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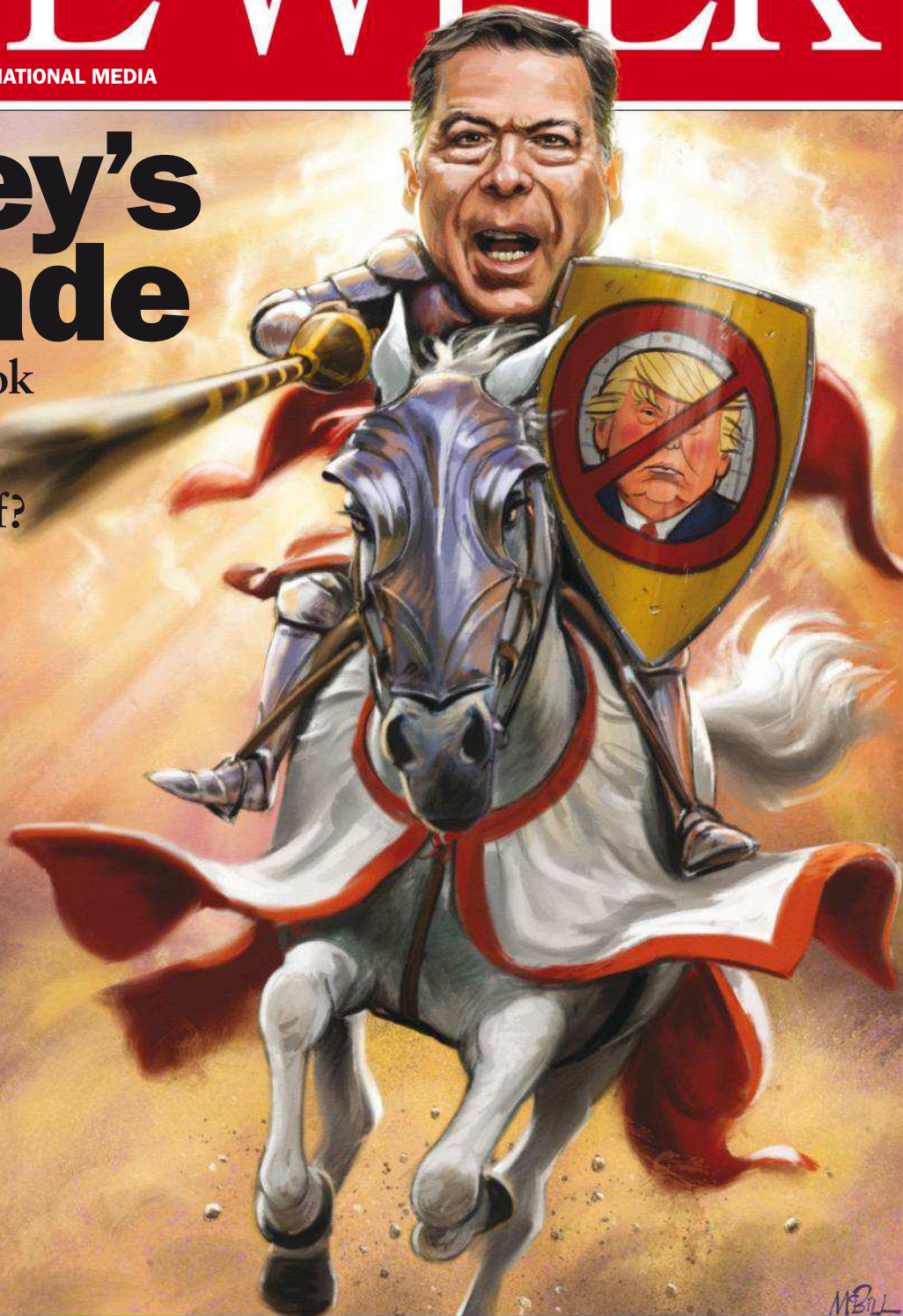
THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Comey's crusade

Does his new book
do more damage
to Trump—or
to Comey himself?

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AIRFRANCE



FRANCE IS IN THE AIR



37 DESTINATIONS IN FRANCE WITH DAILY CONNECTIONS VIA PARIS

Editor's letter

People in the journalism trade (like me) are fond of quoting Thomas Jefferson's statement that he'd rather have "newspapers without government" than "government without newspapers." As a 25-year veteran of newspaper work, I'm inclined to agree—and this year has vividly proven Jefferson's point. Power corrupts, public servants sometimes lie, and institutions hide their dirty secrets. To function properly, a democracy needs the impertinent watchdogs of the free press to challenge authority and hold it accountable. For proof of that, consider the contributions made by the winners of the 2017 Pulitzer Prizes for journalism, announced this week. Among them: the stories that finally brought Harvey Weinstein's monstrous predations to an end.

With months of painstaking work, reporters from *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times* tunneled under the wall of threats, bribery, and fear shielding Weinstein's secrets. Their stories led hundreds of women to come forward to name abusers in

Hollywood, politics, and virtually every other field, triggering a chain reaction that is reshaping our culture. Another Pulitzer went to *The Washington Post* for exposing U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore as a serial predator of teen girls. The *Post* and *The New York Times* were honored for detailing and explaining Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential campaign. To help readers see and feel the terrible human cost of the heroin epidemic, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* sent 60 journalists to document its daily impact on addicts, their families, police, and paramedics. When most people think of "the media," they visualize preening TV anchors, shouting pundits, and clickbait generators. But the real work of journalism is done by a dwindling army of nerdy, impossibly earnest reporters and editors in cluttered newsrooms. Every day, they dig out truths the powerful would prefer to conceal, applying the disinfectant of sunlight. There's a reason their work is protected by the very first Amendment.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

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Trump still wants out of Syria

What happened

President Trump signaled this week that he was sticking to his plan to withdraw all 2,000 U.S. troops from Syria in the coming months, after launching a limited set of missile strikes on the Syrian regime in response to a chemical-weapons attack that killed more than 40 civilians in Douma. In a joint pre-dawn mission with France and the U.K. last Saturday, the U.S. and its allies fired 105 Tomahawk and other missiles to destroy three facilities linked to the Syrian government's chemical-weapons program. To avoid provoking Russia—which along with Iran is backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad—the Pentagon avoided hitting any targets near Russian forces. The strike came only 10 days after Trump told the Joint Chiefs of Staff he wanted to remove all U.S. troops in Syria by the fall. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told senators this week that Trump remained set on extricating the U.S. from Syria, despite intense lobbying by senior administration officials and French President Emmanuel Macron. Administration officials are now seeking to form a coalition of Arab states to help replace American troops in Eastern Syria and prevent ISIS from regrouping.



One of the chemical-weapons sites that were attacked

Trump initially pushed for a more forceful response in Syria—largely because he'd sent a series of bellicose tweets promising Assad would pay "a big price"—but he was talked down by Mattis, *The New York Times* reported. In a televised address, the president urged Moscow and Tehran to drop their support for Assad, and warned that the U.S. would launch further strikes if the "monster" dictator used chemical weapons again. On Twitter, Trump described the strikes as "perfectly executed," adding: "Mission Accomplished!" He later angrily reversed an announcement by U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who said the military response would be coupled with new sanctions on Russian companies linked to Syria's chemical-weapons program. The White House said Haley was "confused," and that no new sanctions would be imposed.

What the editorials said

"Trump was right to order the strike," said *The Washington Post*.

It's "vital" that civilized nations uphold the international ban on these "horrific" weapons. But "the mission is far from accomplished," and the president's determination to pull U.S. troops out of Eastern Syria is "misguided." Arab-nation forces would be no match for the Russian- and Iranian-backed Assad regime and Turkey. The Turks would decimate the Kurdish troops who helped the U.S. defeat ISIS, and Tehran would "obtain the land corridor it seeks across Syria"—all but guaranteeing a catastrophic conflict between Iran and Israel.

Limited strikes please neither isolationists nor hawks, said the *Chicago Tribune*. But unless the U.S. launches an Iraq War-style intervention in

Syria—something no sane American wants—the country's fate will ultimately be determined by Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Those countries have much more at stake, and are thus willing to take greater risks to achieve their aims. The U.S. must accept its status as a "marginal player."

Trump's hasty reversal on sanctions is deeply suspicious, said the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Despite a litany of "egregious transgressions" by Russia—including Moscow's denial that the Assad regime used chemical weapons—he continues to advocate "a good relationship" with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Could the once far-fetched notion that Trump is being blackmailed by Putin actually hold some truth?

What the columnists said

"Somewhere, deep in his concrete labyrinth," Assad is smiling, said Dexter Filkins in *New Yorker.com*. He's paid only a small price for using chemical weapons to flush out the remaining resistance in Douma. Trump gave him time to move his warplanes to Russian bases, and held back a truly punishing attack that would antagonize Moscow. Assad now knows Trump will never seek to force him from power, no matter how many Syrians he slaughters. Trump "deserves credit" for enforcing President Obama's infamous "red line," said Marc Thiessen in *The Washington Post*. But the airstrikes didn't hit "a single airplane, airfield, or delivery system," leaving his air force intact. This "weak" response will not only leave Assad "emboldened," it will also reassure North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that Trump's bellicose threats are empty.

Actually, Trump appears to be embracing a sensible middle path, said Walter Russell Mead in *The Wall Street Journal*. Rather than trying to impose a U.S.-led solution on a broken region, he wants only to ensure that neither Russia nor Iran becomes too dominant. When the "balance of power" is secure, he can keep his distance; when that balance is threatened, he can work with regional partners to rein in aggressors. This approach "has a real chance of success," but only if this administration can learn to manage its alliances.

What next?

The Trump plan to replace U.S. troops in Syria with Arab-nation forces is highly problematic, said Alex Ward in *Vox.com*. Two of our most important would-be partners, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are already "overextended" militarily in Yemen, and thus unlikely to commit troops. Even if they did, most experts think their sub-par militaries "would struggle in a campaign against ISIS." Worse, that plan would "pit the military forces of two mortal enemies" now fighting for control of the region—Shiite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia—directly against each other. That could provoke a "dangerous and unnecessary escalation" that could trigger a regional war.

The biggest worry is Trump's "increasingly extreme mental state," said David Frum in *The Atlantic.com*. On the day the president was supposedly mulling his options for Syria, he was angrily tweeting about the criminal investigation into his private lawyer as well as the Russia investigation. Seething with "rage and resentment," Trump is clearly allowing his emotions—and what he sees on Fox News—to "distort his decision making." This is deeply alarming. With major military decisions ahead on Iran and North Korea, we have a commander in chief who very clearly "is not in command of himself."

Illustration by Howard McWilliam.
Cover photos from Newscom, Reuters, Newscom

Trump's 'fixer' in growing legal jeopardy

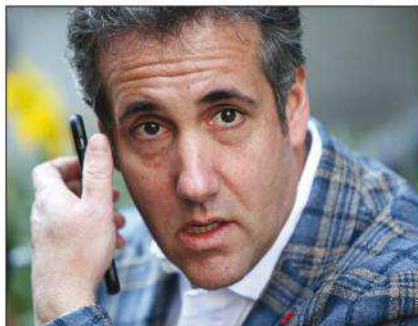
What happened

Amid mounting alarm and anger from President Trump, a federal judge this week denied requests from his lawyers to review materials seized from his longtime personal lawyer and self-described "fixer," Michael Cohen. Federal Judge Kimba Wood is weighing whether to appoint an independent lawyer to review the seized materials to see if any documents are shielded under attorney-client privilege before they are handed to investigators. The Justice Department revealed that Cohen had been under criminal investigation for several months over his business dealings when the FBI seized documents and hard drives from his office and home in early April. Among the records investigators were looking for were materials related to a \$130,000 payoff to porn star Stormy Daniels and communications about the notorious *Access Hollywood* tape. Trump's advisers believe that the investigation into Cohen poses a bigger and more imminent threat to the president than special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian collusion, *The New York Times* reported.

Cohen's lawyers said he had only two other clients in the past year: Republican donor Elliott Broidy, for whom Cohen arranged a \$1.6 million payoff to hush up an affair with a Playboy model, and Fox News star Sean Hannity. But prosecutors said Cohen appeared to do little legal work, which suggests that much of the Trump-related material recovered may not be covered by attorney-client privilege. McClatchy newspapers also reported last week that Mueller has evidence that Cohen secretly traveled to Prague in the summer of 2016. If true, it would corroborate a claim in the Steele dossier that Cohen headed there to meet with an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding the election. Cohen has denied traveling to Prague.

What the editorials said

Trump's past is finally catching up with him, said *The New York Times*. Cohen is typical of the "grifters, cons, sharks, goons, and crooks" he has associated with his entire career. But the threats and payoffs Cohen used to protect Trump when he was a real estate tycoon won't work against federal prosecutors. This is no "witch hunt," said *The Baltimore Sun*. The deputy U.S. attorney overseeing the investigation is Robert Khuzami, who spoke at the 2004 Republican National Convention. Hardly a "deep state" Democrat.



Cohen: Under criminal investigation

All of this is a long way from "the allegation that Trump is a front man for Putin," said *The Wall Street Journal*. The collusion investigation has turned into a dumpster-diving expedition, with Mueller passing on referrals about porn-star payoffs and other unrelated issues. The best thing Trump can do now is follow the Bill Clinton model: Keep quiet and let the booming economy speak for itself. Too bad it's advice he won't take.

What the columnists said

The White House is right to be more worried about the Cohen investigation than Mueller's probe, said Noah Feldman in *Bloomberg.com*. While the special counsel's office has a relatively narrow mandate, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York can investigate any potential crimes "that Cohen may have committed on behalf of Trump." And Trump can't fire the career prosecutors now on the case, as he could Mueller. Trump can't be indicted while in office, but he could be named as an unindicted co-conspirator in any charges against Cohen, the same way a grand jury named Richard Nixon in the Watergate cover-up. "That would tell the world that the president is a crook."

"I've never thought 'collusion with Russia' posed jeopardy" to Trump, said Andrew McCarthy in *NationalReview.com*. But the Cohen investigation is a different story. The U.S. Attorney's office almost certainly wouldn't have jumped through the legal hoops needed to search a lawyer's office unless it had evidence of serious crimes, ones that probably go far beyond potential campaign-finance violations for paying off a porn star.

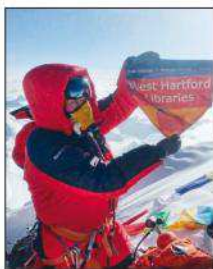
This feels like a "turning point," said Adam Davidson in *New Yorker.com*. Perhaps Trump will escape being personally linked to Russian collusion. But "I am unaware of anybody who has taken a serious look at Trump's business who doesn't believe that there is a high likelihood of rampant criminality," from his ties to New York mafiosi to his dealings with known money launderers and fraudsters in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia. Cohen has been present for virtually all of it, and his records are in prosecutors' hands. It could be that "we are now in the end stages of the Trump presidency."

It wasn't all bad

■ A Girl Scout troop from New York City is being saluted for its cookie-selling skills. Troop 6000 was founded in 2016 to offer youngsters who live in homeless shelters the Girl Scout experience. Last week, the group began its first ever cookie sale, and hoped to sell 6,000 boxes. Within two days, the girls had shifted 17,000, with hundreds of buyers queuing up at their stall. "It's important to show other girls that it doesn't matter where they're from, they could still be a Girl Scout," says 10-year-old Sanaa, a Troop 6000 member.



Sherpa: At work and on top of the world

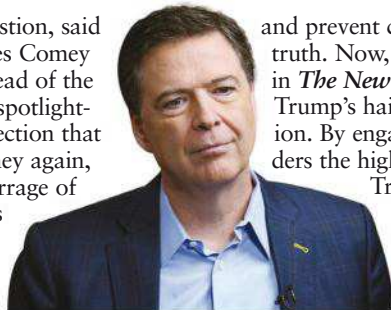


■ In her day job, Lhakpa Sherpa washes dishes at a Connecticut Whole Foods. For fun, she climbs Mount Everest. The 44-year-old single mom holds the world record for summits of Everest by a woman and plans to return to her native Nepal this month for her ninth trek up the mountain. Sherpa has no time to train between work and raising her two daughters. Still, she's used to overcoming adversity: Growing up, Nepali girls were discouraged from climbing, but she couldn't be deterred from her love of the sport. "I climb for all women," she says.

■ When an Illinois veteran was separated from his service dog in a car crash, a group of volunteers set out to reunite the pair. Summer, a miniature Australian shepherd, ran into the woods following the accident; owner Andre Wild couldn't look for his beloved dog because he was in the ICU. When locals heard Wild's story, they set up a Facebook page to coordinate a 400-person search effort. After three weeks, an exhausted but healthy Summer was caught and reunited with Wild. "It's just wonderful," says Wild's sister, Linda. "These people do not know me or my brother and they did this."

Comey: What his book actually reveals

This isn't the first time we've had to ask this question, said Alex Shepard in *NewRepublic.com*, but "is James Comey helping?" When President Trump fired him as head of the FBI last May, Comey was already notorious for spotlight-grabbing intrusions into the 2016 presidential election that helped get Trump elected. Now here comes Comey again, with a new memoir, *A Higher Loyalty*, and a barrage of media appearances in which he is hammering his contention that Trump is "morally unfit to be president." Trump, Comey writes in his book, is a serial liar who inhabits a "cocoon of alternative reality" and runs his administration like a Mafia boss, complete with "loyalty oaths" and an "us-versus-them worldview." In an interview with ABC's George Stephanopoulos, Comey stopped just short of accusing Trump of obstructing justice by interfering in the FBI's Russia investigation, and said "it's possible" that Russian President Vladimir Putin has compromising information on Trump, perhaps even the infamous "pee tape." To Trump's opponents, Comey's insider story helps flesh out the picture of the amoral, authoritarian president who's unfit to serve—aided this week by Trump's tyrannical Twitter rants about how Comey is "a slimeball" who should be sent to "jail." But to Trump defenders, the former FBI director's clear "personal animus" only feeds into the narrative of a "deep state" conspiracy against the president.



Comey: Compares Trump to a mob boss

and prevent critics from saying voters didn't have the full truth. Now, in his crusade against Trump, said Frank Bruni in *The New York Times*, Comey even stoops to mocking Trump's hair, his hand size, and his fake "orange" complexion. By engaging in these personal insults, Comey "surrenders the high ground," descends to Trump's level, and lets Trump, once again, "get the better of him."

It's far too late for Comey to convince liberals he's a hero, said Adam Serwer in *TheAtlantic.com*. The lifelong Republican's clumsy and self-conscious interventions in the 2016 presidential race "likely cost Clinton the election."

After finding no reason to prosecute her for her use of a private email server, the FBI director broke with Justice Department rules and gratuitously criticized Clinton for being "extremely careless" in her handling of classified information. This public slap was an obvious attempt to appease angry Republicans; meanwhile, Comey didn't tell voters about the FBI's far more serious investigation into the possibility "Trump's campaign may have been getting aid from a hostile foreign power." What was Comey thinking?

Comey may have "feet of clay," said Harry Litman in the *Los Angeles Times*, but he has still performed a service with this book. In documenting Trump's pressure to clear him and his aides of Russian collusion, Comey has provided "a highly credible account of possibly criminal behavior by the president." Trump's fate, however, will likely be decided "in the court of public opinion," said Max Boot in *The Washington Post*. By lowering himself to Trump's "sordid level" and revealing such personal animosity, Comey has undermined his value as a witness in possible impeachment hearings. "Once again, he is showing that his judgment is flawed."

Comey's bitchy book "torches what's left of his own reputation," said Kyle Smith in *NationalReview.com*. While offering no new details about his interactions with Trump, this "pompous ass" actually admits he was driven by politics and poll numbers when he decided to announce, 11 days before the election, that the FBI was re-opening its investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails. Since she seemed certain to win, Comey wanted to cover his own butt

Only in America

■ A 20-year-old man is suing a publisher for damages over a fraudulent book his father wrote claiming his son went to heaven and met Jesus following a 2004 car crash. Alex Malarkey, who was left paralyzed by the accident, said two years ago that his father, Kevin, totally fabricated the best-seller and did not share the millions he made. The lawsuit demands that Alex's name be "completely disassociated from the book."

■ A Nevada woman has refused to sing the national anthem before a minor-league baseball game because she can't carry a gun into the stadium. Alishia Wolcott said she was "thrilled" to be asked to sing before a Reno Aces game until she learned the stadium had installed metal detectors that would "strip me of my Second Amendment rights."

Good week for:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, after a coffin containing the Romantic poet's remains was discovered in a London wine cellar. "You could see it as appropriate," commented Richard Coleridge, great-great-grandson of the hard-drinking author of *Kubla Khan*.

Close shaves, when an asteroid nearly four times the size of one that leveled 500,000 acres of Siberian forest in 1908 missed Earth by only 119,500 miles last weekend. Startled astronomers had detected it less than a day earlier.

Louisiana's animals, after the state Senate passed a bill banning bestiality. "[If] you vote against this bill, good luck explaining it," said Sen. J.P. Morrell. Ten senators then voted against it.

Bad week for:

Scott Pruitt, when Congress' Government Accountability Office ruled that the scandal-plagued head of the Environmental Protection Agency violated the law when he installed a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth in his office last year.

Henry David Thoreau, after a new study found that the ecosystem of once pristine Walden Pond in Massachusetts has been devastated by "anthropogenic nutrient inputs"—that is, tourist swimmers peeing in the pond.

Taunting, when Mexican-born boxer Francisco Vargas dominated and scored a technical knockout over Rod Salka, who wore trunks depicting a brick wall and the words "America First." Vargas said his opponent's trunks provided some "extra" motivation.

Boring but important

Justices strike down deportation law

Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch joined with the court's four liberal-leaning justices this week to strike down a federal immigration law that allowed immigrants to be deported for violent crimes, ruling the law was unconstitutionally vague. The defendant in *Sessions v. Dimaya*, James Dimaya, was born in the Philippines and became a permanent U.S. resident in 1992, when he was 13 years old. The government sought to deport him following burglary convictions in 2007 and 2009. But the justices ruled 5-4 that the law's definition of "aggravated felony" as any crime with a "substantial risk" of physical force was too broad to be applied consistently by the courts. "Vague laws invite arbitrary power," Gorsuch wrote in his concurring opinion.

