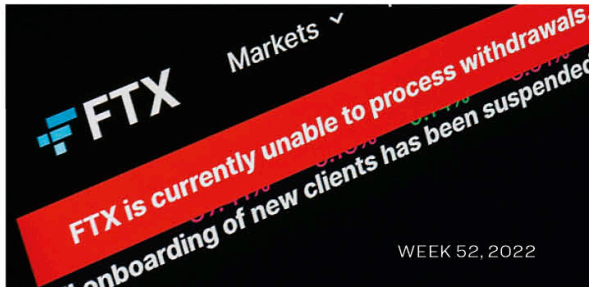
THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL PHOTO ISSUE

EPOCH INSIGHT

YEAR IN PHOTOS



Year in Photos

WHEN LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT IMAGE to capture a news event, Epoch Times photographers and photo editors look for images that are moving, visually striking, and have strong composition.

The power of an image is in the instant connection it creates, according to Epoch Times photographer Samira Bouaou.

"Photography connects us to each other; it can connect us to our past. We can help to reinforce the human bonds among us and, through that, create more respect for each other," Bouaou says.

"It allows us to see the dignity in people everywhere."

This week's edition of Epoch Insight includes some of the most striking images from many of the biggest news stories this year.

One such picture is that of a Ukrainian boy receiving aid (Page 63).

"His expression is innocent but at the same time, in need," Bouaou said. "It captures the moment he's reaching out for help—you almost want to help him reach out for help, too."

Not all pictures are of suffering and war, however.

One picture (Page 59) shows an elephant keeper caressing an elephant calf in Samburu, Kenya.

"It's very sweet. It shows the relationship between animals and humans: how they respect each other," says Bouaou.

"You have this sun ray here that is hope and positive and adds warmth—it's already a warm interaction and the lighting adds warmth to it, the ray of hope."

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief

ON THE COVER
As the famous saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words." See the year 2022 through the lenses of news photographers.

EPOCH INSIGHT

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DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Ukrainian artillerymen fire a 152 mm towed gun-howitzer at a position on the frontline near Bakhmut, Ukraine, on Oct. 31, amid the Russian Invasion of Ukraine.

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THE YEAR *in* PHOTOS

WHAT MOVED AND INSPIRED US IN 2022

THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

What moved and inspired us in 2022

MANY PEOPLE LOOKED toward 2022 with hope after a difficult and uncertain 2021 awash in changing parameters around COVID-19 and shrinking economies. Some of what unfolded was predictable; but much wasn't. World leaders changed, a long-ruling monarch died, and regular people had to start tightening their belts as inflation soared, supply chain issues persisted, and economies soured.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine dominated many news cycles, which will likely continue into 2023. COVID-19 vaccine mandates stirred backlash, especially as more side effects came to light. In China, under the regime's extreme lockdowns, citizens began to protest against their diminishing freedom.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision to send abortion law back to the states triggered both celebrations and protests. As with every year, natural disasters and crime both took their toll in 2022. The midterm elections came and went, with some surprises and a renewed critique of voting integrity. Former President Donald Trump announced his bid for the 2024 election, which could be a re-run of 2020.

The year finished with a soccer World Cup, a crypto currency crash, and the knowledge that there are now 8 billion of us on the planet.

We wish everyone a positive and productive 2023.

1/1 **Celebrating New Possibilities**

People celebrate the beginning of 2022 as confetti showers Times Square in New York City.

PHOTO BY YUKI IWAMURA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

1/6 **Snow Blanket in Germany**

An aerial view shows a snow-covered landscape on a sunny winter day near Winterberg, Germany.

1/7 **COVID-19 Cases Hit Milestone**

People line up for a nasal swab COVID-19 test in Mumbai, India. The number of COVID-19 cases worldwide has just exceeded 300 million.

1/16 **Australia Bans Tennis Champ**

World No. 1 Novak Djokovic (C) is banned from entering Australia and playing in the Australian Open as he chooses to not take a COVID-19 vaccination.

1/5 **Syrian Refugee Crisis**

Mariam Ahmad, a Syrian refugee from Aleppo, smiles as she looks at her child in her home in Tripoli, Lebanon.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LINA FASSBENDER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; REUTERS/LORENE LLOTT; ANDREEA CAMPEANU/GETTY IMAGES; PUNIT PARANJPE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Year in Photos January

1/18 **UK Migrant Boat Pressure**

An illegal migrant arrives in England after being intercepted in the English Channel by the UK Border Force. In 2021, the number of boat migrants tripled to 28,000 from 2020.

1/24 **Admiration of Art**

Children look at "The Blue Boy" by English artist Thomas Gainsborough at the National Gallery in London. The painting is on display in the UK for the first time in 100 years.

1/12 **Nevada Senator for 30 Years**

President Joe Biden walks away after paying respects at the casket of former U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, who lies in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: DANKIT WOOD/GETTY IMAGES; ANDREW HARNIK/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; TOLGA AKMEN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

New York Police Department Officers Jason Rivera and Wilbert Mora are shot and killed in Harlem while responding to a domestic disturbance call.

1/28 **Fallen Police Officer**

Dominique Rivera, wife of fallen New York Police Department Officer Jason Rivera, hugs the flag from his casket during his funeral at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

1/29 **Hard Labor in Western Africa**

Men break up granite and carry out the slabs for a few euros per day in the large crater of Pissy Granite Mine located in the center of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

FROM L SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES; JOHN WESSELS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FEBRUARY

2/4 **US Counterterrorism Raid**

Islamic State leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi is killed during a counterterrorism raid by U.S. special forces in the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib.

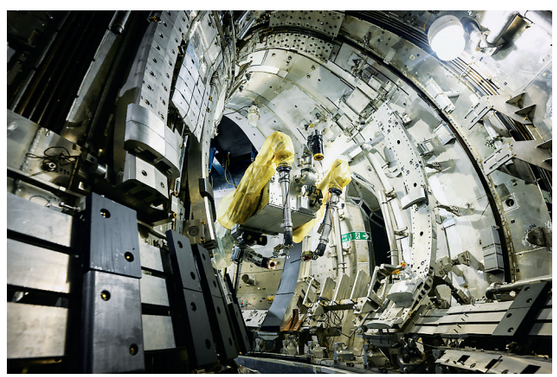
PHOTO BY AAREF WATAD/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

2/7 **Salute to the Queen**

A member of the Honourable Artillery Company loads a cannon for a gun salute in front of London's Tower Bridge to mark the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne.

2/9 **Nuclear Fusion Breakthrough**

The biggest breakthrough in fusion energy since 1997 is reported at the Joint European Torus in Abingdon, England, with 11 megawatts of power being produced over five seconds, more than double the previous record.



Facebook's parent company, Meta, plummets in value following an earnings report showing the first-ever drop in daily user numbers.

2/3 **Social Media Giant Takes Tumble**

The share price of Meta dropped by more than 25 percent and Facebook lost $230 billion in market value, the biggest one-day loss in history for a U.S. company. This followed the company's first-ever drop in daily user numbers.

2/7 **Diplomatic Overtures**

French President Emmanuel Macron (R) meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in an effort to find common ground on Ukraine and NATO.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: NIKLAS HALLEN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES; /SPUTNIK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

THE START OF THE RUSSIA–UKRAINE WAR

RUSSIAN FORCES INVADE UKRAINE on March 24, inflicting devastating losses and spurring millions of Ukrainians to flee to neighboring Poland. The Ukrainian president said that at least 137 Ukrainian soldiers were killed by the end of the first day.

Russian President Vladimir Putin prefaced the invasion in a pair of speeches during which he called it a "special military operation." The Russian leader said the "operation" was necessary because Ukraine has become "infected with the virus of nationalism and corruption" and a neo-Nazi state.

The EU, United States, and their allies swiftly committed to imposing economic sanctions on Russia and began sending support to Ukraine, including money, weapons, and humanitarian aid.

2/28 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

A couple prepares to evacuate by train from Ukraine's capital city, Kyiv, as Russia's invasion enters its fifth day.

2/24 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

Civilians gather at a metro station in Kyiv, Ukraine, after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation and explosions sounded. Russia's foreign minister said a "full-scale invasion" was underway.

2/25 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

People look at the exterior of a damaged residential block hit by an early morning missile strike in Kyiv, Ukraine, the day after Russia launched a large-scale attack on the nation.

2/24 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

A woman stands in a street as smoke rises from a military airport near Kharkiv, Ukraine. Russian troops have invaded the country from the north, east, and south, accompanied by air strikes and shelling.

CLOCKWISE FROM L: DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, DANIEL LEAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, ARIS MESSINIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

MARCH

3/12 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

A mother and son sleep in a family area in Lviv, Ukraine, while waiting to board a train to Poland. More than 2 million people have fled Ukraine in the past three weeks.

3/1 **State of the Union**

President Joe Biden gives his first official State of the Union Address at the U.S. Capitol as Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi applaud behind him.

3/10 **South Korean Presidential Election**

Yoon Suk-yeol from the People Power Party narrowly wins the presidential election for South Korea.

3/12 **Festival of Color**

Revelers awash in color sing hymns during the Hindu spring festival of colors at Nandgaon village in India's Uttar Pradesh state.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: DANKITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES; SARAHBETHMANEY-POOL/GETTY IMAGES; JAFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; KIM HONG-JI - POOL/GETTY IMAGES

The Year in Photos March

PHOTO BY YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

3/16 **Fishing in Poorest Nation** Fishermen leave to fish on Lake Tanganyika in Bujumbura, Burundi. Burundi is classified as the poorest nation in the world in terms of gross domestic product per capita, according to the World Bank.

3/26 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

Black smoke billows after authorities said a missile attack hit an industrial area of Lviv, Ukraine.

3/28 **Education Protections in Schools**

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis celebrates signing into law provisions that would ban certain discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity in school classrooms from kindergarten to third grade.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON/THE EPOCH TIMES; FADEL SENNA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF FLORIDA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

The Russia–Ukraine conflict heads into its second month as fighting continues to leave a path of destruction.

3/29 **Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

A Ukrainian serviceman stands on a destroyed Russian tank in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Trostyanets after Ukraine stated that it recaptured the town; one of the first to fall under Moscow's control.

APRIL

4/21 **Traditional Indian Garb**

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson gets a traditional turban tied on his head after arriving at a university in Gandhinagar during a two-day trip to India.

4/10 **France Presidential Election** A man picks up ballots for the first round of France's presidential election at a polling station in Lyon, France.

4/1 **Burning Peatlands in Indonesia**

A man walks past a burning peatland in Pekanbaru, the capital of the Indonesian province of Riau. Dry peat burns easily and can be difficult to put out, endangering nearby protected forests.

4/13 **New York City Subway Attack**

Suspect Frank James is arrested in connection with the April 12 subway attack during rush hour. Ten people were shot, with five sustaining critical injuries.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: BEN STANSALL - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES, WAHYUDI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES, JEFF PACHOUD/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

MAY

5/7 **Celebrating Spiritual Practice and Chinese Culture**

Falun Gong practitioners take part in an event to celebrate the May 13 World Falun Dafa Day ahead of time in Foley Square, New York.

FROM L: SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES; HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

5/30 **Lockdowns in China**

A man receives a haircut on a street adjoining a neighborhood that authorities locked down over fears of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Jing'an district of Shanghai.

Sri Lanka descends into chaos as protests ramp up against the government amid the country's economic free fall.

5/16 **Religious Celebration In Indonesia**

Buddhist devotees and tourists release lanterns into the air near the Borobudur temple during celebrations for Vesak Day in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia.

FROM L: ULET IFANSASTI/GETTY IMAGES; ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

5/9 **Unrest in Sri Lanka**

Destroyed buses lie near Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's official residence in Colombo. Rajapaksa resigned following massive protests against his government.

5/24 **Mass Shooting in Texas School**

In one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history, 19 children and two teachers were killed at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

CLOCKWISE FROM L: MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES, STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

JUNE

Following a publicized trial of the former couple, Johnny Depp is awarded $15 million and Amber Heard is awarded $2 million.

6/1 **Acrimonious Defamation Trial**

(Below) Actor Johnny Depp arrives at an event in England. (Bottom) Actress Amber Heard departs a Virginia courthouse. A jury in Virginia found both Heard and Depp liable for defamation after a bitter trial.

6/22 **US Gas Price Shock**

Gas prices hit well beyond $7 per gallon at gas stations in Los Angeles. President Joe Biden pitched a temporary fuel tax break, which critics called window dressing ahead of midterm elections.

6/21 **War Games in Morocco** A Royal Moroccan Armed Forces tank is driven in the Grier Labouihi region in Agadir, southern Morocco, during the "African Lion 2022" military exercise.

6/15 **Monsoon Season in India**

A woman throws a bottle of drinking water to her neighbor as sea water gushes into a residential area near the seafront at high tide during monsoon season in Mumbai, India.

6/10 **Culture Must Go On**

A ballet dancer sits backstage during a performance of "Giselle" in Lviv, Ukraine. The Lviv National Opera house resumed performances in May, but limited the audience to 300 people, which is the capacity of its bomb shelter.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; INDRANIL MUKHERJEE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; PAULA BRONSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES; FADEL SENNA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

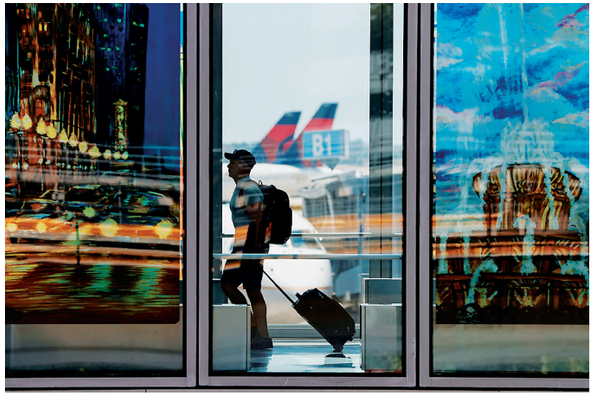
6/24 **Traditional Festival in Menorca** A rider gallops on his horse with a lance during the traditional San Juan festival in the town of Ciutadella, on the Balearic Island of Menorca.

6/3 **Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee**

A dancer rehearses for a tea dance performance In Belfast City Hall in Ireland to mark the 70th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: JAIME REINA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, CHARLES MCQUILLAN/GETTY IMAGES

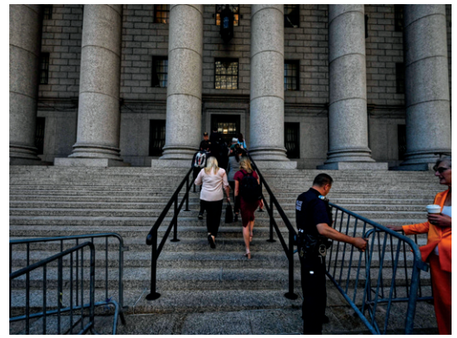
6/23 **Supreme Court Firearms Ruling** Shooting range owner John Deloca aims his pistol down range in Queens, New York. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Americans have a fundamental right to carry a handgun in public.



6/10 **US Drops COVID Test Requirement**

A traveler passes through O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. The Biden administration announced the end of the COVID-19 testing requirement for international travel.

6/24 **Supreme Court Abortion Ruling** Pro-life activists celebrate outside the Supreme Court after the top court ruled to erase a federal right to an abortion and sent abortion law to the states to decide.



6/28 **Jeffrey Epstein Associate Sentenced**

Spectators arrive at court in New York for the sentencing hearing of Ghislaine Maxwell. Maxwell received a 20-year sentence for charges related to sex trafficking and sexual abuse.

FROM L: BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES, ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

JULY

A landscape of mountains and valleys speckled with glittering stars is actually the edge of a nearby, star-forming region in the Carina Nebula.

7/12 NASA's New Star Power NASA's new James Webb Space Telescope reveals for the first time previously invisible areas of star birth.

FROM L: TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; NASA, ESA, CSA, AND STSCI VIA GETTY IMAGES

7/8 **Japan's Shinzo Abe Assassinated**

Pedestrians are silhouetted against a large public video screen showing an image of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo after he was fatally shot during a campaign stop in Nara, Japan.

7/22 **Contempt of Congress** In a first since Watergate, former White House senior strategist Stephen Bannon is found guilty of contempt of Congress after defying subpoenas by the Jan. 6 committee.

7/27 **Manchin Makes Deal With Schumer** In a reversal, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.) announces that he has reached a deal with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) that would further the climate and energy agenda of the Biden administration.

7/27 **Interest Rate Hike** Traders work at the New York Stock Exchange. The U.S. Federal Reserve raised the benchmark interest rate by 0.75 of a percentage point in an attempt to combat a historic level of inflation.

