

Shareholder Votes the Key to ESG Agenda

By Kevin Stocklin

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WEEK 29, 2023

BLACKROCK

Contents

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The Key to ESG: Controlling the Shareholder Vote

A HANDFUL OF ASSET MANAGEMENT companies and fund managers hold so much influence over shareholder votes that they have the power to push corporations, and even governments, in a certain direction.

Critics of the proxy voting system say behemoths such as BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street have used that power to successfully impose a leftwing agenda known as the environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) movement on companies.

Recent congressional hearings have focused on how to address the role of proxy agents, as well as how to deal with efforts by regulators to impose extensive climate reporting rules on all listed companies. New regulations by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) would require companies to produce audited reports on their CO2 emissions and those of their suppliers and customers.

"Coupled with the recent politicization of the SEC, proxy advisory firms have seized immense power to shift policy ... to promote a liberal social and political agenda," said Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.). "The proxy process is broken; it no longer promotes long-term shareholder value and operates without transparency or accountability."

National Association of Manufacturers Vice President Christopher Netram says that in recent years, "third parties have hijacked the proxy process."

"Activists use the proxy ballot to advance political and social agendas," he said. Read this week's cover story by Epoch Times reporter Kevin Stocklin to find out more about ESG, proxy voting, and what experts are recommending to lawmakers.

JASPER FAKKERT

JASPER FAKKERT Editor-in-chief



ON THE COVER

Fund managers and proxy agents control shareholder votes to push political and social agendas.

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SPOTLIGHT A Call to End Persecution

FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS PARTICIPATE in a rally to mark the 24th anniversary of the start of the persecution of the spiritual discipline in China by the Chinese Communist Party, in Washington on July 20. An estimated 1,500 people rallied near Washington's National Mall on July 20 to call for an end to communist China's brutal persecution of the spiritual group.

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PHOTO BY SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EP

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The Week



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When adults encourage a "social contagion" such as gender dysphoria, it will spread rapidly, a psychologist says. PHOTO BY SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

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Bypassing the Court

(ET)

History suggests that liberal states may disregard the Supreme Court's ruling against affirmative action. [28]

Summer Slump

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Effective Treatment

Tinnitus sufferers may find relief from infrared light therapy, a study finds. **52**

The Week in Short **US**

The Week in Short **US**

Hollywood Actors,

THOUSANDS OF HOLLYWOOD ACTORS

and writers continued to picket outside

major studios, striking together for the

The Screen Actors Guild-American

extensive list of demands that it claims

were ignored by the studios. The union

ance of Motion Picture and Television

Producers—including Amazon/MGM,

Discovery, Paramount, and more—are

The actors' union asked for an 11 per-

Federation of Television and Radio

claimed the companies in the Alli-

Disney, Netflix, Sony, Warner Bros.

prioritizing shareholders and Wall

Street over union members.

Artists (SAG-AFTRA) has released an

first time in more than 60 years.

Writers Strike

CALIFORNIA

Heats Up

"Under no circumstances" should doctors be allowed to perform these gruesome, irreversible operations on underage children." Sen. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio).

in a statement about a proposal that he's introduced to end transgender procedures on minors

"Use of [AI] ... may perpetuate or even amplify bias or inaccuracies inherent in the data used to train the system."

Michael S. Barr. vice chair for supervision, Federal Reserve Board, during a conference, on the risks of using artificial intelligence

Customs and Border Protection officials said total encounters with illegal immigrants along the U.S.-Mexico border in June were 144,607, a 30 percent decrease from the previous month, and the lowest monthly number since February 2021.

2025 PLAN—The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has released a plan to start

limited air taxi operations in the country as early as 2025.

16 PEOPLE

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has announced charges against 16 people who signed certificates claiming that President **Donald Trump won** Michigan in the 2020 election.

STATES

Officials in 16 states have reported a total of 117 illnesses among people and at least 2.715 among animals as a result of toxic algae in bodies of water across the United States, according to the CDC.

\$38 MILLION

IRS officials have announced that

they've recovered \$38 million from

delinguency cases against wealthy

taxpayers in the past few months

because of a boost in agency funding

from the Inflation Reduction Act.



United Parcel Services (UPS) workers walk a "practice picket line" in New York on July 7.

IIPS

Retail Industry Group Urges UPS, Teamsters to Try to Avert Strike

A U.S. RETAIL INDUSTRY GROUP has urged the Teamsters Union and United Parcel Service (UPS) to come to an agreement to avert a strike, warning that it could cause billions of dollars in economic losses.

The Teamsters and UPS have until July 31 at midnight to reach a new contract deal for hundreds of thousands of truck drivers and warehouse workers. A key sticking point in the talks is pay increases for experienced part-time workers who are making roughly the same or even less than new hires because starting wages jumped due to the labor shortage in the past few years.

Logistics publication Freightwaves noted that UPS handled about 18.6 million parcels per day in the United States in the first quarter. A strike could affect the delivery of 4 million, or 30 percent of, parcels per day, it says.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Governor Seeks to End Sales of All Gas-Powered Vehicles by 2035

NEW JERSEY GOV. PHIL MURPHY has proposed rules that require car manufacturers to increase the sales of electric vehicles and would mandate a total ban of all gaspowered vehicles over the next 12 years.

The Democrat governor said in a statement that the Advanced Clean Cars II proposal, which would mandate more sales of zero-emission vehicles, was submitted to

the state's Office of Administrative Law. The proposal must be approved by that office before it can take effect.

Proposals to ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035 have drawn criticism from conservative groups and consumers. California and New York, as well as the European Union, have issued similar rules in recent months.



New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy gives a speech in New York on Jan. 31.

to less than \$1 million.

cent general wage increase, but were offered only 5 percent by the alliance, which would result in a pay cut because of inflation, SAG-AFTRA claims. The Writers Guild of America strike is well into its third month. JUDICIARY

Judge Rejects Trump's Bid to Shift NY Criminal Case to **Federal Court**

U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE Alvin Hellerstein has rejected former President Donald Trump's attempt to shift his New York criminal case to federal court. Mr. Trump and his lawyers argued that because Trump was president when he carried out the actions for which he's been charged, the case should be heard in federal, not state, court.

In addition, U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan in Manhattan has rejected Mr. Trump's request for a new trial in the defamation and battery case brought by writer E. Jean Carroll that resulted in a \$5 million damage award. Judge Kaplan also dismissed Mr. Trump's arguments for reducing the damages

The Week in Short World



The P4 laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on April 17, 2020.

US-CHINA

US Government Suspends Funding to Wuhan Laboratory

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S ADMINISTRATION has suspended funding to the laboratory in China that's in the same city where COVID-19 cases were first identified, according to a document.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is cutting off the Wuhan Institute of Virology's access to U.S. grants, an HHS official said in a memorandum.

The institute has received more than \$1.4 million in U.S. funds over the years for testing under a project dubbed Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence, including experiments that made a bat coronavirus more infectious.

Mice infected with a modified version of the virus became sicker than those infected with the original virus, according to documents made public in 2021.

That violated the terms of the grant, the HHS official said.

ISRAEL

Israel's Herzog Says Criticism of Israel Must Not Drift Into Anti-Semitism

ISRAELI PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG has told U.S. lawmakers that he welcomes criticism, especially from American friends, but said that must not cross the line into negation of Israel's right to exist. That, he said, is anti-Semitism.

Herzog, whose position is largely ceremonial, was speaking to a joint meeting of Congress.

Herzog spoke a day after a White House meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden, at which the two leaders stressed their countries' close ties amid tensions with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government.

Falling Gas, Diesel Prices Drove Inflation Down to 7.9 Percent: ONS

THE UK'S ANNUAL INFLATION rate in June slowed to 7.9 percent, largely driven by falling motor fuel prices, according to figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The UK's annual consumer prices index in June is down from 8.7 percent in May. That's in line with the Bank of

England's forecast in May, but lower than the 8.2 percent forecast by most economists polled by Reuters.

A decline in motor fuel prices is the biggest contributor to the slowdown of both annual and monthly inflation, the ONS said.



A Shell gas station in London on March 14.

RUSSIA

Moscow Gives UN 90 Days to Meet Conditions for Reactivating Grain Deal

moscow has given the United Nations three months to meet its conditions for reactivating a year-old agreement that had allowed Ukraine to export grain through the Black Sea.

"The U.N. has three months to achieve concrete results," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Otherwise, the agreement would be considered a dead letter, she said.

Brokered in 2022 by the U.N. and Turkey, the agreement expired on July 17. Moscow declined to renew it, however, saying key conditions were never fulfilled.

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t's not climate change. It's not raging inflation or even the national debt. The real threat to the United States and to the world is the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) 100-year plan to defeat America and establish world domination. There's no urgency in the mainstream media. That's why "The Final War" had to be made. Anchored by senior investigative reporter Joshua Philipp, and one-and-a-half years in the making, "The

Final War" is a film that is so relevant to current events and so important that we're offering it to EVERYONE for free. It will answer your questions about the pandemic, the impending invasion of Taiwan, and how the CCP works to keep the United States occupied with at least four global adversaries.

See the film. Know the danger. Be prepared. The final war is already underway.



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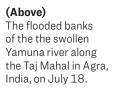


The Week in Photos

(Right) A girl pours water over a boy amid soaring temperatures and power cuts in Gaza City, Gaza Strip, on July 18.









(Above) Children jump into the Shatt al-Arab waterway to escape the heat in Basra, Iraq, on July 15.







(Left) A protester is apprehended by the Kenyan police during clashes between authorities and supporters of the Kenyan opposition during a protest against the government in Nairobi on July 19.

(Left) Former President Donald Trump speaks at the Turning Point Action conference in West Palm Beach, Fla., on July 15.

(Left) A Canadair firefighting plane sprays water over a wildfire in

CONTROL THE SHAREHOL DER VOTE, CONTROL DER VOTE, AGEND A Behind the ESG movement are the firms that vote with the shares you own BY KEVIN STOCKLIN

BlackRock's chief executive officer said in 2017 that the company uses proxy voting to control corporations.

PHOTO BY ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

T THE SAME TALK WHERE BLACK-Rock CEO Larry Fink told his audience that his firm was "forcing behaviors" on companies, he also divulged a key lever used by the progressive movement to control corporations: proxy voting.

The term "proxy voting" refers to the practice of fund managers using the corporate shares they own to vote on behalf of investors, influencing company activities and strategies. With the rise of mutual funds, pension funds, and index funds, more than three-quarters of all stocks in the United States today are held not by individual investors but by a short list of very large asset management firms.

Mr. Fink said at a 2017 New York Times conference: "[Index fund managers] are the ultimate long-term holder; we have to own all the companies that are in an index.

"If you're an active manager and you don't like a company, you can sell it. I can't sell. I have only one power, and I'm going to use that power heavily. And that's the power of the vote."

BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, has more than \$8 trillion in assets under management. Vanguard, the second largest, has more than \$7 trillion under management. State Street has about \$3.5 trillion under management.

At the same time, two proxy agent companies, International Shareholder Services (ISS) and Glass Lewis, have arisen to advise fund managers on how to vote on numerous shareholder proposals. Critics argue that fund managers and proxy agents now have undue influence over shareholder votes and that they have used that power to successfully push a left-wing agenda known as the environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) movement on companies.

Congressional Hearings on ESG

In a series of Congressional Financial Services Committee hearings last week, Republican representatives hammered the ESG industry for manipulating free markets for political goals, while Democrat representatives accused the GOP of racism, climate denial, and Trotskyism.

"I support shareholder democracy, but it should be their say and not external third parties who exploit the existing process to impose their own social and political beliefs onto American public companies," Committee Chairman Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) said at the July 12 hearing.

"We must address the burdensome climate reporting and other requirements imposed by the Biden administration Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC has proposed a 500-page climate disclosure rule that would replace voluntary sustainability reports with mandatory disclosures, and the question of materiality is really thrown out the window.

"The SEC is not a climate regulator, nor has Congress authorized it to mandate environmental policy via the disclosure regime."

Democrat lawmakers, however, were united in their view that the hearings on ESG shouldn't have been held in the first place.

"Today is the first of six areas this month where Republicans will partner with a network of dark money climate deniers and conspiracy theorists to wage their latest culture war against responsible investing," Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) said.

"For over 100 years, the followers of Leon Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party have waged war against this capitalist model," Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) said. "Today, elements of the Republican Party join them in that effort. Ronald Reagan would be ashamed."

How Proxy Voting Works

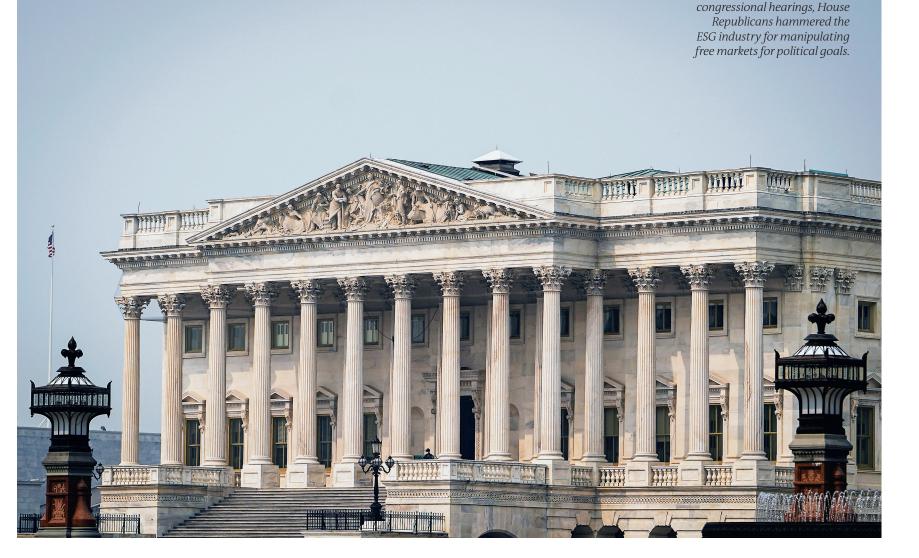
The hearings focused on how to address the role of proxy agents and how to deal with efforts by financial regulators under the Biden administration to impose extensive climate reporting rules on all listed companies. New regulations by the SEC would require companies to produce audited reports on their CO2 emissions and those of their suppliers and customers.

"Coupled with the recent politicization of the SEC, proxy advisory firms have seized immense power to shift policy ... to promote a liberal social and political agenda," Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.) said. "The proxy process is broken; it no longer promotes long-term shareholder value and operates without transparency or accountability."

The proxy process begins with shareholder proposals, for which the SEC acts as a gatekeeper, determining which proposals can proceed to a shareholder vote and which cannot. Under President Joe Biden in 2021, the SEC shifted its



BlackRock CEO Larry Fink in a 2017 conference told his audience that his firm was "forcing behaviors" on companies.



policy to make it easier for ESG proposals to be put to a vote.

"The SEC's new position is that corporate annual meetings must permit the smallest of shareholders to force shareholder votes on any social or policy concerns whether or not it is material to the company's business," James Copland, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute, told committee members. "This change in policy has predictably led to a significant increase in socially oriented shareholder activism.

"In 2022, the first year after the SEC's new guidance, the number of shareholder proposals faced by the large companies tracked in our proxy monitor database jumped 33 percent over the prior three-year average. To date in 2023, with approximately 10 percent of companies yet to file a proxy statement, companies have already seen a record number of shareholder proposals."

Jonathan Berry, a partner at law firm Boyden Gray, testified at the July 13 hearing that the SEC has shown a bias toward green-lighting pro-ESG proposals while rejecting anti-ESG proposals. "Environmental and social proposals now rep-

resent a majority of all proposals in Russell 3000 companies, 58 percent of proposals in 2022," he said. "This last proxy season, my client, the National Center [for Public Policy Research], took a shareholder proposal that the SEC had blessed on a discrimination issue and substituted the terms 'viewpoint' and 'ideology' for the prior proposal's terms 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity.'

"But the SEC said that my client's proposal could be struck off the ballot, that viewpoint discrimination in the workplace was not a significant social policy question."

National Association of Manufacturers Vice President Christopher Netram said that in recent years, "third parties have hijacked the proxy process."

"Activists use the proxy ballot to advance political and social agendas," he said.

"Proxy firms dictate corporate governance decisions, and the SEC is empowering these ↔

ASSETS Under World's Top 3 Managers

In a series of recent

BlackRock: \$8 trillion Vanguard:

\$7 trillion **State Street:** \$3.5 trillion

58%

ESG PROPOSALS made up 58 percent of all shareholder proposals in 2022, an expert says.

40%

THREE ASSET management firms— BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street could control as much as 40 percent of shareholder votes in the S&P 500 within two decades, according to a 2019 analysis published in the Boston University Law Review.



INTERNATIONAL Shareholder Services and Glass Lewis are able to swing between 10 percent and 30 percent of shareholder votes in line with their recommendations.

955% A 2018 REPORT Stated that 175 asset managers, with more than \$5 trillion in assets under management, followed the advice of International Shareholder Services more than 95 percent of the time.



groups while also proposing ESG disclosure mandates of its own. Turning the proxy ballot into a debate club diverts time and resources away from shareholder value creation and forces companies to wade into controversial topics over which they have no control."

Examples of companies' wading into controversial topics include Disney's fight in 2022 against parental rights laws in Florida, Coca-Cola's fight in 2021 against voter I.D. laws in Georgia, and Anheuser–Busch's and Target's recent attachment of their brands to the transgender movement. In many cases, venturing into politics proved harmful to brand perception, reduced sales, or caused a substantial decline in the company's stock price, all to the detriment of end investors.

Those who support ESG say it's merely a means of getting important information to investors and that the SEC's green accounting mandate and permissive approach toward ESG shareholder proposals is simply the free market at work.

"Investors need to know how companies are addressing climate risk, how they pay their employees, how diverse their workforce is, and more investors want this information, because it's good for the performance of their investments, which is also good for society," Ms. Waters said. "Rest assured that committed Democrats will continue to thwart this anti-capitalist, anti-investor, anti-business and anti-American effort."

But ESG critics say there's more to it than that. "ESG efforts are not primarily about providing information," Scott Shepard, director at the National Center for Public Policy Research, told The Epoch Times. "They're about forcing companies to adopt political-schedule decarbonization, equity-based discrimination, and hard-left positions on social policy."

According to Will Hild, executive director of Consumers' Research, much of the information that comes from environmental or racial audits that companies are compelled to produce will not be used to increase shareholder value but rather "to give far-left activists a cudgel to use against these companies" via lawsuits, negative publicity campaigns, and additional shareholder proposals.

The Proxy Agent Duopoly

ISS and Glass Lewis hold a duopoly in the proxy agency market, together representing more than 90 percent of it.

"Both earlier and recent regulatory actions by the Securities and Exchange Commission have created a duopoly in the market for proxy advisory services and powerful incentives for firms and funds to retain proxy advisers and to adopt their recommendations often on an automatic basis," Benjamin Zycher, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, told lawmakers.



"It should be [shareholders'] say and not external third parties who exploit the existing process."

Rep. Patrick McHenry

to a shareholder vote

and which cannot.

"The advisers themselves have weak incen- *The proxy process begins with shareholder proposals*, *for which the SEC acts as a gatekeeper*, *determining which proposals can proceed* "The advisers themselves have weak incentives to consider the fiduciary interests of shareholders and fund participants, thus freeing them to indulge their own political preferences and little or no cost to themselves. Unsurprisingly, environmental social and government's political objectives have come to influence proxy advice heavily."

> Steven Friedman, ISS general counsel, testified that ISS is a registered investment adviser that "provides institutional investors with objective, timely and expert proxy research and vote recommendations based on the proxy voting policies selected by the clients."

