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THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Mainstreaming hate

Carlson, antisemitism, and the fight for the GOP's future

p.6



NOVEMBER 14, 2025
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Virginia Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger celebrates her win. (p.4)

Editor's letter

“Nazi. I hate these guys.” The first time I heard that line, I was 10 years old and sitting in a grubby cinema somewhere in southwest England. I was watching rapt as Indiana Jones—appearing in his last good movie, 1989’s *The Last Crusade*—realizes he’ll have to face off against his old goose-stepping foes. I like to think that I nodded enthusiastically at Indy’s words, because I also hated Nazis. While World War II was at that time some four decades in the past, it continued to rage in the British popular imagination. My childhood was filled with stories of relatives who’d survived the beaches of Dunkirk and tussled with the Luftwaffe in the skies over Europe. My bookshelves were stacked with comics like *Battle* and *Commando*, in which steel-helmeted German soldiers and cold-eyed SS officers committed gruesome atrocities before being dispatched by plucky Brits armed with Lee-Enfield rifles and stiff upper lips. Movies about the Allies’ heroics, from *The Dam Busters* to *Where Eagles Dare*, seemed to play constantly on the four TV channels we had at the time. Immersed in these tales, I couldn’t imagine anyone disagreeing with Dr. Jones.

Yet here we are 36 years later, and a lot of people do. Self-proclaimed führer fan Nick Fuentes has built a large online following by raging against “perfidious Jews” and promising to turn America into an Aryan nation (see *Controversy*, p.6). He had a friendly sit-down last week with podcaster and MAGA ideologue Tucker Carlson, who a year earlier had a similarly chummy chat with Darryl Cooper, a Nazi apologist who claims Winston Churchill was “the chief villain of the Second World War.” Some on the Right, like Heritage Foundation boss Kevin Roberts, have been reluctant to criticize Fuentes or Carlson, based on the theory that any enemy of the Left—especially one who energizes young people—must be an ally of conservatism. But there will be nothing left to conserve if Third Reich sympathizers are welcomed into one of our two major parties. Faced with the likes of Fuentes, there’s only one thing to say: “Nazi. I hate these guys.”

Theunis Bates
Editor-in-chief

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Keira Knightley (p.10)

Democrats ride anti-Trump wave to victory

What happened

Democrats this week swept an off-year Election Day with a series of commanding wins from Virginia to California, delivering a rebuke of President Trump and raising the party's hopes for the 2026 midterms. In New Jersey, a closely fought gubernatorial contest turned into a 13-point rout by Rep. Mikie Sherrill, a former Navy helicopter pilot who cast Republican Jack Ciattarelli as a MAGA acolyte who would "do whatever Trump tells him to do." Sherrill won at least five counties Trump carried in 2024. In Virginia, former congresswoman and ex-CIA officer Abigail Spanberger will succeed GOP Gov. Glenn Youngkin after crushing Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears by 15 points. Running as a pragmatic centrist, Spanberger produced a blue shift in every county from the 2021 gubernatorial election. "Tonight we sent a message," she said at her victory party. Virginians "chose commonwealth over chaos."

In a victory for California Gov. Gavin Newsom, state voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 50, a ballot measure he promoted as a pushback against Republican gerrymandering in Texas and elsewhere. It will allow the state legislature to redraw congressional maps, yielding up to five new Democratic seats. In a closely watched election, voters in swing-state Pennsylvania retained three Democratic justices on the state supreme court, preserving a Democratic majority, while in New York City, democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani trounced Trump's preferred candidate, independent Andrew Cuomo. "What a night for the Democratic Party," said Newsom, "a party that is in its ascendancy, a party that's on its toes, no longer on its heels." In a social media post, Trump blamed Republicans' poor showing on the government shutdown and one other factor: "TRUMP WASN'T ON THE BALLOT."

What the columnists said

What a turnaround, said Ed Kilgore in *New York*. When Republicans took the White House and Congress last November, it was heralded "as the beginning of a realignment," and Democrats fell into "recreations and despair." But this week they romped in "almost every competitive venue." They stopped a GOP ballot initiative to "rig voting rules in Maine" and flipped two seats on Georgia's Public Service Commission, which hasn't held a Democrat since 2007. In Virginia, Democrats flipped 13 seats in the state



Sherrill takes a selfie with supporters.

House and Jay Jones, their candidate for attorney general, beset by a text-messaging scandal involving violent fantasies about Republicans, "won anyway."

The top races delivered a lesson for Democrats, said Domenico Montanaro in *NPR.org*: "It's the cost of living, stupid." Sherrill, Spanberger, and Mamdani all focused on kitchen table issues, and in exit polls, voters in New York, Virginia, and California listed the economy as their top concern. That's a "very bad sign for Republicans and Trump, who clearly now owns the economy," no matter how much he tries to blame former president Joe Biden.

The election results "shouldn't be overinterpreted," said *National Review* in an editorial. Republicans typically face a tough road in Virginia and New Jersey, and especially so in off-year elections "when the GOP holds power in Washington." Still, the routs bode badly for next year's midterms. So does a shift among Latino voters, who swung hard for Trump in 2024, said Sara Dorn in *Forbes*. They "overwhelmingly broke Democratic" in the gubernatorial races, backing Spanberger and Sherrill by 2-to-1 margins.

Don't ignore the election's key takeaway, said Michael Tomasky in *The New Republic*: Most Americans "hate Trump and what he's doing to this country." The president and his allies "live in a fantastical bubble where his polls are great" and we're skipping through an "American renaissance." In the real world, his disapproval rating just hit 63%, food prices remain high, and Americans don't seem to want the federal workforce decimated, the White House bulldozed, or masked "quasi-vigilantes rounding up brown people."

For Democrats, the election results point to a looming "intraparty battle," said Lisa Lerer in *The New York Times*. Will they fare better as a centrist party built on candidates like Sherrill and Spanberger, who focused on attacking Trump "rather than offering bold new ideas?" Or is it Mamdani's "populist vision" and critiques of unfettered capitalism that point the way forward? As they try to rebuild "their damaged brand," the Democrats remain a party "teeming with tensions over age, ideology, tactics, and tone." But for now, at least, they've showed they can pull off "the most important goal in politics. They can win. And win big."

It wasn't all bad

■ A pair of used socks helped lure back Norm Feigenbaum's yellow lab Sunny after she escaped from his backyard. The 93-year-old enlisted animal rescue volunteers, who tracked the dog to a 1,325-acre nature preserve in Los Angeles. They planted a pair of Feigenbaum's socks to locate Sunny. But it took an offering of meatballs, kielbasa, and rotisserie chicken to bring her out. Sunny "had a huge smile on her face" when she saw Feigenbaum, said volunteer Jennifer Justice. "It was obvious that he was her person."

■ After Nick Mondek learned in 2022 he was dying of acute myeloid leukemia, a bone marrow cancer, his brother donated stem cells that briefly sent the disease into remission. But his cancer returned last April, and he couldn't find a genetic match for another transplant. Mondek turned to his 9-year-old son, Stephen, to save his life. A test confirmed their stem cells partially matched, and the extraction at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles made Stephen the hospital's youngest donor ever. Nick left the hospital three weeks later and stopped on his way home to watch the final inning of Stephen's Little League game. "It's not just an honor to call him my son," said Nick. "I'm proud to call him my hero."



Stephen and Nick

■ Reginald Betts—poet, lawyer and MacArthur "genius grant" recipient—built his 500th prison library at a women's correctional facility in Connecticut in August. Betts is no stranger to prison life: At 16, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for carjacking. In solitary confinement, he had books smuggled to him by other inmates with a pulley system of torn sheets. Once released, he earned his law degree from Yale Law School and started a nonprofit that builds libraries to inspire change in inmates' lives. "Books gave me a pathway into the world," said Betts.

...and How They Were Covered

New York City's new democratic socialist mayor

What happened

Historic numbers of New Yorkers voted this week to elect democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani as mayor, in a clear challenge to the political establishment. Mamdani, 34, who will be the city's first Muslim mayor, defeated former three-term Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo, who ran as an independent, and Republican Curtis Sliwa. A state assemblyman who was largely unknown when he won the Democratic primary, Mamdani took half of the more than 2 million votes in the biggest turnout in 56 years, and won 70% of voters under 45.



Mamdani: Proudly leftist

Mamdani focused his campaign on the city's affordability crisis, promising a rent freeze, free buses, and city-run grocery stores—all to be financed by a tax on millionaires. At least 25 billionaires donated to pro-Cuomo PACs. Upon winning, the mayor-elect thanked "the next generation of New Yorkers, who refuse to accept that the promise of a better future was a relic of the past."

President Trump, who endorsed Cuomo, had threatened to cut federal funds to New York City if the "Communist lunatic" Mamdani won. Cuomo focused on Mamdani's pro-Palestinian views, saying his opponent refused to denounce the phrase "globalize the intifada" and would "stoke the flames of hatred against Jewish people." Mamdani was defiant. "I am Muslim," he said in his victory speech. "I am a democratic socialist. And most damning of all, I refuse to apologize for any of this." To the president, he said, "Since I know you're watching, I have four words for you: Turn the volume up."

What the columnists said

Unbelievable as it may seem, the world's financial capital will now be run by an avowed socialist, said David Wallace-Wells in *The New York Times*. While Cuomo "desperately caricatured Mamdani" as an Islamic fundamentalist, even appearing to agree with a claim that he would have cheered the 9/11 attacks, Mamdani remained tightly focused on cost-of-living issues. He managed to appeal to a "coalition of the precariat" that includes the working, middle, and even upper-middle classes. These groups are united in their "rage about income inequality, corruption, and the entitlement and impunity of the very rich." It's a message that could resonate on a national level.

A slim majority of New Yorkers may have chosen Mamdani's "radical agenda," said the *New York Post* in an editorial, but don't be surprised if his win triggers "a historic race for the exits" as wealthy residents move to the suburbs. Among New York's million-plus Jews, who mostly backed Cuomo, there's a sense of unease, said Olivia Reingold in *The Free Press*. Mamdani refuses to recognize Israel's right to remain a Jewish state. Will Jews who believe in that right "be frozen out of public life?"

A leftist NYC mayor is "not that novel," said Matthew Yglesias in *Slow Boring*. But "now comes the interesting part." Can Mamdani forge tough compromises without falling victim to the Left's tendency to eat its own, as it did with former mayor Bill de Blasio? "Winning in big cities as a progressive is easy; governing is harder."

High court unlikely to uphold Trump tariffs

What happened

The Supreme Court this week appeared skeptical that President Trump has the legal authority to unilaterally impose tariffs on goods from across the globe, signaling that the justices may be prepared to strike down his signature economic policy. At oral arguments in a case that Trump described as "life or death," several conservative justices joined their liberal bench mates in grilling Solicitor General D. John Sauer about whether Trump is usurping Congress' taxation power. Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Trump appointee, expressed concern that handing tariff power to the president could lead to a "one-way ratchet" in which Congress struggles to reclaim its authority. Meanwhile, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, another Trump appointee, questioned whether it was necessary to tax imports from allies for national security reasons. "I mean, Spain?" she said, "France?"

Lawyers for the plaintiffs, who include small businesses and 12 states, also faced tough questions, with Barrett noting that it would be a "mess" for courts to refund taxpaying U.S. importers. And Justice Brett Kavanaugh wasn't sold on the plaintiffs' argument that a statute must explicitly use the word "tariff"—which does not appear in the 1977 law used by Trump—to grant a president the power to impose them. Why, he asked, would Congress allow the executive to shut down trade entirely but not impose even a 1% tariff, likening the situation to a "doughnut hole." An attorney for the plaintiffs countered by calling revenue-raising tariffs an entirely "different kind of pastry."

What the columnists said

Is the Supreme Court done behaving like Trump's "lickspittles"? asked Ian Millhiser in *Vox*. This is the court that allowed Trump to use his office to "commit crimes," but Gorsuch, Barrett, and Chief Justice John Roberts all seem likely to join the bench's three liberal justices and buck the tariffs. There's still time for the justices to "retreat into their partisan camps" and hand Trump a victory. But for now, it looks like the tariffs "will fall."

But maybe just temporarily, said *The Economist*. Trump sent apocalyptic warnings about this case, but in private, his administration is "more relaxed" because there are other ways to keep the tariff regime rolling. He could turn to parts of the trade laws like a national security provision known as Section 232, which lets the president slap tariffs on imports of specific goods. This already serves as the basis for Trump's 50% steel and aluminum tariffs. It would certainly be a "more cumbersome" process than the current one, but "brick by brick, it would enable Trump to rebuild his tariff wall."

Tariffs might be here to stay, said Eric Boehm in *Reason*, but this case is bigger than a "normal dispute over policy." Instead, it "asks a serious question about the separation of powers in the constitutional system." If the Supreme Court allows Trump, or any president, to "read new meanings into the words that Congress has written in the laws it passed," then there would effectively be no limits on what the executive branch can do.

Controversy of the Week

The GOP: Will it welcome antisemites?

The poison of antisemitism is “growing on the new right,” said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial, and it’s “spreading wider and faster than we thought.” Last week, Tucker Carlson hosted “Hitler fanboy” Nick Fuentes on his podcast for a “chummy” two-hour interview watched by more than 5 million people. The white nationalist influencer, 27, toned down his material for the chat—he’s previously talked about wanting a child bride and fantasized about killing a Black man with Hitler—but still praised Soviet tyrant Joseph Stalin and assailed the threat of “organized Jewry.” Carlson largely nodded along and even admitted he loathed Christian Zionists such as the staunchly pro-Israel GOP Sen. Ted Cruz “more than anybody.” That Carlson would grant Fuentes access to his massive audience is proof that his hate “is entering the MAGA mainstream,” said Ali Breland in *The Atlantic*. Look at the recently leaked group chats of Young Republican leaders, which were “full of the kind of antisemitic and racist jokes” beloved by Fuentes and his legion of young fans, known as groypers. Conservative writer Rod Dreher, a friend of Vice President JD Vance, says he’s been told that 30% to 40% of Republican staffers in Washington under age 30 are groypers. Fuentes said in 2021 that his goal was to turn the GOP “into a truly reactionary party.” That “vision is coming true.”

“Conservatives who detest antisemitism were shaken by the interview,” said Michelle Goldberg in *The New York Times*. But “they were even more alarmed” when Kevin Roberts—head of the Heritage Foundation, the GOP’s preeminent think tank—released a video defending Carlson’s decision to host Fuentes. He said Heritage doesn’t police “the consciences of Christians” and accused a “venomous coalition” of targeting Carlson. It’s an argument made by other prominent new right thinkers, who portray the Left as



Fuentes and Carlson: A very friendly chat

an existential threat that “necessitates the final loosening of all remaining restraints.” Roberts did eventually denounce Fuentes after some Heritage donors and staffers slammed his video. But it was too late to stop a MAGA “civil war,” said Will Sommer in *The Bulwark*. Podcaster Ben Shapiro attacked Carlson for “normalizing Nazism,” Cruz called Carlson a “coward,” and Rep. Randy Fine (R-Fla.) said he’d canceled an event with Heritage because “I don’t work with antisemites.”

Yet the silence from President Trump’s heir apparent was “deafening,” said Eli Lake in *The Free Press*. Vice President JD Vance, a Carlson ally, said nothing about Fuentes, despite being a repeat target of Fuentes’ bile. In recent livestreams, Fuentes has called Vance—whose wife, Usha, is Indian American—“a fat race mixer” and vowed to disrupt Vance’s likely 2028 presidential campaign if he gets too close to “the Israel First lobby.” Vance has gone out of his way to avoid offending groypers, chiding the “pearl clutchers” who were outraged by the Young Republicans chat. Perhaps Vance thinks “he can tame the feral groypers, retain his friendship with Carlson, and keep the MAGA peace. But this is delusional.”

It’s not if you remember “Never Trumpism circa 2016,” said Nick Catoggio in *The Dispatch*. Back then, plenty of Republicans—like Vance—denounced Trump as “an unfit degenerate” only to embrace him “as the specter of a Hillary Clinton presidency loomed.” So why wouldn’t they embrace a future candidate who’s friendly to Fuentes or, at least, one who can triangulate “the growing divide between antisemitic and anti-antisemitic Republicans?” Practicing “strategic silence” might just be enough for Vance to keep everyone on side. “There will be no right-wing crack-up.”

Only in America

■ A Tennessee man spent more than a month in jail for criticizing President Trump. Larry Bushart, 61, posted a meme of President Trump with the words “We have to get over it”—a comment Trump made after a 2024 school shooting—in a Facebook thread on Charlie Kirk’s murder. Sheriff Nick Weems of Perry County promptly arrested Bushart, claiming he “intentionally sought to create hysteria within the community.” Bushart was released without charge last week.

■ Kentucky’s secretary of state issued a public advisory on Election Day, reminding Kentuckians they’re not eligible to vote in other states’ elections. After receiving multiple queries from concerned residents, Michael Adams wrote on X that Kentucky’s polling places were closed because “Kentucky votes next year. You cannot vote today in Kentucky for the mayor of New York City or the governor of Virginia. Sorry.”

Good week for:

Distancing, after President Trump claimed in a *60 Minutes* interview that he had “no idea” who Changpeng Zhao is, despite having pardoned the cryptocurrency billionaire of enabling money laundering just days earlier. Zhao’s firm Binance has had business dealings with the Trump family’s crypto company World Liberty Financial.

Emergency rations, after a 77-year-old Frenchman fell into a 130-foot-deep ravine while cycling home from a market in the mountainous region of Cévennes. He was rescued three days later, having sustained himself on several bottles of red wine that mercifully survived the fall.

Fido 2.0, after Tom Brady revealed that his young pit bull mix Junie is actually a clone of Lua, a family pet who died two years ago. The ex-NFL star thanked Colossal Biosciences, which specializes in “species restoration,” for giving his family “a second chance” with “our beloved dog.”

Bad week for:

Melting pots, after Vice President JD Vance told an interviewer that he finds it “totally reasonable and acceptable” for Americans not to want to live next to neighbors who don’t speak English. Vance’s sympathy deepens further if the hypothetical neighbors are from a “totally different culture.”

Los Angeles, which has displaced Chicago as the nation’s most rat-infested city, according to Orkin. The pest control company cited several factors that helped L.A. claim the No. 1 spot on its Rattiest Cities list, including “year-round warm weather” and “a booming culinary scene.”

Diagnoses, after a Maine health service sent letters to 531 still-living patients expressing condolences for their deaths and advising how next of kin could settle their estates. One patient who called MaineHealth about the erroneous letter said a customer service rep told her, “I’m glad to hear that you’re still alive and well.” And I’m like, “Yeah, me too.”

In other news

Trump asserts sweeping war powers over boat strikes

The Justice Department told Congress last week that the Trump administration will continue its attacks on alleged drug trafficking boats in the Caribbean, and that it is not bound by a Vietnam War-era law requiring lawmakers to approve any hostilities. Under the 1973 War Powers Resolution, a president who unilaterally orders the use of military force is supposed to terminate the operation after 60 days if it is not approved by Congress. But T. Elliot Gaiser, head of the DOJ’s Office of Legal Counsel, told a small group of lawmakers that Congress’ approval is not needed because the strikes do not put American troops in danger and so don’t rise to the level of “hostilities.” The boat attacks, which have killed dozens since September, have mostly been conducted by drones. President Trump has said repeatedly that the Caribbean operation could expand to include strikes on targets inside Venezuela.

The U.S. at a Glance

Ferndale, Mich.

Terrorism charges: Three men from the Detroit metro area were charged this week with attempting to aid the Islamic State and plotting a terrorist attack. The FBI arrested Mohmed Ali and Majed Mahmoud on Halloween and charged them with possessing AR-15-style rifles, handguns, and shotguns that prosecutors said were to be used in a terror attack in Ferndale, outside Detroit. A third Dearborn man, Ayob Nasser, was later



Mohmed Ali

arrested in connection with the alleged plot. The criminal complaint said that Ali and Mahmoud modified a semiautomatic weapon to increase its rate of fire. They allegedly called their plot “pumpkin day” and practiced shooting at firing ranges and outdoor locations. Authorities found over 1,600 rounds of ammunition in their homes. The complaint alleges that the pair discussed traveling to Syria to join ISIS and referenced a 2015 ISIS attack in Paris, saying they would do the “same thing as France.”

Ontario, Calif.

Shot by ICE: A 25-year-old U.S. citizen who was shot by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents this week said that he was trying to warn officers to move away from a bus stop frequently used by schoolchildren. According to his attorney, Carlos Jimenez had been driving to his job at a local food bank in Ontario when he



ICE encounter

saw the ICE agents pulling over a vehicle and blocking traffic. The officers drew their guns when Jimenez pulled up to ask them to clear the street. Jimenez was shot in the shoulder as he was reversing his car; his attorney says he was simply trying to get around the police vehicles. Prosecutors charged Jimenez with assault of a federal officer, alleging that he rapidly accelerated toward the agents, causing them to fire “defensive” shots. This incident came days after the police chief in Durango, Colo., said he would investigate reports that an ICE agent put a protester in a choke hold and threw her down an embankment.

