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“THE STARTUP CULTURE IN MICHIGAN IS LIKE NO OTHER.”
Miller’s revenge
The White House plan to ‘dump’ migrants in sanctuary cities
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Editor’s letter

In The Week’s office, the country’s major newspapers are laid out in a line each day along a counter. One day last week, the same spooky image stared out from every front page, like a cosmic eyeball—the first-ever “photo” of a black hole. (See Health & Science.) It’s an achievement once thought impossible, given that black holes exert such monstrous gravity that they swallow light itself. To see the unseeable, it took 200 scientists on four continents using eight radio telescopes, synchronized so that they functioned like one giant radio dish the size of Earth. Even Einstein, whose theories predicted black holes, initially doubted something so outlandish could exist. Now astronomers have captured what one looks like: a radiant orange-red ring of superheated gas swirling around an ominous void—the “event horizon”—where all matter and energy is sucked into no-one-knows-where.

The value of feats like this are not entirely scientific: They remind us that human beings are not always petty, small, and mean, and that at our collaborative best, Homo sapiens is capable of magnificent things. Over the last century, science has shown that our universe is a far stranger place than our everyday experience would suggest. Space itself is curved and warped by mass. Time slows down on an object the faster it travels. Electrons act both as particles and waves. “Entangled” particles seem to instantly know and react to what happens to their partner across vast distances. At the quantum level, there is no empty space: Particles constantly pop in and out of existence, creating an ephemeral quantum “foam.” At the other end of the scale, there are least 2 trillion galaxies in the universe, each containing billions of stars and probably more than a few planets where intelligent life has evolved and is puzzling over the same questions as we are. The more we discover, the more it becomes clear that our certainties, whatever they may be, are built on illusions. We live in a great mystery.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief
Trump’s plan to ‘dump’ migrants

What happened
President Trump said last week that he is “strongly looking” at a plan to transport immigrant detainees from the southern border to sanctuary cities as retribution for Democrats’ refusal to support his border policies, as his administration ratcheted up efforts to stem the influx of Central American migrants. The proposal to bus migrants to Democratic-controlled “sanctuary cities” like New York and San Francisco was championed by White House senior adviser Stephen Miller, The Washington Post reported, but was shot down as inappropriate and expensive by officials at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). One day after the story was published, Trump tweeted the plan remains under “strong consideration.” It’s “retaliation to show them, ‘Your lack of cooperation has impacts,’” a Department of Homeland Security official told the Post. Trump taunted sanctuary cities, saying, “They’re always saying they have open arms. Let’s see if they have open arms.”

Attorney General William Barr ruled this week the government can hold adult asylum seekers indefinitely if they entered the country illegally—even if it takes years until their court date. Trump’s frustration also led him to suggest illegal means of blocking the migrants, according to several news reports. During a visit to Calexico, Calif., CNN reported, Trump told border agents to simply refuse to let migrants reaching U.S. soil apply for asylum, and to reply if a judge questioned them. “Sorry, judge, I can’t do it. We don’t have the room.” CNN also quoted administration officials as saying Trump told acting DHS Secretary Kevin McAleenan he “would pardon him if he ever went to jail for denying U.S. entry to migrants.” The White House denied this.

Border authorities are grappling with the biggest migrant surge in 12 years, as families flee poverty and violence in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The number of families crossing the border is up 300 percent over 2018, and the average tally of immigrants in ICE custody, including both families and single adults, swelled to more than 50,000—an all-time high. Since Dec. 21, ICE said, it has released 125,000 migrants into the U.S. who arrived as families.

What the columnists said
Trump is not only urging officials to break the law to stop immigration—he’s openly musing about using violence, said Alex Ward in Vox.com. After telling reporters he wanted more troops at the border, the president bemoaned how if the military “got a little rough” with asylum seekers, “everybody would go crazy.” We shouldn’t dismiss this as just more Trump tough talk. Our commander in chief is saying he wishes American troops “could have more freedom to hurt men, women, and children.”

It’s time for Trump to admit the obvious, said David French in NationalReview.com. Despite his tough talk and empty threats, he’s “failing on his signature issue.” He needs a course change—one that recognizes the reality that Congress sets America’s immigration and border-enforcement policies. “That means dealmaking. That means compromise.” The alternative is “more flailing” and more chaos. Yes, but Democrats don’t want to negotiate, said Brett Velocovich in FoxNews.com. By offering nothing other than saying “no” to Trump, they are essentially advocating “open borders.” Democrats refuse to change the asylum law because they actually welcome the “unbridled flood of humanity” now pouring into our country.

Since the sinister Stephen Miller is “the chief architect” of Trump’s immigration agenda, said Greg Sargent in The Washington Post, Democrats should summon him to testify before a congressional committee. Though Miller largely operates behind the scenes, he is playing a major role “in so much of the chaos, incompetence, and increasingly malevolent extremism gripping the Trump administration right now.” Hearing from him could “shed light on Trump’s efforts to flout the law” and the colossal mess he’s making of border policy.

What the editorials said
Let’s hope Trump is just trolling Democrats, said The Wall Street Journal. Flooding sanctuary cities will only “increase the likelihood these migrants will remain in the U.S. for years under city and state protection.” And since most sanctuary cities are in Democratic strongholds, swelling their populations with new non-citizens will only “add to their strength in reapportionment for Congress after the 2020 Census.” Yes, the Supreme Court will soon hear a case about whether the Commerce Department can include a citizenship question in the Census, but a legal victory is far from certain.

If America is full, as Trump claims, asked The San Diego Union-Tribune, why are employers desperate for seasonal employment visas for foreign workers? Employers are facing such a profound labor shortage amid record-low unemployment that they crashed the Labor Department’s electronic system with nearly 100,000 requests for these visas within the first five minutes. And, by definition, these visas can be granted only when “there are not enough U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to do the temporary work.” Indeed, employers report 7 million unfilled jobs.

What next?
The American Civil Liberties Union has vowed to go to court to block Barr’s ruling on the indefinite detention of asylum seekers who enter the U.S. illegally, said Dara Lind in Vox.com. But regardless of how the case is decided, Barr’s directive won’t make much difference: It doesn’t apply to most asylum seekers who legally apply at border checkpoints, or those entering the country as family units, who “are supposed to be released after about 20 days.” As ICE runs out of space to house detainees, it faces “a coming confrontation with Congress.” Current funding allows ICE to keep an average of 45,274 migrants in custody through the end of September, but ICE has already exceeded that number. Barr said he’s delaying his new policy by 90 days to give DHS time to erect “additional detention” facilities. But at some point, Democrats may refuse to provide additional funding for detentions—setting up yet another court battle.
Extradition fight begins for WikiLeaks founder

What happened
WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was this week preparing for a potentially years-long legal battle over a U.S. extradition request, after he was expelled from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London and arrested by British police. U.S. officials have charged Assange, an Australian national, with a single count of conspiring to commit computer intrusion. The case stems from 2010, when Assange allegedly told former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning that he would help crack a password that would provide even deeper access to the Defense Department computer network from which Manning was leaking classified information. That password hack was apparently unsuccessful, but WikiLeaks did publish hundreds of thousands of classified and sensitive military and diplomatic documents supplied by Manning. The indictment notes that Assange encouraged Manning to keep hunting for new information, saying in one online exchange, “Curious eyes never run dry in my experience.”

Assange, 47, took shelter at the embassy in 2012 to avoid being extradited to Sweden on allegations of sexual assault. Unable to interview Assange, Swedish authorities dropped the investigation in 2017; they now say they may reopen the case. Ecuadoran officials said Assange became increasingly unhinged in recent years, verbally abusing staff, neglecting his pet cat, and at one point smearing his own feces on the embassy walls. Assange is also accused of leaking documents about Ecuador’s president online. President Trump, who repeatedly praised WikiLeaks during the 2016 campaign after it published hacked Democratic Party emails, swiftly distanced himself from Assange. “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump said.

What the editorials said
You don’t have to like Assange to worry that his indictment “portends a crackdown on freedom of the press,” said the Los Angeles Times. Thankfully, the U.S. government isn’t prosecuting him for publishing classified information, which would have set a dangerous precedent. But there are “some ominous implications” in the indictment. It accuses Assange of actively soliciting information from his source, for example, but that’s just standard journalistic practice. It “would be a tragedy” if Assange’s case ultimately makes it harder for legitimate journalists to expose official wrongdoing.

What the columnists said
Nobody should cheer this arrest, said Nathan Robinson in The Guardian.com. “The Obama administration fished for years to find a charge that would stick to Assange, but ultimately couldn’t find a way of going after him that wouldn’t also criminalize ordinary acts of journalism.” Trump’s administration has no such scruples. It should be obvious that a single, flimsy charge for a failed attempt to break a government password is just a pretense to punish him for airing America’s dirty laundry.