"ISS and other proxy advisers play an important but narrow role in the proxy voting process," Mr. Friedman said. "It's the client who creates and selects the voting policy guidelines that reflect their own fiduciary obligations and investments strategies."

A 2018 report by the Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance states: "Proxy advisory firms have significant influence over the voting decisions of institutional investors and the governance choices of publicly traded companies. However, it is not clear that the recommendations of these firms are correct and generally lead to better outcomes for companies and their shareholders."

According to this report, ISS and Glass Lewis are able to swing between 10 percent and 30 percent of shareholder votes in line with their recommendations.

A 2018 report by the American Council for Capital Formation states that 175 asset managers, with more than \$5 trillion in assets under management, followed the advice of ISS more than 95 percent of the time.

A July 12 Wall Street Journal article states that both ISS and Glass Lewis supported an audit of the employment practices of Starbucks this year, which shareholders passed with a 52 percent majority, and that the duopoly backed a racial equity audit at McDonald's that passed with 55 percent support.

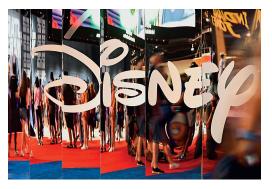
Policy recommendations included breaking up the proxy adviser duopoly and passing laws to check the administrative overreach of financial regulators such as the SEC.

"One thing they should do is look at why it's a duopoly in the first place," Mr. Hild said. "Generally speaking, we don't allow that in any major industries and certainly not something as big and important as the proxy advising services."

Mr. Zycher said Congress should focus not on the Big Three asset managers, but rather on reforming the SEC regulatory framework.

"I urge Congress to enact legislation constraining the efforts of regulatory agencies to pursue climate policies not authorized in the law, uninformed by actual evidence and justified on the basis of fundamentally dishonest benefit-cost analysis," he said.

"Such regulatory efforts continue to engender vast costs and no benefits." ■



An example of companies wading into controversial topics includes Disney's fight in 2022 against parental rights laws in Florida.

18 EPOCH INSIGHT Week 29, 2023

Experts estimate that 60,000 to 100,000 transplants take place in China every year.

"They

essentially

living person

by removing

their heart."

board member, Association

Dr. Richard Amerling.

of American Physicians and Surgeons

execute a

HUMAN RIGHTS

Industrial-Scale Murder: 'Absolutely Horrific'

American doctors seek to ban U.S. training of medical professionals from China due to the regime's medical abuse By Danella Pérez Schmieloz & Eva Fu

U.S. DOCTORS' GROUP IS TAKING a stance on the Chinese regime's industrial-scale murder of prisoners of conscience for their organs, urging U.S. authorities and doctors to do what they can to stop enabling the abuse.

"Overwhelming evidence" indicates that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been incarcerating and committing forced organ harvesting on religious, ethnic, and other minorities in China, according to a statement released by the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons earlier this month.

The group also called on the U.S. government and American physicians to stop training or educating medical professionals from China—or any other totalitarian regime—in skills that could be used to commit the abuse.

"We unequivocally condemn it. It's absolutely barbaric, inhumane, unethical. There's no way to justify this at all," Dr. Richard Amerling, the association's former president and current board member, told The Epoch Times. "You cannot forcibly take someone's organs; that's the grossest violation of bodily autonomy that could exist.

"They essentially execute a living person by removing their heart-they're still technically alive,

they're not brain dead. It is absolutely horrific." In 2019, the China Tribunal, an independent expert panel, concluded that the Chinese regime has been committing forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience for years, and "on a substantial scale."

The tribunal also concluded that imprisoned adherents of Falun Gong-a spiritual practice systematically persecuted by the regime for more than two decades-are the principal source. Uyghurs and other persecuted minorities in northwest China are also at risk, along with Tibetans and House Christians, experts have said.

Allegations that the communist regime was killing Falun Gong practitioners to sell their organs for transplant first emerged in 2006. Since then, numerous investigations have confirmed grisly details of this atrocity.

"It's tough to confront this evil," Dr. Amerling said. "I think people shy away from looking at things like this. And if you don't look at it, and you just put it buried under the sand, pretend that it doesn't exist, life's easier in many ways.

"But once you recognize that this is going on, it demands a response. This is too barbaric. A civilized country cannot allow this to go on without some sort of statement."

Dr. Amerling, a nephrologist for more than

30 years, believes that forced organ harvesting "needs to be condemned forcefully by the medical establishment in this country."

"It's absolutely gut-wrenching and horrifying to think this is going on, that people abuse medical knowledge to perform such evil acts," he said.

Dr. Amerling believes that medical societies have the duty to push back against such abuses by publicizing them and by shunning Chinese personnel from U.S. medical educational circles.

"Why are we training these doctors? Why are we educating them? Why are we allowing them to participate in American medicine in any way?" he asked. "They should be blocked from any participation in the American medical system, period. They should not be trained in our hospitals. They should not be allowed to present papers at our conferences. They should not be allowed to publish articles in American journalism."

Penalizing these doctors and barring their entry to the United States "would send a message to the government that we're aware of what they're up to," he said.

One nonprofit transplantation organization is already doing that. The International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, the world's largest organization dedicated to researching end-stage heart and lung disease, stated in 2022 that it'll no longer accept research papers "involving either organs or tissue from human donors in the People's Republic of China" because of the body of evidence of the regime's systematic forced organ harvesting from nonconsenting donors.

Call for US Action

Organ harvesting is a lucrative business for the CCP. During a 2021 hearing before the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Geoffrey Nice, who chaired the China Tribunal, said the Chinese regime could obtain up to use organs originating from China or any other \$500.000 from each victim's body.

Experts have estimated that 60,000 to 100,000 transplants take place in China every year, far exceeding the regime's official figure of 10,000. Organs for those additional transplants are predominantly sourced from prisoners of conscience, they said.

Dr. Amerling called upon the U.S. government to harness its "commanding position" through its control of U.S. banks to help put an end to organ harvesting.



He believes that banning the U.S. training of *Falun Gong* Chinese physicians should be a national policy. But challenges remain because of the CCP's influence over U.S. institutions through donations and grants that have effectively bought their silence, according to advocates. The Chinese regime has donated more than \$3 billion to universities over the past three decades, and experts believe that's only the tip of the iceberg.

Recently, U.S. lawmakers have ramped up efforts to counter forced organ harvesting in China. In June, Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) introduced the

Falun Gong Protection Act (H.R.4132). The bill aims to impose sanctions on individuals who are complicit with forced organ harvesting in China and bar them from entering the United States. It would also make it a U.S. policy to avoid cooperation with communist China in the organ transplantation field and to coordinate efforts with allies and multilateral institutions to sanction the regime.

Also in June, Texas signed into law a bipartisan bill that makes it illegal for health insurance providers to fund organ transplants that country that's known to be involved in forced organ harvesting.

In March, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act to sanction anyone complicit in such practices.

Dr. Amerling welcomed these legislative responses and hoped that others will join his organization in taking a position.

"Words have an impact. We can't let the Chinese get a pass," he said. ■

practitioners participate in a rally to mark 24 years of the CCP's persecution of the spiritual discipline in China by the Chinese Communist Party, in Washington on July 20.

\$500.000

THE CHINESE regime could obtain up to half a million dollars from each victim's body, a group says.



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to advocates.

TRANSGENDERISM

Foncens IVA ransgender Summer **Lamps**

In some, campers and counselors self-select which cabin to stay in, based on their gender identity

By Jackson Elliott

Most children will grow out of gender dysphoria if not encouraged in it, a psychologist says. CROSS THE UNITED STATES, there's a growing number of summer camps specifically for children who don't identify with their sex. These overnight camps connect hundreds of children who identify as transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming.

Attending such camps is likely to create lasting gender dysphoria in children who would otherwise probably leave that phase behind, psychologist Nicholas Kardaras told The Epoch Times.

Most children will grow out of gender dysphoria if not encouraged in it, he said. But when adults encourage a "social contagion," it will spread rapidly, he said.

"If you put a very developmentally fragile young person in any social group that is very dominant, they're going to inevitably mimic the behaviors and the identity of that social group that they get dropped in," Dr. Kardaras, who runs Omega Recovery, a mental health clinic in Austin, Texas, told The Epoch Times.

'Gender-Liberated' Facilities

Unlike traditional summer camps that require separate bathrooms and sleeping areas for boys and girls, some transgender camps don't segregate children by sex, The Epoch Times learned.

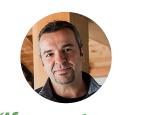
In West Central Ohio's Camp Lilac, restrooms and shower facilities "are split by age group, not gender," the camp website reads. "Showers are in private stalls with locking doors."

Vermont's Camp Outright advertises on its website that "all the bathrooms at camp are gender-liberated." And campers and counselors self-select which cabin they will stay in, based on their gender identity, according to the website.

The Naming Project camp in Deerwood, Minnesota, advertises that separation between men and women isn't encouraged. The group describes itself as a Christian ministry, and its website, in response to a frequently asked question about its camp for adults, reads: "At other church camps, you might have heard the phrase, 'Boys are blue. Girls are pink. Don't make purple.' Well, we won't be saying that, because that phrase erases the reality of LGBTQ people, our lives, and our relationships."

The American Camp Association (ACA) stands behind the emergence of camps especially for transgenderidentifying children, according to camp director Andy Pritikin.

"I think that mixed gender is likely going to be the wave of the future," he said. "I have so many kids that are transgender, so many staff that are transgender, at this point. To have mixed-gender groups makes life a heck of a lot easier for these folks."



"If you put a very developmentally fragile young person in any social group that is very dominant, they're going to inevitably mimic the behaviors."

Nicholas Kardaras, CEO and founder, Omega Recovery

Transgenderism has dramatically changed summer camps, even those not specifically designed to cater only to campers and counselors who identify as transgender, Mr. Pritikin said.

While public schools must abide by government rules on transgender issues, directors of privately run camps decide on their own how to handle those situations, he said.

It can be complicated when counselors suddenly announce they've "changed genders," he said.

"I'm hiring staff in, let's say, March, and then we do our first training [for summer camp], and they've changed

genders," he said.

It happens with campers, too, requiring last-minute reorganization, he said. "We're enrolling campers as boys. Then, a week before camp starts, the parent calls and says, 'They want to be in a girls' group," he said.

The fact that his day camp has male and female bathrooms is less than ideal, he said, because the camp should have gender-neutral facilities.

And same-sex changing rooms should be replaced with gender-neutral facilities, Mr. Pritikin said.

At the camp he operates, children go home at the end of the day. The logistical problems of overnight camps are bigger, he said.

Risky Sleeping Arrangements

At sleepaway camps, girls may find themselves in a cabin with a boy who identifies as female, Mr. Pritikin said.

"They would not be changing in front of each other," he said. "They would have changing stalls.

"They're not fornicating with each other in the same room," he added. "They're sleeping in the same room." But Mr. Kardaras is skeptical of sudden cases of gender dysphoria that cause last-minute logistical problems for camps.

In genuine cases of gender dysphoria, adults and children don't suddenly identify as transgender, he said.

"Gender dysphoria doesn't work like that," he said. "It's not authentic gender dysphoria. It would be what I'm calling 'pseudo-gender dysphoria.""

He said that this pseudo-gender dysphoria results from online exposure that persuades adults and children that they are transgender.

If camp directors allow children and adults to change accommodations based on these categories, it will cause problems, Mr. Kardaras said.

Mixing genders at camps creates the potential for underage sex, he warned. Research shows that gender identity is often more changeable than sexual attraction, he said. The girl in the boy's cabin might still feel attracted to boys, even if she now identifies as male.

"The young person actually may think that they are authentically gender dysphoric, but they're not. And



Kids learn sword fighting at Camp Liberty Lake in Bordentown, N.J., in 2018. The camp is for all campers and staff regardless of their gender identity, its website says.

then when they wind up landing in the girls' cabin, their sexual orientation unfolds," he said.

Adolescent boys also might want to sleep in girls' cabins in search of sex, he said.

Although camps have always had to tackle problems such as these, creating sleeping arrangements to accommodate transgender-identifying campers is "exacerbating the issue," Mr. Kardaras said.

Some people have expressed opposition to the ACA's "new thinking" about transgenderism, Mr. Pritikin said. But, he added, the media often inflate concerns over transgender "predators in the bathrooms."

"The concern that I hear from my colleagues is from the parents," Mr. Pritikin said.

Camp directors have mixed responses to a politically divided public, he said.

Some directors don't let transgender-identifying campers enroll. Others don't let in children who won't sleep in the same room with transgenderidentifying campers.

Some shuffle camp arrangements to ensure everyone feels comfortable, he said.

"Half the country voted for Donald Trump, right?" Mr. Pritikin asked. "So I mean, 30 to 40 percent of Americans would have a problem with [accommodating transgender-identifying children and counselors]. So you run the risk of losing some of those people." Both overnight and daytime sum-

Both overnight and daytime summer camps must be careful to protect

children from sexual abuse, he said.

"If any situation comes up where you [as an adult] could theoretically find yourself alone with a camper, you need to invoke the Rule of Three, which is you need to get another staff person or another camper to be with you," Mr. Pritikin said.

Most sleepaway camps fire anyone who breaks this rule for any reason, he said.

Because predators go wherever children go, Mr. Pritikin said he encourages camp officials to stay on high alert.

"Everybody is suspect," he said. "You're choosing to work your summer with kids, and that's great. That's noble. That's amazing.

"But at the same time, our whole staff has to keep the radar up on everybody." ↔

Dangerous Policies?

It's shocking and dangerous that sexbased boundaries that have kept children safe have been removed at some camps, Kimberly Fletcher, president and founder of Moms for America, told The Epoch Times.

"When you open Pandora's box, you don't get to decide what comes out," Ms. Fletcher said.

She said that she experienced sexual abuse as a young girl and that spaces that allow men and women to sleep in the same cabin or use the same bathrooms feel unsafe and threatening to her.

Mixed-gender camp arrangements create openings for sexual abuse, discomfort, and legal trouble, she said.

"I don't want my daughters being put



"We need to start treating children like children, instead of putting them in a situation where they have to make decisions that adults make."

Kimberly Fletcher, president and founder, Moms for America

in a position where they feel uncomfortable as girls," Ms. Fletcher said. "And as a mother of sons, that puts them in a position to have all kinds of legal action and problems that could come out after them.

"There are sex offender laws out there that go after young boys for doing things that [camps are] encouraging them to do."

Camps that encourage children in transgenderism would likely fail to notice how often children make sweeping claims about their identities that have little to no basis in reality, Ms. Fletcher said.

Embracing these claims or letting them pass unchallenged invites madness, she said.

"My granddaughter is convinced that she's a butterfly. My other granddaughter is convinced that she is a mermaid who wants to ride unicorns," Ms. Fletcher said.

"So do I throw my granddaughter who thinks she's a mermaid into the waters, strap her to a tail, and say, 'Good luck, go ahead, be a mermaid'? Do I tell my other granddaughter to go up on the roof, jump off, and fly?"

The son of a close friend struggled mentally because of abuse and abandonment, she said. After, he seemed to be seeking a new identity. He went vegan to impress a girl. He later identified as gay after teachers told him it was possible to be homosexual without knowing it, and peers affirmed to him that he seemed gay.

After the revelation that he was "gay," his schoolmates stopped rejecting him and started accepting him, Ms. Fletcher said.

"He found a community to feel a part of," she said.

When the boy went to see mental health counselors, they all told him he was homosexual and ignored the abandonment, abuse, and bullying issues, she said. They said the problem was people who didn't "accept that he's gay." She said that by adulthood, he no longer identified as "gay" and entered a relationship with a woman.

"We need to start treating children like children, instead of putting them in a situation where they have to make decisions that adults make," she said.

Special Camps, **Special Activities**

Like traditional summer camps, most transgender camps offer activities, such as rock climbing, archery, sports, nature activities, and crafts.

But they also have several features that distinguish them from traditional children's camps of the past.

Transcending Adolescence camp and the Trans Youth Equality Foundation camp, both in the Jacksonville, Florida, area, keep their locations secret from the public.

"Your child's safety is our No. 1 priority," the Transcending Adolescence camp website reads. "For the security of our campers, we only disclose the location to registered campers and their families." Some camps offer transgender activities that teach children how to enhance their ability to identify as the opposite sex.

"Celebration of trans identities is inherent in everything we do at camp, but we also host makeup and hair tutorials, voice training, and more!" Camp Lilac's website reads.

"Voice training" teaches children how to make their voices sound more like those of the opposite sex. Camp Lilac provides this service to children aged between 12 and 17.

More than 80 children attend every week during the summer, according to the camp's website.

ACA regulations require anyone working for a camp to pass a criminal background check, present at least two references, and pass a personal interview. But the list of qualifications for a volunteer counselor at Camp Lilac doesn't include background checks, its website shows. One job of counselors is to moni-

tor showers, the camp website reads. The Epoch Times reached out with requests for comment to Camp Lilac, the Transcending Adolescence camp, the Trans Youth Equality Foundation camp, The Naming Project camp, and Camp Outright. None responded.

Big Support for 'Gender Diversity'

According to statistics from the Pew Research Center, claims of transgender identity have increased massively among young adults.



VERSUS

.6%

OF PEOPLE

younger than

30, 5.1 percent

now identify as

transgender or

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of people older

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Of people younger than 30, some 5.1 front this perceived epidemic of intolerpercent now identify as transgender or

nonbinary. Yet only 1.6 percent of people older than 30 identify as transgender or nonbinary.

Many psychologists have said that this rapid rise in new gender identities results from social contagion, not from a true change in human psychology.

Children who identify as transgender have far higher rates of depression and suicide than other children, research shows. For that, proponents of radical gender ideology blame a society "intolerant" of transgender identity.

"The findings [on increased suicide rates for transgender youth] empha-

size the urgency of building welcoming and safe communities for LGBT young people, particularly for transgender youth," the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT activist group, states on its website.

Several recently opened transgender summer camps announced plans to conance by creating spaces for only people who aren't heterosexual.

"Since 2017, we've been creating a safe, welcoming, and confidential space in which gender diversity is the norm," Camp Lilac's website reads.

If only transgender children are present at a camp, then it will be impossible for them to experience discrimination from nontransgender children, some camps assert in their promotional materials. And business is booming.

Camp Lilac enrolled 16 children in 2017. In 2022, the number of campers swelled to 123. "Due to this tremendous growth, we no longer fit in our original space," the

Camp Lilac website reads. Some transgender camps receive funding from donors with deep pockets. The Tawani Foundation donated \$50,000 to Harbor Camps, a Florida camp for transgender children. Meanwhile, Transcending Adolescence receives support from Tides, a massive

Children at Camp Liberty Lake play while wearing Star Wars masks in Bordentown, N.J., on June 27, 2018.

international grant-giving organization that seeks out "social justice" causes. The camp also is sponsored by the Gainesville Community Counseling Center, the University of North Florida's Osprey PERCH mental health program, and the transgender activism group known as the Unspoken Treasure Society.

Camp Outright has received pledges totaling more than \$165,000.

Uniform Day Camp receives sponsorship from Transforming Family, a group dedicated to "creating a positive environment for children, adolescents, and their families to explore issues of gender identity."

The Trans Youth Equality Foundation camp receives funding from the leftwing charity site ActBlue.

Mr. Kardaras says he's concerned about the lasting effects these camps may have on the children who attend and are encouraged to continue in their gender dysphoria.

"Rare is the true gender dysphoria youth," he said. "We're talking very rare—.04 percent was one estimate.

"So certainly, some percentage of the current transgender population is a social contagion—and you're not going to make a social contagion better by not treating it."

