

THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

EPOCH INSIGHT

TEEN RECOUNTS 'HORRIFYING' TRANSITION, SURGERY

Every day, all across
America, our sons and
daughters are being
permanently damaged

**SPECIAL
REPORT**

**TRANS-
GENDERISM
IN AMERICA**

WEEK 37, 2022



Detransitioned

AT AGE 15, CHLOE COLE WAS CONVINCED that “transitioning” into a boy would make her feel happy and whole.

Encouraged by doctors and school staff, she had her breasts removed.

Now, three years later, Cole has “detransitioned” back to a woman and describes what she endured as “a nightmare.”

Cole feels she was let down by all the adults in her life, and she’s hardly the only one.

Every day, teenagers across the country are pushed to undergo life-altering “gender-affirming” surgery. An estimated 1.4 percent of American children aged 13 to 17 now identify as transgender.

In many cases, they are encouraged by the system.

Parents who object are pressured into supporting irreversible surgery or hormone treatment, under the threat that they might otherwise lose their child to suicide.

“They effectively guilted my parents into allowing them to do this. They gave them the whole ‘Either, you’ll have a dead daughter or a live son’ thing,” Cole told The Epoch Times.

In this special report, we delve into the broad impact of transgenderism in the country—how it’s affecting children, their families, schools, and society at large.

We also take a look at the role social media play in promoting transgenderism and fueling its rise.



ON THE COVER

In this special report, The Epoch Times investigates the impact of transgenderism on America.

JOHN FREDRICKS/
THE EPOCH TIMES

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EPOCH
INSIGHT

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An ex-transgender teen recounts her “brutal” transition and surgery.



Chloe Cole near her home in Northern California on Aug. 26. | John Fredricks/The Epoch Times

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The Report


Transgenderism in America

The number of Americans—especially teens—who consider themselves transgender has skyrocketed in recent years. This special report looks at what’s behind the phenomenon and how it’s causing irreparable damage to young people.



Newly donated LGBT books are displayed in the library of an elementary school in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES



Chloe Cole stands near her home in Northern California on Aug. 26.

PHOTO BY JOHN FREDRICKS/THE EPOCH TIMES

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

EX-TRANSGENDER TEEN

‘BECAUSE OF A DECISION I MADE WHEN I WAS KID,

RECOUNTS ‘HORRIFYING’

I CAN’T BREASTFEED MY CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE.

TRANSITION

THEY’RE STARTING TO OPERATE ON PRETEENS NOW.’

BY BRAD JONES

CHLOE COLE WAS 15 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE AGREED TO LET A “GENDER-AFFIRMING” SURGEON REMOVE HER HEALTHY BREASTS—A LIFE-ALTERING DECISION SHE NOW DEEPLY REGRETS.

HER “BRUTAL” TRANSITION from female to male was anything but the romanticized “gender journey” that transgender activists and medical professionals had portrayed, she told The Epoch Times.

“It’s a little creepy to call it that,” she said. Cole, who is now 18, feels more like she’s just awoken from “a nightmare,” and she’s disappointed with the medical and school system that fast-tracked her to gender transition surgery. “I was convinced that it would make me happy, that it would make me whole as a person,” she said.

Although she feels “let down” by most of the adults in her life, she doesn’t blame her parents for following the advice of school staff and medical professionals, who “affirmed” her desire for social transitioning, puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgery.

Most of the medical professionals did nothing to question or dissuade her or her parents, she said.

“They effectively guilted my parents into allowing them to do this. They gave them the whole, ‘Either, you’ll have a dead daughter or a live son,’ thing. They cited suicide rates,” she said. “There is just so much complacency on the part of educators—all the adults basically. I’m really upset over it. I feel a little bit angry. I wasn’t really allowed to just grow.”

Her parents, though skeptical, trusted the medical professionals and eventually consented to their daughter’s desire for medical interventions, including surgery, which was covered by their health insurance policy.

“It shouldn’t be put on adolescents to make these kinds of decisions at all,” she said.

Transgenderism

Transgenderism, while widely celebrated in popular culture and on social media in recent times, is a much more divisive issue than people may think, Cole said.

Today, Cole is one of a growing number of young “detransitioners” who reject current trends in transgender ideology and oppose the “gender-affirming” model of care being pushed by progressive lawmakers at state and federal levels.

She recently testified against California Senate Bill 107, proposed legislation authored by Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), that would shelter parents who consent to the use of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and gender transition surgery on their children from prosecution in other states that view such actions as child abuse.

“I think that is really dangerous for families across the U.S. It can tear families apart,” she said.

Cole has been harassed on social media and received a couple of death threats from trans activists since she announced her detransition and took a stand against “gender-affirming” policies.

“Now that I’m completely disillusioned from all of it, it’s really shocking that we’ve even gotten to this point,” she said.

The Struggle

Diagnosed with ADHD at a young age, Cole now believes she’s “on the spectrum.”

“There is really a high comorbidity rate between gender dysphoria and autism,” she said.

Though “very feminine” as a young child, Cole was “a bit of a tomboy,” as she grew older.

“I just really hated dresses, skirts, and things of that sort,” she said.

Children’s TV shows had left her with the message “girls are less significant,” because they often depict characters who are more girly or feminine as “stupid, airheaded, and like just get in the way of things,” she said. “And that kind of imprinted on me.”

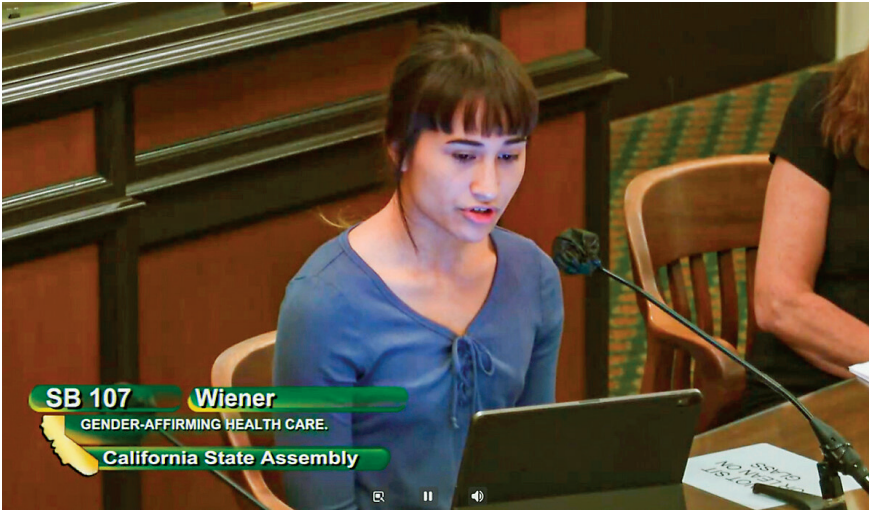
However, her real fear of femininity and early disdain for womanhood began years ago on social media and LGBT websites, she said.

“I had started puberty fairly young, about 9 years old, and I started to struggle with growing into a woman,” she said.

She started her first social media account at 11 on Instagram, and with nearly unrestricted access to the internet, she was exposed to inappropriate content, including pornography and “sexting” in online communities.

On Instagram, she was first approached by boys who identified as gay and bisexual through the platform’s messaging feature, but eventually began spending more time on recommended websites for 12- to 19-year-old “trans” teens.

“There was one particular page that stood out to me. It was a bunch of adolescents who identified as FTM [female to male]. It seemed like they were very closely knit, a very supportive commu-



nity, and that just kind of spoke to me because I’ve always struggled with making friendships and feeling excluded. I’ve never really fit in with other kids my age,” she said.

Cole seldom interacted with the transgender community in real life, but she noticed from online discussions with trans teens that many of them had deep emotional scars and mental health issues.

“Pretty much every transgender person I’ve ever met, especially around my age, either has really bad family issues or they’ve been sexually abused or assaulted at a very young age, and it’s really concerning that nobody really talks about that association,” she said.

At 11, Cole also didn’t understand she wasn’t supposed to look like the sexualized images of scantily clad women she saw online.

“I didn’t know that then,” she said. “I started to develop body image issues. I started thinking, ‘Why don’t I look like this? Am I not a woman?’ And a lot of the feminist content pushed by other girls was making womanhood out to be this terrible thing.”

The Transition

By the time she was 12, Cole told her parents she was transgender, and they sought out professional medical help.

Cole went to a gender specialist, who referred her to an endocrinologist. When the endocrinologist refused to prescribe blockers or hormones, citing concerns about how they could affect Cole’s cognitive development, he became the first and last doctor to ever deny her “gender-affirming” care.

“It was very easy to just find another endocrinologist who would ‘affirm’ me,” she said.

After two appointments, a second endocrinologist approved both puberty blockers and testosterone.

Cole was 13 when she began physically transitioning. The puberty blocker injections reduced the estrogen in her body, and about a month later, she started injecting herself with testosterone, a process medical professionals call hormone therapy.

“They put me on blockers first,” she said. “I would get hot flashes. They were pretty bad. They would happen kind of sporadically, and it would get to the point where it would feel really itchy. I couldn’t even wear pants or sweaters in the winter. It’s like an artificial menopause.”

Once on testosterone, Cole’s voice “dropped pretty low” and her breasts got smaller and lost their shape over time, she said.

Cole stayed on puberty blockers for

Chloe Cole speaks at an Assembly committee hearing for Senate Bill 107 in Sacramento, Calif., on June 28.

about 18 months and testosterone for about three years.

The hot flashes ceased when she stopped taking the puberty blockers, she said.

Binding Decision

At school, Cole was “an awkward kid” but had made a few more friends online and in person. But because she had only come out to her closest friends, she had to deal with anxiety over the possibility of being outed.

“I never even told teachers my preferred name or anything up until high school, but I was presenting in men’s clothes and shorter haircuts,” she said.

A few months after she was prescribed testosterone, Cole was groped by a boy in the middle of her eighth-grade history class, which was so chaotic that no one noticed—including her teacher, she said. The incident sealed her decision to wear binders to flatten and conceal her breasts.

“I had a relatively small chest, but it still did a bit of damage to me. My ribs are a little deformed because of them. The way they work—it’s not like the breasts just disappear—they push the breast into the ribcage,” she said.

Cole recalls her binder sticking to her skin in the hot Central Valley California weather and her chest feeling constricted.

“It was just the most uncomfortable thing,” she said.

She used the men’s bathroom, but always feared she might be sexually assaulted.

However, she didn’t change in the boys’ locker room because she was afraid of being seen with her binder and “that somebody would make a comment on it, and target [her] for it,” she said.

Most of the students, except those who had known her as a younger child, knew her as a male, but a boy in her

Chloe Cole stands near her home in Northern California on Aug. 26.



“IT KIND OF FELT LIKE PROPAGANDA—THE WORDS THEY USE LIKE ‘GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE’ AND THINGS OF THAT SORT. IT DOES FEEL LIKE I WAS SOLD A PRODUCT.”

Chloe Cole

phys ed class eventually noticed her feminine features.

“There was one time during P.E. when we were swimming. I took my shirt off. I was wearing a binder, and somebody pointed out my body shape. That was another thing that made me want to get rid of my breasts,” Cole said. “He said something along the lines of, ‘I don’t know what it is, but you’re looking kind of feminine,’ and that kind of hurt me.”

Before the first day of her freshman year in high school, Cole went to the principal’s office with her parents and asked for her name and records to be changed to “Leo.”

‘Top Surgery’

Before her operation, Cole attended a “top surgery” class with about 15 other children and their parents to learn about the different types of incisions.

In hindsight, she said, “it kind of felt like propaganda—the words they use like ‘gender-affirming care’ and things of that sort,” she said. “It does feel like I was sold a product.”

Cole recalls looking around the room and noticing about half of the other kids appeared they were a few years younger than her.

“Looking back on it now is a little horrifying. It’s a little weird considering ... they were already considering surgery,” she said.

But at the time, seeing other kids and knowing she wasn’t alone solidified Cole’s decision to go ahead with the most widely performed type of double mastectomy called a “double incision with nipple grafts” in June 2020. She was 15.

The surgery involved removing breast tissue and contouring the chest

to make it look more masculine.

“They take off the nipple and reattach it in a more masculine position, and there are a few side effects associated with it,” Cole said.

Not only is there a loss of sensation from cutting away the breast tissue, but repositioning the nipple requires severing the duct that supplies breastmilk to the nipple, she said.

The surgery left Cole with deep muscle soreness for which she was prescribed an opioid-based medication, but because the pain from the resulting digestion problems was worse than the pain in her chest, she stopped taking the pills.

“I was actually disabled for a while. I had a really limited range of motion, especially in my arms and upper body. There were a lot of things I couldn’t do. I couldn’t even leave the house for a few weeks,” she said. “I remember that being really upsetting.”

The most devastating part of the recovery process has been ongoing post-op



Chloe Cole holds testosterone medication used for transgender patients, in Northern California on Aug. 26.

Chloe Cole announced her detransition in May 2021, about 11 months after she underwent surgery.



issues with her nipples, she said. “It’s been two years, and I’m still having some really bad skin issues,” she said. “The way the skin heals over the grafts ... is just awful. It’s really quite disgusting.” Cole said she had trouble contacting her surgeon afterward, and although she was supposed to have a follow-up appointment with him, she ended up having a call with two nurses who were in the operating room instead. She also worries the puberty blockers might have affected her brain development as her first endocrinologist had warned, but her greatest regret is how the surgery has permanently affected her as a woman. “I was 15. You can’t exactly expect an adolescent to be making adult decisions,”

she said. “So, because of a decision I made when I was kid, I can’t breastfeed my children in the future. It’s just a little concerning that this is being recommended to kids at the age I was, and now even younger. They’re starting to operate on preteens now.”

Detransition Dilemma

During the COVID-19 lockdowns and distance learning, Cole resorted to social media for virtual interaction and noticed girls her age were posting “super-idealized” pictures of themselves. Although she realized the images were edited and enhanced, they triggered the same body image issues she had experienced as a child. “For a while, it made me wonder, ‘Is this

really a woman’s worth? If I don’t do this, does that make me not as good as these other women?’” she said. But eventually, Cole bought some feminine clothing and makeup, which she only wore in the privacy of her room. “I guess subconsciously I started to realize what I was losing. I started to miss presenting more femininely, like being pretty,” she said. Over time, she grew increasingly more disillusioned with the idea of living as a man. “I realized I wasn’t really up for a lot of the responsibilities that come with it,” she said. “There were times when I felt like I wasn’t good enough as a girl, but maybe I’m not good enough as a boy either, and maybe I just can’t be good

ALL PHOTOS BY JOHN FREDRICKS/THE EPOCH TIMES



(Far Left) Chloe Cole holds a body brace that she used while she was taking transgender hormone treatments. **(Left)** Chloe Cole holds a childhood photo of herself.

enough to be either, so I don’t really know what I am.” Over the next few months, the isolation of the lockdowns and school closures took their toll on Cole’s state of mind. She was depressed and fell into an emotional tailspin. During the second semester of her junior year, Cole’s grades plummeted, and her parents decided to put her into an online-only school program. “It was sort of like a homeschooling program, except I would have to go to the district office at least once per week for testing purposes,” she said. “My school performance actually got a lot worse, because now I was truly isolated.” But Cole admits that having less social interaction gave her time for more introspection. During the last quarter of her junior year, she took a psychology class for the first time and learned about child development. One of the lessons covered the Harlow experiments on infant rhesus monkeys with a theme of maternity, mother-child bonding, and breastfeeding. “I started to realize, this is what I’m taking away from myself,” she said. “I’m not going to be able to bond with my children the same way that a mother does

by taking on a male role, and I’ve gotten rid of my breasts, so I can’t feed my children naturally or be involved with them in that way. And I think that was like the biggest catalyst in me realizing how wrong all of this was.”

Embracing Womanhood

Cole announced her detransition in May 2021, about 11 months after the surgery, and has embraced womanhood. “I am a woman,” she said. Despite her transition, Cole said she has always been mainly attracted to masculine men and had only ever been “marginally attracted” to women. She is “straight,” she said, and knows now that her gender confusion as a child was based on insecurity and her fear of being a woman. Cole has enjoyed “cultivating” a new feminine look for herself, but says she still isn’t really into makeup and doesn’t have time for it most days. “I’m almost always in a dress or a skirt because, honestly, it’s really comfy,” she said. She’s learned to accept her body the way it is, she said, and doesn’t want to go through the process of reconstructive surgery or get breast implants.

“There are multiple options for reconstruction, but I honestly don’t think it’s worth it,” she said. “I will never get the function back no matter what I do, so there’s not really a point in doing it.” Cole graduated from high school in May and has applied for college.

Message of Hope

Though she has been harassed on social media and threatened by activists, Cole said she’s committed to sharing her story. “I want to prevent more cases like mine from happening,” she said. She wonders why educators have become complicit in the “gender-affirming” process. “The problem is they’re not really pushing back on this whole trans thing. When I told the high school to change my name, and my email, and their records, there was really no pushback or anything,” she said. Cole urged children who may be thinking about gender-transition surgery “not to get caught up in the whole romanticization” of what it might be like to be the opposite gender and suggested they consider that there may be “other reasons” underlying gender dysphoria, including autism or other mental health issues. “I very much suggest waiting, because the brain doesn’t stop developing for most people until about their mid-20s, if not a bit later, and teenagers are known for making rash decisions. It sucks hearing that, especially as a kid, but it’s the truth,” she said. “There is a reason why you can’t buy cigarettes or alcohol or vote or rent a car under a certain age.” ■

“IT’S JUST A LITTLE CONCERNING THAT THIS IS BEING RECOMMENDED TO KIDS AT THE AGE I WAS, AND NOW EVEN YOUNGER.”

Chloe Cole

FAMILY

Husband's Transgendering Shattered Family

TRACY SHANNON MARRIED A MAN AND,
AFTER HAVING THREE CHILDREN, DIVORCED
A 'WOMAN'

BY JACKSON ELLIOTT ♦



A wedding photo of
Tracy Shannon with
her husband in 1994.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACY SHANNON

TRACY SHANNON MARRIED a man and divorced a “woman.” She had no early indication that her husband and high school sweetheart had a desire to become a woman, and the clues were slow in becoming apparent.

He started shaving his legs, saying that his physically demanding job made his jeans pull his leg hair out.

At first, Shannon didn’t think this was more than a personal quirk.

“I just thought that was so ridiculous, because I’ve never heard of any guy’s jeans pulling their hair out on their legs,” she said.

Then, she found out he secretly painted his nails, through the sharp odor of acetone in the bathroom.

Shannon realized he had a problem.

But when she visited a counselor with him, the doctor told her she was crazy to oppose his desires.

“The lady told me that I’m very closed-minded because I’m not down with the cross-dressing,” Shannon said. “She suggested that he could go and do this on weekends with a bunch of guys, and I would never have to see it.”

Shannon says her husband’s choice to indulge his fantasies of being a woman “shattered” their family and left their three children vulnerable.

Today, Shannon runs the Texas chapter of Mass Resistance, an organization founded in 1995 to “confront assaults on the traditional family, school children, and the moral foundation of society,” its website states. Today, the group has chapters in more than 16 states.

Unlike many people who criticize the transgender movement, Shannon doesn’t speak from anonymity. The stakes are too high, she says.

“There’s nothing more precious in our children that we could lose. A job is replaceable,” she said.

The Epoch Times attempted to contact Shannon’s ex-husband, but was unable to find him.

Steeped in Manipulation

Shannon’s experience with transgenderism began in 1998, before the movement went mainstream.

“They didn’t even use the word ‘trans-

gender’ back then,” she said.

But it was a foretaste of what many Americans would soon experience.

Shannon describes herself as a “trans widow.” Her husband chose to change himself so much that it was effectively like a death, she said.

Although society rarely sympathizes with men who break marriage vows to go after younger women, people often sympathize with men who break marriage vows to be “happy” as a transgender “woman,” Shannon said.

Often, strangers ask her if her husband is happy now.

“If my ex had simply just left for a younger, hotter edition, nobody would say something that cold to me. But I get that all the time,” she said.

“I think that is the most insulting thing, because a commitment to marriage should mean something,” Shannon said. “Children mean something.”

She isn’t the only trans widow. An increasing number of women have seen their husbands vanish in quests to become “women.”

According to Shannon, her husband’s pursuit of “happiness” was steeped in manipulation from the beginning.

It wasn’t until after the birth of their first child that her husband told her that he liked to cross-dress. He told her that he had known that from the beginning of their relationship and had considered telling her on previous occasions but had chosen not to.

“I didn’t want to tell you, because I didn’t think you would marry me,” she



“Between three kids, there’s been six suicide attempts.”

Tracy Shannon

said, recalling her husband’s words.

For Shannon’s husband, the idea of becoming feminine was linked to sexual pleasure, she said.

One day, she found him sexually excited while shaving his legs in the bathroom.

“Why do you get such a kick out of shaving your legs?” she recalled wondering.

On other occasions, he asked her if he could pretend to be a lesbian during sex, she said.

Later, Shannon learned her husband had autogynephilia, a form of sexual response in men characterized by sexual arousal over the idea of being or becoming female.

“In my gut, I knew it was a form of infidelity, like an elusive ‘other woman’ ... but until I learned what an autogynephile was, I had no word or explanation for what I witnessed,” she said.



Tracy Shannon (rear R) with her former husband (C) and children in 2005.

Counseling Was a Trap

When her husband admitted to his desires, Shannon agreed with him to visit a counselor.

But it was a trap, she said. The counselor had already been meeting with her husband and had supported him.

“I went there the first time, not knowing she was an LGBT counselor, and she was someone that they recommended to the community of crossdressers,” she said.

Moreover, the counselor suggested that Shannon was a lesbian, saying that since she was attracted to a man who wanted to be a woman, it meant she wanted a romantic relationship with a woman.

“We have to take everybody else’s word for what they are,” Shannon said. “But if you say you’re straight and you know it, there’s ‘something wrong with you.’”

Instead of helping her husband to change his behavior, the counselor

suggested that her husband keep secrets better.

If he bought himself women’s underwear, took her underwear, shaved his legs, put on makeup, and went out to bars with other transgender people without Shannon’s knowledge, it would be fine, the counselor said.

“No, I don’t want my spouse to have a separate life from me. That sounds crazy,” Shannon recalled replying.

Finally, the counselor said that Shannon’s husband didn’t know if he was a man or a woman. Shannon reacted by telling the counselor that if that were true, she needed a divorce.

Her husband responded to that by saying he didn’t actually want to be a woman, Shannon said. But behind her back, he took female hormones.

Hormone Therapy

In 1998, the couple’s therapist gave Shannon’s husband a letter to allow him to begin gender transition.

Shannon said she never was notified of this development throughout her husband’s 11 years of hormone use.

