

EPOCH INSIGHT



FOR SOME, THE WAR NEVER ENDS

*A family's journey
to find answers
and peace*

BY MICHAEL CLEMENTS



The Ongoing War

FOR MILITARY VETERANS WHO RETURN from war, their fight has only just begun. In some cases, it's an internal struggle that's often tragically lost.

After combat veteran Army Pfc. Logan White died in 2017 from an accidental heroin overdose, his widow wanted his memory to live on.

"People should know there are other ways that people can lose their lives to war than just being killed in action," Alyse White told Epoch Insight.

Pfc. White's widow and his parents founded a grassroots organization, Memories of Honor, that filled a void. The organization seeks to ensure that his service and the service of other fallen veterans is honored, regardless of how, when, or where they died.

White's death was a result of his self-medicating due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a traumatic brain injury, said his father, Brian White.

"The loss for us is as traumatic as for those families who had someone killed in combat," he said.

Read Epoch Insight's in-depth report to find out more about Pfc. White's life and his loved ones' journey to find answers and peace.

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief




ON THE COVER

Pfc. Logan White on duty in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

COURTESY OF BRIAN WHITE

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President Joe Biden delivers the State of the Union address in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Feb. 7. Biden's State of the Union address brought the second-smallest television audience in 30 years, with around 27.3 million people tuning in, according to data from the Nielson company.

JACQUELYN MARTIN/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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SPOTLIGHT

Deadly Disaster

DEBRIS FROM A 7.8 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE that hit near Gaziantep, in Iskenderun, Turkey, on Feb. 6. The quake hit in the early hours of the morning followed by another 7.5 magnitude midday quake and caused widespread destruction in southern Turkey and northern Syria.

PHOTO BY BURAK KARA/GETTY IMAGES



The Week



The U.S.–Mexico border fence in San Luis, Ariz., on Dec. 25, 2022.

PHOTO BY REBECCA NOBLE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Many Americans may not have a complete understanding of what the U.S. debt ceiling is. **52**

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“*[The country is in the] very early stages of disinflation.*”



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, speaking at the Economic Club of Washington.

“**If China threatens our sovereignty, we will act to protect our country.**”

President Joe Biden in his State of the Union address.



\$1
MILLION

The bail for a 73-year-old Arizona rancher who has been charged with first-degree murder for the killing of an illegal alien—who has been tentatively identified as a Mexican citizen—was set at \$1 million.

\$10
BILLION

The Biden administration plans to sell nearly 20 high-mobility artillery rocket system launchers and various other weapons and related equipment, worth a total of around \$10 billion, to NATO ally Poland.

5 Million

Nearly 5 million bottles of Fabuloso multipurpose cleaner have been recalled because the products may contain harmful bacteria, manufacturer Colgate-Palmolive announced in a notice.



100 Leaders and Organizations

A resolution introduced by Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.) and Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky.) to prevent the Biden administration from promoting a “woke capital agenda” has the support of more than 100 conservative leaders and organizations.

400 Recalled—Over 400 products, including sandwiches, salads, snacks, yogurt, and wraps have been recalled over potential contamination with listeria, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said. Brand names included in the recall are Bistro to Go, InReach, Naval Academy 1845 Coffee, Orchard Bistro, Westin Label, and more.

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HEALTH

Maker of Common Thyroid Medication Announces Recall

IBSA PHARMA INC. says it’s voluntarily recalling 27 lots of a drug used to treat hypothyroidism.

The recall of Tirosint-SOL, or levothyroxine sodium, a thyroid medication used to treat an underactive thyroid gland, “has been initiated because these lots may be subpotent,” the company said. The announcement was published on the Food and Drug Administration’s website.

“The company’s analyses show a slight decrease below 95.0 percent of its labeled amount in levothyroxine sodium (T4) for some lots,” according to the recall notice. The recall doesn’t apply to Tirosint capsules.

People who take the recalled, subpotent drug could “experience signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid),” which may include “fatigue, increased sensitivity to cold, constipation, dry skin, puffy face, hair loss, slow heart rate, depression, swelling of the thyroid gland and/or unexplained weight gain or difficulty losing weight,” the notice said.

VACCINE

US Congresswoman Says She Was Injured by COVID-19 Vaccine

A U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN has said she was left injured by a COVID-19 vaccine.

Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.) disclosed her health complications during a hearing with former Twitter executives while decrying how Twitter had censored posts from medical experts, including Dr. Jay Bhattacharya and Martin Kulldorff.

“I, along with many Americans, have long-term effects from COVID. Not only was I a long-hauler, but I have effects from the vaccine. It wasn’t the first shot but it was the second shot that I now developed asthma that has never gone away,” Mace said in Washington.

“I have tremors in my left hand, and I have the occasional heart pain that no doctor can explain—and I’ve had a battery of tests.”



China’s DF-41 nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missiles in Beijing on Oct. 1, 2019.

MILITARY

China Now Has More ICBM Launchers Than the US, Lawmaker Confirms

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR Mike Rogers (R-Ala.) said the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had leapfrogged the United States in the number of its active intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, during a hearing on the threat posed by the CCP to U.S. defense.

“The CCP is rapidly expanding its nuclear capability,” Rogers said. “They have doubled their number of warheads in two years. We estimated it would take them a decade to do that.”

“We also were just informed by the DOD [Department of Defense] that the CCP now has more ICBM launchers than the United States.”

NATIONAL SECURITY

Chinese Spy Balloon Went Over US Nuclear Weapons Sites, Top Lawmaker Says

A TOP HOUSE LAWMAKER said the Chinese spy balloon transited over key U.S. missile and nuclear weapon sites before it was shot down off the coast of the Carolinas on Feb. 4.

“If you take the path that this balloon did, and you put up an X every place



Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio) at a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Nov. 20, 2019.

where you have a missile defense site, actual nuclear weapons infrastructure, you’re going to follow this path,” House Intelligence Chairman Mike Turner (R-Ohio) said in a news conference with reporters, USA Today reported. “So I think the natural conclusion is, it is intelligence gathering with respect to try to affect in some way the command and control of our missile defense and nuclear weapons.”



A woman sits on the rubble of a destroyed building in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, on Feb. 7, a day after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck the area.

MIDDLE EAST

Death Toll From Syria-Turkey Quake Continues to Rise

THE COMBINED CONFIRMED DEATH TOLL from the two powerful Feb. 6 earthquakes that struck a section of southern Turkey and neighboring Syria has risen to more than 22,000 people as of Feb. 10.

The tally is expected to continue to rise. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has acknowledged that there were issues with the ongoing earthquake relief efforts as he faces pressure over the government’s allegedly poor response to the crisis. People affected by the earthquake in southern Turkey have been battling freezing winter weather while waiting for the rescue of their family and friends.

US-CHINA

Chinese Corn Mill Project in North Dakota Struck Down

A CITY COUNCIL IN NORTH DAKOTA has voted unanimously to block a Chinese company’s proposed corn mill after the U.S. Air Force raised national security concerns over its proximity to a military base.

The public in attendance cheered and chanted “USA!” when the Grand Forks City Council voted unanimously 5–0 to terminate the proposal by Fufeng Group, a large Chinese agribusiness with strong ties to the Chinese Communist Party.



U.S. Air Force members at Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., on June 6, 2022.

The proposed mill was intended to be built on 300 acres of land owned by Fufeng Group that’s only 12 miles from a military base that houses top-secret drone technology.

UK

Welsh Government Unveils Proposal to Streamline Gender Change Process

WALES HAS ANNOUNCED plans to become the “most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe” by copying a process similar to Scotland’s self-ID legislation to make it easier to change gender.

The Labour-run Welsh government, in cooperation with the left-wing Plaid Cymru political party, announced its LGBTQ-plus Action Plan, calling for new powers to make it easier to legally change gender.

Wales aims to follow Scotland, which became the first UK country to back a self-ID process for legally changing gender when it passed the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill in December 2022.

However, in late January, the UK Parliament triggered a constitutional clash by blocking gender reforms passed by the Scottish government, the first time it had sought such an order.



St. Mary Street in Cardiff, Wales, on Oct. 23, 2020.

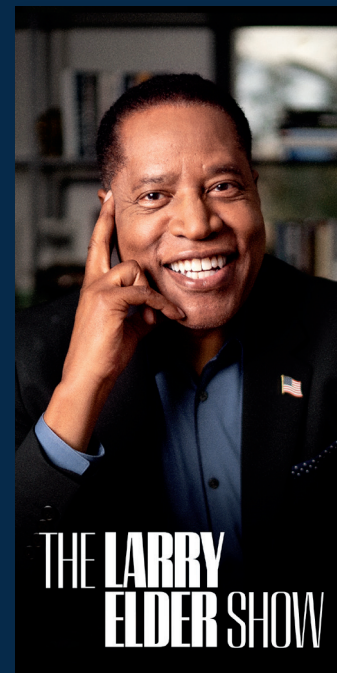
CANADA

Wait Times at Walk-In Clinics in Canada Increased by 50 Percent in 2022

WAIT TIMES FOR CANADIANS at walk-in medical clinics rose by nearly 50 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, providing yet another symptom of the nation’s health care crisis.

The recently released Medimap Walk-in Clinic Wait Time Index shows that Canadians had to wait 37 minutes on average to see a doctor last year, a 12-minute increase from the year before, when the average wait was 25 minutes.

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The Week in Photos



1. Cows rest after a forest fire caused by a devastating heat wave in Santa Juana, Chile, on Feb. 4.



2. A Syrian girl at a makeshift camp for displaced people, near the Syria–Turkey border, on Feb. 4.

3. President Joe Biden delivers his State of the Union address during a joint meeting of Congress in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Feb. 7.

4. People explore ice castles in negative-1 degree F weather in North Woodstock, N.H., on Feb. 4.

5. Protesters hold smoke flares at a nationwide rally against a deeply unpopular pensions overhaul, in Nice, France, on Feb. 7.

6. Rescue workers tend to an 11-year-old survivor at the site of a collapsed building following a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, in Hatay, Turkey, on Feb. 8.



COURTESY: LOOK WISE FROM TOP L; JAVIER TORRES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; BAKR ALKASEM/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES; JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; VALERY HACHE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; BURAK KARA/GETTY IMAGES

Illegal immigrants arrive at the U.S.—Mexico border in San Luis, Ariz., on May 23, 2022.

PHOTO BY MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

BORDER SECURITY

ARIZONA BORDER TOWNS STRUGGLE AS CARTELS DRIVE CRISIS

**Yuma and San Luis
are buckling under
the volume of illegal
border crossings**

BY ALLAN STEIN

SAN LUIS, ARIZ.—A TANGLED coil of razor wire marks the end of a segment of the border wall between San Luis, Arizona, and Mexico, although it's just the beginning for illegal migrants entering the city day and night. Separating two parallel wall sections with 30-foot-high steel bollards is a narrow stretch of dirt road that has been dubbed “no man's land” by law enforcement.

Within this humanitarian limbo are empty water bottles, cans of food, and old clothing, things that are no longer of any use or value to those crossing the border.

According to those trying to stem the human tide, they're all signs of a worsening illegal immigration crisis in San Luis.

Wearing dark sunglasses, San Luis Police Lt. Marco Santana peered through four-inch gaps between the bollards at the refuse pile.

The situation in no man's land is often chaotic, he said, as some illegal immigrants engage in a life-or-death struggle to enter the country by attempting to climb over both massive sections of the wall.



“You’ve got to be an athlete to cross this fence. Many have died—well over 30 people.”

Lt. Marco Santana, police, San Luis

Those who make it over the first section risk almost certain death scaling the second.

“Are you kidding me? You’ve got to be an athlete to cross this fence. Many have died—well over 30 people,” Santana said.

“If you’re here, you’re an illegal—and a lucky person. If you can jump the first fence, you cannot jump the second one. I have not seen anybody make it over the second one.”

Santana recalled a young man from Colombia who fell and hit his head on the concrete slab below the second fence.

“He died, unfortunately, and it was

here”—in no man's land.

Santana said each day, dozens of illegal immigrants enter San Luis from Mexico through unguarded areas of the border wall.

The majority of crossings occur at night.

Sometimes, they'll wade through an aqueduct at various points along the border wall in San Luis, a city of 35,500 in Yuma County, dubbed “the lettuce capital” of America.

“This is what you call the Colorado River,” Santana said of the deep, slow-moving water that turns into rapids further upstream.

On the other side of the aqueduct are golden fields of grass and shrubs in Mexico.

“If the immigrants come, they come through here,” he said. “And cartel activity, on the other side, charges people to cross. They’ve got a business on the other side.”

Illegal immigrants who don't wish to be caught and held for processing will try to swarm border law enforcement like Japanese soldiers' banzai charges during World War II.

While U.S. Border Patrol agents and other law enforcement try to intercept every illegal crossing, they're spread thin throughout the Yuma Sector. It stretches along the southern border from the Yuma-Pima County line in Arizona to the Imperial Sand Dunes in California, with approximately 800 border security officers to watch over the sector.

The illegal immigrants that get away in San Luis continue their trek across active farmland, trampling and defecating on crops and trespassing on residential properties on their way north across Arizona's Sonoran Desert.



Illegal immigrants are apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol agents after crossing the U.S.–Mexico border near Yuma, Ariz., on Sept. 26, 2022.

As a result, there has been an unprecedented spike in property crime and, in some cases, violent crime and shootings, Santana said.

“They’re people from all over the world,” he told The Epoch Times. “You’ve got people from Colombia, Peru. You’ve got people from the Dominican Republic. You’ve got people from Brazil—you’ve even got Russians, Uzbeks.

“Some of them fly, and some of them

take boats. They cross over from Mexico. Their journey is lengthy—very lengthy.”

Often, that journey involves making a deal with the devil.

The Sinaloa Drug Cartel in northern Mexico is heavily involved in illegal drug smuggling and human and sex trafficking along the border with San Luis.

Many new arrivals have agreed to work as “mules” for the cartels, carrying illegal drugs such as fentanyl into

the United States in exchange for safe passage.

Newly elected San Luis Mayor Nieves Riedel said the city is overwhelmed by the border crisis and that she believes that it will likely worsen in the warmer months.

“We’re just a walking path [for illegal immigrants],” Riedel said, “but they’re dying in our backyard.”

Not everybody who walks across the

border is a “good guy,” she said.

“They kick in doors, basically going into private properties,” Riedel said. “Our police force needs to be bigger. We don’t have the resources to deal with this issue.”

She said the crisis has continued unabated—“day in and day out.”

“It’s inhumane. Our immigration [system] is not working. It needs fixing. I’ve heard this for the past 30 years, and they’ve done nothing. The border ❖

FROM LEFT: ANSTEIN/THE EPOCH TIMES; JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

Every day, dozens of illegal immigrants enter San Luis from Mexico through unguarded areas of the border wall, a police officer says.

towns carry the bulk of the problem,” Riedel told The Epoch Times.

She said most communities aren’t prepared for what’s coming.

“We have a lot of farmland surrounding these areas,” Riedel said. “One of the things these people in Washington need to understand is our farming industry feeds the rest of the country. If it collapses,” the nation’s supply chain will suffer.

“Nobody is looking at the impact on our fieldworkers. This is a problem where everybody is being hurt. It is a safety issue at all levels. And it is upon us.”

On Dec. 24, 2022, Yuma County Board of Supervisors Chairman Tony Reyes declared an emergency in the county’s unincorporated areas to address the health and humanitarian costs of the border crisis.

Reyes said while Yuma Sector agents made more than 300,000 apprehensions of illegal immigrants in 2022, the county

is facing a “triple threat” of COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, and the flu.

With increasing asylum seekers and illegal migrants entering Yuma County from Mexico, local resources are “stressed.”

In the meantime, Title 42 of the Public Health Services Act, implemented by then-President Donald Trump in 2020, is set to expire sometime in 2023. The act allows suspending people’s entry at the southern U.S. border as a public health safety measure against COVID-19 and other diseases.

San Luis Interim Police Chief Miguel Alvarez said the community is at a crossroads with the border crisis.

“We are already at a tipping point. We’ve been there for many years now,” Alvarez said. “The situation keeps getting worse.”

“As a resident of this community, it is very concerning. We’ve had to lock down

schools. As a lieutenant, I have given the instructions because people were crossing into other people’s property” as classes let out.

Alvarez said his biggest concern is the quantity of fentanyl, an illegal synthetic opioid, crossing over the border into San Luis because of Mexican cartel activity.

In recent years, one or two fentanyl overdoses were weekly occurrences in the San Luis high school. Then, the city took an aggressive stance and introduced education and the life-saving drug Naloxone, which reverses the effects of an overdose.

“There are so many sad stories of grandmothers having to use the [Naloxone] on their 13-year-old grandson because they overdosed,” Alvarez told The Epoch Times.

With a full-time staff of 22 police officers, he said the department is struggling with the border crisis.

“Our guys are working a lot of overtime, which is good for them but bad because they work 11 days straight without resting,” Alvarez said.

The solution is to hire more staff and secure additional funding, although resources are limited.

Riedel said in one instance, the city’s three ambulances diverted to the border wall in response to health emergencies, leaving city residents without service for hours.

The local hospital is also facing problems dealing with the influx of illegal migrants, she said.

Riedel said better immigration laws and strong border enforcement would resolve many of these issues.

“It doesn’t make sense what’s going on,” Alvarez said. “We’re reducing law enforcement while we see an increase [in border crossings.] We’re becoming more lenient in border security when we should be more strict because fentanyl is a lethal drug—very different from marijuana and other drugs.

“Unfortunately, the federal government is not only putting a burden on federal law enforcement but on the communities that have to work alongside them.”

On Jan. 26, Arizona legislators and law enforcement held a press conference in



An illegal immigrant family from Colombia waits inside a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol vehicle at the southern border wall in San Luis, Ariz., on Jan. 27.



San Luis Police Lt. Marco Santana helps a group of children who entered the country illegally from Colombia at the border wall.

Phoenix on the border crisis and the mounting toll of human smuggling, fentanyl, and sex trafficking.

Arizona state Rep. Steve Montenegro, a Republican and chairman of the House Health and Human Services Committee, said fentanyl overdoses are the leading cause of death among people 18 to 45 and are responsible for 70 percent of all drug-related deaths in the United States.

He described the monthly number of fentanyl deaths as the equivalent of “two 9/11s.”

“The problem is the cartels have taken notice, and they’re shifting increasing amounts of their product [from Texas] through the Arizona border instead,” Montenegro said. “Ladies and gentlemen, this is now a public health crisis. We need to take swift action to deal with what is happening to combat it.”

He said a “placeholder” bill in the state

legislature would provide communities and law enforcement with the tools to measure and attack the fentanyl crisis.

“Many Arizona counties have yet to report 2022 numbers because they are overwhelmed. But the legislature needs these updates regularly,” Montenegro said.

“The days of getting new numbers once a year are over. We need them weekly or at least monthly.”

He said fentanyl is also a public safety crisis. And while the raw materials used to produce the drug come mainly from China, production of fentanyl is almost exclusively done in Central and South America.

Deliveries of fentanyl often take place along the same routes used by the cartels for sex and human trafficking and drug smuggling, according to Montenegro.

“Today, many of those routes run

across our Arizona border,” he said. “And they present a threat to Border Patrol agents and county and local law enforcement.”

Montenegro said while Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, has stated publicly that the border crisis is real, “her actions in gutting border-related funding to law enforcement says otherwise. It’s unacceptable.”

“We call on the governor—Governor Hobbs—to join us in this effort,” he said.

State Rep. Kevin Payne, the House Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee chairman, said Hobbs has made it “very clear she has no interest” in promoting Arizona border security.

“This is a public health crisis of our time. It is time to step forward and take care of it,” said state Sen. T.J. Shope, chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. ♦

FROM ALLAN STEIN/THE EPOCH TIMES; COURTESY OF SAN LUIS POLICE LT. MARCO SANTANA

“This will be about turning lives around if they can and are willing to do so.”