Oklahoma City

Teacher strike ends: Oklahoma teachers ended a nine-day statewide strike last week after winning the largest pay hike in state history. But they failed to compel lawmakers to reverse a decade's worth of steep cuts to education funding. The walkout

*On the picket line*

started on April 2, just after Oklahoma lawmakers voted to grant teachers an average raise of \$6,000, with educators hoping to win more concessions. Lawmakers later passed an additional \$40 million in education funding, though that figure fell well short of educators' demands. Union leaders still called for the strike's end, urging teachers to shift their efforts to electing sympathetic legislators in the midterm elections. "There comes a time, when if what you're doing is not getting the results you seek, there is wisdom in shifting focus," said Alicia Priest, president of the Oklahoma Education Association. "While the walkout is ending today, and we're going back to school, we are not just giving up and going home."

Houston

Barbara Bush dies: Tributes poured in this week for former first lady Barbara Bush, who died at her home in Houston two days after deciding not to seek further medical treatment. The 92-year-old had been struggling with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure. Bush is the only woman besides Abigail Adams to have been married to one president and parent to another, as wife to George H.W. Bush and mother to George W. Bush. Politicians on both sides of the aisle hailed Bush's lifelong commitment to volunteerism and literacy. Former President Obama called Bush "the rock of a family dedicated to public service," while Sen. Mitch McConnell lauded her "renowned toughness." Her 73-year marriage is the longest in presidential history. "[George Sr.] held her hand all day today and was at her side when she left this good earth," said family spokesman Jim McGrath.

*A political matriarch***Jefferson City, Mo.**

Greitens accused: Calls intensified this week for Republican Gov. Eric Greitens to resign, after an investigation into an affair he had with his hairdresser in 2015 detailed lurid claims of physical violence and blackmail. The unnamed woman testified to a Missouri House committee that her sexual encounters with Greitens weren't always consensual and were occasionally violent. She said the first time they were together he took a photo of her blindfolded and tied to exercise equipment, then threatened to release the picture if she exposed their relationship. Greitens, who has admitted to the affair, denied the allegations and attacked the investigation as a "political witch hunt." But all the state's Republican leaders called on him to stand down. His legal woes increased this week, when Missouri's attorney general said he had evidence Greitens used his charity's donor list for political fundraising—a possible felony.

**Washington, D.C.**

North Korea trip: CIA Director Mike Pompeo secretly traveled to North Korea, where he met with Kim Jong Un to prepare for face-to-face talks between the dictator and President Trump, the White House confirmed this week. "Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed," Trump tweeted of the clandestine talks over the Easter weekend, which are the highest-level contact the two countries have had since 2000. The president told reporters that he expects to meet with Kim in early June. U.S. officials have signaled that Kim is willing to negotiate the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, though what exactly that means is not clear. In the past, North Korea has insisted that denuclearization should include not only the dismantling of Pyongyang's nuclear program but also the removal of U.S. troops from South Korea, and an end to the U.S. nuclear security umbrella for the region. The U.S. has long rejected such terms.

Philadelphia

Starbucks under fire: Starbucks announced this week that it will close more than 8,000 U.S. stores for several hours next month to give staff "racial bias" training, after the arrests of two black men in a downtown Philadelphia outlet sparked widespread outrage. The men had asked to use the store's bathroom; when the manager told them they had to purchase something, they refused and sat down, saying they were waiting for someone. The employee asked them to leave and called the police when they declined to do so. The two men were arrested for trespassing and held for nearly nine hours before being released without charge. Footage of the arrests went viral and sparked days of protests at the store. The coffee chain's CEO, Kevin Johnson, apologized for the "reprehensible" incident and met the two men to offer a personal apology. Starbucks said the employee responsible was no longer with the company.

*Protesters at the store***Philadelphia**

Deadly flight: A Southwest Airlines jet was forced to make a harrowing emergency landing in Philadelphia this week after an engine explosion sent shrapnel through one of its windows, resulting in the death of a passenger who was partially sucked out of the aircraft. The plane carrying 149 people was 20 minutes into a flight from New York City to Dallas when passengers heard a loud boom from the left side and oxygen masks dropped from the ceiling. Jennifer Riordan, a Wells Fargo executive from Albuquerque, was pulled partly out of the blown-out window as the cabin depressurized. Several passengers pulled her back inside, but she was bleeding and badly injured and was later pronounced dead at a hospital. It's the first U.S. airline passenger death since 2009. Passengers praised pilot Tammie Jo Shults, a former Navy fighter pilot, for preventing an even worse tragedy. "She has nerves of steel," passenger Alfred Tumlinson said. Investigators said they found signs of "metal fatigue" in the left engine.

*A passenger's photo*



May: Saying sorry

London

Apology to Caribbeans: British Prime Minister Theresa May apologized this week to the thousands of Caribbeans who have been legal British residents for decades but were recently wrongly identified as illegal immigrants. Members of the "Windrush generation"—Caribbeans from

former British colonies, named after the 1948 ship that brought the first wave of foreign workers invited to help rebuild the U.K. after World War II—who arrived before 1973 had an automatic right to settle in the U.K. But some of those immigrants, especially those who arrived as children on their parents' passports, have been denied services such as health care, and some were deported because of rule changes implemented in 2012. The new rules require residents to prove their legal status, but the Caribbeans were never issued any immigration documents.

Havana



Díaz-Canel

New blood: Raúl Castro, 86, was expected to step aside as Cuba's president this week, handing over power to his vice president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, 57. A Castro has governed Cuba since 1959, when Raúl's late brother, Fidel, led a communist revolution that toppled the island's U.S.-backed regime. Raúl has been slowly nudging Cuba toward economic and political reform since he took the reins in 2008, and Díaz-Canel has been his close confidant. The Castros aren't gone, though: Raúl will remain head of the Communist Party; his son, Alejandro, holds a key position in the Interior Ministry; and a former son-in-law, Gen. Luis Alberto Rodríguez, is a top military leader.

Lima

Absent U.S.: The Summit of the Americas, held every three years to cement ties between Western Hemisphere nations, was a desultory affair this year without the U.S. president in attendance. President Trump is the first U.S. president to skip the summit since it was founded in 1994; Trump remained in the U.S. to oversee the military operation in Syria. Venezuela wasn't invited, because of its democratic backsliding under President Nicolás Maduro, and five other leaders stayed home. The summit is supposed to focus on open markets, hemispheric integration, and sustainable development. But "Trump does not believe in any of those three things," says U.S. political scientist Greg Weeks. "It would be natural for leaders to wonder what the whole point is."



Trump missed the party.

Brasília

Racist candidate? A leading candidate for the Brazilian presidency was charged last week with hate speech against blacks, women, refugees, and LGBT people. The charges stem from a speech by Jair Bolsonaro last year in which, among other things, the far-right politician implied that Afro-Brazilians were too lazy even to procreate and that he would prefer his son to "die in an accident than show up with some dude with a mustache." Bolsonaro, 63, shrugged off the charges as an overreach of political correctness. If convicted, he could face up to three years in prison, but the case is unlikely to be resolved before September's presidential vote. A poll taken after his arrest showed Bolsonaro in a virtual tie with environmentalist Marina Silva.



Bolsonaro

Yenisakran, Turkey

U.S. pastor on trial: An American pastor denied charges of terrorism and espionage as his trial got underway in Turkey this week, in a case that has exposed Ankara and Washington's fractured relationship. Andrew Brunson, a North Carolinian who has worked as a missionary in Turkey for 23 years, was detained following the failed 2016 coup attempt, which Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blames on the U.S.-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen. At an emotional court appearance this week, Brunson, 50, said that being called a Gulenist was an insult, because as a pastor, he wants to raise followers for Jesus. His lawyers say he has effectively been taken hostage by Erdogan, who wants to trade him with the U.S. for Gulen.



Brunson



Johannesburg

Zuma allies raided: A wealthy family tied to South Africa's disgraced ex-president Jacob Zuma is under investigation for corruption and money laundering. South African authorities this week raided the Johannesburg mansion of the Guptas, three Indian-born brothers who built a billion-dollar business empire with interests in areas as diverse as mining, media, computers, and dairy farms. Prosecutors seized some \$21 million in assets, including residences, aircraft, and cars. The brothers are alleged to have funneled cash to Zuma, his family, and his favorite allies to win state business and influence ministerial appointments. The Guptas fled to Dubai in February, shortly before the African National Congress party forced Zuma to step down as president.

Moscow

Messaging app banned: In an unprecedented crackdown, Russian authorities have banned Telegram, one of the country's most popular social media platforms, because it refused to let Russian intelligence agencies read its users' encrypted messages. When Telegram tried to evade the ban by routing traffic through servers run by Amazon and Google, state regulator Roskomnadzor blocked some 16 million IP addresses owned by those companies. Telegram founder Pavel Durov announced a "digital resistance," saying he would donate millions of dollars in Bitcoin to companies that create services that hide IP addresses. Telegram is popular with Russian journalists and members of the political opposition, but has also been used by Kremlin staffers.

*Blocked by the Kremlin***Yekaterinburg, Russia**

Journalist murdered? A Russian investigative journalist who wrote about Russian mercenaries fighting in Syria plunged to his death from his fifth-floor apartment in Yekaterinburg this week. Maxim Borodin, 32, had recently helped break a story about Russian contractors with the Wagner group—a private security firm linked to pro-Putin oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin—who were killed when they attacked a U.S. base in Syria in February. Four days before his mysterious fall, Borodin had called a friend at 5 a.m. saying armed security officials were on his balcony and in his stairwell, before calling back to say it appeared to be just a drill. His editor at *Novy Den*, Polina Rumyantseva, said she did not believe Borodin committed suicide, but police say the death is not suspicious.

Tokyo

Abe unpopular: Tens of thousands of Japanese protesters called this week for the resignation of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. His conservative government has been accused of giving deep discounts on land sold to an ultranationalist school linked to his wife, and then falsifying documents to hide the involvement of Abe, his wife, and Finance Minister Taro Aso. All three deny any wrongdoing. Abe's approval rating has sunk to 27 percent, the lowest it's been since he took office for the second time, in 2012. While his party changed its rules last year so he could run for a third term, Abe is not expected to survive this fall's leadership race. He was out of the country this week meeting with President Trump at his Florida Mar-a-Lago estate.

*In trouble***Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

Runaway princess: A Dubai princess who tried to flee the emirate by sea last month was allegedly recaptured at gunpoint and forcibly returned to her home. Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, 32, announced in a YouTube video that her escape would be "the start of me claiming my life, my freedom."

*Kidnapped at sea?*

French ex-spy Hervé Jaubert, who worked on luxury projects in Dubai but fled the emirate himself in 2009, said he helped organize her escape attempt but that military commandos boarded her sailboat in the Arabian Sea, dragged her away, and beat Jaubert and his crew. Latifa's father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is the ruler of Dubai and the prime minister of the United Arab Emirates. His government said the princess is safe, and it blamed rival Qatar for starting rumors.

Gaza

Protests rage on: One person was killed by Israeli sniper fire and hundreds injured by tear gas as some 10,000 Palestinians demonstrated at the border fence between Gaza and Israel last week. While most protesters were peaceful, some threw firebombs and rocks across the fence. Israeli soldiers have killed at least 35 demonstrators since weekly Friday protests began nearly a month ago. The protests—a grassroots movement that was taken over by Hamas, the militant group that controls Gaza—are intended to highlight the suffering of the 2 million people in Gaza, which has been blockaded by Israel since 2007. Israel announced sanctions on the owners of the buses that bring activists to the border, and said it had destroyed a Hamas attack tunnel that stretched from Gaza into Israeli territory.

*Carrying an injured protester***Abuja, Nigeria**

Senator loots Senate: A suspended Nigerian senator accompanied by about 10 armed men burst into the country's Senate during plenary session this week and stole the chamber's ceremonial mace. Witnesses said Ovie Omo-Agege—suspended last week for criticizing an electoral bill that he says is biased against President Muhammadu Buhari—and his gang snatched the gold-colored mace from its traditional spot and ran out. Normal business resumed in the Senate 15 minutes later, after the missing mace was replaced with a spare. "This action is an act of treason," said Senate spokesman Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, "as it is an attempt to overthrow a branch of the federal government of Nigeria by force." Omo-Agege was arrested shortly after his raid on the legislature.

*Omo-Agege: Under arrest*

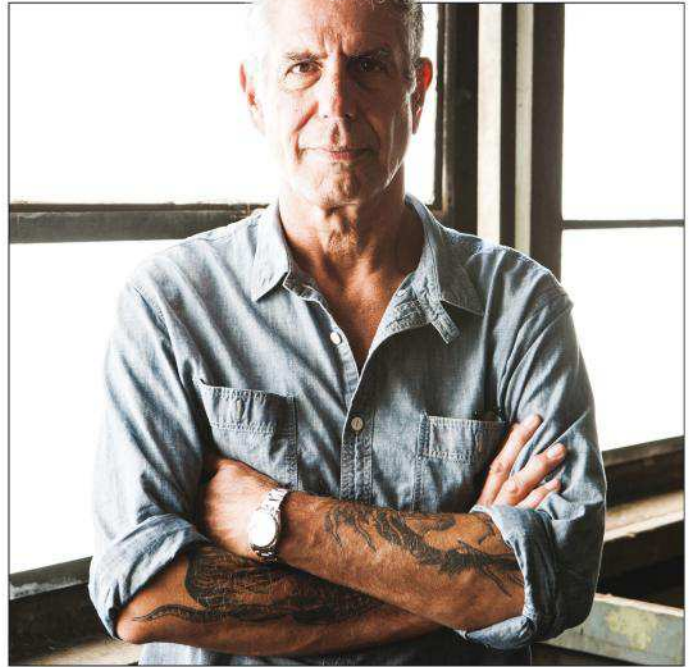
New Zealand's pregnant prime minister



Jacinda Ardern will soon become the second prime minister in world history to give birth while in office, said Helena de Bertodano in *The Sunday Times* (U.K.). Ardern, 37, found out she was pregnant only six days before taking office in October. (Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto was the first prime minister to give birth, in 1990.) Arden has had to field some awkward interview questions, such as when a male TV journalist asked exactly when she got pregnant, and another asked how she planned to give birth. "I just said, 'Like everyone else,'" Ardern recalls. "Do I need to describe it to you?" But in a country that prides itself on its progressive politics, most Kiwis have taken her pregnancy in stride. New Zealand became the first country in the world to give all women the right to vote, in 1893, and Ardern is its third female prime minister. "A path was carved well before I came along," she says. Ardern plans to take six weeks of maternity leave after the baby arrives in June, and then hand much of the child care to her stay-at-home husband, who has become known as the "first bloke." "I'm very mindful that I don't want to be some kind of poster child saying women can do everything, because it implies women *should* do everything," she says. "I think women have enough expectations. I can only do everything because I have help."

The man who was almost a Beatle

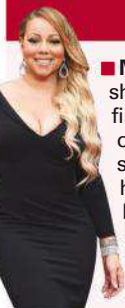
Pete Best has secured his place as a footnote in rock 'n' roll history, said James Hall in *The Telegraph* (U.K.). In 1959, Best's mother opened the Casbah Coffee Club in Liverpool, where the young trio of George Harrison, John Lennon, and Paul McCartney helped paint the walls before playing there on opening night. Later, when their band, the Beatles, needed a drummer, they remembered that Best owned a drum kit and invited him to join. Best played with the Beatles for two years, until he was abruptly fired in August 1962, just months before the hit single "Love Me Do" was released. Now 76, Best accepts the decision. But what still rankles is that his bandmates got manager Brian Epstein to do the firing. "He said, 'Pete, I don't know how to tell you this. The boys want you out.'" Ringo Starr, deemed a better drummer, had been lined up to replace him. "I'm not saying I'd change the outcome, but at least give me the decency of being there and [letting me] confront them," Best says. A year later, the Beatles were the biggest band in the world. Best hasn't seen McCartney since, but is open to having a chat. "We're senior statesmen now. Let's talk about things in general. Stick a bottle of Scotch on the table and let's have a good old bash."



Bourdain's rocky path

Anthony Bourdain doesn't consider himself a celebrity chef, said Howie Kahn in *The Wall Street Journal*. It's been almost two decades since he actually worked in a kitchen. Bourdain, 61, had been a competent chef, but he's a storyteller at heart: It was his gritty insider's view of the restaurant trade, *Kitchen Confidential*, that propelled him to global stardom. "The word 'celebrity' is not a compliment," says Bourdain, now the globetrotting host of CNN's *Parts Unknown*. "But I'll live with it since it's afforded me so many things." When he was a young line cook at the Rainbow Room, a chef sexually abused him, grabbing his rear end every day until Bourdain stabbed the offending hand with a meat fork. "I sunk that thing in up to the knuckle. I didn't have a problem with him after that." He bounced from kitchen to kitchen, developing an addiction to heroin and cocaine, and spent a decade struggling to get clean. His father, a record executive, died before Bourdain's book made him a success. "He died thinking of me as a guy who squandered my opportunities, my advantages, my education—a guy in his 30s who was hitting him up for money, probably for drugs." Bourdain chokes up. "It's a major regret of my life."

Gossip



■ **Mariah Carey** has revealed that she has bipolar II disorder and is finally getting treatment after years of denial. The 48-year-old singer-songwriter—whose erratic behavior has created speculation throughout her career—told *People* she was first diagnosed after being hospitalized for an emotional and physical breakdown in 2001. "I didn't want to believe it," Carey said. "I didn't

want to carry around the stigma of a lifetime disease that would define me and potentially end my career." Carey has a less acute form of the disorder, but it has caused periods of depression that alternated with periods of irritability, sleeplessness, and hyperactivity.

She's now managing her condition through therapy and medication. "I'm hopeful we can get to a place where the stigma is lifted from people going through anything alone," Carey said. "It can be incredibly isolating."

■ **Marvel Comics icon Stan Lee** is suing a former business manager for fraud and elder abuse, including a scheme to sell vials of the 95-year-old's blood to collectors. The lawsuit alleges that Jerardo Olivarez took advantage of Lee's grief over his wife's death in 2017 to dupe him into firing his longtime banker and signing over power of attorney to Olivarez's lawyer. Altogether, Lee says, \$4.6 million was transferred out of his bank account without his authorization, including \$300,000 to a fake charity that Olivarez said was actually for a nonprofit merchandising company. Family friend Keya Morgan told

Deadline.com that Olivarez also allegedly told a nurse to extract blood to sell to Marvel collectors. "There are shops in Las Vegas selling Stan Lee's blood," Morgan said.

■ **Khloé Kardashian** gave birth to a daughter just days after the father, Cleveland Cavaliers star **Tristan Thompson**, was apparently caught cheating on her with multiple women. Thompson was recently photographed leaving a New York City hotel with Instagram model Lani Blair. Video also emerged of Thompson kissing a woman in a Washington, D.C., nightclub last October, when Kardashian would have been three months pregnant. Nevertheless, Thompson was still present for the birth of his daughter in Cleveland, where Cavaliers fans booed him during the last regular season game and held up signs saying, "We love Khloé."

Hungary's 'illiberal democracy'

Viktor Orban is leading Hungary away from the rule of law and human rights—but with popular support. How?

How has Orban changed Hungary?

He is turning it into a crony capitalist state with what is effectively one-party rule. Viktor Orban's right-wing Fidesz party, which has had a supermajority in Hungary's parliament since sweeping to power in 2010, has changed the constitution and enacted stringent laws guaranteeing its dominance. Fidesz controls all branches of government, including the judiciary. It has gutted the independent press, with the media now dominated by outlets that overtly support Fidesz and Orban. Businesses that are close to the party, or to Orban and his cronies, get favorable contracts, while those that are not face punishing taxes and regulations. "Authoritarian capitalism," says Hungarian economist Gabor Scheiring, is the "new political economic model." The takeover caught the opposition, and the European Union, by surprise. Fidesz got just 53 percent of the vote in 2010, but quirks of seat distribution gave it a two-thirds majority, and it quickly exploited its position to remake the country. In a 2014 speech, Orban explained that his vision for Hungary was an "illiberal democracy," citing strongman states such as Russia and Turkey as models. He is well on his way to achieving that goal.



Orban: A 'Hungary First' populist

How did he do it?

By exploiting nationalism and fear of foreigners. Orban used government funds to wage a massive propaganda campaign depicting Hungary as under assault by Muslim and other dark-skinned immigrants and by liberals in the EU bureaucracy in Brussels. The campaign was effective because Hungary has had a long history of foreign domination, and just a few decades of experience with democracy, capitalism, and a free press; it was a Communist state in the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact until 1989. Orban changed the constitution to have judges appointed by a single person, instead of an all-party committee, and replaced experienced judges with his apparatchiks. He passed media laws imposing heavy fines on any press outlet deemed biased against the government, silencing those voices. Local TV stations were bought up by friendly oligarchs. Meanwhile, Orban installed political cronies in once independent bodies such as the state auditor's and state prosecutor's offices. Gerrymandering and biased electoral laws make it highly likely Fidesz majorities will continue.

Do Hungarians approve of this?

Mostly, yes. The election last week, giving Fidesz a third straight supermajority, had a strong turnout of 69 percent. The vote was free in that there were opposition candidates and ballots were counted correctly, although it was unfair because of regulations disfavoring other parties and the suppression of government criticism. Orban has succeeded in convincing Hungarians that only they can preserve Christianity

in Europe from a rampaging horde of Muslim refugees, just as Hungary held the borders of Christendom against the Ottoman army in the 15th century—an image he invokes frequently. In service to this nationalist narrative, he has demonized Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros, who funds civil society groups across Eastern Europe (see box), and sealed Hungary off from the 2015 wave of more than 1 million migrants fleeing Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

How did he do that?

