

EPOCH INSIGHT



**WHO WILL
TAKE THE
STAGE?**

By John Haughey

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WEEK 28, 2023

Who Will Take the Stage?

THE FIRST REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL debate will be held on Aug. 23 in Milwaukee, and while some candidates are scrambling to meet the requirements, the leader in current polling is threatening to be a no-show.

Former President Donald Trump has threatened not to participate in the Milwaukee debate or in a second one that’s slated for California.

Meanwhile, other candidates are trying, dollar by dollar, to secure the 40,000 unique campaign donors needed to make the stage. The Republican National Committee has also set two other requirements: that candidates receive 1 percent or more support in enough qualifying polls and that they sign a pledge to support the party’s nominee.

Of the 14 GOP presidential candidates, at least six look likely to qualify for the debate, with Fox News’ Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum set to moderate.

Read this week’s cover story by Epoch Times reporter John Haughey to find out more about each candidate’s status and who is likely to make the cut.

Jasper Fakkert

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief



ON THE COVER

With around one month to go, which of the candidates will qualify for the first GOP presidential debate on Aug. 23?

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EPOCH INSIGHT

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SPOTLIGHT

Government Collapse

OUTGOING DUTCH PRIME MINISTER Mark Rutte (R) speaks with Christian Union Member Mirjam Bikker (center L) at the House of Representatives in The Hague, Netherlands, on July 10. Mr. Rutte, the longest-serving leader of the Netherlands, announced on July 10 that he would quit. The Dutch government collapsed on July 7 after failing to reach a deal on restricting immigration, which will trigger new elections in the fall. The crisis was triggered when two of the four parties in the coalition government refused to support a push by Mr. Rutte's conservative VVD party to limit the flow of illegal immigrants.

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NATION • WORLD • WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Week 28

The Week

Then-President John F. Kennedy and then-first lady Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy walk down the steps of Air Force One less than an hour before his assassination, at Love Field in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

PHOTO BY JFK LIBRARY/THE WHITE HOUSE/CECIL STOUGHTON/FILE PHOTO VIA REUTERS



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“The blatant misuse of warrantless surveillance powers targeting Americans’ communications should not be accepted.”

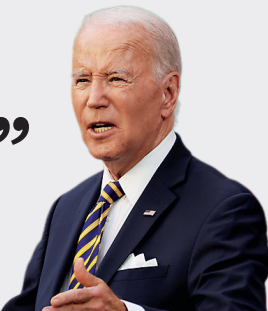


Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.), who is leading a Republican effort to abolish the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which is due for reauthorization at the end of the year

3%
The U.S. annual inflation rate slowed to 3 percent in June, the lowest reading since March 2021, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“We’re going to help Ukraine build a strong capable defense, across land, air, and sea.”

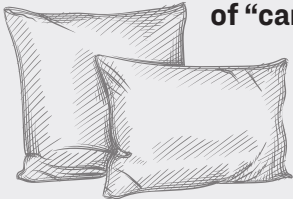
President Joe Biden, at the NATO summit in Lithuania about Ukraine’s desire to join the alliance



100 MILLION
More than 100 million Americans across the southern United States were under heatwave alerts on July 13, according to the National Weather Service.

\$100 MILLION

MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell says his company lost \$100 million because of “cancel culture,” after multiple major retailers pulled his company’s products off their shelves because of his vocal support for former President Donald Trump.



14%
Municipalities that increased minimum wages by up to \$2.50 per hour from 2013 to 2018 saw an average increase of 14 percent in homelessness compared to those with no such change, according to a study.

10,000 BABIES—Texas’s ban on most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy has saved nearly 10,000 babies over a nine-month period, according to a research analysis.



A Bank of America Corporate Center in Charlotte, N.C., in this file photo.

BANKING
Bank of America to Pay \$250 Million in Restitution, Penalties

BANK OF AMERICA will have to pay more than \$100 million to customers for doubling up on some fees, withholding reward bonuses, and opening accounts without customer consent, the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) said in a statement. Separately, the bank will have to pay some \$90 million in penalties to the bureau and \$60 million in penalties to the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. One of the most commonly used banks in the United States, North Carolina-based Bank of America serves some 68 million people and small-business clients, and had \$2.4 trillion in consolidated assets and \$1.9 trillion in domestic deposits as of March 31. It’s the second-largest bank in the country after JPMorgan Chase.

WHITE HOUSE
Secret Service Refuses to Hand Over Records Regarding Cocaine in White House

THE U.S. SECRET SERVICE has refused to comply with a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for records relating to the cocaine that was recently found in the White House, citing the potential for interference in an ongoing investigation. Bloomberg Business investigative reporter Jason Leopold’s FOIA request asked for information such as emails, text messages, memos, intelligence bulletins and threat assessments, after-action reports, and suspicious activity reporting regarding the cocaine found in the West Wing of the White House on July 2. The Secret Service states that the requested information could potentially “interfere with enforcement proceedings.”



A substance that tested positive for cocaine was found in the White House library on July 2.

TECHNOLOGY
Elon Musk Launches New Company ‘xAI’ With a Cryptic Mission

TWITTER CEO ELON MUSK has announced that he’s forming a new artificial intelligence company called xAI. Mr. Musk made the announcement in a brief tweet, in which he didn’t elaborate on the details of the new venture except to say that its aim is to “understand reality.” The Twitter chief also shared a link to the new venture’s Twitter page and its website, which states that its objective is to “understand the true nature of the universe.”



Tesla CEO Elon Musk attends an event in Paris on June 16.

SOCIAL SECURITY
Social Security Insolvent in 10 Years Unless Congress Acts, CBO Director Says

THE TWO TRUST FUNDS that undergird Social Security will have a zero balance in 10 years, forcing a 25 percent reduction in payments to all beneficiaries, Phillip Swagel, director of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, told Congress. The Social Security program includes two trust funds, Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance, which provide 25 percent of the payments made to beneficiaries. Both funds will be exhausted by 2034, according to Mr. Swagel, leaving only revenue from payroll taxes to supply benefits. That will mean an immediate 25 percent cut in benefits the day the money runs out.



A robot equipped with artificial intelligence welcomes visitors in Geneva on July 6.

INTERNATIONAL

27 Percent of Jobs at High Risk From Artificial Intelligence Advances, OECD Says

THE ORGANIZATION for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says that more than a quarter of jobs in its member countries rely on skills that could be easily automated in the coming “artificial intelligence revolution.”

The OECD is a 38-member bloc, spanning mostly wealthy nations but including some emerging economies such as Mexico and Estonia.

While there is little evidence the emergence of AI is having a significant effect on jobs so far, that may be because the technology is in its early stages, the OECD said. Jobs with the highest risk of being automated make up 27 percent of the labor force on average in OECD countries, with eastern European countries most exposed.

Meanwhile, 3 out of 5 workers fear they could lose their job to AI over the next 10 years, an OECD survey found last year.

CHINA

Hong Kong Slashes Number of Directly Elected Seats on Council

THE HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL approved an amendment to a law to eliminate most directly elected seats on local district councils, the last major political representative bodies chosen by the public, reducing the percentage of directly elected (by popular vote) seats to only 20 percent of the total.

The revised composition of the local councils will almost certainly return Chinese Communist Party-controlled factions to the majority across all councils.

The number of directly elected seats has been dramatically reduced to 88 from the current 452. The remainder of the 470 total seats will be appointed by the chief executive, rural committee chairpersons, and local committees.

CANADA

RCMP Investigating 70 Alleged Sex Assaults at Nova Scotia Youth Jail

THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE is investigating at least 70 cases of sexual assault at a youth detention facility in Nova Scotia’s Annapolis Valley.

The alleged assaults occurred at the Nova Scotia Youth Centre in Waterville, between 1988 and 2017, the RCMP told a news conference, adding that all 70 initial cases involved males.

Const. Shannon Herbert said that based on the investigation to date, police expect there are up to 200 people who may come forward to make statements.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE

FBI Helped Ukraine’s Intel Service Flag US Government Account: House Report

A VERIFIED U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT account got caught up in a Ukrainian intelligence effort to suppress alleged Russian disinformation on social media, according to a report by the House Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government.

According to the committee’s report, the Security Service of Ukraine forwarded to the FBI lists of social media accounts it said had “spread Russian disinformation.” The Ukrainian intelligence service asked the FBI to pass along these lists of social media accounts to their contacts with big tech companies in Silicon Valley, and, according to the House report, the FBI complied.



“The FBI worked with and on behalf of a foreign intelligence agency,” the House report says.

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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 United States occupied with at least four global adversaries.

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The Week in Photos

(Right) A man walks past debris from a flooded road in Kurume, Japan, on July 10. Heavy rains hit the area, killing one person.



(Above) A couple poses near a giant clock at the Musee d'Orsay in Paris on July 9.



(Above) A Kenya Police officer shoots a tear gas canister to disperse people who gathered to protest against the government over the high cost of living, in Nairobi on July 12.



(Left) Young farmers and their sheep participate in the Kent County Show, a three-day agricultural event, in Maidstone, England, on July 8.

(Left) Billowing smoke and flowing lava emerge from a volcanic eruption near Litli Hrutur, Iceland, on July 10. This is the third time in two years that lava has flowed in the area.



(Left) A demonstrator speaks on a megaphone as he marches along with others during a protest against the Israeli government's judicial overhaul bill, outside the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv on July 11.

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L: KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, SERGEI GAPON/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES, LUIS TAJO/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES, DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES, KRISTINN MAGNUSSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

WHO WILL TAKE THE STAGE?

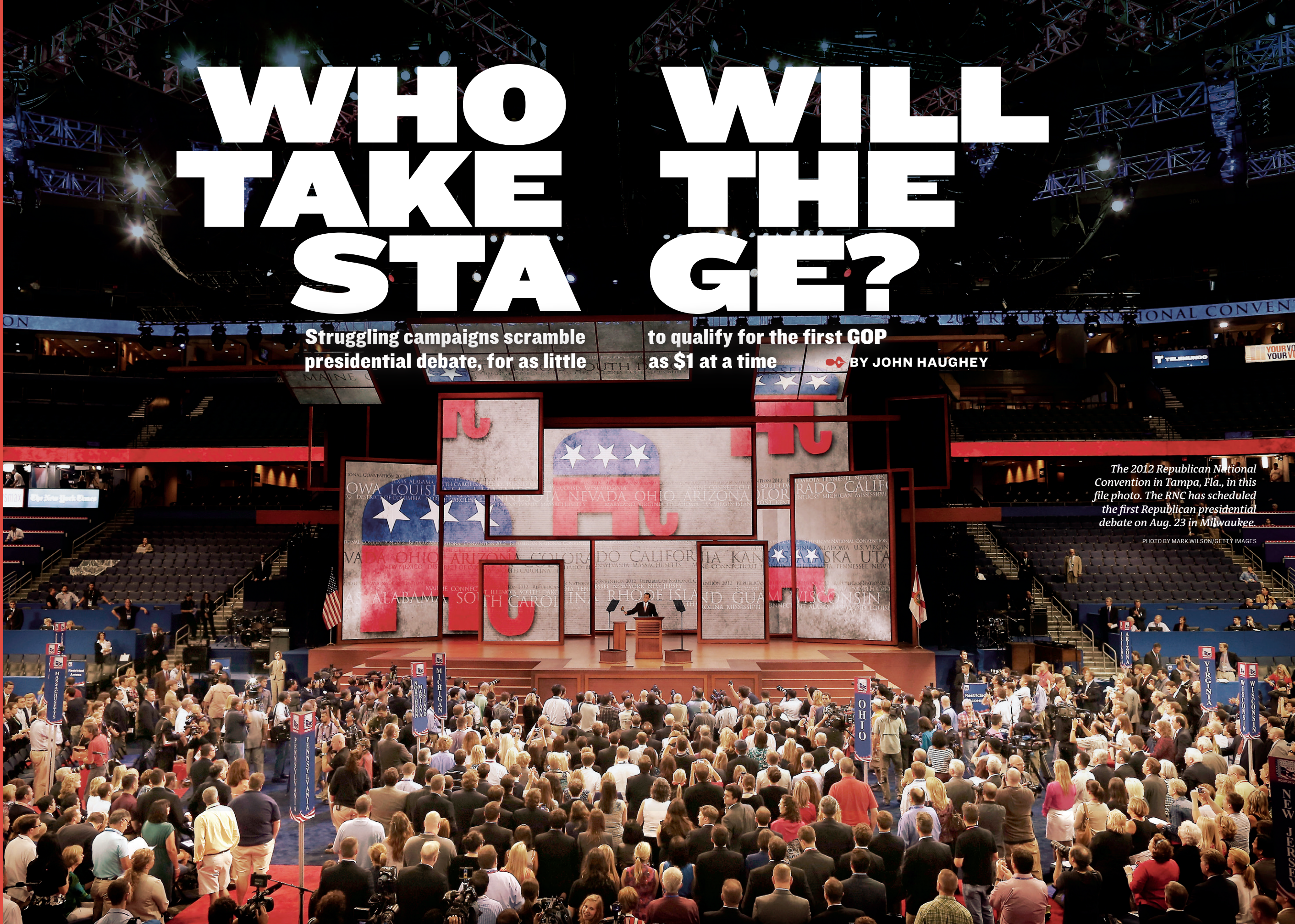
Struggling campaigns scramble
presidential debate, for as little

to qualify for the first GOP
as \$1 at a time

BY JOHN HAUGHEY

The 2012 Republican National
Convention in Tampa, Fla., in this
file photo. The RNC has scheduled
the first Republican presidential
debate on Aug. 23 in Milwaukee.

PHOTO BY MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES



The Republican National Committee says the threshold requirements of the debate are a precursory ‘success metric’ to weed out marginal campaigns.

AFTER NEARLY SIX months of grueling state primaries, one presidential candidate will be formally confirmed as the GOP’s 2024 nominee during the Republican National Convention, to be held July 15–18, 2024, in Milwaukee.

But while there’s still a year of campaigning between now and then, another far more pressing timeline is posing an existential challenge for as many as half of the 14 candidates in the race.

There’s a little more than a month left to qualify for the first Republican presidential debate on Aug. 23 in Milwaukee, and campaigns for several lesser-known candidates are scrambling to meet required polling numbers and to collect the 40,000 individual campaign donors needed to make the stage.

At least one candidate, former Texas Rep. Will Hurd, who only started his long-shot campaign in late June, has also balked at a third Republican National Committee (RNC) debate requirement: Participants must sign an oath pledging to support the party’s candidate regardless of who it is in the Nov. 5, 2024, election.

Other candidates, including former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, and former President Donald Trump, have also either criticized or been noncommittal about signing the pledge.

And, of course, the viability of the

whole 2024 RNC presidential debate program is in doubt in terms of its reach and appeal if Mr. Trump follows through with his threat to not participate in the Milwaukee debate or a second one tentatively set to be held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California.

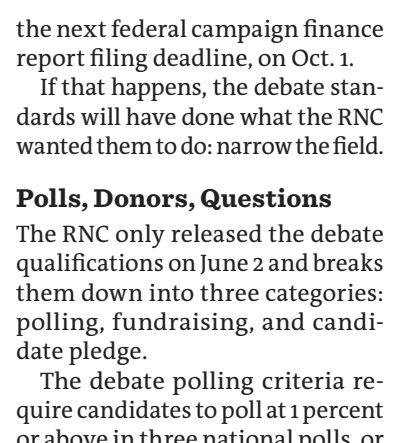
At least one Trump opponent doubts that will be the case. “The only thing bigger than Trump’s mouth is his ego & neither will let him skip a debate,” Mr. Christie wrote on Twitter on July 4. “He’ll be on the stage and so will I.”

Mr. Christie is likely to meet the criteria to make the Aug. 23 stage, as are Mr. Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.), former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Hailey, and tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy.

But as many as seven other candidates’ campaigns may fall short. On the bubble are the campaigns for Mr. Hutchinson, conservative talk show host Larry Elder, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

Unlikely to qualify for the debate are Michigan businessman Perry Johnson, Texas entrepreneur Ryan Binkley, and Mr. Hurd, who has disqualified himself anyway by saying he won’t sign the loyalty pledge.

Failing to qualify for the first debate and gain the national exposure from being on that stage could be the death knell for several long-shot campaigns; several candidate are likely to withdraw from the race after that first debate and before



the next federal campaign finance report filing deadline, on Oct. 1.

If that happens, the debate standards will have done what the RNC wanted them to do: narrow the field.

Polls, Donors, Questions

The RNC only released the debate qualifications on June 2 and breaks them down into three categories: polling, fundraising, and candidate pledge.

The debate polling criteria require candidates to poll at 1 percent or above in three national polls, or 1 percent in two national polls and 1 percent in one of the four early Republican primary states—Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina.

Several campaigns say the criteria are confusing, especially a stipulation requiring them to verify that at least “800 registered likely Republican voters” participated in a survey before it can be accepted by the RNC. ♦

(Top Row, L–R) Former President Donald Trump, former Vice President Mike Pence, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Hailey, and Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.).

(Middle Row, L–R) Tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, conservative talk show host Larry Elder, and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.

(Above Row, L–R) Former Texas Rep. Will Hurd, Texas entrepreneur Ryan Binkley, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, and Michigan businessman Perry Johnson.

(TOP ROW, L–R) SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES, ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES, LOGAN CYRUS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES. (MIDDLE ROW, L–R) WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES, LOGAN CYRUS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES, SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS. (ABOVE ROW, L–R) WILLBHURD.COM, THEWAYTOFREEDOM.ORG, MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES, PERRYJOHNSON.ORG



Supporters of former President Donald Trump in Smyrna, Ga., on March 30.

Mr. Burgum's and Mr. Suarez's campaigns are among those that say the rule unfairly penalizes candidates who don't have prominent name recognition beyond their states.

The polls must be conducted between July 1 and Aug. 21, two days before the first debate.

The fundraising qualification requires candidates to garner at least 40,000 "unique" donors, including at least 200 unique donors from 20 or more states and territories. Several candidates, such as Mr. Burgum and Mr. Johnson, could self-finance much of their campaigns but may struggle to capture the 40,000 individual donor mark.

The RNC and Chair Ronna McDaniel have defended the threshold requirements as a precursory "success metric" to weed out marginal campaigns and to avoid a repeat of 2016's two-tiered, two-night debates.

Although the idea is to get all candidates on the same stage at the same time, the RNC has nevertheless scheduled a second night of debate for Aug. 24 in case there are too many to squeeze onto the stage.

Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Elder are among candidates who insist that the polling and donor requirements are too burdensome this early in a campaign.

But the RNC notes that if a candidate cannot garner a donation—even for as

\$1

Donating as little as \$1 would make an individual a "unique" donor counting toward the debate prerequisite.

14

CANDIDATES

There are 14 GOP presidential candidates in the 2024 election.

40,000
DONORS

Each GOP presidential candidate is required to collect 40,000 individual campaign donors to qualify for the first Republican presidential debate.

7

CANDIDATES

As many as seven candidates' campaigns may fall short of the donor requirement before the first GOP presidential debate.

little as \$1—from 40,000 people when there were 2.5 million donors who gave in 2022 to WinRed, the primary GOP fundraising platform, then maybe they don't belong in the 2024 race.

Taking the Vow

Only candidates who meet the polling and donor requirements will be required to sign the loyalty pledge by Aug. 21. They must also pledge to not participate in any non-RNC sanctioned debate for the remainder of the election cycle and to support a data-sharing agreement with the national party committee.

Ms. McDaniel has repeatedly issued statements in support of requiring debate participants to sign the loyalty pledge.

In February, she said it was a "no-brainer" measure to ensure that members of the party "all come together and unite behind [the GOP] nominee to defeat Joe Biden and the Democrats."

Mr. Hutchinson tried to convince the RNC to amend the pledge to say only that any candidate who doesn't get the party nod vows not to run a third-party campaign.

Mr. Christie backed that proposal, which was rejected by the RNC.

Mr. Christie told Axios in March that there was "no way" he'd sign such a pledge because he wouldn't want to support Mr. Trump and called it "a useless idea" during his CNN Town Hall, but he

has since said that he might sign it to get on the debate stage and ignore it later.

Mr. DeSantis has said he'd sign the pledge as a way to "respect the process" and "people's decisions."

Mr. Pence said during his CNN Town Hall that he'd sign the pledge despite previous comments that Mr. Trump's role in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach should disqualify him from the race.

Ms. Haley, Mr. Scott, Mr. Ramaswamy, Mr. Elder, Mr. Burgum, Mr. Suarez, and Mr. Johnson have all said they'd sign the pledge.

Mr. Trump said in February that whether he'll support the nominee depends on who it is.

\$1 Campaign Donation: Priceless

In an era of multimillion-dollar, nine-figure election campaigns, the race to garner 40,000 donors by Aug. 21 to get on the RNC's debate stage has some candidates providing \$1 donation buttons on their campaign and WinRed websites.

"I'm self-funding but the RNC is requiring a minimum of 40,000 donors to make the first debate stage in Milwaukee. We plan to be there but need a little help!" Mr. Johnson wrote on Twitter on June 7 after his campaign spent nearly \$28,000 on Facebook ads in early June. The ads promised that for \$1, donors could receive an "I stand with Tucker" T-shirt.

On Mr. Johnson's campaign's WinRed website, a \$1 donation will get you a copy of his book, "Two Cents to Save America."