7/24 **Oak Fire Near Yosemite** A firefighter hoses a burning tree at the so-called Oak Fire near Midpines, Calif., a day after Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency as the wildfire continued to scorch thousands of acres.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES, DAVID MCNEW/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

The Year in Photos July

7/31 **Kids Cooling Off**

Children play in a water-filled wash tub amid soaring temperatures in a camp for the internally displaced, near the Syrian village of Killi in the rebel-held northwestern province of Idlib.

PHOTO BY AAREF WATAD/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

AUGUST

8/8 **FBI Search Mar-a-Lago**

A police car sits outside former President Donald Trump's residence at Mar-a-Lago, in Palm Beach, Fla., as the FBI searches his home for classified documents.

8/8 **Trump Calls It a Raid**

Law enforcement officers in front of former President Donald Trump's home at Mar-a-Lago in Florida. Trump says his residence is being "raided" by FBI agents in what he calls an act of "prosecutorial misconduct."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; REUTERS/MARCO BELLO; GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FBI'S SEARCH OF MAR-A-LAGO

THE FBI RAIDED former President Donald Trump's residence at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 8. Agents confiscated more than two dozen boxes of documents and memorabilia, including his passports—which were later returned. The Department of Justice (DOJ) said the agents were sent to look for unauthorized classified documents.

The raid of the former president's home turned into a court battle in which a Florida judge granted the Trump team's request for a special master to go through the seized documents—a request that was later overturned by a higher court. Following Trump's announcement that he's running again for president, the DOJ appointed prosecutor Jack Smith as special counsel.

8/15 **Trump's Mar-a-Lago Property** An aerial view of Mar-a-Lago, the Florida home of former President Donald Trump. The FBI executed a search warrant on the home on Aug. 8, seeking boxes of classified documents that Trump is alleged to have taken from the White House.

8/18 **Slater Tube Riding in Teahupo'o**

U.S. professional surfer Kelly Slater competes during the Outerknown Tahiti Pro in Teahupo'o, French Polynesia.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: JEROME BROUILLET/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, LUIS TATO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, PAUL MORIGI/GETTY IMAGES FOR WE THE 45M

8/9 **Kenya General Election**

Kenyan Electoral Commission officials observe voters casting ballots during the general election at a polling station in the Mathare Social Hall in Nairobi.

8/25 **Student Loan Reprieve Short-Lived**

Student loan debtors hold a rally in front of the White House to celebrate President Joe Biden's intent to cancel student debt, which was later blocked by the Supreme Court.

8/17 **Water Lilies on Lake Golbasi** An aerial photo of a fisherman in his boat among water lilies in Lake Golbasi in southern Turkey's Hatay Province.

8/22 **Fauci Announces Retirement**

Dr. Anthony Fauci testifies in front of the U.S. Senate on Sept. 14. The director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who became the face of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, announces on Aug. 22 that he plans to retire at the end of the year.

8/25 **Gas-Powered Car Ban After 2035**

Traffic backs up at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge toll plaza. California announces a ban on the sale of new gasoline-powered cars after 2035 in a push to transition to electric vehicles.

8/22 **Ethiopia's Ashenda Festival** Young women walk through the cave of Saint George during the Ashenda festival, which marks the end of a two-week-long fasting period, when the faithful in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church gather to honor the Virgin Mary.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: OMAR HAJ KADOUR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES, AMANUEL SILESHI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

SEPTEMBER

9/11 **In Remembrance of Lives Taken**

People place flags and flowers next to the names of those who died in the 2001 attacks, at the World Trade Center Memorial in New York.

SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AFTER the 9/11 terrorist attacks left the United States reeling, a somber memorial in downtown Manhattan keeps the names of those lost etched into bronze parapets. The names of the 2,983 people who were killed in the 2001 and 1993 terrorist attacks are inscribed.

The memorial draws family, friends, and tourists as stories of courage and bravery continue to be shared.

Tens of thousands of survivors, first responders, cleaning crews, and nearby residents continue to suffer from chronic illnesses brought on by the toxic dust inhaled after the blasts.

9/11 **In Remembrance of Lives Taken**

People pay their respects at the World Trade Center Memorial in New York.

ALL PHOTOS BY CHUNGI HO/THE EPOCH TIMES

9/13 **Stocks Take Hit Over Inflation**

Traders work at the New York Stock Exchange. The Dow Jones Industrial Average drops 1,276 points, or just under 4 percent, after a monthly inflation report, effectively erasing recent gains.

9/14 **Railroad Strike on Horizon**

Freight trains travel through Houston. Rail carriers across the country are cutting shipments and Amtrak has begun halting passenger routes as a national railroad strike looms.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES; -/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; RAYE WING/VINEYARD GAZETTE/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS; BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

9/21 **Protests in Iran Break Out**

Iranian demonstrators take to the streets of the capital Tehran during a protest for Mahsa Amini, five days after the young woman died in custody while under arrest by the country's morality police.

9/14 **Venezuelans Flown to Martha's Vineyard**

About 50 Venezuelans who recently crossed the U.S. border illegally are at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School in Massachusetts, after being flown there by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Six days later, the group filed a lawsuit against DeSantis.

9/19 **Her Majesty Laid to Rest**

Queen Elizabeth II's casket is carried into St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle in England for her committal service following a state funeral at Westminster Abbey. The Queen died at Balmoral Castle in Scotland on Sept. 8.

9/26 **Diverting Earth-Bound Asteroids**

A television captures final images as NASA successfully crashes its DART spaceship into the moonlet asteroid Dimorphos, in its first test of planetary defense.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: BEN BIRCHALL - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES, GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, JIM WATSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

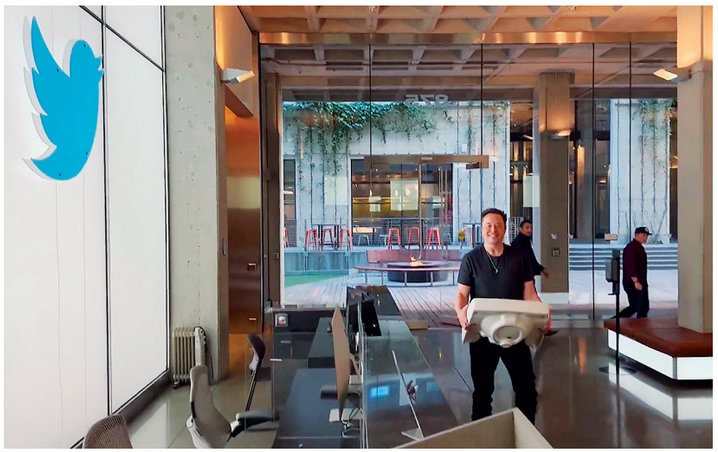
Hurricane Ian makes landfall midafternoon on Sept. 28 near Cayo Costa, an island off the coast of Fort Myers, Florida.

9/30 **Hurricane Ian Pummels Florida**

Florida begins a long cleanup after Hurricane Ian, a Category 4 storm that hit the state's southwest three days prior, killing more than 100 people and inflicting $50 billion in insured losses.

OCTOBER

10/22 **Changing of the Guard in Italy** New Italian government ministers are sworn in at the Quirinal Palace in Rome. Conservative Giorgia Meloni is set to become Italy's first female prime minister.



10/26 **The Arrival of Twitter 2.0**

Billionaire Tesla chief Elon Musk arrives at the San Francisco headquarters of Twitter, stating,"Let that sink in" as he completes his $44 billion acquisition of the social media company.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: ANTONIO MASIELLO/GETTY IMAGES; ROBYN BECK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; LUIS TATO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; // TWITTER ACCOUNT OF ELON MUSK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

10/5 **More Oil Please**

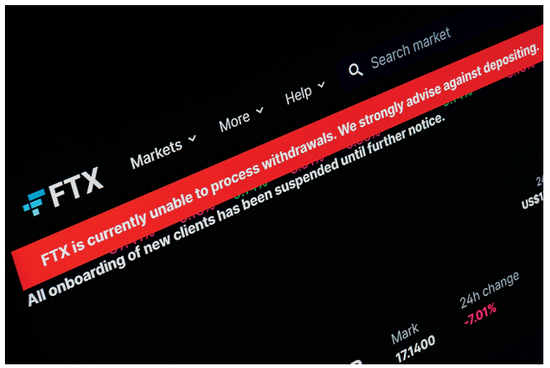
Oil pump jacks in California. The OPEC+ alliance agrees to cut oil production by up to 2 million barrels per day, delivering a blow to President Joe Biden, who had asked the cartel to boost production to quell soaring inflation.

10/19 **Africa Battles Severe Drought** Amid East Africa's worst drought in 40 years, which has put millions of people and wildlife on the brink of starvation, an orphaned elephant calf receives care at the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary in Samburu, Kenya.

NOVEMBER

11/1 **Netanyahu Returns as Israeli PM**

Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc of political parties won a 64-seat majority in the Israeli Legislature, returning the Likud party leader to the nation's helm as prime minister.



11/11 **FTX Crypto Exchange Collapses**

FTX, the world's third-largest cryptocurrency exchange, files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the United States, as customers are told the company is unable to process withdrawals amid an $8 billion shortfall.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: AMIR LEVY/GETTY IMAGES, DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES, LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

11/8 **Midterm Elections Underway**

People vote on Election Day at a polling location at Indianola Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio. Many Americans are keeping a close eye on the tightly contested races.

11/15 **Trump Announces 2024 Bid** Former President Donald Trump and former First Lady Melania Trump officially launch Trump's 2024 presidential campaign at an event at their Mar-a-Lago home in Palm Beach, Fla.

11/18 **Russia-Ukraine Conflict Drags On** A child receives aid in Kherson, Ukraine, after almost half of the country's energy infrastructure was disabled by Russian strikes, leaving about 10 million Ukrainians without power.

11/15 **8 Billion Humans**

People walk through a market in Bangalore, India. The global population has topped the symbolic milestone of 8 billion people, according to a United Nations estimate.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES; BULENT KILIC/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; MANJUNATH KIRAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

UNPRECEDENTED PROTESTS AGAINST CHINA'S ZERO-COVID POLICIES

OVER A WEEKEND in November, mass protests sprung up across more than a dozen Chinese cities against the Chinese regime's draconian zero-COVID policy. The events marked a bold display of defiance against the Chinese Communist Party not seen in decades.

The catalyst for the protests was an apartment fire that claimed the lives of at least 10 people in Urumqi, the capital of the far-west Xinjiang region, where some residents had been under lockdown for more than 100 days. Residents blamed strict COVID-19 controls for hampering rescue efforts and preventing those trapped from escaping.

From Shanghai to Beijing, Chinese citizens took to the streets to express their outrage while calling for an end to the measures. Some demonstrators went so far as to call for a regime change and greater political freedoms. "Xi Jinping step down! Communist Party step down!" some chanted in Shanghai.

Protesters held blank sheets of white paper to express their unspoken yet implicitly understood discontent with the communist regime.

Weeks after the demonstrations, the Chinese Communist Party, without referencing the protests, changed course and reversed its zero-COVID controls.

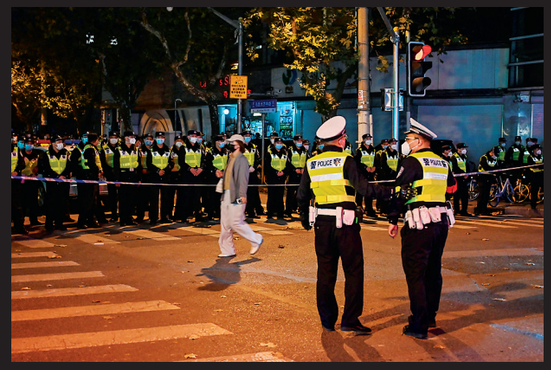
11/27 **Blank Paper Speaks Volumes** Protesters in Beijing hold up white pieces of paper to protest against censorship and China's strict zero-COVID measures.

11/27 **Lockdown Tragedy Sparks Protests**

Protesters in Beijing gather at a memorial after at least 10 people die in a Xinjiang apartment building fire blamed on the Chinese regime's restrictive zero-COVID measures.

11/27 **Shanghai Protests**

A piece of paper reads "I didn't say anything," behind protestors in Shanghai who rail against the Chinese regime's censorship while calling for an end to COVID-19 lockdowns.



11/27 **No More 'Zero-COVID'**

Police officers block Wulumuqi Street in Shanghai, where protests against zero-COVID took place the previous night in response to a deadly fire in Urumqi, Xinjiang.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES, KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES, HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

11/29 **Jan. 6 Conviction** Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes testifies on-screen during a House Select Committee hearing on June 9. On Nov. 29, Rhodes is convicted by a federal jury of committing seditious conspiracy during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach.

FROM L: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, DAN LIN/THE EPOCH TIMES

DECEMBER

Former Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin died on Nov. 30. He was responsible for the persecution of millions of practitioners of the spiritual discipline Falun Gong.

11/30 **Goodbye Jiang Zemin**

Chinese expats in New York set off firecrackers to celebrate the Nov. 30 death of former Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin, who is responsible for mass human rights abuses.

12/18 **Messi's World Cup**

Argentina's Lionel Messi holds aloft the soccer World Cup trophy after leading his team to beat France in a dramatic final for his first and Argentina's third World Cup victory, in Qatar.

FROM L: CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES, MARIO DUNCANSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

12/13 **Extradition Awaits SBF**

Sam Bankman-Fried, founder and former CEO of the failed cryptocurrency exchange FTX, is led away in handcuffs by officers of the Royal Bahamas Police Force in Nassau, Bahamas.

The Year in Photos December

12/4 **Santas Unite for a Cause**

A man dressed as Santa Claus rides his motorbike during the 12th Santa Claus "Papa Noel" charity rally in Turin, Italy, to raise funds for a pediatrics health care facility.

12/19 **Families Gather for the Holdays** A family poses together for a photo in front of Christmas and New Year's decorations in Moscow.

12/10 **Nobel Prize Festivities** Laureates of the 2022 Nobel Prize enjoy a royal banquet following the award ceremony in Stockholm.

12/12 **Getting Ready for Christmas**

Workers set up a Christmas tree in Al-Hatab Square, one of Syria's oldest squares, in the northern city of Aleppo.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: MARCO BERTORELLO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JONATHAN NACKSTRAND/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; /AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

BEST WISHES FOR A GOOD
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023!

Perspectives

People raise blank sheets of paper to protest against the Chinese regime's harsh zero-COVID measures in Beijing on Nov. 28.

PHOTO BY KEVIN FRAYER/ GETTY IMAGES

CHINA: A YEAR OF TUMULT AND HOPE

Rising totalitarianism in the context of emerging dissent. 75

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INSIDE

THOMAS MCARDLE was a White House speechwriter for President George W. Bush and writes for IssuesInsights.com.

Thomas McArdle

Public-Private Peril

Hertz falsely accused hundreds of its customers of stealing its cars

These days, poisonous collusion between powerful private sector interests and the state turns one's thoughts to insecure cellphone data and social media censorship in the service of the Democratic Party. But devil's bargains between U.S. Chamber of Commerce members and elected officials have been going on for a long time, maybe back to the Pliocene Epoch.

Consider the outrageous 5–4 ruling in Kelo v. City of New London in 2005, which twisted the Fifth Amendment's eminent domain doctrine "in favor of affording legislatures broad latitude in determining what public needs justify the use of the takings power," the upshot being that a Connecticut woman's humble home could be seized not to build, say, a public highway but because a politically well-connected private developer wanted it.

Alongside its protection against self-incrimination, the Fifth Amendment enshrined a guarantee in its takings clause that "private property" shall not "be taken for public use, without just compensation"—but "public use" became anything state legislators decided it was.

As Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in her dissent: "Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party. ... The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms. As for the victims, the government now has license to transfer property from those with fewer resources to those with more. The Founders cannot have intended this perverse result. 'That alone is a just government,' wrote James Madison, 'which impartially secures to every man, whatever is his own.'"

It isn't only your home, your smartphone, and your vote in the crosshairs when private sector financial resources and state power combine to target you as a menace. Your physical liberty is in jeopardy, too.

The reports were too outlandish to be correct. "Hertz Announces Settlement Agreements Related to Past Legal Claims" was the pea-soup-foggy title of the statement recently sent out by the world's most famous rental car service, disclosing that "the settlement of 364 pending claims relating to vehicle theft reporting ... the company will pay an aggregate amount of approximately $168 million by year-end to resolve these disputes."

A Mississippi man spent more than six months in jail for car theft despite the fact that he had returned it and paid his bill in full.

"Past legal claims"? It turns out that over a span of years, Hertz was falsely accusing hundreds of its customers of stealing its cars, in some cases resulting in arrest, false conviction, and even incarceration.

Hertz's longtime poster boy in the 1970s and '80s, NFL star-turned-accused-killer O.J. Simpson, remembered for running through airports to reach his Hertz rental, turns out to have been a fitting spokesman for the company, given his familiarity with the inside of a prison.

