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# THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## Worst-case scenario

A massive winter wave of Covid  
spreads across the U.S. just in time  
for Thanksgiving

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NOVEMBER 27, 2020 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 1003

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS

WWW.THEWEEK.COM

For certain adults with **newly diagnosed metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)** that tests positive for PD-L1



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**In a study of newly diagnosed advanced NSCLC patients, half of those on OPDIVO + YERVOY were alive at 17.1 months versus 14.9 months on platinum-based chemotherapy.**

Results may vary.

### Indication & Important Safety Information for OPDIVO (nivolumab) + YERVOY (ipilimumab)

Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how OPDIVO in combination with YERVOY may fit into your overall therapy. The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional, so talk to them if you have any questions.

#### What are OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are prescription medicines used to treat people with a type of advanced stage lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). OPDIVO may be used in combination with YERVOY as your first treatment for NSCLC when your lung cancer has spread to other parts of your body (metastatic), **and** your tumors are positive for PD-L1, but do not have an abnormal EGFR or ALK gene.

It is not known if OPDIVO and YERVOY are safe and effective when used in children younger than 18 years of age.

#### What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are medicines that may treat certain cancers by working with your immune system. OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause your immune system to attack normal organs and tissues in any area of your body and can affect the way they work. These problems can sometimes become serious or life-threatening and can lead to death and may happen anytime during treatment or even after your treatment has ended. Some of these problems may happen more often when OPDIVO is used in combination with YERVOY.

YERVOY can cause serious side effects in many parts of your body which can lead to death. These problems may happen anytime during treatment with YERVOY or after you have completed treatment.

**Call or see your healthcare provider right away if you develop any symptoms of the following problems or these symptoms get worse. Do not try to treat symptoms yourself.**

- **Lung problems (pneumonitis).** Symptoms of pneumonitis may include: new or worsening cough; chest pain; shortness of breath
- **Intestinal problems (diarrhea or colitis) that can lead to tears or holes (perforation) in your intestine.** Signs and symptoms of colitis may include: diarrhea (loose stools) or more bowel movements than usual; mucus or blood in your stools or dark, tarry, sticky stools; stomach-area (abdomen) pain or tenderness; you may or may not have fever

- **Liver problems (hepatitis) that can lead to liver failure.** Signs and symptoms of hepatitis may include: yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes; nausea or vomiting; pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen); drowsiness; dark urine (tea colored); bleeding or bruising more easily than normal; feeling less hungry than usual; decreased energy
- **Hormone gland problems (especially the thyroid, pituitary, and adrenal glands; and pancreas).** Signs and symptoms that your hormone glands are not working properly may include: headaches that will not go away or unusual headaches; extreme tiredness; weight gain or weight loss; dizziness or fainting; changes in mood or behavior, such as decreased sex drive, irritability, or forgetfulness; hair loss; feeling cold; constipation; voice gets deeper; feeling more hungry or thirsty than usual; urinating more often than usual
- **Kidney problems, including nephritis and kidney failure.** Signs of kidney problems may include: decrease in the amount of urine; blood in your urine; swelling in your ankles; loss of appetite
- **Skin problems.** Signs of these problems may include: skin rash with or without itching; itching; skin blistering or peeling; sores or ulcers in mouth or other mucous membranes
- **Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).** Signs and symptoms of encephalitis may include: headache; fever; tiredness or weakness; confusion; memory problems; sleepiness; seeing or hearing things that are not really there (hallucinations); seizures; stiff neck
- **Eye problems.** Symptoms may include: blurry vision, double vision, or other vision problems; eye pain or redness
- **Heart problems.** Signs and symptoms of heart problems may include: shortness of breath; irregular heartbeat; feeling tired; chest pain
- **Muscle and joint problems.** Signs and symptoms of muscle and joint problems may include: severe or persistent muscle or joint pains; severe muscle weakness

#### Additional serious side effects observed with YERVOY include:

- **Nerve problems that can lead to paralysis.** Symptoms of nerve problems may include: unusual weakness of legs, arms, or face; numbness or tingling in hands or feet





**Talk to your doctor about OPDIVO + YERVOY**

**[www.OPDIVOYERVOY.com](http://www.OPDIVOYERVOY.com) 1-855-OPDIVOYERVOY**

**Get medical help immediately if you develop any of these symptoms or they get worse. It may keep these problems from becoming more serious.** Your healthcare team will check you for side effects during treatment and may treat you with corticosteroid or hormone replacement medicines. If you have a serious side effect, your healthcare team may also need to delay or completely stop your treatment with OPDIVO and YERVOY.

**What should I tell my healthcare provider before receiving OPDIVO and YERVOY? Before you receive OPDIVO and YERVOY, tell your healthcare provider if you:** have immune system problems (autoimmune disease) such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, lupus, or sarcoidosis; have had an organ transplant; have lung or breathing problems; have liver problems; have any other medical conditions; are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. OPDIVO and YERVOY can harm your unborn baby. **Females who are able to become pregnant:** Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test before you start receiving OPDIVO and YERVOY.

- You should use an effective method of birth control during and for at least 5 months after the last dose. Talk to your healthcare provider about birth control methods that you can use during this time.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you become pregnant or think you are pregnant during treatment. You or your healthcare provider should contact Bristol Myers Squibb at 1-844-593-7869 as soon as you become aware of the pregnancy.
- **Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study:** Females who become pregnant during treatment with YERVOY are encouraged to enroll in a Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study. The purpose of this study is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. You or your healthcare provider can enroll in the Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study by calling 1-844-593-7869.

**If you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed:** It is not known if OPDIVO or YERVOY passes into your breast milk. **Do not** breastfeed during treatment and for 5 months after the last dose.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.**

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare providers and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

**What are the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY?**

**OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause serious side effects, including:**

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO and YERVOY?"**
- **Severe infusion-related reactions.** Tell your doctor or nurse right away if you get these symptoms during an infusion of OPDIVO or YERVOY: chills or shaking; itching or rash; flushing; difficulty breathing; dizziness; fever; feeling like passing out
- **Complications of stem cell transplant that uses donor cells (allogeneic).** **These complications, such as graft-versus-host disease, may be severe and can lead to death if you receive OPDIVO or YERVOY either before or after transplant. Your healthcare provider will monitor you for the following signs and symptoms: skin rash; liver inflammation; stomach-area (abdominal) pain; diarrhea**

**The most common side effects of OPDIVO when used in combination with YERVOY include:** feeling tired; diarrhea; rash; itching; nausea; pain in muscles, bones, and joints; fever; cough; decreased appetite; vomiting; stomach-area (abdominal) pain; shortness of breath; upper respiratory tract infection; headache; low thyroid hormone levels (hypothyroidism); decreased weight; dizziness.

These are not all the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

*OPDIVO (10 mg/mL) and YERVOY (5 mg/mL) are injections for intravenous (IV) use.*

This is a brief summary of the most important information about OPDIVO and YERVOY. For more information, talk with your healthcare providers, call 1-855-673-4861, or go to [www.OPDIVO.com](http://www.OPDIVO.com).



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## Editor's letter

Jodi Doering, an emergency room nurse at a South Dakota hospital, is a daily witness to just how sick our country has become. People severely ill with Covid-19 are flooding her hospital, suffering also from an extreme case of cognitive dissonance: They'd been told the pandemic was a concoction of the fake news media. "They tell you there must be another reason they are sick," an exhausted Doering recounted on Twitter this week. Even while gasping for breath, she says, the patients insist "they don't have Covid because it's not real." The delusional talk only stops when these patients get intubated or die. "It's like a f---ing horror movie that never ends," Doering says.

This horror movie is now playing in hospitals in large swathes of the U.S., most frequently in states where coronavirus denialism is rampant. The test positivity rate in South Dakota is a breathtaking 58 percent, yet Gov. Kristi Noem continues to refuse to

impose mask mandates or other restrictions. "My people are happy," she recently said. "They're happy because they're free." Struggling for breath in an ICU, or being zipped into a body bag, is a strange sort of freedom, but such is the surreal state of the nation's leadership in the *annus horribilis* of 2020. The president who insisted the coronavirus is "like a flu" and "will just disappear" is now promoting denial about the election results. One million people a week are being infected—at least partly because so many Americans have rejected scientists' pleas to wear masks and avoid indoor gatherings as an unbearable imposition on their freedom. So, the dreaded winter wave is upon us, and by Christmas, more than 2,000 Americans may be dying every day. The scientists may rescue us in the spring with vaccines (see Main Stories), but how many more people will perish or become debilitated by Covid before they arrive? Freedom without responsibility is manslaughter. **William Falk**  
Editor-in-chief

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# Crying fraud, Trump blocks a Biden transition

## What happened

President Trump continued to insist this week that he'd been cheated of victory in the presidential election, even as his campaign's lawsuits alleging voting improprieties were repeatedly dropped or rejected. His aides acknowledged privately that he had no chance of prevailing. "He knows it's over," said one. After North Carolina and Georgia were called, Joe Biden emerged with a decisive Electoral College win, with 306 votes to Trump's 232, and a popular vote lead of more than 5.5 million. But Trump's administration continued to freeze out Biden's transition team, and most Republican lawmakers joined Trump in refusing to acknowledge Biden's win. Georgia's Republican secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, told *The Washington Post* that Sen. Lindsey Graham had suggested he throw out *all* mail ballots in counties with high rates of mismatched signatures. On Tuesday, Trump fired the director of Homeland Security's cybersecurity arm, Chris Krebs, who'd issued a statement calling the election "the most secure in American history." Trump momentarily seemed to acknowledge his loss Sunday, tweeting that Biden "won because the Election was Rigged." But he quickly reversed himself, tweeting, "I concede NOTHING! We have a long way to go."

More than 15 lawsuits alleging voter fraud and other wrongdoing were dropped or dismissed by judges; election-law experts described them as insubstantial, laced with hearsay and such complaints as that Republican poll watchers *felt* uncomfortable. "This is just purely outlandish stuff," said attorney Barry Richard, who worked on George W. Bush's 2000 recount case. As court defeats mounted, Trump and his allies were pressuring Republican officials in close-fought states to ignore election results and appoint Trump electors—a radical step officials in several states said was off the table.

Biden named several key staff members, appointing Beltway veteran Ron Klain as his chief of staff and his campaign manager, Jen O'Malley Dillon, as deputy chief. He stepped up his criticism of Trump's intransigence, calling it "embarrassing for the country" and saying the administration risked American lives by refusing to work with his team to plan coronavirus vaccine distribution. "More people will die if we don't coordinate," he said.

## What the editorials said

"The results are clear," said *The New York Times*, so Republicans must stop "indulging Trump's tantrum." A presidential transition "is a monumental undertaking," and executing it successfully is vital to national security. By blocking the incoming team's access to classified information and agency officials, Trump is "creating a worrisome opportunity for America's foreign adversaries to exploit."



Trump at the White House: 'He knows it's over.'

"Where's the evidence" of election chicanery? asked *The Wall Street Journal*. Trump's "latest argument is that voting machines must have been rigged," and he and his allies are claiming the machines supplied by the company Dominion somehow "deleted" millions of his votes. Their conspiracy theory is that Dominion is connected to the Clintons, or Nancy Pelosi, or Venezuela, or China, but the evidence shows there are no such ties. For the good of the country, these unfounded rumors "should be put to rest."

## What the columnists said

Republicans are following Trump down a destructive path, said Dan Hannan in *WashingtonExaminer.com*. They "have every reason to be satisfied" with their gains on Nov. 3, having picked up House seats and defended vulnerable senators. But they are risking their advantage in the Georgia Senate runoffs with "petty and graceless" obstructionism. If Republicans make those elections a referendum on the Democrats' far-left extremism, the GOP will win. If it's "all about Trump," they may lose one or both seats.

Trump's would-be coup is "pathetic," said Jonathan Chait in *NYPMag.com*, but it is an attempted coup nonetheless—"a banana-republic maneuver" to invalidate a free and fair election. Whether you'll back an insurrection "is the easiest possible test" of your commitment to democracy. From Sen. Graham to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, many "prominent Republicans are failing it." Privately, they justify it as playacting to appease an overgrown toddler who can't accept losing, said Alex Pareene in *NewRepublic.com*. But millions of outraged Trump supporters think this cheesy show is real, and will always believe the election was stolen.

It's even more dangerous that some Trump allies are talking about the "thermonuclear" option, said Rich Lowry in *Politico.com*:

"Republican state legislatures taking matters into their own hands." Pressuring state lawmakers to override the voters' will by appointing Trump electors stands out "as radical and destructive even in a year when we've been debating court packing and defunding the police."

American democracy seems to have prevailed—"for now," said Perry Bacon Jr. in *FiveThirtyEight.com*. But even if Trump exits the White House on Jan. 20, we're witnessing "party-wide normalization of refusal to concede loss and transfer power." A very important line has been crossed. If just one or two states were in play, would the GOP fully back Trump's efforts to throw out votes and declare victory? "Next time a Trump-like figure emerges" we may find out—and the signs are deeply troubling.

## What next?

Trump can't stretch this out forever, said Andrew Prokop in *Vox.com*. "Actual deadlines are fast approaching" that promise to end his bid to overturn the election results. The states all have looming deadlines for certifying results over the next week, and the Electoral College casts its votes Dec. 14, at which point Biden's win becomes official. That will be an obvious cue for Trump's Republican allies "to make it clear that enough is enough." Trump will probably then bow to reality and give up the ghost, though "we won't know for sure until he actually does it." Inauguration Day promises one of the "iciest transitions of power in U.S. history," said Scott Martelle in the *Los Angeles Times*. It's hard to picture Trump "sitting quietly among the dignitaries as Biden places his hand on the Bible." More likely he'll follow Andrew Johnson's lead and skip it, retreating to Mar-a-Lago to "lob tweets from afar as the nation moves forward, finally, without him."

## Covid surge overwhelms hospitals across America...

### What happened

Covid-19 case counts and hospitalizations exploded across the country this week, as governors imposed new restrictions and the White House coronavirus task force warned of “aggressive, unrelenting, expanding broad community spread.” In Chicago, officials issued a stay-at-home advisory, and Philadelphia banned most private indoor gatherings. In Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer set off a firestorm by canceling all in-person learning at high schools and colleges for three weeks as well as shuttering casinos and movie theaters. Yet a new Reuters poll found that almost 40 percent of Americans intend to gather with 10 or more people for Thanksgiving, despite a national average of 156,000 new infections a day over the past week. The death toll hit more than 1,700 on a single day, and hospitalizations reached new highs at more than 73,000. “We are in a full-blown pandemic crisis,” said Robert Kenagy, CEO of the Stormont Vail Health hospital system in Topeka, Kan., where hallways and waiting rooms were being converted into ad hoc Covid-19 treatment areas.



El Paso, Texas, has turned to mobile morgues.

In South Dakota, the seven-day test positivity rate rose to 58 percent, while in New Mexico, according to federal officials, the rate of community spread was “threatening the health system.” At the Moore County Hospital District in North Texas, staff sought help from as far as 500 miles away in Kansas City because all other local hospitals were filled beyond capacity. Over a six-day stretch, six Covid-19 patients perished there while awaiting transport. “These are our neighbors, our family members,” said Jeff Turner, the hospital’s chief. “That makes it tough.”

### What the columnists said

“At the root of this third wave is public fatigue,” said **Jamie Downie** in *The Washington Post*. After nine months of living in strict social bubbles and seeing friends and family only behind masks, Americans are gravitating back to old habits and holding dinner parties, game nights, and sleepovers. In fact, contact tracers now report that these “small, private social gatherings,” rather than the earlier nursing home outbreaks and superspreader events, are fueling the pandemic’s latest surge.

Yes, the numbers are grim, said **Jacob Sullum** in *Reason.com*. But officials shouldn’t respond by placing “arbitrary legal restrictions” upon their citizens. In some places, schools are closing even though children, especially elementary school kids, have not been a major source of virus transmission. In others, like Chicago, officials are urging people to stay at home while keeping restaurants, movie theaters, and fitness clubs open. When “there’s little rhyme or reason to Covid-19 control measures,” people are unlikely to obey them.

Please “cancel Thanksgiving,” said **James Hamblin** in *TheAtlantic.com*. The prospect of tens of millions of Americans “congregating in multigenerational units indoors” while having lively, particle-spewing arguments over three-hour meals threatens to make our current “worst-case scenario” even worse. For the well-being of those you love and the country, eat at home just this one Thanksgiving and call or Zoom your friends and family. Next year, after we’ve been vaccinated, we will have twice as much to celebrate. “It will be like a Super Thanksgiving.”

## ...as new vaccine breakthroughs offer hope

### What happened

Two U.S. drug firms announced this week that their experimental Covid-19 vaccines appear to be roughly 95 percent effective in preventing sickness, fueling optimism that millions of Americans could receive shots by the end of this year. Pfizer and its German partner, BioNTech, delivered the first complete set of results from a late-stage vaccine trial, reporting that of the study’s nearly 44,000 participants, 170 became infected with Covid-19. Only eight of those cases were in volunteers who received the vaccine; the rest were in participants that got a placebo. Pfizer said it will apply to the FDA for emergency authorization “within days.” Biotech firm Moderna, meanwhile, said 95 people in its ongoing 30,000-person trial developed Covid-19 with symptoms; only five of those had received Moderna’s vaccine. That indicates an efficacy rate of 94.5 percent—far above the 50 percent needed for FDA approval.

Both companies’ vaccines use a technology that has never been approved before. In traditional vaccines, a patient is injected with dead viral material, which triggers the body to produce specialized antibodies. The experimental vaccines use a synthetic version of coronavirus genetic material that leads human cells to produce copies of the virus’ outer spike proteins. Those proteins spark the immune system to mount a defense. If Pfizer’s vaccine is approved, federal officials hope to immunize 20 million high-risk Americans in December. “The light at the end of the tunnel is getting a little brighter,” said infectious-disease expert Dr. William Schaffner.

### What the columnists said

“These vaccines could change the game,” said **David Axe** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. It’s encouraging that Pfizer’s shot seems to work well on older people, who sometimes don’t respond to vaccines. And the side effects, so far, appear to be minimal—at worst a headache or temporary fatigue. Still, distribution “will take a huge, coordinated effort.” Pfizer and Moderna’s vaccines require two doses, about three weeks apart. And Pfizer’s has to be kept at minus 94 Fahrenheit, so clinics will have to buy industrial freezers.

Vaccine rollout is “one of the most monumental tasks” facing President-elect Joe Biden, said **Greg Sargent** in *WashingtonPost.com*. The federal government is buying 100 million doses of Moderna’s vaccine and the same amount of Pfizer’s. But no distribution plan has been released, and Biden’s team is being “kept in the dark” by the Trump administration. Dr. Moncef Slaoui, head of President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed project, said he wants to brief the incoming administration, calling the vaccine’s timely distribution “a matter of life and death for thousands of people.”

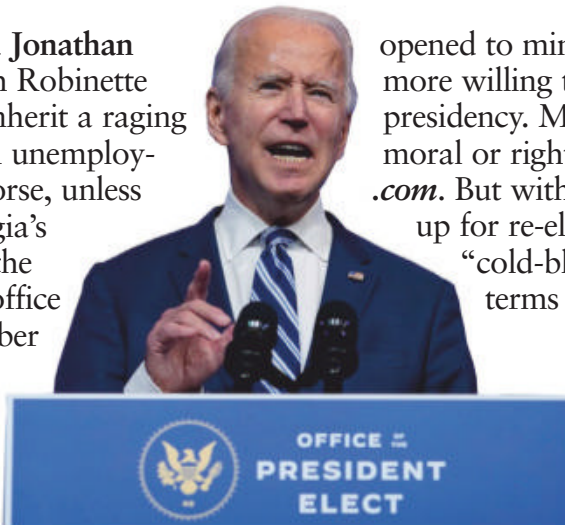
This medical triumph is “stunning,” said **Daniel Tenreiro** in *NationalReview.com*. It typically takes eight years to develop a vaccine. But in only eight months, and using entirely new technology, Pfizer and Moderna have created vaccines that appear to be far more effective than the annual flu shot and about as good as the measles vaccine. Thanks to this historic breakthrough, there’s a chance we’ll be able to “suppress Covid-19 by mid-2021.”



## President Biden: What can he accomplish?

“Now comes the unimaginably hard part,” said **Jonathan Allen** in *NBCNews.com*. When President Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. is sworn in on Jan. 20, 2021, he will inherit a raging pandemic, a badly damaged economy with high unemployment, and “an angry and polarized nation.” Worse, unless Democrats can pull off two upset wins in Georgia’s Senate runoffs, Biden will tackle these crises as the first president since George H.W. Bush to take office without his party controlling Congress. Remember the “political dysfunction and economically painful austerity” of Obama’s last six years in office? said **Jordan Weissmann** in *Slate.com*. “Now imagine a repeat of all that, but with more death.” If he remains the majority leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell will try to thwart the entirety of the Democratic president’s agenda, starting with tax increases on the wealthy and corporations. With the norms of government shattered in the Trump era, McConnell may decide to block Biden’s judicial nominees *and* some of his Cabinet appointments if he deems them too liberal. Even a miracle in Georgia won’t save the “more progressive planks” of Biden’s agenda, which would need the votes of red- and purple-state Democrats in a 50-50 Senate. Without such a miracle, it’s safe to say that his entire presidency “will be crippled before it begins.”

Biden must also contend with the new 6-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court, said **Fred Kaplan**, also in *Slate.com*. The court is likely to be hostile to legislation addressing gun violence, climate change, voting rights, and other critical issues on the progressive agenda. Nonetheless, Biden can still “get an awful lot done.” With a stroke of his pen Biden can undo many of Trump’s 176 executive orders—scrapping the Muslim travel ban, reinstating DACA, ending wall construction, restoring protections to federal lands Trump



McConnell will be a formidable obstacle.

opened to mining and drilling—and he may find McConnell more willing to make deals than he was during the Obama presidency. McConnell won’t work with Biden because “it’s moral or right or patriotic,” said **Brent Budowsky** in *TheHill.com*. But with voters desperate for help, and 20 GOP senators up for re-election in 2022, McConnell may decide it’s in his “cold-blooded political interest” not to fight those mid-terms as the “Do-Nothing Republican Senate.”