State College, Pa.

Purge: The senior FBI official overseeing the agency’s aircraft and pilots lost his job last week after angering FBI director Kash Patel, becoming the latest casualty in Patel’s purge of experienced agents. An FBI veteran of 27 years, Steven Palmer led the agency’s critical incident response group, overseeing aviation units. The FBI forced him out after Patel expressed outrage about negative media coverage of his use of an FBI jet. Patel had traveled to State College, Pa., to see his girlfriend, country singer Alexis Wilkins, perform the national anthem at a wrestling match last month. FBI jet logs are publicly available, and Patel himself shared photos of his time in State College. His spokesperson maintained he followed rules requiring him to partially reimburse the government, and Patel said he wouldn’t be distracted by “the noise from uninformed internet anarchists and the fake news.” Palmer is the third head of the critical incident response team that Patel has fired or removed this year.

Washington, D.C.

Shutdown pain: The White House confirmed this week that it would comply with a federal court order to fund food benefits for millions as the longest government shutdown in U.S. history stretched past the five-week mark. Funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits lapsed on Nov. 1, but a Rhode Island judge ordered the Department of Agriculture to use \$4.65 billion from SNAP’s contingency fund to cover roughly half the usual benefits. Over 42 million Americans rely on SNAP, and 25 states plus Washington, D.C., sued the administration, arguing that halting SNAP was illegal. Trump insisted benefits “will be given only when the Radical Left Democrats open up government,” but White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said the administration would obey the judge’s order. The shutdown has caused widespread chaos, with Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announcing that flights would be cut by 10% at 40 major airports as air traffic controllers, who work without pay during the shutdown, call in sick.



Running out



McLean, Va.

Cheney death: Dick Cheney, George W. Bush’s running mate and one of the most influential vice presidents in U.S. history, died this week from complications of pneumonia, cardiac and vascular disease; he was 84. Though Cheney became a political lightning rod during his time as second-in-command, American flags at the White House were at half-staff and tributes from both Republican and Democratic lawmakers poured in. Former President Bush said in a statement that Cheney “was a patriot who brought integrity, high intelligence, and seriousness of purpose to every position he held.” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, however, gave only perfunctory comments on Cheney during a briefing session on Wednesday, and President Trump didn’t post about the former veep’s death, underscoring the antipathy that developed between the two during the 2024 presidential election, when Cheney endorsed Democrat Kamala Harris for president. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of *The Week*.



Cheney

Louisville

Fire in the sky: A UPS plane crashed in Kentucky this week, killing at least 11 people and injuring about a dozen others. An engine detached from the MD-11 plane as it was about to take off for Honolulu from Louisville’s Muhammad Ali International Airport. The plane, which had three UPS crew members and was loaded with 38,000 gallons of fuel, caught fire and fell to the ground about 3 miles from the airport. It tore open storage tanks of oil and propane as it crashed into a petroleum recycling facility, igniting a fireball and blackening the sky. Louisville houses UPS’s largest air cargo hub, and its airport was the fifth busiest for cargo traffic globally last year. Federal authorities are still investigating the crash, but former Department of Transportation inspector general Mary Schiavo suspected the plane’s fuel tank ruptured, starting the fire. “The poor pilots could do nothing at that point,” she said.

The World at a Glance



Caught on video

London

Knife rampage: A British man went on a stabbing spree through a train traveling from central England to London last week, leaving 11 people injured, several seriously. Witnesses said terrified passengers ran from car to car to escape him, and everyone poured out at a Cambridgeshire station.

Video showed the suspect, holding a knife, fleeing through the station, and when police tasered and tackled him, he shouted, “Kill me! Kill me!” The suspect, Anthony Williams, 32, was charged with attempted murder. Police ruled out terrorism but said Williams was also linked to incidents in Peterborough the day before, including brandishing a knife in a barber shop and stabbing a teen. One of those injured on the train, police said, was a railway worker whose attempts to stop the attack “were nothing short of heroic and undoubtedly saved many people’s lives.”

Paris

Deflating Shein: France this week threatened to ban Chinese fast-fashion retailer Shein after finding that sex dolls “resembling children” had been sold on the company’s website. “This has crossed a line,” said Finance Minister Roland Lescure. “These horrible objects are illegal.” The company promised to cooperate with French prosecutors investigating the matter and said it would impose a “total ban on sex-doll-type products” on its platform. The negative publicity came just as the company, known for online sales of cheap, trendy clothing direct from Chinese factories, was preparing to try its luck with a few brick-and-mortar stores. Its first physical store opened this week in Paris’ popular BHV Marais department store.

Uruapan, Mexico

Day of the Dead assassination: The mayor of Uruapan, in Mexico’s western Michoacán state, was gunned down last week in a town square where he was officiating at a candlelight ceremony for the Day of the Dead. Mayor Carlos Alberto Manzo Rodriguez, 40, was known for leading police raids wearing a bulletproof vest and cowboy hat, and had promised to end extortion by gangs in a city known as “the avocado capital of the world.” He was shot seven times, and two others were wounded. Police killed the suspected hitman and said the gun had been linked to a shoot-out between rival gangs. Manzo had criticized leftist President Claudia Sheinbaum for focusing on gathering intelligence rather than using soldiers to attack cartels. At his funeral, mourners chanted, “Justice! Out with Morena,” Sheinbaum’s ruling party.



Manzo’s funeral



F-35s in Puerto Rico

Caracas

U.S. military buildup: The U.S. military has started refurbishing the long-abandoned Roosevelt Roads naval base in Puerto Rico as it ramps up military pressure on Venezuela. The renovation is part of the largest U.S. military buildup

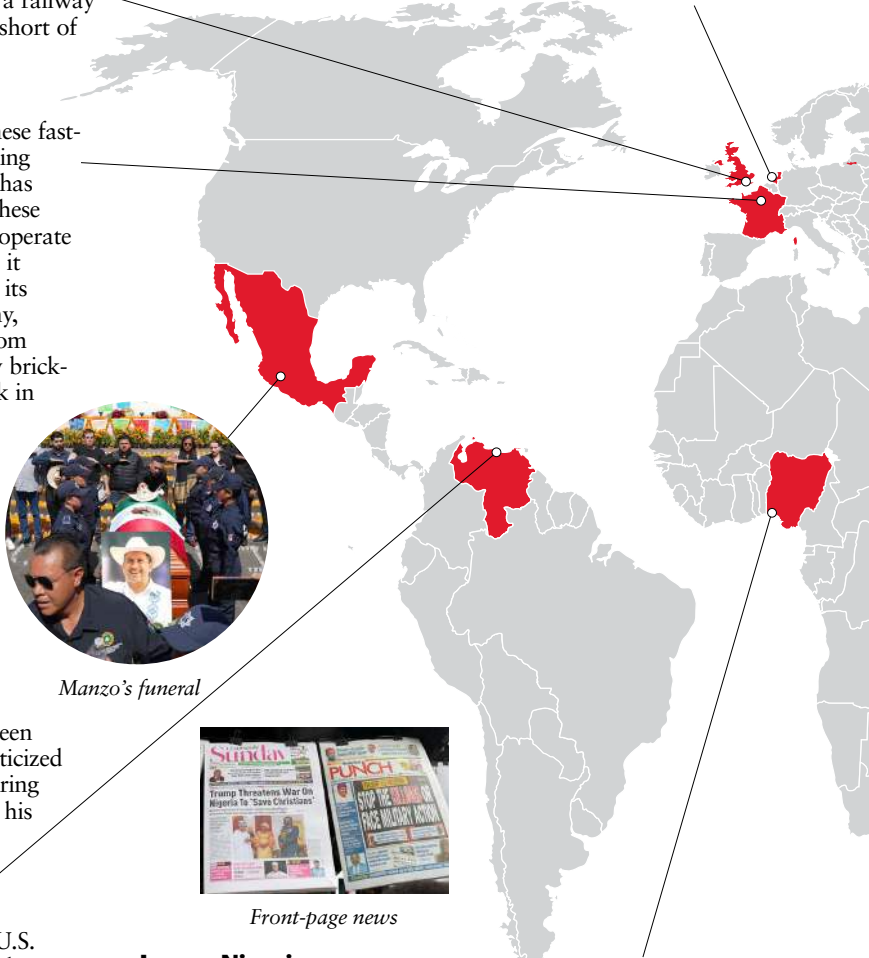
in the Caribbean in 30 years, which includes an aircraft carrier, nuclear submarines, guided-missile destroyers, and some 17,000 troops. The U.S. has also bombed at least 16 suspected drug boats, killing dozens. President Trump, who accuses Venezuela of sending drugs and criminals into the U.S., said this week that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s “days are numbered.” Christopher Hernandez-Roy of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said the moves are “designed to scare the pants off” Venezuelan generals and inspire a coup against Maduro.

Amsterdam

Far-right stumbles: The center-left D66 party eked out a win in Dutch parliamentary elections last week, putting its 38-year-old leader, Rob Jetten, on track to be the country’s youngest prime minister. With 16.9%, D66 narrowly beat Geert Wilders and his far-right Freedom party, which took 16.7%. Wilders’ party had easily won the 2023 elections, and the setback was seen as a rebuke of its anti-Muslim rhetoric. “Voters have clearly indicated the need for cooperation,” Jetten said. The pro-EU D66 will need three coalition partners to build a majority coalition. Wilders, who hadn’t become prime minister in 2023 because none of the other parties would partner with his, did not immediately concede defeat.



Jetten



Front-page news

Lagos, Nigeria

Accused by Trump: Nigerians reacted with shock this week after President Trump threatened military action, accusing the West African nation of letting “radical Islamists” slaughter Christians. Trump posted that the U.S. would cut aid and possibly go in “guns a-blazing” if Nigeria doesn’t protect “our cherished Christians” from terrorists. A day earlier, his administration put Nigeria on a list of nations threatening religious freedom. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu said it was unfair to call Nigeria, which is about 55% Muslim and 45% Christian, intolerant. “Nigeria stands firmly as a democracy governed by constitutional guarantees of religious liberty,” he said. The country has been battling Boko Haram and other Islamist groups—which kill both Muslims and Christians—for decades. An adviser to Tinubu said Nigeria would “welcome U.S. assistance as long as it recognizes our territorial integrity.”

The World at a Glance

Moscow

Russian pipeline blasted: Ukrainian forces struck and crippled a fuel pipeline near Moscow that Russia used to supply its army, Kyiv said last week. Military intelligence said the strike destroyed all three fuel lines in the 250-mile Koltsevov pipeline, which can transport 3 million tons of jet fuel, 2.8 million tons of diesel, and 1.6 million tons of gasoline per year. Analysts said it was a significant blow to Russia's military. "Our strikes have had more impact than sanctions," Ukrainian military intelligence chief Kyrylo Budanov said. Ukrainian drones also struck a Russian tanker in the Black Sea, and two drones got close to hitting an industrial plant 800 miles inside Russia. Russia said those two were shot down, but the increase in strikes on the homeland has unnerved residents.



Direct hit

Jerusalem

Orthodox rage: Hundreds of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews marched last week to protest a proposal to draft them into the military. The crowd blocked Jerusalem roads, chanting slogans against the secular state. Public resentment over the long-standing exemption from service for the ultra Orthodox, known as the Haredim, has grown during the Gaza war, in which more than 900 Israeli soldiers have died and thousands of reservists have served multiple tours of duty. The Supreme Court overturned the exemption last year, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has dragged its feet on conscripting Haredi men. The loss of ultra-Orthodox parties could sink Netanyahu's far-right coalition.



They say prayer is their service.

Jerusalem

Prisoner abuse: Israel arrested the country's top military lawyer this week on charges that she leaked surveillance video allegedly showing five Israeli reservists abusing a Palestinian prisoner from Gaza at a military jail. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi said she approved the release of the images in July 2024 to counter claims by far-right protesters and politicians that the torture allegations had been fabricated. The prisoner was admitted to a hospital with broken ribs and severe rectal injuries, and soldiers are accused of sodomizing him with a sharp object, which they deny. "There are acts that must not be committed," Tomer-Yerushalmi said, "even against the most despicable of detainees." She resigned last week and briefly disappeared, prompting concerns for her safety, after Israel's attorney general announced an investigation into the leak. Defense Minister Israel Katz accused the general of "blood libel."



Tomer-Yerushalmi

Hanoi

Claiming the Spratlys: Vietnam has built 21 artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea over the past four years, expanding its military footprint to counter China's territorial claims in one of the world's busiest shipping corridors. Satellite images show that Vietnam has created land on every rock and semi-submerged reef it controls in the contested Spratly Islands, *The Wall Street Journal* reported this week. The construction gives Vietnam more than 2,200 acres of fortified artificial islands. China, which seized several islands from Vietnam in the 1970s and '80s and claims the entire sea, has built nearly 4,000 acres of artificial land in the archipelago. Vietnam's islands, made with sand, coral, and rock from the ocean floor, include several ports and a 2-mile airstrip big enough for large military aircraft. The buildup began after China took the Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines in 2012.

Dodoma, Tanzania

Deadly protests after election:

President Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared winner of the presidential election last week by 98% in a vote that European observers said was a sham. Top opposition candidates were barred from running. Huge protests broke out across the country, and the opposition said police had killed hundreds of people. The government disputed that figure, and after protesters posted photos on social media showing their dead comrades' bodies with gunshot wounds, it shut down the internet for nearly a week. Service is now restored, but police warned that citizens who posted "pictures or videos that cause panic" would be arrested. Hassan, Tanzania's first woman president, raised hopes of reform when she took office in 2021; she had been vice president and acceded to the top post after President John Magufuli died. But she has used state forces to suppress protest, harass activists, and jail her opponents.



Protesters were shot.

Giza, Egypt

King Tut on display: Egypt last week inaugurated the long-delayed Grand Egyptian Museum, part of a government push to boost tourism and inject money into a crumbling economy. The government called the \$1 billion showplace a "gift to the world." The museum, near the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx, houses 100,000 artifacts, including the intact tomb of the boy king Tutankhamen. This will be the first time the tomb's full contents, including Tutankhamen's gold mask, throne, and chariots, have been displayed together since British Egyptologist Howard Carter found them in 1922. At an opening ceremony featuring a drone light show, President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said the museum would be a "platform for dialogue, a destination for knowledge, a forum for humanity, and a beacon for all."



Solid gold

Amer's flag of defiance



In the days after 9/11, Mo Amer experienced blatant Islamophobia for the first time in his life, said Andrew Marantz in *The New Yorker*. The stand-up comic, born in Kuwait to Palestinian parents, was 9 when his family moved to the U.S. He grew up in Texas and was 20 and working in a Houston flag shop when al Qaida terrorists attacked America. “All of these angry Texans

were showing up [at the store], and we sold out everything within 24 hours,” says Amer, 44. The customer who snagged the last flag was three hours late to pick it up. When he finally arrived, he eyed a prayer written in Arabic above Amer’s office. “And he goes, ‘This place is owned by a sand n-----.’ I was so jarred. I had never heard that term before, but obviously I understood right away what that meant, and I was furious. I was, like, ‘You’d better buy this flag. This is a super-polyester, \$500 flag.’ Which was not true. It’s, like, \$3 and we were selling it for, like, \$20.” Amer made the sale, then the man said he also needed a flagpole. “I was completely out. So I was, like, ‘Well, I have one flagpole, but, you know, it’s hand-carved and \$500 dollars but I’ll throw in a free stand.’ So I went to the back and grabbed the mop and unscrewed it. I was just so mad.”

The ‘geek’ who co-founded Wikipedia

Jimmy Wales is often referred to as the good guy of the internet, said David Shariatmadari in *The Guardian* (U.K.). But the idea that the Wikipedia co-founder deliberately used his tech skills for good—creating a free repository of human knowledge—rather than to make billions of dollars misses the mark. “Early in the career of Wikipedia, a lot of journalists were asking that question, thinking I was some kind of communist because, like, why would you be doing this thing as a nonprofit,” says Wales, 59. “But I’m not. I’m actually quite in favor of business and capitalism and all that.” Wales, a former trader, says he just likes doing interesting work. “And Wikipedia is super interesting. I visit with Wikipedians around the world, go to schools, and meet prime ministers.” While Wales, an American who lives in London, knows that a lot of bankers in the City make far more money than he does, he’s also sure that “almost all of them” lead lives that “are dramatically less interesting than mine.” He insists he’s not jealous of tech barons with private islands and superyachts. “I’m just a geek. I literally work every day in an office in my basement. And that’s my happy place. I’ve got my two computers and my treadmill. I’m not gonna go into space with my rocket. I like it here on Earth. There’s oxygen.”



When Knightley went incognito

At 17, Keira Knightley suddenly became one of the most famous women in the world, said Caitlin Moran in *The Times* (U.K.). The British actress made her big-screen breakthrough with *Bend It Like Beckham* and, over the next year, starred in *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Love Actually*. “I remember waking up one day and there were 10 men outside my front door,” says Knightley, 40, “and they didn’t leave for about five years.” It was the early 2000s, and the paparazzi would shout abuse—“It was mostly ‘whore’; ‘slut’ sometimes”—as she left her home in a bid to get a newsworthy reaction. Knightley chose passive resistance. She wore the same clothes every day and would simply stop walking if photographers were following her. “I’d literally stand there. Stock still. It wasn’t a valuable shot to them. There’s only so many times you can write, ‘Ooh, she’s wearing the same clothes,’ with a photo of me standing still. It gets boring.” In her early 20s—when she was the second-highest paid actress in Hollywood—she skipped town, ditching London to travel across Europe by rail. She says she wasn’t spotted once, thanks to her ability to act in an un-Keira Knightley fashion. “I was very good. Museums, trains, no one expects to see you there. I was very scruffy, which they also wouldn’t have expected. You just don’t make eye contact, go a bit hunched. I kind of *slithered*.”

In the news

■ Actress **Millie Bobby Brown** accused her *Stranger Things* co-star **David Harbour** of bullying and harassment before they began shooting the final season of the hit Netflix show, the *Mail on Sunday* (U.K.) reported last week. “There were pages and pages of accusations,” said a source, adding that Netflix spent months investigating the allegations. Harbour, 50—who plays Brown’s adoptive father in the show—was not accused of any sexual impropriety. The inquiry’s outcome is not known, but Brown, 21, was accompanied by a personal representative on set while filming the final season, which will air later this month. Harbour is also facing allegations that he cheated repeatedly on his estranged wife, singer Lily Allen. A source told the *Mail* that Allen—whose new album is a scathing attack on Harbour—supported



him during the Brown investigation. “It was a brutal time,” the source said.

■ Acting NASA chief **Sean Duffy** last week set the record straight for a conspiratorial **Kim Kardashian** after she dismissed the Apollo 11 moon landing as “fake.” In a new episode of her reality show, *The Kardashians*, the influencer, actress, and underwear mogul is seen reading an article on her phone to actress Sarah Paulson—her co-star in the new Hulu series *All’s Fair*—in which astronaut Buzz Aldrin supposedly declares that the 1969 lunar mission “didn’t happen.” Aldrin, 95, has never denied landing on or walking on the moon, but Kardashian, 45, told Paulson that she’s “seen a few videos on Buzz Aldrin talking about how it didn’t happen. He says it all the time now.” Duffy

addressed Kardashian directly on social media, telling her that, actually yes, the U.S. has sent astronauts “to the moon before...6 times!”

■ Vice President **JD Vance** drew backlash this week after saying that he hopes his wife, **Usha Vance**—the child of Indian Hindu immigrants—will eventually convert to his Catholic faith. “Do I hope eventually that she is somehow moved by the same thing that I was moved by in church?” Vance said after being asked about his marriage at a Turning Point USA event. “Yeah, I honestly do wish that.” On social media, some commenters accused Vance of pandering to Christian conservatives at the expense of his wife, with whom he has three children, while the *Times of India* said the veep “came across as ‘Hindu-phobic.’” Vance later accused his critics of “anti-Christian bigotry,” and praised Usha as “the most amazing blessing I have in my life.”

Briefing

Ultra-processed America

Highly processed foods make up most of our diet. Is that so bad?

What are ultra-processed foods?

