, unions will be sure to remind us how much we have to thank them for. And they'll be right. But we'll also be reminded how far they've fallen. The labor movement successfully improved working conditions in the 20th century, but it has lost its way in the 21st—veering from its original purpose and putting politics above workers' needs.

Many union members in America don't work in industry at all—they are government employees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2022 "the union membership rate of public-sector workers (33.1 percent) continued to be more than five times higher than the rate of private-sector workers." Government unions are some of the most powerful in the country—especially the teachers unions.

The American Federation of Teachers, with more than 1.6 million members, paints a rosy picture of financial prosperity, with \$152 million in assets and a net financial-position improvement of \$15 million since 2020. A closer examination, however, reveals an alarming trend: the union increased its membership dues while losing more than 10,000 members since 2020.

The AFT and the NEA are more concerned with left-wing causes than their members' interests.

No wonder teachers are turning away from the union when only 34% of its spending goes toward acting on behalf of its members. The AFT diverts large sums to political activities, supporting left-wing causes and candidates, taking no account of the diverse political affiliations among its members. Political spending accounted for 17.3% of the AFT's total outlays in the 2021-22 fiscal year. AFT President Randi Weingarten pulls in roughly \$488,000 a year—more than eight times what a teacher makes.

The situation is arguably worse at the even larger National Education Association. It spent \$49.2 million on political activities in 2021-22, surpassing the amount spent on membership representation by \$3.5 million. Like the AFT, the NEA protected revenue from membership losses by hiking dues. The union's emphasis on financial investment further highlights its shift away from representing teachers and toward building its own wealth.

I work with public employees who feel abandoned by their unions. I've seen the positives and negatives of the labor movement. But it's clear that unions' emphasis on political activity is detrimental to members' interests and erodes the trust workers once placed in them.

Union alternatives—such as Christian Educators and the Association of American Educators along with local, independent unions—aren't part of a national monopoly and have the potential to fulfill the true purpose of unions: advocating workers' rights and improving working conditions.

The heart of the labor movement should be the pursuit of a better future for workers. We want unions to do better. National unions such as the AFT and the NEA should refocus their efforts on the needs and concerns of their members rather than pouring vast sums of money into divisive politics. True representation means standing up for all members, regardless of their political beliefs, and ensuring their voices are heard.

Ms. Messenger is CEO of Americans for Fair Treatment.



DECLARATIONS
By Peggy Noonan

My great memory of this summer is reading Tolstoy's "War and Peace." In all these years I never had. In college I majored in British and American literature, so didn't have to. I expected I'd catch up with it along the way, but I didn't. For one thing it was huge, more than 1,000 pages, a real commitment, and one that involved patronyms, lineages and Russian existential gloom. Also, at some point in my 40s I pretty much stopped reading fiction and was drawn almost exclusively to nonfiction—histories and biographies. From youth I had read novels hoping to find out what life is, what grown-ups do, how others experience life. Now I wanted only what happened, what did we learn, how did it all turn out.

But something got in my brain the past few months, that there were great books I hadn't read and ought to. My mind went back to something George Will wrote about William F. Buckley, that later in life he'd finally read "Moby-Dick" and told friends: *To think I might have died without having read it.*

And so in late July I picked up the Louise and Aylmer Maude translation, which I gathered isn't considered the greatest but was approved by Tolstoy himself, and finished it this week. And, well, to think I might have died without having read it.

It was stupendous. At some point I understood I hadn't made a commitment of time but entered a world. It is about *life*—parties and gossip and thwarted elopements in the night, religious faith and class differences and society, men and women and personal dreams and private shames. It is about military strategy, politics and the nature of court life, a world that exists whether the court is that of Czar Alexander in 1812, or the White House or a governor's office today. And of course it is about the Napoleonic wars, and Russia's triumph after Napoleon's invasion.

It begins with a whoosh: "Well, Prince, so Genoa and Lucca are now just family estates of the Buonapartes." This is Anna Pavlovna Scherer, the Perle Mesta of St. Petersburg and a favorite of the empress, at one of her grand receptions. It will be



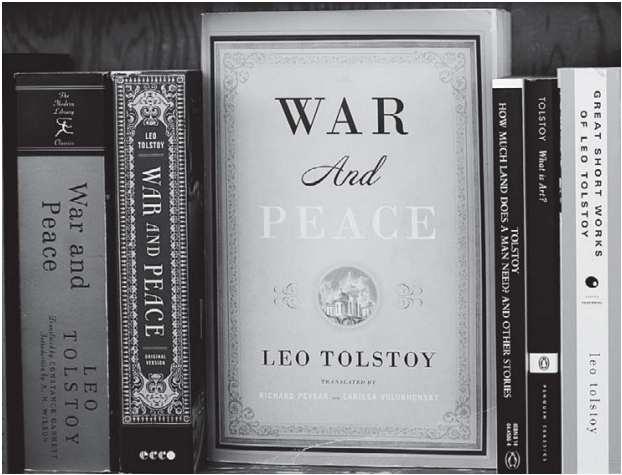
BUSINESS
WORLD
By Holman W. Jenkins, Jr.

Local politicians blabbed in the aftermath about climate change to help unlock Obama disaster aid, and also to duck questions about inadequate preparation. But the storm itself wasn't different from many that had battered the Northeastern seaboard for centuries. The difference was how many people and structures were in its path.

Nothing is funny in the aftermath of the Maui wildfire, which swept through a town and killed at least 115. But it's noteworthy that Joe Biden refrained from his usual clamor about a climate crisis. He didn't even mention the word climate in his speech when visiting the island.

Perhaps Mr. Biden's off-key anecdote about a kitchen fire at his Delaware home was his ad-lib substitution. Whatever the reason, his aides apparently understood that climate talk would come across as criminal and cowardly in the face of the true causes of the Maui disaster.

High winds are a common occurrence. Dry conditions are a common occurrence. Invasive grasses taking over abandoned pineapple and sugar plantations were a known menace, complicated by unhelpful land-use policy.



ROBERT ALEXANDER/GETTY IMAGES

seven years before Napoleon invades her country but she had her eye on him and clocked him early: "I really believe he is Antichrist." The prince to whom she's speaking shrinks back, suggests she's excitable. "Can one be calm in times like these if one has any feeling?" she asks. "You are staying the whole evening I hope!" In the end, what she cares about is the party. So does most everyone else.

I didn't understand what good company Tolstoy is. The Russian

This year I finally resolved to read 'War and Peace.' To think I might have died without having read it.

general Pfuell, an ethnic German, is "self-confident to the point of martyrdom as only Germans are, because only Germans are self-confident on the basis of an abstract notion—science, that is, the supposed knowledge of absolute truth." A Frenchman is self-assured because he regards himself personally as irresistibly attractive. "An Englishman is self-assured, as being of the best organized state of the world." "A Russian is self-assured just because he knows nothing and does not want to know anything, since he does not believe that anything can be known."

One of Napoleon's commanders rejects better quarters and sets himself up in a peasant's hut on the field. "Marshal Davout was one of those men who purposely put

themselves in most depressing conditions to have a justification for being gloomy. For the same reason they are always hard at work and in a hurry."

"Anatole, with the partiality dull-witted people have for any conclusion they have reached by their own reasoning, repeated the argument."

Tolstoy's Napoleon is a puffed up poseur, not so much confident and bold as "intoxicated by the crimes he has committed so successfully." "His whole short corpulent figure with broad thick shoulders, and chest and stomach involuntarily protruding, had that imposing and stately appearance one sees in men of forty who live in comfort." "Only what took place within his own mind interested him. Nothing outside himself had any significance for him, because everything in the world, it seemed to him, depended entirely on his will."

A small tragedy of humanity is that "man's mind cannot grasp the causes of events in their completeness, but the desire to find those causes is implanted in man's soul." And so man, in the form of historians, makes up stories. Napoleon, at the battle of Borodino, did all he'd done in previous battles, but this time he didn't triumph. Why? Because, researchers say, he had a cold. No, Tolstoy says, that isn't it! Some historians say Moscow burned because Napoleon set it on fire for revenge. Others say the Russians lit the blaze rather than let him rule there. Nonsense, Tolstoy says: Moscow burned down because it was a city made of wood. The French soldiers who occupied it

Maui Sees Off the Climate Ambulance Chasers

Emergency sirens weren't sounded. Water wasn't available due to political squabbles over allocation rights. The local utility was instructed by Hawaii's Legislature to meet ambitious renewables targets rather than spend on reducing fire risk. Firefighters reportedly left the scene early believing they had extinguished the initial blaze.

Maui itself is an island surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, with vagaries more immediate and potent than any caused by a 0.3% fluctuation in the planet's long-term energy balance due to atmospheric CO2.

Blue-green algae gave us oxygen to breathe and yet we don't blame blue-green algae for everything oxygen-breathing organisms do. Likewise, nothing very useful comes from trying to explain every weather-related misfortune in terms of human-caused carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Weather is a product of climate, we should specify; our climate is currently influenced by atmospheric CO2 of 419 parts per million.

But hurricanes, fires, floods and heat waves also occurred when the concentration was 280 parts per million, and tended to claim more lives than they do now. Whatever man's role in climate change, whatever the merits of regulating CO2, making climate policy the answer to weather risks is a distraction and fraud on the public. Nearly one-third of all greenhouse gases have been released since Al Gore won his 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for a climate movie. These emissions have an estimated half-life in the atmosphere of 120 years. Your electric car isn't going to change that.

By now, though, activists and lobbyists have a picture on the wall, blown up to five times life-size, of a certain type of voter willing to believe anything, even that Joe Biden's pork-ridden Inflation Reduction Act meaningfully addresses a warming planet.

For once, a weather-related disaster is too important to cheapen for the sake of the 'narrative.'

Meanwhile, a Nobel Prize laureate in physics who decries the "application of scientific disinformation for opportunistic purposes" can expect to be disinvented from giving a speech to the International Monetary Fund, as the 2022 laureate John Clauser recently was. His offending words, which are hard to dispute in the dictionary sense: "I believe that climate change is *not a crisis*" (emphasis added).

A crisis, after all, usually calls for concerted, immediate action. Why is

cooked and lit candles and fell asleep and stumbled about. Moscow's inhabitants had fled; there was no one to watch things and no fire department.

There are beautiful set pieces. Count Pierre, sick, starving, a prisoner of Napoleon's army, on a constant forced march without shoes, sets his entire intellect to understanding the truth of life. All he has experienced tells him "that man is created for happiness, that happiness is within him, in the satisfaction of simple human needs, and that all unhappiness arises not from privation but from superfluity." An epiphany follows: "That nothing in this world is terrible." "Life is everything. Life is God. Everything changes and moves and that movement is God. . . . To love life is to love God."

His character is transformed. Once he waited to discover good qualities in people before caring for them. Now he loved them first, "and by loving people without cause he discovered indubitable causes for loving them."

I read this in a hotel in Ireland after visiting the site of a 19th-century Marian apparition in the town of Knock. It was a peaceful place and felt holy. Pierre would have been comfortable there.

And so the lessons of my War and Peace summer.

Feeling such love for a great work did something important to me. For the first time in some years I felt freed for long periods of an affliction common to many, certainly journalists, the compulsion to reach for a device to find out what's happening, what's new. But I already knew the news. Pierre was in love with Natasha. Prince Andrei was wounded at Borodino. Princess Mary was saved by Nicholas's intervention with the serfs. That was all I had to know and it was enough, it was the real news.

Don't be afraid to visit old worlds. Man is man, wherever he is you can follow.

Sometimes a thing is called a masterpiece because it is a masterpiece.

When you allow a past work of art to enter your mind and imagination you are embarked on a kind of reclamation project, a rescue mission. As you read, Nicholas and Sonya are alive, but Tolstoy himself is still alive. He isn't gone, his mind is still producing, he continues in human consciousness. You are continuing something. You should feel satisfaction in this.

it that nothing is ever seriously proposed or enacted, including Mr. Biden's bag of handouts for "green" energy interests, that would actually have a detectable effect on weather and climate now or in the future?

What doesn't make news is an updating by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, sharer of Mr. Gore's Nobel Prize, of its all-important climate-sensitivity estimate and related forecasts.

The expected path of future emissions has been significantly reduced solely on the basis of more-realistic technological and socioeconomic assumptions. A doubling of atmospheric carbon is still expected to lead to a long-term 3 degrees Celsius of warming from preindustrial times. But crucially lowered are the odds of a worse-than-expected warming driving most climate doom scenarios. The IPCC also continues to see no clear evidence of worsening tropical storms.

To emphasize something not usually emphasized, the science is still largely a science of computer simulations. For now, though, it suggests a relatively manageable human adaptation to a slowly warming planet, mainly through everyday decisions about where and how to live, build and work. Down the road may arise a gnarly question of whether to use particulates to control how much sunlight reaches the earth's surface. But this can of worms technology was going to open anyway.

When a Big Family Gets Bigger

By Nicole Ault

While cleaning up the church after my sister's wedding last month, my four other siblings and I hashed out the family accounting. Did we lose a sibling? Gain one? Can her husband join the family group chat?

Our first family wedding was in no small way a sibling affair—not least because it marked the first change to our ranks. Dad gave the bride away, but it felt as though we brothers and sisters, ushers and bridesmaids, were giving our blessing too. We had vetted her husband. A new brother is a big deal.

The six of us are close, despite the chafing that comes with sharing bedrooms and a minivan for years. (And with our fun but not frictionless en-

deavors, like fielding a basement baseball team and producing Sunday afternoon "plays.") You can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends—and sibling friendships must be cultivated.

They are excellent investments. Brothers, teasing and protective, help you grow a thick skin. They are the reason I know anything about sports. Sisters, sweet but honest, offer sartorial judgment before the world can.

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity," says Proverbs 17:17. The events we rally for in years ahead won't always be as happy as a wedding. Siblings share burdens.

Big families, familiar with raised eyebrows and because of the minivan, know they aren't "cool." Certainly they aren't the norm. The average

household size was 2.5 in 2022, down from 3.33 in 1960. Environmentalism has given an ideological force to disdain for large families.

Yet many great stories attest that sibling camaraderie is enviable. The four Pevensies venture into Narnia. The Boxcar Children make do without parents in so charming a fashion that who wouldn't want to be an orphan living in a train in the woods? Jo March would have no story without Meg, Beth and Amy. And no family is more hilariously delightful than the "Cheaper by the Dozen" dozen.

We're happy to count our sister's marriage a gain to the sibling roster, not a loss. And our brother-in-law is holding his own in the group chat.

Ms. Ault is an assistant editorial page writer at the Journal.

SPORTS



Cal and Stanford Set to Join the ACC

The two California schools, along with SMU, have been approved to join the conference in 2024

By LAINE HIGGINS

When the Pac-12 effectively collapsed on a Friday last month, two of the most accomplished schools—Stanford and Cal—were left standing in the rubble of the so-called “Conference of Champions.” Now these two stalwarts of the Pacific coast have found a new home—in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Stanford, Cal and Southern Methodist are set to join the ACC in 2024 after the move was approved by the conference’s board of directors, made up of presidents and chancellors from its 14 full members plus Notre Dame. The vote was not unanimous—Florida State voted against expansion—but the ACC did reach the required threshold of 12 affirmative votes.

“Joining the ACC will ensure the Power Conference competitive infrastructure and long-term media revenues that are critical for our student-athletes to compete,” said Stanford athletic director Bernard Muir in a statement.

“When you look at the quality of the institutions in the ACC, this is an incredible fit,” added Cal athletic director Jim Knowlton.

The move bolsters the ACC entering the new era of mega-conferences that are fortified by ever-more lucrative television contracts. Beginning in 2024, the ACC will

have 18 members in most sports except football, in which Notre Dame will maintain its independence.

The ACC had been on the sidelines as other big conferences remade themselves over the past three summers. Oklahoma and Texas bolted from the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference. The Big Ten has added four West Coast schools—Oregon, UCLA, USC and Washington—and the Big 12 has scooped up pieces of the southwest—Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado and Utah.

The shake-up created a feeling of restlessness among ACC members who feared that the supersized leagues, which were already raking in more money than they do, would pull further ahead financially.

“College sports is going through the next iteration of change and it’s been really drastic. But you either get busy or you get left behind,” said ACC commissioner Jim Phillips.

According to a person familiar with the league, the ACC is poised to generate approximately \$600 million in additional revenue over the remaining 13 years of its current television deal with ESPN from adding Cal, SMU and Stanford. This is due to a “pro rata” clause in the current contract, which requires ESPN to pay new members the same amount of money per year as existing schools, and an agreement by the incoming schools to take dis-

counted shares of revenue.

Based on the most recent tax records, the ACC made \$443.7 million from its television deal during the 2021-22 fiscal year—about \$29.6 million per school. A person familiar with the matter said that Cal and Stanford would initially accept a 30% share of the revenue they generate from the ESPN deal and gradually see their cut increase to 100% in 2034. During the most recent fiscal year, Cal and Stanford each received \$37 million from the Pac-12.

In separate statements released Friday morning, spokesmen for Stanford and Cal addressed geographic concerns, saying that 19 Bears and 22 Cardinal teams will see “either no scheduling changes or minimal scheduling impacts.”

Aside from the geographic realities, the ACC isn’t a perfect fit for Cal and Stanford athletes who compete in niche Olympic sports that their new conference doesn’t sponsor. The ACC holds championships in 28 different sports; Stanford sponsors 36, Cal 30. Many teams in sports like water polo and beach volleyball would have to look elsewhere to find league competition they readily had in the Pac-12.

Some sports, like men’s gymnastics, already do that due to the small number of universities with teams across the nation. Others, like men’s rowing and rugby, compete outside of the NCAA umbrella.



SMU, on the other hand, has agreed not to take a share of television revenue when it joins the ACC, said a person familiar with the matter. This is an incredibly unusual move for a team jumping up to one of the richest athletic conferences.

The Mustangs were once a proud member of the Southwest Conference with legitimate national championship contending teams in the 1980s. But then the NCAA slapped them with “death penalty” sanctions in 1987 for systemic recruiting violations on the football team and the program backslid into near irrelevance. SMU, which currently plays in the American Athletic Conference, has been angling to earn its way back into a top-tier athletic

Cal running back Jaydn Ott, top, attempts to dive into the end zone against Stanford. Both teams are set to join the ACC in 2024.

conference ever since.

SMU President R. Gerald Turner said in a statement that Friday was a “transformational day” that will “raise SMU’s profile on a national level.”

Joining the ACC at a major discount is as much about prestige for SMU as it is about money. Even in the AAC, which commissioner Mike Aresco dubbed a member of the “Power Six” to emphasize its competitiveness, revenue lagged well behind the richest Division I conferences. Tax documents show that the league earned \$65.2 million from its television deal in the 2021-22 fiscal year—well behind the \$443.7 million the ACC earned in that span. SMU’s distribution from the AAC that year was \$8.3 million dollars.

In a statement, Aresco said that he knew SMU’s defection was a possibility and plans “to focus any expansion efforts on schools that allow for sensible and sustainable competition and student-athlete well-being within our strong geographic footprint.”

By adding new members at a discount and pocketing the balance, the ACC gains a pile of cash that it can distribute as it sees fit. A person familiar with the league said that the money won’t be divided equally among league members.

In May, the ACC board backed a model that would implement “success incentives” for universities whose teams win championships in football and men’s basketball during the 2024-25 academic year. Winning a championship in a sport that doesn’t generate a profit for the athletic department wouldn’t trigger additional funds from the ACC.

The success initiatives, however, haven’t been officially approved. It is unclear whether expansion will delay that process.

Travel costs will undoubtedly increase for all ACC schools, but the discretionary funds can help allay current members’ complaints of a growing revenue gap between their league and the Big Ten and SEC—the rich soon-to-be mega-conferences poised to rake in upward of \$60 million per school per year.

Florida State and Clemson have been the most vocal and seemingly restless members of the ACC. In a Board of Trustees meeting in early August, Florida State president Richard McCullough characterized the gap as “\$30 million per school per year.”

Yet Florida State and Clemson are effectively handcuffed to the ACC by the league’s grant of rights, the legal document binding the schools together until the current television deal with ESPN expires in 2036. Should any school leave the conference before then, it would forgo the TV rights to its teams’ competitions and all of the money that comes with it. Leaving is prohibitively expensive and absent convincing ESPN to renegotiate its deal more than a decade early, Friday’s move was the clearest way for the league to manufacture more money.

The U.S. Open tennis tournament is often hailed as “one of the great sporting events in America”—partly because it happens in New York City, and New York City can’t help but be rigorously full of itself, and also because, yes, the U.S. Open is one of the great sporting events in America.

The Open—plus Nebraska’s epic volleyball match on Wednesday, which drew 92,003 and broke a record for the most-attended women’s sporting event ever—have me thinking about a perpetual topic:

What are the most fun U.S. sporting events to attend?

It’s a question I get asked a lot, and I’ll be honest: My answers change all the time. The list below (to which I’ll add the previously mentioned U.S. Open) is just how I feel *right now*, at summer’s end—it isn’t definitive, not even close. Like the Open, I’m limiting it to events in the U.S., so no yelling at me about the trip you took to Old Trafford, and I’ll omit the Tour de France. You will surely have your own ideas! As always, you may direct the angriest complaints to my editor, Jim Harbaugh.

College Football Rivalry Game

No, I’m not going to specify which college rivalry game, not even the glory of Wisconsin-Rutgers. Pick the biggest game on a major football school’s calendar, see if you can book a hotel room within 110 miles, and start there. SEC people will tell you to go SEC; there is a case for Army-Navy; Big Ten people tout the Big Ten; and then the Big 12 people will ask you if you like to watch teams actually score touchdowns. Your friends from the Pac-12 will simply hold a glass of California red in one hand and an Oregon Pinot in the other and weep softly.

One of these days I’m going to go to Ohio State at Michigan in the Big House, and watch blindfolded inside a glass box, suspended from a crane. I can’t wait.

The Masters

I was thinking I might leave the Masters off the list, just to tweak the fussy golf traditionalists. Alas, I can’t. Augusta stands alone.

The Daytona 500

Readers of this column agree: I

know less than a dog does about auto racing. But I won’t let that stop me from touting the spectacle of the Great American Race, a noisy smorgasbord of decibels, tire smoke, gasoline, a tailgate of tailgates, and a seemingly monotonous excess of left turns which becomes quite compelling in person.

Boston Marathon-Red Sox

“Patriots’ Day” honors American revolution battles—and also whatever genius came up with the idea

of an 11 a.m. ET Red Sox game leading into the homestretch of the grandest event in U.S. distance running. You can literally leave Fenway, walk over the Mass Pike, wander your way into Kenmore Square, and find yourself among the throngs cheering for elite record-chasers as well as spouses and strangers closing in on 26.2 miles from Hopkinton. One of the great sports combination plates—much preferable to mixing a delightful U.S. Open day pass with a sad New



Fans gathered courtside after Novak Djokovic’s first-round match at the U.S. Open on Monday night.

York Mets nightcap.

Women’s College World Series

I finally got to Oklahoma City in June. Lived up to the hype—the exuberant chanting, chatter, and quality of play. Nestled in a stadium that seats 13,000, but feels more like 1,300. What jumps out is the passionate fan base—some of whom go back to the WCWS’s Omaha days—and the talent on the field. You think you can hit that lights-out pitching? Trick question! You can’t.

Lambeau Field

It’s Lambeau Field, what more do you need to know? Just go. Pack your warmest socks, and remember: sausage is a vegetable.

The Final Four

This event can get better—the men’s tournament insists on playing inside gargantuan football stadiums; the women’s tournament needs more resources; there aren’t anywhere near as many students in attendance as there should be. But a semifinal Final Four round—back-to-back games for spots in the championship round—is peerless do-or-die theater.

A Game Your Kid Is Playing In

This is the only one I’m certain about. If it’s one of my children, there is nothing better. I’m reliably told the experience is even better as a grandparent. Please know: I’m not one of *those* sports parents. I sit there with my iced coffee, I keep my composure, I never yell at the refs, and I haven’t gambled on an Under-10 soccer game in months. On a weekend afternoon, there is nowhere I’d rather be, the pride rushing from my heart as I watch my own kids. Unless they decide to play goalie, because I won’t be able to take it, and I’m going to need the glass box, and the crane.



Moonshot
How to get to
outer space on
the cheap **B3**

EXCHANGE

Wheel Deal
Germany's luxury
car companies are
on sale **B12**



Rates Are Up. We're Just Starting To Feel the Heat.

Homeowners. Car buyers. Landlords. Big businesses. Here's who stands to lose—and in some surprising cases, win—as interest rates stay high in the years ahead.

BY
GREG IP

IN THE DECADE BEFORE the Covid-19 pandemic, governments, businesses and households became addicted to low interest rates, gorging on debt to fund everything from expensive new cars to crisis-fighting stimulus and leveraged buyouts. That era was a product of the sluggish, low-inflation environment that prevailed after the 2007-09 global financial crisis, and now it is over. As investors have come to that realization in recent weeks, long-term bond yields have risen to 15-year highs. The Federal Reserve's federal-funds rate averaged 0.5% from 2009 through 2021. Today it is be-

tween 5.25% and 5.5% and markets think it will be around 3.5% for the next decade.

As yet, this has caused little distress. Growth is chugging along, and even the interest-sensitive housing sector seems to have a second wind.

The effects will come; just wait. In the first year of the pandemic, many borrowers locked in low-cost funding for many years, effectively delaying any day of reckoning. As that debt matures, higher interest costs will start to bite, unless rates unexpectedly fall back to their old lows.

Among the most exposed: taxpayers. Federal debt

Please turn to page B4

FTC Clears Amgen's Deal for Horizon

BY DAVE MICHAELS
AND JOSEPH WALKER

WASHINGTON—The Federal Trade Commission said Friday it reached an agreement that would end its legal challenge of drugmaker **Amgen's** \$27.8 billion deal to buy **Horizon Therapeutics**, averting a trial that was to have started this month.

The pact also dismisses the anti-trust claims of six states that joined the FTC in May seeking to block the deal over concerns that Amgen would illegally bundle its products with Horizon's medicines for thyroid eye disease and gout. Amgen agreed in the proposed settlement not to bundle the Horizon treatments and swore off conditional rebates or other tactics that could entrench the monopoly position of Horizon's products, which treat rare diseases.

Amgen previously said it had told the FTC it wouldn't bundle any of the Horizon products, but the anti-trust enforcer filed the lawsuit anyway and Friday presented the settlement as a win.

"Today's proposed resolution sends a clear signal that the FTC and its state partners will scrutinize pharmaceutical mergers that enable such practices, and defend patients and competition in this vital marketplace," said Henry Liu, director of the FTC's bureau of competition.

Please turn to page B11

Walgreens CEO Brewer Steps Down Suddenly

BY WILL FEUER
AND SHARON TERLEP

Rosalind Brewer has stepped down as chief executive of **Walgreens Boots Alliance** less than three years after taking the helm of the pharmacy operator.

Brewer, 61 years old, a former Starbucks and Sam's Club executive, took over as CEO of Walgreens in March 2021. Her abrupt exit leaves the drugstore giant in search of a new leader at a time of upheaval.

Walgreens' share price has fallen about 50% over the past two years, while rival **CVS Health** has dropped almost 25%. Walgreens has been the worst-performing component in the Dow Jones Industrial Average this year. Shares fell 74% on Friday, closing at their lowest level since the financial crisis in 2009.

"This is perhaps one of the most difficult notes I have ever written over the course of my career," Brewer said in a post announcing her exit on LinkedIn. She said she was proud of her tenure and strategic changes, and would help the company search for a CEO with healthcare expertise. "Per-

Please turn to page B10

Meet the Man Who Has Detroit on Edge

BY NORA ECKERT

When Shawn Fain glances at the wall of executive portraits at the United Auto Workers' historic Black Lake conference center in Northern Michigan, there is one photo that always catches him off-guard.

His own. "I look up and expect to see someone else," said Fain, who was elected this spring to lead the 400,000-member union. "It's very surreal."

Fain's ascent to the UAW's top office has taken the entire auto industry by surprise.

In the five months since he narrowly edged out the incumbent in a contentious runoff election, the 54-year-old UAW boss has tossed the typical union playbook, starting with turning his back on a traditional CEO-handshake ceremony

that has for decades marked the start of labor talks in Detroit.

The new president and his executive board, many of whom ran as part of the same reform-minded caucus as Fain, are negotiating new labor contracts for about 146,000 hourly workers at General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the global car company that now owns Jeep, Ram and Chrysler.

The existing contracts expire Sept. 14, and if a deal isn't reached by then, Fain has said he is ready to strike—potentially not just one automaker but all three.

Elected in March, he became the first candidate outside the group's ruling caucus to unseat the incumbent in more than 70 years.

He has pledged to bring change to a union battered by a yearslong corruption scandal that has sent two past UAW presidents to prison.

And he has insisted that workers should be sharing in the success of companies that have earned billions of dollars in profits each year. Members spent much of the Covid-19 pandemic working long days on assembly lines, Fain has argued, while corporate workers had the flexibility to clock in from home.

In recent weeks, he has been unusually outspoken about his frustrations with labor talks—at one point, making a public show of throwing Stellantis's bargaining proposals in the trash—and has embraced fiery rhetoric that has riled up workers for a potential walkout and taken many auto executives aback.

Fain disclosed Thursday evening that the UAW had filed complaints with the National Labor Relations Board alleging that GM and Stellantis have been negotiating in bad faith, which the filings said amounted to an unfair labor practice. It is highly unusual for the UAW to make such a complaint at this stage of talks.

Both companies denied the alle-

Please turn to page B5



United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain is preparing for a possible strike against three automakers: Ford, General Motors and Stellantis.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ/USA TODAY NETWORK/REUTERS

PHOTOILLUSTRATION BY MATT CHASE

THE SCORE | THE BUSINESS WEEK IN 5 STOCKS

Shoppers Cut Back, A Boost for Coinbase

BEST BUY

▲
BBY
3.9%

Best Buy's sales keep falling as electronics demand loses its charge. The retailer had been bracing for a drop in revenue this year after a surge of pandemic-driven demand, though sales in the latest quarter fell less severely than expected. "We continue to expect that this year will be the low point in tech demand after two years of sales declines," Chief Executive Corie Barry said. In 2020 and 2021, Best Buy saw revenue jump as homebound consumers set up work-from-home spaces. Now, shoppers are feeling the strain of higher debt and persistent inflation. Best Buy shares **increased 3.9% Tuesday**.

\$9.58 billion
Best Buy's 2Q sales,
down 7.2% from a year earlier

\$274 million
Best Buy's 2Q profits,
down 10.5% from a year earlier

DOLLAR GENERAL

▼
DG
12%

Bargain shoppers are spending less. Discount retailer Dollar General cut its outlook for the year, reporting slower sales and a growing glut of inventory as its shoppers pull back on purchases. Both Dollar General and rival Dollar Tree have said customers are spending money on less-profitable items like food and other essentials. Heading into the holiday season and the second half of the year, Chief Executive Jeff Owen said Dollar General plans to whittle down unsold goods through markdowns. Dollar General shares **fell 12% Thursday**, closing at their lowest level in years. The stock has been cut nearly in half so far this year.

‘Our core customers continue to tell us they feel financially constrained.’

Dollar General CEO Jeff Owen



The aftermath of last month's fire in Lahaina, Hawaii. Pano AI's camera, below, can automatically scan for smoke.

KEYWORDS | CHRISTOPHER MIMS

Better Tech for Fighting Bigger, Faster, More Devastating Fires

We don't have a nationwide system for alerting us to fires—but could someday

Soon after the fire that would devastate Lahaina, Hawaii, sparked on the afternoon of Aug. 8, a U.S. government satellite 22,000 miles above detected its ferocious heat. That satellite is one of a pair belonging to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that also allow U.S. agencies to track hurricanes. Someday, such space-based tools could be a key part of methods for rapid detection of fires across the entire U.S. For now, the U.S. government doesn't have a robust capability to alert local authorities to such incidents. But various agencies, along with private companies, are working on it and prototype systems have already rolled out.

Indeed, a wide array of new technologies are being tested and deployed that can alert authorities minutes after a fire starts. These include tower-mounted cameras that use artificial intelligence to identify smoke, and sensors that are installed just above the forest floor, sniffing out fires using a kind of electronic nose.

"I can envision a day when your rural fire department might want to keep an eye on the next-generation fire system, or its successor," says Scott Lindstrom, a wildfire expert at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The instrument on the satellite that automatically detected the Lahaina fire is so sensitive that it can sometimes detect a single house catching fire.

Other new technologies allow fire agencies to determine what areas are at risk, and can help forest managers take steps to reduce the severity of future fires in those areas.

Collectively, these fire-prevention and fire-detection systems have the potential to be stitched into comprehensive "fire intelligence networks." Already, early versions of these networks are rapidly informing the actions of firefighters. In the future, they might generate alerts that help us all cope with wildfires.

"I don't think there is a silver-bullet solution to wildfires," says

Carsten Brinkschulte, chief executive of Dryad, a Berlin-based startup that makes tree-mounted sensors that can detect wildfires minutes after they've begun. "The problem is so big that we need to throw everything that we've got at the problem."

The problem of wildfires in the U.S., especially in the West, is by some measures worse than at any other time in recorded history. Fires are bigger, hotter and more devastating, and the number of "megafires" that scorch more than



100,000 acres has increased sharply in the past decade.

To prevent future devastating fires, technology must be used in service of what we already know about managing landscapes to save lives and property: We need more fire, not less, but it has to be the right kind—what Weiner and others call "good fire."

"We have to do something drastically different in the next 10 years, or we're going to lose it all," says Eli Ilano, forest supervisor for Tahoe National Forest in California.

The system Ilano is using, called Land Tender, is made by a startup called Vibrant Planet.

Land Tender creates maps of all the vegetation in an area, and its systems help figure out how to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. That means prescribed burns, which are fires deliberately started during the wet season to reduce the amount of fuel available to future fires, and mechanical thinning,

which is just what it sounds like—removing trees and vegetation without clear-cutting an area, says Vibrant Planet CEO Allison Wolff.

Other startups offer technology that can make up for shortcomings of satellite-based systems, which have limitations due to the great altitudes where they operate.

Cameras from Pano AI, mounted on cell towers, water tanks and other high points, can continuously scan in a circle 10 miles out, says CEO Sonia Kastner. Images from the cameras are uploaded through cellular networks or internet connection and checked by software that can identify smoke. Once a human verifies that it's a fire, an alert is dispatched, via email and text, to customers including fire agencies.

For the most at-risk areas with the highest value, there are now options for detecting fires almost as soon as they start. One is Dryad Networks' solar-powered sensors, which can detect hydrogen, carbon monoxide and other gases, and use built-in artificial intelligence to evaluate when their levels change in a way that indicates a fire has started nearby.

At least one company has proposed automatically dispatching drones to dump water on fires soon after they're detected, and others are trying variations on this idea. But fighting fires remains a mostly low-tech affair.

Implementing the kind of continent-spanning alert system that could underlie future firefighting efforts would require more advanced satellites than the ones currently flying. On the ground, we would also need all the data-processing and communication infrastructure needed to get the right alerts to the right people, as quickly as possible.

It would be very hard to create such a system, says Chris Schmidt, a researcher at the Space Science and Engineering Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who analyzed the satellite data from the Lahaina fire. "With the caveat that I'm speaking for myself and not my employer, I absolutely believe we could build something like that," he adds. "It's just a question of whether or not we want to prioritize it."



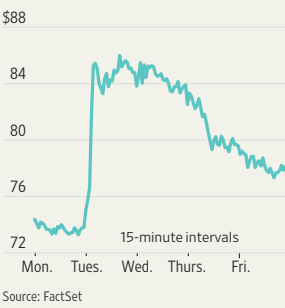
Crypto stocks rallied on the prospect of broader investor access.

COINBASE GLOBAL

▲
COIN
15%

A federal appeals court ruled Tuesday that the Securities and Exchange Commission must reconsider crypto asset manager Grayscale Investments' application to launch the first bitcoin exchange-traded fund. Grayscale sued in 2022 after the agency denied its application. Bitcoin and crypto-related assets surged on the prospect of broader investor access to crypto. Shares of Coinbase, the largest publicly traded crypto exchange, **jumped 15% Tuesday**.

Coinbase performance this week



3M

▲
MMM
5.2%

The maker of Scotch tape and Post-it Notes on Tuesday announced a \$6 billion settlement resolving thousands of veterans' claims that 3M sold defective military-grade earplugs that resulted in hearing loss. It's not the only legal trouble facing 3M. Thousands of people are alleging that products containing chemicals known as PFAS made them sick, and states have filed lawsuits claiming 3M and other companies contaminated their soil and waterways. In June, 3M agreed to pay up to \$12.5 billion to resolve some of the PFAS litigation. 3M shares **gained 5.2% Monday**.

WALGREENS BOOTS ALLIANCE

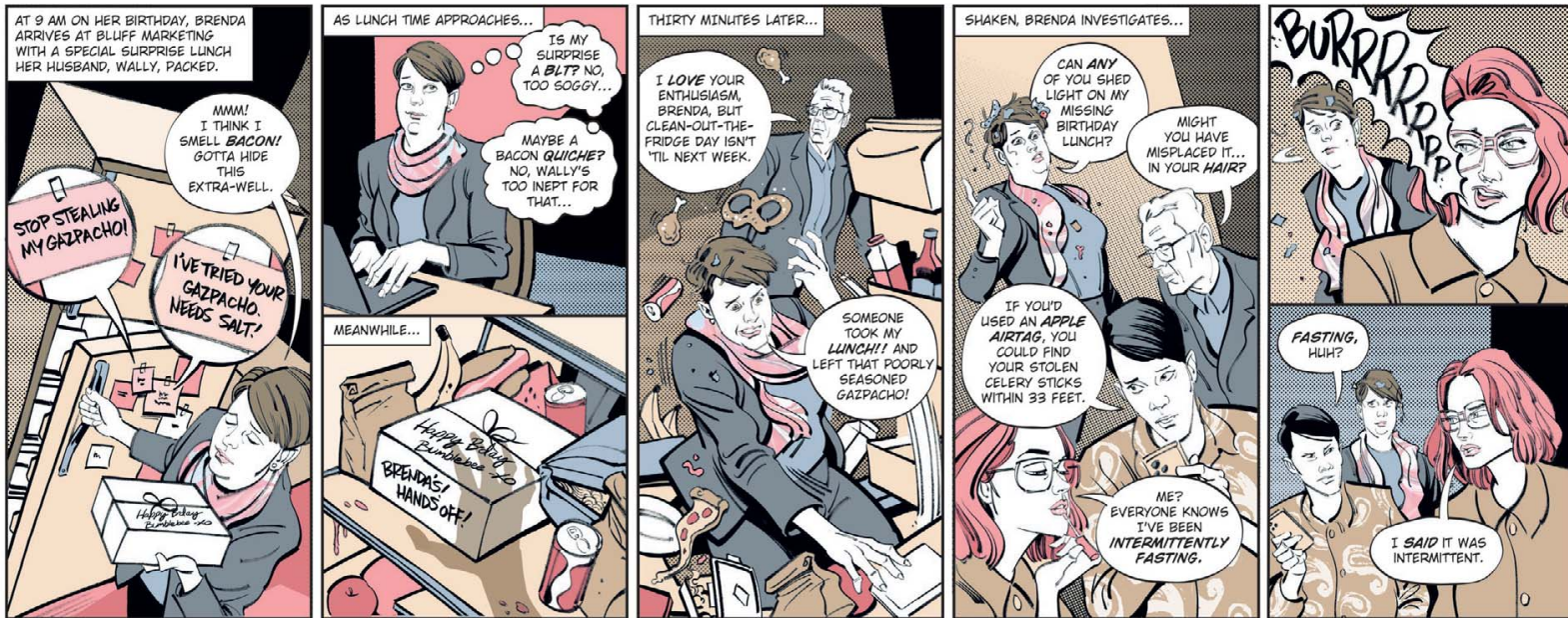
▼
WBA
7.4%

Walgreens is in search of a new leader after its chief executive's abrupt exit. Rosalind Brewer stepped down as CEO of the drugstore giant less than three years after taking the helm, Walgreens said Friday. Board member Ginger Graham will take over as interim CEO. Brewer was trying to revamp the company's ailing drugstore business by expanding into healthcare. Walgreens also warned that it expects its annual earnings per share to come in at the low end of its forecast. Walgreens shares **lost 7.4% Friday**.


—Francesca Fontana

WSJ COMIC | DALE HRABI & KAGAN MCLEOD

A Piece of Work: The Office Fridge Incident



EXCHANGE



You can't make a giant leap without taking small steps.

When the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft touched down on the moon last month, India joined the U.S., Russia and China as the only nations to land on the lunar surface. It was also the first to reach the south pole only days after Russia crashed on its way there. And its victory in the race to previously unexplored frontiers was a spectacular achievement for this nation of 1.4 billion people.

But the most remarkable thing about India getting to the moon was how it got there: on a budget.

India spends billions of dollars less annually on space than Russia, while U.S. spending is in a different orbit altogether. This bargain of a mission cost an estimated \$70 million—pocket change for other nations. By cheaply going where no country had gone before, India provided a model of success for any business on this earth.

So it wasn't long after the lander named Vikram arrived on the moon that reporters asked the head of the country's space agency how India did it.

"I don't want to explain all the secrets," said S. Somanath, the Indian Space Research Organisation's chairman, "because if I tell the secrets, others will learn and they will become very cost-effective."

That only made me more curious about the secrets of India's space program—and what others can learn from its moonshot.

Some of those cost-effective measures are not exactly secretive. India pays rocket scientists significantly less than other countries with similar aspirations. The unmanned Chandrayaan-3 blasted off with a small launch vehicle and light payload before getting a lift from gravity and following a long and winding road to the moon. It piggybacked on technological breakthroughs developed by the U.S., Russia and others that have chosen the moon. And this mission designed to maximize efficiency also saved money because, like the Apollo program, it was more about fostering national pride than advancing science. By reducing the mission's complexity, India boosted its probability of success.

But it's still an incredible milestone for the world's most populous country, whose per-capita GDP is also one of the lowest. Last year, the U.S. government funded NASA with \$24 billion and spent a total of \$69 billion on space, or 0.28% of the nation's gross-domestic product, according to the Space Foundation. India's total space budget of \$1.3 billion was 0.04% of its GDP. And it had plenty of experience running frugal missions before this one. In fact, India's first Mars orbiter in 2014 came with a lower price tag than the 2015 blockbuster "The Martian." It also landed on the moon for less than it costs Hollywood to make movies about the moon.

There are many obvious ways that financial restrictions can be a competitive disadvantage. What's less obvious is how they might work to an organization's advantage.

They can breed creativity, spur innovation and give people no choice but to make the most of their limited resources.

"I've always enjoyed working on missions that are cost-constrained," said Robert Braun, the head of space exploration at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and the former chief technologist of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

APL performed last year's bon-



kers Double Asteroid Redirection Test on behalf of NASA, and Braun calls the \$325 million operation "among the lowest-cost planetary-science missions that the U.S. has done." The constraints forced scientists to discuss trade-offs and weigh financial and schedule costs against technical benefits in design meetings long before they engineered a space collision and rearranged the cosmos. The mission was more likely to succeed because of the choices they made in those difficult conversations, he said.

Another way that teams in space, sports and so many other industries squeeze value from every last penny—or rupee—is by taking the lessons from one mission and applying them to the next. This piecemeal approach is how progress happens.