GETTING AROUND AF ENRITY EAGEION

History suggests liberal states will look for workaround to Supreme Court decision

STOP DISCRIMINATING

OF BACE

SKIN

🗢 🔶 By Jackson Richman

Diversity

lustice

Protesters for and against affirmative action demonstrate on Capitol Hill n Washinaton on June

HE SUPREME COURT RULED on June 29 that affirmative action is unconstitutional. Nonetheless, history suggests that liberal states and institutions could obstruct implementing the decision that race-conscious admissions violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

GianCarlo Canaparo, senior legal fellow at The Heritage Foundation's Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, predicted to The Epoch Times that colleges and universities will attempt to circumvent the decision by using a race-neutral standard to produce racial diversity.

"They may give preferences to applicants from zip codes or high schools where they know a lot of black and Hispanic students live, and disadvantages to people from zip codes with high Asian and white populations," he said. "This is still forbidden by this Supreme Court decision— 'deals with substance, not shadows'—but it will be hard to catch universities if they discriminate on the sly."

Following the Supreme Court ruling, the State University of New York (SUNY) defended affirmative action.

"Race-conscious admissions policies have enriched our institutions and our nation," SUNY Chancellor John King and the SUNY Board of Trustees said in a joint statement. "Yet despite the existence of race-conscious admissions policies, Black and Latino students, along with other groups, are still underrepresented across institutions of higher education as students, faculty members and administrators."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement after the decision: "No court case will ever shatter the California Dream. Our campus doors remain open for all who want to work hard and our commitment to diversity, equity, and equal opportunity has never been stronger."

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a statement that "no archaic ruling will ever change" the state's policy of promoting minority students in colleges and universities.

Disregard for Supreme Court

Howard Slugh, an attorney who has litigated constitutional issues, told The Epoch Times that the Supreme Court decision is "ambiguous," since the highest court in the United States didn't explicitly say whether it overturned the 1978 case of Regents of the University of California v. Bakke and the cases that followed it, which had been seen as establishing the test for whether in a given case it's acceptable to consider race in college admissions.

"We're likely to see more litigation regarding whether different activities are as expressive as web design," he said. "The Supreme Court didn't have to answer that question because Colorado had stipulated that 303 Creative was engaged in expressive conduct. It is unclear where the boundaries will be."

Nonetheless, Mr. Blackman said to expect the number of such cases to decrease, given the infrequency of samesex couples going to those of religious faith for wedding websites.

Some universities will simply disregard the Supreme Court's ruling because the Biden administration won't hold them accountable, a law professor says.

Josh Blackman, a professor at the South Texas College of Law Houston, told The Epoch Times that universities will try to work around the ruling by issuing "diversity statements," and that "savvy admission officers will know how to read [admissions essays] in just the right way."

David Bernstein, a constitutional law professor at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School, said that some state universities will simply disregard the ruling, as the Biden administration won't hold them accountable. He also predicted that schools will do away with standardized test scores, making it easier for underprivileged minorities to get admitted.

Other Recent Rulings

It isn't just the affirmative action decision that states and higher education institutions could try to go around. In the recent case of a website designer seeking to establish that the state of Colorado could not force her to design websites for same-sex weddings, the Supreme Court ruled in the designer's favor. Mr. Slugh, general counsel for the Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty, said he expects the assault against those of faith in the service sector to continue.

And the Biden administration is already trying to use a workaround regarding student loan debt.

The Supreme Court on June 30 deemed President Joe Biden's \$400 billion student debt forgiveness program unlawful. Later that day, Mr. Biden announced that the Department of Education can "compromise, waive, or release loans under certain circumstances" in accordance with the Higher Education Act of 1965. He also announced a program through which students can defer their payments for up to one year without being referred by the Department of Education to debtors.

Mr. Canaparo said he expects the new policies to fail.

"The Higher Education Act does not demonstrate Congress's plain intent to delegate to the president the power to end hundreds of billions of dollars of student loans," he said.

Pushing Gun Control Laws

Liberal states such as California and New York have sought to use workarounds to achieve gun control, despite the Supreme Court reaffirming the Second Amendment right of individuals to bear arms in District of Columbia v. Heller in 2008.



Colleges and universities will attempt to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision by using a race-neutral standard to produce racial diversity, an expert says.

California has some of the strictest gun laws in the United States. Shotgun purchasers must be at least 18 years old, while handgun buyers must be at least 21 years old. Since July 1, the Firearm Industry Responsibility Act has been in place in the state, which mandates that firearms salespeople, including those who sell privately, must have a license to sell firearms.

The law also allows people to more easily sue gun manufacturers in civil court.

There was also the 2010 case of Mc-Donald v. City of Chicago, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the Second Amendment includes the right to selfdefense at home with a firearm and that states must abide by it in accordance with the 14th Amendment's due process clause. The decision nullified Chicago's handgun ban.

Nonetheless, it's still difficult to

legally acquire a firearm in Chicago. This year, Illinois enacted an assault weapons ban.

Upcoming Cases

In the 2022 case of New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen, the Supreme Court struck down a New York state law requiring people to show "proper cause" in order to carry a concealed firearm. Mr. Blackman said that "in the wake of Bruen, blue states have tried to evade the landmark Second Amendment ruling" and that "it is a massive resistance." Since then, New York enacted an

amended Concealed Carry Improvement Act.

"Right now, [New York and California are] trying to figure out just what they can get away with," Mr. Canaparo said. "They're also probably hoping that friendly lower court judges in their states will let them get away with a lot, and that the Supreme Court won't take another Second Amendment case any time soon."

However, in its next term, the Supreme Court is set to take up a case about whether those under a domestic violence restraining order can possess a firearm, which is banned under federal law.

Also in the next term, which begins Oct. 2, the Supreme Court will determine what constitutes a serious drug offense. There is also another redistricting case before the court; it decided two in the most recent term. Additionally, the court is set to hear a couple of cases related to the social media accounts of public officials. Moreover, the court will determine whether the funding structure behind the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is constitutional.



Sky Stunts

COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE PILOTS fly Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to perform acrobatics during the F-AIR Colombia 2023 air festival in Rionegro, Colombia, on July 14.

HOTO BY FREDY BUILES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Wind turbine blades (L) stored on the quayside ready for shipping at the Siemens Gamesa blade factory in Hull, England, on Jan. 28, 2022.

DUSTRY

Turbine failures and plunging

stock add to growing doubt

over wind industry

By Matt McGregor

ENERGY

In Focus Industry

N INCREASE IN THE FAILure of wind turbine components and the subsequent financial fallout are creating uncertainty about the true sustainability of an industry that's campaigning for green energy.

Siemens Energy announced on June 22 that it would be withdrawing its profit assumptions and initiating a technical review of Siemens Gamesa's onshore wind farm, which could cost more than \$1.1 billion.

"This is a disappointing, bitter setback," Siemens Gamesa CEO Jochen Eickholt said in a June conference call. "The quality problems go well beyond what had been known hitherto, in particular in the onshore area."

The mechanical problems could affect 15 percent to 30 percent of the company's wind turbine farms and take several years to repair.

The day after the announcement, Siemens Energy's shares fell more than 37 percent.

The company said it expected challenges to "ramp up" offshore as well.

Siemens Energy is a subsidiary of the German conglomerate Siemens. Siemens Energy's wind farm business, Siemens Gamesa, is a global company based in Spain that constructs onshore and offshore turbines in Europe and the United States.

The company began an investigation into a damaged turbine at the Santo Agostinho wind farm that French energy company Engie SA is building in the northeast of Brazil, Bloomberg reported.

The installation—which is part of Siemens Gamesa's new 5.X model of onshore wind farms, with turbine blades as long as 262 feet—has faced numerous quality control issues and has been shut down for the investigation.

Since Siemens Gamesa's announcement, a spokesperson confirmed to Recharge on July 5 that a blade had broken at the Santo Agostinho wind farm.

'More Severe Than I Thought Possible'

Media outlets and spokespersons blame the issues on the increasing costs and decreasing availability of raw materials caused by the COVID pandemic and \Rightarrow

SHALL



Workers install turbine machinery at a wind farm at Wimmelburg, Germany, in this file photo. Modern onshore turbines are more than 600 feet tall, an exerpt says.

the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has left competing companies with challenges in meeting deadlines while rattling the confidence of investors.

Siemens Energy CEO Christian Bruch said during a June conference call that the setback is "more severe than I thought possible."

"Siemens Gamesa will incur high losses this year and will take longer to reach an appropriate level of profitability," Mr. Bruch said. "We also have to see that we have an urgent requirement to fix the corporate culture. Too much has been swept under the carpet."

In 2022, Siemens Gamesa announced a layoff of 2,900 employees, with further cuts predicted, EnergyWatch reported.

"It is never easy to make such a decision, but now is the time to take decisive and necessary actions to turn the company around and ensure a sustainable future," Mr. Eickholt said. "We need to build a stronger and more competitive Siemens Gamesa to secure our position as a key player in the green energy transition."

'Uncharted Territory'

Nicholas Green, head of industrial technology at the global asset management firm AllianceBernstein, told CNBC that the rate of expansion has pushed wind energy into "uncharted territory" that

has led to "an industry-wide issue." "It wasn't that Siemens Gamesa is a bad operator, as such, it's that actually some of the normal protocols and time in use, operational data in use, is relatively limited," Mr. Green said.

In addition to the availability of materials, the rapid expansion is creating challenges not only for supply and demand, but also for engineering.

Christoph Zipf, a spokesman for WindEurope, told CNBC that 20 years ago, a normal wind turbine would have a capacity of 1 million watts, while today, they're testing at 15 megawatts (15 million watts).

"This means that turbines have become bigger as well, posing challenges to components (quality, materials, longevity)," Mr. Zipf wrote in his statement.

The United States currently has about 65,000 to 70,000 operating towers, an expert says. Mr. Zipf maintained that these issues aren't a foreshadowing of an industrywide collapse, however, stating that "the problems at Siemens Gamesa are limited to Siemens Gamesa."

"Big turbine failures are extremely rare given the number of turbines installed in Europe already," he said.

There are others who claim turbine failures are, in fact, more frequent and underreported, however.

'Significant Underreporting'

Lisa Linowes, founder and executive director of WindAction, told The Epoch Times in an email statement that turbine failures are more prevalent than people are made aware of.

"Not all failures are picked up by the press, so we don't know the degree of underreporting, however, there is good reason to believe the underreporting is significant," Ms. Linowes said. "There have been clear signals from the industry dating back to 2007 that component failure [and] structural failure are not isolated, but systematic and industry-wide." Ms. Linowes pointed to a New York Times article published in 2007 on the mechanical problems with turbines. The availability of large government subsidies led to a race to construct wind turbines and capitalize on the fast-growing industry, leading to shortcomings in the technology.

Engineers complained of limited time to test prototypes, demand exceeding supply, and companies showing no interest in slowing down to create more efficient technology, instead just making bigger facilities.

"Since this article was published, there've been a host of collapses where towers buckled or complete collapses of turbines," Ms. Linowes said.

Sixteen years ago, when the article was published, Ms. Linowes said, the United States had about 6,000 operating towers. Today, there are about 65,000 to

70,000 towers, she said.

'One Disaster After Another'

During a visit to the Block Island Wind Farm in Rhode Island in late May, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm praised America's first offshore wind farm as a model that should be followed throughout the rest of the country, The Providence Journal reported.

"We want to replicate this, even bigger, all up and down the Atlantic seaboard, but also in the Pacific and in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Great Lakes," Ms. Granholm said. "We want to be able to generate clean energy all across America."

However, the Block Island Wind Farm, like other installations, has faced multiple problems.

Meghan Lapp, a representative for a commercial fishing company in Rhode Island who also works in fishery management, told The Epoch Times that the installation is "rarely working" and has frequent maintenance issues.

"A couple of years ago, 4 out of 5 of them went offline for months because they have stress fractures in the rotors," Ms. Lapp said. "This year, one of them will be offline all summer for repair. It's been one disaster after another."

A Rush to Cash In on Subsidies

WindAction was formed in 2006 to investigate the wind industry and its impact on wildlife, the natural environ-

ment, and human health. The organization has collected articles since 2004 that have reported on

structural failures. Because the industry is driven by subsidies, Ms. Linowes said, there's a rush to get turbines raised as quickly as possible

before the subsidies run out. "With the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, some of that pressure might moderate in the future, but the damage is built into the existing fleet of operating and newly launched turbines," she said.

"To maximize the subsidies, turbine manufacturers have been pushed to build taller turbines with larger megawatt capacities and at lower costs. There may well be shortcuts taken in the manufacturing and erection processes and sloppy work by field technicians."

Just as was warned in 2007, the increasing size of these turbines could be shooting past their mechanical capabilities, she said.

"Modern onshore turbines now stand over 600 feet tall, with rotor diameters greater than 130 meters (426.5 feet)," she said. "There is a lot of stress, and as you go higher, the turbulence increases."

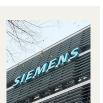
The taller the turbines get, the more they reach into the unknown of how they'll perform.

Along the Atlantic coast, there are 3,500 proposed turbines that will stretch across 2.2 million acres of coastal waters.

Cindy Zipf, executive director for Clean Ocean Action, told The Epoch Times in a previous report that these turbines will be up to 1,046 feet tall—as tall as the Chrysler Building—with one blade surpassing the height of the Statue of Liberty.

Ms. Linowes points out that the subsidies in the United States run for the first 10 years of turbine service.

"By the 10-year mark, the project owners and investors have recouped their investment and earned the expected return," she said. "Consequently, the project is of less value. The turbines are older, and we know from studies by the U.S. government that older turbines become less efficient."



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30%

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will stretch across

2.2 million acres of

coastal waters.

'Likely to See More Failures'

According to a 2020 report by Berkeley Lab, abrupt changes in performance happen after the first 10 years of operation, coinciding with when U.S. wind companies lose eligibility for production tax credits (PTC).

The tax credits were initiated by the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to incentivize the development of wind installations.

An article published in the scientific journal Joule said there's a notable coincidence in the timing between the drop in performance and the eligibility deadline for production tax credits.

"It suggests that maintenance and operating strategies change when projects lose access to the sizable tax benefits afforded by the PTC," the report stated.

This reaches a point when the cost of maintenance isn't worth it, Ms. Linowes said. "In 2019–2020, GE experienced a series of turbine collapses which were reported as being caused by different

sources," she said in her email. "A single point of failure leading to the collapse of multiple turbines would suggest a common cause in the design, manufacture, or assembly that could be investigated/resolved."

Multiple issues stemming from multiple points of failure, however, suggest that there's a problem with the overall process, including the design, the manufacturing of the equipment, and an inadequate grasp of what's required for proper operation, Ms. Linowes said.

"Given the recent reporting from Siemens, the issue of turbine failure appears more systemic than isolated," she said. "This, combined with the loss in subsidies and rising maintenance costs for older turbines, means we are likely to see more failures from here on." ■ A volunteer distributes caucus and election poll information at an event in Las Vegas on July 8.



2024 ELECTION

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL **CAUCUSES**

The strength of the caucus system is that it helps *build a grassroots party organization*

By Lawrence Wilson

F YOU WANT TO GET A REACTION from an Iowan, say you're tired of having their caucuses select a president for the entire country. You'll get an earful of reasons why that just ain't so faster than you can say "pork queen."

Iowa's position on the election calendar has given the state's caucus-goers an early thumbs up-or down-on presidential hopefuls since the early 1970s. Nevada's caucuses, which occur a few weeks later. are the "First in the West." That makes both states bellwethers for public opinion. Many a candidate has surged in primary voting after a good showing in Iowa, while many others have dropped out after disappointing results in Nevada.

Though the number of states holding caucuses rather than primary elections during presidential election cycles can vary, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are also expected to hold caucuses in 2024.

Caucuses and primary elections both play roles in selecting major party candidates for presidential elections. But that's about all they have in common.

The Epoch Times spoke with Republican party leaders in Iowa, Nevada, and North Dakota to learn how their parties' caucuses work and why some states prefer them. Democratic leaders in those states didn't respond to requests for comment.

Here are five things you need to know about the caucuses in Iowa and beyond.

Organized by Parties, **Not States**

Caucuses are local gatherings of party members organized by the parties themselves, not by the states.



"We never know how many to project; you don't register or anything like that."

Gloria Mazza, chair, Republican Party of Polk County

Primary elections are organized and paid for by the states and are subject to state election laws. To a voter, primaries may seem exactly like regular elections, except that all the candidates are from the same party.

In many state primaries, Republicans and Democrats vote on the same day and in the same precincts. They're just given different ballots depending on party affiliation. In many states, registered vot-

ers can choose which primary to vote in regardless of their party affiliation.

Caucuses look and feel different because they are partisan gatherings, not subject to the same laws as a primary election. Each political party is free to organize caucuses according to its own rules.

The downside for the parties is that they receive no organizational help from the states. Each party must finance and operate its own events. One exception is that in Iowa, state law mandates that public schools must allow their facilities to be used as caucus locations.

Most caucuses are held at the precinct level, the smallest unit in the election system. That can make organizing caucuses a major challenge for party leaders.

For example, Iowa's Polk County, which includes Des Moines, has 176 precincts, and each will have its own caucus.

"We never know how many to project; you don't register or anything like that," Gloria Mazza, chair of the Republican Party of Polk County, told The Epoch Times. "We know the turnout from, say, a couple of years ago. Then we're looking to find a location in the precinct that will hold close to 300 people."

From finding the venue to printing the materials and setting up chairs, caucuses are entirely a volunteer operation.

"According to our rules, the state party is to ensure at least eight caucus locations in North Dakota," Republican State Committeeman Shane Goettle told The Epoch Times. "Those will 🍝



Ballots are counted following a Republican Party caucus in West Des Moines, Iowa, on Feb. 1, 2016. Attendance at a typical Iowa caucus can range from about 40 to 500 participants, an official says.

be in our eight major cities, which are also ideally situated around the state."

However, all of North Dakota's 47 legislative districts can choose to hold caucuses if they wish.

"So right now, we don't know how many we will have, but there will be at least eight," Mr. Goettle said.

Nevada's GOP caucuses are held in each of the state's thousands of precincts.

An Event, Not a Line

Primary election voters are used to showing up, sometimes standing in line, casting a vote, and leaving immediately. Most caucuses don't operate like that.

Caucuses are generally held in the evening in a public space such as a school gym or community center, and they may last from 30 minutes to three hours.

That's especially true in states such as Iowa and Nevada, where caucuses are used to conduct party business other than the selection of a presidential nominee.

"We do two things," Jeff Kaufmann, chairman of the Republican Party of Iowa, told The Epoch Times. "We do our party business: elect people to go to the county conventions and elect our local leaders. That's a caucus. Almost all parties have that.

"What makes Iowa unique is that we have a presidential preference poll, and we go first [in the nation]. ... Those are the two orders of business."

Attendance varies based on the size of the precinct and can range from about 40 to as many as 500 participants, according to Ms. Mazza. A typical Iowa caucus may last from 90 minutes to two hours, though many attendees leave after the presidential preference poll.

Nevadans also use caucuses to conduct local party business, though their meetings are a bit shorter. They last between 30 minutes and an hour, Jim DeGraffenreid, Republican National Committeeman for Nevada, told The Epoch Times. "It just depends on how many people are there and how deep into discussion they want to get."

North Dakotans usually caucus during a three-hour window—6 to 9 p.m., for example. There may be speeches or presentations given, but participants are free to vote and leave whenever they like.