Orban closed Hungary's border and built a 100-mile, barbed-wire fence he later electrified. A propaganda campaign ensued, warning that Muslim immigrants would bring crime and rape Christian women. After the EU struck a deal to resettle some of the migrants in each of the member countries, Hungary refused to accept its quota. More recently, the flow of migrants has stopped, yet Orban still used the threat of Muslim criminals as his main campaign theme. Before the election, television news repeatedly showed a video of 2017 terrorist attack in Stockholm, in which an Uzbek asylum seeker drove a bus into a crowd.

Who are his allies?

A fierce anti-Communist during Hungary's Iron Curtain days, Orban is now pro-Russia and has eagerly courted Russian President Vladimir Putin. Last year Russia was awarded a no-bid contract to expand Hungary's only nuclear plant, further cementing Russian control of Hungary's energy supply. Orban has also praised and endorsed President Donald Trump, and cited Trump's "America First" nationalism as justification for his own nationalist policies. "We have received permission from, if you like, the highest position in the world," Orban said. Orban's closest European ally is Poland's de facto leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who is using Hungary as a model. Kaczynski is limiting press freedom and politicizing the court system, as Poland slides toward authoritarianism.

What can the EU do?

Theoretically, it could cut off transfers and subsidies to Hungary—some \$6 billion a year—and suspend its voting rights. This "nuclear option," though, would be vetoed by Poland, just as any penalty against Poland would be vetoed by Hungary. Though Orban's authoritarianism has horrified the EU, it is at a loss over how to respond to his wholesale flouting of democratic norms and values. Former EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding said the EU is designed to help members become more open and free, and doesn't have adequate tools to punish members who seek the opposite. "We never thought that someone would go the other way," Reding said. "It was unthinkable."

The Soros bogeyman

Liberal American financier and philanthropist George Soros has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in Hungary since 1989, financing educational and social projects, including Budapest's prestigious Central European University. Orban sees this promotion of human rights and the rule of law as a threat, and has demonized the Hungarian-born Soros, who is Jewish, in a propaganda campaign filled with anti-Semitic code words and stereotypes. Parliament has taken up a "Stop Soros" package of laws aimed at banning non-governmental organizations, and last week, a Hungarian magazine published 200 names of "mercenaries"—including journalists and members of Amnesty International and of anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International—who it said were trying to turn Hungary into an immigrant, non-Christian nation. "We are fighting an enemy that is different from us," Orban said. "Not open but hiding; not straightforward but crafty; not honest but base; does not believe in working but speculates with money; does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world."

The crisis no one is facing

Robert Samuelson
The Washington Post

Republicans and Democrats have the same plan for the massive hole in the federal budget: "Do nothing," said Robert Samuelson. The latest projections from the Congressional Budget Office are "gruesome." Thanks to falling revenue from Republican tax cuts and a bipartisan spending binge, the deficit will leap to \$1 trillion by 2020, with the federal government adding another \$12.4 trillion to our \$21 trillion national debt over the next 10 years. Exploding the deficit during a strong economy makes no sense, and may lead to rising interest rates—and at some unpredictable point, to a collapse in U.S. creditworthiness. "Political expediency" is to blame. "It's more popular to increase spending and cut taxes than the opposite." Balancing the budget will require annual spending cuts and tax increases that add up to \$1 trillion—an unpopular combination that neither party has the courage to support. Liberals don't want Medicare, Social Security, and other entitlements touched, even though they equal about 70 percent of federal spending. Conservatives refuse to countenance tax hikes, even though without them "spending cuts would be unacceptably severe." Eventually, the bill for this willful blindness will come due.

Why Trump pardoned Libby

Marcy Wheeler
The New York Times

Why did President Trump suddenly pardon I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby last week? asked Marcy Wheeler. That's obvious: He was sending "a message to Paul Manafort, Michael Cohen, and any of his other close aides" who face prosecution in the Russia investigation. Libby was convicted in 2007 of disclosing the identity of CIA officer Valerie Plame in an act of political retribution that may have been ordered by Vice President Dick Cheney. Libby had already regained his law license and his right to vote, so Trump's pardon "will change nothing." It's entirely symbolic, reminding those who might incriminate Trump in either the Cohen or Russia investigations that he can rectify their legal problems if they—like Libby—remain silent. As legal strategy, this has two flaws: One is that Manafort, Cohen, and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, could be charged with state crimes for financial and tax matters—which the president cannot pardon. The second is that special counsel Robert Mueller is reportedly just weeks away from issuing a report on Trump's numerous attempts to obstruct the Russia investigation—which will likely detail previous attempts to dangle pardons before Manafort and others. Any actual pardons would serve only to prove Trump's intent to obstruct justice.

A global plastics crisis

Emily Atkin
NewRepublic.com

When a dead sperm whale washed up on a beach in Spain earlier this year, said Emily Atkin, scientists were shocked to discover "64 pounds of plastic in its stomach and intestines." Throughout the world, discarded plastic is infiltrating and killing wildlife, ravaging coral reefs, and contaminating birds, fish, and the food chain. It is making its way into our bodies, with unknown health effects. Humans already put 19 billion pounds of plastics into the oceans every year, and that toxic avalanche will double by 2025. Recycling and bans on plastic bags and straws can "make a small difference," but this scourge is truly an international problem, with Asian countries contributing the vast majority of ocean plastic. "Like human-caused climate change," plastic pollution requires an international agreement with "binding pollution-reduction targets for every country." That goal will meet with stiff resistance: Not surprisingly, China, India, and now the U.S. under President Trump have refused to sign a draft U.N. resolution that would start the process of setting plastic targets. But it's the only way to stop the immense flow of plastics into our oceans and our bodies. "The plastics crisis is entirely within humans' power to solve, but only if we do it together."

Viewpoint

"The IRS's biggest problem is that it has nowhere near enough money to do the job asked of it. Enforcement personnel have dropped precipitously at the agency, including a 30 percent drop in auditors between 2010 and 2017. Contrary to the popular perception, Americans generally think their taxes are reasonable. It's not paying that gets them incensed, but the notion—real or imagined—that others aren't paying their fair share. Crapping the IRS makes that perception more real by enabling tax cheats to get away with their games."

Pat Garofalo in *NBCNews.com*

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

■ Hundreds of people recently gathered in the Indian village of Harpur to watch a Hindu holy man perform a bizarre show of strength—pulling a car tied to his private parts. The man, known as Penis Baba, can be seen in a video putting a white towrope under his robes and apparently attaching it to his member. He then staggers backward, pulling the compact car some 100 feet down a dirt road. Baba said that his performance was the result of "the power of God—the power of devotion."

■ A New York man ended up in the hospital with severe head pain after he scarfed a super-hot chile pepper during a pepper-eating contest. Moments after swallowing the Carolina Reaper pepper—more than 400 times spicier than a jalapeño, making it one of the world's hottest—the otherwise healthy 34-year-old began dry heaving and was hit with "a thunderclap" headache. He rushed to the ER, where scans revealed that the pepper had caused blood vessels in his brain to contract, triggering the horrendous head pain. The man soon recovered, said Dr. Kulothungan Gunasekaran, but "he will remember this for his life."

■ A road safety measure intended to curb distracted driving in the Netherlands has succeeded only in driving local villagers crazy. To warn drivers they're out of their lanes in a lively way, workers painted a road through the village of Jelsum with "rumble strips" that play the regional anthem when car tires pass over them. But many drivers ran over the strips on purpose to hear the music, and locals say the nonstop anthem is keeping them awake at night and is "psychological torture." Officials agreed to remove the strips, but contended that "the idea was good."





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UNITED KINGDOM

Time to eat American Frankenfood

Sean O'Grady
Independent.co.uk

Brexit is going to force Britons to be less picky about their food, said Sean O'Grady. Leaving the European Union and its massive common market means the U.K. will need to strike a free-trade deal with the world's largest economy, the U.S.—and America sure as hell isn't going to let us sell it our steel, Rolls-Royces, and banking services if we don't take its chlorinated chicken and hormone-laced beef in return. Just look at the latest annual report setting out America's wish list with trade partners, including the EU. The U.S. wants to scrap all manner of restrictions, including many of our rules limiting pesticide use and requiring

strict standards of animal welfare. It objects to the "country-of-origin labeling" regulations that tell consumers where meat comes from—probably out of fear that informed buyers would shun American products. And it wants to scrap the geographical protection system, so get ready for California "champagne" and Virginia "prosciutto" appearing on our supermarket shelves. The U.S. government even claims that cloning technology can improve livestock herds and presents no food safety issues. "So post-Brexit, chances are you'll be shopping blind, unable to avoid genetically modified American 'cheddar' even if you wanted to."

POLAND

Now we look worse than ever

Jerzy Haszczyński
Rzeczpospolita

Poland's gag law on Holocaust culpability has utterly backfired, said Jerzy Haszczyński. The law, passed in February, makes it a crime to attribute Nazi atrocities to the Polish nation or people, or to use the phrase "Polish death camps" to describe Nazi German concentration camps in occupied Poland. One could see the ruling Law and Justice party's intention in this legislation; Poles find it infuriating to be unfairly blamed for the horrors of Auschwitz. But the law was understandably seen in Israel and the U.S. "as a gag stuffed in the mouth of the last Holocaust survivor." Governments denounced it, and newspapers around the world began listing every instance

of Polish complicity in roundups or killings of Jews here during World War II. The result was a global "outpouring about Polish crimes committed against Jews," with not a word about the many Poles later deemed by Israel to be Righteous Among the Nations for saving Jews, nor any mention of valiant Polish resistance fighters. The true story of Poland during the Holocaust encompasses both "evil and heroism." It will be years before we can undo the reputational damage caused by this misguided law—but at least the government appears to have realized its mistake. The gag law will now go before Poland's constitutional court, and hopefully be consigned to history.

Europe: Joining the U.S. to strike Syria

The West had to take a stand, said *Le Monde* (France) in an editorial. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad crossed a red line once again this month by blasting his own people with chemical weapons, killing dozens—many of them children—in the rebel-held Damascus suburb of Douma. The U.S., U.K., and France had no choice but to hit back, smashing the dictator's chemical-weapons facilities with airstrikes and Tomahawk missiles. The three allies are "all too conscious of the disastrous consequences" of their failure to act in 2013, after Assad killed nearly 1,500 civilians with sarin gas in the Damascus suburbs. French planes were fueled and ready to launch, but the British and Americans balked. Since then, the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons at least 85 times. And yet "a night of strikes is not a strategy," said **Arnaud de La Grange** in *Le Figaro* (France). U.S. President Donald Trump obviously has no plan, so our President Emmanuel Macron must take the lead. No one expects to "go in one day from the Tomahawk to the peace pipe." But this jolt could "reawaken diplomacy."



A French fighter jet prepares for airstrikes in Syria.

It certainly did nothing to change the facts on the ground, said *The Guardian* (U.K.). The allied strike was meant to be simultaneously tough enough to deter Assad from further chemical-weapons attacks, and not so damaging as to provoke his sponsor, Russia, "into retaliatory action that might escalate the conflict." Those goals are irreconcilable. Remember, the U.S. under Trump

bombed Syria a year ago, in a similarly limited attack and for the same reason, and all Assad learned "was that he would not be seriously punished" if he gassed his people again. Prime Minister Theresa May has insisted that the U.K. joined last week's operation not because Trump asked us to, but "because we believed it was the right thing to do." That claim is laughable. We were little more than multinational window dressing for Trump, who might be flexing U.S. military muscle to distract from his many scandals back home.

May had to take part, said *The Daily Telegraph* (U.K.). To wait for the United Nations to approve any intervention would be to effectively "accept a Russian veto on U.K. action." And Britain was in danger of becoming irrelevant in a vital region. When Trump was looking for support for the strike, he called Macron first, not May. France is now "supplanting the U.K. as America's leading partner in Europe." So where does that leave Germany? asked **Holger Schmale** in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (Germany). Chancellor Angela Merkel approved of the attack on Syria, praising the U.S., France, and the U.K. for fulfilling their international responsibilities. Yet Germany has remained resolutely on the sidelines throughout this crisis, not even using its political heft to organize a diplomatic response to Assad's crimes. How pathetic to see a nation as powerful as ours "talk of responsibility and do nothing."

India: Hindu nationalists accused in child-rape cases

Indians are aghast at the sickening gang rape and murder of a Muslim girl, said **Harinder Baweja** in the *Hindustan Times*. Police in the state of Jammu and Kashmir say 8-year-old Asifa Bano was grazing her family's ponies in a field when she was kidnapped, drugged, and locked inside a Hindu temple. Over the next four days, she was raped repeatedly by at least four Hindu men; finally, they bashed in her skull and dumped her body in a forest. Police say the perpetrators wanted to terrorize the girl's ethnic group, Bakherwal nomads, into leaving the area. The attack occurred in January, but shot to national attention last week after charges were brought against eight men, including the temple's custodian and four policemen—two of the officers are said to have accepted money to cover up the crime. The “gruesome details” should “make our collective blood boil,” and thousands of Indians have marched demanding justice for Asifa. But last week a group of Hindu lawyers surrounded a local court in an attempt to keep police from filing charges, claiming the suspects were being discriminated against because of their faith. Two state ministers from the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party who protested in defense of the alleged rapists have been forced to resign.



A young protester in Jammu and Kashmir

Meanwhile, allegations of another rape have shaken the state of Uttar Pradesh, said **Amulya Gopalakrishnan** in *The Times of India*. A 16-year-old girl said she was raped last summer by BJP state legislator Kuldeep Singh Sengar and his brother, but

that police refused to investigate. After she tried to immolate herself at the governor's residence earlier this month to draw attention to the crime, her father was allegedly beaten by Sengar's henchmen and died in police custody. Sengar was finally arrested last week. It's damning that in both the Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir cases “the alleged rapists were either from the BJP or had been shielded by senior BJP leaders.” Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Hindu nationalist, issued only a brief condemnation of the crimes after opposition leaders criticized his silence. Modi is playing politics, said Indian journalist **Nilanjan**

Mukhopadhyay in *Aljazeera.com*. India has elections next year, and there are “worrying signs” that his party is “increasingly relying on majoritarianism and hypernationalism to get re-elected.”

This isn't simply about party politics—our country refuses to wake up to its rape epidemic, said **Manish Tewari** in *The Indian Express*. Many of us thought we had reached a turning point in 2012, after a 23-year-old woman known as Nirbhaya was gang-raped on a New Delhi bus, suffering horrific injuries that resulted in her death. “People were outraged and took to the streets to vent their anger.” Those protests spurred changes in the law, including the imposition of the death penalty for rape. And yet reports of rape in New Delhi have actually gone up since Nirbhaya was brutalized. The bitter reality is that in India, every woman and girl is still “considered fair game.”

CANADA

Spurning our repugnant neighbor

Doug Saunders
The Globe and Mail

Americans don't need to wonder who lost Canada, said Doug Saunders. Right after Donald Trump was elected president, Canadian regard for its most important trading partner crumbled. According to a new poll, more than half of Canadians now hold an unfavorable view of the U.S.—the first time that's happened since pollsters began charting the relationship some 40 years ago. “It is not a subtle drift.” We were “overwhelmingly positive” about America until November 2016, when the numbers dropped off a cliff. More Canadians now list the U.S. as a negative force in the world than cite North Korea. We've even soured on Britain,

because that country has been contorting itself to stay close to Trump's U.S. At the same time, our admiration for Germany and Sweden—countries with a strong welfare state, welcoming attitude toward refugees, and no love for the far right—has soared. “It is their similarity to us, and their difference from you-know-who.” Everything Trump hates we now support more than ever, from globalization to immigration to peacekeeping. While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has done a masterful job wooing the volatile U.S. leader, his efforts could backfire. Canadian voters may want to see “overt antipathy to Washington.”

JAPAN

You must wait your turn to have a baby

Editorial
Mainichi Shimbun

Women being discouraged from having children? That's the last thing you'd expect in a country suffering a steep demographic decline, said the *Mainichi Shimbun*. Yet in those Japanese workplaces where women make up most of the staff, that's exactly what's happening. Managers are telling female employees to wait their “turn” before having a baby. In one recent incident that caused a public outcry, an employee at a child care center who discovered she was pregnant was chided by her boss for “selfishly breaking the rules.” He had drawn up a strict schedule for female staff to take time off to give birth and she had ruined it. In an-

other incident, a 26-year-old working at a Tokyo cosmetics firm was told by a supervisor that she'd be allowed to have a child only after 10 years of employment. She was emailed a document mapping out the childbirth schedules, with the warning that “selfish behavior will be subject to punishment.” Even when female employees aren't explicitly told to stick to a schedule, many put off getting pregnant so as not to “cause trouble” at work. Japan's fertility has been below the replacement rate since 1974, and our population is actually dropping. Businesses in most countries can find ways to accommodate pregnant staff. Why can't Japan?

Paul Ryan: Judging his term as House speaker

It seems like ancient history now, but House Speaker Paul Ryan was once hailed as “both the GOP’s ideological standard-bearer and its future,” said **James Hohmann** in *The Washington Post*. In 2015, the conservative policy wonk reluctantly bowed to pressure to take the speaker’s chair as the only member of Congress who could unite Republicans after a right-wing rebellion against John Boehner. But last week the 48-year-old Ryan announced that he’d be joining Boehner in retirement—another casualty of his party’s bitter factionalism. When he first became a national figure in the 2000s, Ryan portrayed himself as a small-government, free-market libertarian whose primary mission was reining in Washington spending and Big Government. Mitt Romney tapped Ryan as his running mate in 2012 to shore up his appeal with grassroots conservatives. Now, the base has a different hero, the populist President Trump, who has repudiated Ryan’s positions on free trade, immigration, and reforming entitlements like Social Security and Medicare. Ryan “has become a stranger of sorts in his own party.”

Good riddance, said **Matthew Yglesias** in *Vox.com*. Ryan has successfully sold himself as a serious policy guy and deficit hawk to a gullible media, but he’s always been a “phony.” Under President George W. Bush, Ryan voted for multiple “budget-busting” tax cuts, costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the 2003 Medicare expansion, and the TARP bank bailout. During the Obama administration, Ryan proposed a long-term plan to reduce the deficit—but it relied on “magic asterisks” such as unspecified spending cuts and wildly optimistic growth projections. Under Trump, Ryan did push through the one thing he cared about most: a tax cut for the rich and corporations. But even there, Ryan was “a failure on his own terms,” said **John Cassidy** in *NewYorker.com*. The giveaway to the GOP’s donors will add \$1.9 trillion to the debt over 10 years, while making Democrats less likely than ever to cut benefits to retirees and the poor. “Every time a Republican tries to bring up the debt or reforming Social Security and Medicare, this figure will be thrown in their faces, and rightly so.”

Ryan deserves some credit, said **Mona Charen** in *NationalReview.com*. “Nearly single-handedly,” he managed to put out-of-control entitlement spending on the national agenda. Unfortunately, his



Ryan: Got his tax cut, but deficits are soaring.

reward for attempting to drag our country into a “grown-up reckoning with our debt” was to be caricatured by Democrats “as the goon throwing granny in her wheelchair off a cliff.” The country is going to miss Speaker Ryan, said **John Podhoretz** in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. Whatever his failings, Ryan had a low-key approach to politics and a mastery of the details that have sadly gone out of fashion among Republicans in the age of Trump. “If the House has become an inhospitable place for a Paul Ryan, who actually cared about national matters more pressing than his next Fox appearance, then woe betide us all.”

next Fox appearance, then woe betide us all.”

Spare me the tears, said **Ronald Brownstein** in *TheAtlantic.com*. Over the past year, Ryan was Trump’s “most important enabler.” Fully expecting that Trump would lose on election night 2016, Ryan was prepared to give a speech denouncing Trumpism’s racism and urging the GOP to return to a more inclusive message. “Instead, when Trump won, Ryan folded the speech back into his jacket pocket.” Since then, he’s made a “devil’s bargain” with Trump, choosing to look away from the president’s crude, divisive rhetoric and contempt for democratic norms, in hopes of furthering his own priorities, especially the tax cut. History will not judge Ryan kindly, said **Tim Alberta** in *Politico.com*. He’s stood mutely by while Trump has attacked private citizens and corporations, attempted to delegitimize federal law enforcement, and committed “innumerable other acts for which Barack Obama would have been impaled by the Right.” When it’s asked how the party of fiscal sanity, family values, and compassionate conservatism became the party of exploding deficits, Muslim bans, FBI hatred, and porn-star payoffs, “the answers will implicate not just Trump, but Ryan and other Republicans as well.”

Was the deal with the devil worth it? asked **Josh Barro** in *Business Insider.com*. It doesn’t look like it. Even with his party in complete control of Washington, Ryan was unable to achieve most of the biggest items on his agenda. The Affordable Care Act still lives. He wasn’t able to significantly reform or reduce spending on Medicare, Medicaid, or food stamps. The national debt is \$21 trillion and rising fast. “The great tragedy of Paul Ryan is not that he sold his soul to Donald Trump. It’s that he got so little in return.”

Noted

■ The U.S. has accepted only 11 Syrian refugees fleeing the carnage of the country’s civil war so far this year, down from 15,479 in 2016 and 3,024 in 2017. “I think you can call it a backdoor ban, except that it’s so blatant,” said Becca Heller of the International Refugee Assistance Project. *NPR.org*

■ In 2015, Donald Trump listed 19 companies that were paying him so they could sell Trump-branded consumer goods, including ties, steaks, and underwear. But his presidency has driven off customers, leaving only a Panamanian company

selling Trump bed linens and a Turkish company selling Trump furniture.