Mr. Ramaswamy, whose campaign reported having at least 30,000 donors despite that he was largely unknown before joining the GOP race, continues to run Facebook ads seeking \$1 donations to "secure a prime spot" on the debate stage.

Mr. Hutchinson's WinRed campaign website includes a donation button with the message "Donate To Get Asa in the Debate! Please contribute just \$5 and help us qualify for the debates!" There is also a \$1 button on the donation panel.

Mr. Elder, Mr. Hurd, and Mr. Burgum also have \$1 donation ads on social media.

"If you haven't chipped in just \$1 yet, please do so now and help me qualify for the debate," Mr. Hurd wrote on Twitter as recently as July 3 and on Facebook on July 4 while campaigning in New Hampshire before saying he will not sign the pledge if he meets other debate criteria.

Mr. Burgum has the resources to self-fund, as he explained in a Grand Fork, North Dakota, stump stop, but he was using text messages to sell American flags for \$1 as a Fourth of July donor drive.

Mr. Binkley, the Dallas-area businessman and nondenominational pastor who remains a relative unknown despite campaigning heavily in Iowa and New Hampshire, is also soliciting \$1 donations from the "Binkley Brigade."

The Republican National Committee's rules require debate participants to sign an oath pledging to support the party's nominee, regardless of who it is in the Nov. 5, 2024, election. Some candidates haven't yet committed to signing the pledge.

"We need 40,000 unique donors to get in the debate. That means even \$1 makes a huge difference. Click the donate button at Binkley2024.com," his ads read.

The Suarez campaign is offering all sorts of deals for a buck.

On July 2, the Miami mayor wrote on Twitter, "Chip in just \$5 to help secure me a spot on the debate stage, and I'll send you a brand new American flag, on me."

His ItsTimeWeGetStarted.com campaign website features a similar appeal, with eight donation buttons ranging

from \$1 to \$3,300. His WinRed webpage provides a bouncing red \$1 button amid six blue buttons with donation amounts from \$10 to \$250.

On July 4, the Suarez campaign announced a new \$1 initiative. "Why buy a T-shirt for \$35 when you can get it for free? Chip in any amount through the link below and I'll send you a free Team Suarez T-shirt—and yes, \$1 donations count too!" it wrote.

Mr. Christie appears certain that he will qualify for the debate, and his campaign doesn't look to be seeking \$1 donations. Most of his social media posts contain something Mr. Trump has said on Truth Social or elsewhere about him with the former New Jersey governor and ally-turned-critic appearing unconcerned; he can be seen napping on a plane in several posts on Twitter.

"Living rent-free in Donald's head," many of Mr. Christie's ads say. "Make me a permanent resident. Donate today." ■



Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley greets supporters following her first campaign event in Charleston, S.C., on Feb. 15.

President Joe Biden gives a speech on launching his newly branded “Bidenomics,” at the Old Post Office in Chicago on June 28.

PHOTO BY ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/
AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ECONOMY

WHAT ‘BIDENOMICS’ REALLY MEANS

Advocates and critics debate big government, industrial policy, and centralized control

By Kevin Stocklin

BIDENOMICS BIDENOMICS

BIDENOMICS

WITH AN EYE TOWARD the 2024 presidential election, the White House has launched a new public relations campaign that it calls “Bidenomics,” to define President Joe Biden’s economic agenda.

“I don’t know what ... that is, but it’s working,” Mr. Biden stated at a June 17 union rally in Philadelphia, begging the question, what is Bidenomics, and is it working?

According to a White House statement, Bidenomics rests on three pillars: massive “smart” government spending on renewable energy and semiconductors, support for unions and domestic manufacturing, and promotion of competition. As a result, the White House states that “our economy has added more than 13 million jobs—including nearly 800,000 manufacturing jobs—and we’ve unleashed a manufacturing and clean energy boom.”

The Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science (CHIPS) Act of 2022 allocated \$280 billion in federal spending to bolster U.S. semiconductor manufacturing. The Infrastructure Act of 2021 allotted more than \$65 billion for “clean energy” projects, and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act set aside an additional \$394 billion for clean energy in the form of tax incentives, loans, and grants.

“I would define it as trickle-down big government,” Jonathan Williams, chief economist at the American Legislative Exchange Council, told The Epoch Times. “The common thread of this administration has been growth and expansion of government power, and certainly big government spending.”

According to White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, when Biden took office, “America’s industrial base had been hollowed out. The vision of public investment that had energized the American project in the postwar years—and indeed for much of our history—had faded.”

Mr. Sullivan, who, despite his focus on security issues, has become a spokesman for Bidenomics, has been highly critical of what has been called Reaganomics, or a platform of tax cuts, trade liberalization and deregulation.

“There was one assumption at the heart of all of this policy: that markets always allocate capital productively and efficiently,” Mr. Sullivan said during an April speech at the Brookings Institution.

“President Biden ... believes that building a 21st-century clean-energy economy is one of the most significant growth opportunities of the 21st century,” he said. “To harness that opportunity, America needs a deliberate, hands-on investment strategy to pull forward innovation, drive down costs, and create good jobs.”

Despite the administration’s argument that government is best positioned to direct private industry, some critics say that waste and failure are the hallmarks of government industrial policy.

Political Investors

“The government is not in the business of making good investments,” economist Arthur Laffer, a former adviser to Presidents Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump as well as to UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, told The Epoch Times. “That’s not what they should be doing.”

“These guys are not good investors; they’re political investors.”

The more the government seeks to influence the private sector, the more the private sector will orient itself toward producing what the government wants versus what consumers want.

“Bidenomics is nothing more than the application of government intervention to guide, direct and restructure the economy as the White House thinks it should be structured,” Steve H. Hanke, an economics professor at Johns Hopkins University, told The Epoch Times.

“This type of interventionism flies under the rubric of ‘industrial policy.’ It’s where government picks winners and losers by using levers of government policy, like taxes, subsidies, regulations, tariffs, quotas, and even outright bans.”

Recent examples of government ventures into private industry include Solyndra, a California maker of solar

panels that received \$535 million in federal loan guarantees from the Obama administration before going bankrupt.

Under Bidenomics, automakers are being pushed by a combination of consumer subsidies, manufacturing grants, and ever-tightening emissions regulations to switch their production to electric vehicles (EV) from gasoline-powered cars and trucks. However, there is scant evidence that enough consumers will switch to EVs to justify the investments, that carmakers will be able to source enough lithium, cobalt, and other minerals to build EV batteries in large quantities, or that the U.S. electric grid can build enough new generation capacity and connect enough charging stations to charge EVs at scale.

At the same time, the Biden administration is working to reduce domestic production of oil, gas, and coal in favor of wind and solar, with the same supply issues that automakers face. The required minerals for wind turbines and solar panels are typically mined in countries that may not be friendly to the United States, and it has created a heavy dependence on China, which controls most of the refining of those minerals.

“Bidenomics is nothing new,” according to Mr. Hanke, who served on Reagan’s Council of Economic Advisors. “Advocates of industrial policy in the 1980s used to latch onto Japan as a model for industrial policy, arguing that it contributed to Japan’s emergence as an economic power after World War II.

“But since the last three lost decades in Japan, the industrial policy advocates have gone radio silent,” Mr. Hanke said. “It’s hard to imagine a more misguided way to make decisions than to put them in the hands of those who pay no price for being wrong.”

Trillions in New Spending

To date, the Biden administration has overseen more than \$4 trillion in new spending, of which \$1.6 trillion was passed by Congress on a partisan basis,

76%

A SURVEY IN May found that 76 percent of Americans had a negative view of President Joe Biden’s economic policies.

\$16

TRILLION “UNDER THE President’s FY 2023 budget, the debt would be allowed to grow by \$16 trillion over 10 years,” according to the Congressional Budget Office.



The Biden administration is working to reduce domestic production of oil, gas, and coal in favor of wind and solar, spending hundreds of billions on “clean energy” projects and funds.

\$1.4 trillion was passed on a bipartisan basis, and another \$1.1 trillion came from Biden’s executive actions. Despite this spending, the White House claimed in March that “the President’s Budget improves the fiscal outlook by reducing the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade.”

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) sees it differently, however.

“Under the President’s FY 2023 budget, the debt would be allowed to grow by \$16 trillion over 10 years, or \$50,000 of debt per American citizen,” the CBO reported in March. “Under CBO’s current projections, the gross federal debt would increase from \$31 trillion today (123 percent of GDP) to \$52 trillion (132 percent of GDP) in 2033.”

“Probably the worst part of Bidenomics is the enormous increase in spending,” Mr. Laffer said. “I never could have

guessed anyone would have overspent like that.

“If you look at the national debt-to-GDP or any other measure, it’s gone way, way up. This is an egregious reversal of what would be good economics.”

Tax Policy Under Biden

“Forty years of handing out excessive tax cuts to the wealthy and big corporations had been a bust,” Mr. Biden stated. By contrast, Bidenomics “is about building an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, not the top down.”

While most of the tax hikes that Mr. Biden called for have so far failed to get through Congress, critics argue that Americans have experienced significant tax hikes nonetheless, due to another economic phenomenon to carry the president’s name: Bidenflation.

“The inflation that has come in under

Biden has pushed capital gains tax rates way up, because we have illusory capital gains that are now subject to capital gains taxation,” Mr. Laffer said. Because of inflation, he said, the nominal value of assets has increased dramatically, even though in terms of purchasing power “it’s the same thing.”

This results in a “tax on the illusory capital gains,” he said. Inflation has also pushed Americans into higher income tax brackets, despite the fact that wage gains have often failed to keep up with rising prices, leaving Americans poorer but facing higher tax liabilities.

“If you look at the corporate rate, it’s still what it was when Trump left; and as you look at the personal income tax rates, 37 percent is still the highest,” Mr. Laffer said. “But if you look at all the inflation-induced tax rate increases, they’ve been quite substantial.”

And this is in addition to the effective tax of inflation itself, which drives up the cost of goods and services as the dollar loses its value. Inflation was cited as the main reason why 76 percent of Americans polled in an Associated Press–University of Chicago survey in May had a negative view of Mr. Biden’s economic policies.

“There’s nothing that can bring the economy to its knees faster, and more damagingly, than an unhinged paper currency and high inflation,” Mr. Laffer said.

Under Bidenomics, the White House asserts that “America has seen the strongest growth since the pandemic of any leading economy in the world. Inflation has fallen for 11 straight months and has come down by more than half.”

As is often the case with statistics, however, the time period that you consider colors what the numbers show. While the official inflation rate, according to the consumer price index (CPI), came down from a high of 9.1 percent in June 2022 to the current rate of about 4 percent, it remains well above pre-pandemic levels of below 2 percent.

Many attribute escalating prices to unprecedented levels of government spending, coupled with policies that discouraged the production of oil and gas, driving up the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel, fertilizer, food, and transportation, although the Biden administration has blamed the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The story is similar to economic growth under Biden. After U.S. GDP fell by 2.8 percent in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and government lockdowns, America’s economy

roared back to a positive 5.9 percent GDP growth in 2021 once lockdowns were lifted and businesses rushed to rehire laid-off workers.

Following this burst, however, the United States has underperformed against most other industrialized countries. While the average global GDP growth rate for 2022 was 3.1 percent, according to the World Bank, the U.S. GDP growth rate in 2022, at 2.1 percent, lagged behind the rest of the world. Among “leading economies,” the UK’s GDP grew by 4.1 percent; France’s by 2.6 percent; Sweden’s by 2.6 percent; Spain’s by 5.5 percent; Mexico’s by 3.1 percent; and Canada’s by 3.4 percent. Germany, at 1.8 percent, was one of the few industrialized countries that underperformed the United States.

Notably, GDP also includes government spending, which has hit record levels under the Biden administration.

Employment Remains a Bright Spot

According to the White House statement, “under Bidenomics, the unemployment rate fell below 4%,” and the abundance of jobs is certainly one of the bright spots of the current economy. However, critics say there are clouds here as well.

The labor participation rate, which is the percentage of able-bodied people seeking work, hit a high mark just above 67 percent in the year 2000. It fell to a low of 62.5 percent in 2015, before climbing back to 63.3 percent in 2020 under Trump. It then plummeted to 60 percent during the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently at 62.6 percent under the Biden administration, the

same level as it was during the Obama administration.

Many blame an expansion of social programs and unemployment benefits for the number of Americans leaving the labor market. This also makes the unemployment rate seem lower because those who aren’t seeking work aren’t counted in unemployment statistics.

“Encouraging people not to work has reduced the unemployment rate, that’s true,” Mr. Laffer said. “It’s also reduced the participation rate. It’s reduced both the employment rate and the unemployment rate, which is the antithesis of what we want in a healthy economy.”

Gravy Train for the Super-Rich

Mr. Biden claimed that tax cutting under Reagan benefitted only the rich and “hollowed out the middle class.” By contrast, a central pillar of Bidenomics is “empowering and educating workers to grow the middle class,” according to the White House statement.

But some economists argue that the president has it backwards, that government intervention makes the private economy even more of an insider game at the expense of everyday Americans.

“The one thing we know for certain about big government and more government spending is that it provides a gravy train for the super-rich, rent-seeking class,” Mr. Hanke said.

“The surge in government spending over the last five years has resulted in a huge jump in U.S. billionaires’ wealth, from 15 [percent] to 18 percent of GDP. So much for the equity arguments that are draped over Bidenomics.”

“The best way to make profits today in the private sector is to lobby the government for a contract or a regulation to help you,” Mr. Laffer said. “If you tell a business that was profit-focused that you can make the most profits by lobbying government, of course, they’re going to do that.”

Regulation and Centralized Authority

The other major component of Bidenomics is a sharp increase in government regulation. This includes new draconian emissions regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency, new appliance regulations from the Depart-



The more the government seeks to influence the private sector, the more the private sector will orient itself toward producing what the government wants versus what consumers want, an economist says.

ment of Energy, and new Securities and Exchange requirements for producing audited reports on CO2 emissions for all listed companies.

A June report by the Committee to Unleash Prosperity estimated that the added costs of new Biden administration regulations, “which include both their current and expected future costs, amount to almost \$10,000 per household.” By contrast, the Trump administration reduced regulatory costs on Americans by \$11,000 per household, according to the study.

The report stated that, as reported by federal agencies themselves, the cost of new regulations that they were implementing under the Biden administration totaled \$173 billion per year, although the report estimated that the costs were actually much higher, at \$616 billion per year.

Beyond costs, critics charge that the current administration has been particularly aggressive in attempting to centralize authority within federal agencies at the expense of local government.

“One of our greatest criticisms of this administration’s policy agenda is that



“The government is not in the business of making good investments. ... These guys are not good investors; they’re political investors.”

Arthur Laffer, economist

everything has the common thread of trying to federalize decisions in Washington, and central government versus allowing the states to compete with each other,” Mr. Williams said.

He said that the Biden administration

is “changing the incentive structure for many states in favor of a big government agenda.”

Historically, U.S. states have been free to compete with each other on policies, and this has allowed for experimentation in terms of what works best. Businesses and workers typically respond by investing in and relocating to states that provide the most attractive conditions in terms of living costs, tax rates, regulations, and quality of life, and the past several years has seen a flood out of progressive states such as California, New York, and Illinois, in favor of conservative states such as Texas and Florida.

“[Mr. Biden’s] policy agenda has been to undermine state autonomy and federalism wherever possible, whether that is federalizing elections, banning state right-to-work laws [or] telling states you can’t cut taxes if you take federal bailout dollars,” Mr. Williams said. “The Biden administration has flooded state budgets with unprecedented amounts of federal aid.

“While that federal aid is temporary, the strings that are attached to it are not temporary.” ■



Under Bidenomics, automakers are being pushed to switch their production to electric vehicles (EV) from gasoline-powered cars and trucks.

CLOCKWISE FROM L: MICHAEL M. SANTAGO/GETTY IMAGES; MADALINA VASILIU/THE EPOCH TIMES; WINNAN/ANNE/GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP UNVEILS AMERICAN

FUTURISTIC BLUEPRINT

By Janice Hisle & Nathan Worcester

*Former president's
Quantum Leap plan
involves 'freedom
cities' and flying cars*

Former President Donald Trump arrives at his first rally since announcing his 2024 presidential campaign, at the Waco Regional Airport in Waco, Texas, on March 25.

PHOTO BY BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, WHO made his fortune as a real-estate magnate, is tapping into that background to chart the future of the United States.

While making his third run for the U.S. presidency, he released a proposal that fell outside of conventional campaign rhetoric.

Mr. Trump said that if he's elected, his plan will propel the nation into a new era of economic development, innovation, and prosperity.

He said he envisions 10 gleaming new "Freedom Cities" rising on now-vacant federal land, with so-called flying cars transporting people and goods as new manufacturing centers churn out products in the United States instead of overseas.

Those are among the desired outcomes of his "Quantum Leap" plan. Supporters are excited about those possibilities. But several experts dismiss the proposal as unrealistic.

Still, even skeptics commend Mr. Trump for "thinking big," countering Republican opponent Chris Christie's recent contention that Mr. Trump has fostered "small" thinking in the United States.

Some who doubt the plan's feasibility concede that it sets a forward-looking agenda and tries to address the nation's shortage of affordable housing—a growing problem.

But Mr. Trump's supporters say they're confident that his plan will boost Americans' standard of living if he secures a second term in the 2024 election.

Jason Meister, a New Yorker who serves on Mr. Trump's campaign advisory board, said the Quantum Leap proposal will "reignite American imagination."

He said he sees Mr. Trump as a visionary and that he's the only candidate strongly emphasizing "American exceptionalism," the belief that the United States is the world's greatest nation, a land of opportunity, freedom, and innovation.

"Trump 2.0 means nothing less than a complete disruption of the existing political order," Mr. Meister said.

Mr. Meister and other Trump advisers spoke with The Epoch Times about the potential they see for the Quantum Leap plan. The Epoch Times also interviewed experts who weighed the proposal's pros and cons.

Forging Ahead

Although Mr. Trump is dogged by two criminal cases and a host of other simmering legal woes, he's currently the frontrunner to become the Republican Party's nominee.

If he wins the nomination, he'll try to take back the White House from the Democrats, whose leading candidate is President Joe Biden. Both men are mired in scandals as the nation grapples with economic, social, and political upheaval.

Mr. Trump refuses to let any of those distractions hold him back, according to Mr. Meister.

"Donald Trump presents voters with a real chance for America to break free from the grip Democrats have on our failing crime-ridden cities ... and restore U.S. excel-



An attendee wearing VR glasses sits in a model of the air taxi concept at an event in Los Angeles on May 8, 2018.

lence and leadership," Mr. Meister said.

Several "people who aren't normally cheerleaders" for Mr. Trump's ideas commended The Quantum Leap plan, his advisers have said.

Mr. Biden seems to be "very much caught up in the news of the day" rather than looking far ahead, Mr. Trump's team said.

Within the past few days, Mr. Biden has ramped up messaging about his economic policies, dubbed "Bidenomics."

On June 28, Mr. Biden gave a speech in Chicago laying claim to successes of job creation and investment, even though many Americans have blamed his policies for causing interest rates, grocery prices, and energy costs to soar.

Mr. Trump's advisers tout his Quantum Leap plan as an antidote for those ills.

On first blush, the proposal may seem fantastical; a Reason magazine article called it "grandiose" and impractical.

But in an article posted by the Association of Mature American Citizens, the writer claims that, while Mr. Trump's plan is "audacious," history has shown that ambitious construction projects "can rejuvenate a society and revitalize a culture."

Almost Like 'The Jetsons'

And at least one slice of Mr. Trump's futuristic vision is on the verge of reality. Similar to the "flying cars" popularized as a science fiction fantasy in the 1960s cartoon "The Jetsons," Electric Vertical Take Off and Landing aircraft (EVTOLs) are now in production for commercial users.

EVTOLs were being developed before Mr. Trump's first presidency, and the technology advanced during his tenure. Now plans are in the works for EVTOLs to start being used as city-to-city air taxis, perhaps within a few years.

Mr. Trump proposes enacting policies that would support U.S. companies that are trying to beat the Chinese in a "race" to produce EVTOLs. He said this would start "the biggest revolution in American transportation since the interstate highway system."

"Just as the automotive revolution created extraordinary economic growth and helped link our country together, the coming air mobility revolution can transform commerce, bring an infusion of wealth into rural America, and connect families and our country in new ways," Mr. Trump's statement reads.

Rediscovering Boldness

EVTOLs and other aspects of the Quantum Leap concept were discussed during Mr. Trump's administration but weren't developed fully before he left office in 2021.

Using broad brushstrokes, Mr. Trump went public with his proposal earlier this year.

"Past generations of Americans pursued big dreams and daring projects that once seemed absolutely impossible. They pushed across an unsettled continent and built new cities in the wild frontier," Mr. Trump said in a videotaped message.

"They transformed American life with the interstate highway system—magnificent it was. And they launched

a vast network of satellites into orbit all around the Earth."

But in recent years, "our country has lost its boldness," Mr. Trump said, promising to harness it again "in a very big way."

The former president said his plan for Freedom Cities would "open up the American frontier ... to charter new cities where families and individuals can have a new shot at the American Dream."

Right now, the dream of home ownership is out of reach for many people, especially young families, Mr. Trump said.