Retired Capt. Jaeson Jones, formerly with the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Intelligence and Counterterrorism Division, said the impact of the Mexican drug cartels has reached “unprecedented levels” in the United States.

“What you are witnessing is the largest U.S. intelligence failure since 9/11. I want to say that again—the largest U.S. intelligence failure since 9/11,” Jones said.

As the dominant crime group in Mexico, Jones said the Sinaloa Drug Cartel is responsible for large quantities of fentanyl entering the United States, as well as sex and human trafficking.

Jones said the drug cartels are foreign terrorist organizations and should be labeled as such, operating like a parallel government.

“The Sinaloa cartel is responsible for the epidemic that has impacted your state and your citizens—one cartel. They control all the plazas on the Mexico side,” he said.

In 2022 alone, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) seized 50.6 million fentanyl pills in the United States, and half of that amount was in Arizona.

“So when you hear you are ground zero, you are, and that unsecured border is directly responsible. Don’t let anyone tell you that what we’re dealing with is unfixable because it is fixable,” Jones said.

Former Acting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Tom Homan said 5.5 million illegal aliens have crossed the border into the United States under President Joe Biden, with more than 1.2 million “gotaways.”

He said Texas lawmakers taking swift action on the border crisis in that state would only shift cartel activity west and into Arizona.

“It’s happened before. In my day, it was California. Then it was Arizona. Then it was Texas. And if you don’t think it’s not coming back to Arizona, you’re going to have to be ready,” Homan said.

“Arizona has more gotaways than Texas, California, and New Mexico combined. You think the cartels don’t know that?”

Regardless of one’s opinion on illegal immigration, Homan said that sidelining 80 percent of U.S. Border Patrol agents



First responder and paramedic Carley Morgan holds a sign protesting Mexican drug cartels at a press conference on the border crisis in Phoenix on Jan. 26.

has only made things easier for the drug cartels to operate.

“That’s when expected terrorists can come across [the border,]” he said. “That’s when the record sex trafficking of women and children happens.”

Homan said the fentanyl epidemic killed 100,000 U.S. citizens in 2022. And with sex trafficking at record levels, federal agents were also busy arresting 137 “known or suspected” terrorists at the southern border.

“It is not a coincidence that in an unprecedented year of the border crisis, we have unprecedented overdose deaths from fentanyl coming across that border,” he said. “Hold on tight because Arizona will be the new ground zero. You’re already ground zero with fentanyl.”

Hoisting a sign protesting against the drug cartels, Phoenix first responder Carley Morgan said she’s witnessed firsthand how the fentanyl crisis has hurt families

and is “getting worse.”

“It’s tragic. It’s happening to our families. We need to secure the border to close the lines of people coming in and out with fentanyl. That’s the first thing we need to do,” Morgan told The Epoch Times.

“I’m hopeful that if we stand together, we can help with legislation to create better laws and security for our families.”

As for Hobbs and her southern border policy, Morgan said the governor is “giving incentives to come to Arizona to get free education and other free things.”

“She’s incentivizing the problem,” Morgan said. “She’s not helping to secure the border at all.”

Tania Pavlak, public affairs specialist with the Yuma County Sheriff’s Office, said the unprecedented nature of the border crisis is driving county resources to the breaking point.

“All these people crossing in remote areas are looking not to get caught,” Pavlak

said. “When we receive reports of deaths, it takes a lot of time and resources from our officers” to investigate.

In 2022, the Yuma County Sheriff’s Office investigated 69 illegal migrant deaths. Since Biden took office, the number has almost doubled yearly, up from 34 deaths in 2021 and 16 deaths in 2020.

“A lot of the deaths occur in remote areas of the desert,” often from exposure to the elements, Pavlak told The Epoch Times.

The illegal migrants arrive at all hours. While the majority—41 percent—hail from Mexico, other countries of origin include Peru, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia, Haiti, and Belize.

“As people are getting processed, and as more people come in, depending on how quickly Border Patrol can process them, the crowd starts accumulating,” Pavlak said.

The county medical examiner’s office considers all migrant deaths homicides “until proven otherwise.”

Many “gotaways” are people who circumvent the heavily guarded commercial points of entry in Yuma County and penetrate the community undetected.

The problem is then that “we don’t know where they end up,” Pavlak said, noting that Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmoth has reached out to Hobbs with his concerns.

In recent months, the border crisis in Yuma County has become so dire that county supervisor Jonathan Lines told Fox News that the county is on the verge of “collapse” and that the response at the federal level has been soft at best.

“Our Border Patrol is overwhelmed,” Riedel said. “They’re not only underpaid, they’re overworked and demoralized. They’re a taxi [for illegal migrants] because that’s what they’re doing. Picking up people.

“Right now, [the cartels] are looking at Arizona. It’s a long stretch of border, and most of it is unprotected. It doesn’t matter how much you try to protect it. We don’t have the manpower.”

Like Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, Arizona’s new governor is busing processed illegal immigrants out of her state.

“She’s enabling and sending them out

throughout the country,” said Arizona state Sen. Wendy Rogers, a Republican.

State Sen. Sonny Borrelli, a Republican, recalled how “they ridiculed [former Gov.] Doug Ducey for that, but they’re giving her a pass.”

Borrelli summed up Arizona’s border crisis in two words: “It’s bad.”

“They discovered tunnels [used by the cartels] again in Yuma. They had to close those tunnels down,” he told The Epoch Times.



“Our guys are working a lot of overtime, which is good for them but bad because they work 11 days straight without resting.”

Miguel Alvarez, interim police chief, San Luis

Arizona state Rep. Michele Pena said the border crisis is severe in San Luis, where hundreds of illegal immigrants enter the country almost daily.

“The numbers always change. What has to happen is they need to close the border,” Pena said.

Riedel said many illegal immigrants who risk making the journey to the Arizona border believe that life in the United States will be a cakewalk.

She said the reality is that for many illegal immigrants, it’s anything but free and easy.

“I believe some people come across and feel we owe them something. And this is why the men and women of the

Border Patrol are so discouraged,” Riedel said.

As a 20-year member of the San Luis police force, Santana said he has another decade to go in his career.

After he retires, he hopes to study and become a deacon in the Catholic church and help people as a civilian.

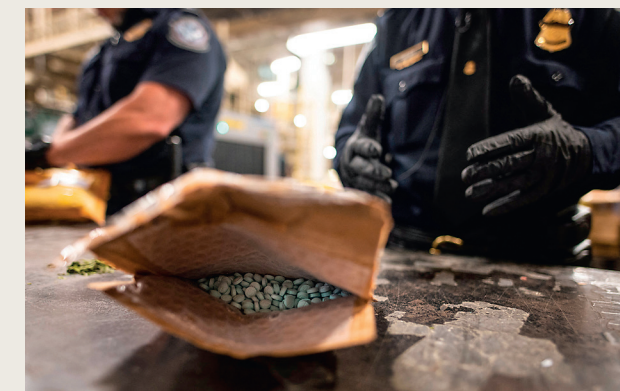
The suffering he’s seen at the southern border wall is heartbreaking, a humanitarian crisis of growing proportions. Many illegal immigrants told him

they endured impossible conditions of brutality and political corruption before fleeing to the United States.

“They all start crying most of the time with what they went through. It’s just horrible,” Santana said.

He said he believes the U.S. immigration system is broken. But it falls upon the federal government to get control of the problem because too many lives are at stake on both sides of the border wall.

“I do not disrespect someone who is not trying to harm me. I see people who have survived some gruesome things. But I believe in immigration reform. It just has to be the right way of doing things,” Santana said. ■



A police officer says his biggest concern is the quantity of fentanyl crossing over the border due to Mexican cartel activity. The fentanyl epidemic killed 100,000 U.S. citizens in 2022.



The proposed California state legislation would seal the petitions of anyone under 18 for name and gender changes.

TRANSGENDERISM

Sealing Minors' Records

California bill would seal name, gender change; critics say it's a slippery slope

By Brad Jones

1.8%

OF U.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

identify as transgender, according to the CDC.

A CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLYMAN HAS proposed legislation to allow children who have filed petitions to change their legal names and gender identities to have these records sealed.

Assembly Bill 223 (AB 223), the Transgender Youth Privacy Act, would amend the state's health and safety code to require the petitions of anyone under 18 for name and gender changes, and any documents associated with such proceedings, to be sealed.

"Being 'outed' is a traumatic event for anyone—but especially traumatic for someone under the age of 18," Assemblyman Chris Ward (D-San Diego) said in a press release.

The bill, which is expected to be heard in committee as early as Feb. 10 according to legislative

documents, would give transgender youth the confidence "to navigate their gender identity without fear of retaliation" from anyone who discovers information in public records, Ward said.

Ward's communications director, Mike Blount, told The Epoch Times in an email that under existing law, parent authorization is required for changing vital records for minors "unless a court has emancipated them."

Blount said AB 223 would not change the petition process but would ensure the petition records are sealed from general public discovery. "Many of our documents have become digitized and are too easily accessible to those who would do these youth harm," Blount said.

Ward, a member of the state Democratic Party's LGBTQ Caucus, cited a study conducted in 2017 and released in January 2019 by the U.S. Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that found transgender youth are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their "cisgender" peers and are at higher risk of "violence, victimization, substance use and depression."

The CDC study also found that an average of 1.8 percent of high school students identified as transgender, according to population-based survey data from 10 state and nine urban school districts.

However, the claims about suicide rates among transgender people have been widely disputed. For example, a Swedish study of 324 transgender individuals from 1973 to 2003 found that sex-reassigned adults, compared to same birth sex controls, were 19 times more likely to commit suicide. The study shows that deaths among transgender people increased sharply compared to deaths among other adults starting about 10 years after medical interventions.

Another study published in the American Urological Association's official journal found that in California from 2012 to 2018, suicide attempt rates more than doubled among transgender patients after vaginoplasty or phalloplasty—3.3 percent post-surgery compared to 1.5 percent before. Also, the rate of psychiatric emergencies did not decrease in the two years after surgery compared to the two years before.

Public Reaction

Erin Friday, an attorney and co-leader of the group Our Duty, U.S.A., which opposes gender ideology, told The Epoch Times the proposed legislation would make it impossible to track data such as "how many trans-identified youths commit suicide, how many are victims of crimes, or commit crimes, [and] how many end up in foster care, homeless, or drug-addicted."

Even though California law requires parental consent for a minor to legally change his or her name, Friday alleged that Ward is "moving toward empowering minors without parental consent to have that right" in the last line of the bill, which states, "Allowing our children to choose when and how they decide to share their personal details is vital in protecting their mental and physical health."

Matthew McReynolds, deputy chief counsel for the Pacific Justice Institute's Center for Public Policy, warned against "government secrecy," saying it rarely improves public safety.

"Any time a bill proposes to reduce transparency, even in the name of privacy, tough questions must be asked about the unintended consequences," McReynolds told The Epoch Times. "Among many other things, this bill prompts as-yet unanswered concerns [about] whether law enforce-

ment and other authorities will be hampered in their ability to track offenders and suspects across changing identities and aliases. At a minimum, it should be amended to address such concerns."

McReynolds also questioned how AB 223 would affect noncustodial parents, such as those who oppose transitioning their own children. He suggested that keeping them in the dark could be intended.

"I think it is very much part of the intent here," he said.

Kathie Moehlig, executive director of TransFamily Support Services, said in the press release AB 223 would ensure the safety and privacy of transgender youth.

"By sealing the name and gender marker change records, we are bringing the courts in line with the laws around schools not outing students," Moehlig said. "Often families were not even aware that these records are public until years after when a court order is discovered in a Google search of the youth's name. Keeping these records public will put many students at high risk for bullying, hatred, and even violence."

Last year, Moehlig testified at the state legislature in favor of Senate Bill 107, which made California a trans sanctuary state for transgender youth and their "gender-affirming" parents, and other legislation supporting "gender-affirming" care.

A source inside the state legislature who spoke on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation told The Epoch Times that the California government has already circumvented the law and parental rights, "if you look at how agencies and departments are currently operating and translating the law of this whole privacy concern."

Under state-mandated gender nondisclosure policies, teachers are prohibited from revealing the chosen gender identities of students to parents without the child's permission unless the school believes there is a "compelling" reason. The California Department of Education also requires all members of the "public school community," including students, to use the preferred pronouns of others, under penalty of harassment charges.

Misgendering a transgender person by referring to them by their natal or birth gender instead of the person's chosen identity, name, or preferred pronouns is already being used by government agencies as justification to remove children from their parents' homes in cases where a parent refuses or is slow to accept a child's transgender identity, the source said.

"They've also put forward the idea that to misgender someone is a hate crime," the source said. ■



"Any time a bill proposes to reduce transparency, even in the name of privacy, tough questions must be asked about the unintended consequence."

Matthew McReynolds, deputy chief counsel, Pacific Justice Institute's Center for Public Policy

FROM L. JOHN FREDRICKS/THE EPOCH TIMES; ROUNGZAA/SHUTTERSTOCK



According to Wysa, 42 percent of employees polled said their mental health had recently declined.

PHOTO BY GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

TECHNOLOGY

Using AI to Treat Depression

World Economic Forum's Uplink program promotes app that 'reframes' negative thoughts

By Kevin Stocklin

PEOPLE CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR feeling depressed these days. The future touted by global leaders is dire. The 2021–22 U.N. Human Development Report states that living standards have declined in 9 out of 10 countries around the world since 2020 and that multiple crises “are hitting us at the same time and interacting to create new threats and make us feel insecure, unsafe, and untrusting of each other.”

The solution, according to the U.N., is to “recognize and treat the global mental health crisis that undermines human development and recognize the polarization that is more deeply dividing us, making collective responses harder.”

Echoing the U.N.'s narrative, World Economic Forum (WEF) founder and Chairman Klaus Schwab said the world is facing “unprecedented multiple crises” today. To combat the “global mental health crisis,” the WEF's Uplink program—a platform to help companies that support the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)—presented its remedy for depression and dissent: artificial intelligence (AI).

Speaking at the recent WEF summit in Davos, Switzerland, a company called Wysa demonstrated its phone app that uses AI to provide psychological counseling.

“This is a person coming into the app and starting to talk about things that are not necessarily about depression, just about their feelings,” said Jo Aggarwal, Wysa's founder and



Pandemic lockdowns and declining living standards from fuel and food shortages are key factors in the deterioration of global mental health.

One in 8 people suffer from a mental health disorder, Wysa CEO Jo Aggarwal says.

CEO, displaying an example of an AI text therapy session. “AI is helping this person reframe what they’re thinking, it’s helping them open up.

“People open up to AI three times faster than they do to a human therapist.”

Aggarwal said the Wysa app currently has about 5 million users in more than 30 countries.

She said that “232 people have written us to say that they’re only alive today because they found this app.”

According to Wysa, many companies, including Accenture and SwissRe, are choosing to use its app. And schools are as well.

“Teenagers have been our first cohort,” Aggarwal said. “About 30 percent of our users are young people under the age of 25. We do have a cutoff: above 13.”

Numerous trials were used to test and refine the program.

“We built this for three years iteratively,” adjusting the program when users had concerns about it, she said. Some concerns were about the “power differential” created by the app, particularly from younger users, who said, “I don’t want to reframe a negative thought because that’s the only control I have in this situation.”

“Then, we changed how the clinicians told us what else we could say to them,” Aggarwal said.

Adjusting Children’s Minds

This program coincides with another U.N. effort to adjust children’s minds in favor of the U.N.’s SDG goals, called social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is embedded into the curriculum at most public and private schools throughout the United States and other countries.

In a report titled “SEL for SDGs: Why Social and Emotional Learning is Necessary to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,” the U.N. argued that children are suffering from “cognitive dissonance” that arises when what they see around them conflicts with the progressive

ideology that’s presented by their teachers or when concepts such as systemic racism and intersectionality prove to be self-contradictory.

The U.N. stated that, for children, “dissonance is unpleasant—the aversive arousal state is because inconsistent cognitions impede effective and unconflicted actions.” In other words, cognitive dissonance allows for the questioning of U.N.-approved concepts and may result in children having second thoughts about taking action in support of the SDGs.

“The dual potential of dissonance to undermine development goals by enabling compromise and inactions necessitates appropriate dissonance management for the attainment of development goals,” the report reads. “We posit two specific avenues, emotional resilience and prosocial behavior, for managing dissonance and attainment of the SDGs.”

What the U.N. considers psychological problems aren’t just giving children headaches; the WEF says it’s also harming the productivity of “human capital.”

According to the World Health Organization, 12 billion workdays are lost each year from depression and anxiety, costing the global economy about \$1 trillion. The report notes that 15 percent of the world’s workforce has a mental disorder and that among the causes are “bullying and psychological violence (also known as ‘mobbing’).”

According to Wysa, global mental health is deteriorating at an alarming rate: 1 in 8 people suffer from a mental health disorder today; there has been a 25 percent increase in “major depressive disorders”; 42 percent of employees polled by the company said their mental health had declined recently; and one-third of employees polled were “suffering from feelings of sadness and depression.”

Pandemic lockdowns, which the WEF supported, appear to be the No. 1 culprit, although declining living standards from fuel and food shortages in the wake of the WEF’s net-zero carbon emissions campaign are also a key factor.

Risks Around Brain Data

Regarding the pros and cons of AI therapy, a report in Psychology Today states that the upside is that patients can get therapy whenever they want and pay less. In addition, “machine learning could lead to the development of new kinds of psychotherapy.”

The downside is that patients may worry that “data from their encounters will be used for marketing, including targeted ads, spying or other nefarious purposes.”

“There might even be concerns that the data might be hacked and even exploited for ransom,”

the report reads.

A WEF report titled “4 ways artificial intelligence is improving mental health therapy” states that one of the ways AI is “helping” is by monitoring patient progress through tracking of what it calls “change-talk active” statements uttered by patients, “such as ‘I don’t want to live like this anymore’ and also ‘change-talk exploration’ where the client is reflecting on ways to move forward and make a change.”

“Not hearing such statements during a course of treatment would be a warning sign that the therapy was not working,” the WEF wrote. “AI transcripts can also open opportunities to investigate the language used by successful therapists who get their clients to say such statements, to train other therapists in this area.”

Questions from WEF attendees at Wysa’s presentation included whether AI therapy apps could be programmed to include suggesting certain “values such as service and community” and whether it uses “AI emotion recognition algorithms to see the condition of the voice” and assess how distressed a patient might be.

“When we analyze their voice, people began to feel less safe,” Aggarwal responded.

“If we use their data to say, looks like you didn’t sleep very well last night based on their phone, they will start feeling less safe; they would say, ‘Oh, somebody’s tracking me.’ So we took all that cool AI out and gave them what they needed to be able to feel this was private, this was safe.”

Voice recognition programs may be added in the future, however, when that can be done in what the app owners consider is a “clinically safe way.”

Wysa has worked to create an app that’s “truly equitable, so that a person in Sub-Saharan Africa could access it as much as someone working at Goldman Sachs,” according to Aggarwal. For some languages, such as French and German, there’s a “for-profit track” to use the app; for others, such as Hindi, there’s a “non-profit track.”

She explained that she herself had suffered from depression, and that was her inspiration to create an app that could help others.

“I wanted something that would guide me through how to restructure the negative thoughts, all the evidence-based techniques that I could feel supported,” Aggarwal said. “So when you think about AI, don’t think about it as another entity, think about it as your own resource to work through things in your own head.” ■

What the United Nations considers psychological problems aren’t just giving children headaches; the WEF says they’re also harming the productivity of ‘human capital.’

VACCINE MANDATES

Fired Health Care Workers File Appeal Over Vaccine

Legal battle over blanket denial of religious exemptions in Maine

By Alice Giordano

People protest against COVID-19 vaccine mandates, treatments, and government emergency orders, in Kennebunkport, Maine, on March 2, 2022.