The Washington Post

■ Fisher Island, a 216-acre private island off the coast of Miami, is the richest ZIP code in the U.S. The average income there was \$2.5 million in 2015, more than \$1 million more than the second-place spot, the City of Atherton in Silicon Valley. *Bloomberg.com*

■ In 2017, more police officers were shot responding to domestic violence than to any other type of firearm incident. From 1988 to 2016, FBI data show, 136 officers were killed while responding to domestic disturbances, compared with 80 killed during drug-related arrests. *USA Today*

■ Thirty-three percent of 25- to 29-year-olds lived with their parents or grandparents in 2016—the highest proportion in 75 years. *Qz.com*



Pompeo: Why his confirmation is in jeopardy

"Amid a series of difficult Senate confirmation fights facing President Trump," Mike Pompeo's nomination for secretary of state "was supposed to be the easy one," said Elana Schor and Nahal Toosi in *Politico.com*. But after combative hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week, Pompeo's nomination is in real trouble. Committee Democrats grilled the CIA director on his previous, hard-line statements that we should tear up the Iran nuclear deal and overthrow North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. They questioned him about reports that Trump once asked him to get the FBI to scale back the Russia investigation. Even Republicans chipped in, asking him whether he'd ever push back against the president's worst instincts. Pompeo's evasive answers—that he now favors diplomacy over confrontation, and that Trump never asked him to do anything "inappropriate"—left Democrats "frustrated." With Republicans Sen. Rand Paul already saying he'll vote "no" and Sen. John McCain ill, Pompeo will need Democratic votes to be confirmed.



Pompeo: He'll need Democratic votes.

Pompeo's biggest problem is his "long history" of far-right extremism, said Zack Beauchamp in *Vox.com*. After riding the Tea Party wave to Congress, the West Point graduate endorsed the belief that homosexuality is a "perversion," and in 2013

even suggested that Muslim leaders were "potentially complicit" in the Boston Marathon bombing. Do we really want this bigot as our chief diplomat? More concerning is Pompeo's hawkish worldview, said Richard North Patterson in *The Boston Globe*. He and the new national security adviser, John Bolton, have a history of "exaggerating threats, scorning serious diplomacy, and imagining that American power can mold the world to their liking." For all his flaws, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson did at least "speak for moderation."

These are all "legitimate concerns," said *The Washington Post* in an editorial. But Trump is facing a "chaotic confluence of actual and looming foreign crises," involving Syria, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. The State Department and national security apparatus are already "badly depleted," with "dozens of senior positions" vacant. It's simply too "parlous" a time to be without a secretary of state. Pompeo is also one of the few officials who has "the trust of the president," said Michael Allen in the *Washington Examiner*. That's essential, as other nations will know he genuinely speaks for Trump. For the sake of the nation, Democrats must put politics aside and confirm Pompeo.

Russia investigation: Can Trump shut it down?

OK, "this is not a drill," said Christian Farias in *NYMag.com*. When federal agents last week raided the offices and home of President Trump's personal lawyer Michael Cohen, the president and White House floated new threats that special counsel Robert Mueller may be fired. "We'll see what happens," Trump said, while his spokesperson, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, said Mueller has "gone too far" and that Trump "certainly believes he has the power" to fire Mueller himself. Because of the terms of the former FBI director's appointment, it's more likely Trump would have to sack Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who oversees the Russia probe, then get another Justice Department official in the line of succession to either fire Mueller or significantly curtail his investigation. Two Trump associates told *The Wall Street Journal* last week that Rosenstein's ouster was "a matter of when, not if."

Republicans have urgently warned Trump not to fire Mueller, said Rick Wilson in *WashingtonPost.com*. But while GOP lawmakers could easily pass bipartisan legislation to protect the special counsel, they're too "spineless" to upset Trump's supporters. Most of those supporters will stick by Trump no matter what—even if he does pull a "Saturday

Night Massacre," as Richard Nixon did during Watergate, said Margaret Sullivan in *The Washington Post*. That's because Trump has a shield Nixon didn't have: Fox News. Night after night, the conservative cable channel bombards its audience with Trump propaganda, portraying Mueller's investigation as a partisan "witch hunt" led by "deep state" forces. It's working: One recent poll found that 3 in 4 Republicans now believe the Justice Department and FBI are "actively working to undermine Trump."

Even so, "it's too late for a Saturday Night Massacre," said Frank Bowman in *Slate.com*. Mueller cleverly outsourced the Cohen investigation to career prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's office in New York, so it is largely insulated from Trump's meddling; Cohen's extensive records of his "fixer" work on Trump's behalf may be a gold mine of incriminating evidence about the president's financial and tax affairs, business dealings with Russia, payoffs to women, and other possible crimes. Meanwhile, Mueller's team has already compiled mountains of evidence and witness statements that no Trump stooge can bury for long. Going "on a firing spree" might make Trump feel better for a few days—but it won't save him from the truth.

Wit & Wisdom

"A step backward, after making a wrong turn, is a step in the right direction."

Kurt Vonnegut, quoted in *Forbes*

"To love existence is to love what is indifferent to you."

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Frank Bidart, quoted in *The Boston Globe*

"Never ask anyone over 70 how they feel. They'll tell you."

Barbara Bush, quoted in *TownAndCountry.com*

"Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, quoted in *Salon.com*

"A neurosis is a secret you don't know you're keeping."

Critic Kenneth Tynan, quoted in *The Observer (U.K.)*

"Some people become so expert at reading between the lines they don't read the lines."

Mystery writer Margaret Millar, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*

"The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare."

Virginia Woolf, quoted in *BBC.com*

Poll watch

■ 27% of American voters think the Republican tax cut passed in December was a "good idea."

36% see it as a "bad idea." 53% believe the tax overhaul will lead to higher deficits and disproportionate benefits for the wealthy and big corporations.

NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*

■ By a 48% to 32% margin, Americans say former FBI Director James Comey is more believable than President Trump.

ABC News/*Washington Post*

Social media: What Facebook knows about you

Facebook knows far more about you than you probably understand, said **Natasha Singer** in *The New York Times*. The data that users voluntarily supply—age, relationship status, employer, location—is just the tip of the iceberg. Facebook methodically scrutinizes “the minutiae” of its 2.2 billion users’ online lives, and its cyberstalking “stretches far beyond the company’s well-known targeted ads.” It regularly tracks the websites and apps that users visit, thanks to its “ubiquitous Like and Share buttons” and to invisible monitoring code that’s dropped onto other websites. It collects “biometric facial data” for photo tagging without asking for “opt-in consent.” And it shares granular insight about its users’ interests and activities with advertisers, to help buttress its \$40.6 billion-a-year ad business. “The inner workings of Facebook’s data-harvesting behemoth are so byzantine,” said **Christopher Mims** in *The Wall Street Journal*, that even Mark Zuckerberg appeared confused last week about how it all works. Facebook has “a lot more data about us than it lets on,” giving it an excellent chance of knowing “everything from your wealth to whether you are depressed.”

Last month I downloaded the data Facebook had stored on me since 2004 and discovered that the social network has “an impeccable memory,” said **Sara Ashley O’Brien** in *CNN.com*. The phone number of my late grandmother, “who never had a Face-



The social network has an ‘impeccable memory.’

book account, or even an email address,” was there, as well as cringeworthy Messenger conversations with my ex. I learned that dozens of advertisers have my contact info, including some sites “I had never heard of.” Facebook still “doesn’t make it particularly easy” for users to adjust their privacy settings, said **Jen Kirby** in *Vox.com*. You can see “which third parties have your data,” and, to a certain extent, tweak the amount of data individual apps can access. But because Facebook is fundamentally an advertising company, “there’s no real way

to turn off the spigot completely.” You can block the site from showing you ads based on your browsing history, but that won’t stop Facebook from continuing to track the sites you visit.

The furor over Facebook shows that we are only just beginning to understand how Silicon Valley “collects and treats personal information,” said **Brian Chen** in *The New York Times*. I recoiled when I opened my Facebook data file and saw my entire phone book, a log of each time I’d opened Facebook over the past two years, and a list of more than 110 people I’d unfriended. But expansive data mining is not unique to Facebook. You’d be wise to look through the data files from all your social media and online accounts, including Google and LinkedIn. But a warning: “Once you see the vast amount of data that has been collected about you, you won’t be able to unsee it.”

Innovation of the week

Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems has broken ground in Japan on a hydrogen-fueled plant that will be run by artificial

intelligence, said **Jim Polson** and **Naureen Malik** in *Bloomberg.com*. The plant will dispense with the need for human operators and run autonomously, according to **Paul Browning**, the chief executive of the operation. AI will be able to better coordinate power systems and make them more flexible, **Browning** said. If all goes to plan, “the plant will be capable of diagnosing system failures before they happen and dispatching its own power based on weather and supplies in the market.” The company says the facility will use power from wind or solar to convert water to hydrogen, then burn it based on demand. “There’s going to be autonomous cars,” **Browning** said, “There’s also going to be autonomous power plants.” The facility is scheduled to be operational in 2020.



Bytes: What’s new in tech

YouTube collecting kids’ data?

More than 20 consumer advocacy groups have filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission “claiming that YouTube has been violating a children’s privacy law,” said **Sapna Maheshwari** in *The New York Times*. The complaint argues that YouTube “has been collecting and profiting from the personal information of young children on its main site,” in violation of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, which requires companies to get parents’ consent before collecting data on children under the age of 13. YouTube’s terms of service say the site is not meant for anyone under 13, and the platform directs younger viewers to YouTube Kids, which contains filtered videos. But the groups contend that YouTube still “collects data on children under 13 through its main site, where cartoons, nursery-rhyme videos, and those ever popular toy-unboxing clips garner millions of views.”

Apple’s HomePod miss

Apple’s HomePod appears to be a flop with consumers, said **Mark Gurman** in *Bloomberg.com*. The long-delayed smart speaker joined a crowded field when it arrived in stores in January. With the market “pioneered and dominated” by Amazon’s Alexa-powered Echo

devices, the HomePod, which at \$349 is priced higher than competing gadgets, has stumbled, forcing Apple to lower sales forecasts and cut orders with parts manufacturers. Though the HomePod initially captured 10 percent of the smart-speaker market, compared with Amazon’s 73 percent, weekly sales have since slipped to 0.4 percent of the category. Apple’s speaker has won praise for its audio quality, but consumers have reportedly been turned off by the fact that “it’s heavily dependent on the iPhone and is limited as a digital assistant.”

Zillow plans to flip homes

“Zillow is getting into the business of buying and flipping homes,” said **Laura Kusisto** and **Rolfe Winkler** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The “risky and untested” move by the online real estate-listings company could threaten the livelihood of realtors. Zillow plans to purchase between 300 to 1,000 properties in the Las Vegas and Phoenix areas this year, spending between \$75 million and \$250 million to renovate them and attempt to flip them within 90 days. The company “is following other competitors” into the sales business. Opendoor now has an in-house brokerage team, and Redfin has been “experimenting” with buying homes for the past year.

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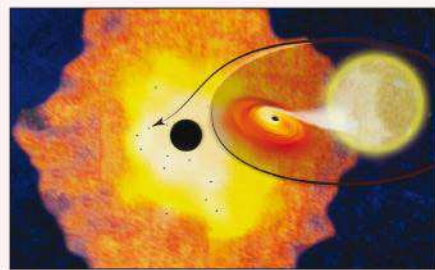
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The black holes at the galaxy's core

Scientists have finally confirmed the existence of a dozen black holes at the heart of the Milky Way—and they believe there may be many thousands more. Lying at the center of our galaxy is a supermassive black hole, Sagittarius A*, that is about 4 million times the mass of the sun. Astronomers have long suspected that Sagittarius A* is surrounded by black holes. But because these enigmatic celestial bodies are invisible—their gravitational field is so strong that even light can't escape—they're extremely hard to find. In this case, scientists studied old observations gathered by NASA's

Chandra X-ray telescope to look for "binary" systems: black holes with an orbiting star, which together emit telltale radiation. They identified 12 black holes in total, all within a few light-years of Sagittarius A*. Because binary systems account for only a small proportion of black holes overall, they calculated that 10,000 other black holes must be lurking in the same area. With an abundance of dust and gas, the galaxy's center is a "hothouse" for black hole formation, reports *BBC.com*. "[It's] sort of like a little farm," says lead author Chuck Hailey, an astrophysicist at Columbia University,



An artist's conception of the galaxy's center

"where you have all the right conditions to produce and hold on to a large number of black holes." The dust and gas first form large stars, which collapse inward when they die and become black holes.



A bleached portion of the Great Barrier Reef

Sunscreen for coral reefs

Scientists in Australia have come up with an unlikely way to protect the Great Barrier Reef from climate change: using sunscreen. Greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere are causing the oceans to become warmer and more acidic. When coral reefs are stressed by heat, they lose their bright, vibrant color and turn ghostly white. A resilient reef can recover from this "bleaching" process if water temperatures return to normal quickly; if not, the coral eventually dies. To combat this phenomenon, researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Australian Institute of Marine Science designed a "sun shield" to sit on the water's surface above the corals. Some 50,000 times thinner than human hair, the biodegradable layer is made from calcium carbonate, a component of coral skeletons. Tests found that it blocked up to 30 percent of the sun's ultraviolet radiation, cooling the waters below and thus protecting the coral from bleaching. "This is not intended to be a solution that can be applied over the whole [134,000 square miles] of Great Barrier Reef," Anna Marsden, from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, tells *NBCNews.com*. "But it could be deployed on a smaller, local level to protect high-value or high-risk areas."

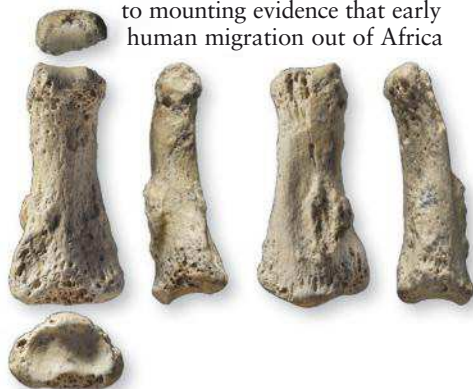
The evolution of eyebrows

It's a question that has long puzzled sci-

entists: Why are human eyebrows so expressive? Hominins that lived 200,000 to 600,000 years ago boasted a prominent brow ridge, which gave their face a permanently intimidating look and may also have served a structural purpose, as it allowed their skulls to withstand the force of chewing on the tough materials they ate. But modern humans evolved to have a long, smooth forehead with notably agile eyebrows. In a new study, researchers at the University of York in England have offered up a new theory for that evolutionary change. They believe early humans developed more expressive eyebrows out of necessity—that as the species developed increasingly sophisticated forms of communication, social interaction became more vital to their survival. Whereas the thick brow of their ancestors signaled only dominance, eyebrows allowed them to convey a broad range of emotions, from trust to sympathy, friendliness to anger. "We traded dominance or aggression for a wider palette of expression," lead author Paul O'Higgins tells *TheGuardian.com*. "As the face became smaller and the forehead flattened, the muscles in the face could move the eyebrows up and down and we could express all these subtler feelings."

A finger's point about migration

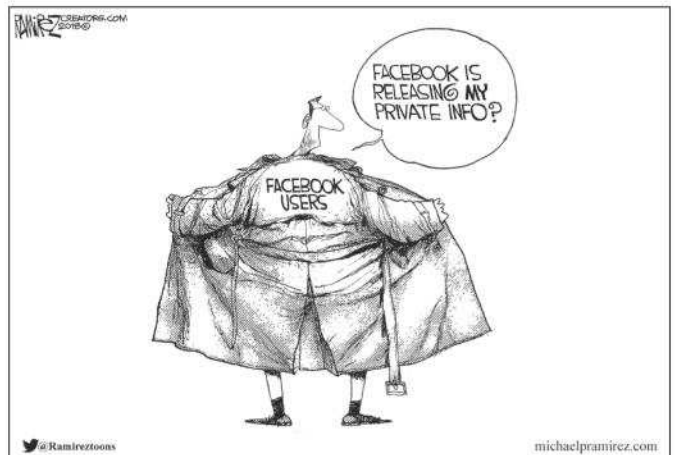
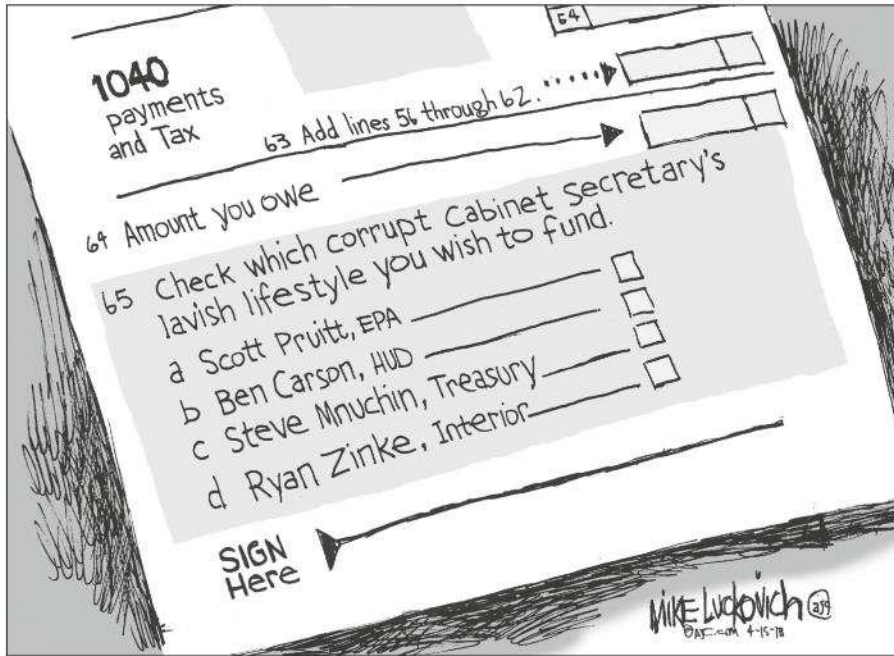
A roughly 90,000-year-old finger bone found in Saudi Arabia's Nefud Desert adds to mounting evidence that early human migration out of Africa



was considerably more complicated than previously thought. The remains are the earliest *Homo sapiens* fossil discovered on the Arabian Peninsula, and the oldest outside Africa and the Levant. Until relatively recently, most scientists believed that modern humans first left Africa in a single migration some 60,000 years ago. But along with other recent finds—including 80,000-year-old human teeth in China and tools dating back 65,000 years in Australia—the finger bone suggests our ancestors actually left the continent much earlier, in several different routes. "There's a growing picture that this old model of single-rate expansion is inaccurate," lead author Huw Groucutt, from the University of Oxford, tells *The Washington Post*. "The picture is changing."

Health scare of the week Antidepressants and pregnancy

Taking commonly prescribed antidepressants during pregnancy could affect the development of the baby's brain, reports *Reuters.com*. Scientists at Columbia University scanned the brains of 98 newborns. The mothers of 16 infants had taken selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)—such as Zoloft, Celexa, and Prozac—during pregnancy, while 21 had suffered untreated depression. The others did not suffer from depression. The MRIs showed that the babies who were exposed to an SSRI in utero showed greater volume in the amygdala and the insular cortex, areas of the brain involved in mood regulation and the processing of intense emotions. They also had more connections between these brain regions than the other infants did. Study co-author Jiook Cha says it's now clear that "SSRI medications have an influence on fetal brain development." But she cautions that untreated depression is also risky during pregnancy, and that further research is needed.



Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Sharp: The Women Who Made an Art of Having an Opinion

by Michelle Dean

(Grove, \$26)

Michelle Dean's new book could so easily have been a group catfight, said Maureen Corrigan in *The Wall Street Journal*. She has chosen, after all, to profile 10 women writers known for their strong opinions, and "there are so many stores to tell, so much bad behavior to revel in, and so many zingers to quote." When Mary McCarthy met a young Susan Sontag at a 1964 party, she cut the upstart down to size by saying she smiled too much to be a seasoned New Yorker. Pauline Kael once wrote of a Joan Didion novel that she "read it between bouts of disbelieving giggles." But instead of inviting us to gorge on pure dish, "Dean has pulled off a much rarer achievement": She's written an "entertaining and erudite" cultural history that uses the lives, work, and disagreements of her protagonists to illuminate how much we owe them.



Sontag: The critic who dared to smile

Many readers will question the exact makeup of Dean's all-star lineup, said Laura Jacobs in *The New York Times*. Why, for example, is Zora Neale Hurston a mere sideline character while Dorothy Parker gets the honor of the book's first full profile? But, "it's Dean's party," and "she's invited the sharps she most admires"—10 women known foremost as critics, observers, or critical thinkers. Dean, who herself is an award-winning

critic for *The New Republic*, chides her laureates here and there for their lesser work, but she doesn't fully rise to the challenge she's set herself. Her writing "can get too loosely conversational," and she avoids engaging on matters that demand her opinion. Nora Ephron was known as a fearless memoirist and sentimental Hollywood screenwriter, for example, yet Dean never attempts to explain the split persona.

Not that Dean routinely shies from argument, said Lindsay Zoladz in *TheRinger.com*. At a time when tweets have become the prime currency of critical dialogue and too many women

feel pressured to express gender solidarity with substance-free "likes," Dean wants to celebrate women who have insisted on their right to nuanced disagreement. We too easily simplify Didion or Parker or even Hannah Arendt when we canonize them. Not Dean: "The greatest justice she does to these women is to take them down off their modern pedestals and let them argue with one another. That fighting spirit makes her book well worth reading."

Novel of the week
Varina

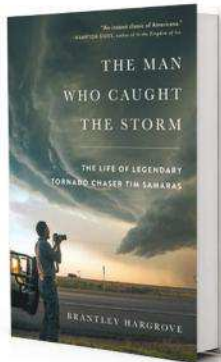
by Charles Frazier (Ecco, \$28)

Charles Frazier's "splendid" fourth novel marks a welcome return to form, said Dan Cryer in *Newsday*. Arriving two decades after *Cold Mountain*, his award-winning Civil War-era love story, *Varina* revisits the eventful life of Jefferson Davis' second wife and makes this forgotten woman "a symbol of wit and grit, open-mindedness and tolerance." Born in Mississippi and educated in Philadelphia, Varina Howell was 18 when she married Davis, unaware that leadership of the Confederacy lay 15 years ahead in her husband's future. Readers meet her in 1906, when she's visited by a black man who believes she saved his life in 1864. Frazier tries, "sometimes a little laboriously," to make Varina heroic, said Mark Athitakis in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Though she didn't reject the South's slaveholding culture until it was defeated, she did reject its remnants, moving to New York to become a newspaper columnist and declaring that the right side had won. So the minor triumph of her life is that she recognized past errors. "Its tragedy is that her circumstances never empowered her to do much beyond making that recognition."