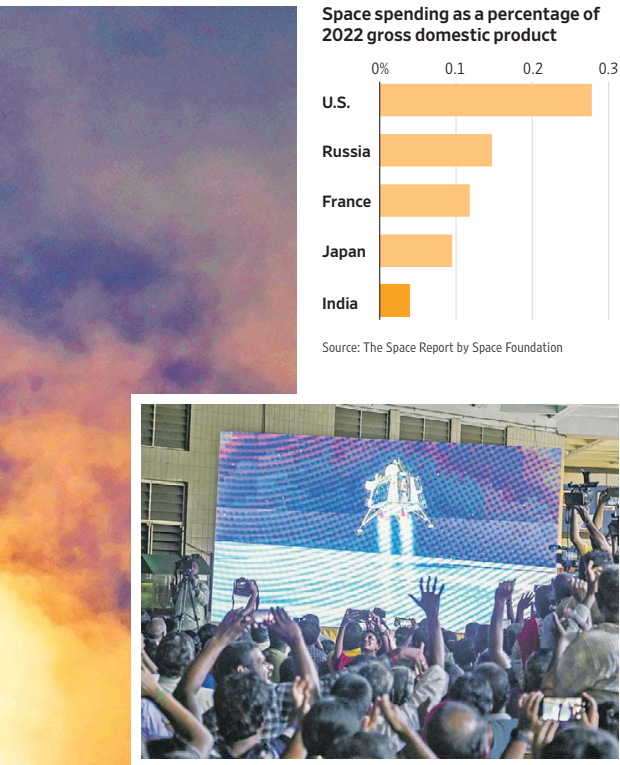
"An incremental, step-by-step approach is the best way to be successful in things that are super hard," Braun told me. "Like landing

on another planet."

Things that are super hard don't happen overnight. It may have taken a few days for meme stocks to get to the moon, but it took India decades.

The lunar surface seemed light years away when India's space program took flight in 1963 in a fishing village and scientists operated from the local church. When the country's Department of Space was officially established in 1972, the engineers worked out of sheds with corrugated roofs and watched pigeons fly overhead, as The Wall Street Journal's Tripti Lahiri reported.

India's first launch involved an American rocket, Russian computers and a French payload, according to an ISRO history called "From Fishing Hamlet to Red Planet." But importing so much equipment was impractical. And soon it was impossible. International sanctions after India's 1998 nuclear tests meant



simulated thousands of times to go right on the very first try. With no margin for error, it's essential to mitigate risks. But space is inherently risky. India's program tends to be aggressive in how it values risk and picks the ones that are worth the reward. If they have to cut corners, they know which corners to cut.

India is also excellent at learning from its failures. It has to be. It can't afford to let one go to waste.

When its Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle crashed on its maiden voyage in the late 1980s, it was a national tragedy almost as devastating as a cricket loss. ISRO convened a Failure Analysis Committee, which studied 37 potential explanations but couldn't identify the source of error. The next attempt splashed into the Bay of Bengal again. This time, the failure analysts were supplemented by an Expert Review Panel, and they spent a year trying to crack the mystery. They eventually pinned the failure on two glitches that lasted for one second.

Fixing that rocket helped ISRO develop the rocket for India's first lunar probe: Chandrayaan-1. It launched in 2008, spent nearly a year in orbit before losing contact and paved the way for Chandrayaan-2 in 2019. That spacecraft found itself tantalizingly close to the moon before crashing into the lunar surface because of a last-second software error.

It failed, but it wasn't a total failure. There is no Chandrayaan-3 without 1 and 2. The challenging engineering that got ISRO really, really close to the moon helped drive down the price of getting back there and trying again.

"You're going to see this for all the different companies and countries going to the moon," said Jim Bridenstine, the former head of NASA. "Over time, as we learn more, the cost goes down."

Every space mission is made possible by prior missions—and not just the successful ones. This spacecraft transcending the limits of the sky and touching down on the moon reminded those of us on earth how powerful incremental progress can be.

It's what mankind has known since Neil Armstrong took a small step and one giant leap of his own.

Aramco Again Is Weighing a Record Share Offering

BY SUMMER SAID
AND JULIE STEINBERG

Saudi Arabia's on-again, off-again plans to list more shares of Aramco, the world's most valuable oil company, appear to be on again.

The kingdom is considering selling a stake of as much as \$50 billion, people familiar with the potential deal said, an amount that would be the largest offering in the history of capital markets.

After monthslong consultations with advisers, the kingdom has decided to host any new Aramco offering on the Riyadh exchange to avoid legal risks associated with an international listing, according to Saudi officials and other people familiar with the plan.

A final decision hasn't been made on the timing of the deal, but some of the people familiar with the transaction say the kingdom could offer the shares before the end of the year.

Aramco has been sounding out potential investors, such as other multinational oil companies and sovereign-wealth funds, about participating in the deal, some of the people said.

Even more than most deals, there is a possibility this one gets postponed or canceled altogether. Riyadh



A \$50 billion offering, likely on Riyadh exchange, would be the largest in history of capital markets, but similar plans have fallen through.

has floated several different plans over the years aimed at raising funds via Aramco, some of which have ultimately faltered or been abandoned.

Last year Aramco considered selling additional shares on the Riyadh stock exchange and a secondary listing, possibly in London, Singapore or other venues, but decided market conditions weren't favorable.

Aramco didn't respond to requests for comment.

A share sale of \$50 billion could prove difficult to pull off. The company set the previous record for the world's largest initial public offering in 2019 when it raised \$29.4 billion on the Tadawul, or the Saudi stock exchange. The Ant Group's IPO of more than \$34 billion surpassed that amount in 2020.

The 2019 listing was a scaled-back version of the company's original ambitions, which were to sell 5%

of the company for as much as \$100 billion, including on a major international exchange. But international investors were wary of governance issues and the price of the shares, which valued the company at \$1.7 trillion. The domestic-only IPO ultimately listed 1.5% of the company.

Bloomberg reported in May that the kingdom was contemplating selling additional shares.

Saudi Arabia has long wanted to sell off chunks of the oil giant, part of a strategy crafted by de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to monetize the country's massive oil assets and use the proceeds to invest in industries outside of oil.

In April 2021, Mohammed said in a televised interview that the kingdom was in talks with unnamed foreign investors about selling stakes in Aramco, with options that included a 1% acquisition by a leading global energy company.

Aramco, majority owned by the Saudi government, said in May that it would introduce an additional dividend tied to its annual financial performance, basing it on the company's free cash flow. The move was partly aimed at attracting new investors after Aramco came under pressure for shareholders to pay

more dividends, according to officials familiar with the matter.

Last month, Aramco posted a 38% drop in quarterly profit because of lower energy prices and production cuts, but boosted its dividend by more than half—highlighting the kingdom's dependence on oil revenues.

Aramco's dividend commitment has been a key source of funding for the Saudi government and a bellwether for energy investors—a large, recurring payout the company promised to make to lure investors to its long-delayed IPO in 2019.

Aramco's decision to boost dividends has raised questions about whether the oil giant can balance the needs of its main shareholder with the investment requirements of a listed company.

In March, Aramco reported a record annual profit of \$161 billion in 2022, the largest ever by an energy firm, cementing the kingdom's dominance as the world's most important oil producer.

Saudi economic advisers in recent months have privately warned senior policy makers that the kingdom needs elevated oil prices for the next five years to keep spending billions of dollars on projects that have so far attracted meager foreign investment.

PHOTOS (FROM LEFT): ANJAL RAHWAP (2); SESHADRI SUKUMAR/ANJAL RAHWAP (2); SESHADRI SUKUMAR/ANJAL RAHWAP (2)

SIMON DAWSON/BLOOMBERG NEWS

EXCHANGE

The Impact of Higher Rates Is Just Beginning

Continued from page B1

held by the public rocketed from 35% of gross domestic product at the end of 2007 to 93% in the first quarter of this year as Uncle Sam borrowed first to bail out banks, then to prop up growth, then to cut taxes, then cushion the economy from the pandemic, and now to support manufacturing.

The burden of that debt has been relatively low because the Treasury could borrow so cheaply. But 67% of the debt matures within five years, according to TD Securities. TD estimates the U.S. pays an average rate of 3.4% on that debt, well below current interest rates.

In the private sector, banks were the first casualty. Three regional lenders collapsed earlier this year, squeezed between the falling market value of loans they made and bonds they bought when rates were lower, and depositors fleeing to higher-yielding investment alternatives.

American corporations could be next. "In 2020, we had these very unique circumstances where companies didn't know if the economy would be shut down for another year or how long the Fed's intervention in the corporate-debt market would last, and they issued a huge amount of debt," said David Mericle, chief U.S. economist at Goldman Sachs. This has insulated them from the need to refinance as rates have risen in the past year.

That is going to change. As that debt is refinanced, corporate interest expenses will rise, which can in turn limit companies' ability to spend, research and hire.

Individuals meanwhile are already paying higher rates on credit cards and car loans. Interest expense, excluding mortgages, consumed 2.2% of personal income in July, up about a percentage point in two years.

Because most homeowners in recent years exploited the lowest mortgage rates in a generation, the effective rate on outstanding mortgage debt had only crept up to 3.6% in the second quarter—even as the rate on new mortgages shot up to 6.5%, according to Freddie Mac—a historically wide spread.

To avoid paying that higher rate, homeowners are staying put. That can't go on forever: Almost everyone eventually has to move, and as they do, interest will consume more of household incomes.

Still, one person's debt is another person's asset. As borrowers wince under the pressure of rising costs, many retirees and other will celebrate finally being able to earn a safe return above the rate of inflation.

Here's our survey of who stands to lose—and in some cases, win—as interest rates stay high in the years ahead.

Households

Homes and cars are two of the biggest purchases households make, and higher rates are hitting buyers of each on different timelines.

Swiftly rising rates have already made some homeowners reluctant to sell their properties and give up the superlow mortgage rate they locked in a couple of years ago. These golden-handcuff mortgages are one factor limiting the inventory of homes on the market and driving down home sales. In July, U.S. buyers were choosing from 1.1 million listings of existing homes, down from 1.9 million in July 2019, according to the National Association of Realtors.

The new-car market may have its own golden-handcuff problem—it just hasn't hit yet, said Tyson Jominy, a vice president at J.D. Power.

Car buyers tend to trade in their vehicles five to seven years after purchasing them, which means that drivers who got low-rate loans in 2020 and 2021 are still happily out on the road. But in 2025 and beyond, many of them will return to the market and may have to contend with higher rates.

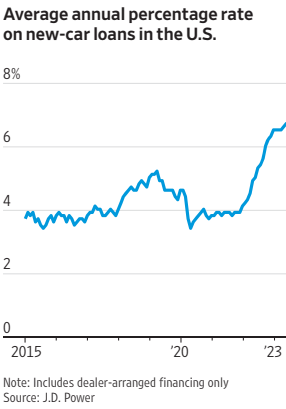
The average monthly car payment jumped \$151 between June 2019 and June 2023, and higher rates on auto loans account for only \$16 of the increase, according to J.D. Power. But that figure is expected to rise in coming years, and many consumers will either absorb higher payments, opt for more-modest vehicles, or squeeze more miles out of cars they bought with lower-interest loans.

Marjorie Radlo-Zandi bought an SUV in 2016 with a 3% loan and wants to trade it in, but not in today's market, since dealers have less selection, prices have shot up, and her interest rate would be twice as high.

Radlo-Zandi, an investor and board member in Lexington, Mass., said she can't bear to buy a new car even though maintaining hers has become a nuisance. She has taken it in for repairs five times this year, at a cost of \$6,000, and has had to learn how to fill up the car's oil herself because it mysteriously started guzzling the substance. She now drives around with two spare quarts of it behind the front seats.

"I'm hoping I can squeak by for this year," Radlo-Zandi said. She aims to delay her purchase until at least 2024.

—Joe Pinsker



As rates remain high, home buyers and commercial real-estate investors alike will feel the bite. Above, a subdivision of new homes in Hawthorn Woods, Ill. Right, the skyline of San Francisco.

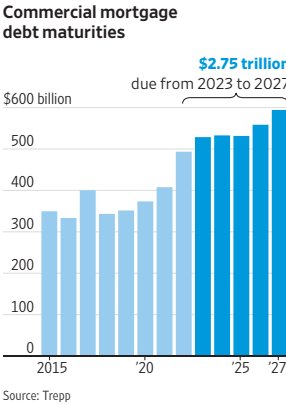
Commercial Real Estate

Low interest rates gave the U.S. economy a lot of new real-estate businesses it probably didn't need. A.I.-powered house flipping, luxury timeshare startups, apps and platforms for everything from bidding on rent to showing office tenants where the conference room is—they all emerged from a seemingly endless stream of cheap money that no longer exists. Some may not survive.

But the more tried-and-true property businesses of old, like builders, office-building landlords and hoteliers, relied on large helpings of cheap debt, too. They are reckoning with the reality that cash costs a whole lot more now. More than \$1.5 trillion in commercial-property loans come due by the end of 2025, and refinancing that debt will be a drain on profits for many property owners, while a possible bankruptcy trigger for some others.

Worse for landlords is that the banks they depend on for loans are already dealing with a lot of bad property debt on their books. Real-estate investment trusts that specialize in property lending aren't lending anything at all. The Mortgage Bankers Association predicts commercial-property lending will have fallen 38% by the end of this year, when compared with 2022. Some worry that once-reliable sources of credit will be unwilling to return to their previous levels of lending any time soon, leaving property owners high and dry.

A protracted landlord-banker impasse will work in favor of newly formed debt funds that raise private-equity capital to make new loans, and which plan to step in and lend to property owners for as long as banks stay on the sidelines. These funds are hoping to reap profits in part by refinancing the debt of investors who borrowed during times of lower interest rates, said Vicky Schiff, chief executive of Avrio Management, which launched a debt fund this year "with an eye towards what could go wrong." Targets of such funds include underwater speculators that bought low and middle-in-



come apartment buildings, mostly with floating-rate loans that they now can't pay down.

—Will Parker

Corporate Borrowers

U.S. companies have \$600 billion in corporate debt set to mature this year, a total that will grow to more than \$1 trillion a year from 2025 until 2028.

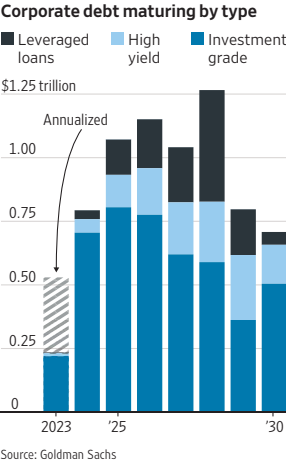
That stark data from Goldman Sachs points to a financial cliff that is coming for American corporations, which executives are trying to navigate by extending the dates their debts come due, refinancing borrowings or managing cash reserves.

What's at stake? The debt loads, coupled with the rising costs of new financing for companies, may cut into corporate profits, investor returns, spending on new ideas, hiring—and could lead to less-healthy balance sheets. Some analysts say there could be a swath of corporate credit-rating downgrades ahead.

Many businesses are trying to strike their refinancing rates at just the right moment—when investors are feeling optimistic about the economy and willing to lend. Beauty and fragrance giant Coty, for example, in July was able to refinance its \$2 billion revolving credit facility, extending its maturity to July 2028. The New York-based company, which includes brands from CoverGirl makeup to Burberry fragrances, watched market conditions closely, and Chief Financial Officer Laurent Mercier said he would have postponed the move if rates climbed too high.

With market conditions where they are and higher rates ahead, he said, even just a month later "would be more difficult."

Similarly, Wyndham Hotels took advantage of a narrow window in the second quarter to refinance a



\$1.1 billion term-loan facility set to mature in May 2025, the company's CFO said on its most recent earnings call. That debt was replaced by a new term loan of the same amount set to mature in May 2030, a move that helped the company reduce debt payments over the next three years.

Against this backdrop, companies will need to think differently about how they manage their cash. They will need not only to consider debt payments, but how they invest their cash and how much to keep liquid.

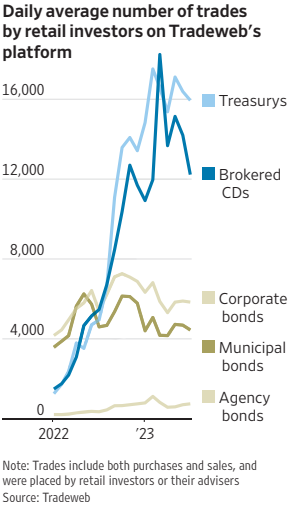
New York-based Tradeweb CFO Sara Furber, for example, prioritized the online bond-trading company's cash positions more than a year ago.

"As we think about a higher-interest-rate environment, the first thing is to figure out where all the cash is and make sure it's not trapped," said Furber, referring to strategies to free up investible cash.

—Walden Siew and Jennifer Williams-Alvarez

FROM TOP: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; JASON HENRY/BLOOMBERG NEWS; GABRIELLE ZANDI

EXCHANGE



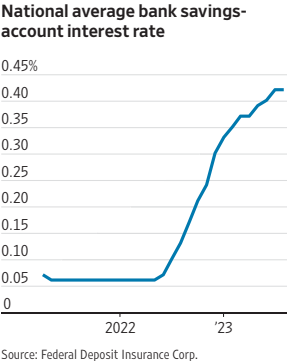
Retirees

Retirees living on a fixed income have been squeezed by inflation. Higher rates provide some relief. Years of anemic returns in the bond market pushed many baby boomers to keep most of their portfolios in stocks. Now they have more options. Better returns on savings accounts, CDs, money markets and bonds give older Americans low-risk ways to stretch their nest eggs further. If they haven't already paid off their home mortgages, retirees

especially a problem for retirees with variable-rate loans. This also makes it tougher for younger people to borrow money at reasonable rates. In the case of retirees, many feel obligated to provide financial support to their children and grandchildren. This runs the risk of depleting retirees' nest eggs. "Boomer retirees are increasingly becoming the Bank of Mom and Dad out of necessity," said Marcus Kerner, 69, in West Glacier, Mont. —Veronica Dagher

Banks

Deposits are the fuel for the banking industry. And as fuel prices go up, banks are going to have to adjust. For the many years of super-low interest rates, banks enjoyed the benefit of very cheap deposits. People grumbled about their banks paying paltry interest rates on their savings or checking accounts, but with few alternatives that also offered the safety of government deposit insurance, stashing cash in a bank was basically the default option. This also changed how banks could use money. When banks weren't paying much to get funding, they didn't have to work that hard to make money with your money. They could park it in things like longer-term U.S. Treasuries, which paid a low but at least higher interest rate than what deposits cost. During the Covid-19 pandemic, some banks made this investment in huge amounts, using a flood of deposit cash coming from stimulus checks and excess savings to buy Treasuries and other government-backed bonds. They could also fund mortgage loans at incredibly low interest rates. But as interest rates rise, the equation is changing. For depositors, alternatives like money-market funds or short-term Treasury bills offer significant yields. That means banks will have to compete to keep attracting money by raising their own interest rates. This pressure can be offset if banks are able to earn much higher interest rates, too. But that isn't so easy. Those low-yielding government bonds and mortgages are still on banks' books, losing value and depressing banks' earnings. That was one of the sparks of the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and others. Banks can now charge a lot more for loans like credit cards. But some analysts worry consumers won't be able to keep up with those higher monthly payments, especially if people's incomes drop or grow more slowly. Over time, higher rates can play to banks' advantage. Deposits should still be cheaper than what rivals like "fintech" startups or private-credit firms will pay for funding in this new world. But as with any industry, higher fuel prices just make doing business a lot more complicated. —Telis Demos



A New Union Leader Tosses the Old Playbook

Continued from page B1

Under Fain, the union has brought forward a set of demands that includes winning back benefits that workers gave up in past talks to help the companies survive. Fain, who started his union career as an electrician at a Chrysler plant in Kokomo, Ind., is also pushing for a shorter, 32-hour workweek and a 46% hourly wage increase over the four-year contract, which would be the largest in recent memory.

Some auto companies have called Fain's proposals excessive, and if fully implemented, damaging to their ability to compete with nonunion rivals like Tesla. One Wells Fargo analyst estimated the union's demands as they stand would add about \$6 billion to \$8 billion a year in labor expenses for each automaker. In many ways, Fain is tapping a renewed vigor in the U.S. labor movement. Union negotiations for airline pilots and UPS drivers have resulted in significant pay increases and better work-life balance, and the UAW's own strike at farm-equipment maker Deere in 2021 led to some sizable wins, including a 20% bump in wages.

His speeches are often peppered with quotes from Walter Reuther, the legendary 1940s union boss who was regarded as a reform-minded intellectual, and he counts civil-rights activist John Lewis and college-basketball coach John Wooden among his influences. But when asked who his role model is, he hesitated for a moment. "I am who I am," he replied. "I was raised to be my own person."



Fain's union aims to win back benefits workers gave up in past talks.

His office decor includes a placard that reads: "I don't sugar coat s—. I'm not Willy Wonka." Fain grew up in Kokomo, home to large manufacturing facilities now owned by Stellantis. He spent his younger years door-knocking and putting up yard signs with his politically active parents. His father was a local policeman and his mother was a nurse. Fain's Sunday family dinners included relatives who worked at Chrysler and a nearby electronics plant owned by General Motors, giving him a real sense of their triumphs and struggles, he said. He still carries in his pocket one of his grandfather's Chrysler pay stubs from 1940, a reminder of Fain's family ties with the union. Early in Fain's career, he was laid off and went on a government aid program to pay for his child-rearing expenses. "I'm glad I had that experience, because it really taught me what was important," Fain said. Over the years, Fain became more active in local politics, once running unsuccessfully for a spot on the county council in 2006. He also rose within the union. He has been involved with the union's national negotiations in different capacities since 2009. During this time, he developed a reputation for at times clashing with UAW leadership. "If I don't agree, I'm going to tell you I don't agree," Fain said. "I'm not going to do things just because you tell me to."

In late 2021, union members voted to change the way its leaders were elected in the wake of a federal civil settlement related to the corruption scandal. For the first time, the union's president and other top officers would be elected directly by members, rather than by local chapter leaders. Fain saw his moment. He won with a less than 1% margin, marking a turning point for the union and throwing a wild card at the automakers, who suddenly

found themselves dealing with a mostly new UAW bargaining team. Fain immediately hired staffers with successful records at other unions and regularly connects with members via weekly Facebook livestreams. One of his first moves was to withhold the union's endorsement of President Biden's reelection bid, a major departure for a union that's consistently backed Democratic candidates. Fain has said that he wants to ensure first that Biden's agenda on electric vehicles will preserve and support union jobs. Unlike past leaders, who tend to go quiet during negotiations, Fain has remained vocal, often throwing barbs at the companies and speaking candidly about their bargaining proposals. In a symbolic show of change, he ditched the handshake ceremony with the car-company CEOs—a tradition that dated

Shawn Fain

- **Picky eater:** Orders plain baked potatoes.
- **Work breakaway:** Played basketball in high school and has a hoop on his office door.
- **Aquatic hobbies:** Water skiing and fishing.
- **Caffeine source:** Hasn't had a drop of coffee in his life; prefers Coke.
- **Cinema snack:** Sometimes stops by a movie theater just to grab popcorn.

back to at least the 1960s—in favor of glad-handing with union members at different plants. He said he won't shake the CEOs' hands until a contract is done. "He's taking action," said Kimberley Speight, a factory worker for Stellantis in Michigan. "I like it. It's a direct approach." Fain is also taking a rather unexpected strategy to bargaining this time around. Historically, the union has picked one company to negotiate with first in hopes of reaching a deal that it can then use as a template for the other two, a process known as pattern bargaining. If a deal can't be reached, the UAW targets that company for a strike. This time, Fain and his team have opted to make all three car companies the so-called "target", believing that it will speed up the process and ultimately get a better deal for members by keeping the pressure on each one. Many in the industry worry he is setting workers' expectations too high, which could make it difficult to get a deal ratified. The White House, too, is on edge. Biden said earlier this month that he was concerned about the possibility of a strike, which would be economically disruptive. Jim Cramer, the host of CNBC's investing show "Mad Money," said the union's demands were so aggressive they'd significantly weaken the U.S. auto companies. "This man studied Trotsky," Cramer said during a broadcast this summer, referring to the Russian revolutionary. When asked about Cramer's comments, Fain said he didn't know much about Trotsky and joked, sarcastically, how central Indiana is known as a "fertile ground for cornfields and communism." Reflecting on his short tenure as union boss, Fain said the reality has yet to fully sink in. "I don't want it to," Fain said.

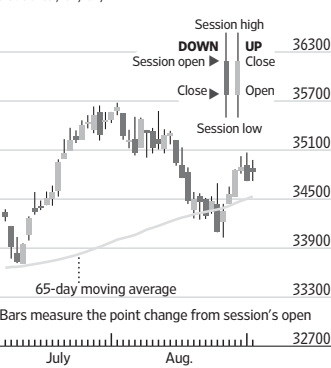


Silicon Valley Bank collapsed in March—a failure due in part to the impact of rising interest rates.

MARKETS DIGEST

Dow Jones Industrial Average

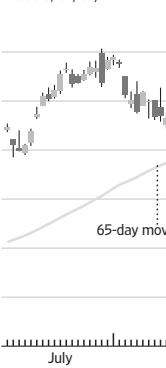
34837.71	Last	Year ago
▲ 115.80	Trailing P/E ratio	25.22 18.44
or 0.33%	P/E estimate*	18.95 16.73
All-time high	Dividend yield	2.07 2.26
36799.65, 01/04/22	Current divisor	0.15172752595384



Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc. *Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

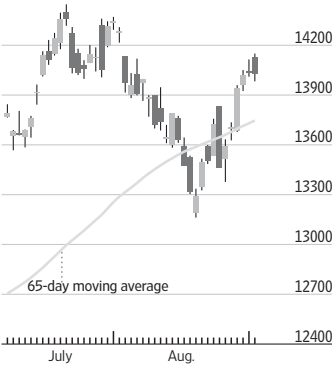
S&P 500 Index

4515.77	Last	Year ago
▲ 8.11	Trailing P/E ratio*	20.49 21.53
or 0.18%	P/E estimate*	20.17 17.52
All-time high	Dividend yield*	1.54 1.68
4796.56, 01/03/22		



Nasdaq Composite Index

14031.81	Last	Year ago
▼ 3.15	Trailing P/E ratio**	30.82 24.82
or 0.02%	P/E estimate**	27.35 22.31
All-time high:	Dividend yield**	0.82 0.90
16057.44, 11/19/21		



Track the Markets: Winners and Losers

A look at how selected global stock indexes, bond ETFs, currencies and commodities performed around the world for the week.

Index	Currency, vs. U.S. dollar	Commodity, traded in U.S.*	Exchange-traded fund
		Nymex crude	7.17%
S&P 500 Information Tech			4.42
Nymex natural gas			4.06
Lean hogs			4.04
S&P 500 Energy			3.78
Nasdaq-100			3.67
Russell 2000			3.63
S&P/TSX Comp			3.58
S&P 500 Materials			3.57
S&P SmallCap 600			3.56
S&P MidCap 400			3.51
S&P 500 Communication Svcs			3.46
NIKKEI 225			3.44
Nasdaq Composite			3.25
S&P 500 Consumer Discr			3.03
S&P 500			2.50
Hang Seng			2.37
S&P/ASX 200			2.29
Shanghai Composite			2.26
S&P 500 Industrials			2.02
S&P 500 Financials			2.00
BOVESPA Index			1.77
KOSPI Composite			1.77
FTSE 100			1.72
FTSE MIB			1.57
STOXX Europe 600			1.49
Comex gold			1.46
S&P 500 Real Estate			1.44
Dow Jones Industrial Average			1.43
Dow Jones Transportation Average			1.41
Euro STOXX			1.39
Comex copper			1.34
DAX			1.33
IBEX 35			1.19
Bloomberg Commodity Index			1.18
CAC-40			0.93
Australian dollar			0.78
S&P BSE Sensex			0.77
iShiBoxx\$HYCp			0.62
South Korean won			0.60
Chinese yuan			0.39
iShJPMUSEmgBd			0.32
iSh 7-10 Treasury			0.31
Norwegian krone			0.29
Indonesian rupiah			0.26
VangdTotalBd			0.17
VangdTotIntlBd			0.16
Japanese yen			0.14
U.K. pound			0.10
iShNatlMuniBd			0.10
iSh 1-3 Treasury			0.07
Canadian dollar			0.07
iShiBoxx\$InvrGrdCp			0.07
S&P 500 Health Care			0.05
		Comex silver	-0.01
		WSJ Dollar Index	-0.07
		S&P/BMV IPC	-0.09
		Swiss franc	-0.17
		Euro area euro	-0.18
		iSh TIPS Bond	-0.22
		Indian rupee	-0.24
		S&P 500 Consumer Staples	-0.33
		iSh 20+ Treasury	-0.39
		South African rand	-1.18
		Corn	-1.27
		Russian ruble	-1.46
		S&P 500 Utilities	-1.73
		Soybeans	-1.79
		Mexican peso	-1.96
		Nymex RBOB gasoline	-2.03
		Wheat	-4.34
		Nymex ULSD	-4.97

*Continuous front-month contracts

Sources: FactSet (indexes, bond ETFs, commodities), Tullett Prebon (currencies).

Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg	YTD	% chg 3-yr. ann.
Dow Jones										
Industrial Average	34979.18	34720.70	34837.71	115.80	0.33	35630.68	28725.51	11.2	5.1	6.7
Transportation Avg	15897.59	15751.58	15835.58	110.38	0.70	16695.32	11999.40	15.3	18.2	11.9
Utility Average	879.84	860.00	866.66	-6.04	-0.69	1061.77	838.99	-14.5	-10.4	3.0
Total Stock Market	45356.31	44995.88	45124.59	134.63	0.30	45969.67	36056.21	14.3	17.1	7.9
Barron's 400	1017.01	1004.27	1016.55	12.27	1.22	1036.97	825.73	11.8	10.4	11.1
Nasdaq Stock Market										
Nasdaq Composite	14149.62	13982.42	14031.81	-3.15	-0.02	14358.02	10213.29	20.6	34.1	5.5
Nasdaq-100	15618.85	15429.36	15490.86	-10.21	-0.07	15841.35	10679.34	28.0	41.6	8.0
S&P										
500 Index	4541.25	4501.35	4515.77	8.11	0.18	4588.96	3577.03	15.1	17.6	8.6
MidCap 400	2675.01	2659.56	2669.68	24.21	0.92	2728.44	2203.53	11.6	9.8	11.2
SmallCap 600	1244.66	1234.16	1239.34	12.45	1.01	1315.82	1064.45	6.7	7.1	10.9

Other Indexes										
Russell 2000	1926.81	1908.17	1920.83	21.15	1.11	2003.18	1655.88	6.1	9.1	6.8
NYSE Composite	16152.36	16000.37	16091.79	91.42	0.57	16427.29	13472.18	9.5	6.0	7.1
Value Line	576.39	570.42	574.52	4.10	0.72	606.49	491.56	6.2	7.1	6.0
NYSE Arca Biotech	5365.71	5290.74	5340.95	50.21	0.95	5644.50	4390.11	13.7	1.1	-0.1
NYSE Arca Pharma	914.27	905.80	910.94	5.14	0.57	917.89	737.84	20.5	5.0	11.1
KBW Bank	82.86	82.05	82.37	0.87	1.07	115.10	71.96	-21.5	-18.3	2.3
PHLX® Gold/Silver	120.27	117.35	117.38	-0.48	-0.41	144.37	91.40	19.7	-2.9	-8.3
PHLX® Oil Service	95.87	94.41	95.62	2.86	3.08	95.62	56.08	38.6	14.0	38.6
PHLX® Semiconductor	3705.58	3658.29	3682.84	11.91	0.32	3861.63	2162.32	41.7	45.4	16.9
Cboe Volatility	13.56	13.02	13.09	-0.48	-3.54	33.63	12.91	-48.6	-39.6	-20.6

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners	NYSE	NYSE Amer.
Total volume*	773,114,559	7,453,475
Adv. volume*	536,725,095	5,030,339
Decl. volume*	211,905,003	2,242,910
Issues traded	3,005	326
Advances	1,864	167
Declines	1,021	136
Unchanged	120	23
New highs	116	2
New lows	29	5
Closing Arms*	0.71	0.76
Block trades*	3,950	88
	Nasdaq	NYSE Arca
Total volume*	4,033,962,056	277,579,538
Adv. volume*	2,398,116,744	185,691,754
Decl. volume*	1,572,632,864	91,010,696
Issues traded	4,432	1,763
Advances	2,687	1,153
Declines	1,567	591
Unchanged	178	19
New highs	101	36
New lows	95	16
Closing Arms*	1.12	1.05
Block trades*	26,787	1,433

*Primary market NYSE, NYSE American NYSE Arca only. (TRIN) A comparison of the number of advancing and declining issues with the volume of shares rising and falling. An Arms of less than 1 indicates buying demand; above 1 indicates selling pressure.

Percentage Gainers...

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
TradeUP Acquisition	UPTD	21.25	13.95	191.10	33.00	6.88	111.4
TRxADE HEALTH	MEDS	11.62	3.98	52.09	22.80	3.77	-38.0
Taoping	TAOP	3.40	1.16	51.79	10.20	2.14	-52.1
Aspira Women's Health	AWH	6.00	1.44	31.58	9.60	2.31	-20.8
Reliance Global Group	RELI	3.01	0.67	28.63	15.30	2.00	-73.9
Tivic Health Systems	TIVC	3.09	0.66	27.16	20.20	1.90	-98.4
Hitek Global	HKIT	30.79	6.11	24.76	39.80	4.11	...
Greenland Technologies	GTEC	3.43	0.61	21.63	3.67	1.13	6.9
Growth for Good Acqn A	GFGD	9.98	1.75	21.26	12.30	7.77	1.6
Dell Technologies Cl C	DELL	68.19	11.95	21.25	70.28	32.90	80.4
Elastic	ESTC	74.27	12.39	20.02	91.30	46.18	-9.1
Hanryu Holdings	HRYT	4.69	0.77	19.64	9.50	3.41	...
Eos Energy Enterprises	EOSE	3.85	0.60	18.46	5.67	0.96	104.8
Heliogen	HLGN	7.46	1.08	16.85	90.30	5.55	-90.9
RumbleON Cl B	RMBL	7.60	1.00	15.15	24.49	5.38	-63.2

Percentage Losers

Company	Symbol	Close	Net chg	% chg	High	Low	% chg
Biodeva Pharma ADR	BDRX	5.80	-2.19	-27.41	1664.00	3.51	-99.5
iCoreConnect	ICCT	8.74	-3.22	-26.92	20.70	0.91	192.9
Aditxt	ADTX	41.36	-13.64	-24.80	1139.60	7.34	-85.3
Hongli Group	HLP	2.12	-0.65	-23.39	8.68	2.06	...
CXApp	CXAI	3.15	-0.82	-20.65	21.00	1.21	-68.7
SeqL	SQL	17.90	-4.40	-19.73	96.00	9.21	-49.1
Momentus	MNTS	8.44	-1.75	-17.17	92.50	7.29	-90.1
noco-noco	NCNC	1.74	-0.36	-17.14	11.42	1.58	-82.5
EZGO Technologies	EZGO	2.06	-0.41	-16.46	2.77	0.37	242.5
Inspire Veterinary Ptrs	IVP	3.19	-0.60	-15.83	4.10	2.26	...
VinFast Auto	VFS	29.50	-5.22	-15.02	93.00	11.61	...
Quhuo ADR	QH	1.73	-0.29	-14.14	5.40	1.07	-46.4
Lion Group Holding ADR	LGLH	3.04	-0.47	-13.39	107.50	2.50	-96.3
Nexstar Media Cl A	NXST	141.50	-21.30	-13.08	217.76	140.82	-26.0
Gray Television Cl A	GTNA	8.08	-1.17	-12.65	17.50	7.40	-52.0

Most Active Stocks

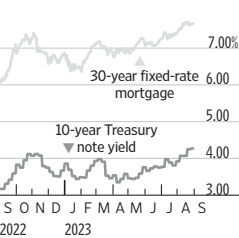
Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Novo Integrated Sciences	NVOS	219,827	786.8	0.22	53.57	1.60	0.07
Axcella Health	AXLA	155,988	1837.2	0.42	81.82	2.70	0.10
Tesla	TSLA	132,069	1.1	245.01	-5.06	313.80	101.81
ProSh UltraPro Shrt QQQ	SQQQ	112,874	-9.5	17.77	0.34	69.55	16.38
ProShares UltraPro QQQ	TQQQ	82,247	-16.5	42.29	-0.35	47.14	16.10

* Common stocks priced at \$2 a share or more with an average volume over 65 trading days of at least 5,000 shares. †Has traded fewer than 65 days

Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

U.S. consumer rates

A consumer rate against its benchmark over the past year



Selected rates

30-year mortgage, Rate

Bankrate.com avg ¹ :	7.67%
Fidelity Bank Trust	6.25%
Dubuque, IA	563-557-2300
International Bank of Commerce	6.25%
Lawton, OK	580-355-0253
Farmers Bank	6.38%
Buhl, ID	208-734-1500
1st Summit Bank	6.74%
Johnstown, PA	888-262-4010
Katahdin Trust Company	6.75%
Patten, ME	207-764-8000

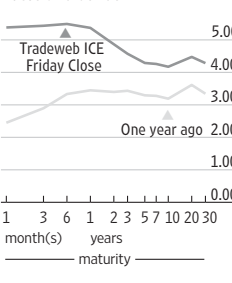
Interest rate	Yield/Rate (%)	Week ago	52-Week Range (%)	High	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Federal-funds rate target	5.25-5.50	5.25-5.50	2.25	5.50	5.25
Prime rate*	8.50	8.50	5.50	8.50	5.25
SOFR	5.31	5.30	2.25	5.31	5.22
Money market, annual yield	0.57	0.60	0.12	0.60	0.33
Five-year CD, annual yield	2.83	2.85	1.85	2.86	2.18
30-year mortgage, fixed ¹	7.67	7.65	6.07	7.71	4.55
15-year mortgage, fixed ¹	6.86	6.90	5.23	6.93	4.28
Jumbo mortgage, \$726,200-plus ¹	7.73	7.69	6.08	7.78	4.57
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM) ¹	6.57	6.50	4.52	6.57	3.29
New-car loan, 48-month	7.35	7.32	5.10	7.64	3.17

Bankrate.com rates based on survey of over 4,800 online banks. *Base rate posted by 70% of the nation's largest banks. †Excludes closing costs.

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; Bankrate.com

Treasury yield curve

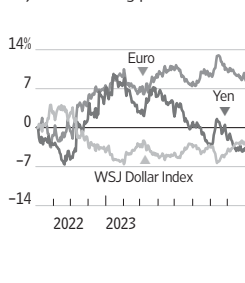
Yield to maturity of current bills, notes and bonds



Sources: Tradeweb ICE U.S. Treasury Close; Tullett Prebon; Dow Jones Market Data

Forex Race

Yen, euro vs. dollar; dollar vs. major U.S. trading partners



MARKET DATA

Futures Contracts

Metal & Petroleum Futures						
	Contract				Open	Interest
	Open	High	Low	Settle	Chg	
Copper-High (CMX)-25,000 lbs.; \$ per lb.						
Sept	3,792.0	3,862.0	3,786.0	3,812.5	0.0400	4,881
Dec	3,830.0	3,908.5	3,829.0	3,852.0	0.0300	128,813
Gold (CMX)-100 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.						
Sept	1950.00	1950.00	1936.60	1939.80	1.60	1,572
Oct	1947.90	1961.10	1942.30	1948.40	1.40	29,060
Feb/24	1985.90	2000.30	1981.40	1987.40	1.10	17,784
April	2007.00	2018.80	2002.00	2006.60	1.10	7,839
June	2026.60	2038.50	2020.40	2026.20	0.90	3,382
Aug	2044.10	2044.10	2043.80	2044.10	0.70	1,532
Palladium (NYM)-50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.						
Sept				1217.20	9.40	35
Dec	1233.00	1240.00	1220.00	1227.40	8.70	17,022
Platinum (NYM)-50 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.						
Sept				965.60	-5.70	1
Oct	977.20	995.00	967.40	968.70	-5.70	58,438
Silver (CMX)-5,000 troy oz.; \$ per troy oz.						
Sept	24,490	24,840	24,205	24,232	-0.240	621
Dec	24,820	25,220	24,520	24,562	-0.250	118,590
Crude Oil, Light Sweet (NYM)-1,000 bbls.; \$ per bbl.						
Oct	83.63	86.06 ▲	83.46	85.55	1.92	308,578
Nov	82.90	85.19 ▲	82.78	84.75	1.79	208,967
Dec	82.21	84.30 ▲	82.09	83.90	1.64	223,378
Jan/24	81.54	83.47 ▲	81.45	83.11	1.53	107,679
June	78.74	80.34 ▲	78.71	80.05	1.21	146,035
Dec	75.94	77.40 ▲	75.93	77.13	1.04	119,695
NY Harbor ULSD (NYM)-42,000 gal.; \$ per gal.						
Oct	3.1165	3.1709	3.0980	3.1050	-0.0081	83,726
Dec	2.9322	2.9809	2.9322	2.9395	-0.0039	52,846
Gasoline-NY RBOB (NYM)-42,000 gal.; \$ per gal.						
Oct	2.5598	2.6094	2.5582	2.5912	-0.0253	115,009
Nov	2.4756	2.5239	2.4751	2.5214	-0.0231	88,323
Natural Gas (NYM)-10,000 MBtu.; \$ per MBtu.						
Oct	2.765	2.860	2.735	2.765	-0.003	221,185
Nov	3.136	3.213	3.096	3.111	-0.036	204,111
Dec	3.587	3.656	3.533	3.548	-0.063	75,007
Jan/24	3.816	3.876	3.768	3.785	-0.050	92,507
March	3.409	3.468	3.384	3.400	-0.027	88,977
April	3.123	3.168	3.090	3.109	-0.011	78,508
Open						
Dec	602.00	612.75	595.25	595.50	-6.50	218,801
Wheat (KC)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	726.25	746.00	722.50	720.50	-6.00	745
Dec	729.00	746.75	722.00	722.75	-4.50	117,327
Cattle-Feeder (CME)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	253.200	253.325	251.025	251.850	-1.425	9,356
Oct	255.775	256.200	254.000	254.650	-1.375	22,074
Cattle-Live (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	180.800	181.025	179.825	180.150	-6.75	125,129
Dec	184.800	185.000	183.750	184.175	-6.25	85,922
Hogs-Lean (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	82.800	83.375	81.975	83.050	500	78,007
Dec	74.325	74.925	73.450	74.600	-275	62,917
Lumber (CME)-27,500 bd. ft. \$ per 1,000 bd. ft.						
Sept	510.00	510.00	503.00	503.50	-5.50	1,991
Nov	508.00	508.50	501.00	501.50	-6.50	4,388
Milk (CME)-200,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	18.90	18.90	18.55	18.61	-28	4,216
Oct	19.15	19.21	18.84	18.92	-18	4,384
Cocoa (ICE-US)-10 metric tons; \$ per ton.						
Sept	3,626	3,626	3,575	3,574	-28	615
Dec	3,637	3,669	3,590	3,605	-33	152,775
Coffee (ICE-US)-37,500 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	151.50	151.50	151.10	150.95	-1.75	613
Dec	154.65	156.35	151.65	151.90	-2.60	117,058
Sugar-World (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	25.11	25.87	25.05	25.81	75	349,119
March/24	25.45	26.11	25.43	26.05	62	277,713
Sugar-Domestic (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Nov	40.56	40.56	40.50	40.53	-97	1,419
March/24				41.55	-45	3,287
Cotton (ICE-US)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	88.79	90.14	88.40	89.61	1.51	102
Dec	87.84	90.00 ▲	87.55	89.95	2.13	130,677
Orange Juice (ICE-US)-15,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	328.00	329.50	328.00	327.35	-80	312
Nov	315.35	323.00	311.00	315.80	-2.75	7,964
Interest Rate Futures						
Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT)-\$100,000 3s 32nds of 100%						
Sept	127-230	128-060	125-300	126-150	-1-16.0	25,115
Dec	129-070	129-260	127-060	127-250	-1-12.0	1,514,708
Treasury Bonds (CBT)-\$100,000 3s 32nds of 100%						
Sept	121-110	121-260	119-270	120-080	-1-10.0	13,783

Agriculture Futures

Corn (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	461.00	468.25	460.25	464.75	3.75	4,839
Dec	478.00	485.25	477.50	481.50	3.25	699,873
Oats (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	491.25	496.25	▲	488.75	463.50	-6.00 156
Dec	493.50	501.75	▲	482.50	486.50	-6.75 3,482
Soybeans (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	1362.00	1374.00	1355.00	1356.25	-3.75	1,550
Nov	1369.00	1385.00	1366.00	1369.25	.50	330,116
Soybean Meal (CBT)-100 tons; \$ per ton.						
Sept	418.70	423.80	412.00	412.70	-6.00	2,251
Dec	404.10	409.70	399.00	399.60	-4.40	202,783
Soybean Oil (CBT)-60,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	66.10	66.75	66.00	66.55	1.03	1,531
Dec	62.63	63.73	62.51	63.29	.81	196,895
Rough Rice (CBT)-2,000 cwt.; \$ per cwt.						
Sept	16.46	16.83	16.40	16.65	-1.15	405
Nov	16.65	16.80	16.50	16.57	-1.13	9,959
Wheat (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	574.00	585.00	571.00	567.50	-5.50	1,975

Exchange-Traded Portfolios | WSJ.com/ETFResearch

Largest 100 exchange-traded funds, latest session						
Friday, September 1, 2023						
ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg (%)	YTD (%)	ETF	Symbol
CommSvcsSPDR	XLC	67.10	-0.93	39.8	iSHCoreUSAggBd	AGG
CnsmrDiscSclSector	XLY	169.67	-0.81	31.4	iSHEdgeMSCIMUNISA	UMG
CnsStapleSclSector	XLP	72.14	-0.65	3.2	iSHEdgeMSCIUSAQual	IAU
DimenUSCoreEq2	DFAC	27.75	0.65	14.3	iSHGoldTr	GLD
EnSelSectorSPDR	XLE	90.74	2.05	3.7	iSHBox\$HYCPbD	HYG
FinSelSectorSPDR	XLF	34.69	0.90	1.4	iSHBox\$IGCPbD	LQD
HealthCareSelSect	XLV	133.57	0.27	-1.7	iSHBMS	BMB
IndSelSectorSPDR	XLI	108.80	0.53	10.8	iSHMSCIACWI	ACWI
InvsNasd100	QQM	155.37	-0.04	41.9	iSHMSCIEAFE	EFA
InvsCQQQ	QQQ	377.59	-0.11	61.8	iSHMSCIEM	EFM
Invs\$P500EW	RSP	150.54	0.41	4.6	iSHMSCIEAFEValue	EFV
iSHCoreDivGrowth	DGRO	52.14	0.31	4.3	iSHNatI/MuniBd	MUB
iSHCoreMSCIEAFE	IEFA	66.90	-0.01	8.5	iSHI-5YIGCorpBd	IGSB
iSHCoreMSCIEM	IEMG	49.62	1.14	6.3	iSHI-3YTreabD	SHY
iSHCoreMSCITotInt	IXUS	62.39	0.34	7.8	iSHRussMC	IWR
iSHCore\$P500	IVV	453.65	0.02	18.1	iSHRuss1000	IWF
iSHCore\$P500	IJR	266.89	0.98	10.3	iSHRuss1000Grw	IWG
iSHCore\$P500	IJH	101.81	1.02	7.6	iSHRuss1000Val	IWD
iSHCore\$P500TotUS	ITOT	99.71	0.30	17.6	iSHRussL2000	IWM
iSHCoreTotalUSDBd	IUSB	44.61	-0.40	-0.7	iSH\$P500Grw	IVG
					iSH\$P500Value	IWE
					iSHSelectDiv	DVY

Borrowing Benchmarks | WSJ.com/bonds

Money Rates

Inflation				
July index	Chg From (%)			
level	June'23	July	22	
U.S. consumer price index				
All items	305.691	0.19	3.2	
Core	309.402	0.16	4.7	
International rates				
Week	Latest	High	Low	
Prime rates				
U.S.	8.50	8.50	8.50	5.50
Canada	7.20	7.20	7.20	4.70
Japan	1.475	1.475	1.475	1.475
Policy Rates				
Euro zone	4.25	4.25	4.25	0.50

Dividend Changes

Company	Symbol	Amount New/Old	Yld %	Payable/Record
Increased				
Gaming & Leisure Prop	GLPI	6.2	73.72	Q Sep29/Sep15
Initial				
Endeavor Group Holdings	EDR	1.1	.06	Sep29/Sep15
PHINIA	PHIN	3.5	25	Sep22/Sep12
Stocks				
Sonnet BioTherapeutics	SONN	122		/Sep01

KEY: A: annual; M: monthly; Q: quarterly; r: revised; SA: semiannual; S21: stock split and ratio; SO: spin-off.