It's a bit of a fuzzy area, but the gist is they're refined foods made from ingredients not typically found in home kitchens. Brazilian researcher Carlos Augusto Monteiro popularized the term in 2009, when he classified food into four categories. At one end of the spectrum lie foods from the farm, such as vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs, and meat; at the other, ultra-processed foods, including sodas and energy drinks, one-box meals, junk foods like chips, and fast food. The addition of high-fructose corn syrup is usually a hint that a food is ultra-processed. Eating these products has been linked to diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, depression, and obesity. Given that nearly one-third of teenagers and almost half of adults are prediabetic or diabetic, ultra-processed foods have become a scapegoat for America's health problems. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. called them a "poison" that's "driving our chronic disease epidemic," and California just became the first state to regulate them. But public health experts disagree on the dangers they pose, with some arguing the category is meaningless because it can describe everything from corn dogs to canned black beans. "A whole lot of things that you could never imagine can be done [to food]," said University of North Carolina nutritionist Barry Popkin. "You can't tell simply by the ingredients."

How much of these foods do we eat?

About 70% of the U.S. food supply qualifies as ultra-processed, and these items made up 55% of the food Americans ate from 2021 to 2023, according to a new Centers for Disease Control report. They've been omnipresent in grocery stores for decades, with high-fructose corn syrup consumption increasing a hundredfold from 1970 to 1993 (see box). But Americans are actually eating less of these foods than in previous years. The mean percentage of calories consumed by adults from ultra-processed foods dropped 3 percentage points from 2018 to 2023, sinking to 53%. For kids and teens, it dropped by almost 4 points, to 61.9%. While the bulk of most people's calories still comes from ultra-processed foods, "statistically, the decline is significant," said the CDC's Anne Williams.

Are they unhealthy?

The most prominent study, by the National Institutes of Health, compared an unprocessed diet loaded with fresh fruits and vegetables with an ultra-processed diet, giving participants in both groups equal amounts of salt, sugar, and fiber. The people on the junky diet ate about 500 more calories a day and gained more weight. Energy density, or calories per gram of food, explained the difference. Ultra-processed food is nearly twice as fattening as fresh food—three cups of broccoli, for example, has 100 calories,



A dopamine hit in every bite

the same amount as half a Hershey bar. A 2025 study also found a person's risk of premature death rose almost 3% for every 10% increase in ultra-processed foods consumed. "No reason exists to believe that humans can fully adapt to these products," said Monteiro.

So why do we eat them?

Partly, because they taste great. Ultra-processed foods are addictive, echoing the effect of a hit of nicotine on our dopamine systems. Studies show eliminating them can lead to withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety. They're also cheap and easy. In the NIH study, the unprocessed meals cost 40% more and took longer to prepare. That's why ultra-processed TV diners became popular in the 1950s and '60s, when more women were working but were still tasked with feeding their families. Nearly 19 million Americans now live in food deserts without access to healthy food and with little leisure time. "You have to be like, What am I going to cook? What am I shopping for?" said health policy expert Julia Wolfson. "It's a lot of planning and cognitive functioning and mental energy, which is not time- or cost-neutral."

How are these foods regulated?

Under California's new bipartisan Real Food, Healthy Kids Act, the state will identify ultra-processed foods "of concern" and eliminate them from school lunches by 2035. The ban is expected to cover most foods that contain unnatural substances like emulsifiers and flavor enhancers, as well as those with high levels of saturated fat, added sugar, sodium, and certain sweeteners. "D.C. politicians can talk all day about 'Making America Healthy Again,' but we've been walking the walk," said Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom. On this issue, he's aligned with Kennedy and his MAHA movement. Kennedy plans to release updated nutritional guidance prioritizing "whole foods, healthy foods, and local foods" and pinning down the definition of ultra-processed.

The corn syrup boom

It's no accident that corn syrup is so prominent in our diet. Subsidies given to farmers in the early 1980s made corn syrup production incredibly profitable just as tariffs raised the price of imported sugar. High-fructose corn syrup was a much cheaper ingredient than domestic sugar, and bread and snack companies made the switch. It's a different story in Europe, where the use of corn syrup is discouraged. Products like Fanta or Heinz ketchup, which have corn syrup here, contain sugar over there. But we may be slowly inching closer to Europe's model. Coca-Cola, which swapped cane sugar for high-fructose corn syrup in 1984, announced plans to reverse that move this year—one of numerous companies to make the switch. But as with corn syrup, excess consumption of cane sugar can lead to weight gain and other health problems. "These one-ingredient changes," said nutritionist and food policy expert Marion Nestle, "don't make these foods healthy."

Will that help?

It's debatable. Some experts argue the ultra-processed foods category is too broad to regulate. It contains Doritos and Coke, but also store-bought whole-wheat bread and hummus. Some highly processed products, such as certain breakfast cereals and yogurts, aren't associated with poor health outcomes; others, like gluten-free bread, provide alternatives for people with allergies. A committee advising the federal government last year decided against taking a strong position on ultra-processed foods, saying the science just wasn't sufficient to reach a definitive conclusion. "There are probably some subcategories that are perfectly fine—maybe even really good for you—and others that are particularly damaging," said NIH researcher Kevin Hall. "I just don't think we know which ones."

Best Columns: The U.S.

Reviving a food-stamp stereotype

Krissy Clark
Vox

As millions of food stamp recipients face real hunger, the myth of the “welfare queen” has come roaring back to life, said Krissy Clark. Popularized by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, this mythical figure was based on “a very old set of tropes and stereotypes” about shiftless Black women who refuse to work to keep the welfare spigot turned on. Now that Republicans and President Trump are holding SNAP, or food stamp benefits, for 42 million Americans hostage in the government shutdown battle, their supporters are posting phony, AI-generated videos of female SNAP recipients boasting of using their benefits to buy steaks and luxury items. One Trump ally, lawyer Mike Davis, posted on X that food stamp recipients should “get off your fat ghetto asses.” But this is “not an accurate depiction of most food stamp recipients.” Two-thirds are over 60, children or teens, or people with disabilities. “The vast majority” of the other third work, but get paid so poorly they still qualify for food assistance. More recipients are white than any other race, and undocumented immigrants don’t qualify. And the average food stamp benefit is \$6 a day. Could you live like a queen on that?

Providing fuel for Category 5 hurricanes

Dave Levitan
MSNBC.com

Jamaica has become the latest casualty of climate change, said Dave Levitan. Hurricane Melissa devastated the island last week after rapidly intensifying to a Category 5 storm while sucking heat from warm Caribbean waters, with winds that surpassed 185 mph flattening entire communities, leaving most of the island without electricity, and killing dozens of people. Such incredibly powerful storms have become “a grim hallmark of a warming world.” The number of hurricanes that rapidly grow from Category 1 to 3 has more than doubled over the past two decades, because warmer ocean waters serve as energetic fuel for these storms. Caribbean nations now face a high risk of such devastating hurricanes for the foreseeable future—“and the U.S. is not immune.” In 1992, Hurricane Andrew made landfall in southern Florida as a Category 4 and wreaked incredible destruction—\$60 billion in today’s dollars. If a Category 5 storm were to hit downtown Miami, the insurance giant Swiss Re estimates, it would do \$400 billion in damage. There’s simply no way to prepare for the apocalyptic winds, rain, and flooding of Category 4 and 5 storms. “In a warmer, warming world, more and more people are likely to join a grim, catastrophic club.”

The economic costs of zero migration

Idrees Kahloon
The Atlantic

For the first time in nearly a century, said Idrees Kahloon, the U.S. will soon hit “net zero migration,” with fewer foreign-born people entering the country than leaving. The Trump administration has triumphantly predicted that net zero will be achieved this year, as a result of deportations, border controls, and extreme restrictions on work and student visas. The consequences will include “a shrinking population,” fewer workers to pay for retired Americans’ benefits, and “lower economic growth.” We know this “because the U.S. has tried it before.” Previous immigration crackdowns in the 1930s, the 1960s, and the early 2000s, paradoxically, did not produce more jobs or higher wages for native-born workers. Why? Deprived of cheap, low-skilled labor, employers often turn to automation or offshoring rather than increase their payroll costs; many entrepreneurs, meanwhile, are deterred from launching new businesses. If the U.S. remains net zero, our country’s population will actually decline because our birth rate is so low. Payments into Social Security and Medicare will decline—accelerating the day the welfare state runs out of money. If “America’s gates are all but pulled shut” for years, American citizens will feel serious pain.

Viewpoint

“The central danger of populism is that it invites its practitioners to prefer what is popular to what is true or moral. The populist’s instinct, when contradicted, is to insist that The People must be right, and that contradicting the populist just shows that you are an out-of-touch, ivory-tower elitist who Doesn’t Get It—or worse, a bought-and-paid-for shill for The Man. Truth or falsehood doesn’t enter into the discussion, except perhaps through the implication that whatever is wanted by The People (or at least by a preferred subset of them) must be right.”

Dan McLaughlin in *National Review*

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

■ A Russian factory worker is refusing to return over \$87,000 his employer paid to him by accident. When the inflated paycheck arrived in his bank account due to a software glitch, Vladimir Rychagov initially believed it was a bonus. The factory firm told him to return it, but he decided after some legal research that since the error was not his fault, “I had the right to keep the money.” When the company grew more insistent, he used the cash to buy a new car and move his family to another city. The case has now reached Russia’s Supreme Court.



■ Sotheby’s is auctioning off a solid-gold toilet. Titled *America* and sculpted by provocative Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, the 18-karat toilet is fully functional. Bidding will start at the price of the 223 pounds of gold involved, about \$10 million. Cattelan is the same artist who last year sold a banana taped to a wall for \$6.2 million. Presale, the toilet will be installed in a bathroom in Sotheby’s Manhattan headquarters, where prospective buyers can eyeball it but not use it. “We don’t want people sitting on the art,” said a Sotheby’s spokesman.

■ A woman in Hopkinsville, Ky., who was expecting a delivery of medicine opened a package and instead found several human body parts. Two arms and four fingers packed in ice and intended for “medical training” were accidentally delivered to her home by a freight company. The local coroner, Scott Daniel, retrieved the body parts and had them sent to their original destination. The woman was “obviously a little shook,” Daniel said.

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BRAZIL

Favelas need money, not massacres

Ruth de Aquino
O Globo

Rio de Janeiro Governor Cláudio Castro has unleashed Rio's brutal police to do their worst, said Ruth de Aquino. Last week, 2,500 officers raided Vila Cruzeiro, a poor favela or shantytown, and killed over 130 suspected gang members. Mothers wept as residents, including children, carried bloody, mutilated bodies out of the Mountains of Mercy woods and laid them in the narrow streets. "There are people who have been executed, many of them shot in the back of the head, shot in the back," resident Raul Santiago told AFP news agency. While most Brazilian authorities decried the bloodshed, Castro proclaimed the operation a success, saying

no civilians were killed. It's true that many residents are fed up with gangs who extort them "for access to essential services like gas, electricity, transportation, and internet." But a "massacre like this, with decapitated, stabbed, and handcuffed corpses," will provoke only "more hatred and revenge." What the favelas need is "genuine political will and investment" to establish a state presence that can push out the gangs. That includes providing "basic sanitation," better roads and housing, and "access to public facilities." We can't shoot our way out of the problem. That merely kills gang foot soldiers "while the kingpins remain free."

MEXICO

The plague smuggled into our country

Luis Hernández Navarro
La Jornada

Mexico eradicated the "devastating New World screwworm" decades ago, said Luis Hernández Navarro, but the parasite is now returning "with a vengeance." The screwworm is a parasitic fly whose larvae burrow into animals' flesh, causing fatal infections. Smugglers have brought it across our southern border via the 800,000 head of cattle that are illegally imported each year, mostly from Nicaragua. How is it that over 2,000 animals a day, some of them infected with screwworm, can enter Mexican territory "without any authority noticing"? The answer is they do notice—they just don't care. An operation this big can't function without the "complicity and impunity" of crooked health

inspectors, police, soldiers, politicians, truckers, and ranchers. "Like skilled magicians, black marketers transform illegal cattle into legal ones" with "reused or counterfeit" identification tags, which officially cost 50 pesos (\$2.70) but fetch 10 times that on the black market. The criminals and their accomplices in government "don't care whether the animals are healthy or sick." Now the U.S., which buys 80% of our beef, has begun blocking Mexican beef to protect its own herds. Our government is releasing sterile screwworm flies in an effort to eradicate the disease, but that's not enough. If it continues "turning a blind eye" to smuggling, our beef industry will collapse.

Sudan: World does nothing as Darfur descends into horror

Sudan is reliving the "darkest moments of the Darfur genocide," said Hassan Gibril in the *Sudan Tribune* (Sudan, in exile). Rapid Support Forces paramilitaries last week blasted their way into El Fasher, the Sudanese army's last stronghold in the western region, after an 18-month siege. Reports say the RSF, born out of the Janjaweed ethnic-Arab militia that killed 300,000 Black Sudanese civilians in Darfur in the early 2000s, has slaughtered thousands of noncombatants. Satellite photos showed pools of blood and piles of corpses next to charred vehicles. There were "scenes of terror" everywhere as RSF fighters separated families at checkpoints and shot the men. RSF leaders denied the atrocities, but "gruesome videos shared by RSF fighters themselves" showed "summary executions of civilians and ex-combatants." In this ruined North Darfur city, the victims include many members of the Masalit tribe—the group the RSF massacred after conquering El Geneina in West Darfur two years ago. The world professes shock but, just as before, does little.

Humanitarian groups warned for months that the siege could "trigger a catastrophe," said Hassan Alnaser in *Mada Masr* (Egypt). The RSF encircled El Fasher with a mound of earth, slowly starving the 250,000 people remaining from a population of 1 million. Now roads to refugee camps remain blocked, "aid convoys have been looted," and "hospitals lie in ruins." The city's fall "marks a turning point." With total control of Darfur, the RSF has secure supply lines for weapons and fuel and a firmer "grip on gold mines and informal trade networks" it needs to



RSF fighters exulting in streets they emptied

split the country apart again, just 14 years after South Sudan was cleaved away. "It's as if we're discovering Sudan for the first time," said Mehdi Mabrouk in *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (pan-Arab), "when in reality, it's a country that has suffered for decades." Sudan was long the "most diverse and varied of all Arab countries," but its neighbors watched silently as it spiraled into "this horrific infighting" and "abhorrent sadism." Maybe Gaza "distracted us." Maybe it was Syria, or Lebanon. But the country's Arab and African neighbors can't look away any longer.

"What is happening in El Fasher now would not be happening without the United Arab Emirates," said Oscar Rickett in *Middle East Eye* (U.K.). The UAE is the main foreign backer of the RSF. From its two Sudanese bases, it keeps the RSF flush with weapons in exchange for gold, mercenaries, and "an entrenched presence in a large, strategically positioned country with a wealth of untapped resources." Yet the U.S. has put "no effective pressure" on the UAE, because it's too important to President Trump's Middle East plans and personal business interests—indeed, he bragged he could get "unlimited cash" from the Emiratis. The UAE isn't the only power involved here, said *Le Monde* (France) in an editorial. It backs RSF leader Hemedti, but Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia support Sudanese army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who's also accused of atrocities. Yet not one of the nations that profess concern for Sudan "has ever held those perpetuating the chaos accountable." Until they do, nothing will stop "Sudan's descent into hell."

Best Columns: Europe

United Kingdom: A call for fewer Black people on TV

“Does it matter what color the people in a sofa advert are?” said Marina Hyde in *The Guardian*. That should be low on the list of “things to wet your pants about.” But Sarah Pochin, a member of Parliament from the anti-immigration Reform UK party, has distinguished herself by wailing, “It drives me mad when I see adverts full of Black people, full of Asian people.” Talking to a caller on a TV call-in show who complained that such ads “don’t represent what this country looks like,” Pochin agreed, blaming the “woke liberati” for what she saw as a shortage of white English actors. Her comments rightly provoked near-universal outrage, with Health Secretary Wes Streeting calling them a return to “1980s-style racism.” Even Reform UK leader Nigel Farage conceded they were ugly, though he argued she wasn’t being “deliberately” racist. But of course she was. “Anyone who has got this far through 2025” knows this kind of talk is part of a “great unmooring” fueled by the far right. People now feel free to spout “dangerously irrational bigotry.”

You expect such words from Pochin, whose party dreams of “purging this country of non-white people,” said Darren Lewis in the *Daily Mirror*. But Conservative and Labour lawmakers are hypocritical to scold her given that they, too, have been stoking anti-immigrant fervor. Former Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May had campaign vans exhorting immigrants to “GO HOME,” while Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer said just this year that Britain must curb immigration lest it become



Sainsbury's supermarket ad from Christmas 2020

an “island of strangers.” The “wall-to-wall condemnation” of Pochin is unfair not only because her view is widely held, said Laurie Wastell in *The Spectator*, but also because it’s grounded in truth. A recent study found that Black people appear in 51% of TV commercials, 23% of the time in lead roles, although they make up only 4% of the U.K. population. Diversity campaigners always go on about the importance of “representation,” meaning too many white people, so why shouldn’t an MP point out that white families are actually underrepresented in TV ads?

Commercials aren’t intended to represent real life, said Clive Morgan in *The Independent*. They work by presenting an aspirational vision that connects the product to the viewer emotionally. That’s why car ads don’t show traffic jams; they show cars flying along the open road. In today’s Britain, diversity looks like possibility and progress. And remember, “every face onscreen is the product of research, focus groups, and consumer testing.” Brands have found that inclusivity sells, especially to the young. Reform UK should take note of that, said Stephen Bush in the *Financial Times*. The far-right party may have gained in polls, reaching 35% support, but 47% of Britons now see it as racist. This “extremist” stain can cost the party in elections, as undecided voters are likely to choose anyone but the Reform candidate. “There is a prize available here in England if either of the two big political parties can get its act together” and remind voters what politicians like Pochin are really selling.

DENMARK

Slandering the Jews for votes

Marcus Rubin
Politiken

Denmark’s Independent Greens party defines itself as pro-climate and anti-racist, but apparently antisemitism is just fine, said Marcus Rubin. The party’s new campaign poster, featuring the slogan “Free Copenhagen from Zionism,” is “very far over the line.” There’s nothing wrong with making “political use of the understandable anger that Israel’s war in Gaza has created.” Danes are free to oppose the idea of a Jewish state, and even some who support Zionism oppose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s far-right government and its expansion of West Bank settlements. But this new Independent Greens slogan goes beyond

such criticism—indeed, it’s eerily similar to the far-right Stram Kurs party’s crusade to “liberate Denmark” from Islam. Zionism and Judaism are “not synonymous.” But the party message blurs the line, evoking the old antisemitic trope that “Jews secretly control society, pulling the strings behind the scenes.” Independent Greens leader Sikandar Siddique insists the poster isn’t “aimed at Jews,” but it is clearly meant to suggest scary infiltration at city hall. This helps nobody. It stokes “fear and prejudice at a time when antisemitism is on the rise.” And it is so “offensive and extreme” that it can only harm the Palestinian cause.

GERMANY

The beef with plant-based burgers

Leo Fischer
Frankfurter Rundschau

The right-wing language police have come to the defense of meat, says Leo Fischer. Having slain “gender-inclusive terms,” they’re now waging a campaign to ban “misleading names” for plant-based foods, like “veggie burgers” and “soy steaks.” Governor Markus Söder of Bavaria is at the helm, as the leading conservative “meatfluencer.” His social media constantly shows him eating “colossal mountains of meat,” as proud as if “he killed those spareribs himself.” Having failed “to torpedo the meat substitute industry” in 2020, he and his fellow meat cultists are trying again at the EU Parliament. If they prevail, anyone who labels a nonmeat product a “burger” could “potentially be committing

a crime—or at least would face legal challenges under European law.” Manufacturers are already changing the names of their meat substitutes as a precaution. Yet it’s a phony issue. Nobody has ever “accidentally grabbed vegan liverwurst and then tearfully realized they’d bought something healthy.” If the meat industry really wanted to be honest, it shouldn’t object to saying “‘meat-processing residues in their own skin’ instead of the euphemistic ‘sausage.’” Schnitzel, for example, could be called “breaded adductor muscle of a creature that plays and makes friends.” Or how about calling all of it “end product of immeasurable exploitation of migrant workers”?