In the meantime, her husband lied about the symptoms of his hormone use, she said.

He developed breast buds. He told Shannon that it was a side effect of the obsessive-compulsive disorder medications he took to manage his cross-dressing desires.

“When I learned he did this on purpose, I felt violated by him and the doctors involved. I did not consent to this fantasy of ‘being lesbians.’ It is violating, unethical, and cruel,” she said.

Shannon found out her husband had been on hormones for a decade, when reading chat messages between him and his lover.

“I still cannot believe a therapist or doctor will do this without a spouse knowing,” she said.

One of her pregnancies during this time ended in miscarriage, and another of her children had a birth defect that would have been fatal without correction. She said she wonders if her husband’s hormone therapy was a factor.

In 2009, her husband took a woman’s name and started wearing women’s clothing.

After about 12 years of attempting to deal with her husband’s transgenderism, Shannon divorced him. By that time, he had completely transitioned.

“When we went to court to divorce, I was divorcing a ‘woman’ with a name that was not even on my marriage license. It was all very bizarre,” she said.

Children Involved

But her struggle had just begun. Some of the time, her husband had custody of their three children.

He soon cohabited with his lover, a woman who wanted to be a man, Shannon said.

That woman was dangerous, she added. At times, the woman threatened to kill her husband and her children.

“She was abusive toward my kids,” Shannon said.

Furthermore, her husband and his lover tried to involve her children in celebrating sexually different behaviors.

The pair tried to put Shannon’s children on a pro-BDSM gay pride parade float, she said. Her husband’s female lover walked around shirtless to display the scars that replaced her removed breasts.

They also made their home inappropriate for children, Shannon said. They left sex toys out, along with sexually explicit books.

“I always was prayerful for their protection, and I trusted God to bring them through it,” she said. “They’re moving on from all that trauma, one step at a time.”

Today, Shannon is remarried. Her children don’t see their dad, she said, but that doesn’t mean they don’t feel his loss.

“They just wanted their dad,” she said of her children.

Without their father, Shannon said her children have faced intense mental suffering.

“Between three kids, there’s been six suicide attempts on different levels of how serious they were,” she said.

When a father decides to become a woman, children don’t understand, she said. Kids need a man in their life, and a “woman” doesn’t fill that need.

“Nature matters,” she said. “And it matters to children. And they know when they’re missing out.” ■

ARMED FORCES

Transgender Policy Hurts Military

A retired US Marine says a progressive shift is impairing military preparedness

By John Seiler



U.S. soldiers ahead of deployment to Germany in Savannah, Ga., on March 2.

PHOTO BY MELISSA SUE GERRITS/GETTY IMAGES

LIKE MOST AREAS OF SOCIETY, THE U.S. armed forces are experiencing the effects of transgenderism, and critics say military preparedness has suffered as a result. Transgender individuals were banned from serving in the U.S. military for decades until officials lifted the ban in June 2016. Then-President Donald Trump implemented a new ban in July 2017.

Shortly after President Joe Biden took office, he reversed the Trump administration's ban on transgender recruits. On March 31, 2021, the International Transgender Day of Visibility, then-Pentagon press secretary John F. Kirby announced at a briefing that "there is no place for violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression or sex characteristics."

He cited Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, who said, "I also believe we should avail ourselves of the best possible talent in our population, regardless of gender identity. We would be rendering ourselves less fit to the task if we excluded from our ranks people who meet our standards and who have the skills and devotion to serve in uniform. This is the right thing to do."

Other military experts have a different view. "At the root of the matter is whether someone who identifies as transgender represents a risk or burden that is greater than the contribution that person would make," retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Dakota Wood told The Epoch Times. "Meaning, do the accommodations that must be made by the military system and the potential risks to the force in operational settings outweigh the relative value of conceding to such a person's desire to serve in uniform?"

Wood, who retired from the Marines in 2005, is the senior research fellow for defense programs at The Heritage Foundation.

Citing the work of Heritage Foundation colleague Thomas Spoehr, director of the foundation's Center for National Defense and a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, Wood said statistics show that those who suffer from gender dysphoria are at increased risk of mental health problems.

"THEIR MEDICAL TREATMENT necessarily consumes resources and time that could be spent elsewhere, increasingly important as the military's medical support capabilities are coming under increased stress," he said.

Militaries are primarily fighting units, not social welfare agencies, according to Wood. Anyone who needs regular medical care could be at risk if their care is interrupted by military activities.

14,000
SOLDIERS

MILITARY.COM reported that the U.S. Army is expected to drop in size by roughly 14,000 soldiers by 2024.



The rest of the fighter's unit could also be "placed at unnecessary risk similar to the loss of members due to any other injury or wound."

"Except in the case of a transgender service member, it would be the result of a personal choice rather than a wound inflicted by an enemy or an injury subject to some military operations," he said.

The military gives rigorous physical exams to potential recruits, Wood said. Disqualifying conditions include asthma, severe allergies, very poor dental conditions, and physical deformities.

"A desire to serve is not the same thing as the ability to serve when military effectiveness in the most strenuous circumstances is the prevailing requirement," he said. "There are many ways to serve the country and one's community. There is not a de facto 'right' to serve in the military."

Recruiting is also a problem, according to André Van Mol, a board-certified family physician, co-

U.S. Marines on the front line in Now Zad, Afghanistan, in this file photo.

chair of the Committee on Adolescent Sexuality at the American College of Pediatricians, and co-chair of the Sexual and Gender Identity Task Force at the Christian Medical & Dental Association.

"As a former Navy medical officer, I see problems with both recruitment and effectiveness for a military that has been legislated and ordered into an ideology that has little to do with fighting and winning wars or advancing readiness and safety," Van Mol told The Epoch Times.

A military requires cohesion and uniform standards, he said, and controversial gender identity policies undermine that goal.

"It must have equality of opportunity and rewarding of achievement, rather than primacy of identity politics," Van Mol said. "And it requires mutual respect, which women in the military likely will not recognize [when] trans females with male genitals [are] in their showers and other private spaces. Armed forces which no longer enforce freedom of speech, conscience, religious practice, and medical judgment will do poorly recruiting from a population that values a First Amendment."

Other sources have also reported low recruitment numbers. On July 28, Military.com reported that the U.S. Army is expecting to drop in size by roughly 14,000 soldiers by 2024.

"Recruiting struggles are an amalgamation of issues, most notably the military being out of the minds of young Americans as a job opportunity with no widespread call to arms like the one after 9/11," according to the publication.

Regarding the added medical costs for transgender individuals, Van Mol said not only are there initial costs to the military but also to the Veterans Administration (VA) for surgeries and lifelong hormonal therapy.



"A desire to serve is not the same thing as the ability to serve when military effectiveness in the most strenuous circumstances is the prevailing requirement."

Dakota Wood, retired lieutenant colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

"There are also costs from complications of both the hormones and the surgeries, the compromised physical readiness of said service member from several factors, and the decreased availability of already time-challenged military and VA physicians, surgeons, and mental health specialists who will have to care for the many needs of trans-identified service members," he said.

"This is more than financially costly; it compromises military readiness." ■



A police officer stands near a military recruitment center in New York on July 26, 2017.

LEGISLATION

CALIFORNIA'S TRANSGENDER SANCTUARY STATE

Legislation
welcomes
parents who
allow their
children to
undergo
gender-based
surgery

BY BRAD JONES

The California state Capitol in
Sacramento on April 18.
PHOTO BY JOHN FREDRICKS/THE EPOCH TIMES



CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATS RECENTLY voted to approve legislation that will make California a sanctuary state for transgender youth and their parents avoiding prosecution for child abuse in other states.

The legislation, Senate Bill 107, was approved on a 30–9 vote along party lines in the California state Senate on Aug. 31, the last day of the legislative session. State Sen. Bob Hertzberg, a Democrat, didn’t vote on the measure. Gov. Gavin Newsom has until Sept. 30 to either veto the “gender-affirming health care” legislation or sign it into law.

The vote followed a federal court ruling on Aug. 26 that struck down a Biden administration mandate that forced doctors to perform medical procedures, including those related to gender transitions, against their religious beliefs.

During the discussion of the legislation, state Sen. Melissa Melendez, a Republican, questioned whether supporters, including state Sen. Scott Wiener, a Democrat and author of the measure, have done enough research on the effects of transgender medical interventions on children, pointing out that some European countries, such as Sweden, appear to be shifting away from the “gender-affirming” care model for minors.

Referring to Chloe Cole, who at 15 years old had her breasts removed and now regrets having done so, Melendez said some of the procedures are irreversible.

Cole, now 18, has testified twice against SB 107, most recently at a California Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Aug. 30, the day before it was passed by the Senate.

“MY PARENTS WERE TOLD that the options were transition or suicide. They complied because they were not offered any other treatment solution for my distress. My distraught parents wanted me alive, so they listened to my doctors. I was placed on puberty blockers and testosterone after expressing my gender dysphoria to my therapist, and I was approved for a double mastectomy all by the age of 15,” she said.

“My parents were told that the options were transition or suicide.”

Chloe Cole

“Who here really believes that as a 15-year-old, I should have had my healthy breasts removed or that should have been an option? SB 107 will open the floodgates for confused children like me to get the gender interventions that many so regret. I am the canary in the coal mine.”

Like many gender-dysphoric children, Cole also suffers from a variety of mental health conditions, she told the committee.

“So I easily fell prey to the narrative that if I felt different and did not want to be a highly sexualized girl, I must be a boy. I obsessed over becoming a boy. I believed that all my insecurities and anxiety would magically disappear once I transitioned,” she said. “The mental health professionals did not try to dissuade me of this delusional belief. I was fast-tracked into medical transition after I was diagnosed with dysphoria in California.”

Melendez said “there is no going back” from that type of surgery, and she contended that there aren’t enough long-term scientific studies or data to suggest medical interventions such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones don’t harm children.

“To allow them to go through with some of the medical procedures that are being suggested here without a parent being able to intervene is wrong, and that’s what this bill will allow,” she said.

While children with gender dysphoria should be protected from bullying and harassment and provided all the medical and mental health care they need, the state shouldn’t step in to help facilitate the gender transitioning of minors, according to Melendez.

“It’s not our place,” she said. Wiener accused Republicans in California and other

states of “trying to score cheap political points on the backs of these children” by “playing into this culture war and delegitimizing and erasing trans kids.”

“This is about making sure that trans kids and their families are not being criminalized and torn apart by other states,” he said. “California is not going to enforce these vile, hateful laws.”

The legislation would prohibit health care providers in California from complying with subpoenas requiring the disclosure of medical



(Clockwise from top L) State Sen. Melissa Melendez; state Sen. Scott Wiener; Erin Friday, the mom of a teenage daughter who suffered from gender dysphoria; and state Sen. Brian Dahle speak in front of the California state Senate on Aug. 31.

information relating to transgender procedures and prevent California law enforcement agencies from cooperating with out-of-state agencies and laws, preventing arrests and extradition, according to Wiener.

Melendez argued that while Wiener has talked about the stress transgender youth and their parents face in other states, he has ignored the depression and anxiety many still encounter even after transitioning and surgery.

“That is very real, and you cannot deny that, and you cannot say that those kids who now regret their decision are invisible,” she said.

Parental rights shouldn’t be sacrificed to show sympathy to transgender children and families from other states, according to Melendez.

“You can be sympathetic and understanding to those who are having thoughts about transitioning and the parents who are trying to help their kids ... but also be sympathetic to the parents who are raising them and their role in their child’s life and not interfere in that relationship between the parent and the child,” she said.

Wiener defended the legislation, arguing that the notion that it would get between kids and parents is “bogus.”

State Sen. Brian Dahle, a Republican, accused him of dodging his question about whether there’s an age limit on how young children can consent to transgender treatments.

“What is the age?” Dahle asked.

Wiener responded that ages of consent are set in medical standards of care, not by the legislation.

“I didn’t hear an answer in that other than the fact that there is no age [limit]. Basically, the age can be determined by a panel of people or some scientific data that’s out there,” Dahle said.

The legislation could force the state to get involved in child custody disputes if one parent wants to allow their child to undergo gender transitioning and the other one doesn’t, he said.

“This bill is basically putting the state in your home,” Dahle said. “I think it’s time for California to get out of the way of parents and let them work with their children. And look, if they’re an adult, let them make the decision. I have no problem with that.”

State Sen. Richard Pan, a Democrat and a

Y Allen

Y Archuleta

Y Atkins

N Bates

Y Becker

N Borgeas

Y Bradford

Y Caballero

Y Cortese

N Dahle

Y Dodd

Y Durazo

Y Eggman

Y Glazer

Y Gonzalez

N Grove

Hertzberg

Y Hueso

Y Hurtado

N Jones

Y Kamlager

Y Laird

Y Leyva

Y Limón

Y McGuire

N Melendez

Y Min

Y Newman

N Nielsen

N Ochoa Bogh

Y Pan

Y Portantino

Y Roth

Y Rubio

Y Skinner

Y Stern

Y Umberg

Y Wieckowski

Y Wiener

N Wilk

YES: 30

NO: 9

SB 107

Wiener et al.

Item #: 12

A vote on SB 107 in the California state Senate on Aug. 31.

(Below) The logo of Planned Parenthood at a center in St. Louis on May 30, 2019. (Right) A young girl holds a sign during the annual LA Pride Parade in Los Angeles on June 9, 2019.



pediatrician, accused opponents of exaggerating and spreading medical misinformation and claimed that the effects of puberty blockers on youth are reversible and that denial of such treatments have long-term consequences, including depression and suicide risk.

At the Aug. 30 committee hearing, Tami Martin, legislative director for Equality California, accused politicians across the U.S. of plotting to “invalidate and repress transgender people and the families and doctors who support them.”

“These attempts are part of a broader effort to invalidate marginalized populations and rob people of autonomy over their own lives and their own bodies,” she said.

Martin said SB 107 would ensure that California “will not enable other states to punish people who are in our state for the purpose of obtaining ‘gender-affirming’ care, which is lawful here.”

“I also want to highlight what the bill means as an LGBTQ+ person, and as one who works in the legislative space, it has been hard to watch leaders in other states use legislation and policy to harm my community and to hurt my friends,” she said.

Kathie Moehlig, founder of Trans Family Support Services based in San Diego and who has a transgender child, said about 56,000 trans youth and their families are living in states that may lose “gender-affirming” care.

Recently, Alabama passed a law that criminalizes trans-affirming care for those 19 and younger, according to Moehlig.

“Alabama is not the only state with this harmful legislation. This was devastating for our youth and family,” she said. “The rate of anxiety, depression, and self-harm and suicide ideation among this



FROM: SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, DAVID MCNEU/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

There aren’t enough long-term scientific studies or data to suggest medical interventions such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones don’t harm children, a state senator says.

population is so very high, especially for those who can’t access appropriate medical care, which is the only treatment for gender dysphoria.”

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California is also a supporter of the legislation.

Erin Friday, a California leader of Our Duty, an international organization that views transgender ideology as a “social contagion” and rejects the notion that people can be trapped in the wrong bodies, has testified several times against SB 107. She said SB 107 would only worsen the “largest medical scandal in history.”

Friday, an attorney and mother of a teen who

once suffered from Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD) but no longer identifies as trans, said that if SB 107 passes, the state would decide which parent, if either, would get custody of an out-of-state child seeking medical interventions.

“THIS LAW ENTICES MINORS seeking gender interventions against their parents’ wishes to run away to California,” she told the committee. “So if parents disagree on whether or not to permit their 14-year-old daughter to have her breasts removed and the offending parent and child arrive in California, California will decide which parent gets custody. We parents know who will win that battle. Pursuant to Family Code 3428, it is not kidnapping if the non-custodial parent absconds with the gender-confused child to California.”

A self-proclaimed Democrat, Friday has warned the Democratic Party that they’ll lose votes from parents like her over the transgender debate.

“Republican and Democratic parent groups are linking arms to safeguard children,” she told The Epoch Times in a text message after the legislation was passed. “I don’t think my party will ever recover from this assault on the family or bodily integrity of children.”

Greg Burt, capitol director of the California Family Council, told The Epoch Times on Sept. 2 that the legislation clearly states that California courts would be granted additional powers to take temporary jurisdiction of any child that makes it to California for transgender treatment.

“California is getting ready to remove custody from parents from other states if [they] object to their kids getting these drugs and surgeries that will permanently destroy their reproductive systems,” Burt said.

“We hope that Newsom will veto this bill and see that it’s just going to get the state sued. Every attorney general in the country is going to come after this state the second we take away parental rights from somebody in another state. We’re setting ourselves up as a threat to families in the whole country.”

The text of the legislation reads, “The bill would authorize a court to take temporary jurisdiction because a child has been unable to obtain ‘gender-affirming’ health care. The bill would additionally prohibit a court from considering the taking or retention of a child from a person who has legal custody of the child, if the taking or retention was for obtaining ‘gender-affirming’ health care or mental health care.” ■

MENTAL HEALTH

PSYCHIATRIST on GENDER DYSPHORIA

No consensus that ‘gender-affirming’ care helps gender dysphoria, psychiatrist and author says

BY MATT MCGREGOR

LAURI FLORENTINE-HOWELL’S daughter was 11 years old when she began dressing like a boy, and by age 12, she wanted to be called Jack.

Her daughter told her that she identified “more with male energy.”

“It was a shock,” Florentine-Howell told The Epoch Times.

Not wanting to alienate her, Florentine-Howell said she processed her daughter’s words without reacting negatively, neither affirming nor denying what her daughter said she was experiencing, she said.

“We’re not going to tell her that her feelings are wrong because we don’t know what she’s going through, but at the same time, we’re not going to allow her to take any drugs, like puberty blockers,” Florentine-Howell said.

In retrospect, Florentine-Howell said her daughter may have developed these feelings during the COVID-19 lockdowns when, amid a rapidly changing society, children were allowed to retreat online, finding communities on social media platforms that either

affirmed or attacked their feelings.

Not one to blindly accept a narrative, Florentine-Howell said she researched, seeking answers to why children her daughter’s age were feeling alienated from their own bodies to the extent that they were willing to declare themselves as the opposite gender, with some committing to that declaration with drugs and surgery.

Florentine-Howell even watched the documentary “What Is a Woman?” about

the transgender movement, directed by Matt Walsh of The Daily Wire.

The documentary delves into academic, historical, psychological, and tribal perspectives on gender and sex while examining the trend in transgenderism and how it has reached children.

“It’s fascinating, and it addressed everything we’ve been experiencing,” Florentine-Howell said.

Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria

A phrase that emerged during Florentine-Howell’s research was “rapid-onset gender dysphoria.”

This isn’t an official diagnosis like gender dysphoria, but rather a description of a phenomenon among adolescents derived from a study by physician and researcher Dr. Lisa Littman that examined “potential factors contributing to the onset and expression of gender dysphoria among AYAs [adolescent and young adult children]” such as “social influences and maladaptive coping mechanisms.”

‘A Social Contagion’

Miriam Grossman, a psychiatrist who appeared in Walsh’s documentary, ♦



“The worldview being taught is that gender is a social construct, and that there’s no consequence for denying your biology.”

Miriam Grossman, psychiatrist

THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF DR. MIRIAM GROSSMAN



There aren’t enough data to justify performing transgender interventions on minors, a psychiatrist says.

PHOTO BY FIORDALISO/GETTY IMAGES

discussed with The Epoch Times the complexities of the gender issue and how it's mutated into what many are describing as "a social contagion" not rooted in an authentic psychological condition, but a trend.

"What's always been around are rare cases of prepubescent children and predominantly middle-aged men who have gender issues," Grossman said. "Those cases were unrelated to any kind of indoctrination or agenda that was taking place."

In the younger children, they were mostly boys who had the disorder, she said.

"For every one girl who was expressing a desire to be a boy, there were six boys," she said. "Those were kids that we diagnosed as having gender identity disorder, or GID."

Without the intervention of the puberty-blocking drugs and surgeries that are so common today, the majority of children with GID in former years would eventually desist, which Grossman defined as the resolving of the feeling of discomfort or incongruence one has with their biological sex.

"However, these are children—usually 5, 6, or 7 years old—who are not yet in adolescence," Grossman said. "This is not the current population of older kids that we are looking at now."

Today, most of the children presenting as transgender are adolescents who have shown no previous symptoms of discomfort with their biological sex, Grossman said.

"This is a new population, and that's really important to understand because people who are pushing the affirmation model of automatically accepting the child's announcement that they are identifying as the opposite sex are using data from a different population," she said. "In fact, the data that we have on this issue in any population are far from ideal."

The problem is, Grossman said, there are medical organizations that are basing their recommendations on poor evidence.

On March 31, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Population Affairs released a document titled "Gender-Affirming Care and Young People," which endorses gender-reassignment surgery and hormone treatment for minors.



On the same day, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), a division of HHS, released a document titled "Gender Affirming Care Is Trauma-Informed Care," which promotes surgical procedures for minors.

"Providing gender-affirming care is neither child maltreatment nor malpractice," the NCTSN document states.

The Risk of Suicide

Parents are now told by these medical organizations that their child is at risk of committing suicide if they don't give their child "gender-affirming" care, Grossman said.

While everyone is on the same page with preventing suicide, she said, there's no data to support the idea that adolescent children are committing suicide because they can't be gender-affirmed.

"Kids who are confused about their

gender often have other issues, and if you compare the suicide rates of kids who have psychiatric issues without gender identity problems with kids who say they are trans, or nonbinary, what you have are very similar suicide rates," Grossman said. "So, it's very inaccurate for these parents to be told their child is at risk of suicide because of this one issue, when there are many other issues."

In addition, there's no long-term evidence that these treatments are preventing suicide, she said.

Grossman referenced a study that suggests the opposite.

In the study, those who went through sexual reassignment procedures had a higher risk of suicide.

The study examined 324 sex-reassigned persons (191 male-to-females and 133 female-to-males) in Sweden and concluded that people "with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality,

suicidal behavior, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population."

The study defines transsexualism, or gender identity disorder, as a condition in which a person's gender identity "contradicts his or her bodily sex characteristics."

"The study followed people for 30 years," Grossman said. "Again, this wasn't the same population we're talking about now."

One important point about the study is the length of time it took for people to regret what they'd done, she said.

"It took them years to get to that point to where they realize they may have not made the best decision," Grossman said. "So, when we're studying these adolescents, we can't just follow them for six to 12 months, but that's what's happening now. These medical organizations are looking at them for a very short term."

Much of the available evidence of the negative effects is coming from the tes-



(Left) A children's book about gender identity, in Irvine, Calif., on Aug. 30.
(Above) Lauri Florentine-Howell next to a drawing by her daughter.

timonies of "detransitioners" who are beginning to speak up.