“As a journalist and a citizen” I’m grateful for the secrets Assange revealed, said Timothy O’Brien in Bloomberg.com. WikiLeaks data dumps, which included harrowing footage of a U.S. helicopter attack in Iraq that killed two journalists, opened a window into “the outrageous, gut-wrenching, and legally questionable aspects” of America’s War on Terror. But if Assange coached or helped Manning break into government computers, he committed a crime. “Journalists stop being journalists when they help the case the joint.”

The sight of a bedraggled Assange being hauled from the Ecuadorian Embassy “should provide us with a moment of reflection,” said David French in NationalReview.com. In 2010, Assange was a darling of the Left for exposing military secrets; six years later, he “enjoyed a reputational renaissance on the Right” for helping Russia interfere in our democracy. But no matter who was singing his praises, he consistently pursued a virulently anti-American agenda. “Assange was a window into America’s polarized soul, and the view he revealed is ugly, petty, and deeply dispiriting.”

Note to readers: The Mueller report was due to be released after The Week went to press. See next issue for full coverage.
Attorney General William Barr just “keeps on delivering for President Donald Trump,” said Stephen Collinson in CNN.com. Barr first proved his loyalty by dismissing the obstruction evidence against Trump gathered by special counsel Robert Mueller and issuing a one-sided, misleading summary of Mueller’s report. But the partisan Republican’s shamelessness reached an alarming new peak last week when he seemed to confirm Trump’s paranoid fantasy of an attempted “Deep State” coup against him. Testifying before a Senate subcommittee, Barr declared he would be investigating government “spying” on Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign, when the FBI grew concerned about Trump associates’ numerous contacts and connections with Russians. Under grilling by incredulous Democrats, Barr “kind of, sort of walked back that claim,” said Aaron Blake in The Washington Post. He clarified that he was talking about electronic surveillance—such as that conducted on former Trump adviser Carter Page—and said he wanted to find out whether that surveillance was “adequately predicated.” Predictably, Trump seized on Barr’s reckless allegation to proclaim “we had the temerity to call spying ‘spying,’” said the Hillary Clinton campaign. Democrats are outraged that Barr assembled by a former British intelligence agent getting paid by the FBI also cited the now infamous Steele dossier, Papadopoulos and Sam Clovis. In applying for wiretapping warrant to gather intelligence on Page and fellow Trump adviser George Papadopoulos and Sam Clovis. In applying for wiretapping warrant on Page, the FBI also cited the now infamous Steele dossier, assembled by a former British intelligence agent getting paid by the Hillary Clinton campaign. Democrats are outraged that Barr “had the temerity to call spying ‘spying,’” said Ben Weingarten in TheFederalist.com. But what really terrifies them is what a “full investigation of the investigators” will reveal. Barr mustn’t be deterred. We need to know how and why U.S. intelligence agencies came to spy on a presidential candidate’s campaign, so that it “never happens again.”

We already had that investigation, said Rick Lowry in Politico.com, given that Barr doesn’t have all the facts yet. But we need to know how much the FBI and other intelligence officials were “legitimately—and understandably—freaked out by some of the Russia connections of Trump associates,” and how much they acted “out of partisan malice.” Barr should investigate, release his findings, and let “people decide for themselves.”

**Only in America**

- An Indiana man is suing his parents for $86,822.16 because they destroyed his huge collection of pornography. The plaintiff, identified only as Charlie, claims that after he moved out of his parents’ house, they destroyed a dozen crates of his porn videos. This cache, he says, included some films that are extra valuable because they’re “out of print.”

- The campus police chief for Mount Holyoke and Smith colleges in Massachusetts was put on administrative leave after students discovered he was a Trump supporter. On Twitter, Daniel Hect had liked posts that included “Stay the course Pres Trump” and “Build that wall!!!” Smith officials explained Hect’s suspension by saying that “members of our campus community have voiced a lack of trust.”

**Good week for:**

- Adjustments, with assurances from Joey Gallo and Nomar Mazara of the Texas Rangers that they will stop grabbing each other’s crotches as part of their ritualized home-run celebration. “We apologize for that,” said Gallo.

- Holding your fire, after armed police responding to a home-invasion call in Oregon found the suspect cornered in a bathroom and burst in to find an active Roomba robot vacuum cleaner, whose noisy collisions with the walls had alarmed the house sitter.

- Pampered dogs, after The Wilson, a restaurant in Manhattan, debuted special dishes for dogs and their owners to share on an outdoor patio. The menu includes a $42 grilled rib eye with baby vegetables and a $14 bowl of mixed berries.

**Bad week for:**

- The hirsute, with new research showing that men with beards carry more bacteria than dogs do in their fur, with nearly 40 percent of beards tainted with microbes that are hazardous to human health. “Dogs can be considered as clean compared with bearded men,” said Professor Andreas Gutezeit, of Switzerland’s Hirslanden Clinic.

- The Swiss, after the government of Switzerland ruled—incorrectly—that coffee is “not essential to life,” and that the nation’s emergency stockpile of the substance can therefore be abolished.

- State media, after an irritated President Trump tweeted that it was “so weird” to see his favorite network, Fox News, host a town-hall event for Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders. Trump also complained about how “smiley and nice” the moderators were with the left-wing Sanders.

**DOJ seeks to weaken Emoluments Clause**

After President Trump took office, the Department of Justice narrowed its reading of constitutional rules that bar U.S. officials from receiving payments from foreign governments. According to a forthcoming Indiana Law Journal article, the department’s new interpretation of the Emoluments Clause allows any official, including the president, to accept payments from foreign governments as long as the money comes from commercial transactions. Several lawsuits argue that China, Saudi Arabia, and other countries patronize Trump Organization properties in an effort to curry favor with the president. The Justice Department’s rebuttal echoes a 2017 position paper from Trump Organization lawyers, who said, “Paying for a hotel room is not a gift or a present.”

Controversy of the week
New York City

**Pulitzers:** Investigations into President Trump's hush payments and "tax dodges" earned Pulitzer Prizes this week. The New York Times won the "Explanatory Reporting" category for exposing "dubious tax schemes" and "outright fraud" that helped Trump and his relatives avoid some half a billion dollars in taxes in the 1990s. Honors for "National Reporting" went to The Wall Street Journal for revealing that Trump personally played a central role in illegal payoffs made during the 2016 campaign to adult-film actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the South Florida Sun-Sentinel earned awards for coverage of mass shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, respectively. The Pulitzer Board also praised Stoneman Douglas student newspaper reporters for their obituaries of the 17 people murdered.

Washington, D.C.

**War powers:** President Trump this week vetoed a bipartisan resolution that would have ended U.S. military aid for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's civil war. All Democrats and several Republicans in both chambers of Congress voted to cut off U.S. logistical support for the Saudis, who've fought for four years to suppress Iran-backed Houthis rebels trying to overthrow Yemen's government. Thousands of civilians are dead and millions face famine in what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Yet the first successful invocation of the War Powers resolution drew the second veto in office from Trump, who's called for an end to U.S. involvement in other foreign entanglements. "This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities," he said.

In October, after Saudi Arabia's murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the U.S. military ceased providing in-flight refueling for Saudi aircraft.

**Gold Star deportee:** Immigration officials deported the husband of a female U.S. soldier killed in Afghanistan, but allowed him to return to the U.S. this week when his plight was publicized. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials pulled over and arrested Jose Gonzalez Carranza, 30, on the way to his welding job and deported him to Nogales, Mexico, leaving his 12-year-old daughter, Evelyn, with her grandparents.

Carranza immigrated to the U.S. illegally as a teenager and in 2007 married Barbara Veyra, who he says joined the Army to provide for their family. After her death, Carranza was granted "parole in place," allowing him to remain in the U.S. without threat of deportation. ICE did not explain its reversal. Cecilia Wang, deputy legal director of the ACLU, called the initial deportation "the height of cruelty."

**Church burnings:** Prosecutors charged the son of a deputy sheriff with hate crimes and arson this week after he allegedly burned down three black churches over 10 days. Holden Matthews, 21, pleaded not guilty and was denied bond after the sheriff's office said "another fire was imminent." Authorities said they found photos and videos on Matthews' phone linking him to gasoline-fueled fires that destroyed St. Mary Baptist on March 26, Greater Union Baptist on April 2, and Mount Pleasant Baptist two days later. Nobody was inside when the century-old buildings were destroyed. Authorities noted that Matthews is lead singer in a "black-metal" band called Vodka Vultures; the genre is known for its nihilistic themes. Sheriff Bobby Guidroz said his deputy, Roy Matthews, had "no knowledge" of his son's alleged crimes. The NAACP called the arsons "domestic terrorism."

Ashland, Ky.