Noted

■ At least six top Trump administration officials have moved into military housing in the Washington area, where they are shielded from the public and receive enhanced security. They include senior White House aide Stephen Miller, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who live at Fort McNair; and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who lives in a home designated for the Coast Guard commandant. *The Atlantic*



■ President Trump has had the bathroom in the White House's Lincoln Bedroom renovated in lavish style, he revealed on social media. The new design, which features black-and-white marble and gold-plated fixtures including showerheads, faucets, towel racks, and a trash can, is "very appropriate for the time of Abraham Lincoln," Trump wrote. *USA Today*

■ The U.S. obesity rate has fallen from a record high of nearly 40% in 2022 to 37% today—a decrease representing 7.6 million fewer obese adults. Increased use of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs like Ozempic could be behind the drop; 12.4% of Americans now take the medication. *Semafor*

■ The Trump administration is restricting the number of refugees it admits annually into the U.S. to 7,500, and they will mostly be white South Africans. No reason was given for the limit, a dramatic drop from last year's ceiling of 125,000 set by the Biden administration. *Associated Press*

Bovino: The new face of mass deportation

Move over ICE, said Gregory Royal Pratt and Laura Rodríguez Presa in the *Chicago Tribune*, President Trump has a new favorite immigration agency. Frustrated that Immigration and Customs Enforcement has failed to hit a target of 3,000 daily arrests, the administration last week ordered a shake-up of the agency, replacing many of its regional leaders with Border Patrol officials. Trump has been impressed by the agency's "strong-arm tactics" in Chicago. While ICE's operations tend to be focused on migrants with criminal records, Border Patrol has roamed through the city with the "mission of arresting as many undocumented immigrants as possible." Agents who once patrolled the dangerous southern border now "stop mostly brown people at random" and demand to know "Where were you born?" Cellphone videos have shown officers blocking residential streets, firing pepper balls at residents, and dragging citizens from their cars. Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino was filmed hurling a tear-gas grenade at a crowd—behavior that last week earned him a scolding from a federal judge. "What we're seeing now," said Illinois immigration activist Fred Tsao, "is what the rest of the nation can expect."

Bovino is "the face of the Chicago deportation battle," said Jonathan V. Last in *The Bulwark*. He left a Chicago courthouse last week surrounded by



Bovino in Chicago

masked agents in camouflage gear, raising a clenched fist and employing "an exaggerated series of tactical command gestures, as if he were ordering a platoon into action at Dog Green Beach." It was "a performance piece," designed to tell Trump that he's "straight out of central casting" and Chicagoans that he's "an occupying military commander." He's certainly not acting like a law enforcement officer, said Jon Seidel in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. In court testimony, Bovino admitted to instructing his agents to arrest demonstrators "who make hyperbolic comments," in seeming violation of their First Amendment rights. And he refused to admit that he'd seen any protesters in Chicago who were not rioters, giving his agents cause to "go hard" against them.

With the Border Patrol leading Trump's crackdown, there will be "more scenes of tense, militarized confrontations in American cities," said Andrew Prokop in *Vox*. Whether that will "meaningfully increase deportations is a different question." Detention capacity remains limited, immigration courts are severely backlogged, and many countries are reluctant to accept deportees. But the Border Patrol's brutal tactics could still have an impact—by showing that "the U.S. has become an ugly, unwelcoming, and dangerous place to immigrants, and therefore scaring people enough to leave."

Obamacare: Why premiums are rocketing

When describing what it was like to discover how much her Affordable Care Act plan would cost next year, Stacy Cox "used one word repeatedly," said Justin Gomez in *ABCNews.com*: "devastating." The Utah-based photographer's monthly health insurance premium will leap from \$495 to \$2,168, an unmeetable cost she says will force her and her husband to go without insurance. Cox, 48, is one of an estimated 22 million ACA enrollees who will see their premiums spike in 2026—by an average of 114%, according to health policy group KFF. That rise is largely due to the Dec. 31 expiration of pandemic-era "enhanced" premium subsidies, which are at the heart of the government shutdown, with Democrats insisting any funding bill must also extend the tax credits. If those subsidies disappear, "the impact will not be felt evenly," said Robert King in *Politico*. It depends on an enrollee's income, size of household, and where they live; some states are contributing funds to reduce the impact. That includes Maryland, where the average ACA premium will rise 30%; in New Jersey, it's 175%.

The "lavish subsidies" are a "Band-Aid" for a broken health-care system, said *The Washington Post* in an editorial. Passed as a temporary measure to help families—including those earning more than

400% of the poverty level, who were previously ineligible for subsidies—the credits led ACA enrollment to more than double between 2019 and 2025. That increased the demand for health care, which in turn raised costs. "Now the bill is coming due," and Democrats' only plan is to shovel "more taxpayer money into a pit of ever-larger subsidies." Despite "Democratic howling," the real problem isn't the loss of subsidies, said *The Wall Street Journal*. It's that the ACA "is a debacle" delivering plans "few deem worth buying unless they're protected from the cost." The GOP should seize this moment "to start building lifeboats from Obamacare."

Good luck with that, said Jonathan Cohn in *The Bulwark*. Since the day President Barack Obama signed the ACA into law in 2010, Republicans have assailed the program while promising "to provide cheaper, better health care without major coverage losses." But their abject failure to deliver a plan has become "a running joke in Washington," and the idea that it will happen now "is so fanciful" even GOP Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene "has mocked it." That's why, with their own constituents getting sticker shock, a Republican compromise on subsidies may be coming. GOP lawmakers may hate Obamacare, but "they know the voters disagree."

Talking Points

Andrew: His Epstein disgrace is complete

Prince Andrew “is no more,” said *The Guardian* in an editorial. Amid a renewed public outcry over Andrew’s long friendship with American convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, King Charles III announced last week that he will strip his younger brother of all his royal titles and order him to vacate his lavish 30-room home on the grounds of Windsor Castle. The erstwhile prince, Duke of York, and His Royal Highness will henceforth be known only as Andrew Mountbatten Windsor. Public disgust with Andrew had been simmering in the U.K. for more than a decade, after Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre accused him of raping her when she was 17. But the outrage recently intensified after several U.K. news outlets published a trove of incriminating emails between Andrew and Epstein, including messages that indicate Andrew ordered his taxpayer-funded police guard to dig up dirt on Giuffre. In a posthumous memoir published last month, Giuffre wrote that the “entitled” royal thought that having sex with powerless teen girls like her “was his birthright.”



Edward with Charles: Bad for the brand

The growing revulsion over Andrew’s misconduct “backed King Charles into a corner,” said **Autumn Brewington** in *MSNBC.com*. Charles had to officially cast out his wayward brother to save “the

royal family’s brand.” Over the years, Andrew’s scandalous behavior also included “allegations of questionable relationships and lavish trips,” and involvement with Chinese and Russian spies who supplied sex and offers of lucrative business deals.

Even if he was a bit late in acting, King Charles “has shown a ruthlessness and moral clarity others should try,” said **Rosa Prince** in *Bloomberg*. President Trump and the

Republican-controlled Congress should release the Epstein files, which the majority of his MAGA supporters want, so that Americans can find out who else was complicit in Epstein’s sexual abuse of minors. But House Speaker Mike Johnson will evidently do anything to keep the files secret, said **William Kristol** in *The Bulwark*. He still refuses to swear in Democratic U.S. Representative-elect Adelita Grijalva of Arizona six weeks after she won a special election, because she will provide the crucial 218th signature on a discharge petition that could force the House to release the Epstein files. For some reason, longtime Epstein pal Trump desperately opposes that release. “Epstein has become a Republican problem, not simply a Trump problem,” and the GOP “is now a full co-conspirator in the cover-up.”

Trump: On the path to autocratic rule

“Are we losing our democracy?” asked *The New York Times* in an editorial. “The United States is not an autocracy today,” but President Trump and his administration have raised this “chilling question” with a series of major steps toward one-man rule. Most modern authoritarians like Hungary’s Viktor Orban and Turkey’s Recep Tayyip Erdogan have not seized power in an overnight military coup, but instead by using the power of elected office to steadily erode freedom and the rule of law, intimidate citizens and the national legislature into compliance, defy courts, prosecute enemies and punish free speech, and “make political opposition more difficult, if not impossible.” Trump has checked all those boxes. Like many autocrats, he’s engaged in blatant corruption, adding billions to his net worth, while promoting a bizarre “cult of personality.” America “has started down an anti-democratic path”—and we are not yet one year into Trump’s four-year term.

Like other authoritarians, Trump also insists on “the right to unilaterally use the military” for whatever purpose he chooses, said **Jim VandeHei** and **Mike Allen** in *Axios*. He has declared multiple states of emergency as a pretext to deploy National Guard troops and armed federal agents to the streets of Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C.,

and other cities. In the Caribbean, Trump has ordered the military to obliterate boats and kill dozens of people he alleges were smuggling drugs, without any evidence or due process. The U.S. has become what scholars call “a competitive authoritarian regime,” said **Christopher Armitage** in his *Substack* newsletter. In countries like Orban’s Hungary and Narendra Modi’s India, elections take place, opposing parties exist, and courts function—but they all “operate on a playing field tilted so severely” that true democracy no longer exists. If Americans do not mobilize in massive numbers to halt Trump’s power grab, he’ll move the country to the next stage: “consolidated authoritarianism,” or true dictatorship.

The 2026 midterms will be “a pivotal moment,” said **David A. Graham** in *The Atlantic*. To keep Republican control of the House, Trump has promoted extreme redistricting, is attempting to usurp states’ constitutional roles in administering elections, and is challenging the integrity of voting machines and mail-in balloting. What is to stop him from sending armed soldiers to intimidate voters and ordering the seizure of “fraudulent” voting machines and ballots? If he gets away with that, “there may not be much democracy left to save in 2028.”

Wit & Wisdom

“The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way a person looks or people look at reality, then you can change it.”

James Baldwin, quoted in *The Atlantic*

“The most successful people I know believe in themselves almost to the point of delusion.”

Sam Altman, quoted in *The Knowledge*

“The sleep of reason produces monsters.”

Francisco Goya, quoted in *The New Yorker*

“It’s tough to make predictions, especially about the future.”

Yogi Berra, quoted in the *Santa Cruz, Calif., Good Times*

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Arundhati Roy, quoted in *Good Housekeeping*

“Most of us spend too much time on the last 24 hours and too little on the last 6,000 years.”

Will Durant, quoted in *The Dharma Dispatch (India)*

“Jokes are resistance.”

Comedian Sammy Obeid, quoted in *Salvos*

Poll Watch

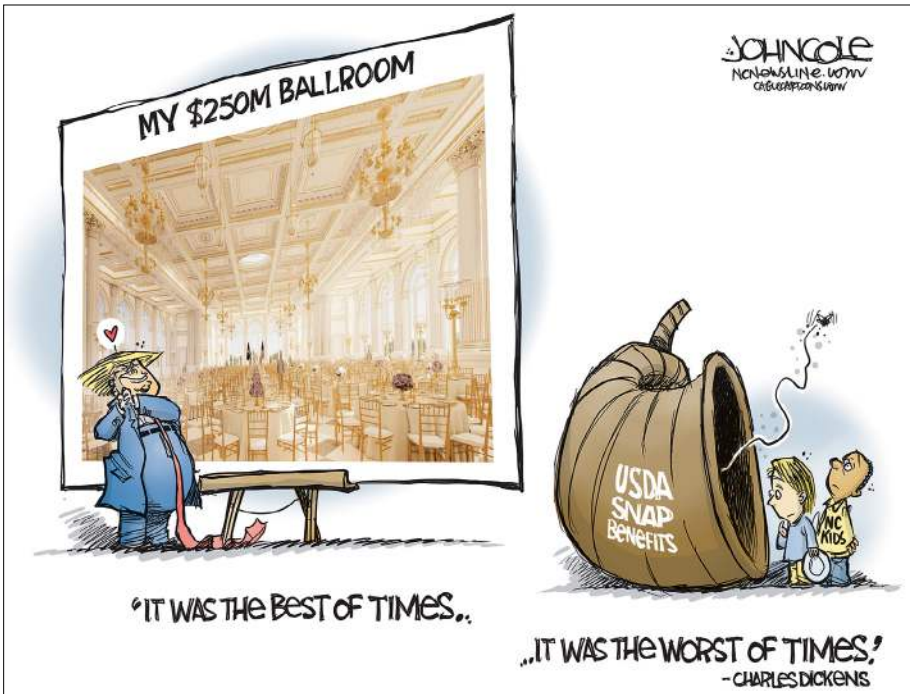
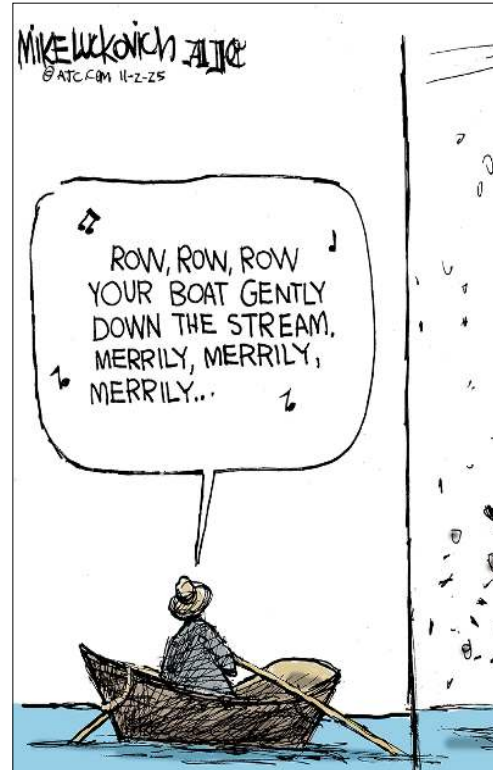
■ **64%** of Americans think President Trump is going too far in trying to expand the power of the presidency. **59%** disapprove of his job performance, and **62%** disapprove of his handling of the economy.

The Washington Post/ABC News/Ipsos

■ **55%** of Americans expect an increase of political violence. **24%** believe there are some instances where political violence is justified. **41%** are afraid to share their political views in public.

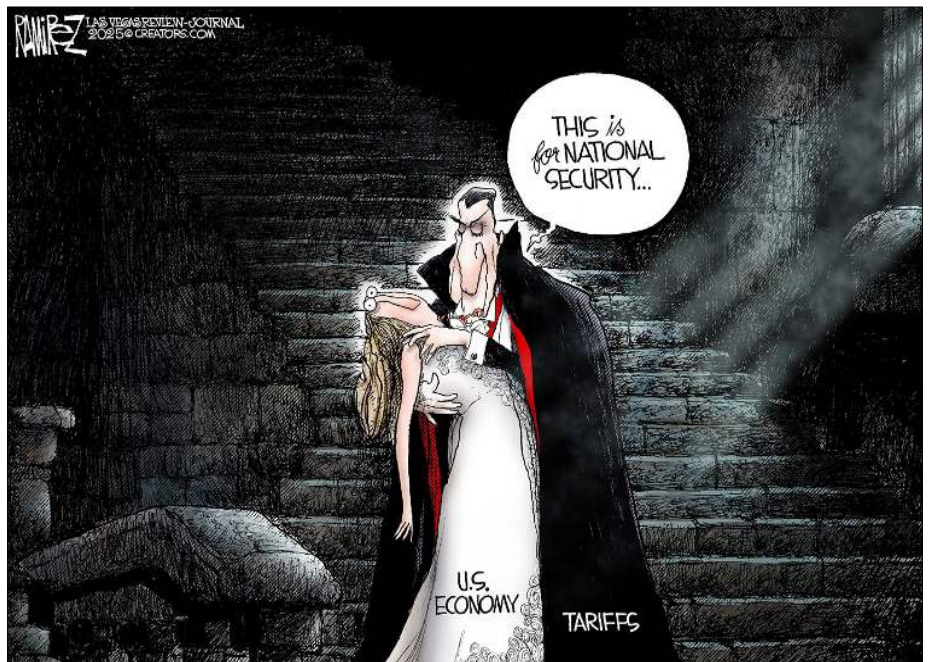
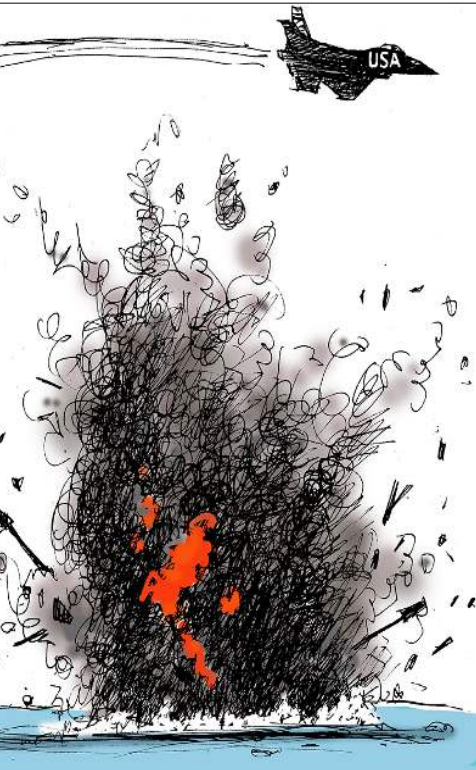
Politico/Public First

Pick of the Week's Cartoons



Pick of the Week's Cartoons

For more political cartoons, visit:
theweek.com/cartoons



\$5 trillion web: Nvidia's tangle of circular deals

Nvidia is turning into a one-firm industrial revolution, said Dave Lee in *Bloomberg*. The California chipmaker topped \$5 trillion in market value last week, the first company in history to do so. But beyond the staggering headline number is the truly unprecedented nature of how central “its success is to the entire global economy.” Nvidia now plays a crucial role in everything from the creation of “self-driving cars with Uber and Lucid” to “pharmaceutical research with Eli Lilly.” That doesn’t even include the billions of dollars in bookings from AI companies like OpenAI on its balance sheet or “the possibility that talks between President Trump and President Xi Jinping of China might pave the way for Nvidia’s most sophisticated chips to be sold in China.” The elephant in the room, however, is that Nvidia’s influence also “makes it a potential \$5 trillion single point of failure.”

The “emblematic stupidity of the AI boom” may be summed up by one photo, said Robin Wigglesworth in the *Financial Times*. In it, superstar Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang is “chillaxing” over beers and fried chicken with the chief executives of Samsung and Hyundai. What’s absurd is that traders proceeded to drive up the stock price of just about any South Korean company linked to fried chicken. “The phenomenon of anything remotely AI-adjacent rallying hard” is reminiscent of past bubble peaks. “The



Huang: A stake in everything from cars to pharma

incestuous relationship between the AI companies themselves” makes the situation more worrisome.

The “dollars at stake are exponentially bigger, the deals are more complex, and the money trail is often harder to follow,” said Jonathan Weil in *The Wall Street Journal*, but the basic structure of the AI industry is much like what we’ve seen in past bubbles. The buzzword used to describe it these days is “circularity.” Nvidia is investing \$100 billion in OpenAI, while Open

AI will in turn send the money back to Nvidia, and to Oracle, from which OpenAI has promised to buy \$300 billion of computing power—which relies, yet again, on Nvidia chips.

The circular deals have swelled fears that “a bust is coming,” said Noah Smith in *Noahpinion*. But maybe the problem isn’t the circularity. Sure, Nvidia is essentially lending OpenAI money to buy its chips. That, though, is something big companies have always done. The simpler and more obvious issue is that despite its \$5 trillion market value, according to Nvidia’s financial statements, more than half of its revenue at the beginning of this year “came from just four big mysterious customers—probably Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Meta.” And regardless of who is buying chips from whom, all of them are “existentially dependent” on the giant AI bet.

Innovation of the week

Nike’s “robot” shoes aim to put a motorized pep in your step, said Michael Calore in *Wired*. The athletic apparel giant last recently unveiled “an early design of a powered footwear system” that boasts its own battery-operated motor within a mechanical arm stretching up the wearer’s calf. “At the end of each step, the motor pulls up on the heel of the shoe,” giving “an extra push.” Nike says the robot shoes are intended to help “middle-of-the-road” runners with their training as well as “people who are on their feet for long stretches” and want the “ability to stay mobile longer and with more comfort.” The system is still in development, Nike adds, with the goal of a commercial release in 2028.



Bytes: What’s new in tech

■ Banning teens from role-playing bots

The artificial intelligence startup Character.ai became the first big AI firm to enact age restrictions on its products, said Cristina Criddle in the *Financial Times*. The company announced last week that it will bar users under age 18 from talking to chatbots beginning on Nov. 25. Until then, teen users will have a “gradually reducing time limit before stopping them completely.” Character.ai, whose bots can assume different personas like “Egyptian pharaoh,” “an HR manager,” or “toxic girlfriend,” will still let teens create videos and stories while using text prompts. The new policy comes “amid growing public and regulatory scrutiny over the safety of AI technology for young users.” Character.ai is facing multiple lawsuits, including one case in Florida “that claims the platform played a role in the suicide of a 14-year-old.”

■ An ‘outage mode’ for smart beds

Smart-bed owners were questioning the intelligence of their purchase after Amazon’s outage, said Jess Weatherbed in *The Verge*. When Amazon’s cloud services got knocked offline last month, it was a disruption for many people—and a disturbing wake-up call for owners of tech-loaded beds. Eight Sleep’s “smart” mattress toppers—which start at \$2,000 alongside “a monthly Autopilot subscription (starting at \$17) to use

the features”—rely on cloud connectivity and an active internet connection. The Amazon outage caused some customers’ beds to get “stuck at sweltering temperatures and uncomfortable incline positions.” Eight Sleep said it was introducing a new “outage mode” that “allows the app to communicate with Pod devices over Bluetooth,” meaning users can turn the smart bed “off” in the event of another server crisis.