Biden can be most effective where it matters most, said **David Leonhardt** in *The New York Times*: climate change. He can, on day one, rejoin the Paris climate accord—an important statement of U.S. commitment—and his team is already exploring ways “to reduce carbon emissions through regulation rather than legislation.” It has not escaped voters’ notice that vast sections of the fire-charred West are hotter and drier than ever, and that an endless parade of hurricanes and storms pounded the Gulf Coast this year. If only one or two Republican senators acknowledge these “terrifying” realities, Biden would have a majority for meaningful action.

It’ll actually be “a blessing” for Biden if he has a divided government, said **Bobby Jindal** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Why? Because a McConnell-led GOP Senate would “give him someone to blame” for not pursuing court packing, Medicare for All, large tax increases, or any other far-left scheme that would surely earn Biden a brutal midterm backlash. McConnell may thwart Biden’s more ambitious plans, said **John Podhoretz** in *CommentaryMagazine.com*, but he can’t keep Biden from fulfilling the core promise he made to voters: that he would not be Donald Trump. If President Biden wants to be remembered as a “resounding success,” all he has to do is “sit in the Oval Office not being crazy.”

### Only in America

- Inmates at a Texas prison are being used to help stack the corpses of Covid-19 victims. El Paso County has an estimated 34,000 active cases and has set up 10 mobile morgues to store the overflow of dead. A Sheriff’s Office spokeswoman said that inmates were being paid the standard prison wage of \$2 a day to move bodies, but stressed that the work is “100 percent voluntary.”

- Republicans in the Minnesota state senate kept a Covid-19 outbreak secret from their Democratic colleagues. In an internal memo leaked to the media, a GOP official revealed that “a number” of Republican staff and senators had tested positive, and advised all to work from home. Senate Democrats called the GOP’s secrecy “a blatant disregard for the health and safety of others.”

### Good week for:

**Second chances**, after a hiker whose heart stopped for 45 minutes after being rescued from a blizzard on Washington’s Mount Rainier was brought back to life by doctors. “I’m still just shocked and amazed,” said Michael Knapinski, 45.

**Trump campaign staff**, with the merciful shuttering of the campaign’s ill-fated Voter Fraud Hotline. The hotline was inundated by prank calls, including many consisting of loud farting noises. “It’s misery,” said one staffer of working in “the room from hell.”

**Sibling rivalry**, after an 18-year-old Taiwanese man emerged from a coma after 62 days when his older brother threatened that if he didn’t wake up “I’m going to eat your favorite chicken fillet.”

### Bad week for:

**Massive fraud!**, after officials overseeing New Zealand’s Bird of the Year vote discovered that 1,500 votes had been cast for Little Spotted Kiwi from a single IP address. Once the suspicious votes were discounted, the fat, flightless Kakapo emerged victorious.

**Ernest McKnight**, of Florida, who told officers arresting him after an alleged spree of car theft and burglary that he had brought his 8-year-old son along “to toughen him up.” Local Sheriff Grady Judd responded that “taking a child out with you while you commit felonies is not the proper way to create a positive influence.”

**Tucker Carlson**, after the Fox News host cited as proof of election fraud that James Blalock of Georgia had voted even though he’s dead. Agnes Blalock, 96, came forth to say she voted under her married name, “Mrs. James Blalock.” Carlson apologized, but insisted that “a whole bunch of dead people did vote.”

### Acosta’s Epstein deal was ‘poor judgment’

A Justice Department watchdog gave Alexander Acosta, former labor secretary under President Trump, a slap on the wrist for using “poor judgment” in a non-prosecution deal with deceased former hedge-fund manager Jeffrey Epstein that Acosta approved while serving as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. Under the 2008 deal, Epstein escaped federal prosecution for sexually abusing dozens of underage girls in return for pleading guilty to state charges. He served only 13 months in jail. The Office of Professional Responsibility said there was no evidence that the plea deal “was based on corruption or other impermissible considerations.” Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) said Epstein’s light sentence was not merely poor judgment but a “disgusting failure,” and vowed to keep investigating.



Pushing to strike Iran

**Washington, D.C.**  
**Holding fire:** President Trump's top deputies labored to dissuade him from preemptively attacking Iran's

main nuclear facility last week during an extraordinary Oval Office meeting that came one day after international inspectors revealed that Iran had created enough low-enriched uranium to build two weapons. *The New York Times* reported that Trump asked for options for attacking the Natanz nuclear site during the final weeks of his administration. The request was reportedly met by opposition from newly installed acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller as well as from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Vice President Mike Pence, and Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Despite the International Atomic Energy Agency report, Iran is still said to be several months from building a weapon and has less low-enriched uranium (5,385 pounds) than the roughly 25,000 pounds it turned over after signing a multilateral nuclear accord in 2015.



Children betrayed

**Irving, Tex.**  
**Immense suffering:** Court officials overseeing the Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy case revealed this week that

they have received almost 93,000 sexual abuse claims from former scouts and survivors of the organization. Taken together, the mountain of accusations speaks to decades of alleged abuse that victims say occurred in all 50 states and as far away as military bases in Germany and Japan. One coalition of lawyers said the victims it's representing range in age from 8 to 93. "If you step back and realize the scope of the human carnage, it's stunning," said Michael Pfau, a Seattle-area lawyer who is representing hundreds of alleged victims. The Irving-based BSA, which filed for bankruptcy in February as the number of cases nationally swelled, has said it has assets exceeding \$1 billion in value that can be divided among vetted accusers. In a statement, it called the number of claims "gut-wrenching" and apologized.

**Washington, D.C.**  
**Not looking back:** President-elect Joe Biden has reportedly told top aides that he doesn't wish to spend his limited political capital investigating President Trump or members of his administration, but instead "just wants to move on" in attempting to unite the country. NBC News cited five people close to the president-elect in reporting that Biden specifically intends to resist calls from within the Democratic Party to pursue investigations into the president's taxes or any presidential pardons he may issue in the waning days of his presidency. The guidance would not affect local cases percolating against the president—two of which involve officials in New York state. One adviser said Biden intends to be more focused on "fixing the problems and moving forward than prosecuting them," while another said that any Trump-related investigations would be "very situational and depending on the merits."



**Cape Canaveral, Fla.**  
**Private flight:** SpaceX ushered in a new age of manned commercial space travel this week with the launch of four astronauts to the International Space Station. Three NASA astronauts and a Japanese astronaut blasted off aboard the Crew Dragon capsule *Resilience* and then traveled 27.5 hours at speeds exceeding 17,000 mph. The reusable nine-engine Falcon 9 rocket successfully landed on a dock in the Atlantic Ocean following the flight. The private company plans seven such flights over the next 15 months—some to carry astronauts and others to ferry cargo. Its founder, Elon Musk, was not present for liftoff but was isolating after an illness he tweeted was "most likely" a mild case of Covid-19. The crew included Victor Glover, who is the first black astronaut to serve as a member of the station's crew. After reaching orbit, his flight leader, Cmdr. Mike Hopkins, had a message for those listening back on Earth: "That was one heck of a ride."



Big Moose Inn, site of infection

**Millinocket, Maine**  
**Deadly celebration:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released an alarming report ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday showing how a wedding in Maine turned into a superspreader event that infected 177 people with Covid-19 and killed seven who hadn't even attended. Prior to the Aug. 7 wedding at the Big Moose Inn in Millinocket, the town of about 4,500 hadn't recorded a single case. The wedding couple came from California. Fifty-five people attended. Fever tests were administered, but maskless guests sat at roughly 10 tables of four to six apiece. One attendee showed symptoms the next day. Soon, 27 guests had been infected, as well as one staff member, a vendor, and a person unrelated to the party. One visited a parent who worked at a long-term care facility where 38 later fell sick and six died. Another worked at a prison where 82 got sick. In its report, the CDC warned that "large indoor gatherings pose a high risk."

**Washington, D.C.**  
**MAGA mayhem:** A rally of President Trump supporters ended in violent clashes between marchers and counter-protesters as the group arrived at Black Lives Matter Plaza, across from the White House. At least 20 people were arrested and two officers injured as videos posted to social media showed the groups trading punches, brandishing clubs, and hurling projectiles. One counterprotester was stabbed. The rally to protest the election results was billed as a "Million MAGA March" but ended up attracting only a few thousand supporters. Members of the far-right Proud Boys group and Oath Keepers militia marched; some chanted "Fox News sucks," berating the network for accepting President-elect Joe Biden's election win. Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and recently elected House member Marjorie Taylor Greene addressed the crowd, and merchants sold everything from rhinestone-studded Trump jackets to Trump masks and socks. The president himself rode by on his way to a Virginia golf club and waved to supporters from his motorcade.



Rallying to support Trump

**Paris**

**Anger at U.S. media:** French President Emmanuel Macron has accused the American and British media of “legitimizing” jihadist terrorist attacks against the French. Macron phoned up Ben Smith, a *New York Times* columnist, to complain about coverage of his policies to combat radical Islamism, which have included the closure of some

*Macron: Bad press*

mosques. That led to an op-ed in the *Times* headlined “Is France Fueling Muslim Terrorism by Trying to Prevent It?” and other similarly critical pieces. Macron said that English-speaking reporters portrayed his program as antireligious because they do not understand the French founding principal of secularism. “In our society, I don’t care whether someone [is] Catholic or Muslim,” he said, “a person is first and foremost a citizen.”

**Bilwi, Nicaragua**

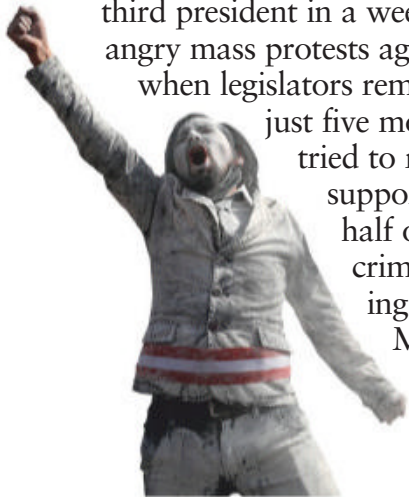
**Epic hurricane:** The most powerful hurricane ever to hit Nicaragua has killed at least six people, two of them children swept away by a raging river, and has left tens of thousands more homeless. Hurricane Iota hit as a Category 4 storm this week, making landfall mere miles from where Hurricane Eta—also a Category 4—struck Nicaragua earlier this month and left scores dead. Iota’s 155 mph winds ripped off roofs and uprooted trees. “The kids were screaming with fear. It was horrible,” said Fatima Thomas Pérez, a resident of the Caribbean town of Bilwi. “The ground shook just like an earthquake.” In neighboring Honduras, thousands of people have evacuated to shelters as rivers continue to rise and mudslides threaten villages.



*After the storm*

**Lima**

**Political chaos:** Peruvian lawmakers have appointed the country’s third president in a week, in a desperate bid to calm increasingly angry mass protests against Congress. The turmoil began last week when legislators removed the popular President Martín Vizcarra just five months before new elections. Vizcarra had tried to root out corruption, which earned him the support of the people but the enmity of Congress, half of whose members are under investigation for crimes that include bribery and money laundering. Lawmakers named the head of Congress, Manuel Merino, as president, but Peruvians protested so fiercely that Merino resigned after six days. Now Congress has given the job to Francisco Sagasti, 76, one of the few members who had opposed Vizcarra’s removal.



*Anger on the streets*

**La Paz, Bolivia**

**Another deadly virus:** Scientists have confirmed that an Ebola-like virus in Bolivia can spread from person to person. CDC researchers said this week that three health-care workers contracted the Chapare virus through bodily fluids while treating two infected patients in La Paz in 2019. One patient and two of the health-care workers died. The virus, carried by a local species of rat, causes fever, vomiting, and bleeding and is often confused with dengue fever. The revelation that the Bolivian outbreak was Chapare virus was presented this week at a meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. The society’s president, Daniel Bausch, stressed that Chapare virus was very difficult to transmit as well as very rare. “This is not the sort of virus that we need to worry is going to start the next pandemic,” he said.

**Antwerp, Belgium**

**Pricey bird:** An anonymous Chinese bidder has paid a record \$1.9 million for a racing pigeon. The bidder, who goes by the pseudonym Super Duper, bought the female New Kim to breed with Armando, a male bought for a then-record \$1.4 million from a different breeder last year. Pigeon racing has exploded in popularity in China, with race prizes in the seven figures. Birds from Belgium are considered the thoroughbreds of the sport, because breeders there have spent generations perfecting their flocks. “To be the best, it has to be your life’s work,” said Pascal Bodengien, head of the Belgian pigeon federation. “Day in, day out. Winter and summer, always those pigeons.”



*New Kim*

**Rio de Janeiro**

**Fake Bolsonaros lose:** Brazilians have rejected most of the candidates endorsed by President Jair Bolsonaro in this week’s municipal elections. The far-right Bolsonaro doesn’t have a political party, but of the nearly 60 candidates he endorsed as mayors and city councillors, only nine won office. And not one of the 70 candidates who added “Bolsonaro” to their ballot name in an effort to signal support for the president got elected. Bolsonaro’s son, Carlos, did win re-election as a city councillor in Rio de Janeiro, but with far fewer votes than he got four years ago, while Bolsonaro’s cousin Marcos and ex-wife, Rogéria, lost their bids. In São Paulo, Bolsonaro’s mayoral candidate didn’t even make it to a runoff. “We have beaten Bolsonaro,” said leftist candidate Guilherme Boulos, “we have beaten his project of hatred.”



*The real Bolsonaro*



### Chisinau, Moldova

**Defying Moscow:** Maia Sandu, a Harvard-educated economist who supports closer ties with the European Union, was elected president of Moldova this week, defeating an incumbent endorsed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Sandu will be the first woman to lead the tiny, impoverished former Soviet republic; a former prime minister, she has a strong record as an anti-corruption crusader. “Moldovans need a state that does not steal, but protects its citizens,” Sandu said. She plans to negotiate with Putin to secure the withdrawal of the Russian peacekeepers that have been deployed in the predominantly Russian-speaking Trans-Dniester region since 1992. Sandu has said that she wants warm relations with Russia, where many Moldovans work as migrant laborers.

*Sandu: Winner*



### Guerguerat, Western Sahara

**Back to war:** The independence movement in Western Sahara declared war on Morocco this week, ending a 29-year cease-fire. A former Spanish colony, Western Sahara was annexed by Morocco in 1975, sparking a rebellion by the pro-independence Polisario Front that ended in a U.N.-brokered truce in 1991. Polisario today controls about a quarter of the disputed territory, which it calls the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The declaration of war came after Morocco launched a military offensive to reopen a road to Mauritania in a Sahrawi buffer zone, which it said Polisario was blocking. “If the international community fails to prevent Morocco from continuing its aggressions, the Sahrawi people will take action,” said Mohamed Omar, a Polisario spokesman.



*Attacked by Morocco*

AP Reuters, CTC, Reuters

### Moscow

**Covid-19 ravages hospitals:** Russia’s coronavirus outbreak is much worse than the government has admitted. Cellphone footage passed to CNN by a Russian doctors’ union shows patients gasping for air in hospital hallways and dead bodies piled on top of each other in morgues. In Moscow, a large skating rink known as the Ice Palace has been repurposed as a field hospital, with 1,300 beds equipped with oxygen tanks. Russia says that some 33,000 people have died of Covid-19 this year, but Alexey Raksha, a former government statistician who quit after alleging a cover-up of the crisis, says the true figure is likely about 130,000.



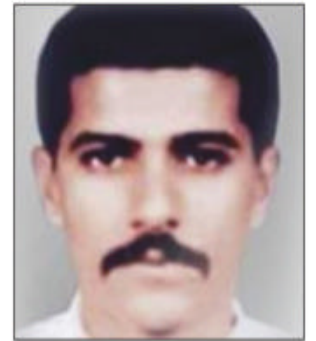
*Inside the Ice Palace*

### Beijing

**Massive trade pact:** China and 14 other Asia-Pacific countries have signed the world’s largest trade deal, an agreement that covers a market of 2.2 billion people. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) includes Japan, South Korea, Australia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It excludes India, the world’s largest democracy, and the U.S., the largest economy. An earlier trade pact negotiated by the Obama administration, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, would have united most of those countries while excluding China, but President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of that deal. President-elect Joe Biden has not said whether he believes the U.S. should join the RCEP, but did say that America should align itself with other democracies so that they, not China, write the rules governing global trade.

### Tehran

**Al Qaida boss killed:** The U.S. and Israel worked together to kill a top al Qaida operative on the streets of Tehran earlier this year, U.S. officials revealed last week. On Aug. 7, Israeli operatives zoomed up on motorcycles and shot Abu Muhammad al-Masri, the terrorist group’s No. 2, and his daughter, Miriam, the widow of Osama bin Laden’s son Hamza. The assassinations took place on the anniversary of the 1998 truck bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which al-Masri is believed to have planned. U.S. officials have long suspected that Iran, though a majority Shiite Muslim nation, has been sheltering members of al Qaida, a Sunni terrorist group. The revelation that al-Masri was in Iran could help Israel bolster its case with the incoming Biden administration that any resumption of the Iran nuclear deal include commitments by Iran to end its sponsorship of terrorism.



*Al-Masri: Dead*

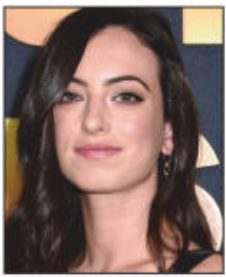
### Tigray, Ethiopia

**Humanitarian crisis:** Some 30,000 Ethiopians have fled across the border to Sudan, seeking refuge from a government onslaught on the rebellious region of Tigray. Hundreds of thousands more are displaced within Tigray, where they are running out of food. A locust outbreak, one of the worst in decades, has already destroyed much of the region’s crops. The conflict, which has killed hundreds, began in early November, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the Tigrayan local government had attacked a military base. Abiy had postponed national and local elections because of the coronavirus, but Tigray held its vote in September anyway; now each side sees the other as illegitimate.



*Tigrayans flee to Sudan.*

## David's crushing breakup



Cazzie David is even more neurotic than her famous father, comedian Larry David, said Amy Kaufman in the *Los Angeles Times*. Cazzie, a 26-year-old essayist and screenwriter, is very afraid of singing, falling in the shower, vomiting, being alone, and leaving the house. "Anxiety has become such a trend, and it deeply annoys me," she says. "There's a difference between

having stress and having an anxiety disorder, feeling like the rug is gonna be pulled out from under you at any second." She met her match in Pete Davidson, the *Saturday Night Live* comedian and actor who is also open about mental health struggles. After dating for three years, they broke up in 2018, and a day later Davidson revealed on Instagram he was dating one of the world's biggest pop stars, Ariana Grande. David says she was obsessed with thoughts of Davidson and Grande "immediately falling in love, accompanied by audio of her baby voice whispering sweet nothings in his ear." She wept uncontrollably for days and woke up one morning "screaming in agony." Her father pleaded with her in vain: "Cazzie, come on. Your ancestors survived the Holocaust!" David has written a very candid essay about the breakup, even though it still makes her anxious to discuss. "There's nothing that's gonna be worse than what I already experienced," she says.

## Benson's debt to Sinatra

George Benson owes his career to some of the greatest names in music, said Shannon Effinger in *The New York Times*. The legendary jazz guitarist got his start playing ukulele in his native Pittsburgh, then a major destination for jazz acts. When a pioneer of the genre, Eddie Jefferson, came to town, he found a 7-year-old Benson singing on a street corner and encouraged the youngster to embrace his voice. When Benson was 17, the guitarist Wes Montgomery came to Pittsburgh, and Benson asked for advice on how to play without a pick. Montgomery turned him down. "I'm still trying to learn how to play myself," Montgomery told him. "That really got to me," says Benson, 77. "He's the greatest guitar player in the world and he's trying to learn how to play?" Benson's biggest success came in 1976 with *Breezin*, an album that won multiple Grammys even though critics sniped at Benson's transition to smooth jazz. "I never made a big to-do" out of the backlash, he says. "I once did a recording with Frank Sinatra. He said, 'Mr. Benson, your guitar playing, we love that, but I love your voice too.' When he said that, I dismissed all those bad reviews talking about my voice. Sinatra loved my voice. That's it!"



## How Loren sees herself

Sophia Loren was always puzzled by all the fuss about her looks, said Celia Walden in *The Daily Telegraph* (U.K.). "I never looked in the mirror and thought, 'You are so beautiful,'" says Loren, 86, who's returned to acting after a decade-long hiatus. "I was never happy about how I looked." Growing up hungry in a poor Naples suburb during World War II and its aftermath, Loren was so skinny she was nicknamed "the toothpick." But when she was 16, her future husband, film producer Carlo Ponti, discovered her at an Italian beauty pageant. In her 20s, her voluptuous beauty and stoicism on screen made her an instant star of American blockbusters and Italian art house films; she won the 1962 Best Actress Academy Award. Some Hollywood producers thought Loren was "too much," she says, because of her outsize sex appeal. "If they had tried to change me," she says, "I just would have said, 'Bye-bye.'" Loren has spent the pandemic in Geneva, riding an exercise bike in her bathroom every day. Unfortunately, her famous quote—"Everything you see, I owe to spaghetti"—is apocryphal, she says. "If you eat a lot of spaghetti, you get fat! I eat in a moderate way, because I always try to stay fit and pretty."

## In the news



■ **Barack Obama** feared that his marriage to **Michelle** would never recover from eight stressful years in the White House, the former president writes in his memoir published this week. In *A Promised Land*, Obama writes that

Michelle objected to his 2008 presidential bid just two years after he was elected to the U.S. Senate, telling him, "God, Barack, when is it going to be enough?" They attended couples therapy, and she relented.

But during his presidency, "I continued to sense an undercurrent of tension in her," Obama writes, explaining that Michelle resented his absorption with work and "the tendency of even friends and family members to treat her role as secondary." Obama says he'd lie in bed and "think about those days when everything between us felt lighter, when her smile was more constant and our love less encumbered," adding, "my heart would suddenly tighten at the thought that those days might not return."

■ President Trump's daughter **Ivanka** and her husband, **Jared Kushner**, removed their three young children from a Jewish day school after other parents complained that they were flouting Covid-19 safety guidelines, CNN reported last week. The kids—ages 9, 7, and 4—transferred to a different

Jewish private school in nearby Rockville, Md., on Oct. 19. CNN reports that parents objected to the couple refusing to wear masks or practice social distancing at White House events, which have led to many infections. "There was no secret about their behaviors, because everyone could see them," one parent said.