The Man Who Caught the Storm: The Life of Legendary Tornado Chaser Tim Samaras

by Brantley Hargrove

(Simon & Schuster, \$26)



"Almost anyone who has ever intentionally piloted a vehicle toward a thunderstorm knows about Tim Samaras," said Alexandra Witze in *The Dallas Morning News*. For more than two decades, the Colorado engineer and autodidact went looking for tornadoes instead of hiding from them, and his three-year run as a star of Discovery's reality-television series *Storm Chasers* made him a role model for countless adrenaline seekers. Samaras, though far more alert to his vocation's dangers than many copycats are, was killed chasing a storm in 2013, and that tragedy has been covered extensively before. Still, Brantley Hargrove's new book "finds fresh stories to tell," offering a "detailed, nuanced" portrait of a man driven to risk his life to gather useful new knowledge.

"Samaras was nothing if not a go-getter," said Ian Livingston in *WashingtonPost.com*. A tinkerer at a young age, he landed a job straight out of high school as an explosive-weapons tester. But storms became his passion, and he eventually developed a tool that allowed him to chart the steepest pressure drop ever recorded. Because Samaras lacked the educational pedigree of others in the field, he sought respect by taking risks that others wouldn't. One early storm-chasing partner quit in 2003 after the pair barely escaped a Texas tornado. But Samaras kept going. Because Hargrove is "one of today's great science writers," the book convincingly captures the thrill of the chase.

Hargrove's exciting storm scenes suggest that Samaras should have been more cautious, said Joseph Bien-Kahn in *Outside*. On the day he died, Samaras was working on a lightning research project in Oklahoma when he spotted a monster storm and started driving toward it in a small Chevy with his 24-year-old son and a third researcher. Finding a dead end where they'd expected a way to sidestep the tornado, the men were sucked up by the 200-mph winds and thrown a half-mile, killing them all. Should Samaras be blamed? Hargrove doesn't. He simply offers a portrait of a man who was constantly curious, "but also, perhaps, too reckless or too hubristic."

The Book List

ARTS 23

Best books... chosen by Sara Shepard

Sara Shepard's new novel and first adult thriller, *The Elizas*, is narrated by a woman whose recent brush with death may or may not have been a suicide attempt. Below, the *Pretty Little Liars* author names six favorite stories of deception.



You by Caroline Kepnes (Atria, \$17). The narrator, Joe, presents a genial face to the world, but readers get the privilege of access to his darkest thoughts and gruesome actions—all conveyed in a surprisingly sympathetic voice. It's a cautionary tale that reminds us that we never know who anyone is beneath the surface, and that a good enough actor can fool us all.

The Talented Mr. Ripley by Patricia Highsmith (Norton, \$16). People who choose to assume someone else's identity have always fascinated me. I read this novel years ago and have come back to it several times for its deftness and ingenuity—and to revisit how, in the end, Ripley's brilliant hoax comes at too great a cost.

The Basic Eight by Daniel Handler (Ecco, \$14). This novel was one of the first that inspired me to write a Y.A. thriller. In its pages, the smart, witty teenage narrator is spiraling out of control, a party has gone very, very wrong, and a crime has occurred—but the attempted cover-up is not the biggest deception. It's a third-act twist, which catches readers completely off guard.

An American Marriage by Tayari Jones (Algonquin, \$27). Deception doesn't occur only in thrillers—a complicated relationship can be just as fertile ground. In this beautifully written new book, a great domestic betrayal occurs, but it's one that's arguably justified.

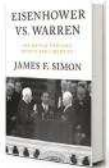
Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier (William Morrow, \$16). The unnamed narrator has just married a wealthy Englishman, and now must live in the shadow of her new husband's first wife, whose presence can be felt everywhere at Manderley (her husband's estate, and one of my favorite settings in literature). I return often to this celebrated 1938 study of jealousy, obsession, and manipulation. I still can't get enough of Mrs. Danvers.

Emma in the Night by Wendy Walker (St. Martin's, \$27). I read a lot of thrillers, but this recent example—two missing sisters, a narcissistic mother, and plenty of dark, ugly backstory—stood out. The psychology of this novel is very grounded and believable, and Walker managed to keep me guessing until the very last page.

Also of interest... in partners and rivals

Eisenhower vs. Warren

by James F. Simon (Liveright, \$36)



It's said that Dwight Eisenhower cursed the day he chose Earl Warren to lead the U.S. Supreme Court, said Michael O'Donnell in *The Atlantic*. But the fraught relationship between the two men took "at times surprising" turns, and James Simon is the ideal scholar to catch every nuance. His sympathies "clearly lie with Warren," a true civil rights champion. His Ike, though at times hard to admire, backed the cause when his support was most needed, presenting a case for cautious leadership.

Fatal Discord

by Michael Massing (Harper, \$45)



Erasmus and Martin Luther, both critics of the Catholic Church, "might have been natural allies," said Rebecca Newberger Goldstein in *The New York Times*. Instead, they were fierce foes, and this "inspired" examination of their dispute proves the Renaissance thinker and Reformation leader were waging a battle for the Western mind. Erasmus, unfortunately, doesn't get his full due. Yes, Luther's faith prevailed 500 years ago, but Erasmus' skepticism laid the cornerstone of modern philosophy.

Something Wonderful

by Todd S. Purdum (Holt, \$32)



Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein weren't born revolutionaries, said *The Economist*. But this smart dual portrait "strips away the accretions of time" to show how boldly the pair remade the Broadway musical with a run of hits launched by 1943's *Oklahoma!* Driven to simply make each show work, the composer and lyricist invented a new hybrid of dance, drama, and song, and this book's "most thrilling" sections show how ruthless they were in reshaping imperfect work.

Double Vision

by William Middleton (Knopf, \$40)



John and Dominique de Menil deserve their own movie, said Susie Tommaney in *HoustonPress.com*. Houston knows the French-born husband and wife as the city's greatest art patrons, but their story "belongs to the world." Author William Middleton "left no stone unturned" in his pursuit of details—of the couple's aristocratic background, their youth, their emigration, their chemistry, and their support for civil rights and other causes. "They inspired each other," and will inspire readers too.

Author of the week

Junot Díaz

Junot Díaz is a very brave man, said **Julianne Escobedo Shepherd** in *Jezebel.com*.

In an essay published last week in *The New Yorker* and addressed to a fan he brushed off at an event years ago, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist revealed a secret he'd kept most of his life: He was raped when he was 8 by an adult he



trusted, and had never really recovered. "That s--- cracked the planet of me in half," Díaz wrote in his blunt confession. "More than being Dominican, more than being an immigrant, more, even, than being of African descent, my rape defined me." It was why, he says, he attempted suicide in high school, and why his 20s and 30s were a dance of denial. "'Real' Dominican men, after all, aren't raped," he writes. "And if I wasn't a 'real' Dominican man, I wasn't anything."

Díaz, now 49, is also honest enough to admit how many women he hurt as a result, said **Maiysha Kai** in *TheRoot.com*. Scared of true intimacy—because he would be forced to reveal his secret—he ran from relationships that grew too close, or sabotaged them by cheating with other women. He cites the pain he caused as one of the reasons he felt the need to finally share his secret publicly—after having already found a way to share it with family and friends. He sounds today as if he's truly broken free from old patterns: He's in therapy and a stable relationship, and he has stopped lying to himself. "In Spanish, we say that when a child is born it is given the light," he says. "And that's what it feels like to say the words—like I'm being a given a second chance at the light."

Exhibit of the week Adrian Piper: A Synthesis of Intuitions 1965–2016

Museum of Modern Art, New York City, through July 22

Whatever your level of interest in conceptual art, Adrian Piper “shows us how to do it right,” said David Velasco in *Artforum.com*. For more than five decades, the Berlin-based, New York City-born artist has been the most generous of innovators, creating work that “kicks open your mind” without picking fruitless fights. And if you visit New York’s MoMA this spring, you will quickly learn why the museum has given her current retrospective an entire floor—an unprecedented amount of square footage for a living artist, said Victoria Stapley-Brown in *TheArtNewspaper.com*. “It takes that much space to cover the breadth of Piper’s work.” After a brief period of producing psychedelic drawings and paintings as a 1960s art-school student, the biracial polymath embraced conceptual art’s potential to interrogate habits of perception, particularly regarding race and otherness. Her tools have included video, performance, installation, and viewer participation. At one point in the MoMA show, visitors have to hum for a security



Piper’s Mythic Being, in a 1975 photo still

guard to move from one area to the next.

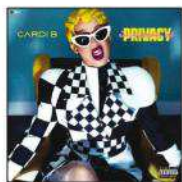
Despite such moments of prankishness, the exhibition “does much to rightly remind viewers of Piper’s legacy as a first-rate thinker,” said Antwaun Sargent in *Artsy.net*. Even before she earned a Harvard Ph.D. in philosophy in 1981, she was staging searching probes of identity in projects characterized by “pitch-perfect” humor. For the 1973–75 project she called *Mythic Being*, she donned a fake mustache and Afro wig, then roamed the streets of New York City spouting lines from her teenage diary to bewildered passersby. She was, as

usual, seeking to spark reactions, and indeed, “many of Piper’s works can seem like psychological thought experiments.” In *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems*, a 1980 walk-in installation, a viewer enters a dark space to stand eye to eye with illuminated photo portraits of four black men while listening on headphones to Piper reciting words that test the listener’s racial anxieties. Because of such moments, the exhibition “will certainly be a wildly different experience for white visitors versus visitors of color.”

But Piper clearly wants all viewers to think differently about their responsibilities to one another, said Larissa Pham in *Vice.com*. *Probable Trust Registry*, an installation that won Piper top honors at 2015’s Venice Biennale, looks like a trio of MoMA information booths, but if you stop at any of them you’ll be invited to sign a contract committing yourself to one of three principles, including “I will always mean what I say” and “I will always do what I say I am going to do.” It’s just one more way that Piper’s art insists that no matter how much work we have to do to disentangle ourselves from the pathologies of sexism and racism, “there are some tools: We can observe, and be honest, and listen.”

Cardi B Invasion of Privacy

★★★★★

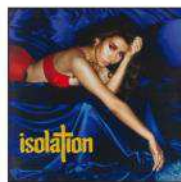


“Cardi B is the new American Dream,” said Sheldon Pearce in *Pitchfork.com*. Still feeling the afterglow from her chart-topping 2017 single “Bodak Yellow,” the Bronx-born

stripper turned reality TV star turned rapper has emerged, on her full-length debut, as a “first-rate” song maker. “At once brazen and vulnerable,” *Invasion of Privacy* turns up the in-your-face personality that won Cardi fame but also offers glimpses beneath her armor. She has honed her wordplay since her debut, and she “wields her voice like a weapon” on “Money Bag” and “She Bad,” letting her Bronx accent and punchy inflections “forge each syllable into a snap.” Some lyrics are “laugh-out-loud funny,” others are “immensely clever,” and quite a few are both. What’s more, “she is more versatile than most rappers or pop stars of any stripe,” said Jon Caramanica in *The New York Times*. Because it ranges so widely in style—from R&B to reggaeton—*Invasion of Privacy* is a hip-hop album reminiscent of the late ‘90s, “when New York rap was beginning to test its pop edges.”

Kali Uchis Isolation

★★★★★

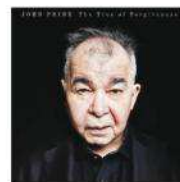


With her first full-length album, Kali Uchis has established herself as a potential legend in the making, said Madison Desler in *PasteMagazine.com*.

“For an album to be this consistently good is a rarity and an artistic triumph” and shows how far the 24-year-old Colombian-American singer-songwriter has come since she was living alone at 17 in a Subaru. *Isolation* so smoothly and confidently segues between retro-tinged soul, R&B, and Latin pop, it should appear on every year-end best-of list. Uchis has attracted an impressive group of collaborators, including Gorillaz, Thundercat, and the jazz quartet BadBadNotGood, said Daisy Jones in *Vice.com*. But she’s an artist in control of her own music and image, and her sound throughout *Isolation*’s 15 tracks is “one of sunshine and lowrider culture, pastel-colored by day and neon-tainted by night.” The single “After the Storm” is a standout slow funk jam featuring Bootsie Collins and Tyler the Creator, yet it fits neatly into a package that’s “dreamy, feverish, and crammed with feminine power.”

John Prine The Tree of Forgiveness

★★★★★



John Prine is back, and it’s “a soul-deep treat to be in his company once again,” said Jim Fusilli in *The Wall Street Journal*. The country singer-songwriter’s first album in 13 years is

“prime Prine”—“simple, instantly memorable” melodies paired with sharp lyrics that “tell of the agonies and absurdities of life that often stand side by side.” Prine, 71, has twice battled cancer, and his fans won’t be surprised that *The Tree of Forgiveness* frequently ruminates on death. “Yet it is never maudlin.” Just listen to the casual warmth of the ballad “Summer’s End” or to the rousing “When I Get to Heaven,” in which Prine jokes about all the fun he plans to have in the afterlife. Though Prine’s voice has been ravaged by time, its creakiness “only serves to deepen the impact of his lyrics,” said Jim Allen in *NPR.org*. Prine occasionally alludes to political divisions (“Caravan of Fools”), but in most of the 10 songs, he favors “the universal over the strictly topical.” And, of course, “Prine being Prine,” he also “detours into some gleefully absurdist flights of fancy.”

Borg vs. McEnroe

Directed by
Janus Metz Pedersen
(R)



A classic showdown, in headbands and short shorts

Sorry, Bjorn Borg—we had you all wrong, said **Richard Whitaker** in *The Austin Chronicle*. In this new dramatization of one of tennis' most storied showdowns, the unflappable Swede of legend is portrayed as having been just as volcanic a young man as his rival, John McEnroe, and Swedish actor Sverrir Gudnason strips Borg bare to reframe the classic 1980 Wimbledon men's final. Here, it's not the consummate sportsman versus Superbrat; "it is rivalry as silent kinship." Let's face it, though, said **Rafer Guzman** in *Newsday*. "The real selling point here is watching Shia LaBeouf, one of the most widely reviled actors in



LaBeouf and Gudnason: Fire and ice

showbiz, play his tennis industry doppelgänger." Notorious for his own public outbursts, LaBeouf appears to have been born to play the racket-smashing McEnroe, and he's so effective, "you might walk away liking both the character and the actor more than you expected." The re-enactment of the five-set title match is nowhere near as exciting as the original was, said **Kyle Smith** in *NationalReview.com*. Even so, *Borg vs. McEnroe* makes "a beguiling character study," a duel between a Scandinavian royal who's fatally unsure of himself and "an impetuous young king in waiting." Even Shakespeare might be intrigued.

The Rider

Directed by Chloé Zhao
(R)



An injured rodeo cowboy searches for new purpose.

"How many stirring moments does it take to make a great movie?" asked **Joe Morgenstern** in *The Wall Street Journal*. "Whatever the number, *The Rider* has more than enough." That's partly because most of the characters in this "poetic, laconic, and ineffably beautiful" drama are real people playing slightly fictionalized versions of themselves. The story centers on Brady Jandreau, a South Dakota rodeo cowboy who is forced to give up riding—the thing he lives for—when a bucking bronco fractures his skull. Director Chloé Zhao "clearly understands that universal conflict between desire and reality," said **David Sims** in *The*



Jandreau: Is this even acting?

Atlantic. Brady, while coming to terms with his new life, suffers seizures, works menial jobs, and fights with his father. But the mood is never miserable. In one remarkable scene, he trains a neighbor's wild horse, and we watch in real time as the hostile animal succumbs to his skillful coaxing. "The naturalism is incredible." During such moments, *The Rider* "comes as close to a spiritual experience as anything I've encountered in a movie theater this year," said **Justin Chang** in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Is Jandreau acting, or merely being? I'd suggest a third option somewhere in between, in that mysterious realm where art resides."

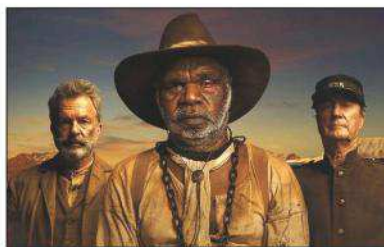
Sweet Country

Directed by
Warwick Thornton
(R)



A just killing triggers a manhunt across Australia.

This beautiful new Western hits "painfully close" to home, said **Chris Nashawaty** in *Entertainment Weekly*. Though set in the 1920s Australian outback, its "spare, deliberately paced, and almost biblical" story of racial injustice summons the ghosts of America's past. When an Aboriginal stockman kills a white farmer in self-defense, the killer and his wife flee, and a manhunt ensues. And though the story is simple, "the visuals are gorgeous, capturing the cruel beauty of the desert." Despite bursts of violence, the film is "overwhelmingly quiet," lingering over ambient sounds



Morris: Caught in history's vise

as the fugitives, Sam and Lizzie (first-time actors Hamilton Morris and Natassia Gorey-Furber), traverse Australia's Northern Territory, said **April Wolfe** in the *VillageVoice.com*. The silences help us see the world through the eyes of the story's indigenous characters, yet "no one is innocent here." With a "stoically vengeful" Bryan Brown leading the posse on his tail, Sam repeatedly outwits his pursuers, said **Jeannette Catsoulis** in *The New York Times*. But because every victory is short-lived, "we can't help feeling that, for Sam and his ilk, no amount of guile will ever be enough."

New on DVD and Blu-ray

The Post

(20th Century Fox, \$30)

Steven Spielberg's recent Best Picture contender is "the best movie about newspapers since *All the President's Men*," said the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Meryl Streep is "astounding" as Post CEO Katharine Graham, who teams with editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) to reveal the Pentagon's Vietnam lies.

Ingrid Bergman's Swedish Years

(Criterion, \$70)

Movie lovers will find "much to savor" in this box set of Ingrid Bergman's early Swedish films, said *The Wall Street Journal*. The six-disc trove includes the Hollywood legend's first credited role and offers proof that "real movie stars are not so much made as born."

Genius

(20th Century Fox, \$30)

National Geographic's recent series about Albert Einstein's life "will answer every question you never had about space and time relativity," said the *Los Angeles Times*. "Beautifully shot and written," the 10-part scripted drama series feels like an epic feature film. Geoffrey Rush stars.

Movies on TV

Monday, April 23

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl

The swashbuckling franchise curtain-raiser introduced Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow, here bent on rescuing his ship from a nefarious rival. Keira Knightley co-stars. (2003) 6 p.m., AMC

Tuesday, April 24

Cactus Flower

Walter Matthau, Ingrid Bergman, and Goldie Hawn co-star in a comedy about a scheming dentist adored by two women. (1969) 10:15 p.m., TCM

Wednesday, April 25

Life Is Beautiful

Roberto Benigni wrote, directed, and won two Oscars for this moving comedy-drama about a father who, for love of his son, makes a game of their life in a Nazi concentration camp. (1997) 6 p.m., Showtime

Thursday, April 26

Patriot's Day

Mark Wahlberg, Michelle Monaghan, and J.K. Simmons co-star in an effective dramatization of the manhunt following 2013's Boston Marathon bombing. (2016) 7:45 p.m., Showtime

Friday, April 27

Crazy Heart

Jeff Bridges won his first Oscar playing a boozing country-music star struggling to turn his life around. With Maggie Gyllenhaal. (2009) 8 p.m., HBO

Saturday, April 28

Star Trek Beyond

The latest *Star Trek* installment finds Chris Pine's Captain Kirk stranded on a remote planet with his crew after an attack on the *Enterprise*. (2016) 5:50 p.m., Epix

Sunday, April 29

I Want to Live!

Susan Hayward delivered a career performance playing a real-life California prostitute whose career in petty crime turned tragic when she was framed for murder. (1958) 8 p.m., TCM

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Genius

One great mind gives way to another. After an Emmy-nominated debut season featuring Geoffrey Rush as Albert Einstein, this scripted biographical series turns to Antonio Banderas for a 10-part portrait of Pablo Picasso. Banderas, who grew up in the same Málaga neighborhood as the legendary Spanish artist, creates a Picasso as consumed by lust for his muses as he is by new ways of seeing. Clémence Poésy and Poppy Delevingne co-star. *Begins Tuesday, April 24, at 9 p.m., National Geographic*

Nova Wonders

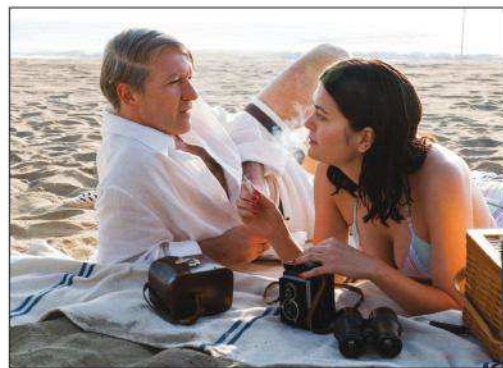
The PBS series that sets the bar for science documentaries is launching a spin-off to tackle some big questions. The *Nova* team has signed up three charismatic young co-hosts—a neuroscientist, a mathematician, and an AI developer—who in early episodes will investigate the mysteries of the human microbiome and the possibility of life on other planets. First up: an hour on the secret languages of animals. *Wednesday, April 25, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Brockmire

Baseball and dark comedy apparently can mix. In Season 2 of this surprising series, Hank Azaria's Jim Brockmire is still a sportscaster best known for an on-air breakdown back when he was the voice of the Kansas City Royals. And Brockmire still drinks himself sick during most games. But his stint with the lowly Morristown, Pa., Frackers has earned him a move to New Orleans, a step closer to the bigs. Amanda Peet returns as the Frackers' owner and Brockmire's Morristown flame. *Wednesday, April 25, at 10 p.m., IFC*

Bobby Kennedy for President

Robert F. Kennedy had finally seized momentum in the race for the 1968 Democratic presidential nomination when he was murdered by an assassin. This four-part series looks at what might have been by revisiting how the last years of Kennedy's life shaped his vision for America. A wealth of rarely seen period footage pulls viewers in close as Kennedy weathers tragedy, finds his voice as a U.S. senator, and immerses himself in the struggles



Genius: Banderas' Picasso works his magic.

of far less privileged Americans. *Available for streaming Friday, April 27, Netflix*

Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie

Has there ever been another toy so widely loved and loathed as Barbie? To some a vessel for healthy female aspirations, to others an embodiment of the damaging pressures inflicted on girls, the 60-year-old icon is still stirring up trouble. This smart history looks at both sides, tracking Barbie's never-ending bid for popularity with the help of such commentators as Gloria Steinem, Roxane Gay, and today's Mattel design team. *Available for streaming Friday, April 27, Hulu*

Other highlights**Look & See: Wendell Berry's Kentucky**

A beloved writer and naturalist provides a lens through which to see how the rural way of life is disappearing. *Monday, April 23, at 10 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Fishing for Giants

Sportsman Andy Coetzee chases the world's aquatic monsters in a new series that launches with his quest to land a 300-pound Nile perch. *Wednesday, April 25, at 8 p.m., Smithsonian*

3%

Season 2 begins for the Brazilian series about a near future in which only a lucky 3 percent escape squalor. *Available for streaming Friday, April 27, Netflix*



A handmaid's funeral in Atwood's Gilead

Show of the week**The Handmaid's Tale**

When we last saw Offred, she was in the same fix she was left in by Margaret Atwood's classic dystopian novel: pregnant and riding away in a black van to an uncertain future. After a first season showered with Emmys, Hulu's adaptation is ready to extend the story into uncharted territory, though guided by Atwood and her vision of an America that has tipped into Christian totalitarianism. So is Elisabeth Moss' Offred being rescued by the resistance, or is she being punished after failing to stone Janine? It's a question the novel's fans have pondered for decades. *Available for streaming Wednesday, April 25, Hulu*

LEISURE

Food & Drink

Critics' choice: Restaurants without borders

Brenner Pass Richmond, Va.