Hertz Global Holdings was in bankruptcy proceedings in 2020–21, and it was through that legal process that the shambles of the firm's computer customer records system was revealed. Customers who were only pulled over by police because their rental car had previously been erroneously reported to be stolen got off easy; one Chicago woman went to jail for more than 30 days after being falsely charged with car theft. A Florida woman spent 37 days behind bars, was separated from her two children, and missed her graduation from nursing school. A Mississippi man spent more than six months in jail for car theft despite the fact that he had returned the vehicle and paid his bill in full.

Had Hertz had its way, none of this would have become public, its attorneys arguing in bankruptcy court that the allegations should be kept under seal. And although it's shelling out $168 million to its victims, "Hertz does not expect the resolution of these claims to have a material impact on its capital allocation plans for the balance of 2022 and 2023," its statement on the subject breezily concluded.

If faulty computerized records can dole out that much suffering and restriction of movement to the innocent—with the company pointing the finger and the apparatus of the state zeroing in—imagine how much worse it would be if it were intentional.

The now-most important of our personal effects, mobile phones, allow telecom companies to track our movements, then be perfectly happy handing the data over to police on request, along with our communications. Tech firms keep media revelations from us to prevent our votes from toppling their preferred politicians. And a man's home is his castle—up until it gets in the way of "public use" somehow practiced by private companies.

The incompetence of Hertz in branding innocent customers as thieves and having the cops cart them off to the clink demonstrates that our public-private Big Brother has much more power over us than we might imagine.

ANDERS CORR is a principal at Corr Analytics Inc., publisher of the Journal of Political Risk. He is an expert in political science and government.

Anders Corr

China: A Year of Tumult and Hope

Rising totalitarianism in the context of emerging dissent

The latest tumult from China is a microcosm of the past year. The People's Liberation Army attacked across the de facto border into India and swarmed the Philippine Islands. Chinese leader Xi Jinping supposedly ended strict COVID-19 lockdowns because of the biggest protests since Falun Gong protesters surrounded the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) Zhongnanhai leadership compound in 1999.

Inklings of hope emerged from the "white paper" protests, in which thousands of young people across China risked their lives to raise blank sheets of paper and signify their opposition to China's lockdowns. Some called for Xi and the CCP to "step down."

Unfortunately, that looks unlikely in 2023. Xi got himself appointed to a norm-breaking third term as general secretary of the CCP in October. He continued in 2022 to eradicate opposition through a long-running "anti-corruption" campaign that defenestrates opposing politicians and leading entrepreneurs, including in technology, education, and property development.

China's economy stumbled in 2022 because of the lockdowns, deflation of the property bubble, and increasing debt. This resulted in the loading of the financial system with risk from increased responsibilities for bailouts and lower reserve requirements.

The United States and its allies increasingly impose sanctions and export controls on China, intended to both improve its human rights and decrease its power. Federal and state entities moved against China's tech companies, including a developing computer chip war and measures against Huawei, TikTok, and China's overseas tech investors.

Major Chinese companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges—such as Alibaba, JD.com, and Baidu—experienced downward pressure on their market capitalization from U.S. audit laws. While the CCP resisted the audits for years, it finally accepted them this month. Companies that will be subject to the audits have thus escaped U.S. delisting but fell further in trading, in the context of worries about what the audits might uncover.

China's economy stumbled in 2022 due to the lockdowns, deflation of the property bubble, and increasing debt.

International companies have begun the process of diversifying supply chains to other countries such as India, Thailand, and Vietnam. Nevertheless, Xi appears bent on following his mercantilist and hegemonic agendas.

In February, Beijing hosted what activists called the "Genocide Olympics" due to the regime's treatment of Uyghurs. Diplomats from 10 countries—led by the United States, the UK, and Canada—boycotted the Winter Games.

The CCP continues to see Taiwan as a renegade province and has plans to invade. In response, democratic countries around the world are deepening ties with the island democracy. For example, Lithuania opened a trade office in Taipei in November. Beijing responded by downgrading relations. Earlier in the year, the CCP allegedly halted the clearance of Lithuanian goods because of the opening of a Taiwanese trade office in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. This month in response, the European Union brought China to court at the World Trade Organization.

Xi has concentrated political power on himself and insulated it from dissenting voices. The CCP politburo is now a group of yes-men. This will likely lead Xi to make more disastrous choices for China and the world in 2023, including an increase in coal-burning power plants.

If China's economy does improve due to a relaxation of COVID-19 lockdowns, Xi will use that economic strength to further the influence of the CCP globally and empower his military to the point where it will need to be used—for example, against Taiwan—for Xi to maintain his power.

Conflicts with China will likely increase in 2023. An invasion of Taiwan could come at any time, especially while the West is off balance due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In response, the United States and EU, the world's two biggest economies, increasingly see Beijing as an adversary and long-term threat. Arms sales to Taiwan have increased, as have military budgets. That trend will likely continue as public opinion in democracies learns from repeated negative interactions with China under communist rule.

But let's also look at the silver lining of 2022 and what that might mean for 2023. The lockdown protests were the biggest in more than 20 years. They forced the CCP to at least give the appearance of backing down from a policy closely associated with Xi himself. They could spread to other regions, such as Hong Kong, as new issues emerge in 2023 that mobilize Chinese citizens more widely.

Only if Beijing listens to its people, ultimately by democratizing the country and improving its human rights, will it reverse its self-defeating trend toward totalitarianism, economic decoupling from the rest of the world, and pariah-state status.

MILTON EZRATI is chief economist for Vested, a contributing editor at The National Interest, and author of "Thirty Tomorrows" and "Bite-Sized Investing."

Milton Ezrati

A Look Back, a Look Forward

The frustrations of 2022 should find some resolution in 2023

This is the season for articles that look back at the past year and forward to the next. For this look, it seems as though an extremely ambiguous and consequently frustrating 2022 will give way to a greater resolution in 2023.

Last year's economy certainly created frustration. Take the path of inflation. It was severe and persistent enough to convince Washington to dispense with the 2021 nonsense that the price pressures were merely "transitory." But a lingering and misplaced impulse to blame everything on Vladimir Putin kept alive an unrealistic hope that inflationary pressures would dissipate on their own.

The economy looked weak enough to raise widespread concerns of a recession but not so weak that policy postures changed, either in the White House or Congress. Federal Reserve policy, which started 2022 with an air of insouciance, then suddenly became harshly anti-inflationary in the middle of the year, ended 2022 with talk of moderation.

Without a doubt, the new year will carry its own frustrations and ambiguities. But—for good or ill—last year's ambiguities should receive clarity. Here's how each will likely play out over the next 12 months.

Inflation

Inflation will remain persistent enough to at last erase the last vestiges of optimism—perhaps even enough to penetrate the White House. All the distracting talk of inflation being "transitory" or that price pressures will ease on their own accord will disappear. A consensus should form that matters require strong and consistent policy measures, especially from the Fed.

Actual inflation measures may fall short of the 9 percent 12-month price hike recorded for the consumer price index (CPI) last June—they already have—but rates of increase—probably in the 5 to 7 percent range—will persist and be widely recognized as unacceptable. They'll certainly remain above the Fed's inflation target of 2 percent. Even as monetary policy rises to the challenge, the danger is that inflation's persistence will create expectations that it will continue—a state of affairs that could prolong the price pressure and blunt the effects of anti-inflationary monetary actions.

If the economy has already entered a recession, it will extend into 2023 and become more definite.

Federal Reserve Policy

Because of this inflationary reality, the Fed should continue to raise interest rates and restrict money flows that are the root cause of inflation. As interest rates rise to higher levels, policymakers should moderate the pace at which they increase them, less because they believe they've done enough but rather because, as Fed Chairman Jerome Powell recently explained, they'll make allowances for the lagged effects of what they've already done.

However fast Fed policy moves, history makes clear that it can't effectively blunt price pressures until interest rates rise to or above the ongoing inflation rate. With inflation in the 5 to 7 percent range, that's considerably above where interest rates are now.

Economy

The economy couldn't help but feel a recessionary effect from this type of monetary policy. Economic activity has already weakened appreciably. Some aspects of the economy continue to show strength, most notably consumer spending and hiring. But both are showing much smaller gains than six or 12 months ago.

Hiring could change abruptly since job creation tends to lag the pace of overall economic activity, both when it turns down and when it turns up. If the economy has already entered a recession, it will extend into 2023 and become more definite. If it hasn't yet entered a recession, it will likely do so in 2023. The good news is that the recessionary adjustment will likely run its course before the new year ends so that by the second half of 2023, clear signs of recovery will begin to emerge. This recovery's strength will fall far short of the unprecedented pace that typified the rebound from COVID-19 lockdowns, but it will be a recovery, nonetheless.

Fiscal Policy

Fiscal policy should remain unresponsive throughout. A standoff between the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and the Democratic-controlled White House will likely stymie any response to either recession or inflation. Such an impasse might lift if either problem goes to extremes, but nothing on the horizon suggests that extremes will develop. It may be just as well.

Should Washington act against inflation, and certainly if it acts against recession, the effect of such policies would almost certainly reach full force only after the economy has finished adjusting. They would consequently create more distortions than anything else.

This isn't an especially exciting outlook, but neither is it frightening. It should be welcome because it will resolve some of the uncertainties of the past year, and a definite picture of economic conditions and prospects can offer a good groundwork for healing and recovery. Politics and geopolitics should remain as frustrating and impenetrable as ever.

EMEL AKAN is a senior reporter for The Epoch Times in Washington. Previously, she worked in the financial sector as an investment banker at JPMorgan.

Emel Akan

Businesses 'Extremely Cautious' in 2023

Spending cuts and tight household budgets worry corporate leaders

The question of whether the U.S. economy is in recession remains one of the most hotly debated topics of 2022, yet corporate America is bracing for a slump in consumer spending. As high inflation depresses consumer demand, businesses of all sizes expect the economy to worsen in 2023.

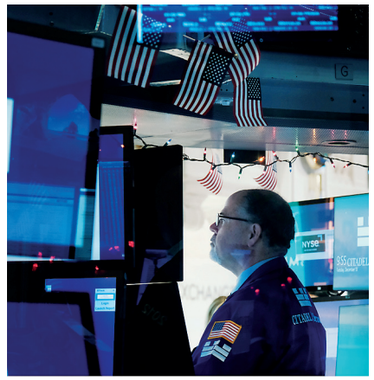
Consumer spending has kept the U.S. economy afloat over the past year, but it's unclear whether this pace of spending will be sustained in the coming year as household budgets become further stressed.

Bank deposits have fallen by $340 billion since their peak in April, indicating a weakening savings buffer. The personal savings rate as a share of disposable income fell to a 17-year low of 2.3 percent in October. And consumers are increasingly turning to credit cards to make ends meet in the face of rising prices.

With household budgets squeezed and Americans signaling future spending cuts, business leaders are worried about a dip in revenues and the need to lay off personnel.

The profit outlook for S&P 500 companies also reflects the economic weakness ahead. Analysts now expect fourth-quarter earnings to fall by 2.8 percent, according to FactSet. This would be the first drop since the third quarter of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak. In the past five years, the average profit growth of S&P 500 companies was 14.3 percent.

"If a recession is coming in 2023, it will be the most widely anticipated recession of all time," Ed Yardeni, president of Yardeni Research, said, noting that some of the most vocal pessimists are bankers. "It would be the first time that we've collectively talked ourselves into a recession."



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Main Street is expecting choppy waters in 2023 particularly owing to high inflation and tightening credit conditions.

Executives of the largest U.S. banks are warning that rising prices would dampen consumer spending, which makes up roughly 70 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.

"Economic growth is slowing," Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon said on Dec. 6 at a conference hosted by the investment bank. "When I talk to our clients, they sound extremely cautious."

Goldman Sachs is reportedly planning to lay off thousands of staff, as it prepares for an unpredictable economic environment in the new year. It will be the latest big bank to cut jobs due to a sluggish economy and Wall Street activity.

Many executives, including the CEOs of JPMorgan, GM, Walmart, United, and Union Pacific, are also preparing for a slowdown in consumer spending and business activity. Among the challenges they mention are rising interest rates, inflation, geopolitical tensions, and stressed supply chains.

"It could be a hurricane. We simply don't know," JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon told CNBC.

Main Street is also expecting choppy waters in 2023, particularly owing to high inflation and tightening credit conditions.

Nearly 40 percent of small business owners believe the U.S. economy will enter a recession in 2023, up from 26 percent in the third quarter, according to the latest CNBC–SurveyMonkey survey. Most respondents anticipate the recession to begin in the first half of next year.

Following its final policy meeting of the year on Dec. 14, the Federal Reserve put financial markets on notice that officials were nearly unanimous in their assessment that interest rates needed to rise further and remain at high levels for longer to fight inflation.

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers believes that the Fed is making the right call this time to focus on lowering inflation despite increasing concerns about an economic recession.

According to Summers, one of the problems is that salaries are still catching up with inflation and labor markets remain extraordinarily tight.

There's no reason to believe that inflation is under control "until wage inflation declines significantly or we get clear evidence of a productivity acceleration," Summers wrote in a recent Washington Post op-ed.

"Unfortunately, all major reductions in inflation in the past 70 years have been associated with recessions. It should come as no surprise that many economists, including me, expect a recession to begin in 2023."

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

Cap on Russian Oil Subsidizes China

Beijing will secure a long-term supply at an attractive price from Russia

There are many mistakes in the G-7 agreement to put a cap on Russian oil. The first one is that it doesn't hurt Russia at all. The agreed cap, at $60 per barrel, is higher than the current Urals price, above the five-year average of the quoted price, and higher than Rosneft's average netback price.

According to Reuters, "The G-7 price cap will allow non-EU countries to continue importing seaborne Russian crude oil, but it will prohibit shipping, insurance, and reinsurance companies from handling cargoes of Russian crude around the globe, unless it is sold for less than the price cap."

This means that China will be able to purchase more Russian oil at a large discount, while the Russian state-owned oil giant will continue to make a very healthy 16 percent return on average capital employed and more than 8.8 billion rubles ($141 million) in revenues, which means earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization that more than doubles its capital expenditure requirements.

This misguided cap is not only a subsidy to China and a price that still makes Rosneft enormously profitable and able to pay billions to the Russian state in taxes; it's also a big mistake if we want to see lower oil prices.

With this cap, the G-7 has created an unnecessary and artificial bottom to old prices. The G-7 didn't want to understand why oil prices have roundtripped in 2022: that is, competition and demand reaction. By implementing a $60-per-barrel cap, which is a bottom price, the G-7 has made it almost impossible for prices to reach a true bottom if a demand crisis arrives. On the one hand, the G-7 has taken 4.5 million barrels

DADO RUVIC/REUTERS

The G-7 may be planting the seeds of a commodity super-cycle in which dependence on OPEC and Russia increases.

per day, the estimated Russian oil exports for 2023, out of the supply picture with a minimum—and maximum—price, but has additionally made OPEC keener on cutting supply and raising their exports' average realized oil price higher.

China must be exceedingly happy. The Asian giant will secure a long-term supply at an attractive price from Russia and sell refined products globally at higher margins. Sinopec and PetroChina will find enough opportunities in the global market to secure better margins for their refined products while guaranteeing affordable supply in a challenging economic situation.

When I read this news about "price caps," I wonder if bureaucrats have ever worked in a global competitive industry. They may not have, but they certainly employ thousands of "experts" that may have told them that this is a clever idea. It's rubbish.

If the G-7 really wanted to hurt Russia's finances and exports, the way to do it is to encourage higher investment in alternative and more competitive sources. However, what's happening is the opposite. G-7 governments continue to impose barriers to investment in energy, as well as regulatory and wrongly called environmental burdens that make it even more difficult to guarantee diversification and security of supply.

What killed the oil crisis of the '70s was the phenomenal rise of investment in other productive areas. What has allowed oil prices to do an almost 180-degree year-to-date move is higher supply, non-OPEC competition, and demand response.

The energy sector already suffers from concerning levels of underinvestment. According to Morgan Stanley, oil and gas underinvestment has reached $600 billion per annum. With this so-called price cap, the incentive for producers to sell what they can and invest as little as possible is even higher, and this may imply much higher oil prices in the future. China and Russia also know that renewables and other alternatives are nowhere close to being a widely available alternative and that, anyhow, this would require trillions of dollars of investment in the mining of copper, cobalt, and rare earths.

By adding a so-called cap on Russian oil prices to the increasing barriers to developing domestic resources, the G-7 may be planting the seeds of a commodity super-cycle where dependence on OPEC and Russia increases, instead of decreasing.

I repeat what I've been saying for months: The developed economies' governments are taking their countries from a modest dependence on Russia to a massive dependence on China and Russia.

FAN YU is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.

Fan Yu

Germany Model Relies on China, Russia

It's easier said than done for Chancellor Scholz to change course

Last month, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz acknowledged something every German knew but was afraid to say: the country's business model is broken.

Germany's strategic national business model, predicated on globalization and interdependency, is backfiring. It's the nation-building equivalent of putting all of your eggs in one basket. In this case, two baskets: Russia and China. Germany depends on Russia for most of its energy needs, and it depends on China for most of its export-driven economy.