■ **Britney Spears** said she will refuse to perform after a Los Angeles judge rejected her bid last week to remove her father, **James**, as conservator of her estate. James Spears has overseen his pop star daughter's estate since her public mental breakdown in 2007, and he told a judge that Spears, once in debt, is now worth \$60 million. "She is afraid of her father," Spears' attorney countered. "She will not perform again if her father is in charge of her career."

# Biden's challenges abroad

*President Trump pulled the U.S. back from global leadership. Can Joe Biden restore it?*

## What is Biden facing?

Trump's "America First" foreign policy was a radical departure from the multilateral approach of the Obama administration, and it has transformed the international landscape. The U.S. pulled out of the Paris climate accord, the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, the World Health Organization, and the U.N. human rights commission, and it unilaterally withdrew from the multiparty Iran nuclear deal and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty with Russia. After four years of being berated by Trump, European allies no longer feel they can depend on the U.S. or its commitment to NATO—although they have, at Trump's insistence, begun to spend more on defense. The U.S.-China relationship is at its most tense in decades. Both North Korea and Iran are further along in their nuclear programs than they were when Trump took office, with a jubilant Kim Jong Un recently showing off a new ICBM that can reach every city in the U.S.

## What will he take on first?

Biden, who has decades of foreign policy experience as vice president and as chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, wants to reassert American leadership on the biggest crises facing the globe. Most pressing is the coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. will rejoin the World Health Organization and seek to coordinate an international plan to distribute vaccines. Climate change is the other major challenge. Once back in the Paris climate accord, Biden wants to lead global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with a \$2 trillion clean energy and infrastructure plan. In his very first week in office, Biden plans to save the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty, New START, which expires in February. While Trump wanted to alter the pact, Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to extend it without changes for five years; Biden will likely agree. But Biden will resume robust support for Ukraine, which is still battling Russia, and it's possible he'll further sanction Moscow for its attempts to interfere in U.S. elections.

## What about U.S. allies?

Repairing damaged U.S. alliances is central to Biden's plans—but many allies are wary. Some Europeans, such as French President Emmanuel Macron, say that America's retreat from international leadership began not with Trump, but under the Obama administration, when the U.S. failed to act against Syria's use of chemical weapons. Even if Biden is wholeheartedly committed to the defense of traditional allies, they are keenly aware the American people could well vote for another isolationist in four years. Europeans can "no longer take for granted that they can trust the U.S., even on basic things," says former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland. Europe itself has changed: Brexit means that the



*Then-Vice President Biden with Xi Jinping in 2011*

U.K., our closest ally, no longer has a voice in the EU, and London is desperate for a favorable trade deal with the U.S. that it may not get.

Yemen, which has killed thousands of civilians, and punish the Saudis for human rights abuses such as the murder of journalist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi. The Israeli relationship will also change. Biden has always been a staunch supporter of Israel, but he doesn't see Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line policies as beneficial for Israeli or U.S. interests. He will keep the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, but will oppose continued Israeli settlement building in Palestinian territories and restore U.S. aid to the Palestinians.

## What about nuclear proliferation?

Biden wants to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear pact, but Tehran has increased its stock of low-enriched uranium over the past four years and would have to agree to give up the progress it has made toward a nuclear weapon. Further attempts to negotiate with North Korea are unlikely; Biden's plan there is to re-engage with South Korea, abandoning Trump's demand for \$5 billion to house U.S. troops. But to rein in Pyongyang, he must get the cooperation of its biggest backer, China.

## How will he do that?

Like Trump, Biden wants to prevent China from establishing military hegemony in the strategic South China Sea and halt Chinese stealing of U.S. intellectual property. But Trump's approach, a trade war, hurt the U.S. economy without denting Chinese resolve. Biden is expected to halt the tariff war and instead focus on working with Beijing—along with regional allies Japan, South Korea, and Australia—on areas of common interest. But he also says he will hold Beijing accountable for its atrocious human rights abuses in Xinjiang and its reversal of democratic freedoms in Hong Kong. Balancing those competing interests will be extremely difficult. "History cannot be erased," said French diplomat Jean-Marie Guehenno, a former U.N. undersecretary-general. "The kind of soft power that the United States has enjoyed in the past has largely evaporated."

## 'Forever wars' in Afghanistan and Iraq

"It's long past time we end the forever wars," Biden said in his foreign policy address during the campaign. "We should bring the vast majority of our troops home from the wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East and narrowly define our mission as defeating al Qaeda and the Islamic State." But both Iraqis and Afghans are worried about the aftermath of troop withdrawals. After the Obama administration drawdown in Iraq, Iran asserted more influence there and the Islamic State overran large parts of the country. "We do not want Obama's policies to return to our country again," said Iraqi lawmaker Dhafer al-Ani. In Afghanistan, a Biden administration is likely to continue Trump's planned withdrawals but make them contingent on the Taliban keeping their promises to stop attacks on Afghan forces—which so far they have not done. True peace is likely to continue to be elusive.

## A wake-up call for progressives

**Bret Stephens**  
*The New York Times*

The new Left's morally superior "certitudes" have left progressives blind to "the world as it is," said Bret Stephens. The same blinkered "group-think" that has led the woke to purge independent-minded writers like Andrew Sullivan from their publications, and to see all individuals as defined by their racial, sexual, and gender identities, produced an unpleasant shock in the results of the 2020 election. President Trump came "within about 80,000 votes of another Electoral College victory"; somehow, the man progressives denounced as the most racist and misogynist president in recent history again won a majority of white women's votes and improved his vote share among Hispanics and black men. Progressives could not imagine that some voters would see Trump as "the reprehensible man he is" but vote for him anyway, because they liked his economic policies and feared leftist rhetoric about defunding the police, decriminalizing border crossings, and shutting down fossil fuels. The jeering dismissal of Trump supporters as bigoted and stupid white people only served to fuel the resentment of millions of Americans, who denied Democrats the blue wave they expected. Progressives aren't very big on "self-doubt," but they've been given a reminder of its usefulness.

## A president who isn't a messiah

**Steve Chapman**  
*Chicago Tribune*

Our last two presidents both inspired "a cult of personality," said Steve Chapman. Barack Obama's oratorical gifts and his breakthrough as the first black president led admirers to believe he could "inspire us to new heights" and "end our racial divisions." Obama described his own election as "the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal." Eight years later, Donald Trump was elected after describing the nation as so broken that "I alone can fix it." Evangelicals decreed he was chosen by God, and Trump's fervent admirers are still so entranced they've poured into rallies "where they stood a good chance of contracting the coronavirus." Previously, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan also were "practically canonized" by their supporters. Contrast the excitement and veneration these presidents generated with the modest expectations surrounding the boring, charisma-free Joe Biden. Americans voted for him "because he was a serviceable replacement for the incompetent, incorrigible incumbent." He promises only experience, competence, and decency, and his "affable personality" may "cool passions" and soothe resentments. "The bad news is that Biden will not be a savior. The good news is that he doesn't pretend to be."

## Ending abuses of presidential power

**Rohit Aggarwala**  
*Bloomberg.com*

America needs a constitutional amendment to "prevent another Trump," said Rohit Aggarwala. Over the past four years, the president has run roughshod over "behavioral norms" that we once took for granted. He refused to reveal his tax returns; wielded the power of the Justice Department as a weapon to protect allies and threaten enemies; fired inspectors general; and maintained control of his personal business empire despite promising to turn over "complete and total control" to his sons. He's even threatened to issue blanket pardons for himself and his family. The 28th Amendment should require presidents to release their tax returns; forbid them from running businesses that receive payments from foreigners; and prohibit them from pardoning themselves, their families, or campaign officials. There is precedent for amending the Constitution to rein in the chief executive. In 1951, three-quarters of state legislatures signed on to what would become the 22nd Amendment after former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt "broke a tradition set by George Washington by seeking a third and fourth term." Plenty of Republicans were uneasy with Trump's abuses and may welcome reform. If they balk, Democrats could turn their resistance into a "powerful weapon" in 2022.

### Viewpoint

"In this dangerous post-election moment, hate is hanging in the air. It's so thick you can cut it with a knife and eat it with a fork. I'm afraid many of us are finding it a little too tasty. We must spit it out before it's too late. Because once swallowed, hate can only nourish our capacity for more hate—and the violence to which unleashed hatred can easily lead. The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was right when he famously wrote: 'He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster.'"

*Tom Krattenmaker, quoted in USA Today*

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

■ A woman allegedly impersonated an FBI agent and demanded that the staff at a Georgia Chick-fil-A give her a free meal or she would have them locked up. Police said Kimberly Ragsdale, 47, maintained the farce even after cops arrived, speaking into her shirt as if she were wearing a wire and communicating with nearby federal officers. "Send someone to Rockmart PD," she allegedly said. "You will not hear a real officer demand a meal anywhere," said Chief Randy Turner, adding that discounts, of course, are appreciated.

■ A fed-up Massachusetts motorist has successfully shamed authorities in his town into filling potholes by putting small Christmas trees inside them.



Kevin Martin said he'd had enough when he blew all four of his car's tires while driving over a notoriously pocked stretch of roadway. After he fixed his tires, he drove to Home Depot, bought several small Christmas trees with little red ribbons tied to their tops, and planted the trees in the potholes. "I needed to make sure that it got fixed one way or another," he said. Days later, the potholes were filled and the trees removed.

■ Corona Newton has long been subjected to beer-based jokes about her unusual name—but the 49-year-old Briton says things have gotten out of hand during the pandemic. She has been plagued by prank callers ("Is this the virus?") and rude remarks. "People have said to me, 'As if I'm going to listen to somebody named after a virus.'" But the civil servant, who acquired her name because her parents were torn between Catherine and Sarah, is philosophical about her moniker. "At least no one will ever forget me," she said.

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## UNITED KINGDOM

## U.S. imports will devastate our farmers

Jay Rayner  
*The Guardian*

American chlorine-washed chicken is one of the big sticking points in a potential U.S.-U.K. trade deal, said Jay Rayner. But why? It's not as if the rinse makes the food unsafe to eat. The problem is the reason why American agribusiness needs to bleach the meat in the first place: "To deal with pathogens as a result of terrible U.S. animal-welfare standards." American-style factory farming, which packs chickens and pigs and other animals into tiny, crowded spaces with no room to turn around as they fatten, leaves livestock sick and covered in feces. But it is much cheaper than humane British farming. If we allow a trade agree-

ment to accept such products, "British farming will be forced into a cost-cutting war, which will undermine its standards." Such a race to the bottom would drive our own farms out of business, leaving us dependent on the U.S. for food. The U.K. government claims it won't allow chlorinated chicken into the country, but given three chances to enshrine that claim in law, it declined them all. Some argue that we should simply put tariffs on American chicken to level the playing field, but we all know that once those products are allowed in, "the haggling will begin, and inevitably, over time, the tariffs will come down."

## GERMANY

## No free money for authoritarians

Björn Finke  
*Süddeutsche Zeitung*

Hungary and Poland are trying to extort the European Union, said Björn Finke. The EU has just passed a "revolutionary mechanism" that allows Brussels to withhold funding from member nations that harass judges, politicize courts, or otherwise undermine the rule of law. The potential punishment was clearly written with Hungary and Poland in mind, because both nations have been slowly morphing into one-party states led by right-wing autocrats. Now those two countries are striking back by threatening to block the passage of a vital coronavirus aid package and the EU's seven-year budget. The stakes couldn't be higher. The pandemic's first wave pushed Italy, Spain,

and other nations to the brink of economic collapse, and without a bailout, the surging second wave is sure to force those countries over the edge. But Germany, the country that holds the EU presidency and is therefore leading the negotiations, is right to stand firm against Poland and Hungary. The EU is supposed to be "a community of values." Taxpayers in rich nations such as Germany and the Netherlands are happy to support their poorer neighbors, but they don't want their money going to authoritarian governments. Berlin needs to make Warsaw and Budapest see reason. "Bowing to the two blackmailers to avoid budget delays is not an option."

## Europe: Covid-19 surges across the Continent

"Europe is now a gigantic test tube," said Constantino Sakellarides in *Público* (Portugal). With Covid-19 cases spiking back to their springtime highs all over the Continent, countries are once again enacting restrictions: curtailing the opening hours of bars and restaurants, mandating masks in public, limiting gatherings. Every nation has a different threshold for taking action to stem the spread. Germany reinstated severe coronavirus restrictions when its cumulative 14-day infection rate hit 200 new cases per 100,000 residents.

In France, the magic number was 706 cases per 100,000 residents, in Belgium 1,786 cases. We will soon find out if Portugal, which has 710 new infections per 100,000 people, waited too long. "The situation is serious and more critical than what we experienced in the first wave of the pandemic," Prime Minister António Costa said last week in announcing new lockdowns in the worst-hit areas. There's a curfew from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. on weekdays, while on weekends residents can go out only in the mornings and must be home by 1 p.m.

Austria has gone even further, said Gerald John in *Der Standard* (Austria). We have one of the highest infection rates in Europe—1,043 cases per 100,000 residents—and the government has ordered a three-week national lockdown, closing schools and workplaces. Everyone is to stay put, and then everyone is to be tested for Covid-19 before Christmas. Such drastic steps are necessary because officials bungled their response to the pandemic. They urged Austrians to resume a normal life when the first wave waned, and even as the infection rate was exploding in late Octo-



A sign in a Belgian cemetery detailing mask rules

ber, Health Minister Rudolf Anschober "assured us that we were a long way from needing a second lockdown." Rather than encouraging vigilance, he "lulled people into a sense of safety." Young people in particular think they are invincible, said Serge Enderlin in *Le Monde* (France). In the Swiss city of Lausanne, on the night before a partial lockdown took effect on Nov. 4, hundreds of people packed into a bar and sang AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" at the top of their lungs. That was "a superspreader event," and such careless behavior explains why Swiss morgues are now overflowing.

Even Sweden is implementing tough measures to contain the disease, said Olle Lonnæus in *Sydsvenskan* (Sweden). Officials had boasted that our soft-touch approach would keep case numbers low and our economy thriving through fall and winter. Yet Sweden is now faring worse than Denmark, Norway, and Finland in terms of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths; indeed, with 6,000 Covid-19 fatalities, Sweden has Europe's fifth-highest per capita death rate. The Swedish government has been hamstrung by the constitution, which guarantees freedom of assembly and makes it impossible to enforce a total lockdown. This week, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven exploited a "plague loophole" to limit public gatherings to eight people. This applies to religious services, sporting events, and concerts—but not to shopping malls or private parties. Lofven has no authority to limit those, so all he can do is encourage people to act safely. As Health and Social Affairs Minister Lena Hallengren puts it, "We cannot legislate common sense."

## Nagorno-Karabakh: Winners and losers of a bloody war

After refusing to intervene, Russia has emerged as a winner of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, said **David Bragvadze** in *Kviris Palitra* (Georgia). The ethnic-Armenian enclave is located inside Azerbaijan—its borders were drawn by Joseph Stalin, who applied a divide-and-rule approach to the USSR's many nationalities—but Armenia has always claimed the territory as its own. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the newly independent Azerbaijan and Armenia went to war. By the time that conflict ended in 1994, Armenians were in control of chunks of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. But with the support of Turkish drones, Azerbaijan has recaptured much of that territory in a 44-day blitz that left more than 4,000 people dead and uprooted tens of thousands more. Russia did nothing to help its ostensible ally Armenia during this onslaught, punishment for the peaceful democratic revolution that removed Armenia's corrupt, pro-Moscow government in 2018. Russia further humiliated Armenia last week by brokering a peace deal that lets Azerbaijan keep its territorial gains and will see some 2,000 Russian peacekeepers stationed in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. That deployment is a victory for the Kremlin, because Azerbaijan was the only nation in the region without a Russian troop presence.

Yet Russia's apparent success is a mirage, said **Mark Galeotti** in *The Moscow Times* (Russia). "The Kremlin has long regarded the South Caucasus as part of its 'Near Abroad' sphere of influence." That Turkey was able to fuel a conflict there is a blow to Russian



Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh

prestige. Sure, Russia now has troops in Azerbaijan, but "this is an additional burden on its military and treasury." Moscow even overlooked Azerbaijan's downing of a Russian military helicopter over Armenia, just as it was forced to accept Turkey's 2015 downing of a Russian bomber over Syria. This is hardly hegemony. "This is managing decline."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has notched a clear victory, said **Serkan Demirtas** in *Hurriyet* (Turkey). The frozen Karabakh conflict had been managed since 1994 by the U.S., France, and Russia.

But America and France had no role in ending the most recent war. Erdogan timed the conflict perfectly, when the U.S. was distracted by an election and France was consumed with the fallout from domestic terrorist attacks. Now Turkey is a major player in the Caucasus, and Turkish troops will participate in the Russian peacekeeping operation. This is "the beginning of a new era in the region that will feature the stronger influence of Turkey."

Moscow will soon slap Ankara back down, said **Dmitry Bavyrin** in *Vzglyad.ru* (Russia). Erdogan is trying to insist on Turkish peacekeepers in Azerbaijan, but Turkey was "a full-fledged party to the conflict" and so can't be a peacemaker. Maybe we'll allow a few Turkish observers to tag along with the Russian mission. But "no, the sultan will not have a new military base in the South Caucasus, even if he bursts out in rage." Expect Turkey to take revenge on Russia for stealing its victory. The hot proxy war will "give way to a cold one."

### TANZANIA

## A brutal blow to African democracy

**Phillip Van Niekerk**  
*DailyMaverick.co.za*  
(South Africa)

Is this the end of democracy in Tanzania? asked Phillip Van Niekerk. Tanzania was long a peaceful outlier on a continent plagued by ethnic and political violence. The 2015 election of President John Magufuli marked the beginning of the country's descent into authoritarian rule. Five years of ruthless political repression culminated in last month's election, in which Magufuli claimed to have won an implausible 84.4 percent of the vote, while the opposition lost nearly all its seats in Parliament, even those in "strongholds where it has been entrenched for decades." This isn't just the "usual gripe about 'irregularities.'" Ballots came premarked, boxes

prestuffed. Police fired tear gas at supporters of Chadema, the opposition party, and its presidential candidate, Tundu Lissu, was banned from the campaign trail for a week for using "seditious language" and has now fled to Belgium. Chadema founder Freeman Mbowe, meanwhile, has been detained indefinitely on trumped-up charges of terrorism. Why? Evidently, Chadema's campaign, with its grassroots activism and appeal to the poor across the country, represented "a very real threat to the power of the ruling party." Lissu and his colleagues have been "beaten and bloodied." Africa can only hope that they "have not been bowed."

### CHINA

## Too late for a heroic last stand

**Alex Lo**  
*South China Morning Post*

The Hong Kong lawmakers who resigned on principle last week are winning no accolades from the pro-independence movement, said Alex Lo. No doubt these pro-democracy legislators thought they were being noble and brave. Beijing had passed a new resolution requiring the removal of any member of the Hong Kong legislature who does not recognize Chinese sovereignty over the city, and after four pro-democracy lawmakers were kicked out, the remaining 15 opposition legislators quit in solidarity. Yet "none of them have received much sympathy" from Hong Kong's "radical" anti-Beijing movement, which sees the action as too little, too

late. The protest movement already considers the city's current legislature illegitimate, because the elections that should have been held in September were canceled by the pro-Beijing government, ostensibly because of the pandemic. Activists claim that opposition lawmakers legitimized the body by staying on. Joshua Wong Chi-fung, de facto leader of the protesters, has gone even further. He said the lawmakers should have quit in 2016, when two newly elected city legislators were disqualified after making pro-independence statements. The opposition politicians missed their chance to be seen as heroes. Instead, they are being "treated with contempt."

## Trump: What's next for him—and Trumpism?

With President Trump's remaining days in the White House ticking down, one question looms large, said **David Jackson** and **John Fritze** in *USA Today*: "What's Trump's next act?" He reportedly is talking about launching a conservative television network or streaming media company to take on Fox News, whose coverage of the election angered him. He may recast himself as a television personality or radio host. Whatever he chooses to do, he's not about to fade into the background. With a rabid following and an unquenchable thirst for attention, he'll "continue to be a presence on the national stage" and to leverage his "influence over a Republican Party he has transformed." Trump will no doubt "continue wielding his Twitter megaphone," said **W. James Antle III** in *WashingtonExaminer.com*, but he won't likely stop there. "He could launch a Super PAC to promote" like-minded Republicans who kiss his ring, and he has strongly hinted he may run again himself in 2024, when he'll be 78.

Once Trump finally leaves the White House, said **Michelle Goldberg** in *The New York Times*, he may be shocked at how diminished he quickly becomes. Ripped from the sanctuary of the Oval Office, the president "is likely to be consumed by lawsuits and criminal investigations." He faces numerous civil actions, including two defamation suits by women who've accused him of sexual assault. He's being investigated by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., who "could be looking at tax fraud, insurance fraud, and falsification of business records," and New York State Attorney General Letitia James is probing "possible financial chicanery by the Trump Organization." Federal prosecution for a host of potential crimes is also possible, unless he resigns in return for a pardon. And he faces a mountain of debt, including \$421 million in personally guaranteed loans that mostly come due within a few years. Meanwhile, Trump's business empire faces its deepest challenges "in decades," said **Brian Spegele** and **Caitlin Ostroff** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The pandemic has hammered his hotels and resorts, the "financial benefits" bestowed on his businesses by the presidency are likely to vanish, and the organization faces a massive "cash crunch," with wary lenders unlikely to bail him out.

If Trump does decide to run in 2024, he's a shoo-in for the nomination, said **Marc Thiessen** in *The Washington Post*. With "the most



A unique bond with his base

loyal base in modern history," he just commandeered an army of 73 million voters to beat back a threatened blue wave. "No sane Republican would challenge him." Even if he doesn't run, Trump could establish himself as "a kingmaker of sorts," said **Peter Nicholas** in *TheAtlantic.com*. "He's formed an emotional bond with his base that isn't about to vanish," and will still be seen as "the party's de facto leader" by candidates who'll "trek to Mar-a-Lago for endorsements and position themselves as heirs to the movement he rode to power."