THE STATE OF MAINE IS accused of “having its cake and eating it too” in a federal appeal filed in Boston last month that could have national implications for health care workers fired after being denied religious exemptions from COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

The appeal, filed on Jan. 24, is founded on the argument that federal and constitutional law trump state law and policies. It currently sits with the 1st Circuit of Appeals.

It is also born out of a state where the former state CDC director, Nirav Shah, was just catapulted to second-in-command of the national CDC, serving as its deputy director.

Shah, who pushed for the elimination of religious exemptions in Maine, was named to the national post on Jan. 12, just a day after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services extended COVID-19’s status as a public health emergency.

‘One or the Other’

The bottom line issue in the newly filed appeal is Maine’s granting of medical exemption requests while denying religious ones.

Religious exemptions were banned by Maine Gov. Janet Mills, the primary defendant in the appeal, despite a longstanding provision under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act that prohibits discrimination of any kind against religious beliefs.

While Title VII does not guarantee approval of a religious exemption, it mandates a process for it, argues Liberty Counsel, which filed the Maine appeal.

“Defendants cannot have their cake and eat it, too—relying on the vaccine mandate to say it would be an undue hardship to violate state law while at the same time espousing that the vaccine mandate does not prohibit employers from providing an accommodation under Title VII,” said Liberty Counsel founder Mat Staver.

“It must be one or the other but cannot be both.”

Staver said the Maine court, in siding with the Mills administration, essentially “permitted a ‘heads I win, tails you lose’ proposition.”

The appeal comes months after Maine U.S. District Court Judge Jon Levy dismissed a complaint, on Aug. 18, 2022, filed by seven health care workers.

The workers, mostly hospital nurses, lost their bid to be exempt from the COVID-19 job for religious beliefs and thus their jobs.

Freeing Health Care Workers

Mills also threatened to revoke the licenses of all health care employers who fail to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for all their employees, a threat similar to one by President Joe Biden to withhold federal Medicaid and Medicare dollars from hospitals not mandating the shot.

In safeguarding the policies, Levy ruled that it would be an undue hardship for hospitals and other health facilities to grant the religious exemptions under Mills’s directives.

Liberty Counsel argues that Levy’s ruling is invalid because it undermines the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which requires that the Constitution and federal laws take priority over any conflicting rules of state law.

The prevailing argument could widen an already promising legal course that would finally free health care workers from a job-or-job ultimatum, an issue that so far the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to take up.

In July, Liberty Counsel won a historic class action settlement with NorthShore University Health System for denying employees religious exemptions from the COVID-19 job. The Chicago-based hospital giant will end up paying more than \$10 million to 500 health care workers in the settlement.

Earlier this month, the tides turned in New York when a state Supreme Court judge ruled that Gov. Kathy Hochul and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDH) overstepped their authority by requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for health care workers.

“The mandate is beyond the scope of respondents’ authority and is therefore null, void, and of no effect,” Judge Gerard Neri wrote in his Jan. 13 decision in a lawsuit filed by a group of health care workers who have joined under the name Medical Professionals for Informed Consent.

Other Pending Lawsuits

There are pending lawsuits in other states as well, including many in Florida, which unlike Maine and New York, has passed laws outlawing jab-or-job ultimatums.

Last month, in a story The Epoch Times covered on the COVID-19 vaccine mandate and its effects on the already critical nursing shortage in the United States, Brittany Woolerey, a Keiser University nursing student, described how she wasn’t able to complete her degree because she was denied a religious exemption from the health care facilities where she was due to do her clinical exams—the final step to becoming a registered nurse.

One unvaccinated EMT recounted a call when he was forced to stand around while patients needed care, due to the mandate.

There are also new lawsuits in Maine filed recently by Health Choice Maine on behalf of EMTs who can still drive an ambulance but have to stay at least six feet away from patients if they are not inoculated against COVID-19—another Mills-born directive.

In a story by The Epoch Times, one unvaccinated EMT recounted a call when he drove an ambulance to a scene with multiple injuries and was forced to stand around while patients needed care.

Hospitals and state governments, however, are not throwing in the towel.

In a statement reported by Becker’s Hospital Review, the NYSDH said it disagreed with the state Supreme Court’s decision and would be “exploring all options.”

Maine’s largest hospitals, most of which are named in the federal appeal as defendants, have also stood firmly by Mills’s COVID-19 policies.

In several exhibits submitted in the Maine appeal, one of the hospitals, MaineGeneral, repeatedly told health care workers—when refusing to consider their religious exemptions—that only medical ones would be considered “under the Governor’s mandate.” ■

JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



SPOTLIGHT

Spy in the Sky

SAILORS ASSIGNED TO EXPLOSIVE
Ordnance Disposal Group 2 recover a Chinese spy balloon off the coast of Myrtle Beach, S.C., on Feb. 5. President Joe Biden ordered that the high-altitude surveillance balloon, which flew over the continental United States, be shot down off the East Coast.

PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS TYLER THOMPSON/
U.S. NAVY VIA GETTY IMAGES

LEGISLATION

HEARTBROKEN OVER GIRLS HATING THEIR BODIES

Counselor-mom pushes for law change to
protect freedom of conscience in counseling

BY JANICE HISLE

Counselor Peggy McFarland has observed societal trends adversely affecting girls in which images on social media and TV glorify "unrealistic perfection and unrealistic fitness."

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

PEGGY MCFARLAND'S conscience wouldn't let her stay silent.

As a mother, teacher, and licensed professional clinical counselor, McFarland has repeatedly seen girls become conditioned to despise their own bodies, especially when they hit puberty.

"I just feel so brokenhearted," she told *The Epoch Times*, "when I see how they start hating their bodies and being embarrassed and ashamed."

"And I just have this deep desire: How can I help these girls to feel that growing up being a girl is something wonderful—and not something terrifying?"

After raising her "blended family" of five daughters and four sons, McFarland dedicated her professional life to correcting and preventing body-image damage among girls. She even wrote a curriculum titled "Healthy Transitions for Girls."

But now, she said, "the culture has exploited" girls' tendency to be self-critical, leading many to seek to "transition" into boys. That path is fraught with lifelong social and health implications.

Yet, across the United States, privacy laws and professional requirements block counselors such as McFarland from objecting to that course of treatment.

Troubled that she could be thrust into such a moral and ethical dilemma, McFarland became the driving force behind a proposed Idaho law that would apply when counselors confront a crisis of conscience.

The one-page bill, released on Feb. 1, makes a straightforward declaration: "No person providing counseling or therapy services will be required to counsel or serve a client regarding goals, outcomes, or behaviors that conflict with the sincerely held principles of the counselor or therapist."

Opposition and Support

The law would apply not only to transgender-related issues, but also to other scenarios; the bill makes no mention of the word "gender."

Even so, the blowback against Idaho House Bill 63 was almost immediate.

About five minutes after the bill was printed, its sponsor, Idaho Rep. Julianne

Young (R-Blackfoot), got a phone call in opposition to it. In an email, a therapist alleged that the bill contradicts accepted counseling principles.

However, Young and McFarland are convinced that the proposal serves the best interests of therapists, clients, and parents.

Scott Newgent, a nationally known transgender person who opposes the gender-transitioning of children, agrees.

Born female, Newgent bore three children before undergoing sex-change surgeries—procedures Newgent soon regretted. Reversing the effects, or "de-transitioning," is next to impossible, Newgent told *The Epoch Times*, because of the cost, the strain on a person's body, and the limits of medical science.

Even though the Idaho bill can apply to many situations unrelated to transgenderism, Newgent hopes for similar laws nationwide. These measures would benefit many therapists who want to buck the "gender-affirming care" trend but fear reprisals, Newgent said.

"Good for her, standing up," Newgent said, referring to McFarland. "Being loving, being caring to anybody is telling the truth, with love and kindness on the other side."

Tennessee passed a similar conscientious-therapist law in 2016; McFarland has discussed the Idaho bill with lawmakers from several other states.

Lawmaker Gives Rationale

Young told *The Epoch Times* that she drafted the bill after McFarland alerted her about the predicaments that therapists may face.

"This general issue of protecting freedom of conscience is something that has always been a concern to me," Young said.

In late 2022, McFarland contacted Young and "expressed her concerns about the potential of actually being put in a situation where she could be disciplined or lose her license," Young said, "because she sees this trend toward pressuring counselors to provide care that is in conflict with some of those sincerely held beliefs."

She said her bill acknowledges that a counselor's first obligation is to "take care of somebody that's in imminent

"I just kept researching, researching, and I just got darker, darker, deeper, deeper, deeper into that iceberg of harm of children."

Peggy McFarland, clinical counselor



"Toxic cultural messages make growing up more like a 'minefield' than the hopeful journey it should be."

Peggy McFarland, clinical counselor

FRONTAL COURTESY OF PEGGY MCFARLAND AND JODIE RIGGS/GETTY IMAGES

danger of losing their life or causing the loss of someone else's life."

Then, if a client wants to be counseled "regarding specific goals, outcomes, or behaviors" that conflict with a therapist's personal beliefs or professional opinion, the state is "not going to strong-arm" the counselor to proceed in that manner, she said. Instead, the counselor will help the client find another therapist.

"And then they are relieved of any further professional obligations to that individual. And they can't be sued. They can't be prosecuted. They can't have their license called into question," Young said.

She believes that lawmakers' primary purpose should be to define people's fundamental rights and provide protection for those.

"Our goal is not to tell everybody what to do all the time," she said.

The purpose of the bill, she said, is to ensure "mutual respect and conscience protections for counselors and therapists." She thinks it strikes a good balance among all concerned.

'Informed Choice' Paramount

There's another existing issue: Informed consent is lacking. The Idaho bill would help remedy that in two ways, McFarland said.

First, it would help parents and clients to know if they have chosen the right therapist for them, and second, it would allow open discussion of the risks and benefits associated with the "gender-affirming" model of care.

McFarland believes clients should have the right to make an informed choice about who they want as their therapist.

"Let's be honest here. Everybody brings their values to whatever they do. We need to stop pretending that people don't have values," she said. "And the goal should be that we are honest."

'The culture has exploited' girls' tendency to be self-critical, leading many girls to seek to 'transition' into boys, counselor Peggy McFarland says.

McFarland's website describes her as a "Christian wife, grandmother, teacher and therapist," making her core values clear to prospective clients, she said.

Years ago, professional guidelines called upon counselors to disclose relevant differences of opinion to clients, McFarland said.

That has since changed. Now, counselors are muzzled about their beliefs, particularly concerns about the sexualization of children and the serious harm that can come from transgenderism, she said.

For a counselor to be considered "multiculturally competent," he or she must embrace the "gender-affirming" approach, McFarland said. Therefore, therapists face professional risks if they promote a therapy that doesn't affirm a child's transgender feeling.

'Path of Harm'

Furthermore, Idaho law prohibits counselors from sharing information with parents of minor clients who are 14 or older.

Thus, parents of these youths may be kept entirely in the dark about their child's gender confusion or other potentially life-altering circumstances. Similar confidentiality laws are in effect in other states, although the age limits vary.

Besides being distressing to parents, this situation could potentially create legal peril for counselors, McFarland said.

"How would you feel as a parent if you find out that you sent your kid to a therapist and they're helping that kid connect to the same people that put on a 'drag kids on stage' event?" McFarland asked.

This is a very real possibility, she said, because therapists are being told they need to connect transgender-identifying children with "people of their culture."

"That's what they're asking me to

do," McFarland said. "And those are not neutral acts. Those are putting kids on a path of harm."

Therapists who send children on a route that leads to gender transition may not even realize the liabilities they have. "Parents' lawsuits are coming," she said. "That's what's happened in England."

That nation had been a frontrunner in the "gender-affirming care" movement. But in recent months, England and other European countries have been putting on the brakes after rising complaints from "detransitioners" who wish they had never used hormones or surgeries to alter their appearance.

In August 2022, news broke that 1,000 families were suing the Gender Identity Development Service at London's Tavistock Centre. The Times of London quoted an attorney alleging that professionals there got children "started on a treatment pathway that was not right for them."

Amid such criticisms, England's National Health Service ordered the Tavistock clinic to close by spring 2023.

Life-Altering 'Gate'

Many people think that "socially transitioning" a child—allowing the child to experiment with a new name and cross-sex identity, clothing, and hairstyles—is harmless experimentation.

But, McFarland said, "that's a gate that we're opening up. And once they start to socially transition and get into that, research shows they're going to continue and go on with these harmful puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones."

Worse yet, some of these medications can cause depression, an additional struggle for a vulnerable child who may already suffer from underlying mental and emotional issues.

After hormones, the next step could be costly body-altering surgeries, some of which have high complication rates. "Gender-affirming" proponents say these measures are "life-saving" because gender-questioning youths are at a higher risk of suicide than those who do not question their gender.

However, an oft-cited 30-year Swedish study showed that transgender adults were 19 times more likely than other adults to kill themselves despite under-

going sex-change procedures.

Newgent, the anti-transitioning activist, is aware of very few people who believe the surgeries improved their long-term quality of life. Newgent has faced repeated infections and other complications from the surgeries.

Instead of facing a similar fate, children should be allowed to work through their gender questioning and any underlying issues, Newgent said. Both McFarland and Newgent point out that several studies show that large percentages of youths "desist" their claim of transgenderism if they don't begin the transition process.

Trends Fueled Gender Ideology

As the decades have passed, McFarland has observed societal trends adversely affecting girls.

Images on social media and TV glorify "unrealistic perfection and unrealistic fitness," she said.

"Then I saw the culture send big messages about androgyny ... so you look at kids, and they're all in T-shirts and jeans, and sometimes you can't tell if they're girls or boys," she said, noting that the trend turned toward "hating your body and disassociating from your body."

"Now we're going to mutilate your body and change it to be some other thing that it can never possibly be."

Despite looking like a man, Newgent declared, "I will never be a man," in the 2022 Daily Wire documentary "What Is a Woman?", which explored gender ideology.

That statement gained international publicity for Newgent, who applauds McFarland's efforts.

McFarland said her concerns began when she was trained on how to use a new assessment form.

"I just had a very bad feeling about it," she said.

McFarland thinks parents would be shocked to know that many therapists use that same form, which asks more than 100 questions, several of which probe gender identity and sexuality for children from birth to age 18.

Part of the assessment asks whether a child's parents support the child's desire for "transitioning" and the child's "new culture." If not, "it literally says they're being discriminatory, and they're 'op-



Counselor Peggy McFarland (3rd L) poses with her daughters and granddaughters at a family wedding in 2018. To McFarland, this picture radiates sisterhood, a feeling that could forge positive changes in the lives of the young girls she counsels.

pressing' their child," McFarland said.

Further, the same claims can be made about a therapist who doesn't abet the child's desire to transition, which could be personally and professionally harmful for the therapist, McFarland said,

Her disquiet over the questionnaire caused her to dig for information. "I just kept researching, researching," she said, "and I just got darker, darker, deeper, deeper, deeper into that iceberg of harm of children."

The process has been painful for her. But she can't ignore the facts she found. That's why she felt compelled to act. That's how McFarland turned into a reluctant activist.

"It's not something I feel brave about," she said. "I feel like my heart is just broken, watching this happen to children and to parents—and they don't even know what they're getting into."

Navigating a 'Minefield'

But help is available for parents and children who seek it, McFarland said.

Of particular note, she said, is a free booklet, "Navigating the Transgender Landscape—School Resource Guide," published by the Child and Parental Rights Campaign.

"I can't say enough about this resource," McFarland said.

Although the guide is intended for school administrators, the group says that "parents will also benefit from the balanced approach to this complicated phenomenon."

McFarland said the guide provides "social, medical, and legal information to develop sound policies."

"It's a plan that protects all students

and protects parents' rights," she said. "With this resource, you will be prepared to work with others and draw that line in the sand that we need to protect our kids and our freedoms."

As parents, McFarland and her husband, Michael, have tackled challenges ranging from learning disabilities to depression and same-sex attraction. These life experiences prepared her well for her role as a counselor.

McFarland likes to joke that these hurdles have earned her an honorary doctorate from the School of Hard Knocks.

In reality, McFarland holds a Master of Science degree in mental health counseling from Capella University. She's also a university instructor who "teaches parenting to students all over the world," according to her website.

McFarland said she tries hard to help girls see that womanhood is something special, something to be celebrated.

"Toxic cultural messages make growing up more like a 'minefield' than the hopeful journey it should be," she writes on her website. "That's why I developed Healthy Transitions for Girls, a curriculum to help girls ages 8 to 14 to develop a positive body image."

Under the heading "Helping Girls Is My Passion," McFarland is pictured on her website with five young ladies—some of her daughters and granddaughters—at a 2018 wedding. They're all smiling, dressed in pastels and floral prints.

To her, that picture radiates love, togetherness, and the unparalleled joy of sisterhood—a feeling that could forge positive changes in the lives of the young girls she counsels.

She just wants to share it freely. ■

COURTESY OF PEGGY MCFARLAND

VETERANS

FOR SOME,
THE WAR
NEVER ENDS

A COMBAT VET IS HONORED, REGARDLESS
OF HOW, WHEN, OR WHERE HE DIED

BY MICHAEL CLEMENTS

The transition from military life to civilian life is often difficult. Many veterans bring home physical and psychological wounds.

PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

PFC. LOGAN WHITE SERVED TWO tours in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in May 2011. But his family says Logan's war did not end until Sept. 26, 2017, after an accidental heroin overdose.

"People should know there are other ways that people can lose their lives to war than just being killed in action," Logan's widow, Alyse, told The Epoch Times.

One group wants to ensure that Logan's service and that of other fallen combat veterans is honored, regardless of how, when, or where they died.

"Our mission is to make every day Memorial Day," Amy Cotta, founder and executive director of Memories of Honor, told The Epoch Times.

Alyse White lives in Dallas, near her former in-laws. She says society tries to divide a veteran's military life from his civilian life. One day he will be a soldier serving with others under circumstances that only a few will ever experience. And the next day, he's expected to transition to the civilian world, where he's just another co-worker, husband, friend, and neighbor.

On the outside, it may appear that the transition is seamless. In family photos, Logan is a young man riding his motorcycle, getting married, and enjoying life with his family and friends. But for combat veterans and their families, that separation is never so clear-cut. Many veterans, like Logan, bring home physical and psychological wounds.

VeteranAddiction.org is a website that provides information on veteran mental health and substance abuse. It also provides a way for vets in trouble to find help. The site reports that 11 percent of veterans who visit a Veterans Administration (VA) facility report substance use disorder. The most common is binge drinking, with 80 percent, or 900,000, reporting problems with alcohol in 2020.

About 300,000, or 27 percent, reported issues with illicit drugs, and 7 percent, or 80,000, abused both. While Logan did drink socially, his family said his biggest struggle began with other opioids and segued into heroin. They said he turned to drugs to alleviate the physical pain and mental anguish that remained after he left military service.

Logan's father, Brian White, told The Ep-



Phillip Logan White served two tours in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in May 2011.

och Times that a veteran's family and friends often try to fill the void left when military buddies are separated. For mothers, fathers, wives, and other loved ones, the war goes on as long as the veteran struggles with the ghosts of the battlefield. And it continues after the veteran's struggle is over.

"[Logan's death] was a result of his self-medicating because of PTSD and [traumatic brain injury]," Brian said. "The loss for us is as traumatic as for those families who had someone killed in combat."

The Whites remember Logan as a rowdy, fun-loving man who loved adventure and excitement. Logan loved the outdoors and especially loved riding motorcycles. Whether it was a dirt bike or his favorite Harley-Davidson, Logan loved the adrenaline-laced rush of two wheels on the road and the wind in his face.

Brian was surprised in May 2008 when Logan told him he had enlisted in the Army. The Whites are Oklahoma natives who had relocated to Dallas for Brian's job. He said Logan was not a bad kid or a troublemaker but that he had a strong will.