■ ChatGPT enters the housing market

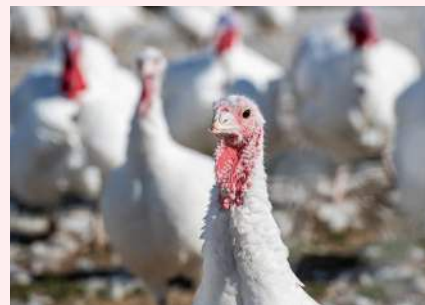
Artificial intelligence is “quickly reshaping the real estate industry into something that isn’t necessarily, well, real,” said Kat Tenbarge in *Wired*. Using AI tools like ChatGPT, realtors can within seconds transform photos of an empty home into one filled with virtual furniture. And with the app AutoReel, they can turn still images of a property into walk-through videos. But house hunters complain that realtors are also using AI to make their properties “a little too perfect.” Angry would-be buyers have shared scores of AI-driven misleading listings on social media, ranging from “a New York City apartment listing where a tiny loft became a master bedroom to an edited house facade, complete with a new roof, in Detroit.” In the AI-tweaked photos of one listing in Michigan, “kitchen cabinets were missing, backyard pavement was replaced by grass, and windows were dramatically resized.”

Health & Science

A bird flu threat to Thanksgiving

After a quiet summer, bird flu is back—just in time for Thanksgiving. Cases tend to surge in the fall, when migrating geese and other birds head south. Since early September, nearly 7 million farmed birds have died in new outbreaks, and 1.3 million of them were turkeys. The National Turkey Federation says there will definitely be enough supply for the holiday rush, largely thanks to stockpiles of frozen birds. But wholesale prices are already 40% higher than they were last fall, and they could rise even further for fresh birds if the outbreaks worsen. It doesn't help that this year's surge began earlier than usual, or that it is coinciding with

a federal government shutdown that has left disease surveillance severely hampered. Both the USDA and the CDC have suspended their channels of routine communication with the states, leaving farms, veterinary labs, and state health departments with patchy information. But the more the virus spreads in animals, the more likely it is to evolve a way to spread among humans; it has already jumped to dozens of mammal species. Since 2022, at least 70 people in the U.S. have been infected, and one has died. For now, authorities are taking a watch-and-wait approach. "It's an interesting time," Declan Schroeder, a virology professor at the University of Minnesota's College of Veteri-



More than 1 million turkeys have died.

nary Medicine, tells *NBCNews.com*. "Everyone is waiting with bated breath to see what's going to happen."



Late pregnancy loss is not uncommon.

The shocking rate of stillbirth

The death of a baby during or close to delivery is a terrible tragedy. It turns out it's not as rare as once thought and is more likely to happen to Black women. Researchers who analyzed health insurance data covering 2.8 million pregnancies between 2016 and 2022 found that 19,000 ended in stillbirth, defined as the death of a fetus in the womb after 20 weeks of gestation. That's about 1 in every 147 births, much higher than the 1 in 175 that the CDC had estimated based on fetal death certificates. The rates were even higher for low-income families (1 in 112 births) and in areas with higher proportions of Black families (1 in 95 births). The study also found that while most stillbirths involved at least one known risk factor, such as obesity, substance abuse, or diabetes, nearly 30% occurred when there was no such cause for alarm. "It's astonishing that in our day and age, so many stillbirths happen with no identified risk factors," co-author Jessica Cohen, from Harvard's School of Public Health, tells *The Washington Post*. "We have watches that track our sleep and stress, but we can't always tell when a pregnancy is in trouble."

Anti-vaxxers come for pets

Veterinarians are reporting a troubling new trend: rising vaccine hesitancy among pet owners, reports *The New York Times*. In a

shift that mirrors the rise of the human anti-vaxxer movement, formerly routine inoculations for dogs, cats, and other pets have become increasingly contentious. Some people now refuse to get their animals the shots, accusing vets of profiteering. "I actually had someone scream and storm out because we required rabies vaccines for her cats," says Kelly McGuire, a vet in Colorado. There is no solid data on vaccination rates for pets, so it is unclear beyond anecdotal evidence whether they are actually falling. But a 2023 survey found that more than half of owners expressed doubts about the safety of or need for vaccines, and a poll the following year suggested that around a quarter of dog and cat owners could be classified as "vaccine hesitant." If rates really are falling, that could mean that deadly, vaccine-preventable diseases—such as rabies or leptospirosis—could spread to humans. "Dogs are sharing our beds with us now," says veterinarian Steve Weinrauch. "They're kissing our children's faces."

Pig kidney lasted months

A man has set a new record by living 271 days with a genetically modified pig kidney. Tim Andrews, 67, received the transplant at Massachusetts General Brigham in January. Suffering from end-stage kidney disease, he'd been undergoing six hours of dialysis three days a week. Andrews knew the "xenotransplant" procedure was risky but thought it was worth it if he could get off dialysis, at least for a little while, and help further the science of transplants. The pig kidney, which came from a genetically edited animal named Wilma, allowed him to return to normal activities: cooking, walking his dog, and on one occasion even throwing the first pitch at Fenway Park. "I was alive, and I hadn't been in a long time," he told CNN earlier this year, describing the transplant as "a miracle." He had to have the kidney removed recently after it began to fail, and now he's back on the waiting list. Mass General hailed Andrews—the fourth person in the U.S. to get a pig kidney—as a "selfless medical pioneer."

Growing a monster pumpkin

The world record for biggest pumpkin has been smashed yet again, reports *Smithsonian*. Twin brothers Ian and Stuart Paton of the U.K. harvested an orange beast this year that weighs 2,819 pounds. Thirty years ago, no one had passed the 1,000-pound mark, but these days the record is broken every two or three years. That's because obsessive growers are using advances in selective breeding, precision feeding, and soil science to generate ever larger fruits of the Atlantic Giant variety, *Cucurbita maxima*. The growers

regulate micronutrients in the soil such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and they pollinate the flowers by hand to prevent any unwanted cross-pollination. Scientists say the record-breaking trend can't continue forever, but with new highs continually being set—and now edging toward the 3,000-pound milestone—no one knows where the limit lies. Unlike in most competitive endeavors, pumpkin growers are more likely to swap tips and advice than guard secrets. "We prefer to help everyone else," says Ian Paton. "We prefer to think of pumpkin growing as the friendliest sport in the world."



Review of Reviews: Books

Book of the week

Paper Girl: A Memoir of Home and Family in a Fractured America

by Beth Macy (Penguin, \$32)

Beth Macy's characterization of life today in her Ohio birthplace "might feel familiar, like an update of JD Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*," said Alex Kotlowitz in *The Atlantic*. In fact, the vice president grew up an hour down the road. "But unlike Vance, who blamed much of his hometown's misfortune on its residents," Macy returned to Urbana, Ohio, an economically distressed city of 11,000, eager to listen to and learn from her former neighbors about why so many friends no longer talk to one another and why so many embrace the politics of Donald Trump. In *Paper Girl*, her new hybrid of memoir and social portrait, the Roanoke, Va.-based author of *Dopesick* and *Factory Man* "does what most opinion essays don't even try to do: She gets out of her bubble." And one of her most striking discoveries is how lonely many Americans are.

Our culture divide won't be erased anytime soon, said Leigh Haber in *The Washington*



Urbana today: A small city wrung dry

Post. But "in offering us a chair at her kitchen table, Macy has injected a rare note of civility into the conversation." Macy herself grew up poor; she was the daughter of the town drunk. After a newspaper route earned her pocket money, a Pell Grant enabled her to earn a college degree, and while she never cut all ties to Urbana, she was startled to discover upon her return that a place once proud to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad had shifted from

Republican-leaning to deep red, with QAnon lies metastasizing and Confederate flags flying. Macy traces the discontent back decades and calls on various experts to help fill in the big picture of job losses and failing public institutions. The result is a "searingly poignant" book that's not afraid to call out liberals for being so blind to red-state pain.

"The conversations Macy has in this book—both with her family and others in MAGA world—are fascinating, but never entirely fruitful," said Grace Byron in *The New Yorker*. She fares better when focused on her book's true star: Silas, a young trans man working against the odds to move up in the world. Silas' inclusion "could come across as a cynical ploy," an easy way for Macy to highlight small-town intolerance. But Silas mostly illustrates how much more challenging life has become for Urbana's ambitious young adults. Meanwhile, Macy blames Trump for the political polarization she sees, which feels too easy. Her "more compelling argument" is that America's middle class is being crushed by the nation's ultrarich. Since Trump's 2016 election, many books have attempted to explain the nation's deep divide. "Few do so as deftly as Macy's."

Novel of the week

The Rose Field

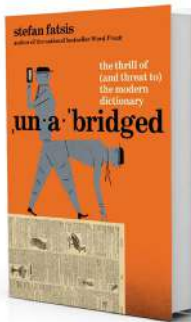
by Philip Pullman

(Knopf, \$30)

The 670 pages of Philip Pullman's new franchise caper "fly past at an astonishing rate," said Laura Miller in *Slate*. The novel wraps up *The Book of Dust*, Pullman's follow-up trilogy to the seminal fantasy series *His Dark Materials*. And though the book's structure proves "rickety" at times, *The Rose Field* is "jam-packed with chases, daring escapes, and strange and magnificent creatures" as Lyra, the *Dark Materials* child heroine who has now reached her 20s, continues searching for Pan, her daemon or animal spirit, who earlier abandoned her. Her quest is revealed to be "inextricably entwined" with a global battle against theocratic authoritarianism, said Sarah Crown in *The Guardian*. "Here more than ever," the world of the book "appears as a charged and slanted version of our own." But where the ending of *His Dark Materials* was both emotionally and intellectually satisfying, this time, "there is a sense of threads left unknotted." Fortunately, that feels fitting—"the ultimate reflection of the fact that *The Book of Dust* is a story for grown-ups, not children, and storybook endings are another casualty of the putting away of childish things."

Unabridged: The Thrill of (and Threat to) the Modern Dictionary

by Stefan Fatsis (Atlantic Monthly, \$30)



"Are dictionaries going the way of dodos, pocket calculators, and civil discourse?" asked Chris Hewitt in *The Minnesota Star Tribune*. Sure, dictionaries are still printed. But the information they specialize in has largely moved online, and

Stefan Fatsis' lively new history of the once-ubiquitous reference books includes an insider account of the collapse of Merriam-Webster's most recent bid to print an updated unabridged volume. While *Word Freak*, Fatsis' previous book, proved gripping because it built to a Scrabble championship showdown, "*Unabridged* does not have that kind of narrative spine." It's instead the kind of book "enjoyed by dipping in and out of its discrete chapters," whether Fatsis is focused on how social media is changing English or forecasting how AI may change how we view dictionaries.

The book "abounds with curious particulars," said Henry Hitchings in *The Wall*

Street Journal. Fatsis amusingly relates how Noah Webster strove to modernize English spelling when he created America's first dictionary in 1806, only to be laughed at for suggestions such as "soop" and "spunge." Insults were also flung at Merriam-Webster in 1961 when its unabridged *Third New International* edition included an entry for "ain't." That was the book primed for a revision when Fatsis landed work as a trainee lexicographer at Merriam-Webster's Springfield, Mass., headquarters. While he's often sardonic, his book is also "a stout defense of the craft of making dictionaries."

Fatsis' best passages detail office life at Merriam-Webster, said Dan Piepenbring in *The New York Times*. We're there both for a retiree's wistful send-off and a debate over a risqué definition of Dutch oven. At times, the book feels "like a Frederick Wiseman documentary about the last days of lexicography," which I wanted more of. But *Unabridged* also provides "an excellent primer on Merriam-Webster's role in the culture wars, with thorough accounts of the dictionary's approach to the N-word, the F-word, 'Covid-19,' and 'woke.'" In the end, Merriam's place in our national life comes across as privileged but tenuous. "We ask the dictionary to serve as both the authoritarian father and the laid-back uncle, but we bridle if it settles too comfortably into either role."

The Book List

Best books...chosen by Bryan Washington

Bryan Washington's newly published third novel, *Palaver*, is a National Book Award finalist that chronicles a mother's surprise two-week visit with her gay American son living in Tokyo. Below, the prize-winning author of *Lot* names six favorite books of the past decade.



The Membranes by Chi Ta-wei (2021). An entire world of a book. This novel fits an epic narrative beautifully into a relatively compact text, with room to play—incorporating science fiction, history, and humor in a deeply speculative but approachable universe. The characters have many layers, and Ari Larissa Heinrich's translation from the Chinese delivers them seamlessly.

Walking Practice by Dolki Min (2023). At its heart, this novel's narrative is about difference and isolation and connection, presented through intertwined windows of queerness and gender, highlighting the (delightful, irreparable) horror of following one's true desires. Alongside the author's vibrant illustrations, Victoria Caudle's translation from the Korean is a dream.

Cross-Stitch by Jazmina Barrera (2023). Barrera is astounding. Here's a novel of girlhood, adulthood, and the shifting nature of relationships between ourselves and others. The novel blends loss with levity and laughter, underlining that none of these elements is an island. An incredible translation from the Spanish by Christina MacSweeney.

Almond by Sohn Won-Pyung (2017). Such a wonderful novel. The character building and world of its narrator are both deeply specific and wholly expansive. A bullied kid finds a friend and a community after a tragedy and, more crucially, starts to accept the many different versions of himself. The translation from the Korean by Sandy Joosun Lee is warm and delightful.

So We Look to the Sky by Misumi Kubo (2021). A novel that's tender, jarring, and technically dazzling. Kubo weaves timelines into a compounding bildungsroman, tackling questions of love and acceptance and isolation. Deeply stirring, and woven together in a stellar translation from the Japanese by Polly Barton.

Another Brooklyn by Jacqueline Woodson (2016). I'm always thinking about this book's structure and themes. It's an elliptical coming-of-age story, a coming-to-terms story, and a sort of coming-out story. It's concerned with how the precipice of adulthood is continual, and how the decisions we make in childhood—and have inflicted on us—never really come to an end.

Also of interest...in war stories

The Wounded Generation

by David Nasaw (Penguin Press, \$35)



"David Nasaw's book is a corrective," said Brandan P. Buck in *Reason*. We rightly celebrate all who served in World War II, but "as he skillfully shows, victory came at a steep cost for those who survived the fighting."

Many suffered post-traumatic stress disorder before it was understood. Others endured alcohol addiction, marital trouble, and unemployment, and while Nasaw outlines the full scope of such challenges, his account "shines brightest" when it zooms in on individuals.

McNamara at War

by Philip and William Taubman (Norton, \$40)



This "fascinating" new biography attempts to humanize Robert McNamara, and it does, said Julian E. Zelizer in *Foreign Policy*. The defense secretary who expanded the U.S. war in Vietnam was tortured by the war from the start, and the authors highlight letters that show he developed a surprisingly intimate relationship with Jacqueline Kennedy. Still, "it is difficult to finish reading this book feeling much sympathy for McNamara." He knew early that the conflict was futile but supported it for years.

38 Londres Street

by Philippe Sands (Knopf, \$35)



Philippe Sands is "a consummate storyteller," said Jennifer Szalai in *The New York Times*. His "marvelous" new book focuses on two monsters who became friends in 1940s Ecuador. One was a former SS commander who'd fled Germany. The other was Augusto Pinochet—later a murderous dictator who possibly enlisted his Nazi ally in his terror campaign. While attempts were made to prosecute both men, Sands "shows that justice is never a foregone conclusion."

Gotham at War

by Mike Wallace (Oxford, \$45)



Historian Mike Wallace writes "with both panoramic sweep and an acute eye for telling detail," said Fergus M. Bordewich in *The Wall Street Journal*. The third volume of his remarkable history of New York City focuses on the World War II era and runs roughly 900 pages. But as the author details how the war spread fear, sparked a cultural flowering, and erased the Depression, each of the book's 168 chapters is "a small masterpiece of concision that combines erudition, insight, and dry humor."

Author of the week

Gish Jen

"Gish Jen is finally ready to talk about her mother," said Anson Tong in the *Washington Independent Review of Books*. The celebrated author's autobiographical new novel, *Bad Bad Girl*, revisits the pair's fraught bond, characterized by a barrage of parental scoldings and belittling that ended only when Agnes Jen died at 96 in 2020. "You were a mystery



Ma," Jen writes. "Why, why, why were you the way you were?" But Jen didn't write the book to expose her mother's abuse.

"I was not writing from anger," she says. "This is not some act of revenge." She wrote to understand why the woman who raised her treated her from the start as her least favorite of five children. And she chose to publish what she'd written because she believes the writing afforded her an understanding that had been elusive before.

For any daughter who has battled her mother, Jen's novel "may prompt a flood of feelings," said Leigh Haber in the *Los Angeles Times*. Even as Jen reaches back to 1930s Shanghai to re-create her mother's path—fictionalizing as needed—we hear her mother's scolding voice in imagined passages of dialogue that play out in Jen's mind. But we also come to see Agnes as a highly intelligent girl and woman who was routinely attacked by her own mother and who, after reaching the U.S., channeled her disappointments into squelching the spirit of her first daughter. Having seen the pattern clearly for the first time, Jen wishes she could reunite with her mother. At least, though, she knew long ago not to treat her own children the same way. "Don't worry, I'm still a very flawed mother," she says. But she is willing to congratulate herself for putting an end to a destructive pattern. "I feel it's the great achievement of my life," she says.

Exhibit of the week

Manet & Morisot

Legion of Honor, San Francisco,
through March 1

Although Édouard Manet and Berthe Morisot were “extraordinarily close,” said Mary Tompkins Lewis in *The Wall Street Journal*, art historians have tended to misjudge the two painters’ relationship. In many accounts, Manet, the “dashing, witty” so-called father of modern painting, has come across as the master artist while the younger Morisot is portrayed as more a student and muse than a peer. But the duo’s work is now hanging together in their first-ever major joint exhibition, and “everything here argues otherwise.” Yes, Morisot, at 27 or 28, cut a striking figure in Manet’s *The Balcony*, a realist work from 1868–69. But at roughly the same time, she painted *The Harbor at Lorient*, an impressionist seascape that announced her “bold determination to paint in a free and sketch-like style.” In the many “beautiful, illuminating” juxtapositions of their work that follow, it becomes clear that Morisot’s example loosened up Manet’s brushwork and that their years-long artistic dialogue should be understood as “central to the origin story of modern French art.”



Morisot in an 1872 portrait by Manet

Other dual-artist exhibitions feel like competitive showdowns; this one comes across as “a mind meld,” said Karen Rosenberg in *The New York Times*. With their canvases hung side by side, you see how Morisot is often echoing and reimagining Manet’s images. Meanwhile “her reciprocal impact on him is undeniable,” and whenever we catch them passing motifs back and forth, “it is always with an inspired twist.” Months after Morisot posed as one of three central figures in *The Balcony*, which Manet painted from the perspective of an across-the-street

onlooker, Morisot had her sister pose sitting at a window looking out to a balcony overlooking the city. While critics have long speculated that Manet and Morisot may have been romantic partners around that time, “you will not find confirmation in this show or its catalog—only the flickers of sexual tension in some portraits of Morisot by Manet,” plus mention of a Morisot letter to her sister that confesses she’d be attracted to Manet if he weren’t already married.

Although “Manet & Morisot” is “rightly focused on the creative exchange, it’s also, unavoidably about love,” said Sebastian Smee in *The Washington Post*. The show’s curator, Emily A. Beeny, argues in the catalog that an extramarital sexual relationship between the pair would have been out of the question for a woman of Morisot’s class and social bearing. And in 1874, nine years after she met Manet, Morisot married his brother. Still, the five Manet portraits of Morisot that hang in the exhibition’s first gallery “amount, cumulatively, to one of the greatest records of intimacy in the history of art.” In the most arresting of these paintings, 1872’s *Berthe Morisot With a Bouquet of Violets*, a “detonation” of brisk black brushstrokes captures an indelible face. Clearly, each time Manet looked at her, “he was moved, aroused, in love.”

Two top dramas new to Broadway

“Both times I’ve seen *Liberation*, I’ve felt unprepared for the emotional wallop it lands,” said Jackson McHenry in *NYMag.com*. Bess Wohl’s drama, which debuted earlier this year on an off-Broadway stage, opened last week at Broadway’s James Earl Jones Theatre, and the conversation that it invites us into remains transformative. Susannah Flood plays Lizzie, the young leader of a 1970s women’s consciousness-raising group that meets in an Ohio rec-center gym. Flood also plays Lizzie’s playwright daughter, who years later interviews one of the group’s members to learn more about her deceased mother’s surprising endeavor. In one of this year’s most daring scenes, the ’70s group disrobes at the start of Act II to talk about their bodies. Meanwhile, “the gap between what you know about someone and what you can understand is the scab that *Liberation* keeps picking at,” and when Lizzie’s daughter finally connects with her mom as never before, it’s as if “some great barrier has fallen.”