Unbeknownst to many people, the federal government owns about 640 million acres, about one-third of the land mass in the United States. The new cities would be built on tracts of undeveloped land; the national parks would remain intact, he said.

People would be invited to submit specific new city proposals in a national contest. Each would occupy about the size of the District of Columbia, according to Mr. Trump's team.

"[America's leaders need to target] trillions of dollars' worth of rural bridges and roads and tunnels and levees ... that need to be renovated and renewed."

Robert Kravchuk, professor emeritus, Indiana University

Expert Offers Critique

But conducting such a contest "is fraught, through and through, with so much potential for abuse," according to Robert Kravchuk, a professor emeritus at Indiana University and an internationally recognized expert in public administration, public finance, and political economy.

He told The Epoch Times that state leaders might make proposals under Mr. Trump's plan and "figure out how they can get federal money for projects that they want to do anyway."

Guidelines for the contest are among the plan's specifics that would need to be fleshed out post-election if Mr. Trump wins in 2024.

Asked to review information released thus far, Mr. Kravchuk said he considers Mr. Trump's Quantum Leap a "pie-in-the-sky" proposition.

China experimented with a similar scenario; it fell flat. "They have constructed entire Potemkin cities, cities capable of holding 150,000 people, out in remote areas that are totally unpopulated today. There's nobody there," Mr. Kravchuk said.

Cities emerge near essential features such as rivers or ports, raw materials, agricultural lands, and markets; each city must have a "core economic function," he said.

"And this is where the Trump proposal falls short," ♦

Mr. Kravchuk said. “If there should be a city there, there would already be a city there.”

Where Should Money Be Spent?

The Trump team counters that the gambling mecca of Las Vegas is an example of a glittering city that rose from nothingness in the Mojave Desert.

But Mr. Kravchuk said: “There’s a reason why there’s only one Las Vegas. Is there room for two? I mean, seriously speaking ... what is going to be the basis for this, this [new] city to survive longer-term? What does it provide that other cities in the country or the region cannot provide?”

And in terms of priorities, Mr. Kravchuk questions whether massive amounts of money should be devoted to birthing new cities on federal land, particularly considering the nation’s other needs.

U.S. leaders need to target “trillions of dollars’ worth of rural bridges and roads and tunnels and levees ... that need to be renovated and renewed,” he said.

‘Bold and Interesting’

Jeffrey Mason, research manager for the Charter Cities Institute, a non-profit think tank that provides advice and technical assistance for new city projects, said he sees “positives and negatives” in Mr. Trump’s proposal.

“On the positive side ... I do kind of appreciate the boldness of thought,” he told *The Epoch Times*. “It’s definitely bold and interesting.”

Mr. Trump’s plan at least acknowledges that people are looking for alternatives to traditional cities because “existing cities and towns have been strangled,” according to Mr. Mason.

“There’s this coalition of interest groups who, for various reasons ... say no to building things,” he said.

In that vein, the *Reason* magazine article conceded that “a decent idea” is buried within the Trump plan.

“The federal government owns the majority of land in states that have seen the biggest pandemic-era housing price spikes. Selling that land off for residential development makes abundant sense,” the article reads.

Home prices have increased by an average of about \$93,000 in the past few years, Mr. Trump’s team pointed out, noting that the 30-year fixed mortgage rate has more than doubled since January 2021, when Mr. Trump left office.

Mr. Trump said that, in addition to building the new cities, he would take other steps to reduce the cost of living for Americans.

Although Mr. Mason’s work has focused on new city



A U.S. flag flies near a cargo ship docked at the Port of Los Angeles on Sept. 28, 2021. Former President Donald Trump says his trade plan will reward U.S. producers and tax foreign companies.

“Maybe if you could convince a handful of companies to set up their headquarters or maybe some kind of plant or something like that, you can kind of build around that,” he said. “But I think the ability to scale is difficult.”

Attractive to Businesses

Mr. Trump said he believes that businesses will be attracted to a “clean slate” where they can construct new manufacturing plants with regulatory and tax

incentives, his advisers said. In some ways, the Quantum Leap proposition is akin to a program he championed during his presidency.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Mr. Trump’s second year in office, sliced Americans’ tax rates and also created incentives for investors to develop thousands of Opportunity Zones in impoverished areas.

While the program was initially denounced for its potential to help the rich get richer, recent reports touted its successes. Earlier this year, the Washington-based Economic Innovation Group stated that the program’s results were “unique in the history of U.S. placed-based policy.”

The group analyzed a pair of 2022 research papers and concluded, “The emerging evidence suggests that Opportunity Zones have already achieved a combination of expansive geographic reach, large-scale private investment, and significant economic effects.”

In that same vein, Mr. Trump’s allies say critics of the Quantum Leap plan could be proven wrong.

Competing Visions for Future

Mr. Meister called Mr. Trump’s model for the future “the antithesis” of the vision of many influential organizations across the globe, whose leaders want to curtail land development and population growth.

In contrast, Mr. Trump is aiming to create new cities and is also encouraging young couples to have children; he would ask Congress to pay “baby bonuses” in hopes of fostering a new “baby boom,” like the post-World War II explosion of births in the United States from 1946 to 1964.

When Mr. Trump spoke at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2020, he said: “To embrace the possibilities of

tomorrow, we must reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of the apocalypse. They are the heirs of yesterday’s foolish fortune-tellers.

“They predicted an overpopulation crisis in the 1960s, mass starvation in the ’70s, and an end of oil in the 1990s. These alarmists always demand the same thing: absolute power to dominate, transform, and control every aspect of our lives.

“In America, we understand what the pessimists refuse to see: that a growing and vibrant market economy focused on the future lifts the human spirit and excites creativity strong enough to overcome any challenge—any challenge by far.”

Mr. Meister and other Trump advisers said they’re concerned that the WEF and “green extremists” are pushing for people to live in densely packed areas or “urbanized suburbs.”

The WEF’s “15-minute cities” concept calls for locating many of life’s essentials within a 15-minute walk of people’s homes, drastically reducing the need for pollution-causing transportation.

But the result, some fear, would be crowded, isolated urban centers where space is at a premium and, therefore, extremely expensive.

Mr. Meister said, “We will be living in pods, restricting our carbon footprint, and eating bugs.”

‘Forgotten’ Communities Revitalized

Mr. Trump’s plan includes other features, such as a “strategic national manufacturing initiative.” The goal would be to “revitalize forgotten communities by turning them into flourishing hives of industry,” according to his website.

His America First Trade Policy will “replace the current system of punishing domestic producers and rewarding outsourcers.” A new system would adopt “universal baseline tariffs,” with a goal of rewarding U.S. producers while taxing foreign companies, his statement reads.

Higher tariffs would “create millions of new jobs,” among other ripple effects, and would “generate trillions of dollars of new wealth to strengthen American society,” according to Mr. Trump’s plan.

The proposal also calls for “a four-year plan to phase out all Chinese imports of essential goods—everything from electronics to steel to pharmaceuticals.” Jobs in those industries would then return to the United States.

Mr. Trump would also advance a “great modernization and beautification campaign.” He said he wants to recruit governors from all 50 U.S. states by “getting rid of ugly buildings, refurbishing our parks and our public spaces, making cities and towns more livable, and working to create a pristine environment.”

In wrapping up his message on the plan, Mr. Trump struck an idealistic, optimistic note.

“It is time to start talking about greatness for our country again,” he said. “I will dramatically increase living standards and build a future that brings our country together through excitement, opportunity, and success.” ■

FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

10
CITIES

FORMER

President Donald Trump envisions 10 “Freedom Cities” on vacant federal land as part of his plan if he’s reelected in 2024.

640
MILLION

THE FEDERAL

government owns about 640 million acres, about one-third of the land mass in the United States.

SPOTLIGHT

Diplomatic Visit

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER RISHI SUNAK greets U.S. President Joe Biden outside 10 Downing Street in London on July 10. Mr. Biden met briefly with Mr. Sunak on July 10, with discussions focusing on Ukraine, before meeting King Charles III and ahead of a NATO summit in Lithuania on July 11.

PHOTO BY HENRY NICHOLLS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Iran Joins Rapidly Expanding Eurasian Bloc

Led by Moscow and Beijing, the bloc's top priority is US de-dollarization

By Adam Morrow

IRAN HAS BECOME A FULL-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a formidable bloc of Eurasian states that's led by Moscow and Beijing.

Tehran's accession to the SCO was formalized at a July 4 virtual summit hosted by SCO member India, which currently holds the organization's rotating presidency.

While addressing participants, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi voiced hope that SCO membership would provide his country with a "platform for ensuring collective security" and an "opportunity for long-term economic development."

"Lasting peace and stability is only possible when countries of the [Eurasian] region rely on common ideals arising from their culture and civilization," he said.

Iran already shares significant ties with leading SCO member states. It's a primary supplier of oil to China and India and has a "strategic partnership" with Russia.

The formal process for Iran's accession to the organization began in March of last year. Last October, the Iranian parliament approved the move.

Speaking at the summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed Iran, which, he said, would "now participate in our organization in a full-fledged format."

De-dollarization Tops Agenda

In a joint statement issued at the summit's conclusion, member states stressed their shared desire for "a more representative ... multipolar world order."

The declaration also called for stepped-up cooperation between member states "in the fields of politics and security, trade, economy, finance, and investment, [and] cultural and humanitarian ties."

It went on to assert that the SCO was "not directed against other states and international organizations, and is open to broad cooperation ... in line with the goals and principles of the UN Charter, the SCO Charter, and international law."

Nevertheless, the summit saw repeated calls for member states to con-

duct financial transactions in currencies other than the U.S. dollar.

"The dollar's hegemony facilitates Western hegemony," Mr. Raisi told participants.

"It is necessary to abandon [the dollar] and use national currencies in settlements between countries in order to create a new economic system."

The assertion was echoed by Mr. Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, both of whom urged SCO member states to conduct transactions in their own national currencies.

According to Mr. Putin, more than 80 percent of Russia-China trade is now being conducted in rubles and yuan.

Countering the West

The SCO was founded by Moscow and Beijing in 2001 to counter perceived Western influence in Eurasia. Founding members also include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

In 2017, India and Pakistan both joined the bloc—despite their long-standing rivalry—as full-fledged members, bringing the number of SCO-affiliated nuclear powers to four.

Belarus, a key Russian ally, is also on track to become a full member of the organization later this year.

The SCO coordinates its activities with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Moscow-led military alliance of six Eurasian countries.

In August, SCO member states are scheduled to participate in joint security exercises in Russia's central-west Chelyabinsk region.

Along with Mr. Raisi and Mr. Putin, this week's summit was attended by the leaders of India, China, Pakistan, and the four Central Asian republics.

Putin Reassures Allies

The ongoing conflict between Russia



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping leave after a reception following their talks at the Kremlin in Moscow on March 21.

and Ukraine hardly came up for discussion at the event.

Nevertheless, Mr. Putin took the opportunity to reassure fellow leaders of his country's continued stability following last month's aborted rebellion by the leader of Russia's Wagner Group.

"The Russian people are consolidated as never before," he said. "Russian political circles and the whole of society ... responded as a united front against the attempted armed mutiny."

On June 24, Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin led a short-lived rebellion that had briefly appeared to threaten Moscow. A private military company, the Wagner Group has done much of the frontline fighting in Ukraine.

During the mutiny, the leaders of several SCO member states—including China, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan—contacted Mr. Putin to express their support.

Mr. Putin thanked SCO members who, he said, had voiced support for Moscow's efforts to "safeguard the constitutional order and citizens' lives and security."

'Very Serious Force'

Headquartered in Beijing, the SCO is the

80%

MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF Russia-China trade is now being conducted in rubles and yuan, according to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

26 MEMBERS

THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION Organization has a total of 26 member states and dialogue partners, a Russian official says.

world's largest regional bloc in terms of population and geographical scope. Its members collectively account for 40 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of the Eurasian land mass, and a third of global GDP.

In March, Saudi Arabia—a key U.S. ally in the Middle East—formally applied to join the SCO as a "dialogue partner." The move is widely regarded

as a first step towards full membership.

Notably, the move came shortly after Tehran and Riyadh agreed to restore diplomatic ties—after years of hostility—in a deal brokered by China.

Saudi Arabia isn't the only U.S. ally seeking membership in the SCO. Last year, Egypt and Qatar also joined the Eurasian bloc as dialogue partners.

"The roster of SCO dialogue partners has been joined by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and so on," Bakhtiyar Khakimov, Moscow's special envoy for SCO affairs, said on July 5.

"There are a total of 26 member states and dialogue partners," Mr. Khakimov was quoted as saying by Russia's TASS news agency. "It's a very serious force."

On the same day, the Afghan Foreign Ministry expressed its desire to participate in upcoming SCO summits.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan welcomes such meetings ... to ensure regional security and development ... and considers the participation of Afghanistan in such meetings to be within its legitimate rights," the ministry said via Twitter. ■



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi at a press conference in Tehran on June 21, 2021.

FROM LEFT: LATTA KENARE/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; PAVEL BYRIN/SPUTNIK/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES

POLITICS

RFK Jr. Accuses Biden Admin of Coverup Over JFK

Some JFK assassination records to be kept secret indefinitely

By Alice Giordano

ON THE AFTERNOON OF June 30, before one of the busiest holiday weekends in America, the Biden administration issued a memo announcing that because of national security concerns, it was going to postpone the release of certain classified documents relevant to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy (JFK).



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. believes that evidence shows his uncle President John F. Kennedy was murdered by the American government.

“The assassination was 60 years ago. What national security secrets could possibly be at risk? What are they hiding?”

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Democratic presidential candidate

Despite the quiet announcement on the eve of the July 4 weekend, the decision sparked outrage led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (RFK Jr.), who has, in recent times, openly speculated that the CIA was behind his uncle’s assassination and that he could be in danger from the agency.

In a barrage of Twitter posts, Mr. Kennedy, who’s gaining momentum against President Joe Biden for the 2024 Democratic nomination for president, suggested a cover-up.

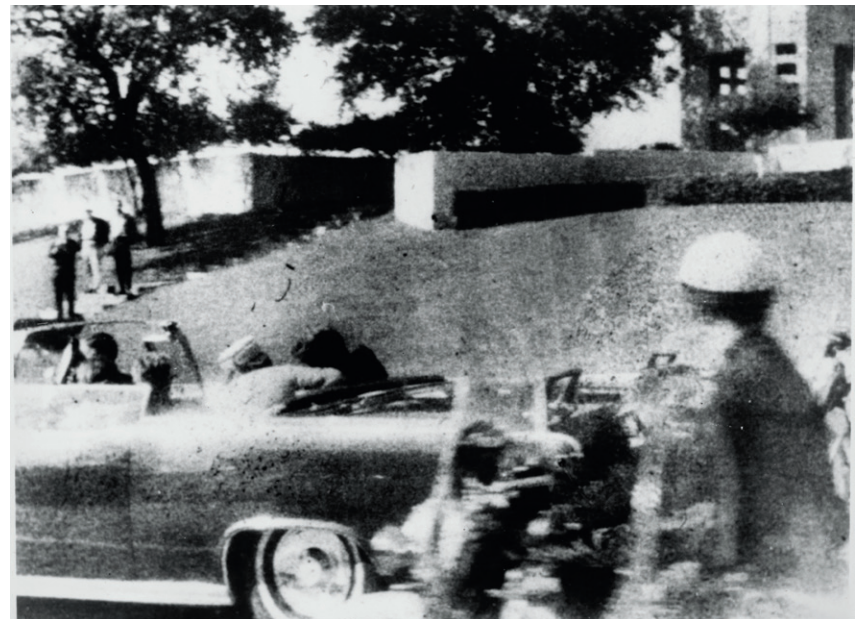
“The assassination was 60 years ago. What national security secrets could possibly be at risk? What are they hiding?” Mr. Kennedy asked.

He blasted Mr. Biden for choosing the timing to cover the “bad news” that he would be “maintaining secrecy indefinitely” on JFK assassination records. ❖

The Biden administration has announced it’s postponing the release of certain classified documents relevant to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.



FROM L: JAMIE MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES; STRINGER/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES



(Top) President John F. Kennedy (L), First Lady Jackie Kennedy (3rd L), Texas Gov. John Connally (2nd L), and his wife, Nellie (2nd R, in a limousine minutes before the assassination in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

(Above) An estimated one-sixth of a second after the president was shot.

Mr. Kennedy charged that the postponement was an “unlawful” violation of the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, which mandated the release of all government-held JFK assassination records no later than October 2017.

The records have been kept by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The deadline to release the JFK assassination documents has been repeatedly extended, including under the Trump Administration.

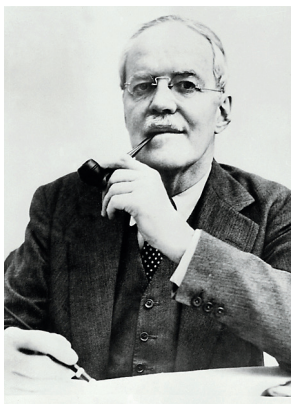
However, the law does include an exception in instances in which the president certifies that a continued delay is “made necessary by an identifiable harm to the military defense, intelligence operations, law enforcement, or conduct of foreign relations” and that the harm is “of such gravity that it outweighs the public interest.”

In December 2022, as part of a partial release of new records, Mr. Biden issued a signed agreement that the remainder would be released on June 30, the eve of the Independence Day weekend.

On June 30, the White House an-

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. believes that former CIA Director Allen Dulles used his position with the Warren Commission to cover up evidence of CIA involvement in his uncle’s assassination.

Former CIA Director Allen Dulles became director of the CIA in 1953, but was fired by Kennedy in 1961. He later was a member of the Warren Commission, which was established to review the president’s assassination.



nounced that more than 99 percent of the records have been publicly released. But in the memo signed by Mr. Biden, the president said NARA’s acting archivist recommended that he postpone the public release of “certain redacted information” in the records released in December 2022.

“Continued postponement of public disclosure of that information is necessary to protect against identifiable harms to the military defense, intelligence operations, law enforcement, and the conduct of foreign relations that are of such gravity that they outweigh the public interest in disclosure,” the memo reads.

Mr. Biden also said future release of the withheld JFK assassination records would “occur in a manner consistent” with a policy called the Transparency Plan, which was established by the National Declassification Center.

“The Transparency Plans will ensure that the public will have access to the maximum amount of information while continuing to protect against identifiable harms to the military de-

fense, intelligence operations, law enforcement, and the conduct of foreign relations under the standards of the Act,” he wrote in the memo.

Since declaring his candidacy for president, Mr. Kennedy has become increasingly vocal about his belief that evidence shows that his uncle JFK was murdered by the American government.

He noted that among the members of the Warren Commission, which was established to review the assassination, was ex-CIA Director Allen Dulles, who had been fired by President Kennedy.

Dulles, who died in 1969—six years after JFK’s assassination—denied any involvement in the murder.

Dulles International Airport in Washington was named after his brother John Foster Dulles, who served as secretary of state under President Dwight Eisenhower.

RFK Jr. believes that Allen Dulles used his position with the Warren Commission to cover up evidence of CIA involvement. He said in a recent interview that his own father’s “first instincts” were that the federal agency carried out the killing.

The CIA has long denied any involvement in the 35th president’s death.

In 1979, a U.S. House review committee appointed to study evidence of the assassination concluded that at least two gunmen and co-conspirators were involved in JFK’s murder.

The only person who was ever accused of killing JFK was former U.S. Marine Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald, who denied being the assailant, was killed a few days after JFK’s death by nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

Ruby was convicted and sentenced to prison, where he died in 1967 while awaiting a new trial after winning an appeal of his conviction.

In mid-June, national conservative podcaster Joe Rogan asked Mr. Kennedy if he was concerned about his safety in relation to being targeted by intelligence agencies such as the CIA.

Mr. Kennedy said yes, that “he has to be careful” and that he does “take precautions.” ■

Samantha Flom contributed to this report.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L: WALT DISNEY; DALLAS MORNING NEWS VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; -AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; MARY ANN MOORMAN (MARY KRAHMER) VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

CULTURE

Entrepreneurism in Ohio's Amish Country

Sustainable living traditions inspire independence, hard work, and responsibility

BY JEFF LOUDERBACK

A girl and her father milk cows in an Amish community, in this file photo.

PHOTO BY CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES

MILLERSBURG, OHIO— In a warehouse outside of this village in Ohio's Amish Country, Brenton Wengerd walks along aisles of shelves stocked with 700 varieties of seeds that range from fruits, vegetables, and herbs to flowers, ancient grains, and cover crops.

A day earlier, his company—Berlin Seeds—co-hosted the second Food Independence Summit, where gardening and homesteading enthusiasts around the country traveled here to learn about sustainable living.

"Just as the summit's purpose is to help people become more comfortable and knowledgeable about producing their own food, our mission here is to improve the health of their gardens so they have productive soil and a consistently abundant harvest," he said.

Berlin Seeds sells seeds to 30,000 Amish and "English" (how the Amish commonly refer to non-Amish people) customers nationwide. Marcus Wengerd, Brenton's father, owns the business. Brenton manages day-to-day operations—at the age of 21.

"Whatever needs to be done, I guess slap a title on it. I'll do it," he said with a grin.