"He's the last person I would have expected to enlist. He liked to challenge authority," Brian said.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRIAN WHITE

After exposure to explosions during service, veteran Logan became hyper-vigilant. Even though he knew he was no longer on the battlefield, he couldn't help keeping an eye out for threats.

Logan's mother, Kimberly White, was equally surprised. She said that Logan had tried military school at one point, which didn't work very well at all. But it made a little more sense when she learned that combat engineers, the military occupation Logan had chosen, work with explosives.

"If he could blow stuff up and not get into trouble for it, he was like, 'Yeah!'" Kimberly said.

Brian is an Army veteran, having served in the artillery in the 1980s. On the one hand, he was proud of his son's desire to serve; on the other hand, he was a concerned father.

When Brian served, America was in a "cold" war. The enemy was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. And the prospective battlefield was Europe's damp, green fields and forests. Brian and his brothers in arms prepared for the possibility of a war that, thankfully, never came. But Logan and his peers weren't facing the mere prospect of war.

"I'm proud of him for making that decision, but as a parent, you're concerned," Brian said. "It was not a matter of if; it's a matter of when."

No one was more keenly aware of that than Kimberly. She convinced herself that once Logan completed his training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he would be sent to a stateside unit and given time to learn more before he was sent overseas. Surely they wouldn't send brand-new recruits directly into combat, right?

From Fort Leonard Wood, Logan was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, The Big Red One.

"He was there two weeks, and there was a deployment," Kimberly said.

She stayed in Kansas for the deployment ceremony and the days after until Logan's unit left for Iraq. She made sure that Logan didn't see her cry.

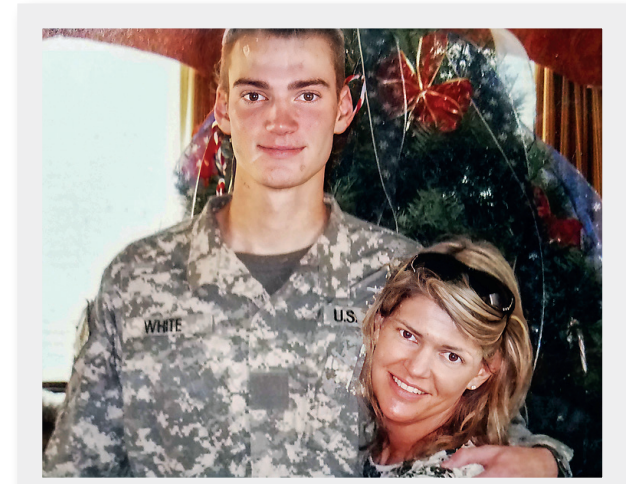
"I might have cried all the way home, but the last he saw of me was not going to be me crying," she said.

Memories of Honor

Amy Cotta said the Whites' situation is one faced by thousands of other parents, including her. Her son is an active-duty Marine Corps gunnery sergeant married to an active-duty Marine Corps staff sergeant. She knows what it is to see a child leave for an uncertain future. Cotta said her desire to honor her son's service was the seed that grew into Memories of Honor.

Cotta's son enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps when he was 17. She took up running to deal with her anxiety and show support for her son and other active-duty service members. But, rather than run in run-of-the-mill jogging shoes, she chose combat boots, the footwear worn by those she wanted to honor.

Eventually, she added a military rucksack to her running gear. Then she began writing the names of those in active duty and fallen veterans on paper and displaying them on her gear as she continued to run to raise money for military charities. From this grew Memories of Honor, which works with sports venues, entertainment venues, and organizers of other events who want to help honor veterans and their families. ♦



Logan White and his mother, Kimberly White, during a Christmas visit.



U.S. Army vehicles move into position ahead of a possible military strike near the Kuwait-Iraq border, in this file photo.

One of the most recent Memories of Honor events was held at the National Shooting Sports Foundation's 45th annual SHOT Show in Las Vegas. SHOT stands for the Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoors Trade Show. At the Vegas event, Troy Acoustics sponsored a Wall of Honor.

Visitors were allowed to select a family of a fallen veteran from the wall and write them a note of gratitude, encouragement, and support. At the end of the SHOT Show, the letters were gathered up and delivered to the families so they would know that people remember and appreciate the sacrifices their loved ones made.

William Bergaidis is the founder and chief executive officer of Troy Acoustics. His company sells acoustic panels and building materials for shooting ranges, recording studios, highway noise barriers, and any other project that requires noise mitigation. He first met Cotta when Memories of Honor was at the U.S. Army National Guard Convention in 2022.

He was impressed with the group's desire to ensure that veterans are not forgotten. He decided he wanted Troy Acoustics to be part of their work.

"These [veterans] go out, and you hear it one time on the news, then it goes away," Bergaidis said. "You don't hear the stories of all the people that are touched."

Like many military families, the Whites watched the news. They kept in touch with Logan through telephone calls and emails and prayed for his safety. Logan didn't tell them much about his life during his two deployments.

Brian figured Logan didn't want them to worry. But one day, Logan called, and Brian could tell by the tone of his voice and hesitant speech that something had happened. As Logan was a combat engineer, his unit was tasked with finding and disposing of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Sometimes that went well, and sometimes it did not.

"Logan said, 'There was an incident. I was scanning my sector and saw a flash of light and woke up in the troop compartment,'" Brian said.

Logan had been riding in the gunner's position of an armored vehicle on patrol with his unit. His vehicle had been struck by an IED. The blast forced his face into the machine gun in front of him before he dropped into

the passenger compartment, unconscious. He had broken his nose, injured his neck, and gotten a concussion.

Bomb Blast 1st of Many

The explosion destroyed the vehicle and killed one of his friends. It was the first of many explosions Logan would be exposed to.

Because of those experiences, Logan became hyper-vigilant. Even when he was back home and knew he was no longer on the battlefield, he couldn't help but keep an eye out for threats.

Logan told Alyse that he was once driving his grandfather's pickup truck and saw a gas can and a length of rope on the side of the road. He almost couldn't drive past it because the rope reminded him of the triggering devices he had seen in Iraq. He told his father it could be a problem when trying to get somewhere.

"He said, 'If I see a dog or some trash on the side of the road, I just tense up,'" Brian said.

Kimberly said that was just one of the changes she saw. She said her boy, who had loved fireworks and family get-togethers, could no longer handle loud noises or crowds. It became commonplace for them to be at a family reunion or some other event and suddenly notice that Logan was gone. Sometimes the noise and crowds got to be more than he could handle, so he left.

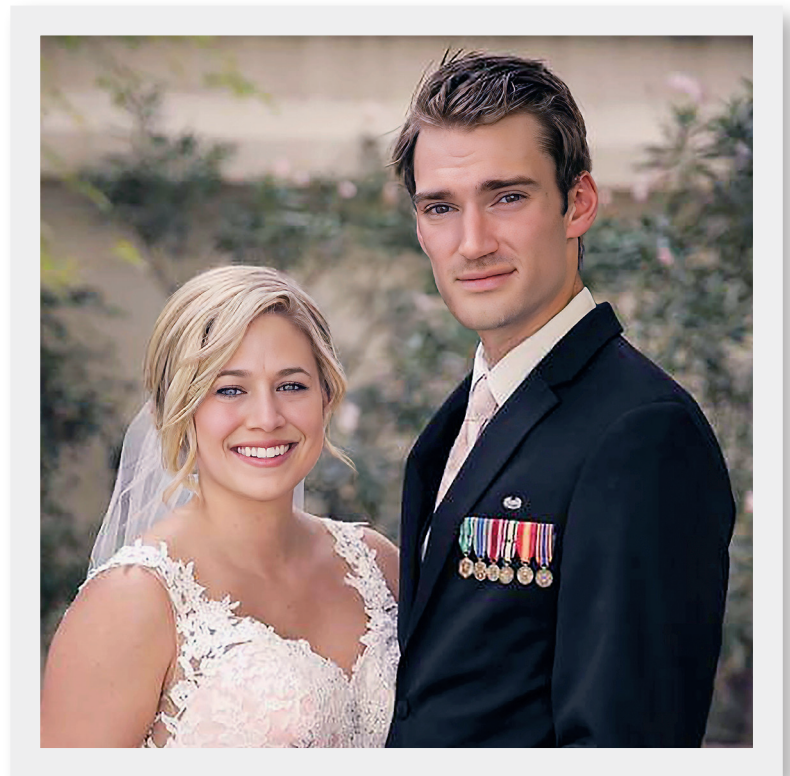
'He Had a Different View'

Brian introduced Alyse and Logan at a military event they attended together. She was attracted to Logan's unaffected air and willingness to do what he thought was right regardless of how he might be perceived.

"He had a different view of things and wasn't concerned with going against the grain. He did what he wanted to do as long as it wasn't hurting anyone else," Alyse said.

She said that one benefit of their meeting when they did was that she didn't know Logan before the war, so he didn't feel any pressure to "go back to who he was." The only Logan she knew was the Logan who was doing his best to adjust to his new life.

In their wedding pictures, they are a young couple with their whole lives ahead



Logan and Alyse White on their wedding day. Alyse said there was some benefit in her not having met Logan prior to the war.

of them. In another photo, Logan is dancing with his mother.

Brian laughed as he showed a picture of himself with a stunned look. He said that just before Kimberly snapped the photo, she told him she had agreed to cover the bar tab for the reception as a gift to Logan and Alyse.

Logan would sometimes open up to his new wife, but she doesn't believe he told her everything. He talked of losing friends, being afraid, and playing soccer with children one day who the next day might be pressed into service as suicide bombers. Sometimes, after a drink or two with his friends, he would tell stories. But

in his sleep, he relived the stories he didn't tell. In nightmares and dreams, he dealt with the memories he avoided during the day.

And he went to the VA for help. But,

according to his family, the agency did no more good for him than telling stories and drinking beer did. It wasn't that they didn't try, but the programs were built on a model that worked for civilians. Most had a 30- or 40-

11% OF U.S. VETERANS who visit a Veterans Administration facility report substance use disorder.



90-day component and included group meetings, but they did little to plumb the depths of the psychology of the combat veteran.

Brian accompanied Logan on one of his first visits. During the intake interview, a nurse asked Logan if he had been exposed to bomb blasts or explosions. He said he had. She asked how many.

“He said, ‘I stopped counting at 17,’” Brian said.

Logan went to his appointments because there was nothing else he could do. But he was reassigned to a new counselor every few months. Each reassignment meant retelling his story, which, to Logan, seemed like moving in reverse. In addition, he was prescribed a raft of medications to help deal with his myriad issues.

“He said, ‘A pill didn’t break me. A pill’s not going to fix me,’” Brian said.

Logan’s service-related injuries were complicated by motorcycle wrecks he had after

Logan’s ashes were interred in a casket so the tributes from his friends, including challenge coins from his friends at Warrior’s Heart, could go with him.

“People should know there are other ways that people can lose their lives to war than just being killed in action.”

Alyse White, widow of Logan White

returning to Texas. The pain relievers he was prescribed didn’t always work and were often hard to get through the system. Logan found that heroin was readily available, cheap, and effective.

Kimberly said her son knew he had a problem and wanted help but that the programs he went to were geared toward the “normal” addict.

Logan told her of a group session in which they were asked to describe the worst thing they had done because of their drug addiction. Logan wasn’t sure how to answer. He didn’t do the worst things he had done because of drugs; he used drugs because of the worst things he had done.

“He said, ‘Someone said they forgot to pick their kid up from school. And I’m like, really, that’s the worst thing you did?’” Kimberly recalled.

Then, Logan found a different organization.

He Found Warrior’s Heart

Warrior’s Heart is a San Antonio-based facility established and run by former soldiers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, first responders, and others who have seen the worst that man does to man. They understand that service often costs more than expected and that those who serve need help dealing with the mix of strong and conflicting emotions. They knew the battle Logan was fighting.

Brian said Logan began to make progress there.

Logan completed the program’s initial phase to detox and moved into the sober living facility. From all appearances, he was on his way out of the darkness. Then came the relapse. Brian said they will never know what triggered it.

Logan left Warrior’s Heart, telling his friends he had a job interview in San Antonio. Instead, he drove to Dallas to find his drug dealer. His usual dealer wasn’t available, so he bought some heroin from a dealer he didn’t know as well. He then went to a friend’s house and asked to use the bathroom. The friends there knew what Logan was probably doing, but Logan was a grown man and would do what he wanted, Kimberly said.

After about 30 minutes, unable to get any response from Logan, they broke the bathroom door. Logan was unresponsive. They called 911 and tried to resuscitate him until the ambulance arrived. Logan was taken to

RH Dedman Memorial Medical Center. At first, it appeared he had a fighting chance.

The emergency room doctors placed him on a ventilator, and his body was fighting the machine, which doctors said was a sign of brain activity. But his heart stopped, and he had to be revived three times. They got Logan’s heart beating, but he had been deprived of oxygen, and it became clear there was no more brain activity.

Logan’s war finally ended on Sept. 26, 2017.

But a new fight began for the Whites that day. The first battle was centered on Logan’s body. Logan was an organ donor, which didn’t surprise his parents. They were proud of their son’s desire to help others even after his life was over. So, as they began grieving, they spent the rest of the week handling the administrative and legal tasks that go along with giving a loved one’s organs to help others live.

At one point, some of the hospital staff were discussing Logan’s organs and were understandably excited at the prospect of being able to help people in desperate need. They likely didn’t realize Logan’s family was within earshot. But it became more than Kimberly could bear.

“I don’t remember what I told them, but it probably wasn’t very nice,” Kimberly said. “I just got tired of hearing ‘brain dead.’”

“It was a long week.”

The Whites want people to remember that Logan and veterans like him sacrificed their time and lives in service to their country. Regardless of politics or ideology, they served so that others would not have to. Alyse said there is a story about how members of the military have written a blank check to their country. The country can fill in that check for any amount, including the servicemember’s life.

“It doesn’t matter when that check is cashed. There’s a level of stigma for veterans who lose their lives to addiction or PTSD. But to me, it doesn’t feel any different,” she said.

“We are still proud of his service.”

Brian honors his son’s memory by volunteering with Memories of Honor because the organization honored Logan’s family. He said Memories of Honor’s work has done much to help his family deal with their grief and to keep Logan’s memory alive. According to Cotta, that is the organization’s most important work.

Memories of Honor will honor all fallen veterans regardless of how they died. Wheth-



Alyse White says goodbye to her husband of less than a year on the day of his funeral.

er the servicemember died in combat, in a training accident, by suicide, or by physical or mental illness, he or she will be remembered.

“We wanted to make sure we created a space where anyone who lost a loved one during or due to active duty had a place,” Cotta said.

To register a veteran, visit MemoriesOfHonor.org and click on the “Honor The Fallen” tab. Once registered, the veteran and the veteran’s family will be included among those memorialized by Memories of Honor. Cotta said Memories of Honor is driven by the idea that no one truly dies until their name is spoken for the last time. The organization wants to ensure that doesn’t happen to any veteran.

“At any event, someone will say their loved one’s name.” ■

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRIAN WHITE

SPOTLIGHT

Unsettling Unrest

RESIDENTS DISMANTLE A VEHICLE BELONGING to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Kanyaruchinya, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Feb. 8, after it was set on fire overnight by angry locals. Protesters are demanding the withdrawal of U.N. forces from the country for failing to rein in rebel groups who attack civilians.

PHOTO BY GUERCHOM NDEBO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



The Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nev., on Jan. 16. The Hoover Dam is a critical infrastructure that supplies energy for Nevada, Southern California, and Arizona.

PHOTO BY ALLAN STEIN/THE EPOCH TIMES

NATIONAL SECURITY

POWER SUBSTATION ATTACKS, A REAL THREAT

BY ALLAN STEIN

Authorities look at tighter security around key infrastructure after string of attacks

BOULDER CITY, NEVADA—DURING World War II, America feared surprise enemy attacks on its electrical power grid plunging the nation into darkness. The military considered Nevada's Hoover Dam potentially vulnerable as a supplier of hydroelectric energy for the defense industry.

To prevent direct attacks or sabotage, the dam, built in the 1930s, came with a hardened machine gun nest manned around the clock.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), which has jurisdiction over the dam, described the pillbox as 24 feet long, made of steel and concrete, with six gun ports.

At least one soldier was always inside the nest while riflemen watched the dam from the nearby rocks.

"They didn't find anybody trying to damage the dam [during the war], but they did apprehend a couple of Nazis who were trying to come up the river in Mexico," a USBR tour guide told Hoover Dam visitors on Jan. 19.

Before entering Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nevada, members of the public first have to go through a security checkpoint and declare that no firearms or drones are inside the vehicle.

"They are very serious about security all over this place—between the scans, the cameras—everything. That's all pretty much since 9/11," the staff member told The Epoch Times.

"I haven't heard of anything [threatening since then], which is just how I like it."

In light of recent power substation attacks in four states, federal and state officials view protecting the nation's energy grid with greater urgency.

The attacks occurred in North Carolina and South Carolina, with six reported intrusions at Duke Energy substations in Florida in September 2022.

Washington state reported 15 physical attacks on power substations last year.

In some cases, the culprits used firearms.

On Jan. 3, police arrested a man in Boulder City after he doused his car with gasoline, lit it on fire, and then sent it crashing through an MGM solar farm outside of Las Vegas.

The solar array provides electricity for 13 casinos. Mohammed Mesmarian, 34, allegedly told authorities that he did it "for the future."

Also in January, federal investigators charged Matthew Greenwood, 32, and Jeremy Crahan, 40, with conspiring to attack power substations in Washington state in December 2022.

The duo allegedly had planned to cut the power to a pair of substations and, under the cover of darkness, break into a local business and steal ♦♦



money from the register on Christmas Day 2022. The damage left thousands across Pierce County without power and racked up an estimated \$3 million in repair costs.

“We are aware of these incidents, and we continue to be vigilant in executing our security protocols” at hydroelectric power facilities, USBR public affairs officer Michelle Helms told *The Epoch Times*.

However, attacks against the nation’s power grid are nothing new, even though the motives are sometimes unclear.

A recent George Washington University study titled “Mayhem, Murder, and Misdirection: Violent Extremist Attack Plots Against Critical Infrastructure in the United States, 2016–2022” largely blamed “white supremacism” for conspiracies during that timeframe.

“The rise of accelerationist ideology and doctrine during the past decade likely fueled the increased risk of attack plots within white supremacist milieus targeting critical infrastructure, and the energy sector in particular,” the report reads.

“Since 2019, white supremacist attack plots against critical infrastructure systems have distinctly increased.”

One notable example of a targeted power infrastructure attack in 2013 was the Metcalf sniper incident at a Pacific Gas and Electric power substation in Coyote, California.

“They did quite a bit of damage to the substation equipment,” said James Kirtley, professor of Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “Fortunately, there was enough redundancy in the system that they didn’t lose any customers.

“I don’t understand the motives of some people. People tend to oppose almost all infrastructure projects—as if they didn’t use electricity themselves. I don’t know anybody who doesn’t use electricity. It’s hard to know who might be motivated to attack a substation.”

Utility companies often complain about hunters using power substation parts for target practice, causing significant damage, he said.

“If you know what you’re doing, you can cause terminal damage to a transformer,” Kirtley told *The Epoch Times*. “Transformers are big and quite costly—millions of dollars. They’re hard to replace because they tend to be custom, specialized designs. It can take a couple of years to make one.”

According to a Federal Energy Regulatory Com-

An attack against the power grid could have severe consequences in areas that rely on a steady supply of energy.

FROM L. JOSEPHO HOLMES / PORTFOLIO STREET/NE COM/GETTY IMAGES; ALAN STEIN/THE EPOCH TIMES

mission report, of the 55,000 power substations in the United States, 30 play a critical role in the nation’s energy grid.

Kirtley said that one way to protect power substations is to install bullet-proof armor. Another is to place visual barriers to deter vandals or terrorists.