Electioneering Allowed

States generally prohibit campaigning for a particular candidate in or near a polling place. They do that to ensure that the voting is conducted in a neutral en-

vironment. Once voters approach the voting site, no one is allowed to influence their votes. Usually, even clothing or buttons touting a candidate are prohibited. That's not the case with caucuses.

At a caucus, presidential candidates and their representatives are usually allowed to make speeches. Neighbors can discuss the candidates among themselves and try to persuade one another.

"I've experienced a caucus where there was a debate," Mr. Goettle said of North Dakota. "People could stand up and make their best case for the candidate of their choice. And you were free to cast your vote and leave or to sit and listen to the discussion."

In Iowa, where candidates are eager to make their first impression on voters, it can be tough for organizers to fit all speakers into the program, according to Ms. Mazza.

"In my precinct in 2016, we had [former President Donald] Trump, [Florida Sen. Marco] Rubio, [former Pennsylvania Congressman Rick] Santorum, and [former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development] Ben Carson show up that night, and we only allow three to five minutes." Ms. Mazza said.

"That goes even for the candidates

themselves because others will have a spokesperson recruited to speak. That can take a while," she said.

After the speechifying, caucus-goers vote on the candidate of choice. In most caucuses, but not all, that involves casting a ballot.

Iowa Democrats vote with their feet, moving to a designated area of the room for their candidate of choice. Democrats can also vote "uncommitted," meaning they're not choosing a candidate at that time.

In Iowa, Nevada, and North Dakota,

Caucuses are different from state primaries because the former are partisan gatherings, not subject to the same laws as the latter.

They Work

the race.

Winning in Iowa isn't a sure sign of succaucus results are proportional, not winner take all. Candidates who gain a cess in the general election. Since 1976, minimum percentage of the statewide the first year when both the Democratic vote will have a commensurate number and Republican caucuses in Iowa were of the party's delegates from that state first in the nation, just three of seven "committed" to them. That means those non-incumbents who won in the Iowa delegates must vote for the candidate caucuses have gone on to win the genon the first nominating ballot at the eral election: Jimmy Carter in 1976, national party convention. In North George W. Bush in 2000, and Barack Dakota, for example, the threshold is Obama in 2008. In fact, winning in Iowa can be less

Retail Politics

20 percent.

The strength of the caucus system is that it helps build a grassroots party organization, and it encourages politicians to engage in retail politics, engaging voters where they live and work.

That explains why so many candidates spend time in the diners, town halls, and farms of Iowa. The key to doing well in a caucus state is to appeal to the rank-andfile voters within the party.

Getting out and talking to people is the key to victory in Iowa's caucuses, according to Ms. Mazza.

"In 2016 [Texas Sen.] Ted Cruz won here. Trump didn't win the Iowa caucuses," she said. "And when we go back to the [election] before, Santorum won here. He was in every little café and corner of our state." In Nevada, the caucus system forces

candidates to reach out to registered

party voters, according to Mr. De-Graffenreid.

"The route to success is in reaching out to grassroots activists statewide and making sure that the candidate makes their pitch to the people who are most active in politics and the ones who are going to be at those precinct meetings," he said. "They may concentrate on a different issue, I suppose, in Nevada than other places, but the process is the same. You're going to reach out to your most active grassroots Republicans."

important than placing well, especial-

ly for long-shot candidates. An unex-

pected third-place finish can generate

the funding and publicity to continue

Neither does Nevada, the "First in the West," have a perfect record in picking winners. Donald Trump (2016) was the only non-sitting president to place first in Nevada's caucuses and go on to win the general election.

Some states that normally hold caucuses forgo them in some presidential election years. Iowa, the best-known caucus state, chose to have a presidential primary instead of caucuses in 1916. North Dakota Republicans didn't hold caucuses in 2004. Nevada will have a presidential primary for Democrats in 2024, but Republicans will still hold caucuses.

Where caucuses are held, they appear to be popular with voters.

About 35,000 Republican voters turned out for the most recent Nevada caucuses, according to Mr. DeGraffenreid.

"That was actually on par for participation in the state primary for presidential preference that we did before the caucuses started, so turnout is actually fairly comparable between the two systems," he said.

Party leaders seem to like them also, seeing them as a good way to promote participation in the political system.

The caucus is the perfect blend of presidential and local politics, Mr. Kaufmann said.

"I can't think of anyplace else where we have well over 1,000 of these events, all happening on the same night, to try to determine who the next president of the United States is going to be," he said.

"It's the way the Founding Fathers envisioned it in terms of the people having a choice."



Disney's Summer Numbers Drop as Families Go Elsewhere

The days of traditional family travel might be in the past, experts say

By T.J. Muscaro

People gather ahead of the Festival of Fantasy Parade at the Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom theme park in Orlando, Fla., on July 30, 2022.

HE WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT is playing host to much smaller crowds this summer than it did in previous years. Theme park experts say families are staying away because of record heat, rising costs, and their decisions to visit at other times of the year.

After two years of strong post-pandemic numbers, Disney's summer numbers are dropping, according to the latest data collected by the travel company Touring Plans. The figures include one of the lowest recorded park crowds for the Fourth of July in recent history.

Using a 1–10 scaling system, Touring Plans tracks daily crowd levels at Disney World's four theme parks: Magic Kingdom Park, EPCOT, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom.

The daily average for all four theme parks in June was 5.56. In June 2022, that average level was 6.46. The first 11 days of July recorded a daily average crowd level of 4.54. By July 11, 2022, the average daily crowd level was 6.36.

The levels are determined by the average wait times posted for each park's key attractions during the day.

"Parents [are increasingly more willing] to take children out of school for trips rather than wait until summer."

Fred Hazelton, statistician, Touring Plans

Michael Arnold, an annual pass holder and a writer for DisneyDining.com, said he has experienced significantly lower crowds and shorter wait times during his latest visits.

Mr. Arnold said the most astonishing time drop that he noticed was the wait time for Avatar: Flight of Passage at Disney's Animal Kingdom. The 4-D simulator ride—infamous for maintaining a wait time of more than 100 minutes almost daily—was found to have a 55-minute wait in the middle of the day.

The Walt Disney Co. continues to face a tumultuous 2023.

Its current fiscal quarter has featured the departure of two C-level executives, further box office flops, and an enduring bout with Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis over control of the Reedy Creek Improvement District.

Now, its largest theme park resort complex is having the worst summer crowds since its restrictive reopening after the COVID-justified shutdown.

Disney's now-former Chief Financial Officer ↔

60%

Going to Disney World costs "more than 60 percent" of what the average American household spent on travel before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the president of Touring Plans.



Christine McCarthy warned of a drop in theme park attendance at the company's second-quarter earnings webcast in May but said it was to be expected.

"Please keep in mind that in the back half of this fiscal year, there will be an unfavorable comparison against the prior year's incredibly successful 50th-anniversary celebration at Walt Disney World," she said.

"We typically see some moderation in demand as we lap these types of events, and third-quarter-to-date performance has been in line with those historical trends."

Independent theme park experts agree that a post-anniversary lull made sense, but they also say general costs and the decision to avoid the Florida summer heat are keeping a larger number of families away from the "Most Magical Place On Earth."

Once upon a time, a child's visit to Disney World was determined by his or her school schedule. Summer vacation, the Christmas holiday season, spring break, and three-day weekends became peak seasons for family visits. But those days of traditional family travel,

experts said, might be in the past.

"Summer crowds have been declining for a few years," said Touring Plans master statistician Fred Hazelton. "We attribute this to the increased willingness of parents to take children out of school for trips rather than wait until summer." Disney reported "attendance growth and higher occupied room nights" in its latest quarterly earnings report.

And Ms. McCarthy specifically announced a 7 percent increase in attendance during the first three months of 2023 as compared with 2022.

That three-month period includes traditional vacation time slots: the tail end of Disney's holiday celebration and long weekends such as President's Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"Spring break is still a thing, though, but those crowd sizes depend on where Easter falls; we can't necessarily attribute a light or heavy spring break season to guest preference," Mr. Hazelton said.

"I think guests do have some regard for travel windows like summer and spring break, but less so than, say, 15 years ago. Now, we see increases in crowds during October and February instead."

Mr. Arnold said, "A lot of people will pull their kids out early fall into September or early October to try to come down and enjoy the Halloween parties and things like that before it gets crazy busy. A lot ... will pull their kids out, you know, late winter, early spring before the spring break crowds hit.

"There's been plenty of times where our kids have stayed home so we could go to Disney World before for a couple of days. Families are increasingly taking their kids to vacation destinations other than Disney, an expert says. "I personally don't see anything wrong with that. Sure, there's people out there that disagree, but to each their own, I guess."

Alexis Pechek, a content creator and mother of three, told The Epoch Times: "Our kids' school doesn't have a problem with vacations during the school year. Not every parent has the summer off—or can take the summer off—so we all have to do what benefits us.

"For parents who are hesitant to take a vacation during the school year, I would say do it.

"They are only young once, and it's not like they won't be learning from an amazing experience ... to travel to a place like Disney."

'They Can't Afford Disney Anymore'

Tied to families' decisions to visit outside of traditional vacation seasons is the increasing cost that parents must pay to go, according to Len Testa, president of Touring Plans.

"Disney's explicitly encouraged this by pricing admission and hotels lower during those previously slower times and limiting the number of guests in the parks through its parks reservation system," Mr. Testa said.

Walt Disney World Resort frequently offers discounts throughout the year for ticket sales and resort hotel stays. And special pricing is available for Florida residents.

However, a standard five-day ticket valid for all four theme parks each day, called a "park hopper," would cost more than \$135 per day for would-be guests this July, according to Disney World's website.

That same ticket could cost \$117 per day in September.

"You know, people are struggling to put groceries on their table. They're struggling to fill up their cars. They can't afford Disney anymore," Mr. Arnold said. "I think people are being forced out of their Disney World vacations."

The least expensive time for a family to buy and use their five-day park hopper ticket in 2024 will be in August and September. They're the only two months of 2024 for which that five-day standard park hopper ticket is available for less than \$120 per day.

A Disney World vacation costs more than 60 percent of what the average American household spent on travel before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Mr. Testa. That average household travel expense in 2019 was \$2,100, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Rising Heat and Cooling Fad

The Fourth of July has attracted guests to Walt Disney World for years. Already known for its nightly fireworks displays, the Magic Kingdom

hosts a special spectacular that's performed only on Independence Day. But this year's crowds were reported to be noticeably smaller.

Mr. Arnold blamed the heat and highlighted the difference between annual pass holders and other Disney World guests.

"Annual pass holders stay home," he said. "I don't know many annual pass holders that want to go to the parks on a major holiday. And then you combine that with the fact that it feels like 110 degrees.

"Nobody wants to go ... sit at Main Street and Magic Kingdom all day. I bet the resort pools were packed."

Mr. Testa said: "Disney's attendance bounced back on July 5 and remained above average for the rest of the week. So I really think it was a combination of that heat advisory and the threat of thunderstorms canceling the fireworks that kept people out of the parks."

"You know, people are struggling to put groceries on their table. They're struggling to fill up their cars. They can't afford Disney anymore."

Michael Arnold, writer, DisneyDining.com

But as the heat rises, the experts say the travel fad of visiting Disney World is cooling.

Disney created a "huge influx" of visitors over the past three years, according to Mr. Arnold. It was a combination of visitors who rescheduled their trip because of COVID-19, post-COVIDshutdown visitors who were looking to travel somewhere safe, and visitors coming for Disney World's 50th-anniversary celebration.

"We're starting to see that level out, and you combine things like nasty weather this summer, and people can't afford to go; that's kind of what you're seeing over these past couple of weeks," he said.

But families are still going on vacation—just not to Disney World.

"Revenge travel' is probably much less of a factor now. I think people have had plenty of time to get that out of their system," Mr. Testa said. "At Disney's fairly high price point, it's pretty clear that families are trying other options. Cruises have done really well this year—including Disney's cruise line."

The Walt Disney Company didn't respond by press time to The Epoch Times' request for comment. ■

SPOTLIGHT Search and Save

HIP CIX

S.

A LIBYAN BORDER GUARD GIVES WATER to an illegal immigrant during a rescue operation in an uninhabited area near the border town of Al-Assah on July 16. Libyan border guards have rescued dozens who said they had been left in the desert by Tunisian authorities without water, food, or shelter.

PHOTO BY MAHMUD TURKIA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

HEALTH

An Important and Overlooked Cause of Alzheimer's

Dentists could play a critical role in helping us avoid dementia, but most don't know it

By Amy Denney

Seventy percent of U.S. adults 65 and older have gum disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PHOTO BY GROUND PICTURE/SHUTTERSTOCK

ESEARCHERS HAVE LONG LINKED GUM DISEASE to a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. Research has revealed that inflamed, bleeding gums are the entry point for disease-causing bacteria to get into the bloodstream and trigger issues that can lead to dementia. That means dentists could be a first line of defense against cognitive decline—if only more of them recognized that possibility.

Nearly half of adults above the age of 30 have gum disease, and 70 percent of those who are 65 and older have periodontal disease, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That means this population has an important modifiable risk factor for Alzheimer's.

The key bacteria involved are Porphyromonas gingivalis (P. gingivalis), a cause of chronic periodontitis. Recent research has revealed that P. gingivalis can make their way to the brain and cause neuroinflammation, which can contribute to Alzheimer's.

P. gingivalis can produce gingipains, a class of enzymes, some of which are toxic and can cause gum inflammation. Gingipains are neurotoxic and particularly harmful to tau, a protein our brains need for normal neuronal function. In Alzheimer's, which also affects memory and communication, tau proteins begin to stick to one another, forming threads called neurofibrillary tangles that block the neuron transport system and harm communication between neurons.

The changes in an Alzheimer's patient's brain are suspected to come about because of these abnormal tau, beta-amyloid proteins, and other factors, according to the National Institute on Aging. Abnormal tau accumulates in brain regions involved in memory, and beta-amyloid forms clumps of plaque between neurons.

Gingipains Inhibitors

"Neuroinflammation induced by P. gingivalis has increasingly been recognized as a factor in the pathogenesis of AD [Alzheimer's disease]," notes a 2021 review published in Frontiers of Neuroscience by Dr. Ingar Olsen, a microbiologist and dentist with the department of oral biology at the University of Oslo in Norway.

Dr. Olsen looked at previous research to dig deeper into how this neuroinflammation contributed to Alzheimer's disease pathogenesis. He noted that P. gingivalis and gingipain have been detected in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, and P. gingivalis DNA has been found in the brains and cerebrospinal fluid of patients. P. gingivalis lipopolysaccharide, a large pathogenic molecule, has also been detected in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

An animal study published in Science Advances in January 2019 had already concluded that P. gingivalis could cause Alzheimer's disease by showing that negating the bacteria's influence could prevent the disease.

In the study, researchers were able to block the bacteria's neurotoxicity with synthesized small-molecule inhibitors targeting gingipains in mouse brains. The outcome was reduced P. gingivalis, blocked beta-amyloid protein production, reduced neuroinflammation, and rescued neurons in the hippocampus. ◆

While it's undoubtedly a great discovery, rodent research doesn't always translate into human success. That study was funded in part by Cortexyme Inc., which went on to test its gingipain inhibitor, called atuzaginstat, in humans. It was eventually put on hold by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration due to liver toxicity concerns.

An Overlooked Warning

The link between Alzheimer's and P. gingivalis may be well established, but it's still overlooked, according to some experts. A case in point is The Lancet's international commission for dementia prevention, intervention, and care. The commission releases reports every few years about important insights into Alzheimer's. Its last report came out in 2020, 6 months after the Science Advances-published study.

Functional dentist Dr. Mark Burhenne was disappointed that the report omitted any mention of the P. gingivalis connection.

"It was shocking to me that we're not including gum disease as a risk factor. To me, it should be number one," Dr. Burhenne told The Epoch Times. "We have a causal link now. If you can prevent gingipain from getting to the brain, then you're in good shape." Given that gum disease is easily visible and has an estab-

lished causative link to Alzheimer's, some argue that dentists should be playing a more significant role in the battle against this degenerative brain disease.

The Commission's Findings

The Lancet commission published its initial findings in 2017 showing that less education, hypertension, hearing impairment, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, and low social contact were factors associated with dementia risk. Three years later, it added excessive alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury, and air pollution due to "newer, convincing evidence."

The latest report was published in July 2020 in The Lancet, concluding that "together the 12 modifiable risk factors account for around 40 percent of worldwide dementias, which consequently could theoretically be prevented or delayed."

Alzheimer's disease is one of many forms of memory loss, but there are a variety of studies that find that many modifiable risk factors can help reverse these effects through lifestyle changes—if enacted in the early stages. New research indicates that Alzheimer's can even be screened in preclinical stages through the gut microbiome.

The Epoch Times reached out to the head of the commission, Gill Livingston, to ask why gum disease was omitted from The Lancet's list. She said dental health is a topic they are considering for the next update, which is expected in June 2024.

"It's discussed in the next Lancet commission, and I therefore cannot say much," Ms. Livingston, professor of psychiatry of older people at the University College in London, wrote via email. "But you might want to ask whether people with bad dental health are likely to be less or more educated, wealthier, and healthier."

The Cost of Dental Care

There's a major disconnect between the medical and dental professions when it comes to the holistic, systemic connections Some argue that dentists should be playing a more significant role in the battle against Alzheimer's disease.



P. gingivalis, the key bacteria that cause gum disease, can make their way to the brain and cause neuroinflammation, which can contribute to Alzheimer's, research shows.

of health—and also in dental insurance coverage. Medicare coverage only extends to dental emergencies and doesn't reimburse the costs of basic dental cleanings, fillings, and dentures.

Dr. Burhenne said that often, people won't pay for any health expenses not covered by insurance, even if they're able to budget for it. He relayed the story of one patient who had a great salary and benefits, but when he retired—even though he likely could have afforded the out-of-pocket expenses of cleanings and maintenance—he stopped coming. That patient developed gum disease and dementia rapidly. Dr. Burhenne said that, ideally, patients ought to find a functional dentist who understands the systemic danger of gum disease on the entire body and recognizes it as a metabolic, autoimmune disease. However, insurance rarely covers expenses related to these professionals.

"I realize when I discuss all this, I'm telling everyone what to do, and it's not as easy as it sounds. A lot of things have to change," Dr. Burhenne said. "People are better when they have insurance. We need insurance for the retired."

Medicaid, health care coverage for the poor, isn't much better, although New York state is currently implementing expanded coverage, in part due to a lawsuit challenging the state's stance that only four back teeth in addition to the front teeth are necessary.

Gum disease is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults. That's why dental care is vital for screening and educating patients, even if dentists don't acknowledge the connection between periodontitis and other diseases. Oral health habits-such as proper brushing and flossing—can prevent gum disease.

For anyone losing teeth or exhibiting other symptoms of gum disease well before they enter their golden years, intervention could go a long way toward preventing dementia, too.

Dr. Burhenne suspects that there will eventually be an affordable test for gingipain levels. Right now, the technology is too expensive and inaccessible. And while there may ultimately be a pill or mouthwash that targets gingipains, it could come with unwanted side effects or still be somewhat ineffective.

On the other hand, there are ways to prevent gum disease and preserve the good bacteria in the mouth that help maintain balance in the oral microbiome, which is the total collection of microorganisms, predominantly bacteria, that reside in the mouth.

Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

Boosting the good bacteria in a microbiome helps the environment achieve homeostasis. Katherine Dahl learned that lesson first with her gut, when she was able to use probiotics for a severe bacterial infection caused by Clostridioides difficile, better known as C. diff. But she still had cavities and poor oral health after three pregnancies.

"Dentists tend to be, 'This is what I do: heal teeth, fill cavities, and make sure the mouth is functioning properly," Ms. Dahl said. But dentists don't address the bacterial dimension to oral health, something she thinks could be a part of their responsibilities.