"I've been working as a psychiatrist for almost 40 years, so I've seen everything, but these stories of young 17-year-olds who have had their breasts removed, they're growing a beard, their voices dropped, and they're suicidal because they've gone through these irreversible procedures—it's a horror show," Grossman said.

Parents must get educated, she said, and not wait for their children to come home and say they no longer identify with their gender.

In May 2022, Dr. Rachel Levine, the transgender assistant secretary for health at HHS, said there were no physicians disputing the need for children to receive transgender treatments.

But Grossman said parents need to understand that there's no consensus among physicians on this topic, despite people being led to believe otherwise.

"We need to step back and admit that we just don't have the data to be performing these experiments on minors," she said, adding that the first line of treatment has traditionally been psychotherapy.

'An Extremely Radical Vision'

Despite this lack of data, however, indoctrination to influence parents and children goes back to the 1950s.

In her 2009 book "You're Teaching My Child What?" Grossman traces the concept that gender is separate from biological sex and physical anatomy to psychologist John Money in 1955.

Grossman goes into detail as to how Money arrived at his conclusions in Chapter 7 of her book, which describes Money's unethical practices that were

later revealed by the very subjects of the experiments to be a hoax carried out through sexual abuse of children.

Grossman said that many sex educators today ignore the truth about Money and still subscribe to his theories, and the idea that gender isn't determined by biology continued to find its way into pseudoscience and books for children, as it did in 1997 with "My Gender Workbook" by Kate Bornstein, who was born male and underwent sex reassignment surgery to present as a woman, but who now identifies as nonbinary.

Grossman said Bornstein is working to "dismantle the gender system on the planet as we know it."

"On the front line of her attack are pronouns," Grossman said. "She, he, his, and her don't work: They support the gender binary."

For the transgender community, the gender binary is viewed as a tool of oppression, Grossman said.

Grossman said her book was a warning to parents more than a decade before the campaign of transgender normalization that prevails in media today.

"The worldview being taught is that gender is a social construct and that there's no consequence for denying your biology," she said.

It's a movement to change how society thinks of males and females, she said.

"That's the big picture here," Grossman said. "It's an extremely radical vision, and when you have a vision for changing society and the world, you have to start with the children."

'We're Going Through This Together'

Fortunately, Florentine-Howell said, her daughter has expressed no interest in puberty-blocking drugs or surgery.

"There's not really any part of her life that is negative or suffering right now because of this, and that's why we're just going through this together," she said.

School has begun, and Florentine-Howell said her daughter seems happy and content, with her artwork and piano playing "thriving."

"We have come to the conclusion, if there's something to worry about, we will address it and deal with it," Florentine-Howell said. "If not, we will just allow time to unfold on its own." ■

POLICIES

TRANSGENDERISM IN THE 50 STATES

A look at states' transgender policies,
especially toward children

BY JOHN SEILER *NEWS ANALYSIS*

WHAT IS THE STATUS of transgender policies across the United States, in particular in the critical area of policy toward children?

First of all, such policies are clearly among the most controversial issues of our time. For example, on Aug. 21, The New York Times Magazine's back page featured an ad headlined "Join Us to Defend Every Student's Right to Learn."

The copy read: "Across America, a coordinated attack on students' right to learn is underway right now. This year alone, 33 state legislatures have introduced over 100 new bills restricting discussions about race, gender, and sexual orientation in schools. The ACLU is hard at work challenging these damaging book bans and classroom censorship efforts through litigation advocacy."

Meanwhile, others have a very different understanding of the situation.

"Despite very strong and highly financed efforts by activist groups, philanthropic organizations, media, federal agencies, and now quite 'woke' corpo-

rate America, states vary considerably on their handling of transgenderism in education," André Van Mol, a board-certified family physician, told The Epoch Times.

Van Mol is co-chair of the Committee on Adolescent Sexuality at the American College of Pediatricians and co-chair of the Sexual and Gender Identity Task Force at the Christian Medical & Dental Association.

He said his home state of California "is among the most ideologically driven, with current and pending legislation the average American would find unbelievable and unsupportable, and that the average California parent doesn't fully know exists."

Some gay-identified and even trans-identified adults and groups oppose California's actions and support states that are moving in a different direction, he said.

"[This is] precisely due to the conviction that kids don't benefit from premature exposure to, let alone indoctrination with, adult gender ideology," he said. "States like Florida are working hard to protect young students from adult ♦



A gender-neutral sign is posted outside a bathroom at Oval Park Grille in Durham, N.C., on May 11, 2016.

PHOTO BY SARA D. DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES



Newly donated LGBT books in the library at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

sexual ideology they have no means to resist or even see through.”

Emphasizing this difference is California’s Senate Bill 107, “Gender-Affirming Health Care,” by state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco). It recently passed both houses of the state Legislature and now awaits the signature of Gov. Gavin Newsom.

According to the Senate summary, the bill, among many other provisions,

“All public schools direct their staff to socially affirm gender-confused students on day one, no questions asked, and to avoid speaking with parents unless the child directs them to do so.”

Michelle Cretella, pediatrician, Advocates Protecting Children’s advisory board

“provides that a court of this state has temporary emergency jurisdiction over a child if the child is present in the state because the child has been unable to obtain gender-affirming health care or gender-affirming mental health care.”

IT ALSO “PROVIDES that a law of another state that authorizes a state agency to remove a child from their parent or guardian based on the parent or guardian allowing their child to receive gender-affirming health care or gender-affirming mental health care is against the public policy of this state and shall not be enforced or applied in a case pending in a court in this state.”

According to writer Samantha Riedel from Them.us, an LGBT-focused publication, “All of these measures are aimed at protecting the parents of trans minors in states like Texas and Alabama, where laws and executive actions are criminalizing the provision of transition-related medical care for minors, prompting many families to weigh relocation.”

If this law goes into effect, it would clash directly with other states’ laws and could end up on the docket of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Another perspective comes from Michelle Cretella, a pediatrician on the advisory board of Advocates Protecting Children and past executive director of the American College of Pediatricians. She sees a more unified national focus, regardless of state policies.

“All public schools operate in lockstep on all matters dealing with sexuality and gender,” she told The Epoch Times. “All public schools direct their staff to socially affirm gender-confused students on day one, no questions asked, and to avoid speaking with parents unless the child directs them to do so.”

Schools that didn’t follow this policy in the past have faced legal action from the highest levels of government. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) during the Obama administration announced it had reached a settlement with a Southern California school district to resolve an investigation into

allegations that a transgender student hadn’t been allowed to use preferred restrooms, locker rooms, and sex-specific overnight accommodations during a school-sponsored trip.

A LETTER WAS ALSO ISSUED in 2016 by the Department of Education and DOJ to school superintendents indicating federal funding could be withheld from schools that didn’t treat gender identity the same as sex.

“Although this [letter] eventually was rescinded by President Trump, the fear of losing money ruled the day and the damage was done. Now, of course, the Biden administration is even more pro-transitioning of children than the Obama era,” Cretella said.

The two major national teachers unions, the National Education Association and the smaller American Federation of Teachers (AFT), take a similar view. In 2017, the AFT passed the resolution “Support of the Rights of Transgender Persons—AFT Stands in Unity Against Discrimination in North Carolina and Mississippi.”

For a comparison of policies across the nation, the Transgender Law Center in Oakland, California, which bills itself as the “largest national trans-led organization,” is recording the status of transgender issues in all 50 states.

The project lists which states have a

high number of policies largely supported by the LGBT community, such as allowing transgender youth to participate in sports activities with their preferred gender, or allowing those youth to undergo medical procedures banned by other states.

Other policies include allowing name changes for birth certificates or driver’s licenses, as well as banning medical pro-

fessionals or child welfare agencies from using religious exemptions to decline to serve LGBT patients. The project uses terms preferred by many LGBT advocates, so those opposed to such policies would use different terms.

The Gender Identity section on the organization’s website grades the 50 states on a five-tier scale on issues related to gender identity.

HERE ARE THE STATES FROM EACH RANKING:

- 16 states and the District of Columbia have high gender identity policy tallies: Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Minnesota, Illinois, New York, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Colorado, Maryland, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia
- 5 states and 1 territory have medium gender identity policy tallies: New Mexico, Michigan, Virginia, New Hampshire, Delaware, and Puerto Rico
- 5 states have fair gender identity policy tallies: Utah, North Dakota, Iowa, Alaska, and Pennsylvania
- 10 states and 1 territory have low gender identity policy tallies: Idaho, Wyoming, Kansas, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands
- 14 states and 3 territories have negative gender identity policy tallies:

Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam

HERE’S THEIR TALLY IN POPULATION TERMS:

- 45 percent of the LGBT population lives in states with high gender identity policy tallies
- 7 percent of the LGBT population lives in states with medium gender identity policy tallies
- 8 percent of the LGBT population lives in states with fair gender identity policy tallies
- 17 percent of the LGBT population lives in states with low gender identity policy tallies
- 23 percent of the LGBT population lives in states with negative gender identity policy tallies



A class in session in New York on July 22, 2021. This year alone, 33 state legislatures have introduced more than 100 new bills restricting discussions about race, gender, and sexual orientation in schools.

As to the states and territories, it’s much as you would expect. The highest scores go to the Northeast, the West Coast, Illinois, and Minnesota. The lowest scores go to the South, the Prairie and Mountain states, and the socially conservative territories of American Samoa, the Northern Marianas Islands, and Guam.

According to the organization, “the tallies look only at existing laws—they do not look at the social climate, nor do they take into account the implementation of each state’s laws. The tally also does not reflect the efforts of advocates and/or opportunities for future change.”

In other words, these policies could change in many of these states, providing a potential opportunity for active citizens to make an impact. ■



MENTAL HEALTH

TRANSGENDER SOCIAL CONTAGION

Mom of ex-trans daughter seeks to expose 'social contagion' in upcoming documentary

BY BRAD JONES

FROM L: MICHAEL GIAGLO FOR THE EPOCH TIMES;
COURTESY OF VERA LINDNER

A girl holds an assignment that was handed out at an art club at her school in Wellington, Colo.

Vera Lindner urges more people to question the "gender-affirming" model of care.

IN THE EARLY SUMMER OF 2020, Vera Lindner watched in shock and bewilderment as her teenage daughter and her friends persuaded each other they were all transgender, except for one girl who identified as bisexual.

The girls dared one another to use male names and pronouns that summer, she said, and by August, her daughter told Lindner she was "trans."

Realizing something was wrong, Lindner decided to research the transgender movement. She read Abigail Shrier's "Irreversible Damage" and witnessed the same phenomenon described in the book unfold at home: an "epidemic of teenage girls ... rushing to hormones and surgeries," according to Shrier.

"I watched front and center as a mother," Lindner told The Epoch Times. "I was watching in real time the social contagion that Abigail Shrier talks about."

With some experience in filmmaking, Lindner embarked on the idea of producing a documentary. After two years of researching medical studies and weighing "gender-affirming" and "gender-critical" narratives, Lindner has produced a feature-length documentary, "Affirmation Generation: The Lies of Transgender Medicine," which is set to premiere in mid-November. The

trailer was released on Sept. 6.

The documentary features six people—three men and three women—who are "detransitioners," a term used to describe people who transitioned from their natural sex but then regretted it. These individuals sought medical help for gender dysphoria, a sense that their gender identity didn't match their biological sex, but were irreversibly harmed by doctor-prescribed gender-affirming care, Lindner said.

"Children are being trapped."

Vera Lindner, mother and filmmaker

Stephanie's Story

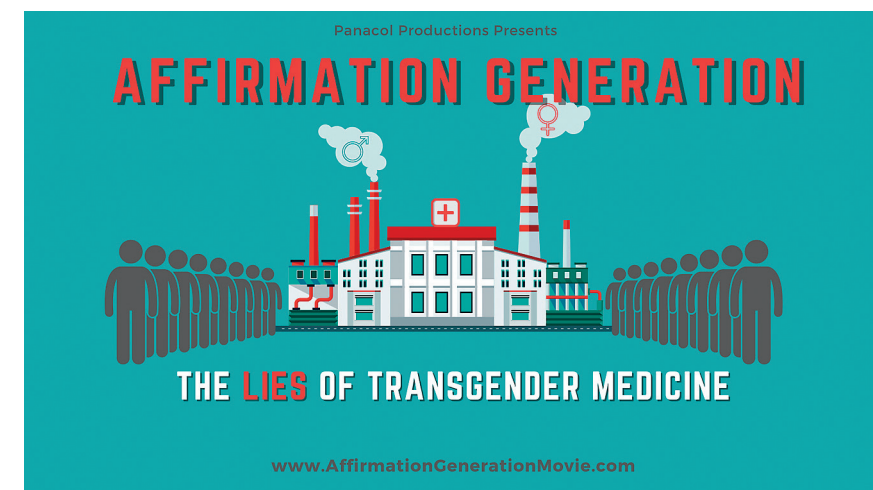
Lindner, who refers to her daughter by the pseudonym Stephanie to protect her identity out of fear of retaliation, said she is a gift-

ed artist and high-functioning autistic child.

From kindergarten until her gender identity crisis, Stephanie had performed well in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

"She was always the teacher's pet, except for a math teacher who said she was 'distracted.' Everybody loved her, and she really flew under the radar as being autistic and ADD [attention deficit disorder]—two very serious diagnoses—until she was 14," Lindner said.

Many people who've been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome are "gifted people who really contribute so much to culture and civilization," but because autistic children tend to obsess over



The medical industry and Big Pharma are creating ‘lifelong patients’ out of a vulnerable group of people to consume their products, Lindner says.

things, many of them have fallen prey to the push for “gender fluidity,” she said. “It just occupies their minds,” she said. “They don’t think about anything else. They don’t think about any other interests. They’re so singularly focused on gender, gender, gender, 24/7. “This is also something I watched firsthand with the friends of my daughter. They were all on the spectrum. They were all neurodivergent.”

When Stephanie was in sixth grade, she joined a Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) club, formerly known as Gay-Straight Alliance clubs, which met during lunchtime at her school. These clubs are encouraged by groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood.

“They were recruiting sixth graders with doughnuts,” Lindner said.

All public schools are mandated by the Department of Education to treat GSA clubs the same as other clubs under the Equal Access Act.

Lindner was under the impression that the GSA would teach her daughter tolerance and compassion toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, but later found out students were taught controversial transgender and gender fluidity ideology using the “Genderbread Person” model. The lesson asks students to rate themselves on “woman-ness” and “man-ness,” and whether they are more attracted to males or females. It also suggests “infinite possible” gender identities such as two-spirit, genderqueer, and genderless, and gender expressions such as butch, femme, androgynous, gender neutral, and hyper masculine.



A group of high school students walk home together, in this file photo.

Additionally, the model lists “intersex” as a biological sex.

‘Gender-Affirming’ Care

When Stephanie identified as transgender, Lindner took her to a therapist, who “immediately advised” Stephanie to call her parents’ health insurance company to ask if she was eligible to take testosterone, without exploratory questions into past trauma, Lindner said.

“She was 14!” Lindner said. “She was at the height of a mental health crisis caused by the gender ideology in the schools.”

Lindner then made a life-altering decision of her own. She dissuaded Stephanie from jumping too hastily toward gender transition and pulled her out of public school in Los Angeles. The Lindner family moved to a quiet mountainside community, where Stephanie now attends private school.

Stephanie has since abandoned the idea of gender transitioning, Lindner said.

While the transgender community celebrates children who transition,

those who get cold feet and detransition most often get the cold shoulder from the same trans activists who once embraced them, she said.

“When they detransition, the community shuns them and pours hatred on them,” Lindner said. “They are the failed experiments. They’re the experiments that didn’t stick with the program.”

Lindner said the intent of her film is to show detransitioners’ physical and psychological pain as a “visceral” human interest story and show the truth about what happens to those who regret their transitions, she said.

“By showing the stories of detransitioners, we hope to create a powerful, compelling documentary—essentially testimony of the medical harm,” she said.

The medical industry and Big Pharma are creating “lifelong patients” out of a vulnerable group of people to consume their products, Lindner contends.

“It’s all about a massive recruitment of patients for this uncontrolled medical experiment,” she said.

The film also features doctors and experts who are critical of transgender

hormone treatment for minors. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), under HHS, released a document that same day titled “Gender Affirming Care Is Trauma-Informed Care,” which also promotes surgical procedures for minors.

“Providing gender-affirming care is neither child maltreatment nor malpractice,” according to the NCTSN document.

However, a federal court on Aug. 26 struck down a Biden administration mandate that had forced doctors to perform medical procedures, including those related to gender transitions, against their religious beliefs.

Challenging the Narrative

Lindner, who has worked in Hollywood for more than two decades, said entertainment is a creative industry that tends to attract people who are LGBT, autistic, or gifted. While she has embraced these people, she rejects transgenderism and any obsession with pronouns, believing they are harmful to the community.

“This is why my daughter is sort of listening to me, because I have the ‘street cred’ of somebody who really has been an incredible bonafide ally. I told her, this is all about monetization. It’s all about profiting off the backs of these very vulnerable, confused people,” she said.

A common tactic used by medical professionals, social workers, and trans activists is to tell parents that their son or daughter could commit suicide if they don’t affirm their child’s chosen new gender identity.

“When they detransition, the community shuns them and pours hatred on them. They are the failed experiments.”

Vera Lindner, mother and filmmaker

“This is a total lie,” Lindner said. “In our film, we have a therapist who specializes in counseling detransitioners, and she says this is precisely the opposite.”

Some researchers have, indeed, found an increased risk of suicide for those who went through with sexual reassignment procedures compared to those who didn’t.

Parents of gender dysphoric children are scared and have been “bludgeoned into submission,” Lindner said.

She urges more people to question the gender-affirming model of care and to consider the dire consequences for those who later decide to detransition.

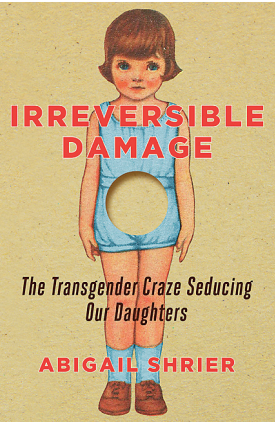
“It’s really important to me that the decision-makers watch these stories of detransitioners,” she said, as she believes gender-affirming care for minors is outright “medical malpractice.”

With the documentary still set to launch, Lindner is already thinking about a sequel focusing on ideologies being taught in schools.

She believes that transgender ideology is a form of “brainwashing” that alienates children from core values, such as honesty, truth, and the ability to trust their own perceptions.

“It’s absolutely devastating. It’s catastrophic. It’s ruinous,” she said. “The impetus to create this documentary was the lies that are being told to parents, the lies that the doctors and therapists say to children and parents and minors, and a whole ideology based on lies and deceptions and delusions.”

The documentary will be available to watch on three platforms: YouTube, Vimeo, and the website AffirmationGenerationMovie.com. ■



Cover of “Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters” by Abigail Shrier.



EDUCATION SYSTEM

TRANSGENDER BOOKS FOR KINDERGARTENERS

California's Department of Education recommends gender ideology books for the youngest children

BY MICAELA RICAFORTE

AS CALIFORNIA STUDENTS HEAD BACK to school this year, they may encounter books and materials promoting LGBT topics, transgenderism, and gender ideology for children as young as preschool and kindergarten.

Dozens of books with such topics are promoted for use in classrooms by the California Department of Education's recommended literature list, under the topic "Gender/Sexuality."

Brenda Lebsack, a teacher of 30 years and a former school board member for the Orange Unified School District, told The Epoch Times that LGBT groups have expanded the word "queer" to encompass hundreds of different sexualities and gender identities and that those are now being taught to children in schools.

Last year, the California State Board of Education approved its model curriculum for ethnic studies, which includes the acronym "LGBTQ+" as a marginalized group. The state's health education framework explains this concept further:

"Historically, the acronym included lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender but has continued to expand to include queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, allies, and alternative identities (LGBTQQIAA), as well as expanding concepts that may fall under this umbrella term in the future."

Now, the state's education department is recommending books to students that teach expanded sexualities and gender identities.

For example, the department recommends

California State Superintendent of Schools Tony Thurmond reads from "Red: A Crayon's Story," a book on gender identity and gender expression, to second graders at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

the book “Julian is a Mermaid” for preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners.

The book describes a young boy named Julian who wants to be a mermaid after he sees a parade of people dressed up as mermaids while out with his grandmother.

“Julian has a good idea,” the book reads as it shows Julian shedding his clothes and donning lipstick and curtains for his mermaid costume.

When Julian’s grandmother sees his costume, she gives him a beaded necklace to complete his outfit. She then takes him outside to join the other adults dressed up as mermaids.

For children in kindergarten through second grade, the list recommends “Call Me Max,” a book about a child who “lets his teacher know that he wants to be called by a boy’s name.”

“Call Me Max” was written by Kyle Lukoff, a transgender writer.

In the book, Max says, “When I look in the mirror, I see ... a boy who is transgender.”

“When a baby is born, a grown-up says, ‘It’s a boy!’ or ‘It’s a girl!’” the book reads. “When a baby grows up to be transgender, it means that the grown-up who said they were a boy or a girl made a mistake.”

At the end of the book, Max says, “Being a boy isn’t better than being a girl. But being myself is the best.”

Along those same lines, “It Feels Good to Be Yourself” is another book on the list aimed at children in kindergarten through second grade that “explores identities across the spectrum as it introduces various children.”

The book was written by Theresa Thorn, host of the comedy podcast “One Bad Mother,” and illustrated by Noah Grigni, a nonbinary transgender writer.