Scholz said Germany's "one-sided dependence" on China and Russia must end.

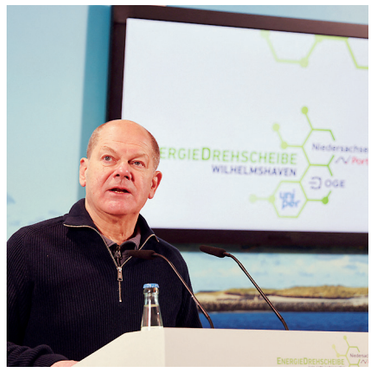
The chancellor is shifting Germany's longstanding policy. The country is committing 2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to defense and bolstering NATO's eastern defenses, accelerating the move away from Russian energy, building more liquid natural gas (LNG) terminals, and committing to becoming a nuclear nation.

However, Scholz isn't blameless in Germany's present plight. For years, he served as finance minister and vice chancellor in then-Chancellor Angela Merkel's government.

In early December, local German media published excerpts of a leaked Economy Ministry strategic paper that predicts increasing tensions between Germany and China, and that China would move to annex Taiwan by 2027, at the latest. If this comes to fruition, it all but paves the way for more economic pain for Germany.

The paper further states that while China has worked for years to reduce its foreign dependence—a development that The Epoch Times has covered extensively—Germany and Europe have played right into China's hands and instead doubled down on their dependency on China.

But changing course is easier said than done.



FOCKE STRANGMANN/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Germany's strategic national business model, predicated on globalization and interdependency, is backfiring.

Germany is an advanced industrial nation. Its energy source isn't very diversified. Fossil fuels such as oil and gas make up 60 percent of Germany's energy, and Russia is the biggest supplier of both.

"Germany has been importing around 1.8bn euros (around US$2 billion) worth of Russian gas, oil, and coal a month, thereby helping to finance Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine," The Economist wrote in April.

Now, the country is desperately building new LNG terminals to supplement its energy needs. LNG is delivered by ship and the United States is a major exporter. In late September, Scholz's government announced a 200 billion euro ($209 billion) "defensive shield" program to limit gas prices for consumers and businesses as well as to subsidize energy-importing companies.

On the trade front, German politicians last month made their rounds across Asia, reassessing existing ties and forging new ones.

Several captains of German industry were in tow, including leadership at industrial giants BASF and Siemens, as well as financial giant Deutsche Bank.

The previous German governments hitched the country's wagon to China, a country whose communist regime has grown increasingly hostile toward the West and its allies. That policy was shaped almost entirely by the interests of German businesses, which depend on Chinese demand and have invested heavily in Chinese production.

Germany must prepare for a world in which China becomes increasingly isolated and cut off from the rest of the world.

No country can replace China's appetite for German exports including industrial machinery, technical equipment, and automobiles. But Germany had to start somewhere.

"It would certainly not be an option to renounce China completely," Volker Treier, head of foreign trade at the DIHK lobby in Berlin, said in an interview with Bloomberg in November.

"German businesses are trying to diversify and guard themselves against the possibility of a stronger decline in trade relations with China."

German businesses must be incentivized to diversify away from China. It will cost money, and it will hurt companies' bottom lines, at least temporarily. And it takes commitment from the business community, German politicians, and its European Union allies.

So far, its pivot has had limited traction. While Germany last month blocked the Chinese acquisition of a domestic chip plant, in early December it declined to follow the United States' lead to enact a full ban on importing telecom equipment made by Chinese telecom giant Huawei. In October, Berlin allowed Chinese government-owned shipping giant COSCO to buy a terminal in the port of Hamburg, albeit it settled on a smaller investment than the Chinese company had originally planned.

All of this begs the question: Is it too little, too late?

KEVIN STOCKLIN is a business reporter, film producer, and former Wall Street banker. He wrote and produced "We All Fall Down: The American Mortgage Crisis" and "The Shadow State."

Kevin Stocklin

ESG Targets Utilities

Big asset managers buy large stakes in America's utilities firms

Wall Street giants BlackRock and Vanguard are buying up ever-larger shares in America's public utility companies, setting off alarm bells from those who fear they'll use their voting power to push utilities out of fossil fuels and into wind and solar.

In April, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved a request from BlackRock to increase its ownership up to 20 percent of a public utility's voting shares without incurring the regulatory scrutiny and disclosures that are mandated by the Federal Power Act. In return, BlackRock and Vanguard promised to be "passive" investors and not attempt to influence management.

Because utilities are often regional monopolies and because electricity and heat are essential in peoples' lives, any investment of more than $10 million in a public utility must be approved by FERC. BlackRock and Vanguard received blanket exemptions in 2019; BlackRock's exemption was just extended for three more years and Vanguard now wants the same.

In response, 13 state attorneys general petitioned FERC to deny Vanguard's request, stating: "Vanguard's own public commitments and other statements have at the very least created the appearance that Vanguard has breached its promises to the Commission by engaging in environmental activism and using its financial influence to manipulate the activities of the utility companies in its portfolio."

FERC Commissioner Mark Christie stated: "The claim that huge asset managers such as BlackRock, State Street, and Vanguard are merely passive investors in publicly held corporations, investing purely for the benefit of their beneficiaries—many of whom are retirees receiving pensions—is no longer

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Any investment of more than $10 million in a public utility must be approved by regulators.

credible. BlackRock, in particular, has been openly aggressive in using its massive financial power to influence corporate policy." He approved BlackRock's request anyway.

The FERC exemptions follow a landmark Supreme Court ruling in June, West Virginia vs. EPA, in which the court blocked the EPA's attempt to force America's utilities to transition from fossil fuels to wind and solar energy. But activist corporations often succeed where federal agencies fail.

BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street are the world's largest asset managers, controlling approximately $20 trillion in investors' money. They've joined clubs such as the Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative (NZAM), Ceres, and Climate Action 100+. Members of NZAM pledge to leverage their voting power "for all assets under management to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner."

"These targets come out of the Paris Accord, which couldn't even get passed through a Democratic Senate," Will Hild, executive director of Consumers' Research, told The Epoch Times. "Voters have rejected these net-zero-by-2050 goals over and over again. So now we're seeing this, in my opinion, illegitimate attempt to use corporate America to push these goals."

But according to Tyson Slocum, director of Public Citizen's Energy Program, the problem is that the Big Three aren't pushing utilities hard enough toward net-zero goals.

"We noted some statistics, with BlackRock anyway, that they abstain from a number of climate-related votes, that instead of using their voting power to push companies harder on climate change, instead they're giving management a pass," Slocum told The Epoch Times. "By failing to vote, you are sending a message to management: We're an entity that controls a massive amount of your shares, and we're not going to pressure you on these issues when the general public who own most of those shares actually want you to do those things." Public Citizen petitioned against FERC's exemption for BlackRock.

In October, Swiss investment bank UBS downgraded the shares of BlackRock, stating that BlackRock's "early and energetic adoption of ESG principles in its fund management and shareholder proxy activities have positioned the firm as an ESG leader in our view. However, as performance deteriorates and political risk from ESG has increased, we believe the potential for lost fund mandates and regulatory scrutiny has recently increased."

Perhaps fearing a similar fate, Vanguard pulled out of NZAM on December 7, stating that "such industry initiatives can advance constructive dialogue, but sometimes they can also result in confusion about the views of individual asset managers."

BlackRock officials declined to comment on this article.

ANDREW MORAN has been writing about business, economics, and finance for more than a decade. He is the author of "The War on Cash."

Andrew Moran

The Digital Dollar

Many Fed officials believe the United States should explore a digital currency

The development of central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) has accelerated in 2022 and is heading into 2023. Critics are worried, however, that the increasing adoption of CBDCs might trigger liberty and privacy concerns, as there's no limit to the extent of control the government could have over its citizens.

Despite these concerns, central banks intend to digitize their currencies within the next decade.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York recently launched a 12-week pilot program with nine major financial institutions, including Citigroup, Mastercard, and Wells Fargo, to experiment with a CBDC and a proof-of-concept digital money platform called the Regulated Liability Network.

The project aims to determine how banks use digital currencies in a public ledger and if this system would speed up payments.

Although the New York Fed noted that it wouldn't use the results to form policy or decide about establishing a CBDC, the central bank has come under pressure from Washington to keep up with nations that have digitized their currencies, particularly China.

The White House claimed a CBDC "has the potential to offer significant benefits."

In September, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen endorsed national efforts to "advance policy and technical work" on a CBDC since "some aspects of our current payment system are too slow or too expensive."

This past summer, Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.) submitted a proposal for the issuance of a CBDC by the Federal Reserve, arguing that it would help ensure that the U.S. dollar maintains its global reserve currency status.

"Over the last few years, we have seen other governments make real progress in establishing a central

PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Despite concerns about privacy and freedom, central banks plan to digitize their currency within the next decade.

bank digital currency," Himes said in a statement. "The longer the United States government waits to embrace this innovation, the further we fall behind both foreign governments and the private sector."

A growing number of Fed officials agree that the United States needs to start exploring the adoption of a virtual currency.

Fed Vice Chair Lael Brainard told the House Financial Services Committee in May that digitizing the dollar could maintain stability in the financial system.

"We recognize there are risks of not acting, just as there are risks of acting," she said.

The Atlantic Council, a nonprofit think tank that focuses on international affairs, reported that more than 100 nations, representing 95 percent of global GDP, are exploring or have implemented CBDCs, with the United States and the United Kingdom far behind their counterparts.

A December "Future of Payments" report by the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum found that two-thirds of surveyed central banks plan to issue a CBDC within 10 years.

"Overall, if central banks decide to issue a CBDC, they expect deployment to come sooner rather than later," the report stated.

Across the globe, countries have unveiled plans to develop a CBDC.

The European Commission, for example, confirmed earlier this year that it's working on a digital euro, with the chief objective being a single currency complementing euro banknotes and coins. It's consulting with financial services experts, chambers of commerce, and the general public to assess the impact of implementation.

Tiff Macklem, the head of the Bank of Canada, plans to launch a consultation with Canadians to learn "what are Canadians' interests in a digital currency, what are their expectations, what sort of elements would be important to them."

Roberto Campos Neto, president of Brazil's central bank, confirmed at a press conference that the institution intends to release a CBDC in 2024. Neto thinks that a digital currency issued by the Brazilian central bank would benefit the economy and fuel participation.

"I think that this digitized, paid-in, integrated system, with inclusion, will help a lot in the development and inclusion of people in the financial world," he said.

But these countries have much catching up to do, considering that China has enjoyed a head start with its digital yuan. This could allow Beijing to advance its long-term aim of advancing yuan internationalization and increasing its share of global payments currency.

Is this the beginning of the end of physical money?

THOUGHT LEADERS

‘Gender Affirmation’ and Its High Price on America’s Children

‘The goal of this movement is to erase ... these biological truths that are eternal’

“They’re experimenting on the body, and people are paying a massively high price for these medical experimentations,” says Dr. Miriam Grossman, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and author of “You’re Teaching My Child What?”

In this recent two-part episode of “American Thought Leaders,” Grossman and host Jan Jekielek discussed the ideological movement behind the promotion of “gender-affirming care” among young people, the collaboration of the government and many in the medical field, the dire consequences of this, and ways parents are pushing back.

JAN JEKIELEK: Please tell us: How did you come to your expertise?

DR. MIRIAM GROSSMAN: I’ve been a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist for almost 40 years. As a psychiatrist for UCLA students for 12 years, I became aware that many students who were ending up in my office due to depression, anxiety, or insomnia were there because of the sexual decisions they had made.

I ended up writing two books. The first was called “Unprotected: A Campus Psychiatrist Reveals How Political Correctness in Her Profession Endangers Every Student.” I explained how certain aspects of my profession, especially sexual health, were no longer about protecting health. They were about ideology.

Then, I wrote a book in 2009 called “You’re Teaching My Child What?” It’s mostly about sex education and targeting younger kids in the schools.

Boxes of donated LGBT books sit stacked on the playground at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

There’s a chapter, Gender Land, about gender identity being promoted to young children. I warned parents that they needed to have their eyes open about the ideology in sex education, that it was a dangerous ideology that kids and families will pay a high price for.

This gender ideology has now grown. The New York Times came out with a poll a few days ago that asked, “Do you believe that gender is a completely different thing than biology, than sex?” In the 65 and older group, I think 18 percent agreed. But in the 18-to-29 age group, 61 percent believed that gender is separate from sex.

They’re taught that those are facts. They’re told that gender is between the ears and that sex is between the legs and they’re not related, that you may choose to go on a wonderful gender journey exploring which sex you are and which gender you are. Should you decide you’re another gender, then options are open in terms of medical care. And the only option with that care is gender affirmation.

MR. JEKIELEK: This “gender-affirming care” that you just mentioned is presented as the way to do things because it has been determined scientifically. You’ve made the case that this is absolutely not true. What’s “gender-affirming care”?

DR. GROSSMAN: “Gender-affirming care” means that whatever the child comes up with in terms of their identity, no matter how old they are or what other conditions they may suffer from, that’s their identity, and we must accept it. We affirm it, and we give them the treatment they want to get. If they’re feeling nervous about puberty starting, we give them blockers. Later, if they want to appear more like the opposite sex, we give them opposite-sex hormones and then surgeries later on.

We have to note the Orwellian manipulation of language when the term gender-affirming is used. They’re experimenting on the body, and people are paying a massively high price for these medical experimentations. All of this is just so upside down. I feel, Jan, like I’m living in a parallel universe. One universe is the whole gender industry, which includes Washington, D.C. The president himself and his assistant director of Health and Human Services came out not long ago instructing parents that if they have a child who’s questioning their gender, then it’s crucial that they get them “gender-affirming care” and basically put them on the path toward medical interventions.

Almost all the professional organizations are on board with this—The American Academy of Pediatricians, the American Psychological Association, the American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the American Association of Endocrinology. All these organizations have been captured by this ideology.

MR. JEKIELEK: The numbers have gone through the roof. Does the combination of ideology, indoctrination, and peer pressure produce these results? Have there been studies done on this?

DR. GROSSMAN: Yes, there are studies, most notably from Dr. Lisa Littman, a physician researcher at Brown University. She came out with a study in 2018. She noted that there were now these parent groups online, parents of kids who, without any previous indication that they were uncomfortable with their sex—in fact, they might have been the most boyish of boys and the most girly girls—suddenly

LEFT PAGE: PHOTO BY BLAKE WU/THE EPOCH TIMES; THIS PAGE: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

> "I warned parents that they needed to have their eyes open about the ideology in sex education; it was a dangerous ideology."

announce that they're either the opposite sex or they're non-binary, meaning they're neither male nor female. And these parents were just blindsided.

They just didn't know what the heck this was about. They would take their kids to gender therapists. The gender therapists would say, "Yes, we are going to affirm this. You don't have a daughter; you now have a son." When these parents would protest, the gender therapist would say, "If you're not going to accept your daughter as your son, you're the problem." They would often say this after one or two meetings with the family, and they would say it in front of the child.

These parents would grab their child and run, but they didn't know where to go. Then, they began to find one another online. They were anonymous online, because a lot of them were scared to put their name on this and admit they were questioning the process.

I've talked to a lot of these parents, and this has been, for most of them, the most difficult thing they've ever gone through. This destroys families and marriages.

And this is where transgenderism and the COVID lockdowns start to intersect. With the COVID lockdowns and kids not going to school and being online 24/7, they were exposed to these ideas about transgenderism. Hundreds of influencers on YouTube and other platforms were describing their transition from male to female or female to male.

But then you can look at the detransitioners, and we have thousands of them now, the kids who got all the "gender-affirming treatment" and whose parents did go along with it. They talk about feeling suicidal because of where they are now. They're recognizing that their original mental health issues were never addressed. They still have their depression, anxiety, and trauma.

They were placed on an assembly line toward medicalization. Now, they don't have their breasts any longer. They may not have the genitals they were born with.

Why are they being silenced? Why are they being canceled?

We need professional medical people who aren't going to treat this as a civil rights issue, who see it instead as a medical, mental health issue.

And we have to listen to the people who have been through this process, the detransitioners. Their suffering is such that I can't read it sometimes. To see what my colleagues have done to these kids and how they're suffering is a nightmare.

MR. JEKIELEK: What do you recommend for people facing this with family members or friends?

DR. GROSSMAN: If you have a child that's changing in the way they present to the world and how they speak about themselves in terms of male and female, then you want to get educated about this topic. There are many resources online and many parent support groups.

And if your child comes to you with this very shocking announcement, you want to remain calm. You want to say: "Tell me more about this. I can see it's really important to you, and whatever's important to you is important to me. We're going to learn as much as we can about this, and we're going to start having conversations. It's not going to happen in one conversation. It's going to be an ongoing conversation."