Another recent play that’s new to Broadway is proving to be “a stunning vehicle for Laurie Metcalf,” said Naveen Kumar in *The Washington Post*. Samuel D. Hunter’s



Flood in the gym with her ’70s posse

Little Bear Ridge Road, which debuted in 2024 at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre, is set in Idaho during the pandemic and finds Metcalf’s Sarah playing host to a gay adult nephew who has nowhere else to stay while trying to sell his late father’s nearby home. Sarah allows her nephew a spare room, but her resentment is palpable, a trait Metcalf makes “so thrillingly alive and persuasive that you can’t help but lean into the uneasiness.” In some ways, the play is “a bleak buddy comedy.” But it’s also a play “about grief, inertia, and a dueling desire to connect and spin off into lonely orbit.”

The Kennedy Center’s slump

Nine months after President Trump seized control of the Kennedy Center, ticket sales are “the worst they’ve been in years,” said Travis M. Andrews in *The Washington Post*. A *Post* analysis of ticket sales since the fall season began shows that 43% of seats at the main performance spaces at the national arts center have gone unsold, up from 7% a year ago. And the downturn could be even worse because the figures don’t account for comped tickets or for shows that were canceled or moved to smaller venues owing to poor presales. Back in February, when Trump pushed out the center’s board members and appointed himself chair, he claimed that programming was too woke and unpopular, but fall box office revenue through mid-October was less than half what it was in 2024. Granted, “there may be multiple reasons for the dip in ticket sales.” But among them are the hit to tourism and nightlife caused by Trump’s deployment of the National Guard on D.C.’s streets and the reluctance of many of the Kennedy Center’s previous patrons to support Trump’s cultural power grab.

Review of Reviews: Film

Die My Love

Directed by Lynne Ramsay
(R)



A new mother goes off
the deep end.

“You haven’t lived” until you’ve seen Jennifer Lawrence’s performance in *Die My Love*, said Ryan Lattanzio in *IndieWire*.

Playing a new mother who’s sinking into psychosis, the 35-year-old Oscar winner becomes a woman beyond help, and “she’s never been better.” Directed by the Scottish filmmaker Lynne Ramsay, *Die My Love* “can be languorous in its vision of a person coming undone,” but “Lawrence is game and fearless, stripping herself in all senses to lean into a woman’s debilitating emotional crisis.” The movie “takes a shotgun to certain postpartum clichés,” said Jia Tolentino in *The New Yorker*. We first see Lawrence’s Grace and Robert Pattinson’s Jackson as wildly lustful for each other after moving to an isolated Montana home.



Lawrence: A woman unraveling

of sensory wonder,” said Richard Lawson in *Vanity Fair*, it “grows a bit repetitive” once Grace’s consciousness fractures. Still, the film’s “mesmerizing” central performance keeps us watching, and “what a thrill to see Lawrence expanding her artistry like this, a movie star reclaiming the talent that her celebrity once nearly obscured.”

Christy

Directed by David Michôd
(R)



A female boxer battles
bias, abuse, and long odds.

“There’s familiar, there’s formulaic, and then there’s *Christy*,” said Nick Schager in *The Daily Beast*. A biopic that follows the dramatic life story of Christy Martin, a pioneer of women’s boxing, “this manipulative hybrid of *Rocky*, *Million Dollar Baby*, and *Monster* is so rote that even an AI wouldn’t dare try to pass it off as original.” Meanwhile, Sydney Sweeney’s lead performance “almost transcends her role’s derivativeness,” and although her work hasn’t guaranteed her a Best Actress nod, it affirms that the American Eagle model and steadily rising star is “capable of making headlines for more than just her jeans.” Thanks to the muscle she added and the months of training she put in, “you truly believe that Sweeney has the meanest right cross in 50 states,” said David Fear in *Rolling Stone*. And



Sweeney conquers in her chosen field.

while *Christy* traffics in “extremely recognizable beats,” it showcases its star’s “willingness to go the distance for a project.” The screenplay “allows Sweeney to play the scales from victim to survivor, helpless to empowered,” as the West Virginia-born Martin is challenged to overcome her mother’s homophobia, a trainer who evolves into a monstrous husband and manager, and a world skeptical of the sport Martin falls into until her talent and personality help change the game. Given how many “painfully” broad scenes Sweeney has to navigate, “it can feel like she’s battling odds at every turn that she really shouldn’t have to,” said Chase Hutchinson in *The Wrap*. Still, she “comes out as a victor” because she “proves she can carry even the most flawed film on her shoulders.”

Train Dreams

Directed by Clint Bentley
(PG-13)



A common logger helps
tame the Pacific Northwest.

Train Dreams, a film making a brief appearance in theaters before moving to Netflix later this month, tells the story of an ordinary life in “an extraordinary way,” said Brian Tallerico in *RogerEbert.com*. Joel Edgerton, doing “the best work of his remarkable career,” stars as a logger and railroad worker in the early-20th-century Pacific Northwest, and the world the character moves in “can be both magnificent and soul-crushing at the same time.” We are witness to this taciturn man’s witnessing of the sometimes violent march of human progress, and *Train Dreams* emerges as one of the year’s best movies because of the way it “threads the needle between brutal reality and wistful poetry.” William



Edgerton’s everyman

H. Macy shines as an eccentric older logger, said Tim Grierson in *Screen Daily*, and Felicity Jones “brings some grit” to the role of the beloved wife that Edgerton’s character is too often leaving behind. Will Patton meanwhile provides narration that never overexplains the protagonist’s profound emotions. Though not long, *Train Dreams* has “a scale that demands a huge screen,” said Bilge Ebiri in *NYMag.com*. “The obvious comparison here would be the work of Terrence Malick,” but director Clint Bentley, the co-writer of last year’s *Sing Sing*, mimics no single filmmaker’s style while presenting his transcendent vision. “Please, for the love of God, don’t watch this magnificent movie on your phone.”

Streaming tips

Dispatches on nature and ecology**The Memory of Darkness, Light, and Ice**

This beautifully shot, at times haunting documentary immerses viewers in the geologic mysteries of the Greenland ice sheet and shows scientists seizing on the discovery of sediment samples taken during the Cold War to predict what's to come for coastal communities around the globe. *\$6 on demand*

Last Lands

ABC News' Bob Woodruff leads this expedition series that visits the front lines in the battles to protect the world's most threatened ecosystems. In the new episodes, Woodruff visits a Guatemalan rainforest and a Panamanian island that sits aside a humpback whale superhighway. *Disney+*

Tribe With Bruce Parry

Two decades after launching this groundbreaking BBC series, the host, a former British commando, embeds again with remote Indigenous tribes to share how they live and how they see the world. *Apple TV*

The Wild Ones

In this fun and informative series, a trio of intrepid explorers travels the globe to locate, document, and contribute to protecting endangered species such as the Malaysian tiger and Armenian leopards. *Apple TV*

Sacred Planet With Gulnaz Khan

Journalist Gulnaz Khan has a unique angle on the climate crisis, focusing on the response of faith leaders and spiritual communities who are feeling its impact. Traveling to sacred places around the world, she finds hope in the meeting of current science and ancient wisdom. *PBS.org*

Nightmares of Nature

Blumhouse, a studio known for horror movies, turns its attention to the natural world in this series, which shadows prey species as they navigate the terrors of living among predators. *Stranger Things'* Maya Hawke narrates. *Netflix*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching**Being Eddie**

Cue that crazy honk of a laugh. Eddie Murphy has plenty of reasons to look back happily on his long career, which after his breakout years on *Saturday Night Live* has encompassed seminal stand-up specials, 1980s movie megahits such as *Beverly Hills Cop*, and a couple of remarkable rebounds. Murphy reviews it all with great candor in this gut-busting documentary, aided by friends Dave Chappelle, Kevin Hart, Chris Rock, and Jerry Seinfeld. *Wednesday, Nov. 12, Netflix*

Last Samurai Standing

If the ghost of Akira Kurosawa directed *Squid Game*, the product might look like this series set in post-feudal Japan and starring actor, martial artist, and former pop singer Junichi Okada. Okada plays Shujiro Saga, a fallen samurai looking for a new line of work and a way to survive. An opportunity arises by way of a fight-to-the-death competition, called Kodoku, that will leave just one survivor. *Thursday, Nov. 13, Netflix*

Come See Me in the Good Light

You wouldn't expect many moments of joy in a documentary about a couple dealing with one partner's terminal cancer diagnosis. But not all couples are Andrea Gibson and Megan Falley. Filmmaker Ryan White and his crew embedded with the two poets as their days together dwindled, following the pair through chemotherapy sessions, public readings, and intimate moments in their Colorado home. The result is a meditation on love, sorrow, and death's relationship to happiness. *Friday, Nov. 14, Apple TV*

Malice

Nannies get such a bad rap from horror films that it's high time a manny took some heat. Jack Whitehall stars in this dark thriller as a charming tutor hired by a wealthy family during a family holiday in Greece. Invited to return with the family to London, he proceeds in *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* fashion to wreak havoc on the household. David Duchovny and Carice van Houten co-star. *Friday, Nov. 14, Prime*



A battle engraving from 'The American Revolution'

The American Revolution

It's almost hard to believe that Ken Burns is only now getting to the story of the war that secured the nation's independence. But America's leading documentarian has met the moment with a six-part, 12-hour series that highlights how division was with us from the start. As he revisits the spark of the conflict and the trying military campaign that followed, he gives voice to loyalists, rebels, women who never saw a battlefield, Native Americans, and the enslaved, all who faced difficult choices. *Sunday, Nov. 16, at 8 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

**Other highlights
Palm Royale**

Kristen Wiig's Maxine Dellacorte Simmons seeks to bounce back from scandal in Season 2 of this fun series set in Palm Beach. Patti LuPone, John Stamos, and Vicki Lawrence join the cast. *Wednesday, Nov. 12, Apple TV*

Nouvelle Vague

Relive the making of Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* in Richard Linklater's love letter to the French New Wave, which moves this week from theaters to streaming. *Friday, Nov. 14, Netflix*

The Seduction

This racy French series provides an origin story for *Les Liaisons Dangereuses'* Marquise de Merteuil. *Friday, Nov. 14, HBO Max*

Show of the week**The Beast in Me**

Claire Danes has reteamed with the creators of *Homeland* and all seems right in television land. The former Carrie Mathison this time plays Aggie Wiggs, an acclaimed author who has not been herself since the death of her son. An irresistible story then falls in her lap when Nile Jarvis, a mogul who was suspected of killing his wife, moves into an estate just down the street. Aggie latches onto Jarvis and starts a new book, but her subject, played by *The Americans'* Matthew Rhys in a disturbingly layered turn, is at best elusive, at worst dangerous. And he senses she's untrustworthy as well. *Thursday, Nov. 13, Netflix*



Cat-and-mouse partners Danes and Rhys

Critics' choice: Landmark restaurants revisited

Spago Beverly Hills, Calif.

When Hollywood A-listers first flocked to Spago, Wolfgang Puck was “the face of an entire vibe shift,” said Tejal Rao in *The New York Times*. The ur-celebrity chef gave Southern California diners what they wanted: “lighter, more delicious food” and “all the perks of a fancy restaurant without the formality.” Sadly, in its 43rd year, Beverly Hills’ Spago “has somehow regressed into the overworked presentations and muted flavors it once rebelled against.” Disappointments began with a confusing “caviar cannoli” and a “warm, wet salad” that came with a “distressingly sweet” vinaigrette. Next came an overcooked Wiener schnitzel, and a half chicken surrounded by a puddle of brown sauce of unidentifiable flavor. Such complaints “suggest that it’s no fun to go to Spago, but the weird thing is, it can be.” Pastry chef Della Gossett’s desserts shine, and some of the servers are so good “you could forget that most of the very expensive meal is not great and just enjoy the feeling in the room, depending on which one you’re in.” Try for the main dining area or patio. As in the early days, “it matters where you sit.” 176 N. Canon Drive

Emeril's New Orleans

The Emeril's of today is far different from the freewheeling version its founder created, said Ian McNulty in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. Now headed by chef E.J.



The courtyard at Spago

Lagasse, the talented young son of celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, the 35-year-old institution was reinvented two years ago as an ultra-high-end tasting menu restaurant where dinner costs \$225 before the wine bill. But today's Emeril's is “showing what New Orleans food looks like at the highest level of global cuisine.” If you can spend at this level, “there is no risk,” because “the money is getting you a peak dining experience.” As you enter the dining room, you see the gleaming kitchen framed by light, and “it feels like stepping into a theater.” Canapés include a game-piece-size po’boy and a shot-glass-size cup of “silken and rich” gumbo, while the dinner itself features echoes of the classic menu such as oyster

stew and trout almondine, except that each dish is now small, artful, and executed by a kitchen “focused on perfecting every aspect in its Platonic ideal.” An indulgence? Yes, but also “on par with the finest of fine dining anywhere.” 800 Tchoupitoulas St.

Founding Farmers Washington, D.C.

Back in 2016, most of the food at Founding Farmers “tasted like insults to American cooking,” and I gave the popular restaurant zero stars in a review that remains one of my most widely read, said Tom Sietsema in *The Washington Post*. But because I believe in second chances, I recently returned. Founding Farmers’ flagship sits three blocks from the White House and is committed to supporting local farmers and providing a good-value downtown breakfast. It does both. The decor, which reads as “barn meets cheap cruise,” is still laughable, but the once-gummy corn bread has gotten a major upgrade, all the salads are good eating, and I rank the skirt steak with chicken enchiladas just behind the lemony catfish as the best entrées on a “trying-to-please” menu that should be heavily edited. The chicken and waffles must stay, though, and if you save room for pie, while avoiding the dense meatloaf and the misconceived goat cheese ravioli, you can eat fairly well here and count on conscientious service despite the crowd. “Tip well because the crew deserve it.” 1924 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Recipe of the week

“Inspired by samosas,” these spiced potato cakes make a hearty vegetarian meal, said Amanda Luchtel in *Cook's Country*. They're served with a cilantro chutney that functions as both a sauce and a salad dressing, and they come together in less than an hour.

Curried potato cakes with spicy cilantro chutney

3 cups fresh cilantro leaves and stems, chopped coarse • ¾ cup plus 2 tsp vegetable oil, divided • ¾ cup water, divided • 2 jalapeño chiles, stemmed and chopped • 2 tbsp lime juice • 5 garlic cloves, minced, divided • 2½ tsp table salt, divided • 1 tbsp curry powder • 1½ tsp cumin seeds • 2 lbs russet potatoes, peeled and cut into ¾-inch pieces • ½ cup frozen peas • 8 oz (8 cups) mesclun

- Process cilantro leaves and stems, ¼ cup vegetable oil, ¼ cup water, jalapeños, lime juice, 2 tsp minced garlic, and 1 tsp table salt in blender until smooth, about 45 seconds.
- Cook curry powder, cumin seeds, 2 tsp oil, and remaining 3 tsp minced garlic in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in potatoes and remaining ½ cup water and 1½ tsp salt. Cover and simmer until fork-tender, 18 to 20 minutes, stirring half-way through. Off heat, add frozen peas and mash potatoes until coarsely mashed.



Transfer to bowl and refrigerate until cool enough to handle, about 5 minutes. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

- Divide potato mixture into 8 equal patties about 2½ inches in diameter. In cleaned skillet, heat remaining ½ cup oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Place 4 cakes in skillet and cook until deep golden brown, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer cakes to platter. Repeat with remaining cakes. Toss mesclun with ½ cup of cilantro chutney and offer remaining chutney on the side. Serves 4.

Wine: Lees-aged albariño

While crisp white wines are “usually best unadorned,” said Ray Isle in *Food & Wine*, “many of the top albariños from Spain’s coastal Rías Baixas region are aged on their lees before bottling.” Lees are the spent yeasts that settle as sediment once they’ve converted sugar to alcohol during fermentation. Leaving albariño in contact with the lees works magic, adding “umami depth” without obscuring the wine’s brightness and salty minerality.

2024 Pazo das Bruxas (\$25). This entry-level Rías Baixas albariño is “grapefruit, melony,” and “ideal for raw seafood of any kind.”

2024 Granbazán 'Etiqueta Ámbar' (\$27). This “elegant, lemon-blossom-scented” albariño sources its grapes from vineyards that are at least 40 years old.

NV Paco & Lola 'Lola' Sparkling Albariño (\$42). “Anyone looking for a cool Champagne alternative should check this one out.” Two years on the lees add “yeasty, baked-bread” tones to the “grapefruit-inflected” top note.



The Porsche 911 Turbo S: What the critics say

The Wall Street Journal

"To the untrained eye, the Turbo S might look like just another 911. But this, dear friends, is The Big One." Track fiends may prefer the lighter GT3, but the new 2026 Turbo S rates as the quickest, most powerful, most versatile car in the 911 lineup. Credit the "drastically redesigned" power train, now a hybrid system created to meet EU environmental standards. That system generates 701 hp, and "the acceleration is terrifying." At the same time, dive-bombing through mountain switchbacks in this elaborately engineered masterwork proves "alarmingly easy."

Road & Track

Whether you want to hightail it to your

mountain chalet or need to edge through weekday freeway traffic, "there are few tasks that a 911 Turbo won't accomplish brilliantly." It can be a track car or a grand tourer, and though it's heavy for a 911—topping 4,000 pounds in cabriolet form—the electrically powered twin turbos help ensure that this Turbo S is "blindingly fast and instantly responsive." Porsche says it can hit 60 mph in 2.4 seconds, but we suspect it's quicker.

Motor 1

When the first Turbo S's are delivered this spring, drivers may have a hard time fathoming how the car so deftly combines "track-decimating performance" and "countryside-crossing relaxation." The answer lies in an



The new king of 911s, starting at \$270,300

active electrohydraulic roll stabilization system that keeps the tires planted and is possible only because hybrid setups add high-voltage power. "The only real detriment here is price." Otherwise, the 2026 Turbo S is "proof that 'hybrid' doesn't have to be a dirty word."

The best of...fashionable pajamas

Petite Plume 'The Olivia' Wide Leg Pima Pajama Set,

Made with 100% Peruvian pima cotton, these PJs are "oh-so-buttery and cozy, yet still incredibly breathable." Thanks to the "swinging" silhouette and pima's resistance to wrinkling, you'll look put together even while lounging. \$138, petite-plume.com
Source: Town & Country



Damson Madder 'Froll Florie' Stripe Pajamas

The playful, ruffled trim of this classic striped set is a typical Damson Madder flourish. The London-based brand "excels in personality pajamas," and this 100% organic cotton set is no exception. \$155, nordstrom.com
Source: Vogue



Eberjey x Casa Del Sol 'Inez' Silk Short PJ Set

The magic of this lightweight pajama set lies in its 100% mulberry silk, which is washable and thermoregulating. It's cozy in the winter and in the summer "keeps you feeling cool, clean, and rich all night long." \$278, eberjey.com
Source: Architectural Digest



Quince French Terry Modal Jumpsuit

A "glorified onesie," Quince's jumpsuit "falls somewhere between lounge-wear and pajamas." The rayon-like fabric, made from beech tree pulp, is ideal for PJs because it's super soft and won't pill in the wash. \$40, quince.com
Source: NYMag.com



Sleeper 'Party Pajama' Set With Detachable Feathers

"Sleeper's feather-trimmed pajama set arguably started the viral pajama-as-daywear trend." Made from viscose-based crepe de chine, the set is soft enough for bedtime while evoking vintage Hollywood glamour. \$390, the-sleeper.com
Source: Harper's Bazaar



Tip of the week...

How to prep a garden for winter

- **Clean out the vegetable patch.** Remove the plants and all crop debris because by season's end, they're loaded with disease spores that can survive the winter.
- **Go easier on flower gardens.** You can cut back perennials whose leaves are susceptible to disease, but delay pruning any woody shrubs, such as hydrangea, until spring. Leaving them intact protects the crown and buds from cold.
- **Do a soil test.** If you had problems this season, use a testing kit or send a soil sample to a cooperative extension service, such as a state university. "Results will indicate what you need to add."
- **Add a 2-inch compost layer.** No need to mix it in; the nutrients will leach down.
- **Add a 3-inch mulch layer.** Organic mulch such as pine straw, chopped leaves, or shredded bark insulate roots and protect soil nutrients.
- **Plant spring bulbs.** If the ground isn't frozen, it's not too late. In fact, daffodil bulbs are best planted after a killing frost.
Source: Country Living

And for those who have everything...