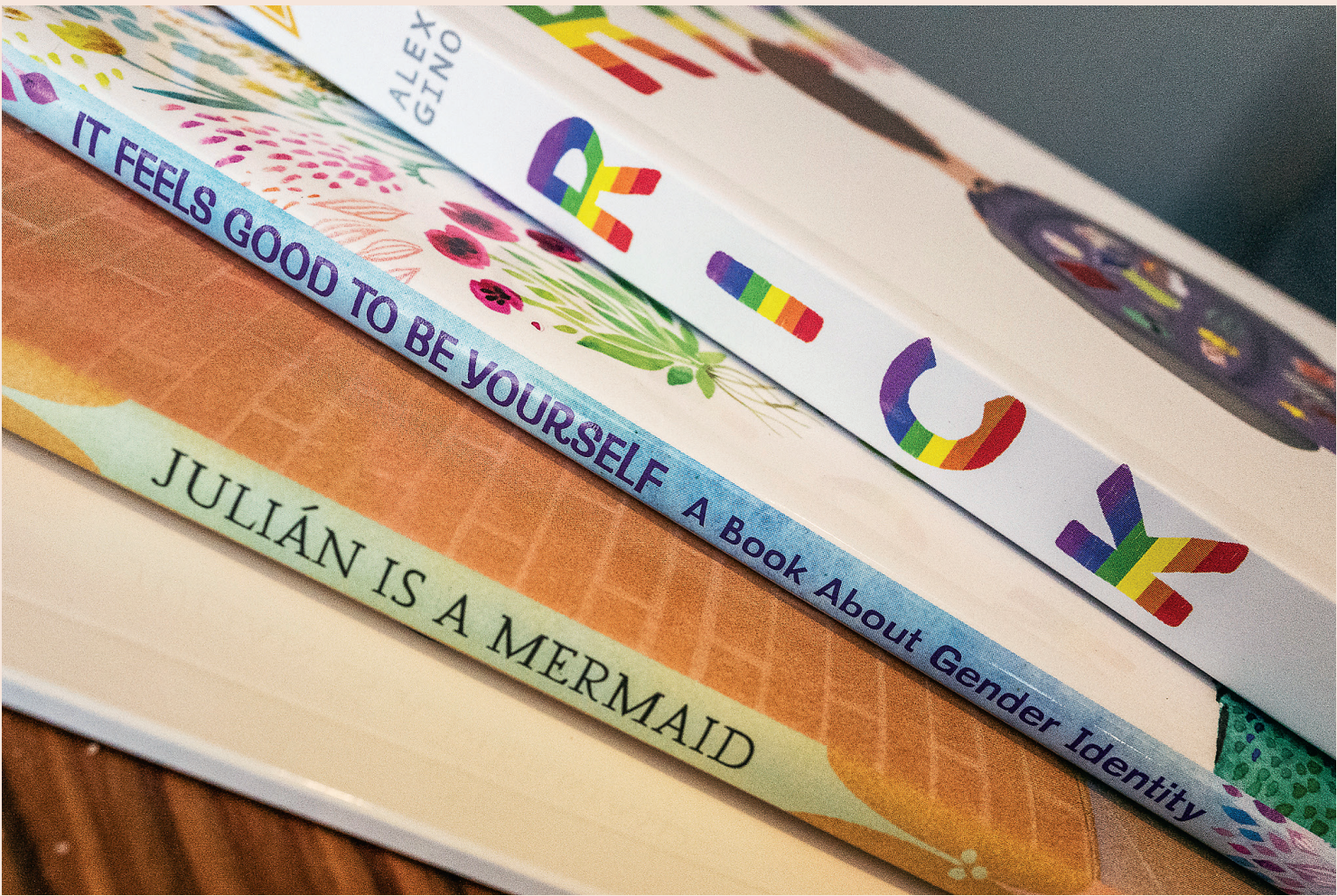
It introduces Ruthie—who was born a boy but later declared her gender identity was a girl—and her brother, Xavier, who was born a boy and whose gender identity is “cisgender.”

The siblings have a pair of friends who are both nonbinary—one is “both a boy and a girl,” while another is “neither a boy nor a girl.”

“Some kids don’t feel exactly like a boy or a girl—they feel like neither,” the book reads. “Some kids feel that their gender identity isn’t always the same—it’s often changing. And even with all these possible ways to be, some kids don’t feel any of the words they know fit them exactly right.”

At the end of the book, there’s a list of “helpful terms,” including the terms “intersex,” “transgender,” “gender identity,” “gender expression,” “non-binary,” and “cisgender.”

“Your feelings about your gender are real. Listen to your heart,” the book reads. “It feels good to be yourself, doesn’t it?”



For middle-schoolers, “Rick” is a novel about an 11-year-old boy who joins a club at school where he can “discover his own identity, which may just be to opt out of sex altogether.”

In the book, Rick joins a Rainbow Spectrum club at school, where members discuss their gender identity, sexual orientation, pronouns, and “LGBTQIAP+ rights.”

Rick learns about the terms “asexual”; “aromantic,” which describes people who aren’t sexually or romantically attracted to anyone; “graysexual” and “grayromantic,” which refer to people who are occasionally attracted to people; and “demisexual” and “demiromantic,” which describe those who are only romantically or sexually attracted to people “after developing a deep connection.”

In another part of the book, Rick’s grandfather dresses up as a woman and does Rick’s makeup for an event.

“Some people who wear skirts and makeup are women,” Rick’s grandfather says in the book. “Me, I’m a guy, no matter how I’m dressed.”

Books about transgenderism for children, in Irvine, Calif., on Aug. 30.

Toward the end of the book, Rick “comes out” to his father as asexual.

When Rick’s father replies that Rick is too young to be “something like that,” he’s dismissed by Rick, who insists that “right now, my path is that I’m not interested in anyone.”

Across the nation, these titles have made their way into schools in other states, such as New York and Oregon.

Last year, New York City announced a \$200 million plan to develop standardized math and English curriculum with a focus on diversity. The curriculum’s Independent Reading Collection contains several books that feature LGBT and gender ideology for young children, according to an investigation by Fox News.

Some of the books in the collection include “Julian is a Mermaid”; “Love is Love,” a story about gay relationships aimed at first graders; and “I’m Not

a Girl: A Transgender Story,” also aimed at first graders.

In the North Clackamas School District near Portland, Oregon, “It Feels Good to Be Yourself” and “Julian is a Mermaid” are available in elementary schools, according to screenshots of an online portal obtained by Fox News. The district’s high schools have books such as “Fun Home,” a graphic novel about a lesbian teenager, and the graphic memoir “Gender Queer”—both of which depict scenes with sexual acts and masturbation.

Betsy McCaughey, an author and public policy expert who previously served as the lieutenant governor of New York, said the spread of such materials doesn’t proportionately reflect the actual number of people who experience gender dysphoria.

About 0.6 percent of the U.S. population older than age 13—or about 1.6 million people—identifies as transgender, according to a June study by UCLA’s Williams Institute.

A 2020 study by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles found that gender dysphoria—the distress caused by a discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and their biological sex at birth—manifested in about 75 percent of transgender individuals before the age of 7.

Because of this, McCaughey suggested in an op-ed for the New York Post that teachers and school counselors become trained to help children with gender dysphoria but discouraged schools from introducing such topics into classrooms.

“These books don’t belong in our elementary schools,” McCaughey told The Epoch Times in a statement. “Gender dysphoria is an extremely rare affliction. Those who have it deserve our respect and sympathy. But telling all children about it is unnecessary, confusing to them, and hurtful.” ■



0.6%

ABOUT 0.6 PERCENT of the U.S. population over the age of 13—or about 1.6 million people—identify as transgender, a study found.

“Telling all children about [gender dysphoria] is unnecessary, confusing to them, and hurtful.”

Betsy McCaughey, public policy expert

An instructor speaks to her students at a Catholic school in La Puente, Calif., on Nov. 16, 2020.

COMMENTARY

DO YOU REMEMBER when you first heard of the terms “non-binary” or “gender fluid”? How about “gender-expansive” or “gender-nonconforming”? I bet it was within the past five years.

I recently came across a guide distributed to teachers and administrators nationwide. The guide was made in partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Education Association (the largest teachers union in the United States), and LGBT groups. The guide is titled “Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K–12 Schools.” So what’s in this nationally distributed guide?

It states: “The expression of transgender identity, or any other form of gender-expansive behavior, is a healthy, appropriate and typical aspect of human development. A gender-expansive student should never be asked, encouraged or required to affirm a gender identity or to express their gender in a manner that is not consistent with their self-identification or expression. Any such attempts or requests are unethical and will likely cause significant emotional harm.”

It continues: “Ongoing learning is a key element of this process. Educators and administrators need to engage in regular professional development and training to build a school climate that avoids gender stereotyping and affirms the gender of all children.”

THE GUIDE ALSO states that teaching children gender ideas will help them to “explore a greater range of interests, ideas, and activities.”

Gone are the comparatively simple days of just having a couple of “trans students” at school—when we had maybe one or two students in the whole school who identified as the opposite gender of their biological sex. We are now living in a time where kids are encouraged to be “gender-expansive”—a broader, more flexible range of gender identities or expressions than those typically associated with the “binary gender system.”

Confused yet? You should be. ♦

SCHOOLS

STUDENT GENDER IDENTITY GUIDE

ACLU guide labels teachers ‘unethical’ if they don’t affirm students’ various gender identities

BY KALI FONTANILLA

Students walk to class at a school in New York on Feb. 25, 2021.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES

When I see this, I think of the first 10 years of my teaching career when this wasn't even a consideration, because we didn't have any students who identified as nonbinary. I feel sorry for Gen Z. Many of these students, if they were just born 10 years before, wouldn't even be questioning their gender. Maybe we weren't repressing them back then; we just weren't giving them the idea.

Now, our nation's children are bombarded with trending TikTok videos of teens changing their preferred pronouns monthly and images of young women showing off their scarred chests from double mastectomies.

The pressure of culture alone is often overpowering for young people, but on top of that, many of the adults in their lives—their teachers—affirm this toxic behavior as normal.

Back to the “Schools in Transition” guide. It claims that teachers are unethical if we don't affirm these various identities, that we will emotionally harm the students. You read that right; the teachers who don't push and affirm this confusing array of new genders, as varied as the stripes on the ever-expanding gender rainbow flag, we are labeled as emotionally harming our students!

It gets worse. The guide also addresses what a teacher or administrator should do if a parent is unsupportive of their child changing their gender identity at school. The guide emphasizes the importance of asking the child if their family knows about their change in identity. If they don't, the guide suggests that teachers and administrators be careful not to “out” the student to their parents.

Think this is all just recommendations from some obscure guide? Think again. In my former district in Salinas, California, a teacher called home using the new

name and pronoun of a student who had changed their gender identity at school. The parent had no idea who they were talking about because they were completely unaware of the secret identity change done at school.

AFTER THIS INCIDENT, teachers were instructed not to use a student's new name and pronouns unless it was clear that the parent was aware of the gender identity change. In other words, hide the identity change from the parent.

This hiding of new pronouns and names being changed is standard policy in many

states nationwide and is also recommended in the guide. Encouraging children to keep secrets from their parents is also one of the telltale signs of “grooming,” but I digress.

As a former public school teacher of 15 years in California, I only recently start-

ed seeing more students identifying as trans or nonbinary. When I began my teaching career 15 years ago, none of my students identified as nonbinary. None. Teachers weren't asking students to share their pronouns at the beginning of the school year. My colleagues weren't putting their preferred pronouns at the end of emails. We didn't have to worry about mis-pronouncing a student. (Is “mis-pronouncing” even a word? It's all so confusing.) I think back to that time and it seems like a dream.

We are asked to refer to an individual “nonbinary” student as they/them. I'm an English teacher! For the majority of my career, I taught English language learners (ELLs). Are we going to throw out a basic English language rule and refer to a single student in plural form? Oh, you better, if you want to keep your job and maybe avoid a lawsuit. And forget about confusing the ELLs; that's collateral damage.



An instructor reads a book about gender identity to students at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

Not only are we pressured by our woke administrators and colleagues to use these grammatically incorrect pronouns with our students, but we're also being told not to address our class in “gendered” language. So “ladies and gentlemen” or “boys and girls” isn't progressive or inclusive and shouldn't be used. We are given posters with “inclusive” greetings we can use instead, such as “scholars” or “friends.” Remember the posters about determination and perseverance that were hung up at schools when you were a kid? The kind with pictures of athletes and maybe a cat hanging on to a string for dear life. Well, posters in schools are different now.

When I taught middle school, I had my students line up with their gender, a line of boys and a line of girls. Organizing students by two genders wasn't a problem for many years. In fact, it was pretty normal to separate stu-

A person holds pins with gender pronouns in Laramie, Wyo., on Aug. 13.



dents by gender in our schools until the past five years. Now, this simple act of having students form two lines outside of class is something teachers have to question, lest the thought police come after them for the crime of wrongthink and emotionally harming the nonconforming students.

Not only is there an ever-expanding

“gender spectrum,” but the American public is expected to keep up with the latest gender-inclusive terms and to change their speech patterns to accommodate it. If we don't comply, we risk being labeled bigots, hateful, and intolerant. This label can include further consequences for teachers like myself, including losing our jobs.

Again, I want to say that none of this was an issue we faced as teachers 10 years ago.

I'm worried about our future. I'm worried about teachers having to go against their conscience to keep their jobs. But mostly, I'm worried about our children, confused by activists posing as teachers and the unknown psychological and physical damage they are inflicting on the next generation.

SO WHAT DO WE DO? In the chaos of gender confusion, one thing is clear: No one solution is going to fix this. It's all hands on deck, and we must work against this madness in every way possible.

Consider running for the school board. Go to your school board meetings. And don't assume that because you're in a red state that “they don't do that stuff around here”—don't be naive. When those classroom doors close, that's when the activists have the opportunity to indoctrinate. Teach your children how to spot when a teacher is trying to push radical gender theory on them and to tell you if they do try it.

Better yet, pull your kids out of public school if you can. Many states have passed new laws providing school choice vouchers that can help pay for private schools. That's why my husband and I started our own private K-12 online school to combat these “woke” ideologies.

Legislative protection is one of the best ways to fight back. The Parents Rights in Education Act proposed and passed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is a good start. In the famously and falsely labeled Florida “Don't Say Gay” bill, parents are protected from having their child's gender unknowingly changed at school. It also bans gender and sexual orientation conversations for K-3 students in the classroom, giving the teachers in Florida some room to breathe.

Laws should be passed like this nationwide. It's not enough to elect conservatives opposed to this Brave New Gender-Fluid World; you must pressure them to pass laws like the Parents Rights in Education Act in your home state. Let your voice be heard.

In short, use whatever time and skills you have to defend our nation's children. Imagine the irreversible damage that could be done to our children if we don't. ■

YOUTH



A student in class at St. Anthony Catholic High School in Long Beach, Calif., on March 24, 2021.

Civil rights group pushes schools to stop hiding students' gender issues from parents

HIDDEN from PARENTS

BY BRAD JONES

ANATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS GROUP HAS urged the California government to revise policies that require teachers and other school staff to hide the gender identities of students as young as kindergarten from their parents if the child so wishes.

The nonprofit Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR) has also advised Oregon, Vermont, and New Hampshire, which have similar policies, to do so as well, “however, none of

those states’ non-disclosure laws go quite as far as California,” Letitia Kim, managing director of the organization’s legal network, told The Epoch Times on Aug. 24.

California Department of Education (CDE) policies encourage schools to “socially transition” children who say they are transgender, which means allowing them to use preferred names and pronouns, dress as the opposite gender, and use opposite-sex bathrooms without parental consent.

“You can’t just leave it entirely within a child’s hands, particularly given that the child is not developmentally mature enough to make that kind of a determination,” she said.

Kim stated in an Aug. 10 letter to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond that several CDE “non-disclosure” policies related to gender identity pronouns are unconstitutional because they violate parental rights.

The CDE policy cited in the letter prohibits schools from disclosing a student’s transgender identity to their parents, unless the child consents or the school believes there is any “compelling” reason to tell the student’s parents.

“With rare exceptions, schools are required to respect the limitations that a student places

on the disclosure of their transgender status, including not sharing that information with the student’s parents. In those very rare circumstances where a school believes there is a specific and compelling ‘need to know,’ the school should inform the student that the school intends to disclose the student’s transgender status, giving the student the opportunity to make that disclosure her or himself,” the CDE policy states.

THE CDE ALSO INSTRUCTS SCHOOLS to store transgender students’ chosen name and gender in separately located “unofficial” records, Kim points out in the letter.

“To prevent accidental disclosure of a student’s transgender status, it is strongly recommended that schools keep records that reflect a transgender student’s birth name and assigned sex (e.g., copy of the birth certificate) apart from the student’s school records. Schools should consider placing physical documents in a locked file cabinet in the principal’s or nurse’s office,” the policy states.

The CDE also requires “all members of the public school community, including students,” to use the preferred pronouns of others on penalty of harassment charges.

Although the CDE may intend to protect transgender students and create environments of respect, “its expansive policies go too far,” Kim states in the letter.

State non-disclosure policy, based on Assembly Bill 1266 (AB 1226), allows students to participate in school sports and activities consistent with their gender identity, but nothing in the statute permits public schools to withhold information about a child’s gender identity from parents, Kim points out in the letter.

The CDE is depriving parents of their fundamental rights under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment to direct the upbringing, care, and control of their children, FAIR contends. And because gender transition affects a child’s mental, emotional, and physical development, parents not only have a right to know but must consent to this kind of gender transitioning, including social transitioning, she said.

Thurmond was given five days to respond to the letter, which was also sent to Virginia Jo Dunlap, the CDE’s chief legal counsel, but didn’t do so, Kim said.

“We remain optimistic they will see that these policies do not comport with constitutional requirements, and hopefully revise them,” she said.

Parents, she said, should be treated as part-

ners in the education process and “not be summarily excluded, particularly when it involves an issue so important and so essential to a person’s life as their gender and gender identity.”

FAIR plans to send a follow-up letter to Thurmond, and if still nothing is done to revise current policies that keep parents in the dark, Kim said the organization will consider litigation.

“It is an uphill battle in many ways in California,” she said. “We are not ruling out the possibility of legal action.”

“We prefer to resolve these things without legal action in all cases, if we can. Sometimes, we can’t, and in that case, if somebody were to approach us who has legal standing—either a parent or guardian in the school who has a child who was affected by this policy—then we would absolutely consider supporting further legal efforts, including litigation,” Kim said. “Our door always remains open to parents who find themselves in these situations where information that they’re entitled to has been concealed from them.”

FAIR states it is a nonpartisan, nonprofit group with more than 80 chapters and “tens of thousands of members nationwide, including throughout California.”

Maria Clayton, CDE communications director, stated in an email to The Epoch Times that the CDE is reviewing the letter which, she said, didn’t reference any specific guidance.

“While it is unclear what is being challenged, pursuant to Education Code Section 200 and AB 1266, we believe that the CDE has acted appropriately. The guidance reinforces the right of students, especially transgender students, to be treated with respect and in compliance with the law,” Clayton said. ■



“You can’t just leave it entirely within a child’s hands, particularly given that the child is not developmentally mature enough to make that kind of a determination.”

Letitia Kim, legal network managing director, FAIR



Students walk to their classrooms at a public middle school in Los Angeles on Sept. 10, 2021.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

What to Do If Your Boy Says He's a Girl

When it comes to treating children with dysphoria, we must be cautious

By James Breslo



A man walks a child to class at Julia A. Stark Elementary School in Stamford, Conn., on Sept. 16, 2020.

PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

COMMENTARY

FOUR YEARS AGO, I BEGAN an investigation into the transgender movement for my “Hidden Truth Show” podcast. The show conducts deep-dive investigations into controversial and unresolved issues. At the time, transgenderism had seemingly blown up overnight from a tiny, fringe idea to a major player on the heels of the gay marriage movement.

It was sparking national debate over restrooms and public curiosity over the transition of well-known figures such as Caitlyn Jenner.

I wanted to understand the science behind it, and the politics. Since my investigation, the issue has only become bigger and more controversial—restrooms now seem to be the least of the issues we’re confronting. Schools are teaching children that they can choose their own pronouns and that they may have been born in the wrong body. Applications of all kinds now have many more than two choices for gender. Biological males are winning championships competing in women’s sports, pregnant women are now called “birthing people,” and there seems to be a transgender role in every new movie or TV series.

I interviewed doctors, psychologists, athletes, transgender people, and politicians on all sides of the issue over the course of 20 weeks. I went into it with an open mind. I am primarily a libertarian by philosophy; I believe in maximum individual freedom and respecting everyone’s right to live as they please. I am also deeply concerned about our children, and I fear that the breakdown of the American family is having an adverse effect on our country.

Of the many questions I sought to answer, one question rose above all others: If your 5-year-old son comes to you as a parent and repeatedly tells

you that he wants to be a girl, what should you do? Should you seek counseling? Should you do nothing and hope that it passes? Or should you give him a girl’s name and let the child wear dresses? More parents than ever are faced with this very real question. Making the wrong decision may cause long-term damage to your child, and it could even be child abuse.

When I started the investigation, I assumed the best plan would be to take your child for counseling. However, this is probably the last thing you would want to do, as my investigation revealed that LGBT activists have taken over the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Psychology Association. As a result, these associations have adopted a policy of helping children transition to the opposite sex at the earliest age possible. It’s all part of a movement to reduce the stigma associated with transgenderism by acting as if it’s natural and normal.

But it isn’t natural or normal to feel that you’re in the wrong body. That’s why it was labeled “gender identity disorder” for so many years, until it was changed to “gender dysphoria.” It was changed to reduce the stigma. I agree with reducing the stigma, but changing a name doesn’t change the science. It is, by definition, a disorder, as it’s a disruption of normal physical or mental functions.

And it does require treatment. As I learned in talking to so many transgender people, gender dysphoria is a nightmare. The question is, what is the proper treatment for it? LGBT activists would like you to believe that transgenderism should be embraced, and thus, the proper treatment is assisting the person in their transition to the opposite sex. They call this “gender-affirming” care, even though it’s actually “gender-changing” care. They denounce any care that may help a person identify with their biological sex.

It isn’t natural or normal to feel that you’re in the wrong body. That’s why ‘gender dysphoria’ was labeled ‘gender identity disorder’ for so many years.



More parents than ever are faced with the issue that making the wrong decision may cause long-term damage to their children.

VERALIVCHAK/GETTY IMAGES

Why not treat a disorder by trying to minimize or eliminate the disorder? We do that with every other disorder: bipolar, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive, substance abuse, attention deficit, body dysmorphia, bulimia, and borderline personality. (In fact, most people with gender dysphoria also have one of these disorders.) But when it comes to gender identity disorder, it’s to be embraced and not treated. The foundation for their argument is that people are “born this way.”

Yet we know this isn’t true based upon numerous identical twin studies, which reveal that a majority of the time, when one twin is LGBT, the other isn’t. Same DNA, different outcome. Scientists have now mapped the entire human genome. No transgender gene has been found.

The most likely explanation is that it happens in early childhood due to some form of trauma, just like so many other conditions that manifest later in life. Studies have shown that the trauma usually involves the small child not accepting or embracing their gender due to a failure to bond with the same-sex parent.

Thus, the best thing to do for a child experiencing gender dysphoria is to help that child become more comfortable in their biological sex. For a boy, that means the father or a male role model spending more one-on-one, intimate time with the child and ensuring that the boy isn’t being bullied by others in a way that causes him to retreat from his maleness.

For older children or adults with dysphoria, it can be treated in the same way as other dis- ♦



orders, through traditional psychological counseling. The most effective counseling usually involves examining a patient's childhood and looking for childhood traumas. The most common form of childhood trauma involves poor, abusive, or absent parenting, but it can also come from abuse by other family members or friends.