"We can disrupt the biofilm and then put new bacteria on the scene," she said.

Biofilm in the mouth is bacteria that clump together and form plaque. New techniques can actually test saliva for the balance of bacteria, Ms. Dahl said, and allow people to detect signs of disease far before symptoms emerge. Her experience of using oral probiotics successfully prompted her to launch a new oral probiotic product with the help of her family of dentists.

Dr. Burhenne recommends probiotics to his patients and teaches dentists to incorporate oral microbiome testing. With his online and podcast presence, he educates the public on how to monitor their own gum health regularly.

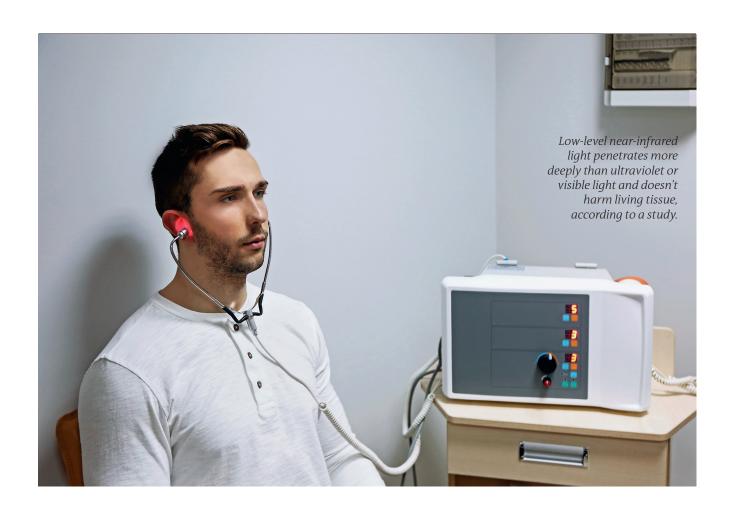
"You can look at Google images of gum disease and look in the mirror, and you as a lay person could potentially have a good idea of where you're at," he said. "You don't even need a test. You don't need a dentist. Certainly, if you're spitting in the sink after brushing and you see a little blood, that's not healthy."

Besides brushing your teeth after eating and flossing a few times a week, other lifestyle choices can help prevent gum disease, including:

- · Avoiding mouthwash and other dental products that are disinfectants or antibacterial, as they kill off even the commensal, or good, bacteria.
- Eating a whole food diet and avoiding processed foods.
- Avoiding glyphosate, emulsifiers, and GMOs, which can damage the microbiome.
- Not drinking or eating from plastics, which are linked to systemic inflammation.
- Avoiding mouth breathing and dry mouth and boosting saliva production.

Some dentists may disagree, Dr. Burhenne said, but many of these practices actually contribute to gum disease by destroying the microbiome.

"It's about having the right philosophy on what is the root cause of oral disease," Dr. Burhenne said. "Unfortunately, most dentists aren't there yet. They're great clinicians, but they've been taught in the curriculum that you really need to disinfect the mouth."



INFRARED THERAPY FOR TINNITUS: A STUDY

An estimated 10 to 25 percent of US adults experience some form of tinnitus

By Megan Redshaw

INNITUS, OR RINGING IN THE ears, is an often debilitating condition with no approved treatment or cure. However, some sufferers may find relief from low-level infrared light therapy, according to a new peer-reviewed, first-of-itskind study published in the Journal of Personalized Medicine.

Over four weeks, researchers evaluated treatment for tinnitus in more than 100 men and women aged 18 to 65 whose condition either had an unknown

cause or had been unresponsive to treatment and divided them randomly into 10 groups. Researchers investigated personalized treatment options involving low-level laser therapy (LLLT) using red and infrared light in the inner ear or cochlea, where tinnitus often occurs, and LLLT combined with other treatments, such as vacuum therapy and drug therapy.

LLLT uses a narrow spectral width of light close to infrared to promote tissue regeneration, reduce inflammation, and

relieve pain. Whereas a high-powered laser is used to cut and destroy tissue, lowlevel near-infrared light penetrates more deeply than ultraviolet or visible light and doesn't harm living tissue, according to a study published in Medical Lasers.

The study assessed both red light and infrared light laser therapy. Red light is visible and uses wavelengths of 630 to 700 nanometers (nm). Infrared light, at wavelengths from 800 to 1,000 nm, is invisible and penetrates deeper into the body. Treatments evaluated included the following:

- LLLT modalities using only light.
- LLLT combined with vacuum therapy, ultrasound, Ginkgo biloba tablets—an herb commonly used for vertigo and tinnitus caused by circulatory disorders and lack of blood flow to the brain—or a drug used to treat dizziness, vertigo, and migraines called flunarizine dihydrochloride.
- Laser acupuncture, a specific type of LLLT that uses nonthermal, low-intensity laser irradiation to stimulate traditional acupuncture points.
- Treatment with only flunarizine dihydrochloride.
- Treatment with only ginkgo biloba.

LLLT using infrared wavelengths was superior to the placebo, and lasting therapeutic effectiveness was also observed 15 days post-treatment with LLLT, laser acupuncture, and light therapy combined with other treatments. Researchers also observed that the most effective treatment was when light therapy sessions focused on the cochlea and middle ear were increased from six to 15 minutes.

Since there are currently no recommended treatments or approved drugs to treat tinnitus, medicines such as sedatives, antihistamines, antidepressants, local anesthetics, and antipsychotics are commonly prescribed for treatment. These drugs can cause short- and longterm systemic side effects.

This is the first study that shows that treatment with LLLT to the middle ear and cochlear area is superior to placebos and the first to investigate the effects of LLLT combined with other therapies to monitor short-term effects of nine treatment modalities during and 15 days after treatment and to suggest protocols for tinnitus patients.

What Causes Tinnitus?

The National Institute on Deafness tumors, di and Other Communication Disorders tions, Mén



Low-level laser therapy uses a narrow spectral width of light close to infrared to promote tissue regeneration, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain.

More than 25,000 people have reported developing tinnitus after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

estimates that 10 to 25 percent of U.S. adults experience some form of tinnitus—making it one of the country's most common health conditions.

People experiencing tinnitus often hear ringing, roaring, whooshing, hissing, humming, or buzzing in one ear or both, and the noise can be soft or loud, low- or high-pitched, and sporadic or constantly present. Symptoms can resolve spontaneously or become chronic, resulting in sleep deprivation, loss of concentration, psychological distress, and depression.

Scientists theorize that tinnitus results from damage to the inner ear that changes the signals carried by the nerves to the parts of the brain that process sound. Other evidence suggests that abnormal interactions between the auditory cortex and neural circuits could contribute to the condition.

Tinnitus can also be caused by underlying conditions, such as circulatory problems, hearing loss, infection, tumors, diabetes, autoimmune conditions, Ménière's disease, heavy metal toxicity, and medications. More than 25,000 people have reported developing tinnitus after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine—an adverse event that U.S. regulatory agencies have seemingly ignored but is commonly associated with other vaccines.

Because it's hard to determine the underlying cause of tinnitus, it's challenging to treat and determine whether or when it might resolve.

Using Infrared Light Therapy to Treat Tinnitus

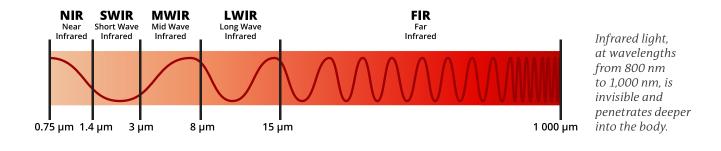
Scientists discovered in the 1960s that LLLT could enhance tissue repair, but it has only been used during the past two decades to reduce tinnitus severity. Previous studies have yielded inconsistent results, but the authors of the recently published study say this could be attributed to not using the appropriate power for wavelengths, not having the proper sessions over a long enough duration of treatment, or not focusing the light on the correct part of the ear.

To perform LLLT, a device is used to apply red or infrared laser wavelengths at a particular setting to various parts of the ear for a set duration. The therapy isn't painful or associated with adverse events. A Norwegian study published in the British Medical Journal describes LLLT as "harmless."

According to the Medical Lasers paper, the exact mechanisms of LLLT aren't fully understood. Still, it's believed that once the light is absorbed, it can "modulate cell biochemical reactions and stimulate mitochondrial respiration, enhancing the production of molecular oxygen, ATP synthesis, and collagen deposition."

Natural Treatments for Tinnitus

With no approved medical treatments in the United States or Europe, many turn to alternative and complementary medicine to address tinnitus's underlying causes and alleviate their symptoms. In addition to infrared light therapy, the following natural remedies have been shown to be effective for some people. ↔



Gushen Pian

In a randomized controlled trial published in Cell Biochemistry and Biophysics, Gushen Pian, a traditional

Chinese herbal remedy, showed significant therapeutic results for tinnitus compared with a placebo after four weeks of treatment, with an overall effective rate of 89.2 percent versus 30.8 percent for the placebo and a symptom relief rate of 59.5 percent versus 5.1 percent for the placebo.



Ginkgo biloba, a tree native to China, has been used as a medicinal herb for more than 2,000 years.

Ginkgo biloba extract, EGb 761, is the most widely tested drug in nonclinical tinnitus models and clinical trials, according to a review published in Frontiers in Pharmacology. Bioflavonoids and flavonoids in Ginkgo biloba, terpene trilactones, such as ginkgolides and bilobalide, polyprenols, and organic acids are thought to have a vasodilatory effect and help alleviate tinnitus symptoms.

Although the treatment may not work for everyone, preclinical and clinical studies have shown that apart from its antioxidant and vasodilatory effects, Ginkgo biloba extract may improve cochlear microcirculation, protect against ototoxicity—damage to the ear caused by medicine, resulting in hearing loss, ringing in the ear, or balance disorders—and alleviate aging-associated degeneration.

The study in the Journal of Personalized Medicine didn't show significant results when Ginkgo biloba was used on its own.

Korean Red Ginseng

Studies mentioned in the Frontiers in Pharmacology review show that Korean red ginseng can protect against ototoxic medications, attenuate noise-induced hearing loss, and

improve cochlear damage. In a study published in the Journal of Audiology & Otology, patients with chronic tinnitus received 1,500 milligrams per day (mg/day) or 3,000 mg/ day of Korean red ginseng or 160 mg/ day of Ginkgo biloba extract over four weeks. The authors found that the patients receiving 3,000 mg/day of Korean ginseng showed significant improvement in their scores and improved emotional and mental health.

Zinc Research suggests that

as many as 31 percent of patients with tinnitus are deficient in zinc.

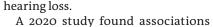
In a study published in the Journal of Otology and Neurotology, 46.4 percent of patients given zinc reported clinically favorable progress, and 82 percent of patients experiencing subjective tinnitus experienced an improvement in symptoms; patients who received a placebo experienced no significant decrease.

Melatonin

Supplementing with melatonin—a hormone that the brain produces in response to darkness and that helps regulate your circadian rhythm—at three milligrams per day for 30 days was associated with a "statistically significant decrease in tinnitus intensity and improved sleep quality in patients with chronic tinnitus," according to a study published in the Annals of Otology, Rhinology, and Laryngology. Melatonin therapy is most effective in men without a history of depression, those with severe and bilateral tinnitus, and those with a history of noise exposure.

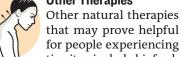
Dietary Therapy

Diet may play a role in the susceptibility of the inner ear to noise- and age-related tinnitus and



between single nutrients and dietary patterns in those with tinnitus and hearing difficulties. A higher intake of vitamin B12 was associated with a reduced chance of developing tinnitus, while calcium and iron increased the chances of developing tinnitus. Vitamin D intake was associated with a reduced risk of hearing difficulties, as was a diet higher in protein, vegetables, and fruit and lower in fat.

Other Therapies



tinnitus include biofeedback, heavy metal chelation, acupuncture, stress management and, if tinnitus is related to dental grinding or temporomandibular joint dysfunction, wearing a mouth guard.



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

Thomas McArdle

Canceling Speech

Biden and social media collude to suppress speech



F ALL THE WAYS IN which we exercise our freedom in America, the exchange of information without the interference of government may be the most indispensable.

Well into the 21st century, the muzzling of reports or analyses of events or trends is impossible, or very close to it. But what the government can do, and has done, is prevent widespread popular access to information, data, and even facts it disfavors.

It can only do this, however, with the assistance of Big Tech—the companies that provide online news links, such as Google, and that own the social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook: big businesses on which millions rely to know what news is hot, companies that take it upon themselves to discern what information is credible, and thus fit to be read.

The most glaring example, of course, was Twitter's blocking of the New York Post's investigative report on Hunter Biden's laptop on the eve of the 2020 election, through which Joe Biden became president; the rationale being the suspicion that the Hunter Biden scandal was little more than Russian disinformation.

Even the now-ex-Twitter executive responsible conceded that at the time, "It didn't reach a place where I was comfortable removing this content from Twitter."

On July 4—appropriately—U.S. District Judge Terry Doughty of the Western District of Louisiana forbade a slew of Biden administration officials, from Cabinet secretaries and the White House press secretary to lower-level subordinates, from engaging with social media and other communications companies including Facebook/Meta, Twitter, YouTube/Google, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.

The prohibited conduct included

"meeting with social-media companies for the purpose of urging, encouraging, pressuring, or inducing in any manner the removal, deletion, suppression, or reduction of content containing protected free speech posted on social-media platforms."

What Biden and his staff did wasn't along the lines of emergency powers that we would all accept.

Judge Doughty said of the Biden administration's behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: "If the allegations made by Plaintiffs are true, the present case arguably involves the most massive attack against free speech in United States history. In their attempts to suppress alleged disinformation, the Federal Government, and particularly the Defendants named here, are alleged to have blatantly ignored the First Amendment's right to free speech."

The case was brought by Missouri and other states, and joined by infectious disease epidemiologists and other interested parties. They joined together against government-engineered censorship targeting mostly conservative speech, in which "through public pressure campaigns, private meetings, and other forms of direct communication," the Biden administration has "colluded with and/or coerced socialmedia platforms to suppress disfavored speakers, viewpoints, and content on social-media platforms."

As the judge remarked, "Freedom of speech and press is the indispensable condition of nearly every other form of freedom."

What Mr. Biden and his staff did wasn't along the lines of emergency powers that we would all accept, such as preventing someone from urging people to take, say, large doses of strychnine to prevent the spread of smallpox. What the administration and Big Tech were censoring included "speech about the lab-leak theory of COVID-19's origin ... speech about the efficiency of masks and COVID-19 lockdowns ... speech about the efficiency of COVID-19 vaccines ... speech about election integrity in the 2020 presidential election ... speech about the security of voting by mail ... parody content about Defendants [all Biden administration officials] ... negative posts about the economy," and "negative posts about President Biden."

In other words, exactly the kinds of political speech during a time of crisis that were anticipated by the framers of the Bill of Rights.

The quintessential example cited by the plaintiffs was how the publication of the Great Barrington Declaration in October 2020, in which physicians and scientists warned of the physical and mental health consequences of the COVID-19 lockdowns, was censored by Google, Facebook, Twitter, and others.

Just days after its publication, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci and other officials were organizing a campaign to suppress and discredit the declaration.

The judge last week denied a motion by the Biden administration to stay the ruling preventing its officials' politicized communications with Big Tech. (Since then, on July 14, a threejudge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans issued an administrative stay that halts Judge Doughty's order while the Justice Department pursues a full appeal with the appeals court.)

Unfortunately, even a court order gagging Biden officials may not be of great consequence in the end, because these firms are so in sync with the Democratic Party, they likely already know what to censor before they are told. ANDERS CORR is a principal at Corr Analytics Inc., publisher of the Journal of Political Risk. He is an expert in political science and government.

Anders Corr

Beijing Is Desperate for Growth

China's economy slumps due to bad communist policy

HINA'S ECONOMY IS in desperate straits. So desperate that a county in Guangdong Province offered an illegal bribe to U.S. investors.

Any U.S. corporate "decision-mak-

er" who brings investment would get

10 percent of the deal's total value.

A \$100 million investment by a U.S.

company, for example, could get a

kickback of \$10 million to the compa-

ny's CEO. Shareholders would be stuck

with the lousy investment while the

CEO laughed all the way to the bank

and then cried on his way to prison.

Meanwhile, the value of invest-

ments in China is increasingly hard

to estimate because normal due dili-

gence activities by U.S. companies are

treated by the regime as spying, and

Profits made in China by foreign

firms are now more difficult to repa-

triate, so they risk having no option

other than reinvestment in China. In

March, investor Mark Mobius warned

his colleagues to "be very, very care-

ful" with their investments in China

after revealing he couldn't repatriate

Inscrutably, the Chinese Com-

munist Party (CCP) targets the most

successful private ventures, including

those founded by Chinese nationals,

with massive fines, bans, regulations,

Any company or leader seen as com-

petition to Xi Jinping and his totalitar

The CCP is threatening to detain reg-

ular U.S. citizens, too. Last month, the

against traveling to China due to the

increased risk of wrongful detention.

Beijing's threats against Taiwan,

decoupling in the form of technology

COVID-19 lockdowns, human rights and

international law violations, and blocks

and mineral export controls, tariffs,

U.S. State Department issued a warning

and detention of business leaders.

ian rule is squashed.

his money from the country.

due diligence firms downsize.

on international data flows instituted by China's regulators have dealt additional body blows to China's economy and foreign direct investment (FDI).

The CCP targets the most successful private ventures, including those founded by Chinese nationals, with massive fines, bans, regulations, and detention of business leaders.

FDI into China dropped to just \$20 billion in the first quarter of 2023 from \$100 billion in the first quarter of 2022. China's GDP grew only 3 percent in 2022, one of its worst years in decades. The China share index of MSCI is down 2 percent this year, compared to a 15 percent gain for stocks globally. The yuan is at eight-month lows, which will boost exports but hurt investors with yuan revenues.

China's financial regulators are trying to reverse the tide by courting the world's biggest U.S. investors in a symposium this week. In an uncharacteristic fashion, they will ask the investors for feedback and a better understanding of the challenges faced by global investors in China. While China's regulators promise that the tech crackdown, which started in 2020, is over, its arbitrary nature under the thumb of Mr. Xi makes it hard to trust the regulators' word.

One of China's strongest supporters over the past decade has been Germany. Volkswagen and BMW manufacture and sell massive quantities of vehicles in the country. But even Berlin is pulling back from China. On July 13, the German government announced it would reduce dependence on Chinese supply lines in critical sectors, including electric vehicles, medical technology, pharmaceuticals, rare earth elements, and computer chips.

After experiencing Russia's stoppage of gas supplies to Germany to pressure the European Union not to support Ukraine, Berlin finally realizes that trade can be used as a cudgel against it by dictatorships like China. "In key areas, the [EU] must not become dependent on technologies from [non-EU] countries that do not share our fundamental values," a government strategy paper stated.

In a potential first, Germany stated that it would issue provisions to limit federal funds for research and development with China "in which knowledge drain is likely." The United States, Japan, and the EU as a whole should take notes and follow suit.

The CCP's strategy for its own economic revitalization is multi-fold, including reinvigorated trade with Europe and Southeast Asia, higher domestic consumption, and stimulus spending. However, Brussels has already taken a hard line against reliance on China's supply chains, and countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines and Vietnam, don't trust Beijing any longer because of the latter's attempts to steal oil, gas, fishing, and trade routes in the South China Sea.

More domestic consumption could move Chinese citizens beyond demanding a better standard of living to demanding democratic governance. And China's economy is already overstimulated with inefficient production, for example, the ghost city construction boom that has led to the property market collapse.