One of the South's most gifted chefs is breaking out into new territory, said Bill Addison in *Eater.com*. Brittany Anderson's Brenner Pass conjures "an Alpine state of mind"—taking both its name and culinary inspiration from a mountain corridor that divides Austria from Italy but weds several neighboring mountain cultures. The elevated German fare Anderson created for Metzger—still Richmond's best restaurant—has a place in the larger venture's warm, contemporary dining room. But she's also able to dip into France, Switzerland, and beyond, "zeroing in on the richly comforting foods—cheeses, pastas, polenta, lake fish enriched with dairy, pork in its infinite iterations—that sustain hearty souls in the provincial mountain terrain." Surprisingly, the house fondue is a bland, chalky affair. But plenty else is wonderful, including mussels in a paprika aioli, the *coq au cidre*, and arctic char bathed in a *vin blanc* sauce. For instant transport to the French Alps, try the sausages called *diots*. Their secret? "The distinct thunderclap" of nutmeg. It "transmits elemental messages to the brain: You're happy. You're safe." 3200 Rockbridge St., (804) 658-9868

Chez Ma Tante Brooklyn

"It is hard to say what kind of food Chez Ma Tante serves, apart from the consis-



Justin Yu of Theodore Rex: Feeling more at home

tently good kind," said Pete Wells in *The New York Times*. Chef Aidan O'Neal, who arrived in New York City by way of Montreal's Au Pied de Cochon, borrowed the name of his spare Greenpoint retreat from a Montreal hot dog joint, and all his cooking shows "a healthy disregard for refinement." At brunch, the kitchen serves delicious pancakes that "look and taste as if they were made in the woods," as well as kedgeree, a British-inspired mosh of rice, flaked cod, and hard-cooked egg under a crunchy celery salad. At night, you might start by spreading a chicken-liver pâté on toasted country bread and move on to salad and thick grilled pork steak rubbed with mustard and maple syrup. The pork will arrive slathered with a parsley *salsa verde*

and wading in stewed Puy lentils. As with every other dish here, "the look may say it was thrown together, but the full, lasting flavors tell you it wasn't." 90 Calyer St., (718) 389-3606

Theodore Rex Houston

Though Justin Yu isn't aiming for the stars anymore, the Southwest's 2016 James Beard Award winner "still pushes the envelope on flavor, texture, and technique," said Alison Cook in the *Houston Chronicle*. Having shuttered Oxheart to escape the pressures of forever delivering theatrical tasting menus, Yu has converted the same space into a more casual operation where his artistry tends to sneak up on you. Consider his tomato toast—a simple but addictive opener whose secret is that it requires cooking 75 pounds of tomatoes down to 5 pounds of tomato fondant. The menu bounces from a "down-right cosmic" bowl of Carolina rice with butter beans to a lively hot-cold marriage of Rio Red grapefruit and blanched snap pea pods. A few duds have shown up on Theodore Rex's brief menu, but Yu has shed or upgraded them promptly. I'd return regularly just for the Italian bread dumplings served in a whey sauce ("sounds awful, tastes great") with braised greens, white beans, and crumbled cheese. "With a glass of white Lambrusco, this is my idea of heaven." 1302 Nance St., (832) 830-8592

Recipe of the week

Every home cook could use a new chicken soup recipe, "especially one that comes together as easily as this one does," said Bonnie Benwick in *The Washington Post*. A simplified version of Peruvian *aguadito de pollo*, it starts with a green puree and gets a kick from jalapeño. For a more traditional take, sub in cilantro for the parsley.

Peruvian chicken soup

1 small jalapeño • 1 small onion, peeled and quartered • 1 rib celery, coarsely chopped • 1 clove garlic, peeled • ¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, stems included • 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil • 2 cups chicken broth, preferably no-salt • ¼ cup dried quinoa • 1 large boneless, skinless chicken breast half, tenderloin removed • 1 cup frozen peas • flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper • 1 or 2 limes, for serving

• Cut jalapeño into strips, discarding stem, seeds, and ribs. Combine in a blender or food processor with onion, celery, garlic, parsley, and oil; pulse until evenly green, with darker green flecks. Add some broth if needed.

• Pour mixture into a pot over medium heat. Cook 1 minute, stirring, then add remaining broth.

• Rinse quinoa and add to pot. When mixture starts bubbling, cover and cook

15 minutes. Cut chicken breast crosswise into 5 or 6 pieces and add to pot. Cook, uncovered, 10 minutes, until chicken and quinoa are cooked through.



• With tongs, transfer chicken pieces to a cutting board. Using two forks, shred meat, then return it to pot along with peas; cook until peas are tender. Taste and season soup with salt and pepper. Serve hot, with lime wedges for each portion. Serves 2.

Wine: Today's Chianti

Chiantis are getting more charming almost by the day, said Patrick Comiskey in the *Los Angeles Times*. Though the popular Italian table wine will always be "somewhat grippy," vintners are learning to finesse the acid and tannins in sangiovese grapes. Where Chiantis of the past were "all but unpalatable without a mouthful of spaghetti," classics like these can proudly stand on their own.

2014 I Fabbri Lamole (\$22). "It's rare to find any red wine as direct as this one." Aged in steel, it has rustic tannins that become more refined with air.

2014 Montebemardi (\$24 a liter). An hour after it's opened, this light Chianti "unfurls like a hibiscus flower," its herbal edges softened by dusty plum and cherry flavors.

2015 Monteraioni (\$30). This silky, "impossibly sexy" wine delivers a delightful range of flavors, including minerals, sour cherries, and cut tobacco leaf.



This week's dream: A magical tour of the Beatles' Liverpool

The day I suggested to my Beatles-obsessed husband that we should visit Liverpool, "I won points for the rest of our marriage," said **Liz Robbins** in *The New York Times*. I've never been a Fab Four fanatic—not like Ricky, a fount of Beatles trivia who started playing the band's songs on guitar when he was 13. But as we made our way from Abbey Road to Penny Lane, meeting fellow fans from the U.S. and as far away as Uruguay, I was able to marvel at how four Liverpool lads united the world, "and continue to do so," even 54 years after they charted their first overseas No. 1 single.

"Where does one begin the story of the Beatles in Britain? At the crosswalk, of course." Hours after landing at Heathrow Airport, we headed to London's Abbey Road to re-create the cover of the namesake album—as a few hundred other people were doing the same. Beatles tourism is an even bigger deal in Liverpool, bringing in \$116 million a year, and when we arrived in the industrial port city, "I didn't know



The Fab Four in bronze on Liverpool's waterfront

whether to expect depth or Disney." We experienced Disney on our first day, spotting a Magical Mystery Tour bus and, on the docks, a Yellow Submarine houseboat for rent. Outside the Beatles Story museum, Sgt. Pepper himself was hawking tickets. But the museum offers a decent primer for Beatles beginners and includes a replica of the Cavern Club, where John, Paul, George,

and Ringo played some of their first gigs. The exhibits prepared me for the next day's big activity: a Fab Four Taxi Tour with a Beatles expert as our guide.

We were picked up in a black cab by Gareth Byrne, 57, who called himself a Scouser—a true Liverpool native. For the next three hours we roamed the city, enjoying Byrne's encyclopedic memory, deadpan humor, and "an accent that begged for subtitles." He took us to John Lennon's favorite pub, the Beatles' childhood homes, and to Penny Lane, where the street sign is stolen and replaced, we learned, about once a week. Our last stop was St. Peter's Church, where Paul McCartney first heard John play, fronting his skiffle band, the Quarrymen, at a 1957 Sunday picnic. Across the street stood a cemetery. "When slanted sunbeams fell on Eleanor Rigby's headstone as if on cue, I shivered a little and smiled."

At Liverpool's Hard Day's Night Hotel (harddaysnighthotel.com), doubles start at \$102.

Hotel of the week

A suite with a ballpark view

Hotel Zachary**Chicago**

"Holy cow, architecture fans!" said Blair Kamin in the *Chicago Tribune*. This handsome new brick-and-glass hotel sits right across the street from century-old Wrigley Field, and—if you don't mind obstructed views—you can watch the Cubs play from many of the east-facing guest rooms. Named after the stadium's architect, the seven-story 173-room hotel "can get a little theme-parky." But the theme is architecture, not the Cubs, and on the whole, Hotel Zachary "strikes an effective balance between ceding center stage to Wrigley and making its own statement." hotelzachary.com; doubles from \$197

Getting the flavor of...**An oasis outside Vegas**

Ninety minutes west of Las Vegas, deep in the Mojave Desert, sits a tiny community that's a world apart from the bright lights of the Strip, said Kate Silver in *The Washington Post*. Some visitors come to Tecopa, Calif. (population 150), for the hot springs, others for the date milkshakes served at the China Ranch, a working date farm. "I come for the profound quiet at Cynthia's," a retreat where three giant teepees and half a dozen repurposed trailers look out on lush palms and loping hills. During the day, my husband and I take ATVs out to tour an old mine and a cemetery where the grave markers are simple painted wooden crosses. At night, we head to Steaks and Beer, a hole-in-the-wall that serves a filet mignon doused with red-wine butter. "It's as good as any I've had in a Chicago steakhouse." Stuffed, we use flashlights to find our way back to our teepee, and "sleep soundly until the coyotes rise with the sun."

The first hotel in outer space

Space tourists might soon have a comfortable place to rest their heads, said Justin Bachman in *Bloomberg.com*. The Houston-based startup Orion Span recently announced plans to launch "the first luxury hotel in space" by the end of 2021, with guests welcome sometime in 2022. The 35-by-14-foot Aurora Station will orbit 200 miles above Earth and have room for four guests and two crewmembers—most likely former astronauts, Orion Span says. A 12-day stay, including round-trip rocket flights, will cost \$9.5 million a person, and for that hefty fee guests will see 384 sunrises and sunsets as they race around the planet. Prospective visitors can put down an \$80,000 refundable deposit for a future stay right now, but some experts suspect the startup's time frame is overly ambitious. After all, the new commercial space-flight industry "has yet to launch a single trained astronaut into space, let alone civilians and leave them there for two weeks."

Last-minute travel deals**A villa in Barbados**

Port Ferdinand, a luxury resort in Barbados, is offering 35 percent off all villas booked by April 30. A one-bedroom villa overlooking the marina costs \$445 a night midweek in June. The offer is valid for stays in June, September, and October. portferdinand.com

Summer in Scottsdale

When the temperature rises in Arizona, prices will drop at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. With the resort's Early Bird deal, doubles will start at \$130 for May 28–Sept. 11 stays, down from the regular summer rate of \$179. Book by April 30. fairmont.com/scottsdale

A return to New Orleans

The B on Canal, a newly renovated New Orleans hotel, is offering 20 percent discounts and automatic room upgrades for April bookings. In June, a midweek stay in a room for four starts at \$103. Use code OPNDIS. bhôtelsandresorts.com

The 2019 Jaguar I-Pace: What the critics say

Autoweek.com

The latest crossover with no engine under its hood "could finally be the vehicle that changes everything for Jaguar." Due to arrive in the fall, the battery-powered I-Pace will be the first luxury plug-in SUV from a mainstream brand, and it also happens to be "a handsome machine from every angle" and "the best-built Jaguar in the 83-year history of the brand." Jaguar badly needs a big seller besides its F-Pace, and providing the first true alternative to Tesla's Model X ought to be the answer.

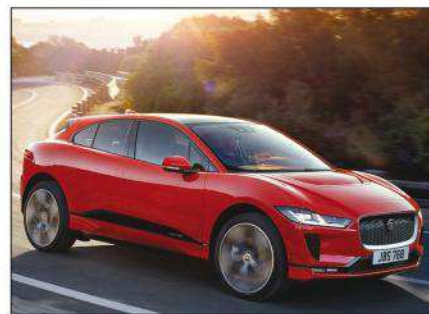
Wired.com

The I-Pace promises a 0 to 60 mph sprint in

4.5 seconds—"enough to shove you back into the seat and elicit a giggle or two." It also has a range of 240 miles between charges, which matches the similarly priced entry-level Model X. "As ever, Jaguar is counting on design to set it apart"; in this case, by offering familiar luxury styling. And despite being no bigger than the brand's fuel-powered F-Pace, the I-Pace is far more spacious inside.

MotorTrend.com

"Quiet and quick," the I-Pace feels sorted out at every level. There's "a lovely fluidity to the chassis, steering, and power train," and like the Jaguars of old, the vehicle



Tesla's worst nightmare, from \$69,500

beautifully combines "grace, pace, and space." Sure, Tesla pointed the way forward. But "the future just got real."

The best of...dresses for spring weddings



Rebecca Vallance Ravena Midi

Darted along the bodice, this crepe midi in antique rose creates a silhouette sophisticated enough for the most formal wedding. A lace-up cutout in back enhances the drama. \$147, [net-a-porter.com](#)
Source: TheTrendSpotter.net



Ted Baker London Hailie Skater Dress

A midday garden affair needs a touch of romanticism, too. The bold zig-zag and scalloped edge on this skater dress add snap to its dusky rose Palace Gardens print. \$289, [nordstrom.com](#)
Source: TownAndCountryMag.com



Boden Riviera

Grab attention while staying loose with this sleeveless cotton-linen midi in mimosa yellow. The flattering waist tie sits just above two generous front pockets. Also available in snapdragon red. \$140, [boden.com](#)
Source: Brides.com



Borgo de Nor Isadora

Frida Kahlo meets Leonora Carrington in the purple orchids and brilliant saffron of this satin maxi with a wrap-around skirt and asymmetrical ruffle detail. Pair it with beige accessories for best effect. \$693, [matchesfashion.com](#)
Source: Elle.com



Eliza J Chiffon Maxi

"Flowing and floral, this dress screams spring," and the pleats running from waist to toe ensure it'll come to life with every twirl on the dance floor. It's on trend, but "you'll love it for years to come." \$158, [nordstrom.com](#)
Source: SouthernLiving.com

Tip of the week...

How to read a bottled-water label

- **Purified** refers to water from any potable source (a tap) that has had any contaminants removed, usually through filtration, distillation, or reverse osmosis. Because purification also removes beneficial minerals, you might see the phrase "electrolytes for taste"—indicating that minerals were added back in.
- **Alkaline** is just that—water with a pH level above neutral. Some purveyors claim it helps with digestion; "others, much, much more."
- **Ionized** indicates that the water has been exposed to an electrical current, which is one way to create alkaline water.
- **Spring** means the water is from a spring. Curious about the source? Look for a phone number on the label, and call for details.
- **Vapor-distilled** tells you the water was boiled into steam and then condensed. That makes the water slightly acidic—"and therefore not particularly healthy until electrolytes are added back in."

Source: Town & Country

And for those who have everything...

Building a backyard bar doesn't have to be a complex task. The **Honomobar** is a pop-up libation station that arrives ready for happy hour in any outdoor or indoor setting. Created by the architecture and design studio Honomobo, each 8-by-12.5-foot unit is cut from a recycled shipping container and comes outfitted with a cedar overhang, a butcher-block bar top, an aluminum roll shutter, and a floor painted with a nonslip coating. No electrical or plumbing fixtures are included or required, and neither does the structure require a foundation. What's more, it arrives four to six weeks after it's ordered—just in time for summer. \$19,764, [honomobo.com](#)
Source: HiConsumption.com



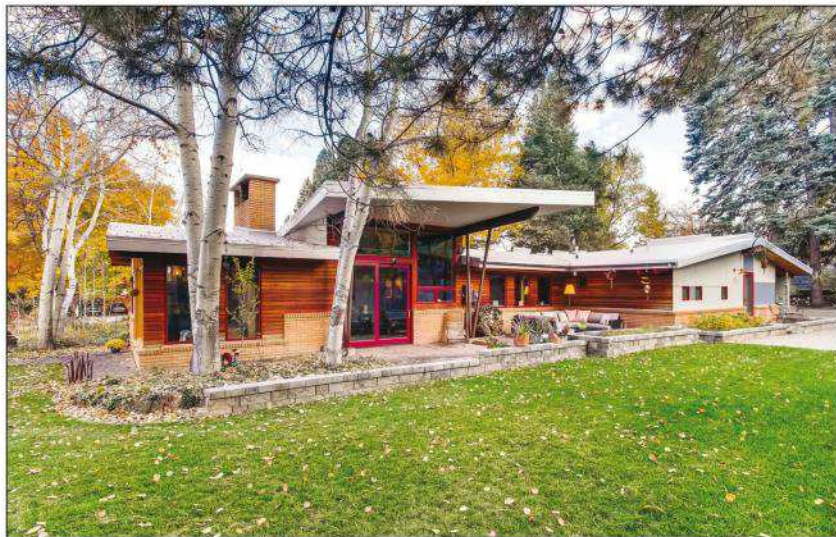
Best apps...