However, because the activists are so focused on reducing stigma by insisting that transgenderism is natural and normal, they can maintain that such counseling is inherently wrong.

Since there's nothing wrong with being transgender, it doesn't need to be treated—so their logic goes. This is why they go to extreme measures to try to discredit counseling designed to reduce dysphoria. But there's a fatal flaw in their logic: Merely because something can or should be treated with psychotherapy doesn't mean that we should stigmatize or look down upon those who need

the treatment. Can you imagine not providing alcoholics with treatment simply so that society doesn't stigmatize them? But that's their logic. They're putting the feelings of the group over the individual needing treatment.

We must make known the availability of counseling that reduces gender dysphoria. A relative-

ly new treatment called EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), which has been used successfully to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, is now shown to also have great effects on reducing gender dysphoria.

But incredibly, 25 states have made psychotherapy to reduce dysphoria in children younger than age 18 illegal. They disparagingly refer to the therapy as "conversion therapy," calling it shaming or "praying away the gay," but researchers from groups such as The Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity, as well as the Child Youth and

Students play at recess on an outdoor court at school in New York on March 7.

When one twin is LGBT, the other isn't. Same DNA, different outcome. No transgender gene has been found in the human genome.

A boy works with a psychologist in a counseling session.



Family Gender Identity Clinic in Toronto—which was dismantled in 2015 amidst the "gender-affirming" movement—say the therapy has been proven to be effective. And if it doesn't work, the patient is still free to transition to the opposite sex. It doesn't work so well the other way.

When it comes to treating children with dysphoria, we must be even more cautious since they don't get to make the decision for themselves. Studies show that most children experiencing confusion about their gender will grow out of it. So, providing "gender-affirming" care, i.e., transitioning to the opposite sex, as the activists advocate for, really isn't wise. But what I learned through my investigation is that if you take your child for counseling, that is exactly what you're likely to get.

In a policy statement issued by the AAP, the very first conclusion it draws is that "discrimination based on gender identity or expression, real or perceived, is damaging to the socioemotional health of children." And its first recommendation is that youth who identify as transgender have access to "comprehensive, gender-affirming" care.

The AAP's primary focus: discrimination. Its primary recommendation: transitioning children as soon as possible. It criticizes not just providing psychotherapy, but even taking a wait-and-see approach.

It states: "This outdated approach does not serve the child because critical support is withheld. Watchful waiting is based on binary notions of gender in which gender diversity and fluidity is pathologized."

In other words, the sooner you take your child at their word that they are the wrong sex, the better.

But "gender-affirming" care involves the most radical and risky of hormone manipulations and surgeries. The concept of "gender identity" has no physical presence and can only be known to the person in which it resides. As one expert reported to me, "gender-affirming" therapy is a high-risk, experimental therapy based on low-quality evidence and which represents a treatment for a condition that can't be diagnosed by any doctor.

The AAP goes on to trash psychotherapy designed to help a child identify with their biological body. It states that conversion or reparative treatment models are used to "prevent children and adolescents from identifying as transgender

or to dissuade them from exhibiting gender-diverse expressions." The AAP describes reparative approaches as "unfair and deceptive." The states, in turn, use statements such as this to justify their bans on such treatments.

Parents in these states who want to help their children reduce gender dysphoria aren't permitted to do so. They're only permitted one treatment option: to help their child to transition to the opposite sex. They must change their child's name, change their clothing, administer hormone blockers, and ultimately change their genitalia. This is all for the cause of reducing the stigma associated with being transgender, but really it amounts to an unscientific experiment on children. Also known as child abuse.

I want love, acceptance, and nondiscrimination for all adults and children with gender dysphoria and who are transgender, but the price for this can't be the denial of science. The failure to provide needed psychotherapy for children and the total suppression of information about this for adults is untenable. We can have both acceptance and recognition that this is a disorder that can be treated if desired. ■

25 STATES

IN THE UNITED STATES have made psychotherapy to reduce dysphoria in children younger than age 18 illegal.



PEER PRESSURE

Children Are Being Influenced by ‘Trans Trends’

Girls are going to gender treatment clinics in groups, giggling together, and demanding hormones

Students visit the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles booth during a career convention at the Los Angeles Convention Center, in this file photo.

PHOTO BY KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

COMMENTARY

By Kali Fontanilla

CAN YOU REMEMBER THE POPULAR trends from your teenage days? Which of them were you caught up in? I can almost hear the groans as readers remember the clothes, hairstyles, and attitudes of their youth. When recalling their not-so-glory days, the oft-repeated slogan of anyone older than 30 is, “I was so dumb back then.”

Don’t misunderstand me. I’m not trying to say young people are dumb. They’re often bright and full of energy. But wisdom, discernment, and the willpower to stand out against the peer pressure of the groups—that’s what young people lack. How easily they are swayed to make themselves look ridiculous with whatever new trend has become popular!

But what if the trends of youth culture could be directed? What if the power of peer pressure could be captured and used as a weapon to transform our country? And what if the media, major corporations, social media influencers, and even our entire compulsory educational system could be geared toward creating trends in our nation’s youth? And what hope would a teenager have against such an onslaught of influence?

Unfortunately, we don’t need to guess “what if,” because this is exactly what’s happening today. A transgender agenda, a “trans trend,” if you will, is being popularized in the minds of our children.

Let’s start with some numbers. Historically, gender dysphoria (when someone claims to be dissatisfied with the gender they were born with) has only affected a tiny percentage of children, less than 0.01 percent, and almost all the cases were boys. Today? The United States has seen a 1,000 percent rise in gender dysphoria, and the UK has reported a more than 4,000 percent rise in girls demanding gender “treatments.” And 70 percent of “sex reassignment” surgeries are done on girls.

What has led to this dramatic shift, not only in the number of children claiming gender dysphoria, but also the about-face of a predominantly male affliction to a female-dominated phenomenon? All of this is too rapid, too dramatic of a change to be explained as a natural occurrence. Something is pushing these trends.

The book “Irreversible Damage” by Abigail Shrier posits that these trans trends are pushed by an informal network of educators, social media influencers, psychologists, politicians, and even doctors. In a review of the book, some of the common themes of social media “trans influencer gurus” are listed: “If you think you might be ❖

trans, you are,” keeping secrets about your new trans identity from your parents is encouraged, your parents don’t love you if they don’t affirm your new “identity,” you can try out hormones such as testosterone even if you’re not sure you’re trans, deceiving “doctors is justified if it helps transition,” and so forth. This isn’t just Michael Jackson telling you to drink Pepsi in the ‘80s.

Schools are also in on the trans advertising blitz. They’re leading the way. As I covered in a recent Epoch Times article, teachers are being pressured to push the trans agenda under accusations that they’re “emotionally harming” students if they don’t. Administrators instruct teachers to keep trans identity secrets from parents, and the curriculum teaches students as early as kindergarten that there’s a gender spectrum.

The results? Girls are going to gender treatment clinics in groups, giggling in the waiting rooms together and demanding hormones. Groups. This isn’t normal; it’s an artificial trend. What are the chances that entire groups of friends all happen to be “born with” gender dysphoria? Not likely. These teens act in groups as with other popular trends, not because of some deep and innate sense of being “born in the wrong body,” as trans apologists claim—no, they’re following a crowd.

The response from the radical gender-theory left is to deny that these are peer-pressured and artificial trends of innocent teens being manipulated into thinking that they’re trans by educators and influencers. Instead, they claim that these are organic and genuine cases of gender dysphoria—as if the promotion of these ideas in our youth has nothing to do with the rapid rise in their popularity.

But the left has had no problem recognizing outside influence causing past unhealthy trends in youth. I’ll give two examples. First, Malcolm Gladwell brilliantly documented the rapid rise in teen suicide among males in Micronesia in his book “The Tipping Point,” showing that “in the early 1960s, suicide on the islands of Micronesia was almost unknown,” yet by the 1980s, they had the highest per capita suicide rate in the world. The rate for 15- to 24-year-old males was seven times higher in Micronesia than in the United States.

Almost all of them were copycat suicides, a ritual that became so popular among youth culture that it was “expressed in recent songs composed locally and aired on Micronesian radio stations, and in graffiti adorning T-shirts and high school walls,” Gladwell wrote.

That’s not just individual cases of suicidal depression. That’s a trend. And it shows that unhealthy trends can spread rapidly among highly impressionable youth—even trends as harmful as ritual suicide.



Then, there’s the trend of copycat school shootings, documented by none other than the far-left magazine Mother Jones. The influence of mass media coverage on teen shooters is discussed in an article on the explosion of school shootings after the infamous Columbine tragedy. Did the media cause the shootings? No, of course not. But how many high school students would have thought of such a thing if they hadn’t heard about it first? The article, “Copycat Shooters Motivated by Columbine Keep Multiplying, Our Investigation Shows,” is a tragic reminder of youth subculture run amok.

As these two examples simply show, the dangers of unhealthy teen trends mainly spread organically. How much more dangerous is an astroturf trend pushed by cultural Marxists bent on sowing chaos in society and manipulating our defenseless children?

Suppose fads in youth culture can influence teens to engage in such harmful and unhealthy behavior as mass shootings and ritual suicides. Should we just take the word of a group of giggling girls in a doctor’s office wanting hormone therapy and double mastectomies? Maybe kids don’t always know what’s best for themselves. That’s a radical idea, I know.

It’s no new thing for teens to be manipulated by corporate advertising and celebrities. But now, the result is far worse than that hairstyle you wore in the ‘80s or the cost of overpriced dolls or games during the Christmas season. The price is the mangled bodies and distorted minds of our most precious treasure: our children. ■

Teens are going to gender treatment clinics in groups to demand hormones because they’re ‘following a crowd,’ an education expert says.

Demonstrators protest for transgender rights in Chicago on Feb. 25, 2017.

1,000%

Today, the United States has seen a 1,000 percent rise in gender dysphoria from historic numbers.

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The Week

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky testifies during a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Sept. 14.

PHOTO BY STEFANI REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



CDC Director Admits Agency Gave False Information on COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring

THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTERS for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has acknowledged publicly for the first time that the agency gave false information about its COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the agency’s director, said in a letter made public on Sept. 12 that the CDC didn’t analyze certain types of adverse event reports at all in 2021, despite the agency previously saying it started in February 2021.

“We ... pledge to the American people to reject any continuing resolution that expires prior to the first day of the 118th Congress.”



Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas), on the House Republican effort to block Democrats from using a last-minute stopgap funding bill to tie Republicans' hands in 2023.

“[The Chinese Communist Party’s] willingness to undermine all of the institutions and the norms of the world to fulfill [its] ambition is without a doubt the singular geopolitical issue of the 21st century.”

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.)



66%
of U.S. voters blame President Joe Biden for their economic struggles, polling by the Republican National Committee shows.

26%
The S&P 500 could plummet by another 26 percent by 2023, predicts famed investor Jeremy Grantham, co-founder of Boston asset manager GMO.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: SCREENSHOT VIA NTD; DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

\$370 BILLION

American banks lost a record \$370 billion in deposits in the second quarter, the first decline since 2018, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

43 Years

In August, prices in the “food at home” category in the United States soared at the fastest pace in 43 years, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

\$370 Billion

American banks lost a record \$370 billion in deposits in the second quarter, the first decline since 2018, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation says.

236,962 INCIDENTS — of major crime were reported in the United States in the first six months of 2022, a 4 percent increase from the same period last year.



President Joe Biden speaks at the United We Stand Summit at the White House on Sept. 15.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Biden Signs Executive Order Blocking Foreign Investments in US Technology

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN has signed an executive order bolstering a regulatory panel’s ability to scrutinize foreign investments in areas that are deemed critical for the U.S. economy. While the order doesn’t directly mention the Chinese regime, it comes amid growing concern among U.S. officials about China’s investments in the U.S. technology sector and other industries. It tells the federal Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to review cases involving “microelectronics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and biomanufacturing, quantum computing, advanced clean energy, and climate adaptation technologies.”

VACCINES

COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness Estimated to Turn Negative Over Time in Children: Study

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine against infection turned negative over time for children aged 5 to 11, according to a study. Researchers found that for kids in the age group, the effectiveness peaked at 60 percent to 70 percent several weeks after the first dose. It then dropped, nearing zero at week 18 for previously uninfected children and week 20 for previously infected children. After that, the effectiveness was pegged as turning negative, which means the vaccinated children were more likely to contract COVID-19 than unvaccinated children.



A child receives a COVID-19 vaccine in Needham, Mass., on June 21.

MANDATES

Biden Admin Decides Not to Enforce COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for Federal Contractors

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN’S administration has opted not to enforce a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal contractors, following a recent court decision that enabled the government to enforce the rule in some parts of the country. The White House Safer Federal Workforce Task Force quietly updated its website to say that the government “will take no action to implement or enforce” Biden’s executive order mandating COVID-19 vaccination for contractors. Clauses in existing agreements that implement requirements of the order will also not be enforced “absent further written notice,” the Task Force added.

EDUCATION

17 GOP State AGS Say Biden’s Title IX Rewrite Jeopardizes Women’s Progress, Safety

A BIDEN ADMINISTRATION proposed rewrite of the landmark Title IX ban on discrimination in public school classrooms and athletic fields will repeal five decades of women’s progress in education and subject female athletes to physical injury and sexual assault, according to a coalition of 17 Republican state attorneys general. In their comment letter, the attorneys general, led by Montana’s Austin Knudsen, were critical of the Department of Education’s proposal to replace the biological definition of sex with “gender identity.” A primary focus of their analysis was the projected impact of the federal statute’s revision on women in schools and athletics, both adults and students.



Peiter “Mudge” Zato, former head of security at Twitter, testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee on data security at the company, on Capitol Hill in Washington on Sept. 13.

BIG TECH

At Least 1 Chinese Spy Was on Twitter’s Payroll: Whistleblower

THE FORMER HEAD of security at Twitter was told earlier this year by the U.S. government that there was at least one agent of China’s top intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security (MSS), working as an employee at the company. This was one of the revelations made by Peiter “Mudge” Zato, a whistleblower who served as Twitter’s head of security for about 14 months before being fired earlier this year, during testimony before a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing. “The corporate security physical security team had been contacted and told that there was at least one agent of the MSS, which is one of China’s intelligence services, on the payroll inside Twitter,” Zato said.

VACCINES

Study Confirms Vaccine-Linked Myocarditis Deaths for First Time

A STUDY PUBLISHED in late August found that 345 people in England died of myocarditis in one year, all vaccinated with one of three COVID-19 vaccines. The study, conducted from December 2020 to December 2021, looked at deaths after a hospital stay for myocarditis or with myocarditis listed as a cause of death on a death certificate among 42.8 million vaccinated people in England aged 13 and older. Of the people who received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and were hospitalized for myocarditis or with myocarditis listed on their death certificates, 22 people (17 percent) died within 28 days of receiving the first dose, 14 people (12 percent) died after their second dose, and 13 people (15 percent) died after getting the Pfizer-BioNTech booster. For the AstraZeneca vaccine, 40 people died of myocarditis after the first dose and 11 after the second dose, amounting to 28 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Among those who got the Moderna vaccine, there were no myocarditis deaths within 28 days of vaccination. For males younger than 40, the risk of myocarditis after a second dose of the Moderna vaccine was almost four times higher than the risk of myocarditis after a SARS-CoV2 infection, the data showed.

UK

Number of Illegal Immigrants Crossing English Channel This Year Exceeds Whole of 2021

MORE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS have crossed the English Channel to reach the UK so far this year than in the whole of 2021, UK government figures suggest. Some 538 made the journey in 11 boats on Sept. 13, boosting the provisional total for the year to 29,099, the Ministry of Defence said. Last year’s total was 28,526, according to official figures. The 2022 figure to date is more than double the number that had been detected by this point last year, which was just under 14,500.

US-MEXICO

US, Mexico to Cooperate on Semiconductors, Electric Vehicles

THE UNITED STATES AND Mexico are planning to cooperate on semiconductor and electric vehicle production, according to a White House fact sheet. Both nations seek to establish a Supply Chain Working Group with an initial focus on semiconductors and information and communications technology supply chain ecosystems, the fact sheet states. A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Mexican Ministry of Economy and leading tech firms and manufacturers to “facilitate emerging technologies and workforce development in Mexico.” In a joint statement, the officials said that they will be working together on a pilot project to determine the feasibility of near-shoring semiconductor manufacturing inputs.

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The TotalEnergies Leuna oil refinery at twilight, near Spergau, Germany, on April 12. The refinery is connected to the Druzhba oil pipeline, which transports oil from Russia to Germany.

PHOTO BY SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES



WOKE TRILLIONS

Republicans are shy to recognize and combat this unholy alliance. **64**



CAPITAL MARKETS FREEZE UP

Companies are seeing the worst year for public offerings in decades. **67**



INTERVENTIONISM LED TO ENERGY CRISIS

Europe’s energy shortage was created by intervention on a massive scale. **68**

INSIDE

Thomas McArdle



Woke Trillions

Republicans are shy to recognize and combat this unholy alliance

DURING THE COVID-19 pandemic, when the U.S. Federal Reserve invested heavily in corporate debt in unprecedented fashion, which entity in the private sector do you think our central bank turned to for advice? The largest asset manager in the world and perhaps the most powerful “woke” entity in the global financial firmament: BlackRock.

Panicky investors kept a keen eye on which exchange-traded funds and other debt-heavy instruments the Fed favored during the crisis, and they found BlackRock’s own funds high on the list. So naturally, they grabbed onto the central bank’s coattails and invested in the firm themselves. BlackRock got even bigger as a result, pulling in tens of billions of dollars more to oversee than in the previous year. The firm now has more than \$10 trillion in assets under management—more than twice Germany’s annual gross domestic product (GDP).

“It’s not that complicated, really. The Fed says, ‘We’re buying this.’ OK, then, I’m going to buy it too,” Michael Rosen, chief investment officer of the \$38 billion-strong New York-based Angeles Investments, told The Wall Street Journal a few months after the Fed’s actions began in 2020.

No wonder BlackRock largely waived its consulting fees for its services to the Fed.

One might imagine that such oceans of cash would satisfy anyone. Hardly. Not that the world hasn’t known saintly tycoons, and as George Gilder eloquently reminded us 40 years ago in his masterful “Wealth and Poverty”:

“Capitalism begins with giving. Not through greed, avarice, or even self-love can one expect the rewards of commerce but from a spirit closely akin to altruism, a regard for the needs of others. ... Not taking and consuming but giving, risking, and creating are the characteristic roles of the capitalist.”

In the case of BlackRock, however,

greed became so drowned by lucre that it sought other satiation on new shores, such as manipulating others, especially its fellow rich, those who employ the nonrich.

In a chillingly oligarchic remark in 2017, BlackRock CEO Larry Fink said, “Behaviors are going to have to change. ... You have to force behaviors, and at BlackRock, we are forcing behaviors.”

Companies and equity investment funds seeking capital from big investor entities now have to worry if they’re politically correct enough on race and climate.

Money doesn’t just talk, as the saying goes, it coaxes and seduces, and in BlackRock’s case, it bullies and blackmails. Fink, in 2019, joined the board of the Davos, Switzerland-based World Economic Forum, and as strategic risk consultant F. William Engdahl of the Center for Research on Globalization noted, BlackRock has, since 2018, targeted companies for either investment or shunning based on their ESG (environmental, social, and governance) credentials. In other words, the Democratic Party’s woke agenda.

Companies and equity investment funds seeking capital from big investor entities are supposed to be worried about balance sheets, profits, and overall financial performance; now they also have to worry if they’re politically correct enough on race and climate. Engdahl pointed out that BlackRock awards a firm “positive ratings for the seriousness of its hiring gender-diverse management and employees” or when it embraces green energy. And the criteria can “include anything from corporate donations to Black Lives Matter to supporting UN agencies such as the World Health Organization.”

“Even Carl Icahn, a ruthless Wall Street asset stripper, once called BlackRock ‘an extremely dangerous company. ... I used to say, you know, the Mafia has a better code of ethics than you guys,’” he said.

The firm invests in Chinese military companies and helps Beijing sustain its totalitarian power over the Chinese people. It influences who informs you and who governs you; BlackRock, for years, has held one of the largest shares of ownership in The New York Times. Brian Deese, director of President Joe Biden’s National Economic Council, was brought into the administration straight from BlackRock, where, as “global head of sustainable investing,” his salary and perks were in the millions. Nigerian-born Adewale “Wally” Adeyemo, the current deputy secretary of the Treasury, was chief of staff to BlackRock CEO Larry Fink from 2017 to 2019. Michael Pyle, senior economic adviser to Vice President Kamala Harris, was global chief investment strategist at BlackRock.

The Heartland Institute’s David Hoyt said: “BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street Capital are the top three shareholders in a startlingly large number of the world’s largest and most influential companies. They all sing from the same dark hymnal on governance, which is how they have cartelized private global enterprise to promote their left-wing agenda.”

And yet conservative Republicans are shy to recognize and combat this unholy alliance of private money and public power.

“What the radical left could not achieve by force with the typical levers of government power, it is now poised to accomplish with nominally public-private enterprise partnerships. This new strategy has confused the conservative and libertarian response,” Hoyt said.

Success as a capitalist shouldn’t shield anyone who promotes the Democratic Party’s agenda of insanity and assault on freedom.

Anders Corr



American Money at Risk

China and Russia decouple their gas trade from the US dollar

THINK ENERGY PRICES are high? They could be at a short-term low.

The global economy is interconnected, with China stumbling about near its center. Nothing proves this better than the interrelation of global gas prices and China shooting its own economy in the foot through regional COVID-19 lockdowns that persist month after month.

Gas prices are higher than average due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the resulting sanctions and counter-sanctions. But China’s locked-down economy diminishes the demand for energy. That could change quickly if Xi Jinping unlocks China’s economy after the upcoming Chinese Communist Party (CCP) congress, which would increase global energy prices. He has every incentive to do so, as once he has secured that third term, he has less reason to stick to his failed “zero-COVID” policy.

Much of the liquified natural gas (LNG) that Russia would have sent to Europe but for the energy war is being slowed either by European capitals, which want to punish Moscow for the invasion, or Moscow itself, which is punishing Europe with preemptive supply cuts.

To maintain Russian revenues, that LNG must go somewhere—such as China, the world’s biggest likely market—because of the Siberian pipeline and more planned. In 2021, Russia exported 16.5 billion cubic meters to China, and as of Sept. 7, it’s pricing future energy exports in a 50–50 split between the Russian ruble and Chinese yuan. That puts downward pressure on the global demand for U.S. dollars and upward pressure on inflation.