	Contract				Open interest	
	Open	High	Low	Settle		
Dec	602.00	612.75	595.25	595.50	-6.50	218,801
Wheat (KC)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.						
Sept	726.25	746.00	722.50	720.50	-6.00	745
Dec	729.00	746.75	722.00	722.75	-4.50	117,327
Cattle-Feeder (CME)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	253.200	253.325	251.025	251.850	-1.425	9,356
Oct	255.775	256.200	254.000	254.650	-1.375	22,073
Cattle-Live (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	180.800	181.025	179.825	180.150	-6.75	125,129
Dec	184.800	185.000	183.750	184.175	-6.25	85,922
Hogs-Lean (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	82.800	83.375	81.975	83.050	-500	78,007
Dec	74.325	74.925	73.450	74.600	-275	62,917
Lumber (CME)-27,500 bd ft.; \$ per 1,000 bd ft.						
Sept	510.00	510.00	503.00	503.50	-5.50	1,991
Nov	508.00	508.50	501.00	501.50	-6.50	4,388
Milk (CME)-200,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	18.90	18.90	18.55	18.61	-28	4,216
Oct	19.15	19.21	18.84	18.92	-18	4,384
Cocoa (ICE-US)-10 metric tons; \$ per ton.						
Sept	3,626	3,626	3,575	3,574	-28	615
Oct	3,637	3,669	3,590	3,605	-33	152,775
Coffee (ICE-US)-37,500 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	151.50	151.50	151.10	150.95	-1.75	613
Oct	154.65	156.35	151.65	151.90	-2.60	117,058
Sugar-World (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	25.17	25.07	25.05	25.81	75	349,119
March/24	25.45	26.11	25.43	26.05	-62	277,713
Sugar-Domestic (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Nov	40.56	40.56	40.50	40.53	-97	1,419
March/24				41.55	-4.5	3,287
Cotton (ICE-US)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Oct	88.79	90.14	88.40	89.61	-1.51	102
Dec	87.84	90.00	▲	87.55	89.95	2.13 130,677
Orange Juice (ICE-US)-15,000 lbs.; cents per lb.						
Sept	328.00	329.50	328.00	327.35	-80	312
Nov	315.35	323.00	311.00	315.80	-2.75	7,964

Interest Rate Futures

Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT)-\$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%						
Sept	127-230	128-06	125-30	126-150	-1.16.0	25,115
Dec	129-070	129-260	127-060	127-250	-1.22.0	1,514,708
Treasury Bonds (CBT)-\$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%						
Sept	121-110	121-260	119-270	120-080	-1.10.0	13,738
Dec	121-140	121-290	119-290	120-110	-1.11.0	1,325,125
Treasury Notes (CBT)-\$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%						
Sept	110-150	110-305	109-300	110-050	-13.0	31,039
Dec	110-290	111-125	110-120	110-185	-14.5	4,711,499
5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-\$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%						
Sept	106-117	106-250	106-040	106-080	-5.0	33,806
Dec	106-285	107-092	106-192	106-232	-6.2	5,322,703
2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-\$200,000; pts 32nds of 100%						
Sept	101-170	101-246	101-145	101-161	-2	16,509
Dec	101-285	102-030	101-266	101-281	-7	3,633,407
30 Day Federal Funds (CBT)-\$5,000,000; 100/- daily avg.						
Sept	94.6600	94.6650	94.6575	94.6650	.0050	127,899
Oct	94.6400	94.6550	94.6350	94.6550	.0150	441,399
Three-Month SOFR (CME)-\$1,000,000; 100/- daily avg.						
June	94.7600	94.7625	94.7600	94.7625	.0000	1,124,318
Dec	94.5850	94.6200	94.5750	94.6000	.0050	1,282,398

BUSINESS NEWS

New Tesla Model 3 Raises Its Range and Price Tag

By **RAFFAELE HUANG**
AND **SELINA CHENG**

SINGAPORE—**Tesla** unveiled its long-awaited refreshed Model 3 with a longer range as it seeks to maintain its title as the world’s leading electric-vehicle maker.

The iteration has a sleeker and sportier look with slimmer headlights, as well as an added 8-inch display screen for rear-seat passengers, according to images on its website.

One thing it doesn’t have that some analysts were expecting is a lower price tag. In China, where the vehicle first went on sale Friday, the refreshed Model 3 was priced at the equivalent of around \$35,800 and up. That is 12% higher than the last starting price of the older version, which Tesla has stopped selling in the country.

Tesla said it expects to start deliveries in the fourth quarter this year. It also started allowing consumers in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Australia to place orders, though the car wasn’t available for order in the U.S. as of early Friday. Prices in Japan, Australia and Germany are also higher than they were for the previous model.

Tesla has been relatively slow to offer new products even as more rivals enter to the market. Tesla last brought a new passenger vehicle, the Model Y compact sport-utility vehicle, to the market in early 2020 and upgraded its Model S more than two years ago.

Investors have long hoped an updated Model 3 could breathe new life into the car and spur demand; some analysts said they expected it to come out at a lower price to attract more buyers.

After failing to meet delivery targets last year and following a disappointing first quarter, Tesla’s global deliveries surged 83% in the second quarter, helped by sharp price cuts and hefty discounts. The car company, led by billionaire Elon Musk, delivered more than 466,000 vehicles to



Tesla has been relatively slow to offer new products even as more rivals come on to the market. Visitors look at a previous Tesla Model 3 at an expo in Haikou, China, in April.

customers worldwide in the April-to-June period, a record quarter for sales.

Tesla has for years said its plan is to introduce cheaper EV models in the future, moving from selling expensive electric sports cars to more mass-market, affordable EVs.

Widespread commentary that Tesla’s refreshed Model 3 would be cheaper has been proven wrong, said Shi Ji, analyst at CMB International.

In recent months, Tesla adjusted its production line at its Shanghai factory, the company’s biggest worldwide, to prepare for the mass production of the updated Model 3, which will start this month, people familiar with the matter said. During a visit to China this summer, Musk saw the model that was being trial-produced in the factory.

Tesla is looking to shore up its competitiveness in China, its second-biggest market, where it has been losing market share in recent years and faces increasing pressure from local rivals like BYD. EV sales growth in the country has been slowing and a months-long price war has hit profits of carmakers.

The standard driving range of the refreshed Model 3 is 377 miles per charge under the China standard, or 319 miles using a more widely adopted international standard used in Japan, Europe and Australia.

Tesla also has a long-range version that is estimated to run 443 miles per charge by the China standard that is priced at just under \$41,000 or higher.

Those distances would make it one of the longest-range vehicles in the U.S.

Chinese buyers are less concerned about range and tend to look for upgrades, analysts say. The Shanghai-made Model 3 hadn’t changed before it began delivery to Chinese customers almost four years ago, while many Chinese rivals refresh their models regularly.

Tesla offers less frequent face-lifts in exchange for better investment returns per model, as each one sells more volume globally, said David Zhang, automobile consultant and new energy vehicle faculty dean at the Jiangxi New Energy Technology Institute. Cabin ambient lighting and the rear screen baked into the

updated Model 3 are features common among Chinese EVs—as the prices for these components have come down—so adding them won’t create too much additional cost to manufacturers, Zhang added.

“Many Chinese consumers still favor Tesla, so the revamp should give a boost to its sales,” he said.

Globally, BYD delivered 50% more cars than Tesla did during the last quarter, although more than half of those were plug-in hybrid EVs. Tesla remains the world’s top seller of fully electric cars.

In China’s EV market, the world’s biggest, BYD sold 1.4 million full electric cars and plug-in hybrids in the first seven months of the year, far ahead of second-placed Tesla’s 325,000 EVs, according to data from the China Passenger Car Association.

Also Friday, Tesla cut prices for its imported higher-end Model S and Model X cars in China, by around 14% and 21% respectively, two weeks after having lowered price tags for those cars in a bid to boost sales.

—Bingyan Wang
contributed to this article.

Boozy Beverages Blur Lines for Kid, Adult Drinks

By **JENNIFER MALONEY**

Some states say adult and children’s drinks are getting too close.

Beverage aisles are teeming with new, boozy drinks sold under household-favorite brands such as Mountain Dew, SunnyD, Simply Orange juice and Eggo. The crossover products have multiplied as companies like **PepsiCo** and **Coca-Cola** look to gain a foothold in fast-growing alcoholic beverage categories.

Regulators, consumer groups and public-health experts say these crossover products have the potential to create consumer confusion—and result in a parent inadvertently buying and serving alcohol to underage children.

PepsiCo—which owns the Mountain Dew brand and distributes the alcoholic version, Hard Mountain Dew, in more

tiller’s history.

The federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau reviews product labels to ensure that they don’t mislead consumers. States have jurisdiction over where alcoholic products may be sold at retail. Virginia in July implemented a new law barring retailers from shelving alcoholic products next to their nonalcoholic versions. The Illinois Liquor Control Commission in May issued an emergency rule with similar restrictions.

The similarities between the packaging of the alcoholic and nonalcoholic versions of Mountain Dew caught regulators’ attention in Illinois, said Lisa Gardner, executive director of the state’s liquor control commission. “We were really concerned that busy parents, busy caregivers, busy shoppers, as they traversed the marketplace, were inadvertently grabbing the wrong thing.”

Consumer advocates and public-health experts criticized the introduction in recent months of SunnyD Vodka Seltzer and Eggo Brunch in a Jar

Sippin’ Cream. SunnyD fruit drinks and Eggo waffles have long been marketed to children.

SunnyD is made by Harvest Hill Beverage, a company owned by private-equity firm Brynwood Partners. Harvest Hill has said that consumers who were already using SunnyD as a cocktail mixer requested a ready-to-drink alcoholic version. A spokesman for Harvest Hill declined to comment on the potential appeal of the drink to children.

The Eggo liqueur tastes like maple syrup, butter and bacon. A collaboration of Kellogg and Sugarlands Distilling, it is packaged in a glass jar with an image of a waffle.

Kellogg and the distiller created the drink “so parents can L’Eggo, relax, and enjoy that ‘treat yourself’ feeling brunch evokes,” Kellogg said. Parents are a longtime target audience for Eggo, the company said, and the liqueur is clearly labeled as alcohol and intended for adults 21 and older.

Regulators fear parents will accidentally serve alcohol to their children.



Kellogg and a distiller created Eggo Brunch in a Jar.

New Cable Fight Is Over Philosophy, Not Cash

By **JOE FLINT**

Charter Communications subscribers are caught in the middle of a philosophical fight between the cable giant and Disney, parent company of ESPN, ABC and other networks.

Disney-owned networks on Thursday went dark for customers of Charter’s Spectrum cable systems, which have nearly 15 million video subscribers across the country including the New York and Los Angeles markets. As a result, sports fans who are Charter subscribers are losing access to college football and the U.S. Open. And the National Football League season is about to begin: ESPN’s “Monday Night Football” starts Sept. 11.

Disney said Friday that it had offered Charter an extension to the negotiations that would have kept its networks on Spectrum, but said Charter “declined in the middle of pro-

gramming that is important to their subscribers, including the U.S. Open.”

Feuds between pay-TV distributors and programmers aren’t uncommon but are usually centered on money. In this case, Charter said it agreed to Disney’s terms but insisted the deal allow it to offer the ad-supported versions of Disney’s streaming services Disney+, ESPN+ and Hulu free as part of its video package. Disney declined, Charter said.

“This is not the typical carriage dispute,” said Charter Chief Executive Chris Winfrey on a call with analysts Friday.

Charter said it was unwilling to keep paying for Disney’s traditional channels without offering access to its streaming content, given that Disney in recent years made most of its highest-profile content available on streaming, in turn decreasing the appeal of its cable channels, it said.



Aurubis discovered shortfalls in metals and discrepancies in its inventory and said it won’t meet its financial forecasts.

Massive Metals Theft Is Reported At Europe’s Largest Copper Producer

By **JULIE STEINBERG**

Europe’s largest copper producer **Aurubis** said it might face losses of hundreds of millions of euros stemming from a theft within its recycled materials business, the latest in a string of fraud-related incidents to hit the metals industry this year.

The German recycler said late Thursday it had discovered shortfalls in metals and discrepancies in its inventory, and concluded it had been the target of criminal activity.

Aurubis is investigating whether this incident is con-

nected with cases of criminal activity it had disclosed in June, a spokesperson said. The company said at the time that German authorities were probing a suspected theft ring targeting the company’s precious metal products.

The industry has recently been grappling with a raft of alleged frauds. Trading giant Traffigura Group earlier this year said it could lose \$577 million owing to fake nickel shipments, while the London Metal Exchange said it found bags of stones instead of nickel in a separate incident.

Shares of Aurubis fell 6.1%

in Friday trading. The company said it has involved the State Office of Criminal Investigation. The Hamburg State Office of Criminal Investigation and the Hamburg Public Prosecutor’s Office didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

While the company hasn’t determined the exact amount of damages, it said losses could total in the low, three-digit-million-euro range and said it wouldn’t be able to meet its financial forecasts for fiscal 2023.

A spokesperson said the company identified discrepan-

cies in figures it paid to suppliers compared with the metals accounted for in its inventory. The fraud could have been perpetrated by people inside and outside the company, such as suppliers, the spokesperson said.

While it is still unclear which metals are affected, the spokesperson said he expects both copper and precious metals to have been involved, as well as possibly gold and silver. The company expects to finish its investigation by the end of September.

—Georgi Kantchev
contributed to this article.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Foreign Ties Worry Singapore Banks

Police raids on a criminal gang have sparked fears over money laundering

By WEILUN SOON

Financial institutions in Singapore are scouring client records after police raided a sprawling criminal organization with stockpiles of cash—and dozens of bank accounts.

Police officers and agents in the city-state arrested 10 foreign nationals in mid-August on charges including fraud and money laundering. The arrests followed a series of raids that led to the discovery of \$630 million worth of properties, cars, luxury goods and cash, and \$81 million of assets held across 35 bank accounts.

Bankers worry the raids are only the tip of the iceberg for a country that has been a magnet for foreign money in the past few years.

Global and domestic banks in the city-state are now looking carefully at the accounts of their clients to see whether any of them could be implicated, according to people familiar with the matter. The Monetary Authority of Singapore asked banks for information on specific account holders just before the arrests, but that is likely to be the start of a prolonged process that leads to further questions from the regulator, the people said.

The raids also uncovered 11 documents with information on virtual assets, the police said. Those are likely to contain details of private wallets, according to people familiar with the matter. One of those

charged held more than \$170,200 worth of Tether stablecoin, according to court documents seen by The Wall Street Journal. Stablecoins are designed to keep a steady value, often at \$1—although sometimes they don't live up to their name. Some crypto firms have checked if any of those arrested or named in the probe were their clients, they said.

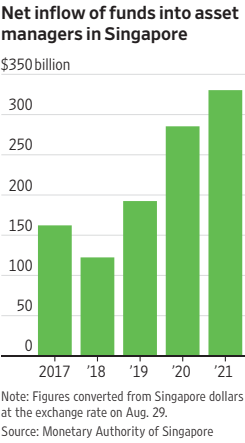
Singapore, which has a population of around six million people, is one of Asia's best-developed financial systems. It has long attracted foreigners looking for a safe place to put their money, including many wealthy Chinese nationals who have set up family offices in the city-state and spent big on apartments, cars and country-club memberships.

Singapore's asset-management industry drew the equivalent of \$330 billion in net new inflows in 2021, the most recent data available, up nearly 16% from the previous year. By the end of last year, around 1,100 family offices had been set up in Singapore, due in part to a government push to attract wealthy foreigners and promote the country as a global family-office hub.

But Singapore's attractiveness as a place for the rich to put their money means it has occasionally found itself embroiled in high-profile money-laundering cases. The most prominent involved IMDB, the disgraced Malaysian state investment fund, which passed some of its money through Singapore's banks. After the IMDB scandal was revealed in 2015, Singapore handed out a mix of jail sentences, fines and



Singapore bank notes said to have been seized in a raid are displayed in this police photo.



banning orders.

On July 31, about two weeks before the latest police raid, the MAS proposed tightening anti-money-laundering rules for family offices that manage the wealth of single families. The regulator set out

minimum standards these offices need to meet before getting exemptions from rules that apply to most other asset managers.

The MAS said last year that it would take a tough stance against financial institutions that have big lapses in their anti-money-laundering approach.

Banks in Singapore have been working hard to improve their anti-money-laundering controls in recent years, tightening their controls for customer due diligence and transaction monitoring, said Grace Chong, head of the financial-regulatory practice at Gibson Dunn, a law firm. "They're definitely not letting their guard down during this critical period," she said.

Those arrested in the raids included three Chinese nationals and others who the police said were citizens of Cyprus, Turkey and elsewhere. They all held passports that police

said were believed to be issued by China.

Four of those arrested allegedly gave documents they knew were false to the branches of Citigroup, Standard Chartered, Singapore's Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. and UOB Bank, and the local offices of Malaysia's CIMB Bank and RHB Bank, according to court documents seen by The Wall Street Journal.

"We are committed to the fight against money laundering and ensuring the highest standard of governance and controls. We have been working with the authorities to strengthen and protect the integrity of the financial system," said a Citi spokesperson.

CIMB said it is fully committed to strong corporate governance and strict compliance with banking laws and regulations. RHB Bank said it takes money laundering seriously, and will cooperate with

the authorities. UOB and OCBC declined to comment. Standard Chartered didn't respond to a request for comment.

Irene Charalambides, a lawmaker in Cyprus, told The Wall Street Journal that she sent a request on Aug. 17 to the Interior Ministry asking for information on whether two men with Cypriot passports who were arrested in the raids had been previously flagged to authorities.

Cyprus previously ran a golden-visa program, allowing foreigners to get citizenship or permanent residency for investing in the country. The island nation shut the program in 2020.

"Those two never came up in previous investigations and it was important for me to know whether during application they had a criminal record," she said.

The probe has also rattled Singapore's property sector. A government agency said it is investigating real-estate brokers that might have facilitated property transactions related to the case. Home prices and rents have jumped in Singapore, helped by the influx of money and people from mainland China.

During the raids, the local police force identified 105 properties, including seven bungalows at one of Singapore's most exclusive neighborhoods and 19 commercial or industrial properties. These assets were frozen. The police also seized cash worth \$17 million, hundreds of luxury bags and watches, more than 270 pieces of jewelry and two gold bars.

—Matthew Thomas contributed to this article.

Timely Rains Relieve Pressure on Corn-Belt Crops

By KIRK MALTAIS

Bouts of rain in parts of the Midwest have alleviated the worst fears of drought-stricken corn crops and soybean crops, sending futures prices lower.

The U.S. Corn Belt—a region of 13 states in the middle of the country that dominates U.S. corn production—is grappling with yet another round of tough, dry conditions. But timely spurts of rainfall throughout the growing season have helped mitigate the worries over some of the hottest months ever recorded, according to surveys performed by scouts on the Pro Farmer Midwest Crop Tour last week.

Following days of surveying fields through seven Corn Belt states, the trade publication projects a U.S. corn crop roughly 9% larger than the U.S. Department of Agriculture's figures for last year—and a soybean crop 2.4% smaller.

"The rain stopped for much of May and June, which stunted early growth and development," explains Brian Pullam, floor manager with Linn & Associates, a Chicago-based grain futures broker. "Fortunately, timely rains resumed and supported corn



Spurts of rainfall throughout the growing season have helped mitigate worries over some of the hottest months ever seen.

pollination and we saw improving crop conditions."

Expectations for a stronger crop have weighed on grain prices over the past 12 months. The most active corn and wheat futures contracts have both dropped around 28%. Soybeans are little changed, supported by tighter

supplies.

Farmers watching the estimates were disappointed that this year's crop didn't show more improvement. Pro Farmer projects national corn production at 14.96 billion bushels with a yield of 172 bushels per acre, both of which are up from last year's

projections but lower than estimates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"With last year being so cruddy, we were hoping for a rebound this year," said Brent Judisch, a crop scout on the tour who is also a farmer based out of Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Before the summer heat set

in, many farmers were largely seeing optimal conditions for planting—allowing them to plant crops faster than they had in the previous four years. Many expected near-record corn and soybean crops, as farmers attempted to take advantage of last year's sky-high prices.

But prices were expected to be volatile in 2023, thanks to the continuing war in Ukraine, one of the world's top producers. Many expect heat to pressure crops further in coming months.

This year's El Niño climate pattern has hit many growing areas around the world with hotter-than-normal temperatures, hurting production in the U.S. as well as Europe and China. When that happens, trade winds moving west across the Pacific Ocean weaken and warmer-than-normal water sloshes toward the West Coast of the Americas.

Last week, the National Weather Service issued excessive heat warnings covering as many as 19 states in the Midwest, Central Plains and Mississippi Delta, including farming states such as Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois. The odds are better than 50/50 for El Niño to be strong through December, heating up average ocean temperatures by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Above-normal temperatures are expected to continue into next week, with "significant heat" expected in the Midwest and Plains, said agricultural research firm DTN in its forecast on Thursday.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Marketplace

To advertise: 800-366-3975 or [WSJ.com/classifieds](https://www.wsj.com/classifieds)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ALLIANCE MORTGAGE FUND
8%-9% RETURN
REAL ESTATE SECURED FIXED INCOME FUND
SEEKING RIA'S & ACCREDITED INVESTORS
CALL:
866-700-0600
ALLIANCE PORTFOLIO
120 Verita Dr., Ste. 515 • Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
www.AlliancePortfolio.com
RE Broker • C.D.R.E. • 02066955 Broker License ID

PUBLIC NOTICES

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1981 OF BERMUDA
and
IN THE MATTER OF INSURANCE COMPANIES LIMITED (the "Company")

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 132G(2) (d) of the Companies Act 1981 of Bermuda that INSURANCE COMPANIES LIMITED, an exempted company incorporated and existing under the laws of Bermuda (the "Company") intends to discontinue under the laws of Bermuda and continue in the State of Texas, United States of America as if the Company had been incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas, United States of America.

Date:

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

THE MARKETPLACE

ADVERTISE TODAY

(800) 366-3975

For more information visit:
[wsj.com/classifieds](https://www.wsj.com/classifieds)

© 2023 Dow Jones & Company, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Seeking \$1 Million
36-month participation bridge loan secured by Historic American Lighthouse
Excellent Yield.

Tobetterworld@msn.com

Walgreens CEO Exits Suddenly

Continued from page B1

haps what I'm most proud of is our work to develop a strategic pivot towards the growth of WBA into health care," she wrote.

On Friday, the company warned that it expected adjusted earnings per share for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31 to come in at the low end of its forecast. In July, it cut its annual EPS targets to about \$4 from at least \$4.45 citing softer consumer spending and lower sales of Covid-related products.

Walgreens said Ginger Graham, a longtime board member, would take over as interim CEO while the company searches for a permanent successor. Graham, 67, previously served as CEO of drugmaker Amylin Pharmaceuticals.

Brewer had been trying to revamp Walgreens and convince its board, led by billion-

Rosalind Brewer had been trying to revamp Walgreens and persuade its board to move deeper into healthcare services.

aire Stefano Pessina, to pursue a strategy of moving deeper into U.S. healthcare services.

Last year, Walgreens directors signed off on a deal valued at \$9 billion to invest in a chain of urgent-care centers. The deal capped a string of acquisitions aimed at putting physicians on Walgreens' payroll and offering a range of medical services to draw more business from patients covered by Medicare.

Brewer said her strategy was guided by a belief that the

nation's second-largest drug-store chain was in a business that no longer works.

Brewer was one of a handful of Black CEOs running an S&P 500 company. She was diverging in part from the path laid out by Pessina, who led the company for six years and focused on partnerships over acquisitions.

With nearly 9,000 U.S. locations, Walgreens has previously said it plans to shut down hundreds of underperforming locations and launch

Share price performance

Source: FactSet

reformatted stores, tailored to local communities' needs.

Walgreens said Brewer agreed to step down as CEO and as a board member, effective Thursday. She will receive a cash severance of \$9 million plus full vesting of a performance stock award that Brewer received when she was hired in 2021, according to a securities filing. Brewer will advise Walgreens while it conducts its CEO search, and get a consulting fee of \$375,000 a month through February 2024.

MARKETS

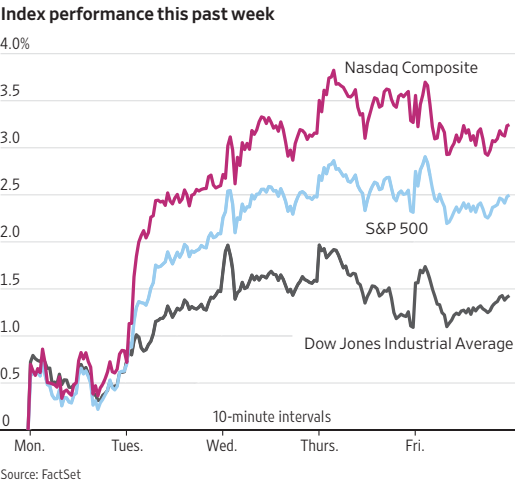
Stock Indexes Post Strong Weekly Gains

August jobs report boosts investors’ hopes the Fed will continue rate pause

By HANNAH MIAO

The S&P 500 rose Friday, finishing its best weekly performance since June. The broad index gained 0.2%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added roughly 115 points, or 0.3%. The Nasdaq Composite eased less than 0.1%. For the week, the S&P 500 advanced 2.5%. The Dow and Nasdaq rallied 1.4% and 3.2%, respectively, each notching their best weeks since July.

Investors parsed the August jobs report ahead of a holiday weekend. All three major indexes initially rose Friday after the report suggested the economy may be cooling enough for the Federal Reserve to hold off on further interest-rate increases. The unemployment rate jumped to 3.8% in August. Economists had expected it to hold steady at 3.5%. Average hourly earnings, meanwhile, rose 4.3% in August from a year earlier,



less than in July and lower than forecast. “Everything’s keyed into numbers related to inflation and ultimately what the path of the Fed is going to be,” said Leslie Thompson, chief investment officer of Spectrum Wealth Management. The indexes came off intraday highs as declines in megacap tech stocks weighed on performance. Tesla fell 5.1% after it unveiled a new vehicle with a steeper price tag than analysts

expected. Nvidia pulled back 1.7% after rival chip maker Broadcom forecast revenue for the current quarter just in line with analyst expectations. In the bond market Friday, the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury yield swung, ultimately rising to 4.173% from 4.090% on Thursday. Yields rise as prices fall. Market participants attributed Friday’s shaky trading to lower activity around the holidays as investors take time off.

AI Helps Dell Stock Hit Record

Shares of Dell jumped Friday, closing 21% higher. Street-beating quarterly per-share earnings and revenue, reported Thursday night, helped, but enthusiasm about the outlook for AI-related business fanned the flames. Dell’s stock finished at a record high, \$68.19, according to Dow Jones Market Data, logging its largest percentage increase on record going back to August 2016. The company on Thursday said quarterly revenue and net income fell year-over-year, though adjusted earnings per share rose. Meanwhile, comments about the potential for artificial intelligence to lift Dell’s business aided the shares. “Overall, we were pleased with the quarter

given strong sequential growth of 10% and growing interest in orders in AI solutions. Artificial intelligence is a strong tailwind for all things data and compute,” Dell COO Jeffrey Clarke said on a conference call, a transcript of which was provided by Sentio. A number of Wall Street analysts offered bullish commentary on the company’s AI outlook. AI generally has lifted a range of stocks in recent months. “AI-generated demand represents potential for upside,” wrote Citi analysts, who have a buy rating on the stock—though they see it as more relevant in 2024. Dell’s shares are up about 70% this year. —David Marino-Nachison

U.S. markets are closed Monday for the Labor Day holiday. “Trades in a thinner market can get exaggerated,” said Jack McIntyre, portfolio manager for Brandywine Global.

Shares of entertainment companies fell Friday after a dispute between Charter and Walt Disney created concerns about the future of the cable-television business model.

Shares of Charter eased 3.6% and Disney lost 2.4%. Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount Global, Fox and Comcast also pulled back. Dell Technologies rallied 21% after the company reported better-than-expected earnings and issued a robust outlook. Consumer-staples stocks were the worst performing sector of the S&P 500 on Friday. Walgreens Boots Alliance declined 7.4% after the pharmacy operator’s chief executive stepped down. Stocks are coming off a weak month of trading, even with a late-August rally. The indexes took a breather from their year-to-date climb as investors assessed the sustainability of stocks’ ascent and weighed competing high yields from safer, cash-like instruments. September is historically the worst month for U.S. stocks. The S&P 500 has lost an average of 1.1% in September dating back to 1928, according to Dow Jones Market Data. “We’re getting through that summer lull. Seasonality isn’t playing in our favor this coming month,” said Jake Jolly, head of investment analysis at Bank of New York Mellon’s investment management division.

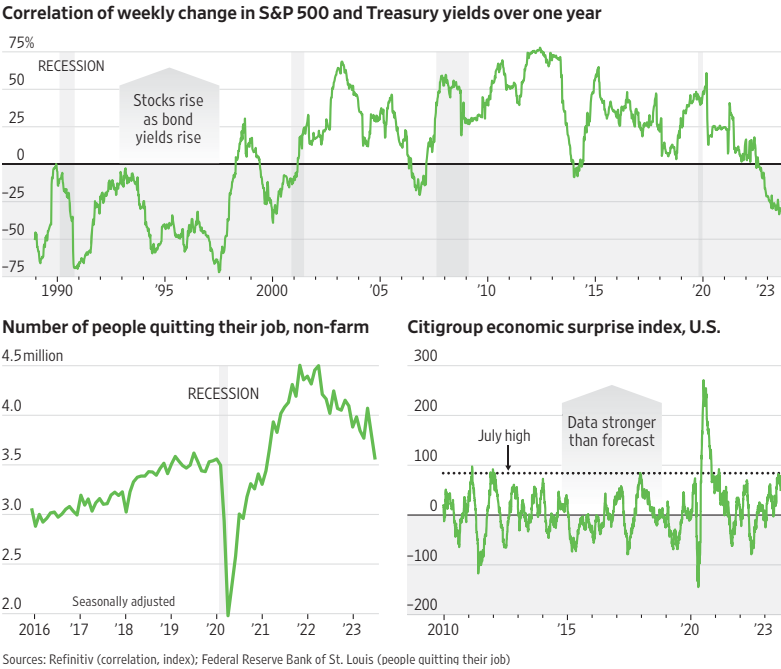


STREETWISE | By James Mackintosh

Generational Paradigm Shift Takes Over Markets

You know the drill: Bad news for the economy turns out to be good for stocks, and good news becomes bad. It’s happening again, and it’s all thanks to inflation—or more to the point, worries about inflation. The latest example was the surprisingly weak job openings figures on Tuesday, which showed more than half a million fewer vacancies than economists had forecast and the number of job quitters back to pre-Covid levels. Instead of taking that as a sign that companies see weaker demand and consumers are less confident, both bad for profits, investors welcomed the idea of a slowdown. There will be less pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise rates and keep them high, so bond yields fell and stock prices rose. This could be part of a generational shift in how markets operate. For most of the 20th century—aside from the Great Depression, World War II and the Vietnam War—stocks and bond yields moved in opposite directions. But today’s investors grew used to stocks and bond yields going in the same direction, as they did from 2000 to 2021. In the past two years, the pattern has reverted to the old normal, as inflation concerns came to the fore. There was a brief break ear-

lier this year when investors thought inflation would fall back by itself, and the bull market in stocks took hold again. But in July—when stocks peaked—the old pattern took over, with 14 days in a row of the S&P 500 and 10-year Treasury yields moving in opposite directions, the longest period since 2009. Broadly speaking, a stronger economy brings two conflicting things: Higher profits for companies, which are good for share prices, and more inflationary pressure that leads to higher interest rates, which are bad for share prices. Right now investors are much more focused on the inflationary pressure than the profits, so higher bond yields come with lower stock prices. Equally, as on Tuesday, bad news on the economy is good for stocks, because it means less inflationary pressure. When inflation isn’t a concern, then the prospect of higher profits dominates the threat of higher rates, and good news on the economy is good for stocks despite higher Treasury yields. The new pattern makes life harder for investors. Treasuries provide less protection in a portfolio, because prices tend to move in the same direction as stocks (bond yields move inversely to prices). If stocks fall, so will bond prices, and



the whole portfolio does badly, as last year’s painful experience should have seared into your memory. Compare that to the previous regime, where Treasury prices helped to smooth a portfolio by tending to move in the opposite direction to stocks on any given day or week—while still making money over the long run. Of course, in a recession all this goes out the window. The Federal Reserve slashes

interest rates, there is a rush to buy Treasuries, and both stocks and bond yields tumble. But outside recession, Treasuries no longer offer the same day-to-day diversification from stocks. This ought to make them less appealing and push up their yield to compensate. The question for investors is whether the negative link between stocks and bond yields will last. Measured on a weekly basis over the past

year, the link is the most negative since 2000, which is about when it first flipped positive as investors lost their fear of inflation. But it waxes and wanes, and it’s hard to predict when investors will suddenly shift away from worrying about inflation, as they did for a few months this year, and the stock-bond correlation will reverse again. I think inflationary pressures are here to stay,

thanks to deglobalization, industrial policy, a corporate switch from efficiency to resilience and spending on defense and clean energy. That marks a sharp change from the “great moderation” that preceded the 2008 financial crisis, when investors were convinced that inflation had been conquered. It’s also very different to the long period of low rates and low inflation that followed it, when investors worried much more about recession than inflation. If I’m right, then investors will stay focused on inflation, hoping for the weak growth that would bring lower bond yields and boost the price of stocks. There’s a tension here. The economy has been surprisingly strong of late, which also means expectations for growth are higher—and more easily disappointed. Small bits of bad news could be good for stocks, as on Tuesday. In the longer run, those without a strong view on the direction of inflation should expect their portfolios to be more volatile, as bonds no longer cushion daily stock-price moves. That hurts, adding unwanted risk and so making leverage less attractive. But for those simply buying a passive stock and bond portfolio for the long run, the best advice applies whatever correlations do: Don’t check what it’s worth except when you rebalance.

FTC Ends Bid to Stop Biotech Deal

Continued from page B1
Horizon shares rose 2.3% in trading on Friday, while Amgen shares were little changed. Amgen said Friday that it expected to quickly seek the final approval needed to close the transaction in the early fourth quarter of this year. The commitments it made to settle with the FTC and six states will have no impact on its business, the company added. The biotech’s agreement to buy Horizon was among the biggest deals of the year. It promised to bring to biotech Amgen, which sells cancer, osteoporosis and other drugs, Horizon’s portfolio of rare-disease medicines. Horizon’s top-selling drug is Tepezza, which treats an inflammatory eye condition known as thyroid eye disease that can damage tissues around the eyes. Much of Horizon’s sales are in the U.S.

Amgen said it could help sell Tepezza and Horizon’s other products around the world. Horizon’s two drugs currently have no competitors, but the FTC said in its lawsuit that other drugmakers are developing medicines that could compete with Tepezza and Krystexxa. Friday’s agreement requires Amgen to seek the FTC’s approval if it ever seeks to acquire products that compete with Tepezza and Krystexxa. Amgen is looking for new products to boost revenue in the coming years when some of its biggest blockbuster drugs are due to lose patent protection, including the arthritis treatment Enbrel and the osteoporosis drugs Prolia and Xgeva. The settlement is a rare instance of the FTC under Chair Lina Khan throwing in the towel on litigation. Khan’s FTC has been more aggressive about probing deals and then suing to block them. Khan, a merger critic, has said she favors blocking deals outright rather than putting conditions

on them that make them look better to enforcers. Khan said Friday the FTC had not challenged a proposed pharmaceutical merger in more than 14 years. The agreement is “a major advancement” for its enforcement program and addresses practices that “may work together to deprive Americans of access to affordable drugs.” Analysts had questioned the strength of the FTC’s objections, since Amgen’s lineup doesn’t compete with Horizon’s. Antitrust law is most supportive of challenging horizontal mergers, which combine competing firms and increase market concentration. Courts also sometimes agree with the FTC when it opposes vertical mergers, in which the acquirer purchases one of its suppliers. But the Amgen-Horizon deal was neither of those. The FTC argued a court should block it because Amgen would have an ability to entrench Horizon’s products by bundling them with its own drugs

or engaging in discounting practices. “This sort of cross-product bundling scheme can lock out new competitors—even if their products are more affordable or effective,” Khan wrote in her statement, which was joined by the FTC’s two other Democratic commissioners. The FTC’s theory for blocking Amgen’s deal triggered strong opposition from Amgen and business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers. “If the Federal Trade Commission is permitted to succeed on such a standard, the government could block any merger based on little more than hypotheticals, introducing uncertainty and casting doubt on any number of mergers that benefit consumers,” the Chamber and NAM wrote in a friend-of-the-court brief last month. The FTC has stumbled in court several times after filing aggressive merger challenges. It recently lost a federal-court case in which it sought to block Microsoft from buying Activision Blizzard. A judge also rejected its challenge of Meta Platforms’ acquisition of a virtual-reality company.

Equity, Hedge Funds Sue SEC Over Rules

By PAUL KIERNAN

WASHINGTON—A coalition representing the biggest private-equity and hedge funds sued the Securities and Exchange Commission on Friday to block new regulations aimed at giving investors more transparency and better terms from asset managers. The lawsuit argues that the SEC overstepped its legal authority in finalizing the regulations last week. Plaintiffs include the Managed Funds Association, American Investment Council, National Venture Capital Association and the National Association of Private Fund Managers. An SEC spokeswoman said the agency “undertakes rule-making consistent with its authorities and laws governing the administrative process, and we will vigorously defend the challenged rule in court.” Adopted by the SEC last week in a 3-2 vote along party lines, the rules apply to private funds, which manage nearly

\$27 trillion for institutional investors like pension funds and endowments, as well as wealthy individuals. They require managers of private funds to provide their investors with quarterly financial statements detailing their performance and expenses, and to undergo annual audits. The new regulations also restrict managers from certain activities the SEC sees as harmful, such as offering some investors better terms than others via deals known as side letters. “The rules exceed the Commission’s statutory authority, were adopted without compliance with notice-and-comment requirements, and are otherwise arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and contrary to law,” lead plaintiffs’ attorney Eugene Scalia wrote in the lawsuit. Scalia, a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, served as labor secretary in the Trump administration and is the son of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

HEARD ON THE STREET

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & COMMENTARY

It is hard to find a good deal on a German car these days. Most German car stocks, on the other hand, are selling for cents on the dollar.

There are solid reasons for the discrepancy: weakening consumer sentiment, trouble in China, and the ever-mounting cost of catching up with Tesla in electric vehicles. Yet people will always want premium brands, not least in China. There may be more gas left in the tank, particularly for BMW and Mercedes-Benz, than many investors seem to think.

Car watchers can expect lots of flashy vehicle previews as IAA Mobility, Germany's answer to the Detroit auto show, revs up for its grand opening by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday. One battleground might be smaller cars: BMW launched a new generation of its city-car brand Mini on Friday, while Mercedes-Benz plans to reveal a fresh approach to the compact segment Sunday.

But the old rivalry between these luxury stalwarts isn't the real story these days. Investors are more worried about new competition, notably from fast-growing EV makers such as Tesla and China's BYD. The latter will have six vehicles on display at IAA, including a new five-seat sport-utility vehicle.

The risk is already playing out in China, where EV sales are most advanced. Volkswagen was overtaken by BYD as the Chinese market leader earlier this year. The German giant's EVs don't appear to be competitive with equivalents that are developed locally with the speed and fresh thinking of startups.