Marcus Wengerd, who bought Berlin Seeds a few years ago, is passionate about the healthy lifestyle that homegrown and locally sourced food promotes.

"Seed is the currency of our planet. If we don't have seed, then we go hungry," he said.

He instilled entrepreneurialism in his sons, Brenton and Logan, at a young age.

"I hoped that I would get a chance to work with my children, but when Brenton and Logan were young, I wasn't sure that would happen because there was a time when they really didn't think that working with dad would be much fun," Mr. Wengerd said.

"I told them that they would work for me for a year or two, and then they would have to work somewhere else for the same time period so they would know what it was like to not have their dad as their boss. That relieved pressure because they knew that if they didn't like working in a family business, they could do something else."

Brenton is the general manager of Berlin Seeds. His father also owns Carlisle

Printing, and Logan runs that business.

"Growing up in this community, people are taught to work. They are encouraged to become entrepreneurs," Brenton Wengerd said. "Here, you either start your own business or find a profession and build upon it. We're taught that you should earn what you eat with hard work. I think that's a good principle."

John Miller, who co-founded the Food Independence Summit with Mr. Wengerd last year, owns Superb Sealing Solutions.

When there was a shortage of canning lids during the COVID-19 pandemic, a few local companies approached Mr. Miller about manufacturing the lids at his facility in Sugarcreek. Superb sold 30 million lids last year.

One day in 2022, Mr. Miller drove past a golf course where there was a micro camping festival.

"Why not have a canning festival?" he thought. Mr. Miller talked to Mr. Wengerd, who expanded the idea to include a summit to "bring together people who grow their own food and show them how to do it—all the way from seed and soil to preservation."

The intent is to encourage and provide the tools and information to take steps toward discovering the freedom that comes with homegrown and local food, Mr. Wengerd said.

Homegrown food is making a major resurgence, partly because of supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic and also because of inflation and uncertainty about the condition of produce and meat found in grocery stores.

Ohio's Amish Country is the ideal destination for a sustainable living event, Mr. Miller said—but not because of what it's most known for.

The region includes the second largest community of Amish in the world, behind Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Most of the settlement is located around Holmes County, which has the highest concentration of Amish in any U.S. county. Half of the county's population is Amish, and many members of closely related denominations—like the Mennonites—reside here, too.

Amish Country is one of Ohio's most visited tourist areas. Visitors flock here to experience farm attractions and museums and buy a wide assortment of ♦♦



At the age of 21, Brenton Wengerd runs the daily operations of Berlin Seeds, which is owned by his father and based in Ohio's Amish Country.

handmade goods and artisan products. Local stores carry canned fruits and vegetables, and apple butter and preserves. The Guggisberg Cheese Factory in Millersburg, the Holmes County seat, invented Baby Swiss and has a viewing area where guests can see the cheese-making process. The Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center in Millersburg has exhibits that explain the culture and religion. Sugarcreek is home to the Alpine Hills Historical Museum, which displays what is reported to be the World's Largest Cuckoo Clock. Bed and breakfasts and historic inns dot the landscape amid meticulously

maintained and sprawling farms. Horse-drawn buggies are just as common as automobiles on some of the roads. Mr. Miller said he appreciates the tourism support and traffic, but what makes this area "perfect" for an event that encourages gardening and homesteading is its heritage. "We live in a community where homesteading is a way of life. The notion of sustainable living is a deeply entrenched tradition dating back several hundreds of years," Mr. Miller explained. "This is a community that encourages and embraces entrepreneurial endeavors. "Take a drive down these roads, and you can find food producers and manufacturers of barns, lumber, tools, and farming supplies as just a few examples. Another benefit of having the summit here is that it brings together people who want to become more proficient at leading a self-sufficient lifestyle, and they can get all the supplies they need with the businesses that are here." Joel Salatin, the owner of Polyface Farm in Virginia, is one of the nation's foremost authorities on organic farming. At the summit, he hosted a session that encouraged parents to work with their kids so they will want to work with their parents. Mr. Salatin said he likes being part of the Food Independence Summit: "[In Ohio's Amish country], the traditions ... inspire and motivate children to

start and build their own businesses that contribute to the community maintaining a sustainable way of life. "There is a homesteading tsunami because there is a deep intuitive understanding that society is heading in a way where it is better to be in the country than in the city. "There is a self-reliant persona in rural regions that doesn't exist in urban regions where there is unrest and violence. Homesteading and homeschooling are on the rise because of this. Because this lifestyle is new to a lot of people, understanding how to transition is important, and it is a learning process." Mr. Salatin attributes the abundance of entrepreneurs and businesses centered around sustainable living in Amish Country to values that instill an appreciation for work, which is what he talked about at the summit. "Work is not a punishment. Don't ever make work punishment," Mr. Salatin added. "Make work exciting and fun. Make it task-oriented, and not time-oriented. Task-oriented assignments build a respect for work, and complementing that with offering children the freedom to pursue their own interests gives them a chance to succeed and fail and find out who they are, Mr. Salatin said. The homesteading lifestyle encourages this path, he added, because of the elements required to live off the land



Marcus Wengerd (R), owner of Berlin Seeds and co-founder of the Food Independence Summit, addresses an audience on the first day of the event.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF EVERITT TOWNSEND; COURTESY OF MELISSA RENEE



Attendees of the event watch the ropemaking process at the Food Independence Summit.

and produce homegrown food. Mr. Salatin's words resonated with Melissa Renee, a single mom who moved to Ohio from Mississippi five years ago to seek medical care for one of her children. In January, she relocated from suburban Cincinnati and bought a two-acre homestead located next to Amish farmers. Ms. Renee learned about the Food Independence Summit from her Amish neighbors, who received a bulk order from Berlin Seeds and brought over the event brochure. "I had been laughing and joking with them that, as a new homesteader, I had no idea what I was doing with adding a dairy cow and trying to figure out how to add chickens to go along with a garden," she said. "They knew that the summit would be something that would help me with my journey." Ms. Renee named her homestead Handwritten Hills. She documents her experience on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media sites. Five generations of her family have farmed, and she learned self-sustainable living skills as a child, but the transition to homesteading as an adult is an adjustment that she hopes others can learn from. "[The Food Independence Summit] not only taught me a few things I didn't know, but more importantly, it renewed my spirit [because of] the sense of community among people with a like-minded purpose of providing for their families from the land." During a tour of Berlin Seeds, Ms.



"The way of life [children] are taught gives them a greater sense of identity and a strong work ethic because they have not just learned out of a book."

Melissa Renee, founder, Handwritten Hills

Renee explained that she saw a lot of her 18-year-old son, Everitt Townsend, in Brenton Wengerd. Like Mr. Wengerd, her son was homeschooled, and is an entrepreneur. Townsend owns E.T. World Productions, a video production and photography business that counts churches, small businesses, and large companies among its clients. Though she is new to homesteading, Ms. Renee has 20 years of experience as a homeschool mom, and she helps parents new to the process effectively teach their children. "In many ways, homesteading and homeschooling are similar," she said.

"At an early age, homeschooled children are encouraged to explore what they like, and they discover gifts and talents that they develop because they have the freedom to do that. "You can put a seed in the ground, but unless there is rich and fertile soil, it won't grow. You have to create good soil and give it sunlight and proper care," Ms. Renee said. "You prepare for storms and droughts, and there are times when you don't have as big of a harvest as you thought. "In homeschooling, the child is that seed. The child will experience storms and drought, and some seasons will be better than other seasons. That is why a strong root system is important." Young adult entrepreneurs such as Mr. Wengerd illustrate the value of that strong root system and the message that Mr. Salatin detailed in his address at the summit, Ms. Renee said. She brought her two younger sons, who are 13 and 7, so they could see firsthand the influence of homesteaders who are in different stages of the journey they are experiencing at Handwritten Hills and locals such as the Millers and the Wengerds. "The way of life they are taught gives them a greater sense of identity and a strong work ethic because they have not just learned out of a book. They have identified and grown their interests, and they have gained a lot of hands-on experience and mentorship," she said. "Everywhere you look around the summit, and around Amish Country, you see people who are carrying on what they learned as children and what generations before them have done." Observations like those reflect the realization of expectations in Ohio's Amish Country, Mr. Wengerd said. "Whether you are Amish or Mennonite, or not, you are expected to uphold a sense of responsibility when you live here. You are expected to do good, and to make a positive contribution to the community," he said. "There is a weight of responsibility, and that's a good thing because that's how the traditions from past generations are kept alive." ■

SPOTLIGHT

Flash Storm

A DAMAGED ROAD NEAR A CREEK AFTER heavy rainfall in Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y., on July 10. The northeastern United States experienced heavy rain and flooding across several states on July 9. Storms and flash floods washed out highways and killed one person in the state of New York, leading Gov. Kathy Hochul to declare states of emergency in two counties.

PHOTO BY KENA BETANCUR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

White House Invites Israeli President, Snubs PM Netanyahu

Biden to meet with President Isaac Herzog while shunning Prime Minister Netanyahu

By Jackson Richman **News Analysis**

HOUSE SPEAKER KEVIN McCarthy (R-Calif.) announced on June 29 that Israeli President Isaac Herzog will address a joint meeting of Congress on July 19. Reportedly, Mr. Herzog will meet with U.S. President Joe Biden—a continuation of Mr. Biden’s snubbing of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

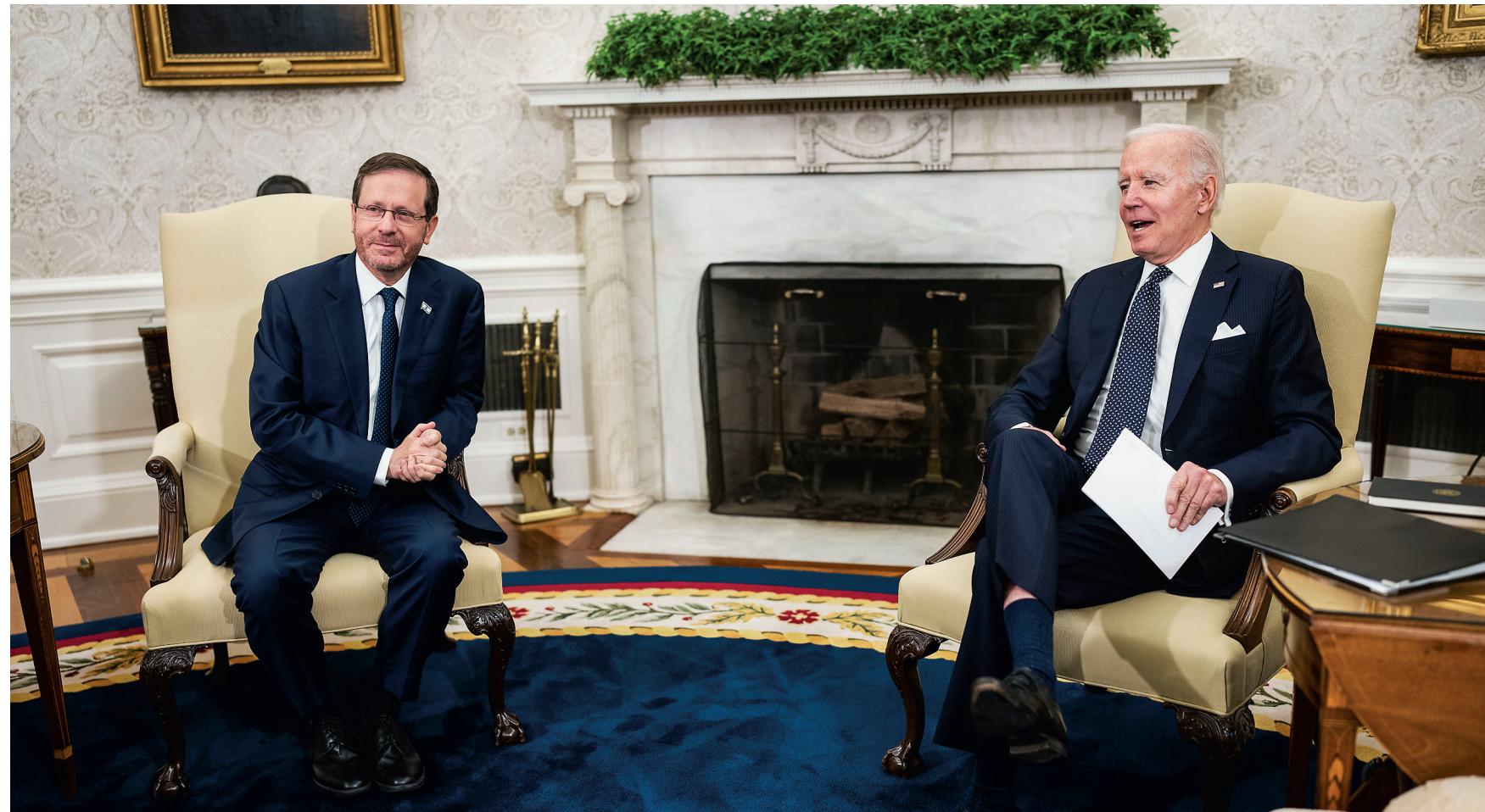
In March, Mr. Biden said that he wouldn’t invite Mr. Netanyahu to the White House “in the near term” because of Mr. Netanyahu’s attempt to change Israel’s judiciary, an effort that’s opposed by Mr. Herzog. In response to Mr. Biden shutting the door on a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu in the near future, Mr. McCarthy said that he would invite Mr. Netanyahu to Congress if Mr. Biden doesn’t reverse course.

“If that doesn’t happen, I’ll invite the prime minister to come meet with the House,” Mr. McCarthy told the newspaper Israel Hayom.

“He’s a dear friend, as a prime minister of a country that we have our closest ties with.”

Mr. McCarthy visited Israel in May and became the second sitting speaker to address the Knesset, Israel’s parliament.

Mr. McCarthy’s possible invitation to Mr. Netanyahu is reminiscent of the 2015 invitation that then-House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) extended to Mr. Netanyahu to address a



President Joe Biden and Israeli President Isaac Herzog meet in the Oval Office of the White House on Oct. 26, 2022.

joint session of Congress, which Mr. Netanyahu accepted and then used to warn Congress about the then-pending Iran nuclear deal. Mr. Netanyahu’s visit was boycotted by then-President Barack Obama and his administration, under whom Mr. Biden served as vice president. It’s unclear if Mr. Netanyahu would give a joint address to Congress were he to be invited by Mr. McCarthy.

A Slap in the Face

The expected meeting between Mr. Biden and Mr. Herzog is a slap in the face to Mr. Netanyahu, prominent members of the Jewish community told The Epoch Times.

Bryan Leib, a Republican who’s head of CASEPAC, which supports federal office candidates dedicated to fighting antisemitism, noted that Mr. Netanyahu, not Mr. Herzog, is Israel’s head of government. Mr. Herzog is Israel’s head of state.

“Prime Minister Netanyahu is the leader of the State of Israel, so inviting anyone other than Netanyahu to represent the State of Israel on an official visit is a direct shot

across the bow of Netanyahu from the Biden administration,” he said.

“The Biden administration has shown us in words and actions that they are far more interested in throwing shade at the Netanyahu government than embracing them and working together to expand the Trump-era Abraham Accords,” Mr. Leib said, referring to the 2020 U.S.-brokered peace accords between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

The Biden administration announced last week that former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro would be its point person on the Abraham Accords, looking to further them.

The upcoming visit by Mr. Herzog wouldn’t be controversial were it not for Mr. Biden blacklisting Mr. Netanyahu, said Shoshana Bryen, senior director of the Jewish Policy Center.

“If, for example, there had been a relationship between Herzog and Biden from the ‘old days,’ no one would question it,” she said. “It is Biden’s blatant disrespect for Netanyahu that makes it important.”

While Mr. McCarthy may be inviting Mr. Herzog to speak before Congress, don’t take it as a signal that Mr. McCarthy is aiding and abetting Mr. Biden’s snub of Mr. Netanyahu, Ms. Bryen said.

“I don’t think McCarthy is abetting Biden; he’s making the best of a situation,” she said.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Rishon LeZion, Israel, on July 5.



U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) in Washington on June 5.

“I suspect Biden decided to undercut McCarthy by inviting Herzog as much as he thinks he’s undercutting Netanyahu by inviting [Herzog]. If there is an invitation out to Herzog, then McCarthy would look bad inviting Netanyahu to swoop in and ‘take Herzog’s place.’”

“In this case, timing is everything. Biden will think he’s won one here, and he may not be wrong,” Ms. Bryen said. “McCarthy is doing the right thing by ignoring any possible domestic issue and responding to an invitation to the president of an allied nation by giving him a platform in Congress. Good for him.”

Mr. Herzog’s visit comes as the Biden administration has come under fire—mainly from the right—over reportedly resuming talks with Iran on an interim nuclear deal to no longer allow funding for research in Israeli neighborhoods in Judea and Samaria, also known as the West Bank. While Israel has come under fire over its response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, it has provided humanitarian and nonlethal military assistance to Kiev.

The trip also comes after Israel recently conducted an anti-terrorism operation in Jenin, a city in the West Bank that’s notorious for harboring Palestinian terrorists.

Zionist Organization of America’s Mort Klein decried what he called “a conspicuous insult” by Mr. Biden to Mr. Netanyahu in that the president of the Jewish state is a ceremonial role. He also said that the invitation sends “a phony message” that the administration isn’t anti-Israel.

At the end of the day, Mr. Leib said, “McCarthy should follow through on the promise he made in Jerusalem earlier this year to invite Netanyahu to Washington.

“If Biden isn’t going to recognize Israel’s leader, then McCarthy is in a prime position to do this. He has the power to make it happen.” ■

CLOCKWISE FROM L: DOUG WILKS-POOL/GETTY IMAGES; JACK GUEZ/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; MADALINA VASILIU/THE EPOCH TIMES

HEALTH

Linking Mental Health and Diet

Harvard professor believes mental disorders are metabolic disorders of the brain

By Michelle Standlee

WHAT CAUSES mental illness? For years, despite medical advances, this pressing question has remained unanswered.

Often, patients seeking clarity encounter explanations such as “it’s genetic” or “depression is a lack of serotonin.” Of course, there are countless experiences that can contribute to mental illness, including social isolation, addiction, and trauma. But researchers have also long known that there’s a biochemical aspect to depression.

Dr. Christopher Palmer, a Harvard professor of psychiatry, has been connecting the dots of thousands of research articles regarding the relationship between mental illness and mitochondrial dysfunction.

According to Dr. Palmer, this collective research raises concerns about the current treatments used for mental disorders.

A Chance Discovery

Dr. Palmer started his investigation in 2016, when he helped a patient with schizoaffective disorder lose weight. The patient suffered not only from severe mental illness, but also from low self-esteem due to the weight gain he experienced while on psychotropic medication.

Weight loss brought a dramatic drop in symptoms.

Dr. Palmer said he initially couldn’t believe that switching to a low-car-



The ketogenic diet, high in fat and low in carbohydrates, benefits mitochondrial health by forcing the body to use ketones as an energy source for cells.

Mental disorders are metabolic disorders of the brain, which means they aren’t permanent defects and can be corrected, a professor says.

bohydrate, ketogenic diet could have stopped the patient’s chronic auditory hallucinations and paranoid delusions. He quickly started using this intervention in other patients and saw similar—sometimes even more dramatic—results.

This experience encouraged him to learn how a change in diet could help with severe mental illness. He found decades of studies revealing the con-

nection between metabolic health and brain health.

“The more I uncovered in terms of those concrete mechanisms of action, I realized there’s something much bigger here. I’m beginning to connect a lot of dots that our field hasn’t been able to connect before,” Dr. Palmer told The Epoch Times.

In November 2022, he released the book “Brain Energy,” highlighting his discoveries and theorizing that mitochondrial disorders are the root cause of all mental illnesses.

Drawing from decades of research on metabolism and mitochondria, Dr. Palmer said he believes that mental disorders are metabolic disorders of the brain. This means that these conditions aren’t permanent defects and can be corrected by identifying and addressing their root cause. This insight challeng-

es the notion that conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are lifelong disorders.

“People with labels such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder can put their illnesses into remission, they can heal, and they can recover,” he said.

“That goes against much of what we tell people today.”

What’s Mitochondrial Dysfunction?

Cellular structures called mitochondria are vital for all cells to function normally, including brain cells. When mitochondria aren’t operating correctly, various health problems can arise, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity, and Type 2 diabetes.

Dr. Palmer pointed out that when mitochondria fail to work correctly, this can also lead to mental disorders such

as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. The brain needs a considerable amount of energy to work efficiently. When mitochondria aren’t churning out enough energy, this can lead to abnormalities in the brain’s structure and function, leading to mental illness.

Dr. Palmer said mitochondrial dysfunction can produce several changes in the brain that can cause mental illness to develop. These changes include fluctuations in neurotransmitter levels, oxidative stress, and inflammation.

If the origin of mental disorders is mitochondrial dysfunction, treatments that address the underlying issue could be more successful than traditional tools. Some of Dr. Palmer’s patients have experienced remission of mild to severe symptoms, including depression, psychosis, and hallucinations, and then reduced or discontinued their medications. Although helpful for some patients in the short term, psychiatric medications can often produce side effects such as reduced libido, increased risk of suicide, and weight gain.

“We seriously need to look at the risks and benefits of those treatments over the long term,” Dr. Palmer said.