But China’s slowing economy is reducing its need for LNG. As a result, the price for LNG in Asia is dropping in the short term while the price in Europe

rises. China’s energy traders are taking advantage of the price difference for arbitrage. Beijing can buy LNG from Russia cheaply and sell it, sometimes directly to Europe, at a higher price.

A single LNG cargo, such as the one recently resold by China’s JOVO Group to a European buyer, can reportedly yield as much as \$100 million in profit. Sinopec has sold 45 LNG cargoes on the international market, which frees other LNG for cheaper delivery everywhere, regardless of whether it goes direct to Europe.

Keeping that Russian supply in the spot markets is critical to keeping down inflation and avoiding recessions in the West, but it also increases Beijing’s influence.

“As Europe attempts to wrestle out of its dependence on Russia for energy, the irony is that it is becoming more dependent on China,” the Financial Times stated.

Everyone who cares about profits and the economic strength of the United States and its allies has a short-term incentive to look the other way as Russian oil and gas leaks through porous sanctions to Europe via China. Keeping that Russian supply in the spot markets is critical to keeping down inflation and avoiding recessions in the West, but it also increases Beijing’s influence.

The sanctions aren’t wrong; they’re just backfiring with higher prices, so Russian President Vladimir Putin keeps making money, as do his friends in Beijing and New Delhi. Whenever energy prices drop, energy dictators in Moscow, Tehran, and Riyadh have rea-

son to start a war and scare oil traders into buying more now for a rainy day and shippers into shipping less. The result is higher energy prices around the world.

The Saudis seek a long-term minimum oil price of \$100 per barrel, and sanctions on Russia and Iran have gotten them there and beyond. If the sanctions start working more effectively, the price could go much higher.

While it’s fashionable to ignore the effect of hydrocarbons on causing war, the democracies demanding an oil price cap and the leader of OPEC+ (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, plus Russia and its energy allies) nations demanding an oil price minimum, are increasingly at daggers drawn.

It didn’t have to be like this. The Saudis have traditionally been close allies of the United States. In exchange for arms sales and defense from countries such as Iraq and Iran, they open their massive oil spigot wider whenever Washington asks to keep energy prices down.

However, their inclusion of Russia in OPEC+ and their increasingly friendly relations with Beijing should concern us. Riyadh is straying toward its fellow autocrats around the world and is starting to weaponize its control of oil against U.S. foreign policy goals.

Russia and China have strong relations because each has what the other needs, and both want independence from the West’s sanctions. The Saudis would be icing on their cake.

The fundamental issue is that the world’s dictators are getting stronger and more organized. Wars and high energy prices facilitate the process. Their increasing collective power decreases their fear of economic or military repercussions from the West for violating international law. Enforcing the law is hard, but the longer we wait, the harder it becomes.

Business Formations Rising

Monthly applications to start a new business are up



IN TODAY’S GREAT DEBATE over whether the economy is in recession or not, the pace of new business formation would say “not yet.” At least it seems to say that on the surface. Put into context, recent data may not carry quite that powerful of a positive message.

The underlying consideration is the lingering effect of all the opportunities opened by the pandemic-induced lockdowns and quarantines. Entrepreneurs rushed in to fill the gap left by this raft of business failures and, accordingly, have kept applications for new businesses at historically high levels. They will likely continue to do so for a while yet, until all those opportunities are exhausted, even in the face of an economic weakness that would otherwise cause a more pronounced pullback in new business formations.

The most recent report from the Department of Commerce tells the story well. On the surface, things looked positive. In July, monthly applications to start a new business averaged 426,000 nationally. That figure was 3.7 percent above the June rate. What the department calls “high-propensity” applications, meaning businesses likely to hire staff, rose 3.9 percent from June. Those that planned to pay wages rose 4.6 percent, and corporate applications rose 4.1 percent.

The South and Midwest Gain

Enhancing the positive picture was the broad regional diversification of the gains. The strongest growth was in the Midwest. July’s overall measure rose 5.4 percent from June. The greatest relative weakness occurred in the West. There, overall new business applications gained only 2.2 percent. No doubt this relatively poor showing reflects California’s difficult business climate, to which that state’s losses to places such as Texas and Florida testify.

The South led the nation with the

greatest number of new business applications, at 198,000 overall. That was more than twice the number recorded for the much more populous Northeast, a pattern that prevailed in every sort of business, from the smallest to corporate applications, and especially in the so-called high-propensity businesses.

In July, monthly applications to start a new business averaged 426,000 nationally. That figure was 3.7 percent above the June rate.

As indicated, however, these monthly figures are only part of the story. Before running too far and too fast with this upbeat information, it’s important to note that July’s bounce came off relative lows hit in June. The fact is that the prevailing trend in new business formation has been on a gradual downward slope for well over a year.

Highs for business formation came immediately after the lifting of the worst lockdowns and quarantines in the summer of 2020. Those strictures had forced a precipitous drop in business formation—by some 30 percent, in fact, in a matter of weeks in April and May of that year. Businesses then weren’t forming; they were collapsing. But as soon as the lockdowns and quarantines began to lift, even just partially, entrepreneurs rushed to take advantage of the gap left by the lockdown-induced failures and closures.

Accordingly, applications to start new businesses soared in July and August 2020, reaching a peak of close to 550,000 a month. When later in 2020, the omicron variant threatened new lockdowns, the pace of new business formation quickly dropped back from

these highs, to some 350,000 a month. But by early 2021, as the omicron threat began to dissipate, new business applications rose quickly, approaching 500,000 a month.

In normal circumstances, one would have expected new business applications to continue rising as the general economic recovery gained momentum in 2021, but instead, they began to tail off. It wasn’t that prospective businesspeople failed to believe the then-positive economic news, but rather the gradual decline in applications reflected how the earlier surge in business formation had taken up most obvious openings left by the damage done during the lockdowns and quarantines. Enough opportunities remained, however, so that the slide in applications proceeded only gradually into 2022. The continued presence of such opportunities is why, even in the face of more recent economic weakness, indeed recession fears, these applications remain higher than in the strong, pre-pandemic economy.

It would seem from this analysis that the July bounce will likely reverse soon and that the pace of new business formation will resume the gradual slide that has typified it through much of 2021 and 2022. More pronounced weakness in the overall economy will accelerate that trend.

A more precipitous decline will likely wait until all the opportunities opened by past pandemic-related business failures are exhausted. That point is impossible to determine, but a sharp downward adjustment is all but assured as that point approaches. Then, especially if the economy remains weak, the pace of new business formation will almost surely fall below the 300,000 averaged in the strong economy of 2018 and 2019. In the meantime, these business formation indicators will overstate the economy’s underlying strength.



Capital Markets Freeze Up

Companies are seeing the worst year for public offerings in decades

IT HAS BEEN A HARD YEAR for companies that want to raise capital.

The initial public offering (IPO) market, which allows a company to raise money by selling shares to public investors, has witnessed a sharp decline this year, following a record year in 2021.

Public offerings in the United States are on track for their worst year in decades, according to forecasters. Volatility in the stock market, brought on by high inflation, rising interest rates, and growing recession fears, has slowed IPO activity to a halt.

In August, only nine firms submitted IPO filings to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), much lower than the 10-year average of 23, according to a report by Renaissance Capital.

“The 2022 U.S. IPO market is on track to raise the lowest proceeds of any year in our firm’s 30-plus year history,” the report reads.

Investors have shown little interest in newly listed firms amid this year’s market downturn. Technology firms have been affected particularly hard by this trend.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite is down by 24 percent so far in 2022, worse than the 15 percent decline in the S&P 500 Index.

The Renaissance IPO Index, which tracks the largest, most liquid newly listed public companies, has plummeted by more than 40 percent, pointing to a lack of investor interest in newly listed companies.

This month, yogurt maker Chobani pulled its IPO, which was the latest bad news for the IPO market. The company announced its withdrawal plan in a Sept. 2 letter to the SEC, after delaying the offering several times.

The IPO was expected to be one of the largest of the year, giving the yogurt producer a valuation of more than \$10 billion.



Investors have shown little interest in newly listed firms amid this year’s market downturn.

In July, food retailer The Fresh Market and payroll software company Justworks also pulled their IPO filings.

According to Ernst & Young, the number of public offerings in the United States fell by 75 percent in the first half of 2022 from a year earlier, while proceeds from offerings plunged by 94 percent.

During the stock market rally in August, some analysts thought that IPO markets would recover this fall. However, not everyone is optimistic.

Tom Farley, former New York Stock Exchange president and current CEO of Far Peak, said in June that the capital markets are “completely dead” and won’t recover soon. Companies that believe they can go public in the second half of this year are wrong, he told CNBC.

The markets will be paying a lot of attention to two prospective mega-public offerings, Porsche and AIG-owned CoreBridge, as they test the waters this fall.

There’s an increasing urgency to ob-

tain funding through an IPO or private market for many companies, especially for late-stage startups, according to a report by Pitchbook, a data provider for private capital markets.

“We have a lot of companies that are talking to their investors, and their investors are telling them not to expect new money any time soon,” David Peinsipp, a partner at law firm Cooley, told Pitchbook.

Debt Market

The corporate debt market is also under pressure as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates at the fastest pace in decades. Higher interest rates mean less income to pay off debt for many businesses, and this will make raising new funding more challenging.

The U.S. central bank has raised benchmark interest rates four times this year, with the fed funds rate reaching a range of 2.25–2.50 percent in June. Fed policymakers are expected to opt for another 75 basis-point rate hike during the central bank’s policy meeting on Sept. 20 and Sept. 21.

Higher lending costs will force businesses to borrow less, which then could reduce their business activities, investments, and hiring. Some are also concerned about default risks.

Corporate bankruptcies in the United States are already on the rise. Last month, 38 companies filed for bankruptcy, up from 31 in July, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Market experts predict that the number of bankruptcies will continue to climb in the coming quarters. The largest bankruptcies this year with more than \$1 billion in liabilities include Carestream Health, OSG Group Holdings, Aearo Technologies, Celsius Network, and Revlon.

Dozens of mortgage-lending companies have also either filed for bankruptcy, reduced staff, or been forced into mergers.

DANIEL LACALLE is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

Daniel Lacalle

Interventionism Led to Energy Crisis

Europe’s energy shortage was created by intervention on a massive scale



AN ENERGY POLICY THAT bans investment in some technologies based on ideological views and ignores the security of supply is doomed to result in a strepitous failure.

The energy crisis in the European Union wasn’t created by market failures or a lack of alternatives. It was created by political nudging and imposition.

Renewable energies are a positive force within a balanced energy mix, not on their own, due to the volatile and intermittent nature of the technology. Politicians have imposed an unstable energy mix by banning base technologies that work almost 100 percent of the time, and this has made prices soar for consumers and threatened the security of supply.

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, recently gave two messages that have grabbed many headlines. First, she announced a strong intervention in the electricity market, then she announced a proposal at the Baltic Sea Summit to increase renewables to 45 percent of the total generation mix by 2030. She said she believes that this isn’t an energy crisis but “a fossil fuel energy crisis.”

However, von der Leyen’s messages have two problems. Europe’s energy crisis is the result of intervention on a massive scale. Furthermore, massively increasing renewables doesn’t eliminate the risk of dependence on Russia or other commodity suppliers.

The European electricity market is probably the most intervened in the world. More intervention isn’t going to solve the problems created by a political design that has made most countries’ energy mix expensive, volatile, and intermittent.

Ideology is a bad partner in energy. Between 70 percent and 75 percent of the electricity tariff in most Euro-



Europe arrived at this crisis due to a combination of arrogance and ignorance on the part of the legislators who control the energy mix.

pean countries are regulated costs, subsidies, and taxes set by governments, and, in the remaining part, the so-called liberalized generation, the cost of carbon dioxide (CO₂) allowances has skyrocketed because of those same governments that limit the supply of permits and impose an energy mix by political decisions.

In Germany, only 24 percent of all costs in a household bill are “supplier costs,” according to the German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW) in 2021. The vast majority of costs are taxes and costs set by the government. However, the “problem” is the market, according to the messages of the president of the European Commission. Go figure.

It’s surprising to read that Europe’s power markets are “free markets” when governments impose the technologies within the energy mix, monopolize and limit licenses,

prohibit investment in some technologies or close others, and force the rising cost of CO₂ permits by limiting their supply.

Governments are awfully bad at picking winners, but they’re even worse at picking losers. Constant intervention leaves a trail of debt and cost overruns that all consumers pay.

What happens when the government intervenes? It closes nuclear power out of ideological obsession, then depends on 40 percent of its energy mix from coal, lignite, and gas, like Germany. Or it brings its flagship public company to the brink of bankruptcy by intervening in tariffs, like France. Or, like Spain, it creates a diplomatic conflict with its largest natural gas supplier, Algeria, and, because of that conflict, has doubled its gas purchases from Russia from the beginning of the war in Ukraine to July.

Now, the EU is rushing to install more than 30 new floating regasification plants. The problem? Practically all the liquefied natural gas ships for this winter have already been contracted.

Installing renewables doesn’t eliminate dependence on natural gas. Renewables are, by definition, intermittent and volatile, as well as difficult to plan. Additionally, installing more renewables requires huge spending on transmission and distribution investments, which makes the tariff more expensive.

If there’s one thing that this crisis has shown us, it’s that what Europe needs is more market and less intervention. Europe arrived at this crisis because of a combination of arrogance and ignorance on the part of the legislators who control the energy mix. The importance of a balanced mix, including nuclear, hydro, gas, and renewables, is more evident every day.

Interventionist energy policy has failed miserably. More intervention isn’t going to solve it.

TOBIAS SCHWARZ/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Fan Yu

Why Did Buffett Sell BYD Shares?

Berkshire could sell its entire 20 percent stake in the Chinese EV maker

WHEN BERKSHIRE Hathaway, Warren Buffett’s investment firm, began trimming its stake in Chinese electric car and battery maker BYD, rumors began circulating about what the move meant for the company, China’s stock market, and ordinary investors following Chinese stocks.

But to regular everyday investors who follow Buffett, it means very little.

On the surface, the stock sales appear strange. After all, BYD now is the world’s second-biggest electric vehicle (EV) battery maker, overtaking South Korea’s LG. Sales of its electric vehicles (EVs) have also been accelerating. Its first-half 2022 net income tripled. BYD also has a commanding 30 percent market share in China’s expanding EV market. Those are all good news on their own and should send the company’s stock soaring.

But Berkshire, one of BYD’s biggest shareholders, has now sold 18 million shares according to securities filings. That has sent BYD shares plummeting in Hong Kong trading. As of Sept. 6, BYD stock was down by almost 30 percent from July 1.

Now, Berkshire still owns about 220 million shares, good for almost 20 percent ownership stake in the company’s “H shares.” While the exact number of shares Berkshire owns at any time is hard to discern, the number of stocks it has already sold only amounts to very little of its total holdings.

So what’s going on here? For one, some experts are expecting more sales, which could drag the price down.

“This is a common trend for investors starting to take cash,” Yang Liu, Atlantis Investment’s chief investment officer, told CNBC on Aug. 31.



BYD isn’t a typical Buffett investment that follows the value investing mantra.

While that’s a rather obvious remark, the sheer volume of stock Buffett owns can easily move the market. If Berkshire can’t arrange a block stock sale with an investment bank, it could take months for Berkshire to unload the stock in the open market, and those sales will mechanically put pressure on BYD’s stock price.

And why do investors expect Berkshire to keep selling?

Buffett is a proponent of the value investing strategy, which focuses on long-term value appreciation and buying companies with good balance sheets at depressed prices. But BYD isn’t a typical Buffett investment that follows the value investing mantra. Berkshire invested in BYD at \$1 per share back in 2008 at the suggestion of Li Lu—who founded the investment firm Himalaya Capital—who recommended it to Buffett’s longtime business partner Charlie Munger. That was three years before the company went public on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

The shares Berkshire recently sold

averaged \$35 per share. That’s a 35-fold realization multiple. Berkshire held the stock for 14 years, a longer timeframe than many retail—or even institutional investors—would think about holding onto their shares. This gives us a sense of the immense profits the company was sitting on, and it makes sense that it would start selling given the uncertainties around the Chinese stock market.

It didn’t exit the investment when the company went public in 2011, and it kept the stock even during the tumultuous period of 2014 to 2016 when the Chinese stock market suffered from large volatility. It continued to sit on the shares during the Chinese stock market revival over the past five years.

And finally, as policy sentiment in Beijing has turned against technology companies and the country’s economically destructive COVID-19 policy has rendered the future bleak, Berkshire has decided to begin unloading its massive shares in BYD. And we haven’t even touched upon more direct factors impacting BYD’s financial outlook, which is bright but is facing headwinds. Raw material prices for EV batteries will squeeze the company’s margins. And despite the recent decline in its stock price, BYD continues to trade at higher multiples than peers and very high absolute multiples. BYD has also been accused by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute of being connected to forced labor among the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, China.

All of this, coupled with the immense paper profits Buffett was sitting on, suggests that Berkshire should sell. It probably should have begun selling sooner. And for average investors who happen to also own BYD stock, it’s probably also a good time to sell given the macro picture and specific challenges facing the company’s richly valued stock.

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Jeff Minick

Master Your Emotions

Applying reason before reacting helps keep our perceptions steady



MANY PEOPLE SAIL on a pretty even keel when it comes to their emotions. They can become sad without collapsing in sobs or angry without giving way to rage and hysteria. Pardon the mixed metaphors of seamanship and masonry, but put a bricklayer’s level on these folks and you’d find them plumb, with that bubble dancing in the glass right where it should be.

A couple of people I know do have triggers that can roil up strong emotions. Mention politics to one friend, and odds are you’ve just lighted a wildfire on a dry prairie. Everyday stress—work-related problems, misunderstandings with a child or a friend, computer glitches—can pitch another acquaintance into a mosh pit of self-pity and wild despondency.

And a few men and women apparently wear one mask in public and another in the privacy of their homes. They flick on their screens, devour some article or social media post, and the veneer of civilization, always thin, is torn away. The quiet, helpful guy at the office returns home in the evening, rolls up his sleeves, pops open a beer, and becomes a volcano of online rage under the pseudonym “Morlock.” The library receptionist, always ready to greet patrons with a smile, mercilessly mocks them and their selection of books on her anonymous blog.

Those screens and pen names bring out the worst in some users, allowing them to draw their swords and run amuck. Their unleashed emotions overwhelm their powers of reason.

“I feel, therefore I am” has also become a byword in public life, creating a culture of disrespect or narcissism. Critics who despise Donald Trump, for example, rightly accuse him of rude



On a personal level, feelings can also dangerously dominate our own behavior.

tweets and demeaning his opponents with nasty nicknames, but then they follow suit by abusing him with ad hominem insults.

Shoppers in my local grocery store, many of them young, indulge in casual obscenities once reserved for barracks or a locker room. Some who claim they belong to a different race or sex, or feel the urge to practice certain predilections no matter how bizarre, declare their feelings as truisms that others should accept without question.

On a personal level, feelings can also dangerously dominate our own behavior. For seemingly no reason whatsoever, a man wakes one morning ready to bite the head off the first person who looks at him cross-eyed. After a particularly grueling day, overwhelmed by the demands of work or children, a woman trudges through the twilight hours and falls

into bed feeling sad and lost, too beaten down to see that fatigue and not reality has generated this mood.

The 17th and 18th centuries are sometimes called the Age of Reason. With all our psychologists and counselors, our self-help books, and our emphasis on subjectivity and the individual, the past two centuries might someday be labeled the “Age of Passion and Sentiment.”

The 19th-century Romantics are the ancestors of our current rock-and-roll festival of emotions.

This romanticism was a reaction against the earlier advocates of reason and logic. Yet perhaps the stage is set for another rebellion, this time against the psychobabble and overwrought passions of today’s culture.

As in so much of life, perhaps temperance is the target we should aim for, a balance of feeling and thinking—what Aristotle dubbed the “golden mean.” Emotions tempered by reason, and vice versa, won’t solve all the problems of this raucous world, but guiding the tumbling waters of the heart with the riverbanks of the head might give us a better chance as individuals for happiness and contentment.

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THOUGHT LEADERS

The Paradox of Control

Safety mania, mob dynamics, and dehumanization in the age of COVID

“If you don’t conform to the irrationality, to the hysteria,” says writer Charles Eisenstein, “then you become the enemy, the traitors, the nonconformists, and the taboo-breakers.”

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek and Charles Eisenstein discuss ideas from “The Coronation,” his new collection of essays exploring the ideologies and dynamics of safety and social control, especially in the age of COVID.

JAN JEKIELEK: Your first essay in “The Coronation” is about the Zika virus, where you write, “All the ideological machinery was already in place for the transition that began in 2020 to a fully medicalized society.” What are you saying here?

CHARLES EISENSTEIN: I wrote “Zika and the Mentality of Control” in 2017. It turned out that the Zika virus wasn’t scary enough for them to actually implement a lot of policies. My son was going to a school camp, and everyone was going to sleep in a tent and be outdoors for two days. They canceled it because New England had

“When something disrupts our illusion of control, people panic, and they want something done.”

Charles Eisenstein,
author of “The Coronation.”

two cases of Zika virus. That was more important to authorities than having children get to know each other and being out in nature.

This is the mentality where everything is subjugated to the litmus test of “Is it safe or not? Could you get sick or not?” and how you should live your life to minimize that risk. That whole mentality was already well developed by 2017. The conditions for COVID hysteria are not new.

If you hold safety as being of paramount importance, then you can use it to justify anything, and that’s exactly what we saw. That was the justification for the



suspension of civil liberties. But there’s no clause in the Bill of Rights that says, “Except if the authorities declare an emergency, Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech and freedom of religion.”

So, to protect our safety it’s OK to suspend civil liberties, to keep children indoors, and close off the playgrounds. It’s OK to prohibit handshakes and hugs, choirs and Little League games, and everything else defined as nonessential. I’m not saying that safety is unimportant, and I’m happy to prolong my life. But it’s for a reason; it’s so that I can live. It’s not so I can exist in a bubble in some half-alive hell until I die.

That mythology of well-being and security says that human destiny lies in a program of control. This is the belief that humans are the only source of intelligence in the universe, which gives us the duty to impose order onto the world. And this pathology as expressed in the COVID hysteria indicates we are on the brink of a deep revolution.

MR. JEKIELEK: The authorities say, “Wear masks, get vaccinated, and you’re a good person.” This propaganda stems from what you’re describing.

MR. EISENSTEIN: “If I wear a mask, then I’ll be safe” conforms to the ideology of control. And here’s another thing: When something disrupts our illusion of control, people panic, and they want something done. The authorities come



People walk through a subway station during the pandemic in Beijing on July 20, 2020.

under pressure. So they do what is familiar to them and to the public, which is to issue mandates and go to war against something.