**Favor returned:** The Russian aluminum company Rusal announced plans this week to invest $200 million in a Kentucky plant—the home state of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. In January, McConnell joined the Trump administration in lifting sanctions on Rusal. The company, partially owned by Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, will supply aluminum from Siberia to the new $1.7 billion rolling mill. The U.S. removed Rusal from its sanctions list after agreeing that Deripaska, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, would reduce his stake and voting rights. Yet news broke earlier this month that the Treasury Department allowed the transfer of about $78 million worth of Rusal shares to Deripaska's children. Craig Bouchard, CEO of Braidy Industries, the U.S. owner of the mill, called partnering with Rusal "noncontroversial," adding, "I'm not a politician. It's all about the business."

St. Landry Parish, La.

**Secret graves:** After clearing trees downed by Hurricane Michael, workers discovered 27 possible clandestine graves about 165 yards from the infamous Dozier School for Boys, a government report revealed last week. Researchers had already excavated 35 graves from a burial site on the 1,400-acre rural campus, far more than any official tally of deaths at the school. Florida shuttered its oldest reform school in 2011 following reports of horrific abuse by school staff during Dozier's 111-year history, during which delinquent and orphaned boys sent to the "White House" were chained or tied up, sexually abused in a "rape room," and beaten mercilessly or killed if they tried to escape. Graves previously exhumed were found to be misidentified or filled with congealed bodies. Jerry Cooper, 74, says guards lashed him 135 times as punishment one night in 1961. "Mark my words," he said, "there are more bodies out there."
The world at a glance...

London
**A Halloween Brexit?** The European Union last week extended the U.K.’s deadline to leave the EU from March 29 until Oct. 31, buying Prime Minister Theresa May more time to get some kind of exit deal through Parliament. Whether she will be able to do that is far from clear. The divorce agreement May negotiated with the EU has been blocked by members of her Conservative Party, and she is now negotiating with opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who favors a Brexit that would keep the U.K. in a full customs union with the EU and maintain current protections for workers’ rights. Corbyn said those talks had already stalled because the government was under pressure from hard-line Conservative Brexiteers who want “to turn this country into a deregulated, low-tax society which will do a deal with [President] Trump. I don’t want to do that.”

Havana
**Tough on Cuba:** The Trump administration announced this week that it is tightening restrictions on travel and remittances to Cuba, reversing the engagement policies of the Obama era. U.S. residents will now only be allowed to travel to Cuba for family visits. That could spell the end of U.S.-to-Cuba cruises, which began under President Obama. The new limits on remittances will be “generous,” a senior administration official told the **Miami Herald,** “because we don’t want to hurt the families.” The Trump administration also said it would let lawsuits be filed against foreign firms that use Cuban properties seized from U.S. citizens—including naturalized Cubans—following the island’s 1959 revolution. Canada and the EU threatened to sue the U.S. at the World Trade Organization if it interferes in their business ties with Cuba.

Tapachula, Mexico
**Storming the border:** Some 350 people broke through a locked gate at the Mexican-Guatemalan border this week and crossed into Mexico to join a caravan of 2,000 migrants heading to the U.S. Mexican authorities said the migrants were “aggressive” and accused them of attacking the police. A group of several hundred Central American, Cuban, and African migrants have been waiting for weeks at immigration offices in Tapachula, where they say immigration officials have been slow to process documents that would allow them to head north. The World Bank says climate change is fueling the exodus from Central America, where farmers are losing cropland to unusually extreme droughts and floods.

Lima
**Presidential suicide:** Former Peruvian President Alan García fatally shot himself in the head this week just moments before he was about to be arrested for alleged bribery and money laundering. When police arrived at his home at 6:30 a.m. to execute the warrant, García asked them to call his attorney and went to his bedroom, officials said. After hearing the gunshot, officers broke down the door and rushed the 69-year-old to a Lima hospital, where he died. García, who served as president from 1985 to 1990 and from 2006 to 2011, was accused of taking kickbacks from the Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht in a contract to upgrade Lima’s transit system, part of a vast corruption scandal that has implicated politicians and business leaders across South America. The day before his suicide, he tweeted that there was “no shred of evidence” against him.

The Hague, Netherlands
**U.S. won’t be investigated:** The International Criminal Court last week dropped plans to investigate alleged war crimes in Afghanistan, citing a lack of cooperation from the U.S. and other parties. That probe would have looked at civilian killings, torture, and other abuses in the 18-year Afghan War, including by U.S. soldiers and intelligence officers, the Taliban, and Afghan government forces. President Trump hailed the decision as “a major international victory.” His administration has vowed to deny U.S. visas to any ICC staff who investigate or rule on war crimes cases involving Americans, and recently revoked the visa of the court’s chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda. Afghan human rights campaigner Hadi Marifat decried the ICC for abandoning the probe, saying, “The court was a last hope for all of us in a country which is completely lacking justice.”
**Fershampenuaz, Russia**

**Priest banished for wife’s sin:** A Russian Orthodox priest has been removed from his parish and sent to minister to a remote village because his wife won a beauty contest. Oksana Zotova performed a Brazilian dance in a skimpy costume at the Miss Sensuality pageant during Lent, and when Father Sergei Zotov’s superiors saw the photos of his beautician wife on social media, they were not amused. “It is a great sin when the wife of a priest exposes herself for show,” said Archpriest Feodor Saprykin. “What kind of a priest is he if he cannot control his own family? How does he intend to control his congregation?” Zotov will serve the rural congregation in Fershampenuaz, 45 miles from his home city of Magnitogorsk, until church authorities decide his atonement is complete.

**Cairo**

**El-Sissi sticks around:** Egypt’s Parliament this week overwhelmingly approved a series of constitutional amendments that would allow President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi to remain in power until 2030. The amendments would also give the military greater influence in political life and hand el-Sissi more control over the judiciary. The amendments must go to a national referendum. Since coming to power in a 2013 coup that ended the brief rule of democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi, an Islamist, el-Sissi has built a cult of personality and returned Egypt to the authoritarianism of its longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak. Banners and billboards across Cairo exhort Egyptians to vote for the amendments; there is no free press.

**Hangzhou, China**

**All work and no play:** Chinese tech billionaire Jack Ma came in for rare state criticism this week after he enthusiastically endorsed a 12-hour workday. The founder of Alibaba said in a blog post that the so-called 996 schedule—working from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., 6 days a week—that is increasingly the norm at Chinese tech firms allows employees to enjoy “the happiness and rewards of hard work.” But Chinese internet commenters complained that such a schedule prevents workers from having a personal life, and the state-run newspaper People’s Daily agreed. “Advocating hard work and commitment does not mean forcing overtime,” the paper said, calling 996 culture “unfair and impractical.” China adopted the two-day weekend in 1995.

**Jakarta**

**Jokowi re-elected:** Indonesian President Joko Widodo looked set to win a second five-year term this week after fending off a challenge by a hard-line Islamist. Widodo’s election rival, Prabowo Subianto, is a onetime son-in-law of Indonesia’s former dictator Suharto, and a much-feared ex-special forces commander with strong backing from Islamists. To counter Prabowo’s appeal to pious Muslims, the president, who goes by “Jokowi,” named a conservative cleric, Ma’ruf Amin, as his running mate and made a pilgrimage to Mecca days before the vote. He also touted his infrastructure achievements, including new roads, ports, and airports. Indonesia’s presidential election is the largest single-day election in the world, with 190 million eligible voters.

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Ivanka touts aid:** President Trump’s daughter and senior adviser Ivanka Trump traveled to Ethiopia and Ivory Coast this week to promote a $50 million U.S. initiative to boost women’s employment in developing countries. In Addis Ababa, Trump signed a joint statement with the African Union Commission on fighting child marriage, human trafficking, and sexual abuse and attended a summit on African women’s economic empowerment. “Investing in women is a smart development policy,” she said, “and it’s smart business.” Ethiopia has made great strides in women’s inclusion. Half the ministers in the cabinet of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed—who took office last year—are women, and in October the legislature elected Sahle-Work Zewde to be the first woman to hold the largely ceremonial post of president.
Kardashian’s legal ambitions

Kim Kardashian is very serious about becoming a lawyer, said Jonathan Van Meter in Vogue. The reality-show superstar became a criminal justice reform advocate after connecting with Alice Marie Johnson, a 63-year-old Alabama woman who’d been in prison for a nonviolent drug offense since 1996. Working with activists, Kardashian played a key role in lobbying President Trump to commute Johnson’s sentence last summer on the way to signing a bipartisan sentencing reform bill. Kardashian didn’t want her efforts to end there. “I just felt like the system could be so different, and I wanted to fix it,” she says. “If I knew more, I could do more.” Kardashian did not graduate college, but California is one of four states that allow applicants to take the bar after a four-year apprenticeship with a lawyer or judge. She’s now working her way through a first-year law student’s curriculum. If she passes the “baby bar exam” administered by the state, she’ll be approved for three more years of study. “To me, torts is the most confusing, contracts the most boring, and crim law I can do in my sleep,” she says. “Took my first test, I got a 100. Super easy for me. The concepts I grasp in two seconds.”