So the CCP has painted itself into a corner economically and politically. This isn't surprising as communists have never been good at operating in the free market, or among free and diverse populations in liberal democracies.



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

Milton Ezrati

Office Space: More Trouble



COVID, rising interest rates, and crime hurt developers, lenders

OMMERCIAL REAL estate faces increasing headwinds. Delinquency rates, especially for office buildings, have spiked and show signs of climbing still higher. Developers and lenders are set to lose.

The pain is passing through to those who hold bonds backed by commercial mortgages, the so-called commercial mortgage bond securities (CMBS). There is little sign of relief anytime soon.

The problem lies largely, though not entirely, with the work-fromhome legacy of the COVID-19 lockdowns and quarantines. Because office workers especially became accustomed to remote work, they remain reluctant to make their former daily trek to city-center offices. That reluctance has found a powerful reinforcement in rising crime and a marked deterioration in the quality of city life. Firms have begun to adjust so that much space in the great glass boxes downtown lies empty and not earning the rents for which they were built. Developers unavoidably feel the pinch.

That isn't all. Because the Federal Reserve's inflation fight has prompted it to raise interest rates, developers can no longer ease pressures by getting better terms in a refinancing. For a while, these developers hung on in the hope that the Fed would change policy soon. But now policymakers have made clear that they intend to raise interest rates still more and hold them at heightened levels until inflation returns to the Fed's preferred 2 percent target, a long way from recent rates of inflation. With continued pressures and the evaporation of these hopes for a policy change, more developers are giving up, walking away from their projects, and leaving the proverbial keys with the lenders. The pressure, already

acute, is set to intensify because this year will see the maturation of the interest-only mortgages that had become especially fashionable in recent years, rising to 88 percent of issues in the past year from 51 percent in 2013.

Because office workers became accustomed to remote work, they remain reluctant to make their former daily trek to city-center offices.

Figures on the deterioration in this sector are depressing. Office real estate values have declined across the country. In San Francisco, for example, values have dropped 60–70 percent from their peaks of just a few years ago. This city is an admittedly dramatic extreme, but it nonetheless captures how bad things have become, while anecdotal evidence suggests strongly that value declines on city office space have spread out of the big cities and beyond the big projects.

With values falling and rent rolls thinning, delinquency rates on all forms of commercial real estate jumped to 3.6 percent in May (the most recent period for which data are available), up considerably from 3.09 percent in April and 2.99 percent six months ago. Among the different sorts of commercial space, retail continues to be the most troubled, with a 6.67 percent delinquency rate. Lodging is second with a 4.25 percent rate. But the overall May spike was due almost entirely to a sudden rise in delinquencies on office space.

There, the rate hit 4.02 percent in May, a major jump from April's 2.77 percent rate and a rate of only 1.70 percent six months ago. Only industrial and multifamily delinquencies have remained low.

Anecdotal evidence makes the dry statistics more real. Blackstone, one of the largest real estate developers in the world, has given up on two of its prominent properties: the \$350 million loan for a Las Vegas office park and a midtown Manhattan office tower that it bought in 2014 for \$605 million. Blackstone also shows signs of walking away from a \$274 million loan it took for Club Quarters Hotels in Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia. These loans have already been transferred to what are called "special services," a common step with a loan that is headed for default.

The experience of this prominent player is not unique. And it looks as though the pressure will become still more intense. The Mortgage Bankers Association estimates that some \$92 billion in non-bank mortgage debt will mature before year-end.

The woes of developers and loan originators have begun to pass through to CMBS investors. Already in May, some 6.2 percent of these securities have transferred to special services, exceeding 6 percent for the first time since 2013. A disproportionate 41 percent of this number involve office properties. Accordingly, overall CMBS delinquencies have risen from 2.88 percent in April to 3.43 percent in May, well above last year's figure of 2.78 percent.

The horizon holds little promise of relief for office properties, at least not anytime soon. The trend for remote work becomes more firmly entrenched each day. Crime and quality-of-life matters in major cities will take time to turn. Even the Fed promises to take months before even considering a reduction in interest rates. Tough times for office properties seem likely to last. 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

Unlawful Race-Based Quotas

State AGs say companies must stop discrimination based on race

TATE ATTORNEYS general from Tennessee, Kansas, and 11 other states put 100 of America's largest corporations on notice that, following the Supreme Court decision against racial discrimination at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, private companies would be held to the same standard. In a July 13 letter to CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, the attorneys general wrote that "the Supreme Court's recent decision should place every employer and contractor on notice of the illegality of racial quotas and race-based preferences in employment and contracting practices.

"If your company previously resorted to racial preferences or naked quotas to offset its bigotry, that discriminatory path is now definitively closed," the letter reads. "Your company must overcome its underlying bias and treat all employees, all applicants, and all contractors equally, without regard for race."

The letter, authored by Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach and Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti, was co-signed by attorneys general from Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Nebraska, Iowa, South Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Mississippi, Missouri, and Montana. They charged that the following companies, among others, had enacted racial hiring, promotion, or contracting quotas: Airbnb, Apple, Cisco, Facebook, Google, Intel, Lyft, Microsoft, Netflix, PayPal, Snapchat, TikTok, Uber, Goldman Sachs, and JPMorgan Chase.

In all, they said, 27 banks, tech companies, and consulting firms set explicit racial hiring quotas, which courts have consistently ruled are illegal under U.S. law.

According to a Harvard Business Review 2022 survey, more than 60 percent of U.S. companies had a race



State attorneys general say that 27 banks, tech companies, and consulting firms set explicit racial hiring quotas, which courts have consistently ruled are illegal under U.S. law.

or gender-based diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) program. Following the 2020 death of George Floyd, a black man, at the hands of police officers, numerous companies, including Wells Fargo, United Airlines, JPMorgan Chase, Delta Airlines, Ralph Lauren, and Estée Lauder, announced racebased hiring and promotion policies.

On June 29, the Supreme Court ruled that race-based admissions policies at Harvard and the University of North Carolina violated the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment.

In rendering this decision, the Justices wrote: "Proponents of the Equal Protection Clause described its '[foundational] principle' as 'not [permiting] any distinctions of law based on race or color.' Any 'law which operates upon one man [should] operate equally upon all.' ... Eliminating racial discrim-



ination means eliminating all of it." While this ruling concerned university admissions policies, the Supreme Court also argued that U.S. civil rights laws were applicable, which includes private companies as well. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act bars racial discrimination for any entity that receives federal funds; Title VII bars discrimination in employment and applies to private companies.

A number of states, including New York, California, and New Jersey, have laws that mirror the Civil Rights Act's prohibition of racial discrimination in private employment. Some state laws allow for uncapped punitive damages to employees for racial discrimination, and a court in New Jersey awarded a white Starbucks employee \$20 million in punitive damages in June, ruling that the company had fired her on racial grounds.

In the dissenting opinion to the Supreme Court ruling, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote: "Gulf-sized race-based gaps exist with respect to the health, wealth, and well-being of American citizens. ... Every moment these gaps persist is a moment in which this great country falls short of actualizing one of its foundational principles—the 'self-evident' truth that all of us are created equal."

Erin Wilcox, an attorney at the Pacific Legal Foundation, said that while some companies may choose to eliminate race-based policies following the Supreme Court ruling, others will continue to use racial criteria or use "proxy" policies that don't explicitly state racial terms but find other criteria that achieve the same goal.

According to the state attorneys general, "responsible corporations interested in supporting underprivileged individuals and communities can find many lawful outlets to do so. But drawing crude lines based on skin color is not a lawful outlet." 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

US Consumers Are Suffering



Workers need to work harder to make ends meet due to inflationary tax

EYNESIAN POLIcies are damaging what they were intended to support. No example is more evident than what's occurring in the United States.

A few years ago, in 2021, I had a conversation with economist Judy Shelton during which she said the recovery would be much stronger without the stimulus package, and she was right. Massive government spending and currency printing have left a much weaker labor market and poorer citizens.

In June, nonfarm payrolls increased by 209,000, the smallest advance since the end of 2020, after two consecutive downward revisions in the prior months, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). If we look at employment statistics beyond the headline unemployment rate, we can see that the labor force participation rate was 62.6 percent for the fourth consecutive month, and the employment-to-population ratio, at 60.3 percent, was unchanged over the month, according to the BLS.

Both measures remain below prepandemic levels (63.3 percent and 61.1 percent, respectively) after years of enormous entitlement and spending programs.

Workers aren't satisfied, and there's a reason for it. All the money printing has created elevated inflation and a recovery in which the United States has seen 26 consecutive months of negative real wage growth. We haven't seen such a negative recovery for American workers in decades.

U.S. citizens are surviving on record levels of debt. Credit card debt, according to the Federal Reserve, reached a record high in the first quarter of 2023, while personal savings as a percentage of disposable income remain well below pre-



We haven't seen such a negative recovery for American workers in decades.

pandemic levels at 4.6 percent, a massive 44.7 percent decline from the figure at the end of 2019.

We have to put these poor figures in the context of a so-called stimulus that built a federal deficit that surpassed \$7 trillion between 2020 and the first quarter of 2023. We often read the modern monetary theory nonsense that deficits are reserves for the private sector and a tool for growth and prosperity.

The reality is that American workers are much worse off and need to work harder to make ends meet as the inflationary tax eats away at their savings and wages.

Of course, the excuse is to say that without the massive U.S. government spending plan, things would be much worse, but that's typical counterfactual nonsense. These large government spending plans weren't created to mitigate a weak recovery but rather as a tool to strengthen and accelerate it. The reality is that the recovery is weaker than the historical trend, real wage growth is negative, and debt is much higher. Thus, in terms of return on invested capital, the stimulus plan has detracted from a recovery that was already evident simply because of the reopening of the economy.

We can also argue that the stimulus plan financed with newly created currency in the middle of a lockdown has been the main cause of inflation, as the studies of Claudio Borio and others have demonstrated, such as when they wrote that "an upsurge in money growth preceded the inflation flare-up, and countries with stronger money growth saw markedly higher inflation."

Why am I discussing these figures? Because the backlash from these stimulus plans will likely lead to a recession, and the government will present itself again as the solution with yet another multitrilliondollar misguided measure. However, this time, the ability to increase the deficit simply isn't there, as even the most optimistic estimates see a \$14 trillion accumulated deficit through 2032 with the current budget proposals.

The next stimulus plan may lead to a huge debt-deflation spiral Japanstyle if population aging and deindustrialization continue or, even worse, stagflation if the government decides again to use the misguided stimulus checks. You got \$1,000 from the government, and the inflationary tax took \$3,000 from you.

It's evident that we have reached the point of debt saturation, where new stimulus packages simply generate no multiplier effect but make citizens poorer until the next one makes things even worse. Someday, policymakers may start to realize that progress comes from saving and prudent investment, not spending and debt. FAN YU is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.

Germany's New China Strategy

The strategy paper is laughably weak yet took years to draft

FTER DECADES AS China's closest ally in the European Union, Germany finally appears to be having second thoughts.



The document said China's "growing prosperity and achievements ... contrast with setbacks concerning civil and political rights."

the exchange between Germany and China. China impedes contact with its civil society, media, research institutes and governmental agencies. Against this backdrop, China is simultaneously a partner, competitor and systemic rival for the Federal Government," the document reads.

The strategy paper, which provides guidance to governments, businesses, educational institutions, and politicians in Germany in their China dealings, will now move to Germany's Parliament, where lawmakers are expected to begin debating when officials return in September.

While the paper acknowledges the challenges the CCP and China pose to Germany going forward, it's hardly a directional change for the biggest China cheerleader in continental Europe. For one, the strategy doesn't recommend reining in policy or stopping China from gaining access to critical technology, which would have a real bite given Germany's advanced industrial sector. The United States has restricted Chinese access to essential semiconductor technologies. And there is a level of conflict



The 64-page document listed a slew of risks in doing business with Beijing—none of which are new and all of which could be gathered with a simple Google search or ChatGPT prompt.

within the strategy paper itself. While it argues for smarter engagement with China, it also insists that German businesses must maintain beneficial economic relations with China and expresses the need to "work together on fighting climate change."

There was real potential for a policy change in Germany after an early draft of the strategy document was leaked late last year that imposed significant changes to how companies must engage with China. Those changes included disclosing their exposure and extent of collaboration with Chinese entities and having to undergo periodic "stress tests" to demonstrate their ability to withstand geopolitical turmoil. In the end nothing notable was

In the end, nothing notable was included. The 64-page document listed a slew of risks in doing business with Beijing—none of which are new and all of which could be gathered with a simple Google search or ChatGPT prompt—while outlining possible responses, including slowing outbound investment into China and imposing controls on exporting technology for military use.

Fan Yu

But the document failed to specify any binding or quantifiable targets companies and institutions should abide by. It stopped far, far short of even having low hurdles for companies wanting to do business with China.

It's no wonder that the German business class welcomed the government's China strategy—a strategy paper that is laughably weak yet took years to draft.

The Federation of German Industries (BDI) industry association acknowledged that more discussion on the concrete design of some measures was needed but was quick to point out that "there is a danger that entrepreneurial dynamism will be restricted too much," BDI president Siegfried Russwurm told Reuters.

The CCP is no doubt in favor of Germany's new strategic document.

To demonstrate Beijing's solidarity with Germany, the CCP responded in typical fashion to appease the many German critics of its new China engagement strategy.

The Chinese Embassy to Germany put out a statement on the same day that China doesn't cause any "difficulties and challenges Germany is currently facing" and that treating China as a "competitor and systemic rival" isn't based on reality and wouldn't benefit Germany.

In the end, if China pretends to be offended by the paper, then it must be a good strategy. And merely acknowledging the risks of dealing with the CCP could buy China-addicted German industrial giants more time against their critics.

For involved parties not intending to change the status quo, it must be a win–win situation.

THOUGHT LEADERS

Pharma Insider Speaks Out About Vaccine Batches

Huge variance in COVID-19 vaccine batches raises red flags with deaths, injuries

Sasha Latypova, a former phamaceutical industry executive. HE REGULATORS knew perfectly well that they were saying things that weren't true. That led me to start questioning the whole thing," says Sasha Latypova. "If you catch an official or a professional lying about something to the public, what else are they lying about?"

In a recent episode of "American Thought Leaders," host Jan Jekielek and Ms. Latypova, a former pharmaceutical executive, discuss COVID-19 vaccines, the enormous discrepancies in their manufacture, and the U.S. government's militarization of public health during this crisis. Ms. Latypova emerged from retirement during the COVID-19 pandemic to become a whistleblower after she observed the government and vaccine manufacturers veering away from established clinical research and public health protocols.

JAN JEKIELEK: You've become a whistleblower in the realm of COVID genetic vaccine manufacturing. What did you see that made you start wondering about a problem happening?

SASHA LATYPOVA: I worked in the pharmaceutical industry and had retired before COVID started. I sold my companies and was enjoying life, spending time with my family, and traveling. But when COVID started, I was concerned like everyone was.

I became suspicious when the health authorities started a campaign against hydroxychloroquine, which I knew was a safe drug because I had familiarity with it. I knew what they were saying about this drug was absolutely not true. More importantly, the regulators knew perfectly well that they were saying things that weren't true. That led me to start questioning the whole thing. If you catch an official or a professional lying about something to the public, what else are they lying about?

That started my investigation. I was a bit familiar, not very deeply, with

"The U.S. government is representing to the public that this is a response to a health event. But in fact, what they are doing is a military operation."

this mRNA class in my professional work, when these products were in development for other things—severe conditions such as cancer. I knew that these products were inherently dangerous, which isn't unusual in pharmaceutical research and development. We frequently work on things that are risky and can be toxic, such as chemo agents.

Yet, all of a sudden, our regulators were all gung-ho saying, "These are prophylactic vaccines. They can be given to children, pregnant women, and everyone else." I became extremely suspicious about this whole situation, and that's how I started looking into it.

MR. JEKIELEK: Please tell me a bit about your background. You said you sold your companies. What exactly were you doing, and how did you get into it?

MS. LATYPOVA: I'm originally from Ukraine. While I was still there, I worked in industries that contracted for health and IT. I also did international translations of documentation and negotiations for companies coming into the market after the Soviet Union collapsed.

I came to study in the United States for my business and graduate degrees, and went to work for the pharmaceutical industry right away. I eventually co-founded several businesses, which were all successful. The last one was focused on cardiovascular safety testing in pharmaceutical research and development. After I sold that one, I didn't need to work anymore.

My clients were a variety of pharma companies—large ones and small ones—Pfizer included. Pfizer was also our research and development partner.

We were developing technologies they were interested in, applying them to their clinical trial space to make data collection more reliable. We partnered with Pfizer several times. We also worked with other large companies such as GSK and Johnson & Johnson, and a variety of small biotechs.

MR. JEKIELEK: What about the manufacturing side of things? Most of us just assume it's done, and done right.

MS. LATYPOVA: That's a big issue that people often don't appreciate. The whole FDA [U.S. Food and Drug Administration] regulation actually hinges on good manufacturing practice regulations. They regulate the compliance of manufacturers with what they claim about their product, which needs to be reproduced in every pill, bottle, and vial that the manufacturer ships.

That's extremely important to know, and it's important to follow. You have to prove that the product has certain ingredients and quantities that are present in every single dose. That's why I was always focused on this, because I knew how important it was.

MR. JEKIELEK: After you started digging around, you noticed that things weren't what they seemed to be. Where did you start looking and finding problems? ◆



"We have a poor manufacturing practice compliant product being produced and injected into millions of people. We also have the CDC and FDA lying and saying, 'There is no signal at all,'" Ms. Latypova says.

tern that needs to be investigated. But

And that was a signal for me ... be-

cause if you have government officials

staring at a very loud signal and tell-

ing you that there is no signal, that's a

signal in itself. I couldn't understand

could deny reality with a straight face,

MR. JEKIELEK: What did you decide

MS. LATYPOVA: I looked at the data,

not just the total number of adverse

events and deaths, but also the pat-

terns of data across manufacturing

All pharmaceutical products are

manufactured in lots or batches. The

them. If you go to the pharmacy and

lots are numbered, and you can look at

buy Advil, you can look at the box, and

it has a lot number. Those lot numbers

when people submit the reports. Those

numbers aren't always there because

tients, pharmacists, doctors, nurses-

can be recorded in VAERS reports,

those submitting the reports-pa-

how they could do this, how they

and nothing would happen.

to do?

lots or in batches.

no investigation ever happened.

MS. LATYPOVA: In addition to what was happening with hydroxychloroquine, I became suspicious once the mRNA products started coming on the market. There were a lot of reports of adverse events and deaths, which I was expecting. As I said, I knew this product was inherently dangerous.

The CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] maintains the VAERS [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System] database, and there are others, such as Yellow Card in the UK and EudraVigilance in Europe, and all kinds of other databases. They all started showing huge numbers of adverse events and deaths right away. The government was denying that those were associated with the vaccine, and they continue denying it to this day.

The first immediate finding was that the total volume of adverse events and deaths was more than 10 times higher than [that of] all the previous vaccine products combined. The VAERS database has reports for about 100 different vaccine products from hundreds of manufacturers. Then 2021 comes along and there's a signal, a patreports, those numbers are there. I was able to match those lot numbers with the CDC lot numbers. I have a list of them. I was able to see that not only were the adverse events high, but the variability of them by batch was absolutely extreme. **MR. JEKIELEK:** Please explain variability.

> **MS. LATYPOVA:** Variability refers to how many total reports are submitted for a particular batch number. Some batch numbers had two or three reports, and some had 5,000 to 6,000. That should never happen. If you're buying Advil today and then buying it a month from now, your experience shouldn't be 1,000 percent different, because that's really dangerous. When you see a variability like this among batches of what is supposed to be good manufacturing practice compliant, it means the product is not, in fact, compliant.

don't always have that information.