VW admitted defeat last month by investing \$700 million in local rival Xpeng and agreeing to co-develop new models with its new partner. In a historic reversal, the German company is now having to learn from Chinese manufacturers just as they once learned from it.

Investors have shunned VW's stock, afraid that the next step involves BYD and others taking market share from VW in its European heartlands. The German company's preference shares that are typically traded by institutional investors now trade at just 37% of the company's book value, lower than at any point since the 2008 financial crisis.

Looking for a Deal on a BMW? Its Stock Is a Bargain.

Investors are predicting a deep crisis for Germany's luxury car companies. That dark future may never come—and their shares have rarely been cheaper.



Germany's premium auto brands are still selling well in China, despite shifts in other parts of the country's market.

While it is hard to be too optimistic about a rapid VW turnaround given the heavy involvement of labor unions in its governance, the market may have gone too far. For one thing, the company could have more time to get EVs right in Europe than expected. BYD has launched its European offensive with high-spec vehicles at midmarket to premium prices rather than the entry-level products China is often associated with. Will Roberts, an analyst at London-based EV consultancy Rho Motion, sees this as evidence that the Chinese company isn't going to rush the early stages of its European expansion.

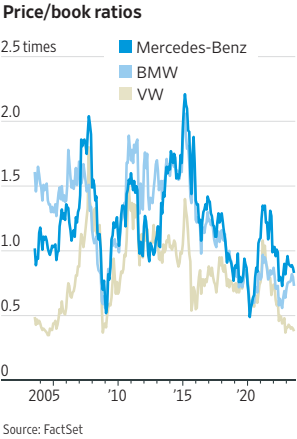
Investors also risk underestimating the importance of brands in the

automotive sector, which are a German strength. BYD is still unknown in Europe, and the consumer nationalism that plays in its favor in China will work against it in the birthplace of the automobile. Chinese brands that try to launch in Europe with premium prices—the early approach taken by the likes of NIO and VW's new partner Xpeng—will probably end up discounting, says Matthias Schmidt, founder of Schmidt Automotive Research.

Unlike VW, German premium brands Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Porsche are still selling well in China. This is partly because EVs are growing in the Chinese market from the low end up, whereas in the U.S. and Europe they are

mainly upscale products. But it likely also reflects the brand consciousness of Chinese consumers, who are famously fond of fancy European handbags and watches. The shift to EVs may be redefining luxury in cars, but investors should still be wary of extrapolating VW's midmarket problems in China to higher-end brands.

Tesla also looks to be less of a threat to the likes of Mercedes-Benz and BMW than it used to. In the heyday of the Model S, Elon Musk's company likely ate into their U.S. market share, but now the world's richest man is focused on bringing EVs to the masses. As Michael Muders, a fund manager at Frankfurt-based Union Investment, points out, the kind of price cuts



Tesla has pushed through this year to expand its addressable market would be anathema to Germany's premium brands, which pay close attention to secondhand vehicle values.

BMW, Mercedes-Benz and VW's Audi brand all had the highest U.S. market share in their history last year, according to Wards Intelligence. The data has been distorted by vehicle shortages, and U.S. consumer sentiment is now weakening. Still, this hardly looks like a sector in deep crisis.

Yet emergency lights are flashing even at the premium end of the stock market: BMW and Mercedes-Benz shares are trading at 73% and 82% of book value respectively, well below the historic average of roughly 120%. The advantage of using this measure, rather than the more standard price-earnings ratio, is that it strips out the distortive impact of an earnings glut. High car prices have led to fat profits for the past couple of years, including in the most recent quarter, but even taking this into account the stocks appear cheap.

These are expensive and uncertain times to be in the traditional car business, and investors' reluctance to back it is understandable. Yet the desire to signal status with brands will survive the shift to EVs, and EV startups face even greater hurdles to success than industry incumbents. Big discounts at BMW and Mercedes might not last forever.

—Stephen Wilmot

ALY SONG/REUTERS



An increase in labor-force participation should help ease hiring strains.

Jobs or Inflation: Which Will Cool Faster?

The labor market could go from 'cooling' to 'deteriorating' before inflation slows enough

The job market is cooling, and inflation is cooling, too. That counts as welcome news to Federal Reserve policy makers, but for the economy the outlook is still murky.

The Labor Department on Friday reported that the economy added a seasonally adjusted 187,000 jobs in August. That was more than the 170,000 economists expected, but there were downward revisions to the two prior months that more than offset that difference. Average hourly earnings rose less than economists expected.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate, which is based on a separate survey, rose to 3.8% from July's 3.5%. This wasn't a reflection of job losses, though; rather, it came about because the share of the working-age population that is employed or seeking employment rose. Because this increase in labor-force participation should help ease hiring strains, it points the way to further cooling in wages.

Coming on the heels of a Commerce Department report Thurs-

day that showed the Fed's favored measure of inflation continued to moderate in July, Friday's report cheered investors. Interest-rate futures now imply there is little chance of the Fed raising interest rates later this month, and that there is only about a one-in-three chance of the central bank raising rates at all through the remainder of the year. A week ago, futures put the chances of another rate increase by the end of this year at better than even.

It is important to recognize that Fed policy makers don't yet believe their job is finished. If they opt to leave rates on hold, it will be because they believe that rates are already restricting the economy by quite a bit, and that further hikes won't be necessary.

Cutting rates is another matter, though: While it wouldn't be necessary for inflation to go all the way down to the central bank's 2% target, Fed Chairman Jay Powell emphasized recently that policy makers will need to be confident that inflation "is moving down

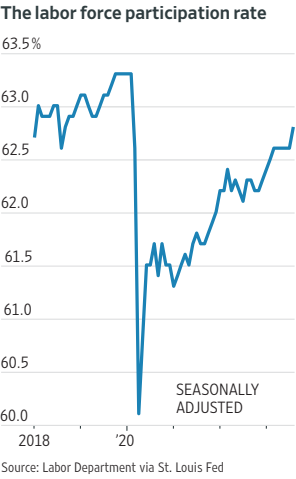
sustainably" toward that goal. As of July, the Commerce Department's measure of consumer prices excluding food and energy items was up 4.2% versus a year earlier. But the annual pace over the three months ended July was a cooler 2.9%.

One risk is that the job market will go from cooling to deteriorating before inflation slows enough for the Fed to pull the trigger on rate cuts. The good news is that there appears to still be a

lot of underlying demand for workers in sectors, such as health-care, that are still trying to staff up, and this could help absorb any job losses that come elsewhere. But a confluence of factors—including the resumption of student-debt payments, the reduction in the savings buffers that Americans built up after the pandemic struck, and tighter lending standards—could weigh on spending and, ultimately, employment in the months ahead.

Friday's report adds to the evidence that the Fed will be able to cool the economy without plunging it into recession. But it isn't time to run up the "Mission Accomplished" banner just yet.

—Justin Lahart



International Paper Checks All the Boxes

Sustained gains in e-commerce—and a reduced inventory glut—should help the manufacturer

When Americans' spending on stuff surged shortly after the pandemic hit, **International Paper's** sales and stock boomed. It made sense: A lot of the stuff came in boxes the company had made, especially stuff bought online, as anyone could see from all the boxes piling up on front porches.

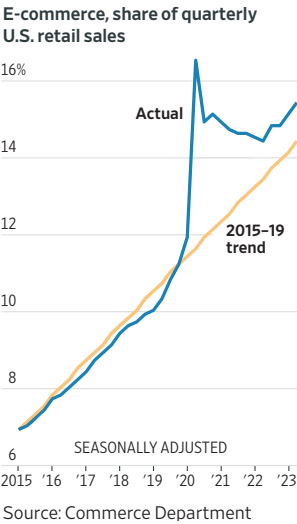
Then came the hangover. As people reengaged in activities such as dining out and taking vacations, spending on boxed goods stopped growing so swiftly. Worse, retailers and other consumer-facing businesses weren't really prepared for the slowdown, and ended up taking on more inventory than they needed—including the corrugated boxes and other packaging materials that drive International Paper's sales.

The company's stock price is now 43% below its peak in June 2021 and 16% below its average trading level in 2019.

Shares of other pandemic sales-boom beneficiaries have sold off, too, but are still a lot higher than they used to be. United Parcel Service's stock, for example, is trading more than 50% higher than its 2019 average.

Yet through the volatility, underlying demand looks much better than before the pandemic. Commerce Department figures show that e-commerce sales accounted for a seasonally adjusted 15.4% of retail sales in the second quarter of this year, compared with 11.2% in the fourth quarter of 2019. This suggests that a behavioral shift among consumers has, in fact, taken hold.

Meanwhile, many businesses appear to have worked off excess inventories, or are close to it. More manufacturers polled by the Institute for Supply Management have lately been saying their customers' inventories look too low rather than too high, while economists reckon that a rebound in inventories will add as much as a percentage point, or more, to an-



nualized growth in gross domestic product in the third quarter.

For its part, on its earnings call in late July, International Paper said that North American corrugated packaging customers it surveyed reported inventories were at or near their target levels entering the third quarter, whereas at the start of the second quarter inventories were mostly too high.

Inventory rebuilding, when coupled with rising demand, can induce powerful "bullwhip" effects that can supercharge sales as customers try to restock even as more stock heads out the door.

That might not be in the cards now. Though worries about the possibility of the economy slipping into a recession might have subsided, they have hardly gone away. Still, even if its customers merely stop drawing down inventories, International Paper could quickly look more enticing to investors.

—Justin Lahart



The Jordan Rules
An epic NBA rivalry showed how beauty can defeat brutality **C6**

REVIEW

Written in the Cloud
The next step in the evolution of authorship **Books C7**



CULTURE | SCIENCE | POLITICS | HUMOR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, September 2 - 3, 2023 | **C1**



Elon Musk as a character in the video game 'Elden Ring.'

THE REAL STORY OF MUSK'S TWITTER TAKEOVER

In April 2022, things were going surprisingly well for Elon Musk. Tesla stock had risen 15-fold in five years, making it worth more than the next nine auto companies combined. SpaceX in the first quarter of 2022 launched twice as much mass into orbit as all other companies and countries combined. Its Starlink satellites had just succeeded in creating a privately owned internet, providing connectivity to 500,000 subscribers in 40 countries, including Ukraine. It promised to be a glorious year, if only Musk could leave well enough alone. But that was not in his nature. Shivon Zilis, who manages Neuralink (Musk's company working on implantable brain-computer interfaces) and is the mother of two of his children, no-

In an exclusive excerpt from his new biography 'Elon Musk,' **Walter Isaacson** offers a behind-the-scenes look at one of the most surprising and controversial decisions of the mogul's career.

ticed that by early April he had the itchiness of a video-game addict who has triumphed but couldn't unplug. "You don't have to be in a state of war at all times," she told him that month. "Or is it that you find greater comfort when you're in periods of war?" "It's part of my default settings," he replied. As he put it to me, "I guess I've always wanted to push my chips back on the table or play the next level of the game."

This period of unnerving success coincided, fatefully, with a moment when he had exercised some expiring stock options that left him with about \$10 billion in cash. "I didn't want to just leave it in the bank," he says, "so I asked myself what product I liked, and that was an easy question. It was Twitter." That January, he had confidentially told his personal business manager, Jared Birchall, to start buying shares.

The way that Musk blustered into buying Twitter and renaming it X was a harbinger of the way he now runs it: impulsively and irreverently. It is an addictive playground for him. It has many of the attributes of a school yard, including taunting and bullying. But in the case of Twitter, the clever kids win followers; they don't get pushed down the steps and beaten, like Musk was as a kid. Owning it would allow him to become king of the school yard. More than two decades earlier he had started a company called X.com, *Please turn to the next page*

This piece is adapted from Walter Isaacson's new biography, "Elon Musk," which will be published on Sept. 12 by Simon & Schuster.

Inside

UKRAINE

In Berlin's museums and cafes, Ukrainian artists fleeing the Russian invasion are reimagining their country's culture and history. **C5**



'X' Marks

From algebra to movie ratings to Elon Musk, the letter has stood for intrigue and the unknown. **C3**

WEEKEND CONFIDENTIAL

CEO Ted Fischer believes robotic pets can bring play and therapy to the elderly. **C14**



FANTASY

The enduring power of 'The Lord of the Rings' lies in its biblical worldview. **C4**



REVIEW

The Inside Story of How Elon Musk Decided to Take Over Twitter

Continued from the prior page which he wanted to make into an “everything app” that would handle all of a person’s financial transactions and social connections. When it merged with a payment service cofounded by Peter Thiel called PayPal, Musk fought furiously to keep X.com as the name of the combined company. His new colleagues resisted. PayPal had become a trusted brand name, with a friendly chirpiness similar to that of Twitter, whereas the name X.com conjured up visions of a seedy site you would not talk about in polite company. Musk was ousted, and he remains unwavering to this day. “If you want to just be a niche player, PayPal is a better name,” he says. “But if you want to take over the world’s financial system, then X is the better name.”

By the time he started buying its shares, Musk saw Twitter, whose name he likewise felt was too niche and precious, as a way to fulfill his original concept. “Twitter could become what X.com should have been,” he told me that April, “and we can help save free speech in the process.”

By then, a new ingredient had been added to this cauldron: Musk’s swelling concern with the dangers of what he called the “woke mind virus” that he believed was infecting America. “Unless the woke mind virus, which is fundamentally anti-science, anti-merit, and anti-human in general, is stopped, civilization will never become multiplanetary,” he told me gravely.

Musk’s anti-woke sentiments were partly triggered by the decision of his oldest child, Xavier, then 16, to transition. “Hey, I’m transgender, and my name is now Jenna,” she texted the wife of Elon’s brother. “Don’t tell my dad.” When Musk found out, he was generally sanguine, but then Jenna became a fervent Marxist and broke off all relations with him. “She went beyond socialism to being a full communist and thinking that anyone rich is evil,” he says. The rift pained him more than anything in his life since the infant death of his firstborn child Nevada. “I’ve made many overtures,” he says, “but she doesn’t want to spend time with me.”

He blamed it partly on the ideology he felt that Jenna imbibed at Crossroads, the progressive school she attended in Los Angeles. Twitter, he felt, had become infected by a similar mindset that suppressed right-wing and anti-establishment voices.

‘WHAT TWITTER NEEDS IS A FIRE-BREATHING DRAGON.’

One night after it became public that he was buying Twitter stock, Musk called Parag Agrawal, the software engineer who had taken over from Jack Dorsey as Twitter’s CEO. They decided to meet secretly for dinner on March 31, along with Twitter’s

a brief couple of days, it looked as if there would be peace in the valley.

Luke Nosek and Ken Howery, Musk’s close friends and fellow PayPal cofounders, paced around the mezzanine workspace of the Tesla factory and headquarters in Austin, Texas, on the afternoon of April 6, the day after the announcement that he was joining the Twitter board. They were wary. “It’s probably a recipe for trouble,” Musk merrily conceded as he sat down at a conference table overlooking the assembly lines. “It’s very clear that the inmates are running the asylum,” he said of Twitter’s workers.

He repeated his simple view that it would be good for democracy if Twitter stopped trying to restrict what users could say. Despite sharing Musk’s libertarian views on free speech, Howery pushed back gently. “Should it be like a telephone system, where the words that go in one end come out exactly the same on the other end?” he asked. “Or do you think this is more like a system that is governing the discourse of the world, and maybe there should be some intelligence put into the algorithm that prioritizes and deprioritizes things?”

“Yeah, it’s a thorny question,” Musk answered. “There’s an ability to say something, and then there is also the issue of to what degree it’s promoted or amplified.” Perhaps the formula for promoting tweets should be more open. “It could be an open-source algorithm placed on GitHub so people can sift through it.”

Musk then threw out a few other ideas. “What if we charged people a small amount, like two dollars a month, to be verified?” he asked. Getting a user’s credit card, he said, would eliminate bots, provide a new revenue stream and facilitate his goal of turning Twitter into a payments platform, like he had envisioned for X.com, where people could send money, hand out tips and pay for stories, music and videos. Because Howery and Nosek had been with Musk at PayPal, they liked the idea. “It could fulfill my original vision for X.com and PayPal,” Musk said with a gleeful laugh.

His brother Kimbal told him over lunch the next day that it would be better to start a new social-media platform based on the blockchain. Musk was intrigued and got into giddy mode. Perhaps, he said half-jokingly, it could have a payment system using Dogecoin, the semi-serious cryptocurrency whose development he had been quietly funding. After lunch, he sent Kimbal a few texts fleshing out the idea for “a blockchain social media system that does both payments and short text messages like Twitter.”

He then flew to Larry Ellison’s Hawaiian island, Lanai. He had planned



little content. Is Twitter dying?”

About 90 minutes later, Twitter CEO Agrawal sent Musk a text message: “You are free to tweet ‘Is twitter dying?’ or anything else about Twitter, but it’s my responsibility to tell you that it’s not helping me make Twitter better in the current context.” It was a restrained text, carefully worded to avoid implying that Musk no longer had the right to disparage the company.

When Musk got the text, it was just after 5 a.m. in Hawaii, but he was still going strong. He shot back a scathing reply: “What did you get done this week?” It was the ultimate Musk put-down.

Then he texted back a fateful three-shot volley: “I’m not joining the board. This is a waste of time. Will make an offer to take Twitter private.” Agrawal was shocked. “Can we talk?” he asked plaintively.

Within three minutes, Taylor, the Twitter board chair, texted Musk with a similar plea to talk. “Do you have five minutes so I can understand the context?” he asked Musk. “Fixing Twitter by chatting with Parag won’t work,” Musk answered. “Dramatic action is needed.”

‘I MADE AN OFFER.’

Musk says that it became clear to him when he got to Hawaii that he would not be able to fix Twitter or turn it into X.com by going on the board: “I decided I didn’t want to be co-opted and be some sort of quisling on the board.” There was one other factor. Musk was in a manic mood, and he was acting impetuously.

As was often the case, his ideas fluctuated wildly with his mood

swings. Even as he was barreling toward buying Twitter, he was texting with Kimbal about their idea of starting a new social-media company. “I think a new social-media company is needed that is based on the blockchain and includes payments,” he wrote.

But by later that afternoon—Saturday, April 9—he had embraced the idea of buying Twitter. “It already has a base of users,” he told me. “You need that booster to launch X.com.” He sent a text to Birchall. “This is real,” he assured him. “There is no way to fix the company as a 9% shareholder.”

Musk then flew to Vancouver to meet his on-and-off girlfriend Claire Boucher, the performance artist known as Grimes. She had been pushing him to go there so that she could introduce their son X (yes, X) to her parents and aging grandparents. But when it came time to drive to see her parents, she decided to leave Musk back in the hotel. “I could tell that he was in stress mode,” she says.

Indeed he was. Late that afternoon, Musk texted Taylor his official decision. “After several days of deliberation—this is obviously a matter of serious gravity—I have decided to move forward with taking Twitter private,” he said.

That night, after Grimes returned to their hotel, he unwound by immersing himself in a new video game, “Elden Ring,” which he had downloaded onto his laptop. Elaborately rendered with cryptic clues and strange plot twists, it requires intense focus, especially when it comes to calculating when to attack. He spent a lot of time in the game’s most dangerous regions, a fiery-red hellscape known as Caelid. “Instead of sleeping,” Grimes said, “he played until 5:30 in the morning.”

Moments after he finished, he sent out a tweet: “I made an offer.”

Musk then set about finding outside investors who would help him fi-

nance the purchase. He asked Kimbal, who declined. He was more successful with Larry Ellison. “Yes, of course,” Ellison had answered when Musk asked earlier in the week if he was interested in investing in the deal.

“Roughly what dollar size?” Musk asked. “Not holding you to anything, but the deal is oversubscribed, so I have to reduce or kick out some participants.”

“A billion,” said Ellison, “or whatever you recommend.”

Ellison had not tweeted in a decade. In fact, he could not remember his Twitter password, so Musk had to personally get it reset for him. But Ellison believed that Twitter was important. “It’s a real-time news service, and there’s nothing really like it,” he told me. “If you agree it’s important for a democracy, then I thought it was worth making an investment in it.”

‘MY BULLSHIT DETECTOR WENT OFF LIKE RED ALERT.’

One person who was eager to be in the deal was Sam Bankman-Fried, the soon-to-be-disgraced founder of the cryptocurrency exchange FTX. Musk’s Morgan Stanley banker urged him to call Bankman-Fried, saying that he “would do the engineering for social media blockchain integration” and put \$5 billion in the deal.

Despite having kicked around with Kimbal the idea of building a social network on the blockchain, Musk felt that this approach would be too sluggish to support fast-paced Twitter postings. So he had no desire to meet with Bankman-Fried. When his banker persisted by reiterating that Bankman-Fried “could do \$5bn,” Musk responded with a “dislike” button. “Blockchain Twitter isn’t possible, as the bandwidth and latency requirements cannot be supported by a peer to peer network.” He said he might at some point meet with Bankman-Fried, “so long as I don’t have to have a laborious blockchain debate.”



A SpaceX Starship rocket lifts off for a test in Boca Chica, Texas, April 2023.

board chair Bret Taylor.

Musk found Agrawal to be likable. “He’s a really nice guy,” he says. But that was the problem. If you ask Musk what traits a CEO needs, he would not include being a really nice guy. One of his maxims is that managers should not aim to be liked. “What Twitter needs is a fire-breathing dragon,” he said after that meeting, “and Parag is not that.”

Musk hadn’t yet thought about taking over Twitter himself. At their meeting, Agrawal invited him to join Twitter’s board, and he agreed. For

the trip as a quiet rendezvous with one of the women he was occasionally dating, the Australian actress Natasha Basset. But instead of using it as a relaxed mini-vacation, he spent his four days there figuring out what to do about Twitter.

He stayed awake most of his first night stewing about the problems Twitter faced. When he looked at a list of users who had the most followers, they were no longer very active. So at 3:32 a.m. Hawaii time, he posted a tweet: “Most of these ‘top’ accounts tweet rarely and post very

REVIEW



Clockwise from left: The Twitter logo on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, November 2021; Elon Musk (right) and Peter Thiel, whose companies merged to form PayPal, in October 2000; Parag Agrawal, the CEO of Twitter when Musk bought the company; Musk celebrates the close of the Twitter deal with a bottle of Pappy van Winkle bourbon, Oct. 27, 2022.

That led Bankman-Fried to call Musk in May. “My bullshit detector went off like red alert on a Geiger counter,” Musk says. Bankman-Fried began talking rapidly, all about himself. “He was talking like he was on speed or Adderall, a mile a minute,” Musk says. “I thought he was supposed to be asking me questions about the deal, but he kept telling me the things he was doing. And I was thinking, ‘Dude, calm down.’” The feeling was mutual; Bankman-Fried thought Musk seemed nuts. The call lasted a half hour, and Bankman-Fried ended up neither investing nor rolling over his Twitter stock.

Musk successfully put together his financing, and the Twitter board accepted his plan at the end of April. Instead of celebrating that night, Musk flew down to his Starbase rocket-launch site in south Texas. There he participated in the regular nightly meeting on redesigning the Raptor engine and, for more than an hour, wrestled with how to deal with unexplained methane leaks they were experiencing. The Twitter news was the burning topic around the world, but the SpaceX engineers knew he liked to stay focused on the task at hand, and no one mentioned it. Then he met Kimbal at a roadside cafe in Brownsville that featured local musicians. They stayed there until 2 a.m., sitting at a table right in front of the bandstand, just listening to the music.

In the months between the deal agreement and the official closing,

Musk’s moods fluctuated wildly. “I am very excited about finally implementing X.com as it should have been done, using Twitter as an accelerator!” he texted me at 3:30 one morning. “And, hopefully, helping democracy and civil discourse while doing so.” A few days later, he was more somber. “I will need to live at Twitter HQ. This is a super tough situation. Really bumming me out :(Sleep is difficult.” He was having doubts about taking on such a messy challenge. “I’ve got a bad habit of biting off more than I can chew,” he admitted in a long talk with me one night. “I think I just need to think about Twitter less. Even this conversation right now is not time well spent.”

Revelations from a whistle-blower and others had inflamed his conviction that Twitter had been lying about the number of actual users and that his original offer of \$44 billion was too much. He wanted a better deal. Throughout September, he was on the phone with his lawyers three or four times a day. Sometimes he was in an aggressive mood and insisted that they could beat the lawsuit that Twitter had filed in Delaware seeking to force him to go through with his first offer. “They are shitting bricks about the dumpster fire they’re in,” he said of the Twitter board. “I cannot believe that the judge will railroad the deal through. It would not pass muster with the public.”

His lawyers finally convinced him that he would lose the case if they took it to trial. It was best just to close the deal on the original terms. By that point Musk had even regained some of his enthusiasm about taking over the company. “Arguably, I should just pay full price, because these people running Twitter are such blockheads and idiots,” he told me in late September. “The potential

is so great. There are so many things I could fix.” He agreed to an official closing of the deal in October.

‘ALL THESE DAMN BIRDS HAVE TO GO.’

Musk scheduled a visit to Twitter in San Francisco for Wednesday, Oct. 26, to poke around and prepare for the official closing of the deal, which was scheduled for that Friday. He seemed amazed as he wandered around the headquarters, which was in a 10-story Art Deco former merchandise mart built in 1937. It had been renovated in a tech-hip style with coffee bars, yoga studio, fitness room and game arcades. The cavernous ninth-floor cafe served free meals ranging from artisanal ham-

‘These people running Twitter are such blockheads and idiots...There are so many things I could fix.’

burgers to vegan salads. The signs on the restrooms said “Gender diversity is welcome here,” and as Musk poked through cabinets filled with stashes of Twitter-branded merchandise, he found T-shirts emblazoned with the words “Stay woke,” which he waved around as an example of the mindset that he believed had infected the company.

Between Twitterland and the Muskverse there was a radical divergence in outlook. Twitter prided itself on being a friendly place where coddling was considered a virtue. “We were definitely very high-empathy, very caring about inclusion and diversity; everyone needs to feel safe here,” says Leslie Berland, who was

chief marketing and people officer until she was fired by Musk. The company had instituted a permanent work-from-home option and allowed a mental “day of rest” each month. One of the commonly used buzzwords at the company was “psychological safety.” Care was taken not to cause discomfort.

Musk let loose a bitter laugh when he heard the phrase “psychological safety.” It made him recoil. He considered it to be the enemy of urgency, progress, orbital velocity. His preferred buzzword was “hardcore.” Discomfort, he believed, was a good thing. It was a weapon against the scourge of complacency. Vacations, work-life balance and days of “mental rest” were not his thing.

He became amused and then repulsed by how Twitter’s iconic blue bird logo was plastered everywhere. He is not a chirpy person; he relishes dark and stormy drama rather than chipper and light chattiness. “All these damn birds have to go,” he told a lieutenant.

The closing of the Twitter deal had been scheduled for that Friday. An orderly transition had been scripted for the opening of the stock market that morning. The money would transfer, the stock would be delisted, and Musk would be in control. That would permit Agrawal and his top Twitter deputies to collect severance and have their stock options vest.

But Musk decided that he did not want that. On the afternoon before the scheduled close he methodically planned a jujitsu maneuver: He would force a fast close that night. If his lawyers and bankers timed everything right, he could fire Agrawal and other top Twitter executives “for cause” before their stock options could vest.

It was audacious, even ruthless. But it was justified in Musk’s mind because of his conviction that Twitter’s management had misled him. “There’s a 200-million differential in the cookie jar between closing to-night and doing it tomorrow morning,” he told me late Thursday afternoon in the war room as the plan unfolded.

At 4:12 p.m. Pacific time, once they had confirmation that the money had transferred, Musk pulled the trigger to close the deal. At precisely that moment, his assistant delivered letters of dismissal to Agrawal and his top three officers. Six minutes later, Musk’s top security officer came down to the second-floor conference room to say that all had been “exited” from the building and their access to email cut off.

The instant email cutoff was part of the plan. Agrawal had his letter of resignation, citing the change of control, ready to send. But when his Twitter email was cut off, it took him a few minutes to get the document into a Gmail message. By that point, he had already been fired by Musk.

“He tried to resign,” Musk said. “But we beat him,” his gunslinging lawyer Alex Spiro replied.



WORD ON THE STREET
BEN ZIMMER

The Mysterious Allure of A Mogul’s Favorite Letter

EVER SINCE ELON MUSK announced in late July that Twitter was going to be rebranded as X, the decision has generated no end of agita from longtime users of the social-media platform. Lately some

[X]

the new stylized X logo from their screens and bring back Twitter’s familiar blue bird. The rocky rebranding effort reflects Musk’s long-standing obsession with the 24th letter of the alphabet. Back in 1999,



he co-founded the online bank X.com after acquiring “the coolest URL on the Internet,” as he put it to Jimmy Soni, who profiled Musk in his 2022 book “The Founders.” When his company merged with PayPal, he tried to rebrand PayPal as X.com. “To him, X.com was novel, intriguing, and open-ended enough to capture the company’s gist—a place for all banking and investment services to coexist,” Soni wrote of Musk. While his attempt failed, Musk continued working “X” into his business dealings, founding companies named

SpaceX and xAI, as well as his personal life, naming one of his children X Æ A-12, or X for short. And now Twitter has become his new vehicle for X-ophilia. Musk is hardly alone in being drawn to the intrigue and mystery of the letter X. While its presence in the English alphabet owes its roots to the Romans adopting the Greek letter chi, “X” has always been relatively uncommon compared to other letters of the alphabet, especially at the beginning of a word. Besides its rarity, many other qualities have con-

verged to give “X” a certain X factor. Its shape lent itself to marking locations on a map, as in “X marks the spot.” It has long been used as a mark for someone unable to sign their name. “X” further developed its air of mystery as a symbol of the unknown. Since the 17th century it has been used in algebra to represent a variable, and by extension it came to serve as a stand-in for an undetermined person or thing. When the German scientist Wilhelm Röntgen discovered a hitherto unknown type of radiation in 1895, he called it “X-radiation,” or “X-rays” for short. Members of the Nation of Islam, like Malcolm X, embraced the letter to symbolize lost ancestral names. Douglas Coupland’s 1991 novel “Generation X” gave a label to disaffected youth with an uncertain future. (It was also the name of a British punk band of the late ’70s—not to be confused with the L.A. punk band simply called X.) Thanks to Coupland’s book,

those born between the early 1960s and the early 1980s have been dubbed “Gen Xers”—including Elon Musk, born in 1971. This cohort came of age when the letter X had a certain edge to it. In The Atlantic, Lora Kelley observed that “‘X’ was especially hip at the dawn of the millennium (think Xbox, X Games),” which could have contributed to Musk’s penchant for the letter when he launched X.com. “X” also carries some racism to it, dating back to the British Board of Film Censors’ introduction of the “X certificate” in 1951 for films deemed “extremely graphic.” The Motion Picture Association of America followed suit in 1968 with its own “X-rating.” But after “X” (and “XX” and “XXX”) got embraced as a promotional tool by the adult film industry, the ratings boards backed away from the designation, with the MPAA adopting “NC-17” instead. Will such sleazy connotations be a problem for the Twitter-to-X transition as well? The answer is a mysterious unknown.


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RICHARD DREW/ASSOCIATED PRESS; PAUL SAKUMA/ASSOCIATED PRESS; KEVIN DIEZSC/GETTY IMAGES; PATRICK T. FALLON/AF/GETTY IMAGES; WALTER ISAACSON

JAMES YANG

REVIEW

WILCZEK’S UNIVERSE
FRANK WILCZEK

The Scientific Value of Ignorance



IN GEORGE ORWELL’S novel “1984,” “Ignorance is Strength” is a shocking slogan that epitomizes a corrupt and sinister regime. But in a more nuanced form, “Ignorance Can Be Strength,” it is an apt slogan for some cutting-edge science. Used wisely, ignorance can be a super-power that makes our senses more acute and our minds more capacious (through measuring devices and computers, respectively).

This seeming paradox is rooted in the nature of quantum reality, which imposes a fundamental limitation on our knowledge of the properties of any object. Given perfect theoretical knowledge of an object’s state, we can predict probabilities for where it will be found and how fast it will be seen to move, if we measure those things. But according to quantum theory, when we multiply the fuzziness in predicted position by the fuzziness in predicted momentum, the product cannot get below a definite limit. That is Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle.

Now suppose that we’d like to measure the position of a test body very precisely, so that we can detect the tiny distortions of space caused by gravitational waves. To minimize the fuzziness in its position, while remaining in Heisenberg’s good graces, we need to crank up the fuzziness in its momentum. The art of doing this is called “squeezing,” and it is a hot frontier of research.

The main difficulty in making good quantum computers is keeping nature ignorant about what they’re doing. A classical computer runs through a sequence of definite “positions,” each consisting of a series of 0s and 1s that represent the states of its transistors. A quantum computer, like a quantum particle, allows all these positions to coexist.

Fuzziness in position is necessary so that the computer can move reliably, with small fuzziness in “momentum,” to execute the next step in



its program. If the computer inadvertently betrays information about its distribution of positions, it will reduce that distribution’s fuzziness and necessarily inject fuzziness into the corresponding momentum, thus making the program’s execution unreliable.

When I first began to think about leveraging ignorance in the quantum world, I considered it to be one of that world’s weird special features. But I’ve come to see it as a much broader idea that illuminates many things about how we deal with the everyday world.

Consider, for example, what it means to recognize someone. The underlying pattern of photons that arrives at our retina will be quite different depending on where that person is, how they’re oriented, whether they’re partially hidden behind other objects, what they’re wearing and many other factors. But in concluding “It’s Betsy,” we choose to ignore all that, and that’s obviously a useful thing to do.

Why don’t we all have perfect pitch? Within our inner ears we have little inverse pianos that move specific keys (actually, specialized hairs) in response to specific tones. The information is there, but few of us can access it. Those of us who don’t have perfect pitch may have “chosen” ignorance—unconsciously, as our brains got wired up—in order to focus on more generally useful relationships.

Adam and Eve were punished for eating from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” However you take that story, it is a vivid reminder that ignorance is an option worth keeping in mind.

Tolkien’s Biblical Epic

The long-lasting popularity of ‘The Lord of the Rings’ shows that in a secular age, readers still respond to Judeo-Christian teachings about morality, providence and power.



By MEIR SOLOVEICHIK

If, in the 1930s, someone had sought to predict the bestselling English author of the 20th century, they probably would not have selected the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, who died 50 years ago on Sept. 2, 1973, spent his entire professional life in the academy, yet his impact on the world reached far beyond the ivory tower. His “Lord of the Rings” series of novels, which launched the modern genre of fantasy literature, have sold over 150 million copies and served as the source material for the wildly successful films of Peter Jackson.

Tolkien’s fame began with a much lighter work, “The Hobbit,” published in 1937. A book for children, it is the story of Bilbo Baggins, a lazy creature who is suddenly startled into alacrity by a visiting wizard and an entourage of dwarves that recruit him to join their invasion of a dragon’s den. Along the way, Bilbo acquires a useful ring that allows him to turn invisible, a magical device essential to the triumph of his quest.

Tolkien could have continued his career as an enormously successful children’s author. Instead, he followed “The Hobbit” with the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy, in which it is revealed that the trinket discovered by Bilbo was forged long before by the dark lord Sauron. His discovery that the long-lost talisman has been found sets in motion a series of events in which characters from across the realm of Middle-Earth—the wizard Gandalf, humans, dwarves and elves—unite to battle against the forces of darkness. Bilbo’s nephew Frodo is given the terrible task of bringing the ring deep into Sauron’s territory, to destroy it in the fires in which it was forged.

Unlike “The Hobbit,” the trilogy—comprising “The Fellowship of the Ring,” “The Two Towers” and “The Return of the King”—is densely written, with paragraph upon paragraph describing the geography of Middle-Earth. (Peter Jackson’s films retain this element of the novels: One viral parody movie trailer describes the movies as featuring “‘walking, roaming, hiking, more walking, and strolling.”) Tolkien also wrote an appendix explaining the history of Middle-Earth before Frodo’s story and made up languages like Elvish out of the whole cloth.

Yet Tolkien believed that these details were essential, since a great literary creation must give its readers an entire world for their imaginations to inhabit. The complexity of Tolkien’s world has in no way limited its popularity, with many fans devoting themselves to careful study of various aspects of Middle-Earth.

Given that they feature wizards, orcs, goblins and elves, it is easy to conjecture that the magic of Tolkien’s books lies in—well, magic. Yet no other fantasy series approaches the popularity of “The Lord of the Rings,” though many others feature elves and wizards aplenty. To understand the enduring enchantment of Tolkien’s works, one must comprehend a central feature of his life that the 2019 biopic “Tolkien” largely chose to ignore: his Catholic faith.

If sales of “The Lord of the Rings” rival those of the Bible itself, it is because the series offers a profoundly biblical view of the world. The reality and consistency of human sin described in Genesis is a central theme throughout Tolkien’s books. Sauron’s ring, rightly understood, is much more than a “MacGuffin”—an object whose only importance is that it helps move the plot forward. Rather, the ring is one of the true characters of the novel, representing sin and its many temptations.

The moral fragility of humanity is made manifest in the ways that some characters give in to those temptations. Yet others are able to resist them. Redemption ultimately comes to Middle-Earth through Aragorn, the descendant of a long-lost line of kings—a clear reference to the biblical story of David and to Isaiah’s guarantee that David’s heir will one day redeem the world. Christians like Tolkien identify this prophesied descendant as Jesus, though Aragorn more closely resembles the Jewish conception of the messiah as a great warrior-king.

The Bible asks us to see history through the lens of both providence and power, as events reflect the tension between human choice and divine intervention. Tolkien, too, creates a world in which our individual choices

make a difference, even as certain events are prophesied and foreseen. Sauron may triumph for a day, or even a generation, but the king will return, and our own actions help determine when that day will come. The fate of all Middle-Earth seems to hang on a single hobbit.

Today, more and more people in the West refrain from identifying with any faith, and some of our most popular stories, such as

In Tolkien’s world, individual choices make a difference even as certain events are foreseen.

James Cameron’s “Avatar,” offer myths that are more pagan than biblical. Yet the fact that Tolkien’s books continue to sell, and to be read, indicates that many people still believe that the complex interpretation of our world offered by Scripture is the most accurate depiction of reality. A story featuring some decidedly nonhuman characters gives us a profound meditation on human existence and the way our lives become important because of the roles we choose to play.

Faithful Jews and Christians believe, in different ways, in the ultimate “return of the king.” But we also believe that we are called to live courageously in a world where that has not yet occurred. In one of the best-known scenes from the book and the film, Frodo ruefully wishes that he lived in a time before the ring was rediscovered, before evil made itself so profoundly manifest. “So do I,” Gandalf replies, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

This advice given by a wizard to a hobbit offers a succinct summation of what the Bible communicates to humanity and what has sustained men and women of faith in some of the darkest of times. Fifty years after Tolkien’s passing, the series that helped create the fantasy genre endures because of its realism.

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik is the author of “Providence and Power: Ten Portraits in Jewish Statesmanship.”



J.R.R. Tolkien in 1968.

FROM TOP: NEW LINE CINEMA/EVERETT COLLECTION; DAILY MAIL/SHUTTERSTOCK

REVIEW



By BOJAN PANCEVSKI

Volodymyr Budnikov is renowned in Ukraine as an abstract painter, but since Russia invaded his homeland, he has been producing realistic pictures of death and destruction. In his new canvases, Russian soldiers are represented as skeletons—because, he says, the invaders “don’t feel anything.” Budnikov’s wife Vlada Ralko, one of the most acclaimed Ukrainian artists, is creating eerie, oppressive images that depict the horrors of war in cryptic yet unmistakable ways. One of her drawings shows a two-headed skeletal bird reminiscent of the eagle on Russia’s coat of arms, defecating bombs that cause blood-red explosions on a cratered ground.

Like many other Ukrainian artists, Ralko and Budnikov are processing the trauma of Russia’s aggression while in exile in Berlin. Some 1.2 million Ukrainians have poured into Germany since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, and the capital, where about 10% of the refugees live, has become a hub of Ukraine’s cultural diaspora. Visual artists, performers, writers and filmmakers are responding to the war while helping to change the perception of Ukrainian art and culture.

Making art in exile, Ralko says, is a matter of “conscience and responsibility.” For many Ukrainian artists, that means reshaping their sense of Ukrainian history and identity. “Our works are not so much about the horrors of war as about its origins,” said Ralko, referring to the long history of Russian imperial rule in Ukraine. Budnikov grew up speaking Russian but now speaks Ukrainian whenever possible, rejecting the language of the aggressor.

Today the Ukrainian language can be heard around the German capital,

In Exile in Berlin, Ukrainian Artists Confront the War

In the German capital’s museums and cafes, artists fleeing Russian aggression are reimagining Ukraine’s culture and history.

from the cafes and designer shops of the affluent west side to the hip Friedrichshain district in the east, home to much of Berlin’s fabled nightlife. Some of the capital’s most popular venues, such as the cultural center ACUD and the Space Medusa bar, have become meeting places for the Ukrainian cultural diaspora, hosting exhibitions, lectures and concerts featuring exiled artists and visitors from Ukraine.

At Kin Za, a trendy Georgian restaurant that has become a favorite meeting place for Ukrainian exiles in Berlin, artist and actress Anastasiia Pasichnyk, 24, explains how she set up the Ukrainian Cultural Community when she arrived as a refugee last year. The organization helps Ukrainian artists find funding and exhibition space their work in Germany. One installation on the Kurfürstendamm, a popular thoroughfare on the city’s west side, featured the burned wreck of a car from Bucha, a commuter town near Kyiv that was the site of well-documented Russian war crimes. Three women and a young girl were incinerated when the car came under Russian artillery fire.

While Pasichnyk has always been drawn to political art, Valentyna Sa-

liukhina, 24, was inspired by popular culture motifs such as yoga, new age spirituality and advertising. Now she says that is no longer an option: “People in peaceful countries can afford to be apolitical, but we

‘I didn’t go to war...but I chose to tell the story through my art.’

DARIA KOLTSOVA
Artist

have no such choice because we’re fighting for our freedom, for our very existence.”

A practicing Orthodox Christian who grew up speaking Russian, Saliukhina fled her home Donetsk in 2014 after the region was taken over by Russian proxies, then became a refugee for the second time last year, fleeing Kyiv for Berlin. She is currently working on a series, “Holy Nonsense,” that explores how Russia uses religion and history to maintain a chokehold over Ukrainian identity. The works incorporates traditions that Russian authorities have

invoked to justify their expansionist policy, such as Orthodox Christian iconography, prayers and calligraphy originating in medieval Byzantium.

Today many of Berlin’s galleries and museums display the Ukrainian flag, and cultural institutions have opened their doors to the newcomers. Generous funding from government and private foundations helps provide workspaces, grants and residencies for Ukrainian artists, as well as jobs for curators and art historians in German museums. Last month, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited an exhibition of Ukrainian artists near his home in Potsdam, an affluent commuter town in the greater Berlin area. A planned 15-minute visit stretched to three hours, as Scholz talked to the exiled artists about their work and enjoyed a performance of Ukrainian music. Their art, he said, exudes confidence.

The influx has also prompted Europe’s cultural establishment to redefine its understanding of Ukrainian art, which has traditionally been subsumed into Soviet or Russian art history. For instance, Kasimir Malevich, a pioneer of abstract art in the early 20th century, was born to Polish parents in Kyiv in 1879, when the city

was part of the Russian Empire. He has long been considered a Russian artist, but curators across Germany and elsewhere in the West are now updating their exhibits to describe Malevich as Ukrainian.

This curatorial and critical shift is on display in “Modernism in Ukraine 1900-1930s & Daria Koltsova,” a major exhibition on display at Cologne’s Ludwig Museum through Sept. 24. It features about 80 works by Ukrainian artists from the early 20th century, a time when many settled in Germany after fleeing the Russian Revolution. These older works are paired with a new monumental stained-glass installation by Koltsova, one of the best-known of today’s younger Ukrainian artists. “Tessellated Self” shows a stylized Ukrainian wreath known as vinok, traditionally worn by young women, and a black cross emblematic of Malevich’s Suprematist paintings. Superimposed over that image is a contour of Derzhprom, a 1920s architectural masterpiece and landmark of the artist’s hometown Kharkiv, which has been under near-constant shelling since last year. Two drawings by Malevich are exhibited in the same room.