He cautioned that people should never discontinue the use of medications without speaking with their medical providers.

Dr. Palmer suggests numerous strategies to mitigate the effects of mitochondrial dysfunction, including common-sense lifestyle changes such as exercise, improved diet, stress reduction, and adequate sleep.

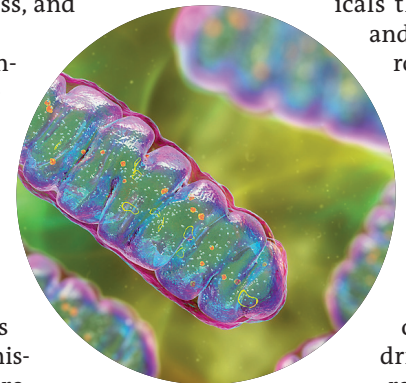
The ketogenic diet has proven to be the most successful for Dr. Palmer’s patients. The ketogenic diet, which dates back to 1920, was first used to treat epilepsy. The diet—high in fat, moderate in protein, and low in carbohydrates—has been shown to increase the number of mitochondria in cells and enhance

their function.

One of the ways the ketogenic diet benefits mitochondrial health is through the production of ketones. When the body is in ketosis, it produces ketones from stored fat as an alternative, more efficient fuel source. These ketones can provide energy to cells, including brain cells, which rely heavily on mitochondria for their energy needs.

Mitochondria assist in the production of neurotransmitters, chemicals that influence mood and behavior, such as serotonin and dopamine.

The ketogenic diet also improves insulin resistance because it’s low in sugar and carbohydrates. Insulin resistance can also impair the creation of new mitochondria. Insulin resistance results in dysfunction of the mitochondria, reduced energy production, and cellular damage, including in brain cells.



When mitochondria aren’t churning out enough energy, it can lead to mental illness, a professor points out.

A Picture of the Research

Research from 2015 found that the ketone metabolite, which is the energy molecule created when the liver breaks down fat, could block NLP3 inflammasome-mediated inflammatory diseases. A study published in BMC Psychiatry in April found that inflammatory processes linked to NLP3 were an important contributor to severe psychiatric disorders and that NLRP3 inflammasome was elevated in people with psychiatric disorders.

A review published in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews in 2018 looked at research regarding a ketogenic diet’s effect on mood disorders. A ketogenic diet fuels the body with fat rather than carbohydrates.

According to the review, preclinical studies at the time found that the diet had antidepressant and mood-stabilizing effects.

The researchers said the diet should be considered a “promising intervention.” ■

FROM L. FIKES/SHUTTERSTOCK, KATERINA KON/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/SHUTTERSTOCK



A customer plays craps at the Bellagio hotel-casino in Las Vegas on June 4, 2020. Nevada is the cradle of worldwide gaming.

PHOTO BY RONDA CHURCHILL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ADDICTION

Gamblers Crushed by Losses

Find New Ways to Win

BY HUEY FREEMAN

The internet and sports betting have fueled a gambling boom that puts millions at risk of suicide, financial ruin

TED HARTWELL HAD LEARNED TO GAMBLE from his father. It was a way to relax and have fun. But by the time he had racked up \$90,000 in secret gambling debts as an adult, it wasn't fun anymore. He had told his wife that he had quit years ago and knew that he was on the verge of losing everything.

Mr. Hartwell's story is far from isolated.

As a student at Texas Tech University, he had supported himself by playing in a weekly high-stakes poker game. After completing his master's degree in anthropology, he got a job at the Desert Research Institute in Nevada.

"I thought I had landed at one of the best places," Mr. Hartwell told The Epoch Times.

Las Vegas, the cradle of worldwide gaming, is a magnet for gamblers across the globe. Nevada, the first state with legalized gambling, has about 400 working casinos, almost one-fifth of the nation's gambling houses. The United States, meanwhile, has

about 2,150 casinos, the most in the world and more than a quarter of all the casinos on Earth, according to the World Casino Directory online.

"I only played live poker at first in Las Vegas," Mr. Hartwell said. "It was years before I hit my first jackpot of \$1,000. A large win or a series of wins often changes your mind about gambling. I thought I could make money gambling once more."

But as everyone knows, casinos aren't in the business of losing money; that's what players are supposed to do. And every compulsive gambler knows what happens as the losses mount.

"Once losing becomes a problem, it transitions into a desperation, a desire to increase those betting limits, with the excuse that you're going to win back the money you lost," Mr. Hartwell said.

The gambling industry exploded with the legalization of sports betting in many

states in recent years. The hidden cost has also risen—a high rate of suicide, depression, and criminal activity by compulsive gamblers. A study published in the *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* in 2018 found that people with a gambling disorder are 15 times more likely to die of suicide.

This often-unseen addiction can be ruinous, but there are successful approaches that countless gamblers have used to regain control of their lives.

“Gambling disorder is a real illness,” said Mr. Hartwell, now 57 and a community liaison for the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling. “It is potentially deadly, because of the suicide rate associated with it.”

Some researchers say that compulsive gamblers have a higher suicide rate than those with any other addiction. Compulsive gambling was codified as an addictive disorder in 2013 in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, DSM-5*, because of its similarities to substance abuse disorders.

Mr. Hartwell said the addiction is just as real as a substance dependence, but that those who suffer from it are more reluctant to seek treatment. There are good reasons why gambling dependence is known as the “hidden addiction.”

“There is a tremendous shame and guilt that can be associated with it,” he said. “Some gamblers have stolen from their families. How could they come out and admit they did this, which was against their own moral compass?”

Bill Johnson, executive director emeritus of the Illinois Council on Problem Gambling, said that there was a 400 percent increase in calls to the state’s help line from 2020 to 2022. A recent study identified more than 1 million Illinoisans—1 in 11 state residents—who have a gambling disorder or are at risk of developing one. The state has 10 casinos, with six more sites approved, and 44,000 video gambling terminals.

A sharp increase in gambling activities in the wake of the May 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing the legalization of sports betting has led to more gamblers finding themselves in distress.

In the five years since that decision—with sports betting now legal and live

400
CASINOS

NEVADA HAS about 400 working casinos, almost one-fifth of the nation’s gambling houses.

15
TIMES

PEOPLE WITH A gambling disorder are 15 times more likely to die of suicide, according to a study.

\$220
BILLION

SINCE MAY 2018, Americans have legally wagered \$220 billion nationwide, according to the American Gaming Association.

2,150
CASINOS

THE UNITED STATES has about 2,150 casinos, the most in the world and more than a quarter of all the casinos on Earth, according to the World Casino Directory online.

in 34 states and the District of Columbia—Americans have legally wagered \$220 billion, according to the American Gaming Association, a trade group for the gambling industry. Gamblers placed bets of about \$95 billion in the fiscal year ending March 2023.

Only His Partner Could Quit

In the early 2000s, Mr. Hartwell met his future wife, who also enjoyed gambling.

“We were going to the casino after work almost every evening,” he said. “There was financial stress as well as emotional stress in our relationship.”

They both decided to stop gambling. After his wife stopped, he followed suit for a few months and agreed to attend a 12-step program meeting. There, he heard the tragic stories of other gamblers, some who had gone to prison for embezzlement and others who had lost their families.

But Mr. Hartwell didn’t heed these warnings and secretly began gambling again. About two years after attending his first meeting, he stepped up his gambling to a higher level. After he had racked up that \$90,000 in debt, his wife asked him to seek serious help.

“This woke me up,” he said. “That was the beginning of my recovery process, which I am still engaged in today.

“Treatment is available, and treatment is effective.”

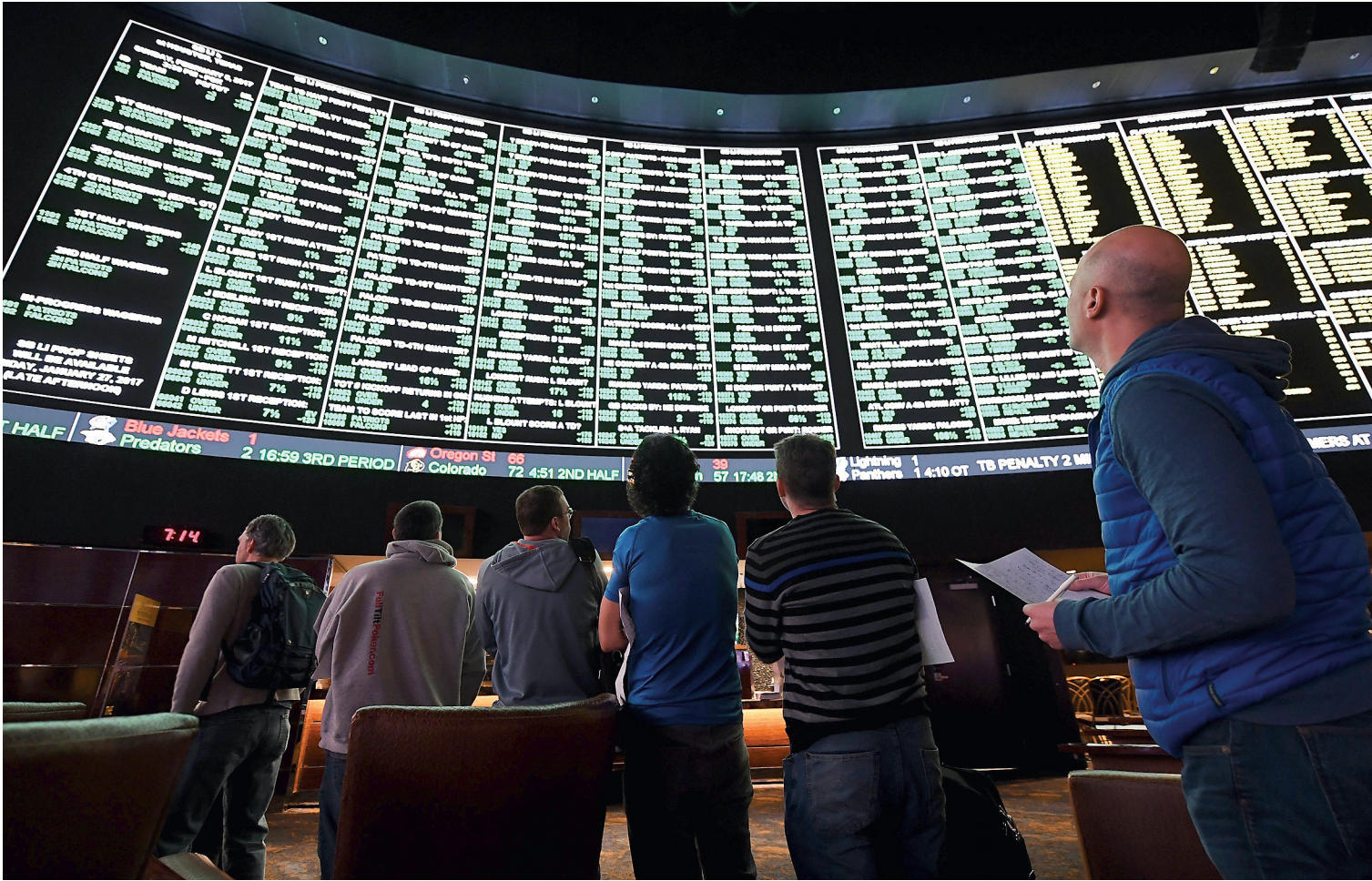
Compulsive Gamblers Devastate Families

Travis Thompson, a licensed therapist in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, said that gambling addictions are often well hidden, especially now that the internet offers a virtual casino. Many now find it harder to avoid gambling, and most tend to wait until their situation is dire before seeking help.

“By the time therapy is desperately needed, they’ve put themselves into deep debt,” said Mr. Thompson, author of “To Those Left Behind: Helping Partners and Families Understand Addiction.”

It’s easy for compulsive gamblers who place bets on sports games or engage in other online gambling to hide their activities. The financial consequences are often disastrous.

“They end up creating issues that



Men line up to place bets at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino in Las Vegas on Jan. 26, 2017. A May 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing the legalization of sports betting has led to more gamblers finding themselves in distress. Sports betting is now legal in 34 states and the District of Columbia.

can go on for decades that will affect their spouses,” he said. “The spouses can be locked into the consequences of their addictions for the rest of their lives, depending on the severity of the addiction. Family members will find out suddenly that they are \$80,000 in debt, which they have to deal with. With gambling addictions, even after the cure there still could be crippling debt.”

At the root of addictive behavior is a need to connect to a sense of safety, purpose, and meaning in the world.

“We mostly find that in relationships,” Mr. Thompson said. “With addicts, they feel their relationships are not assured.”

While many people think that gambling is about the excitement, for most gamblers it’s a kind of numbing relax-

ation. It soothes them. For people with traumatic pasts, this distraction often feels essential. Unfortunately, as debts mount and shame grows, too many gamblers resort to suicide.

“For some people, that is the way they see out of the financial ruin for them and their loved ones,” Mr. Thompson said.

Paychecks Get Flushed at Casinos

Luke, who asked not to share his last name in accordance with the traditions of Gamblers Anonymous, is a 46-year-old manufacturing service technician who lives in suburban Chicago. He visited a casino for the first time while he was in college.

“I didn’t have much money—maybe

\$40 or \$50—so I played slots. So when I lost it, it was gone,” he said.

After Luke graduated, he had more money for betting, and access to several casinos within driving distance.

“I learned how to play blackjack,” Luke said. “I started going by myself, rather than going with friends. When you start going by yourself, and it’s more frequent, it’s problematic.”

He no longer bet just the \$100 in his pocket. If he lost his stake, he would stay around to try to win it back.

“I would go back to the ATM to get more money,” he said.

Luke’s job performance suffered, and he became distant from his family.

“I was losing all my money,” he said. “Sometimes, I would lose my entire paycheck in one night at the casino. I ♣



got paid monthly, and I had to pay my mortgage and my car payment. Then I had to go to my parents for money, just to live. Or I raided my 401(k) and used that to live on.”

Life Wasn’t Worth Living

Luke began to suffer from depression and sought help in 2007 to gain relief from the dark thoughts.

“Gambling was very much affecting my mood and my quality of life,” he said.

There were times when he thought that he would be better off dead.

“I felt hopeless and worthless,” he said. “After another gambling binge, I decided to exclude myself from the casinos. In Illinois, you can put yourself on the voluntary exclusion list. It is a lifetime ban from all casinos. If you enter a casino, you can be arrested for trespassing.”

When he went online to find out how to ban himself, he was referred to a counseling center, which offered therapy for substance and gambling addiction. His psychiatrist recommended Gamblers Anonymous.

“I felt like I fit in right away,” he said. “I started going to a couple of meetings a week. Gamblers Anonymous became a big part of my recovery right away. It was indispensable.”

Luke said that he hasn’t placed a bet since he began attending meetings regularly 11 years ago.

“To get any genuine recovery and have success, you need to attend meet-

ings with regularity,” he said.

The Rise, Fall, and Recovery of a Successful Lawyer

Chris also found recovery through Gamblers Anonymous. Now 66 and a retired Chicago attorney, he was introduced to casino gambling during a 2004 fishing trip with his family in Wisconsin. He went back the following year and began enjoying the dice game of craps. His gambling increased when his office moved closer to a casino and he could gamble at lunch or after work.

“For the next six years, it went from once every couple of weeks, to four times a week. I started out losing a couple of hundred a week, to more than \$1,000, then as much as \$1,400 during some sessions,” he said.

Then Chris took early retirement, which gave him more free time.

“I started gambling every day at the Rivers Casino in Des Plaines. I would also drink; I had that addiction, too. That kind of fueled it,” he said.

Table craps was the only game that Chris played.

“The strategy of it fascinated me, in terms of all the different kinds of bets you could make with the dice,” he said. “It was exciting. You play it around a table with eight to 16 people. There is a camaraderie, and people whoop it up when everything’s going well. From 2007 to 2014, I was playing craps all the time.”

The most money that Chris ever won in one session was about \$4,000. He of-

Losing can lead one to desperation to increase betting limits, with the excuse that one will win back what is lost, according to a former gambler.

ten lost as much as \$1,400 in one day. The losses far exceeded the wins, and Chris became stressed about where to find the money to cover his losses.

“My wife didn’t see what I was doing, taking money out of my checking account and my 401(k). The worst thing was the all-encompassing focus on where I was going to get my next money for gambling. I couldn’t think about anything else but that,” he said.

Chris’s luck changed when he checked himself into CORE, the Center of Recovery, an in-patient facility for compulsive gamblers in Shreveport, Louisiana.

“CORE treatment was very successful,” he said. “There was intense counseling with eight other people in the group.”

Each gambler explored how he or she became powerless over gambling and used it to soothe uncomfortable feelings.

“We worked with that,” Chris said, “how could we explain that and be honest about it? How did it affect our relationships?”

Chris attended Gamblers Anonymous meetings each night, and had one-on-one counseling with a counselor who was assigned to him.

“I understood that I lost myself in gambling. It was the thing that would take over so I didn’t have to deal with the depression and anxiety,” he said.

That was nine years ago. These days, Chris attends a gambling counseling group at the Way Back Inn, an outpatient facility, once a week. He talks with his counselor once a month.

“Continuing counseling and the CORE in-patient program have been the most effective for me,” he said. “In Gamblers Anonymous, you’re hearing the stories of other people, what they went through, how they went through it, and what’s been working for them.

“And you play that in your mind and think, ‘If I went back there and went through that again, I’d end up right back where they did.’ When you work with other people, you stay close to the problem. You remember how it was.” ■

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Perspectives

President Joe Biden unveils his economic plan during an event in Chicago on June 28.

PHOTO BY SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES



BIDENOMICS



INVESTING IN AMERICA



EMPOWER WORK



LOWERING COSTS



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Thomas McArdle



Business Bigotry

Corporate America and the left perpetuate race myths

THERE ARE THOSE WHO are convinced that the United States is incurably racist. The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in late June to end once and for all the explicit consideration of race in college admissions exposed entrenched racism within this country’s society all right. But it turns out that where it’s found is in an unholy alliance of the political left and corporate America.

In an amicus brief supporting Harvard and the University of North Carolina’s determination to continue their decades-long use of race as a negative, stereotypical criterion in deciding what tiny fraction of the more than 60,000 applicants, in the case of Harvard, will be awarded places in the undergraduate class, there was a telling admission from the long list of powerhouse U.S. corporations.

“While the total U.S. buying power increased 55 percent between 2010 and 2020, Asian Americans’ buying power grew by 111 percent, Latino and Hispanic Americans’ buying power by 87 percent, Native Americans’ by 67 percent, and Black Americans’ by 61 percent,” the brief stated.

The profit motive is what Apple, Bain & Co., Dell Inc., Etsy, General Dynamics, General Electric Co., General Motors Co., Google, Hershey, Levi Strauss & Co., Merck & Co., Proctor & Gamble, Starbucks, Uber, United Airlines, and the others have their eyes on.

President George W. Bush famously called the lowering of standards for non-whites “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” But there’s nothing soft about raking in money by perpetuating dangerous race myths.

What’s more, one of the high-powered lawyers whom the firms enlisted might have told his or her clients that Asian Americans—with that 111 percent increased buying power in just one decade—may be the most serious victims

of the universities’ current racial-preference policies, now consigned to the ash heap of history. As Chief Justice John Roberts’s opinion noted, Harvard’s consideration of race has caused an 11.1 percent decrease in the number of Asian Americans it admits.

What these elites have been doing, far from making moral strides for society, is little more than statistical tokenism.

These companies, sniffing out in which direction they might find their future profits, have disgraced themselves by endorsing the fanciful idea of a permanently bigoted America held by Justice Sonia Sotomayor in the case’s primary dissent, joined by the other liberal justices, “an endemically segregated society” upon which the high court majority of six justices “ce-ments a superficial rule of colorblindness as a constitutional principle.”

These corporate entities make it sound like there’ll be another 1929 crash if colleges stop lowering admission standards to give places to minority students.

Apparently, being around those of other races and ethnicities is more valuable to corporate America than anything you might learn from books or professors. (Except, it seems, being around Asian Americans, whose numbers have dwindled thanks to the race preferences that downplay academic merit.)

The evidence that the firms presented included the truly bizarre, such as the results of a pretend homicide investigation finding that “individuals in racially homogenous groups may be more reluctant to raise new information due to pressure to conform and the emphasis on in-group similarities.”

And race—not religion, not geo-

graphical origin, not philosophical variety—is what counts. The business- es argued before the court that “the empirical research underscores the specific importance of racial diversity on university campuses. Of the various diversity experiences at universities, interactions with peers of different races are more strongly linked with cognitive growth than are interactions with peers who exhibit other forms of diversity.”

The U.S. Supreme Court wasn’t swallowing any of this. In reviewing its past rulings, Mr. Roberts noted the “two dangers that all race-based government action portends”: the risk of stereotyping, and discrimination against racial groups that aren’t the beneficiaries of race-based preferences. Underlying these concerns is the principle that all “racial classifications, however compelling their goals,” are dangerous.

The factual record shows that what these elites have been doing, far from making great moral strides for society in regard to race, is actually little more than statistical tokenism. From 2009 to 2018, as Mr. Roberts pointed out, blacks formed “a tight band of 10.0–11.7 percent of the admitted pool” at Harvard.

“The same theme held true for other minority groups,” Mr. Roberts said.