A lot of unconscious psychosocial forces are at work here. It’s totally irrational, but people do irrational things all the time. And if you don’t conform to the irrationality, to the hysteria, then you become the enemy, the traitors, the nonconformists, and the taboo-breakers.

You could say the same thing about witch hunts. This is the pattern of unifying violence, when everybody turns on a sacrificial subclass of victims or scapegoats. We see this dynamic even today. I noticed it in grade school. Did you have a weird kid in your class?

MR. JEKIELEK: Always.

MR. EISENSTEIN: In our class, he was Kent, and Kent had cooties. Who decided Kent had cooties? Who knows? But nobody wanted

to associate with him, because if you did, then you’d be the weird kid, too. A couple of loudmouths gleefully accused Kent of being weird, and then there were the enthusiastic who joined in the name-calling. Then there was the silent majority, the kids who said, “I don’t necessarily think Kent is weird, but if everyone says so, they must be right.” And then there were the silent doubters who felt sorry for Kent. This was me. I didn’t speak up for him, because then I would be ostracized as well. So I kept silent. And our silence creates an illusion of unanimity.

This is a powerful, psychological disposition that fascists and totalitarians exploit to control society.

MR. JEKIELEK: One thing that has stunned me over the past three-odd years is the realization of how important the idea of belonging is to humans.

MR. EISENSTEIN: Part of

the crisis of our civilization is a crisis of belonging. It comes from our dissociation from community, place, and nature. Ordinarily, we get a sense of identity from our relationships. Today, these relationships have shrunk to the nuclear family and to the superficial relationships of the workplace or the suburban neighborhood. For most of our lives, we’re immersed in a sea of strangers. We don’t have a sense of belonging like an indigenous villager, or a medieval peasant, or even someone living in a small town in the 19th century.

Then, you were surrounded by a matrix of stories that gave you the sense of being at home in the world. Today, we don’t have that, so we’re vulnerable to substitutes like membership in an internet opinion tribe or a political ideology. Everybody is dividing the world into good guys and bad guys. Now, I’m not saying that there’s no such thing as a virus, or that viruses can’t make people sick. But when that is the exclusive lens, this good-versus-evil lens, we end up fighting an endless war, which includes totalitarian control over society.

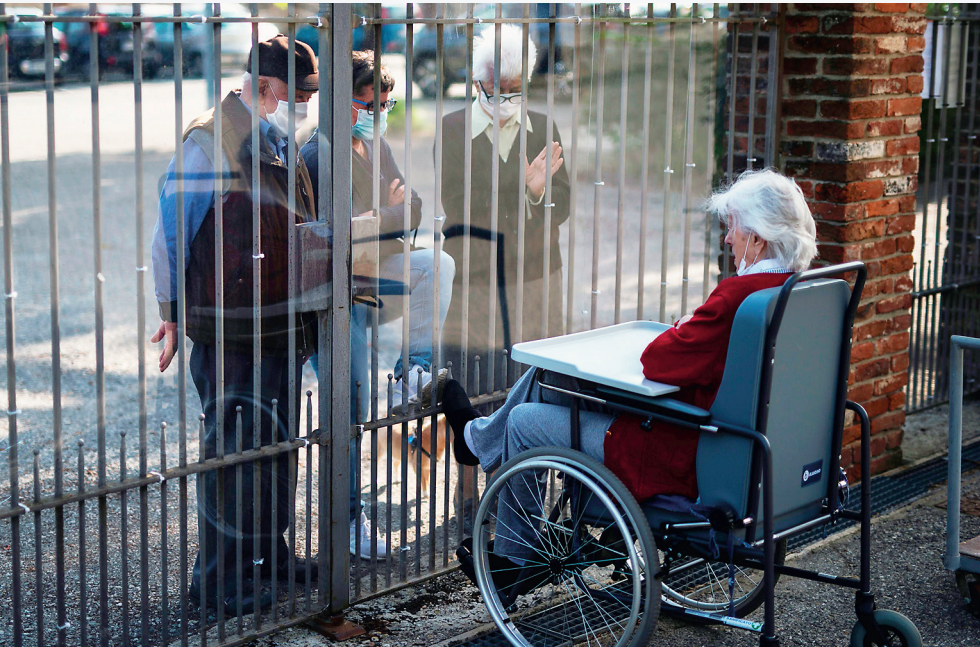
MR. JEKIELEK: This passage from one of your essays really jumped out at me: “What makes you crazy is to be an agent of your own gaslighting. It starts with outward conformity, when you say and do things that contradict your truth. You might have good reasons to uphold the pretense, to avoid shaming and ostracism, to be accepted, and

“We’re vulnerable to substitutes like membership in an internet opinion tribe or a political ideology. Everybody is dividing the world into good guys and bad guys.”

to keep your job. But unless you can hold a place of truth within you that is inviolate, the show soon becomes real. You forget the boundary between true and false, and the bandits breach the walls. You run amuck as you retreat to the inner sanctuary, the seat of the soul. Finally, they usurp that too, and you become a fugitive in your own castle. That is what I mean by insanity.

MR. EISENSTEIN: Yes, you become a fugitive in your own castle, dodging all the negative voices that tell you you’re crazy, naive, and irresponsible. They’re overwhelming, and they’ve taken over the throne, but you’re still in the castle skulking around, searching for something to save you from banishment. I definitely went through some dark periods like that, but I finally listened to my inner revulsion and began writing. The masks always bothered me more than the vaccines. The dehumanization was just so

dystopian. I didn’t want my children living in a world where masking became normalized. That’s what pushed me over the edge to say things I knew would get me in trouble. That’s when I published “Mob Morality and the Unvaxxed.”



An elderly resident in a wheelchair talks with relatives during a visit at the Tapparelli retirement home in Saluzzo, Italy, on May 25, 2020.

MR. JEKIELEK: It’s an explosive essay.

MR. EISENSTEIN: Basically, it says the unvaccinated are fast becoming the new dehumanized subclass associated with contagion, the enemy that must be controlled or removed from society. They’re not fully deserving of life and liberty because they’re putting us all at risk. We have to look at this pattern, because who knows what the next invocation toward mob violence will be? Who are we going to dehumanize next?

MR. JEKIELEK: You mention dehumanization just now. I believe you see this as something that humans do, which is a real foundational problem.

MR. EISENSTEIN: It’s one of the deepest

lies of the human condition. Anytime you dehumanize somebody, you’re not in truth. The truth about human beings is that they are divine souls and children of God, however you want to articulate it. They are a full sacred consciousness looking from different eyes. COVID showed us what we were choosing. It said, “If you continue on this path, here is what society will look like.” The surveillance, the censorship, the lockdowns, and the mandates were a preview of a future where we subscribe to the story of control. We were shown that so that we could choose, intentionally and consciously. We have a very clear choice right now. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

THIS PAGE: MARCO BERTORELLO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Unwind



With a population of only 300,000 and glaciers covering 80 percent of the land, Iceland is indeed a unique travel destination.

PHOTO BY TAKEAPICNICK/SHUTTERSTOCK

The Land of Fire and Ice 78

A CLOSE SHAVE IS GOOD, but a perfect shave is better, and easily attainable when you know how to give your face a barbershop-quality pruning. 82

WE’VE ALL FOUND OURSELVES fascinated by the stars, planets, and twinkling satellites whooshing overhead nightly; with the right tools, you can have a front-row seat. 85

A VACATION AT SEA CAN be made even more enjoyable when you know how best to behave with fellow travelers and the crewmembers alike. 88

A MUSICALLY INSPIRED Residence

*A home delivering
privacy in a laid-
back, yet close
to everything,
Florida west coast
community*
By Phil Butler

The airy dining area is well-suited for casual family dinners as well as for entertaining friends.

SAID TO HAVE ONCE BEEN A SUMMER retreat owned by the pop band ABBA, this custom waterfront residence in the Tierra Verde islands community has direct access to Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. On the market for the first time in almost four decades, the home is listed for \$3.5 million.

This one-of-a-kind 4,527 square foot home, built in 1982, is a great example of Florida's relaxed west coast lifestyle. Situated on a large waterfront corner lot, the house has a two-sided mirror design, each end featuring a main floor owner's suite, a loft, and two bedrooms separated by a shared bathroom. Entering from the arching circular drive, the center of the six-bedroom, six-bath home is a vast social space with two-story vaulted ceilings, a stone fireplace, a kitchen, and an inviting Florida room overlooking the bay. There's also a den, a library, an office, an inside utility room, and plenty of closet space.

Outside, the owners and guests enjoy a true waterfront paradise in a lush tropical setting beneath a canopy of mature oak trees. The pool is ideal for sunny days or cool nighttime

dips, and the lounging area looks out over a picturesque southern backdrop. Two separate two-car garages, electric shutters, a private dock, and other practical features round out this very well-equipped residence. The property has recently been improved with a new roof with skylights, a three-zone HVAC system, and other updates inside and out.

Located in the desirable Tierra Verde area, the property is just a few minutes by boat or car from historic and scenic Fort DeSoto Park, with miles of unspoiled beaches overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. This part of Florida, which was once home to Native Americans and pirates, became one of the area's most coveted addresses when bridges were built to connect it to the mainland in 1962. Today, residents can enjoy the Marina Resort, Tierra Verde Marina, Egmont Key, and easy access to downtown St. Petersburg and its business district, restaurants, and attractions, including the Salvador Dalí museum. ■

Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.



**TIERRA VERDE
WATERFRONT**

**873 2ND AVENUE SOUTH,
TIERRA VERDE, FLORIDA
\$3,500,000**

- SIX BEDROOMS,
SIX BATHS
- 4,527 SQUARE FEET
- 0.62 ACRES

KEY FEATURES

- WATERFRONT,
DESIRABLE COMMUNITY
- FLORIDA-STYLE
POOL HOME
- CONVENIENT LOCATION

AGENT

PREMIER SOTHEBY'S
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Lisa Farmer, global
real estate adviser

+1 727-200-2176



(Above) This six-bedroom, four full- and two half-bath home is located on a large wooded corner lot inside the sought-after Tierra Verde community. **(Top Right)** The home's bedrooms provide resort-quality amenities in a relaxed, private setting. **(Right)** The spacious Florida room features a social and dining space overlooking the pool and Tampa Bay beyond.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEAR KARRY PRODUCTIONS



The Sky Lagoon is located 15 minutes from central Reykjavik.

IF YOU'RE RETURNING FROM A trip to Iceland, people will usually ask you one thing: Did you visit the Blue Lagoon? This massive, milky-blue pool has become an icon and one of the country's most popular tourist attractions. In a typical year, more than 1 million people come here for a soak.

Visitors arrive, shower, and wade into the steaming water, covering themselves with silica mud from the bottom that's said to have healing powers. A photo—cold beer in hand and a mask of white mud on your face—is an essential keepsake from your visit. The pools maintain a temperature of about 100 degrees Fahrenheit and are actually man-made. It all came about by accident, really—the power plant opened in 1976, and by the early 1980s, people with skin conditions came to the then-unregulated runoff pools and reported good results. A more formal complex opened in 1987.

It's by far Iceland's most famous geothermal wonder, and it's a perfect place to take a bath. But on any visit to Reykjavik, the world's northernmost capital, you'll have many choices for a soak.

This pleasant, warm water is a happy by-product of the great violence taking place just below the surface. Rising from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Iceland sits directly on a divide between the Eurasian and North American continental plates. It's a land of fire and ice—covered in glaciers, shot through with lava tubes, and sporting more than 200 volcanoes. Mud pots bubble. Geysers erupt. All this power is useful in providing clean, low-cost electricity throughout the country, even heating Reykjavik's sidewalks in the winter.

Icelanders have enjoyed their hot pools since long before the advent of the Blue Lagoon. The earliest settlers, Norwegians who came in the 9th century, quickly discovered natural hot springs and used them for baths and washing clothes. In the 1200s, renowned historian Snorri Sturluson built his own thermal pool; the trend quickly caught on among others in medieval Iceland, who soon built whole complexes for themselves. Throughout the centuries, Icelandic farmers have weathered harsh, long winters by retreating to their own pools, which were pleasant places for cleaning and just relaxing.

THE TRADITION REMAINS strong in Reykjavik. Walking around the city, everything feels vaguely Scandinavian, including the language—Icelandic is essentially the most original form of the Scandinavian language spoken by early settlers.

"We're very close to the old Norse," one man told me. "We've been here on this island, isolated, for more than a thousand years!"

With 17 public pools across town, locals gather there for reasons beyond the therapeutic and hygienic. These pools are social hot spots as well. Retired Icelanders come in the morning to trade gossip and talk politics. Families bring their kids, happy to let them burn off steam in the water. Couples spend their date nights there.

On a bright Friday evening, I simply followed the steady stream of people carrying their swim clothes to Sundhollen. Built in 1937, it's the oldest public pool in the city. It was designed by Guojon Samuelsson, one of the country's greatest architects, who was also responsible for the National Theatre of Iceland and the iconic Hallgrímskirkja, a hilltop glacier-inspired church that's visible from



(Middle) Reykjavik is the world's northernmost capital. (Right) Northern lights in Reykjavik, Iceland.



'Viking' Baths

Pool-hopping in Reykjavik's hot springs

By Tim Johnson

FROM TOP L: HEIDI HARALDSDOTTIR/PURSUIT/SKY LAGOON, THE EPOCH TIMES; ALEXANDAR TODOROVIC/SHUTTERSTOCK, PIERRE MEUNIER/SHUTTERSTOCK





The Hallgrímskirkja towers over the city.

almost anywhere in the city.

Fully showered, I emerged from my changing cabin in my swimsuit and proceeded to navigate the saunas and hot pools. The facilities were recently renovated, and everything felt fresh. Around me, my fellow bathers chattered away in the ancient language of the Vikings.

I DECIDED AGAINST making my final stop at the Blue Lagoon, which is actually a decent drive from the capital. Instead, I opted for the newly opened Sky Lagoon, which is much closer to town, reachable by a public shuttle that picked me up right next to my hotel.

Again showered and changed, I descended into the steaming water through a cave-like opening in the black, volcanic stone walls. The walls and turf exterior create an immersive environment, transporting me to a land where all you care about is enjoying thermal, volcanic joys.

I grabbed a glass of wine from the bar. Later, I proceeded through their seven-step “Ritual,” which includes a sauna, steam room, body scrub, cold plunge, and warm, waterfall shower.

But first, I paused at the infinity edge of the

pool, with the view, which designers call a “window on Iceland,” spread out before me. The cold waters of the North Atlantic, the buildings of central Reykjavik, and planes descending at the city’s small airport were a reminder that my departure to points beyond awaited me the next day. But for the moment, I was happy to stand there, steam rising everywhere and my glass still half full, happy for my last, glorious soak of this trip to Iceland. ■

Tim Johnson is based in Toronto. He has visited 140 countries across all seven continents.



Iceland’s geothermal assets mean you have many hot pools to choose from. Left, the newly opened Sky Lagoon.

Known as the
“**LAND OF
FIRE AND
ICE,**”

Iceland has glaciers and more than 200 volcanoes.

If You Go

Getting Around:

Taxis are very expensive, so if your budget is a concern, take bus shuttles to the Blue Lagoon, Sky Lagoon, and other pools. They can be booked through Reykjavik Excursions.

Stay:

Fosshotel Reykjavik offers comfortable rooms with sweeping ocean views, within walking distance of Sundhollen and other major attractions.

Take Note:

If you’re visiting the public pools, make sure to bring your own towel and other bathing basics. For a guide on what to expect, consult VisitReykjavik.is

ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC COCKTAIL: THE AVIATION

This high-flying gin-based cocktail, a revival of a pre-Prohibition classic, balances sweet, sour, and delicately floral flavors

By Kevin Revolinski

THE AVIATION—NOT TO be confused with Aviator gin, though one could create one with it—is a surprisingly lavender-colored cocktail that delivers a tantalizing mix of the botanicals of gin and the citrus of lemon, tempered with maraschino and crème de violette liqueurs.

Hugo R. Ensslin, head bartender of Hotel Wallick in New York, created the Aviation. The recipe first appears in print in Ensslin bartender’s guide, “Recipes for Mixed Drinks,” published in 1916, just three years before Prohibition forced the hotel to close. Ensslin’s mix called for a 2-to-1 ratio of El-Bart gin and lemon juice, plus two dashes of maraschino liqueur and two of crème de violette.

Like most of Ensslin’s recipes, the Aviation specifically called for El-Bart, a London dry gin that was also the house gin for the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Bombay London Dry Gin works quite nicely here, but swapping out other gins gives some variety. Citadelle is an interesting alternative with more citrus and even a touch of violet among its botanicals.

As one might guess, crème de violette is a liqueur made from the namesake flower in a sweetened neutral spirit, giving it its purple color (though coloring may be added depending on the brand). When crème de violette ceased to be imported into the U.S. market in the 1960s, bartenders simply skipped it. But in 2007, Minnesota-based importer Haus Alpenz LLC brought in Rothman & Winter Crème de Violette, which is fairly common now in liquor stores; hence, the return to

Crème de violette, made from the namesake flower, is intensely floral; add it sparingly.

Maraschino liqueur, made from Maraska sour cherries, is dry and slightly bitter with almond notes.

For the cherry garnish, swap the bright-red maraschino for a more luxurious bite.

THE AVIATION

- 2 ounces gin
- 1/2 ounce maraschino liqueur
- 1/4 ounce crème de violette
- 3/4 ounce lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- Garnish: cherry

Mix all the ingredients in a shaker with ice and shake until well-chilled. Strain into a stemmed cocktail glass and garnish with a cherry.



This elegant drink gets its characteristic lavender-blue hue from an old-school liqueur, crème de violette.

the original recipe.

Maraschino (mar-uh-SKEE-no) liqueur is made by distilling Maraska sour cherries, so it isn’t sweet but dry and slightly bitter with almond notes. Italy’s Luxardo, in its red-capped, straw-wrapped bottle is a popular choice, but the original Maraska Maraschino from Croatia has a bit more cherry and brandy character. Both of these are clear, so they won’t mess with your lavender color scheme.

As for the Aviation’s

cherry garnish, it may be worth going first-class with Luxardo and Maraska cherries soaked in Maraska cherry syrup. Those may cost as much as the bottle of crème de violette, but mid-range brandied or sour cherry syrup are also just fine. In any event, it’s worth upgrading from the brightly colored economy-class dessert variety. ■

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He’s based in Madison, Wis.

TRY SHAVING



Like Grandpa

Using old-school shaving techniques may be the way to get the best shave ever

By Bill Lindsey

Traditional barbershop techniques can transform shaving into an enjoyable ritual.

SHAVING IS AN EVERYDAY (or perhaps less frequent) task that's typically performed with little forethought. However, it can be transformed into a morning ritual that leaves you energized and looking like a million bucks.

Historians tell us that man first began grooming himself 100,000 years ago by using clam shells like tweezers to remove unwanted hairs. About 40,000 years later, a caveman named Og realized that he could sharpen the clam shells or use stone knives to shave, representing a huge step in facial grooming.

Archeologists have found brass razors in Egyptian tombs dating back to about 1500 B.C., and Alexander the Great is credited with having his soldiers shave their faces, in order to give the enemy one less way to grab them in battle. Shaving was forbidden in Turkey until Suleyman the Magnificent rose to power in 1520; soon thereafter, barbers pioneered a method of removing hairs by using a strand of thread that closed over the hair, allowing it to be plucked out.

The English firm of Sheffield is credited with creating the first steel-edged straight razors in 1680, which served as the most commonly used shaving tool until the stamped steel safety razor was invented around 1901 by an American named King Camp Gillette. The safety razor soon became wildly popular, aided, no doubt, by the fact that it was issued to American soldiers in both world wars.

In the 1970s, disposable razors with replaceable, disposable cartridges were introduced and now represent the most widely used shaving implements.



A traditional shaving bowl and brush are certainly practical grooming equipment, but they also can serve as whimsical decor in the bathroom.

Technology has provided many options when it comes to wet shaving.

For many, acquiring shaving skills begins at puberty, hopefully under the watchful eyes of an experienced mentor such as a father or older brother standing by with a styptic pencil.

OF THE TWO SHAVING METHODS, wet and dry, there are steps to take well before the razor approaches skin. Our focus is on wet shaving and how it can easily become an involved process, but here's a fast overview of dry shaving preparation: Make sure the skin and the razor are both as dry as possible, and use a pre-shave powder or lotion that dries the skin and helps to ensure hairs stand up for best cutting results.

For many, the process of wet shaving consists of splashing the face with warm water, applying a layer of shaving foam from a can, and then running a disposable razor over the areas to be shaved. This works, but for many it leaves a bit to be desired. A "proper" wet shave has multiple steps, all working together to achieve a great shave.

To ensure the closest, most comfortable shave, the skin needs to be prepared, and the razor needs to be as sharp as possible. Let's start with the skin, which needs to be as moist as possible to provide lubrication for the passing blade. Shaving right after a hot shower is a good way to begin the moisturizing process. The skin needs to be clean, which is best accomplished with a soap made for facial skin, as opposed to bath and body bars that can remove natural oils and overly dry the skin. Using hot water opens pores, softens the tough outer layer of hair, and helps to remove dead skin. The trick is to do all this gently, without a washcloth that can irritate the skin. To do it right, wash your face well and then wrap it in a towel soaked in hot water for about 30 seconds. An easier option is to apply some hair conditioner to your face as



When it comes to wet shaving, technological options include the safety razor and the straight razor.

A trick to the most comfortable shave is to use a washcloth that doesn't irritate the skin.

An aftershave does a lot more than just smell good; the astringents help to close pores and tiny scrapes, and eliminate bacteria.

LEFT PAGE: SELIGAA/SHUTTERSTOCK; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: STEPHEN PLASTER/SHUTTERSTOCK; EGGSTOCK72/SHUTTERSTOCK; BAIBAZ/SHUTTERSTOCK; ANN YUN/SHUTTERSTOCK; LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS/SHUTTERSTOCK



If you're a bit hesitant to try shaving with a straight razor, understandably, consider getting a barbershop shave to see how a pro wields the blade.

you leave the shower.

Shaving foam in a can certainly works. But, according to Derek Dodds of Naked Armor, purveyor of grooming products, you can step up your grooming game by going old school: using a scuttle bowl, a shaving brush, and a bar of shaving soap. Saturate the brush in hot water and then whisk it around in the bowl to create a rich, thick lather. Generously apply the lather in a swirling motion to reach every whisker. Using a badger brush adds an exfoliating effect.

NEXT, CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON. Technology has provided many options when it comes to wet shaving. The options include the safety razor, cartridge-style multi-razor blades, or a straight razor. The straight razor is a bit of a paradox, preferred by barbers and assassins, both of whom may refer to it as a cutthroat razor. Unlike a cartridge system that can actually recede a bit under the skin, leading to bumps and ingrown hairs, a straight razor cuts the hairs at the surface for an extremely smooth, irritation-free experience.