However, “it’s not necessarily someone trying to destroy the power system or interrupt service. I think people who do this type of thing aren’t thinking very hard,” he said.

Midwest Energy, a power company in Hays, Kansas, stated that it had taken steps to improve substation security.

“Over several years, we’ve upgraded security measures at many of our substations and are looking at industry best practices to plan further improvements,” Vice President for Engineering and Energy Supply Bill Dowling told *The Epoch Times*.

“Local law enforcement is more aware of the issue, and we’ve encouraged the public and our contractors that if they see anything suspicious around our facilities, to report it.

“Lastly, federal legislation raising the penalties for substation attacks helps raise the issue’s profile.”

TotalShield, the maker of high-impact force protection products, said there are challenges associated with protecting a power substation, given their remote locations.

Most substations have only a chain-link fence for protection and are vulnerable to gunfire, TotalShield stated on its website.

Moreover, the footprint of some power substations is significant. Installing ballistic-resistant barriers around the entire perimeter would be costly.

TotalShield recommends focusing instead on deterrence, “delaying an attacker and minimizing damage to critical elements while maximizing repairability.”

Severe Consequences

Measures would include visible warning signs of the consequences of an attack on a substation, security cameras, alarms, electronic monitors, perimeter fencing, and climbing deterrents.

By any measure, an attack against the power grid could have severe consequences in areas that rely on a steady supply of energy, such as hospitals and clinics.

YouTube podcaster Matt “Magic Prepper” in North Dakota said the key for everyday people is to prepare for such events.

“I think the way I would approach this might seem counterintuitive. The most obvious thing



Kristi Doubledee (L) and Chad Sealock of Ohio said they were concerned about the rash of power substation attacks across the country as they toured Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nev., on Jan. 19.

to do would be to tell people to have a generator of some kind—gas, solar—and a way to keep it fueled,” Matt said.

“However, I would suggest they take an inventory of what they would be without and prepare accordingly.

“Most people living in urban and suburban areas rely on city water systems for their hydration needs. If the grid goes down, the pumps go down with it, and the water no longer runs.”

He said that having a generator would be less beneficial than having a reasonable amount of water storage.

Critical Infrastructure

“Even though you might personally have access to power, that will not allow the water pumps at the treatment center to start functioning, thus providing running water once again,” Matt told *The Epoch Times*.

“If you rely on an electric heat source and the power shuts off, how will you stay warm? Wood stoves and propane heating units work well and are far less expensive than acquiring a generator with enough power to run an electric furnace for long periods.”

The Hoover Dam is a critical infrastructure that supplies energy for Nevada, Southern California, and Arizona, the loss of which could be far-reaching and serious.

Standing 726 feet high, the dam operates with 17 enormous hydroelectric turbines capable of producing 2,080 megawatts of power to serve 1.3 million people.

“We live close to a substation in Ohio. That is concerning,” Chad Sealock of Ohio told *The Epoch Times* regarding the substation attacks during a recent tour of Hoover Dam with Kristi Doubledee.

“The whole world relies on electricity. In many ways, it feels like Hollywood in the news.

“The world is so small, and many people would never get these ideas if they hadn’t seen it, or heard it, or watched it in a movie.” ■

15
ATTACKS

WASHINGTON State reported 15 physical attacks on power substations last year.

55,000
SUBSTATIONS

OF THE 55,000 power substations in the United States, 30 play a critical role in the nation’s energy grid, a report says.

1.3
MILLION

THE HOOVER DAM is capable of producing 2,080 megawatts of power to serve 1.3 million people.



The national debt clock shows the U.S. gross national debt and each American family's share of the debt, in New York on Nov. 23, 2022.

CONGRESS

The Debt Ceiling and Why It Matters

The United States has been in debt since 1791

By Lawrence Wilson

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND HOUSE Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) met on Feb. 1 to talk about raising the U.S. debt ceiling. However, many Americans may not have a whole grasp on what that is, although oddly, so many have an opinion on what should be done about it. For example, a recent poll conducted by RMG Research found that 79 percent of Americans think that the debt ceiling should be raised but are divided on whether that should be accompanied by spending cuts.

Of the 1,000 registered voters surveyed, 45 percent said spending cuts should be a prerequisite for

Hitting the debt ceiling is like hitting the limit on a credit card. Unless you have cash, you have to stop spending money.

raising the limit, and 24 percent said it should be raised with or without cutting spending.

A 2013 poll from National Journal shows that 62 percent of Americans thought that raising the debt ceiling would allow the government to borrow more money for future spending, which isn't the case.

What Is the Debt Ceiling?

The debt ceiling, sometimes called the debt limit, is the total amount of debt the federal government is allowed to have at one time. That limit is set by Congress and can't be exceeded without congressional approval.

The current U.S. debt ceiling is more than \$31 trillion. To be more precise, it's about \$31,381,000,000,000.

Hitting the debt ceiling is like hitting the limit on a credit card. Unless you have cash, you have to stop spending money, even on things you've already purchased, such as electricity or phone service.

The United States would have reached the debt ceiling on Jan. 19 if Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen hadn't taken "extraordinary measures" to keep the nation's bills paid for another five months or so.

How Did We Rack Up \$31.4 Trillion in Debt?

How has the nation accrued a debt of \$31.4 trillion?

The short answer is that we've spent more money than we've received in taxes and other revenues for a long, long time.

The United States began borrowing during the American Revolution and had accumulated \$75 million in debt by the start of 1791. We've been in debt ever since.

Historically, the national debt has grown the most during wartime. It jumped \$2.7 billion during the Civil War, reached \$22 billion after World War I, and topped \$4 trillion by the end of World War II.

From there, the national debt settled back to around \$3 trillion and remained there through the 1970s.

The rest of our \$31.4 trillion debt was created between 1982 and today. During that period, the national debt doubled approximately every seven years.

Some of that increase is attributable to unusual circumstances that called for emergency spending, such as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic.

More often, debt has increased because Congress elected to operate the country on a deficit budget. That means that we made a spending plan that intentionally exceeded our income, planning to borrow money to cover the difference.

That has been the case in all but four of the past 52 years. Since 1970, we've spent more money than we had about 90 percent of the time.

Can't We Just Cut Future Spending?

Raising the debt ceiling is about paying for the past, not financing the future.

If you wanted to remodel your kitchen, you might hire a contractor to do the work. You would sign a contract for, let's say, \$5,000. If the contractor trusted you, you might not pay anything upfront.

But when the contractor did the work, you would have to pay. If you didn't have cash, you might put it on a credit card.

That's essentially what happens when Congress passes a deficit spending bill. It obligates the country to spend money in the future for a commitment made today.

So when Congress agreed to spend \$1.7 trillion in

62%

OF AMERICANS in a poll thought raising the debt ceiling would allow the government to borrow more money for future spending, which isn't the case.

\$31 TRILLION

THE CURRENT U.S. debt ceiling is a bit over \$31 trillion.

90%

SINCE 1970, the United States has spent more money than it had about 90 percent of the time.

2023, members knew that would require borrowing money at some point.

And that \$1.7 trillion isn't all the government is committed to spending this year. Many spending commitments were made years ago but will come due in the months ahead. That includes things such as Social Security benefits, Medicare payments, employee salaries, defense contracts, and many other obligations.

What Happens When We Hit the Ceiling?

When you reach the limit on your credit card, you have three choices. You can pay all your bills with cash, ask the bank to raise the limit, or stop spending money.

It's much the same for the government. But since the government planned to spend more than it would receive in revenue, paying cash for everything isn't an option. Either Congress must raise the debt limit or the U.S. Treasury must stop paying for some things.

Biden has said that he won't consider any negotiation on the subject of the debt ceiling because failure to raise it would put the "full faith and credit" of the United States at risk.

However, McCarthy and other Republicans are determined to use this occasion to get both political parties to stop overspending the country's income—or at least to spend less.

The president will release his proposed budget on March 9.

The parties have until early summer to reach an agreement. That's when the United States will again reach its debt ceiling. ■



Debt has increased because Congress made a spending plan that intentionally exceeded its income, planning to borrow money to cover the difference.

FROM: CHUNG/HOT/THE EPOCH TIMES; PAUL U. RICHARDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

LEGISLATION

Florida Seeks to Ban Vaccine Discrimination

Civil rights bills would also stop vaccine status from being shared on federal database

By Dan M. Berger

FLORIDA LEGISLATORS ARE considering state House and Senate civil rights bills that protect residents from discrimination based on their vaccine or immunity status.

The protection would extend to people concerning all vaccines, not just the increasingly controversial COVID shots. Senate Bill 222, sponsored by state Sen. Joe Gruters (R-Fla.), and House Bill 305, sponsored by state Rep. Webster Barnaby (R-Fla.), are identical. This simplifies the likelihood of becoming law if both are approved, Mo van Hoek of Health Freedom Florida, the group pushing adoption of the legislation, told *The Epoch Times*.

Van Hoek said the legislation would also protect Floridians' vaccine or immunity status from being shared with the federal government's tracking database. The state created a database to that effect in 2019, before the pandemic, and later had to share it with the federal government to receive its allotment of COVID vaccines, she said.

"This isn't a good bill, it's a great bill," van Hoek said.

The measure would extend and make

permanent protections begun in 2021, when the legislature, in a special session, passed temporary protections. Van Hoek said the law will sunset on June 30, necessitating new protections.

The 2021 law wasn't tough enough, she said. It had originally been more comprehensive and didn't pass in March 2021. She said the ban on vaccine passports was taken from it and attached to another bill that passed a couple of months later.

"It had a good impact. It put Governor [Ron] DeSantis on the global map of creating that type of protection for people," she said.

But it had a significant loophole. While companies were forbidden to fire unvaccinated employees, they were allowed to set vaccination policies and could use those to force out noncompliant employees, she said.

Nick Caturano, a Disney World employee, is one of those who got such treatment.

"At Disney (if you weren't vaccinated), you had to wear an N95 mask with a warning sign and face shield," Caturano told *The Epoch Times*. "The goal was to make your life as difficult as possible. I couldn't have lunch with everyone. I

had to eat behind the storage shed.

"The first bill told them they couldn't fire people, but they could set policies. They could still test me and discriminate against me by making me wear things no one else was wearing, by forcing me to stay away from other people.

"There was no appetite to make a strong, clean bill at the time. I'm grateful for DeSantis, that he was willing to move forward, but this is politics. You have to have everyone on board. At the time, the legislators were not willing to risk political capital by doing this."

Caturano still works at Disney and has for 18 years. He's involved in an effort to sue the company for discrimination. He said they changed their policies and quit isolating him when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) dropped its mask requirements.

At the time, though, he felt the heat of his ostracism.

'Pandemic of the Unvaccinated'

"It was the pandemic of the unvaccinated. We were the vectors of disease. We all got attacked. People attacked me, spoke down to me, and told me I was responsible for killing people." ❖



Disney workers in Florida gather to oppose vaccine mandates in front of Walt Disney World on Sept. 26, 2021.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK CATURANO

Perspectives



Mo van Hoek of Health Freedom Florida says that “no one should force anyone to take something when the side effects include death, stroke, and seizure.”

He said that many objections to the jab are now being found to be true. Health Freedom has set up a website called Vaxbully.com to gather stories of others like Caturano who have suffered such discrimination.

Van Hoek said the site has received more than a thousand submissions so far. Bill supporters will use them, she said, to convince legislators the problem is real. They’ve heard from people like a medical student who couldn’t do hospital rotations without a COVID shot and a nursing student who couldn’t take final exams without one.

The nursing student, identified only as T.B. of Jacksonville in a copy sent to The Epoch Times, talked about his experience at a state college:

“There was not a single term in which I had confidence that my next term was guaranteed,” T.B. wrote. “For each new term, I was sent correspondence warning me that my continuing education was in jeopardy based on my vaccination status. A few courageous and understanding professors went to great lengths, in opposition to the administration, to help me finish.

“I persevered and stuck to my ethical and religious beliefs and am now gainfully employed as a nurse. My wife, also a nurse, was threatened with termination from (a large health care organization) nearly weekly for the

same reasons. These same institutions that promote evidence-based medicine proved negligent in this area by trying to force an experimental medical procedure on their own people, then reacted in shocked innocence when rebuffed. Shame on them!”

M.B. of Ruskin wrote:

“As an employee of the federal government, I was bullied to take the jab. They threatened my job if I did not comply. I tried to request a religious exemption and they ignored it. I was ‘othered’ and not allowed to go into the office. At another point, they tried to force me to take a COVID test, which again I refused and asked for a religious exemption. Again they ignored it. At one point, I was told I need to wear a mask but those that got the jab did not have to.

“I am a combat veteran and never expected to experience this kind of tyranny from my own government. This experience has taken a toll on my mental health and well-being. Although I am allowed the same freedoms as my coworkers, I sometimes worry they will come back around to bully me into taking the jab.”

Vaccine Requirements

Van Hoek said a pregnant woman from Jupiter, Florida, contacted her, looking for a pediatrician who wouldn’t require the baby to have shots.

“I made some phone calls,” van Hoek

said. “I called every pediatrician’s office in Jupiter, and not one of them would allow a baby accepted as a patient unless they adhered to the CDC’s vaccine schedule. I called 11 pediatricians.”

Van Hoek’s interest in the issue predates the COVID pandemic. Her son Jan, now 16, was disabled by a series of strokes 13 years ago that she says were caused by his childhood vaccinations. He requires round-the-clock caregivers now. She has never had a vaccination, van Hoek said.

She said the bill wouldn’t change the status of childhood vaccinations required for children to enter schools. Parents can already get their children exempted for religious or medical reasons, and van Hoek said the existing exemption system adequately protects vaccine dissenters. The religious exemption “is extremely flexible,” she said, and can be obtained by the parent submitting the child’s name and birthdate. The medical exemption requires the completion of Form 680 by the child’s doctor.

She said she thinks childhood immunization shouldn’t be required of anyone but respects the rights of parents to make their own choices.

“But no one should force anyone to take something when the side effects include death, stroke, and seizure,” all effects downplayed in warnings about vaccines, van Hoek said. “Everyone has a different risk-benefit ratio. They need to determine it for their own selves.”

She questions whether childhood vaccines have been adequately tested for safety in combination with each other. Children are now required to take 72 of them; COVID shots would add another 18.

Van Hoek predicts the nation’s growing awareness of problems with the COVID vaccines—the side effects, the suppression of information, and their limited effectiveness—will prompt a reexamination of extensive childhood vaccination schedules.

And she thinks it will provide the impetus to get this bill passed. Republicans have supermajorities in both houses of the state legislature.

“This will create true medical freedom,” van Hoek said. “If they’re 100 percent for freedom, they should get behind it. It creates standard protection, across the board, for every Floridian.” ■

THIS PAGE: NANETTE HOLT/THE EPOCH TIMES



The New York Stock Exchange in New York on Jan. 26.

PHOTO BY REUTERS/ANDREW KELLY/FILE PHOTO



FLYING TOO HIGH

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INSIDE

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

Thomas McArdle



Flying Too High

No economist can accurately forecast the economy

EVERYBODY LOVES TO see egg all over the faces of experts, but the blowout of the Wall Street consensus forecasting 190,000 new jobs for January by an actual number of 517,000 was more yolk than anyone bargained for. The favored media meme is that unemployment, which was supposed to go up, is instead at 3.4 percent, now at its lowest since before man landed on the moon.

With nothing to compare the strange era of post-COVID-19 lockdowns to, the second-guessing is everywhere. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, having just happily reduced the velocity of the Fed's interest rate tightening in its fight against the highest inflation in several decades and even boasting of achieving "disinflation in the goods sector," may have to resume increases by 50 basis points or more instead of the Fed's latest 25 basis-point hike, its smallest since March 2021.

Analysts who were assuming that a recession was imminent or already here are now talking "soft landing." Others were convinced that they were hallucinating, such as Moody's Chief Economist Mark Zandi, who wrote in a tweet that the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' jobs report was "so strong" that he didn't believe it. University of Michigan and Brookings economist Justin Wolfers, referring to economists' recession fears during the past months, announced that it was "the biggest mis-reading of the economy" in his lifetime.

Deutsche Bank strategist Alan Ruskin told clients: "There is a feeling that the labor market just does not fit with multiple other weak growth signals. ... At a minimum this data will demand traders retreat and regroup."

The leisure and hospitality sector experienced the greatest job growth,

totaling 128,000 positions filled. Other services were next, professional and business coming in at 82,000 and health care at 58,200. But at the same time, the rate of increase in wages is slowing. And there are now close to two jobs for every prospective employee, while current employees remain finicky about leaving the comfort of home telework to return to the office.

How comforting is it that the superpower that reached the moon and won the Cold War is boasting about employment growth in the service sector, while cutting-edge jobs are shed?

Then there's the juxtaposition of major layoffs at tech companies. Amazon, Google parent company Alphabet, Meta, Microsoft, and Twitter are eliminating sizable numbers of jobs, beginning late last year and continuing into this year. PayPal plans to cut 2,000 workers, software firm Splunk will cut 4 percent of its workforce, online security company Okta is cutting about 5 percent of its jobs, Pinterest is laying off a considerable number, and Miro is showing the door to about 7 percent of its employees.

Checking back in with the experts, we hear the significance of tech's downsizing minimized, explained away as readjusting post-COVID.

"Tech is omnipresent in our lives, so it feels like it should be omnipresent in our labor market, but that's not necessarily the case," labor economist Kathryn Edwards told ABC News.

How comforting is it that the superpower that reached the moon and won the Cold War is boasting about em-

ployment growth in the service sector while cutting-edge jobs are shed? The Oxford English Dictionary defines "McJob," a term originally used against Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, as "an unstimulating, low-paid job with few prospects, especially one created by the expansion of the service sector."

It seems that this jobs report was as unexpected by those who watch the economy for a living as the high inflation that seemed to be triggered by Joe Biden taking the oath of office at the beginning of 2021. It feels like a plane whose pilots are unaware of its airspeed, its altitude, and its direction and destination. And when an aircraft climbs at an unexpectedly steep rate, it risks entering a high-altitude aerodynamic stall that can quickly lead to it crashing to earth.

Could it be that the Amazons, the Googles, the Microsofts, and the PayPals, which transformed our lives with their technological innovations, have a better sense of today's economy than those in the hospitality business? Will Powell play the role that the co-pilot of Air France's ill-fated Flight 447 in 2009 did, misreading an unusual, unprecedented set of circumstances in the cockpit and reacting at the plane's controls by executing the opposite of the proper procedures? The result, far from any soft landing, is a total loss of control and the jetliner going from the highest in the sky it had ever been to speeding down into the ocean in the course of fewer than four minutes.

To raise these concerns isn't to urge the Federal Reserve to go soft. But it wasn't the false scapegoats of COVID-19 and Vladimir Putin who signed trillions of dollars in inflationary new spending. It was President Joe Biden who gave us an economy so out of whack that apparently no one can read it accurately. So it's best to tread carefully.

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Anders Corr



New US Embassy in the Solomons

Support democracy and oppose China's malign influence

THE UNITED STATES HAS A new embassy in the Solomon Islands, a group of 992 islands in the Pacific of which approximately one-third are populated. It's a juicy target for China, which seeks to project its navy toward Australia and New Zealand.

There hasn't been a U.S. Embassy in the Solomons since 1993. Our sudden change of heart is due to our mounting rivalry with China, and specifically Beijing's defense pact with the country.

The Sino-Solomon agreement, signed and leaked in 2022, appears to allow for unprecedented intervention by the PRC police in the case of local unrest. It also includes port services for the PLA Navy. This gives Beijing a strategic foothold just a thousand miles off Australia's coast.

The Solomons were once within the United States' and Australia's sphere of influence, given our close relations and shared history fighting Japan during World War II.

The Japanese invaded the Solomons in 1942. U.S. and allied efforts to liberate the island included the Battle of Guadalcanal, which cost more than 7,000 American lives and left 8,000 wounded. More than 40 U.S. ships and 800 aircraft were destroyed in the Solomon Islands campaign.