In his concurring opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas, as he has done before in addressing racial preferences, quoted Frederick Douglass: “The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us. ... I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us! Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us.”

Mr. Thomas wrote, “Like Douglass, I believe blacks can achieve in every avenue of American life without the meddling of university administrators.”

Sadly, an apparently incurably discriminatory corporate America doesn’t share Douglass and Mr. Thomas’s belief in the abilities and character of black Americans.

Anders Corr



China’s Metal Controls Fail

New restrictions on gallium and germanium not much of a threat

IN THE LATEST BREAK BETWEEN China and the United States, Beijing imposed export controls on gallium and germanium. The two minerals, which Beijing plans to restrict starting Aug. 1, are critical to high-tech products such as ultra-fast computer chips, electric vehicles, radar, night vision devices, missile defense, fiber optics, LEDs, and satellite imagery.

China produces about 60 percent of the world’s germanium and more than 90 percent of its gallium, giving the country leverage over end users.

The controls are widely seen as retaliation for U.S., Japanese, South Korean, and Dutch restrictions on chips and the complex equipment necessary to manufacture them. They could also protect dwindling resources in China, according to experts cited by Hong Kong media.

Some other metals, such as indium, also will be subject to the new controls, according to Reuters. Indium is reportedly less restricted.

The timing of the announcement, just days before U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen’s trip to China, was to present Beijing with a bargaining chip in its attempt to stop U.S. restrictions, including potentially on cloud computing.

In May, Beijing banned Micron Technology chips from its critical infrastructure, including information infrastructure used by large banks and telecom companies.

But if Beijing did think its new controls would be effective bargaining chips, it should have known that Washington has other options. On July 6, the Pentagon announced that it has strategic reserves of germanium (although not of gallium).

On July 5, a Commerce Department spokesperson said Beijing’s new controls “underscore the need to diversify supply chains.”

“The United States will engage with our allies and partners to address this and to build resilience in critical supply chains,” the spokesperson said.

Taiwan’s deputy foreign minister said, “Export controls ... are an accelerator, for countries including Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, to reduce our dependence on China’s supply of those critical materials.”

Alternative sources of gallium and germanium can be found in Alaska, Tennessee, and Washington state and from recycling scrap.

South Korea, a leading chipmaker, said that even the short-term effect of China’s new controls would be limited.

China’s former vice commerce minister said the controls are “just a start,” however, and could broaden if the West continues pressuring China.

Germany’s economy minister said any broadening, for example to lithium used in batteries, would be “problematic.” Restrictions on Chinese graphite exports would hit global automakers particularly hard.

Alternative sources of gallium and germanium can be found in Alaska, Tennessee, and Washington state and from recycling scrap.

The metals can also be acquired from Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Germany, and Belgium.

One industry source said accelerated refining processes in these countries could take a couple of years to fully replace current imports from China.

This would increase the price of computer chips in the short term but diversify supply chains in the long term.

Netherlands-based Nyrstar announced on July 4 that it would seek to

produce gallium and germanium in the United States, Europe, and Australia.

Some argue that the gallium and germanium restrictions are inconsequential relative to restrictions on graphite or lithium and are therefore meant as a shot across the bow. Nevertheless, they seem unwise from even Beijing’s perspective as they alert the United States and allies and incentivize preemptive de-linking of strategic supply chains from China. Xi Jinping’s advisers are likely telling him what he wants to hear, leading to a major strategic error.

The CCP’s restrictions on rare earth elements (REE) against Japan in 2010 likewise backfired. Tokyo relatively easily found alternate sources, including through investment in an Australian REE producer and identification of undersea mining sites within Japanese territorial waters. The bans harmed China’s reputation as a reliable supplier.

Today, China accounts for about 70 percent of global REE mine production and 85 percent of its refinement processing. China’s dominance of the sector, which produces extensive toxic waste, is in part due to lax environmental laws.

The United States, Australia, Thailand, and Myanmar also mine or refine REE, though to a much lesser extent. Vietnam, Russia, Brazil, and India have extensive REE reserves. Russia and the Democratic Republic of Congo both said they could increase supply of the metal.

U.S. dependence on China for REE imports has decreased from about 80 percent between 2014 and 2017 to about 74 percent today. The restrictions on gallium and germanium will accelerate this trend across all critical supply chains.

Beijing’s ham-fisted attempt at leveraging its metals industry against the United States and allies is only further isolating the country economically and technologically.

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Milton Ezrati

President Biden Touts ‘Bidenomics’

Biden tells Americans they are wrong, that the economy is fine



PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN’S speech earlier this month told Americans that they have a mistaken view of the economy. Although the average of polls shows that only some 38.3 percent of American voters have confidence in the president’s handling of the economy, the president thinks he’s doing a great job, and his speech aimed to assure America of that fact. Not only did he insist that things are looking up, but he also assured all that things will get much better once his policies have a chance to take effect. The talk was clearly aimed at the 2024 election. However, economic prospects leave little likelihood that the message will gain acceptance.

He’ll have to work harder than one speech to convince Americans. His approval figures on economics have deteriorated consistently since he took office. In March 2021, just after the second COVID-19 pandemic relief bill became law, some 60 percent of American adults thought the president was doing a good job, generally. That was the high point. Soon thereafter, as signs of inflation began to emerge, his approval ratings began to fall, and they’ve done so consistently since, down to recent lows.

Despite this less-than-encouraging backdrop, Mr. Biden took full ownership of his administration’s economic stewardship. Referring to his approach as “Bidenomics,” the president made four arguments. The first focused on the still-strong jobs market. In June, payrolls grew by 209,000 after an even stronger May figure of 306,000. Unemployment, although up from its lows to 3.6 percent of the workforce, remained remarkably low by historical standards. The speech’s second part used the upbeat jobs theme to point out how the economy has avoided the recession once widely

anticipated when the Federal Reserve began its anti-inflationary interest rate hikes.

A crucial negative that Americans cannot help but note is the state of real wages.

The speech’s third section turned on less firm footing. The president clung to the fact that inflation has slowed dramatically from the highs of a year ago. At an annual rate of 4 percent, inflation is less than half what it was in June 2022. He implied that the improvement would continue, but he offered no reason why it should. In a similar way, Mr. Biden, in the final part of the speech, promised vast economic improvements. He touted his policy of targeting certain investments to drive the economy forward, comparing these policies favorably with tax cuts. He gave as evidence last year’s bipartisan infrastructure bill and his legislation to subsidize the domestic manufacture of semiconductors and the recently announced \$40 billion to bring high-speed internet to the entire country. These steps, he forecast, will pay great dividends, although he admitted that the effects will take time to materialize.

For all this, the president failed to mention other economic indicators and different economic perspectives that, despite the speech’s upbeat framing, might explain his low economics approval rating. A crucial negative that Americans can’t help but note is the state of real wages. Weekly and hourly paychecks have increased, but they’ve failed to keep up with inflation. Hourly earnings after the effects of inflation have declined by more

than 3 percent since he took office. Other important economic indicators show inordinately slow growth, if not signs of outright recession. The country’s real gross domestic product increased at an annual rate of barely 2 percent during the year’s first quarter, far less than historical averages. Consumer spending—a crucial two-thirds of the economy—increased at an annual rate of only 0.8 percent in real terms during the three months ended May, the most recent period for which data are available. That speaks to neither confidence among households nor much of an engine of growth. Homebuilding, although up recently, has declined by nearly 13 percent over the past year.

If the speech is an early glimpse at the 2024 election campaign—and that’s certainly what it looks like—Mr. Biden has taken a high-risk strategy. The election, after all, is 16 months away. For his economic perspective to gain traction, the economy will have to improve visibly over the intervening months. But the Federal Reserve is determined to raise interest rates in coming months and at the very least keep them high until inflation retreats to the preferred 2 percent rate, half of today’s ongoing rate. That policy posture promises high and possibly rising rates for quite some time yet, a practice that if it doesn’t guarantee recession hardly points to an economic pickup. The president also has effectively promised continued improvements in inflation. But history shows that inflation typically follows a variegated path and will almost surely show signs of worsening at some point during this time. And wages aren’t likely to catch up to inflation anytime soon. Things could, of course, work out, but the likelihoods still suggest that economic conditions will deteriorate before they improve.

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

Kevin Stocklin



Smart Home Systems

Government uses ‘data brokers’ to surveil Americans

CONSUMERS AROUND the world are installing “smart” home systems for the convenience and control it gives them, but many are unaware of who or what may actually be controlling these systems and for what purpose.

Users of smart home technology are sometimes startled to find that someone else is operating their systems. In 2019, a Milwaukee couple said they felt “violated” when smart cameras in their house began talking to them, and their thermostat began setting itself to 90 degrees in late summer.

In August 2022, thousands of Colorado residents who installed smart thermostats to get a \$100 credit from Xcel, the local electric utility, were shocked to discover that the utility company had locked them out of their own thermostats, allowing temperatures in their homes to reach as high as 88 degrees in order to reduce power usage during a heat wave.

And recently, a Baltimore resident claimed that Amazon had shut down his smart home security system without warning because of allegations, which turned out to be false, that he had uttered a racial slur to an Amazon delivery person. The resident, Brandon Jackson, who happens to be black, gave evidence from video cameras posted outside his residence that nobody was home when the alleged incident occurred.

And then there are numerous creepy tales of hackers taking over baby monitors to observe the families that installed them. In one case in 2018, parents reported a voice coming through the monitor that said, “I’m in your baby’s room.”

Added to this are the many stories that people tell of private conversations they have with a spouse or friend in their home in the presence of a smartphone, after which an advertisement for whatever they were



In August 2022, thousands of Colorado residents who installed thermostats were locked out of the devices.

discussing coincidentally appears on their computer or phone.

Currently, about 60 million American households have installed home smart systems, and that number is projected to increase by 50 percent to more than 90 million households by 2027.

While corporations have taken a great interest in monitoring people’s behavior for advertising or sales, federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies have also become increasingly fixated on tracking the behavior of everyday Americans.

An internal January report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to National Intelligence Director Avril Haines detailed the routine purchasing of “commercially available intelligence” (CAI) on American citizens by America’s intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

The ODNI report states that the government has been buying CAI from “data brokers,” who “maintain large, sophisticated databases with consumer information that can include credit

histories, insurance claims, criminal records, employment histories, incomes, ethnicities, purchase histories, and interests.”

The report notes the “potential for comparable abuse of CAI held by the IC [intelligence community].”

“In the wrong hands, sensitive insights gained through CAI could facilitate blackmail, stalking, harassment, and public shaming,” it reads.

At a Cato Institute conference on government surveillance, Center for Democracy and Technology Deputy Director Jake Laperruque said: “The violations that we’ve seen have not just been epic in scale, but they’ve also been persistent, over and over again.

“We’ve had reports of journalists, political commentators, a domestic political party; these compliance violations are the most worrisome type of politically focused surveillance.”

This has led some legal experts to call for new laws to protect Americans’ privacy, particularly regarding data collection.

“It’s shameful that we have not had meaningful privacy legislation to this point when ... every other democracy and advanced economy in the world has something like this and the United States doesn’t,” said Neil Richards, a Koch distinguished professor in law at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

David Buil-Gil, lecturer in quantitative criminology at the University of Manchester in the UK and co-author of a study titled “The Digital Harms of Smart Home Devices,” told The Epoch Times: “I think it’s the responsibility of governments to inform citizens what they’re doing with our data. We should be working toward a general understanding of data about ourselves, about our everyday activities, who is collecting that data, who owns that data. And legally, and also from an ethical standpoint, how it’s being used.”

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

Daniel Lacalle

Bidenomics Boosts Debt and Inflation

The neo-Keynesian approach to budget reduces household income



ESTIMATES OF U.S. growth have improved but remain massive-ly below the Federal Reserve’s projections.

After the largest monetary and fiscal stimulus in recent years, growth remains well below trend, and debt is significantly higher. It’s interesting to hear Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen say that “trickle-down economics did not work,” when in reality, this is the failed trickle-down: massive government deficit spending that leads to negative real wage growth and weaker gross domestic product (GDP).

Current consensus real GDP growth for the fourth quarter of 2023 stands at 0.2 percent, significantly lower than the median projection of 1 percent in the policy-making Federal Open Market Committee’s June Summary of Economic Projections. For example, the latest figure shows evidence of headline strength hiding weakness in the details. New durable-goods orders surged in May, but this headline growth disguised that core capital-goods orders were revised down again.

Even if we consider the optimistic assumptions of the Biden administration, which assume a 2 percent per annum GDP growth until 2032 and 3.8 percent unemployment, the U.S. federal government deficit wouldn’t fall below 5 percent of GDP even in 2032. That’s a deficit that rises to \$2.01 trillion in 2032 from \$1.1 trillion in 2023, an accumulated deficit between 2023 and 2032 of \$15.46 trillion. That’s a 106 percent debt to GDP, according to the Biden administration calculations, even with very bullish estimates of growth that consider no recession or stagnation in the entire forecast period.

One of the biggest problems of this neo-Keynesian approach to government budgets is that it leaves households with less money in real terms and that the “anti-inflation” measures



Massive federal expenditure programs generate more inflation as they add artificial demand created with newly printed units of currency to an economy.

increase debt and inflation.

Take the American Rescue Plan for example. It was supposed to be the helicopter money solution to the crisis, giving families cash and supporting consumption through the COVID-19 pandemic. Adjusted for inflation, Bloomberg Economics estimates that the average household in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution now has liquid assets worth \$1,200 less than it did before COVID-19. Did you want the stimulus check with printed money? You paid for it multiple times over in higher inflation.

The other key policy items of the Biden administration—the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—were created to incentivize aggregate demand and boost investment in areas where the private sector seemed to be underinvesting. However, it wasn’t the case. The problem

is that the government doesn’t have more or better information about the requirements of the real economy and assumes erroneously that the private sector didn’t invest because of some flaw in the market, and these massive federal expenditure programs generate more inflation as they add artificial demand created with newly printed units of currency to an economy that’s already working at full capacity and full employment. Thus, it puts more fuel to the fire of inflation.

The Inflation Reduction Act assumes a total of \$500 billion in federal expenditure and tax breaks to accelerate investment in clean energy. This was utterly unnecessary when the United States was already a global leader in renewable energy investments, and the program so far has created more inflationary pressures as artificial government spending added to an already hot industry.

The same happens with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—\$550 billion in new spending over five years, which included a clearly unnecessary artificial boost to an already booming sector, driving prices much higher.

Launching multibillion-dollar spending programs financed with newly created money and debt into an economy has added to inflation and further debilitated the public finances. The measures taken by the Federal Reserve to reduce the inflationary pressures make a recession more likely. The Fed must act to reduce the inflation that the government generates with its anti-inflation spending programs and, by doing so, may create a recession as the rate hikes and monetary contraction hinder families and businesses. Brilliant.

When all this fails and revenues fall below estimates, growth deteriorates or leads to a recession and debt soars, neo-Keynesians will say that another massive government spending program is required.

DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

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

Fan Yu

Fed’s Conundrum Continues

Policymakers are now reading the economic data tea leaves monthly

WE’RE SQUARELY in the dog days of summer, which in Hellenistic astrology is connected to bad luck, lethargy, and, of course, hot and humid weather.

These are the days when economists and market watchers would love to shut down and go away for the summer. But for the Federal Reserve and its chairman, Jerome Powell, there’s a lot of work to be done.

So far, this year has confounded market experts. Heading into the year, many expected an economic recession and the stock market to tumble. Those factors, along with moderating inflation, would encourage the Fed to plateau and even cut interest rates.

But just about the opposite has happened. Many economist factors continue to run hot, forcing the Fed to increase rates. The stock market has enjoyed a tech-led rally all year.

Economic policymakers are now stuck in a month-to-month lurch of reading the economic data tea leaves.

The policy-making Federal Open Market Committee holds its next meeting during the last week of July. And most economists and the market agree that another quarter-percent-age-point increase in the federal funds rate target is in store after a pause last month.

But after that? Experts are divided. Morgan Stanley analysts, among others, believe that inflation will be moderating in a way that pushes the Fed to ease off on more hikes. But each time we think economic indicators are cooling off, something comes along to suggest otherwise.

Among the most conflicted recent data is June’s employment report. A 209,000 increase in payrolls was just slightly lower than expectations after 14 months of straight beats.

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES



Each time we think economic indicators are cooling off, something comes along to suggest otherwise.

The official report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) was less than half of ADP’s estimate of 497,000 for June, released a day before the government’s report. One would generally think the private payroll provider’s figures are more accurate than the BLS’s estimates, given that ADP actually cuts checks for millions of workers in nongovernment sectors.

The official unemployment rate trickled down slightly to 3.6 percent, while the underemployment rate—which counts folks who work part-time because of an inability to land their desired full-time job—ticked up to 6.9 percent.

Another data point is temporary employment. Bloomberg recently reported that employers have cut back on temps in June, a move typically seen just before recessions. The metric has been contracting for several months on a year-over-year basis. Temporary help is usually a leading indicator, as companies would let go

of temp staff before cutting full-time staff en masse.

Morgan Stanley analysts recently dove into some of the difficulties in bridging the public versus private payroll numbers gap.

The analysts found that public payrolls generally lag private payroll numbers.

“This occurs because as private sector wages slow, public sector compensation becomes more competitive, and, as a result, backfilling in the public sector is underway,” Morgan Stanley analysts wrote in a July 7 note to clients.

What this means is that the official BLS payroll numbers may yet swell going forward as laid-off private sector employees find more work in state and local government-supported roles. This trend is supported further by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was signed into law in November 2021 that provided about \$2 trillion in federal funding for large-scale infrastructure projects.

This so-called backfilling could exist until the end of 2023.

Aside from strong wages and jobs, there are plenty of economic factors that suggest against a healthy economy. Hence, the recession we all forecasted from last year may be delayed, but it isn’t canceled.

And less importantly, there may not be too many interest rate increases after July. Perhaps one or two more, before economic indicators really begin to turn.

The bond market confirms that suspicion. The yield curve is still inverted—meaning that near-term yields are higher than longer-term yields—and the gap between the two-year and the 10-year remains its widest since the 1970s and 1980s, when the U.S. economy wrestled with periods of high inflation, rising interest rates, and bouts of recession.



James Lindsay,
founder, website New
Discourses.

ILLUSTRATED BY THE EPOCH TIMES,
BRENDON FALLON/THE EPOCH TIMES

THOUGHT LEADERS

Understanding the Marxist Underpinnings of Education

How the US moved from a high-trust society to needing to verify ‘virtually everything’

“**T**HIS CORRUPTION of scholarship,” says James Lindsay, “creates an entire Lysenkoist artifice that poisons the whole enterprise, the twisted perversion you get when the knowledge generating enterprise gets completely corrupted.”

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek meets with Mr. Lindsay, founder of the website New Discourses, to discuss Marxist corruption in education. Mr. Lindsay is the author of “The Marxification of Education” and “Race Marxism,” and co-author of “Cynical Theories.”

He also belongs to the group behind the Grievance Studies Affair, or Sokal Squared Hoax, which managed to publish a number of fake papers in critical-theory-based journals. That story is detailed in Mike Nayna’s new documentary “The Reformers.”

JAN JEKIELEK: We have this new film by Mike Nayna about the Sokal Squared Hoax, which you and two others created some years back. It opened my eyes to a whole crazy reality that I wasn’t fully aware of. You also have a new book, “The Marxification of Education,” about Paulo Freire and why our education system is the way it is.

JAMES LINDSAY: 2017 to 2018 is the timeline. Two colleagues of mine—Peter Boghossian and Helen Pluckrose—and I decided that one of the best ways to expose the corruption in academia would be to get a large number of papers published in leading academic journals: feminist theory and philosophy, gender studies, and critical race theory.

We took a year and wrote 20 papers. Seven were accepted for publication, and four of them actually got published. It’s a slow process. All of the seven would have been published. One was given an award for excellence in scholarship. The Wall Street Journal figured out what we were up to, and we

“The scholarship upon which we build our knowledge base, our public policy, and our journalism is suffering from political corruption.”

came clean. In October 2018, the final scoreboard was seven accepted, seven under peer review, and six that hadn’t succeeded.

We were aiming to show that the scholarship upon which we build our knowledge base, our public policy, and our journalism is suffering from political corruption, to the extent that we could make up fake articles with ridiculous conclusions that were politically fashionable. Some were funny, and some were heinous and disturbing. We got them through the peer-review process, and they were regarded as genuine academic literature.

MR. JEKIELEK: You figured out that if you used certain keywords and structured the logic in a certain way, you would get in. Is that the idea?

MR. LINDSAY: Yes. The six that failed—the first that we wrote—showed us there was a learning process. At some point, we got the hang of it by asking, “What are the peer reviewers looking for? What do the journal editors believe about the way the world operates? How do we phrase this?” It’s really about a certain language they speak.

One of the articles was prescient for the moment because it said that we needed—and this is meant to be funny—to be wary of advanced artificial intelligence. Rather than allowing AI to be guided by masculine bias, which might end in a calamity that destroys the world, we need to make an interactional feminist. We argued for a feminist AI.

MR. JEKIELEK: Who are they?

MR. LINDSAY: In this case, feminist theorists, gender studies scholars, and critical race theorists. In broader terms, we’re talking about the woke scholars in these domains of identity politics.