Don't be so certain of that, said **Jack Shafer** in *Politico.com*. Once deprived of the White House bully pulpit, Trump can "no longer count on making a splash" every time he blasts out an angry tweet or insults a rival. And as the former reality-TV star knows better than anyone, audiences "are fickle and crave novelty." As the media's focus shifts to the Biden presidency and the raft of troubles facing the nation, "with each passing day he will become less and less relevant." For a cautionary tale, consider Sarah Palin, said **Jonathan Bernstein** in *Bloomberg.com*. After losing her vice presidential bid alongside John McCain in 2008, she tried to leverage her passionate populist support into a media career. Three years later, "she was a washed-up reality-TV star."

Even if Trump doesn't endure, "Trumpism will live on," said **Kevin Williamson** in *The Washington Post*. He's galvanized voters with "a politics of blame" that's less a governing philosophy than it is "an enemies list" made up of "political, corporate, and media elites." Now that he's "whetted many Americans' appetite for an angry politics of cathartic confrontation," that "genie is not going back into the bottle easily." Democrats should be alarmed at the prospect of a Trumpian populist movement led "not by a fading cartoon" but by a "smart, disciplined" professional politician like Sens. Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton, and Rick Scott and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem. Sorry, but no professional politician will succeed at Trumpism, said **Virginia Postrel** in *Bloomberg.com*. A natural showman, Trump offers his disciples "emotional release" by shamelessly thumbing his nose at propriety and scorning bourgeois virtues. He's pure id. That's his core appeal. Trumpism without Trump "is like chocolate chip ice cream" without its "defining ingredient." In other words, "plain vanilla."

### Noted

■ In a reversal of the conventional political wisdom that voters who are prospering favor incumbents, counties with strong job and economic growth voted heavily for challenger Joe Biden. Biden won 490 counties, mostly in urban hubs, that account for 70 percent of the nation's economy, while Trump carried 2,534 counties that represent just under 30 percent, many of them in small cities and towns and rural areas. *The Washington Post*

■ About a third of Americans know someone who's died of Covid-19, researchers estimate. Nearly all have someone in their

social circle who's been infected. *The New York Times*

■ The coronavirus has sidelined more than 130 Secret Service officers assigned to protect President Trump, because they were either infected or quarantined after having close contact with infected colleagues. Since March, some 300 Secret Service agents have been infected or quarantined—at least partly because of their presence at Trump's campaign rallies. *The Washington Post*



■ Three times in American history a U.S. president has not attended the inauguration of his successor: John Adams in 1801, John Quincy Adams in 1829, and Andrew Johnson in 1869. In all three cases, the losers were embittered by hotly contested elections in a highly polarized nation. *CNN.com*

■ Of the more than 230 people who have died from Covid-19 in Texas jails and correctional facilities, 80 percent had yet to be convicted of a crime. *Vox.com*

## Troop withdrawals: Will they backfire?

President Trump is preparing for a “hasty withdrawal” from Afghanistan and Iraq, said **Ellen Mitchell** in *The Hill.com*. Pentagon officials have confirmed that orders had been drawn up to slash American troop levels in Afghanistan from roughly 4,500 to 2,500, and in Iraq from 3,000 to 2,500, by the end of Trump’s presidency on Jan. 20. The orders are apparently designed to let Trump claim he fulfilled his 2016 campaign promise to stop America’s “endless wars,” but defy “months of warnings” by Pentagon brass that a quick retreat from Afghanistan would embolden the Taliban and “ultimately worsen the chances for peace in the country.” Trump’s drawdown order was accompanied by a “White House-directed purge” at the Pentagon, said **Barbara Starr** and **Zachary Cohen** in *CNN.com*. Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and several of his top lieutenants and replaced them with loyalists. Esper and his team objected to Trump’s withdrawal plan, arguing that the Taliban must first sever ties with al Qaida and make substantial progress in their stalled talks with the Afghan government.



U.S. troops on patrol in Afghanistan

President Trump is courting disaster with this “retreat,” said *The Wall Street Journal* in an edi-

torial. Afghanistan remains a powder keg despite a peace deal made between America and the Taliban in February. Both sides have continued fighting as the Taliban jockey for position in their talks over the future of the country. As Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) pointed out this week, Trump’s rushed pull-out tells the Taliban “the

Americans are desperate to depart,” and removes any “leverage” we and the Afghan government have to insist on an end to the fighting. It would also create a power vacuum similar to that which led to the rise of the Islamic State after former President Obama withdrew from Iraq in 2011.

Presidential transitions are a “vulnerable time” for the country, said **David Andelman** in *CNN.com*, and both terrorist groups and rival states know this would be a good time to strike at U.S. interests. A smooth transition of military authority and intelligence is vital to the nation’s safety. Unfortunately, Trump seems determined instead to create as big a headache as possible for President-elect Joe Biden. His troop withdrawals from Afghanistan and Iraq create an impression of weakness, and “could drag the U.S. back into war all over again.”

## Alito: Taking aim at progressives

Samuel Alito sounded more like a Republican candidate “on the stump” last week than he did a “sitting Supreme Court justice,” said **Scott Lemieux** in *NBCNews.com*. Addressing the conservative Federalist Society, Alito—who, with Clarence Thomas, anchors the court’s far-right flank—spoke with “a piercing sense of persecution and resentment,” despite the society’s successful campaign to stock federal courts with fellow conservatives. He complained that Covid-19 has led to “previously unimaginable restrictions on individual liberty,” particularly limits on church services. He bemoaned the court’s ruling on same-sex marriage, saying traditional beliefs about marriage are now “considered bigotry.” Alito, 70, also “attacked five Democratic senators” for saying the court is “too influenced by politics,” calling their amicus brief “an affront to the Constitution.” With this brazen speech, Alito “telegraphed his intentions” for the court’s new 6-3 conservative majority: “to go to war.”

Alito didn’t say anything he hasn’t written in judicial opinions, said **Ed Whelan** in *National Review.com*. While it’s improper “for a justice to speak publicly about an open issue on which the justice hasn’t yet ruled”—as Justice Ruth Bader

Ginsburg did regarding same-sex marriage and President Trump’s tax returns—justices routinely write books and give speeches expanding on positions they’ve “already formally adopted.” In Alito’s concurring opinion in the landmark 2018 *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case, for example, he defended a Colorado bakery for declining to make a wedding cake for a gay couple, writing, “It is in protecting unpopular religious beliefs that we prove this country’s commitment to serving as a refuge for religious freedom.” Alito’s speech was a brave defense of constitutional rights, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. Liberals “want to compel conformity to their views,” but courts provide a check on tyranny of the majority.

Alito’s cranky views are well known, said **Ruth Marcus** in *The Washington Post*, but it was still surprising to hear a Supreme Court justice sound like a “talk-radio host.” Alito’s bitterness is “even more remarkable” because his “side is winning.” Alito knows that, said **Mark Joseph Stern** in *Slate.com*, so his speech sounded like “a taunt to the Left.” There is now nothing liberals can do to curb the power of the conservative judges in federal courts. For Alito and the Federalist Society, “the future looks as bright as ever.”

## Wit & Wisdom

“There is only one kind of shock worse than the totally unexpected: the expected for which one has refused to prepare.”  
**Author Mary Renault, quoted in GoodReads.com**

“Progress would be wonderful—if only it would stop.”  
**Writer Robert Musil, quoted in TheBrowser.com**

“Somewhere in the world there is a defeat for everyone. Some are destroyed by defeat, and some made small and mean by victory. Greatness lives in one who triumphs equally over defeat and victory.”  
**John Steinbeck, quoted in The Washington Times**

“Social media was invented as part of a plot to undermine the faith of sensible people in freedom of speech.”  
**Journalist Michael Deacon, quoted in The Daily Telegraph (U.K.)**

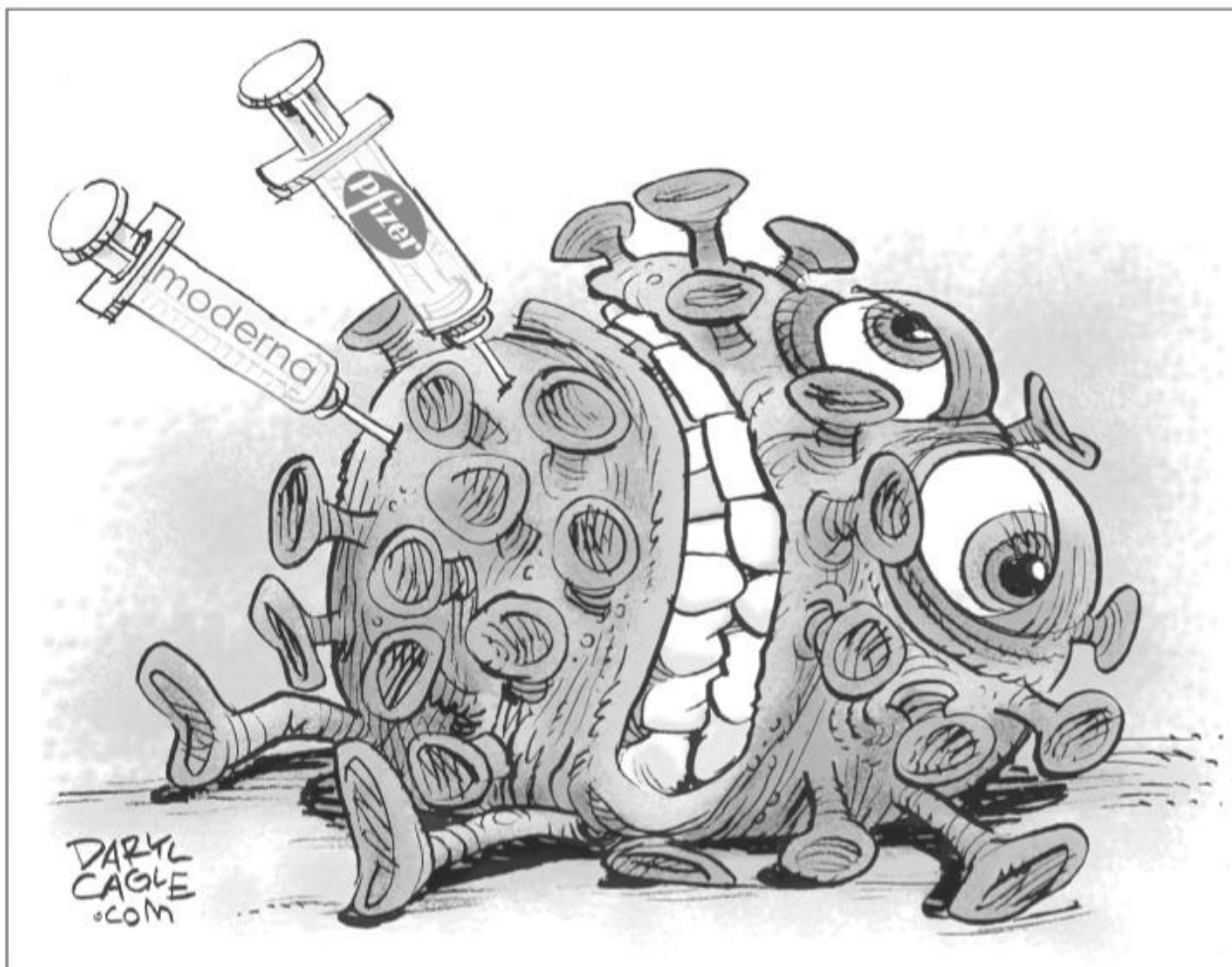
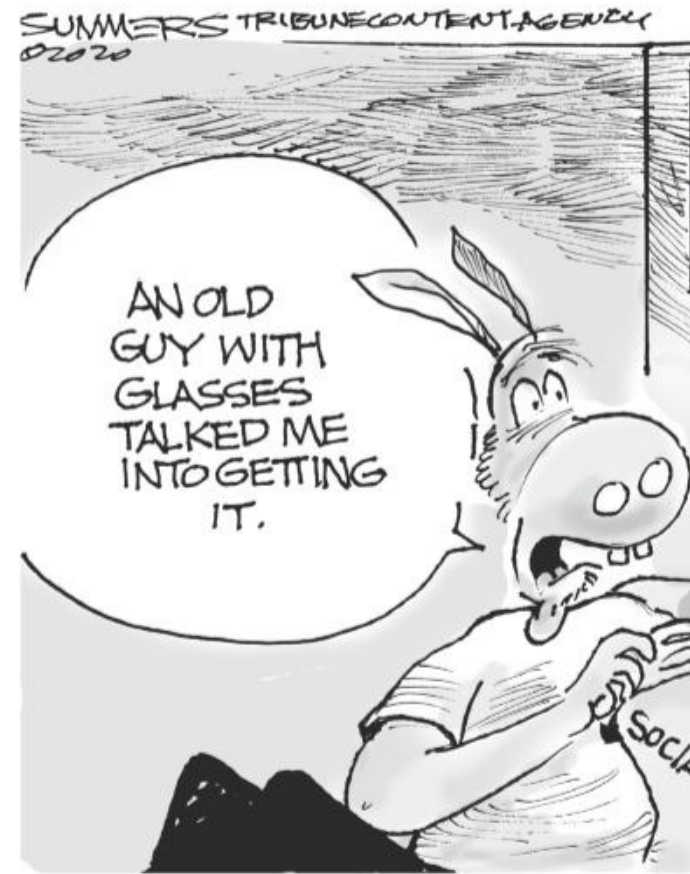
“It’s always a buyer’s market when it comes to souls.”  
**Novelist Jo Nesbo, quoted in The Washington Post**

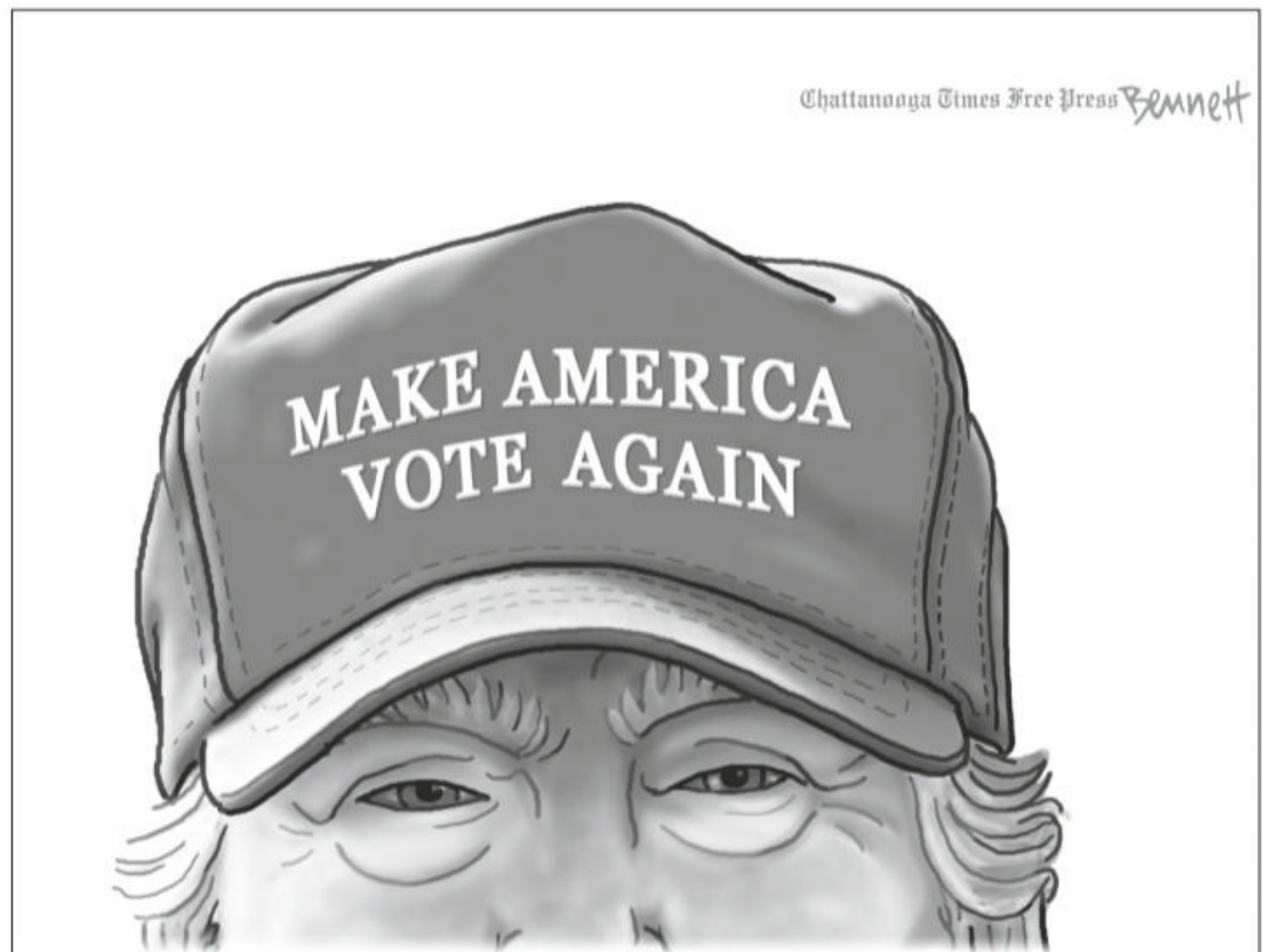
“Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die.”  
**G.K. Chesterton, quoted in Parade.com**

“You can’t teach an old dogma new tricks.”  
**Dorothy Parker, quoted in the Martha’s Vineyard, Mass., Times**

## Poll watch

■ **49%** of Americans say they’d shelter in place again for a month if officials recommended it to stem the coronavirus outbreak. **33%** said they would likely not comply. Despite the opposition to shutdowns, **61%** now say the pandemic is worsening, up **19** points from September, and **56%** are worried that they or a family member will get Covid-19.  
Gallup







## Laptops: A renaissance for the PC, led by Apple

A strange thing happened in tech this year, said Shira Ovide in *The New York Times*: Personal computers have become “the star gadgets.” With work-from-home and remote schooling, not to mention less traveling, we’re on our computers more than ever. Tech companies have shown “there’s still innovation in a digital category that not long ago was mostly boring beige boxes.” The “cheap, simple, and durable” Google Chromebooks have become ubiquitous in classrooms. Microsoft’s Surface, which doubles as a tablet, has been a massive hit. And now there’s the new Mac with Apple Silicon.

“Apple Silicon” refers to Apple’s “most significant advancement in years,” said Daniel Howley in *Yahoo.com*. The unveiling last week of three new MacBooks officially ended the Intel-Apple partnership after 15 years. Instead of Intel’s chips, Apple designed its own Arm-based processors, the kind that “have been traditionally found in low-power machines like smartphones and tablets.” Other companies like HP and Microsoft have used them in their laptops, but “the performance just wasn’t there.” Apple is now “telling the world that it’s about to transform what they should expect of their laptops and desktops.”

Apple is “astonishingly confident in its new M1 Mac processors,” said Dieter Bohn in *TheVerge.com*. In fact, the company



No more Intel inside

has already “ceased selling the Intel version of the MacBook Air,” its best-selling Mac by far. It’s promised better performance, as well as battery life that’s six hours longer than the Intel version’s. The wild card? How well Apple’s new computers run older Mac apps. Microsoft’s experience running software designed for Intel chips on similar processors is “not great,” but Apple says that some apps will actually run faster, even with the greater overhead. It has “encountered some road bumps” bringing old apps over to the new processors, said Lisa Eadicicco in *BusinessInsider.com*. But Apple is betting the effort is worth it, for computers that can take some of the most useful tricks from phones, such as waking instantly from sleep, and can share apps with the iPad.

Apple has been bringing phones and computers closer together, and now it’s further “blurring the lines between what a computer is and what it’s meant to do,” said Ian Sherr in *CNET.com*. Apple “spent more than a decade on research and development, and at least \$1 billion buying more than half a dozen companies, to create its own rival processor.” It can now manage the manufacturing process in ways few competitors can, enabling it to save costs and lower its prices. One day, adding cellular service to these chips could even enable a future 5G-connected MacBook Air. We may look back on this as the moment Apple made “an iPhone-like dent” in the computing universe.

### Innovation of the week



A new device puts music right in your ears without the use of headphones, said Louise Dixon in the *Associated Press*. The technology, called Sound Beamer, is “straight out of a sci-fi movie.” Using a 3D sensing module that “locates and tracks ear positions,” Israeli firm Noveto Systems devised a way to “send audio via ultrasonic waves to create sound pockets by the user’s ears.” The effect is that the listener can “feel completely transported” listening to music, phone calls, or video games without headphones, while others in the room don’t hear a thing. The sound can even “follow a listener around when they move their head.” But moving out of the path of the sound beam means you’ll “hear nothing at all.”

### Bytes: What’s new in tech

#### Hospitals are latest cybercrime target

Cybercriminals are increasingly targeting hospitals with ransomware attacks, said Nicole Wetsman in *TheVerge.com*, crossing a line that the “cybersecurity community didn’t think was going to get crossed.” Previously, most cyberattacks on hospitals were considered “incidental,” the collateral damage of ransomware that was “sent out generally and happens to get into a hospital.” Some cybercrime groups have even “pledged not to target hospitals during the Covid-19 pandemic.” But others are preying on the facilities that “can’t afford to be offline while they try to extricate themselves from ransomware.” Universal Health Services, a chain of hundreds of hospitals, took weeks to bring all its record systems back online after an attack.

#### Shackled to the desk?

Business is booming for office wearables that can monitor workers’ whereabouts, said Dave Gershgorin in *OneZero.Medium.com*. As the pandemic grinds on, businesses have started moving beyond just putting facial recognition or thermal-imaging scanning at security checkpoints. “Contact-tracing wearables are a new step in workplace surveillance,” and the “businesses investing in this technology

aren’t just looking at the short term.” They’re considering how wearables might work after the pandemic, and some envision future workplaces “where employees are physically tracked from the moment they walk in the door.” Austin-based firm Radiant has sold 10,000 of its “stripped-down Samsung smartwatches” to companies across the United States. The watches “constantly search for other similar devices worn by other employees,” and if a strong signal is detected between two devices—suggesting close proximity—the interaction is recorded.