Why Cuomo chose journalism

CNN’s Chris Cuomo isn’t going into the family business, said Jeremy Barr in The Hollywood Reporter. Cuomo is the son of former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and the brother of the current governor. His career choice was apostasy. “My father was heartbroken when I went into journalism,” he says. “He saw the media as a misused political apparatus that was in the business of gotchas and penny-ante interests, without concern for real policy or real implications—especially TV [news].” But Tim Russert, his father’s speechwriter, would go on to become a legendary host of Meet the Press, and he encouraged Chris’ ambitions. “He raised me,” says Cuomo. His combative style has made him a prime-time host on CNN, with 1.3 million people tuning in for his sparring matches with President Trump’s defenders. “[Rachel] Maddow’s a professor, [Sean] Hannity’s a preacher. I was built for the battle,” Cuomo says. Still, it’s not where Cuomo wants to be, with CNN trailing with President Trump’s defenders. “I really like to please. This is their life and I like to let them get whatever the next step is they want to get to.” That’s easier with some celebrities than others. “People like Johnny Depp or Nicole Kidman—I went kicking and screaming to this idea that there actually were people who the camera did love,” she says. “I refused to believe that at first. I had to come to terms with the fact that there are photogenic people.”

Leibovitz’s photographic insight

Annie Leibovitz has become nearly as famous as the celebrities she photographs, said Jordan Riefe in The Guardian (U.K.). Leibovitz, 69, trained her eye as a photojournalist at Rolling Stone in the 1970s, where she captured some of the decade’s defining moments, such as President Richard Nixon leaving the White House for the last time in a helicopter. By the early 1980s she moved into the studio, creating the stylistic portraits that have become her trademark, such as her iconic Vanity Fair cover of a pregnant Demi Moore wearing nothing but a diamond ring. Her image of a naked John Lennon curling up to a fully clothed Yoko Ono was the last picture ever taken of the former Beatle. “I kind of know what people kind of want to look like,” Leibovitz says. “I really like to please. This is their life and I like to let them get to wherever the next step is they want to get to.” That’s easier with some celebrities than others. “People like Johnny Depp or Nicole Kidman—I went kicking and screaming to this idea that there actually were people who the camera did love,” she says. “I refused to believe that at first. I had to come to terms with the fact that there are photogenic people.”

Gossip

Actor Ryan O’Neal once fought to retain Andy Warhol’s iconic portrait of O’Neal’s late partner Farrah Fawcett, claiming its sentimental value to him was priceless. Now O’Neal is shopping the painting for $20 million, the New York Post reported this week. Back in 2013, a jury ruled that O’Neal could retain the painting even though Fawcett, who died in 2009, left her art collection to the University of Texas, her alma mater. “I talk to her,” O’Neal told jurors of the painting. “We lost her. It would seem a crime to lose it.” O’Neal, 77, has priced the painting at $20 million but would “let it go for less,” a source said.

Amber Heard responded this week to ex-husband Johnny Depp’s $50 million defamation suit with new allegations of physical abuse and drug-fueled violence during their brief marriage. Depp filed the lawsuit after Heard wrote in a Washington Post op-ed that she had been a victim of domestic abuse, without naming Depp. In a new court filing, the actress says Depp repeatedly hit and kicked her, head-butted her, pulled out chunks of her hair, and tried to strangle her. Heard said Depp went on sleepless binges during which he took on a “delusional and violent” persona she nicknamed “The Monster.” Heard also said Depp “urinated all over” their vacation home and wrote on the walls in his blood. Depp denied the allegations. He’s set to star in Fantastic Beasts 3, but Warner Bros. is reportedly “freaking out.”

Woody Allen breached his movie contract with Amazon by publicly making “insensitive” comments about the #MeToo movement, a lawyer for Amazon argued last week. Allen, 83, sued Amazon for $68 million after the company voided the deal despite having released just one of four promised films. The company backed out after Allen’s daughter Dylan Farrow publicly detailed how Allen allegedly sexually abused her as a child. Allen responded by accusing Farrow of “cynically using” #MeToo for attention, calling the movement a “witch hunt.” Allen’s lawyers demanded to know who at Amazon had nixed the deal, threatening to depose CEO Jeff Bezos.
**The Mafia today**

**Is the mob still active?**

It would have been easy until a few weeks ago to assume Italian-American mobsters were extinct, and that’s exactly how Francesco “Franky Boy” Cali liked it. Investigators say Cali ran the Gambino crime family like a “ghost,” conducting business strictly in person to avoid wiretaps, and insisting that his underlings do the same. Yet Cali, 53, was splashed on covers of New York City tabloids in March after being shot six times outside his Staten Island home. It was the first murder of a mob boss since 1985, when Gambino head Paul Castellano was gunned down outside Sparks Steak House in midtown Manhattan by three trench coat–wearing men under orders from John Gotti, who watched the cinematic rubout from a car across the street. Gotti became a notoriously flamboyant boss, but the Dapper Don’s celebrity status attracted intensive law-enforcement attention and led to his downfall. That was a fate Cali was determined to avoid when he became the crime family’s capo. (His murder allegedly resulted from a personal feud, not a Mafia rivalry. See box.) “The mob is alive and well,” said William Gale, head of the FBI’s Organized Crime Task Force in New York. “They’ve learned the attention is not good for business.”

**How big are their ranks?**

There are about 3,000 members and affiliates in the U.S., the FBI estimates. In Castellano’s day there were double that number in the New York area alone, yet the same Five Families—Gambino, Bonanno, Colombo, Genovese, and Lucchese—have survived since Charles “Lucky” Luciano founded the Commission, the Mafia’s governing body, in the early 1930s. Luciano helped establish the family structure, with dons and their captains managing associates who had yet to become “made men.” There were 26 families during the mob’s heyday in the 1950s, stretching from Boston, Providence, Buffalo, and Philadelphia through Al Capone’s Chicago outfit to Hollywood and “Bugsy” Siegel’s new frontier in Las Vegas. Today, the mob is concentrated around New York.

**How’s business?**

After Gotti received a life sentence for murder and racketeering in 1992, the mob “retreated to their caves,” Mafia biographer Selwyn Raab said. They refocused on what Raab calls their “bread and butter” rackets: illegal gambling, loan-sharking, extortion, and drugs, mostly heroin. Cali’s crew allegedly worked as a conduit between Latin American drug cartels and Sicilian traffickers. Still, business is way down from Gotti’s era, when the Gambino family allegedly pulled in hundreds of millions a year. At its peak, it used its control of Teamsters unions and other organized labor to take a steady cut from food distribution, construction, sanitation, and clothing manufacturing, at one point collecting a $3 “tax” on every piece of clothing from Manhattan’s garment district. Today, the mob remains heavily involved in cargo theft, extortion of port workers, and drug smuggling in New York Harbor. “The one thing that they are,” said Walter Arsenaux, executive director of the city’s Waterfront Commission, “is adaptable.”

**Why the smaller profits, then?**

Competition, for one. By the 1920s, immigrants from southern Italy had prevailed over Jewish and Irish gangsters, making millions on bootlegging during Prohibition. Except for some collaboration with powerful criminals like Meyer Lansky, Italian mobsters mostly kept business within the family. Meanwhile, other ethnic groups from Russia, Latin America, and Asia mimicked their model and eventually became more sophisticated. New recruits for the Italian mob are in short supply, so families often pay temporary associates to do specific crimes. “Loyalties are thin,” retired FBI agent David Shapiro said. “You know the gig economy? Well, we’ve got a gig Mafia now.”

**Isn’t the mob a lifetime job?**

It used to be. Under the rules imported from Sicily, newly inducted wiseguys swore to never betray their family and to honor omertà, the code of silence. But after Congress passed the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) in 1970, bosses could be prosecuted for their organizations’ crimes, and dozens of mobsters flipped and testified for the prosecution rather than go to prison for decades. In 1986, Rudolph Giuliani, then U.S. attorney in Manhattan, used RICO statutes to convict the heads of three families and five underlings. After Lucchese head Alphonse D’Arco discovered he was marked for death, he became a government informant in 1991, and his testimony led to the prosecution of more than 50 mobsters. Testimony from Gambino underboss “Sammy the Bull” Gravano helped take Gotti down, and in 2017 federal authorities arrested 19 members of the Lucchese family, including its two top bosses, on charges of racketeering and murder. Disloyalty had crippled the mob, and D’Arco said he’d never go back to his mafioso ways. “But as far as living day to day?” he said. “I take that life any f—ing day of the week.”