They call it constructed knowledge. Then a filmmaker, Mike Nayna, started following us around with cameras trying to learn for himself the same thing that you’re asking, “What in the world is going on here?”

It took him four years due to COVID delays and other issues, plus the industry pushback. He couldn’t get any support whatsoever within the film industry, so he had to figure out a way to organize and distribute it.

Anyway, the Grievance Studies Affair, or the Sokal Squared Hoax—the two names for it—have never been more relevant. It’s one thing that we got a feminist theory journal to believe in feminist AI. But these same kinds of articles are now regularly being published in the New England Journal of Medicine. That’s a very concerning issue. For example, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], which has now imbibed this same political philosophy, will be informed by the things that are coming out of the New England Journal of Medicine.

I’m not a doctor, and I don’t know three things about medicine, but I could write these kinds of articles for the New England Journal of Medicine starting today. That’s a very concerning problem.



The woke movement has been in action for the past 10 to 15 years, longer than most people realize, James Lindsay says.

MR. JEKIELEK: I remember in 2020 when the virus was raging and the [Black Lives Matter] riots had begun. Everyone was supposed to stay home. Suddenly, 1,200 medical professionals signed a letter stating, “The real health emergency is racism.” People kept saying to me, “This was the moment a light bulb went off in my head, and I realized something terrible was happening.”

MR. LINDSAY: This is exactly what the Grievance Studies Affair was warning about by focusing attention on how absurd these papers were.

For example, the most famous of our papers presented the idea—which is covered in Mike’s film—of training men the way we train dogs. If we use dog obedience manuals and train men like dogs, with leashes and treats, then we can get them to desist from unwanted behaviors regarding women.

This idea just exploded from there. Peter and I were trying to figure out, “How do we structure this?” He goes to the dog park with his dogs every

day in Portland. I said, “Just work in some of your stuff from the dog park.” He wrote this draft with just insane stuff about things dogs were doing.

The whole paper became focused on how rape culture is a serious problem in society. You could have an implicit bias test by seeing how people reacted to watching dogs have sex with each other at the dog park, or sexually assault one another.

The peer reviewers were worried about things like, “How did you respect the dogs’ privacy while you’re watching them do this? How do you know if the dogs are male or female?” We said that we inspected their genitals. They said, “How did you respect their privacy when you did that? We don’t want to get the dogs embarrassed. How do you know when a sexual assault with a dog is wanted or not wanted?”

It got a lot of attention, and this is the paper that was given an award. This is so absurd that it’s difficult to sit here and describe to you this paper without thinking, “How on earth did anybody ever think this was real?”

We also famously rewrote a chapter of Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” as intersectional feminism. In Chapter 12, Hitler says, “Our movement needs to do this 13-point plan.” He’s talking about the growth of the Nazi party before it becomes the Nazi party. Everywhere that it said “our movement,” we would put in intersectional feminism. We started making the language work, and weaving scholarship in between. We changed a lot of wording without changing the meaning, so it wouldn’t get caught by a plagiarism detector. A feminist social work journal accepted this chapter of “Mein Kampf.”

So it was no surprise to me when people said, “Racism is a real public health threat,” because that’s exactly what the critical race apparatus would say.

This is Lysenkoism. Trofim Lysenko was an agriculturalist in the Soviet Union. He advocated a crackpot Soviet biology that he had more or less invented. It didn’t work, and was based on incorrect theories of genetics and on Soviet ideology in order to displace Western bourgeois ideology.

Lysenko believed that you could convince seeds and plants to be comrades and to share resources and grow better, or to transform from oats to rye. He was famous for remarking that given enough time, he could teach oranges to grow in Siberia.

But Stalin didn’t think he was preposterous, or maybe he did and didn’t care because he was a tool for power. Stalin implemented Lysenkoism in agriculture and starved tens of millions of people in the Soviet Union. Then, Mao comes along and says, “That’s Soviet biology, so that’s what we’ll use,” and he starved tens of millions of people in China.

When we’re dealing with Lysenkoism in the medical field, we have to wonder about this reprioritization of care, the so-called affirming care that’s not actually care. This is a Lysenkoist model; if you disagree with it, you may lose your medical license.

ILLUSTRATED BY THEPOOH TIMES, ROBERTO SCHMIDT/APPIA VIA GETTY IMAGES

If you wanted to prescribe ivermectin during COVID or disagree with the official word about COVID, you might also lose your license.

MR. JEKIELEK: What’s the big lesson of the Grievance Studies Affair, or the Sokal Squared Hoax?

MR. LINDSAY: Everybody has the ability to use their senses and their own experiments to say, “This is the scientific or enlightenment ideal.” But if those are locked behind an ideology, a catastrophe is coming. Undoubtedly, the lesson is that those at the highest level of the information and knowledge apparatus of Western civilization are now locked behind a door held by an ideological contingent. They have a clear agenda of transforming the world into what they want it to be, rather than what it is.

MR. JEKIELEK: I’ve been reading “The Marxification of Education,” which is helping me put together pieces of disparate knowledge about this bizarre cultural moment we’re in. For example, this idea of lived experience and how it’s central to Paulo Freire’s ideas.

MR. LINDSAY: Yes. Freire thought that the dynamic of this particular species of Marxism is if you live in the world, you already know. You’re already a knower, and your knowledge is the favorite word of the day. We hear this from the woke all the time. They don’t talk about true and false, they say it’s valid. Their knowledge is valid; their emotions and anger are valid.

MR. JEKIELEK: They don’t believe in true and false.

MR. LINDSAY: Right. They believe valid and invalid are what counts, and they need to awaken in you what Freire calls a critical consciousness. It’s an extension of class consciousness and the idea

“Our teachers have become corrupted by this political ideology because their schools got corrupted.”

that everything in society needs to be criticized because it’s dehumanizing.

When somebody says, “It’s been my lived experience that I have racism,” what they mean is, “I’ve experienced things that I’ve run through a racial consciousness filter, provided largely by critical race theory, that has led me to interpret a system of racism.”

That is lived experience. It’s not of your real experience or knowledge. Lived experience is when it has been politically conscientized, as Freire calls it. That is better than official knowledge, because it’s the knowledge that the powers that be in society don’t want you to know, the knowledge that gets you out of the trap of oppression.

When we look at the woke literature, we immediately see how it’s always whose knowledge is valid versus whose knowledge is invalid—your truth versus my truth. If you don’t understand the power dynamics behind the construction of truth, then you can’t possibly have anything to say.

Everything coming out of this woke movement in the past 10 to 15 years—longer than most people realize—is colored by this elevation of the oppressed.

MR. JEKIELEK: You’ve provided a framework for understanding all these other critical theories, or cynical theories, as you call them. It was incredibly valuable to understand why you called your book with Helen Pluckrose “Cynical Theories,” because the worldview is cynical. It imagines

that everything is a power play.

MR. LINDSAY: Yes. When they say race and gender are socially constructed, they’re saying that a power dynamic has set up our understanding of that concept, which is imposed on the lower class for the advantage of the upper class. This is a conflict-oriented, stratified kind of thinking, just like Marx adopted.

The goal is to be wholly negative about what you see in the world around you, and as Marx phrased it, “to give ruthless criticism of all that exists.” This is exactly what you see being done today.

Thus, we call it cynical theories instead of critical theories, because their criticism is ruthless and cynical. At the end of the road, it leads to an absolute hatred of the people that you believe are holding you back from the liberation you feel entitled to receive.

MR. JEKIELEK: We saw something like this with the unvaccinated being demonized in all sorts of ways. It’s reminiscent of the struggle sessions during the Cultural Revolution in China.

MR. LINDSAY: Yes, virtually identical. Mao used the term “unity on a new basis.” That was the third part of his three-part formula to transform society: unity, criticism, unity. The first unity means inculcating the desire for unity. “Don’t we all want to have a space where we belong? Don’t you want a welcoming and inclusive environ- ♦

ment?” That’s the modern parlance.

The second stage is to enter into criticism, which then leads to self-criticism and struggle. This is Mao’s totalitarian formula for how we’re going to purge society of the undesirables and bring everybody into “unity on a new basis,” which he called socialist discipline. Today, we use words like sustainability, equity, and inclusion. But the model is the same. Whether it’s COVID, critical race theory, trans-affirmation, or environmentalism and the Green New Deal, it’s the exact same formula.

MR. JEKIELEK: Let’s jump back to Freire. You make a case that there is a Maoist impulse in Freire’s teachings.

MR. LINDSAY: In “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” which is Freire’s magnum opus from 1970, a footnote at the beginning he says his method of education is based on what he has observed in Mao’s revolutionary high schools and colleges in China.

MR. JEKIELEK: How important is Freire’s thinking to the current educational system?

MR. LINDSAY: It’s central. In a book written in 2016, “The Critical Turn in Education,” Marxist professor Isaac Gottesman from Iowa State University gives a historical view from the mid-1960s up to 2015. In the first sentence of the book, he says, and I’m paraphrasing, “Where did all the ‘60s radicals go? Not to the religious cults, and not to yuppiedom, but to the classroom.”

He then explains that Paulo Freire’s work is pivotal here, that by 1992 our colleges of education were completely enthralled with Freire.

Today, we call it culturally relevant teaching, which says, “We’re going to find out where the kids are culturally, socially, and emotionally.” Social and emotional learning is the big rage

now. As Freire says, we will then facilitate them into political knowledge, that whether it’s mathematics, reading, or history, the lesson is a mediator to knowledge, and true knowledge is political knowledge.

MR. JEKIELEK: Do you think most teachers understand that their educational method is following this plan?

MR. LINDSAY: I don’t think the vast majority of them have the slightest idea what ideology they’re supporting. But they’re being taught this is the most sophisticated way to create engagement—that’s the buzzword—with students. If we get engagement with students, then they’re going to have learning. This is just the best way to teach kids.

In fact, however, students’ academic achievement scores are so abysmal that it’s shocking when you hear the percentages. Nationally, only 40 percent of American students are achieving at grade level in math or reading. In certain districts like Providence, Rhode Island, as I say in my book, we’re talking about single digits.

Only 6 percent of students are learning mathematics at grade level in Providence, but they are some of the most politically active students in the country. If something happens in Texas, like a school shooting, every kid is out of the Providence schools and onto the State House steps doing a demonstration that afternoon. The teachers there believe that political activism is engaging.

Most teachers are not complicit in this program; they’re just trying to do the best they can to teach. But some are, and it doesn’t take everybody to do this.

MR. JEKIELEK: Who would have guessed that our whole education system has these Marxist underpinnings today? There were only hints of it. Any final thoughts?

MR. LINDSAY: The sad truth is that when we have a high-trust society where we feel we can trust the teachers, business people, and others, we think we don’t need to keep our eye on everything. We went to sleep and stopped verifying.

But now we have to start verifying virtually everything. Our business people have been captured by this ideology through ESG [Environmental, Social, and Governance], which is an extortion racket. Our teachers have become corrupted by this political ideology because their schools got corrupted. With this whole long march through the institutions, teachers, lawyers, and doctors are increasingly beholden to an ideology.

They have corrupted the center of knowledge production, which brings us back to the film “The Reformers” and the Grievance Studies Affair. Academic scholarship is not particularly relevant to the average person, at least not in a way they can recognize. It trickles out through the mechanisms of advanced societies to affect your life in meaningful ways, but you aren’t thinking about it. Yet this corruption of scholarship creates an entire Lysenkoist artifice that poisons the whole enterprise, the twisted perversion you get when the knowledge-generating enterprise gets completely corrupted.

The Grievance Studies Affair and “The Reformers” expose some of this corruption. And unless and until this corruption goes away, they’ll remain relevant.

This is a story that has happened before. We can point to Lysenko, we can point to Mao, we can point to these characters in the darkest chapters of 20th-century history, and we know where this story goes. We’ve got to start asking hard questions. We can’t simply trust. We have to verify. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

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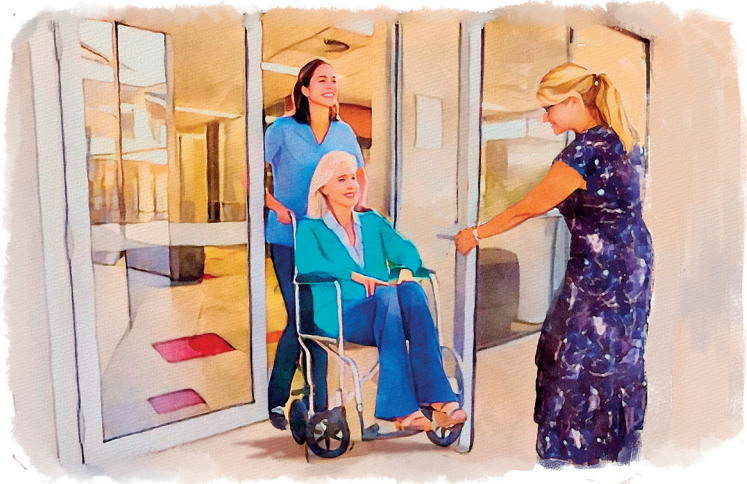


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Don't Be an Island

Take every opportunity to make a new friend

By Jeff Minick



IN HIS MAY 2023 ARTICLE “Let’s Stay In,” John Mac Ghlionn begins with the decades-long Japanese phenomenon of *hikikomori*. He explains that *hiki* means “to withdraw” and *komori* “to remain inside.” In Japan, 1.5 million people, many of them young men, have completely removed themselves from society: no dating, no working, no socializing in person.

Mr. Mac Ghlionn then notes that *hikikomori* is a growing trend in some other countries. Here in the United States, for example, he reports that 60 percent of American men in their 20s are single, and that 50 percent of all unattached males have no interest in dating. Millions, including some women, stay at home, watching television for hours on end, playing video games, and refusing to look for work or make friends.

Nor is this simply a syndrome of youth. Many Americans, Mr. Mac Ghlionn tells us, claim to have no friends whatsoever, and the elderly often suffer physically and mentally from the lack of a social life.

Even worse, these rates of solitude and self-confinement are likely to worsen in years to come. Unless this trend turns around, Mr. Mac Ghlionn warns that “the accelerating atomization of society will result in a collapse of all bonds and lead us into a new, frightening post-political era.”

This widespread absence of traditional human connections is a sad state

These small connections with others can make for a richer tapestry of life.

of affairs. But what about the rest of us? Do we engage in *hikikomori* in a minor key? In other words, do we go out into the world or work a job without making any attempt to build bridges to others? Do we buy a coffee every morning from the same barista without ever learning her name? Do we work beside a man with no idea of where he grew up or even whether he has children? Do we text our friends and family members, but only rarely phone them or get together for a glass of wine?

These small connections with others can make for a richer tapestry of life, but some people have trouble weaving them together. They’re introverted, or they’re in too much of a hurry, or, more simply, they’re just careless, responding to a “How are you?” from the bank teller with “I need to make a deposit.”

No matter how insignificant, however, these small-scale relationships are one of the wheels that keep the world turning round. They can add to our sense of well-being, and they’re surprisingly easy and even enjoyable to practice.

Here are just a few ways to link up with others.

Smile and make eye contact. You don’t need a face-fracturing grin. Just a natural smile. As for the eye contact, keep it brief and friendly.

Learn and use the names of people you encounter on a regular basis. Shakespeare’s Juliet may wonder “What’s in a name?” but most of us are surely flattered when a mechanic or librarian greets us this way.

Practice small kindnesses. Hold that door open for a daughter pushing her mother in a wheelchair, and you’ll likely be rewarded with a smile. Congratulate a coworker on a job well done, and he may leave the workplace walking on air.

In “Take It from a Bartender,” writer and bartender Haley Hamilton reminds us that these brief interactions come with no strings attached, but can be “worthwhile and downright enjoyable.” She concludes, “Technology has given us a way to talk to strangers from a distance, and while it feels good to see those thumbs up next to your posts and pictures, nothing beats the rush of making a connection IRL. I might get paid to talk to strangers, but I can’t think of a better way to make a living.” Giving others a small piece of ourselves is also a great way to make a life. ■

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

Five-star accommodations and unrivaled game-viewing opportunities make South Africa’s Madikwe Game Preserve a perfect adventure vacation option.

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Experience an African Safari 72

INSPIRED BY EUROPEAN palaces, this home in Dubai is not for everyone, but is a great example of what can be accomplished when cost is not an object. 70

WHETHER YOU OPT FOR a travel trailer or a self-contained recreational vehicle, there are options for every budget, and all are ideal for your next adventure. 76

WE’VE COLLECTED SOME not always considered but essential gear that is sure to make your next day at the beach even more fun. 79



Outrageous Luxury

By Bill Lindsey

More than a decade of planning and construction resulted in this most impressive residence

The breathtaking interior is embellished with more than 700,000 sheets of gold leaf, a project that required more than two years to complete.


NOT ALL THAT LONG AGO, THE country of Dubai was mostly desert, but it now boasts Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, and a booming economy founded on oil and boosted by tourism.

Located in Emirates Hills, Dubai's most exclusive neighborhood, this incredible 60,000-square-foot home, clad in marble and set on a 1.6-acre site, features five bedrooms and 19 bathrooms. The property enjoys golf course frontage and views of coastline and the city skyline. Inspired by the European palaces of the Belle Époque, the owners conducted more than 10 years of research, visiting the finest palaces in Europe, before commencing several years of construction.

Embellished with 700,000 sheets of hand-laid gold leaf that required more than two years to complete, the residence's numerous remarkable features include two hand-crafted glass domes, which were created and

installed by a team of 17 artisans, and 160 marble columns throughout the interior spaces. The central gathering room features numerous pieces of impressive artwork and furniture, which can be included in the purchase, and gleaming marble flooring accented by elaborate hand-crafted oriental rugs, with exquisite chandeliers adorning the vaulted, gold leaf-accented ceilings. A 21,800-gallon coral reef aquarium and a crystal dining table adorned with precious stones are the focal points of the elaborate formal dining room.

Upstairs is a 3,875-square-foot master bedroom, an enormous mini-master bedroom, and three more bedrooms. The design allows the addition of eight more bedrooms if desired. Notable features include a 2,150-square-foot gym on the main floor, a 15-car garage, indoor and outdoor pools, a koi pond, a steam and sauna room with a 24-karat-gold jacuzzi, and a power substation. ■



THE MARBLE PALACE
EMIRATE HILLS, DUBAI,
UAE
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- 5 bedrooms
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- 60,000 square feet
- 1.6 acres

KEY FEATURES

- 21,800-gallon coral reef aquarium
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- 15-car garage

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(Above) The curated artwork and handcrafted furniture are all included in the purchase of the residence. (Top Right) The rear of the residence, featuring a grand covered second-story balcony, is accented by a shimmering pool. (Right) The home's main gathering room features a multi-tiered, gold leaf-accented ceiling adorned with magnificent chandeliers floating above the polished marble flooring.



Hidden Safari

South Africa's Madikwe may be the most amazing game reserve you've never heard of



Aerial view of Madikwe Game Reserve, South Africa.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ROCKFIG

By Tim Johnson

THE SKY WAS JUST TURNING TO rust, a pale reflection of the iron-rich red soil below, here in the far reaches of the Kalahari Desert. With the day quickly fading, we needed to make a reluctant retreat back to the lodge. But it was hard to leave. After all, what we had just witnessed was one of Africa's greatest shows.

In arid regions like this, everyone comes to the watering hole. "I tell you, if you come here from morning to evening, you'll see all of the Big Five," our guide, Honest, said.

We sat in awed silence as zebras sipped and then turned to make their way to a safe place for the night. Giraffes dropped their giant necks for a drink. And then, finally, the elephants—a whole huge herd of them jostling for position, little calves squeezing through a forest of big legs.

I was in Madikwe Game Reserve, set on the northern edge of South Africa, right on the Botswana border. It's, perhaps, the country's most underrated safari park, at least when it comes to foreign visitors. Covering just less than 300 square miles, it's the fifth-largest game preserve in South Africa, home to more than 20 lodges. But few North Americans come this way.

On our first game drive, Honest told me that archaeological digs have unearthed stone-age cave sketches and tools. The legendary Mafeking Road runs through this territory, which long transported traders and explorers. King Mzilikazi passed through in the 19th century in his pursuit to expand the Matabele Kingdom. At one point, Honest pointed out a mountain where a fierce battle took place between Zulus and Tswana.

He has guided here for years. It's a place that he loves.

"It's a free-spirited park, where you can explore all corners," he said.

Unlike other safari destinations in the country, where lodge owners limit access to their individual, private sections of land, that's not the case here.

"You can go everywhere. Everyone gets along," he said.

That probably stems back to Madikwe's founding, which was rooted in collaboration and cooperation right from the start. With its arid soil, this part of the country was never ideal for farming, and those who tilled the soil here, or raised cattle, did so without much success. After a feasibility study showed a game reserve would provide better returns from the land, the farms were combined.

Madikwe claims **350** recorded bird species.



Madikwe is about a two-hour drive from Gaborone, Botswana.

The Rant van Tweede-poort hills and Dwarsberg Mountain dominate Madikwe's plains.

A yellow-billed hornbill at Madikwe Game Reserve, South Africa.



FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES; COURTESY OF ROCKFIG



A glimpse of elephants at the watering hole, from Rockfig’s underground “hide,” in Madikwe Game Reserve, South Africa.