Born in 1987, shortly before Ukraine became an independent post-Soviet state, Koltsova remembers growing up in the eastern city of Kharkiv, where she learned about her country’s history in the context of Russian dominance. Her parents spoke Russian and their extensive library featured four books in Ukrainian. Now the family has found refuge in Germany, and Koltsova tries to speak Ukrainian whenever possible, though Russian still sneaks in during heated arguments.

“I didn’t go to war or remain in Ukraine, but I chose to tell the story through my art,” she said in an interview. “That is my language, my weapon.”



MOVING TARGETS
JOE QUEENAN

Adapting To a World Where Adapters Run Amok

Using a new laptop requires buying a seven-pronged hub. Will running shoes be next?

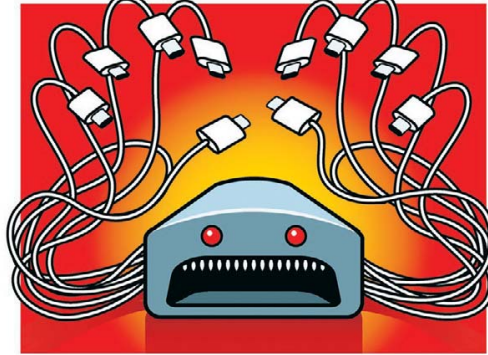
I WAS VERY excited to get working on my new laptop, but I quickly realized that I could not transfer files from my old computer because the new device did not have a USB port allowing access to my external hard drive. Seemingly, old-fashioned USB ports are technologically retrograde and stupid, and only a Luddite like me would expect a sleek new laptop to include one.

The infuriating absence of the all-purpose USB port falls into the broad general category of problems my mother never had. In fact, it falls into the broad general category of

problems I couldn’t even try explaining to my mother. Much less my father.

Rather than belly-ache about not being able to transfer my files, I contacted a friend and asked if there was an adapter he would recommend to help me to get started on my new laptop. Ridiculing my allegiance to Jurassic Era technology, he recommended a seven-pronged adapter that would allow me to plug in any and all external drives, including a prehistoric thingamajig that would allow me to watch old DVDs like “No Country for Old Men.”

He spoke highly of a device that included a 7-in-1 USB C Hub with 4K HDMI, 100W Power Delivery, USB-C and two USB-A 5 Gbps Data Ports, microSD and SD Card Reader. But he warned me that some adapters would not support 60 Hz 4K HDMI video. I told him that support for 60 Hz 4K HDMI video was not one of my



pressing concerns.

The adapter worked like a charm, and I got all my files transferred lickety-split. But it cost me \$40 on top of the \$800 I’d paid for the computer. This got me thinking about what life would be like if we purchased other products and found that they required the use of an adapter.

Footwear, for example. You buy a pair of running shoes online, they arrive in the mail and you’re all set to go for a jog, except that you cannot thread the laces through the holes on the shoes unless you purchase a 7-in-1 Thunderstorm AK-47 Size 6-9 1/2 W

Hub with 5K Meta-Functional Orthopedic Adapter. And a friend warns you that the adapter will only work with shoes up to size 11; anything beyond that and you might need the 9-in-1 Thunderstorm AK-47 Size 12-13 XW Hub with 10K Macro-Pediatric Overdrive. Which will not work with your wife’s shoes.

You’d have a similar problem if you bought a new toaster and found out that the device was not capable of toasting bagels unless you purchased the 7-in-1 T-564 45K 65 MGh 70 MPH Everything Whole Wheat Interface, which comes with two USB SD ports in case you want to film your breakfast being prepared. And a friend warned you that the adapter might not work with English muffins.

It used to be easy to slip

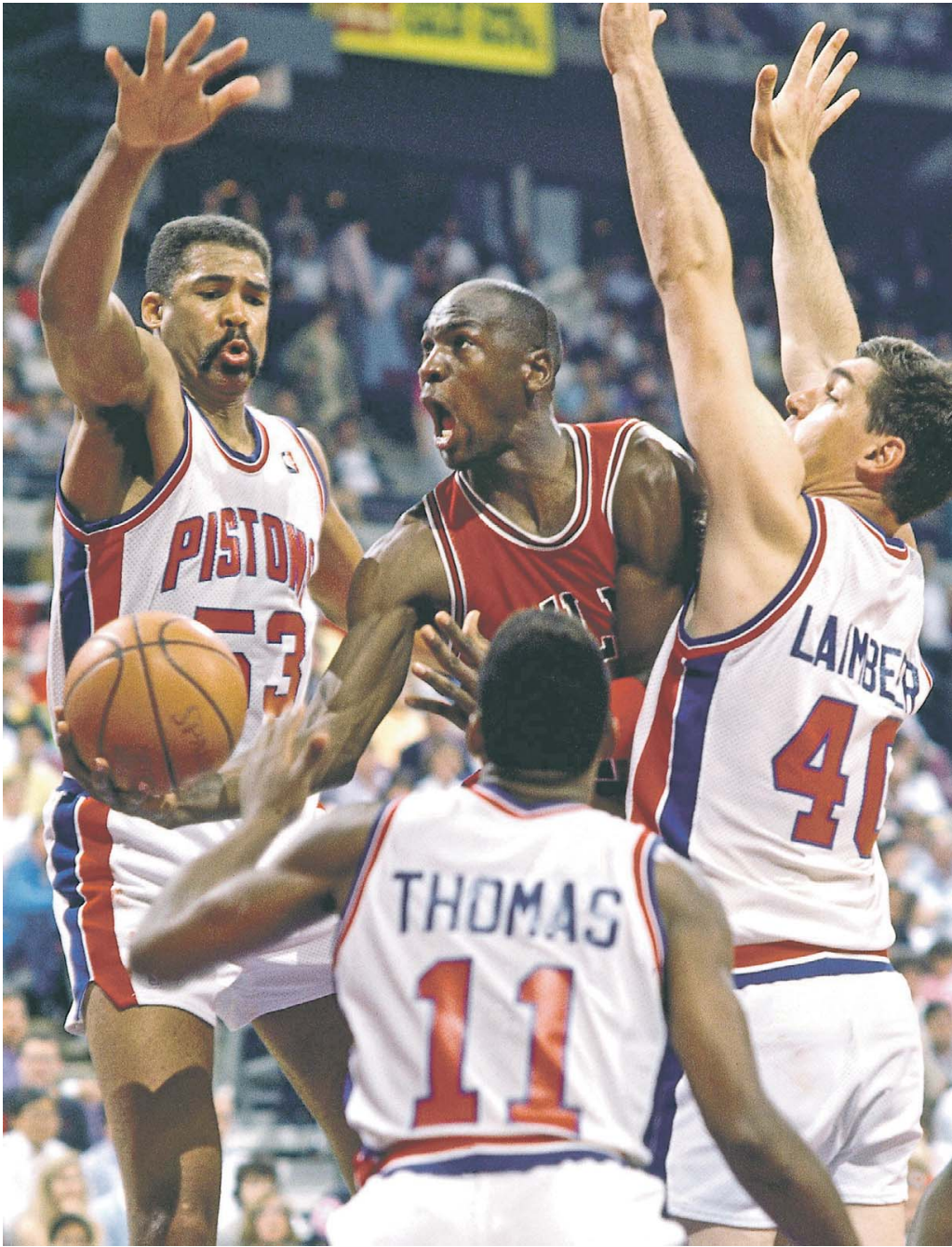
into your pants every morning, but that’s when they still came with two ready-made apertures for your legs. New models of trousers require you to purchase an adapter with several expansion slots—two for your legs, one for your trunk. But a haberdashery-savvy friend warns you that certain adapters will not work if you have a pot belly and recommends the 7-in-1 Thundercloud 100 KG Girth Facilitator. With 250 XXXL power delivery.

The adapter business is booming, so it is only a matter of time before new connecting devices appear. Possibilities include an adapter that allows your hat to directly interface with your head, an adapter that allows your fork to interface seamlessly with your mouth to effectuate the transfer of tortellini, and an adapter that allows razor blades to shave your face. One caveat: The 7-in-1 Thundercloud UFO SDS Hub with 12K OTB, 100WWF and two USB-A 5 Gbps Data Ports will not work with goatees.

REVIEW

What Michael Jordan Learned From Detroit’s Goons

For a Midwestern teen in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, the rivalry between the NBA’s Bulls and Pistons showed how beauty can triumph over brutality.



The Chicago Bulls’ Michael Jordan (center) drives to the basket against the Detroit Pistons in a 1989 game.

It’s human nature. When a beautiful thing appears in the world, someone will always try to crush it. That’s what happened when Michael Jordan arrived in the NBA in 1984 to play for the Chicago Bulls. He was a great athlete, of course, a dynamic playmaker and scorer and team leader, but he was also beautiful. It’s less the individual records we remember than the style: the way he back-pedaled after releasing a jumper, how he turned to the opponent’s bench with raised hands (a

gesture as old as philosophy), how he hung in the air a moment longer than necessary, as if to demonstrate the true nature of his gift, which was gossamer grace. It was this beauty, as much as the points and wins that flowed in its wake, that the Detroit Pistons, who played in the same division as the Bulls, schemed so desperately to stamp out in the 1980s. For those of us living in the Midwest at the time,



BACK WHEN
RICH COHEN

it was a great Manichean drama: the sledgehammer versus the butterfly, the Pistons’ clutching, grabbing and checking vs. Jordan’s insane soaring. These were the great Detroit teams of Isiah Thomas, Joe Dumars and Bill Laimbeer, the most hated man on the most feared club in basketball. They were the self-described Bad Boys. Dennis Rodman, who joined the team as a rookie in 1986, said that they “could

apply to our own lives. You have to be able to defend yourself. In the wake of the Bulls’ loss to the Pistons in the 1990 playoffs, Jordan, who’d played most of his career at 200 pounds, went directly to the weight room. “I was getting brutally beaten up,” he explained in the documentary “The Last Dance.” “I wanted to start fighting back.” So he became the perfect physical specimen most of us remember: 6’6”, 215 pounds, a chord of long, lean muscle, a man cut from marble.

Play your game, not theirs. The Pistons couldn’t match the skill of the Bulls, who had not only Jordan, the greatest athlete in American sports, but Scottie Pippen, who was Robin to M.J.’s Batman. Pippen handled the ball like a point guard but finished like a power forward, which is why the Pistons’ goons tried to turn the game into a slug fest, where they had the advantage. Once Chicago learned to ignore the Pistons’ game and play their own, there would be no stopping them. **Don’t lose your cool.** The Bulls vs. the Pistons in the late 1980s was like watching outtakes of “The Great Santini,” with Robert Duvall taunting the son he can no longer beat on the court. The Pistons would badger, needle and hack until the Bulls shed their discipline, lashed out, took fouls, screwed up. “The Pistons’ primary objective was to throw us off our game by raising the level of violence on the floor,” Bulls Coach Phil Jackson wrote. “They pounded away at our players ruthlessly, pushing, shoving, sometimes even headbutting, to provoke them into retaliating. As soon as that happened, the battle was over. Anger was the Bulls’ real enemy, not the Pistons.” **Only a team can beat a bully.** The Pistons double- and triple-teamed Jordan late in the fourth quarter, when the outcome came

‘Anger was the Bulls’ real enemy, not the Pistons,’ wrote coach Phil Jackson.

down to a handful of plays—a stutter step, a head fake, a don’t-look pass. The focus on Jordan left other Bulls ungarded all around the floor. Once M.J. learned to trust them, the Jordan Rules became a liability for the Pistons, which they had to discard, freeing Jordan himself. It was not the coaches or the practices but the Pistons who turned the Bulls into a team. **What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.** Many of the Bulls players from that era say it was the repeated humiliations at the hands of the Pistons that made the Bulls resilient, angry and tough. “We should’ve paid them a tribute,” Bulls center Bill Cartwright told me. “They paved the way for the kind of game we learned to play. It was like overcoming a monster.” Jordan dropped to the floor in tears when the Bulls won the first of their six championships of the 1990s. Not because he was overly emotional or because that single win meant so much, but because, for him, as for many Chicagoans, it was the culmination of a nearly decade-long struggle, which, at times, seemed hopeless. With his tears, M.J. taught us the most important lesson of all: There is nothing sweeter than the prize you have suffered for.

This piece is adapted from Rich Cohen’s new book, “When the Game Was War: The NBA’s Greatest Season,” which will be published by Random House on Sept. 5.

ANDREW D. BEINSTEIN/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES

EXHIBIT

Cafe Society

IN A WORLD percolating with cafes, eye-catching design is a crucial way to stand out, from packaging to architecture to logos. As coffee expert Lani Kingston shows in her new book “Designing Coffee” (Gestalten), a unifying theme can help. Hoof, a cafe in the U.A.E. city of Ras Al Khaimah, was designed by its horse-fancying owner to evoke “the look and feel of horse stalls,” with steel bar sinks suggesting troughs. The Wind Blows, in Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh City, is wrapped in curving steel shapes meant to echo birds’ nests. Other cafes try to make patrons feel like they’re somewhere else. In Hong Kong, Melrose Coffee (right) channels L.A. beach culture with hues meant to evoke California sunsets, while the Today Is Long Cafe pays homage to Australia with tiles and serving ware in the colors of that country’s red-and-orange sandstone monolith Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock. In Chengdu, China, the Budapest Cafe models itself after the symmetrical world of filmmaker Wes Anderson, who directed “The Grand Budapest Hotel.” Of course, sometimes the coffee itself is the headliner. In Changsha, China, Saturnbird has become famous for its instant coffee, sold in powder form in little takeaway cups. —Peter Saenger



Hong Kong’s Melrose Coffee is designed to channel California style.

HOUSE OF FORME, GESTALTEN



Victorian Novel
Zadie Smith returns
with her best book
in years C10

BOOKS

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Pocket Watching
A history of how
we keep things close
C12



READ ONLINE AT WSJ.COM/BOOKSHELF

**** Saturday/Sunday, September 2 - 3, 2023 | C7



ON THE MARCH 'A Friendly Power in Egypt,' an illustration in 'Cassell's Illustrated History of England' (1906) after a painting by W.C. Horsley.

Empire Without Apology

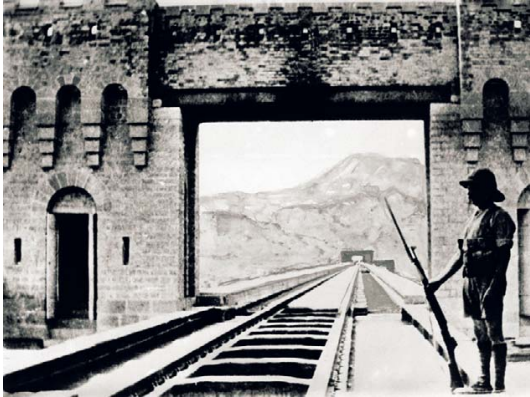
A measured defense of the Western colonial legacy—from the rule of law to greatly improved living standards—argues that the British empire, at least, did more good than evil

Colonialism: A Moral Reckoning

By Nigel Biggar
William Collins, 480 pages, \$34.99

By TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THESE IS acute subversive delight in reading “Colonialism: A Moral Reckoning,” by Nigel Biggar, emeritus professor of theology at Oxford. The book’s manuscript was rejected in March 2021 by Bloomsbury, the British publishing house that commissioned it, on the spineless ground that “public opinion” (in the words of Bloomsbury’s top brass) was “not currently favourable” to Mr. Biggar’s arguments. When the author asked what was wrong with his book—for it was an editor at Bloomsbury, aware of its thesis, who’d encouraged the writing of it—he received no answer, except that the book’s publication was being canceled. This being Britain, however—where minds do not yet march entirely in lockstep—editorial cowardice didn’t prevail. Another publisher, William Collins, stepped into the breach and took the book to market.



WELL TRAINED A British sentinel stands guard in India, 1930.

And so a valuable polemic was rescued from crib-death at the hands of our progressive arbiters of taste and thought—people for whom the questions raised by Mr. Biggar are too awkward, too incorrect to allow expression in print. His book focuses on British colonialism and is, he writes, “not a history of the British Empire but a moral assessment of it.”

Mr. Biggar’s intellectual opponents are the anticolonialists who teem in Western academe, “self-appointed spokespeople for non-white minorities” who insist that “systemic racism” is “nourished by a persistent colonial mentality.” Their aim, he says, is to corrode faith in Western civilization by denigrating its historical record. They place particular emphasis on slavery, which for them epitomizes the West’s “essential, oppressive, racist white supremacism.”

If Mr. Biggar’s book has a flaw, it is not anti-anticolonialism. It is that some of his accounts of British imperial history have an overly potted quality, the result, no doubt, of his having to synthesize vast quantities of secondary literature. After all, he isn’t a historian (as he reminds us) but an Anglican theologian and ethicist. But his background in moral reasoning

turns out to be an asset, bringing fresh perspective to a subject that has become morally Manichaean and intellectually hackneyed and one-sided.

With ethical accounting that is admirable and meticulous, he tallies the evils of British colonialism, “not only culpable wrongdoing or injustice, but also unintended harms.” These include “brutal” slavery; the spread of killer disease; the “unjust displacement” of natives by settlers; instances of unjustifiable military aggression (such as the First Opium War, 1839-42, when the British Empire waged war on China’s Qing Dynasty); the disproportionate use of force (the massacre in Amritsar, in India, in 1919); and the failure to admit “native talent” quickly enough into the upper reaches of colonial administration.

What will grate with the throng for whom anticolonialism is a stock-in-trade is Mr. Biggar’s obdurate—and eloquent—insistence that there is also a hefty credit side. This can be summed up as follows: the creation of a “worldwide free market” that gave native producers and entrepreneurs opportunities that were previously absent; the establishment of peace by imposing curbs on warring peoples, some of whom would have wiped their opponents out; the setting up of a civil service and judges who were “extraordinarily incorrupt” (especially when compared with their postcolonial successors); the laying down of essential infrastructure (yes, the railways: the British laid down more track in India than all other European colonialists did in their empires); the dissemination of modern science and medicine; and the introduction of social reforms that raised living standards and relieved the plight of the most downtrodden.

As for slavery, in the pursuit of which Britain—like every other slave-trading nation of the time—often acted with great cruelty, Mr. Biggar asks us to remember this: For the second half of its empire’s existence, “anti-slavery, not slavery, was at the heart of imperial policy”—that’s 150 years, he suggests, of abolitionist “imperial penance.” He also notes that slavery was neither invented by, nor the exclusive preserve of, Western imperialists. Contrary to Edward Said’s “Orientalism” (1978), many aspects of native cultures (especially Hindu) were “rescued from oblivion, not obliterated, by British Orientalists.”

There is also the truth, uncomfortable to many today, that the colonized often bought into the mission of the colonizers. Mr. Biggar quotes Tirthankar Roy, an Indian history professor at the London School of Economics, who has written that the East India Co. “came to rule India because many Indians wanted it to rule India.” Mr. Biggar also quotes Manmohan Singh, a former prime minister of India, who said at Oxford in 2005 when being conferred with an honorary degree that the Indian constitution “remains a testimony to the enduring interplay between what is essentially

Indian and what is very British in our intellectual heritage.”

Mr. Biggar, God bless him, has a Cordelia-like inability to say what a powerful audience craves—in his case, the academic establishment, particularly departments of postcolonial studies. To him, the truth about empire is “morally complicated and ambiguous.” He confronts mortarboard-leftists with questions that they are all too ready to evade: Are colonialism and slavery really essentially the same thing? Was the British Empire really a theater of nonstop racism? Was it driven fundamentally by material greed and economic exploitation, or were there also other, much less base, motivations?

No apologist for imperialism, Mr. Biggar is at pains to stress that the British Empire “did good as well as evil.” But he goes beyond that limited claim. Did the British Empire, he asks, “do more good than evil?” This is the kind of query that elicits gasps in classrooms today. The very raising of such a question, one that accepts the possibility that empire wasn’t irredeemably bad, is offensive to a majority of Mr. Biggar’s colleagues. For his part, Mr. Biggar accuses his detractors of an “unscrupulous indifference to historical truth.”

Passions from the American Black Lives Matter movement had come to infiltrate British political discourse when Mr. Biggar was finishing his manuscript. He was already ripe for anathema, having courted controversy in the years before by coming to the defense of Cecil Rhodes. In a column in the Times of London, he argued that a statue of the late-19th-century imperialist should not be removed from its place on Oxford High Street.

Mr. Biggar had also blotted his copybook with the bien-pensant herd by running an academic project at Oxford called “Ethics and Empire.” It embraced the fact that the imperial form of political organization had been the world’s default mode until 1945 but rejected the assumption that “empire is always and everywhere wicked.” The project was denounced by students at Oxford, and hundreds of academics worldwide were exhorted to silence him, Mr. Biggar writes, by Priyamvada Gopal, a Cambridge University professor of postcolonial studies. On learning of the project, she tweeted a call to arms: “OMG. This is serious s—.... We need to SHUT THIS DOWN.”

Although Mr. Biggar’s book is not a work of imperial nostalgia—indeed, far from it—critics will caricature it as a whitewash of colonialism. He has been pilloried for the book but appears to be blessed with skin that is as thick as his mind is clear. Not for him the postcolonial self-flagellation and self-censorship that would have modern Britons abase themselves to atone for the sins of their forefathers. For Britain to remain a confident pillar of the liberal international order, it must be proud of its own past, not paralyzed by it.

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

JohannesG, Meet ChatGPT

By DOMINIC GREEN

WE STILL speak of “turning a page,” still aspire to be “open books” and recite “chapter and verse,” but our pages are now webpages, our books are now e-books and audiobooks, and our chapters and verses are dissolving into images, emojis and acronyms (LOL). The printed book will survive as a high-status curio; as late as 2017, the British Parliament still “engrossed” its rulings onto vellum in medieval tradition. For most of us, however, the Age of Print that was inaugurated around 1455 by the Gutenberg Bible has already passed into the Age of the Internet which, ICYMI, began in 1994 with the launch of Netscape Navigator, the first commercial web browser.

“I see a rug being pulled out from under our understanding of the world: a crisis of cognition,” Jeff Jarvis writes in “The Gutenberg Parenthesis” (Bloomsbury Academic, 328 pages, \$27). Mr. Jarvis began his career as an analog journalist but became a digital pundit, so he knows the queasy feeling of living through the twilight of one way of knowing the world and into the dawn of another. The technical term is “epistemic crisis,” a breakdown of shared reality. In American English, Mr. Jarvis notes, a “parenthesis” is usually a grammatical symbol, what the British call a round bracket. In British English, a “parenthesis” is the information contained between the brackets—the “content,” as it’s now called. His book is about how the form defines the content: As Wittgenstein said, “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

The idea of a “Gutenberg parenthesis” was coined in the mid-1990s by three professors from the University of Southern Denmark: Lars Ole Sauerberg, Marianne Borch and Tom Pettit. Before movable type—the left-hand parenthesis that opened the print—information moved by word-of-mouth. Knowledge and memory were, as Mr. Jarvis puts it, “collective, collaborative, and often performative using rhyme and lyric.” Books were rare and were handwritten by scribes whose “higher mission was to preserve the knowledge of the ancients.” After Johannes Gutenberg, information was mass-produced in print, by machines. Books were everywhere. The sentence became the “organizing principle,” and our cognition became “linear.” Copyright law, enacted in England in 1710, created an economic basis for the print industry and turned the scribe into the author and the patron into the publisher.

“The Gutenberg Parenthesis” gives an accomplished and detailed survey of life between the brackets. Movable type and new methods of distribution, according to Mr. Jarvis, created first the public and then the masses, which caused governments to contain speech within censorship laws. The book-banners got to work almost immediately. In 1473 or 1474, the Venetian friar Filippo de Strata petitioned the Doge to stifle the printers because they were putting the scribes out of business. “They basely

Please turn to page C8



TIMAFIELDS/GETTY IMAGES

BOOKS

‘Movie people would have nothing to do with me until they heard me speak in a Broadway play. Then they all wanted me for the silent movies.’ —W.C. FIELDS



FIVE BEST ON HOLLYWOOD’S SILENT-FILM ERA

Kathleen Rooney

The author of the novel ‘From Dust to Stardust’

The Parade’s Gone By . . .

By Kevin Brownlow (1968)

“Silent film” is a retronym, coined to retroactively distinguish an original technology from later ones. Yet its emphasis on what was lacking tends to dim the magic of early cinema. The English filmmaker and film scholar Kevin Brownlow blends passion and expertise to craft a paradoxically elegiac-yet-lively account of a misunderstood era. “The audience responded to suggestion, supplied the missing sounds and voices, and became a creative contributor to the process of projection,” we are told. Packed with oral histories from industry veterans, this intimate and encyclopedic compendium includes such stars as Louise Brooks and Harold Lloyd, as well as participants from stuntmen to scenario writers. Replete with stills that testify to the technical brilliance of silents, Mr. Brownlow’s book cautions against misperceptions caused by the distorting effects of “bad prints shown at the wrong speed.” Far from being primitive, jerky and quaint, the finest of these works were as enchanting as any of today’s best movies.

Silent Stars

By Jeanine Basinger (1999)

Jeanine Basinger is one of the most illuminating film scholars alive; she built the Wesleyan University film-studies program into one of the best in the country. In “Silent Stars” she reveals herself to be above all else a fan. A tenacious and ardent admirer of her objects of study-affection, she celebrates “a group of silent film stars who are somehow forgotten, misunderstood, or under-appreciated.” She extricates Gloria Swanson from the jaws of Norma Desmond and does the same for Marion Davies from “Citizen Kane.” She explains that the origins of the flapper—a key figure in “the evolution of the old-fashioned girl into the modern woman”—arise not with the sexy jazz-baby caricature to which Clara Bow was reduced, but with Colleen Moore, whose persona was “a sort of feminist hoyden with comic touches.” Plus, movie stars are nice to look at, and this book has more than 300 photographs to satisfy that scopophilic urge.



A FUNNY THING HAPPENED Colleen Moore seeks aid for Gary Cooper in a scene from the silent film ‘Lilac Time’ (1928).

Love, Laughter and Tears

By Adela Rogers St. Johns (1978)

As Tinseltown autobiographies go, this is one of the dishiest. A reader would hope for no less from Adela Rogers St. Johns, known as William Randolph Hearst’s girl reporter and the author of the screenplay for 1932’s “What Price Hollywood?”—based on the life of St. Johns’s friend Colleen Moore and the basis of the 1937 film “A Star Is Born” and all its remakes. Forthright and entertaining, St. Johns’s prose goes over the top; she recounts in her punctuation-less prose, that “it seemed all right back there in the Roaring Twenties for Adela Rogers St. Johns to become Mother Confessor of Hollywood though she herself was only in *her* twenties and thirties. Often and often after she went to live and work spang-bang in the middle of it, she felt herself too young and inexperienced for so momentous and

dangerous a position. For soon with all this beauty and genius and sex and love-of-life boiling in one little pot things began to happen that even Shakespeare had hardly thought of.” Hot stuff.

American Silent Film

By William K. Everson (1978)

William Everson’s fervor, mixed with comprehensive knowledge, renders this one of the greatest general surveys of silent film. As the archivist and historian emphasizes in his lucid documentation of the coming of talkies, the silents were their own distinct aesthetic achievement. “The difference between the two,” Everson writes, “is literally the difference between painting and photography, and the frequent unreality—or stylized reality—of much of the camerawork of the silent film was, artistically, one of its greatest

assets.” Beginning with the nickel-odeons of the early 1900s and ending with the ascendance of synchronized sound around 1928, Everson’s book makes the reader long to watch as many of these treasures as possible.

Adventures of a Hollywood Secretary

By Valeria Belletti (Edited by Cari Beauchamp, 2006)

Whatever the subject, it’s an illicit thrill to read a letter that was never intended for you—let alone a whole book of them. The daughter of Italian immigrants, Valeria Belletti traveled, after her mother’s death, from New York to California with her friend and fellow 20-something Irma in the summer of 1924. Unlike Irma, Valeria fell under the spell of the climate and the people and remained in Los Angeles. While living at the YWCA, she was hired as Samuel Goldwyn’s

personal and social secretary. The tension between her entry-level status and the stratospheric fame of some of the names she encountered—Rudolph Valentino, Gary Cooper—gives her epistles a fizzy mixture of sophistication and naiveté. “I know you would enjoy these people even though you have to more or less overlook their moral characters,” she writes to Irma in one of dozens of letters, which are packed with details both gossipy (“Did you know Norma Talmadge and her husband Joseph Schenck are no longer living together? I believe they are going to be divorced very shortly”) and mundane (“Most of the letters are from actresses looking for jobs—so I just write a lot of blarney and sign his name to them”). The historian and documentary filmmaker Cari Beauchamp rescued these letters from obscurity and prepared them for publication. Her annotations and asides are filled with insight into a parade long passed.

The Print Era & the Cloud Era

Continued from page C7

flood the market with anything suggestive of sexuality,” de Strata complained, “and they print the stuff at such a low price.”

The first book in English, a history of the Trojan wars, was printed in 1473 by William Caxton. His heir, the wonderfully named Wynkyn de Worde, opened a print shop in London’s Fleet Street. The first printed newsletter appeared in Strasbourg in 1605, the year Cervantes inaugurated the novel with “Don Quixote.” By 1704 London had nine newspapers and dozens of coffee houses where the conversation began on the page and broke into the room.

The magazine as high-end diversion was born with Addison and Steele’s “Spectator” (1711-12), though the father of direct and demotic “newspaper English” was Benjamin Franklin. From the start, newspaper journalists were viewed as “paid agent[s] of politicians.” As early as 1626, Ben Jonson had satirized the “credulous purchasers” of pamphlets and ballads. Jonson was a credentialed expert, a university man connected to the Court. These days, he would, like Mr. Jarvis, be advising the European Union on how to combat disinformation and hate speech.

The artists of typography raised print to an art: Baskerville, Jenson, Caslon, Bodoni. The technicians upgraded the machines. In the 1790s a team led by Charles Mahon, the Earl of Stanhope, pioneered stereotyping

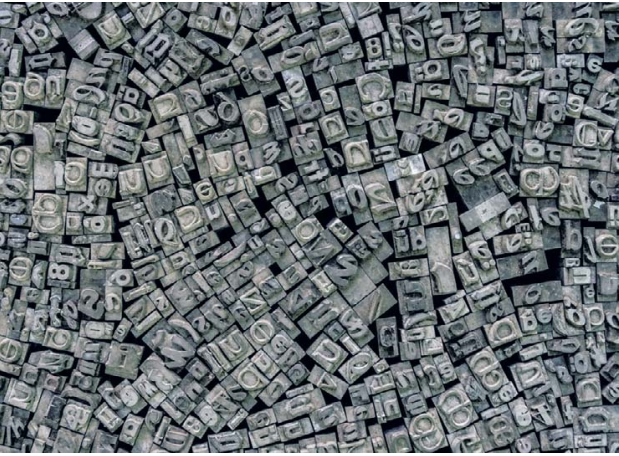
(casting a solid metal plate from a plaster mold so that a page did not need to be reset) and the use of an iron press. Steam-powered cylinder presses arrived in the 1810s, and multicolor printing using intermediate rubber “offset” cylinders began in the early 1900s. Stereotyping, among other 19th-century methods, was still used in the 1970s when Mr. Jarvis started work at the Chicago Tribune.

Print not only changed the material presentation of knowledge and its dissemination. It also, as Mr. Sauerberg of the University of Southern Denmark argued, changed “the very nature of cognition.” The current closing of the right-hand parenthesis implies “a completely new and so far only partially glimpsed—let alone understood—cognitive situation.” It might not be completely new. Marshall McLuhan, who hovers over “The Gutenberg Parenthesis” as Moses hovers over what used to be called the Book of

Reading an AI-written detective novel is, like browsing the internet, at once amusing, alarming and depressing.

Books, predicted that exchanging texts for images would break down the linear cognition of cause and effect, returning us to a pagan or primitive experience of the world. The novelty, then, lies not in the feelings of hapless wonder and terror that lie beyond print, but in the technological means that are carrying us there.

The “materiality of text” dissolved partly because of radio and newsreels, and partly because of new



print technologies. In the 1960s, Gutenberg’s “hot type” began to cool into “cold type” through photo-composition, word processors and xerography. As the commercial internet completes the dematerialization of information production, we are, Mr. Jarvis believes, “beginning to recover from half a millennium of creeping control by institutions.” Tell that to the data-scrappers: This is the golden age of the snooper.

It is difficult to write a history of the present—especially if, like Mr. Jarvis, you equate conservatives with “the far-right,” bundle Trump voters with “Putinists,” and believe that when reporters interview “extremists in their heartland diner-dens,” they “normalize extremism.” When “The Gutenberg Parenthesis” looks from the past to the present, it collapses into platitudes about “diversity” and “disinformation,” just like our failing and increasingly brittle institutions.

Mr. Jarvis’s problem, and ours, is that “new technologies forge institutional change,” but no one can figure out what the new institutions should look like or how to preserve older values such as free speech and privacy. Meanwhile, the new institu-

tion is already here, dematerialized in plain sight: the cloud. Our institutions are failing because they resist integration into this amorphous and nearly infinite network, which they know will consume them.

The governing logic of the cloud is now emerging: machine learning and artificial intelligence. The detective novel “Death of an Author” (Pushkin Industries, 95 pages, \$3.99) is, for now, a novelty: an AI-written text about the killing of Peggy Firmin, a Canadian novelist who might remind readers IRL of Margaret Atwood. The living author of “Death of an Author,” the novelist Stephen Marche, says that 95% of it is machine-generated, using the programs ChatGPT, Sudowrite and Cohere; he has published it under the nom de computer Aidan Marchine. Reading the book is, like being online, at once amusing, alarming and depressing. The plotting is tighter than most literary fiction, but typical for its genre. The prose feels weirdly synthetic: “With a strange sense of comfort, like a dog being smoothed by a hand, Gus returned to bed.”

If that phrase reads as though it had been translated from some future

version of English, that is because it has been. In “Who Wrote This?” (Stanford, 344 pages, \$30), the linguistics professor Naomi S. Baron describes how AI already permeates our cognition. In the 1980s, the composer David Cope programmed a computer to “generate new Bach-like works.” The results fooled “at least some of the people some of the time.” The same now goes for online prompts, telephone banking, corporate communications, political messaging, some journalism and many college essays.

Like a doctor dispensing a terminal diagnosis, Ms. Baron is calm, empathetic and desperate to find a bright side. So far, AI-produced language looks like a condensed parody of print. The data that generative AI and natural-language processing requires is scraped from inside the Gutenberg Parenthesis, apparently without regard for copyright. AI disgorges a cumulative consensus, and its programmers then correct it to reflect their own values, should they have any. The magic of creativity is, for now, beyond reach. But magic is a matter of effects.

“As a large-language model trained by OpenAI, I am not capable of creative thought or artistic expression,” ChatGPT tells Ms. Baron. This is like Johannes Gutenberg saying, “As I am only a blacksmith who prints the Bible in Latin, I cannot comment on whether allowing me to print it in the vernacular might spark a Reformation, a century of religious war, and the birth of international law, free speech and the modern state system.” We have burst our brackets. Only a power cut can save us.

Mr. Green is a Journal contributor and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

BOOKS

‘I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this.’ —HENRY MORGENTHAU

Never Again the First Time

The Righteous and People of Conscience of the Armenian Genocide
By Gérard Dédéyan, Ago Demirdjian and Nabil Saleh
Hurst, 360 pages, \$34.95

By DIANE COLE

IN 1939, a week before the invasion of Poland, Adolf Hitler reportedly asked: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?” At the time, the word “genocide” did not exist. Giving a name to the systematic destruction of a people based on their ethnic, religious, racial or national identity would be the work of the Polish-Jewish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin. Even before escaping Europe for America in 1941, Lemkin had become convinced of the need for an international legal structure to bring to justice the perpetrators of group-targeted mass violence and slaughter. His efforts led not only to his coining of the word “genocide” but to the inclusion of that word in the Nuremberg indictment and to the passage of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. His original motivation, however, was something that had happened long before Hitler: what we now call the Armenian genocide, the ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Young Turks government that began in 1915 and that killed up to 1.5 million out of an estimated population of 2.1 million Armenian Christians within the Ottoman Empire. Lemkin, who died in 1959, was not alone in speaking out about the genocide. He is one among the many whose vehement opposition earned them a place on the honor roll of the “righteous” compiled by the authors Gérard Dédéyan, Ago Demirdjian and Nabil Saleh in their encyclopedic volume, “The Righteous and People of Conscience of the Armenian Genocide.” Mr. Dédéyan is a professor of medieval history at the University of Paul-Valéry Montpellier III; Mr. Demirdjian is an entrepreneur-philanthropist of Armenian descent; and Mr. Saleh, who died in November, was a novelist and international lawyer whose mother’s parents survived the Armenian genocide.

The authors’ merit list includes a broad range of missionaries, teachers, physicians, diplomats, journalists, public figures and others who bore witness and brought public attention to the massacres, death marches and other criminal acts that singled out Armenians for destruction. It is through the profiles of those



FLAME OF MEMORY The Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, Armenia.

“righteous” individuals that the authors here unfold the history and scope of the Armenian genocide. Eyewitness accounts, letters, memoirs, diaries, photographs, newspaper articles and official reports—many of them to be found in governmental and institutional archives and libraries around the world—together form part of the immense body of evidence that

Teachers, physicians, diplomats, journalists and others bore witness to the massacres and death marches.

attests to the fate of countless Armenians during World War I. These materials stand in powerful opposition to the Turkish government, which continues to deny responsibility for the policies and actions that nearly wiped out the Ottoman Armenian population. One of the most authoritative witnesses during the genocide was Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916. He was appalled by the numerous

reports from American consuls and missionaries detailing such atrocities as the “drownings of large numbers of Armenians in the Black Sea.” He stated his objections in a meeting with Talaat Pasha, who was Sultan Mehmed Reshad V’s grand vizier at the time and one of the principal planners of the attack on its Armenian population. Morgenthau relates the bone-chilling conversation in his 1918 memoir, “Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story,” which the authors quote in detail. “It is no use for you to argue . . . we have already disposed of three-quarters of the Armenians,” Talaat told him. Undeterred, Morgenthau responded, “if you are not influenced by humane considerations, think of the material loss.” Talaat answered flatly: “We care nothing about the commercial loss. . . . We have figured all that out and we know that it will not exceed five million pounds. . . . Our Armenian policy is absolutely fixed and . . . nothing can change it.” Morgenthau attempted to persuade then-president Woodrow Wilson to intervene. He also proposed that Congress open America’s shores to 500,000 Armenians. His efforts failed, but he never stopped publicizing the plight of the Armenians.

The German-born missionary Johannes Lepsius had first become aware of the Armenians’ increasingly precarious situation after he arrived in Urfa, Turkey, in the mid-1890s. Corinna Shattuck, an American missionary and educator, described to him a brutal massacre she had witnessed in 1895, when Turkish soldiers set fire to a church in which 3,000 Armenians had sought refuge, killing everyone inside. Lepsius decided to investigate. He gathered eyewitness accounts and other evidence of anti-Armenian violence and published them in his 1896 book, “Armenia and Europe: An indictment of the Christian Great Powers and an Appeal to Christian Germany.” When the genocide of 1915 began, Lepsius once again collected eyewitness accounts. Among the atrocities described were forced death marches into the desert, where those Armenians who survived would then be abandoned—unprotected and without food, water or shelter—in the burning heat. With Germany and Turkey now war allies, Lepsius urged German officials to intervene, to no avail. He also appealed to Enver Pasha, the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army, who responded in much the same way as Talaat had to Morgenthau.

Lepsius compiled his newest findings in “Report on the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey”—this time circulating the text in secret to sidestep military censorship—and included both the results of his investigations and his accounts of his conversations with German and Turkish officials. When his books were discovered, Lepsius was accused of “jeopardizing the wartime alliance” and forced to leave the country. He continued to publicize the plight of the Armenians until his death in 1926. One of the readers of Lepsius’ book would be the Austrian writer Franz Werfel, who relied in part on Lepsius’ writings for his 1933 historical novel, “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh.” Werfel’s book is based on the real-life 1915 resistance of an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Armenian villagers living on the slopes of Musa Dagh (the Mountain of Moses), a scenic area close to the Mediterranean. Ottoman forces had been ordered to deport the Armenians, possibly via death march. Instead, the villagers climbed up the mountain and, with the limited arms they possessed, defended themselves for 53 days (tightened to 40 days in Werfel’s novel). When French warships patrolling the nearby waters were alerted to the situation, Vice Adm. Louis Dartige du Fournet—whom the authors of “The Righteous and People of Conscience” also honor with a profile—led the rescue that eventually transferred the villagers to the safety of British custody. By the time “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” was published, Hitler had come to power and the Jewish Werfel’s book was banned in Germany. The author himself fled to the U.S. in 1940. His historical novel inspired the Jewish resistance throughout the ghettos of Nazi Europe. Despite the wealth of information it conveys, “The Righteous and People of Conscience” suffers from dense writing and poor organization, and may prove confusing to readers not already familiar with the history of the Armenian genocide. Nonetheless, it provides an important historical reference of resistance, uncovering the extent to which these atrocities pre-saged the Nazi Holocaust and underscoring the silence that greeted so many pleas for help. Elie Wiesel once observed that “we must know these good people who helped Jews during the Holocaust.” Thanks to the authors of this book, we now also know the people of conscience who came to the aid of the Armenians.

Ms. Cole is the author of the memoir “After Great Pain: A New Life Emerges.”

Passing Through the Iron Curtain

Defectors
By Erik R. Scott
Oxford, 328 pages, \$34.95

By GARY SAUL MORSON

‘RUSSIA’S border does not end anywhere,” declared Vladimir Putin in 2016, and the statement soon appeared on billboards in Russian-occupied Ukraine. As Russian defectors have learned, the country’s henchmen operate everywhere. In Britain, they murdered Alexander Litvinenko and almost murdered Sergei Skripal and his daughter via poisoning, a punishment meant to shock as well as kill. Such brutality is what prompts some to flee in the first place. Many defections from the Soviet era are famous. In 1961 the ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev eluded his secret-police minders and sought asylum in France, preceding similar escapes by fellow dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov and Alexander Godunov. Stalin’s own daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, defected to the U.S. during a 1967 trip to India. Since anyone going abroad might refuse to return, Soviet travelers were constantly accompanied by KGB operatives. Loved ones remained home as hostages, subject to reprisals. In Stalin’s time, there was a prison camp for the wives of enemies of the people, and the authorities were not squeamish about punishing relatives. Is it any wonder that stories of defection galvanized the Western imagination? In “Defectors,” Erik Scott examines, as the subtitle has it, “how the illicit

flight of Soviet citizens built the borders of the Cold War world.” The book contends that the dispute over defectors “mapped out the contours of modern state sovereignty” and that borders were “far less stable” than the phrase “Iron Curtain” suggests. At Yalta in 1945, Roosevelt and Churchill had promised to repatriate Soviet citizens who found themselves outside Soviet borders at the end of the war, by force if necessary. Stalin viewed anyone who had seen life abroad—even in a Nazi prison camp—as dangerous or treasonous. That is how the hero of Solzhenitsyn’s “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich” lands in the Gulag. Rather than endure torture by the Soviet secret police, some women facing forced repatriation killed their children and then themselves. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians claimed to be Poles in the hope of avoiding being returned to their Soviet republic. The Baltic republics did not become part of the U.S.S.R. until the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, but Lithuanians who had never been Soviet citizens were “repatriated.” Even Russian émigrés who had left after the revolution were, along with their families, forcibly returned. Mr. Scott, a history professor at the University of Kansas, offers a narrative of Cold War rivalry that often seems to justify or excuse some of the harsher Soviet policies. Not least, he provides sanitized references to forced repatriation, which he twice calls “understandable,” given the Soviet Union’s demographic losses. He doesn’t detail the horrendous fate of those who were sent back. East Germany referred to the Berlin Wall as the “Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier,” designed not to imprison its citizens but to keep nefarious Westerners out. Using the same logic, Mr. Scott claims that “even at the height of the Stalinist terror,” the Soviets were more afraid of infiltration by foreign agents than of citizens escaping. In

any case, Mr. Scott asserts, “the Berlin Wall was mutually constituted as the superpowers—and the divided sides of Germany they backed—faced off.” The author indulges in sometimes risible moral equivalence. In his view, the U.S., because of the quota system in place at the dawn of the Cold War, was as guilty of restricting migration as the Soviet Union. “In many respects,” he



RUNAWAY Stalin’s daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, after defecting in 1967.

explains, “the policies of the superpowers mirrored and influenced each other, the US regime based on limiting entry and the Soviet regime focused on restricting exit.” Consequently, he asserts, “rhetorical opposition regarding the ‘freedom of movement’ should not be taken at face value.” Defectors, Mr. Scott contends, helped give the West a lurid impression of a totalitarian Soviet regime. But, he adds, the defectors who described Soviet conditions were often motivated to play to Americans’ “longer-term convictions about the need to liberate Russians from their own country’s ‘despotism’ and ‘backwardness.’” Defection was “jointly produced” by the superpowers, he

says, inasmuch as American encouragement of defection prompted stronger Soviet attempts to prevent it. Mr. Scott offers scare quotes in place of argument: “defectors ‘escaping’ Soviet control,” “the perceived divide between a ‘free’ West that enabled mobility and a ‘captive’ East where citizens were chained in place by restrictions on exit.” He dismisses the

so thoroughly conditioned that they would automatically accept the assertions of the Communist Party, however often its positions changed. Mr. Scott makes one interesting, if unsurprising, point. The phenomenon of defection helped catalyze international agreements regarding places where sovereignty was ill-defined, such as embassies and the high seas. What rules should govern “diplomatic immunity” and the “inviolability” of embassies? Was any ship flying the Soviet flag part of the sovereign Soviet Union regardless of its location, as the

The escape of Soviet citizens influenced the Cold War rivalry and our current set of diplomatic norms.