#### TikTok survives past Trump deadline

The video-sharing network TikTok is still here, said John McKinnon and Georgia Wells in *The Wall Street Journal*. Last week, the Commerce Department delayed implementing an order that would have effectively blocked the TikTok app after Nov. 12. That was the deadline issued by President Trump to ban TikTok if a deal could not be reached to sell it to a U.S. company. But while the two sides remain “far apart” in negotiations on a Trump-approved sale of a 20 percent stake in TikTok to Oracle and Walmart, after multiple legal setbacks the Trump administration has “backed down” from its threats of a shutdown.

## Indoor venues are coronavirus hot spots

Restaurants, gyms, coffee shops, and other crowded indoor venues may have accounted for up to 8 in 10 new coronavirus infections during the first wave of the epidemic in the U.S., a new study suggests. But the research also suggests it is possible to slash the infection rate without shutting these businesses down, by instead limiting the number of customers allowed inside at any one time. For the study, the researchers mapped tracking data from 98 million cellphones in 10 major cities this spring, monitoring how many indoor venues they visited over a day and how long they stayed. Using a

background infection rate, the scientists then ran a computer model to watch how the disease spread. The model showed the risk of infection was highest in restaurants, followed by gyms, coffee shops, and hotels. These venues had an outside effect—in Chicago, 10 percent of sites led to 85 percent of predicted infections. The model found that low-income areas were hit particularly hard because their indoor spaces were more crowded than those of high-income areas. But setting an occupancy limit of 20 percent of maximum capacity for all indoor venues, reports the *Chicago Sun-Times*, could cut new infec-



*Cutting capacity reduces risk of infection.*

tions by 80 percent. “There are policy remedies [for the pandemic] that are not all or nothing,” says study co-author Beth Redbird, from Northwestern University.



*Danish farmers dispose of culled mink.*

### Fears over animal spreaders

A coronavirus outbreak among mink on Danish fur farms has raised concerns about the vulnerability of animals to infection and what that could mean for humans. That people can transmit Covid-19 to animals isn't in question: Dogs, cats, tigers, hamsters, monkeys, ferrets, and mice have all caught the disease. The fear is that a mutated version of the virus could then be transmitted back to humans, diminishing the effectiveness of vaccines designed to combat an earlier strain. At least 12 people have been infected so far with the Danish mink variant, and laboratory tests have found the mutated virus is less responsive to antibodies. Mink have been infected with the virus in other countries, including the U.S., but no mutated strain has been found among those animals outside Denmark. Researchers are now studying species from Beluga whales to deer mice for signs of the coronavirus, reports *The New York Times*. “The last thing we need,” says Tony Goldberg, from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, “is for SARS-CoV-2 to move into an animal reservoir from which it could re-emerge.”

### Blocking Covid with a nasal spray

Scientists have developed a nasal spray that, in ferrets at least, appears to offer 24-hour protection against Covid-19. The spray contains a lipopeptide—a chain of protein

and fat molecules—that binds to the virus' spike protein, rendering it useless. To test the spray, scientists administered it to six ferrets, divided the animals into pairs, and placed them in three separate cages. (Ferrets are used to study respiratory diseases because, like humans, they can catch viruses through the nose.) They then put two ferrets that had been given a placebo spray into each cage, along with another ferret infected with Covid-19. After 24 hours, none of the sprayed ferrets had contracted the disease—while all of the placebo group had. The study doesn't show the spray's safety or efficacy in humans, reports *BusinessInsider.com*. It's also questionable “whether everybody's going to get up every day and spray this stuff in their nose,” says Wesley Van Voorhis, an infectious-disease researcher at the University of Washington, who wasn't involved in the study. But if the spray does prove effective, it could be a useful interim measure until a vaccine is widely available.

### Magic 'shrooms for depression?

A psychedelic substance found inside magic

mushrooms could help people with long-term depression, a new study suggests. Previous research has shown that psilocybin, the hallucinogenic compound, might ease the symptoms of depression. For the new study, 24 patients received two doses of psilocybin, on two different days, along with 11 hours of psychotherapy. The participants were split into two groups, with one group starting the psilocybin treatment immediately and the other placed on an eight-week waiting list to act as a control. The scientists found that the first group enjoyed a “significant reduction in depression” compared with the other and responded much faster than patients typically do with antidepressants. “The effect happened within one day,” study co-author Alan Davis, from Johns Hopkins University, tells *NPR.org*. Depression stayed “at that reduced level through the second psilocybin session all the way up to the one-month follow-up.” Part of the effect may have been anticipatory—the patients were told they were receiving the drug. Still, the researchers say, their findings show the need for further study of this potential treatment.

### Why female mongooses pick fights

Female banded mongooses have a cunning way of avoiding inbreeding, reports *CNN.com*—they trick the males in their clan into picking a fight with another pack, then use the ensuing chaos to mate with the opposition. These small catlike carnivores native to Africa rarely leave the safety of their group, because of the danger from leopards, pythons, and other predators. And whenever banded mongoose females are fertile, males stand guard around them and follow them everywhere. In the new



*A clan gets ready for war—and love.*

study, researchers observed the females deliberately steering their groups toward combative neighbors, inciting them to start a fight, and then sneaking off to hook up with rival males. The females almost never die in the fights, and show zero concern for what happens to the males in their group. Co-author Faye Thompson, from the University of Exeter in the U.K., says the females “do not fit a heroic model of leadership.” But their methods are successful: DNA analysis shows that about 20 percent of pups in a group are fathered by males from another group.

## Review of reviews: Books

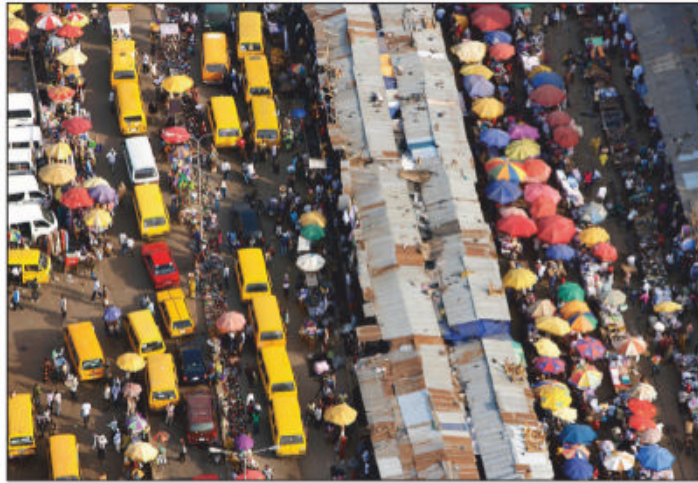
## Book of the week

**Metropolis: A History of the City, Humankind's Greatest Invention**

by Ben Wilson

(Doubleday, \$32.50)

Ben Wilson's ode to urban life across the ages might feel curiously timed, said **Eben Shapiro** in *Time.com*. As a virus that originated in a fast-growing metropolis of 11 million continues to ravage the world, "crowded cities can seem dangerous, even life-threatening." But if history is any guide, "counting cities out is a sucker's game." What they offer as meeting places and engines of human progress can't be replicated in any other setting, and author Ben Wilson is a big believer in the perpetual magnetic appeal of teeming centers of human activity. In his latest work, the British historian proves to be "an erudite, creative guide to the history of civilization through its great urban areas." And given how often cities have responded to disaster by innovating, "perhaps it's just the right moment for such a book."



A bustling street market in Lagos

"Reading *Metropolis* is like visiting an exhilarating city for the first time—dazzling, frazzling, sometimes both simultaneously," said **Howard Schneider** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The very first city, Uruk, which arose in Mesopotamia 7,000 years ago, "contained, inevitably, a mingling of the good and the ghastly." The written word and first numerical system were invented in Uruk, but slavery flourished too. From there, Wilson often leaps about through time. We learn that flush toilets were common in the cities of the Indus Valley as early as the third millennium B.C. Then we are

in 17th-century Amsterdam, a bustling trade center where financial innovations created the conditions for tolerance and free expression. In the present, Wilson takes readers to Lagos, Nigeria, projected to soon become the world's largest city. Despite its sprawling slums, Wilson sees exciting possibility there: The city of 14 million is home to 11 million "micro-enterprises" and to a street life that, he writes, "pulses with a crazy energy."

Wilson is less sanguine about trends in the West, said **Robert Sullivan** in *The New York Times*. Here, "the future of cities as Wilson sees it is bleak: marshes filled in with money-laundering skyscrapers; robot-filled logistics centers supplying megacities with more cheaply produced goods; care workers with longer, more expensive commutes." But in certain of history's grimmest tableaux—bombed-out Warsaw and Tokyo—he finds evidence that people forever find the will to join together and rebuild. "The hope is that we start thinking of the city less as a technical invention and more in terms of that connective tissue. We are already part of that tissue, whether we know it or not."

## Novel of the week

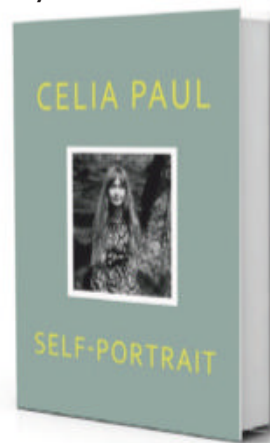
**The Office of Historical Corrections**

by Danielle Evans (Riverhead, \$27)

Danielle Evans' sophomore effort was more than worth the wait, said **Ann Levin** in *USA Today*. Arriving 10 years after *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self*, her new collection is "so smart and self-assured, it's certain to thrust her into the top tier of American short-story writers." Black characters figure prominently in all seven stories, but the stories "aren't specifically about being black any more than Alice Munro's are about being white"; they are about the individuals at their center. "They're also delectably readable," said **David Canfield** in *Entertainment Weekly*. In "Boys Go to Jupiter," a college student endures fallout for wearing a Confederate flag-patterned bikini; in "Happily Ever After," an underemployed 30-year-old black woman works in the gift shop of a *Titanic*-themed museum. And in the title novella, "a masterpiece of tension," a government-employed historian travels to Wisconsin to investigate the decades-old murder of a black man. Here, as everywhere else, "the past is never too far away."

## Self-Portrait

by Celia Paul (NYRB, \$30)



Celia Paul is "a more gifted writer than she has any business being," said **Rumaan Alam** in *The New Republic*. The British painter's short new memoir "reads like a novel" and testifies to her acute powers of observation. Yet Paul, 60, remains

most famous for the decade when she was Lucian Freud's muse and lover. She was exploited in that relationship, but over time Paul has asserted "a dynamic, scintillating personhood all her own," and "*Self-Portrait* illuminates what Freud's long shadow obscured: Celia Paul herself, and an altogether different way of being an artist."

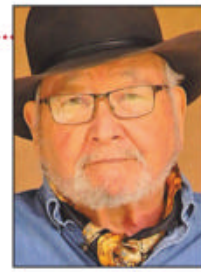
Paul was an 18-year-old art student when Freud, 55, made moves on her, said **Jan Dalley** in the *Financial Times*. The celebrated older painter is a monster here: "emotionally abusive, ruthlessly self-serving." Still, "nothing confounds a case of moral outrage like a willing victim," and Paul reveals a need for attention whatever

the cost, including the attention that a victim garners. She doesn't downplay the harm the relationship caused. She recalls weeping as Freud painted her nude. And when she discovered his rampant infidelity, she attempted suicide. Still, Paul "never resorts to the language of self-pity," said **Jennifer Szalai** in *The New York Times*. She bears a son and spends 10 years with Freud before leaving him, yet "the arc of Paul's story is not one of triumph, but endurance." Once space for her voice becomes possible again, it simply emerges in her paintings. "Unlike the hard, clinical gaze of Freud's work, Paul's portraits are radiant with intimacy."

*Self-Portrait* turns out to be "among the most intriguing accounts I've read of maternal ambivalence," said **Lidija Haas** in *Harper's*. Paul's child awoke in her a powerful maternal instinct, but because she viewed that instinct as a threat to her need to make art, she left him mostly in the care of his grandmother. Her candor on that point is consistent with a core belief: that an artist, especially a female artist, must be ruthless to transform experience into product. In fact, Paul finds enough that was useful in the diminishing experience of having played the silent muse that "you suspect she got more out of Freud than could ever have been taken from her."

## Best books...chosen by N. Scott Momaday

N. Scott Momaday is a poet and novelist whose Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn* launched a Native American literary renaissance. The Kiowa writer's new book is a short essay collection, *Earth Keeper: Reflections on the American Land*.



**Beowulf** (circa 700–1000). Arguably the oldest poem in the English language, *Beowulf* has weathered the test of time. It is as vital for readers today as it was for listeners who heard it recited centuries ago. We don't know how long it existed in the oral tradition alone, but we know that it must have captivated those who heard it and that it was loved enough to be preserved for its own sake. And that, I take it, is the definition of great literature.

**The Wife of Martin Guerre** by Janet Lewis (1941). This small, elegant novel is among those books that I keep close at hand and do not lend. It is a story of abandonment, imposture, belief, and disbelief. It is based upon actual events that took place in 16th-century France—and one of the strangest cases in French judicial history: A woman who had not seen her husband for years was confounded by the arrival at her door of a man who claimed to be her husband returned. The novel it inspired is beautifully written.

**Platero and I** by Juan Ramón Jiménez (1914). In rural Spain, a man and his donkey share a

simple life. The book was written in Spanish, but it is faithfully translated into English. It is a timeless story for all seasons and all ages, and one that nourishes the soul.

**The Old Man and the Sea** by Ernest Hemingway (1952). This was Ernest Hemingway at his very best. The story of a lone fisherman and a marlin becomes a story of heroism, defeat, and the nobility of the human spirit.

**Speak, Memory** by Vladimir Nabokov (1951). A masterpiece in the art of the autobiographical narrative. It is intimate, intelligent, and written in a style that is Nabokov's own. This book has kept me company for many years, and my estimation of it remains undiminished.

**War Music** by Christopher Logue (1981). In this partial paraphrase of Homer's *Iliad*, the first of several Logue wrote in parts across three decades, the English poet plays with the ancient account of the siege of Troy and in the process renders it whole and irresistibly appealing to the modern reader. It is in itself brilliant poetry.

## Author of the week

### Fannie Flagg

Fannie Flagg may have a Montecito, Calif., address, but she'll never quit Alabama, said **Mary Colurso** in *AL.com*. Born and raised in Birmingham, she built a career as a comedian and 1970s screen actress before earning her



most lasting claim to fame by fictionalizing her great-aunt's Irondale, Ala., restaurant in the 1987 novel *Fried Green*

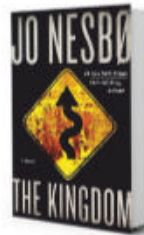
*Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*. A few years ago, she retired from writing, telling one interviewer, "If you hear that I'm writing another book, you have my permission to get on a plane, come to California, and beat me with a stick." But the pandemic changed her priorities. Unable earlier this year to make one of her frequent trips to the South, the 76-year-old author instead returned to the world of *Fried Green Tomatoes*. "I missed coming home and seeing all of my friends in Birmingham," she says. "So, I decided to take a trip in my mind."

A new generation takes center stage in *The Wonder Boy of Whistle Stop*, said Suzanne Van Atten in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Though flashbacks to the 1930s feature the café's co-owners, Ruth Jamison and Iddie Threadgoode, the book's main character is Ruth's son, Buddy Jr., now a retiree, who in 2013 returns to Whistle Stop to see how things are going. The town has gone into decline since its highway was replaced by a distant six-lane interstate, but its residents haven't lost any of their comity or sense of community. "It's just a story about nice people," says Flagg. "If I can't put something positive in the world, I'm not going to do it. I don't want to add to the negativity. There needs to be somebody fighting for the other side."

## Also of interest...in masters of suspense

### The Kingdom

by Jo Nesbo (Knopf, \$29)



At 549 pages, the latest from the reigning king of Scandinavian crime fiction "feels as much like a mini-series as a novel," said Richard Lipez in *The Washington Post*. But as a gas station owner watches his brother pursue a scheme to build a resort in a dying town where every citizen is a drunk, a philanderer, or worse, you can't stop turning them. "Why do mentally healthy readers want to spend time with these god-awful people?" Ask anyone who loved *Breaking Bad*.

### Snow

by John Banville (Hanover Square, \$28)



John Banville's new mystery initially feels like a work by his genre-fiction alter ego, Benjamin Black, said Bethanne Patrick in the *Los Angeles Times*. "It's all there: the body in the library, the inspector on the case," and plenty more. But the discovery of a priest's castrated corpse summons the ghosts of Ireland's past, and though the resolution is predictable, "Banville flicks away his house of cards not simply for the fun of watching it scatter but in order to reveal what lies beneath."

### All the Devils Are Here

by Louise Penny (Minotaur, \$29)



In an Inspector Gamache book, "good and evil are not abstract concepts," said Tom Nolan in *The Wall Street Journal*. The French-Canadian detective is in Paris for his 16th outing, visiting his 93-year-old mentor, when the corruption-hunting financier is struck by an intentional hit-and-run driver and left in a coma. Suspecting the old man was about to expose wrongdoing, Gamache winds up battling malign corporate forces. Still, "what stays with the reader are the tender passages, the human insights."

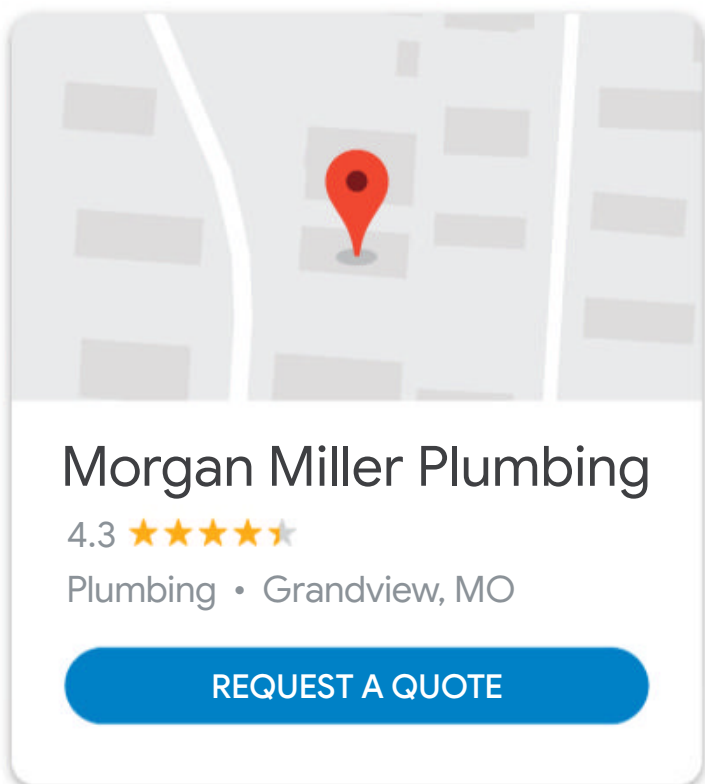
### One by One

by Ruth Ware (Scout, \$28)



Despite the very contemporary humor in the latest from Ruth Ware, "readers will recognize the obvious homage to Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*," said Marilyn Stasio in *The New York Times*. At a chalet in the French alps, insiders at a tech startup start dying off after they gather to discuss the company's future and become trapped by an avalanche. "They're an insufferable lot for the most part," and the ingenious twists Ware dreams up for them "make this whodunit another triumph."

# Helping local businesses adapt to a new way of working





The employees of Morgan Miller Plumbing pride themselves on being a small, tight-knit family, and they treat their customers the same way.

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## Exhibit of the week

### The National Museum of the United States Army

Fort Belvoir, Va.

“Democracy is never self-actuating, nor does it defend itself,” said **Gordon Morse** in the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot*. That’s why the Veterans Day opening of a smart new museum dedicated to America’s original military service deserves to be celebrated. The National Museum of the United States Army, located 20 miles south of Washington, D.C., offers the fullest account yet of the Army’s long history. “There are of course U.S. Army museums scattered all around the country.” But a tribute on this scale has arguably been talked about since 1820, and “to say this museum has embraced an ambitious, multifaceted agenda would be an understatement.” Standing proudly on an 85-acre wooded site, the impressive stainless steel-clad modernist structure by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill immediately becomes “a repository of national pride.”

“The curators have succeeded masterfully in giving visitors a broad-strokes history of the nation’s wars while not losing sight of the men and women who did the day-to-day fighting,” said **Mark Yost** in *The Wall*



A recreation of the 1944 landing at Normandy

*Street Journal*. A 10-foot-tall black granite wall in the Medal of Honor Garden features the names of every member of the Army who has received that ultimate decoration, and in the lobby another wall is engraved with every Army campaign ever undertaken. Lining the way to the main exhibition center is a series of stainless-steel 7-foot pylons, each etched with the likeness and story of an individual soldier: Famous faces such as Alvin York are included, but most—such as 14-year-old War of 1812 drummer Jarvis Hanks—have been plucked from obscurity. Highlights among the 1,400 artifacts include a 1763 French musket shipped to

America during the Revolutionary War and the Sherman tank that led the pack in the Battle of the Bulge. Importantly, the museum forthrightly addresses the Army’s darker chapters, said **Victoria Chamberlin** in *DCist.com*. The “Army and Society” gallery covers a wide range of subjects, from the Army’s role in aviation history to the mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

The museum hasn’t gotten every detail right, said **Philip Kennicott** in *The Washington Post*. When we read that American settlers clashed with Native Americans because both “needed the same lands,” the language feels “both maddeningly dispassionate and morally obtuse.” Fortunately, that’s “a rare fumble” for a museum that’s never a hagiographic shrine or theme park-style recruitment experience but rather a place that welcomes debate about an institution that clearly regards itself as a nonpartisan tool of civilian power. At a time when our president is denying his election defeat and reasonable people are wondering what the Army will do if he demands fealty, “the tone of this museum gives one hope that it will indeed support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” (*Admission is free with tickets reserved via thenmusa.org.*)

## Sun Ra Arkestra

### Swirling

★★★★★



The Sun Ra Arkestra’s first album of new music in 20 years “serves as a fabulous introduction for newcomers to the Arkestra’s sonic universe,” said **Giovanni Russonello**

in *The New York Times*. It’s also “an affirmation of how vital the band remains,” 27 years after its founder died. Sun Ra was a pianist, composer, poet, and Afrofuturist mystic whose cosmic music drew upon all of jazz, from ragtime to bebop, free jazz, and fusion. Fittingly, *Swirling* “wraps its arms around a huge range of musical history: swing, early rock, Chicago blues, avant-garde improvisation, abstract electronics.” The title track, written by 96-year-old saxophonist and bandleader Marshall Allen, “breezily evokes big band sensibilities,” said **Hannah Edgar** in *Chicago Reader*. Like so much of the Arkestra’s music, “*Swirling* sometimes defies easy description.” But if there’s one constant, it’s the “dogged optimism” of Ra’s cosmic philosophy. “The first lyrics, sung by Tara Middleton, sound like a dispatch from a world infinitely more promising than our own.”