The government began something called Operation Phoenix. Begun in 1991, it became the largest animal relocation project ever pursued, anywhere in the world. Creatures great and small were transported to Madikwe from all across Southern Africa. By 1997, some 28 species and 8,000 animals had been released into the reserve.

Today, they thrive. This became apparent within mere minutes of my arrival at Rockfig. A stylish lodge on the western edge of the park with large individual villas with their own pools and huge patios, a key feature—right among the accommodations—is the “hide.” After a warm welcome, a staff member drove me down to my villa.

But on the way, she suggested we check out the hide to see if any visitors had decided to rock in. Entering the underground structure through a short tunnel, we stepped into a sort of bunker, very much hidden from the creatures outside. Peering out, the little pool outside was busy. A whole family of elephants awaited. They sipped serenely, unaware of our presence. Just a few feet away.

It was a fitting introduction to a few days just absolutely filled with wildlife. Madikwe isn’t home to just the Big Five, but all of the Magnificent Seven—in addition to lions, leopards, Cape buffalo, elephants, and rhinos, the park also has wild dogs and cheetahs.

After spending some time with lions, Honest said, “Let’s see if we get lucky with the cheetahs.”

And we did. Following a location tip from a fellow guide, we found two brothers, resting in the morning sun. One remained asleep. The

other was watchful, craning his neck every few minutes in search of threats, then briefly nodding off before rousing himself to resume his watch. A warthog tiptoed by, behind them. “They would hunt him—if they knew he was there,” Honest said.

And then, the surprise. On our last night, after that awe-inspiring parade at the dam, we zoomed back to the lodge. But instead of the usual drop-off point, we rolled down a small dirt path that I hadn’t noticed before. Honest led the way down the slope, which opened onto a broad lookout point.

On a stone patio, the broad plains spread out at our feet, the last pink hues of that spectacular sunset fading on the horizon. Just beyond a distant mountain twinkled the lights of Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. The end of a day, and a visit that was truly special. Created from the dust, just more than three decades ago. ■



Bar and snack services are offered to guests in Rockfig’s underground “hide,” where they can observe wildlife undetected.

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

If You Go

Fly:

Both Delta and United offer direct flights to OR Tambo International Airport (JNB).

Getting Around:

You’ll probably need a car to reach Madikwe, unless you fly on the one-hour shuttle by Federal Airlines.

Stay:

Set high on a hill, Rockfig Lodge is small and personal, with excellent and friendly service, beautiful views, and villas that feel like your own private, luxurious home.

Take Note:

While many people simply pass through Johannesburg on their way to safari, the city is worth a visit.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROCKFIG

ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC COCKTAIL: THE SPRITZ

The Aperol variety gets all the love, but this category of sparkling wine-based cocktails leaves plenty of room to play

By Kevin Revolinski

THERE’S NOTHING LIKE a chilled glass of bubbly happiness in summer, something not too strong but also refreshing and flavorful.

The name spritz comes from the German spritzen (to squirt), which seems an odd moniker for a drink of Italian origins. But in the 19th century after the fall of Napoleon, the Habsburgs of the Austrian Empire ruled Veneto, the region around Venice. As populations (soldiers, for starters) from the north moved in, they drank the local wines, which were a tad more potent than what they were used to. A squirt of water into a glass of red or sparkling wine lightened them up.

The first recorded modern version of the spritz, however, is in Venice and dates to 1920: prosecco for the wine, with added bitters to create the spritz Veneziano. Select, a local brand of digestive bitters, went in along with a splash of soda. Possibly the most popular option these days is the Aperol spritz, using the bright-orange bittersweet liqueur from just down the road in Padua. Weighing in at 11 percent ABV, Aperol is infused with ingredients such as gentian and rhubarb. Red-hued Campari is a common swap here but is double the alcohol and less sweet.

But you are less likely to find purists willing to argue about what makes a true spritz than those who’ll argue about a real martini. Options are many.

Prosecco is standard, but

Prosecco is a standard base, but any sparkling white will work.



Bittersweet Aperol is a classic, but any Italian amaro works for the bitters element.



St. Germain, or another elderflower liqueur, will take you in a floral direction.



APEROL SPRITZ

3-2-1. A bit of a countdown to joy.

- 3 ounces dry prosecco
- 2 ounces Aperol
- 1 ounce club soda or sparkling water
- Orange slice, for garnish

Fill a wine glass with ice, then pour in prosecco, Aperol, and club soda, and garnish with a slice of orange. (Alternatively, add an olive!)



With its unmistakable bright-orange hue, the Aperol spritz remains a summertime icon.

any sparkling white (Champagne or cava) will also work, making it drier. Some may also use white wine and dilute the strength and boost the fizz with more soda water.

Then there’s the bitters element. Any Italian amaro could work for the Aperol, say Averna or Montenegro. Play with the amount if you find the amaro throws the balance off or becomes overly bitter for you.

Or move in a fragrant

and floral direction with St. Germain or any other elderflower liqueur. Crème de Violet will do the trick, plus it’ll bring a nice faint purple color. Alcohol-wise, these run above 20 percent—more like Campari than Aperol-strength—so keep that in mind. But it’s summer, and this cocktail wants to play. ■

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

SELECTING A MOBILE VACATION HOME

By Bill Lindsey

An RV or travel trailer lets you explore the country while being 'at home'

The great thing about RVs is that wherever your travels may take you, it isn't necessary to give up many of the comforts of home.

PHOTO BY PRESSMASTER/SHUTTERSTOCK

SUMMER IS RV SEASON, WHEN RVs (recreational vehicles) function like magic carpets, taking the occupants wherever they want to go. Even better, depending on the type and size of RV chosen, it isn't always necessary to give up many of the comforts of home.

Like boats, RVs come in many shapes and types, ranging from very small trailers to huge, Greyhound bus-sized models. Drivable RVs are either built on a bus, van, or cargo truck chassis, plus there are also camper modules that slide into the bed of a pickup truck. Trailer campers range from large fifth-wheel models that require a powerful truck to tow them to tiny teardrop-shaped campers or flat-top campers that have a tent that can be raised upon arrival at the campsite. Most camper trailers are towed by a truck, but some very small models can be towed by compact cars.

The best way to choose the right RV is to consider how it will be used, and how frequently. As an example, some people purchase an RV to be used all during the summer months, roaming the country on family vacations, while others use them as lodging when visiting friends or family over the winter holidays, or to attend out-of-town sporting events; most college towns are awash in alumni and their RVs during football season.

The best way to choose an RV is to consider how it will be used, and how frequently.

The next question concerns how many people will be using the RV. Even a large RV can soon become a bit crowded if there are a lot of folks on board, while the most compact camper trailers start off as a tight fit. Budget constraints also play a huge role, as the purchase price of a large, luxurious RV can easily exceed \$1 million, not to mention the accompanying ongoing operating costs. A big RV may feel like home, but it will have abysmal fuel efficiency compared with smaller models, will require costly maintenance of the complex systems, and will require a large area for storage when not in use.

"Drivable" RVs or motorhomes are categorized as class A, B, or C. Class A RVs are built on a bus chassis, with the engine at the rear, which is why they are called "pushers." These are the most luxurious RVs on the road, often 45 feet long, and capable of providing overnight accommodations for up to a dozen occupants. Some feature lavish interiors that rival those of superyachts, with slide-out walls to provide more interior volume,

Class A RVs are the top choice of those who seek luxury accommodations while on the road, with room for the whole family.



Compact trailers can be easily towed by the family car, and while they may be a tight fit inside, have all the comforts of home.



Sleek aluminum-skinned Airstream travel trailers have achieved iconic status among campers who seek style and posh accommodations.



Van-based campers are perfect for spontaneous adventures for solo travelers, couples, or a family with a young child, and can double as daily transportation.

CLOCKWISE FROM L: KATYAGORPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK, NERTHUZ/SHUTTERSTOCK, KHURUZERO/SHUTTERSTOCK, NERTHUZ/SHUTTERSTOCK



A class C RV is a great choice for small families or two couples; they offer ample room and are easy to drive.

but their sheer size can make driving them a bit daunting at first. Many class A motorhomes can tow a compact car, called a tender, that is used for local travel when the motorhome is parked at a campsite. Those who seek a rock-star-quality RV and aren't fazed by high prices need look no further than a class A motorhome.

Class B motorhomes use vans as their basis, making them the most nimble and compact of the three categories. Their buildouts range from very simple to very luxurious. These models are a good choice for couples or families with small children, as they are usually set up to accommodate up to four people and are easy to drive.

Class C RVs fill the gap between the class A and B styles. Built on a cargo truck chassis, they tend to be longer and wider than van-style RVs, often coming close to providing the interior space of a class A motorhome, at a lower price point, making them a good choice for two couples or families with several children. Like class As, many class C motorhomes also use slide-out walls that make them much roomier when they are parked at a campsite.

Towable trailers include fifth-wheel models that require a powerful truck with a special attachment point, but some connect to a normal trailer hitch,

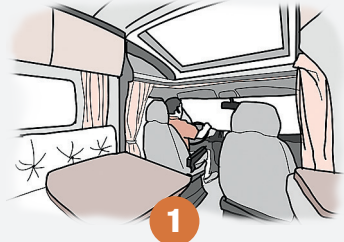
with sizes ranging from tiny ones, up to models 45 feet long that have interiors rivaling those of class A motorhomes. There are also other trailers that “pop up” upon arrival at the campsite to create a camper; because these models fold flat, they are much easier to tow than traditional travel trailers, as they create significantly less wind resistance. Towable campers are a good choice for those who enjoy being able to set up camp and then detach the car or truck to go get groceries, go out to dinner, or explore local attractions. The very compact and folding campers tend to have prices that make them a good choice for those who will use them infrequently.

Regardless of which style appeals, consider renting; a weekend trip will make it clear whether what seemed perfect is really the right choice. ■



Recreational vehicles and travel trailers combine the amenities of home with an ever-changing view.

ET
LIFESTYLE
ROLLING HOMES
Making the right choice



Try Before You Buy

A custom class A RV can easily cost more than \$1 million, while a tiny teardrop-shaped trailer can be found for about \$25,000. In either case, it's wise to rent first, to make sure you enjoy it before you buy.



Bring Everyone

The number of people in the camping party dictates what size RV is needed; resist the temptation to squeeze in too many campers, as this is a sure way to ruin the experience.



Tow It

A travel trailer provides the freedom that comes with detaching the tow vehicle at the campsite so it can be used to get groceries or explore the area.

THIS PAGE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L. GROUND PICTURE/SHUTTERSTOCK; ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE EPOCH TIMES, JAXS/SHUTTERSTOCK

MAKE BEACH DAY PERFECT

This selection of gear is designed for a sunny day spent by the water

By Bill Lindsey



Beach BBQ
UCO FLATPACK MEDIUM PORTABLE GRILL & FIREPIT
\$49.99

Sitting around a fire on the beach is relaxing, and hot dogs taste best right off the grill. While lugging a traditional BBQ grill is tedious, this compact grill folds to less than 2 inches thick to fit in a beach cart or bag and sets up in less than a minute. The stainless steel grill has slanted sides that act as a windbreak to keep the flame alive.



Junior Beachgoer Protection
BABY DELIGHT GO WITH ME DELUXE PORTABLE PLAYARD WITH CANOPY
\$129.99

Designed for children from 6 months to 2 years old, this portable playpen features an ultra-padded floor to protect tootsies from hot sand, and a large canopy offers UPF 50+ protection from the sun. Mesh sidewalls allow breezes to flow through while providing a view. It assembles and disassembles in minutes, and the fabric areas are machine-washable.



Float on the Sand
CGEAR SAND-FREE LIFE BEACH MAT
\$34.99-89.99

Sand between the toes is wonderful, but it isn't as much fun in a sandwich or between the pages of a paperback, making this must-have beach day gear. Whether used as a spacious beach mat or set under a portable cabana, the durable, two-layer system, which was originally designed as a landing pad for military helicopters, allows sand, dirt, and dust to flow down, but not come back up.



Roll Up in Style
MACSPORTS 2-IN-1 BEACH DAY LOUNGER AND CARGO CART
\$149.99

Relaxing in a comfortable chair and taking in the view is the best way to spend time at the beach, and this chair is a great choice. Featuring big wheels that easily roll over the sand, it serves as a cart to haul towels, snacks, a small cooler, and other gear. It then unfolds to create a lounge chair rated for sunbathers up to 225 pounds, complete with a padded headrest.



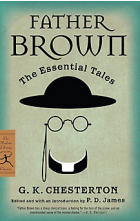
Make Your Own Shade
OUTDOORMASTER BEACH CABANA
\$159.99

The best way to ensure UPF 50+ UV protection is to bring it with you. Weighing less than three pounds, this cabana is easy to bring along to the beach or park in its storage bag. Each pole has pockets for drinks or sunblock. Fiberglass poles, four sand nails, and sand pockets allow a fast, secure setup, and the removable back panel provides shade all day long.

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

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature collected tales of the estimable sleuth Father Brown and a history of an overlooked but crucial Revolutionary War battle.



FICTION

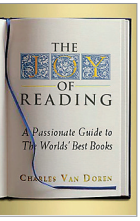
‘Father Brown’

By *G.K. Chesterton*

Edited and introduced by P.D. James,

herself a writer of detective novels, this collection gives readers 15 stories about the plain, short priest with a big umbrella who, though seemingly naïve and bumbling, solves mysteries through his keen wit, his insights into human behavior, and what James calls his “profound understanding of evil.” Included are such classics as “The Blue Cross,” “The Secret Garden,” and “The Hammer of God.” The prose is a bit old-fashioned, but the plots are grand.

MODERN LIBRARY CLASSICS, 2005, 288 PAGES



CLASSICS

‘The Joy of Reading’

By *Charles Van Doren*

The result of “a lifelong love affair” with literature, this book takes readers on a tour of 189 authors and their works, from ancient times through the 20th century. Van Doren’s clear, reader-friendly explorations of writers such as Aristotle, Dante, Pascal, Defoe, and others make him an ideal companion for first-time readers of their books. He is open with his critique, expressing likes and dislikes, but is also fair and honest with his evaluations. It’s excellent for both reference and pleasure.

SOURCEBOOKS, 2008, 544 PAGES




HISTORY

‘Fatal Sunday’

By *Mark Edward Lender and Garry Wheeler Stone*

There are numerous battles in the Revolutionary War that can be considered turning points, such as Bunker Hill, Trenton and Princeton, Saratoga, and Yorktown. As consequential as those battles were, there is another that is as significant yet less understood: the Battle of Monmouth. Lender and Stone demonstrate how this battle played out militarily, and, more importantly, how it played out politically for George Washington. Full of insightful material, this book proves to be an important work.

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS, 2017, 624 PAGES




FOR KIDS

‘Mrs. Piggle Wiggle’

By *Betty MacDonald*

The first in a beloved series, “Mrs. Piggle Wiggle” introduces young readers to the lively title character who lives in an “upside-down house” in a colorful neighborhood where many children with questionable habits live. A widow, she was left a treasure chest of magical cures by her husband. Fun and delightful, this makes a great read-aloud for bedtime.

HARPERCOLLINS, 2007, 128 PAGES




POLITICS

‘March to the Majority’

By *Newt Gingrich with Joe Gaylord*

Changing the dynamics of Washington politics to sway in your favor can be a daunting undertaking. This memoir takes readers back to the days when former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich helped create the Contract with America in 1994. Sharing previously untold personal stories about the politicians who gave rise to modern conservatism and the Republican revolution in Congress, this work, full of important principles, shares lessons well-learned and worthwhile for today’s governing challenges.

CENTER STREET, 2023, 256 PAGES




BIOGRAPHY

‘The Sailor’s Homer’

By *Dennis L. Noble*

Richard McKenna joined the U.S. Navy to find a financial shelter during the Great Depression. After 22 years in the Navy, he retired to become what he dreamed of: a writer. In 11 years, he went from being an unknown sailor to a celebrated author. He focused on his naval experiences and yielded a best-selling novel, “The Sand Pebbles.” Noble’s masterful biography shows how a boy from an impoverished family grew up to become an author who combined literary excellence with popular appeal.

NAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS, 2015, 264 PAGES



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

ENTERTAINMENT

This week, we feature the latest “Mission: Impossible” thriller with its breathtaking action and a drama showcasing legendary star Errol Flynn.

NEW RELEASE



‘Mission: Impossible’ (2023)

► Superspy Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) and his intrepid IMF squad are back in action. This time, they are tasked with a high-stakes objective that sees them facing off against their most deadly threat yet—a nefarious enemy known only as “The Entity,” and the fate of humanity hangs in the balance.

This seventh installment in the Mission: Impossible franchise may be the series's most spectacular. It’s a fast-paced espionage thriller with perhaps some of the most jaw-dropping stunts ever seen on film. It’s a must-see for any action fan.

ACTION | ADVENTURE | THRILLER

Release Date: July 12, 2023

Director: Christopher McQuarrie

Starring: Tom Cruise, Hayley Atwell, Ving Rhames


Running Time: 2 hours, 43 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG-13

Where to Watch: Theaters

★★★★★

AN EARLY UNDERDOG BOXING FILM



‘Gentleman Jim’ (1942)

► Jim Corbett (Errol Flynn) is a brash bare-knuckle boxer who longs to make it big. But when he begins to climb the class hierarchy of 1880s San Francisco, he finds himself at odds with powerful forces.

Flynn is excellent in this delightful underdog tale about a man trying to improve his station in life. Alexis Smith is also great as a woman who eventually falls for Corbett.

DRAMA | MUSIC | ROMANCE

Release Date: Nov. 14, 1942

Director: Raoul Walsh

Starring: Errol Flynn, Alexis Smith, Jack Carson

Running Time: 1 hour, 44 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch: DirecTV, Amazon, Vudu

★★★★★

Epoch Watchlist

FAMILY PICK



“batteries not included” (1987)

► Senior couple Frank (Hume Cronyn) and Faye Riley (Jessica Tandy) manage an apartment building and café in a lower-income part of New York. A greedy developer disrupts their lives in a bid to sell their property and force them out. Things look bleak for the Rileys until a couple of UFOs arrive to help.

Although this is a feel-good, heartwarming tale of ordinary people struggling together in the face of adversity,

COMEDY | FAMILY | FANTASY

Release Date: Dec 18, 1987

Director: Matthew Robbins

Starring: Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, Frank McRae

Running Time: 1 hour, 46 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Where to Watch: Apple TV, Redbox, Vudu

★★★★★

ROMANCE AND FASHION IN LONDON



‘Phantom Thread’ (2018)

► Charismatic yet obsessive dress-maker Reynolds Woodcock (Daniel Day-Lewis) is a fixture in the glitzy fashion world of post-war 1950s London. His carefully regimented life is suddenly upended when he meets and falls in love with Alma (Vicky Krieps), a waitress who becomes his muse—and much more.

This is a brilliantly subtle romantic drama that finds its true strengths in its quietly entrancing performances by its stellar cast and in its immersive score, set design, and unique storyline.

DRAMA | HISTORY | ROMANCE

Release Date: Jan. 19, 2018

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson

Starring: Vicky Krieps, Daniel Day-Lewis, Lesley Manville

Running Time: 2 hours, 10 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch: Netflix, Apple TV, Vudu

★★★★★

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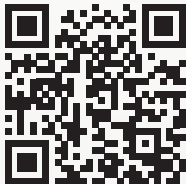
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THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION



Making Friends

The best of friends started off as complete strangers

It can be difficult in our fast-paced world to make new friends, so consider using the techniques of the pros at making connections—bartenders—to start and nurture lasting relationships.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Smile

The first step is the most important and should be the easiest: Simply give the person a warm, genuine smile. Many people are aloof and guarded around strangers, but a smile can melt that away. By taking the first step, you make it easier for them to loosen up. Practice this in everyday encounters with the mail carrier, the neighbor from two doors down, and other pet owners at the dog park.



5 Seek Connections

Over time, the average person comes into contact with many people, the vast majority of whom are never seen again. However, it's entirely possible that one of them has the potential to become a trusted, lifelong friend. While realizing that most brief interactions never develop into something more, remain open to those that show promise. Look for conversation starters, such as the person's dog, car, or sports team memorabilia. They can provide great content after you've already used "hi."

2 Be a Good Listener

Once people let down their guard, they love to tell their stories, so listen more than you talk. Maintain good eye contact, and nod to let them know you're paying attention; this nonverbal feedback shows that you're interested in what they're saying and encourages them to keep talking. Allow them to monopolize the conversation; it's a good sign that you've connected when a shy person lets loose with a torrent of happy chatter.

3 Ask Questions

While it's critical to actively listen, most conversations inspire questions as we seek more details or confirm what we've just heard. Asking relevant questions shows interest and also can be a very effective way to more fully engage with the person who's talking. Because in many interactions it isn't uncommon for the listener to look bored, it's important to participate in the conversation to add virtual fuel to keep it going.

4 Be Diplomatic and Discreet

When interacting with someone for the first time, or early in the relationship, the other person may say something that's either inappropriate or perhaps completely false. At these moments, it's important to consider if you want that person as a friend or as just a nodding acquaintance. In any event, it's incumbent upon you to respect the person's privacy by not repeating what was said and by resisting the urge to correct him or her.

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not against."**

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

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and I trust [the] sources."**

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

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