Soviets claimed? The world’s current system of rules was hammered out during the Cold War. The author details, for example, how both sides agreed to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, “the most sweeping codification of diplomatic law in history.” Discussing such treaties, Mr. Scott at last faults the Soviets: He repeatedly refers to any agreement between the superpowers as “collusion.” Erik Scott is not ignorant, so what leads to arguments like these? It is easy to grasp why Soviet citizens accepted official pronouncements, but books like this one remain, to borrow Churchill’s words about Russia, “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Mr. Morson, a professor of Slavic Languages at Northwestern University, is the author of “Wonder Confronts Certainty: Russian Writers on the Timeless Questions and Why Their Answers Matter.”

BOOKS

‘If a man’s character is to be abused, say what you will, there’s nobody like a relative to do the business.’ —WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

The Truth About Fiction

The Fraud
By Zadie Smith
Penguin Press, 464 pages, \$29

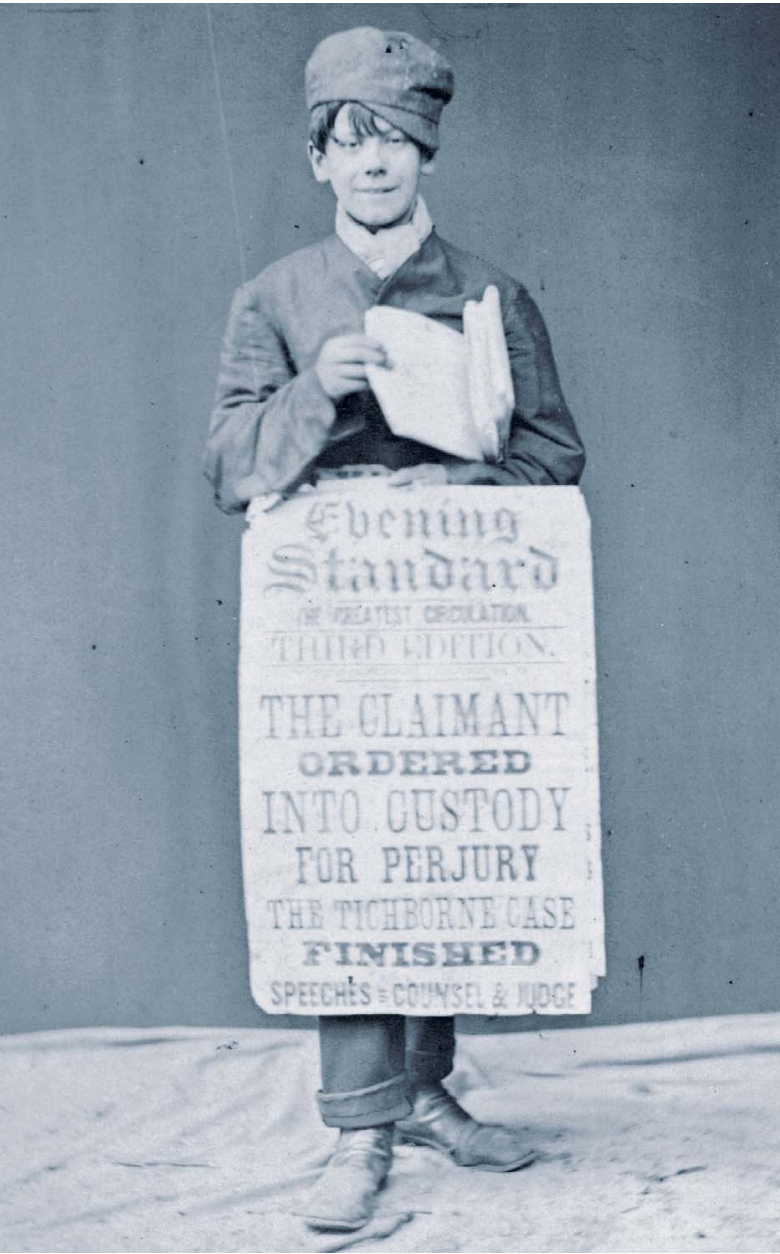
By SAM SACKS

IN 1866 A MAN appeared in England claiming to be Roger Tichborne, the heir to a wealthy aristocratic family who had been presumed dead following a shipwreck a dozen years earlier. Tichborne’s grief-stricken mother immediately embraced this man as her son, despite major inconsistencies in his story. Tichborne had spoken fluent French; this man, whom investigators hired by others in the Tichborne family discovered to be an Australian butcher named Arthur Orton, didn’t know a word. Tichborne had been of average size; this man was enormously overweight. Even so, as the dispute was sensationalized by the press, public opinion became hotly divided along class lines, with many of London’s poor taking up Orton’s cause. The passionately debated trials that followed—first in civil court and then in criminal court, where Orton, by now a celebrity, was sentenced to prison for perjury—were among the lengthiest in the history of English law.

Much like the Victorian authors who found material for their books in juicy news items, Zadie Smith has made the Tichborne Case the basis of her delving historical novel “The Fraud.” In an ingenious stroke, Ms. Smith connects the ludicrous figure of Arthur Orton to another name that was once famous and has since fallen into somewhat risible obscurity: William Harrison Ainsworth, a popular and prolific writer of Gothic romances who, in his heyday, outsold Charles Dickens.

Ms. Smith approaches, and ultimately looks beyond, both men, by focusing on their employees. We view Ainsworth through the eyes of his cousin by marriage, Mrs. Eliza Touchet, a widow who joins the household to help Ainsworth’s first wife and soon becomes a mainstay—housekeeper, accountant, editor, occasional lover (to both Ainsworth and his wife) and all-around companion. Mrs. Touchet is a constant presence when Ainsworth’s star is brightest, and he regularly hosts luncheons for Dickens, Thackeray, the cartoonist George Cruikshank and other self-important luminaries of the literary scene. She is still there decades later when his increasingly outlandish books have made him a laughingstock, publicly belittled by those same former guests. Though she is devoted to Ainsworth—he comes across as benign and childlike, a jovial hack—Mrs. Touchet secretly agrees with the dismissals of his work, and Ms. Smith only needs to cite a few excerpts from it (“‘Zounds!’ he mentally ejaculated. ‘I suspect the little hussy means to refuse him.’”) to bring us to the same opinion.

It is in these diminished circumstances—aging, bored with managing Ainsworth’s decline—that Mrs. Touchet attends the Tichborne trials, where she is magnetized not by Orton but his manservant Andrew Bogle. Bogle, who had been born into slavery on the



1874 A paperboy with a placard announcing the end of the case against the Tichborne claimant.

Tichborne sugar plantation in the colony of Jamaica, came to England as the page of Roger Tichborne’s uncle. Now, long after his employer’s death, Bogle has chosen to vouch for Orton’s identity, even though he forfeits an annuity from the Tichborne estate by doing so. His muted, steady demeanor amid the trial’s sideshow spectacle makes him the most persuasive of Orton’s witnesses and, to Mrs. Touchet, “a confoundment, like honesty itself.” Who is he? What is his story? Why has he jeopardized all for the sake of an obvious impostor? It is here, spurred by Mrs. Touchet’s

importunate curiosity, that “The Fraud” takes a protracted detour to retell Bogle’s family saga, beginning with his father’s capture in Africa and enslavement in Jamaica.

The departure changes not only the novel’s setting and characters but its tenor, from tragicomic to murderously serious. The discomfort is intentional. Ms. Smith is an ardent believer in fiction that displays breadth, diversity and contradiction; that makes what she has called an “empathic imaginative leap” into otherness; and that attempts to forge connections across the most daunting differ-

ences. It is a temperament informed by talent, because Ms. Smith is what the Victorians would have called a woman of parts: a novelist who is also gifted as a playwright, essayist, literary critic and public intellectual. “The world is so much, and so various, all the time—how can it be contained?” thinks Mrs. Touchet as she ponders Bogle’s remarkable life, which she finds both incomprehensible and somehow familiar. The same question seems to drive Ms. Smith to harness the conflicting aspects of herself in every novel she writes.

Like Dickens, Zadie Smith has always been gifted at conjuring voices, and here she captures the variety and diversity of lives in 19th-century London.

In practice, however, this tendency has made for works that do not really cohere. In her previous novel, “Swing Time,” a book about music and dance that bogged down in the politics of cultural appropriation, her presentation of ambivalence—the cherished capacity to view things from different angles—comes to look more like paralysis. The habit of overthinking affects “The Fraud” as well, as it turns out that Mrs. Touchet’s fascination with Bogle has a purpose: She wants to write a novel about him. Hers will not be escapist like Ainsworth’s or melodramatic like Dickens’s (whose interest in people she considers opportunistic and insincere); her lodestar is George Eliot’s masterpiece of psychological realism, “Middlemarch,” whose first two volumes have been published at the start of the trials. Thus Mrs. Touchet wrestles with the same worries that Ms. Smith does—what makes a story true or fraudulent? is it even possible to understand another person?—and “The Fraud” threatens to stall out in metafictional wheel-spinning.

And yet—I say this with just a touch of Smith-ian ambivalence—I think that finally the book is a great success. Certainly it’s my favorite of this writer’s novels. Ms. Smith has always been superb at conjuring voices (in this she is more like Dickens than she might prefer), and the scenes come to life in whirlwinds of dialogue that hurl together working-class cant, Caribbean patois and Queen’s English. Though “The Fraud” is capacious, its chapters are short, vivid and contained, presented almost like the series of stereoscope slides that entertain Ainsworth’s party guests. Doubt about the ultimate truth of the depictions only rarely dampens their vitality, whether they concern the absurdity of the Tichborne case or the savagery of slavery. For perhaps the first time since her 2000 debut, “White Teeth,” Ms. Smith has allowed herself the freedom to be brilliant, without giving equal time to the dutiful rebuttals of guilt and misgiving.

Mr. Sacks reviews fiction for the Journal.

Sailing Through a Life’s Pages

Dayswork
By Chris Bachelder and Jennifer Habel
Norton, 240 pages, \$26.95

By HELLER McALPIN

CHRIS BACHELDER and Jennifer Habel’s collaborative novel, “Dayswork,” is as charming as it is unusual. A Covid-pandemic project by a husband-and-wife team, a novelist and a poet respectively, the book explores questions about literary and marital devotion and what it means to say that a life “works”—or doesn’t. They come at this through a surprisingly delightful reconsideration of the not-altogether successful life of Herman Melville.

Part of the appeal of “Dayswork” lies in its unclassifiability. To call it a novel is somewhat misleading. Yes, it has an unnamed narrator—the wife—whom we presume to be based on Ms. Habel. But it reads as a clever mash-up of a fictionalized memoir, a meditation on a literary forebear and a portrait of a marriage emerging from what the wife alludes to as the Bad Time.

While the husband is busy teaching and the couple’s two teenage daughters are learning remotely during the early months of lockdown, the wife doggedly tries to sort fact from fiction in Melville’s life. This project leads her into an obsession rivaling Ahab’s. (During one sleepless night, she tries to calculate the number of times Melville’s heart beat during his lifetime.) She shares these often quirky discover-

ies with her husband in their bed at night, or by cellphone when he goes into quarantine following exposure to the virus. She writes: “My husband says that I seem to have contracted Melville, and it’s true that some mornings we find one of my crumpled sticky notes in the sheets like a used tissue.”

The husband, just a passenger on her journey, signs off nightly with “bon voyage,” which triggers this typical bit of wordplay: “It’s something he says to me, an edict inside a valediction.” Later, she adds, “By which he meant, Good luck. / And, I’m sorry. / And, I love you. / And, Leave me the f— alone.”

“Dayswork” takes its title from Melville’s long days holed up in his study writing feverishly without food or drink, to the consternation of his stalwart wife, Elizabeth Shaw. This paean to the satisfactions of putting in a productive day’s labor brings to mind Donald Hall’s inspirational memoir “Life Work.” But the tone of Mr. Bachelder and Ms. Habel’s clever collaboration is more witty than instructive.

A pair of married writers use the pandemic’s enforced isolation to voyage into Herman Melville’s life and work.

Melville, with his “lifelong smoldering restlessness,” comes alive in these pages of wry, epigrammatic observations. There are fascinating details about the writer’s intense admiration for his onetime Berkshires neighbor, Nathaniel Hawthorne. And we get a picture of Melville’s dark moods and money woes, his probably abusive relationship with his wife, and the vicissitudes of his literary reputation.

Not surprisingly, a central focus is Melville’s magnum opus, “Moby-Dick,”

completed in 1851 under what his wife called “unfavorable circumstances.” The Melvilles were living at Arrowhead, the Pittsfield, Mass., farmhouse they bought in 1850, soon after the 31-year-old author met and became infatuated with Hawthorne. The impulsive purchase, for which Melville went into debt, was 6 miles from Hawthorne’s Lenox home.

But Hawthorne decamped to West Newton by the end of 1851. And Melville, who had turned from prose to even less lucrative poetry after the disastrous publication of “Pierre,” the novel that followed “Moby-Dick,” moved his “harsh impoverished household” back to New York City for good by the mid-1860s. His work there as a customs inspector paid less than a jailkeeper’s wage. Melville did this for 19 years without promotion, until his retirement in 1885, at age 66. It was, the narrator tells us, longer than his prose career, his friendship with Hawthorne, his residence at Arrowhead and the life of his son Malcolm, who was only 18 when he died by suicide in 1867. Melville’s second son, Stanwix, a drifter whose life also “did not work,” died at age 34.

“Dayswork” is a supremely literate achievement that wears its erudition lightly. Popping up like whale sightings are some of the wildly differing responses “Moby-Dick” has evoked in readers, from students who have ranked it one of the 10 “biggest snoozers” of all time, to Nathaniel Philbrick, the author of “Why Read ‘Moby-Dick?’” who said it “deserves to be called our American bible.”

E.L. Doctorow read half of it at age 10 and said it was “fair sailing until the cetology stove me in.” Maurice Sendak named his German shepherd Herman after the writer he considered a god, while the prolific John Updike offered a left-handed tribute in “Bech is Back,” which features a Melville Medal, awarded every five years to the Ameri-

after he began his project and more than a decade after his own death. Parker, archly referred to in “Dayswork” as “the Biographer,” comes under frequent ribbing for his exhaustive, overly flattering two-volume life of Melville, published in the late 1990s.

Elizabeth Hardwick’s short biography of Melville—which “the Biographer” disparaged as a “booklet”—also catches the authors’ interest. Not unreasonably, they view it as a window into Hardwick’s 23-year marriage to the poet Robert Lowell, another troubled genius. Mr. Bachelder and Ms. Habel draw intriguing parallels between Melville’s relationship to his “dearest Lizzie” and Lowell’s to his. They note that despite a lifetime of humiliations, both Lizzies remained loyal to their difficult husbands, continuing to champion their literary reputations posthumously.

What makes “Dayswork” so compelling are the portraits of marriage, including that of the narrator and her husband. Late one night, the husband cajoles his wife to read him Melville’s “extraordinarily intimate” letter to Hawthorne about “Moby-

Dick.” The narrator hesitates and then explains her capitulation: “It felt too late for Melville’s precipice, but my husband doesn’t ask for much. . . . He requires a lot, but he doesn’t ask for much.” What ensues is one of those lovely, unexpected moments of connection that sometimes grace marriage—and grace this beguiling book.

Ms. McAlpin reviews books regularly for the Journal, the Christian Science Monitor and NPR.



ROGER VIOLET COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

BOOKS

‘I was never revolutionary. The only revolutionary in our time was Strauss!’ –ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

Echoing Down the Decades



LAMENT Mauthausen concentration camp, Austria, ca. 1943.

Time’s Echo
By Jeremy Eichler
Knopf, 400 pages, \$30

By STUART ISACOFF

THE HOLOCAUST was a bottomless well of anguish. With millions of lost lives and countless shattered dreams in its wake, its unspeakable brutality portended for many the end of civilization. It left a searing question: How could a culture that had reached great heights of artistic achievement through towering figures like Bach, Beethoven and Goethe sink to such depths?

In “Time’s Echo: The Second World War, the Holocaust, and the Music of Remembrance,” Jeremy Eichler suggests some answers. As he makes clear, Germany’s vaunted artistic tradition was viewed differently by the disparate groups within its profoundly stratified society.

In a typically evocative example, the author tells us of a tree from the forests of Ettersberg—an old oak said to have been immortalized by Goethe—that was spared from clearing during the construction of the Buchenwald death camp. To the Nazis, the solitary oak represented the glories of the past and an affirmation of their national destiny, and so they ordered Buchenwald to be built around it. To the inmates who would be interned there, however, the oak came to symbolize the failure of the humanist society to which they had contributed. When the tree died after an Allied bombing attack, one prisoner carved a death mask from the wood, calling the result “The Last Face.”

This haunting image serves as an analogy for the music created during that period. At the heart of the book is the assertion by Mr. Eichler, the Boston Globe’s chief classical-music critic, that works by four major composers—Benjamin Britten, Arnold Schoenberg, Dmitri Shostakovich and Richard Strauss—stand as chronicles of the era. “Memory,” Mr. Eichler writes, “resonates with the cadences, the revelations, the opacities, and the poignancies of music.”

Over the centuries, great thinkers, from the composer Felix Mendelssohn to the philosopher Susanne Langer, have debated music’s ability to convey specific experiences. Yet a composition like Schoenberg’s “A Survivor From Warsaw” can certainly speak volumes to the historian. Here, the musical tones are married to a dramatic narrative and edgy expressive devices, like Schoenberg’s trademark half-spoken, half-sung technique of sprechstimme. This work, for men’s chorus and orchestra, depicts a brutal scene in a concentration camp, beginning with Nazi guards demanding that Jewish prisoners count off in anticipation of their own demise, and ending with the prisoners’ spontaneous outbreak of the central Jewish prayer, “Hear, O Israel.” “Survivor” premiered in 1948, performed by the Albuquerque Civic Symphony Orchestra with, we are told, “a participating chorus of cowboys.” The novelist Milan Kundera has called it “the greatest memorial ever dedicated to the Holocaust”; Mr. Eichler describes it as “one of the strangest premieres in all of music history.”

“Time’s Echo” is filled with many such striking accounts, bolstering the author’s contention that “the art of

music possesses a unique and often underappreciated power to burn through history’s cold storage.” Mr. Eichler is an eloquent writer with a poetic bent; his text is lyrical and well-researched.

And geographically wide-ranging. In England, Britten’s “War Requiem” (1962) was a pacifist response to wars in general. Shostakovich’s “Babi Yar” symphony (1962), based on a poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, was an intentional rebuff to the Soviets who tried to suppress the memory of mass killings of Jews on the outskirts of Kyiv. “First the Nazis had destroyed the evidence,” the author recounts. “Then the Soviets had destroyed the memory.”

Shostakovich had often been at odds with Soviet leaders. Yet, as Mr. Eichler also reports, he had an impactful presence; during the siege of Leningrad in 1942, a performance of Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony was amplified through loudspeakers as a show of defiance and resistance to the Germans. The invading soldiers who heard the music reportedly realized “this was a war they could not win.”

Occasionally, the author notes that the facts about a piece are obscure, as in the case of Richard Strauss’s “Metamorphosen” (1945). The composer’s emotionally rich work for 23 solo strings—its dark, visceral quality enhanced by stark, contrapuntal textures—holds many mysteries. He quotes a theme from the funeral march of Beethoven’s “Eroica” symphony. On the score, he wrote, “IN MEMORIAM!”

“In memoriam to whom? To what?” asks Mr. Eichler. “Strauss never said, and like the music of ‘Metamorphosen’ the phrase expresses so much while revealing so little.” Nevertheless, at one point the author succumbs to

temptation and refers to this music as an “elegy to German culture, a death mask in sound.” But was that really the composer’s intent?

According to Strauss’s first biographer, the composer was initially unaware of the thematic similarities between his music and Beethoven’s; when he discovered the connection, the funeral march “escaped” from his pen, said Strauss. (Analogies between Beethoven’s disappointment in the tyrannical leadership of Napoleon, to whom he

Milan Kundera said Schoenberg’s ‘A Survivor From Warsaw’ was ‘the greatest memorial’ to the Holocaust.

first dedicated his “Heroic” symphony before withdrawing the honor, and Strauss’s discontent with Hitler are easy to make but unprovable.)

Perhaps a clearer example of Strauss’s state of mind (and a more touching musical achievement) can be found in his “Four Last Songs,” where he quotes his own theme from an earlier work, “Death and Transfiguration,” suggesting that he was focused on his own passing. Yet the mystery of “Metamorphosen” becomes, in the telling, an evocative contribution to an understanding of the tumultuous period. “The music’s own profound sense of knowing stands in perfect equipoise with its profound unknowability,” writes Mr. Eichler.

In his pursuit of poignancy, the author at times offers some question-

able assertions, concluding his narratives with a subjective or sentimental stroke. Regarding Schoenberg’s musical language, for example, Mr. Eichler apparently agrees with the philosopher Theodor Adorno that, with the Holocaust, “Schoenberg’s music had finally met the world it had always prophesied.” Adorno believed that true art discomfited its audience, and that Schoenberg’s achievement during the prewar years had been to make his listeners aware of their fundamental alienation in the world. The composer himself had a quite different point of view; he believed that he was continuing the tradition of the great composers, especially in their quest for variation, and that he had actually guaranteed the historical ascendance of German music.

He was bound to be disappointed. “I have at last learned the lesson that . . . I am not a German, not a European, indeed perhaps scarcely a human being (at least the Europeans prefer the worst of their race to me), but I am a Jew,” he concluded. Perhaps subconsciously, Schoenberg had clung to certain fundamental aspects of Jewish thought, despite a troubled relationship with the religion. In the invention of the “tone row,” for example—the set arrangement of all 12 tones on which his revolutionary method was based—one can sense the spiritual longing for a singular principle at the root of everything, akin to Karl Marx’s quest for the historical imperative and Albert Einstein’s pursuit of a unified field theory. As the Holocaust revealed, in the end, we simply are who we are.

Mr. Isacoff’s latest book is “*Musical Revolutions*.”

Memories Can’t Wait



SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
LIZ BRASWELL

How would you like it if the moment in your past that you cherish most came back to life?

THE LATE-SUMMER INSECTS are calling and there is a definite chill between the warm breezes. To see you through the last delicious weeks of the season, here are three very different but equally compelling books sure to engage you until it’s time for sweaters and hot drinks. Helen Macdonald, the author of the bird-themed memoir “H Is For Hawk,” has teamed up with Sin Blaché for “Prophet” (Grove, 480 pages, \$29), a novel about truth, the dangers of unchecked nostalgia and the shady world of unconventional-weapons development. Sunil Rao has a unique talent: the ability to tell when a statement is false. Not only when a person is lying; he can also detect if a hypothesis or potentially objective fact is true—a talent that makes him an incredible asset to the intelligence community. After an attempted suicide (triggered by trauma from his intelligence work in Afghanistan for MI6), Rao is brought back into the field with his old American partner, Adam Rubenstein, to investigate some very strange goings-on that include a midcentury American diner suddenly dropped into the middle of an English airfield. The two soon discover that it’s the result of Prophet, a silvery substance of unknown origin that somehow allows

people to summon—out of thin air—the most beloved object from their past. Sadly, most people wind up dead after their experiences with the stuff. Rao and Rubenstein follow the trail of strange activity from England to America, forming alliances with questionable researchers and fighting their way through abandoned facilities filled with half-living Muppets and even an undead Mister Rogers to get to the bottom of it all. (“H Is For Hawk” fans will also find some birds of prey making an appearance.) Much of the book is really about the chemistry between the main characters, making it a 480-page will-they-or-won’t-they. Rao is an addict on every level, Rubenstein is as all-American-Boy-Scout as they come. If you enjoy relationship drama, this is definitely the book for you. I could have used a little less adorable dialogue and more undead Mister Rogers, but, overall, “Prophet” is an ambitious first novel from this duo—I can’t wait to see what they come up with next. For Keith Rosson’s “Fever House” (Random House, 448 pages, \$28), the McGuffin is not a mysterious elixir but a Hand of Glory, an object familiar to readers of horror: the preserved hand of someone hanged for evil deeds, usually murder. The powers granted to

the possessor of such a gruesome artifact vary in stories; usually it’s protection from harm or a way to subdue enemies. In Mrs. Rosson’s pitch-black narrative, the legend is turned on end: This hand causes people around it to imagine—and often commit—unspeakable acts of brutality. In an even more clever turn, “Fever House” isn’t some gothic grave-robbing horror; it’s a modern thriller.

THIS WEEK

Prophet
By Sin Blaché and Helen Macdonald

Fever House
By Keith Rosson

Wild Spaces
By S.L. Coney

The story starts in Portland, Ore., where heavies Hutch and Tim going to deliver a painful warning to a meth head about his debt to a gangster called Peach. What should be a routine job seems a little off—even more so after the two enforcers find a severed hand in a bread bag. From there things start spiraling into unexpected violence, at a level extreme even for this slice of the underworld: Otherwise practical bad guys find

themselves ready to commit egregious acts of brutality for the pure joy of it. Soon everyone is after the hand. We meet Bonner, a federal agent with a scandalous past to live down; Weils, a psychopath who works for a black ops team; and the creepy Saint Michael, who possesses both clairvoyance and wings. Somehow it all connects back to a character named Nick Coffin, whose parents were part of the indie-rock band Blank Letters—a turn that allows the author to dive into the realm of boy music nerd-dom (though there is a mention of Siouxsie Sioux, so perhaps that can be forgiven). The plotting is precise and the tension is wire-tight—I couldn’t put the book down. This has been announced as the first in a series, so here’s hoping the author will take his inventive horror to even more interesting places. S.L. Coney’s “Wild Spaces” (Tordotcom, 128 Pages, \$16.99) is, without question, one of the most beautifully written books I’ve read this year. This brief novel quietly lets the reader into a subtle but profound world of South Carolina coastal nature and the equally complicated thoughts of a young boy coming of age. This boy, nameless for the entire book, lives with his parents in a house on the sea.

His childhood is quietly idyllic, marked by trips to the swamps to find rare bivalves and the constant companionship of his dog, Teach. Then one day his grandfather shows up and moves in. The old man creepily enjoys watching as the boy and his dog “chase lightning bugs in the fading light . . . as his father shows him roly-polies—*Armadillidium vulgare*, his father says—watching as he captures large, fuzzy moths so he can set them free and make wishes for tomorrow.” Family secrets soon bubble to the surface and the family peace is over. The old man proves to be a bully and a narcissist, a cross between Big Daddy from “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” and something much darker. Eventually someone is eaten, there are tentacles, and the still-nameless boy comes into his own. While the ending is a bit abrupt, it remains overall a satisfying end to a story less horrific than sad. The only real flaw is the helplessness of the parents who do surprisingly little to protect their child. Still, it’s a beautiful read for a beach holiday, even in September; think Delia Owens’s “Where the Crawdads Sing” meets H.P. Lovecraft’s “The Dunwich Horror,” with a very healthy dose of Kit Reed’s “Ballad of T. Rantula” thrown in.

BOOKS

‘She carried her pocket Shakespeare with her, and met life fortified by the words of the poets.’ —VIRGINIA WOOLF

Carrying Capacity

Pockets
By Hannah Carlson
Algonquin, 310 pages, \$35

By JANE KAMENSKY

‘WORLD’S USE of Pockets: Men’s Clothes Full of Them, While Women Have but Few . . . Civilization Demands Them’ blared an 1899 New York Times headline. The reporter traced a startling divergence: “Man’s pockets have developed, improved, and increased with the advances of civilization. Woman is actually retrograding—losing ground and pockets.” The article joined a flurry of press coverage in the late 19th century, as women demanded “equality in pockets,” as an editorial in the Baltimore Sun put it, along with—gasp—the vote.

Sweeping gracefully over half a millennium of Western culture, Hannah Carlson’s “Pockets: An Intimate History of How We Keep Things Close” tells a surprisingly consequential story of the ways human needs have shaped dress and dress has shaped human capacity in turn. A study of “the ways we become entangled with things we have come to take for granted,” as Ms. Carlson writes, “Pockets” joins a shelf full of object-centered histories: think Henry Petroski’s “The Pencil” (1990), or Mark Kurlansky’s “Cod” (1997), “Paper” (2016) and “Milk!” (2018). Less ponderous and more playful than most examples of the genre, Ms. Carlson’s study showcases the best features of cultural history: a lively combination of visual, literary and documentary evidence. A keen eye for the overlooked detail that matters. A knack for producing the head-tilt: that moment when a reader reaches into her own closet and realizes that things at once ubiquitous and unnoticed have shaped whole ways of being in the world. As sumptuously illustrated as it is learned, “Pockets” is nearly compact enough to be the first pocket-size coffee table book.

In the beginning, all the world had purses. The word “pocket” stems from the French poche, or bag. When cloth was as dear as gold, the potential for a garment’s reuse governed fashion. Togas had no pockets and bottomless potential for reworking. Clothiers in medieval Europe favored seam slits that allowed wearers to access a purse belted below. “For centuries, how you wore your purse distinguished masculine from feminine dress, but the purse itself did not belong to a single gender,” Ms. Carlson writes.

By the 15th century, the shape of armor had changed, and the contours of civilian men’s clothing changed with it. Breeches emerged from the formless void, and men began to walk on two well-turned legs, with pockets to carry their essentials. Tracking the pocket’s real-world appearance through sources as diverse as tailors’ inventories and royal household accounts, Ms. Carlson reveals the emergence of a new feature of male dress and with it, a new “seat of patriarchal power.” (Early modern writers made high comedy of “the fight for the breeches.”) Function followed form. Pockets changed larceny, as pickpockets edged out cutpurses. They changed reading and writing: Pens, almanacs, watches, compasses, even abridged books all shrank to fit the pockets of the man



THE LEWIS WALPOLE LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY

ACT CASUAL An 1816 illustration of ‘A Fashionable Fop’ with hands tucked in his pockets.

on the move, a miniaturization trend Ms. Carlson calls “the science of the small.” They changed self-defense, too; pistols and pockets grew up together. “Tied up in any man’s look were ideas about honor and his capacity for violence,” Ms. Carlson writes.

Pockets—or the lack of them—also signaled the status of clothing and its wearers. Inventively reading the advertisements for fugitives from slavery in colonial and early national American newspapers Ms. Carlson discovers that the cheap clothing made in Northern factories for enslaved people in the Southern states rarely featured pockets.

But even more starkly, pockets mapped a growing gender divide. By the late 19th century, ready-made clothing proliferated: The design and placement of pockets became standardized, making them the near-universal as well as the exclusive property of men—a “pocket monopoly,” as one satirist joked. Girls and women were left behind, in the bag-and-belt medieval world. Their pockets were exogenous tie-ons, like the one Lucy Locket lost in Mother Goose’s nursery rhyme. Ms.

Carlson finds such purse-pockets in a servant girl’s diary; among the cast-off clothing a lady of the house bestowed on her staff; in dowries and posthumous inventories, where they were listed with underwear; and in lost-and-found ads, because women’s pockets often went missing, or worse.

The capacities and entitlements of dress in childhood would shape adulthood. Pockets gave boys a place to conceal their frogs and snails and other yucky treasures. “A boy’s pockets are his certificate of empire,” wrote one maternal correspondent in Harper’s Bazar in 1894, when America’s imperial designs were all the rage. “All through life he will carry the sceptre of dominion by right of his pockets, in which, whatever his degree, he will carry the sinews of war.”

But the male possession of pockets, which could put idle hands in contact with private parts, was also seen as a moral danger. In 18th-century English graphic satires like William Hogarth’s “Rake’s Progress” engravings, hands in pockets signaled lechery. Into the late 19th century, masters at British boarding schools and

“anxious mothers” alike sewed shut boys’ pockets, to save their lads from temptation. “Green’s Dictionary of Slang” (2010) traces the expression “pocket-pool” to the early 20th century.

In the United States, Ms. Carlson’s book makes clear, pockets also served as an emblem of national character. Despite or perhaps because of its whiff of illicit sex, the hands-in-pocket stance came to seem proudly and distinctively American: plain, unaffected, ready for purpose. Ms. Carlson brilliantly analyzes the famed engraving of Walt Whitman that served as the frontispiece for the first edition of “Leaves of Grass” (1855), in which the poet stands, hat on and head cocked, with one hand “lazily [in] his pocket.” Whitman adored the image, saying “it is natural, honest, easy: as spontaneous as you

In the medieval era, men and women both carried personal items in bags or purses. The arrival of clothing with pockets changed that—for men only.

are, as I am, this instant, as we talk together.” Such images made the dominion of the pocket as central to the iconography of the American man as Paul Revere’s teapot.

While the American Man proudly stuck his hands in his pockets, women, when they were lucky, held their pockets, and then purses, in their hands—which were then encumbered from action. Pockets nourished preparedness, a key word for Ms. Carlson, and for masculinity more broadly. “Be Prepared” was the Boy Scout Motto from the organization’s origin in Britain in 1907. “Men act and do,” as Ms. Carlson writes, so their readiness is all.

For what were women outfitted? Women reformers lamented their pocket paucity. “A bag is not a pocket,” wrote the woman’s rights activist, dress reformer and eugenicist Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1905. The “man’s pockets” facilitated “the easy carriage of small articles which adds so much to the preparedness of men as compared to women.” Alice Duer Miller made women’s missing pockets a metaphor for their lack of political rights in her 1915 book of suffrage verses, “Are Women People?” The answer of the day, she made clear, was a decisive no, and pockets neatly encapsulated the deficit. In the satirical “Why We Oppose Pockets for Women,” Miller offered eight spurious reasons. No.7: “Because men are men, and women are women. We must not fly in the face of nature.”

Notions of what makes men, men and women, women have changed enormously since Miller’s time, yet the quest for pocket parity persists. “Who would have thought that no-fault divorce would beat out dependable pockets for women?” Ms. Carlson asks. She doesn’t venture much of an answer; her account of the hundred-plus years since American women’s suffrage is long on fashion and short on explanation. For all it accomplishes, this highly inventive and original book demands a pocket sequel.

Ms. Kamensky is a professor of history at Harvard. Her book, “Candida Royalle and the Sexual Revolution” will be published in March 2024.

Bestselling Books | Week Ended August 26

With data from Circana BookScan

Hardcover Nonfiction

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Safe and Sound Mercury Stardust/DK	1	New	Taylor Swift Wendy Loggia/Golden Books	6	3
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	2	1	Baking Yesteryear B. Dylan Hollis/DK	7	4
Gambler Billy Walters/Avid	3	New	The Creative Act Rick Rubin/Penguin	8	6
Outlive Peter Attia & Bill Gifford/Harmony	4	2	Tasting History Max Miller/Simon Element	9	–
Yummy Toddler Food Amy Palanjan/Rodale	5	New	I'm Glad My Mom Died Jennette McCurdy/Simon & Schuster	10	7

Nonfiction EBooks

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
\$100M Leads Alex Hormozi/Alex Hormozi	1	7	Safe and Sound Mercury Stardust/DK	1	New
Going on Offense Behnam Tabrizi/Behnam Tabrizi	2	New	The Four Agreements Don Miguel Ruiz/Amber-Allen	2	3
Crank It! Dave Lamont/Dave Lamont	3	New	Gambler Billy Walters/Avid	3	New
Gambler Billy Walters/Simon & Schuster	4	New	Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	4	1
Necessary Trouble Drew Gilpin Faust/Macmillan	5	New	Killers of the Flower Moon David Grann/Doubleday	5	5
American Prometheus Kai Bird & Martin J. Sherwin/Vintage	6	3	Outlive Peter Attia & Bill Gifford/Harmony	6	4
Outlive Peter Attia & Bill Gifford/Harmony	7	10	The Body Keeps the Score Bessel Van Der Kolk/Penguin	7	8
The Wager David Grann/Doubleday	8	5	American Prometheus Kai Bird & Martin J. Sherwin/Vintage	8	2
To Hell and Back Charles Pellegrino/Rowman & Littlefield	9	–	The 48 Laws of Power Robert Greene/Penguin	9	6
Killers of the Flower Moon David Grann/Doubleday	10	9	Yummy Toddler Food Amy Palanjan/Rodale	10	New

Hardcover Fiction

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Fourth Wing Rebecca Yarros/Entangled: Red Tower	1	1	After That Night Karin Slaughter/William Morrow	6	New
Tom Lake Ann Patchett/Harper	2	2	Demon Copperhead Barbara Kingsolver/Harper	7	5
Dead Mountain Douglas Preston/Grand Central	3	New	Dog Man Dav Pilkey/Graphix	8	6
Foxglove Adalyn Grace/Little, Brown For Young Readers	4	New	Lion & Lamb James Patterson & D. Swierczynski/Little, Brown	9	3
Lessons in Chemistry Bonnie Garmus/Doubleday	5	4	The Covenant of Water Abraham Verghese/Grove	10	7

Fiction EBooks

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
After That Night Karin Slaughter/William Morrow	1	New	Fourth Wing Rebecca Yarros/Entangled: Red Tower	1	1
Dead Mountain Douglas Preston/Hachette	2	New	Dead Mountain Douglas Preston/Grand Central	2	New
Shadow Dance Christine Feehan/Penguin	3	New	Tom Lake Ann Patchett/Harper	3	2
The Silent Patient Alex Michaelides/Celadon	4	–	After That Night Karin Slaughter/William Morrow	4	New
State of Denial Marie Force/Marie Force	5	New	Shadow Dance Christine Feehan/Penguin	5	New
Deception Point Dan Brown/Pocket	6	–	The Silent Patient Alex Michaelides/Celadon	6	–
Fourth Wing Rebecca Yarros/Entangled: Red Tower	7	3	A Court of Thorns and Roses Sarah J. Maas/Bloomsbury	7	4
Tom Lake Ann Patchett/Harper	8	4	The Summer I Turned Pretty Jenny Han/Simon & Schuster for Young Readers	8	5
I Could Never Penelope Ward/Penelope Ward	9	New	Too Late Colleen Hoover/Grand Central	9	6
Knockout Sarah Maclean/Avon	10	New	We'll Always Have Summer Jenny Han/Simon & Schuster for Young Readers	10	10

Methodology

Circana BookScan gathers point-of-sale book data from more than 16,000 locations across the U.S., representing about 85% of the nation’s book sales. Print-book data providers include all major booksellers, web retailers and food stores. Ebook data providers include all major ebook retailers. Free ebooks and those selling for less than 99 cents are excluded. The fiction and nonfiction combined lists include aggregated sales for all book formats (except audio books, bundles, boxed sets and foreign language editions) and feature a combination of adult, young adult and juvenile titles. The hardcover fiction and nonfiction lists also encompass a mix of adult, young adult and juvenile titles while the business list features only adult hardcover titles. Refer questions to Teresa.Vozzo@wsj.com.

Hardcover Business

TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE AUTHOR / PUBLISHER	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK
Atomic Habits James Clear/Avery	1	1	The 32 Principles Rener Gracie/Benbella	2	New
The 32 Principles Rener Gracie/Benbella	2	New	Emotional Intelligence 2.0 Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves/TalentSmart	3	7
Emotional Intelligence 2.0 Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves/TalentSmart	3	7	Unreasonable Hospitality Will Guidara/Optimism	4	9
Unreasonable Hospitality Will Guidara/Optimism	4	9	Dare to Lead Brené Brown/Random House	5	5
Dare to Lead Brené Brown/Random House	5	5	Extreme Ownership Jocko Willink & Leif Babin/St. Martin’s	6	10
Extreme Ownership Jocko Willink & Leif Babin/St. Martin’s	6	10	The Energy Bus Jon Gordon/Wiley	7	3
The Energy Bus Jon Gordon/Wiley	7	3	Total Money Makeover Dave Ramsey/Thomas Nelson	8	12
Total Money Makeover Dave Ramsey/Thomas Nelson	8	12	Deeper Than Money Chloe Elise/TarcherPerigee	9	New
Deeper Than Money Chloe Elise/TarcherPerigee	9	New	The Daily Stoic Ryan Holiday & Stephen Hanselman/Portfolio	10	–
The Daily Stoic Ryan Holiday & Stephen Hanselman/Portfolio	10	–			

PLAY

NEWS QUIZ DANIEL AKST

1. Mark Thompson, formerly top dog at the New York Times and the BBC, landed a new job—running what?

- A. MSNBC
- B. CNN
- C. Bloomberg
- D. The Los Angeles Times

2. In the last five years, six former French colonies in Africa have experienced a coup d'état. Which one ousted its president this week?

- A. Gabon
- B. Mali
- C. Burkina Faso
- D. Senegal

3. Despite incentives, the lowest birthrate in the industrialized world just sunk lower—in which country?

- A. Japan
- B. Italy
- C. Israel
- D. South Korea



4. In an effort to tackle high costs, the federal government named the first 10 drugs to be subject to Medicare price negotiations. Which of these is not on the list?

- A. Xarelto
- B. Jardiance
- C. Imbruvica
- D. Dylar

5. Warming waters are prompting some Maine lobstermen to do what?

- A. Hire seafaring psychotherapists
- B. Move into kelp farming
- C. Cultivate lobsters in ponds
- D. Start growing coffee

6. Najla Elmangoush was suspended as foreign minister—of which country?—after meeting with her Israeli counterpart in Rome.

- A. Algeria
- B. Egypt
- C. Libya
- D. Morocco

7. In the wake of Covid lockdowns, German health officials are alarmed by an uptick in what risky behavior?

- A. Binge drinking
- B. Unprotected sex
- C. Smoking
- D. Bicycling without a helmet

8. College mascots are so popular they're being booked for weddings. Where's the Mascot Hall of Fame?

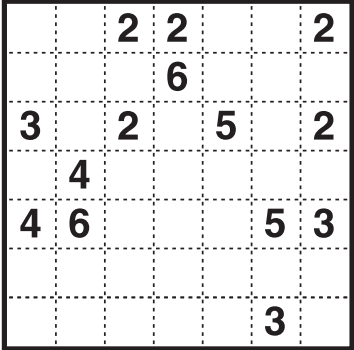
- A. Whiting, Ind.
- B. Greenville, S.C.
- C. Silver Spring, Md.
- D. Auburn, N.Y.