## Chris Stapleton

### Starting Over

★★★★★



Chris Stapleton should probably install a new trophy shelf, said **Sarah Rodman** in *Entertainment Weekly*. Having racked up awards since he debuted with *Traveller*

in 2015, the country troubadour is “hitting new heights” with his polished fourth album, which blends country, rock, gospel, and pop. As always, Stapleton’s appeal starts with “that skyscraping rasp” and “his sharply observed yet plainspoken lyrics.” You’ll hear both in these 14 tracks—as well as some uncharacteristic rage on “Watch You Burn,” a response to the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas. “*Starting Over* doesn’t mean to live up to its title,” said **Chris Willman** in *Variety*. Stapleton is too comfortable in his sound to reinvent himself. He does offer surprises, though, including two Guy Clark covers. Those help compensate for “Cold,” a mawkish ballad with ’70s-style strings. “But when the singer goes into his stripped-down, acoustic mode, it’s usually a sign that you’re in for subtly emotive imagery that will sneak up on you, the way it would in, sure, a Guy Clark song.”

## Aesop Rock

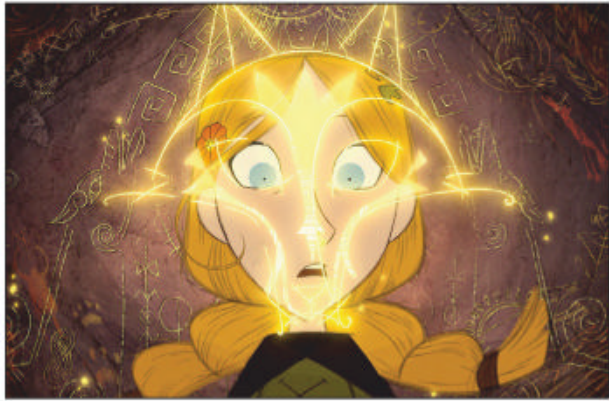
### Spirit World Field Guide

★★★★★



Aesop Rock “sounds as inspired as he did two decades ago,” said **Andrew Sacher** in *Brooklyn Vegan*. The verbose rapper helped define the sound of New York underground

hip-hop in the early 2000s before a move to Oregon, and at 44, “he’s still figuring out how to twist his words into mind-bending rhyme schemes.” Aesop’s first solo LP in four years is a psychedelic concept album set in a parallel universe that we learn is populated by bats, eels, and magic spells. “Rapped with verve, every detail is delivered with a lysergic pop or an eldritch crackle, animals and action verbs smashed together like chimeras,” said **Stephen Kearse** in *Pitchfork.com*. “Aesop has always been a vivid and imagistic rapper, but here his writing brims with wonder.” Producing is his other magic power, and “the beats here are the best of his career, full of torque and life.” And though “his bizarre yarns are certainly eccentric,” Aesop has poured his anxious, overactive mind into his vision quest, resulting in “the most joyous album he’s ever made.”



Robyn feels the beast within.

## Wolfwalkers



“Every frame of this movie is a feast for the eyes,” said **David Ehrlich** in *IndieWire.com*. Cartoon Saloon, the Irish animation studio that brought so much warmth and beauty to 2009’s *The Secret of Kells*, has outdone itself with *Wolfwalkers*—another hand-drawn fantasy based on Irish folklore. “Far and away the best animated film of the year so far,” it’s a heartfelt drama about a plucky girl named Robyn who ventures outside Kilkenny’s fortified walls and there encounters the last of the Wolfwalkers—humans who at night take lupine form and run through the woods. The setup is “more than a little overbaked and overdrawn,” said **Glenn Kenny** in *The New York Times*. Robyn’s father, voiced by Sean Bean, is an English soldier serv-

ing under an Oliver Cromwell figure who is demanding eradication of all wolves in the region. You can guess where the movie is going from its earliest moments. Despite the story’s pat character arcs, *Wolfwalkers* “casts a spell that will linger for a long, long time,” said **Sam Adams** in *Slate.com*. “There’s a powerful sense of the mystical woven through the film,” a sense that the natural world is an unknowable place to be respected and deferred to. That’s often true of the best art aimed at children, “who don’t need to be reminded that there is much of the world that lies outside of their understanding.” (In select theaters now and on AppleTV+ Dec. 11) PG

### Other new movies

#### Freaky

At age 50, Vince Vaughn makes a very convincing teenage girl, said Bill Goodykoontz in *The Arizona Republic*. In this campy mashup between a body-swap comedy (think *Freaky Friday*) and a slasher flick (such as *Friday the 13th*), the motormouthed comedy star plays a serial killer who swaps bodies with a high schooler named Millie after stabbing her with an ancient Aztec dagger. Once transformed, Vaughn “has a blast” nailing the mannerisms of “the classic horror-movie good girl,” and his co-star, Kathryn Newton, is just as good at selling her transformation into an icy killer. There are plot holes, but “don’t sweat the details: More than anything else, *Freaky* is a lot of fun.” (In theaters now; available on demand Nov. 30) R

#### Dreamland

When Margot Robbie first appears in this gauzy period crime romance, she’s “about as perfectly coiffed a gunshot-wounded bank robber as you’ll ever find hiding in an abandoned Dust Bowl barn,” said Michael Ordoña in the *Los Angeles Times*. A 17-year-old played by Finn Cole becomes a Clyde to her Bonnie, and though their story wants to be about legends, unreliable narrators, and the price of escape, it “ends up not saying much about any of them.” (In select theaters or \$10 on demand) R

#### Monsoon

This gentle travel drama provides “an interesting change of pace” for *Crazy Rich Asians*’ Henry Golding, said Ty Burr in *The Boston Globe*. The rising star is “sympathetic if opaque” as a gay man returning to his native Vietnam to scatter his parents’ ashes. Though “too quiescent” in its chronicling of this prodigal’s wanderings, the film is “shot with a steady eye to the beauty and decay of modern Saigon.” (\$7 on demand) Not rated

#### Make Up

With her first feature, director Claire Oakley “has taken the template of arthouse realism and audaciously spiked it with some genre thrills,” said Peter Bradshaw in *The Guardian.com*. Molly Windsor plays an 18-year-old who has joined her boyfriend in an RV at an out-of-season English resort. Soon she’s unsure if she’s being cheated on or stalked by a ghost, while Oakley’s “expertly made” film “luxuriates in its winter chill.” (In select theaters or \$14 at virtual cinemas) Not rated

## A Thousand Ways

Virtual theater from 600Highwaymen.org ★★★★★

“It sounds odd to describe an hourlong telephone chat as a work of theater,” said **Laura Collins-Hughes** in *The New York Times*. But the structured conversation I recently had with a stranger because we had both bought tickets to participate in the latest show created by the theater duo 600 Highwaymen required no stage or actors to be rewarding. “A Phone Call,” the first part of a planned triptych titled *A Thousand Ways*, “achieves more goals of theater—telling stories, triggering imagination, nurturing empathy, fostering connection—than nearly any other show I have experienced since pre-pandemic days.” The stranger and I were connected at an appointed hour and began speaking to each other while following the prompts of a computerized female voice. Over the next hour, we each revealed fragments of ourselves in a way that inspired imagining the complexity of the other person’s humanity.

This kind of thing has been done before, said **J. Kelly Nestruck** in *The Globe and Mail* (Canada). A whole field of performance, called relational aesthetics, developed in the 1990s around the idea of



Co-creators Abigail Browde and Michael Silverstone

curating interactions between strangers. And as with other interactive performances I tuned into earlier in the pandemic, “there was a mindfulness element to the proceedings, an attempt to make participants slow down and connect with our bodies and each other.” But, as lovely as my own co-participant was, it was not a sufficiently novel experience to share random facts about my life, imagine being in a car that breaks down in the desert, and repeat short lines of relevant dialogue. “Something about the project overall felt a little phoned in.”

For me, “A Phone Call” was magical, said **Alexandra Schwartz** in *The New Yorker*. I wrongly assumed my partner was significantly older—until he revealed being a year younger than me. But we each only answered what was asked by the computerized voice, so he learned that I had never fired a gun, but didn’t learn my age. I learned that he was an out-and-proud painter. “How novel, and relaxing, to give up conversational control—to feel interest without needing to perform.” Yet it was as if we were dancing, learning each other’s rhythms.

The denouement of our imagined encounter, when we were asked to imagine we were sleeping under the stars, “touched on the twee,” and I assume that aspect will be similar for any ticketbuyer who accesses a production of the work over the coming several weeks. Even so, I was annoyed when someone in my house spoiled the desert-night illusion by turning on the lights. “I wanted to stay on that frequency, with that stranger.” And the call’s abrupt conclusion left me “with that best and rarest of feelings—wanting more.”



## Streaming tips

*Because we all need a little therapy right now...*

**The Bob Newhart Show**

All due apologies to Kelsey Grammer, but Bob Newhart takes the crown for TV's all-time funniest therapist. The brilliance of his sitcom lies in how his character, also a Bob, reacts to the absurdities presented by his patients, co-workers, and friends. *Hulu*

**In Treatment**

Gabriel Byrne invites the camera in close, episode after episode, as the therapist he portrays soulfully engages with a revolving cast of patients played by top-tier talent (Debra Winger, Alison Pill, Josh Charles, Hope Davis). At their best, the half-hour episodes resemble intense one-act plays. *HBO Max*

**Web Therapy**

Dr. Fiona Wallice is a quintessential Lisa Kudrow character, uproariously oblivious of her own incompetence. She routinely dispenses questionable-to-disastrous advice to patients she sees online in three-minute sessions—a device that allows the series to feature a who's who of Hollywood. *YouTube and IMDbTV*

**Frasier**

For 11 seasons, snooty therapist brothers Frasier and Niles Crane were hilariously humbled by life's curveballs and their blue-collar father who was there to watch it all. It never gets old, thanks to co-stars Kelsey Grammer and David Hyde Pierce, tremendous writing, and a brilliant supporting cast. *Hulu*

**Wanderlust**

Like Gabriel Byrne's Paul Weston, Toni Collette's Joy Richards is a therapist in need of therapy. Bereaved and guilt-ridden, she cheats on her husband before they agree on an open marriage. Knowing Joy's struggles adds fascination to scenes in which she dispenses advice, and to sessions with her own therapist, played by Sophie Okonedo. *Netflix*

**The Week's guide to what's worth watching****Black Narcissus**

Virtue wilts in the thin air of the Himalayas in this remake of a celebrated 1947 erotic melodrama. Gemma Arterton steps into Deborah Kerr's old role as an ambitious nun who establishes a cliff-top convent in a former palace where a ruler had kept his harem. The atmosphere seems to trigger erratic behavior among the nuns, some of it igniting a romantic rivalry between Arterton's Sister Clodagh and Aisling Franciosi's Sister Ruth. *Monday, Nov. 23, at 8 p.m., FX*

**Happiest Season**

There's still life in the holiday rom-com after all. Kristen Stewart and Mackenzie Davis co-star as a lesbian couple so in love that one of them is thrilled to bring the other home for the holidays—until she remembers that she still hasn't told her parents that she's gay. The pair do a charmingly weak job of lying about their relationship and get plenty of help on the comedy from supporting actors Daniel Levy, Aubrey Plaza, Mary Steenburgen, and Victor Garber. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Nov. 25, Hulu*

**Saved by the Bell**

For a certain cohort, Saturday mornings will always belong to Zack, Kelly, Slater, and the rest of the gang from Bayside High. A Screech-less reboot of the half-hour sitcom brings back several original cast members, including Elizabeth Berkley and Mario Lopez, now playing Jessie Spano and A.C. Slater as the school's guidance counselor and gym teacher. The show will belong to a new crop of teenagers, but the first episode hinges on self-aware satire and a visit by Mark-Paul Gosselaar's Zack Morris, who's now California's fair-haired governor. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Nov. 25, Peacock*

**The Flight Attendant**

Kaley Cuoco can make her own noise. The *Big Bang Theory* sidekick shines in this daring limited series about a hard-drinking flight attendant who meets a handsome traveler on a flight, spends the night with him, then wakes in a bed where he lies dead with his throat slashed. With her memory foggy, she instinctively starts cover-



*McCarthy dresses for giggles in Superintelligence.*

ing things up—and making matters worse. From a novel by Chris Bohjalian. *Available for streaming Thursday, Nov. 26, HBO Max*

**Superintelligence**

Melissa McCarthy's latest comedy is often predictable. But the star predictably wins plenty of hearty laughs playing an average-in-every-way American woman who has to prove humanity is worth saving when a powerful artificial intelligence, voiced by James Corden, decides to observe her for three days while trying to decide whether to destroy the planet. *Available for streaming Thursday, Nov. 26, HBO Max*

**Other highlights****Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life**

A four-part *Gilmore Girls* sequel created for Netflix begins a four-night run in its network premiere. *Monday, Nov. 23, at 8 p.m., the CW*

**Hillbilly Elegy**

Glenn Close delivers a fiery performance as a tough-love grandma in Ron Howard's shaky adaptation of J.D. Vance's best-selling memoir. Amy Adams plays the narrator's addict mother. *Available for streaming Tuesday, Nov. 24, Netflix*

**Nature: Santa's Wild Home**

Lapland, the fabled home of Santa Claus, is also the stomping ground of the reindeer, great gray owls, and orcas featured in this snowy nature documentary. *Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 8 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

**Show of the week****My Psychedelic Love Story**

Errol Morris is on an acid trip. In his 2017 series, *Wormwood*, the influential documentarian explored the 1953 death of a scientist tied to CIA experiments with LSD. Here, he presents a captivating figure in Joanna Harcourt-Smith, a former socialite and Rolling Stones groupie who found love with LSD guru Timothy Leary. The recently deceased subject is an entrancing presence, spinning tales of her life with Public Enemy No. 1 before contemplating her role in his capture. Had she unwittingly been a pawn in his entrapment? Her story is at times shaky, giving Morris space to play. *Sunday, Nov. 29, at 9 p.m., Showtime*



*Leary and Harcourt-Smith, digging on each other*

### Instant Thanksgiving: A one-pan roast chicken dinner for four

With big gatherings off the table, said Ann Maloney in *The Washington Post*, many of us are looking for a quick alternative to a big turkey with all the fixings. This sheet-pan dinner needs just two and a half hours, feeds four, and “streamlines the traditional multicourse meal without sacrificing any of its comforting flavors.”

#### Recipe of the week

#### Chicken with Hasselback potatoes and Brussels sprouts

*For the potatoes:*

- 4 large Yukon Gold potatoes, scrubbed
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or grated
- 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp panko (optional)

*For the chicken:*

- 1 (4½ lb) chicken, giblets removed
- 1½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp rubbed sage or ½ tsp dried sage
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ lemon

*For the Brussels sprouts:*

- 1 lb Brussels sprouts
- 1½ tbsp dark brown sugar



*Cranberries optional*

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice and grated zest of 1 lemon
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes

Place a rack in center of oven; preheat oven to 400. Lightly oil a rimmed baking sheet. Position a potato between the handles of two wooden spoons. With a knife, make slices every ⅛ inch across length, using the spoons to avoid cutting through. Repeat for all potatoes. Partially cook each potato in a microwave on high for 2 minutes.

In a bowl, combine butter, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper; set aside 4 tsp of the mixture. In a separate bowl, combine Parmesan and panko. When potatoes have

cooled, spread butter mixture all over and between the slices. Nestle potatoes together at one end of pan and loosely tent with foil. Roast for 45 minutes.

Pat chicken dry with paper towels. In a small bowl, combine thyme, sage, salt, and pepper. Drizzle olive oil over chicken, rub to coat, and gently rub some under skin. Season chicken generously with herb mixture, including under skin and inside cavity. Cut lemon half in two; place pieces in cavity, squeezing them gently. Truss legs with kitchen twine. After potatoes have cooked 45 minutes, remove foil and add chicken to center of pan. Roast chicken and potatoes together for 15 minutes.

Trim Brussels sprouts and cut larger ones in half. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add sugar, olive oil, lemon juice and zest, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Toss to coat.

Remove pan from oven. Using tongs, squeeze each potato to fan the slices. Sprinkle potatoes with Parmesan-panko mixture. Spread Brussels sprouts on the empty third of the pan. Return to oven for 45 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest part of chicken’s breast reads 155. Remove from oven. Dollop remaining seasoned butter over potatoes and let chicken rest 10 minutes before carving. Serves 4.

#### For dessert: An apple pie for every guest

For an easy dessert, consider these palm pies, said Nadiya Hussain in *Time to Eat: Delicious Meals for Busy Lives* (Clarkson Potter). They’re made with apple sauce and filo dough, so there’s no apple peeling or crust finagling involved. They also happen to be great for outdoor dinner parties.

#### Apple palm pies

- 2 10-oz jars chunky applesauce • ½ tsp pumpkin pie spice • ⅓ cup mixed nuts of your choice, roughly chopped • ⅓ cup raisins • cooking oil spray • 10-oz package filo pastry dough (6 sheets) • demerara or brown sugar, for sprinkling

- Put applesauce, pumpkin pie spice, nuts, and raisins into a bowl, stir well, and set aside. Preheat oven to 400. Spray inside of a 12-cup muffin pan liberally with oil. Unroll filo pastry onto a work surface. Stack all 6 sheets on top of one another. Using kitchen scissors, cut all the sheets at once into 8 equal squares (making 48 squares total). Cover squares with a kitchen towel to prevent their drying out.
- Take one square of filo and spray with oil, lay another

square on top, spray again, then lay another on top and spray again. Place the three-layered square inside a cup in the muffin pan, press down, then repeat for all holes. Fill each with apple filling.



- Take another filo square and spray well. Fold it in half, then fold in half again, and place it on top of one pie, folding the sides’ pointy edges inward to close. Repeat for all 12 pies. Sprinkle pies with sugar and bake 14 to 16 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream.

#### Wine: Happy Americans

If you’re trying to host Thanksgiving this year, “which wines to drink will be the least of your worries,” said Eric Asimov in *The New York Times*. But good wine is always an asset, and these three domestic options are versatile and energizing—perfect for a lengthy feast.

**2018 Lioco Sonoma County Chardonnay** (\$22). This “tangy, textured” chardonnay from a California husband-and-wife team is “the sort of white wine that will go with anything.”

**2017 Forlorn Hope Queen of the Sierra** (\$22). You’ll love “the freshness and complexity of the fruit, spice, and herbal flavors” in this organic California red blend from the Sierra Foothills.

**2019 Gia Coppola Lake County Orange Riesling** (\$25 for a liter). Many orange wines are too idiosyncratic for a long meal, but Gia Coppola has made one that’s “a sort of introduction,” with “pretty flavors of dried fruits.”



## The console wars: Which is better—the PlayStation 5 or the Xbox Series X?

### The Sony PlayStation 5

Wired.com

Sony's new gaming machine "looks and feels next-gen in a way that few consoles in recent memory have." In contrast to the Xbox Series X, which is just a box, the PS5 "looks like a cybernetic clam." And the innovations go beyond surface design: Sony's DualSense controller is capable of nuanced haptic feedback, showing "serious potential" for gaming's immersive future. When I swung through the streets in *Spider-Man: Miles Morales*, "the controller didn't just rumble—it thwipped like I'd imagine Spider-Man's webbing would."



IGN.com

"It truly leaves other controllers feeling primitive in comparison." Other welcome upgrades involve the user interface, which is "significantly more elegant," as well as the "blisteringly quick" solid-state drive, which reads data twice as fast as Microsoft's. Unfortunately, Sony's drive also offers much less usable space: 667GB vs. 802GB in the Series X. "That's room for maybe a dozen games." After that, you'll need to invest in external storage.

Polygon.com

"Games are the focus of the PlayStation 5. Everything else is just gravy." Currently, the only big, new game tailored for a next-gen console is *Demon's Souls*, a role-playing game for the PS5. Microsoft will eventually lay claim to *Halo: Infinite* and *The Elder Scrolls VI*, but in the long run, Sony's internal studios will produce many more blockbuster exclusives, including sequels to *God of War* and *Horizon: Zero Dawn*. To an extent, the differences in specs don't matter. "After all, the most powerful console in the world without any good games is just a very expensive paperweight."

### The Xbox Series X

TheVerge.com

Never before has console gaming so closely resembled "a PC-like experience." While Sony poured effort into developing novel controller tech and securing exclusive titles, "Microsoft focused on basics that really matter: high frame rates, a quiet and cool console, faster load times, accessory support, and backward compatibility." Though we have yet to see any new games designed for the Series X, it can, in the meantime, play upgraded versions of old titles from any previous Xbox—and even a decent number of PC games.



Kotaku.com

Inside, the two consoles share a lot of the same cutting-edge components, including a graphics processor that supports ray tracing—a new technology that makes light and shadows look hyper-realistic. On paper, Microsoft's machine "edges out Sony's in terms of pure power." But the Series X "doesn't do a lot new."

Its most innovative feature, Quick Resume, allows you to run and pause multiple games at once, then pick up where you left off. "It's amazing, but it's not exactly a must-have next-generation feature."

CNET.com

As any Xbox devotee knows, "Game Pass is the secret weapon." Microsoft's \$15-a-month subscription service provides access to hundreds of on-demand games, and it's "well worth signing up for." Meanwhile, the new home screen's emphasis on multimedia and community creates "a more well-rounded console-as-ecosystem." That forward-thinking approach to home media "becomes more important in the long run than the actual hardware box."

### Why you might want to hold off

Though both these consoles will sell in big numbers, most gamers shouldn't feel rushed to upgrade, said *AVClub.com*. As mentioned, only one game, *Demon's Souls*, has been designed to exploit the next-gen tech, and even new releases such as *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* are "just as big and new on the old hardware." PlayStation and Xbox, to their credit, are becoming like iPhone and Android: With exclusive games less important, the product distinctions turn "largely meaningless." Still, once anyone into console games commits to a brand, that player's a lifer, with "no real incentive to hop from one platform to the other."