For enhancing your email experience

- **Astro** uses artificial intelligence to help you focus on the important stuff in your inbox and on your calendar. Once the free app syncs with your Gmail account, its virtual assistant can remove clutter, unsubscribe from junk, create follow-up reminders, and highlight emails that might need your attention.
- **Trove** is a lot like Astro, offering numerous organizational tools, plus unique features such as a button that lets you "nudge" people who haven't replied. But Trove's focus is on staying in touch with key contacts, and it doubles as a network for professional associates and teammates who communicate often.
- **Newton** charges \$5 a month (or \$45 a year), but it works with pretty much any email account and comes loaded with powerful features, such as one-click cleaning, receipt scanning, and options to "send later" and "undo send." Best of all, Newton doesn't sell your data.
Source: FastCompany.com

30 Best properties on the market

This week: Homes in Boulder



◀ **Greenbriar** This mid-century modern home sits close to area parks and trailheads. The four-bedroom, recently renovated 1959 ranch features an open floor plan, vaulted ceilings, oversized windows, and oak floors throughout. The property includes large trees, raised beds for vegetables, landscaped flower gardens, and a two-car garage with a studio. \$1,995,000. Jon Hatch, RE/MAX of Boulder, (303) 513-2834



Boulder

Colorado

◀ **Whittier** Built in 2004, this four-bedroom home stands on a tree-lined street near Sunshine Canyon and the university. Interior details include walnut floors, crown molding, plantation shutters, and a master bath with a spa soaking tub. The two-car garage has a lower-level studio with living room, bathroom, and two offices. \$2,775,000. Karen Bernardi, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, (303) 402-6000

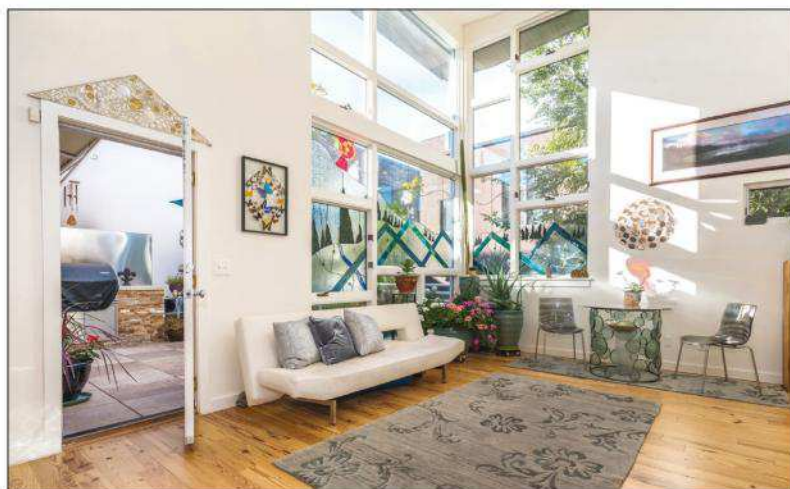
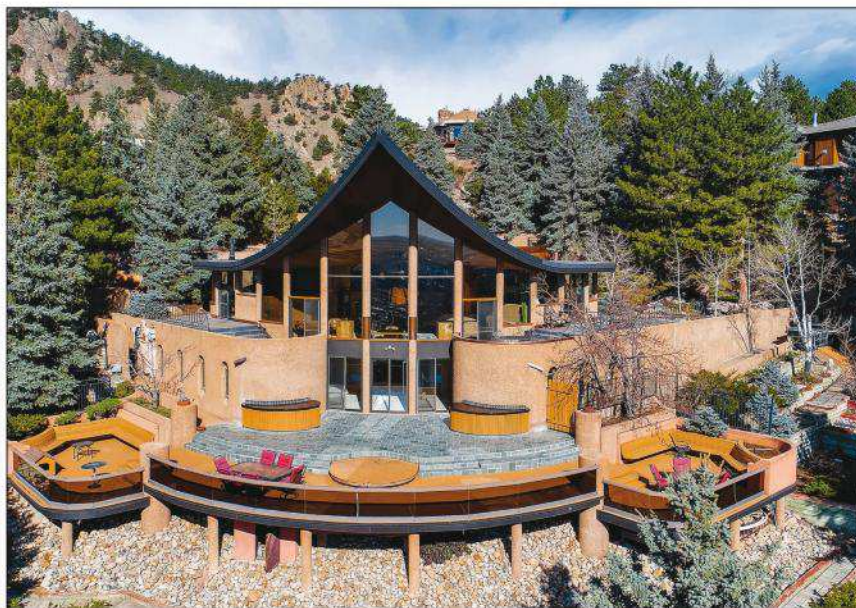
▶ **Flagstaff** Located in the desirable West Rosehill subdivision, this six-bedroom home looks out on the Flatiron Mountains and foothills. The 1958 brick house has oversized windows, a hexagonal living room, three fireplaces, and a two-story-high dining area. The landscaped property includes a large deck and a water feature, and is three blocks from Chautauqua Park, University Hill, and hiking trails. \$2,950,000. Liza Hogan, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, (970) 315-2704



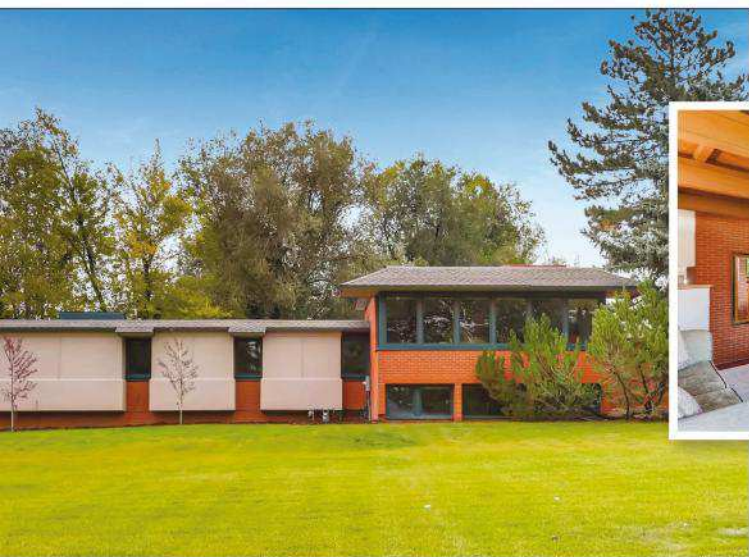
Best properties on the market

31

► **North Boulder** The Aspen Leaf House overlooks Boulder Valley from a mountainside perch ringed with conifers. Created by a renowned local builder, the five-bedroom, 5,023-square-foot home has a great room with a copper-and-stone fireplace, a master bedroom with a balcony, a glass-ceilinged spa bathroom, and custom woodwork throughout. Outside are patios, decks, and a water feature. \$2,995,000. Joel D. Ripmaster, Colorado Landmark Realtors, (303) 443-3377



◄ **West Pearl** This one-bedroom condo loft is located in the heart of the city. Details include a great room with 30-foot ceilings and abundant light, reclaimed-wood floors from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and French doors that open onto a patio with a gas grill. The kitchen features unique tile work and a chef's stove. \$1,525,000. Peter and Kayla Garthwaite, Goodacre & Co., (303) 931-2777



◄ **Indian Hills** Set on more than 2 acres, this mid-century modern home offers views of the Flatiron Mountains. The 1967 four-bedroom house has a living room with exposed brick and beams, two gas fireplaces, and a newly renovated kitchen. The property features a rock-lined small stream, a workshop, and a two-stall barn with a tack room. \$1,449,400. Kimberly Thompson, Colorado Landmark Realtors/Luxury Portfolio, (303) 641-2049

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ The median pay for Facebook's 25,000 employees last year was \$240,430. CEO Mark Zuckerberg's total compensation was more than \$8.8 million. Facebook's median pay is the second highest disclosed so far by 325 companies in the S&P 500 index, as part of a requirement in the Dodd-Frank law. Incyte, a biotech firm with 1,200 employees, tops the list at \$253,015.

BusinessInsider.com

■ Despite fears that President Trump's tariffs on imported solar equipment would be a job killer, new solar-industry jobs are increasing, with total employment likely to top a 2016 record. The Solar Energy Industries Association initially forecast 88,000 lost jobs this year, but has revised its estimate to 23,000 gained, thanks to growing demand.

Bloomberg.com

■ Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta was the world's busiest passenger airport in 2017, with a total of 103.9 million passengers passing through. The second-busiest airport was Beijing Capital, followed by Dubai, Tokyo, and Los Angeles.

AirportWorld.com



■ If the global shipping industry were a country, it would be the world's sixth-biggest

emitter of greenhouse gases. Cargo ships now emit more CO₂ each year than the entire nation of Germany.

Oz.com

■ Companies short of workers are increasingly turning to teens to fill jobs. The 12-month average unemployment rate for teens in March was 13.9 percent, the lowest annual average since 2001 and about half what it was in 2010. Last July, typically the month most teens work, unemployment for 16- to 19-year-olds fell to 13.3 percent, the lowest midsummer rate since 1969.

The Wall Street Journal

Banking: Big banks make \$2.5B from tax cut

"Big banks just received the first installment of benefits" from the new corporate tax law, said Michael Rapoport in *The Wall Street Journal*. "The haul: more than \$2.5 billion"—in just the first quarter. The combined earnings of Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, and Bank of America grew by that much thanks to the lower corporate tax rate of 21 percent. Without the tax savings, Wells Fargo would have seen its earnings drop from the first quarter of 2017, "and much of the year-over-year growth at Citigroup and Bank of America would be gone." Earnings growth at JPMorgan would have fallen to 28 percent instead of being 35 percent.



A corporate tax cut beneficiary

Goldman Sachs didn't necessarily need the tax law to "get its groove back," said Emily Flitter in *The New York Times*. The bank booked \$10 billion in first-quarter revenue—a three-year high. Goldman also enjoyed a 23 percent bounce in its quarterly trading revenue. The bank spent much of last year lagging rivals, "trying to figure out how to rev up an operation feeling

the pressure of new regulations and facing competition from non-bank trading platforms." The latest results relieved insiders, especially as heir apparent David Solomon prepares to take over from longtime CEO Lloyd Blankfein sometime in the next two years.

Taxes: IRS systems collapse on tax day

The Internal Revenue Service gave taxpayers an extra day to electronically file their returns this week, after a catastrophic computer glitch knocked the agency's site offline on tax day, said Jeff Stein in *The Washington Post*. "Senior government officials were at a loss to explain" what caused the "stunning breakdown," which left last-minute filers unable to process or pay their taxes on April 17. The agency said it undertook a hard reboot of its systems but declined to say why the site crumpled.

Autos: Tesla's troubles continue

Production on Tesla's troubled Model 3 sedan has skidded to a halt again, said Dana Hull in *Bloomberg.com*. The electric-auto maker shut its assembly line temporarily this week after founder Elon Musk admitted "mistakes" are hindering "his most important car." It's the second time this year Tesla has paused manufacturing on the Model 3. Musk described the previous shutdown as necessary for routine improvements on production bottlenecks, but conceded last week that "excessive automation" at the facility was a problem.

Gig economy: TaskRabbit temporarily shuttered

TaskRabbit was forced to shut down its app and website this week while it investigated "a cybersecurity incident," said Sara Ashley O'Brien in *CNN.com*. The on-demand gig marketplace website, which was purchased by Ikea last year, was thrown into chaos as workers and customers were unable to access its system during the breach. The company, which said it was actively working with security services and law enforcement agencies to rectify the matter, warned customers their passwords may have been stolen and that incomplete tasks would be rescheduled "as soon as possible."

E-commerce: SCOTUS weighs state taxes

A narrowly divided Supreme Court "struggled" this week to decide whether online retailers should have to collect sales taxes in states where they have no physical presence, said Adam Liptak in *The New York Times*. It was not clear at the end of oral arguments whether there were five votes to overturn a 1992 decision that prevents states from collecting sales taxes from out-of-state companies. Brick-and-mortar stores have long complained they are disadvantaged by the law, and states say they are missing out on billions of dollars in revenue. But several justices "expressed concerns about imposing crushing burdens on small businesses" and suggested punting the issue to Congress.

The rise of 'micromerch'

Buying merchandise like T-shirts and posters to support a favorite band has been "a common expression of fandom for decades," said Jon Caramanica in *The New York Times*. But in the social media age, "no following is too small to monetize." Enter micromerch: name-sake products, made in batches of "a couple dozen to a couple thousand items," offered for sale by Instagram stars or not-quite-celebrities to a "dedicated few." Peloton, the home indoor cycling business, sells small batches of merch "inspired by each" of its dozen instructors. Music producer Alex Tumay recently sold enough shirts featuring his social media-famous French bulldog, Gordie, to pay for flights to the SXSW music festival. And Ashley Iaconetti, a *Bachelorette* contestant known for her TV waterworks, now sells her own tissue-box sleeves. "Being so known for crying," she said, "why don't I have a deal with Kleenex or Puffs?"

College: Appealing a financial aid package

"If you are thinking about negotiating your university-bound child's financial aid offers, you had better start working on your pitch," said Gail MarksJarvis in *Reuters.com*. Inbound freshmen have until May 1 to accept or reject aid offers received earlier this month from universities. While it used to be rare that parents would appeal a student's aid package, it's now virtually standard practice. "With the final tab for private college running more than \$70,000 a year and public universities close to \$35,000, a great deal of money is at stake." The average aid package trims \$20,000 per year from private college fees and \$6,000 from state universities. But proceed carefully. "What may look like the largest offer might not be the best," said Jessica Dickler in *CNBC.com*. "Terms aren't always clear," so carefully go through each offer "line by line" to separate out scholarships and grants, which don't have to be repaid, from loans, which do.

"Don't jump to conclusions by looking at the bottom line," said Terry Savage in the *Chicago Tribune*. "The largest aid package may also bring overwhelming debt," and loans are a burden your student will carry "for many years." Read the fine print on the "ingredients" of the package. Are the grants renewable in future years, or do they just apply to freshman year? Does the



Look carefully at the 'ingredients' of the offer.

interest on loans accrue while the student is still in college? Does some of the package consist of parents' PLUS loans or private loans with higher interest rates? Calculate, too, the exact cost of fees, books, and supplies, as well as expenses such as student health insurance. If you do decide to appeal, "ask for a specific amount of additional aid, based on what your family can afford," said Chana Schoenberger in *The Wall Street Journal*. And be sure to look into that particular school's process for filing an appeal—

whether it's filing an online or paper form, or sending in a letter. Following the procedure carefully will probably increase your chances of getting more aid.

"Always seek tuition discounts, grants, and scholarships over loans if you want a debt-free degree," said John Wasik in *Forbes.com*. You will also have a much stronger case for appealing an aid decision if you can prove your family's financial situation has changed since you originally filed. "Any negative change in a family's financial status should be detailed in the aid appeal letter." Numbers matter—detail the impact of any loss of income, unexpected medical expenses, support of an elderly relative, or even a divorce or separation. "Whatever you do, don't get on the phone and start yelling at an aid officer. That will backfire."

What the experts say

The price of procrastination

"Procrastinating on financial matters can cost you big in the long run," said Russ Wiles in *AZCentral.com*. Many Americans struggle with the pressure of planning for retirement, drafting a will, or developing a savings plan. Some are gripped by the fear of making a mistake, while others are intimidated by not knowing how to proceed. Delaying some matters can be especially costly. One of the worst financial behaviors is paying only the minimum on your credit cards, thinking that you will eventually ramp up payments. Compounding interest will just sink you further in debt. There's also no better time than now to make sure that you have enough savings to cover three to six months' worth of expenses, and to get serious about retirement. "Even individuals who start late with retirement planning can make headway if they just get going."

Credit scores may jump

Tax liens will no longer be considered in your credit score, "a move that will make some risky borrowers appear more creditworthy," said AnnaMaria Andriotis in *The Wall Street Journal*. As of this month, the three major credit-reporting companies will delete more than 5.5 million liens from consumers' credit reports and "stop adding new tax lien infor-

mation." That means some consumers could see their credit scores go up, making them eligible for better loans and financing terms. The credit-rating firms have been "grappling with class-action lawsuits over their handling of consumers' tax liens." A number of suits accuse the firms of not updating information to reflect when the lien was withdrawn or paid.

Pushing back on property taxes

"If your property tax bills are increasing, you're not alone," said Ann Carrns in *The New York Times*. For most families, they're the second-largest household expense after the mortgage. Property tax is calculated as a percentage of the average estimated market value of your area's homes, usually between 1 and 2 percent, so rising prices can inflate your tax obligations. Many cities have also increased their rates, compounding the pain. Last year the average bill nationwide was \$3,400, up 3 percent from 2016. If you feel your bill is too high, you can file an appeal. Check the details in your valuation report, such as the number of bedrooms. If anything is obviously wrong, call your local assessor's office. For significant errors or differences of opinion, "you'll need some data to back up your claim." This could include sales data for comparable homes or even a formal appraisal.

Charity of the week



GUIDE DOGS

For more than 50 years, **Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation** (fidelco.org) has

been dedicated to helping the blind enjoy a sense of independence by supplying German shepherd guide dogs trained to keep

their blind partners safe. Fidelco's guide dogs are bred from Bavarian herding and East German bloodlines, and are known for their intelligence, temperament, and stamina. Fidelco takes the dogs through a rigorous two-year training program supervised by internationally accredited trainers, and custom-matches the animals to their blind partners. The guide dogs are provided at no cost, thanks to donors' generous support. Since its founding, Fidelco has placed more than 1,500 guide dogs across North America.

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.

Global trade: Could the U.S. rejoin the TPP?

President Trump can't seem to make up his mind about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, said **Natasha Bach** in *Fortune.com*. Last week, Trump instructed his stunned economic advisers to look into re-entering the Obama-era trade pact with 11 Pacific Rim countries that he had effectively killed his first week in office. Pulling the U.S. out of the TPP was one of Trump's few consistent policy positions on the campaign trail, where he'd repeatedly derided the pact as a "job killer" and a "disaster." But he seemed to be waffling in recent weeks, after hearing complaints from farm-state Republican lawmakers that their constituents were going to suffer from his trade practices. By this week, however, the "brief flirtation" with the TPP appeared over yet again, said **Shawn Donnan** in the *Financial Times*. After meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Mar-a-Lago, Trump tweeted, "While Japan and South Korea would like us to go back into TPP, I don't like the deal for the U.S." That could just be Trump trying to play hardball on new concessions. Whatever the case, now that Trump's "embroiled in an increasingly tense trade standoff with China," which isn't a party to the TPP, he's probably beginning to see the logic of a pact with other Pacific countries.

Even if Trump wants to, rejoining the TPP "won't be easy," said **Veronique de Rugy** in *NationalReview.com*. When Trump "blew the whole thing up" last year, the remaining 11 nations didn't just slink home empty-handed—they restarted negotiations and last month signed a new deal on their own, minus Washington's hard-won demands on issues like intellectual-property requirements. Even though many of them would ultimately prefer the U.S. in



Representatives of the new TPP, sans the U.S.

the pact, because they want access to the American market and a balance against China, they have bristled at Trump's suggestion that the U.S. could simply waltz back in, especially bearing new demands. Even if the U.S. gets a seat at the table, "it won't come with the bargaining power and authority that it had the first time around." Trump is proving to be "not a very good global economic chess player," said **Z. Byron Wolf** in *CNN.com*. He spent much of 2016 "railing against both China and the TPP and not realizing that one had everything to do with the other." We've now threatened \$150 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods and Beijing has responded in kind, targeting in particular U.S. agricultural products. American farmers were the constituency that "stood to gain most from the TPP," because it guaranteed markets for their harvests. Alas, Trump "couldn't see a few moves ahead."

Trump could still "end up in the right place" on the TPP, said **Matt Lewis** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. He's going to face increasing pressure from Midwestern farmers as the trade war with China heats up, and he could perhaps persuade some TPP countries to lean on their partners to reopen negotiations. We could "scold Trump for being on the wrong side of the issue" or "for changing his mind." But why bother, when he's showing at least some willingness to flip in the right direction? Yes, he may have lost some leverage in the process. But ultimately, the desired outcome—maintaining more markets for U.S. goods and keeping China in check—"is far more important than the process by which he got there."

America's subscription boom

The Economist

Subscriptions are the hot new thing in business, said *The Economist*, seen by many executives "as the holy grail" of profitability for delivering a recurring stream of revenue. Amazon Prime, Netflix, and Spotify are a few of the best-known subscription-based businesses, and venture-capital firms "are pouring money" into more, including companies that deliver "meals, pills, or even fresh underpants." But a business model built around locking in customers has its limitations, and companies should take care before they jump on the bandwagon. Yes, subscriptions help firms better predict future revenues and build deeper relationships with consumers. Technology has also made it "easier

to rent rather than own assets," such as cloud storage space. But the model has its drawbacks. Landing customers in the first place can be "eye-wateringly expensive," with companies often having to either maintain artificially low prices or spend big on marketing. Subscribers can also be "annoyingly disloyal" and flee at the first post-promotion bump in prices. Finally, there's the issue of saturation. America's 118 million households already have more than 200 million subscriptions to online services, and the offerings, from streaming sites to razor delivery, will only multiply. "A first sign of trouble could be that there are not enough Americans to satisfy them all."

Reform the Postal Service needs

Joe Nocera
Bloomberg.com

"Let's put aside for a moment the real purpose" of President Trump's call for reforms to the Postal Service, said **Joe Nocera**. He believes, of course, that changes might harm Amazon's business, and by extension CEO Jeff Bezos, who owns *The Washington Post*. But if Trump's motives are off, his aim is spot on. "The post office does indeed need to be reformed." It's Congress that deserves much of the blame. Back in 1971 the Postal Service became an independent agency, answering no longer to the president, but to lawmakers. Over the years, the Postal Service has proposed reform after reform to save money, from ending Saturday delivery and clos-

ing rural post offices to offering banking services. Every time, "Congress said no." Then in 2006, when the post office had a \$900 million surplus, lawmakers imposed "an insane mandate" that it prepay all future expected retiree health-care benefits. "Every year since, it has lost billions." Amazon has actually helped stem the bleeding: The USPS's package business swelled by more than 11 percent last year, even as mail volume slid 3.6 percent. Any independent body assessing the USPS would likely recommend raising stamp prices, rather than increasing charges on its fastest-growing business. But in these partisan times, genuine, clear-headed reform seems unlikely.

The Oscar-winning director who loved rebels

Milos Forman
1932–2018

Milos Forman defied categorization. The director made 10 films during his four-decade career, each vastly different from the others. There was *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, his Oscar-winning adaptation of Ken Kesey's novel about revolt and repression in a psychiatric hospital, and *Amadeus*, a lush biopic of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which won Forman his second Oscar for best director. Yet Forman's movies all shared a common theme: that of a rebel struggling to break free. Having grown up in Communist-dominated Czechoslovakia, Forman felt an affinity with those who stood up to tyranny. "I lived in a society where people who called for censorship won," he said. "You develop this admiration for people who have the courage to buck the system."

Born in the town of Caslav, outside Prague, Forman became "an orphan at age 10" after both of his parents were killed in Nazi death camps, said the *Los Angeles Times*. Raised by relatives, he drifted from boarding school to the Prague Film Academy. There, he helped found the Czech New Wave, a group of filmmakers who chronicled "the grim realities of life behind the Iron Curtain." His early movies won international playbills—1965's



Loves of a Blonde and 1967's *The Firemen's Ball* were nominated for foreign-language Oscars. But after the Soviets crushed the brief period of liberalization known as the "Prague Spring" in 1968, his work was banned and he moved to the U.S. Forman's first Hollywood film, the comedy *Taking Off*, "did so poorly" that he "wound up owing the studio \$500," said *The New York Times*. He fell into a depression, which lifted only when he was approached to helm *Cuckoo's Nest*. The 1975 film was a nightmare to shoot—its star, Jack Nicholson, stopped talking to Forman—but became a critical and commercial hit.

Forman's next two films—*Hair* and *Ragtime*—"received lukewarm reviews," said *The Washington Post*. But 1984's *Amadeus*, starring Tom Hulse as Mozart and F. Murray Abraham as his bitter rival, Antonio Salieri, was a "tour de force." Forman shot the movie in Prague; the Czechoslovak authorities, he said with pride, "had to bow to the almighty dollar and let the traitor back." He earned his third Oscar nomination with 1996's *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, a bawdy ode to the First Amendment. "Probably because I am a coward," said Forman, "instead of rebelling, I make films about people who rebel."

The stand-up matriarch who ruled L.A. comedy

Mitzi Shore
1930–2018

Mitzi Shore was godmother to a generation of comics. David Letterman, Jay Leno, Roseanne Barr, Chris Rock, Robin Williams, and Jim Carrey were just a few of the performers who cut their teeth at Shore's iconic Los Angeles stand-up club, the Comedy Store. When she took over the venue in 1974 as part of a divorce settlement with her husband, comedian Sammy Shore, it was a variety room with comedians squeezed in between musicians and other acts. Shore decided to focus entirely on stand-up. Her timing was perfect. Two years earlier, Johnny Carson had moved *The Tonight Show* from New York to Los Angeles, making the city a mecca for comics hoping to appear on the show, and the Comedy Store became the place to get discovered. "We're like a school, or a boxer's gym," she said. "We're here to help people develop their skills, and to get them seen by supportive comedy crowds."