Ohio-based **Graeter's Ice Cream** has been churning out fantastic flavors since 1870, but no road trip is necessary to sample its wares. The Midwest favorite can deliver a six-pack of "incredible" pints packed with dry ice right to your door. Graeter's still makes ice cream "the laborious old-fashioned way": The ingredients are swirled together and frozen in so-called French pots that yield just 2.5 gallons per batch. Less air is whipped in, and the use of high-butterfat milk results in a "denser and richer" product. Everyone needs to try Graeter's chocolate chips. They're "soft ribbons of melt-in-your-mouth chocolate that offer unmatched decadence and mouthfeel." \$76 per six-pack, graeters.com
Source: Forbes



Best apps...

For 'vibe coding'

- **Gemini** and other generative AI tools have made "vibe coding" possible, meaning you can create websites, mini apps, and other digital tools without knowing how to code. You simply talk through what you want with a chatbot and let AI do the work. To create an October events calendar for friends, for example, I told Gemini what information sources I wanted to cull and how interaction with the calendar should work. Gemini's first effort "nailed what I'd asked it to do but also highlighted what I hadn't." Next, I specified that I wanted only 2025 events linked to live web pages. After a third request, I was done.
- **Claude** "worked wonders" with the same prompt, displaying events as a categorizable list with a search function. But I had expected a calendar view, and when I asked for one, Claude crashed three times before it impressively corrected itself and came through. Neither AI tool was the clear winner, but both were "significantly faster" than I would have been.
Source: CNET.com

So Much More In One Week Than Just News

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THE WEEK

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America's choice

Why a divided nation swung for Trump—again

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Best Properties on the Market

This week: Homes on the Gulf Coast



1 ◀ **Navarre, Fla.** Located in Northwest Florida, in the 30A region of coastal towns, this eight-bedroom rentable vacation home has a fourth-floor deck facing the Gulf. The 2023 elevated beach house has tongue-and-groove walls and ceilings, plus a top-floor chef's kitchen with a commercial-size refrigerator and Thermador range. It sleeps 32, with bunk rooms, an elevator, and a balcony on each level. The property includes a private pool, an outdoor kitchen, and a sandy yard. \$3,250,000. Tammy Laborde, Coldwell Banker Realty—Fort Walton Beach, (850) 353-1843



2 ▶ **Gulf Shores, Ala.** Built in 1983, this updated five-bedroom lodge home is on Pleasure Island's Little Lagoon. The three-story furnished retreat has wood-look tile floors, an open-plan main floor with a white kitchen, and a primary bedroom with a balcony. A roomy covered deck leads down to a sandy beach, private pier, dock, and bulkhead. Beaches and dining are steps away; Mobile is a little over an hour's drive. \$1,250,000. Angelina Needham, Engel & Völkers Gulf Shores, (251) 979-2108



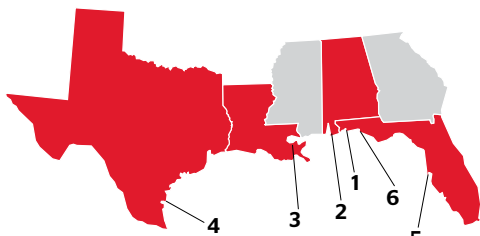
3 ◀ **New Orleans** Designer Ken Fulk reimagined and lived in this 1854 Creole corner-lot townhouse in the French Quarter. The home has four bedrooms, an elevator, a music studio with performance space, a library, a wrought-iron staircase, and a salon with gilded, hand-printed wallpaper. A wraparound balcony and a walled courtyard complete the property, which is walking distance to the French Quarter River Walk and Louis Armstrong Park. \$2,748,000. Elizabeth McNulty and Kristin Patterson, Compass, (504) 908-0289

Best Properties on the Market



4 ◀ Port Aransas, Texas In Mustang Island's Palmilla Beach Resort and Golf Community, this 2017 seven-bedroom coastal contemporary has water views. The third-floor great room has vaulted, trussed ceilings, a shiplap feature wall with decorative niches, and French doors to a balcony. A billiards room downstairs has a wet bar that opens to a fenced yard with a pool. Community amenities include a golf course, two pools, a gym, and dining. \$4,895,000. Amy Hoffman, Kuper Sotheby's International Realty, (210) 778-9644

5 ▶ St. Petersburg, Fla. Designed in 1973 by William Harvard and revamped in 2023 by Lisa Gilmore, this mid-century modern home in Bayway Isles is close to downtown and beaches. The colorful bayfront four-bedroom has exposed brick walls, hurricane-resistant sliders, a kitchen with patterned teal tiles, and a primary bath with dramatic stone and a soaker tub. Also included are a pool and spa, terraces, and two private deepwater slips. \$3,950,000. Ali Bearnarth, Smith & Associates Real Estate/Luxury Portfolio International, (727) 560-4377



Steal of the week



6 ◀ Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. This 2006 three-bedroom raised beach cottage in the Panhandle is minutes from a park and the bay, and less than 4 miles from Gulf beaches. The open-plan three-bedroom features 9-foot ceilings, new wood floors, a primary suite with a balcony, and a spacious covered porch off the kitchen. Outside are a two-car garage and fenced backyard. A public boat ramp, dining, and shops are a short drive. \$549,500. Kristi Lindgren, Compass, (314) 541-8650

The News at a Glance

The bottom line

■ OpenAI signed a \$38 billion multiyear deal for computing power with Amazon. Though much smaller than the deals OpenAI signed with Oracle and Microsoft, the agreement gives Amazon a crucial foothold with the fast-growing AI giant.

The Wall Street Journal

■ The S&P Global Clean Energy Index, which tracks clean-energy stocks, is up 50% this year despite President Trump's efforts to cancel green projects. Much of that rally is pegged to a near insatiable demand for energy to power AI data centers.

Bloomberg

■ The U.S. government shutdown is costing the economy about \$7 billion per month that won't be recovered when it reopens, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The CBO projected real gross domestic product declining by \$7 billion in a four-week shutdown, \$11 billion in a six-week shutdown, and \$14 billion in an eight-week shutdown.

NBCNews.com



■ The average U.S. car commuter now spends a record 63 hours a year stuck in traffic, according to a report by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. That's the most since 1982, when the dataset begins. Thursday has overtaken Friday for the highest share of weekly delay.

Axios

■ Subprime or high-risk borrowers accounted for 14.4% of the consumers tracked by credit-reporting firm TransUnion in the third quarter, up from 13.9% in the same period last year. It's the highest share for the period since 2019, when 14.5% of borrowers fell into the subprime category.

Bloomberg

Mergers: Tylenol maker to sell for \$40 billion

Amid fights with the Trump administration over autism claims, Tylenol is now getting a new owner, said Lauren Hirsch and Rebecca Robbins in *The New York Times*. Kenvue, a Johnson & Johnson spin-off that owns Tylenol as well as other medicine cabinet staples like Band-Aid and Listerine, said this week that it

has agreed to an acquisition by Kimberly-Clark, makers of Huggies diapers and Cottonelle toilet paper, for \$40 billion. It's a sensible linkup at a curious time. "Shares of Kenvue have plummeted this year" as U.S. health officials have made unproven allegations "that acetaminophen—the active ingredient in Tylenol—was linked to autism." Kenvue was already facing litigation over cancer-causing Johnson & Johnson talc; now it's poised



Prize brand or poison pill?

to withstand a barrage of attacks on acetaminophen, starting with the attorney general of Texas, Ken Paxton, who sued the company last month.

It's a mammoth gamble by Kimberly-Clark chief executive Mike Hsu, said Chris Hughes in *Bloomberg*. "Aging populations will drive demand for health and 'wellness' products," which is where Kimberly-Clark has lagged

behind its bigger rival, Procter & Gamble. Kenvue's sliding stock price made the timing irresistible. But there's a real risk "in inheriting litigation through an acquisition." Hsu claims he has "consulted with the foremost scientific, regulatory, and legal experts," but lawsuits "can wage a war of attrition on a stock," especially if Trump remains involved. This Tylenol deal could give Kimberly-Clark a real headache.

Space: Trump renominates Isaacman to head NASA

President Trump renominated Elon Musk ally Jared Isaacman to lead NASA this week in a major about-face, said Kasha Patel in *The Washington Post*. "Trump originally named Isaacman," a billionaire who has twice flown to space privately, "as his intended NASA nominee in December, but he withdrew the nomination in May" as Trump's relations with Musk soured. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has been running NASA on an interim basis and has floated the idea of folding it into his agency. Duffy drew Musk's ire when he said that NASA would reopen contracts for a lunar lander under development by SpaceX.

Treasure hoard: Buffett discloses massive cash holdings

Warren Buffett is still holding firm to a historic cash pile, said Yun Li in *CNBC.com*. Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway last week "reported a sharp rebound in operating profit," up 34% from the year prior, and again "refrained from repurchasing shares" of its stock. Profits were helped greatly by a 200% surge in insurance-underwriting income. And "without any buybacks, Berkshire's cash hoard swelled to a record \$381.6 billion." To put that in perspective, it's enough cash to buy McDonald's, Coca-Cola, or Home Depot outright.

Retreat: Starbucks sells majority stake in China stores

Starbucks said this week it will give up control of its long-standing China business, said Emmett Lindner and Julie Creswell in *The New York Times*. China had been "a big bet for Starbucks," which opened its first coffee franchise in the country in 1999, when coffee culture there "was practically nonexistent." It now owns nearly 8,000 stores, making China its second-largest market. "But in recent years, consumers in China have turned away from foreign brands" in favor of local chains, like Luckin Coffee. Starbucks will relinquish 60% of its Chinese retail operations to Hong Kong's Boyu Capital.

Short sellers: Burry and Palantir go to war

Palantir CEO Alex Karp attacked investor Michael Burry this week, calling him "batshit crazy" after Burry named the high-flying military contractor as one of his new "big shorts," said Mary Hanbury in *Business Insider*. Burry, whose bets against mortgage-backed securities before the 2008 financial crisis were made famous by Michael Lewis' book, *The Big Short*, recently "purchased bearish put options on Palantir and Nvidia." Palantir's shares are currently worth a total of more than \$400 billion, a nosebleed level given the company's roughly half-billion dollars in profit last quarter.

The CEO would like to say a few words...

A bizarre conclusion to a corporate earnings call highlighted the strange world of "mention betting" markets, said Emily Nicolle and Justina Lee in *Bloomberg*. Mention bets on prediction markets such as Kalshi and Polymarket are wagers on what politicians or CEOs might say "in a public forum." But what happens if a CEO is himself watching that mention market? At the end of his company's third-quarter earnings call, Brian Armstrong, the CEO of Coinbase, blurted out a seemingly random list: "Bitcoin, Ethereum, blockchain, staking, and Web3." The words weren't random. Weeks earlier, Kalshi and Polymarket users had placed wagers "on which words would be spoken during the call." The amount of money involved wasn't great—"in total, about \$84,000 had been bet on whether a Coinbase executive would say certain words." But Armstrong's stunt, which made the bets pay out, demonstrated how easily some "prediction markets—supposedly tools for collective intelligence—can be steered by the very people they're meant to observe."

Making Money

Layoffs: The 'no hire, more fire' job market

After a year of a “no hire, no fire” jobs market, said **Jamie McGeever** in *Reuters*, the layoffs are now coming. The last few months have been difficult for those looking for work but generally not stressful for those fully employed. Now, though, a spate of mass layoffs suggests that the jobs picture has moved to “no hire, more fire.” Amazon last week announced 14,000 layoffs, with more to come next year, while “around 25,000 workers are being let go at Intel, 15,000 at Microsoft, and 11,000 at Accenture.” UPS revealed it has eliminated 48,000 positions this year, including 14,000 managers, bringing the total number of job cuts by U.S. employers between January and September to 950,000, according to placement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.



Employers are suddenly turning to sharp cuts.

Escalating adoption of AI is fanning fears of a “white-collar recession,” said **Lindsay Ellis** in *The Wall Street Journal*. A slowdown in hiring can also be attributed to political and economic uncertainty. But many U.S. corporations are no doubt embracing “a leaner new normal” thanks to advances in artificial intelligence that “can handle more of the work.” It’s led executives to rethink their need for “roles that many American workers aspired to secure,” such as those in software development and marketing. In fact, a Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia report found that

jobs that pay better and require more education “are more exposed” to AI.

So far, though, there’s nothing close to an actual jobs crisis, said **Jeffrey Bartash** in *MarketWatch*. While the U.S. jobs report is unavailable during the shutdown, “the data on unemployment filings compiled by the states” is accessible, and they have remained stable week after week, showing no sign of a labor-market meltdown. Big announcements by Amazon and UPS spark fears, but they also have to be put into context within “the full scope of the rapid churn in the U.S. labor market.”

Regardless of the overall employment picture, fears of an AI jobs apocalypse are “growing fast among the educated class,” said **Noreena Hertz** in *Politico*. It is starting to impact their morale. It could also “impact who they will vote for.” Much like the blue-collar workers who turned to a populist President Trump “because of the threat of automation,” white-collar workers might become populist because of “the threat of being replaced by AI.” The Trump White House has fawned over the industry with deregulation and investment while remaining conspicuously silent about its threat to entire professions. “A white-collar uprising is looming” and may come back to haunt politicians who talked up AI without any “concrete plans” to help the people whose jobs get displaced.

What the experts say

■ **One key safeguard for your finances** Every family needs a code word to keep their finances secure, said **Julie Jargon** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Generative artificial intelligence is getting increasingly good at being able to “mimic real people’s voices and con their loved ones out of money.” You might get a call someday from someone who sounds just like your grandson saying he “needs money or a gift card.” Earlier this year a woman in Colorado was scammed out of \$2,000 after falling victim to an AI deepfake phone call that “sounded just like her daughter.” The simplest solution to this growing problem is creating a family code word or a code question “to which only a family member would know the answer.” If the caller can’t produce it, hang up.

■ **Surprising money market returns** Money market funds remain a safe and stable bet for storing cash, said **Jeff Sommer** in *The New York Times*. While yields have been steadily declining “since the Federal Reserve began pushing short-term interest rates down more than a year ago,” money market funds are as popular as ever. That’s because yields remain above most bank savings rates and certificates of deposit. The average

annualized seven-day return stands at 3.9%. Money market funds have also “outperformed investment-grade bond funds over both the last five and 10 years through September” by a relatively wide margin. Don’t get too excited. “They aren’t great long-term investments” compared with a broader stock fund. But in times of extreme volatility, it is comfortable “to own an ample stash of cash” that still pays back a nice chunk of interest.

■ **Old mortgage liens rise from the dead** “Zombie debt collectors” are haunting homeowners, said **Coulter Jones** in *Bloomberg*. Debt collectors have been buying second mortgages in bulk from financial firms across the country, usually at cheap prices, because the original lenders either wrote them off or canceled the debt. Some of these collectors have begun reviving those “zombie” liens and are “making demands for repayment along with years of back interest.” The collectors routinely violate consumer protection laws by demanding payment on canceled debt and not sending bills. “The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau had been building cases against at least three companies involved in zombie mortgage collection,” but under President Trump, the CFPB has halted the work.

Charity of the week

footprintproject.org™

Warming waters in the Atlantic Ocean brought about the devastating and unprecedented Hurricane Melissa, killing more than 60 people across the Caribbean. Record-breaking wind and rain destroyed entire communities, and in Jamaica, as much as 77% of the population was cut off from electricity. The New Orleans-based nonprofit **Footprint Project (footprintproject.org)** is urgently working with organizations on the ground to send Jamaican families and first responders portable solar and battery power stations, as well as backup microgrid equipment, since electric poles across the country remain toppled and damaged. The organization also actively supported Louisiana residents in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida four years ago. As global warming accelerates, Jamaica is increasingly at risk, and introducing renewable energy sources is essential to prepare locals for future natural disasters.

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

Asia summit: A good day for Beijing

There was a clear winner in the trade talks between President Trump and China's President Xi Jinping, said **Simone McCarthy** in *CNN.com*, and it wasn't America. On paper, the results of last week's summit in South Korea looked "like a reasonable exchange." Trump got Beijing to ease export restrictions on rare-earth minerals and agree to begin purchasing U.S. soybeans and other farm products again. China got Trump to lift his saber-rattling threat of new 100% tariffs and to in fact reduce current tariffs by 10% "in exchange for ramping up efforts" to stem the fentanyl trade. The *détente* "delivers, at least for now, what both leaders (and the wider global economy) wanted: stability." But China's hardball strategy with Trump 2.0 seems to be working. It won "valuable concessions on tariffs and export controls," such as a one-year pause on an expanded blacklist of Chinese companies banned from buying U.S. technology. Meanwhile, the rare earths restrictions on which Beijing conceded were always merely retaliation for Trump's levies.



A Trump-Xi *détente*

So much for America First and winning the global economic conflict with China, said **Ana Swanson** and **Alexandra Stevenson** in *The New York Times*. Tariffs on certain Chinese products are now "below those Trump has put on products from other countries, including allies like Switzerland, India, Brazil, and Canada." It may complicate the "longer-run effort to reduce America's dependence on Chinese supply chains" and find low-cost alternatives. Another concern, said **Michael Schuman** in *The Atlantic*, is Trump's nonchalance about U.S. technology. He said he "would discuss selling Nvidia's most advanced AI chips" to China, rais-

ing alarm in Washington, "where these restrictions are widely seen as crucial to U.S. security." That Trump would even contemplate lifting AI chip export controls suggests he is "interested mainly in cutting deals and expanding business opportunities," not controlling the China threat.

The deal Trump got still "beats more unpleasant alternatives," said *National Review* in an editorial. "The brutal reality is that China's domination" of the rare-earths market is a "dangerous vulnerability" for the U.S. Getting a trade truce is enough to justify the talks as "well worth having." I don't think this was another Chinese "TACO," said **David Ignatius** in *The Washington Post*, or a case of Trump "chickening out." China showed it could deny "escalation dominance" with its control over rare earths, critical minerals used in many technologies. But the two leading superpowers recognized they are "better served by preservation of the status quo."

Trump "badly miscalculated" China's response to his "Liberation Day" tariffs, said **Nicholas Kristof** in *The New York Times*. He failed to recognize that "Beijing is now the OPEC of rare-earth minerals, leaving us without alternative resources," while many of the products we export to China "it could get elsewhere." Xi has "established that he has the upper hand in the bilateral relationship." Little stops him from using rare-earths leverage to, say, "encourage Trump to dial down support for Taiwan." It's more than a trade war at stake. It is "our global credibility and influence for years to come."

Bill Gates says the world isn't ending after all

The Wall Street Journal
Editorial

Bill, do you really think "humanity isn't doomed?" asked *The Wall Street Journal*. For years now, Bill Gates, the Microsoft billionaire turned philanthropist, has insisted that "a warming climate is an existential crisis that demands urgent political action." But Gates has apparently changed his mind. Last week, in advance of the coming COP30 climate conference, Gates wrote that he thinks rising temperatures might be a serious problem, but climate change "will not be the end of civilization." Gates calls this a "tough truth." It's only tough, though, if you've been mired in "Armageddon orthodoxy." Now, Gates admits, the biggest problems for the

world's poor "are poverty and disease, just as they always have been." Activists in wealthy Western countries have pushed to eliminate fossil fuels. That has led—as Gates now says—to "almost no impact on global emissions," but sealed off the path to growth that would actually help low-income countries. Gates is coming around to the view that "the best way to cope with rising temperatures is through innovation, adaptation, and policies that continue to spread economic growth and prosperity." It would have been nice if he'd gotten there faster. But we'll still give Gates credit for finally urging "an intellectual climate change."

Trump hasn't managed to cow the Fed

Steven Rattner
The New York Times

"Another Federal Reserve meeting, another loss for President Trump," said Steven Rattner. Last week, the Fed's rate-setting committee voted 10 to 2 to reduce interest rates by just 0.25%. It was the second consecutive quarter-point cut assigned by the committee. There's nothing to suggest that the central bank is cowed by the president's frequent demands for drastic rate cuts. One dissenting vote was cast by Stephen Miran, who argued for a 0.5% cut. "That's to be expected, given that Trump hastily appointed Miran, one of his former advisers, to the Fed just in time for last month's vote." But another dissenter was Jeffrey Schmid, president of the

Kansas City Fed, for the complete opposite reason: He wanted the Fed to hold interest rates steady due to "a growing concern about inflation," which keeps lingering. Trump's reckless rate demands indicate a "basic misunderstanding about how economies work." He keeps comparing our rates with those in Europe, where the benchmark rate is 2.15%. But inflation is also lower in Europe—and so is growth. The job market in the U.S. is weakening, which "makes this small rate reduction understandable." But the Fed is also "right to be disciplined." We should all be grateful it has managed to resist Trump's meddling.