### Tip of the week...

How to shop Black Friday this year

■ **Don't wait.** Big retailers have responded to Covid-related limits on in-person shopping by offering online deals all month long, "essentially turning Cyber Monday into a Cyber November." High demand for electronics, particularly TVs and laptops, could also lead to product shortages after Thanksgiving.

■ **Use online tools.** Comparing prices is easier when you search for products through Google Shopping, PriceGrabber.com, or Shopzilla.com. Browser extensions Honey and CamelCamelCamel help track price changes, while phone apps BuyVia, Shopkick, ShopSavvy, and Shopular aid price comparisons while you're out at the stores.

■ **Be 'loyal.'** When you follow retailers on social media, you're rewarded with sales alerts.

■ **Think big screens.** The best TV deals this year will be on 55- to 65-inch sets (with prices down 18 to 20 percent from last year) and 75- to 86-inch sets (down 35 percent).

Source: Consumer Reports

### And for those who have everything...

"Pandemic gear that looks straight-up celestial has come to Earth." If you're tired of wearing a mask, you could instead suit up with **Air by Microclimate**, a fully enclosed helmet that looks like astronaut wear. Created by Hall Labs of Utah and designed primarily to reduce the risk of Covid infection during air travel, the 2 lb helmet features washable neck liners, a clear acrylic dome, HEPA air filters, and a ventilation system powered by fans that prevent the dome from fogging. Hall Labs does not recommend the helmet for use during conversations but is currently working on adding an intake for drinking straws.

\$299, [microclimate.com](http://microclimate.com)

Source: FastCompany.com



### Best apps...

For happier holiday shopping

■ **Nate** makes checkout much easier when you're shopping various retailer sites. The app fills in your payment and shipping info and can ship gifts directly to another user as long as you have that person's phone number.

■ **Honey** automatically finds discount codes and coupons and applies them at checkout. "If you don't have this tool installed and activated when you shop, you're missing out."

■ **Rakuten** provides automatic rebates when you use the app to shop at various big retailer sites. The savings are mailed to you by check.

■ **LiketoKnow.It** lets you go directly to "buy" when you see an item you like in photos or videos posted by your favorite social media influencers.

■ **Wish** is a top-ranked shopping app for a reason: It offers "super affordable" shoes, electronics, home goods, and much more, most of the products unbranded and sold directly by the manufacturer.

Source: Marie Claire

# Marketplace

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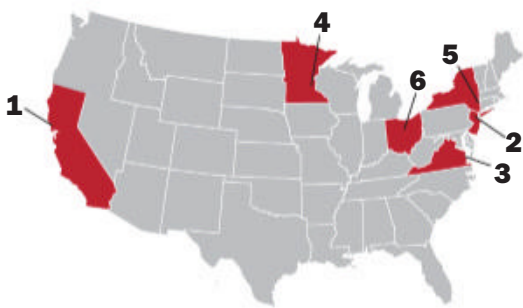
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**This week: Homes with great gardens**

**1** ◀ **Santa Rosa, Calif.** The 26-foot octagonal tower of this Mediterranean villa overlooks 8 acres of landscaped grounds and the forests and hills beyond. The three-bedroom house features marble floors, beamed ceilings, three fireplaces, a chef's kitchen, a breakfast room, a library, a wine cellar, and a sunroom. Outside, flagstone pathways connect patios, a courtyard, a wooded picnic area, a greenhouse, and the gardens, including a rock garden. \$3,150,000. Mary Anne Veldkamp, Coldwell Banker Realty, (707) 481-2672



**2** ▶ **Harding Township, N.J.** The French doors of this five-bedroom modern Colonial open on a lawn set with two French-inspired stone patios. The house has an open kitchen-living room area with beamed ceilings and central stone fireplace, a paneled study with coffered ceilings, a dining room, a media room, and a gym. The 3-acre property is landscaped with shrubs and trees and includes a fountain, a small woods, and a turf putting green with two sand traps. \$3,249,000. Susan Prisco, Coldwell Banker Realty, (973) 769-5541



**3** ▶ **Weems, Va.** The formal gardens of this four-bedroom home look out on the Corroto-man River. The Tidewater-style house features heart-of-pine floors, custom cabinetry, crown moldings, multiple decks, and a chef's kitchen opening to a butler's pantry and the living room. Outside are grounds laid out with lawns, flowers, shrubs, a fountain, oyster-shell walkways, and an arbor; a screened porch with pool and spa; and a deepwater dock with boat lifts. \$1,900,000. Travis Powell, Select Properties of Virginia, (804) 512-2086



**4 ▶ Minneapolis** The 0.23-acre lot of this four-bedroom home is planted with flowers, vines, mature trees, and boxwoods. The updated 1926 house retains its French windows and interior arches and glass-paned double doors, and has an open kitchen, a paneled study, and a master bedroom with a private porch. In front, a small patio overlooks Lake of the Isles; in back are brick and stone garden patios, a patio under an arbor, and a picnic patio with a grill. \$2,750,000. Chad Larsen, Berg Larsen Group/Coldwell Banker Realty, (612) 968-6030



**5 ▲ Amenia, N.Y.** Bogardus Hall is surrounded by wide lawns, mature trees, and extensive perennial beds. Built in 1781 and expanded in 1871, the six-bedroom Georgian house features historic details, such as the original fireplaces and a spiral staircase with murals depicting life along the Hudson River, and has a library-study, full kitchen wing, brick great room, and wine cellar. The 132-acre property includes woods, a trout creek, a two-bedroom guesthouse, and a three-car garage with office, full bath, and car wash. \$4,950,000. Deborah Montgomery and John R. Friend, Houlihan Lawrence, (845) 677-6161

## Steal of the week



**6 ▲ Mansfield, Ohio** This 1929 Normandy-style château stands on nearly 2 acres of landscaped grounds. The five-bedroom house has been updated with a modern kitchen, wet bar, and security system, but preserves the original central turret with curved staircase, steep slate roof, Juliet balcony, frescoes, wormy chestnut-beamed ceilings, and the cellar room once used as a speakeasy. Outside are a sweeping front drive, porch, and garden beds, and a backyard with mature trees, lawn, patio, and carved-limestone elements, including a fountain. \$489,000. Jill Haring, Haring Realty, (419) 571-6889

## The news at a glance

## The bottom line

■ Americans' total household debt has risen to a record high of \$14.36 trillion, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Mortgage debt hit \$9.86 trillion amid a surge in refinancing. *Bloomberg.com*

■ Fidelity Investments said the number of 401(k) participants with \$1 million or more in one of its plans increased to 262,000, up about 17 percent from the previous quarter. The number of IRA millionaires jumped to 234,000, up nearly 15 percent. *The Washington Post*

■ After its fourth-quarter profits rose 25 percent from last year, Costco announced it will be giving \$4.4 billion back to investors with a \$10 per share special dividend. Among Costco's offerings for shoppers this year: membership in a private jet charter company, for \$17,499.99. *FoxBusiness.com*

■ Adobe Analytics, which measures sales at 80 of the top 100 U.S. online

retailers, projects a total of \$189 billion in online holiday sales. FedEx is hiring 70,000 seasonal workers, while UPS is adding more than 100,000. *Associated Press*

■ Boeing's costs from the grounding of its 737 Max include \$8.6 billion in compensation to customers, \$5 billion in added production costs, and \$6.3 billion in other costs for the plane. The company could also lose as much as \$67 billion in revenue from canceled orders, making the 737 Max the most expensive corporate debacle in history. *CNN.com*

■ Americans are wasting \$2 billion a year buying premium gasoline they don't need, according to the American Automobile Association. The "grade gap" in many parts of the country between premium and regular is now 50 to 60 cents per gallon. *CNBC.com*



## Retail: Lockdown habits define holiday season

Retailers are worried about an ice-cold holiday shopping season, said **Julia Horowitz** in *CNN.com*. A second wave of Covid-19 is surging across the country at the worst possible time for stores hoping for more foot traffic to boost sales and put them back in the black. But there are already signs that the virus will "hurt consumer confidence and hit

spending" just as the holidays arrive. "Retail sales increased by only 0.3 percent" from September to October, the slowest gain in six months. The overall numbers beat last year's, but clothing stores, department stores, and sporting goods stores all saw sales drop, and with no new stimulus checks in sight, shoppers may be reining in spending.



Not enough for stores to celebrate

Our shopping habits are still in lockdown mode, said **Sarah Halzack** in *Bloomberg.com*. Americans are "bulk buying, nesting, and stockpiling," in what could be a long-term change in behavior. Home Depot's sales boomed 23 percent "as consumers continued to splash out on remodeling and decorating projects." Walmart's traffic was down, but average spending per receipt rose 24 percent. Consumers are still willing to "splurge on big-ticket items" that help keep them "entertaining themselves within the four walls of their homes." All this suggests the pandemic still "looms large" in Americans' spending decisions.

## Fed: Controversial nominee stalled in Senate

The Senate voted against advancing **Judy Shelton's** nomination to the Federal Reserve board this week, said **Laura Litvan** and **Erik Wasson** in *Bloomberg.com*. Plans to confirm President Trump's controversial pick, a critic of the Fed who has backed a return to the gold standard, were "blown up" when Iowa Republican Sen. **Chuck Grassley** tested positive for Covid-19, leaving the GOP "short of the votes needed to overcome united Democratic opposition." Senate Republicans are expected to try "to bring the nomination up for reconsideration," although it was not immediately clear when **Grassley** and fellow Republican Sen. **Rick Scott** would emerge from quarantine.

## Tesla: Finally joining the S&amp;P 500

The S&P 500 is adding Tesla to the benchmark index after the company notched its fifth straight profitable quarter, said **Heather Somerville** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The announcement this week "validates what was once a niche and highly unprofitable Silicon Valley company" that has continued to "defy skeptics in Wall Street and Detroit." Investors will now look for it to defy historical precedent: "Stock performance for companies added to the S&P between 1973 and 2018 usually fell behind the index a year after inclusion."

## Amazon: A new push into online prescriptions

Amazon launched a pharmacy business this week that will allow customers to order prescription medications online, said **Christina Farr** and **Annie Palmer** in *CNBC.com*. The new service is built on its 2018 acquisition of **PillPack**, a popular prescription delivery service, including **PillPack's** "pharmacy software, fulfillment centers, and relationships with health plans." Amazon says "it has tools to verify that a physician legitimately ordered each prescription," which can be transferred from an existing retailer to the online platform.

## IPOs: Airbnb to go public in tough travel climate

Airbnb filed paperwork for its initial public offering this week, revealing just how much the pandemic has hurt its home-sharing business, said **Erin Griffith** in *The New York Times*. The 12-year-old startup brought in \$2.5 billion in revenue for the first nine months of 2020, a decline of \$1.2 billion from a year ago. It also laid off nearly a quarter of its staff and raised emergency funding in May. But after the company repositioned itself "around getaways that are within driving distance of people's homes" revenue bounced back, setting the stage for a public offering that could leave Airbnb valued at \$30 billion.

## Corporate gurus tackle life at home

Stuck-at-home business consultants are unleashing advice on unwilling clients, said **Rachel Feintzeig** in *The Wall Street Journal*: their families. "Used to soaring off to businesses in need each Sunday to Thursday," the next-best thing is optimizing the house. "We can't turn it off," said **Julia Demkowski**, who runs a management-consulting firm in Fredericksburg, Va. She printed copies of the time sheets she uses with clients for her son to record "intervals spent on videogames and homework." **Sarah Elk**, a partner at **Bain & Co.**, designed Kanban boards—a "staple of agile management" to "make progress clear to the team"—for her kids' days. The experiment lasted only three weeks. But others have found more success channeling their energy. **Steph Nearhos**, a consultant for **Pricewaterhouse Coopers**, planned a backyard wedding for her sister, assigning her future in-laws "deliverables," such as stocking the charcuterie board.

## Digital nomads: Remote work's furthest frontier

More people are trading work-from-home for “work-from-anywhere” during the pandemic, said Kathryn Dill in *The Wall Street Journal*. With many offices closed until well into 2021, “digital nomads” are “experimenting with new locations and lifestyles,” sometimes way off the grid. With their offices closed until August 2021, Chelsea Alexander Paul and her husband, Evan, left their San Francisco apartment after their lease ended in August “for a series of Airbnbs” in Washington state, Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Arizona, working during the week and traveling on weekends. Public-relations consultant Sarah Solomon said “waking at 3:45 every morning” to speak with clients on the East Coast from Maui is “a trade-off she’s willing to make.”



A great place to work, until the cell signal fails

You’ve probably seen the people “Instagramming their work-days from empty beach resorts in Bali,” said Erin Griffith in *The New York Times*. But there are things about the digital nomad life that Instagram doesn’t tell you about. “Tax things. Red tape things. Wi-Fi rage things. Closed border things.” Katie Smith-Adair and her husband “packed up their Volvo with a tent and an outdoor shower” for what they hoped would be “a peaceful commune with the redwoods.” But they quickly found Wi-Fi hard to come by on the road, and her “office became a folding chair outside a McDonald’s or Starbucks.” Others don’t fully consider the tax implications. A popular idea, using the foreign

earned income exclusion, “requires being out of the country for 330 full days of the year, not counting travel.” Some workers traveling abroad have received harsh ultimatums from employers—come home or resign—who balked at paying the foreign taxes.

Some countries are making longer-term plans abroad easier, said Lilly Graves in *Travel + Leisure*. A new work visa program being offered by Aruba, “One Happy Workation,” offers stays of three months, “a nice jump from the usual 30-day period a tourist can be admitted to the island.” Bermuda was also among the first to offer a one-year visa, attracting “an amazing culture of transplanted workers” who gather “between tennis matches and thermoses of Dark and Stormies on the beach.”

Sounds fun, said Justin Fox in *Bloomberg.com*, but “digital nomads” still make up less than 7 percent of the U.S. labor force, and that’s not going to change much. One survey by MBO Partners this summer estimates there are 10.9 million digital nomads in the U.S. this year compared with 7.3 million a year ago—and many more who say they are “planning” to take the leap in the next two or three years. Most of them never will, however, because “when full-time jobs with benefits are available, that’s what most American workers prefer.”

### What the experts say

#### Home-buying for unmarried couples

With mortgage rates at a record low, many couples are looking to purchase a house before they are married, said Veronica Dagher in *The Wall Street Journal*. However, there are “a different set of risks, both financial and practical,” for unmarried partners to consider. “How the house is titled is critical,” and couples can choose sole ownership, joint tenancy with rights of survivorship, or tenants in common. The last is popular among younger couples, because it gives each an ownership stake. But if a partner dies before naming the surviving partner as the beneficiary of the house, “the survivor could become a co-owner with the late partner’s relatives.”

#### A perfect environment for fraud

The pandemic has created “the greatest environment for business fraud in decades,” said Geoff Colvin in *Fortune*. Experts point to three elements working in conjunction for corporate scammers: pressure, opportunity, and rationalization. The bad economy is creating the pressure. Companies that find themselves “unable to meet Wall Street’s expectations” are more inclined to resort to trickery. The pandemic’s work-from-home environment has also contributed to less oversight, less security, and

fewer examiners able to “travel and interview people in person.” Investigators complain that on Zoom they can’t judge who is lying. “Our fraud examiners want to see whether interviewees are closing their arms, for instance,” says the president of an association of fraud examiners. “What about micro-expressions in the face and how muscles in the face contort?”

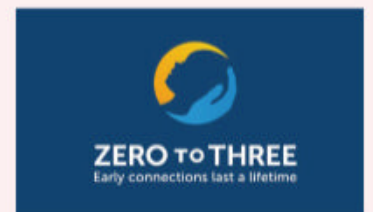
#### An explosion of Medicare options

Medicare’s expanding marketplace is becoming overwhelming, said Mark Miller in *The New York Times*—but it’s worth investigating your choices. Because of efforts to privatize the medical safety net for seniors starting in the 1990s, recipients today have “plenty of options.” A typical enrollee who shops for 2021 coverage “will be able to choose from 57” different plans that include drug coverage. Proponents say this “keeps prices down and encourages innovation.” But a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 57 percent of people “didn’t review or compare their coverage options annually,” because many found them too “confusing” to wade through. Insurers are taking advantage. Many plans have lowered their premiums, but 86 percent now have a deductible—usually the maximum amount (\$445) the government allows.

### Charity of the week

Children’s earliest experiences dramatically influence their future health and well-being.

Launched in 1977, **Zero to Three** ([zerotothree.org](http://zerotothree.org)) supports



professionals and parents nationwide in applying best practices to the care of infants and toddlers. When abuse or neglect occurs, the organization’s Safe Babies Court Teams pair child development specialists with judges to identify the actual needs of the child and ensure the court’s decisions meet those needs. The HealthySteps program places specialists in pediatricians’ offices to screen for and support families that might need extra help facing parenting challenges such as feeding, behavior, and sleep issues. During the pandemic, Zero to Three has been sharing free resources for parents at [zerotothree.org/coronavirus](http://zerotothree.org/coronavirus).

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.



## President-elect: Inheriting an economy in disrepair

“Voters didn’t elect Joe Biden because they thought he would be the best steward of the economy,” said *The Economist*, but the economy may well define his presidency anyway. Biden’s first test will be “persuading Congress to keep the purse strings loose” and stave off further economic calamity. “If the virus again puts the economy to the sword,” he may have to save it with much less support from Republicans. But the new president also must consider “the post-vaccine economy.” Lockdowns and work-from-home have ushered in a new world in which “intangible capital replaces brick-and-mortar” far faster than anticipated. So far, Biden has shown a “nostalgia for manufacturing jobs and an impulse to load firms with worthy social goals.” But as the turn to technology reshapes the labor market and tears at the social fabric, Biden will need an administration that will not stand in the way but seek to “help people adapt.”



Biden: Pushing for a new relief package

Another key question revolves around how Biden handles trade, said Edward Alden in *Foreign Policy*. Don’t expect the U.S. to quickly return to an era of multinational trade agreements. Instead of saying he would “work with allies on a common trade policy,” Biden has “matched Trump sound bite for sound bite” on China. His “Build Back Better” campaign platform was erected around similar protectionist promises, too; he’s even pledged that the government won’t be “purchasing anything that is not made in America.” But after four years of President Trump, “the international trade system is collapsing.” Without America’s leadership, 14 Asia Pacific nations—including Japan, South Korea, and Australia—just joined with China in their own free-trade

bloc, effectively replacing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Trump pulled out of in 2017. The rest of the world won’t “stand still while the U.S. gets its house in order.”

More than trade, business owners’ biggest concern is the prospect of new shutdowns, said Gene Marks in *WashingtonTimes.com*. Small-business owners, in particular, “don’t do Zoom.” They have to leave their houses and “soldier on and live with the virus” to provide for their families. However, some businesspeople think the election yielded a “dream scenario,” said Greg Ip in *The Wall*

*Street Journal*. Biden is a predictable, steadying force that won’t be issuing “sharp criticism of companies, by name, on Twitter.” But, if it holds, a Republican-led Senate means his “more aggressive plans can’t pass the Senate,” hamstringing legislation intended to increase taxes, confront climate change, empower unions, or add a public health option.

Divided government also means “paralysis in a time of crisis,” said Paul Krugman in *The New York Times*, and that’s bad for everyone. With a Republican-led Senate, “the best we can hope for” is a stingy stimulus package and no money to “repair our crumbling infrastructure, care for our children, and meet the urgent need for action against climate change.” Still, the economy should be “easier to clean up” than in 2009, said John Harwood in *CNN.com*. The snapback of output and hiring in the summer offers “the promise of substantial improvement” if vaccines arrive in 2021. “And simply replacing an erratic, fumbling administration with an experienced, serious-minded one” will help.

## Advice from America’s best car salesman

Geoff Colvin  
*Fortune*

The way Ali Reda became the best car salesman in the nation carries lessons for anybody in business during the pandemic, said Geoff Colvin. Reda was working at a warehouse for a decade before he first stepped foot on a car lot in 2001. Sixteen years later, he sold 1,530 new cars and 52 used ones out of the Les Stanford dealership in Dearborn, Mich., breaking a Guinness world record that had stood since 1973. By now, everyone who comes to buy a Chevrolet or Cadillac from Reda “is a previous customer or has been referred by one.” But it took years to establish that trust within the community. “It’s what you’re doing outside of the dealership

more so than in,” Reda says. When Covid-19 struck, “auto retailing looked doomed.” But Reda used his connections with area nonprofits to buy masks that he voluntarily started dropping off at health-care workers’ homes. “As requests multiplied, he set up a website” that gave local testing information and addresses of restaurants offering takeout. On the bottom of the page—discreetly—were Reda’s email and phone number. The pandemic isn’t causing him to forget what’s worked for him. “People are going to be more inclined to do business with somebody they know,” Reda said, “somebody who has given back.”

## The pizza pie returns in triumph

Moe Tkacik  
*Marker.Medium.com*

We’re in the midst of an unprecedented pizza binge, said Moe Tkacik. Even Panera, “departing from years spent identifying itself as a lighter alternative to typical fast food,” recently introduced a pizza menu at 2,000 locations. The forces behind this trend have been as hotly contested within the restaurant industry as election results, but the financial case for pizza is unambiguous. Papa John’s same-store sales in the last quarter rose 24 percent from a year ago, while Domino’s reported a 16 percent uptick. And while “tens of thousands of independent restaurants have closed permanently since March, independent pizzerias listed on the delivery app Slice have seen

sales grow 60 percent.” Cheap to make, pizza is the only thing that restaurants serve that is as profitable as booze. The loser in the pizza rush is “the so-called \$15 salad genre” beloved by venture capitalists and embodied by the Sweetgreen chain. You might imagine that’s because “pizza is a recession food, while salad is not.” But in the last recession, Domino’s was a \$3 stock, and pundits were deriding its menu as an “unaffordable extravagance.” The chain overhauled its recipes and produced “a series of disarmingly sincere commercials about the new and improved taste.” Domino’s is now a \$400 stock, and the same pundits are calling pizza “recession-proof.”