The research is very poor around these experimental therapies. On the other hand, all these people, the pediatrician, the guidance counselor, and the people at your kid's school, are going to speak about it as if this is a done deal, and there's no argument. And if you do have an argument, then you have your own issues. You're transphobic.

We wouldn't do this in any other field of medicine, but we're doing it when it comes to so-called gender-affirming care. The goal of this movement is to erase the differences between male and female, to erase these fundamental truths, these biological truths that are eternal. They want to erase them. Now, I don't have a question in my mind that in the end, they won't prevail and that the truth will prevail. Mother Nature will prevail. She always does. The question is, how high is the body count? ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

A literacy coach reads from an LGBTQ book "From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea" to students at Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, Calif., on May 17.

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A Positive Attitude Is a Life Changer

View the new year as a grand opportunity

By Jeff Minick

"KNOCK, KNOCK."

"Who's there?"

"Radio."

"Radio who?"

"Radio or not, it's a new year."

Ah, I can hear the groans coming right out of my keyboard.

But there's a bit of truth in that joke. Ready or not, like it or not, the new year is indeed here. Some celebrants have watched the Times Square ball sink on television, raised a glass of champagne, kissed their sweetheart, stumbled through "Auld Lang Syne," and posted a list of resolutions on the fridge. Old Father Time has hobbled from the stage, and Baby New Year is tipping his top hat and raring to go.

A Year Lived

Slipping into the new year makes the lucky ones feel like high school graduates in their caps and gowns, full of high hopes and high spirits and ready to take on the world. The year gone by brought triumphs, major and minor—promotions at work, romance, maybe a marriage, or a new member of the family—and all signs point to an even brighter future.

On the other hand, for some of you, 2022 was uphill all the way. At its worst, the hours and days hung on you like weights, getting out of bed was an act of will, and the line of that old "Hee-Haw" song—"If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all"—was your watchword. Defeat dogged your heels: jobs lost, a marriage on the rocks, or financial decisions that drained your bank account like water going down the kitchen sink.

If you've had a year like that, you've probably heard or read enough bromides to last a lifetime, well-meaning advice that helped you stagger forward day-to-day but could never burn away the storm clouds overhead. "Things will look better in the morning," "Love is hard work," and "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" are band-aids, not cures for what ails you.

Your expectations will likely determine how the future greets you.

Take Charge

But this flip of the calendar into another year, symbolic of new beginnings, is made for second chances. A lot of people are looking ahead with great expectations, and you have the same opportunity, no matter what punches you took in 2022.

You can start by treating yourself as a sole proprietorship and doing what so many businesses do this time of year: Take an inventory of your stock and draw up a balance sheet of your assets and liabilities. To be effective, that appraisal must be unflinchingly honest. Unhappy with her workplace, a writer and editor I know recently resigned from her position and spent a month reassessing her talents and ambitions. Another woman, whose husband died after a long illness, took stock of her situation and decided to return to the workforce, both for the extra money and as a means of occupying her spare time. Both women faced difficulties and decisions, but they mapped out plans for their futures based on a solid self-evaluation.

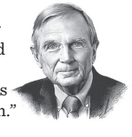
Once you've done the same, it's time to consider your expectations for that most valuable of your commodities: yourself. In "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change," Stephen R. Covey wrote: "Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be."

Have you applied that same formula to yourself? Do you treat yourself as you are or as you can and should be?

We've all heard the proverb, "Hope for the best, but expect the worse." That's sound advice. We should be mentally prepared if our plans take a sudden nosedive. But too many people leave hope out of the picture and simply expect the worse. That's a mistake. Your expectations will likely determine how the future greets you.

This new year belongs to you as much as it does to anyone else. Make it yours, and see what you can become.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man."



Unwind

Come explore this collection of easy-to-master cold-weather sports the whole family can enjoy.

PHOTO BY WLAD GO/ SHUTTERSTOCK

Winter Sports for Everyone 105

YOU ARE SURE TO WANT TO add at least a few of these exciting events scheduled to take place in 2023 across the country to your must-go list now. 90

BECAUSE THE HOLIDAY SEASON can be one of excess, the idea of Dry January is to commit to getting back on a path of moderation, on your own or with friends. 104

IF IT'S TOO COLD TO GO outside, consider taking up one of these hobbies to learn something new and have fun inside where it's warm. 106

INSIDE

Live Like a Marquess

By Mihaela Lica-Butler

Located on the shore of Lake Maggiore in Northern Italy, this villa is a glimpse into a more romantic time

The estate sits on the Piedmontese shore of Lake Maggiore, across from the province of Varese in northern Italy.

When Marquess Massimo d'Azeglio built this charming waterfront Art Nouveau pieds dans l'eau villa, he surrounded himself with the beauty of Cannero Riviera. The property affords endless views of Lake Maggiore, the Dolomite Mountains, the private beach and boat dock, and, for a bit of aristocratic splendor, the property's 1.48 acres of botanical gardens, which feature a lovely landscape with ancient trees, colorful blossoms, and small waterfalls.

The villa was built in 1860 when Massimo d'Azeglio retired there to write his memoirs. In addition to being a nobleman, he was also the prime minister of Sardinia, a novelist, and a painter. The villa retains the artist's studio he used to create his works. While it's a single-family home, the villa certainly doesn't lack for space, with 12,916 square feet of livable space spread over two levels in the form of five bedrooms and six baths.

On the first level lies the main living room and its scenic terrace, a dining room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and the master bedroom with a small balcony. The second floor could function as a separate residence, as it's equipped with two master bedrooms—one with an en suite bathroom—and its own living room, dining room, and a well-equipped kitchen.

The third floor climbs to a turret to arrive at a smaller bedroom and a games room. The villa also has a basement with a fireplace, and various recreation rooms with large windows granting beautiful outdoor views. The property's park overlooks the lake in front of the villa, leading to a lovely private beach with a dock and a mooring pier for a boat. Unobstructed views of the lake can be enjoyed from a small belvedere adjacent to the caretaker's house, as well as from the villa's ground-floor conservatory and terrace.

Nearby Cannero Riviera is a small lakeside community on the shore of Lake Maggiore that is known for its pleasant Mediterranean climate of mild winters and temperate summers. ■

A former military journalist, Mihaela Lica-Butler is a senior partner at Argophilia Travel News. Besides her work as a PR pro and travel journalist, she spends her time writing children's fairy tales and cookbooks.

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(Above) The upper level dining room features sensual Art Nouveau details and soothing natural tones.
(Top Right) The lush interiors feature well-preserved intricate Art Nouveau decor, accented by the restored original flooring, and antique furnishings.
(Right) The bedrooms are well suited to ensuring a relaxing night's sleep soothed by the ambiance of the beautiful surroundings.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ITALY SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

EPIC, CAN'T-MISS AFFAIRS

8 BUCKET LIST EVENTS IN 2023

By Bill Lindsey

Start planning now to make sure you're at these incredible events

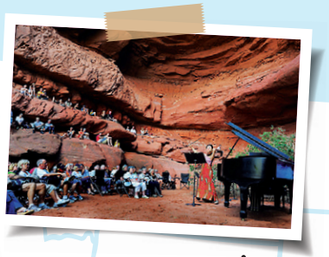
WE ALL KNOW THE feeling of reading about or seeing a video about a great celebration or affair that you want to attend, only to realize it happened a few weeks earlier. For that reason, we've compiled a list of the coming year's most notable events, giving you plenty of time to make plans to attend.

From flower-strewn parades in Hawaii to concerts in mountain grottoes, and even an outhouse race in Alaska, we've gathered some fun events for you to see in the coming year.

ALASKA

HAWAII

COLORADO PLATEAU



LAS VEGAS

NEW MEXICO

WYOMING

MICHIGAN

NORTH CAROLINA

FROSTY FUN IN ALASKA

Anchorage's "Fur Rondy" Fur Rendezvous

In 1935, Anchorage's 3,000 residents had no TV service and no movie theaters, making the winter months long and lonely. To liven things up a bit, Vern Johnson and his friends created a three-day sports festival called the Fur Rendezvous, hosting skiing, hockey, a kid's sled race down Fourth Avenue, a bonfire, and a torchlight parade. It's now a 12-day festival, held in late February. Events include a carnival, a parade, outhouse races, the World Championship Sled Dog Races, and The Running of the Reindeer.

SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE

Albuquerque International Balloon Festival, New Mexico

For nine days in October, the Albuquerque skies are filled with hundreds of colorful hot-air balloons soaring silently above the desert landscapes. Two launches occur each day: The dawn patrol takes place just before sunrise, and the balloon glow lights up the evening sky. The balloons lift off from an 80-acre launch site, where guests can mingle to get an up-close look. The event also features concerts, a car show, and a "glamping section" where guests can book a three-day stay in a safari-style tent.

AN ISLAND OF FLOWERS

Lilac Festival, Mackinac Island, Michigan

In early June, thousands of plant enthusiasts descend upon Mackinac Island for the annual Lilac Festival. Lilacs aren't native to the 4.3-acre island, with the first documentation of their presence dating to an 1861 journal entry by Henry David Thoreau. However, they're now firmly in place, with the island serving as the home of Michigan's largest lilac tree, and are celebrated by 10 days of festivals and events. Only accessible by boats or the ferry, cars are prohibited on the island, making horse-drawn carriages the best way to get around.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: FUR RENDEZVOUS, FORMULA 1 LAS VEGAS GRAN PRIX, CHEYENNE FRONTIER DAYS, MOAB MUSIC FESTIVAL, MACKINAC ISLAND, THE BILTMORE, ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA, HAWAII ALOHA FESTIVALS

SPEED ON THE STRIP

Formula One Racing Arrives in Las Vegas

In November, the Las Vegas strip will come alive with the sights, sounds, and thrills of Formula One racing. A 3.8-mile, 14-turn course will take cars past casinos, hotels, and iconic Las Vegas landmarks at speeds exceeding 200 miles per hour. The race gets underway with a dramatic "lights out" 10 p.m. start, which sends the racers out onto the fully illuminated track, roaring right past grandstands, hospitality suites, and hotels to allow the crowd to see, hear, and actually feel the rumble of the cars as they speed past.

GREAT REASONS TO VISIT HAWAII

A Month of Aloha Festivals

Hawaii's Aloha Festivals take place over several weeks in September. The first is the Royal Court Investiture and Opening Ceremony, featuring traditional music and dance celebrating the history of the islands. Next is the Waikiki Hoolaulea, with Kalakaua Avenue lined with booths offering food, crafts, and displays of island culture, while entertainers perform at numerous stages. Several days later, Kalakaua Avenue is the site of the Floral Parade, featuring elaborate floats crafted using native flowers, marching bands, dancers, and horseback riders entertaining the gathered throngs.

CHANNEL YOUR INNER COWBOY

Cheyenne Frontier Days, Wyoming

Cheyenne Frontier Days has been going strong since 1897. One of the largest rodeos in the United States, the 10-day affair held in Wyoming's state capital city at the end of July is a lot more than an exciting Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo with more than $1 million in cash and prizes up for grabs by the world's best cowboys and cowgirls; other activities include parades, a carnival, concerts, a western art show, pancake breakfasts, a flyover by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, and much more to keep visitors enthralled and entertained.

MOUNTAIN MUSIC

Annual Moab Music Fest

Set in the arid red rock section of Utah's Colorado Plateau, the Annual Moab Music Festival was founded in 1992 by musicians from New York who were enthralled by the area's beauty and unique acoustic effects. The two-week-long festival features upward of 20 concerts, some in grottoes that serve as natural concert halls, where attendees perch on rock walls after hiking in or arriving on river rafts. The event culminates with the two-day Musical Raft Trip.

THE HOLIDAYS IN AMERICA'S LARGEST HOME

Christmas at Biltmore, Asheville, North Carolina

With 33 bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, and 65 fireplaces, the Biltmore House is the largest home in the United States, based on square footage. Built in Asheville by the Vanderbilt family in 1895, the 8,000-acre estate offers two "Christmas at Biltmore" celebrations. The daytime event includes a tour of the estate, from the banquet hall with its towering, ornament-laden tree to exquisitely decorated guest rooms. After sunset, the grounds are illuminated by candles, twinkle lights, and roaring fireplaces. Overnight packages allow guests to experience the holidays just like a Vanderbilt.

WHERE TO GO IN 2023

By Tim Johnson

A young southern elephant seal gives a playful squint.

Antarctica is about 600 miles from South America's tip.

ANTARCTICA'S COASTLINE AVERAGES *14 DEGREES F.*

Gentoo penguins may be seen while sailing Antarctica's coastline.

ANTARCTICA

Sail to Antarctica

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, this mostly undiscovered continent is getting busy. This year, a record 82 passenger ships will visit the coldest, darkest, windiest, highest, driest place on earth. Most of those will travel the relatively short distance from the tip of South America across the famously tumultuous Drake Passage, then trace the snow-laden, mountainous beauty of the Antarctic Peninsula. The natural wonders alone are worth the trip. The wildlife: from adorable gentoo, chinstrap, and Adelie penguins mating and molting, to massive, otherworldly elephant seals jousting on the beach. Even the ice is fascinating, with blue glaciers cracking and tabular icebergs as big as a football field floating by. Just make sure to come see it all before things get too crowded. ■

GREENLAND

Opening Illulissat and Greenland

Colorful homes in Tasiilaq, located in eastern Greenland.

GREENLAND HAS LONG been terra incognita for most travelers. But this territory, a protectorate of Denmark, is welcoming more and more visitors, most of whom arrive on expedition cruise ships. Sail through fjord systems lined with soaring, snow-capped mountains that stretch hundreds of miles. Visit tiny villages where the locals are more than happy to welcome you. If you're lucky, your ship can chopper to the ice sheet, which covers four-fifths of Greenland's surface—more than 660,000 square miles. Ilulissat is a must-visit. Sitting more than 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, its name literally means "iceberg" in the local indigenous language. Here, an incredibly productive glacier runs 25 miles and calves 20 billion tons of bergs every year. ■

A small red sailboat cruises among icebergs from Disko Bay Glacier, Greenland.

Greenland is the world's largest island and least densely populated region.

The Parthenon and Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

GREECE

Elefsina: Capital of Culture

SET ON THE NORTHWESTERN edge of Athens, this small city is close to many of Greece's finest attractions, such as the Acropolis, just a few minutes away, and the vineyards and olive groves of the Peloponnese peninsula to the south. But this year, Elefsina (or Eleusis, to the Greeks) offers plenty of reasons to stay right in town. The history there is deep, more than 4,000 years of it. Home to rich ruins and an archaeological museum, it was one of five holy cities of antiquity. More recently, Elefsina has resurrected its derelict industrial facilities into modern attractions. As one of Europe's capitals of culture for 2023, the city will be putting on a number of exciting events, including cultural and culinary attractions, concerts, and temporary art exhibits. ■

IF YOU GO

Getting Around: Athens International Airport (ATH) is about 40 minutes away.

Stay: While you'll find a couple of nice four stars in town, it's worth a short drive to stay in Athens.

Take Note: The Archaeological Museum of Elefsina showcases a collection of artifacts that date from the ancients to the Romans.

Elefsina is roughly 20 minutes by car from central Athens.

The archaeological site of the Temple of Apollo in Corinth, Greece.

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

YOKOHAMA'S POPULATION GREW FROM 600 IN 1859 TO *3.6 MILLION* **TODAY.**

JAPAN

Firsts in Yokohama

JAPAN JUST FULLY reopened to visitors in October. Tourists are again free to explore its many attractions, from well-known favorites such as the temples in Kyoto, to more under-the-radar destinations such as Yokohama. Best known as Tokyo's port, it was one of the first places in the country to reopen to foreign trade in 1859 and quickly became one of Japan's most cosmopolitan cities, home to its first daily newspaper, street lamps, and railway station. This coming year, the city will host some of Japan's coolest festivals, including the Spring Festival, the largest event celebrating the Chinese New Year in Japan. Come and experience everything this city has to offer, from the Red Brick Warehouse to the soaring Ferris wheel at Cosmo World, which was once the tallest on earth. ■

Cosmo World's historic Ferris wheel in Yokohama, Japan.

Yokohama is about 23 miles away from Tokyo, by car.

Sankeien Garden, a traditional Japanese-style garden in Yokohama, Japan.

BELIZE

Changing Caye Caulker

A TINY COUNTRY IN CENTRAL AMERICA, Belize is set to undergo some big changes, with a number of new luxury hotels opening in the coming months and years. It's best to see this tropical coastline at its sleepiest—and for that, the best of the best is Caye Caulker. A small island along the Mesoamerican Reef, its official slogan is "Go slow." So come, chill on the water, and grab some grilled fish—right off the street—for lunch. Then, take in the rays that come in every day at sunset and settle in for a cocktail at one of the many beach bars. The Lazy Lizard, which sits right on the Split—a channel torn by Hurricane Hattie in 1961—is always a popular gathering place. ■

The Split, the most popular beach destination on Caye Caulker.