Obituaries

The actress who shone in *Fawlty Towers*

Prunella Scales
1932-2025

Prunella Scales was a force in British theater for seven decades, but her career

was defined by just two years. She starred as Sybil Fawlty, opposite John Cleese's Basil, on BBC Two's *Fawlty Towers* in 1975 and 1979. A pillar of perfectly coiffed sanity, Sybil stood ready with an eye roll and a curt "BASIL!" as her husband's chaos spiraled into farce at the seaside hotel the two ran. Scales had a keen awareness of class difference and suggested to Cleese, who co-wrote the show, that Sybil come from humbler roots than Basil. But the character held her own against her snobbish husband, who called her "my little nest of vipers." Their antics propelled the short-lived sitcom to iconic status, reigning as No. 1 in the British Film Institute's list of the 100 best British shows. "Most people seem to remember Sybil as this hideous gorgon of a woman," Scales said. "I consider her a heroine."

Born in Surrey, England, Scales grew up in a rented farmhouse without gas, electricity, or water. She showed an early aptitude for drama and at 17 earned a scholarship to London's Old Vic, "where she immediately felt out of her depth," said *The New York Times*. Yet she landed



a role in Thornton Wilder's debut of *The Matchmaker* in 1955, appearing on the West End and Broadway. Returning to England, Scales joined the Shakespeare Memorial Theater, now the Royal Shakespeare Company. After spending her 20s in serious dramas, she broke through on television playing an exasperated newlywed on the BBC sitcom *Marriage Lines* from 1961 to 1966.

With *Fawlty Towers*, Scales proved "a superb comic creation," said *The Times* (U.K.). She became a mainstay of British television and film, but still made time for theater. She won raves for portraying Queen Elizabeth II in the play *A Question of Attribution* in 1988, and became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1992. She and her husband, actor Timothy West, "shared passions for the regional theater, letter-writing (to each other, mostly), classical music, and Britain's waterways," said *The Guardian*. The couple hosted the show *Great Canal Journeys* together from 2014 to 2019, and West would gently remind viewers at the start of each episode that his wife was declining with Alzheimer's. They were married 61 years, until his death last year. "I am famous for playing unfortunate wives," she said, "but I have been a very lucky wife."

The daughter who lived in Dietrich's shadow

Maria Riva
1924-2025

Nothing about Maria Riva's upbringing was typical. As the sole child

of German-born Hollywood sensation Marlene Dietrich, she was used to first-class travel and opulent hotel suites. But she was also accustomed to neglect, emotional abuse, and being treated as a "handmaiden" by her mother, a sexually voracious narcissist whose turbulent private life roiled behind her glamorous image. Cold and manipulative, Dietrich wouldn't let Maria attend school, and when the girl started showing interest in boys, her mother appointed a lesbian governess who sexually abused her. These and other explosive revelations were laid bare in a best seller Riva published after Dietrich's 1992 death. An actress herself, who found TV fame in the 1950s, Riva said she wrote it not to exact revenge but to offer a glimpse behind fame's facade. "I had grown up in a world where everybody was beautiful, everybody was rich, and nobody was really happy," she said. "It's not what it looks like on the surface."

She was born Maria Elisabeth Sieber in Berlin, said *The New York Times*, where her father was "a dashing assistant director" who cast Dietrich in an early film role. When she was 5, the three moved to Hollywood, and Riva grew up on movie



backlots "caring for her mother's costumes, stamping her autograph on publicity photos, and staying quiet on set." At 9, she played a young version of Dietrich in *The Scarlet Empress* (1934); as a teen, she became alcoholic and suicidal. But after an ill-fated early marriage, she moved to New York, got sober, and began working as an actor.

Marrying again, she established herself as a contract player at CBS, said *The Hollywood Reporter*, becoming "one of the top television personalities in the medium's early days," appearing in more than 500 teleplays.

When her fourth son was born, she quit acting to focus on "the family life she desperately wanted," said *The Washington Post*. But she "was gradually drawn back into her mother's orbit," producing her cabaret show and serving as a caretaker as Dietrich devolved into alcoholic squalor and "spent her final years bedridden in Paris." A year after her death, Riva published *Marlene Dietrich: The Life*, an "alternately sympathetic and astringent" account casting Dietrich as a tragic figure "corroded by vanity, self-absorption, and betrayal." While Riva found a measure of understanding, she wouldn't use the word "mother" for Dietrich. "That is a special word that implies love," she said, "and that is not what I remember."

The doctor who made breastfeeding into a science

When Ruth Lawrence became one of the first female residents at Yale School of Medicine in 1950, the medical community considered breastfeeding an afterthought. Lawrence, who gave birth to the first of her nine children—all breastfed—a year

Ruth Lawrence
1924-2025

into her residency, trained in a maternity ward and saw

women struggle to nurse their infants. Formula feeding was becoming the norm, but she fought that trend, establishing herself as the leading expert in lactation. As word spread of her expertise, mothers and doctors alike sought her out for advice. She published the first book on the subject, *Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Profession* in 1980. "People trusted me because they knew I'd nursed my babies," she said. "I thought, 'You know, if I wrote a book, people could stop calling me up.'"

Ruth Edna Anderson was born in Brooklyn to an electrical engineer father and a homemaker mother. She "began looking after children early on," said *The Washington Post*, because her father died when she was 10, and she babysat for neighbors to help her mother "make ends meet." After attending Antioch College, she earned her medical degree at the University of Rochester, one of the few med schools that accepted women, and married a fellow student. She would go on to work there for seven decades, founding a lactation center.

Lawrence's book, the "bible of breastfeeding," brought her "international prominence," said *The New York Times*. A critic of companies that marketed formula as better than breast milk, she appeared on TV, was interviewed by foreign newspapers, and even met the pope. "My purpose was to spread the knowledge and to make people aware" of breastfeeding's benefits, she said in 2014, "and to put some science behind it."

What happened to the tea party?

The anti-tax, small government uprising redefined Republican politics, said **Naftali Bendavid** in **The Washington Post**. But in the MAGA era, there's no room for such a movement in the GOP.

THE MOVEMENT TORE across the country with an energy new to American politics—its activists shouting at lawmakers and holding frenzied rallies to demand balanced budgets, an end to deficit spending, sharp tax cuts, fealty to the Constitution, and a reined-in presidency.

This was the tea party movement, which punctuated its arrival 15 years ago with the midterm elections of 2010, a moment that seemed poised to rewrite the rules of American politics. Yet just a few years later, the Republican Party was captured by the MAGA movement and President Donald Trump, whose agenda, to some tea party pioneers, is the opposite of theirs and which dominates the party today.

“We feared government tyranny. We feared a strong executive. We feared oppressive government, any president who would take a flamethrower to the Constitution,” said former congressman Joe Walsh of Illinois, a tea party Republican who has since become a podcaster and anti-Trump Democrat. “Now, the very thing we feared is in office.”

The current spending fight reflects the dizzying shift. The tea party's core demand was fiscal responsibility, but Trump's signature spending bill adds \$3.4 trillion to the deficit, according to the Congressional Budget Office, and passed with overwhelming GOP support. In the current dispute over the government shutdown, Republicans are pushing not for cuts but for an extension of Biden-era spending levels.

Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, a rare Republican who opposes his party's spending measures, said the tea party spirit has evaporated. “I think it's largely been supplanted by something else,” Paul said in an interview. “We aren't organized around ideas anymore. We're organized around a person.”

A number of people who were tea party stars in 2010—Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi L. Noem, Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy—are firmly ensconced in Trump's Cabinet. And some Republicans insist that the MAGA movement is a successor to the tea party, not a rejection of it, arguing that both tout free markets and individual freedom.

“I think MAGA is an extension of the tea party movement in many ways, and also is its own thing, because we'll never see anyone like President Trump again in



In the 2010s, tea party rallies were a regular feature of national politics.

our lifetime,” said Jenny Beth Martin, who co-founded the Tea Party Patriots in 2009. “The similarity is that both movements love our country and want what's best for our country.”

Yet many Trump policies appear to contradict tea party ideals. The tea party abhorred taxes; Trump has imposed high taxes on imports with his tariffs. The tea party revered the Constitution; Trump routinely tests its limits, for example by seizing power over spending and tariffs. The tea party championed the rule of law; Trump openly targets his opponents using the legal system.

More fundamentally, the tea party—driven by anger at President Barack Obama—called for a modest presidency to allow homegrown democracy to flourish. Trump is a dominant, attention-seizing leader who brooks no opposition and regularly pushes to expand his power.

“No political party has moved so quickly from DONT TREAD ON ME to DO TREAD ON ME than the GOP in its transition from a tea party-inspired party to a MAGA, Inc.-inspired party,” former Republican congressman Justin Amash of Michigan posted recently on X. Amash, like Walsh and Paul, was elected to Congress in the 2010 tea party wave.

The tea party and MAGA movements are linked by at least one striking quality—a fury at liberal elites who, they contend, have coddled unworthy groups at the expense of ordinary, hardworking Americans. That is evident from the two

seminal moments that launched these political tidal waves.

ON FEB. 19, 2009—one month after Obama took office—CNBC correspondent Rick Santelli delivered what his fans affectionately call a “rant” on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. On air, Santelli slammed Obama's plan to bail out homeowners who'd fallen behind on their mortgages, calling them “losers” for buying houses they could not afford.

Santelli's rant resonated as a broader cry against the unfairness of the American system. “President Obama, are you listening?” he demanded during his tirade. “We're thinking of having a Chicago tea party in July. All you capitalists that want to show up to Lake Michigan, I'm going to start organizing.”

Almost 50 “tea party” groups immediately sprang up and held protests against Obama's stimulus bill, which was a response to the 2008 financial meltdown. On April 15—Tax Day—more than 850 groups held demonstrations that organizers said drew 1.2 million people. On Election Day, this fervor propelled Republicans to an astounding pickup of 63 House seats and six Senate seats.

“We felt like we were the conscience of the Republican Party,” Walsh said of coming to the U.S. Capitol in those exciting days. “You felt like you were conquering the Republican Party.”

Six years later, when Trump announced

The Last Word

his run for president, he echoed Santelli's fiery message that honest Americans were getting cheated. But crucially, Trump insisted that he alone was the answer to the nation's problems—a self-aggrandizement foreign to the tea party. “Our country needs a truly great leader, and we need a truly great leader now. We need a leader that wrote *The Art of the Deal*,” Trump said, referring to his book. “I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created.”

Former GOP congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington—who was elected to the House in 2010 but never considered herself part of the tea party movement—sees a crucial difference between the two groups. Tea party activists wanted to shrink the government and looked to the Constitution for inspiration, she said, while MAGA's adherents largely have given up on the Constitution and simply want to seize the government for their own ends.

“A lot of people now are feeling that their problems are not going to be solved by a constitutional government, the way the tea party did,” Herrera Beutler said. “The tea party thought we should get government out of our lives. That is not the ethos being talked about right now. Now it's like, ‘This government doesn't work.... We need to take control and fix things.’”

As a result, Republicans accept things that would have appalled them in the Obama years, she added, like Trump's intervention in spending decisions. “Nobody is saying anything about it,” Herrera Beutler said. “If that had happened when Republicans took over under the tea party movement, if Obama had done that, people would have been up in arms about the damage being done to the Constitution.”

THE TEA PARTY arose at a time when the GOP was arguably in worse shape than Democrats today. Obama had just won a decisive victory, generating enormous enthusiasm as the nation's first Black president, and Democrats held overwhelming majorities of 257-178 in the House and 60-40 in the Senate.

The new movement provided a storyline when conservatives needed it most: Obama and the Democrats were betraying America's founding ideals, and it was time to restore the Founders' small-government dreams. Demonstrators hoisted “Don't Tread on Me” flags; dressed up as George Washington; and wore red, white, and blue outfits. The name “tea party” itself, of course, referred to the Boston Tea Party, a 1773 act of rebellion against British rule.

“They took inchoate energy and created a coherent narrative,” said Vanessa Williamson, co-author of *The Tea Party and the Re-*

making of Republican Conservatism. “The power of the American Revolutionary image that they used was really substantial. It gave them a way to talk about their concerns that Barack Obama was un-American.”

But when the tea party revolutionaries arrived in D.C., they were furious that their own Republican leaders could not quickly accomplish the change they demanded. They ultimately forced the Republicans' own House speaker, John A. Boehner of Ohio, to step down.

“When we had the original tea party in the United States of America, we threw the tea out of the ship—we didn't sink the ship in the harbor,” said Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.), who was president of the 2010 House GOP freshman class. “The faction that wanted to sink the ship in the harbor we had a hard time with.... I'm all for throwing the tea in the harbor, not for sinking the ship.”

Trump stepped into that morass of disappointment and thwarted expectations, promising to accomplish by force of will what activists had failed to accomplish within the system.

Martin, of the Tea Party Patriots, said her movement shares what she described as MAGA's embrace of free markets and personal freedoms.



Rubio, onetime tea party star

“Those are the most important things to think of when we think about how the movements are similar, and why people who were in the tea party movement originally would have floated to the MAGA movement,” Martin said. Trump spoke to tea party groups when he was first thinking of running for office, Martin said, and tea party activists were on his first campaign team.

Martin said she supported Trump's sprawling budget legislation this year, the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill, despite its addition to the deficit, in part because she has come to realize that revolutionary change takes time.

“What we have learned in the past 16

years is that [even] if you're moving in the right direction, you may not always get everything you want,” Martin said. “We understand how Congress works now much more than we did before. Part of what we have learned is that when you care about something and want to advance whatever it is, our Founding Fathers created a system with all sorts of checks and balances, and it makes change very slow.”

Tea party activists routinely vilified, and ran against, traditional Republican lawmakers in 2010 who made exactly those arguments.

Liberal critics charged that the tea party was motivated at least in part by racial animus, especially as a backlash against the first Black president. Others challenged its claims of grassroots credibility, noting that billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch contributed substantial funds to build up the movement.

Similar criticism has been leveled at MAGA—that it is driven by racism and funded by billionaires. Leaders of both movements reject these claims, saying it is shameful to challenge the motives of millions of Americans who have attended their rallies and supported their candidates with the sole aim of building a better country.

The diminished plight of today's tea party was illustrated last month when Trump pointedly excluded Paul, the Kentucky senator, from a high-profile gathering of Republican senators at the White House to strategize on the government shutdown.

For years, Paul has criticized Republican positions on spending under Trump. “Today is the final nail in the coffin. The tea party is no more,” he said in a July 2019 speech on the Senate floor, referring to a spending deal that suspended the debt limit for two years. This year, Paul was among the few Republicans to have opposed Trump's marquee budget bill and the recent stopgap spending measure.

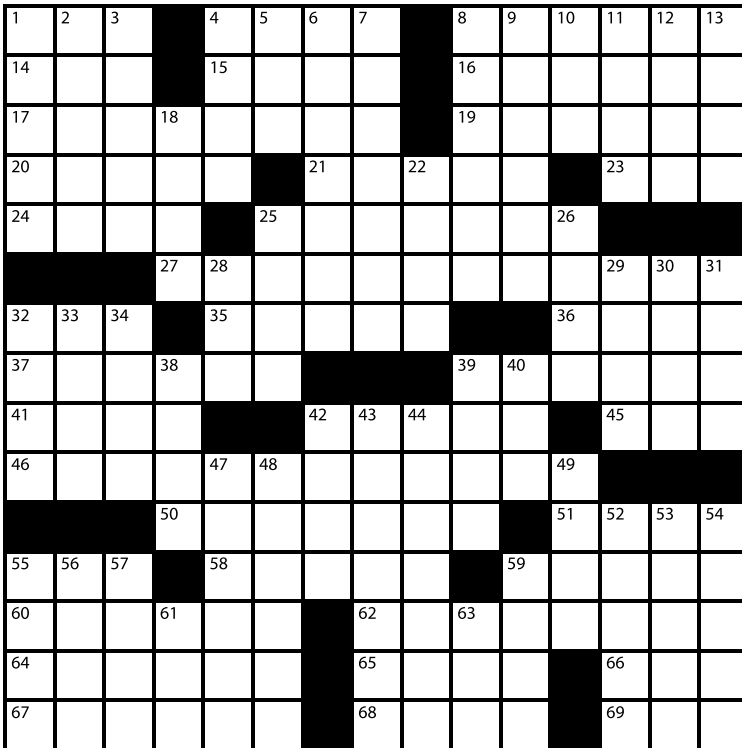
When he was left out of the recent White House meeting, Paul posted a photo of himself huddling with Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), another veteran of the tea party era who has earned Trump's wrath for defying him in the name of fiscal responsibility and constitutional principles.

Paul did not say it, but the photo in some ways reflected how much the tea party movement has shrunk since the heady days of 2010. The last time he played golf with Trump was in June, Paul said—right before he voted against the president's spending bill.

Asked who won, Paul said, “Now, that is top secret.”

This article was first published in The Washington Post. Used with permission.

Crossword No. 816: You're Not Making Cents by Matt Gaffney



ACROSS

- 1 Retail stores are reporting penny shortages some four months after the U.S. stopped minting them, but this puzzle has a lot of them; Penny Marshall directed this 1988 hit comedy
- 4 Places to chill
- 8 Maker of figure eights
- 14 Quotable boxer
- 15 "Listen!"
- 16 Only me, emphatically
- 17 This British actor originated the role of the Stephen King clown Pennywise, more recently played by Bill Skarsgard
- 19 Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, in '24-'25
- 20 Masters of the Universe leader
- 21 Volunteer's phrase
- 23 "None provided," in party host slang
- 24 Perfect place
- 25 Best Picture nominee of 2004, with *The*
- 27 Penny Hardaway played six seasons with this NBA squad, including the four seasons when he appeared in the league's All-Star Game
- 32 It's more in Managua
- 35 Kunta Kinte's creator
- 36 Fastest kind of shark
- 37 Compadres
- 39 Evening meal

- 41 Motorola phone line
- 42 Enjoys, as a lollipop
- 45 Pathetic
- 46 Descriptor of the fire engine, in the Beatles' "Penny Lane"
- 50 "Night Fever" band, with "the"
- 51 Winery containers
- 55 Gerard who played Buck Rogers
- 58 Boston paper
- 59 Seemingly impossible to explain
- 60 Observe
- 62 This French actress starred in the 2010s Showtime series *Penny Dreadful*
- 64 Ask along
- 65 City with many casinos
- 66 Greek consonants
- 67 Sounded like a microwave
- 68 Inner strength
- 69 Be a copycat

DOWN

- 1 Scrub in the tub
- 2 Sheepish confession
- 3 Super-short putt
- 4 Avoid socially
- 5 3 on a short hole, often
- 6 The act of getting there
- 7 Dubai's is famous
- 8 Serenade
- 9 Atari 2600 game featuring bombs
- 10 In the style of
- 11 Final resting place
- 12 Wish you could trade places with
- 13 Buick the bank takes back, say
- 18 Robinson __ (Yankee from 2005 to 2013)
- 22 Lord's wife
- 25 Word of woe
- 26 Way off the highway
- 28 P, to some
- 29 Ways through mountains
- 30 Store with umlauts in product names
- 31 Vacuum attachment
- 32 Salesforce CEO Benioff
- 33 Attorney Clooney
- 34 Extra-large, e.g.
- 38 Take quickly
- 39 Vail pair
- 40 Sailor's org.
- 42 Body of water, in Bolivia
- 43 Penguin's ride, often
- 44 *The Wapshot Chronicle* novelist
- 47 Counteract
- 48 Unfroze
- 49 At any point
- 52 Concert venue
- 53 Monopolize the time of
- 54 Get the feeling
- 55 Not serious enough
- 56 Skye of *Say Anything...*
- 57 Zero, to Coco Gauff
- 59 Four-award achievement
- 61 Physics Nobelists Thorne
- 63 Melodic DiFranco

The Week Contest

This week's question: A Utah man said goodbye to the 1991 Geo Metro he's been driving for nearly 35 years by crushing the broken-down compact with a prize-winning 1,917-pound pumpkin dropped from a crane. In seven or fewer words, come up with a caption for a photo of the moment the giant gourd made impact.

Last week's contest: An outage at Amazon Web Services caused some "smart" mattresses to suddenly heat up, freeze in an upright position, and/or sound a wake-up alarm. In seven or fewer words, write the subject line of a complaint that a sleep-deprived customer might email to the smart-mattress maker.

THE WINNER: My night of the living bed
Tom Titcombe, Larkspur, Colo.

SECOND PLACE: Sweet dreams aren't made of this
Ken Kellam III, Dallas

THIRD PLACE: Please give my smart mattress a lobotomy
Jeff Goodrich, Andover, N.H.

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

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Pumpkin demolition" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Nov. 11. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/contest on Friday, Nov. 14. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

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



Sudoku

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

Difficulty: super-hard

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

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

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1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

Never ones to miss an opportunity, we carefully steadied our glasses of bubbly and climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

With its remarkable retrograde hour and minute indicators, sunburst guilloche face and precision movement, this design is truly one of a kind. What does retrograde mean? Instead of displaying the hands rotating on an axis like most watches, the hands sweep in a semicircle, then return to their starting point and begin all over again.

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