Born and raised in Green Bay, Wis., Mitzi Saidel met her future husband while they were both working at a summer resort on Elkhart Lake, said *HollywoodReporter.com*. The couple moved to L.A. in the mid-'60s and opened the Comedy



Store on the Sunset Strip in 1972. Shore ran the business "when Sammy left for weeks to perform in Las Vegas." After her divorce, Shore became a "critic, confidante, and caretaker for many of the comedians who drifted through the Store," said *The New York Times*. Letterman said she provided crucial direction in his early career, explaining, "Without Mitzi, I don't know what I would have done."

But her relationship with the talent wasn't always smooth, said the *Los Angeles Times*. In 1979, a group of comics went on strike to protest Shore's policy of not paying up-and-coming performers; she thought the exposure was payment enough but eventually agreed to pay most comics \$25 a set. The Store's influence waned as more clubs opened and stand-up specials on cable TV gave "audiences one less reason to go out." But she never lost her reputation as the comedy world's "eccentric mother hen." When her son, comedian Pauly Shore, wanted to break into the business, he had to audition along with other comics. "I didn't encourage Pauly," she said in 1994. "He had to work hard all around town before he got a break on the stage at the Comedy Store."

The drill instructor who became a war movie icon

At age 17, R. Lee Ermey was given a simple choice by a judge: "Son, you can join the military or go to jail." The teenage miscreant

R. Lee Ermey
1944–2018

enlisted in the Marines, beginning a journey that would end in Hollywood. His experience as a drill sergeant led him to be cast as one of the most memorable characters in 1987's *Full Metal Jacket*. As Gunnery Sgt. Hartmann, Ermey dominates the film's first half, berating the new arrivals at a Marines boot camp. Eyes bulging and his jaw jutting, he names one recruit "Private Snowball" and asks another rhetorically, "What is your major malfunction?" The insults were of his own invention. "It was terrifying to those actors," Ermey said. "My objective was intimidation."

Raised in Kansas and Washington state, Ermey was a self-described "hell-raiser" when he was brought before the judge for "joyriding" and "beer drinking" in 1961, said *The Washington Post*. In his seventh year with the Marines, he was posted to Vietnam, where his military career effectively ended after he was wounded by a rocket. Ermey was living in the Philippines when he was hired by Francis Ford Coppola as a technical adviser on 1979's *Apocalypse Now*, in which he also had a bit part as a helicopter pilot.

After playing a drill instructor in 1978's *The Boys in Company C*, Ermey "would often be cast as authority figures," said *The Times* (U.K.). He was a police captain in 1995's *Se7en* and the voice of a green plastic soldier named Sarge in *Toy Story*. He claimed his conservative views led him to be "black-balled" late in his career by liberal Hollywood. But by then, he was happy spending time on shooting ranges with his friends, all of whom, he said, were "good patriots."

How gun culture has changed

As an avid hunter and devoted gun enthusiast, I'm rarely out of reach of a firearm, said David Joy. But I don't see any need for assault weapons designed for mass human slaughter.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE Christmas, I had a 9 mm pistol concealed in my waistband and a rifle with two 30-round magazines in the passenger seat beside me. I was driving down from the mountains to meet a fellow I didn't know at a Cracker Barrel off I-40 in the North Carolina foothills. He wanted to buy a Kel-Tec Sub-2000, and I had one for sale. Other than that, I didn't know him from Adam except for a few Facebook messages.

We were both members of a Facebook group where people post pictures of firearms and buyers private-message to ask questions and make offers—sometimes cash, sometimes trade. I needed money to pay a buddy for an old '70s model Lark teardrop trailer, and that rifle wasn't doing anything but taking up space in the safe.

What I was doing was perfectly legal. In North Carolina, long-gun transfers by private sellers require no background checks. Likewise, it's perfectly legal to sell a handgun privately so long as the buyer has a purchase permit or a concealed-carry license. But as I headed up the exit to the restaurant where we'd agreed to meet, I felt uneasy. I was within the law, but it didn't feel as if I should have been.

He was backed into a space parallel to the dumpster, a black Ford F-250 with a covered bed, just as he'd described on Facebook Messenger. As I pulled in, he stepped out. He smiled, and I nodded.

"You can just leave it in the seat so we don't make anybody nervous," he said as I rolled down my window. There were families in rocking chairs in front of the restaurant. Customers were walking to their cars to get back on the road.

I climbed out of my truck so he could look the rifle over while I counted the money he'd left on his seat. He was about my age, somewhere in his early to mid-30s, white guy with a thick beard. He spoke with a heavy Southern accent not much different from my own. Said he built houses for a living, and that was about all the small talk between us. He liked the rifle. I needed the cash. We shook hands, and off we went.

THERE IS RARELY a moment when I'm not within reach of a firearm. When I lie down at night, there is



The author in North Carolina

an old single-shot New England Firearms Pardner leaned against the headboard, a loaded Smith & Wesson M&P Shield pistol on the nightstand. When I sit on the couch to work on an essay or a novel, there is a CZ 75 pistol on the coffee table. When I go to town for groceries, one of those two pistols is concealed inside my waistband.

Where I live in the mountains of North Carolina, I am not alone. With fewer than a dozen guns in the safe, I wouldn't even be considered a gun nut. Most of my friends have concealed-carry licenses and pistols on their person. If there are 10 of us in a room, there are most likely 10 loaded firearms, probably more, with a few of us keeping backups in ankle holsters. Rarely do we mention what we carry. We don't touch the guns. They are unseen and unspoken of, but always there.

I can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't around guns. When I was a kid, there was a gun rack hanging on the wall in the living room. My father kept a single-

shot .410 and an old bolt-action .22, small-game guns, though he didn't hunt anymore. I can remember the first time my father taught me to shoot a rifle, how he had me sit on the concrete driveway and use my knee for a rest, aiming for a cardboard target in a honeysuckle thicket across the road. I think I was 8 or 9. I pulled the stock in too high on my shoulder and craned my neck awkwardly to line up the iron sights. I didn't know what I was doing, but I knew the rules: Always assume a firearm is loaded. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. Know your target and what's beyond it.

I come from a country people whose culture was destroyed by bulldozers and buildings. My father's family settled in and around Charlotte in the late 1700s. As a child, I would ride around with my grandmother in her light blue Oldsmobile. Where Winn-Dixies and Food Lions stood, she remembered fields where she worked tobacco and picked cotton. I grew up in a tiny holdout spot of country where I ran through a pasture of chest-high field grass to fish a farm pond most evenings, where just a mile down the road my uncle still kept a kennel of hounds to run rabbit each fall.

Guns were often a bridge between father and son. But my dad didn't keep a .38 Special on the bedside nightstand like my best friend's father down the street. I never walked into the house and found him cleaning and oiling a dozen pistols at the kitchen table the way I did with my next-door neighbor's dad. For my family, guns had always been a means of putting food on the table. My father never owned a handgun. He kept nothing for home defense.

AS SOON AS I arrived in Jackson County, I knew I'd never leave. A hundred and fifty miles west of where I grew up, I found a community that reminded me of my grandmother, where folks still kept big gardens and canned the vegetables they grew. They still filled the freezer with meat taken by rod and rifle—trout and turkey, dove and rabbit, deer, bear, anything in season.

I keep a close-knit group of friends here, most of whom are at least 20 years my senior. Our generational difference is erased by a shared passion for wilderness and time

spent in the field with gun in hand. This past Christmas, one of the men I hunt with, a man we call Son in Law, handed down a Model 94 Winchester to his grandson. The grandson would be the fourth generation to hunt with that rifle. A few weeks later, the boy took that .30-30 lever action into the field and killed his first deer with it—the same as his uncle, his grandfather and great-grandfather. Those types of things are rare now, even in places like Appalachia.

I'm the youngest member of my hunting camp—me 34, everyone else in their mid-to-late 60s, a few on up past 70. Among these men, there are centuries of experience gathered around the campfire each night. After more than 40 seasons in the same woods, they've come to know the land intimately.

I killed my biggest deer to date on the 2nd of November from a tree one of those men sent me to. Fifteen feet up a hickory, I watched a tree line at the edge of a clear cut. I heard heavy footsteps and eased around the right side of the tree for a look, and there he stood. Just before the deer strolled behind a cedar sapling, I touched the trigger, and the .308 blew apart the morning. The buck stooped forward and sprinted, back legs driving him over tangled ground. He made it 40 yards before he crashed. From my stand, I could just make out the white of his stomach through the brush. I watched his ribs rise with each breath, that breathing slowing, slowing, then gone.

A few days later, I was driving back home from hunting camp in McCormick, S.C., with the head of that eight-point buck in a cooler in the truck bed, the rest of the deer hanging to age at the processor. On a long straightaway, I passed a state trooper driving in the opposite direction. In the rearview, I saw him slam on the brakes and make a U-turn in the middle of the road, blue lights flashing. I was running just under 60 in a 55 and didn't think there was any way he was pulling me over.

The 9 mm I always carry was loaded and concealed on my side. Until that moment I'd never been pulled over while carrying a concealed weapon. I knew the protocol. I knew what I was legally obligated to say. But I was nervous as hell as the trooper stepped out of his cruiser and approached the side of my truck. He was a young black man with braces on his teeth. He looked to be in his early 20s, had kind eyes, and was built like a linebacker. He asked for my license and registration, and I told him I needed to inform him that I had a concealed-carry license and that there was a weapon on my person. He asked where the gun was located, and I told him

roughly 4 o'clock. He asked if I could get to my wallet, and I told him the pistol was pretty close to my back pocket. There was a moment of hesitation when he considered what to do next. Then he told me to move slowly as I took my wallet from my pocket.

When the trooper had my license and registration, he went to his cruiser. In a few minutes, he came back to the window and issued me a warning for speeding. I asked if there was anything I could've done differently to make him more comfortable when he first approached the truck. The trooper told me what I'd said was fine. He smiled and told me: "But this is South Carolina. Most every car I pull over has a gun."



'I can't remember when I wasn't around guns.'

As I headed toward the mountains, all I could think about was Philando Castile, the young African-American man who had a permit to carry and was shot to death in his car in front of his girlfriend and her young daughter by a Minnesota policeman after notifying the officer that he had a weapon. All I could think about was how things might have been different if the situation was reversed and that young black state trooper with braces had been behind the wheel, a white trooper cautiously approaching the car. It was impossible not to recognize how gun culture reeks of privilege.

LAST SUMMER I drove back to Charlotte to visit my father for his birthday. While I was there, I went into a Cabela's store in Fort Mill, S.C., to buy him a new depth finder for his fishing boat. After I found what I was looking for, I headed across the store to see if there were any good deals on ammo.

There were floor displays of AR-15s, and probably a hundred or more other rifles and shotguns for anyone to walk up and hold. I watched a kid about 8 or 9 pick up one of those ARs and shoulder it to the center of his chest. He held the gun awkwardly, cocked his head hard to the side, squeezed one eye closed to aim, and dry-fired the weapon. I watched two men, presumably his father and grandfather, smile

and laugh, then break out their cellphones to snap a few pictures.

Maybe it's how I was raised and the types of firearms my family kept, but the idea of owning a rifle designed for engaging human targets out to 600 meters just never interested me. I keep a Savage 10 in .308 to hunt whitetail and hogs. I have a CZ 920 that's absolute hell on a dove field. Then there are the weapons I keep for defense—the shotgun by the bed, the pistols—firearms whose sole purpose would be to take a human life if I were left with no other choice.

My friends see no difference between the guns I own and their ARs. One or two of them rationalize assault weapons the same way I justify what sits by my bed. When I ask if those rifles are really the best option for home defense, they joke about the minute hand of the doomsday clock inching closer to midnight. They post Instagram photos of Sig Sauer MCXs and tactical vests loaded with extra magazines, their bug-out bags by the door as they wait for the end of the world.

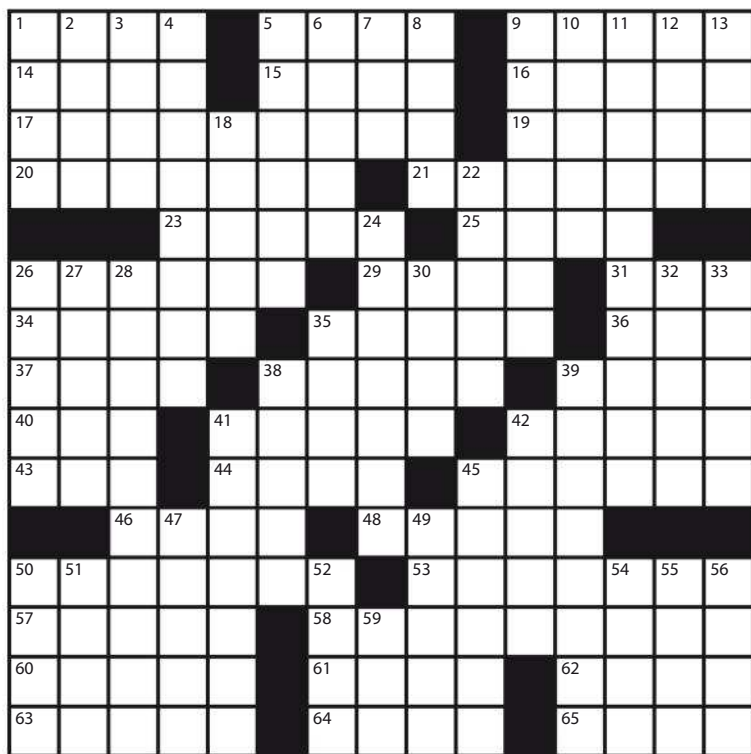
But a majority defend their ARs the same way I defend the guns I use for plinking and hunting. They say they own them because they're fun at the range and affordable to shoot. They use the rifles for punching paper, a few for shooting coyotes. Every weekend they fire hundreds of rounds from custom rifles they've spent thousands of dollars building. They add bump stocks and Echo Triggers to increase rates of fire and step as close to Title II of the federal Gun Control Act as legally possible.

None of them sees a connection between the weapons they own and the shootings at Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Aurora, Orlando, Las Vegas, Parkland. They see mug shots of James Holmes, Omar Mateen, Stephen Paddock, Nikolas Cruz—"crazier than a shithouse rat," they say. "If it hadn't been that rifle, he'd have done it with something else." They fear that what starts as an assault-weapons ban will snowball into an attack on everything in the safe.

I don't believe that politicians are going to ban ordinary guns or overturn the Second Amendment, but I understand their reasoning because I understand what's at stake. I think about that boy picking up that AR in Cabela's, and I'm torn between the culture I grew up with and how that culture has devolved. There are changes I know must come. And there is an unrelenting fear of what could be lost.

Excerpted from an article that originally appeared in The New York Times Magazine. Reprinted with permission.

Crossword No. 453: Birth Firsts by Matt Gaffney



ACROSS

- 1 Hugging pair
- 5 YouTube button
- 9 Sacred song
- 14 Walk off the job
- 15 Amazon's A-to-Z smiling arrow, e.g.
- 16 Step after "lather"
- 17 On April 9, Tammy Duckworth became the first woman to give birth while serving in this office
- 19 One more than a heptad
- 20 Draw
- 21 Bars with four sections
- 23 Source of tears in the kitchen
- 25 Drop anchor
- 26 Relax after work
- 29 *MLS Soccer Sunday* channel
- 31 Deductions pro
- 34 Thin, as a voice
- 35 Cuts into cubes
- 36 Little bit
- 37 Shoots the breeze
- 38 Destroy completely
- 39 Store hassle
- 40 Space-saving abbr.
- 41 Strength
- 42 Orange Co. is there
- 43 Worst way to reach the ER
- 44 "What ___ did he say?"
- 45 Bagel variety
- 46 Board under a bed
- 48 Take back to the editing room, as a movie

- 50 Artist portrayed in 2011's *Midnight in Paris*
- 53 Take in tequila, maybe
- 57 *The Little Mermaid* mermaid
- 58 In 1973, Margaret Court became the first woman to win this tournament after having had a child
- 60 Color slightly
- 61 Lacks the power to
- 62 Country with a llama on its flag
- 63 Wise group
- 64 Sound after "Boo!"
- 65 Vaper's item

DOWN

- 1 The color of water in a swimming pool
- 2 Lack of recent practice
- 3 Precipitation in horror movies
- 4 Complicating factor of many MLB records
- 5 Tranquil
- 6 Numbers game
- 7 In the past
- 8 Pennsylvania city
- 9 There are eight in an atom of oxygen
- 10 Deranged person
- 11 On Jan. 7, 1978, an Argentine named Silvia Morello de Palma became the first woman known to have given birth here
- 12 Hurdle for future attys.
- 13 R.N.s dispense them
- 18 Au pair
- 22 Force
- 24 Zero of the two
- 26 Strongly recommended
- 27 "Wow!"
- 28 On June 16, 1998, a Florida woman named Elizabeth became the first mother whose childbirth was shown live via this then-new technology
- 30 "Begone!"
- 32 ___ Games (quadrennial athletic event)
- 33 25 singer who turns 30 next month
- 35 Boxers and such
- 38 Isn't such a pinball wizard
- 39 Saw no reason to continue
- 41 Disease eliminated in the Americas in 2016
- 42 Dr. for children
- 45 Some employees of baseball teams
- 47 Renaissance festival title
- 49 Parades
- 50 Pilates studio items
- 51 Number for one
- 52 Mark for good
- 54 Gp. founded in Baghdad in 1960
- 55 Hatcher of many TV plots
- 56 Comfy
- 59 Japanese for "yes"

The Week Contest

This week's question: A New York man rushed to the hospital with agonizing headaches after he scarfed a super-spicy Carolina Reaper chile pepper during a pepper-eating contest. Please come up with a medical term for the misery caused by eating overly incendiary food.

Last week's contest: The Russian ambassador to the U.S. has complained that no one in Washington—including House majority and minority leaders and Vice President Mike Pence—is willing to meet and talk with him. If Ambassador Anatoly Antonov were to write a memoir about his lonely life in D.C., what title could he give it?

THE WINNER: "The Spy Who Was Left in the Cold"
Jay Ripps, Mill Valley, Calif.

SECOND PLACE: "Very Quiet on the Western Front"
Anthony C. Chiarella, Oradell, N.J.

THIRD PLACE: "From Russia Without Love"
Alan Levy, New York City

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 "Hot stuff" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, April 24. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, April 27. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.



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

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: *medium*

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

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

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The Week (ISSN 1533-8304) is published weekly except for one week in each January, July, August and December.
The Week is published by **The Week** Publications, Inc., 55 West 39th Street, New York, NY 10018. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **The Week**, PO Box 62290, Tampa, FL 33662-2290. One-year subscription rates: U.S. \$75; Canada \$90; all other countries \$128 in prepaid U.S. funds. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40031590, Registration No. 140467846. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6.
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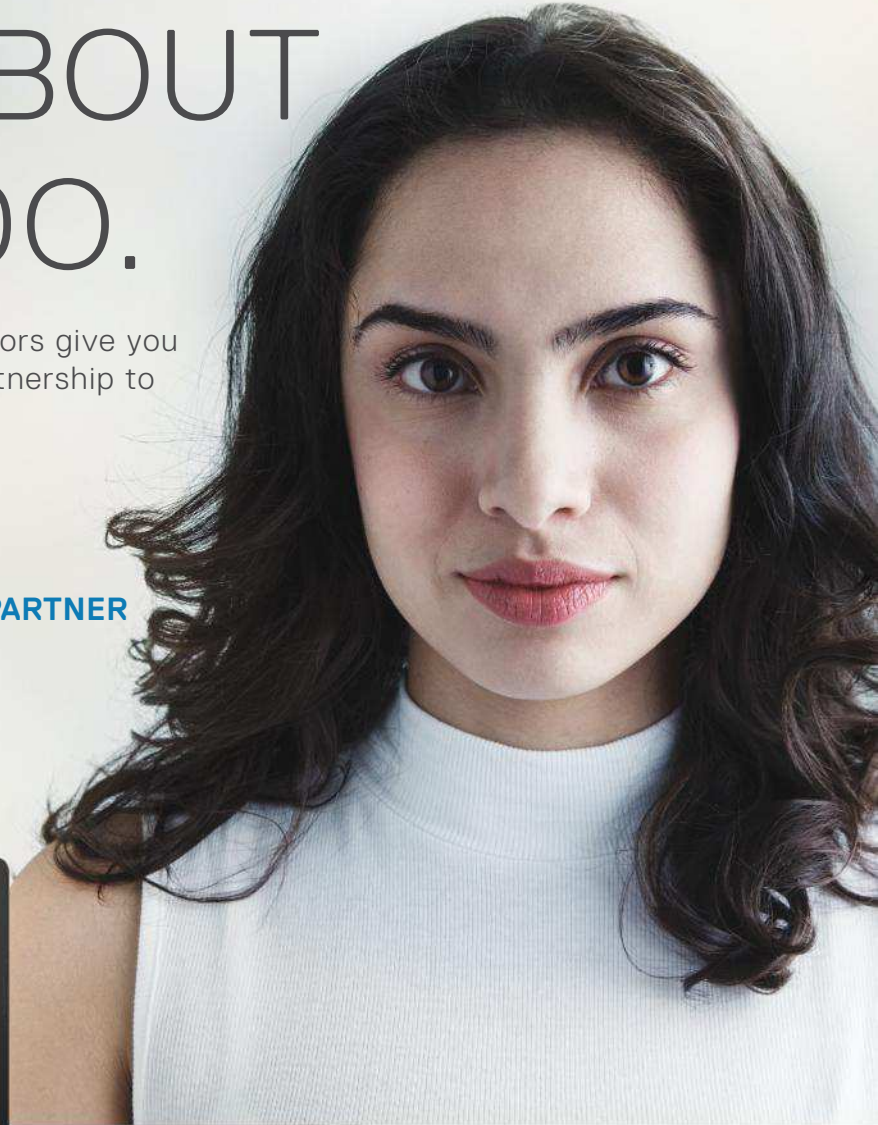
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