Caye Caulker is a 768-mile flight from Miami, Florida.

IF YOU GO

Getting Around: Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport (BZE) has regular, nonstop flights from a number of North American hubs.

Stay: Island Magic Beach Resort sits right on the water, with a small pool and restaurant caressed by sea breezes.

Take Note: As a former British colony, Belize is the only English-speaking country in Central America.

Caye Caulker's official slogan is "go slow."

IF YOU GO

Getting Around: While Gold Coast Airport (OOL) in Coolangatta receives flights from all over Australia, a trip here from North America will likely connect in Sydney.

Stay: The Tessa's on the Beach motel includes a magnesium mineral pool, loungers next to the beach, and access to a boardwalk that stretches miles along the water.

Take Note: Home of the Arts (HOTA) includes quirky collections, plus parkland and an outdoor stage for open-air concerts.

Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast, Australia.

AUSTRALIA

Gold Coast Glamor

ONCE KNOWN FOR GLITZ AND GLAMOR, this corner of Queensland used to be frequented exclusively for its beaches, casinos, and rollicking bars. And, of course, the waves at Surfers Paradise. But lately, things here are changing, with people seeking—and finding—more refined attractions, especially in established communities on the southern edge of town, such as Burleigh Heads. Help make your own surfboard at S-Lab, where they'll even mail you the final product. Take a food and wine tour, or hop between craft breweries. Or just enjoy some spirits—and maybe a haircut—at Granddad Jack's. Named for the founder's barber grandfather, you can still get a $5 trim here while sipping some fine, handmade whiskey, rum, and vodka (but probably not all at once). ■

Pat Gudauskas competes in the Quicksilver Pro Surf Cup 2011, Gold Coast.

Gold Coast is a 5-hour drive from the Great Barrier Reef.

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

TEXAS

Transforming Houston, Texas

AMERICA'S FOURTH-LARGEST CITY was once known mainly for its heat, humidity, and AstroTurf. But a number of new developments are transforming this huge metropolis. Long a place where people spent their time in air-conditioned malls and other sprawling suburban spaces, in the past few years, the city core has begun transforming—and is worth a visit. Start along the new Avenida Plaza, which encourages you to stroll through green space, shops, and some 20 restaurants. Stop for a pint at 8th Wonder Brewery in the formerly forlorn, industrial eastern reaches of downtown. Then, if you can, find your way to the speakeasy at the Four Seasons, a secret space that serves up some of the best tequila in town. ■

IF YOU GO

Getting Around: Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) is one of North America's major hubs.

Stay: The Four Seasons Houston just finished a huge renovation, transforming the lobby, guest rooms, and suites.

Take Note: Both the NBA's Rockets and baseball's Astros play right downtown, their respective stadiums within easy walking distance of most hotels in the city center.

Downtown Houston, illuminated at night.

Houston is 147 miles away from Austin, Texas.

Historic town clock, sitting at the intersection of Main and Texas streets in Houston, Texas.

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

SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg Reborn

JOBURG OR "JOZIE" to the locals, this city has seen some hard times. And few countries were locked down as firmly as South Africa. But now is a perfect time to visit the country's biggest urban center. Take a tour of national hero Nelson Mandela's former home in Soweto, where he lived as a young married man full of dreams, hope, and determination. Bishop Desmond Tutu lived nearby, just down Vilakazi Street, making it the only street on earth that was home to two Nobel Prize winners. Take a culinary walking tour with JoBurg 360, which swings through funky cafes and makers in trendy Maboneng and Jeppestown before finishing with a rooftop cocktail. Or just sit by the hotel pool—the sultry climate is perfect for relaxing in the sun. ■

(Top) A view of Johannesburg at night. **(Above) The Maboneng** Precinct area, one of the hippiest parts of Johannesburg.

Johannesburg lies about 300 miles from the Dolphin Coast.

Street dancers perform at an intersection in Johannesburg.

Solo in Syracuse

Spontaneously exploring the 'greatest Greek city'

By Tim Johnson

The coastline of the town of Syracuse on Ortigia Island, Sicily.

IT WAS A DISCOVERY BORN OUT of very little research or planning. The whole adventure came out of an assumption and an idea: I had a few extra days at the end of a weeks-long trip to Europe and wanted to see more of Sicily, so I made last-minute plans, basically picking a spot at random on a map and hoping for the best.

I found a city both ancient and beautiful, a place wholly unknown to me a couple of days before, where history runs deep and wandering brings its own rewards.

'Greatest Greek City'

I was in Syracuse—known locally in Sicilian as Siracusa. Now a fairly small, out-of-the-way city (total population just tops 120,000), it retains remnants of its glory days as a powerful city-state.

Syracuse was founded 2,700 years ago by Greek Corinthians. Allied with Sparta and Corinth, as a city-state, it dominated the region; in the fifth century B.C., it rose to a status equal to Athens. The statesman and philosopher Cicero even called it the "greatest Greek city, and the most beautiful of them all."

It's referenced once in the Bible; the book of Acts notes the fact that the Apostle Paul spent three days here. In the seventh century A.D., Syracuse even served as the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The Phoenicians probably gave the city its name, deriving from words that meant "stone of the seagulls."

Walking the Streets

Now preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the heart of its ancient wonders sits on the island of Ortygia. I found the fifth-century Teatro Greco, an amphitheater that could once seat 16,000, as well as catacombs and grottoes. One was dubbed The Ear of Dionysus by the famed painter Caravaggio.

Soon afterward, a pleasant downhill stroll took me through broad boulevards and small parks. Making a left, I passed a small marina filled with while sailboats and crossed a small bridge to arrive at Ortygia. Surrounded by water, this is the heart of ancient Syracuse.

The first thing you see, sitting in a big square, is the Temple of Apollo. Dating back to the sixth century, its ruins are a perfect example of the civilization-built-upon-civilization architecture that marks this part of the Mediterranean. Some of the original stone columns remain.

If you go just steps beyond the open-air market lining one side of the street, the old town swallows you up. Cobblestone lanes

Mount Etna is the **tallest active volcano** in Europe, at **11,000 feet.**

Syracuse, Italy, is 4,600 miles away from **Syracuse, N.Y.**

Syracuse was rebuilt with Baroque architecture following a 1693 earthquake.

Remains of the ancient doric Apollo Temple in Syracuse, Sicily.

CLOCKWISE FROM L: PHOTO BY JANKRIKAVA/SHUTTERSTOCK, THE EPOCH TIMES, ANDREI NEKRASSOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

An aerial view of the archaeological site of the ancient theater in Syracuse, Sicily.

wind like secret passages. Small squares bustle with life, and in the main square, I toured the city's cathedral, which was built upon a Greek Doric temple.

Inside, you'll find relics from Syracuse's patron saint, Saint Lucy—a pair of shoes, veil, robe, and bone fragments. Just around the corner lies the famed Fountain of Arethusa. In mythology, this is the place where the namesake nymph escaped her undersea home, and it's been mentioned by authors from Virgil to Herman Melville (in "Moby-Dick"). Today, the fountain is a sort of tropical pond that's girded by stone walls, shaded by reaching palms, and filled with papyrus plants that date back to the ancients.

And, this being Italy, the food is really good, too. I fortified myself with lasagna at a sidewalk café, then followed that up with a Spritz at a bar overlooking the Ionian Sea. Then, completely by chance, I stumbled onto a boat tour.

The fountain of Arethusa, in Ortigia, Syracuse.

Syracuse by Water

Passing the papyrus on a slow descent to the waterfront, I walked past a simple wooden stand. The young man there told me the tours were being offered for half price. I quickly paid cash and was soon rolling out with a small group comprised entirely of Italians on a simple, open boat.

The first bit was slightly terrifying. Passing through a canal, our captain, Giuseppe, told us to duck. He wasn't kidding. We motored under the Ponte Umbertino. At first, its low archways looked far too low for even our small boat to fit beneath. Crouching below the gunnels, I could feel the cool stone of the arch pass just over my head, the bridge itself seeming to sweep right over the top of my hair.

Emerging on the other side, the splendor of this place opened up. Giuseppe took us inside grottoes carved naturally into the cliffs. The full breadth of Ortygia spread before us across the waters, its towers and buttresses and palaces just stacked up, one upon the other.

We arrived on the west side just in time for sunset. Those flaming orange rays cast long trails on the water and warmed up the nearby walls of the city's fortress. "Mamma mia!" one of the Italian women gasped.

It was lovely, and the night had just begun. Soon I'd be back there—ashore in old Siracusa, the streets coming alive again after dark. First, looking for a heaping plate of pasta al sugo di maiale and, later, a gelato. And maybe just one last limoncello as I readied myself to rest up for another day of touring Syracuse. ■

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

If You Go

Fly: Catania-Fontanarossa International Airport (CTA) is Sicily's largest, with flights to Europe's major hub cities.

Stay: The Mercure Prometeo is a good choice. Guest rooms are spacious, some with couches and jetted tubs.

Getting Around: Public transit can be tricky, and ride-sharing services aren't available, so your best bet is to navigate on foot. If you need to go further, taxis offer a flat rate.

Take Note: Mount Etna, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a nearby active volcano.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: MICHELE PONZIO/SHUTTERSTOCK; DAVIDIONUT/SHUTTERSTOCK; SHUTTERSTOCK

ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC COCKTAIL: THE CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

Ring in the New Year with a festive, fizzy drink that puts the bubbly front and center

By Kevin Revolinski

'TIS THE SEASON FOR popping a bottle of bubbly, but along with proposing toasts, may we propose a cocktail as well?

You can find dozens of variations for Champagne mimosas, spritzes, fizzes, and punches (or stronger stuff such as the French 75 or a Kir Royale), but often the wine takes the backseat or at least the passenger's side. Not so with the simple, truth-in-name Champagne Cocktail. While no one can pinpoint with certainty a creator or the exact date, the first instructions in text are from "How to Mix Drinks, or The Bon-Vivant's Companion" by Jerry Thomas, published in 1862.

Champagne, as anyone can pedantically tell you, is only legally called Champagne if it's produced in the French region of the same name and made in a clearly specified manner that dictates the types of grapes, growing conditions, and secondary fermentation method used for the bottle. But why stand on ceremony? Go ahead and swap in cava from Spain, specifically Catalonia. Traditional in its method but made from its own regional grape, it's fairly close. Italian prosecco is generally a tad sweeter and lighter but any sparkling wine may serve, according to your taste, for sweet versus dry and the intensity of the carbonation.

Start with a Champagne—or other sparkling wine—you like to drink.

The sugar cube reinvigorates the bubbles in the wine for a fun presentation.

Garnish with a lemon or orange twist before serving.

This old-school cocktail keeps it simple with Champagne poured over a bitters-soaked sugar cube.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

- 3 to 5 ounces chilled Champagne
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 1/3 ounce Cognac or other brandy (optional)
- A few drops of Grand Marnier (optional)
- 1 sugar cube

Place the cube in a chilled serving glass (a flute or an equivalent) and soak in the drops of bitters. Pour in any optional ingredients here, then top with the Champagne. Garnish with a twist of lemon or orange zest.

In terms of measures, Thomas's recipe calls for "one bottle to every six large glasses," and the drink came in a tumbler one-third full of broken ice, with the Champagne filling the rest of the glass. Beyond that, it contained just a half teaspoonful of sugar, one or two dashes of bitters, and a piece of lemon peel. The sugar adds only a bit of sweetness but affects the presentation, reinvigorating the bubbles of the wine.

Mixing guidance suggests to "shake well and serve," but anyone who has opened a jostled bottle of joy knows how that ends. A gentle pour is just fine and, with a chilled bottle and glass, the broken ice would only serve to water it down a bit.

Another option: The International Bartenders Association adds Cognac and optional drops of Grand Marnier to the recipe while garnishing it with a maraschino cherry or orange zest. Your call! ■

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.

FOOD TRENDS
TO WHET YOUR APPETITE FOR 2023

By Kevin Revolinski

Clearheaded

More drinkers are skipping the alcohol

***Sophisticated nonalcoholic cocktail** options are growing on menus and on shelves.*

BOOZE MIGHT BE TOLERABLE FOR a body, but it isn't exactly beneficial. Led by the health-minded generations, especially Generation Z and younger millennials, the market is reacting to that. According to NielsenIQ, between August 2021 and August 2022, the sales of nonalcoholic drinks hit $395 million, a growth of nearly 21 percent over the previous period. Nonalcoholic beer or "near beer" grew almost 32 percent the year before as well, and the increase in sales of alcohol-free "spirits" nearly quadrupled that. BevAlc Insights's 2022 annual survey found that "Gen Z and Millennials are most game to try non-alc ... 2021 saw a 166 percent increase in the number of non-alcoholic products available on Drizly compared to 2019."

Some of these drinks rely on ingredients that don't have alcohol to begin with, such as juices or sodas, while others attempt to mimic alcohol. Still, others are actual brewed beers or fermented wines with the alcohol removed.

More and more bar menus now offer a selection of nonalcoholic items or a dedicated section of inventive mocktails that won't trip a breathalyzer. The formula is popular enough that bars wholly dedicated to a sober crowd are on the rise. ■

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.

TRY THE TREND

Thomson and Scott makes dealcoholized sparkling chardonnay, sparkling rosé, and red wines that are certified organic and lower in sugar and calories to boot.
NOUGHTYAF.COM

Milwaukee's Lakefront Brewery created nonalcoholic versions of its core beers Extended Play IPA, Eastside Dark, and Riverwest Stein, an amber near-beer that tastes like regular beer with a lightly sweet, malty character and a crisp finish.
LAKEFRONTBREWERY.COM

Drink Monday offers a juniper-forward dry gin, smoky mezcal, and whiskey created by a bourbon maker—all zero alcohol. These products are vegan and have no carbs, calories, or gluten.
DRINKMONDAY.CO

Sober curious? Zero Proof Nation keeps a growing list of booze-free bars, beverages, and bottle shops.
ZEROPROOFNATION.COM

COURTESY OF DRINK MONDAY, THOMSON & SCOTT, LAKEFRONT BREWERY; SHUTTERSTOCK

Homegrown

Consumers turn to direct, sustainable sources of food

***Farmers markets,** community-supported agriculture (CSA) boxes, and other farm-to-door delivery services provide a closer connection to the source.*

ACCORDING TO THE USDA'S 2020 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey, more than 147,000 farms sold produce and goods such as meats, jams, or cheese locally, with 78 percent selling directly to consumers within a 100-mile radius of the farm and resulting in $2.9 billion in purchases from farm stores and farmers markets. LocalHarvest points out that 80 percent of the country's nearly 2 million farms are considered small farms, and are family owned. The site maintains a comprehensive directory of more than 4,000 community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms, as well as a searchable list of farm stores, produce stands, pick-your-own systems, and farmers markets.

Besides the added value of knowing your grower, the produce is picked fresh instead of being picked while still ripening and then shipped far away, which removes the need for wax and environmentally unfriendly packaging to protect from spoilage.