**A long history of rubouts**

No godfather is untouchable. That’s been the grim reality faced by every mob boss since Salvatore Maranzano declared himself capo di tutti capi—boss of bosses—in 1931, only to be killed months later. Albert Anastasia, the “Lord High Executioner,” became one of the most feared Gambino family dons ever after leading Murder Inc., a mob enforcement operation that was linked to more than 60 killings—some performed with ice picks and piano wires. But Anastasia himself was gunned down in 1957 while getting a shave at a Manhattan barbershop. One of the most iconic mobster images is of Bonanno boss Carmine Galante, photographed with a cigar still between his lips after he was shot dead in 1979 while eating at an Italian restaurant in Brooklyn. That tradition continues: Last October, Bonanno family member Sylvester Zottola was shot and killed while ordering coffee at a McDonald’s drive-through in the Bronx. Yet while violence comes with the territory, Frank Cali’s recent murder reportedly struck many mobsters as out of bounds, because it occurred outside his home. Police say that the shooter, upset that Cali wouldn’t let him date his niece, didn’t even realize whom he was killing.
A president shouldn’t be pushing 90

Byron York
Washington Examiner

Benjamin Netanyahu used to be “a cautious leader—until Donald Trump came along,” said Jackson Diehl. The Israeli prime minister, who won re-election last week, has always been a hard-liner, but behind his harsh rhetoric was a pragmatic statesman who “has avoided steering the country into self-defeating adventures or unwinnable wars.” But since Trump forged a strong bond with Netanyahu, and essentially issued him a blank check, Bibi has become more aggressive and even reckless. Just before the election, Netanyahu sought the support of far-right parties by pledging to annex large portions of the West Bank—a radical move that would doom any chance of Palestinian statehood and “plunge Israel into conflict with most of the rest of the world.” Years ago, that step was inconceivable, but with Trump in office, Netanyahu “no longer has the emergency brake” of a possible rupture with the U.S. Trump “enables and even eggs on Israeli nationalism,” and when his long-promised “Middle East peace plan” is inevitably rejected by the Palestinians, it will give Netanyahu an additional excuse to seize the West Bank. If that’s what happens, it will be clear Israel’s leader “has truly embraced Trumpian politics—and its disregard for consequences.”

Why everyone was rooting for Tiger

Scott Jennings
Los Angeles Times

“The world can now finally relate to Tiger Woods,” said Scott Jennings. When he was young and golf’s most dominant player, Woods was cool and aloof, which deprived fans of the warm feelings they had for sunny champions such as Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Phil Mickelson. Later, Woods’ personal mistakes led to a series of public scandals that cost him his marriage, his reputation, and his once unshakable confidence on the course; then serious back problems and spinal-fusion surgery seemed to end his career. So when Woods completed an incredible comeback with a stirring victory at the Masters last Sunday, it was a redemption story millions of Americans could cheer. I watched the final hole in an airport lounge, and when Woods’ last putt settled into the hole, everyone there stood and clapped and “joined in euphoria” over Tiger’s amazing comeback. As a parent, I was deeply moved by seeing him tightly embrace his son and daughter, with the crowd’s roars ringing in their ears. They’d seen their dad at his worst, but now they, too, have seen him at his best: a champion who overcame his mistakes, rebuilt a broken body, and “simply refused to give up.”

Viewpoint

“College mental health facilities are swamped, suicide rates are spiking. At the root of it all is the following problem: We’ve created a culture based on lies, [including] Rich and successful people are worth more than poorer and less successful people. We pretend we don’t tell this lie, but our whole meritocracy points to it. The message of the meritocracy is that you are what you accomplish. If you perform well, people will love you. No wonder it’s so hard to be a young adult today. No wonder our society is fragmenting. We’ve taken the lies of hyper-individualism and we’ve made them the unspoken assumptions that govern how we live.”

David Brooks in The New York Times

It must be true...

I read it in the tabloids

- A parking lot in England is being called Britain’s Bermuda Triangle, because electronic keys and car alarms keep mysteriously malfunctioning there. Dozens of supermarket shoppers in Gloucestershire, have been unable to open or lock their doors or else could not disable their alarms. “It’s bizarre,” said Graeme Wakerley of his useless key fob. “I assumed the batteries were flat, as you would in that situation.” But he said when his son replaced them, “that didn’t work, either.” The supermarket said it is “concerned” and is “looking into the matter.”

- A British inventor has been dubbed the real-life Iron Man after creating a “jet suit.” Richard Browning claims his “wearable flight system” can propel a human as high as 12,000 feet at speeds of more than 55 miles per hour, using five gas turbines. So far, Browning’s company, Gravity Industries, has earned a British patent for the $440,000 suit. The former Royal Marine says his “current priority” is launching a Gravity Race Series later this year, during which teams of would-be Iron Men will “put their flight skills to the test.”

- The town of Joensuu in Finland will hold the first-ever Heavy Metal Knitting World Championships this summer. Finland, the organizers said, is heavy metal’s “promised land,” with 50 metal bands for every 100,000 citizens. Like other Scandinavian nations, it also has a strong knitting tradition. To enter, applicants have to record a one-minute video of themselves knitting along to “Fight or Die” by the thrash metal band Maniac Abdector.
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Three Swedish police have been charged in connection with the fatal shooting of a man with Down syndrome who was playing with a toy gun, said Ingvart Persson. It’s a tragedy for everyone: for the 20-year-old victim, Eric Torell; for his family and friends; and “for the three police officers” who responded to a report of an armed man on the streets of Stockholm. They are being prosecuted for misconduct and manslaughter. Everyone has sympathy for the officers, who feared for their safety and were “forced to make life-or-death decisions in a fraction of a second.” Even the prosecutor concedes that Torell’s toy gun looked like a real weapon. But those arguments “are not enough.” The police should have known that the real gunman had been arrested before they encountered Torell. More important, they should have stopped firing once he was subdued. A total of 25 bullets were fired. Clearly, officers need more extensive training. Police shootings are “extremely rare” in Sweden, with an average of one person killed a year for the past 20 years—a far cry from the hundreds fatally shot each year by cops in the U.S. But even one is too many. We entrust our police with deadly force, and they must take that responsibility deadly seriously.

Rents are soaring in Berlin, and housing activists are demanding dangerously radical solutions, said Bernhard Daldrup and Cansel Kiziltepe. Long a cheap and funky artists’ mecca, Berlin has become steadily more bourgeois since the German seat of government moved there from Bonn in 1999, and over the past decade monthly rent has more than doubled. People who have lived in their apartments for decades—including pensioners in their 80s—are finding themselves out on the street because they can’t make rent. Activists are calling for extreme measures, such as a total rent freeze or even nationalization of the biggest real estate companies, including Deutsche Wohnen, which owns a staggering 111,500 Berlin apartments. These far-left proposals won’t work: They would wreak havoc with the housing market and ultimately hurt tenants. But we do need some kind of “New Housing Deal.” Corporate landlords must be made to “take the social obligations of property ownership seriously.” Greater oversight and regulation could ensure that only companies that “commit themselves not only to short-term returns but also to community principles” would be allowed to operate in the property market. The one thing we can all agree on is that “no elderly person should be evicted ever again.”

The fire that ravaged Notre-Dame de Paris this week has scarred the soul of France and sent an “immense wave of sadness across the planet,” said Le Monde (France) in an editorial. For more than 850 years, the Catholic cathedral has been the heart of Paris. It survived the Revolution of 1789 and the Nazis—German generals defied Hitler’s orders to bomb it. Its bells rang our joys and our sorrows, tolling for the Liberation of Paris in 1944 and after the November 2015 terrorist attacks that killed 130 people in our capital. Now Notre-Dame has been gutted by a massive blaze that apparently broke out by accident on the roof, where renovations were ongoing. Parisians and tourists flocked to the terrible sight, and when the burning spire toppled, the crowd gasped and wept. They were living the nightmare Victor Hugo had imagined in his novel The Hunchback of Notre-Dame. Grieving onlookers began singing hymns, an Ave Maria for Our Lady. “For all lovers of art and civilization, she was a sumptuous Gothic jewel, a miracle of architecture and an invaluable museum.”

The cathedral’s two stone towers and its façade survived, said Alexis Feerchak in Le Figaro (France), but the wealth of masterpieces and sacred objects lost could be immeasurable. Notre-Dame housed three relics from the Passion of Christ: a piece of the True Cross, one of the nails, and the crown of thorns Jesus wore at the Crucifixion. In “the first sign of hope,” authorities said they had saved those relics, but the fate of other treasures is not known. The 76 huge 17th- and 18th-century paintings that hung throughout the cathedral “could not be unhooked” from the walls, and their condition is uncertain—at least, they are damaged by smoke and soot; at worst, they are ashes. The rose windows seem to be intact, but the lead that holds them together may be fatally weakened. The great 18th-century organ is still standing, but its pipes—made of an alloy of tin and lead that is vulnerable to heat—may no longer sound.

How could this happen? asked The Economist (U.K.). Some 500 firefighters rushed to the scene, but they were delayed in evening traffic, and by the time the water cannons were deployed, the fire had spread across the roof. France is still in shock, but soon it will “search for somebody to blame.” Already, “questions are being asked about disaster planning for a monument of this scale and national importance.” President Emmanuel Macron said we will rebuild, no matter the cost, said Guillaume Goubert in La Croix (France). In the aftermath of the blaze, businesses and donors pledged some $1 billion for the reconstruction effort. How strange that a country “so deeply secularized, de-Christianized,” would “feel its heart crushed at the sight of a church in flames.” In this Easter Week of resurrection, we vow “that Notre-Dame de Paris will be reborn from the ashes.”
Sudan: Can a coup give way to democracy?