But in about 50 percent of the

I thought I should compare it to something known, and chose flu vaccines. I extracted all the data for flu vaccines from VAERS. I looked at flu vaccine data from batch to batch over a long period of time.

All these looked as expected for a good manufacturing practice compliant product, which is a straight line, very close to zero; all the batches line up, and there's very little variability among producers, just a tiny bit.

When you compare them to the COVID shots, you can't even put them on the same graph. The COVID shots' variability is absolutely huge. At that time, toward the fall of 2021, I knew for sure that they weren't good manufacturing practice compliant. So we have a poor manufacturing practice compliant product being produced and injected into millions of people. We also have the CDC and FDA lying and saying, "There is no signal at all," and this continues for a long time. Eventually, I ran across research by my current collaborator, Catherine Watt. She's done an incredible analysis of the laws that the government and health care agencies are utilizing to enable this subversion of the good manufacturing practice compliance laws, of being able to deny deaths or injuries occurring with these products.

What we found is a lie. Basically, the U.S. government is representing to the public that this is a response to a health event. But in fact, what they are doing is a military operation. These socalled vaccines aren't really vaccines, but have been manufactured under defense contracts, utilizing the Defense Production Act, other transaction authority, and emergency use authorization under a public health emergency. When these things are used together, then good manufacturing practices don't apply to these products at all.

MR. JEKIELEK: Even legally?

MS. LATYPOVA: Even legally. There's a law on the books, 21-USC-360bbb, that says, "Emergency use authorized countermeasures under public health emergency can't constitute clinical investigation." Clinical investigation is actually not possible for these countermeasures. If clinical investigation isn't possible, then you can't have clinical trials, informed consent, clinical trial subjects, or clinical trial investigators.

Utilizing the structure of emergency use authorization, public health emergency, other transaction authority, and the Defense Production Act, the government was able to commandeer pharmaceutical companies to produce these noncompliant injectable products and distribute them, calling them a medicine, when in fact, they're not a medicine.

It's an act of war. They're using the Defense Production Act, its machinery, and the U.S. military. Even internationally, this is being distributed from this military to overseas militaries, not through the pharmaceutical distribution chain. They're using the military machinery to distribute

"The total volume of adverse events and deaths was more than 10 times higher than [that of] all the previous vaccine products combined."

these noncompliant products—including biologicals, chemicals, and all kinds of ingredients we don't really understand very well—and then calling it public health and medicine.

MR. JEKIELEK: What you just said will sound fantastic to many people, but one thing I know for sure that isn't crazy is the military did the distribution. That's public knowledge. It's on record now. But what about these other parts? This is actually the U.S. government contracting these pharma companies to develop a countermeasure against what?

MS. LATYPOVA: Countermeasure is an important legal term, and I advise people to look it up. First of all, it's a fuzzy term. Anything can be a countermeasure. A lock on the door is a countermeasure against a break-in. Call something a countermeasure, and you have already removed the precision of the legal definitions of a pharmaceutical, for example.

But we already know it's not a pharmaceutical. What I'm saying isn't a conspiracy theory—definitely not because the law that I just described is 21-USC-360bbb. It's cited by everyone, including the FDA in their documents, the manufacturers in their documents, and by GAO [U.S. Government Accountability Office] reports.

Pfizer produced its DOD contract, and since then, hundreds of Department of Defense contracts for COVID countermeasures were released through FOIA [Freedom of Information Act], although they're partially redacted. They're all online, and they're all essentially similar. They're utilizing the structure of ordering countermeasures, prototypes, with the Department of Defense ordering them from the pharmaceutical manufacturers under the Defense Production Act and other transaction authority. Good manufacturing practices aren't part of it at all.

Another additional part of this scheme is the public health emergency announcement. When a public health emergency happens, essentially the executive branch of the government absorbs power from [the] legislative and judicial [branches]. A public health emergency, by various legal amendments and acts over a long period of time, triggers this whole system in which the HHS secretary becomes a de facto dictator. The secretary can determine whether these countermeasures can be deployed based on available data about the current and future risk-benefit profiles.

MR. JEKIELEK: I've had a number of people on this show who have had pretty serious vaccine injuries. That these people could be harmed is denied by society and certainly denied by the authorities.

There are admissions from the NIH [National Institutes of Health], but that's rare. Mostly they say there's no signal. Most of these people are diagnosed with anxiety and things like that. I don't know what your thoughts are on this. MS. LATYPOVA: I understand why the government denies it, but I can't wrap my head around the denial by regular physicians. I know there's a monetary structure that incentivizes this behavior. There are payments from Medicare and Medicaid to the doctors to vaccinate, and bonuses for the number of vaccinations that they administered. There are especially high bonuses to vaccinate somebody who hasn't been vaccinated. And there's not only a huge monetary compensation and incentive, but there's also liability protection through the PREP Act [Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act].

That liability exemption is also explicit in the DOD contracts with vaccine manufacturers. Not just vaccines, it actually goes with the entire COVID countermeasures production, which includes vaccines, therapeutics, monoclonal antibodies, blood products, diagnostics, masks, swabs, and even staffing. All of them have the PREP Act Liability Exemption Clause, which states that if you are in compliance with all of this and follow procedure, then you are exempt from liability. The last sentence of that clause says, "This is both civil and military application."

I'm just listing a set of facts, but I'd like somebody to tell us exactly what is being put in these injections. We can't address injuries until we know that.

MR. JEKIELEK: Ostensibly, it's synthetic mRNA, and a lipid nanoparticle envelope that activates the production of a synthetic spike in the body to create an immune response. Are you saying there's more to it?

MS. LATYPOVA: What you just said is claimed on the label of the product. But as I've said, we know they aren't good manufacturing practice compliant, which means that they can't verify to themselves that is what they're making. If the product isn't good manufacturing practice compliant, it's open to adulteration and falsification, whether on purpose or by accident. We have this

whole bunch of unknowns happening.

MR. JEKIELEK: You've talked about the variation among the batches, which by some interpretations might almost look deliberate. That's very strange.

MS. LATYPOVA: Yes. This was one of the findings early on when I was looking at the various data and the variability of adverse events and deaths per batch number. In addition to seeing huge adverse events and death rates overall, we saw huge variability from batch to batch. But that variability was also not random, meaning that they aren't just producing random outputs. There's some sort of a design going on as far as what's in those vials in different batches.

For example, we saw clustering by alphanumeric codes, both in Pfizer and Moderna. The letters used in the alphanumeric numbering, which should be just random, should be just some sort of a manufacturing tactic to keep track of things. But depending on the letters, we know that one set of letters produced higher toxicity and another set lower toxicity. That should never happen.

We also had clustering by dates of manufacture, and again this shouldn't happen. You shouldn't have a difference between the product made on the first of the month and on the 30th of the month. Once you see some variability of data like this, this huge variability of the clusterings of data by various parameters, numerous different safety protocols should be triggered at the manufacturer. They would recall these products, stop the production lines, and start investigations. That's what they normally do.

MR. JEKIELEK: You've been in the middle of the biopharmaceutical industrial complex. You're aware of its size and power. Did you think twice about disclosing these things as you started?

MS. LATYPOVA: I don't worry about it. If they wanted to kill me,

they would kill me, but that doesn't concern me. Because the evil that has unfolded in the past three years is unfathomable to most people. They prefer to deny it, rather than to deal with it. I don't want to deny it. I want people to have the knowledge that I do from my professional background and to understand what's going on. In fact, we have been successful so far, because the uptick in these shots now is practically zero. There's

industry and of the health authorities. Through spillover, people are questioning the childhood vaccination schedule, which is a great development. They should question it, because the people who are able to do this with these shots, where else are they lying? You have to question all of this.

a huge distrust of the pharmaceutical

MR. JEKIELEK: Do you have a theory about why this happened?

MS. LATYPOVA: MANY people have asked me that, but I can't get into the heads of the criminals. I can just tell you that this is what they're doing. I have the backup to everything I just said in terms of facts and the laws that are being utilized. I can show you how they pre-planned this. Why are they doing it? We'd have to put them on the stand and have them explain it to find out.

MR. JEKIELEK: ANY final thoughts?

MS. LATYPOVA: THANK you for the great conversation. My wish is for this information to be discussed and shared. Challenge it, please, and prove me wrong. Look at these documents, and prove me wrong. But more importantly, I would like some open public investigations to start. Because this information would help people who are vaccine-injured. If we had the answers, we'd know what caused their injuries.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Gold's Recent Drop Below \$2,000 Creates Buying Opportunity

UBS and other analysts maintain positive forecasts, projecting prices of \$2,050 by September, \$2,100 by year-end, and \$2,200 by March 2024, with a new target of \$2,250 by June 2024.

Why is this the perfect time to invest?

- U.S. dollar weakness and potential interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve create favorable conditions for gold.
- Rising recession risks increase demand for safe-haven assets like gold.
- Renowned expert Nitesh Shah, head of Commodities and Macroeconomic Research at Wisdom Tree, expects a new all-time high for gold by the end of 2023.

Seize the opportunity to secure your financial future with the Oxford Gold Group. Regain control of your retirement by investing in physical gold. With our tailored strategies and exceptional customer service, our expert Gold Specialists will guide you every step of the way. Schedule an appointment today. **Call (833) 480-2646**



Remembering Kindergarten Lessons

Slow down to embrace and savor life's joys

By Jeff Minick

UBLISHED IN 1986, and still popular today, Robert Fulghum's bestseller "All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten" highlights the life lessons learned in early childhood. Play fair, don't hit people, and hold hands and stick together were just a few of the axioms making Mr. Fulghum's list. "Take any one of these items," he

wrote, "and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life, or your work, or your government, or your world, and it holds true and clear and firm."

A mid-June week at the beach with some of my children and grandchildren brought Mr. Fulghum's book to mind. Parents and teenage siblings were passing on similar lessons to the little ones. Be nice to your cousins, don't take a second bowl of ice cream until everyone has been served, and wash the sand off your feet before coming into the house were all minilessons for growth and maturity.

As that younger tribe of kids aged 3 to 8 bounced around the beach and the house, they were students, yes, daily taught proper etiquette and behavior, but they themselves offered unintended lessons to anyone paying attention. Here are three of those tutorials that might benefit all of us in our relationships and the workplace.

Curiosity and Wonder

This stretch of the Carolina coast is a

treasure trove of sharks' teeth, and the children found dozens of them in the sand and broken shells of the tideline. The delight of the younger ones with each discovery—they'd run to the adults with these T-shaped black teeth clutched in their hands—led a few of us to investigate online, where we learned that these fossils were at least 10,000 years old and that sharks grow and lose thousands of teeth over a lifetime.

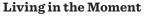
From ordinary shells and sand, they created beauty and adventure.

The pre-teen set taught the adults to look a bit closer at our immediate world and marvel at the riches to be found there.

Playfulness and Imagination

The rough surf of this beach yielded few whole seashells, but the younger girls found several with holes near the top. They ran a colored string through these otherwise common shells and made necklaces. Meanwhile, the boys took shovels and buckets and twice dug enormous holes in the sand, imagining themselves as pirates burying a chest of gems or as embattled soldiers in a trench.

From ordinary shells and sand, they created beauty and adventure. From marriages, friendships, and work we can do the same.



In the midst of the daily hubbub, a 6-year-old became utterly absorbed in an oversized Babar book, oblivious to the chaos surrounding him. On another day, three of his cousins, along with an adult, spent two hours bent over a jigsaw puzzle, slowly constructing a picture of three dogs. This thousand-piece puzzle held their concentration sweetly captive through a windy afternoon.

Counselors, life coaches, and certain books, websites, and articles all stress being fully present in certain moments, focusing on tasks at hand rather than brooding over the past or fretting about the future. Our adult obligations and distractions may keep us from the white-heat focus of a child, but the joy derived from relishing the present as much as possible can still be ours.

By the time that we become adults, we have pulled up many of the weeds of childhood and adolescence: selfabsorption, tantrums, bad manners, and all the other nettles and crabgrass of youth. But the blossoms in that garden—the curiosity, the passion for investigation and creativity, taking pleasure in the day—deserve a lifetime of water, sunshine, and tender care. ■

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."



A Most Enjoyable Museum 72

ONCE THE HOME OF PRINCESS

Margaret of Denmark, this estate built within the walls of a fortress combines luxury with a spectacular view. **70** AFTER READING THIS, devotees of the grill will want to book flights to retrace the steps of this journey to sample some of California's best homegrown BBQ. **75**

FOR THOSE WONDERING

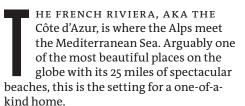
what to do on their summer break, here are several tempting lost treasures to search for on an ultimate vacation. **76**

INSIDE

Classic Style

A unique bayfront French Riviera residence

By Bill Lindsey



Built in the 1920s quite literally within the walls of an ancient stone fortress, this 5,381-square-foot, five-bedroom, six-bath residence on a hillside 0.7-acre plot overlooking Cap Ferrat and Villefranche-sur-Mer's scenic bay delivers modern luxury in an idyllic setting.

A notable former resident is Princess Margaret of Denmark, who moved in upon her return to Europe from the United States, where she and her family had taken refuge during World War II. Spanning four levels, the home features arched windows, hand-textured neutral walls, and oversized fireplaces that look like they were pulled from a medieval castle.

(Above) The villa's upper deck is set up to allow the owners and their guests to relax in the hot tub, bask in the sunshine, and enjoy the amazing views in all directions. (**Top Right**) The living room has been painstakingly maintained to preserve how it

appeared when it was the residence of Princess

Margaret of Denmark. (Right) The formal dining

room features tile flooring, a soaring ceiling, and

floor-to-ceiling glass walls looking out over the

property's inner courtyard.

The stone-studded exterior blends seamlessly with the walls of the fortress as well as the natural landscape.

Inside, the home is tastefully clean and simple, in classic Mediterranean style. The very open kitchen is well-equipped to feed the owners and guests as they enjoy meals in the formal dining room, which looks out over the inner courtyard. The bedrooms are designed to make full use of the cooling breezes, with private terraces to enjoy incredible views in all directions. Immediately adjacent to the residence is a grotto-style oversized pool, set on top of a structure used for storage and featuring a covered lounge, and a spacious studio ideal for an artist or an author.

The town of Villefranche-sur-Mer lying immediately below the estate has a sampling of establishments for dining and groceries, with all the amenities of Nice and Monaco just a 30-minute drive away. The home is expected to be offered via auction. ■



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Built within the walls of an ancient fortress, this estate has a breathtaking view of Villefranche-sur-Mer's bay.

Motorcycle King

Harley-Davidson's illustrious history continues to be celebrated today



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🛑 By Kevin Revolinski
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goes far beyond just a collection of bikes. In 1903, William Harley and Arthur Davidson built the first prototype in a small backyard shed behind Davidson's family home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Out in front of the modern museum is a replica of that structure, and within the first exhibit where an early cycle is mounted in a glass cabinet—the dimensions of that tiny space are marked in lines on the floor. Soon after, Arthur's brothers Walter and William joined the business venture.

The Harley-Davidson Museum's exhibits trace the company from that backyard to a large-scale manufacturer with an international reach. The company survived the Great Depression (one of only two American cycle manufacturers to do so) and played important roles in the two World Wars.

A reconstruction of a wooden embankment from the racing days hints at its original role in an age of daring. A wall of gas tanks creates a colorful mural. A rotating exhibit of historical photos shows startling images of Milwaukee's unassailable industrial past.

One room is dedicated to the evolution of the engine, where component parts hang separately in the air but can be seen put back together if you view them at the right angle. An interactive display allows you to hear the rumbles of the various engine models.

The motorcycle's role in the military, in police work, and even in delivery service receives its due. And yes, a long collection of bikes shows the transformation over time.

But the Harley-Davidson community is always evident. The riding clubs throughout history, across the country, and around the world have honored spaces here. A surprise to many will be the exhibit that highlights the role of a few daring women riders from back in the early 20th century, during a time when road touring on a motorcycle wasn't considered very "ladylike."

Not forgotten are the tough times when, in 1969, Harley-Davidson, facing liquidation, ↔

The museum attracts some **300,000** visitors annually.

WISCONSIN



The Harley-Davidson Museum is on 20 acres in downtown Milwaukee.

Harley-Davidson is still the top U.S. motorcycle manufacturer, producing around 200,000 bikes per year.

During World War II, Harley-Davidson produced about 60,000 WLAs for U.S. and Allied troops.

TOP: ILLUSTR TESY OF THE I



was bought by AMF (American Machine and Foundry) and the ownership left the family for the first time. The story of the company's repurchase by company executives in 1981 plays in a short video, a celebration of a rebirth.

Pop Culture

A bike and rider sail into space high above one of the most intriguing parts of the museum: the exhibition celebrating Harley's place in pop culture. This is Evel Knievel, the daredevil rider who once jumped the Grand Canyon. (Those of us who were children during his heyday in the 1970s believed he had broken every bone in his body at some point.)

A line of movie posters adorns the wall, and a video montage plays showing scenes from Hollywood, including "Easy Rider," "The Terminator," and Marlon Brando's "The Wild One." A few famous rides are on display—think Captain America's bike—as well as other very eye-catching motorcycles, including the most tricked-out Harley you'll ever see, donated by a locally famous owner.

The last stop before the exit is an area where visitors can climb aboard several motorcycles for photo ops. And not to be overlooked, of course, is the gift shop where fans, and the people who shop for them, peruse the world of Harley swag, certainly challenging the popularity of the bike itself. ■

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



The museum features some famous rides including "The Liberator," a favorite of Captain America.



The Harley-Davidson WLA, made to U.S. Army specifications, was also known as "The Liberator" or "the motorcycle that won the war."



The Serial One is known as the oldest motorcycle in existence.



The Harley-Davison Museum, located at 400 W. Canal St. in Milwaukee, is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Make sure to check the museum's website for events including the Thursday Bike Night Concert Series (through Sept. 28, 2023), Saturday demo rides (through Sept. 30, 2023). 414-287-2789. Harley-Davidson.com/us/en/ museum.html

Lunch Plans:

While a visit can easily last more than an hour, depending on one's museum pace, you don't have to rush to get to lunch. The onsite MOTOR Bar and Restaurant is worth staying for. The barbecue is quite notable and Milwaukee's Lakefront Brewery brews their Motor Oil, a rich dark stout.

Accommodations:

Parking at the museum is free. And if you like the Easy Rider theme, consider booking a room at the nearby Iron Horse Hotel, a biker-themed boutique property with a fire pit outside with a view of the museum and a nearby awardwinning gleaming white suspension bridge.

CALIFORNIA'S HOMEGROWN BARBECUE HAS A CENTURIES-OLD STORY TO TELL

Santa Maria-style barbecue, a venerated Central Coast specialty, is a triumph of meat and red oak smoke born from the Spanish vaqueros of the past

By Eric Lucas

B ILLY RUIZ IS HOLDING his hand over a 550-degree Fahrenheit fire. It might be low-tech, but Mr. Ruiz is old school. So is the cuisine he prepares:

"The palm of my hand is my digital thermometer," the master barbecue chef said. If he can keep his hand over the red oak fire for a count of six but no longer—"no lollygagging"—it's ready to sear the six-pound top sirloin roast he's cooking for the customers of

cooking for the customers of his central California catering business, Cowboy Flavor. You could guess Mr. Ruiz's regard for tradition just by

looking at him: long, handlebar mustache; wide-brimmed, open-crown California vaquero hat; and sun-weathered visage. He sears his sirloins for 15 to 20 minutes per side with his castiron grill, about 30 inches above the fire. Then, he raises the grill a foot and steadily roasts the meat for another 90 minutes to achieve an even medium-rare. Sliced across the grain, the

meat is tender and lean, juicy and smoky. The fire has set a crunchy crust on the outside, and the oak smoke lends a deep, buttery tang.