The thought of applying a straight razor to your face and throat can be daunting, but huge numbers of barbers employ this method every day, as did our ancestors, who managed it well enough to allow us to be here today.

To gain a better understanding of how to wield a straight razor, read Naked Armor's "The Modern Art of Shaving," which is essentially Wet Shaving 101. It provides a detailed, easily understood explanation of the process, while also suggesting that newbies start off in just one area of the face and gradually expand until they can confidently execute a full-face shave.

Lather up! ■



A scuttle bowl, a bit of hot water, and a shaving brush can produce a lather superior to anything that comes out of a can.

E
LIFESTYLE
CLOSE SHAVES
How to be your own barber



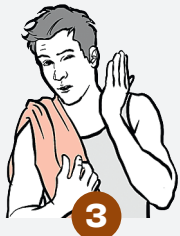
1
Pamper Your Skin

At a minimum, use a facial soap to remove dead skin. If you want to do it right, wrap your face in a hot towel for about a minute to open pores and soften facial hair.



2
Choose Your Blade

Electric razors work well for many, but for others who may have heavier beards, a sharp steel blade is the best choice. Using a straight razor is considered by many the way to achieve the ultimate shave.



3
Slap Yourself

An aftershave containing witch hazel moisturizes the skin, stops bleeding from small cuts, calms irritation, and closes pores against dirt or bacteria.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: FX/ADRO/SHUTTERSTOCK, EVGENY RYCHKO/SHUTTERSTOCK

COURTESY OF MEADE, HUBBLE OPTICS, CELESTRON, OMEGON

ENJOY THE AMAZING LIGHTSHOW HAPPENING EVERY NIGHT

With these items, you can see the stars and the moon up close and clear, without becoming an astronaut

By Bill Lindsey



The Easy View
CELESTRON SKYMASTER 25X 100 MM PORRO BINOCULARS

\$499.95
Binoculars are an ideal and easy way to enjoy heavenly light shows, but a set that's perfect for watching a football game won't have enough power to bring the moon or stars up close. This set from Celestron magnifies 25 times, with 100 mm objective lenses for low-light use, making them a good choice for observing the sky. With all that power, you'll want to use these with a tripod for best results.



For Serious Stargazers
HUBBLE OPTICS 18" PREMIUM ULTRA LIGHT DOBSONIAN TELESCOPE

\$3,595
Like the "other" Hubble telescope, this Dobsonian-style system provides a stellar view via a relatively large 18-inch primary mirror. The very effective light-gathering optical design is favored by serious astronomers, and this model is especially valued by those seeking a powerful telescope that, weighing just 81 pounds and designed to be folded, can be easily transported and set up on sites far from where the city emits light pollution.



A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words
CELESTRON NEXYZ 3-AXIS UNIVERSAL SMARTPHONE ADAPTER

\$74.95
Stargazing is fun, but not everyone can stay up late to do it. This system from Celestron lets you pair most smartphones with a telescope or binoculars; three knobs align the phone's camera with the telescope's viewfinder and then hold it securely in place. It allows you to share photos and videos with friends, as well as to capture them for your own enjoyment. You'll be glad you have this in case E.T. ever flies past.



Compact Powerhouse
MEADE INSTRUMENTS 10" LX90 ACF TELESCOPE

\$3,899.99
Small yet powerful, this telescope is ideal for astronomers and serious amateurs seeking an easy-to-use, very portable system. Use the 8-power viewfinder to find the star, then activate the SmartDrive system to allow long-exposure photography by automatically tracking the star's movement. Add a star diagonal to flip images right-side-up for nature-watching use.



Take a Seat
OMEGON ASTRO OBSERVATION CHAIR

\$149
The most overlooked aspect of stargazing is staying comfortable. The angles required to look through the eyepiece of a Dobsonian or refractor-style telescope, set at the lower end and requiring you to stoop or crouch, can quickly lead to kinks in your back—making this chair a very viable alternative. The lightweight yet sturdy design can be adjusted to suit the system, bringing you in line with the viewfinder, securely perched for hours of comfortable viewing.

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature a marvelous slew of new Miss Marple mysteries and a comprehensive journey through the history of space exploration and navigation.

FICTION

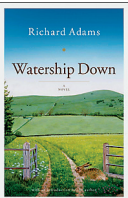


'MARPLE: TWELVE NEW MYSTERIES'
By Various Authors

Agatha Christie's Marple Returns

Miss Marple fans will be thrilled—with 12 thrills, to be exact. Twelve authors have created new cases for the brilliant detective. Agatha Christie's last mystery novel was published posthumously in 1976, but these tales promise to echo the genius of the late author.

WILLIAM MORROW, 2022
384 PAGES



'WATERSHIP DOWN'
By Richard Adams

A Rabbit-Style 'Odyssey'

Wondering why a book about rabbits leaving their warren in search of a new home isn't under "For Kids"? It's because this saga of bravery, intelligence, and danger is for readers of all ages. Published exactly 50 years ago, it won awards, became a wildly popular

bestseller, and still attracts readers today. The tale of Fiver, Hazel, and the other fugitive rabbits originated when Adams told their stories to his daughters, who insisted he write them down. Treat yourself and the family to an adventure.

SCRIBNER REPRINT, 2005
476 PAGES

SPACE



'THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT'
By Ted Spitzmiller

Boldly Exploring Space

The Space Age opened with Sputnik 1 in 1957. Humans entered outer space soon after that and have been space traveling for more than half a century. This book attempts to capture that history—all of it. Spitzmiller's opening chapters define outer space. From there, he takes readers from before the manned spaceflights of the 1960s through to today's missions. While the book is written so that lay readers can understand it, even rocket scientists will enjoy its rigorous accuracy and exciting story.

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF FLORIDA, 2017, 648 PAGES

HISTORY



'YOU ARE HERE'
By Hiawatha Bray

Navigation Through the Ages

It's getting harder to get lost, whether you want to be or not. This book explains why. This history of navigation also examines the privacy implications in a society where you can be tracked by your possessions and your habits. Technology now offers the unprecedented ability to find ourselves, wherever we are. It also permits unprecedented invasion of our privacy. Anyone, especially the government, who wants to find you can.

BASIC BOOKS, 2014, 272 PAGES



'RITCHIE BOY SECRETS'
By Beverley Driver Eddy

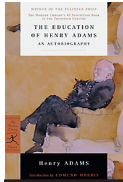
Not Your Average Summer Camp

Supported by years of research and interviews, this book

offers an unusual World War II story. In 1942, the U.S. Army recruited many immigrants and refugees who were fluent in languages and familiar with enemy lands and cultures. They were expertly trained in Maryland at Camp Ritchie and proved invaluable to the war effort.

STACKPOLE BOOKS, 2021
440 PAGES

CLASSICS



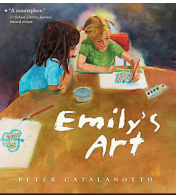
'THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS'
By Henry Adams

An Autobiography of an Educator

A direct descendent of two U.S. presidents, Henry Adams (1838–1918) viewed his life as a teacher and writer as one of unfulfilled political possibilities, yet he left behind a masterpiece of an American autobiography. Privately published in 1909, his work found a wide audience after his death, won him a Pulitzer Prize, and is still read today for its trenchant wit, its many one-liners, and for Adams's keen powers of observation. "A teacher affects eternity," he writes, and "Education" stands as witness to his influence on readers.

MODERN LIBRARY, 1999
560 PAGES

FOR KIDS

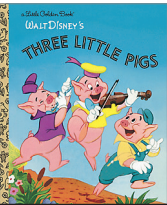


'EMILY'S ART'
By Peter Catalanotto

Painting With the Heart

Emily's first-grade class has an art contest. Will she win? And if not, what will losing do to her? Colorful illustrations, thoughts on friendship, and doing something you love make this a winner for budding artists. Grades K–3.

ATHENEUM BOOKS, 2006
32 PAGES



'THE THREE LITTLE PIGS'
By R.H. Disney

Hard Work Pays Off

This fun and familiar Little Golden Book story is a must-have for any child's library. While learning the virtues of hard work and forbearance, young readers will giggle away as they huff and they puff and ... well, you know the rest.

GOLDEN/Disney, 2004
24 PAGES



Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author.
He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature a touching coming-of-age animated film, as well as a superb book-to-film adaptation of a classic tale by Charles Dickens.

NEW RELEASE



'Goodbye, Don Glees!' (2022)

A trio of friends, who call themselves the "Don Glees," are social outcasts who have formed a tight bond. But when the three set off on their summer vacation and disaster strikes, sparks fly and tensions arise between them. Soon, they realize that they are growing into very different people.

There's no time more exhilarating yet poignant than the end of youth, and this Japanese anime film illustrates that perfectly. It's a warm, emotional experience that features lovely animation, good dialogue, and voice talent. Bring tissues.

ANIMATION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA

Release Date:
Sept. 14, 2022 (limited)

Director:
Atsuko Ishizuka

Starring:
Natsuki Hanae (voice), Yuki Kaji (voice), Ayumu Murase (voice)

Running Time:
1 hour, 35 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★★★★★

AN EXQUISITE ADAPTATION OF A DICKENS TALE



'Great Expectations' (1947)

Young and poor Pip (Tony Wager) is invited into a rich home to keep a beautiful girl (Jean

Simmons) company. Years later, a mysterious benefactor makes him a gentleman, but he discovers that all is not what it seems.

Watching a Charles Dickens's tale helmed

by one of the greatest directors to take the chair, David Lean, is exquisite. A true must-see, cinematic masterpiece.

ADVENTURE | DRAMA | MYSTERY

Release Date:
May 22, 1947

Director:
David Lean

Starring:
John Mills, Valerie Hobson, Tony Wager

Running Time:
1 hour, 58 minutes

Approved

Where to Watch:
HBO Max, Amazon, Apple TV

★★★★★

Epoch Watchlist

INDIE PICK

'Slumdog Millionaire' (2008)

Jamal Malik (Dev Patel) is an orphan from the slums of Mumbai, India. While he earns an honest living, his brother Salim lives a life of crime. Eventually, Jamal gets a shot at making it big by answering questions on the Indian version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" and reuniting with his long-lost love.

This is a briskly paced, deeply moving, romantic, and culturally insightful film about choosing the moral high ground in



one's life, despite enormous setbacks. Just be advised that there is also some violence, so parents beware.

CRIME | DRAMA | ROMANCE

Release Date:
Dec. 25, 2008

Directors:
Danny Boyle, Loveleen Tandan

Starring:
Dev Patel, Freida Pinto, Saurabh Shukla

Running Time:
2 hour

MPAA Rating:
R

Where to Watch:
Redbox, Vudu, DirecTV

★★★★★

A TOUR DE FORCE PORTRAYAL OF A GREAT ENGLISH KING

'Henry V' (1989)

When Henry V of England (Kenneth Branagh) is slighted by one of the sons of King Charles VI of France, Henry decides to lead his army into war against the French. However, self-doubt plagues the English king during this would-be conquest.

Based on Shakespeare's play, this compelling tale displays a wide variety of emotions. Each scene is well-crafted and the movie never falls into the trap of melodrama. The final Battle of Agincourt



is especially memorable, as are many of the superb performances.

BIOGRAPHY | DRAMA | HISTORY

Release Date:
Nov. 8, 1989

Director:
Kenneth Branagh

Starring:
Kenneth Branagh, Derek Jacobi, Simon Shepherd

Running Time:
2 hours, 17 minutes

MPAA Rating:
PG-13

Where to Watch:
Redbox, Vudu, Hoopla

★★★★★



How to Behave at Sea

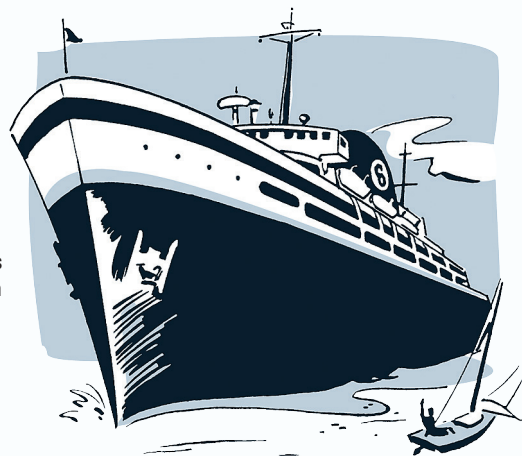
*Cruises are an exciting, exotic experience,
with specialized etiquette rules*

Sailing across the ocean to visit exotic ports is an ideal vacation for anyone, but whenever you find yourself on a ship far from land and full of strangers, proper manners become essential.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Enjoy Yourself Responsibly

The reason to take a cruise in the first place is to relax and refresh yourself by spending time on the open ocean, with all your whims addressed by the attentive crew. Allow your stress to fall away into the ship's wake, but don't neglect common sense. Using sunblock can save you from a trip-ruining sunburn, and restraining yourself at the all-you-can-eat buffet helps ensure that you won't return home to clothes that no longer fit. Don't overindulge on tropical cocktails, either.



2 Be the Crew's Favorite Passenger

As you walk up the boarding ladder to the ship, set a goal of being the passenger the entire crew can't wait to have back for another cruise. Don't skip safety drills, and respect lines for activities; you're on a cruise, so what's a short wait? Be punctual; if you're wrapping up a port visit and miss the tender lift back to the ship, it's your responsibility to find a way back, even if it's at the next port of call.

3 Respect the Crew

Cruise ships are floating resorts, and, to the staff, just another place of work—albeit with a great view. From the captain down to the maintenance staff you may pass in a hallway, show them basic human kindness with a smile and a pleasant comment. Some cruise lines charge you a daily tip to be split among the staff, but this might not include casino and spa personnel, so make sure you take care of these folks, too.

4 Dress to Impress

Do some research before you book a cruise to know what to expect in terms of fellow travelers and the nature of the cruise, from a rowdy spring break crowd to sedate retirees to families with young children. You'll also want to research the expected dress code. Some cruises have formal events, so when the crew is wearing dress whites, you're expected to dress up as well; be sure to pack more than just swimwear and flipflops.

5 Mind the Young Sailors

On all cruises, including family-friendly ones, don't expect the crew to be babysitters. While there may be activities designed to keep kids happily occupied, you are responsible for your children and their actions. This means you need to make sure they are exhibiting great manners and adhering to the ship's rules for meals and activities, as well as at all other times. Even if other parents allow their kids to run amuck, keep yours happy and safe.

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Real News Other Media Ignore

We believe that investigating and exposing the truth is the only way that we can remain safe and free

CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

ON MAY 25, 2017, The Epoch Times published an article headlined “Despite Allegations, No Evidence of Trump–Russia Collusion Found.” The article detailed that—despite a media frenzy at the time—no actual evidence had been uncovered that President Donald Trump or anyone associated with his campaign had colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

OUR REPORTING was proven accurate with the conclusion of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

NOT ONLY DID WE NOT BUY INTO the false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia, but we have also been a leader in reporting on the irregular and apparently politicized nature of the FBI's investigation of the Trump campaign. During the past five years, we have published dozens—many of them exclusive—articles on the topic.



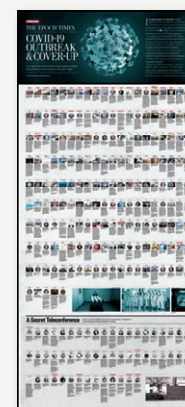
ELECTION INTEGRITY

FOLLOWING THE 2020 ELECTION, The Epoch Times was at the forefront of investigating and reporting on the questions surrounding the integrity of the election. Through our fact-based and independent reporting, we were able to uncover multiple irregularities.



ORIGINS OF COVID-19

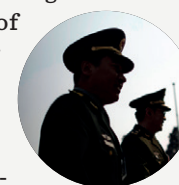
ON APRIL 15, 2020, The Epoch Times published its documentary “Tracking Down the Origin of Wuhan Coronavirus.” The film, which received over 100 million views, explored the origins of the virus, including the possibility of a lab leak. It presents scientific data and interviews with top scientists and national security experts..



YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE of this groundbreaking documentary, the possibility of a lab leak is considered by government officials and experts as the most likely explanation for the virus's spread.

CHINA THREAT

SINCE ITS INCEPTION in the year 2000, The Epoch Times has been at the forefront of reporting on the infiltration of the United States by the Chinese Communist Party. Numerous times over the years, we've broken major China-related stories ahead of other news organizations. In 2003, The Epoch Times was the first media outlet to systematically and continuously report on the spread of SARS, well ahead of most other Western media. We were also the first to report on state-sponsored forced organ harvesting in China—one of the most underreported atrocities of our time—in



which prisoners of conscience are killed for their organs, which are then sold for profit on a large scale.

THE EPOCH TIMES also published the editorial series “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” revealing the true nature and history of the Communist Party and inspiring a movement that so far has seen more than 400 million Chinese people quit the Party and its affiliated organizations. Another of our series, “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” systematically exposes the evil nature of communism, as well as the harm it has brought and continues to inflict on the United States and the world.

A message and a story you do not want to miss

Dear future subscriber,
If you are sick of the bias, lies, and fake outrage that's business-as-usual in the media today, I have a prediction for you: You are going to like our weekly Epoch Insight magazine. And by "like," I mean love.

My name is Kirk Wang, and I am senior vice president of subscription at The Epoch Times—the fastest-growing independent news outlet in America.

When The Epoch Times was founded in 2000, I was the first to join the production team in Atlanta. Together, we made our first edition, in Chinese. Thus began our commitment to reporting the truth and exposing the Chinese Community Party and its infiltration in the United States and around the world. Today, I'd like to share a few things with you.

In today's desert of shameless media dishonesty, The Epoch Times has become an oasis for those thirsting for truthful, fact-based coverage of current events. Our news magazine, Epoch Insight, takes you even deeper.

Produced by our award-winning newsroom, Epoch Insight is a weekly publication that provides big-picture news coverage and in-depth analysis of today's most challenging issues.

Epoch Insight will keep you up to date on the most significant developments in the United States, world, and economic news, with exclusive content in the timeless format of a real American news magazine.

That's what you can trust us to give you. Why? Because we're committed to honoring Truth and Tradition—and treating our readers with the respect you deserve.

Let me offer you three reasons why honest reporting is absolutely central to every line you read in The Epoch Times and Epoch



Kirk Wang, SVP of Subscription

Insight. Then I want you to assess the truth of my claims for yourself.

1. The Epoch Times rejects politically motivated journalism.

We're so old-fashioned, we believe that YOU ought to be able to judge the facts and decide for yourself what to make of them.

Other media corporations want to tightly control what you're allowed to see or read, so that you don't arrive at the "wrong" views.

Not us. When we search for new hires, every single job description emphasizes that the candidate must practice ethical journalism: "seek the truth and report it." This used to be standard in American newsrooms ... but lately it's been sacrificed for social-justice activism.

Is it hard to find reporters who qualify? You bet. Journalism schools have taught students to forsake traditional journalistic ethics for woke newsroom activism.

But while this hiring process is laborious, it has proven successful: The Epoch Times has built a team of reporters who are dedicated to seeking and reporting the truth, regardless of whether what they find conflicts with their personal biases.

And get this: The Epoch Times is so committed to this principle that it has never endorsed a political candidate for office. Can you imagine?

2. The Epoch Times is indebted to no one.

Let's face it: If you are beholden to a corporation or conglomerate, you aren't really free to report the facts. That's the problem we see with many news outlets today... they know where their bread is buttered, and their "factual" reporting shows it!

What's more, if your business model depends on getting a ton of "clicks," you aren't really free to report the news honestly. Every single headline is an advertisement looking to manipulate the consumer. (Remember the saying, "If a product is 'free,' there's a good chance that YOU are the product.")

But The Epoch Times is totally independent. We are funded by loyal subscribers like you and generous donors who are proud to support high-quality, trustworthy journalism.

(By becoming a subscriber today, YOU will become part of this movement to restore truth to our country.)

3. The Epoch Times has seen firsthand where ideological manipulation leads.

I have to warn you, this part of the letter gets a little heavy, and I write it with a somber heart.

You see, the founders of The Epoch Times are Chinese Americans who witnessed persecution in communist China.

We started a newspaper that would counteract the total censorship of the press inside China and the world's reporting about China, and let people see the truth, not just the official government narrative.

And for their courageous commitment to the truth, many Epoch Times journalists paid a very heavy price.

In 2000, China's state security agents arrested the manager of the newspaper's China bureau and 10 journalists. Editor-in-chief Zhang Yuhui received a prison sentence of 10 years, while Epoch Times staff member Huang Kui received five.

Both men were interrogated, tortured, forced into slave labor, and subjected to brainwashing classes. Huang was released in 2004 and Zhang in 2010. But several other Epoch Times staff members were never heard from again. We fear they paid the ultimate price for their commitment to telling the truth.

So, for us, it's personal. When you have colleagues tortured and killed for honest reporting, you're not going to forsake those principles just because it's convenient. We would dishonor their sacrifice if we gave you anything less than the honest truth.

I'd like to invite you to take a look at this Epoch Insight magazine and decide for yourself if it's the kind of in-depth news you've been looking for.

So please, right now, act on our special offer: only \$1 for your first four issues of Epoch Insight. Just go to **ReadEpochInsight.com**. You'll also enjoy a savings of 45 percent off our regular rate on the next 12 months of superior journalism ... plus other big extras, including complete access to the exceptional content on The Epoch Times' acclaimed website, **TheEpochTimes.com**.

In Truth and Tradition,

Kirk Wang
SVP of Subscription
The Epoch Times

What Our Readers Say

**"It's a magazine that's
FOR the American people,
not against."**

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

**"Well thought out material,
thoroughly investigated,
and I trust [the] sources."**

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

**"It is straightforward, rather
than a lot of speculation or
pontificating."**

Jan Hamilton, retired professional

**"[Insight] reminds me
that there are still a LOT
of wonderful, good, and
dedicated people in this
country."**

Creed Haymond, surgeon

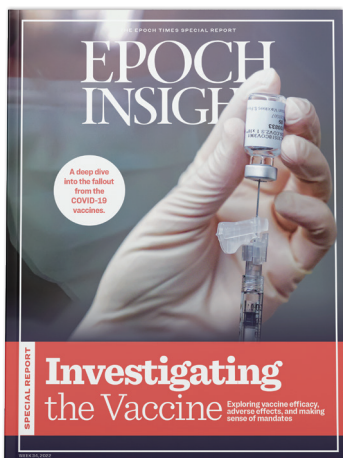
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Mark Naumann, photographer

**"I can trust what I read and
make up my own mind how
I feel about the subject."**

Jim Edwards, retired

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