The world “can rejoice at the fall of Omar al-Bashir,” said Le Monde (France) in an editorial. The Sudanese dictator took power in a military coup in June 1989 and fittingly was ousted by another military coup last week. Bashir, 75, is a nasty bit of work, a tyrant who gave shelter to Osama bin Laden in the 1990s and freely slaughtered his own people. He fought a bloody civil war against separatists in what is now South Sudan and in the 2000s sent Sudanese Arab Janjaweed death squads to massacre and rape black Sudanese in the western region of Darfur. That campaign led the International Criminal Court to charge him with genocide. But what finally brought down Bashir were the austerity policies he imposed late last year, when his regime tripled the price of bread. Hundreds of thousands of mostly young protesters took to the streets to demand his ouster, and when the announcement came that Bashir had been deposed, the people cheered. But will they get true democracy from a military coup? Much work must be done to ensure a political transition “that is not a mere extension of the Bashir regime without Bashir.”

There have already been encouraging signs, said Zine Cherfaoui in El Watan (Algeria). Bashir was initially replaced by the hated former defense minister, Awad Ibn Auf, who served as liaison between the regime in Khartoum and the Janjaweed in Darfur. But protesters decried his appointment, and Auf was forced out after just 24 hours. He has since been succeeded by “new strong-man” Abdel Fattah Burhan, a general who hasn’t previously held any position of note. So far, he’s said all the right things. He lifted the nighttime curfew, released the hundreds of demonstrators who were arrested during the weeks of protest, and promised to “eliminate the roots” of the Bashir regime. Most important, Burhan has pledged to turn over power to a civilian government. His new military council says its temporary rule is “not a coup.”

Oh, yes it is, said Adam Arroudj in Le Figaro (France). Some analysts have likened Bashir’s removal to the recent change of power in Algeria, where longtime President Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned after weeks of protests. But in Algeria, a civilian took over as interim leader—senate leader Abdelkader Bensalah—and he was named by the legislature, not the military. In fact, the substitute leaders in both Sudan and Algeria are members of their countries’ old guard, said Marwan Bishara in Qatar’s Aljazeera.com. But that doesn’t mean the counter-revolution has won. Pro-democracy activists in Sudan and Algeria have learned from the failed revolutions in Egypt (still a dictatorship) and Libya (ruled by warring militias) that it is crucial “to get the military on their side and on their terms.” Now comes the “slow, tedious, and deliberate process of organization, negotiation, and reconciliation.” Rushing into elections right away will privilege the old order “and fracture the newly formed groups driving the revolution.” Democracy is possible, but it will take time.

Rwandain

Remembering the horrors we overcame

Pan Butamire
The New Times

Chinese people have always believed in fate, said Yan Yunning, but we also believe we can change it. We try to optimize our fortunes by consulting the zodiac and choosing houses or wedding dates with lucky numbers. And now we’re consulting online fortune-tellers. These supposed sages are all over the Chinese internet, and they will even read your fate via WhatsApp or WeChat. Some friends recently encouraged me to try a digital fortune-teller for career advice after I complained of feeling stressed in a new job. I forked over 50 yuan ($7.50) and was told to type in my name, gender, birthday, place of birth, city of residence, and field of work. The “self-proclaimed soothsayer” warned me that, because I was born in the Year of the Dog, I’d have bad luck until 2022. But, he said, there was hope. I was due for an unexpected windfall—and he could tell me all about it if I just paid some extra money. It was obvious this was “a scam.” Online fortune-tellers are preying on the gullibility and superstition of the Chinese. They “fleece people in the name of predicting the future.” China has modernized so rapidly that it’s understandable to feel disoriented. But in seeking comforting answers from strangers, we’re making ourselves easy marks.
Talking points

Buttigieg: Can a true Christian be gay?

Pete Buttigieg is trying to win the presidency by breaking “the Republican lock on God,” said Timothy Egan in The New York Times. The 37-year-old Rhodes scholar, Navy veteran, and mayor of South Bend, Ind., formally entered the Democratic presidential race this week after surging to third place in several polls. “Surprisingly for a modern Democrat,” he’s a proud Christian, eloquently explaining how faith informs his desire for a compassionate immigration policy and universal health care. “Mayor Pete,” as he likes to be called, is gay; he proudly shows off his husband, Chasten, and has said their marriage has “moved me closer to God.” That’s a pointed challenge to social conservatives like Vice President Mike Pence who insist on their right to view homosexuality as a sin and gay marriage as a moral wrong. To the “Mike Pences of the world,” Buttigieg recently said, “your quarrel is not with me—your quarrel, sir, is with my creator.”

Buttigieg shouldn’t lecture anyone about Christianity, said Erick Erickson in TheResurgent.com. He attacks President Trump for ignoring biblical commands to care for “the least of these,” but Buttigieg himself ignores “the inconvenient parts of faith,” namely the “express statements in Scripture” that homosexuality is a sin. Pence, meanwhile, has been unfailingly courteous to his fellow Hoosier, said Ben Shapiro in NationalReview.com. Yet at virtually every campaign stop, Buttigieg paints the VP as a “closed-minded bigot.” If Buttigieg truly understood Christianity, he would know that Pence’s traditional reading of the Bible doesn’t mean he has any personal “animus” against gay people.

If not animus, then ignorance, said Ed Kilgore in NYMag.com. Conservative Christians’ homophobia “is based on the belief that being gay is a choice made in conscious defiance of God and nature”—an assumption that’s fading away as straight people get to know openly gay friends, family members, and colleagues. Pence and his allies like to hide behind the old canard of “loving the sinner but hating the sin,” said Bob Moser in NewRepublic.com. But Buttigieg is using the “powerful platform” of his presidential candidacy to point out that the dehumanizing laws, public policies, and court rulings evangelicals seek would make gay people second-class citizens—which is anything but loving. His eloquence on this topic has left champions of Bible-based intolerance “furious—and scared.”

Benedict: Blame the sexual revolution

For six years, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has been content to spend retirement practicing “his Mozart at the piano” and tending his “vegetable patch,” said Tom Kingston in the Los Angeles Times. But now the former pope, 91, has broken his self-imposed silence with an “incendiary essay.” In it, he blames the church’s sexual abuse crisis on a society-wide “erosion of rules and morality” triggered by the sexual revolution. “In the 20 years from 1960 to 1980, the previously normative standards regarding sexuality collapsed entirely,” Benedict writes. Priests internalized society’s new belief that sexual expression of all kinds was natural and moral, Benedict says, so that even pedophilia came to be seen as “allowed and appropriate.” Benedict’s successor, Pope Francis, has blamed “clericalism,” or priests who emphasized power over service, so this new, contradictory analysis has sent “shock waves” through the church.

This is really not good for the faithful, said Tom Gjelten in NPR.org. Catholics now have “two papal perspectives on the clergy abuse crisis” and “may feel free to choose between them.” To this conservative Catholic, Benedict’s “diagnosis of the problem” is far more perceptive, said Michael Brendan Dougherty in NationalReview.com. He traces “the moral anarchy within the church” to “a certain casual or flippant attitude toward God” that became widespread in the 1960s and ’70s. “Why did pedophilia reach such proportions?” Benedict asks. “Ultimately, the reason is the absence of God.” In his critique, Benedict even provides a solution to the crisis—that Catholics must, once again, “fear and honor a living God.”

Benedict’s “self-justifying” letter ignores the facts, said David Von Drehle in The Washington Post. As we now know from investigations worldwide, many abuse cases “occurred long before the fatal 60s.” But in his arrogance, Benedict believes that “priests raped children and bishops covered it up because the rest of us in society forced them into it through our godless depravity.” In reality, the blame lies with the bishops and cardinals who covered up thousands of cases of child abuse by authorizing hush money payoffs to victims, attacking truth tellers, and sending monstrous offenders on “spiritual retreats” rather than turning them over to the authorities. The only salvation for the “corrupted church” is sincere and prolonged confession and atonement by the hierarchy—not Benedict’s astonishing denial of responsibility. Sorry, but “two popes is one too many.”
Talking points

Rep. Omar: Did she diminish 9/11?

Rep. Ilhan Omar has outdone herself, said the New York Post in an editorial. In a speech last month to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the freshman Democratic congresswoman downplayed the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to complain about how she and her fellow Muslims have become “second-class citizens.” After “some people did something” on 9/11, Omar said, “all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties.” Hard to believe, but a member of Congress actually brushed off the murder of 3,000 innocents by Islamic extremists as some people doing something. Omar has already made headlines for trafficking in anti-Semitic tropes, such as implying that Jewish lobbyists are buying U.S. support for Israel. Her cavalier words about one of America’s darkest days is an appalling new low.