There's also a growing interest in sustainable practices. In 2021, L.E.K. Consulting conducted international research and found U.S. consumers to be the most willing to pay extra for sustainable products, with the number of people who care about sustainability rising from 50 percent to 68 percent since 2019. And cost becomes less of a factor as inflation brings grocery store prices closer to farmers market rates. ■

NOTAILGOHAN/SHUTTERSTOCK, INKDROP/SHUTTERSTOCK, GOTHAMGREENS.COM, HONOREFARM AND MILL

TRY THE TREND

From beef and bison to chicken and seafood, Crowd Cow ships meat direct to your home from a carefully chosen list of ethical and sustainable farms, fisheries, and other providers.
CROWDCOW.COM

Market Wagon is an online, fresh-food portal that offers a connection to more than 2,500 local farmers based on ZIP code. Currently, it's available from the Midwest to the East Coast, and as far south as Georgia.
MARKETWAGON.COM

Gotham Greens's urban greenhouses provide year-round fresh greens and use renewable energy. It has facilities in New York, Chicago, and Providence, Rhode Island, and is expanding into Texas, Georgia, and Colorado.
GOTHAMGREENS.COM

Breadmakers can seek out organic grain farmers such as California-based Honoré Farm and Mill, which offers subscriptions for heirloom varieties of stone-mill ground grains.
HONOREMILL.ORG

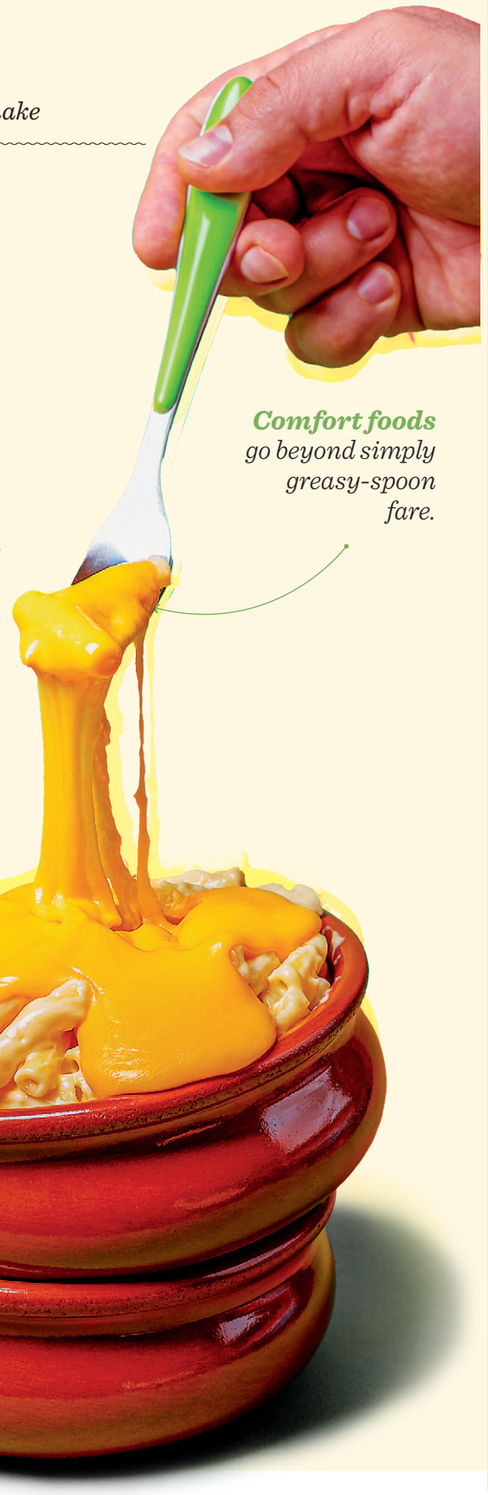
Creature Comforts

A turn to the dishes Mom used to make

THE PANDEMIC, THE ECONOMY, and an unpredictable supply chain may all be factors in the continuing trend toward comfort food. Some new eateries target it directly, while established and sometimes fine-dining restaurants are working the simple and familiar into their menus. Mac and cheese, spaghetti and meatballs, grits, chicken and waffles, ramen—the list is as diverse as the diners.

"Comfort foods are deeply personal and memory-invoking with the ability to instantly transport you back in time to your grandmother's or mother's kitchens," writes Mat Urban, executive chef at The Joule in Dallas. "There's a misconception that comfort foods are just greasy spoon, but they can be much more complex than that—layered flavors, seasonal and local ingredients, utilizing more refined techniques, etc."

Chef and restaurateur K.C. Galbo writes that, though diners "may be having some financial challenges, they still want to go out and enjoy themselves. Thus, lesser-known cuts and cost-effective meats have been popular this year. Specials like short rib, bavette [flank] steaks, and flat iron have been hits in 2022, and if done correctly, they can taste like you're eating a $50 steak for half the cost." ■



***Comfort foods** go beyond simply greasy-spoon fare.*

TRY THE TREND

CBD Provisions at The Joule features a number of old standbys ranging from steak and eggs or shrimp and grits to mac and cheese with tasso ham.
1530 Main St., Dallas
THEJOULEDALLAS.COM

The abundance of single-digit prices at Mid-City Restaurant is its own comfort, but especially items like Easy Salad or the Mid City Plate's sausages, potatoes, and sauerkraut.
40 E. Court St., Cincinnati
MIDCITYCINTI.COM

Crave Kitchen and Cocktails lists it simply and definitively: "The Mac and Cheese." Gussied up with add-ons, this three-cheese wonder is top of the shortlist nationwide. 1968 Riviera Dr., Mount Pleasant, S.C.
CRAVEKITCHENANDCOCKTAILS.COM

Delta Diner is that shiny 1940s classic with a counter and booths, serving Norwegian pancakes, meatloaf sandwiches, and the best hash browns you'll ever find. 14385 County Highway H, Delta, Wis.
DELTADINER.COM

***Adaptogens are** finding their way into foods and beverages.*

En Garde!

A focus on immunity-building functional foods

YES, HEALTHY-EATING TRENDS are still concerned about the usual suspects—heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and the like—and the Mediterranean diet and other food roadmaps aim at long-game healthy living. While these trends continue, greater attention is being paid to more immediate pathogens and the deleterious effects of stress and fatigue. Products that boost energy and immunity are getting a boost themselves.

The International Food Information Council's annual food and health survey found that 37 percent of respondents looked to combat fatigue with their food choices, while a quarter of them sought immunity and positive health effects. The younger generations were more likely to seek emotional/mental health benefits from foods and nutrients, and of those reporting stress in their lives, 30 percent turned to diet for solutions.

In addition to tablets, tinctures, and vitamins, some special plant ingredients that have long been believed to be beneficial by particular cultures and traditional medicines—such as tulsi, turmeric, ginseng, and ginger—are finding their way into foods and beverages. Also known as adaptogens, substances derived from plants and mushrooms such as ashwagandha, goji berry, and licorice root help the body respond to stress, anxiety, infection, and fatigue. ■

TRY THE TREND

Uncle Matt's organic orange juices have 300 percent RDA of vitamin C, 50 percent RDA of vitamin D, and zero glyphosate residue or added sugar. Their Ultimate Immune, a NEXTY Award winner, combines OJ with elderberry juice and zinc.
UNCLEMATTS.COM

Free Rain makes canned sparkling waters with some powerhouse ingredients such as Siberian ginseng, ashwagandha, and maca (Peruvian ginseng). Try Blackberry Passionflower for calm.
FREERAIN.COM

Popadelics makes shiitake mushroom chips rich in vitamins D and B, magnesium, and fiber. Shiitakes may lower cholesterol and have antiviral and antibacterial properties.
POPADELICS.COM

With locations in 17 states, True Food Kitchen offers seasonal, fresh, ingredient-driven menus based on the principles of Dr. Andrew Weil's anti-inflammatory diet.
TRUEFOODKITCHEN.COM

SHUTTERSTOCK, COURTESY UNCLE MATT'S, FREE RAIN, POPADELICS, TRUE FOODKITCHEN

COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK, CBD PROVISIONS, MID-CITY RESTAURANT, CRAVE KITCHEN AND COCKTAILS, DELTA DINER

THE SOBER TRUTH

5 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DRY JANUARY

BY SANDY LINDSEY

AFTER THE EXCESSES of the holidays, January is the perfect time to temporarily set aside alcohol consumption and start the new year on a fresh, sober note. Follow these tips to get Dry January—and the next year—off to a good start.

THE SOBER BUDDY

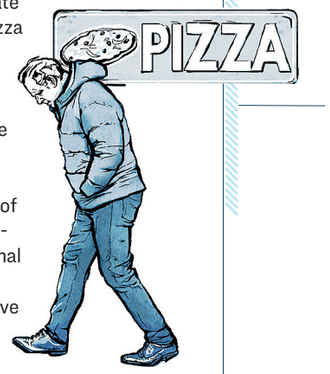
You often drink with friends, so stop drinking with them as well. A buddy (or several) can serve as a support system when the going gets tough. Plus, having someone to support in turn helps keep you strong. You can share tips, ideas, success stories, and even a friendly competition to spice things up. Most importantly, when you go out, you're not the only one not drinking.

REMOVE TEMPTATION

Remove all alcohol from your home. If you're doing it permanently, redecorate the now-empty space so it's not a constant reminder. Otherwise, store the bottles with a strong-willed friend who won't give them back until Feb. 1, not even "just one beer." Arrange dry dinners with friends, or bring your alcohol-free drink with you when you go to their houses or to events such as a football tailgate.

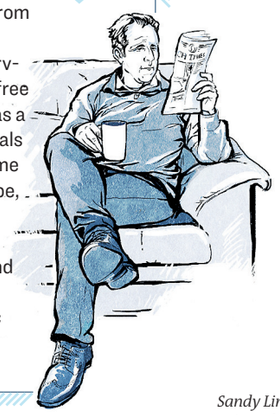
TRIGGER FOODS

Skip the foods you associate with drinking, such as a pizza you enjoy with a cold beer or a Sunday brunch with its all-you-can-drink mimosas. In addition to the weight loss that normally occurs with a reduction of the largely empty calories of alcohol, a 2015 report published in the research journal Appetite indicates that alcohol stimulates excessive food intake.



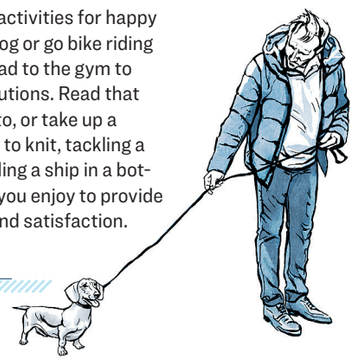
SATISFYING REPLACEMENTS

A large part of drinking is the ritual associated with it, from choosing the beverage to opening it, mixing, and serving. Substituting alcohol-free mocktails or tea, which has a wealth of preparation rituals of its own, creates the same ambience, acting as escape, stress reliever, and social lubricant. Many folks say zero-proof beers, wine, and hard liquor actually taste better than their alcoholic counterparts.



ALTERNATE AMUSEMENTS

Substitute mood-boosting activities for happy hour. Power walk with the dog or go bike riding (weather permitting), or head to the gym to fulfill your New Year's resolutions. Read that book you've been meaning to, or take up a new hobby such as learning to knit, tackling a 1,000-piece puzzle, or building a ship in a bottle. Find some activity that you enjoy to provide the necessary distraction and satisfaction.



Sandy Lindsey is an award-winning writer who covers home, gardening, DIY projects, pets, and boating. She has two books with McGraw-Hill.

EASY COLD-WEATHER ACTIVITIES

SPORTS FOR REAL PEOPLE

By Bill Lindsey

Not everyone has Olympic-level sports skills, so here are some less-challenging ones

NO-PEDAL BIKING

SKI BIKING

This sport is essentially riding a bike and is much easier to master than snowboarding. Using bike frames modified with skis, gravity propels you, so there's no need to pedal. Beginners should stick to gentle inclines, going slow. Skilled snow bikers can tackle downhill ski runs.

TWO-WHEELED WINTER FUN MACHINES

WINTER SEGWAY RIDES

Who knew Segways worked on snow? When equipped with fat tires, the same self-balancing, stand-up-and-go personal transporters can whisk you over snow and along snowy trails much more easily than if you were on cross-country skis. If you can ride one in warm weather, just add warm clothing and you're ready for winter adventures.

SIT, REV, SMILE, ENJOY

DRIVE A SNOWMOBILE

Snowmobiling is an ideal way to spend time in the great outdoors, exploring groomed trails or other snow-covered, "sled-friendly" areas. Beginners can take it easy, putting along at a comfortable rate and leaving speed to experienced riders. Renting a snowmobile is the best way to see if this activity is for you.

SET SAIL FOR WINTER FUN

ICE BOATING

If you miss warm weather sailing, climb into an ice boat to cruise across a frozen lake. If you already know how to sail, trade the swimsuit for a snowmobile suit and you're ready to go. Those new to the sport will soon pick up the basics after taking a few lessons.

HOLD ON TIGHT!

SIT AND SLIDE

Sledding may be the easiest winter sport, because all you need to do is sit and glide down the nearest incline. Whether you use a traditional steel and wood sled or a modern plastic one, the exhilaration is the same. Start with gentle inclines, and there's no shame in wearing a helmet.

DO WE USE ICE CUBES FOR BAIT?

ICE FISHING

Even if you don't catch any fish, spending a day bundled up on a frozen lake with friends is sure to result in a load of wonderful memories. After making sure the ice is safe, you can start off slow, with a hand-powered ice auger and a handline dropped into the water.

LEARN NEW *TRICKS*

By Bill Lindsey

If it's too cold to play outside, ***find a way to stay engaged by learning a new indoor skill***

When the mercury drops, it's natural to spend more time inside, which raises the question of what to do to stay entertained. It turns out that there are many activities that are ideal antidotes for cabin fever.

Anchor Your Attention

For those who are very patient, a great indoor hobby is building a ship in a bottle. It turns out the trick is to pre-build as much of the ship as possible before it goes in the bottle. Who knew? There are many kits to choose from, such as Amati's Golden Yacht, a replica of a yacht dating from 1660. The process is very intensive, requiring a steady hand and plenty of time—making it a satisfying way to stay occupied on cold, snowy days or evenings.

Fish for Finesse

Another hands-on hobby that requires patience and concentration, along with a splash of creativity, is tying fly fishing flies. These delicate creations are each an individual piece of art, designed to entice a trout to attack. While they're practical pieces of fishing tackle, many never see the river, instead being created simply for display. As a bonus, you may find a ready market for your flies, making this a hobby that pays for itself.

Time-Captivating Cooking

If you use your flies to catch fresh mountain trout, you may want to spend some of the winter leisure time learning to cook or bake, or both. Getting started with easy menu items such as pasta builds the confidence needed to tackle tougher items such as baked goods.

You can easily spend the winter months expanding your knowledge of the Egyptian pyramids.

Enjoyable Exercises

As you build your culinary skills, you may realize that's not all that has broadened, making physical fitness an appropriate new winter hobby. There are plenty of very effective exercises that don't require equipment, including sit-ups and planks. Always consult with a physician prior to starting an exercise regime, and go slow to build stamina and strength.

Learn a Language

If you're seeking a less active hobby, consider expanding your linguistic skills. Learning to speak a new language can be practical or simply a fun challenge. There are many online courses to choose from, but you can get started by teaching yourself the basics by learning several words every day and then learning how

➺

There are plenty of very effective exercises that don't require equipment, including sit-ups and planks.

Learning how to cook can be a fun winter hobby that also keeps you well-fed.

Building a ship in a bottle is a challenging task that helps pass the time when it's too cold to venture outside.

Tying fly-fishing flies lets you explore your creative skills and can result in a creel full of trout when the weather warms up.

YouTube has an incredible array of channels that can help you learn to play guitar or any other musical instrument.

LEFT PAGE: FRANCIS HAMMOND/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM L: EGRIGOROVICH/SHUTTERSTOCK, MONICA BERTOLAZZI/GETTY IMAGES, PHOTOLOGY1971/SHUTTERSTOCK, SCHANKZ/SHUTTERSTOCK, GATOT ADR/SHUTTERSTOCK

The frigid winter months are an ideal time to work toward a college degree via online courses.

to correctly use them in sentences. Practice every day in order to improve pronunciation while ingraining the new words into your memory.

Consider College

Earning a college degree is a worthwhile winter hobby, whether motivated by career advancement or simply pursuing a degree in an area that you wish to explore on your schedule. Classes can be taken online or via the mail, with both requiring a significant amount of time dedicated to reading and completing assignments, making this hobby one that's demanding in terms of time and effort. Some schools, such as Stanford Online, offer free courses in areas of engineering, health, and education, as well as arts and humanities.

Imbibe Information

There are other ways to learn on your own time, of course, from books to instructional videos on YouTube. Because these channels reflect their creator's personality and skill level, it becomes clear early on which ones hold your interest. With any of these chosen on the basis of education instead of their entertainment value, it's important to determine if the presenter has a good grasp of the subject matter. Some YouTube channels may be able to augment courses taken from an accredited school. They may even be able to possibly replace a college course if you aren't pursuing a degree, but are rather just enjoying the process of learning.

Not all YouTube channels are designed to teach traditional literature or humanities courses; a significant amount are designed to help viewers learn how to play a musical instrument, paint, tune up a car, or any of a thousand other topics. There are many documentary channels on YouTube that can provide a basic or advanced knowledge of history or philosophy, as well as a wealth of fringe-science subjects. You can easily spend the winter months expanding your knowledge of the Egyptian pyramids, the works of Nikola Tesla, the wonders of Antarctica, how modern technology came to be, creatures living deep in the ocean, or many other topics.

Become a Content Creator

If it turns out that you're an expert in a topic, consider hosting your own YouTube channel. The process is straightforward and starts off easy: Create a Google account, then go to YouTube and click on "Create a channel." The difficulty level goes straight up at this point, as you need to record or otherwise create content, which requires video equipment and the skills to edit what you shoot. Go slow, do a lot of research to see how other channels handle the topics you plan to cover, and most of all, have fun. ■

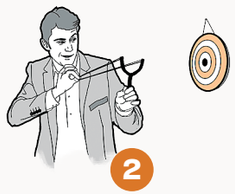
LIFESTYLE

STAY WARM KEEP BUSY

Activities for the winter doldrums

1 Make a List

Write down the various hobbies you've been wanting to try, and consider how much effort and time you want to invest in order to pick one you'll stick with.



2 Pick a Goal

Do you want to earn a college degree or learn to play the bass guitar? There are no wrong answers; most hobbies are intended to be fun.

3 Be Disciplined

Learning requires discipline, so set aside time every day in a room that allows you to concentrate without distractions. If your hobby creates a mess, consider the basement or garage.