So it's particularly painful that the current leader of the Solomons, under allegations of PRC corruption and a de facto coup, is turning toward Beijing.

In 1978, the Solomons chose to become independent of Britain, which must have cheered the Chinese Communist Party. Afterward, the United States established its first Solomon Islands embassy but co-located it with the embassy to the nearby nation of Papua New Guinea.

At the tail end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union in 1988, the United

States established its first embassy physically located in the Solomon Islands, in the capital city of Honiara. Five years later, in the context of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it closed. The money saved by U.S. taxpayers came at the cost of taking some of the shine off the United States for the people of the Solomons.

But Sogavare's government is allegedly following its own corrupt interests, not those of the nation.

A year after Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare ruptured relations with Taiwan in favor of Beijing in 2019, the PRC established its first embassy in the Solomons. The defense pact that followed caught the United States and Australia by surprise. The PRC has already provided crowd control equipment to the Sogavare government, and paramilitary police training for local officers.

That could be used against opponents of Sogavare's increasingly undemocratic government.

According to Grant Newsham, a retired U.S. intelligence officer and diplomat with several decades experience in the Asia Pacific, the "Solomon Islands is being subverted by a corrupt, thuggish prime minister who is determined not to hold a proper election—that he would in all likelihood lose."

Newsham, the author of "When China Attacks: A Warning to America," wrote in an email to *The Epoch Times* of a large constituency in the Solomons that opposes the PRC's threat to their freedom, society, and economy.

Cleo Paskal, an expert on the Indo-Pacific at the Foundation for

Defense of Democracies, noted in an email that the new U.S. Embassy signals to locals and China that the United States cares. She said it indicates to Australia and other U.S. partners that they need to improve their relations in the Pacific Islands.

"When the U.S. pulled out, there was an implicit understanding that, in the case of the Solomons and some others, Australia would 'take the lead,'" she wrote. "This was disrespectful to Solomon Islanders and clearly didn't work as China romped through the region."

Paskal warns that the first test for the new embassy is imminent, "as there is a seemingly PRC-backed vote of no confidence against Premier Suidani of Malaita Province—the one part of the Solomons that has stood up to Beijing—scheduled for next week."

Newsham agrees that the diplomatic proof will be in the Solomons pudding.

He suggests watching whether the new embassy and its top diplomat "pay attention to and provide support for pro-U.S., pro-democracy constituencies and the basic concepts of honest consensual government, while also countering the Chinese political warfare that is going full steam in the country."

The Solomons benefit from the defense umbrella of the United States and its regional allies Australia and New Zealand. The country also enjoys U.S. and allied development assistance. Yet, the Sogavare crew bristles at any hint of U.S. influence, especially when it comes to opposing the PRC.

Yes, the Solomons are a sovereign country. But Sogavare's government is allegedly following its own corrupt interests in its support to China, not those of the nation. It delayed elections based on an excuse, and so has only a tenuous claim to legitimate rule. There are just limits to sovereignty, when it comes to supporting totalitarianism.

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Milton Ezrati



The Future of Tech, Part 2

Opportunities abound in even some seemingly intractable areas

LAST WEEK’S COLUMN discussed tech opportunities in areas like 5G, cloud computing, health care, and finance, especially in insurance. This article examines opportunities for tech in meeting two huge issues facing the world’s economies: the growing number of older retirees in populations, and the ever-present anxiety over climate change.

Whether all the answers to these problems lie in technological solutions remains an open question—they probably do not. But tech certainly will have a huge role to play.

The growing average age of the population is indisputable and will present difficult economic challenges. Because birth rates in the United States and most of the rest of the developed world have remained low for such a long time, this country and others have a dearth of young workers to replace the retiring baby boom generation. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the proportion of the population at retirement age rose to 17 percent in the 2020 census from 9.4 percent in 1960. Not all of those over 65 have stopped working, but the bureau reports that the country now has approximately four people of working age available to support each person of retirement age.

The medical burden this demographic situation will impose on the economy gives only a hint of the ramifications. Still more fundamental is the implied labor shortage. There’s also the question of whether these four people of working age can produce enough to support themselves, their personal dependents, and one retiree and still offer the surplus needed for investments in economic growth. Without some change, these demographics threaten to slow growth or even stop it. Technology can, however, provide significant mitigations.

Here, the advances in artificial intelligence and robotics come to the fore. To date, these technological strides have saved on labor costs and, by making wage differentials less of a factor, facilitated the reshoring of several industries from abroad. The nation’s demographic need will add to opportunities for artificial intelligence and robotics, which can substitute for labor and enable older Americans to work longer than they otherwise might. Because these sophisticated devices require more training and re-training over time, their existence will also offer tech opportunities to satisfy those needs.

To date, AI technological strides have saved on labor costs and, by making wage differentials less of a factor, facilitated the reshoring of several industries from abroad.

Climate change will also enhance tech opportunities on several levels. One lies in finding alternatives to and enhancing the effectiveness of solar and wind power. Wind and solar, though always mentioned first in discussions of climate change, have proved themselves to be unreliable and otherwise inadequate for the task of fueling the world’s power needs. They’re also expensive, as is evident in how their development has long depended on heavy subsidies. No doubt, tech can find ways to improve their effectiveness and lower their costs, but even greater opportunities lie in developing alternatives. Nuclear power is gaining attention, especially smaller reactors that seem to remove the public fear of disaster. Hydrogen technolo-

gies are still largely experimental but have a distant promise. Fission lies on a much longer timeline.

While such alternatives get attention and certainly offer promise, opportunities also lie in efforts to manage fossil fuels. Certainly, gains are available in substituting natural gas for other fuels, in carbon capture, and in emissions control that can make fossil fuels less ecologically threatening or, eventually, not ecologically threatening at all. Even if such solutions fall short of this ideal, they can fuel economies less harmfully during the time needed to develop and apply more radical answers.

Although it’s hardly ever mentioned in the media, a tremendous field in which tech can act is in mitigating the ill effects of climate change. Techniques of flood control, for example, could provide an answer to the greater frequency and severity of storms supposedly caused by climate change. Additionally, there might be opportunities in bioengineering crops that do a better job of removing carbon dioxide and other emissions from the atmosphere. There might be still other opportunities in designing crops that cope better with the excess dryness or wetness supposedly caused by climate change. The urge to return the planet to some balance, one with which people will be happier, is understandable. But short of such an ideal, tech can find ways to allow people to live more comfortable and safe lives despite a changing climate.

It’s admittedly anodyne to say things like “technology is the future,” but it’s no less true for that fact. Today’s world—because of its many troubles and not despite them—offers a wide range of opportunities for technological experimentation and application. With those opportunities lies the potential for great gain, to the world at large and to those technologists who can bring it the needed answers.

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Kevin Stocklin



Retirement Plans to Finance ESG Agenda

ESG funds pressure companies to reduce fossil fuel production

U.S. LAWMAKERS ARE fighting back against a new Biden administration rule that allows retirement money to be invested according to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria.

Every Republican senator, plus West Virginia Democrat Joe Manchin, signed on to a disapproval resolution recently in protest of a Department of Labor (DOL) directive that went into effect on Jan. 30. The resolution asserts that the Biden administration is putting the pensions of 152 million Americans at risk to support “climate and social justice.”

“President Biden is jeopardizing retirement savings for millions of Americans for a political agenda,” Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.), who introduced the resolution, stated. “In a time when Americans’ 401(k)s have already taken such a hit due to market downturns and record-high inflation, the last thing we should do is encourage fiduciaries to make decisions with a lower rate of return for purely ideological reasons.”

Manchin stated, “At a time when our country is already facing economic uncertainty, record inflation and increasing energy costs, it is irresponsible of the Biden administration to jeopardize retirement savings for more than 150 million Americans for purely political purposes.”

It may seem counterintuitive that Americans’ pension investments would be targeted to support political causes, but according to Derek Kreifels, CEO of the State Financial Officers Foundation, “If you’re not able to get bills passed in Congress, and you can no longer count on the Supreme Court to back you, this is the next frontier: Use corporate and private [money] to push through social policy and social change in this country.”

This misuse of people’s savings, he told The Epoch Times, is “putting retirees at risk that they will not have



Every GOP senator, plus West Virginia Democrat Joe Manchin, signed on to a disapproval resolution recently in protest of a Department of Labor directive.

the funds that they will need when they retire.”

The Senate resolution cited studies by the University of California–Los Angeles and New York University that found that ESG funds underperformed the broader market over the past five years, averaging a 6.3 percent return compared to an 8.9 percent market return. A similar measure was introduced in the House by Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky).

The Senate resolution was supported by 100 public policy organizations, state treasurers, and retirement advocacy groups.

“Forcing Americans into ESG investment is not only politically inappropriate, it is also financially irresponsible,” they said in a letter.

“According to research from the University of Chicago, mutual funds scoring highly on ESG factors are constantly outperformed by funds rated lowest for ESG. Moreover, 85 percent

of the country does not even know what ‘ESG’ is and therefore would not be aware of the financial risks their retirement account managers are subjecting them to when they actively pursue ESG investment decisions.”

The Labor Department policy, called “Prudence and Loyalty in Selecting Plan Investments and Exercising Shareholder Rights,” permits fund managers to include ESG factors when choosing where to invest pensioners’ money and how to vote the shares on pensioners’ behalf. The DOL regulates private pensions according to the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), which was enacted to protect pensioners’ retirement money from corruption and malfeasance by fund managers and to ensure that assets were only invested for the goal of maximizing returns.

President Joe Biden’s DOL ruling overturns a directive enacted under the Trump administration that stated that retirement funds under ERISA can only be invested for pecuniary reasons.

In addition to action in Congress, 25 states joined recently to sue the Biden administration over this issue. The lawsuit stated that the directive “undermines key protections for retirement savings of 152 million workers.”

Currently, about 84 percent of the world’s energy is generated by oil, gas, and coal. Wind and solar, despite decades of ESG investments, government subsidies, and regulatory support, still account for less than 5 percent of energy consumed.

ESG financial assets, which seek to pressure companies to reduce the production of fossil fuels, have been estimated to have reached \$55 trillion in global assets under management in 2022, more than double the size of America’s GDP. They are projected to grow to nearly \$100 trillion by 2025, comprising more than half of all assets under management.

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Daniel Lacalle



Global Earnings Recession Risk

The recent rebound could prove to be a mirage for markets

MARKETS recovered massively in January, boosted by lower inflation and optimistic estimates of growth. The Chinese recovery is a key factor for this optimism, as well as the relief in European sentiment as the euro area may escape recession. These are factors that may prove to be a mirage for markets. All this news may reduce the risk of recession, but not the reality of stagnation.

Lifting Europe from deep recession to stagflation because of a mild winter isn't a bullish signal. Furthermore, the Chinese reopening certainly helps the insipid global growth outlook, but it may also perpetuate elevated inflation. We can't forget that the widely cheered inflation figure of November and December comes from weaker global demand for commodities, and the Chinese reopening means a huge boost to oil, coal, natural gas, and copper demand in a moment where inventories remain below the five-year average.

When it comes to markets, we need to understand that investors require accommodative monetary policy as well as positive earnings and cash flow generation surprises to justify the current multiples and bond valuations. Bond investors are betting on the solvency of sovereign issuers that continue to implement deficit spending policies and expect bull market tax receipts to achieve fiscal consolidation. Most corporate issuances have gone from wildly expensive to simply expensive. Yes, yields are a little bit better, but many investors remain too optimistic about cash flow generation, margins, and inflation.

Bonds are only attractive if you really believe that inflation is going to crash to deflation in 2023–24. However, those betting on inflation crashing may forget what will lead to such a



Either we have stagnation and elevated inflation, which means rates will remain higher for longer, or we have rate cuts due to a massive recession, which isn't positive for stocks or bonds.

decline: a massive recession.

Remember, when governments continue to overspend and increase taxes in an inflationary environment, the reduction in prices will only come from a collapse in private demand. Now think what that means for earnings.

As investors, we can't really believe that inflation will come down to 2 percent with negative real rates, no central bank balance sheet reduction, and no cut in government deficit spending. Either inflation collapses due to a recession, and that means more earnings and solvency downgrades, or it remains elevated due to high debt and accommodative policies, which means valuations remain too expensive.

Remember that the earnings estimates for the 600 largest companies in Europe are still assuming rising margins and earnings into 2024. Yes,

Europe is cheap, but it's always cheap for a reason.

Tech companies are shedding jobs as never before. They aren't doing it because they're stupid or evil. They do it because they see what consumers and citizens do every second. But it isn't just technology. The reality of weaker margins and tighter cash flow added to rising taxes is hitting corporations all over the world.

An earnings recession is more likely than earnings surprises. Why? Because current earnings estimates already incorporate estimates of poor growth, and even recession, and yet analysts maintain elevated valuations based on a strong recovery in 2024.

There's only one thing that can happen to reduce aggregate demand: a massive decline in private sector demand, because public sector demand remains unchanged or rising, as governments continue to spend more. Therefore, if we bet on central banks cutting rates from July onward, we're also betting on a monster private sector recession that's in no way embedded in consensus estimates.

Considering that central banks are now loss-making, betting on rate cuts makes no sense if we truly believe in a soft landing.

And no, the prospect of higher growth and no inflation isn't plausible. The accumulated levels of debt and the rising weight of government spending in leading economies have been shedding potential growth and productivity improvements for years.

Either we have stagnation and elevated inflation, which means rates will remain higher for longer, or we have rate cuts due to a massive recession, which isn't positive for stocks or bonds.

Be careful what you wish for. If we're betting on rate cuts in the second half of the year, we may be betting on an economic and earnings recession of gigantic proportions.

MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES

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

Fan Yu

China Boosts Tech for Growth

COVID-19 deaths, infections a massive headwind for economy

BEIJING IS LOOKING TO resuscitate its technology sector growth in order to rescue its ailing economy. China's more than two-year clampdown on its sprawling technology sector may finally be ending. And global investors have raced to snap up shares so far this year.

The years-long campaign to rein in China's internet platform companies is largely complete, Guo Shuqing, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) chief of the People's Bank of China, announced in late January.

Guo further stated that ongoing supervision would be “normalized” and that Beijing would provide support to internet platform companies to “play a larger role in jobs creation and global competition.”

Beijing initially took aim at these tech giants—some of the most valuable companies based in China—beginning in late 2020, warning that they held too much power and controlled too much information. The crackdown that ensued entangled firms such as Alibaba and Ant Group, as well as e-commerce operators, ride-hailing services, and food delivery companies.

The tough stance that policymakers took on the industry caused waves of stock market sell-offs of China tech stocks in the United States, Hong Kong, and China, with many firms seeing more than 50 percent of their value wiped out during the two-year crackdown.

But there has been a recent about-face. And unlike previous policy shifts by Beijing, which were done in a quiet and subtle manner, this transition has been widely broadcast.

Didi, the ride-hailing service, recently received approval to resume new user additions after an 18-month security probe.

In addition, a government-owned investment firm connected to Beijing's



Foreign investors seem to be ignoring or are uninformed regarding COVID deaths and infections and their potential impact on future growth.

internet regulator took small ownership stakes known as “golden shares” in affiliates of Alibaba and Tencent. The Financial Times suggested that these stakes would further cement Beijing's control over these internet companies.

What it does suggest is that the interests of the CCP and these companies should now be completely aligned. Companies won't run afoul of CCP regulations, and the CCP will (presumably) in turn support these sectors' growth and survival. But why now?

China's economic growth is stalling. And it's once again the world's epicenter of COVID-19 infections. Despite suspect infection and death data, it's clear that the country is buckling under an explosive spread of the virus after abandoning its zero-COVID policy at the beginning of the year.

The CCP's sudden U-turn has plunged the country into a major public health crisis, especially during

the Chinese New Year in late January, when holiday trips increased almost 75 percent from last year. As of the beginning of the year, 64 percent of China's population—or about 900 million people—had been infected with COVID-19, according to a Peking University study. Some experts estimate that the death toll could be in the range of 200 million to 400 million. Regardless, the true death toll is far higher than official reports.

Increased infection and death means even more economic distress. It means fewer consumers. Fewer consumers mean lower GDP and economic growth. That growth decline has to be made up somewhere.

So Beijing is hoping to reignite growth in its technology sector to help make up that difference. This year, Chinese stocks are up, mostly from foreign investors buying into the reopening story. The iShares MSCI China ETF, for example, is up almost 15 percent on the year to date, NYSE-traded Alibaba shares are up almost 30 percent, and Tencent's Hong Kong-traded shares are up more than 25 percent.

But so far, foreign investors seem to be ignoring or are uninformed about COVID-19 deaths and infections and their potential impact on future growth. Investment projection models of Chinese companies' users and user activity are likely to be overstated as a result. Even with reopening, the run-rate demand for goods and services should no longer be calculated on a pre-2020 population count of 1.4 billion.

And that's not even factoring in non-COVID structural challenges within China's economy. Government debt across all levels has soared. The real estate sector remains on the brink of collapse. The outlook for both is even more precarious if the population materially declines.

It's a blind spot investors can ill afford to miss.

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



“The transhumanist movement and woke ideology are neo-Gnostic religions.”

Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, psychiatrist, medical ethicist, and author

THOUGHT LEADERS

A Pandemic Legacy of Fear and Control

Dr. Aaron Kheriaty talks about the rise of the biomedical security state

“**T**oday’s transhumanist project of trying to meld the human and the technological, making people bigger, stronger, and smarter through gene editing, cybernetics, and nanotechnology, is just a microwaved version of a very old ideology,” says Dr. Aaron Kheriaty. “It’s a new form of the ancient Gnostic attitude toward the human being.”

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek sat down with Kheriaty, psychiatrist, medical ethicist, and author of “The New Abnormal: The Rise of the Biomedical Security State.” He has filed several lawsuits against U.S. institutions and the government challenging vaccine mandates and COVID-19 pandemic policy. Here, he also addresses the frightening transition from core ethical principles of medicine to a transhumanist, neo-Gnostic, technocratic medical paradigm, in which informed consent is inevitably replaced with an ideology of scientism.

JAN JEKIELEK: In “The New Abnormal,” you talk about how this neo-Gnostic worldview is upon us. It’s a profoundly different way of envisioning the human relationship with reality. It reminds me of woke ideology.

DR. AARON KHERIATY: The transhumanist movement and woke ideology are “neo-Gnostic religions.” Gnosticism was a collection of religious sects in the early centuries of Christianity



A cleaning crew wearing personal protective equipment enters Life Care Center in Kirkland, Wash., on March 12, 2020, in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

that were the main competitors to Christianity. One thing they had in common was their elitism. Only a few had access to the secret knowledge—gnosis—and those were the people that should be running the show. In contrast, orthodox Christianity said salvation was available to everyone, not just to an elite.

The second feature that Gnostics had in common was a desire to overcome the material world. Unlike Christianity, they saw material reality as something to escape from or overcome. Christianity acknowledges that the material and spiritual worlds are both created by God and that God is good; therefore, the material world is good, though it’s affected by sin. These two competing theologies had different approaches to the material world and the human body.

The Gnostics recognized that the material world was ordered by lawful processes, what today we call the laws of science, but that order was something to be overcome. The material world was the raw material to do whatever they wanted with. The idea

was to escape this world into a higher spiritual realm, either through extreme aesthetic modes or through a total desecration of the material world and the human body. Consequently, the human body was just a collection of hardware. It wasn’t an organic whole naturally oriented toward health and human flourishing.

Today’s transhumanist project of trying to meld the human and the technological, making people bigger, stronger, and smarter through gene editing, cybernetics, and nanotechnology, is just a microwaved version of a very old ideology. It’s a new form of the ancient Gnostic attitude toward the human being.

MR. JEKIELEK: People are debating this model of a policy set on high by a group of experts. If we ever needed evidence this is a bad idea, we have the experiment right in front of us.