This is Santa Maria barbecue. A style unique to California's

Santa Maria Valley, its roots stretch to the open-air feasts of the valley's Spanish rancheros in the mid-19th century. Mr. Ruiz, an eighth-gener-

ation Californian, takes his heritage seriously. "This path was carved long

before I was born," he said. "I'm telling the story of my

ancestors."

Far Western Tavern in Orcutt, Calif. The open-air pit room at

A barbecue

platter from

The open-air pit room at Santa Maria Elks Lodge in Santa Maria, Calif.

Cooking over an open pit at Waller Park in Santa Maria, Calif.

DESTINATION BBQ

The two most famous local restaurants serving Santa Maria-style barbecue are Far Western Tavern and the Hitching Post 2.

Far Western Tavern

Co-owner Paul Righetti operates a 10,000-acre cattle ranch founded by his grandfather in 1886. His wife's father founded Far Western in 1958, helping bring indoors a culinary experience that had previously been almost exclusive to weekend outdoor gatherings. FarWesternTavern.com

The Hitching Post 2

Starring in the indie cult classic "Sideways" 20 years ago helped vault this local standout's cuisine from West Coast specialty to national renown. *HitchingPost2.com* The Hitching Post 2, a local standout for Santa Mariastyle barbecue, became known for its cameo in the movie, "Sideways".

A Style of Its Own

While some details differ from chef to chef, several keys mark Santa Maria-style. For one, the meat is either

top sirloin or tri-tip (the triangular end of the sirloin), or perhaps two-inch-thick ribeye, which is known now as "cowboy" ribeye. All are cooked whole. Second, only a dry rub is

applied to the meat before cooking, composed of salt, pepper, garlic, and other spices, the exact identity of which it's considered rude to ask.

And as for cooking, Central Coast barbecue chefs are religiously devoted to coastal red oak, an evergreen tree whose wood burns hot but evenly, minimizing flare-ups. Finally, dinner is served with garlic bread, a salad, and pinquito beans stewed with tomatoes, garlic, and chile. Spanish vaqueros would have built their fire in a pit in the ground and suspended the meat over it, but in most other respects, the method would have been the same as today. "That was our entertain-

ment before TV, you know," Mr. Ruiz said. "Get together out by the corrals, cook up a good dinner, talk, and relax in the cool evening air. That's as good as it gets, folks."

Eric Lucas is a retired associate editor at Alaska Beyond Magazine and lives on a small farm on a remote island north of Seattle.

What could be more fun than spending a vacation looking for fabled treasures?

COMPENSION OF THE SECOND OF TH

By Bill Lindsey

There are a surprisingly large number of treasures waiting to be found in the United States VERYONE LOVES AN EXCITING tale of buried treasure involving pirates and outlaws, and many of those tales are true. Even better, quite a few are said to be awaiting discovery in the United States. Some treasures, such as the fabled Lost Dutchman Mine, have been lost for centuries, while others have a more recent chronology.

Casino Cash

Ted Binion was the son of Benny Binion, owner of Binion's Horseshoe, a Las Vegas casino. In 1964, Ted Binion and his brother took control of the casino after their father lost his gaming license because of a conviction on tax evasion charges. Over the following 30 years, Ted Binion became the face of the Horseshoe, but in 1986, he was arrested on drug trafficking charges; in 1996, the Nevada Gaming Control Board banned him from the casino.

Included among the items that Mr. Binion removed from the casino was his personal hoard of silver, reportedly consisting of up to 24 tons of silver bullion, as well as rare coins and paper currency. All of this was moved to a 12-foot-deep bunker constructed on the 138-acre ranch that he owned in the desert near the town of Pahrump, 60 miles west of Las Vegas. When Mr. Bin-



Las Vegas casino operator Ted Binion is said to have hidden tons of silver on his Pahrump ranch, much of which hasn't yet been found.

Legend has it there may be not one, but two treasures hidden on Charles Island in Connecticut.

ion died in 1996, a large portion of his fortune was recovered—but not all of it. A reportedly sizable amount is said to still be somewhere on the ranch, which now lies in the shadow of a Walmart. Various law enforcement agencies as well as several former ranch workers have attempted to find the balance of Mr. Binion's treasure, but so far, the actual location remains a mystery.

Stagecoach Robbery

What is now the Portneuf Wildlife Management Area in East Idaho is said to be the location of millions of dollars' worth of gold stolen during an armed robbery of a stagecoach. In 1865, the Picket Coral Gang—led by outlaws Brockie Jack and Jim Locket and including Big Dave Updyke, the Ada County sheriff-attacked the stagecoach when it slowed to cross a stream in a canyon aptly named Robber's Roost. After a fierce gun battle, the robbers left with up to 800 pounds of gold. The outlaws were subsequently hunted down, but none were carrying any of the treasure, or willing to give up where it was hidden. Experts believe that the gold is still stashed somewhere within 15 miles of the robbery site, or possibly in the area now encompassing the City of Rocks National Reserve.

Spanish Treasures

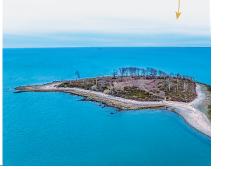
It's clear that the American West is home to many lost treasures. Another is said to have been left behind by Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado as he searched for the fabled city of Cíbola. While the expedition rested in what's now Oklahoma, Vázquez decided to leave a sizable amount of gold that he had amassed along the way near Standing Rock on the north bank of Piney Creek by present-day Lake Eufaula. The men reportedly left markers to ease later **Eight hundred pounds** of gold bars stolen in an 1865 stagecoach robbery in Idaho are out there, waiting to be found.



Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez Coronado is said to have hidden a fortune in plundered gold and jewels somewhere near Lake Eufaula in Oklahoma.



Connecticut's Charles Island is said to hold treasures hidden by Captain Kidd and Spanish conquistadors, all of which is protected by three curses.





Legend has it that in the 1500s, Spanish explorers hid a treasure in a cavern near Arkansas's Sulphur Springs, planning to return for it, but were unable to do so.

recovery of the gold, in the form of a carved turtle and a triangle on Standing Rock. A gold bar was said to have been found in the area in the 1950s, but the main cache has yet to be located.

Another lost treasure related to Spanish explorers is the Old Spanish Treasure Cave in Arkansas's Sulphur Springs. The legend claims that the Spanish took shelter in the cave to rest after traveling north from South America, where they had battled with and stolen treasure from Mayans and Aztecs. Local Indian tribes attacked and killed all of the Spaniards except one, who managed to return to Spain with a map of the treasure's location. In 1885, a traveler from Madrid, armed with a map found in his family's Bible, found a cavern matching the location of the treasure. A few gold coins, some jewelry, and several carvings on the cave's wall were discovered, but subsequent cave flooding has prevented more from being found. The current owner of the property hopes that the treasure will be discovered and now hosts movie nights in the cavern.

Cursed Gold

Legend has it that there may be not one, but two treasures hidden on Charles Island in Connecticut. Only

14 acres in size, Charles Island is said to be cursed by a Mexican emperor, the Paugussett Indian tribe, and then again by privateer Capt. William Kidd. The initial curse was placed by Mexican Emperor Guatemozin on the treasure stolen from him by Spanish conquistadors in the 1500s. The Spaniards made it to Charles Island and buried the treasure while awaiting rescuers who never came. In the 1600s, a Paugussett chief cursed the island in retaliation against unscrupulous European settlers. The third curse was placed by Kidd on anyone who attempted to find the treasure that he supposedly buried on the island. Now a popular bird-watching site, Charles Island just might also be a real-life "treasure island."



The American Southwest is full of tales of lost treasure, such as the Lost Dutchman Mine.



Finders Keepers

Maybe, but maybe not. In cases in which insurance companies paid off a loss, they may retain some rights to any recovered treasure. Property owners and states can also be expected to claim anything of value.



Put Down the Shovel

Digging random holes on private property or state or national land is more than frowned upon—it's illegal trespassing.



Hit the Beach

Gold and silver coins as well as jewelry from Spanish treasure ships wash up on beaches from Florida to North Carolina, especially after an offshore storm. A keen eye can lead you to real treasure.



A New Underwater Neighborhood AQUEON 35 GALLON FRAMELESS CUBE AQUARIUM \$229.99

Fish are great pets; they never complain if you leave them at home while you go on vacation, and they won't leave hairballs on the couch. So show them some love by giving them a new home. This spacious 35-gallon glass aquarium has no frame, allowing an unobstructed view of the fish within from any angle. It's ideal for freshwater and saltwater fish.



A Parrot Penthouse YAHEETECH BIRD CAGE WITH PLAY TOP \$223.99

At an impressive 61 inches tall, this roomy bird cage is designed to create a fun, healthy environment for parrots or most other household species by ensuring plenty of room to move around and roost. Finished in nontoxic black paint, it features wheels for easy movement around the house, a large door for easy access, and a top deck play and feeding area.

A SHOPPING LIST FOR FELINES TO FISH

Gear to please your cats, fish, and birds

By Bill Lindsey



Bring Kitty TRAVEL CAT NAVIGATOR

CONVERTIBLE CAT BACKPACK

\$149.99

Just because Whiskers isn't happy

being treated like a dog on a leash, it

doesn't mean you can't take him for

a walk. This cat backpack's large rear

mesh window gives Kitty fresh air and

a great view of the passing scenery.

Shy cats can relax securely inside,

while more curious felines can stick

their head out the top to look around.



Eat and Drink CATIT PIXI SMART FOUNTAIN AND FEEDER

\$47.99 / \$134.99 Just like their lion and tiger cousins, house cats prefer moving water, so this fountain keeps 2.5 liters of water burbling while the integrated filter softens it and removes debris. A red light lets you know it's time to add more water. The feeder holds 43 ounces of food and can be programmed to release an exact amount at a pre-specified time, or whenever you want, via your phone.



A Robot for Your Pet EBO AIR

\$199 This tiny robot lets you know what your pet does while you're away, and it can keep it company. Controlled by your phone, it uses a Wi-Fi connection to control a video camera with night vision capability, a speaker, a laser pointer, and tank treads so you can see, hear, talk to, and play with your cat remotely. It "knows" to return to the recharging dock when the battery runs low and has object-avoidance software.

78 EPOCH INSIGHT Week 29, 2023

ED Epoch Booklist

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

RECOMMENDED READING This week, we feature a look at "perfect" Scandinavian societies and an absorbing novel about a girl longing to practice medicine in China's past.



'The Almost Nearly Perfect **People'** Bv Michael Booth

Scandinavian

nations score high in international surveys. The Danes are the happiest people in the world, and Finland has the best education system. All regularly end up in the top 10 places to live. What is the real story? Have these countries really achieved Utopia? This book attempts an answer by examining each nation to reveal their fortes and foibles. Readers experience life in every Scandinavian country and see how history and geography shaped each. Lightheartedly, it explains their

PICADOR, 2015, 400 PAGES

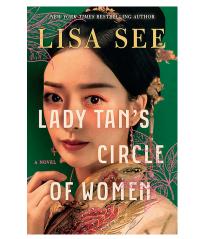
contradictions.



Robert E. Lee on Leadership' By H.W. Crocker III

Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt both praised Robert E. Lee for his military genius and for his nobility. Mr. Crocker analyzes the man's personal and public life and extracts lessons appropriate for today. Using in particular Lee's style of command on the battlefield, he provides his readers insights into how they may benefit from a study of his leadership in business and in the general art of living. This 1999 release is a fine and approachable reflection on the man and on the meaning of excellence.

REGNERY HISTORY, 2023, 256 PAGES



HISTORICAL FICTION 'Lady Tan's Circle of Women' By Lisa See

This captivating story begins in 1469, the fifth year of the Chenghua Emperor's reign. The protagonist is a girl named Tan Yunxian, who's inspired by a woman physician from the same era, a rarity at that time. Yunxian's early interest in medicine is the catalyst for the challenges she faces growing up in an elite family as a clash of traditions dictates her destiny. A fast friendship with Meiling, a midwife in training, and their combined quest to help other women make for a triumphant tale.

SCRIBNER, 2023, 368 PAGES



FOR KIDS Cheaper by the Dozen'

By Frank B. Gilbreth Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey

This classic memoir from 1948 is a hilarious look at the life of a very large

family of 12 children and their parents. What's even funnier is that the father is an expert in efficiency and tries to run his family like a factory. Lighthearted and family-focused, this is a great read for summer-and can even be followed up with one of the film adaptations.

HARPER, 2005, 224 PAGES



By Shaun Assael The life and death of Sonny Liston remains one of the United States' great sports mysteries and tragedies. Liston had risen from poverty, abuse, and crime to become the heavyweight champion of boxing. But some things never left him. The book shows how his harsh upbringing developed an unstable man who reached for anyone who would lend a hand. Those hands came from the criminal underworld, which Mr. Assael strongly intimates were the author of his demise. It is a gripping investigation into the tragic champion.

BLUE RIDER PRESS, 2016, 320 PAGES



'Li Po and Tu Fu' By Li Po and Tu Fu

Selected and translated by

Arthur Cooper, this collection contains the best verses of two of China's greatest poets. These were such close friends that they are often referenced as "Li-Tu." Their eighth-century poems remain fresh and beautiful in their simplicity of language and their appeal to the heart. This particular collection also offers a brief history of the time and brief biographies of the poets, teaches a bit about Chinese poetry in general, and includes notes on individual poems.

PENGUIN CLASSICS, 1973, 256 PAGES



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

Epoch Watchlist

ENTERTAINMENT

This week, we feature a feel-good yet realistic romantic drama and a documentary about the U.S. governmental overreach during the pandemic.

NEW RELEASE

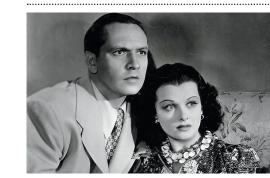


'The Essential Church' (2023)

This documentary details governmental restrictions that were placed on churches by using specious COVID-19 emergency edicts. The film focuses on three pastors who stood against the tide of fear-mongering and mass compliance.

While places such as strip bars and liquor stores were somehow considered "essential" during the lockdowns, church gatherings weren't. This highly informative film is essential viewing for not only Christians, but also those of other faiths, as well as nonbelievers: These edicts may be only the beginning of tyranny.

A HIGHLY ENTERTAINING MYSTERY



'Trade Winds' (1938) suicide. However, she is tracked by ace

Kay Kerrigan (Joan Bennett) is on the run for the murder of a man whom she blames for her sister's

DOCUMENTARY | DRAMA | HISTORY **Release Date:** July 28, 2023 Director: Shannon Halliday **Running Time:** 2 hours, 6 minutes MPAA Rating: PG-13 Where to Watch:

Theaters

\star \star \star \star \star

morous banter pairs nicely with Bennett's sharp-tongued delivery, while March is at his absolute best as a frolicsome Lothario.

CRIME | DRAMA | ROMANCE **Release Date:** Dec. 28, 1938

Director: Tay Garnett Starring: Fredric March. Joan Bennett, **Ralph Bellamy** Running Time: 1 hour, 33 minutes Not Rated Where to Watch: Tubi, Amazon

A well-crafted script filled with hu- \star

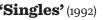
detective Sam Wye

begins to develop

feelings for her.

(Fredric March), who

INDIE PICK



This quirky romantic comedy follows the lives of various young adults who live in a Seattle apartment complex that has a sign out front that reads "Singles." Although centered around two separate couples, it also details the trials and tribulations of their friends as they navigate the grunge era. **Director Cameron** Crowe definitely captures the gestalt of early '90s Seattle. It's an interesting backdrop for the compelling lives of these young

Starring: Bridget Fonda, Campbell Scott Kvra Sedgwick Running Time: 1 hour, 39 minutes MPAA Rating:

characters as they

struggle (and strive)

to find love and self-

COMEDY | DRAMA | MUSIC

fulfillment.

Release Date:

Sept. 18, 1992

Cameron Crowe

Director:

PG-13

Where to Watch: Redbox, Amazon, Apple TV ****

A CHARMING ROMANTIC DRAMA

'Bella' (2007) José (Eduardo) Verástegui) is a chef

> at a New York restaurant that his brother Manny (Manny Perez) owns. Manny fires waitress Nina (Tammy Blanchard) for being late to work, and José steps in to offer compassion and support. As José and Nina get closer, past traumas begin to surface.

This is a very relatable film with gritty, realistic dialogue and a touching, feel-good climax that stays with you. It's also acclaimed Mexican

DRAMA | ROMANCE **Release Date:** Nov. 30, 2007 Director: Alejandro Monteverde Starring: Eduardo Verástegui. Tammy Blanchard Manny Perez **Running Time:** 1 hour, 31 minutes MPAA Rating: PG-13 Where to Watch: Amazon, Apple TV, Vudu

director Alejan-

dro Monteverde's

debut feature film.

("Sound of Freedom")

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THE EPOCH TIMES

ET

Barbecue Behavior

Enjoying summer backyard grillfests

Sunny summer days are made for backyard barbecues, so let's review basic backyard cookout behavior.

By Bill Lindsey

1 There Can Only Be One Chef

When attending a barbecue as a guest, resist the urge to share your grilling techniques with the host or hostess. Everyone has his or her own way of doing things, but it's insufferably rude to act as if only you know the correct way to grill food. Even if you've won the World Series of Barbecue, sit back, enjoy the food, and be sure to compliment the chef.



When you're invited to a barbecue, it isn't rude to ask if you can bring a plus one, but it is rude to simply assume it's OK to do so and startle your hosts. Make a point of arriving within 10 minutes of the time provided by your hosts; arriving too early can interrupt the setup process, and arriving an hour or so late shows a lack of respect.



Bring Something

Even if your hosts say that you don't need to bring anything, don't show up for a barbecue empty-handed. Napkins or paper towels are items that will always be appreciated, as are dessert items such as cookies or a pie. If you have dietary restrictions, let the hosts know when you accept the invitation, and bring something that you can eat, discreetly, without making a fuss or embarrassing the hosts.

5 Be Appropriate

A family get-together isn't the same as a bunch of college buddies having a reunion, and it calls for much different behavior. Regardless of whether the crowd is made up of family, close friends, or folks whom you've just met, respectful, polite behavior is always the best option. Refrain from cursing—this is never appropriate—and overindulging in adult beverages. Don't appoint yourself the party DJ, either. Leave only smiles in your wake.

4 Be Social

A casual barbecue is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and possibly make a few new ones. If you're the host, your first job is to make sure that all of the guests are comfortable and enjoying themselves. If you see a shy guest, buzz on over and make them feel welcome by introducing them to the others. As a guest, say hello to everyone to enhance your enjoyment as well as theirs.

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"It's a magazine that's FOR the American people, not against."

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

"[Insight] reminds me that there are still a LOT of wonderful, good, and dedicated people in this country." "Well thought out material, thoroughly investigated, and I trust [the] sources."

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

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Mark Naumann, photographer

"It is straightforward, rather than a lot of speculation or pontificating."

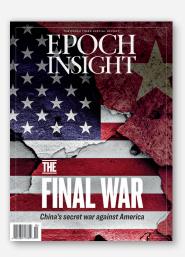
Jan Hamilton, retired professional

"I can trust what I read and make up my own mind how I feel about the subject."

Jim Edwards, retired

Creed Haymond, surgeon

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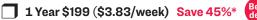
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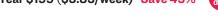


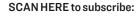
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