## The Golden Boy who powered the Packers

**Paul Hornung**  
1935–2020

Paul Hornung lived up to his “Golden Boy” nickname on and off the gridiron. Playing with the Green Bay Packers from 1957 to 1966, the blond-haired football star was coach Vince Lombardi’s Swiss Army knife: an agile running back who could also pass, block, catch, and kick. Hornung was especially lethal inside the 20 yard line, scoring 15 touchdowns and kicking 15 field goals and 41 extra points in 1960—a single-season scoring record that stood for 46 years. His dynamism powered the Packers to four championship wins, and he was named the NFL’s Most Valuable Player in 1961. With matinee-star good looks, Hornung also made headlines for his carousing and partying—and for his season-long suspension, in 1963, for betting on games. “All I did, really, was seek out fun wherever I could find it,” he said. “Football made it all possible.”

Born in Louisville, Hornung was 2 years old when his parents separated, said *The Washington Post*. Raised by his mother—a devout Catholic who worked for the state government—Hornung led his high school football team to the state championship, then turned down a scholarship offer from the University of Kentucky to attend



Notre Dame. “I couldn’t say no to my mother,” Hornung explained. As quarterback for the Fighting Irish, the 6-foot-2 Hornung won the 1957 Heisman Trophy and was selected by the Packers with the first pick in that year’s NFL draft. He converted to running back, said *The New York Times*, but the Packers floundered for his first two pro seasons. “Everything began to change when Lombardi was named head coach at Green Bay.”

Lombardi “thought of the young star as a son,” said the Associated Press, and featured him in Green Bay’s signature play, “the power sweep.” In 1961, Lombardi lobbied President John F. Kennedy to excuse Hornung from an Army assignment so he could play in the NFL championship game against the New York Giants. Hornung scored 19 points in a 37-0 romp. Lombardi tolerated Hornung’s off-field escapades, commanding him to “stay at the foot of the cross” during his suspension for gambling on pro and college games; Hornung swore he had only bet on the Packers to win. After retiring from football in 1967, Hornung had to wait 18 years to be enshrined in the NFL Hall of Fame. “I never considered myself a villain,” he said, “but obviously some people did.”

## The Southern socialite who was the inspiration for Holly Golightly

Marguerite Littman and Tennessee Williams were sitting by the pool at the Hotel Cipriani in Venice in the 1970s when Williams made a mean remark about a cadaverous woman in a bikini. “That is anorexia

nervosa,” Littman told the playwright. “Oh, Marguerite,” Williams replied, “you know everybody.” She really did. Petite, vibrant, and funny, Littman was close friends with David Hockney, Christopher Isherwood, and Bianca Jagger. Truman Capote modeled Holly Golightly of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* on the Southern socialite, and Elizabeth Taylor emulated her drawl in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958). But Littman was much more than a social butterfly: She founded a leading AIDS charity in the U.K. in the 1980s, a time when polite society regarded the disease as the curse of drug users and sexual degenerates.

She was born in Monroe, La., to a homemaker mother and a father who was a prominent lawyer. She landed in Los Angeles in the 1950s, where a producer promised her an acting contract if she lost her accent, said *The Times* (U.K.). “She practiced speaking with stones in her mouth, but to no avail.” Instead, she became a vocal coach and taught Taylor, Paul Newman, and others to “speak Southern.”

After two tumultuous marriages, she wed British barrister Mark Littman in 1965 and relocated to London, where she threw “storied lunch parties,” said *The New York Times*. Following her friend Rock Hudson’s death from AIDS in 1985—she had nursed the actor in his final days—Littman founded the Aids Crisis Trust, which would raise millions of dollars. Littman had a “magical quality,” said AIDS research pioneer William Haseltine. “You might even say she’s what Holly Golightly would have been if she had grown up.”

## The mother who stood up to school segregation

**Lucille Bridges**  
1934–2020

In the summer of 1960, Lucille Bridges faced an agonizing decision. Her 6-year-old daughter, Ruby, had the chance to become the first black student at the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. Bridges’ husband, Abon, argued against Ruby enrolling; he knew segregationists would try to make his little girl’s life hell. But Bridges was determined that Ruby receive the kind of high-quality education that she herself had been denied as a child. So on Nov. 14, mother and daughter—under the escort of a squad of U.S. Marshals—walked past a crowd of furious white protesters and into William Frantz, helping shatter the segregated schooling system in the Deep South. “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to integrate,” protesters chanted; some hurled eggs, tomatoes, and even bottles. “Don’t pay them no attention,” Bridges quietly reassured Ruby. “Just pray for them.”

Born in Tylertown, Miss., to sharecropper parents, Bridges “stopped attending school after the eighth grade so that she could help them in the fields,” said *The New York Times*. She would look on as a school bus collected the children of white cotton pickers, Bridges later recalled. “I would watch them go with tears in my eyes.”



Ruby was born in 1954, “the same year as the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*,” which outlawed school segregation, said *NPR.org*. But Louisiana—where Lucille and Abon moved in 1956—defied that ruling until 1960, when a federal court ordered the state’s public schools to desegregate. Still, the Bridges’ local school district required black students to take an exam to check “if they could compete with white classmates.” Of the 165 students who took the test, Ruby was one of five to pass.

As the Bridges family became national news, the backlash against them intensified, said *The Washington Post*. Lucille lost her job as a cleaner and Abon his as a mechanic, and “the local grocery store began turning away the family’s business.” But Ruby—who became an author and civil rights activist—continued to attend school even in the face of daily protests, and her bravery was immortalized in a 1964 Norman Rockwell painting (see photo). Bridges bore no ill will toward the demonstrators who had tried to stop her daughter. “All those people calling us names, you just have to charge that to their ignorance and just go on,” she said. “Be yourself, and God will bring you through.”

# A calculated strategy to undermine the vote

*When election results started to point to a Biden victory, Donald Trump was ready with a plan to sow doubt that was four years in the making, said Jim Rutenberg and Nick Corasaniti in The New York Times.*

**T**HE TROUBLE BROKE out inside the main counting room in Detroit late on the morning of Nov. 4. It was the day after Election Day, and until then the process of tabulating votes from the city's various counting boards had gone smoothly inside the TCF Center, the cavernous convention hall that plays host to the North American International Auto Show.

As batches of ballots came in by van, workers methodically inspected and registered them at 134 separate tables, each monitored by voting rights observers and so-called election challengers from each party. But the posture of the Republican challengers shifted as the count swung in favor of Joe Biden and word spread that President Donald Trump would sue. One witness, a nonpartisan observer, Julie Moroney, heard a Republican organizer say, "Now we're going to challenge every ballot."

Republican volunteers suddenly ramped up their objections across the room: accusations that the workers doing the counting were entering obviously incorrect birth years or backdating ballots. In some cases, the volunteers lodged blanket claims of wrongdoing. "What are you doing?" a worker asked a Republican observer who was challenging ballots before he was able to even begin to inspect them, a Democratic observer, Seth Furlow, recalled. The Republican observer responded, "I was told to challenge every one."

Furlow vividly recalled his discomfort with a scene in which mostly white Republican challengers were confronting the mostly black election workers. Already, the police had escorted a handful of particularly disruptive observers from the room. But tensions increased when election officials noticed that the number of challengers had grown well beyond what each side was permitted, and barred entry in a bid to reduce their ranks. Shouts of "Stop the count" went up among Republicans.

The fraud that the Republicans claimed to observe was not fraud at all, a Michigan



*In Detroit, Republican observers were told to challenge every ballot.*

state judge determined last week in rejecting a lawsuit filed by allies of Trump. The various instances of supposed malfeasance were in fact well-established procedures for dealing with the peculiarities of data entry, the correction of minor errors, and protocols for social distancing—all intended to ensure a careful and accurate vote count.

But in the fact-twisting narrative of Trump, his political allies, and his supporters, the Detroit counting center was a crime scene where Democrats stole an election, a miscarriage demanding that outrage be channeled through the courts, presidential Twitter posts, and cable news stemwinders. And that was the plan envisioned by the pro-Trump forces all along.

Like similar episodes in Las Vegas, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, the scene in Detroit was the culmination of a years-long strategy by Trump to use the power of the executive branch, an army of lawyers, the echo chamber of conservative news media, and the obedience of fellow Republicans to try out his most audacious exercise in bending reality: to turn losing into winning.

**T**HE ROOTS OF Trump's approach date to before his election in 2016, and he advanced his plans throughout his term. But his strategy for casting doubt on the outcome of the 2020 campaign took shape in earnest when the coronavirus pandemic upended normal life and

led states to promote voting by mail.

From the start, the president saw mail-in ballots as a political threat that would appeal more to Democrats than to his followers. And so he and his allies sought to block moves to make absentee voting easier, and to slow the counting of mail ballots. This allowed Trump to do two things: claim an early victory on election night and paint ballots that were counted later for his opponent as fraudulent.

The U.S. Postal Service, after coming under the leadership of a Trump

ally, Louis DeJoy, made several cost-saving moves that severely slowed mail delivery rates and prompted broad concern about mail ballots arriving on time. In the Senate, Republicans led by Sen. Mitch McConnell blocked Democratic efforts to get more money to states so they could buy more sorting equipment to count the huge influx of mail ballots faster.

In key states like Pennsylvania and Michigan, Republican-controlled legislatures refused attempts by civil rights groups and Democrats to change or suspend statutes forbidding election workers from beginning to count ballots before Election Day. And once the counting began, the Trump campaign and the president's allies pursued other tactics to slow or stop the count and seed doubt about the validity of the results.

Before Election Day, party officials at the state and national levels helped organize teams of observers, a role that was once a symbol of the transparency of American democracy. But in this case, Trump and his allies encouraged their observers in key states to act aggressively to stop what they portrayed as widespread cheating and provide information that could be fed into lawsuits and stoke demonstrations and coverage from friendly commentators and journalists.

Nearly all of it would be done in the name of a falsehood: that the American voting system was so corroded by fraud that any losing result for the president could not be legitimate.

**A**T THE END of the 2016 campaign, facing what he and the entire political world expected to be a loss, Trump regularly repeated the claim that the election was rigged in favor of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton. International and domestic allies—the ambush-video activist James O’Keefe, Russian troll networks, Sean Hannity, and Infowars—backed him up.

Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to Trump and a perennial Republican trickster, created an outside group, Stop the Steal, that sought to enlist poll observers to collect evidence of Democratic cheating. Trump’s advisers readied legal go-teams to jet anywhere he could press a claim.

Trump’s Electoral College victory rendered those 2016 plans unnecessary. But the incoming president had reason to cling to the falsehood as a way to cast doubt on the reality that he had lost the popular vote by a margin of nearly 3 million. Trump even went so far as to impanel a presidential commission to endorse his charge about widespread voter fraud, led by Vice President Mike Pence and Kris Kobach, a former Kansas secretary of state and prominent supporter of the baseless idea that voter fraud is a national threat.

The commission disbanded amid lawsuits and dissension without issuing findings. But internal documents later released through litigation showed that even before its work truly began it had the outline for a report to claim systematic voter fraud.

In November 2019, Justin Clark, a senior Trump adviser, visited with Republicans in Madison, Wis., to emphasize just how important the state was to Trump’s prospects. He signaled how voter fraud allegations would be key to any Trump strategy in 2020, according to a recording that leaked to the Associated Press in December.

Clark explained how a ruling from a voter intimidation case against Republicans in New Jersey in the early 1980s had led to a long-standing judicial decree forbidding the Republican National Committee from sending and organizing poll watchers in elections. But that decree lapsed in 2018, which, Clark said, gave the national party a new ability to send challengers into polls in 2020 and coordinate in every battleground state.

The challengers would be focused on Democratic “cheating,” he said. And the Republican Party would have an ability it never had before to blast those charges far and wide, through the social media accounts of the president of the United States.

Wisconsin was one of three key battleground states, along with Pennsylvania and

Michigan, where the president had loyal allies who controlled the state legislatures but where Democrats were in the governors’ mansions.

During the pandemic, that political dynamic generated clashes that grew more intense as the key role of mail-in balloting became apparent, with Democrats voting by mail in large numbers during primary elections in the spring. The need for more money and new procedures to help process mail ballots more quickly became evident.

In Pennsylvania, local election administrators and Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, sought to allow processing of mail ballots,



*Outside the count in Maricopa County, Ariz.*

known as pre-canvassing, as early as three weeks before Election Day. Republicans publicly signaled a willingness to work on the issue but kept attaching conditions.

One demand sought to do away with drop boxes, which voters could use for ballots as opposed to the regular mail system; another wanted new signature-matching requirements or to eradicate a provision requiring all poll watchers to live in the county. “Every time we agreed to something that was put out there, they’d raise the bar,” said Jay Costa, the Democratic minority leader in the state senate who was leading the negotiations.

Eventually, there seemed to be some momentum behind an agreement that would have allowed for three days of pre-canvassing, enhanced security measures for drop boxes, and ballots postmarked on Election Day and received within three days to be counted. But the deal abruptly fell apart after a Republican caucus meeting in the lower chamber.

**B**Y THIS FALL, Trump looked increasingly likely to have an early advantage on Election Day as the in-person vote came in but to badly lose the mail-in vote and, potentially, the presidency along with it. A digital-consulting firm founded

by Michael Bloomberg, Hawkfish, called the early returns the “red mirage.”

The president and his allies began a concerted campaign to twist that situation—one to which they contributed by opposing early counting of mail ballots—into something more sinister. Trump urged his followers to become poll watchers. “When you go there, watch all the thieving and stealing and robbing they do,” he said at a rally in North Carolina.

On Election Day, Trump delivered much the same message to staff members, supporters, and followers at the White House as the votes were being tabulated around the country and his early leads were slipping away. “We were winning everything, and all of the sudden it was just called off,” he said. “We want all voting to stop; we don’t want them to find any ballots at four o’clock in the morning and add them to the list.”

As Democrats, opposing lawyers, fact checkers, and in some cases judges pressed for evidence, the Trump campaign released what Kayleigh McEnany, the White House press secretary, called “234 pages of sworn affidavits” from the Trump poll watchers in Detroit: “real people, real allegations, signed with notaries.”

The affidavits were connected to a last-ditch federal lawsuit by the Trump campaign to prohibit Detroit from certifying its results. But much of what they described were merely standard procedures intended to ensure an accurate and legal count.

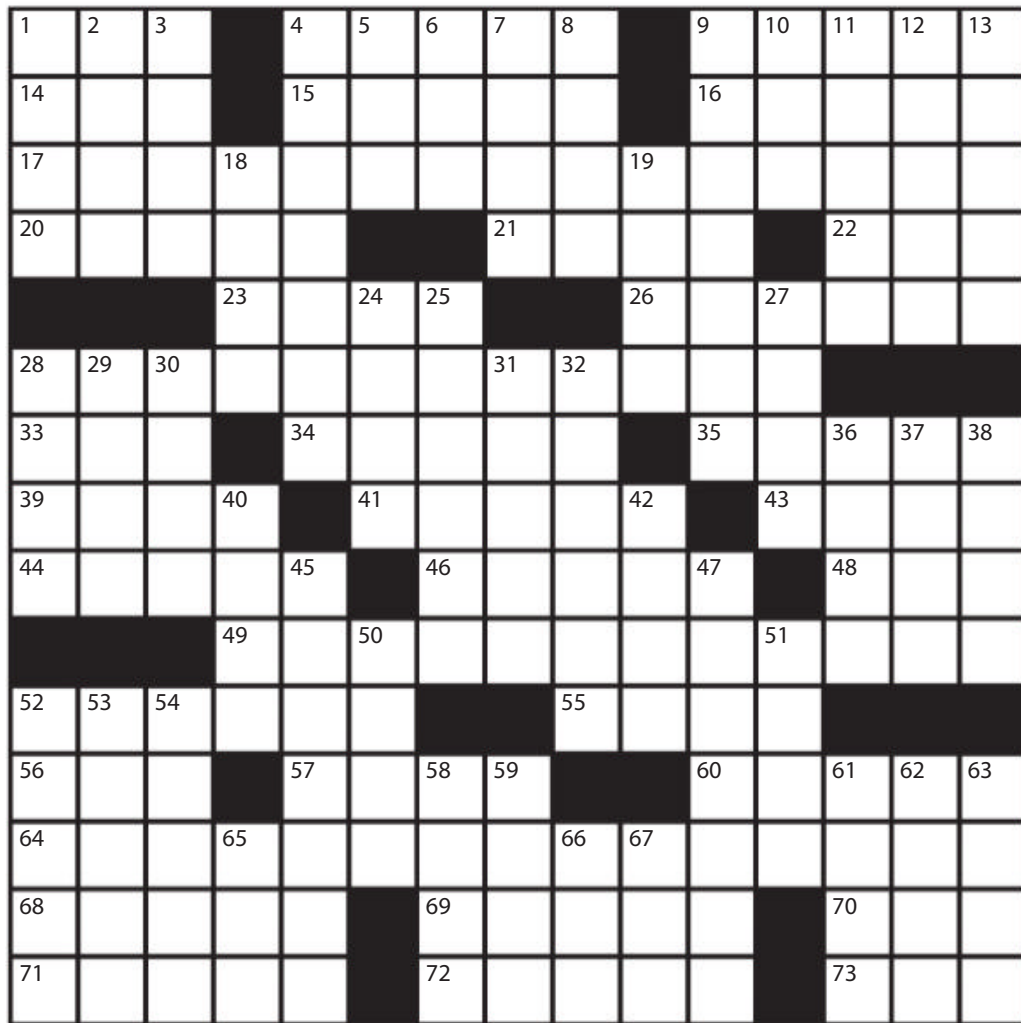
For instance, Republicans who believed they had witnessed fraud when workers input birth dates from 1900 for some mail ballots apparently did not understand that this was done in cases where information other than dates of birth was being used for verification and the dates were not readily available. The 1900 date was a placeholder for the computer program, which required something in the birth date field.

Last week, Judge Timothy M. Kenny dismissed the suit in a Michigan court, largely on the basis that the affidavits were meaningless. The suit’s “interpretation of events is incorrect and not credible,” he found.

But when thousands of the president’s supporters demonstrated in Washington at the end of last week, the legal losses and electoral implausibilities were irrelevant. As they marched through the streets holding an enormous Trump flag flecked with white stars against a navy backdrop, they repeatedly chanted the phrase planted four years ago by Stone: “Stop the steal.”

*A version of this story originally appeared in The New York Times. Used with permission.*

## Crossword No. 577: So Many Questions by Matt Gaffney



- ACROSS**
- 1 Improve musically
  - 4 Some are epic
  - 9 Pappardelle or penne, e.g.
  - 14 Hardware store chain
  - 15 Printer brand
  - 16 Pieces of an archipelago
  - 17 These hotel employees transport luggage for guests; a certain game show host was one at age 13, in the same Ontario hotel where his father worked as a chef
  - 20 Place atop
  - 21 Take out a catamaran
  - 22 Dessert used in charts
  - 23 Gov. Gary Herbert's domain
  - 26 Minibikes
  - 28 Our game show host earned a degree in philosophy in 1961 from the university of this capital city
  - 33 Physicist's particle
  - 34 MMA champ McGregor
  - 35 Enjoy, like a recliner
  - 39 Jennings and Jeong, for two
  - 41 Biggest bone in the body
  - 43 Volcanic flow
  - 44 *The Love Boat* bartender
  - 46 Question to someone using binoculars
  - 48 Very important
- DOWN**
- 1 1975 movie with the line "This was no boat accident"
  - 2 Suffer from soreness
  - 3 Mutton, e.g.
  - 4 Panic-stricken
  - 5 Put on TV
  - 6 Addition to some coffee
  - 7 Arced tennis shots
  - 8 Where the Mets once played
  - 9 Headrests
  - 10 Shade of blond
  - 11 Skier's challenge
  - 12 Lukewarm
  - 13 Fools
  - 18 Talk up
- 19 Spanish-speaking capital
  - 24 Since
  - 25 "I'm not lying!"
  - 27 Clam digger's container
  - 28 Open-source encyclopedia, for short
  - 29 Tilling tools
  - 30 Faris or Kendrick
  - 31 Marisa in *Sweet Girl*, an upcoming Netflix action movie
  - 32 Least disputable
  - 36 Attempt at a movie scene
  - 37 No longer interested in
  - 38 Votes against
  - 40 Carpenter's tools
  - 42 Loaded
  - 45 What a *fromagerie* sells
  - 47 Filmmaking, sculpture, et al.
  - 50 "Let me \_\_\_ comment here..."
  - 51 Title character of a Charlotte Brontë novel
  - 52 Pieces in *The Queen's Gambit*
  - 53 Sound before "Gesundheit!"
  - 54 Showing little emotion
  - 58 Jackson or Rickman
  - 59 Trifling
  - 61 You might take one to dinner
  - 62 Banjoist Fleck
  - 63 Similar (to)
  - 65 Bother a little
  - 66 Marks a ballot, maybe
  - 67 Explosive letters

## The Week Contest

**This week's question:** With humans shunning flights amid the pandemic, farm animals are becoming airlines' most reliable frequent fliers. Qatar Airways, for example, now transports 500 cows, goats, sheep, and horses every day. In seven words or fewer, please come up with an advertising slogan for an airline that promises to transport farm animals in first-class luxury.

**Last week's contest:** Kanye West has lost his bid for the White House after getting only 60,000 votes in the 12 states where he appeared on the ballot. If West were to write a hip-hop track about his presidential run, what should he title the song?

THE WINNER: "Winnin' Ain't Yeezy"  
*Kim Chaffee, Glen Allen, Va.*

SECOND PLACE: "Rapper's Defeat"  
*Matthew Jay McCully, Enumclaw, Wash.*

THIRD PLACE: "The Electoral College Dropout"  
*Emily Kennedy, Shippensburg, Pa.*

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to [theweek.com/contest](http://theweek.com/contest).

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



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

## Sudoku

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

Difficulty: *hard*

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

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: [www.theweek.com/puzzle](http://www.theweek.com/puzzle).

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*"Since losing my mother to pancreatic cancer, my goal has been to ensure that everyone facing a pancreatic cancer diagnosis knows about the option of clinical trials and the progress being made."*

*-Keesha Sharp*



Photo By Brett Erickson

Stand Up To Cancer and Lustgarten Foundation are working together to make every person diagnosed with pancreatic cancer a long-term survivor.

To learn more about the latest research, including clinical trials that may be right for you or a loved one, visit [PancreaticCancerCollective.org](https://PancreaticCancerCollective.org).