DR. KHERIATY: If people would only look at the evidence. The subtitle of “The New Abnormal” is “The Rise of the Biomedical Security

State.” The biomedical security state is the militarization of public health welded to digital technologies of surveillance and control.

This response to the pandemic did enormous collateral harms, yet even after those harms became manifest, our agencies didn’t walk back misguided policies like the lockdowns, the school closures, or the vaccine mandates and passports, which didn’t slow or stop the spread of COVID.

These one-size-fits-all policies did enormous damage to the trust of many Americans in public health and our government agencies, but also to organized medicine. Prior to the pandemic, people would tell me, “I’ve always trusted doctors and hospitals.” Now they’re saying, “I never want to see a physician or a hospital again.”

And even though these policies have now been rolled back, the whole infrastructure is still in place, waiting for the next public health crisis to steamroll our rights and freedoms even more than during COVID.

Americans must understand that scientism, this ideology I’m describing, is totally different from science. Science is inquiry requiring intellectual humility and an openness to new information and the revision of ideas.

But scientific conclusions dictated from the top without anyone being allowed to question them is not science. It’s authoritarian and ultimately a totalitarian ideology. If people don’t want to live in that sort of society, they need to wake up and push back against this. ♦

LEFT PAGE: PHOTO BY YORK DU/THE EPOCH TIMES; THIS PAGE: JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

“Scientific conclusions dictated from the top without anyone being allowed to question them is not science. It’s authoritarian, and ultimately a totalitarian ideology.”

MR. JEKIELEK: Fear, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, was everywhere. How is this connected?

DR. KHERIATY: Fear makes us lose our heads. As a psychiatrist, I can say that a chronic or overwhelming state of fear impairs the ability to think clearly and to reason well.

In the case of the pandemic, the fear which was sustained for so long was not just because of this novel virus, but also from the way information was presented to the public: propaganda designed to intensify people’s fears. People who are afraid are much easier to control. If you want a passive, compliant population that does whatever the authorities tell them, fear, as dictators have known for centuries, is a good way to do that.

MR. JEKIELEK: What you’re describing encapsulates this new collective way of looking at health.

DR. KHERIATY: That’s right. “We know what’s best for everyone,” said this elite clerisy who believe they can discern the direction of history and what the future should look like. “We’re the ones who call the shots be-

cause ordinary people don’t have the wherewithal to make the right decisions.”

Basically, they believe their job is to tell people what to think and to make people believe they’re coming to their own conclusions. This is condescending, arrogant, and politically dangerous.

MR. JEKIELEK: In your book, you offer some thoughtful advice for people on how to do something meaningful in the face of this potential radical shift in society.

DR. KHERIATY: In the last chapter, I try to offer the reader hope because there are some things I fundamentally believe. I believe human beings are resilient. I also believe that regimes built upon lies ultimately collapse. They can continue, as Soviet communism showed us, for an unbearably long time, and enormous human damage can be done, but eventually they will collapse. The question is how to avoid getting to the point where we find ourselves in a dehumanizing society or regime. And if we’re already in one, then how can we help manifest the lies and contradictions of that regime, so that it

collapses sooner rather than later?

I also offer some policy proposals in my areas of expertise, which have to do with public health. I talk about ways we can reform our public health agencies like the CDC, the FDA, and the NIH, which failed us during the pandemic.

I also offer suggestions about overcoming our fear. Anyone who’s experienced a panic attack knows that fear will literally paralyze you, not just physically, but also mentally. You can’t move. You can’t think when you’re terrified. You can’t do anything.

But there’s a lot you can do. You could start by working on overcoming whatever fear you’ve absorbed. You can talk with people face-to-face in the community. Start a book club, for example, reading great works of literature.

People are not powerless. They were made to feel powerless during the pandemic, but they’re not. They’re not powerless.

MR. JEKIELEK: Some of the things you’ve written about in “The New Abnormal” are coming true, as in this court case you’re involved with, *Missouri v. Biden*. Some of the discovery materials, the emails of collaboration between the government and Big Tech, are astounding.

DR. KHERIATY: This will be the biggest First Amendment free speech case in decades. This is the lawsuit that the state attorneys general of Missouri and Louisiana have filed against many senior officials in

the administration, along with four private plaintiffs: myself; Jay Bhattacharya and Martin Kulldorff, co-authors of the Great Barrington Declaration; and Health Freedom Louisiana, a nonprofit medical freedom group in that state.

We are alleging that the government colluded with big tech companies, particularly social media companies like Facebook, Twitter, and Google, to censor information that contradicted the government’s preferred pandemic policies.

I don’t think it’s an exaggeration, Jan, to say that never in our history have we seen this level of free speech violation by the federal government that we’ve seen over the last three years. This absolutely has to stop, or our experiment in this ordered democratic republic is going to come to a grinding halt.

MR. JEKIELEK: Any final thoughts as we finish?

DR. KHERIATY: I want to end on a note of hope. If you stand up and challenge this emerging regime, you may lose some friends. You may be called names. You may be accused of being a conspiracy theorist or a COVID denier.

But as someone who’s had this experience, I will say there’s nothing better than waking up with a clear conscience every day. And also, you’re going to meet new friends, genuine friends, people who care not only about you, but about the pursuit of truth. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



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It’s not climate change. It’s not raging inflation or even the national debt. The real threat to the United States and to the world is the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) 100-year plan to defeat America and establish world domination. There’s no urgency in the Mainstream Media. That’s why “THE FINAL WAR” had to be made. Anchored by senior investigative reporter Joshua Philipp, and one-and-a-half years in the making, “THE FINAL

WAR” is a film that is so relevant to current events and so important that we’re offering it to EVERYONE for free. It will answer your questions about the pandemic, the impending invasion of Taiwan, and how the CCP works to keep the U.S. occupied with at least four global adversaries.

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Finding Ways to Help Others

Being thoughtful can improve lives

By Jeff Minick



“EVERYBODY WANTS to save the earth; nobody wants to help mom do the dishes.” That line from satirist P.J. O’Rourke in “All the Trouble in the World” applies to the 2022 World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, where high-ranking government officials and elites gathered to discuss climate change. Thousands of them arrived via high-polluting private jets, prompting an outcry from environmentalists.

Here, I suppose, we might recast O’Rourke’s witticism as “Everybody wants to save the Earth, but nobody wants to take the train.” Adding to the delicious hilarity of this hypocrisy is the fact that this swarm of luxury jets buzzing in and out of Davos has drawn criticism in past years as well, marking our grand poohbahs as slow learners.

We find this same big-picture humbug in the promises and programs of politicians. They put forth grand and expensive schemes to abolish poverty, revamp our failing educational system, or protect us from a virus, but few of them are willing to stand over that sink of dishes. They’ll fund soup kitchens galore, but you won’t find that gang scrubbing pots and pans.

On the other end of the spectrum are those who encourage us to walk a path where we truly can make a difference. In a meme, teacher John Perricone relates that he invited a

Buddhist monk to speak to his senior elective class. The monk entered the classroom and without saying a word went straight to the board and wrote out O’Rourke’s words about saving the earth and doing the dishes. The class laughed, and then the monk explained that while it was unlikely any of them would ever rescue a child from a burning orphanage, they had opportunities every day to show kindness and respect to those around them. “In the smallest gesture of kindness,” he said, “you have committed an act of immeasurable profundity.”

Every one of us has the ability to polish up our corner of the world.

Sometimes these gestures are profound indeed. In the article “5 Acts of Kindness That Changed History,” HistoryExtra editor Elinor Evans writes of the American Jesse Owens, four-time gold medalist at Nazi Germany’s 1936 Berlin Olympics. Though he was the world record holder in the long jump, Owens twice missed the mark in that event, thereby risking elimination. One of his competitors, German athlete and European champion “Luz” Long, advised Owens to adjust his run-up to the mark. Owens did so and won first place and a gold medal, with Long placing second. Later, Owens praised

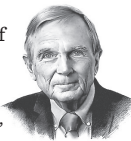
Long for his friendship and kindness and credited him for the win.

Most of us won’t win a gold medal, in the Olympics or elsewhere, and no human being will save the earth—if in fact the planet needs saving—but every one of us has the ability to polish up our corner of the world. One of the greatest advocates of this approach was a nun, Therese of Lisieux (1873–1897). In her short life, Therese spoke and wrote of “the little way,” a commitment to everyday tasks while showing respect and love to the people we encounter in our daily lives. Today, her autobiography “The Story of a Soul” and the example of her life continue to inspire people of all faiths, who apply the principles of the little way to their own lives.

This philosophy of taking care of the small things and making an effort to improve the world around us brings comradery in the workplace, harmony to the home, and comfort to friends and strangers alike. We need our dreamers, our visionaries and creators who point us to the stars, but they too best succeed when they keep the common touch.

So let’s roll up our sleeves and get to those dishes.

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



When exploring Italy, choosing how you get from one place to another can be as much fun as reaching the destination.

PHOTO BY SASHA SAMARDZIJA/SHUTTERSTOCK

An Eclectic and Exciting Italian Journey 72

THESE FIRMS HAVE RAISED the practice of making chocolate to an art, devoting exceptional attention to every step in crafting delicious delights. **75**

IF YOU THINK ALL TELEVISIONS are pretty much the same, come explore the newest models and technology introduced at this year’s Consumer Electronics Show. **76**

SKIPPING THE CHEAP TOOLS and choosing ones that are built to last pretty much forever can be a lot less expensive in the long run. **79**



This casually elegant tropical estate may well be the ultimate Caribbean destination.

BVI Beachfront Splendor

Traditional Balinese design abounds in this spectacular estate

By Phil Butler

THIS UNIQUE ESTATE IN THE British Virgin Islands is accented by beautiful waters and a pristine beach, creating an idyllic tropical experience. Set on a sprawling 1.35-acre parcel with private frontage on Long Bay Beach, the property features a main residence and a guest house to accommodate large families and a long guest list.

Passing through the entry gates emblazoned with the estate’s name—“Nevaeh” (heaven spelled backward)—provides a view of the residence that was built in 2010, inspired by the open layout of traditional Balinese homes. The architecture blends seamlessly into the lush, tropical setting, while the airy interior allows panoramic views of the beach and the water beyond. The two-story main residence has five bedrooms, three of which are “master” sized, with one master suite and two guest bedrooms in the guest house, and an additional bedroom in the free-standing cabana.

The main house’s living room can be opened to allow a grand view of the pool area.

The eat-in kitchen with seating for six is well equipped to prepare meals for large groups. All of the bedrooms enjoy great views, while the first-level master suite bedroom deck provides access to a private swimming pool.

Rainy-day entertainment options include a home theatre with a 120-inch high-definition screen, a gym, and a golf simulator. Outside, the owners and guests can enjoy a rousing game of tennis on the artificial grass court, followed by a dip in the heated saltwater “vanishing edge” pool decorated with hand-crafted aqua glass tiles, relax in the adjacent hot tub that seats up to 12, or explore the grotto hidden behind a waterfall. The wooden pergola, beams, and accents work in concert with numerous stone carvings throughout the grounds to enhance the property’s tropical atmosphere. The property also has two golf carts to explore the island or head over to the nearby golf course. ■

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



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(Above) The open courtyard and second-level deck feature intricate, hand-carved woodwork and manicured native plants and trees.



(Top Right) Viewed from the beach, the estate is designed to provide an exemplary tropical island experience to the owners and their guests. (Right) The open-air Balinese-inspired great room backed by the atrium provides a welcoming gathering space.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOTHEBY’S CONCIERGE AUCTION

Hunter the Hero

Transportation tales from an unforgettable family trip to northern Italy

By Tim Johnson



Italy has more than 10,000 miles of active railroads, with its high-speed train service provided by Trenitalia and Italo Treno.

IT WAS A MOMENT THAT NONE OF us will ever forget. When we arrived by train in Tuscany, our transfer to a local bus was far more difficult than any of us had imagined. Despite the help of online maps and a rather rigorous pre-trip research process undertaken by my sister, Lisa, we were left, bewildered, with paper tickets in hand and no idea where to go.

Where do we catch the bus, exactly? It was a question we asked many people around the station. Pulling our carry-on luggage behind us, under a hot summer sun, we tried three different spots: in front of the train station, and just beside it, where big vehicles lumbered in and out every few minutes—just none with our designated route number above the windshield.

Feeling slightly defeated, we slumped back across the piazza to the train station. And just then, it emerged, rounding the corner like a revelation. It was our bus. But our transportation wouldn't hang around long, and it had stopped fairly far away. Jettisoning his suitcase, my 13-year-old nephew, Hunter, made a singular decision that saved the day. He sprinted toward the bus, walking through the open door and climbing the first two steps, facing off with the surly Italian driver.

What was said, exactly, was lost in the moment. "I think I just told him to wait, that we were on the way," Hunter told me later, a little astonished at his own actions. The driver understood nothing. But it worked. That moment of confusion held him up, just long enough. Soon we were on board, lumbering through the terraced hills, on the way to our destination.

Catch That Bus!

Navigating northern Italy isn't always easy. And on this family trip, which included my sister, brother-in-law, niece, and nephew, we were determined to travel around the region without a rental car. It was certainly challenging, at times. But it was memorable for mostly good reasons.

Starting our trip in Rome, we proceeded north to Siena, in Tuscany, on a double-decker bus, which dropped us at the train station—setting up the ensuing drama. Next, it was a train to Florence. The ride was beautiful, winding through vineyards and villages, the scenes unfolding outside the windows straight from a postcard.

The only problem: The train didn't take us to our destination. Slowly,

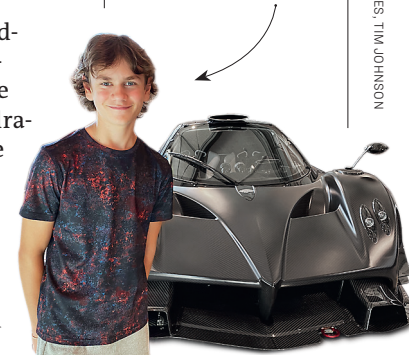
The Frecciarossa 1000 travels up to **224 miles per hour**, making it the star of the Italian rail system.



Frecciarossa 1000 trains connect Rome to Milan in under 3 hours.

Pagani builds around **40 custom luxury cars per year.**

The author's nephew, Hunter, in front of his favorite Pagani at the Pagani Factory and Museum in San Cesario sul Panaro, Italy.



CLOCKWISE FROM L: DIEGOMARIOTTINI/SHUTTERSTOCK; THE EPOCH TIMES; TIM JOHNSON



Modena, Italy, is known for its balsamic vinegar, opera, and its Ferrari and Lamborghini sports cars.

we chugged to a stop at a small-town station. Everyone was told to de-board the carriage. We were so close—Florence was just a couple of stops farther down the tracks. But in a seemingly arbitrary decision, the end of the line had been changed—and we'd reached it.

We wandered around on the platform until another passenger told us that a different train would be coming through that would take us the rest of the way. When we finally arrived, it was worth the frustration.

We walked along the Arno River, the kids following a recommendation from a friend to check out two particularly delicious gelato joints at the end of the bridges. We explored inside the city's famous cathedral and later saw Michelangelo's David. And we dined like royalty on thick, rich, rare Florentine steaks.

And, in a complete surprise to all of us, the final leg of our journey was seamless. We rolled into Modena right on time, traveling part of the way on the super fast Frecciarossa, reaching speeds exceeding 180 miles per hour on the futuristic rail



Bistecca alla fiorentina, young steer cooked al sangue, is a fixture in Florentine.

line. We weren't in a rush. But we definitely had an appointment with a very special carmaker.

Commuting in Style

First, a behind-the-scenes tour at Pagani. While for me cars are mostly a conveyance—just a way to get from point A to point B—for Hunter, this visit was a dream come true.

We learned how the founder, Horacio Pagani, immigrated from Argentina to Italy, enduring some very lean times in his life that required him to sweep floors and sleep in a trailer. He worked his way up at Lamborghini, then struck out on his own. His cars are hand-made with parts created in house, slow-built on the factory floor with input from their owners. They sell for at least \$2 million apiece.

I knew little about the company, but Hunter? He knew all the details, even before the guide relayed them. In a showroom lined with some of the company's best-known cars, the final one, a 2010 Zonda R, was his favorite automobile in the world. He smiled ear to ear, his gaze fixed on the shining "super car" as if trying to record every detail in his mind.

We didn't drive away in a Pagani—collectively, we were a couple of million short on the price tag. In fact, more trains awaited us: a slow commuter route for the rest of the family to Venice, and a long ride for me to Milan to catch a flight home. And while nothing on this trip went quite as planned, we still tell the story of Hunter saving the day—and everything else we experienced, all along the roads and rails. ■

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

If You Go

Getting There: Leonardo da Vinci International Airport (FCO) receives nonstop, direct flights from all over the world.

Getting Around: Nothing beats the thrill of riding some of the fastest trains in the world on Trenitalia's bullet-train style Frecciarossa.

Stay: Best Western Milano Palace offers superb service and big, comfortable rooms within walking distance of the Ferrari museum.

Take Note: Trainline is a helpful site and app for booking and securing your seats early (TheTrainline.com).



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MILANSKO/SHUTTERSTOCK; SHUTTERSTOCK; ILPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

CHOCOLATE FOR GOOD:

Ethically Sourced, Exceptionally Made Bars to Satisfy Every Craving

By Crystal Shi

THESE OUTSTANDING CHOCOLATE MAKERS, who craft their bars with both flavor and fair, sustainable practices in mind, will help you say "I love you" with better chocolate on Valentine's Day, or any time of year.

Milk Chocolate Makeover Fruition Chocolate Works

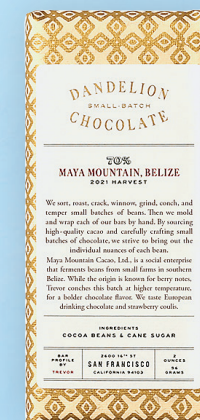
Attention, milk chocolate lovers: Some of the best examples of the category are being handcrafted in New York's Catskill Mountains. Highlights include the 43 percent Brown Butter Milk, made deeply caramel-y with locally churned Ronnybrook Farm Dairy butter, and the 56 percent Spring Salted Dark Milk, enlivened with Peruvian warm spring salt. **\$10, FRUITIONCHOCOLATEWORKS.COM**



Farmers in the Spotlight Askinosie Chocolate

A pioneer in direct trade chocolate, this Missouri father-daughter business works closely with small cacao farmers in Ecuador, the Amazon, the Philippines, and Tanzania. You can't go wrong with any of their single-origin bars, but the ultra-creamy white chocolate, made with house-pressed cocoa butter and goat's milk powder, is a skeptic-converting standout.

\$12, ASKINSIE.COM



No 2 the Same Dandelion Chocolate

Each single-origin bar from this San Francisco bean-to-bar maker sings with distinct flavors so strong, and sometimes unexpected, that it's hard to believe the only ingredients are cacao beans and sugar. Case in point: the 70 percent Maya Mountain, Belize bar, vivid with bright berry notes.

\$10, DANDELIONCHOCOLATE.COM

Infused With a Little Extra Goodnow Farms Chocolate

Founded by a husband-and-wife team who work on their 225-year-old farm in Massachusetts, Goodnow handcrafts silky smooth, single-origin bars with beans sourced directly from farmers throughout Latin America. Look for their unique flavored Special Reserve bars, such as Putnam Rye Whiskey and Las Palomas Coffee.

FROM \$14, GOODNOWFARMS.COM



Bigger and Better Tony's Chocolonely

Hefty, 6.35-ounce bars; all-natural, fair trade ingredients; and colorful, Willy Wonka-esque wrappers are a recipe for guaranteed joy. The basic 70 percent Dark Chocolate is reliably smooth and snappy; the add-in-happy Dark Milk Pretzel Toffee is dangerously snackable. Behind the fun flavors and packaging, the Dutch company, a certified B corporation (meaning it meets certain ethical standards), is on a serious mission to make the cocoa industry 100 percent slavery-free.