By seizing on one phrase in a 20-minute speech, “Omar’s detractors misrepresent her words and intentions,” said Moustafa Bayoumi in The Guardian (U.K.). Omar was trying to explain how the horrific actions of a few Muslims “have distressingly enabled the threat to the civil rights of so many,” such as President Trump’s ban on visitors and immigrants from five Muslim-majority countries. The backlash has only proven how right she was. The conservative New York Post ran a picture of the burning World Trade Center towers on the front page, “as if Omar herself is responsible for those deaths.” Trump went even further, tweeting a video mashing up Omar’s words with footage of the attacks, said Greg Sargent in The Washington Post. Omar soon was inundated with death threats. Trump and his allies’ calculated attacks on Omar “absolutely are designed to incite hatred of Muslims.”

Some of the criticism of Omar has been “over the top,” said David French in NationalReview.com, but Democrats shouldn’t use her Muslim faith to shield her from criticism. Omar is an outspoken public figure, and “it is not racist—nor is it incitement—to call her to account” for her insensitive dismissal of 9/11. Democrats offering “full-throated” defenses of Omar are playing right into Trump’s hands, said David Frum in TheAtlantic.com. The president wants to make this “ultraprogressive” Minnesota congresswoman the face of their party in 2020. It’s very likely she’ll continue to make outlandish criticisms of Israel and America. “It cannot be pleasant for Omar’s colleagues to have to wonder and worry what that next remark will be.”

Sanders: What his tax returns reveal

Rarely is becoming a millionaire “better news for your enemies than you,” said Elizabeth Bruenig in The Washington Post. But Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont is the exception. His “critics are thrilled.” The self-avowed socialist, class warrior, and Democratic presidential contender released 10 years of tax returns, and they reveal he’s joined the “millionaires and billionaires” he’s long vilified. He and his wife, Jane, earned $1.07 million in 2016 and $1.15 million in 2017 on the strength of book royalties received on top of his $174,000 Senate salary—a leap from the $240,622 they made in 2015, before his presidential run turned him into a populist hero. The Sanderses also own three houses. Bernie still wants to raise taxes on the rich, but predictably, his critics are now asking: How can a wealthy man still speak for America’s working class?

If he now advocated lower taxes for people like himself, Sanders would be a hypocrite, but he’s remained true to his message. True enough, said Sam Stein and Adam Rawnsley in TheDailyBeast.com., but how do you explain his giving only an average of 2.26 percent annually to charity over a decade—including less than 1 percent the first year he made a million bucks? That “presents its own set of political vulnerabilities.”

When Bernie was asked about his newfound wealth, said Michael Graham in the Boston Herald, he replied defensively. “If you write a best-selling book, you can be a millionaire, too,” he said. In other words, “I created something of value that lots of other people wanted to buy.” That’s Capitalism 101—and a negation of his value that lots of other people wanted to buy.”

Sanders has spent his career drawing simplistic, black-and-white distinctions between America’s oppressed workers and the evil rich. Now that his story “has become a bit more nuanced,” here’s hoping his rhetoric and policies change in the same way.

Wit & Wisdom

Dictators fear laughter more than bombs.
Author Arthur Koestler, quoted in The New York Review of Books

“If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.”
George Orwell, quoted in Washington Examiner

“Children, I came to understand, need you around even if they ignore you. In fact, they need you around so they can ignore you.”
Writer Ruth Reichl, quoted in The New York Times

“If you don’t have a weekend to spare once a year to think exclusively about the things that really matter—well, then you haven’t planned your life correctly.”
Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, quoted in NationalReview.com

“Show me a hero and I’ll write you a tragedy.”
F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Independent.co.uk

“There is such a thing as overcapitalizing the A in artist.”
Saul Bellow, quoted in LitHub.com

“I like being over the hill. I’ve discovered there’s a whole new landscape.”
Jane Fonda, quoted in The Sunday Times

Poll watch

30% of Americans believe that President Trump’s tax returns will reveal information so damaging that it will show he is unfit to be president, while 22% think his returns will be politically harmful but not disqualifying. 27% believe the returns will not reveal anything damaging, and 21% are not sure. 56% want Trump’s taxes released to the public, while 27% do not.

THE WEEK April 26, 2019
Artificial intelligence: The ethics of algorithms

Lawmakers are gearing up for some of the first efforts to regulate artificial intelligence, said Karen Hao in the MIT Technology Review—and “there are likely to be more to come.” AI algorithms can now determine what content you see online, whether you get a loan, and even whether a convict is granted parole. Handing over decisions to AI can result in unexpected and troubling discrimination. In one test of job ads on Facebook, “postings for preschool teachers and secretaries, for example, were shown to a higher fraction of women, while postings for janitors and taxi drivers were shown to a higher proportion of minorities”—even though the researchers hadn’t asked Facebook to discriminate. The Algorithmic Accountability Act, introduced last week by Democrats in the House and Senate, would require big companies to “audit their machine-learning systems for bias and discrimination.” But these are not easy problems to fix, because they raise fundamental questions of fairness. For instance, in evaluating parole, does fairness mean “the same proportion of black and white individuals should get high-risk assessment scores? Or that the same level of risk should result in the same score regardless of race?”

Letting big tech companies answer these questions themselves will never work, said Turing Award winner Yoshua Bengio in Nature.com. “AI can amplify discrimination and biases, such as gender or racial discrimination, because those are present in the data the technology is trained on, reflecting people’s behavior.” The companies building AI systems don’t have the incentive to fix this, so “the dangers of abuse are very real.” In fact, companies that put limitations on AI to “follow ethical guidelines would be disadvantaged with respect to the companies that do not.” So counting on the tech industry to regulate itself is like relying on “voluntary taxation.” Even if the industry is willing to take on the issues, said Parmy Olson in The Wall Street Journal, self-governance poses serious challenges. Google has disbanded not one but two “high-profile, global, independent ethics councils” over protests from outside and disagreements with its own AI research unit.

Don’t let that make you think that AI experts aren’t just as concerned about fairness as legislators and regulators, said Ariel Procaccia in Bloomberg.com. “Practical ideas for ensuring that artificial intelligence is ethical and fair are gushing from inside the tech profession.” AI specialists are considering dozens of proposals to “spell out what fairness means in mathematical terms.” These days, key papers in machine learning routinely grapple with ethical questions. “The perception that AI researchers and developers care more about algorithms and robots than about people is misguided.”

Innovation of the week

Researchers at Northwestern University have created “small, sticker-like wireless biosensors” that can monitor vital signs in premature babies, said Claire Maldarelli in Popular Science. Traditionally, premature babies in neonatal intensive care units have to be tethered to wires and medical devices. This often forms a barrier to the skin-to-skin contact between babies and their mothers that helps to “stabilize their heart rates, improves their laboratory results and their breathing, and reduces stress.” But the time-synchronized stickers—one on the chest and one on the foot—are able to “stream data to an external monitor.” The chest sticker measures heart rhythms and body temperatures, while the foot sticker monitors blood oxygenation. There are plans to “expand these biosensor patches to adult humans too.”

Bytes: What’s new in tech

Hacked by a toddler

A 3-year-old boy disabled his father’s iPad until 2067 by repeatedly entering the wrong password, said Doug Criss in CNN.com. Evan Osnos, a staff writer at The New Yorker, sent out a tweet asking for help along with a photo of his disabled Apple tablet. The message on the screen seemed too far-fetched to be true: “Try again in 25,536,442 minutes.” That’s more than 48 years. Apple has a security feature that locks a device after a wrong password, and “the more times an incorrect password is entered, the longer the lockout time grows.” The company says that users with this problem can restore an iPhone or iPad, but the process will erase all the data—bad news if it hasn’t been backed up.

Grieving on Facebook

Facebook said a new system should help prevent you from getting notifications of dead friends’ birthdays, said Mihir Zaveri in The New York Times. Typically, after someone dies, a friend or family member can request that the deceased’s profile be deactivated or “memorialized,” which turns the account into a place “where people can post tributes or see posts from when that person was still alive.” But until a page is memorialized or turned off, the accounts will keep sending birthday reminders and other suggestions. Facebook said the new AI-driven system will be better at identifying pages of deceased users. The move is among several “aimed at easing users’ grief,” which also include placing a tributes section on memorialized pages and giving legacy contacts more control of those profiles.

Alexa, who’s listening in?

Amazon employs thousands of people who listen to voice recordings captured by its Echo speakers, said Matt Day in Bloomberg.com. That means anytime you ask “Alexa” for something, a live human might listen to your request. The recordings are transcribed, annotated, and then fed back into the software to help improve Alexa’s speech recognition. But it raises privacy and ethical questions. Two workers “said they picked up what they believe was a sexual assault” and were told by managers not to interfere. Another picked up “a woman singing badly in the shower.” The recordings don’t show the user’s full names or addresses, but they are associated with a user’s first name, account number, and device serial number. Alexa’s privacy settings do include an option to “disable the usage of voice recordings for the development of new features.”
Capturing the first image of a black hole

In a landmark moment for astrophysics, scientists last week unveiled the first-ever image of one of the universe’s most enigmatic phenomena: a black hole. Anticipated more than a century ago by Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity, a black hole is a cosmic abyss so dense with matter that not even light can escape its gravitational grip. The picture from Messier 87, a galaxy some 55 million light-years away, shows a bright ring of particles that are heated to billions of degrees as they circle the gravitational drain at close to the speed of light.