Answers are listed below the crossword solutions at right.

From this week's Wall Street Journal

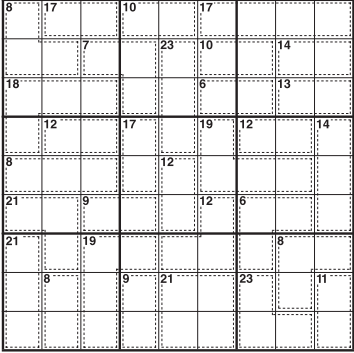
NUMBER PUZZLES

Cell Blocks



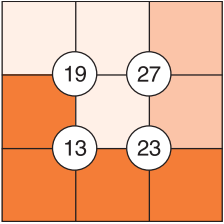
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Killer Sudoku Level 1



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Suko

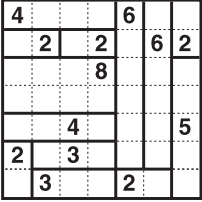


- 14
- 15
- 16

ALL PUZZLES © PUZZLER MEDIA LTD. - WWW.PUZZLER.COM

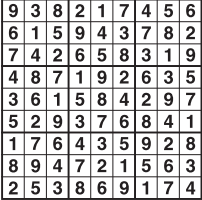
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

Cell Blocks

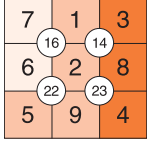


For previous weeks' puzzles, and to discuss strategies with other solvers, go to [WSJ.com/puzzles](https://www.wsj.com/puzzles).

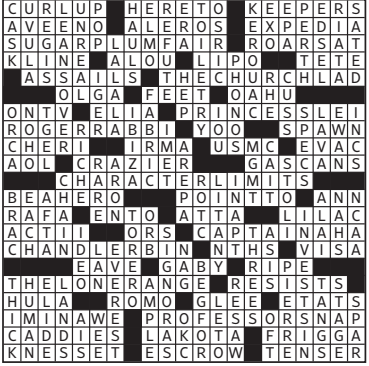
Killer Sudoku Level 4



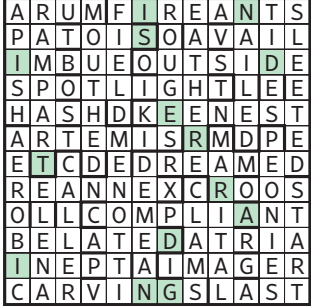
Suko



Cutting a Figure

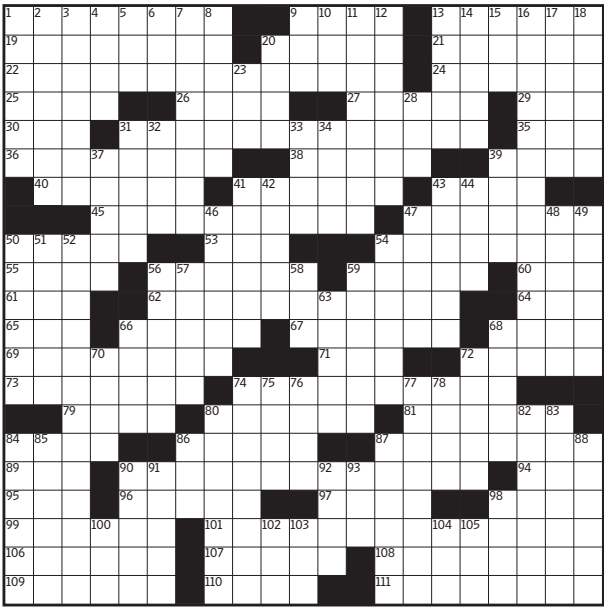


Shady Doings



The shaded squares spell INSIDER TRADING.

THE JOURNAL WEEKEND PUZZLES edited by MIKE SHENK



Just Sayin' | by Randolph Ross

- Across**

1 Restaurant slots

9 Match

13 "Atonement" author Ian

19 Not deserving of a medal

20 Road through Whitehorse

21 Hometown of Beto O'Rourke

22 Report from a hotel desk clerk?

24 Supermarket sections

25 Brunch cocktails

26 Overabundance

27 Snake substitute

29 Dennings of "Thor"

30 Drink suffix

31 Football team that ignores the alarm clock?

35 Pres. Herzog's nation

36 Group with class

38 Humana competitor

39 Singer from Gaoth Dobhair

40 Ont. city across the Niagara River from Buffalo

41 Make a point

43 Part of a bird's gullet
- 45 Female character from a prologue?

47 Perks from work

50 Repaired a pump

53 Never, in Nürnberg

54 Sculpture framework

55 Burnoose wearer

56 Make ragged

59 Coaching command

60 Writer Anais

61 Bearded beast

62 Info about a burglary?

64 Lawn coating

65 Routine bit

66 Change

67 Alphabet part

68 Horne of music

69 Wi-Fi alternative

71 "Cheap Thrills" singer

72 Chum

73 Olympic group

74 Wherewithal to join a poker tournament?

79 Arrests

80 Gallery rejects

81 Tony ____ (two-time John Travolta role)

84 Suit in mah-jongg
- 86 Encyclopedia Brown's real first name

87 Engraver's work

89 Article in la Repubblica

90 TV channel featuring underdudies?

94 Kung ____ chicken

95 P.D. rank

96 Particular place

97 ____ U (candy heart message)

98 Minute Maid Park player, to fans

99 Advil alternative

101 Cheers for a substitute?

106 Self-referential comeback

107 Like Bigfoot

108 "Spamalot" co-creator

109 3.26 light-years

110 Cuba, por ejemplo

111 Without a hint of leniency
- Down**

1 Have absolutely no talent for

2 Sharp, when broadcast

3 Contract adverb

4 Pulp fiction private eyes

5 Bug

6 "There's ____ in team"

7 Pepped (up)

8 Zodiac symbol

9 Benifer bride

10 Post-op spot in a hosp.

11 Holdups and the like

12 Competitor

13 Not accidental

14 Spot awards

15 TV series installments, informally

16 Some emergency room patients?

17 Like pie, so they say

18 Sicilian possessive

20 Broadway opening

23 Recipe unit

28 Cabrera of MSNBC

31 Scintilla

32 Luke's sister

33 Org. with missions

34 Turned right

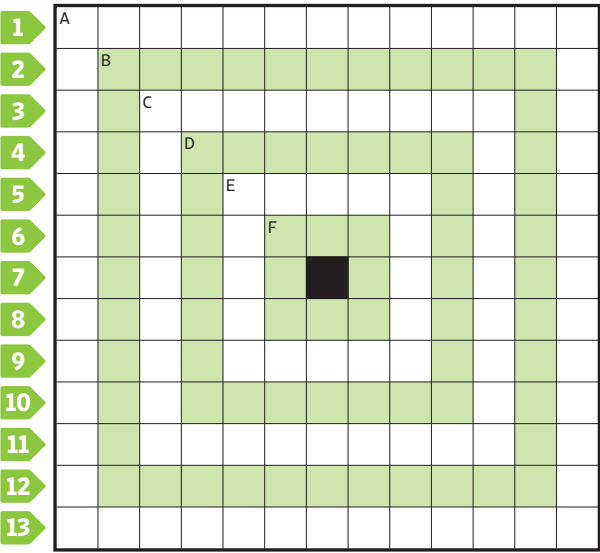
37 Red carpet strutter

39 Compass point

41 Singers Pointer and Baker

42 Aerodynamic

Answers to News Quiz: 1.B, 2.A, 3.D, 4.D, 5.B, 6.C, 7.C, 8.A



Marching Bands | by Mike Shenk

Answer words in this grid march both across ("Rows") and around ("Bands"). Each Row has two answer words to be entered across, from left to right. Their dividing point is for you to determine, except in row 7, where the words are separated by a black square. Each Band has answer words to be entered clockwise, in a continuous string around the shaded or unshaded band, starting at a lettered square (A–F) and ending in the space below that square. The dividing points in each Band's string of words are also for you to determine. All clues are in order. When you are done, each square will have been used twice, once in a Row word and once in a Band word.

Rows

- 1 ► Paper whose first issue bore the date "MARDI 19 DECEMBRE 1944" (2 wds.)
 - Leaders of the pack?
- 2 ► Patriot volume
 - Major who played a key role in establishing a united kingdom of Italy
- 3 ► Three-time film role for Anthony Hopkins
 - Spanish gentleman
- 4 ► "Animal House" director John
 - Oscar winner for "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"
- 5 ► Plummet, as prices (Hyph.)
 - Gets a break, perhaps

- 6 ► Who "told me not to come," in a Three Dog Night song
 - Tinker, notably
- 7 ► Add, as a previously deleted scene (2 wds.)
 - Moor, say
- 8 ► Advance
 - Product from a trusted, well-known company (2 wds.)
- 9 ► Practically (3 wds.)
 - Britain annexed it in 1886
- 10 ► Opening in a broadcast schedule
 - Goes overboard with the compliments (3 wds.)
- 11 ► Freedom from worries
 - Became unconscious (2 wds.)
- 12 ► Swimmer Janet with four Olympic gold medals
 - Checkers, in Cheshire
- 13 ► Adipocyte, less formally (2 wds.)
 - Salvador Dalí's pet Babou, for one

Bands

- A ► Wedge on a shore diner plate
 - Software tryouts (2 wds.)
 - Type given to hairsplitting
 - Took the wrong way?
 - Take payment for services, say (3 wds.)

- Stephen King's second novel, following "Carrie" (2 wds.)
- B ► Symbol for ohms
 - Bawdy talk
 - Painfully unable to decide
 - Protective items for football players and boxers
 - Like the Battle of Trafalgar
 - Bar mixer
 - Soft lump
- C ► Member of an Andean empire
 - Activity for a corps
 - Royal house of kings Charles I and Charles II
 - Port whose Catherine the Great statue was removed in 2022 in a de-Russification effort
 - Currency of Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay
 - "American Gods" author Neil
- D ► Pays out
 - Carnival ride?
 - Scottish tea seller Thomas
 - Goal of some beachgoers
- E ► Entertain
 - Lessens gradually
 - Beautiful youth killed by a boar
- F ► Any of four heralds of the Apocalypse

► Get the solutions to this week's Journal Weekend Puzzles in next Saturday's Wall Street Journal. Solve crosswords and acrostics online, get pointers on solving cryptic puzzles and discuss all of the puzzles online at [WSJ.com/Puzzles](https://www.wsj.com/puzzles).

REVIEW

Robotic pets make some people squeamish. Should man's best friend run on batteries? "We've had plenty of naysayers tell us this is a little weird," says Ted Fischer, co-founder and CEO of Ageless Innovation, a company that creates products for older adults, including animatronic dogs and cats. "But all you have to do is watch what happens when someone gets one," he insists. "When the cat rolls over for the first time, people just go crazy."

The lifelike companions, sold under the brand name Joy for All, cost under \$140. They respond to motion and touch: The cats vibrate when they purr, the dogs wag their tails and have a gentle heartbeat. A number of studies have found that such fuzzy, mess-free friends can reduce their owners' feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression. For elderly patients with dementia, spending 20 minutes with a robotic pet three times a week has been shown to improve their mood and curb the need for pain and behavioral medication.

Nearly 30 states, as well as many Medicare Advantage Organizations, Medicaid Health Plans and Veterans Affairs hospitals, now offer robotic pet therapy for isolated seniors, and over half a million of Ageless Innovation's cats and dogs are in circulation. "Dozens of people tell us the pet was so important to their older adult that they were buried with it," says Fischer, 58, over video from the company's offices in Pawtucket, R.I.

Growing up in Providence, R.I., in a close-knit Italian family, Fischer worked summers alongside his father at his grandfather's thriving textile company. He joined the family business full time in 1987 after graduating from Boston College, where he earned degrees in economics and philosophy and met his future wife, Lisa. When a private equity group came calling a decade later with an offer the family couldn't refuse, Fischer suddenly had to ask, "Now what?"

He saw potential in the IT firm that he had hired to manage the company's transition to new software, and joined it as a vice president in 1999. Later he spent several years as a partner at an investment bank in Providence, but came to feel that he was "not a transactional guy": "I like building relationships, not working with people for a few months until there's a wire transfer and it's over."

In 2014 Fischer heard from Brian Goldner, then the CEO of Pawtucket-

based Hasbro, whom he knew socially and professionally from his investment banking days. The game giant, maker of Monopoly, Play-Doh and Transformers action figures, wanted someone to lead a team to find new markets for existing toys and games. "Hasbro is fantastic at taking \$100 million brands and turning them into \$300 million brands, but not in taking the time to turn things that were organically invented internally into \$100 million brands," Fischer says. After years

leading startups and early-stage companies, often as his own boss, he admits he wasn't sure he wanted to join a public company, but the work seemed appealingly entrepreneurial.

His team saw potential in FurReal Friends, an animatronic toy Hasbro had released decades ago for young girls but which people were buying for aging parents. "That was the core insight we leaned into," Fischer says of the Joy for All brand, launched within Hasbro in 2015. As his division moved deeper into

health and wellness products, largely for older adults, he began to feel that Hasbro, with its expertise in children's toys and games, wasn't a good fit: "Hasbro is an expert at child safety but not HIPAA," Fischer notes. In 2018, he and his team left to found Ageless Innovations with help from private investors.

Fischer knows that toys and games for older adults can be hard for retailers to classify. "One of the challenges when we launched this brand was there wasn't really a

store aisle where we wanted to be," he says. "Walkers and bed pans are important, but where do you find products focused on the fun and joyful side of aging?" Yet the target market is large and growing. By 2040, over 80 million U.S. residents will be 65 and older, more than double the number in 2000, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to electronic pets, Ageless Innovation has partnered with Hasbro to make versions of its classic games that are more user-friendly for the retired set. "When you talk to older adults, the unequivocal thing they want more in their life is fun and joy and play," says Fischer. He recalls how his own grandmother, who suffered from dementia, would come alive when they played Jenga together, and "suddenly all was right in the world."

In August, the company released a version of Scrabble offering new play options, including one that involves spelling words on bingo-style cards; a Trivial Pursuit with larger cards and questions designed for different age groups; and a Game of Life that segments players by generation, with coupon cards for Boomers and side-hustle cards for Millennials. The company plans to release three to five of these reimaged games each year.

Fischer notes that Surgeon General Vivek Murthy recently declared loneliness a public health epidemic, warning that isolation can increase the risk of an early death by 60%—the equivalent of smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. This was the inspiration for Ageless Innovation's new Reach Out and Play initiative, in which scores of regional AARP offices are sponsoring game nights and events in retirement communities, day-care centers and other institutions through October.

The company now fields plenty of suggestions for what products should come next. Despite unexpected demand, Fischer says there are no plans to make a robot squirrel. "People also ask, 'Can you make a boyfriend robot?'" he says, but there are no plans for that either. The company is now working with Brown University on a National Science Foundation grant to add artificial intelligence to its pets, but Fischer isn't yet sure what this will look like. "Some people say our cat should give pill reminders, but I don't think so," he says. "If a cat is telling you to take a pill every six hours, it will be annoying, not a joy."

PHILIP KEITH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MASTERPIECE | THE GUR EMIR (TOMB OF THE KING), INITIATED IN 1403 BY TIMUR THE LAME

A Mausoleum's Enduring Majesty

By MELIK KAYLAN

HISTORY'S TOP TIER of implacable conquerors rarely, it seems, get buried in an identifiable resting place. Alexander, Attila, Genghis Khan—no one knows where their bones lie. The exception is Tamerlane, or Timur the Lame (1336-1405), whose beautifully conceived mausoleum sits in a quiet suburb of Samarkand, in Uzbekistan. Timur's Turco-Mongolian empire stretched from the borders of China to the Levant. Centuries after his death and half a world away, Western scribes continued to immortalize him, so renowned was his legend—Christopher Marlowe's play and Edgar Allan Poe's epic poem being two prominent works inspired by him. His direct descendants, the Moghuls, went on to invade India and give the world some of its most notable monuments, not least the Taj Mahal.

Timur chose Samarkand as the capital of his sprawling empire, a half-ruined trading hub he multiplied in size and reinstated as the center of the Silk Road. Down the centuries it was embellished with structures such as the world-famous Registan Square. In contrast, his mausoleum complex, the Gur Emir (Tomb of the King), seems at first glance more subtly conceived than grandiose, scarcely a shrine imposing enough in size and

scale to boast his titanic status, but giving the appearance of conforming to Islamic rules of modesty for gravesites. In fact, the Gur Emir's grandeur reveals itself stealthily according to your physical position and perspective, the whole more prodigious and majestic at a distance than close up—though from every angle, indoors and out, sumptuous blue-green colors intoxicate the eye.

Arriving at the front, you're confronted by the complex's monumental gateway graced by splendid aquamarine tiling and pseudo-stalactite muqarnas. Once through, you're looking at the main tomb's portal, in white, some 40 yards ahead, spreading out horizontally and inset with multiple mihrabs, or niches, almost eclipsing the structures behind it. On either side of it stand two reinstated versions of the original four minarets, wrapped by elegant calligraphic tiling. The complex's most dominant feature from far away, a soaring 40-foot ribbed azure dome luminescing in sunlight atop the main building, looks elegantly foreshortened. Between the two entrances a perfectly rectangular courtyard intervenes, flanked by semi-sunken mudbrick ruins of what were once a school and a guest-house. For the visitor inside the complex, a trompe l'oeil effect results, emphasizing precise geometry



while muting the dome's grandiloquence and the mausoleum's pretensions, disguising from immediate view the main tomb building's octahedral structure. Modesty, humility and beauty inform the senses.

The story goes that Timur initiated the mausoleum's construction in 1403 for a beloved grandson and heir apparent who died of war wounds. But then Timur died in 1405 while preparing, at age 69, for a full-scale invasion of China. Heavy snows meant he too had to be buried in his grandson's mausoleum. Another grandson continued the construction over the next 30 years as a resting place for the family's five topmost male leaders, along with a beloved teacher of Timur. Their six sarcophagi cluster together companionably,

with the patriarch's composed of a single spectacular block of jade.

What makes the tomb's interior peerless, though, is the sophisticated interpenetration of visual effects; the controlled suffusion of natural light; and the polygonal walls and dome, inset with mihrab-shaped windows suggesting cascading stalactite honeycombs. At ground level, cool turquoise-blue colors dominate, shading into cream and gold geometric traceries as the eye travels upward. Infinite starry geometries lace together to adumbrate an eternal rest both unfathomably abstract and deeply soothing. One is reminded that in Timur's time astronomy, mathematics and metaphysics were a unified science. Also that he relocated artisanal elites from conquered cities to

The subtly conceived tomb is located in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

implant a critical mass of culture in his global capital. Out of it flowed innovations in the arts and sciences, most notably in architecture and what became the celebrated genre of Moghul miniatures.

Arguably, after the era of Mongol destruction, Timur launched the Islamic version of the Renaissance. His reinstatement of the scholar-prince model fused the warrior arts with scholarship, culture and intellectual pursuits at a splendorous court.

But from the late 1600s onward, as the Silk Road rerouted away from Samarkand, the Gur Emir fell into neglect and ruin. It remained a site of quiet pilgrimage but saw no restoration until the '50s, when the Soviets began to monitor and recurate holy places in a folkloric light. But they never completed the task while deliberately playing down Timur's prominence lest "bourgeois nationalist" sentiments grow around his memory. His fame dwindled at home and abroad. After independence in 1991, the Uzbeks set about bringing the mausoleum complex back to life and reclaiming Timur's legacy. The result is a fitting shrine to a major figure of world history.

Mr. Kaylan writes about the arts for the Journal.

ALAMY

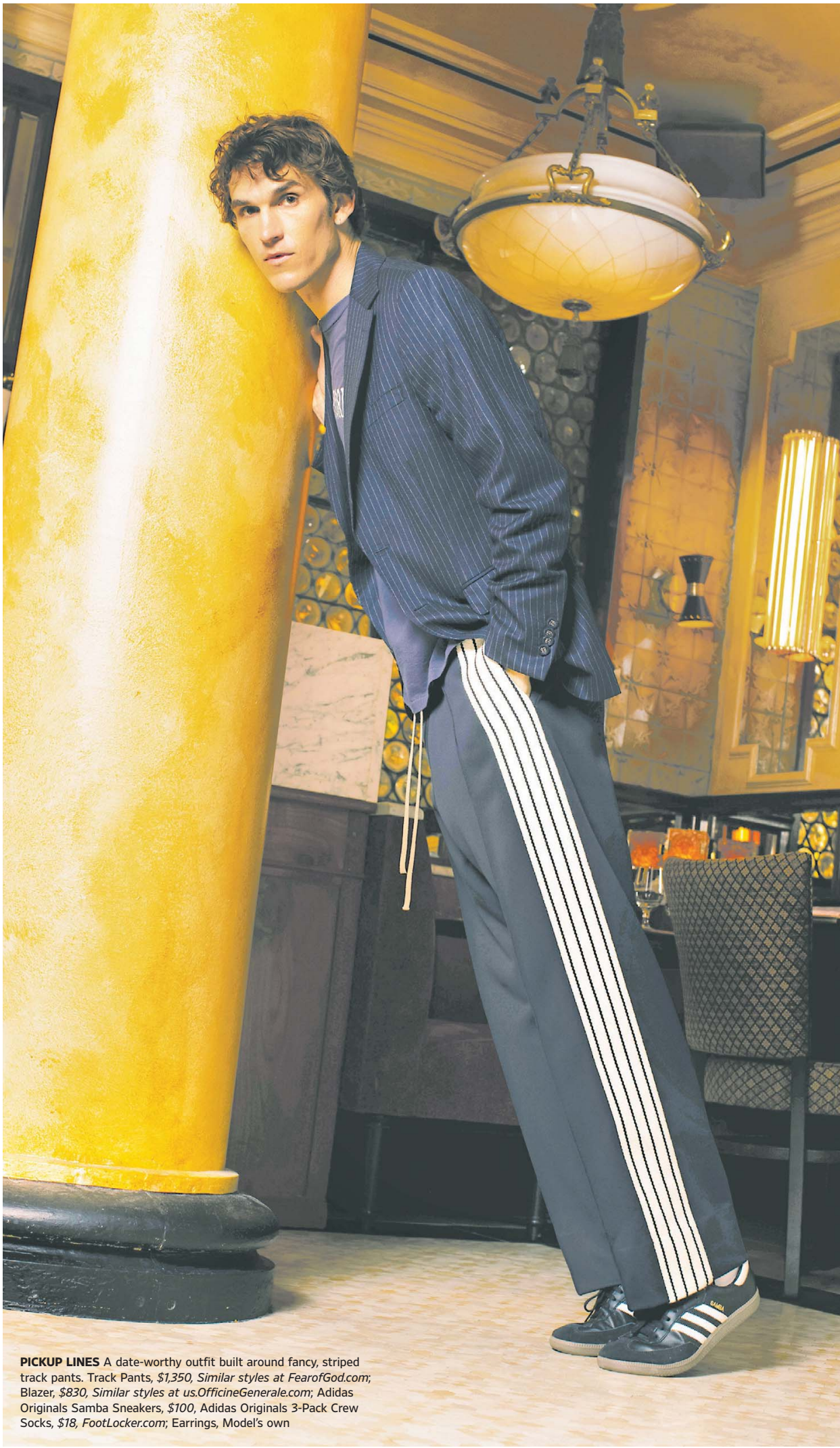


Skewers That Skew Delicious
Stick with grilled chicken and sweet peppers **D6**

Honda's CR-V Is Not Rare
An everyman SUV that's, unfortunately, everywhere **D9**



Track Stars



Track pants have entered their sophisticated, mature phase. Forget gym sessions, these styles are for dinners, dates, even weddings—if styled right.

BY ASHLEY OGAWA CLARKE

LAST FALL, Kevin Ibanez's work schedule suddenly freed him up to attend a friend's wedding at the last minute. One problem: The smartish affair seemed to call for a suit, and the San Diego nurse, 32, lacked one. "I figured I'd put together a dressed-up outfit with what I had in my closet," said Ibanez. He settled on a camp-collar shirt, chunky loafers and track pants. You read that last line correctly. Most track pants evoke lounging-on-sofa vibes at best and noxious sweat at worst, but Ibanez arrived at the nuptials the picture of suaveness. Subtle, dark-purple stripes flank his black track pants, made by Needles, a premium Japanese fashion brand. They puddle nicely over his shoes, and their high rise and subtle sheen recall dress-pants, says Ibanez. At the wedding, which turned out to be fairly relaxed, no one batted an eye, he added. His Needles pair exemplify the new elite track pants. French sports brand Le Coq Sportif popularized early versions of track pants in the 1930s, and for the past near-century, these bottoms skewed ultra-casual. But lately, designers have refreshed the look in ways that merge classic sporty comfort with rakish dressiness worthy of dinners and date nights. Emily Gordon-Smith, content director at trends

Designers have refreshed the look to mix comfort with rakish dressiness.

and insights company Stylus, considers these status trackies key to the "elevated sportswear" trend that emerged from a post-Covid desire to be comfy yet look sharp. Often cut from polyester, these designs distinguish themselves with drapery silhouettes and thoughtful details. Japan's Kapital serves its versions with fancy velvet trim, while London designer Grace Wales Bonner steepes hers in rich retro shades like mustard and burgundy. Nicholas Daley, another London talent, finishes his with chain-stitched embroidery on the back pockets and front pin-tucks (narrow pleats). "You're more likely to see [details like] that on formal trousers or chinos," he said. Instead of clinging to ankles like elasticized gym styles, these upgrades pool elegantly over sneakers or shiny loafers. They schmooze as naturally with dressy items as with sporty fare. Gordon-Smith is noticing younger guys combining them with blazers and button-ups. And Turner Allen, a New York personal stylist, tells his clients in their 30s to team them with jackets for dates. "Track pants don't have to be worn with Air Max Nikes," said Daley. Yet, when it comes to styling, if you misstep, you might resemble a confused soccer fan who has stumbled into a stuffy tailoring store. So follow our fail-safe outfit formulas.

► Turn to D3 for winning combos.

PICKUP LINES A date-worthy outfit built around fancy, striped track pants, \$1,350, *Similar styles at FearofGod.com*; Blazer, \$830, *Similar styles at us.OfficineGenerale.com*; Adidas Originals Samba Sneakers, \$100, *Adidas Originals 3-Pack Crew Socks, \$18, FootLocker.com*; Earrings, Model's own

Inside



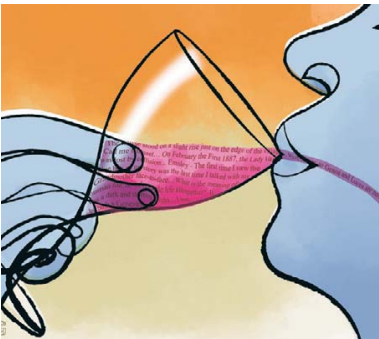
SHIFT INTO PARK
Three of Alaska's memorable national parks can be reached via road trip **D5**



LONDON'S SECRET GARDEN
Visit a low-profile, unexpectedly 'wild' plot in the midst of a highly civilized city **D7**




A BAN ON BLAND
How interior design rescued a new home from its all-too-neutral original state **D8**




THERE'S MANY A LITERARY QUIP
TWIXT CUP AND LIP
The rise of bookstore-wine-bar combos **D6**





Skillets for life. Savings for now.



Save 20% on all Hestan
skillets for a limited time.

hestanculinary.com

By Laura Nelson

WHEN she was 18 and cleaning out a recently deceased relative's home, Vanessa Barboni Hallik, now 42, was confronted with closets of old clothes. She gave most away, keeping only a gray suit, which she wore on her flight home. "I felt I stepped fully into womanhood," she said of the grown-up outfit. Barboni Hallik, who worked on Wall Street before founding Another Tomorrow, a New York brand specializing in women's tailoring, described the experience as "visceral."

Over the past two years, many women stepped just halfway into suiting, pairing oversize blazers with leggings or biker shorts. The choice effortlessly combined a bit of polish with WFH-era ease. Initially, this post-pandemic uniform conveyed insouciance, the flexibility to move nonchalantly from morning barre class to evening martinis. But now that we've mostly assimilated to life outside the living room, the look reads as tired and incomplete. And given the abundance of easy-to-wear suiting—with trousers that rival leggings for comfort—why forgo a full two-piece in favor of spandex?

For pre-fall, Proenza Schouler proposed a sumptuously slouchy suit in ecru. Alexander McQueen's fall collection featured razor-sharp tailoring, and both Chloé and Nili Lotan are selling single-breasted jackets with high-waist flare trousers. Still, few designers drove home the idea of everyday suiting quite like Stella McCartney. At her fall

STYLE & FASHION



Root for the Suit

Why women's top-to-toe tailoring beats blazers-and-leggings

2023 runway show, models strode through a sand-filled arena in plaid and monochrome pantsuits alongside galloping horses.

Women appear to be embracing the trend, minus the fine horses. At the Deck in London, a Savile Row tailor for bespoke women's suits, founder Daisy Knatchbull noted that annual business has more than doubled since the brand's 2019 debut. "Coming out of Covid, orders have boomed," she said, adding that repeat customers drive over 25% of orders.

Roopal Patel, the fashion director at Saks Fifth Avenue, credits the lingering buzz around "quiet luxury" with stoking the fervor for this wardrobe classic. "People want to look polished and put-together, and tailoring is the quickest way to exude effortless elegance," she said.

To master the look, follow Stephanie Goto's lead and relinquish preconceptions of suits as precious and inherently formal. The New York architect frequently navigates dusty construction sites in suits by Sacai or the Row. "It's just part of who I am," said Goto, who is in her 40s.

She recalls saving up her allowance to buy her first suit at age 11. Now, she wears one almost daily, typically opting to skip a button-down underneath in favor of a lightweight T-shirt, a camisole or nothing at all.

Goto generally sticks to navy and black suits, relying on playful sneakers to add a

The buzz around 'quiet luxury' is stoking demand.

peek of color. Los Angeles sportscaster and journalist Malika Andrews, 28, meanwhile, prefers head-to-toe hues. "I have a whole rainbow's worth of suits. I think it's a young take on a timeless classic," she said. Along with several styles by Another Tomorrow, suits by Argente, Indochino and Diane von Furstenberg fill Andrews's chromatic closet.

With sprawling color spectra and myriad silhouettes, finding a suit tailored to your tastes has rarely felt easier. To make your suiting look even more individual, consider adding a vest or, Goto's favorite move, opting for a sleeveless blazer. "It's modern, fun and versatile," she said. The summery look spares her from having to roll up her sleeves at construction sites—plus, it's definitely chicer than elastane leggings and a too-big jacket.

TWO-PIECE OFFERINGS / DRESS WITH MORE COMMITMENT IN THESE FULL SUITS



A CREAM COME TRUE
Slightly oversized in merino wool. Blazer, \$1,390, Pants, \$790, AnotherTomorrow.co



RELEASE THE HOUNDSTOOTH
A sculptural, autumnal wool option. Blazer, \$1,400, Pants, \$560, BlazeMilano.com



COLOR ME NAVY
Rendered in regal blue, this one's optimally roomy. Blazer, \$345, Pants, \$229, TheFrankieShop.com



MONTBLANC

INSPIRE WRITING
montblanc.com

STYLE & FASHION

Track Pants, Three Ways

► **THE GOAL?** The most formal outfit you can achieve with track pants. The strategy: Pair status trackies like these (right) with items that feel dressy but, crucially, not stuffy, said personal stylist Turner Allen. Avoid fussy shoulder-padded jackets, which undermine track pants' louche-ness. Instead, said Allen, slip an unstructured black blazer over a T-shirt, as shown. Though dark pants are the safest bet with tai-loring, daring sorts can play with

bright shades like this cardinal red. Just turn down the volume elsewhere. Opt for black or brown loafers or leather lace-ups—low-rise ones only, said Gali Navangi, 35, a dapper Parisian hat-maker and track-pants fan. Boots can mess with the ankle drape of the soft pants, he said. And you'll be wise to stick to rounder-toed footwear—it anchors the wide trousers. Pointy toes poking out the bottom of flowy trackies just looks odd, said Navangi.

Ritzzy red pants meet an unstructured jacket. Track Pants, \$1,100, Blazer, \$2,850, *Celine.com*; Long-Sleeve T-Shirt, \$48, *Everybody.World*; G.H Bass Loafers, \$175, *Nordstrom.com*; Ring, \$350, *AustinHeye.Jewelry*; Earrings, Model's own

New-Age Tracksuit



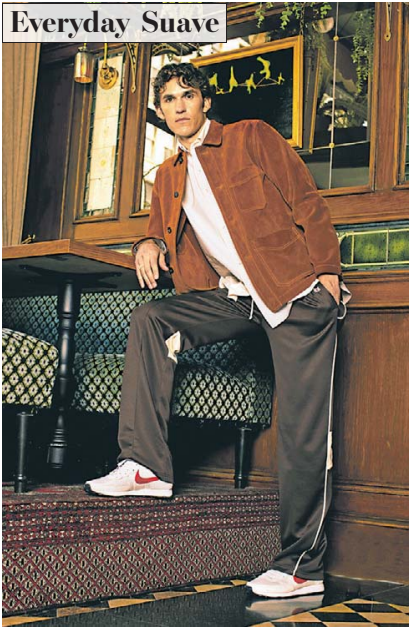
▲ **WANT TO LOOK** coolly thrown-together but also like you've made *some* effort? Consider this modern take on a tracksuit (above). Our inspira-tion comes from Navangi, who can often be spotted strolling around Paris's artsy 18th arrondisse-ment in voluminous, velour Adidas track pants. His styling trick: He'll pair the forest-green pants with a top in the same color family, say an olive green tweed jacket. These sort-of-similar shades create an outfit that's cohesive and polished but not matchy matchy—an effect that's known in French as *camaïeu*, he said. "It's not exactly the same color, so it feels organic," he said. To keep the vibe sporty yet sharp, try a preppy, chunky-collar rugby jersey on top. And temper the color-ful look with quiet shoes, said Thom Scherdel, menswear buying manager at London retailer Browns. He likes derbies or mules—or, for bolder souls, these Bode slippers. Socks optional.

A medley of green. Needles Track Pants, \$275, *Ssense.com*; Shirt, \$690, *ThomBrowne.com*; Shoes, \$690, *Bode.com*; Ring, \$350, *AustinHeye.Jewelry*; Earrings, Model's own

Black-Tie Trackies



Everyday Suave



◀ **YES, SNEAKERS** and trackies can make a sophisticated team. Key to nailing this smart-ish everyday look? Pants that pool hand-somely atop your laces (like those seen at left), said Kevin Ibanez, the San Diego nurse. Namely, long styles with wide, straight legs like these or ones with a slight flare at the ankle (like Ibanez's Needles pair). Dark hues ensure suaveness. "We often think of athletic wear as brightly colored, but with colors like black, you have far more styling options," said Allen. Chocolate brown, seen here, is an unexpected-but-still-versatile alternative to black. On top, you can't miss with a plain Ox-ford shirt, said Gavin Hui, a buyer at U.S. streetwear store Bodega. Allen likes to finish a track-pants look with a workwear jacket, which he considers an elevated hoodie. The jacket's pouches save you ruining your pants' silhouette by stuffing their pockets. Bonus: A chore coat with a matte fabric, such as the suede pictured, offsets the pants' glossiness.

Track pants' ideal companion? A chore jacket. Vales Bonner Track Pants, \$472, *MrPorter.com*; Jacket, \$1,990, Shirt, \$275, *us.Drakes.com*; Sneakers, \$105, *Nike.com*; Ring, \$350, *AustinHeye.Jewelry*; Earrings, Model's own



PRADA

PRADA.COM

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



CANNADAY CHAPMAN

TRAVELER’S TALE / TESSA HADLEY ON OVERCOMING HER OUTSIDER STATUS WHEN ABROAD



My Quest to ‘Belong’ In the Places I Visit

WHEN I WAS 18 I was sure that I would travel. So much of my imagination came from reading, and so many of the writers I loved best had been wanderers. I felt the power and the pull of all the places they wrote about: Sardinia and Mexico in D.H. Lawrence, the south of France in Katherine Mansfield, Paris and Venice in Henry James. So I found a job as a full-time

nanny in a 15th-century palazzo outside Florence, looking after a five-year-old, a two-year-old and a five-month-old baby. Immediately, I was besotted with almost everything about Italy: the language, the food, the life in the street, the ceremonious social ritual. The miracle of espresso (in 1970s England we were still drinking instant coffee). The lem-

ons on the trees. The hoopoes in the convent garden in the town of Fiesole. All these things moved me inexpressibly. And that’s not even including the art. I began to learn, in my time off, how to look at great paintings. You didn’t have to queue, in those days, to get into the Uffizi Gallery. But I was desperately miserable too. In part, it was because of my

new daily routine, looking after those babies, working hard as I’d never worked before and realizing I wasn’t very good at it. Mostly though, I was homesick, missing my own familiar world, uneasily transplanted. I wasn’t Lawrence or Mansfield or James. I was made of softer and more cowardly stuff. The times had changed, too, since those wanderer-artists made themselves at home wherever they went, part of an international elite of travelers, set apart by class and style even when they were penniless. Instead of liberated, I felt uncomfortable in an age of burgeoning mass tourism, moving around inside a world that was not mine. What was I there for, really? I loved Florence, but I couldn’t belong to it, or make its loveliness my own. I couldn’t make sense of being somewhere and just...looking at it. I settled, afterward, at home in the U.K. Some friends of mine didn’t come back for years from the wanderings they began when they were teenagers: They made lives in Portugal, Egypt, Nepal, Brazil. They loved the stimulus and freedom of that same sense of not belonging which made me so uneasy. It was all a matter of temperament. I still went on holidays—with my family, once I was married and had children—but I was a hopelessly shy traveler, overwhelmed by the glorious otherness of elsewhere, made uneasy by my own presence in it. It’s a quality I don’t admire in myself, that painful self-consciousness, but there it is. Yet I’m also intensely susceptible to that otherness—it stirs me passionately. I can remember coming down the steps of an airplane once in Italy, just for a week’s holiday, with tears running down my face from the familiar sensations of the thick heat, the light, the smells. The first time I came to New York I was joyous, setting eyes on that reality I knew so well from films: the great trucks with their upright exhaust pipes, the overhead cables, the EL, the diners and the billboards. Love of my own home and my own country has never, for me, had anything to do with thinking it’s better than anywhere else. It’s just the place where I know what I’m doing, where I recognize the cues and understand what things mean. If I try to imagine the expe-

rience of exile, I imagine what must be the sharpest pain—not only the enforced separation from home, but being stranded in a place where you can’t read the signs, or trust your own guesses at what lies behind them. Yet it’s true that many exiled ones—like the writers who first inspired me to explore—have succeeded over the years in turning this exclusion into strength. Separation from the forms of a strange culture, if only you’re brave enough, can give you an edge, an advantage of insight and perspective, over the stay-at-homes immersed in it. Then, in my middle age, came unlooked-for blessings. I was first published when I was 46, and as my novels and stories began to be sold abroad—in the U.S., and then in various countries in Europe—I was invited to give readings in those places. And I discovered that when I visited as a writer, with a reason for being there and something to do, I was by some convoluted psychic logic liberated at last to enjoy myself. Some of my most ecstatic moments in the last 20 years have been alone, abroad, invited there for some writing-related reason or other. On the afternoon of my 50th birthday, I ate cake and drank amaretto in a cafe on Fifth Avenue in New York. I walked one morning in Stockholm, in a glitter of watery sunlight, between the islands on my way to a museum. I sat as rain fell among the trees of the Jardin de Luxembourg in Paris. The work of writing, of course, if it’s done seriously, opens doors of permission and perception inside yourself. But what a lovely extra gift, to find that for me it opened doors onto the outside as well, and that I could walk through them, and find myself at ease in other worlds. Tessa Hadley is the author, most recently, of “After the Funeral and Other Stories” (Knopf, July 2023)

TIME CAPSULE

All the President’s Lobstermen

For 62 years, Barnacle Billy’s has drawn tourists seeking lunch with a view, local Mainers craving a lobster-roll fix—and the occasional head of state

THEN

IN 1961, well before Billy Tower’s dream of a restaurant opened in the artsy New England town of Ogunquit, Perkins Cove was a working Maine harbor surrounded by a painters’ colony. Tower, a local fisherman who understood the lure of a spectacular view, had a vision: a high-toned seafood restaurant where the Brush and Needle, an art-supply store, stood. He saw a certain sophistication in focusing on the basics: lobsters cooked in the hottest water possible, New England clams served in colorful soft cardboard buckets and views of what would soon be among Maine’s most-visited corners. Close enough to be a day trip from Boston and sufficiently “Maine” to attract locals, the restaurant swiftly became a destination in itself. People came to watch the lobster boats bobbing in the tear-shaped cove, to unwind in the congenial atmosphere and to quaff the fabled rum punch. Summertime neighbor George H.W. Bush loved to steer his cigarette boat there, sometimes with guests like Bill Clinton and Mikhail Gorbachev on board. His visitors would go with the lobster roll, but Bush, Sr., would opt for a hot dog. The more extravagant lobster roll, he balked, cost too much. While the sandwich’s past prices are lost to the erased chalkboards of history, he surely would have chafed at today’s \$29 price tag.



Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, with Tom Brady and part of Tower family.

NOW

TODAY, LOCALS and visitors alike consider the annual April opening of Billy’s the signal that summer will soon bloom. The operation has grown, with Barnacle Billy’s Etc. next door, a sit-down affair with all the Maine favorites but no mosquitoes. The deck of the original Billy’s overlooking the cove remains the main draw, however. Though Tower died in 2013, and the 41st president five years later, diners still linger over the photo of Bush and Clinton, onetime 1992 election rivals turned boon companions, convulsed in laughter, posing with Tower and the staff. Even today, the employees include members of the Tower family. A chalkboard menu still displays the old standards, and on chilly summer nights, logs crackle in the fireplace. We’d understand if eavesdropping here makes you second-guess what country you’re in; Quebecers gravitate to the fare at Billy’s. And Perkins Cove itself? Local artists and the resident lobster catchers still merit reserved parking spots. But the once-quiet promontory has evolved into a bustling entrepôt with small shops selling jewelry and maritime knickknacks. Despite the changes, its name still rings true. Ogunquit, in Abenaki, means “beautiful place by the sea.” —David M. Shribman



CLAWS FOR APPLAUSE The annual April opening of Barnacle Billy’s means summer is near, but the lobster pots stay boiling until October.

More Mainestays

Those in the know understand that Barnacle Billy’s is just one stop on a tour of timeless institutions in Maine. Meet six more iconic establishments along the state’s coastline where your meal comes with a side of history and a generous helping of small-town charm. **Congdon’s Doughnuts, Wells** Since 1945, the premier purveyor of all things doughnut. Ponder the yawning list of flavors or just go with the blueberry-filled classic. Arrive early; the last time I visited I was 79th in line for my doughnut.

Maine Diner, Wells With roots in the early 1940s, Maine Diner originally served food only during winter, intentionally deterring tourists. Thankfully, it’s willing to embrace visitors now, and no one should go home without downing a lobster club sandwich or a giant chicken pot pie here. Expect a line, so wander into the gift shop while you wait. **Chauncey Creek Lobster Pier, Kittery Point** Bring your own wine or beer (and your own salad if you care about a balanced meal).

While the staff boils your lobster, sit at the picnic tables and devour the unlikely combination of chowder, cherrystone clams and chili.



Dunne’s, York Fabled ice cream with a view of the famous Nubble Lighthouse, which has guided mariners since 1879. **Scoop Deck, Wells** Another dreamy ice cream depot. Try, in vain, to resist the peppermint-stick flavor. “Baby”-size cones feed two adults. **Stonewall Kitchen Cafe, York** The famous jam purveyor’s headquarters doubles as a restaurant with a monster tuna melt sandwich. Also on offer: a brownie encrusted inside a cookie. Because, why not?