\$5.95, TONYSCHOLONELY.COM

NEW HOME Entertainment Options

These new models bring the 'wow!' back to watching movies, sports, and shows

By Bill Lindsey

Televisions have come a long way since they first became a household staple. A new crop of cutting-edge models were introduced at this year's Consumer Electronics Show.

THE LATEST and greatest television technology was unveiled at the recent 2023 Consumer Electronics Show (CES), the eagerly anticipated affair presented by the Consumer Technology Association. In case you missed the show, stay tuned for a few notable highlights.

Televisions have come a long way since Paris in 1909, the setting of the first demonstration of live transmission of still images by Georges Rignoux and A. Fournier, who were able to transmit the letters of the alphabet via a crude Kerr cell receiver. Scientists and inventors around the world undertook efforts to improve upon this system, and in 1926, after years of effort, John Logie Baird gave the first demonstration of what would become the television.

In the intervening years, technology hasn't stood still, as evidenced by the growing size of home TV sets and the complexity of their inner workings. Because the technology can be confusing, a brief overview may encourage a better appreciation of the products and systems introduced at this year's CES.

High-Resolution

Many television manufacturers tout 4K resolution; this refers to a display with a horizontal count of approximately 4,000 pixels. The Consumer

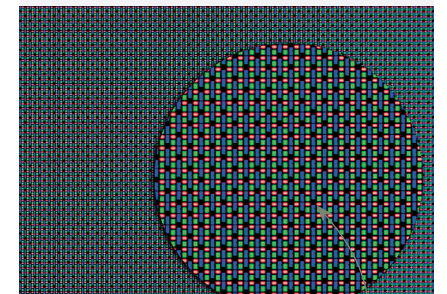
Televisions have come a long way since Paris in 1909, when Georges Rignoux and A. Fournier demonstrated the first live transmission of still images.

Electronics Association defines ultra high-definition (UHD) as a resolution of at least 3,840 by 2,160 pixels in televisions, monitors, or projectors. Virtually all television sets labeled as 4K provide UHD resolution, resulting in many being referred to as having 4K UHD resolution.

Stellar Screens

Television screens can be in the form of liquid crystal displays (LCD), plasma, organic light-emitting diodes (OLED), quantum dot LED (QLED), or microLED. LCD televisions are no longer commonly available; while the term is still used, these models now utilize LED backlights. Plasma televisions became obsolete when manufacturers turned to either lower-cost LCD/LED screens or high-contrast OLED screens for high-end televisions. OLED televisions can deliver perfect black and have incredible detail because they light each pixel

By the 1950s, televisions had become an integral part of life, with no home considered complete without one dominating the living room.



Every pixel in an OLED screen is individually illuminated, to create a vast palette of available colors for incredible, life-like detail.



Screens featuring 4K technology providing ultra high-definition displays have quickly progressed from rare and exotic to now being the industry standard.



Samsung's new Neo QLED televisions are an ideal choice for displaying art when not being used to watch movies or sports, as these models have eliminated the problem of screen burn-in.

LEFT PAGE: PHOTO BY ARCHIVE PHOTOS/BETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF SAMSUNG, ALEXANDER SHUTTERSTOCK; FCC/SHUTTERS TOCK; PROXIMA STUDIO/SHUTTERS TOCK



Introduced in 2022, this LG TV model features the world's largest OLED screen, at 97 inches.

individually, while an LCD television illuminates all pixels at once. OLED televisions can be viewed from a wider range of angles than LCD models and are significantly thinner. They are also a favorite of gamers due to their fast response times.

A downside to OLED televisions is the potential for “burn-in” to occur, resulting in a permanent mark or defect in the screen if it’s left on for an extended length of time. To avoid burn-in, consider a QLED television. These sets are designed to provide great detail and contrast for a very realistic viewing experience, and typically have a longer life than OLED sets. At this year’s CES event, Samsung introduced its 4K Neo QLED series, with an MSRP of \$1,299.99 for the 50-inch model, while LG introduced its B3 OLED series with an MSRP of \$1,599 for the 55-inch model. Samsung has a slightly less expensive “A” series of models, but it currently isn’t available in the United States. Keep in mind that most of these televisions are readily available at prices well below MSRP.

As good as OLED technology is, the next “big thing” is microLED technology. These self-emitting displays are made up of incredibly tiny LEDs that act as subpixels and are engineered to provide extraordinary levels of brightness and contrast, resulting in amazing clarity. These televisions, introduced at CES by Samsung, have very large screens ranging from 50

inches to 140 inches in size but are very expensive, with a suggested MSRP of \$80,000 for the 70-inch model. On the plus side, these televisions don’t require professional installation.

Elegant Displays

Large televisions can be a challenge to mount and are unsightly when not in use, which is why the Displace TV and Samsung booths were so popular at this year’s event.

The Displace (MSRP \$2,999) may be the easiest large-screen TV to install. First of all, it runs on batteries, so there are no unsightly cables to route. Second, it weighs in at a mere 20 pounds and uses proprietary active loop vacuum technology to adhere to any flat surface; the adhesive strips on the back hold it securely to walls or windows. If a 55-inch screen isn’t large enough, the units can be combined to create a larger viewing area. As if all that wasn’t enough, there’s no remote to worry about losing because it’s controlled via hand gestures.

Samsung’s The Frame allows the television to function as art by displaying photos when it isn’t being used to watch sports, movies, or other entertainment. The matte screen eliminates glare, and the system can be mounted horizontally or vertically. QLED technology eliminates burn-in concerns when in art mode. The MSRP for the 32-inch model is \$599.99; the largest model is 85 inches. ■



LIFESTYLE

WHAT'S NEW IN TVs?

TVs get more life-like every year



1

Technology Never Stops

If you can remember when a rear-projection TV was the “best thing ever,” you know how fast technology changes. TVs get better every year, but it can be challenging to stay current.



2

Wait for a Sale

New models are introduced at the annual CES show in January, but savvy consumers wait a bit to let demand cool off and prices drop before buying.



3

Why Upgrade?

Manufacturers constantly strive to develop improved picture quality, making that of the most high-tech TVs from five years ago appear faded compared to the newest models.

HEIRLOOM-GRADE TOOLS

Most tools end up in piles at yard sales, but your heirs will be hoping they inherit these

By Bill Lindsey



Measure Twice, Cut Once LYNX GARLICK TAYTOOLS THOMAS FLINN BRITISH 24-INCH CROSSCUT SAW

\$104.99

With a stained European beech handle secured by gleaming brass button screws and an engraved logo, this saw is even better looking when it’s cutting wood. Crafted in England of Sheffield alloy spring steel, the 24-inch, 10-teeth-per-inch blade is taper-ground to help prevent binding. It’s perfectly balanced for many years of all-day cross-cutting tasks.



A Forgotten Classic GARRETT WADE YANKEE PUSH DRILL AND SCREWDRIVER SET

\$163.65

Grandpa knew the value of a hand-powered push drill or push screwdriver that revolves as it is pushed, rotating the bit to drill a hole or drive a screw. They were perfect when an electric drill wasn’t practical for a small task, but they went out of production years ago. Garrett Wade has brought them back in the form of this chrome-plated, solid brass set that’s built to last.



Righty Tightly, Lefty Loosely LEE VALLEY 9-PIECE HEAVY-DUTY SCREWDRIVER SET

\$115.50

Screwdrivers are one of the most commonly used hand tools, making them easy to take for granted. But unlike inexpensive screwdrivers with plastic handles that can come loose or slip while in use, these feature triangular wood handles for maximum torque. Fitted steel end caps and chrome striking caps make these ready for decades of home improvement projects.



Drive It Home ESTWING 16-OUNCE CLAW HAMMER WITH LEATHER HANDLE

\$42.99

The value of a quality hammer becomes clear when a cheap one loses its head or the handle splinters. Those concerns are eliminated with Estwing’s one-piece steel construction that makes this 16-ounce claw hammer an ideal choice for an heirloom-quality tool set. The leather-covered shock reduction grip keeps it secure during use and also reduces vibration.



Keep It Straight CRICK 18-INCH LEVEL

\$92.25

The first sign of a home without a level is crooked artwork on the walls. That won’t happen with a Crick level. Made in the United States, and with the customer’s choice of beech, walnut, or maple with protective metal edges, this level features three green or clear vials guaranteed to be accurate within 0.015 inches. The 18-inch overall length makes it a good choice for home projects where a longer level could be unwieldy.

THIS PAGE: ADAM BERRY/GETTY IMAGES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L. COURTESY OF TAYTOOLS; LEE VALLEY; ESTWING; GARRETT WADE; CRICK

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature a human portrait of one of our greatest U.S. presidents and a fascinating history of the pioneers of undersea exploration.

FICTION

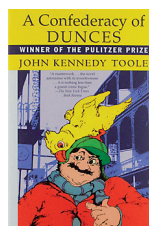


'THE THIN MAN'
By Dashiell Hammett

Enter Nick and Nora

The king of the hardboiled detective produced a classic in his alteration of the detective genre with the wisecracking couple Nick and Nora Charles, who solve mysteries in between martinis. Hammett intertwines great humor with this murder mystery. This is a fun read.

VINTAGE CRIME/BLACK LIZARD REPRINT, 1989, 208 PAGES



'A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES'
By John Kennedy Toole

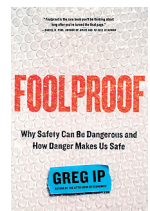
A Comic Masterpiece

Learned in medieval philosophy, junk food connoisseur, and beyond eccentric, Ignatius J. Reilly is in revolt against all things modern. He picks up odd jobs, purveying hot dogs from a cart

and working at Levy Pants, where he tries to launch a workers' revolt. Surrounded by hilarious characters, such as his opinionated mother, the undercover patrolman Mancuso, and the wise-cracking Jones, who sweeps floors in a strip club, Ignatius stumbles from one adventure to another through the streets of New Orleans.

GROVE WEIDENFELD, 1987, 405 PAGES

ECONOMICS



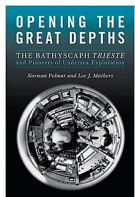
'FOOLPROOF'
By Greg Ip

Examining Risk and Reward

Is there such a thing as being too safe? Can you really make anything totally safe? This book explores these questions. Ip wanted to understand why financial collapses happen. That meant knowing how risk works everywhere. In numerous activities, he shows the perception of why risk may be more important in assuring safety than actual riskiness. He also shows that overemphasis on safety leads to stagnation. Some risk is necessary.

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY, 2015, 336 PAGES

HISTORY



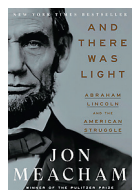
'OPENING THE GREAT DEPTHS'
By Norman Polmar and Lee J. Mathers

To the Uttermost Depths and Back

As humans first reached toward space, they also sought the ocean's uttermost depths, arriving at those depths before those heights. The authors tell that story with this history of Trieste, fitting the deep-diving research vessel into historical context. Concepts developed for high-altitude balloons were used to create the ocean-plumbing balloon. Informative, entertaining, and fascinating, this book will captivate readers.

NAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS, 2021, 304 PAGES

BIOGRAPHY



'AND THERE WAS LIGHT'
By Jon Meacham

Rousing a Nation's Conscience

Humble and honorable, hated and hailed,

Abraham Lincoln took the helm in 1861 at a time when America was at war with itself. His was a complex rise to power. Illuminating and well-researched, this is an engaging human portrait of a legendary president, revealing his vices and virtues and ultimately his defining voice for justice.

RANDOM HOUSE, 2022, 720 PAGES

CLASSICS



'SOCRATES'
By Paul Johnson

The Father of Philosophy

For anyone seeking to explore the philosophy of Socrates as given to us by Plato, here's a wonderful companion for that journey. Johnson presents us with the man who was brave in battle; loved his native Athens; took delight in dialogue; was passionate about education, virtue, and leading a good life; and is considered one of the wisest people ever to grace the planet. Many of us know how Socrates died, but few know how he lived. "Let us meet him," writes Johnson, who endeavors in this book to make that introduction.

PENGUIN BOOKS, 2012, 224 PAGES

FOR KIDS



'MEN OF IRON'
By Howard Pyle

A Classic Story of Courage

Young readers follow Myles Falworth through his quest to become a knight and restore his family's reputation. Pyle's 1891 illustrations and writing accurately depict medieval training, chivalry, and ceremonies. This book is suitable for grades six and up.

INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED, 2021, 232 PAGES



'A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES'
By Robert Louis Stevenson and illustr. by Tasha Tudor

A Foundational Classic

This simply wonderful classic collection of poems is a must-have for every child's home library. Paired with the lovely illustrations of the late Tasha Tudor, this edition is a treasure. This book makes a great gift.

SIMON & SCHUSTER BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS REISSUE, 1999, 67 PAGES



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

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature a refreshing, quirky dramedy about a wannabe astronaut and an animated family blockbuster about a fish and his son.

NEW RELEASE



'Linoleum' (2023)

▶ Cameron Edwin (Jim Gaffigan) is a good-natured man who always wanted to be an astronaut but ended up hosting a kid's science program instead. Now Cameron's job and marriage are in jeopardy. But when a satellite lands in his backyard, events begin to occur that lead to positive changes.

Get ready for the unexpected, as this dramedy defies many of the feel-good movie tropes and delivers a relatively unique storyline. It conveys positive messages that have to do with the importance of family and never giving up on one's dreams.

COMEDY | DRAMA | SCI-FI

Release Date:
Feb. 24, 2023 (limited)

Director:
Colin West

Starring:
Jim Gaffigan, Rhea Seehorn, Katelyn Nacon

Running Time:
1 hour, 41 minutes

MPAA Rating:
Not Rated

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★★★★★

AN ACTIONER ABOUT DEFENDING THE WEAK



'Guns for San Sebastian' (1968)

▶ In the mid-18th century, a priest named Father Joseph (Sam Jaffe) helps wanted fugitive Leon Alastray (Anthony

Quinn) hide from authorities. But when tragedy strikes, Alastray decides to become altruistic himself.

This slow-burn actioner features strong performances by its

excellent cast, fine direction, and a memorable score by legendary Italian composer Ennio Morricone.

ACTION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA

Release Date:
March 20, 1968

Director:
Henri Verneuil

Starring:
Anthony Quinn, Anjanette Comer, Charles Bronson

Running Time:
1 hour, 51 minutes

MPAA Rating: G

Where to Watch:
DirecTV

★★★★★

FAMILY PICK

'Finding Nemo' (2003)

▶ When young clownfish Nemo (Alexander Gould) is captured by scuba divers, his father Marlin (Albert Brooks) sallies forth to find him. Marlin soon meets the friendly yet forgetful fish Dory (Ellen DeGeneres), and together they face many challenges in the deep blue sea in their rescue mission.

This charming computer-animated adventure is filled with incredible visuals, a peppy pace, charming characters, challenging adversaries, and lots of humorous



situations. It's one of the better Disney-Pixar productions and a family favorite.

ANIMATION | ADVENTURE | COMEDY

Release Date:
May 30, 2003

Directors:
Andrew Stanton, Lee Unkrich (co-director)

Starring:
Albert Brooks (voice), Ellen DeGeneres (voice), Alexander Gould (voice)

Running Time:
1 hour, 40 minutes

MPAA Rating: G

Where to Watch:
DirecTV, Vudu, Starz

★★★★★

A BIOPIC ON A RACING RIVALRY

'Rush' (2013)

▶ This is a dramatization of the intense real-life rivalry between two race car drivers during the 1970s—cheeky Brit James Hunt (Chris Hemsworth) and Austrian precisionist Niki Lauda (Daniel Brühl). As the two vie for a world title, Lauda gets into an accident and must harness his willpower to survive.

This biopic captures the fierce struggle between its subjects and is aided by a strong cast, immersive sound design, and skilled



cinematography. It's a highly inspiring tale of passion and perseverance.

ACTION | BIOGRAPHY | DRAMA

Release Date:
Sept. 27, 2013

Director:
Ron Howard

Starring:
Daniel Brühl, Chris Hemsworth, Olivia Wilde

Running Time:
2 hours, 3 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Vudu, Netflix, Redbox

★★★★★

Courageous Reporting

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



CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

ON MAY 25, 2017, The Epoch Times published an article headlined “Despite Allegations, No Evidence of Trump–Russia Collusion Found.” The article detailed that—despite a media frenzy at the time—no actual evidence had been uncovered that President Donald Trump or anyone associated with his campaign had colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.



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

NOT ONLY DID WE NOT BUY INTO the false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia, but we have also been a leader in reporting on the irregular and apparently politicized nature of the FBI’s investigation of the Trump campaign. During the past five years, we have published dozens 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.



Opera Etiquette Tips

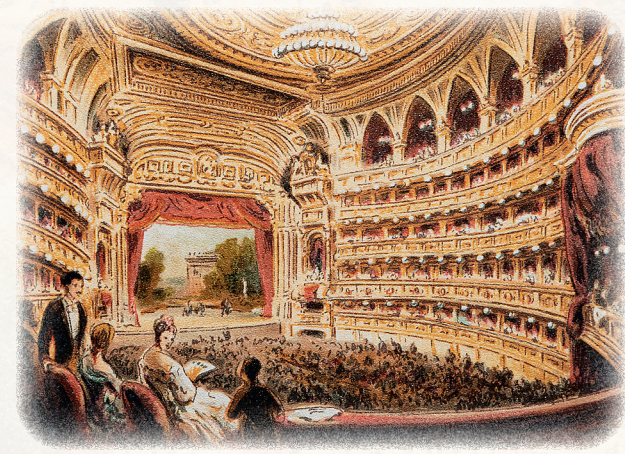
How to Behave When the Curtain Goes Up

You don’t need to be a full-fledged devotee of the arts to enjoy an opera, with many communities offering performances geared toward the entire family. For those new to the opera, here are a few etiquette tips.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Budget-Friendly Tickets

Afternoon matinees are a great way to enjoy an opera when an evening performance isn’t convenient or simply as a way to save a little money on tickets. The performance is exactly the same as that seen by the audience later that evening, but the dress code is relaxed, and it isn’t uncommon to see more children in attendance. If you insist on wearing shorts, choose nice ones instead of cutoffs, and choose a collared shirt rather than a T-shirt.



4 Dressed to the Nines

Most of us rarely have an opportunity to dress glamorously, so consider making a night at the opera even more memorable by wearing your tuxedo or a favorite but infrequently worn gown, accented with a few choice pieces of jewelry. It simply isn’t possible to be overdressed at the opera. A glance around the lobby will reveal that for at least several of those in attendance, “dressing to impress” may well play as large of a part as the actual performance in their opera experience.

2 Enjoy Quietly

It’s understandable to be captivated by the drama and excitement of a live performance, but in order to avoid disturbing those seated around you, or even possibly the performers, resist the urge to talk to your date. However, it’s perfectly acceptable to laugh; many operas have comedic scenes that are intended to provoke laughter. As soon as you take your seat, turn your phone off—not just mute, which still allows the screen to light up and distract others.

3 Enjoy the Pre-Show Activities

Arriving early lets you explore the opera house, enjoy a snack in the lobby, and perhaps sit in on a pre-show discussion in which a cast member will provide a synopsis of the opera or answer questions about the performance and the actors. On a related note, because not everyone speaks French, German, or Italian, a growing number of opera houses utilize unobtrusive subtitle-style displays above the stage to provide translations of the dialogue, allowing for a better appreciation of the performance.

5 Basic Etiquette

Be in your assigned seat no less than 15 minutes prior to the start of the performance, placing your jacket or other belongings on your lap or under your seat. Resist the urge to sneak snacks to your seat in a purse or jacket pocket or to bring food from the lobby into the seating area. In addition to possibly creating a mess, the sounds of eating and drinking can disturb those seated around you.

CSA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

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“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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