THIS PAGE: RIDOFRAN/GETTY IMAGES

SMART MONEY

Most wallets are overflowing with cash, cards, photos, and more, creating a lump on backsides; for an instantly slimmer look, try one of these instead

By Bill Lindsey

A Formal Wallet

MONTBLANC SARTORIAL WALLET

$390

From the folks best known for their iconic pens comes a wallet that exudes style. Part of Montblanc's "Sartorial" collection, you don't have to use this only when wearing a tuxedo, as it lends a sense of sophistication even if the owner is wearing jeans. Accented by the firm's emblem and crafted of exquisitely finished Italian full-grain calfskin, the slim wallet can be embossed with up to four letters at no additional charge, to add a personal touch.

The Reinvented Money Clip

LONGFELLOW LEATHER MONEY CLIP WALLET

$45

This elegantly simple design combines a card holder with a money clip. It's crafted of hand-dyed, full-grain leather from the Hermann Oak Tannery in St. Louis and finished with beeswax from Iowa's Wolf River Bees. The pocket holds up to five credit cards and business cards, while the clip secures cash against the pocket section, keeping it neatly folded. The thin design eliminates "wallet bulge," is very comfortable to carry, and is easy to retrieve when needed.

A Moose in Your Pocket

ROGUE FRONT POCKET WALLET

$65

There's no law that requires wallets to reside in a back pocket, and those seeking an alternative to traditional lumpy wallets will be enthralled by this brilliant design. Crafted in Maine from durable moose leather, it's designed to fit in a front pocket, putting it out of reach of pickpockets while holding cash, credit cards, and even a few business cards, as well. It also incorporates RFID-blocking technology to help foil high-tech thieves using credit card scanners.

The Original Clip

SILVER TONE HALF DOLLAR MONEY CLIP

$142.95

This simple money clip combines a traditional, no-nonsense design with a genuine U.S. half dollar in Walking Liberty, Benjamin Franklin, and John F. Kennedy designs. The available dates of the coins range from 1934 to 2021. To make it one of a kind, the owner's initials can be added as an engraved monogram. The stainless steel, two-inch-wide clip will securely hold folded cash, as well as a few credit cards and business cards.

Sleek & Smart

BELLROY HIDE & SEEK

$89

A close look at this clever wallet reveals a wealth of secrets. At first glance, it's a normal, slim wallet with a section for cash and slots to securely hold credit cards for easy access. However, within the slim confines is a secret section hidden beneath a flap to secure additional cash, as well as a pocket to hold coins or business cards. It also blocks RFID scanners to help prevent unauthorized access to credit card information.

FROM TOP L: COURTESY OF MONTBLANC, LONGFELLOW LEATHER, ROGUE INDUSTRIES, FRANKLIN MINT, BELLROY

Epoch Booklist

Are there books you'd recommend?
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at features@epochtimes.com

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature a warm novel set at Christmas, *riveting biographies of WWII reporters, and vital findings on how space travel effects health.*

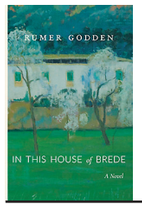
FICTION

'A Redbird Christmas'
By Fannie Flagg

Finding Faith in Lost River

Oswald T. Campbell, 52, receives a dire health prognosis. He leaves chilly Chicago for what he believes may be his last Christmas and takes up residence in a small rural community in Alabama. Warm and welcomed, he receives a rich magical gift, as will readers.

RANDOM HOUSE, 2005
240 PAGES



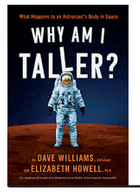
'In This House of Brede'
By Rumer Godden

Inside the Cloistered Life

A career woman, 42-year-old Philippa Talbot, shocks her boss and subordinates when she joins a contemplative religious order in the Benedictine Abbey of Brede. There the nuns still follow the rule of "work and pray." As Philippa enters into this new life and through the years afterward, we learn about the other nuns, but we also discover much about monastic practices, church history, and the customs of those who, to this day, practice the Rule of St. Benedict. This 1969 novel was Rumer Godden's masterpiece.

CLUNY MEDIA, 2021
390 PAGES

SCIENCE



'Why Am I Taller?'
By Dr. Dave Williams and Elizabeth Howell, Ph.D.

Space Changes People

In the 1940s and 1950s, science fiction portrayed life on a spaceship as little different from life on a submarine. Today, after nearly 50 years of humans living for long periods in space, we know better. This book explores and explains what we know about what happens to the human body when it spends time in space. It's a fascinating look at the challenges of space travel and of living in space, and the methods used to keep space travelers healthy—in space and after they return to Earth.

ECW PRESS, 2022, 240 PAGES

HISTORY

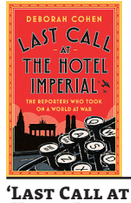
'The Gulf of Mexico'
By John S. Sledge

The Past and Future of an American Sea

The Gulf of Mexico is America's sea. The wealth of two continents passes through its waters, which offer food and recreation. Sledge offers a full history of the Gulf, from earliest times to the present, providing a sublime description of its cities, its ships and travelers, and its disasters. Revealing its rich cultural heritage and potential future, he's clearly entranced by it and after reading his homage, you may be as well.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS, 2019
280 PAGES

BIOGRAPHY



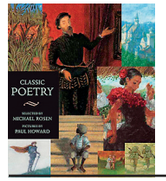
'Last Call at the Hotel Imperial'
By Deborah Cohen

Bygone Bylines Headline History

Take a ride on the wild side by reading about the lives of former journalists in the years leading to World War II. John and Frances Gunther, H.R. Knickerbocker, Vincent Sheean, and Dorothy Thompson are the primary protagonists in these riveting biographies of the storytellers who catapulted foreign affairs to the front pages.

RANDOM HOUSE, 2022
592 PAGES

CLASSICS



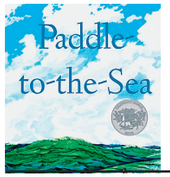
'Classic Poetry'
Edited by Michael Rosen

Simply Gorgeous

Illustrated by Paul Howard, this beauty will appeal to a spectrum of readers, from those who treasure verse and art to teen lit lovers and even to the younger crew, as several children's poems are included. Each entry comes with a tinted painting or photograph of the poet and a brief biography. Here are the good old verses that stir the heart, but some will be new to readers, like "Mulga Bill's Bicycle" by Banjo Patterson, who also wrote "Waltzing Mathilda." If you're looking for an exquisite holiday gift, look no more.

CANDLEWICK REPRINT EDITION, 2009, 160 PAGES

FOR KIDS

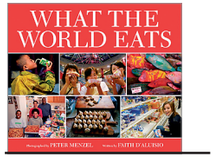


'Paddle-to-the-Sea'
By Holling C. Holling

A Tapestry of Words and Pictures

A carved Indian in a tiny canoe drifts from the Great Lakes to the sea, helped along the way by many hands. Holling blends history, geography, and a great storyline to make this an enchanting, informative adventure. Ages 6–10.

CLARION BOOKS ILLUSTRATED EDITION, 1980
64 PAGES



'What the World Eats'
By Faith D'Aluisio and Peter Menzel

A Culinary Voyage

This photographic journey takes readers around the world, exploring the different cuisines of various cultures. Packed with pictures of families in their kitchens, recipes, maps, and more, it's an enjoyable and eye-opening feast.

TRICYCLE PRESS, 2008,
160 PAGES

Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author.
He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

Epoch Watchlist

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature a peppy animated adventure about a fearless feline *and a charming coming-of-age tale about a child of deaf parents.*

NEW RELEASE

'Puss in Boots' (2022)

In this action-packed, animated adventure (under the Shrek franchise's umbrella), we follow the titular-hero Puss on his latest daring enterprise. Puss's previous perilous escapades have cost him eight of his nine lives. Will he be able to restore them on this quest, or fall to nefarious forces?

Many animated films fail to entertain adults and kids at the same time. But this one's an exception. It's got enough relatable content for both grown-ups and (older) kids, while having a pace peppy enough to keep little ones engaged.

ANIMATION | ADVENTURE | COMEDY

Release Date:
Dec. 21, 2022

Directors:
Joel Crawford,
Januel Mercado

Starring:
Antonio Banderas (voice),
Salma Hayek (voice),
Harvey Guillén (voice)

Running Time:
1 hour, 40 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Where to Watch: Theaters

★★★☆☆

A SNAPPY ROMANTIC COMEDY

'His Girl Friday' (1940)

This screwball comedy from legendary director Howard Hawks is about Walter Burns (Cary Grant), a newspaper editor, desperately trying to win back his ex-wife Hildy (Rosalind Russell) who is engaged to another man.

In what may be the fastest-paced film ever, Grant and Russell pair marvelously in this comedy that never loses its rapid-fire momentum. A fine rom-com from the '40s.

COMEDY | DRAMA | ROMANCE

Release Date:
Jan. 18, 1940

Director:
Howard Hawks

Starring:
Cary Grant,
Rosalind Russell,
Ralph Bellamy

Running Time:
1 hour, 32 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
Redbox, Apple TV, Hoopla

★★★½☆

FAMILY PICK

'CODA' (2021)

"CODA," or Child of Deaf Adults, is a charming coming-of-age tale, starring Emilia Jones as Ruby. The teenager is the only hearing person in a deaf family, and when she discovers that she has a gift and passion for music, she struggles between chasing after her aspirations and helping her family's struggling business.

This rather wholesome family film has acting that's earthy and a script that not only has some surprising laugh-out-loud moments but that will also elicit a tear or two. It may be formulaic, but it's effective.

COMEDY| DRAMA | MUSIC

Release Date:
Aug. 13, 2021

Director:
Sian Heder

Starring:
Emilia Jones, Marlee Matlin,
Troy Kotsur

Running Time:
1 hour, 51 minutes

MPAA Rating:
PG-13

Where to Watch:
Apple TV+

★★★★☆

A MASTERFUL DRAMA OF MOZART'S LATER LIFE

'Amadeus' (1984)

Tom Hulce stars as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the famous Austrian composer, in a fictionalized biography. Telling the dramatic tale is jealous fellow composer Antonio Salieri (F. Murray Abraham).

"Amadeus" represents acclaimed director Milos Forman's masterclass contribution to filmmaking. It features a superb cast, a top-notch score, and excellent writing that seeks to fill in the historical gaps in the genius's later life. You'll see why it's considered to be one of the best films of all time.

BIOGRAPHY | DRAMA | MUSIC

Release Date:
Sept. 19, 1984

Director:
Milos Forman

Starring:
F. Murray Abraham,
Tom Hulce,
Elizabeth Berridge

Running Time:
2 hours, 40 minutes

MPAA Rating:
PG

Where to Watch:
Vudu, Redbox, Apple TV

★★★★½

THE TOP 10 MOVIES OF 2022

Often, finding enough titles to fill a yearly Top 10 list is difficult. In 2022, it was hard choosing from among the many superb features.

Michael Clark
has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. Since 1995, Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles.

‘Corsicana’

With a hearty mix of John Ford, Howard Hawkes, and Clint Eastwood, first-time director Isaiah Washington’s revisionist Western posing as a detective procedural is an unqualified masterpiece. Real-life U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves (Washington) scours most of middle Texas searching for a band of thugs whose depravity knows no bounds.

‘Deep in the Heart: A Texas Wildlife Story’

Three years in the making, at a cost of just over $1 million, “DITH” looks like something costing 20 times as much. Writer-director Ben Masters presents a glorious celebration of life that will put anyone who witnesses its wonders in a state of utter amazement and awe.

‘Louis Armstrong’s Black and Blues’

Bolstered by the title subject’s voluminous personal audio and visual archives, director Sacha Jenkins takes what could have been just a standard issue bio-doc and turned it into an all-encompassing, cradle-to-grave celebration. As one of the two or three most influential American musicians of the 20th century, it was long overdue.

‘Eternal Spring’

This brilliant animated, Oscar-nominated, Chinese-language documentary from filmmaker Jason Loftus breaks all genre rules as it examines the events leading up to and the aftermath of the 2002 hacking of China’s state-controlled TV by Falun Gong practitioners, who follow a peace-loving, apolitical, spiritual path yet are persecuted by the paranoid Chinese communist regime.

‘Top Gun: Maverick’

Easily the highest-profile title thwarted by the 2020 theatrical lockdown in the wake of COVID-19, “TG:M” came roaring back two years later and singlehandedly saved brick-and-mortar theaters. Superior in every way to the 1986 original, it’s the highest-grossing film ever for Paramount Studios and producer-leading man Tom Cruise.

‘Confess, Fletch’

One of the rare reboots to warrant its existence, “Confess, Fletch” finds Jon Hamm taking over for original title-character Chevy Chase and besting him in every manner possible. It’s a perfect mix of razor-sharp wit, intelligent adult interplay, and sly, dry humor, all set before the backdrop of nasty art-world double-dealing.

‘Glass Onion’

Director Rian Johnson’s follow-up to “Knives Out” is every bit as clever, witty, smart, and engaging as its predecessor. Daniel Craig reprises his role as Benoit Blanc, a gentleman Southern sleuth invited to a swanky Greek island where a tech billionaire promises a murder over the weekend.

‘Explorer’

Blood-related to the Fiennes acting family, Sir Ranulph Fiennes has lived a life that would embarrass most overachievers. This mesmerizing documentary covers every aspect of his storied life as a soldier, runner, mountain climber, globe-trotter, author, and if that weren’t enough, a candidate to succeed Sean Connery as James Bond.

‘My Son Hunter’

Director Robert Davi pulled off the near impossible. This wickedly insightful, stinging satire pulls back the curtain on the (now acknowledged by everyone) Hunter Biden laptop scandal without preying on or making light of his chemical addictions. The feted corruption is passed down from father to son like a family heirloom.

‘Empire of Light’

Ranking right up there with “American Beauty” and “1917,” “Empire of Light” finds writer-director Sam Mendes at the top of his game. Set in 1980s England, the story is a stirring love letter to movies, grand brick-and-mortar theaters, and the bittersweet memories of years gone by.

How to Be the Best Student

In addition to taking good notes, make the class better for everyone

Learning works best as an interactive experience, and in order to get the maximum benefit from it, the student needs to find a positive way to engage with the instructor and the rest of the class.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Be Nice

Teachers and students are at their most productive when everyone is enjoying the learning process. It's OK to be excited when the entire class is working together and engaging in positive interactions between students and the teacher. After class, be open to joining a study group; they can help streamline the learning process while making new friends. If you have a great grasp of the subject matter, respectfully help those who don't.

CSA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

2 Be Appreciative

Teachers have a tough job as they work with students to share and impart new knowledge, so it's important to treat them with respect. Getting upset and talking rudely to a teacher is never acceptable; if there is a problem, discuss it with a guidance counselor or trusted teacher. Every once in a while, when you realize your teacher found a way to clearly explain a tough subject so that you suddenly "get it," after class, let them know it worked.

3 Be Honest

If you aren't quite comprehending the subject matter, speak up, even if it's privately with your teacher or instructor. If your assignment is late, let your teacher know why. Cheating is never acceptable; if you are tempted to cheat because you are having difficulty mastering the subject, talk to your teacher after class. If you witness cheating, find a way to advise the teacher, perhaps via an anonymous note—but make sure you are 100 percent correct before saying anything.

4 Be Helpful

If a fellow student drops a book, pick it up and hand it to them. If, during an online class, you notice another student seems confused, send them a private message asking if they need help. After an in-person class, offer to help your teacher put extra chairs away or otherwise straighten up the room. If a fellow student has forgotten their textbook, offer to share yours; if they have been sick and missed a few classes, offer to share your notes so they can catch up.

5 Set a Good Example

Good manners are just as important in a classroom as they are at home or while out with friends and family. Saying "please" and "thank you" aren't optional, even for minor things such as classmates passing tests to each other, or when you need to ask for help with a project. Saying "excuse me" after a sneeze is another must, as is being patient when waiting in line to sign up for classes or for your turn to say something in a class discussion.

Courageous Reporting

We believe that investigating and exposing the truth is the only way that we can remain safe and free

THE EPOCH TIMES

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.

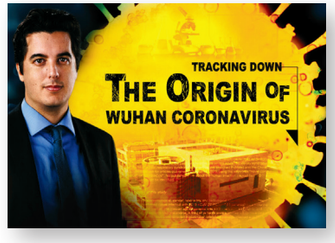
OUR REPORTING was proven accurate with the conclusion of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

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 of articles on the topic, many of them exclusive.

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.

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

"Unbiased reporting. Short, impactful articles."

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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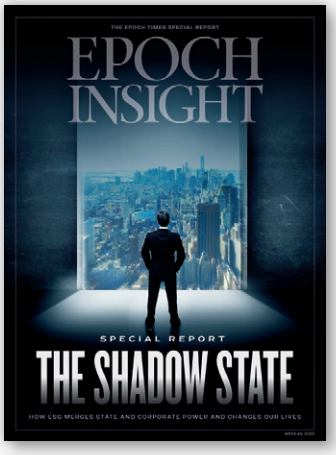

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