MARKET PRICE / MAINE’S SEAFOOD TRADE, THEN AND NOW
Lobster traps in Maine
1961 752,000
Now 2.8 million
Value of Maine’s lobster catch
1961 \$11.1 million
Now \$388.6 million
Price per pound of Maine lobster
1961 \$0.53
Now \$3.97



Value of Maine’s clam harvest
1961 \$793,590
Now \$16.7 million
Licensed lobstermen in the state
1961 6,472
Now 5,643

CHRISTOPHER CHURCHILL FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

The Road to Awe

Alaska can seem impenetrable but these three national parks are just a drive away.
The only struggle? Keeping your eyes on the road.

BY EMILY PENNINGTON

THINK OF Alaska and you might envision remotest-of-the-remote back-country lodges, unnerving glimpses of grizzly bears, salmon eluding the fishing line—with the image of a bearded outdoorsman looming over it all. But you needn't be a hairy survivalist to access the land of the midnight sun. Of the state's eight national parks, three can be reached via a road trip from Anchorage, ideal for hikers and wildlife lovers who prefer creature comforts over a nylon tent and a fresh cat hole. All three offer close encounters with the Alaskan wilderness, but each has its own versions of funky gateway towns, animal-viewing opportunities and adventures for every skill level.

A CLASSIC ALASKAN AMBLE
Denali National Park
Denali means “the high one” in the indigenous Koyukon language, and on a clear day you can see the 20,310-foot mountain's glaciers from Anchorage, the state's largest

Denali means ‘the high one’ in the Koyukon language, and on a clear day you can see the mountain from Anchorage.

city. But it's a long and winding 240-mile drive to reach the park, which is most crowded from June through August. In September the first whispers of fall arrive and the tundra flaunts its most startling foliage. Typically, snow hasn't yet compromised the trails, the bears are chomping the last of the soapberries, and the sun shines 'til 8:30 p.m., allowing for full days and restful nights.

Since you'll rent a car in Anchorage, tack on an extra day to explore Alaska's largest city before heading into the wilderness. Spend the morning at the Alaska Native Heritage Center learning about the traditions of the state's indigenous people.

Then, leave the car behind for the afternoon and head to Trek Bike Rentals in the city center to grab some alternative wheels. Pedal along the Knik Arm waterway before rewarding yourself with a cup of fireweed ice cream at Wild Scoops. Return the bike and plan for an early night, so you can be fresh for the morning's drive.

Right before mile 99, stop for a break at Talkeetna, where mountaineers base themselves for attempts on the park's namesake summit (spot the climbers by their raccoon suntans and vivid spandex). Try the sourdough hot cakes at Talkeetna Roadhouse, made with a legendary starter from 1902. Look for the marked viewpoint around the 134 mile mark, where you'll be able to capture Denali in all its glory.

Drivers have a distinct advantage over the cruise ship crowds when visiting the park proper, as the first 15 miles of Denali's 92-mile Park Road are accessible by private vehicle (a “road lottery” for four



offers some of the most accessible glacier gazing and ice climbing in the state. Roughly seven hours to the east of Anchorage by car, the park has earned a reputation for its mining history, and its phenomenal hiking and rafting.

Follow the braided sapphire curves of the Knik River on your way out of Anchorage, then stop 103 miles in to gaze at the serrated, icy fins of the Matanuska Glacier from a bluff off Glenn Highway. Keep your eyes peeled for the curled horns of Dall sheep beginning at mile 120, where the road cuts through immense mountain passes. Continue on to Chitina, a hub for salmon fishing and the last spot to fill up on gas before braving the notorious, 60-mile washboard road to the town of McCarthy.

Plan for a rough-and-tumble two to three hours on this remote scenic byway, once the path of a prosperous copper-mining railway. Park at the McCarthy Footbridge—where “the road ends and the adventure begins,” as locals say—and walk, bike or shuttle further into the park. Serious hikers will want to tackle a nine-mile trek from the century-old mining village of Kennecott to the abandoned Bonanza Mine.

Exploring this enormous park requires multiple days, so post up at Ma Johnson's Hotel, once a boardinghouse for miners and their families,

and join an all-day glacier hike or ice climbing trip with St. Elias Alpine Guides. Once you've worked up an appetite, chow down on hand-cut curly fries and sockeye salmon at the Potato.

OUT ON THE WATER
Kenai Fjords National Park
Though the drive from Anchorage to the seaside town of Seward—and the adjacent Kenai Fjords National Park—

HONK FOR BEAUTY From top: The road to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park; a trail near the village of Talkeetna; Dall sheep inhabit Alaska's mountains.

is a manageable 2½ hours by car, the journey itself is worth savoring. Stop at Beluga Point, 20 minutes south of town, for a chance to spot the namesake porcelain-white cetaceans in the wild, then continue curving around the rugged shoreline of Turnagain Arm and the towering coastal mountains of Chugach State Park, passing Alyeska Nordic Spa along the way. Make a mental note for post-park soaking and massages.

September is the end of silver-salmon season on the Kenai Peninsula, and Cooper Landing and Russian River are some of the best spots to watch them jockey upstream to spawn.

Once in the port city of Seward, load up on caffeine and pastries at the Resurrect Art Coffee House, a former church that's now a gallery and roaster, then shop for handmade stoneware at Nakao Ceramics.

Kenai Fjords is a whale-watching and watersport-lover's paradise, with options ranging from half-day humpback viewing excursions to backcountry kayaking trips, all conveniently leaving from Seward. To get a bit of everything, splurge on an all-day Aialik Glacier kayak tour with Kayak Adventures Worldwide, which includes a lunch stop at a rapidly calving tidewater glacier. If you're keen to stay on land, challenge yourself on an eight-mile round-trip trek along the Harding Icefield Trail, pausing at Marmot Meadows to check out heavily crevassed Exit Glacier and the surly rodents who give the area its name. Back in Seward, feast on fried chicken and sweet pea hummus at the Cookery. You deserve it.



From left: Kayakers explore the glaciers of Aialik Bay in Kenai Fjords National Park; travelers hike on Matanuska Glacier, one of the most accessible glaciers in Alaska.



Pre-season Sale!
Sale ends 9/4/23

Get ‘em while it’s hot.

Corduroy Jackets

\$296

Exclusively tailored for us of the finest 100% cotton, fine wale corduroy fabric from Italy.

This classic sportcoat features a soft corduroy for exceptional comfort and is a definite must for the well dressed man.

In choice of navy, black, olive, brown, burgundy or camel.

Reg. price \$395
With Promo Code 25% Off= \$296

Use Code **PS25** online to take **Additional 25% Off**

Fall into our Harris Tweeds.

\$521

Enjoy huge savings on Harris Tweed Sportcoats during our pre-season sale.

A must have for your fall wardrobe, and by every standard, a true classic.

Choose from our large selection of sportcoats made of genuine, hand-woven Orb certified Harris Tweed from Scotland in solids and herringbones.

In grey, brown, blue & olive.

Reg. price \$695
With Promo Code 25% Off= \$521



NYC LOCATION

440 Columbus Ave. (cor. 81 st.)
Mon.-Sat.. 10-7, Sun.12-6 (212) 877-5566

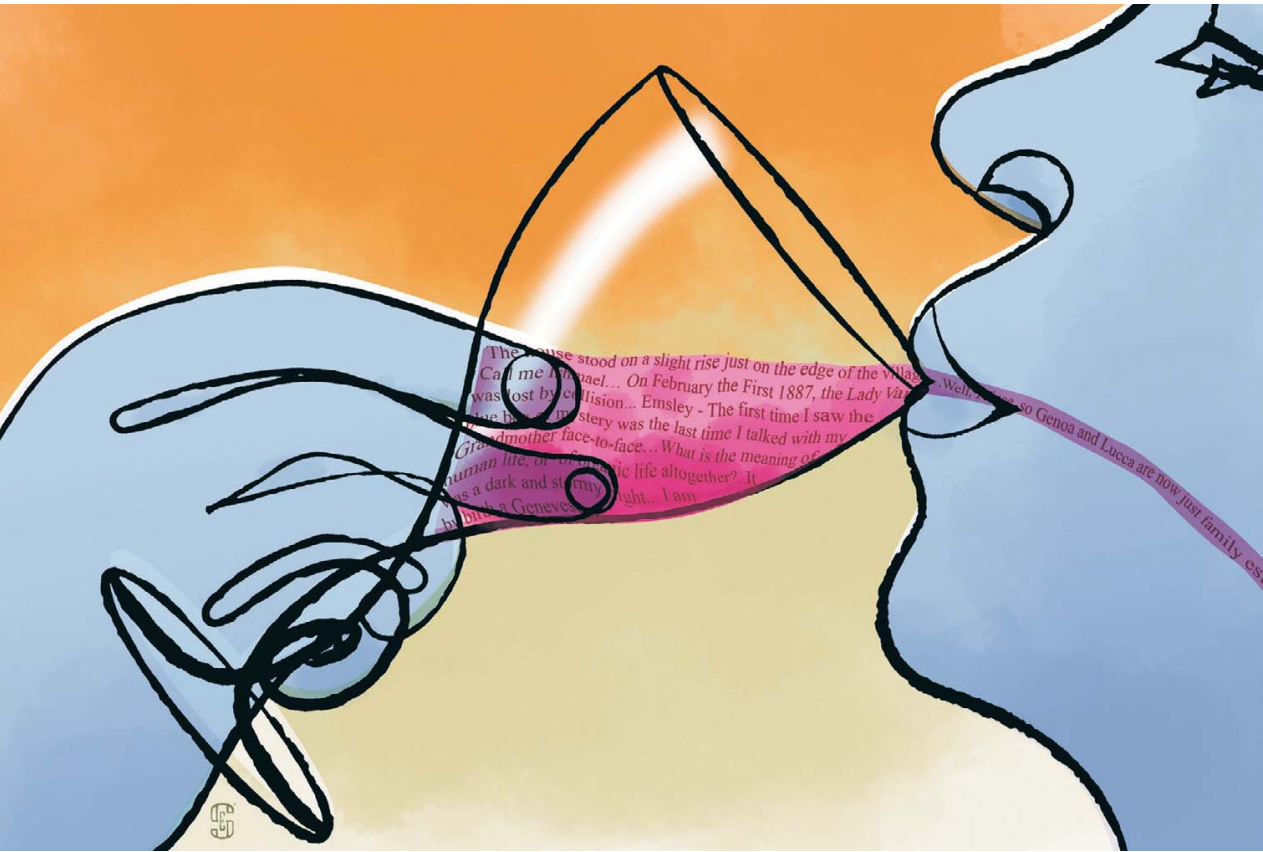
Please visit us online:
www.frankstellanyc.com

 Find Us on Facebook.com/frankstellanyc

 Find Us on Instagram.com/frankstellanyc

Phone Orders Accepted

EATING & DRINKING



ON WINE / LETTIE TEAGUE



Stores Where Oenophiles And Bibliophiles Meet

ANYONE CAN PAIR wine with food, but it takes a special sort of talent to pair wine with a book.

It's not a talent I possess, but after chatting with several owners of combined wine bar/bookstores recently, I know who to ask. A wave of these blended businesses have opened in the past several years, attracting bookish oenophiles, while other, more-established operations are still going strong.

The Bookstore & Get Lit Wine Bar | Lenox, Mass. When I stopped by the Bookstore & Get Lit Wine Bar last month it was not an hour when I would want to drink wine—though technically I could have ordered a glass, since the bar observes the same operating hours as the bookstore (10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, until 4 p.m. on Sundays and “sometimes evenings as well”). While 10 a.m. was too early for me to want Prosecco, at \$9 a glass it was reasonably priced. (All Get Lit wines are priced between \$9 and \$14 a glass.)

Matt Tannenbaum has owned the Book Store since 1976 and added the adjoining wine bar in 2010. He buys all the books, a wide-ranging, thoughtful selection of contemporary and classic works. With some help from his friends he

chooses the wines, served in a cozy space nestled next to bookshelves.

Battery Park Book Exchange & Champagne Bar | Asheville, N.C. My first bookstore-wine-bar foray took place seven years ago when I visited the Battery Park Book Exchange & Champagne Bar. The grand two-story space in the historic Grove Arcade in downtown Asheville is luxuriously outfitted with comfortable leather sofas and towering shelves of books. The wine list includes some well-chosen Champagnes.

Both the wine and book stocks have been upgraded since my visit according to Donna Wright, a Champagne lover who oversees the wine selection. Wright co-owns the space with her husband, Thomas Wright, who is in charge of the books. They've added a kitchen, a chef and a menu, too. One further addition: a sign that reads “No laptops. It's a bar. Talk to each other.” Nobody has complained, Wright said: “It's gone over really well.”

Book Club Bar | New York City Laptops are banned after 6 p.m. at Book Club Bar, a stylish library-like wine bar/bookstore in Manhattan's East Village. When I showed up one afternoon, every seat at the wooden bar was taken. (If patrons wish to

read books from the store at the bar, they must buy them first.)

The book selection at Book Club Bar is extensive. The list of wines offered nine by the glass the day I stopped by, all quite reasonably priced. I can't remember the last time I paid \$8 for a decent glass of Vinho Verde at a bar in New York.

She reads every book she sells and tastes every wine, too.

Co-owner Erin Neary is in charge of buying the books; her husband, Nat Esten, oversees the wine selection—and now liquor as well, as they got a full liquor license in May. “We wanted to combine two of our favorite things and create a cozy space where people could read,” Neary explained. Business has been so good that the couple, who opened their store in November 2019, has been scouting for a second location in Manhattan or Brooklyn.

The Buzzed Word | Ocean City, Md. The Buzzed Word was an Instagram account focused on pairing natural wine with books before its

creator, Mickie Meinhardt, turned it into a bricks-and-mortar shop in July 2021. Meinhardt had moved home to Ocean City from Brooklyn, N.Y., in 2020 to take care of her mother when she had the idea to open her store, partly as a service to the community. “There hadn't been a bookstore here since I was in high school,” she recalled.

The books are an eclectic mix of titles chosen by Meinhardt, and the wines are natural wines from around the world priced at \$11 a glass. Meinhardt also sells wines by the bottle retail and will add a \$10 fee to open and serve them in the store. “People come in for the books and find they can have a glass of wine,” she said. “The two businesses complement one another.”

Drink Books | Seattle, Wash. In 2019, Kim Kent started Book Cru online as a book-and-wine club for which subscribers paid a monthly fee in return for a novel and a bottle of wine along with tasting notes. Two years later, she made her business a store in the Phinney Ridge neighborhood of Seattle. There Kent sold natural wines and books together until August 2023, when the building was slated for demolition.

Before launching the club and store, Kent worked in many Seattle

restaurants and as managing editor of a small university press. Now, she plans to continue Drink Books as a retail pop-up and a book-and-wine club online (*drink-books.com*), offering local pickup in Seattle. She will also continue to ship books, but not wine, to customers nationally.

Kent reads every book she sells and tastes every wine, too. One of her pairings matched “Malina,” a novel by Austrian poet and writer Ingeborg Bachmann, with the 2020 Anne-Sophie Dubois Fleurie l'Alchimiste, a terrific Beaujolais cru. “This month's wine is one that's existed in my consciousness for some time,” she wrote. “Not forgotten, per se, but waiting...And while distortion is the word I would use to describe Bachmann's narrative magic, transformation is more appropriate for Dubois' brand of alchemy.”

Vintage Bookstore & Wine Bar | Austin, Texas Vintage proprietor Jean Buckner was working for Facebook when she had the idea of opening a wine bar/bookstore in her hometown of Austin. She had dreamed of owning a bookstore since she was a child, but Buckner the adult knew the profit margin on books was quite slim. She needed a complementary business, and wine seemed like an obvious choice.

After four years of planning, Buckner opened Vintage Bookstore & Wine Bar in October 2022. The space is sophisticated—tall dark-wood bookcases and upholstered sofas—but welcoming, too. “We want to be Austin's living room,” said Buckner. Book titles, new and used, currently number around 2,000, and the wine list, chosen by Buckner, features 29 by-the-glass offerings such as the Wade Cellars Three by Wade Chenin Blanc (\$14) and Zardetto Prosecco (\$10). Wines by the bottle are usually priced at four times the glass price. Once a month Buckner highlights an in-state winery. “We want to raise awareness of Texas wine,” she said.

Bibliotheque | New York City Father and son team Dr. Andrew Jacono and A.J. Jacono have grand ambitions for Bibliotheque, their bookshop/wine bar slated to open in SoHo this fall. “We want to be a cultural hub,” said Dr. Jacono.

There is nothing in SoHo quite like what they have planned, he added. The Bibliotheque wine list will include some 2,000 bottles, with an extensive selection of pricey wines—about half sourced from the doctor's personal cellar—as well as more affordable options chosen by Bibliotheque wine and beverage director Scott Woltz.

The wine list will be divided into sections akin to those in a bookstore: Short Stories, Classics, Romance and so on. A.J. Jacono, a fiction writer and founder of the Spotlong Review, a literary and arts journal, will oversee the selection of books. There will be original art on display as well as poetry readings and movie screenings, said Dr. Jacono. “We really want it to be a more elevated experience.”

► Email Lettie at wine@wsj.com.

SLOW FOOD FAST / SATISFYING AND SEASONAL FOOD IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES



The Chef
Robynne Maii

Her restaurant
Fête, in Honolulu, Hawaii

What she's known for Dedication to thoughtful, local sourcing in her hometown of Honolulu. Creating a restaurant, with her husband, that serves unpretentious, New American dishes and promotes Hawaiian farmers and food makers.

AT HER HONOLULU restaurant, Robynne Maii puts a punchy homemade Italian dressing to work in everything from salads to sauces. Here, for her final Slow Food Fast, the chef brings that staple's flavorful building blocks—red wine vinegar, dried oregano and olive oil—to a simple marinade for succulent chicken thighs skewered with sweet

red pepper. Rounding out the dish is a riff on another Italian standby: a velvety eggplant caponata studded with capers and golden raisins. While Maii suggests pairing the two, the spread is also aces on its own, served as a dip with grilled bread. After all, flexibility is what this recipe—and this time of year—are all about. —*Kitty Greenwald*

Time 35 minutes
Serves 4

2 large red bell peppers, cut into 1-inch cubes
7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning or dried oregano
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1½-inch cubes
2 Japanese eggplant, about 1½ pounds
1 medium yellow onion, minced
½ cup golden raisins, minced
2 tablespoons capers, minced
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Heat a grill to medium-high. In a medium bowl, toss peppers with 2 tablespoons oil and a pinch salt. In a separate bowl, whisk 3 tablespoons olive oil, vinegar, and Italian seasoning. Add chicken to vinegar mixture along with a generous pinch of salt. Toss to combine. Let chicken marinate at least 15 minutes, then thread onto skewers with the peppers, alternating so each kebab contains a mix. Transfer to a sheet pan; season with salt.
2. While chicken marinates, prick eggplant all over with a fork. (If eggplant is more than 1½-inches thick, halve lengthwise to speed cooking.)

Place on a foil-lined sheet pan and roast until completely soft, 25-35 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, sauté onion with 2 tablespoons oil until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add raisins, capers, balsamic, Worcestershire and a pinch of salt. Simmer until flavors meld, about 3 minutes. Turn off heat, then scoop the soft eggplant from its skin and add to the pan. Mix until well combined and season with extra olive oil and salt to taste.
4. Spray grill with cooking spray or brush with a little extra oil. Grill skewers until lightly charred and cooked through, about 6-7 minutes per side. To serve, spoon eggplant mixture onto a platter and arrange skewers on top. Garnish with parsley.



STICK IT TO ME Paired with a sweet-and-smoky eggplant dip, juicy chicken skewers are late-summer barbecue food at its finest.

DESIGN & DECORATING



CLAIRE TAVAKS (GARDEN); MARIANNE WILLBURN (GATE); SEAN HARKIN (FLOWERS)

PILRIMAGE

A Courtly Park Sheds Its Wig

A garden journalist checks out the ‘wilding’ of a favorite formal oasis in the heart of London’s legal district

By MARIANNE WILLBURN

AS A YOUNG American office temp in the heart of London’s legal quarter, I headed downstairs each lunch hour. Exiting Fleet Street’s commotion, I wound down alleyways and surprise courtyards, past a medieval church and through creaking gates into what felt like a secret retreat. Encircled by neoclassical buildings and protected by the River Thames, the Inner Temple Garden felt hidden and offered a tightly mowed lawn on which I sat, ankles crossed against the restraints

of a short, 1990s-era skirt. Stuffy and respectable, the 3 acres that surrounded me (and my cheese-and-tomato sandwich) spoke in the clipped Britishisms of “annual bedding,” “perennial border” and “rose garden.” This was nature doled out in teaspoons to the barristers and judges of the Inner Temple, one of the city’s professional associations. As for me, I just craved the respite from my word processor. I’m more critical now. My skirt long since exchanged for jeans and my sandwich for the battered notebook of a garden journalist, I made the Inner Temple Garden my first London stop on a recent

trip to the U.K. My goal: to investigate reports that the formal garden I’d cherished had “gone wild.” The man behind that evolution, horticulturist Sean Harkin, won the role of head gardener at Inner Temple Garden five years ago with a vision of “a haven for people and biodiversity.” His plan reflected a trend in residential and public garden design that combines human considerations of beauty with those of ecology. How would Harkin’s dreamlike vision play out against a tightly corseted space steeped in hundreds of years of tradition? I had doubts. Would I encounter weedy wildflowers that

ticked boxes but were sensibly restricted to flower beds? Observing the garden’s public hours of 12:30-3 p.m., I approached the 18th-century gates. Billows of foliage played behind them and, more daringly, through them. I slipped in with a skeptical grin. Seconds later, a thousand oxeye daisies wiped that grin off my face. Gone were the groomed greens of memory and the rose garden in its mulched formality. In their place, knee-high grasses capered with wildflower jewels, brushing the skirts of those same rose bushes and rambling down to the mowed lawn and Broad Walk that abutted Victoria Embankment. Pink-white drifts of *Erigeron karvinskianus* softened the Queen Anne-era sundial. Feathery giant fennel seedlings found purchase in stone steps. In the perennial borders, unapologetic mounds of golden *Euphorbia ceratocarpa* gobbled paths, while 12-foot rockets of purple *Echium pininana* lead the eye to neo-Georgian facades of red brick. Insects filled the air with sound, adding to birdsong and the rustle of meadow grasses. Butterflies flitted against towering lacy black elderberries. I nearly laughed

aloud at the injection of life and energy that a looser approach had achieved. Harkin, however, can testify “gardens gone wild” are anything but—contrary to assumptions of gardener-visitors like me, anxious to smash boundaries with an impulsive mix of grasses and

LOOSE BORDERS Previously prim beds encroach on the walkways at London’s Inner Temple Garden.

pollinator plants. Such gardens, he told me, “require skill to create and knowledge to curate. A great deal of flexibility and curiosity is required, particularly when you’re avoiding chemicals.” Kelly Norris, U.S.-based author of the book “New Naturalism: Designing and Planting a Resilient Ecologi-

Knee-high grasses capered with wildflower jewels.

cally Vibrant Home Garden,” helps clients move into the aesthetic by first redefining what it means to tend a garden. “Maintenance implies stasis,” he said. “This is exactly how we’re trained to care for gardens. But gardens more in tune with natural processes are dynamic.” It’s not more work, he added, just a different way of gardening. Paying attention to natural processes keeps Harkin and team on their toes—cutting meadows, editing self-seeders. His gamble exceeded my expectations and, as he tells it, those of its residents. A barrister with whom I chatted while at the garden referred to its past look as “somewhat municipal in style” and noted this change: “Covid has reduced the numbers of central London workers, but the gardens seem more popular than ever thanks to their natural ambience.”



Vines are allowed to storm the gates of the garden.

TEMPLE GARDEN TRANSFERS / PLANT SPECIES TO START THIS FALL



The fall-planted bulb of *Camassia leichtlinii* ‘Alba’ yields sparkler-like flower spikes in late spring.



Sow *Papaver somniferum* ‘Lauren’s Grape’ poppy seeds in late fall for deep purple blooms come June.



A graceful black-leaved elderberry, *Sambucus nigra* ‘Black Lace’ dons pink umbels at spring’s end.



VANESSA LENTINE (MINDY GAYER); SARAH BELL/SELAVIE PHOTOGRAPHY (TARA FELICE)

BETTER RECEPTION In her cottage in Newport Beach, Calif., interior designer Mindy Gayer visually created a foyer where there wasn’t one.

HOW TO LIVE WITH A ROOM YOU HATE

Make an Entranceway

Without a vestibule, your home reveals itself too abruptly. But designers say you can fake a foyer.

Satisfy the entry requirements. “You definitely miss a defining moment when your home has no vestibule,” said Mindy Gayer, an interior designer in Newport Beach, Calif. Her own bungalow, shown left, lacked an entryway, so she set up a vignette nearby with all the trappings of a front hall. Near the door, she stationed a vintage console—storage for shoes, backpacks, dog leashes—and topped it with coffee-table books, a rustic flower vase, a bowl for dumping keys and a lamp to diffuse soft lighting. Above, a mirror opens up the space and reflects the larger room. “They all work together to create a moment that feels like a statement,” she said.

Roll out the right carpet. Place a rug wisely to define an entry. In her bungalow, Gayer created the illusion of a hallway by positioning the pale plaid carpet that grounds the living room’s seating area so its edge aligns with the side of the window nearest the “foyer.” This leaves the wood floor that stretches in from the front door uncovered, its own domain; a wicker basket serves as a clear punctuation mark between the

two spaces. To ensure the door announces itself, she chose light gray tongue-and-groove paneling, exposed hinges and bronze hardware.

Get in the right frame of mind. To fashion a landing pad inside the front door of his Orlando home, interior designer Marc Thee clad part of the room’s ceiling, floor and the first few feet of walls with dark walnut wood. The substantial frame gives way to a living room of light stone floor and white walls. “The depth and richness of the wood gives you time to relax and feel welcome before entering the rest of the room,” said Thee, of Marc-Michaels Interior Design in Winter Park, Fla. You can achieve the same effect more affordably with wallpaper, he said, or contrasting paint.

Work the layout. A cottage in Oxford, Miss., suffered from an absent entrance until designer Tara Felice of Tara Felice Interiors in Memphis, Tenn., pivoted to a new solution. She floated a white sofa off the wall and turned its back on the front door, a move that emphatically divorced the couch from the

entry. “Having the sofa back [visible] as you enter creates separation. You are no longer walking into the middle of a life,” she said. “I used a performance fabric so you can throw a coat over it without worry.”

Divide and conquer. The main door of a mews house in London opened straight into a kitchen until Tom Cox, principal at local firm H&M Interiors, found an architectural solution. He anchored a floor-to-ceiling wooden partition—painted the same dusty red as the front door—perpendicular to the door so it backs the kitchen’s banquette. The partition’s wide shaker panels lead up to eight window panes that align with the top of the banquette and let light through the space-defining wall. “These partitions are a simple and effective game-changer,” said Cox. —Antonia van der Meer



Tara Felice Interiors in Memphis, Tenn., fudged a hall with a sofa back.

DESIGN & DECORATING

HOUSE TOUR

Plain Wonderful

Natural materials give a numbingly neutral new build color and (praise be) character

By Allison Duncan

FOR YEARS, the all-white look telegraphed serene luxury in elite interiors. But going that route now can both veer into cliché and, especially in new construction, come off chilly. Cold instead of calm. No thanks.

That was the risk Ashley Montgomery faced in 2023, when a young family tasked the Canadian designer with bringing “warmth and character” to their new, blank, bland 8,000-square-foot Toronto property. As she explained, “Homes in Toronto, especially new ones, skew cold and modern, but my clients wanted a house with West Coast-like casual luxury infused with New England-like history and character.” To stand up to the couple’s preteen sons, clean, elegant décor had to double

as cozy and functional. “We had to find a happy medium between builder-grade beige and an overly [ambitious] design,” the designer said. Montgomery’s solution? A tightly edited palette of organic materials heavily informed by the home’s sylvan surroundings. Natural finishes like unlacquered brass, marble and wood contribute subtle colors and textures. Think pale white oak floors and moody walnut accents. Meanwhile, vintage rugs and tactile textiles weave more potent shades like forest green, ocher and gold around the meeker neutrals, creating continuity and adding personality to the otherwise plain space.

“Even though the overall look of the home is neutral, it doesn’t feel monotonous,” said Montgomery. “It comes together very naturally—pun intended.” Here, a room-by-room survey of the designer’s tricks.



WELCOME IMPERFECTIONS While staying within a disciplined off-white color scheme, Montgomery gave the spalike primary bath a warm, approachable vibe. To achieve this, she combined handmade materials whose irregularities reflect the human touch: pearlescent zellige subway tile, rustic ship-lap and natural porcelain countertops. A raw brass frame blings up the walk-in

glass shower, and she dispensed with a traditional bath mat in favor of a one-of-a-kind vintage Persian rug, in muted sandy, stony shades. The unexpected swap is both stylish and smart. “People don’t always think of [putting] a rug in the bathroom,” said Montgomery. “But it can add a lot of character—and be really practical if you need something large.”



THE EARTH STOOD STILL Natural shades of green, gold and sand ground this Toronto living room, reflecting the forest outside.

LAUREN MILLER

HIRE NATURE AS YOUR CO-DECORATOR To stop the blank expanse of the double-height living room from overwhelming its new inhabitants, Montgomery looked to the home’s forest setting for aesthetic prompts. Her first gambit: An equally soaring minimalist chimney rendered in

honeyed brick that softens the cliff-face of floor-to-ceiling windows. This focal point—punctuated by a reclaimed mantel that might have been felled in the nearby woods—adds warmth both literally and figuratively. Removing grilles from the wall-size windows further

erases the barrier between indoor and out. While the view floods in most of the room’s color, a snug seating group of sofas and contemporary white-oak chairs, covered in oatmeal bouclé and golden crushed velvet, cozily and chromatically complement the white oak flooring.



ADD TEXTURAL SOUL “You can get away with a monotone palette if you add texture for character and balance,” explained Montgomery. Both abound in the home’s understated entryway thanks to a tactile coating of lime-wash paint on the walls and a surprising, sultry plaster staircase that mimics the curves of a nautilus shell. Two of the home’s unifying finishes show up in an oak handrail underpinned by unlacquered brass pegs, while underfoot, knots and striations in the “imperfect” wood flooring offset the “new-build feel,” as the designer put it. To complete the warm welcome, vintage ceramics and a dramatic bouquet of boughs from the garden sit atop an artfully wounded and worn pedestal table.



EMPLOY STEALTH COLOR While the kitchen seems plain at first glance, look closely and you’ll notice a thread of mellow color running through it. It all began with a “perfect” Calacatta Vagli marble countertop and backsplash, the designer says. “When we found that slab with its hues of rusty orange and pink, we knew it was the one,” Montgomery explained. “It’s subtle but reminds me of the sunset.” On the cupboards, a swath of Farrow & Ball’s Stony Ground paint, which has slightly red, putty undertones, echoes the stone and creates a soft finish that’s much warmer than the typical all-white McMansion kitchen. Stealthy hits of gold and a dusky sand hue come courtesy of patinated Georgian-era unlacquered plumbing, brass pendants by RW Guild, brass sconces, a battalion of oak and wicker counter stools. Finally, a dark walnut stain on the oversize island “brings in a lot of richness,” and the rounded edges “give it a furniture feel,” Montgomery said. “It’s more relaxed.”



BE STRATEGIC WITH PATTERN Like many homeowners, Montgomery’s clients wanted their bedroom to feel like an “oasis”—but sating that desire didn’t mean defaulting to bland beige, the designer said. Instead, she used understated patterned textiles to construct the room’s soothing personality. Natural linen bedding. A mustard patchwork Indian Kantha throw. Pillows in gingham and floral patterns of green and brown. Also contributing a lot of warmth: leather sconces and a woven-rope bench. Montgomery conspicuously omitted one decorative element: artwork. “There was enough happening already.”

GEAR & GADGETS



RUMBLE SEAT / DAN NEIL



A Honda That’s a Victim of Its Normcore Success

I GET A STEADY STREAM of letters from buyer-intenders asking my advice on new cars. Obviously, by the time people turn to me they are pretty desperate.

Most have families, a goodly household income and an itinerant lifestyle of school, work, sports, errands and weekend getaways. These hardcore normcores represent the center of the middle of the mass market. On the whole and in the main, what they want, most people want.

The Honda CR-V was built for these buyers. I was thinking of a form letter.

You two already know each other. The CR-V has been the best-selling crossover in the U.S. since 1997, Honda tells me, racking up more than six million retail sales. Redesigned for model-year 2023 and priced from \$29,500 to \$39,500 across six trim levels, the sixth-generation CR-V throws sharp little elbows in its competitive set, which includes Toyota RAV4, Ford Escape, Kia Sportage and Subaru Forester.

The new CR-V also showcases Honda’s fourth-generation hybrid powertrain. It’s brilliant. The figures of merit include 204 hp, 248 lb-ft., 0-60 mph in about 8 seconds and an EPA-estimated 37 mpg combined (with AWD). I’ve already played these numbers in Powerball so don’t even try.

Honda’s dual-motor widget also dispatches the conventional CVT (continuously variable transmission) to the dustbin of history. The details are fascinating so prepare to

2023 HONDA CR-V SPORT TOURING



Price, as tested \$40,825

Powertrain Series-parallel hybrid gas-electric, with 2.0-liter direct-injected Atkinson-cycle DOHC inline four with variable valve timing (145 hp at 6,100 rpm/138 lb-ft at 4,500 rpm); AC synchronous permanent-magnet traction motor (181 hp at 5,000-8,000 rpm/248 lb-ft at 0-2,000 rpm) and system generator (161 hp); hybrid automatic transmission and all-wheel drive

Maximum system net 204 hp

Length/wheelbase/width/height 184.8/106.3/73.5/66.5 inches

Curb weight 3,926 pounds

0-60 mph 8 seconds (est.)

EPA estimated fuel economy 40/34/37 mpg (city/highway/combined)

Cargo capacity 39.3/76.5 cubic feet (behind 2nd/1st-row seats)

be spellbound. Before that, though, I would like to feel some feelings.

What is the worst thing about buying a CR-V? They are everywhere. Or at least it seemed so from the driver’s seat of our Sport Touring test car. It doesn’t help that the damn things live longer than tortoises.

It’s irrational to hold the CR-

V’s success against it. After all, excellent consumer products are recognized and rewarded in the market. What difference does it make if yours isn’t the first one on your block?

But then comes the moment when you’re dropping the kids off at school and you pull into a line that’s nose-to-tail with late-model CR-Vs.

What? No, I didn’t even notice.

The sixth-gen’s styling has evolved, bending toward the generically pretty and upscale, by category standards. For Honda’s purposes, that’s all to the good. May I direct your attention to the upright, brand-declarative grille? Also, the windshield pillars have been moved 4.7 inches rearward, 2.8 inches outward and 1.4 inches lower. Relocating these landmarks permitted design-engineers to stretch the hood, lower the horizontal “beltline,” incline the windshield and extend the cabin’s greenhouse, thereby redrafting the CR-V in more mature, premium proportions. Overall length is up 2.7 inches.

Honda’s wordsmiths offer “rugged and sophisticated” to describe the stylists’ intent—like freeze-dried Chateaubriand.

Intentionally or otherwise, the new CR-V looks more like other crossovers than ever before, adding to the general magisteria of rugged/sophisticated sameness in the category. It reminds me of America’s car industry in the late 1920s, when most automobiles could be distinguished mostly by their grilles and hood ornaments; or men’s attire in the 1950s, when millions marched off to work in hats and gray flannel suits. Elevators in those days, am I right?

Our Sport Touring example did its best to stand out from the crowd, however, shod with gloss-black alloy wheels and platinum-hued lower bumper cladding; stainless-steel exhaust tips; and

CITIZEN CR-V Redesigned for model-year 2023, the bestselling Honda CR-V is available in six trim levels, starting at \$29,500.

high-style black front and rear fascias. This thing was dressed for a wiseguy’s funeral.

Standard equipment on the Sport Touring trim is generous, including full-time AWD, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto hands-free connectivity, Bluetooth audio streaming, wireless phone charging, power hands-free tailgate, heated leather seats and steering wheel.

What is the worst thing about buying a CR-V? They are everywhere. And they live longer than tortoises.

The standard powertrain pairs a 1.5-liter turbo four (190 hp) with a continuously variable transmission (CVT) and front-wheel drive. The new hybrid thingamajig, available in the Sport and Sport Touring trims, consists of a 2.0-liter Atkinson-cycle inline-four gas engine, assisted by two electric motors, one for propulsion and one dedicated to maintaining charge in the system’s small buffer battery.

The refinement, the integration...*Mwah!* Chef’s kiss. In most conditions and varying loads and speeds up to about 60 mph, the CR-V relies on its electric motor to move around, allowing it to surge smoothly between stops and glide amid the din with EV-like refinement—stop/start with benefits.

Two lock-up clutches in the transmission allow engine torque to be entrained with the electric torque as needed, at low speed and high speed, to optimize drivability and reduce consumption. Typically, however, the gas engine cycles on and off independently, to spin the generator that charges the battery that drives the electric motor that Jack built.

As engineers discovered with past versions of CVTs, the lack of linearity between the sound of the engine and acceleration bothered people (the extended moaning was particularly embarrassing if you had your mother in the car). The CR-V’s hybrid logic includes the illusionistic Linear Shift Control that “creates the vehicle speed-linked engine rev feel of a conventional drivetrain shifting gears at wide open throttle.”

The engineers also went to great lengths to isolate the seesawing of the engine from the occupants. Hybrid models get added acoustic insulators surrounding the engine bay and cargo hold; an acoustically insulated windshield and front-side windows; and the latest version of Honda’s active noise-canceling system, which reduces “unpleasant booming noise” in the cabin. My kids could use some of that.

Dear Sir/Madam, Thank you for your letter regarding the new Honda CR-V with hybrid power. Yes, I approve! It’s quick, quiet, surprisingly refined and very efficient. Good value for money.

Sorry they are so popular.

Starry, Starry Review Apps

Goodreads, the app that lets you rate and review books, and find new ones you’ll love, has begot others that do the same for...everything. Meet three.

YOU MIGHT HAVE tried Goodreads, the ratings and reviews app that has become an essential resource for readers who want to maintain a catalog of books they have finished and discover their next page-turner. But what if, instead of your next read, you’re looking for your next watch, listen or drink? You’re in luck. Dozens of platforms, both new and established, exist to help anyone chronicle what they have liked and hated, and discover their next favorite thing. The best of the bunch include robust features that allow both newbies and superfans alike to connect with each other, and create bona fide digital and analog communities out of their shared interest. Here, three you should know.



Letterboxd

Quick, name the last five movies you watched. Can’t? The overwhelming scroll of content on your favorite streaming services can blot out your recall. The Letterboxd app and website, however, lets you track, rate, review and recommend any film. You can scroll through recent recommendations from popular reviewers or users you follow and add anything that snags your interest to your “Watchlist.” And when you’re ready to actually watch something off that list, Letterboxd will tell you whether it is streaming on a service like Netflix, or where you can buy it.



Untappd

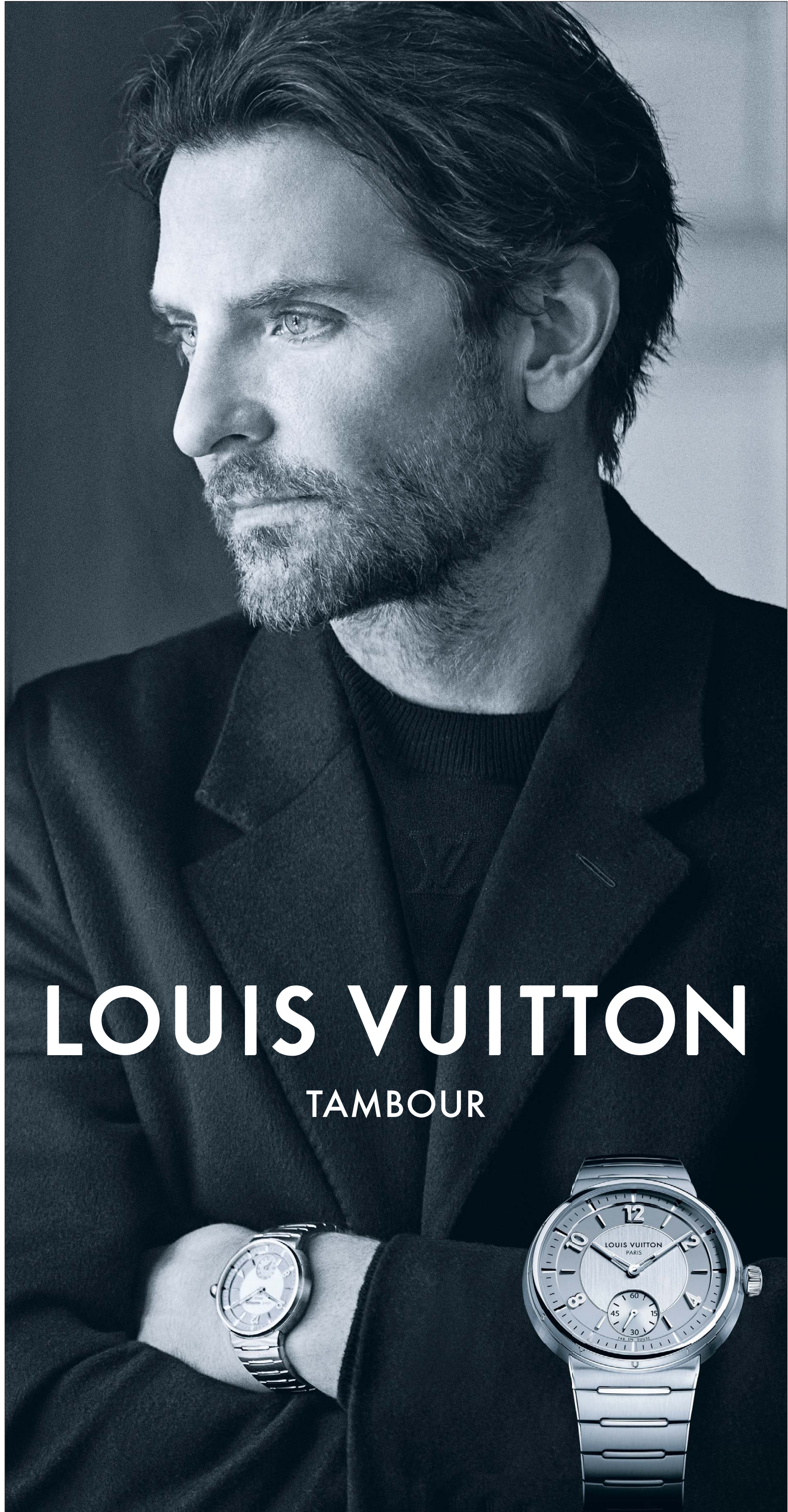
Untappd gamifies drinking beer, but it is no drinking game. Whether you’ll drink pretty much anything or are a red-ale loyalist, this free app lets you track and rate whatever brew you consume. Just scan the can’s or bottle’s bar code, or search for it by name. To up the ante, Untappd encourages you to check-in at the bars, restaurants and breweries where you imbibe. Logging such visits and leaving reviews earns you badges that show up on your Untappd profile, for all your friends and other users to see. If you just want to nerd out on beer yourself, the app supports that, too.



GoodPods

It can be hard to find new podcasts, especially if, for instance, you lack friends who share your fondness for (or hatred of) true crime. Making things worse, the popularity charts and algorithmic recommendations of popular streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts feel so impersonal. GoodPods shines as both a slick, free podcast player, and a place to find new podcasts to try. That is because the app lets users review, rate and comment on episodes, to keep the conversation going well after its hosts are finally done yammering.

—Lina Abascal



LOUIS VUITTON

TAMBOUR