At the center of that glowing doughnut is a supermassive black hole that measures some 25 billion miles across—about 10 times greater than the distance between the sun and Neptune—and has the mass of 6.5 billion suns. Because the black hole is so distant, capturing its image was an immense technical challenge, one that required an Earth-size telescope, reports The Washington Post. And so in the mid-2000s scientists began work on the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)—named after the point on a black hole’s boundary beyond which everything gets sucked in, never to re-emerge. The EHT is a network of eight ultrapowerful radio telescopes around the world, and over 10 days in 2017, they were simultaneously focused on Messier 87. Researchers then compared the resulting images to millions of simulations of what the black hole might look like—and found a match. “We have seen what we thought was unseeable,” says Heald of Washington, says health authorities report NBCNews.com. Researchers from Tufts University examined data from a health survey involving more than 30,000 people ages 20 and older. After accounting for lifestyle factors, they found that people who ingested adequate amounts of magnesium, zinc, and vitamins A and K had a lower risk of death. Furthermore, the participants who took more than 1,000 mg of calcium supplements a day had a higher risk of death from cancer, while those who took more than 400 IU of vitamin D supplements had a higher risk of death from any cause. “It’s becoming more and more clear,” says study co-author Fang Fang Zhang. 

Why cats won’t be called
If your cat ignores you when you call its name, it’s not because it doesn’t recognize it—it’s just because it doesn’t feel like responding. That’s the conclusion of a new Japanese study into the feline mind. The research involved 78 cats who were each played recordings of people reading out four random nouns and then the kitty’s name. Scientists found that the feline subjects generally responded to their name by pricking up their ears or moving their heads—but unlike dogs, didn’t show any major signs of excitement, such as moving their tails or jumping off the couch. Cats may not understand they’re being personally addressed, reports SmithsonianMag.com. They simply associate the sound of their name with a reward, such as food or playtime. And while dogs want to please their owners, says Jennifer Vonk, an expert in animal cognition, cats “are not really as motivated. They’re better at manipulating our behavior than vice versa.”

South Africa; and been added to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s list of “urgent threats.” There have been at least 587 cases in the U.S. since 2013; nearly half of patients who contract C. auris die within 90 days. While public health officials have long warned that excessive use of antibiotics is creating drug-resistant “superbugs,” the spread of C. auris shows that there’s a similar problem with fungi. An estimated 700,000 people worldwide die from drug-resistant infections each year. Yet because hospitals are reluctant to disclose outbreaks for fear of being seen as infection hubs, the extent of the problem is not fully clear. Scientists can’t even establish where C. auris originated. “It is a creature from the black lagoon,” Tom Chiller, head of the CDC’s fungal branch, tells The New York Times. “It bubbled up and now it is everywhere.”

Bad diets kill more than smoking
Unhealthy diets cause more deaths worldwide than smoking or high blood pressure, new research has found. And while the researchers found that consumption of red meat, sugary drinks, and other unhealthy options play a part in that toll, they concluded that the majority of these deaths are the result of people not eating enough healthy foods. Covering 195 countries between 1990 and 2017, the Global Burden of Disease study tracked consumption of 15 dietary elements. The main risk factors for premature death, researchers found, were eating too few fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains and consuming too much salt. Overall, researchers estimate, poor diet accounts for 10.9 million deaths around the world, a fifth of total preventable fatalities. By comparison, tobacco is linked to 8 million deaths and high blood pressure to 10.4 million. Lead author Ashkan Afshin, from the University of Washington, says health authorities should focus on encouraging healthy eating rather than trying to persuade people to cut down on sugar, fat, or even salt. “Generally in real life people do substitution,” he tells The Guardian (U.K.). “When they increase the consumption of something, they decrease the consumption of other things.”

The black hole has the mass of 6.5 billion suns. 

He heard you, he just doesn’t care.

A drug-resistant germ goes global
A deadly drug-resistant fungus is quietly spreading through hospitals around the world. Candida auris, which infects people with weakened immune systems, has wreaked havoc in hospital units in Spain and Britain; taken root in India, Pakistan, and Spain and Britain; taken root in India, Pakistan, and Britain; taken root in India, Pakistan, and Britain; taken root in India, Pakistan, and
ARTS

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow
by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Penguin, $30)

The ugly chapter in U.S. history that followed Reconstruction “in some ways has never really ended,” said Michael Schaub in NPR.org. In a “brilliant” new book, Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. returns to that often neglected period to examine how many of the rights newly won for the nation’s ex-slaves were taken away and how a white-supremacist ideology arose to justify and secure the apartheid policies of the long Jim Crow era. Gates is interested too, in how African-Americans eventually pushed back on other fronts, establishing a cycle that continues repeating today. “Predictably,” Gates delivers a fascinating analysis, “but he’s also just a joy to read.”

For anyone wishing to study this sorry story, Gates’ 250-page book is “excellent one-stop shopping,” said Howell Raines in The Washington Post. He captures how statehouses in the South stripped blacks of rights and how the violence of the Ku Klux Klan backed the legislative campaign. But he also chronicles how Harvard and its ilk nurtured two pseudo-disciplines—eugenics and “scientific racism”—that contributed to racist myths and a central theme of the era: that Reconstruction had been a radical attempt to put white Southerners under the boot of an inferior people. But around the time Jim Crow terrorism was at its worst—and President Wilson was screening Birth of a Nation at the White House—black people began pushing back, said Gene Seymour in Newsday. The term “the New Negro” was first applied to Booker T. Washington, but it was embraced during the 1920s Harlem Renaissance by educated African-Americans who aspired to be models of the race—an artistic and intellectual vanguard. Gates calls the New Negro “black America’s first superhero,” and he “rousingly” contends that the ideal established a pattern for black resistance to racism.

The question of why Reconstruction failed lies at the heart of the book, said Adam Gopnik in The New Yorker. Though there’s reason to denounce the liberal institutions that failed to protect black Americans from re-enslavement, perspective helps. It was, perhaps, “not entirely realistic” to think a small cohort of former abolitionists could impose their ideals on a large population that held opposite views, especially in the wake of a wearying war. But flawed institutions also enabled freed slaves to build—through achievements in music, literature, athletics—the social capital and rich culture that have sustained a generations-long fight for true equality. In the long view, “resilience and resistance are the same activity, seen at different moments in the struggle. It’s a good thought to hold on to now.”

Novel of the week

Normal People
by Sally Rooney (Hogarth, $26)

In every generation, “there are writers who bottle some essential current or mode of thinking or being,” said Michael Schaub in NPR.org. In a “brilliant” new book, Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. returns to that often neglected period to examine how many of the rights newly won for the nation’s ex-slaves were taken away and how a white-supremacist ideology arose to justify and secure the apartheid policies of the long Jim Crow era. Gates is interested too, in how African-Americans eventually pushed back on other fronts, establishing a cycle that continues repeating today. “Predictably,” Gates delivers a fascinating analysis, “but he’s also just a joy to read.”

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Ladies Who Punch: The Explosive Inside Story of ‘The View’
by Ramin Setoodeh (Thomas Dunne, $29)

“Think your workplace is screwed up?” said Vinay Menon in the Toronto Star. Be glad you don’t depend on a paycheck from The View, ABC’s Emmy-winning morning gabfest. When it launched in 1997, creator Barbara Walters quipped that the talk show would feature “different women, different points of view—maybe too different.” The line proved prescient. In the new oral history of the show by top Variety editor Ramin Setoodeh, just about every woman who’s sat at the table “comes across as difficult, if not deranged.” Walters’ attempts to keep her co-hosts under her control appear “borderline diabolical.” Rosie O’Donnell describes Whoopi Goldberg as the meanest person she’s ever shared a camera with. And O’Donnell is shown torching so many colleagues during her two brief stints that she earns this assessment by the show’s director: “She was like Pol Pot.”

Because most of the big stars share their sides of the story, “it’s an exciting read,” said Lincée Ray in the Associated Press. Walters leads off, describing how she recruited her original co-hosts, established the show’s rhythms, and despite a weak launch proved that millions would tune in to watch five women chowing over the day’s news. The infighting begins soon after the upbeat start, said Kevin Fallon in TheDaillyBeast.com. “Come for the stories of cattiness,” though, and you may stay for “the sharp distillation of why this talk show completely changed television.” Today “the conflagration of news and opinion” that defines The View defines all media.

That’s not entirely a bad thing, said Ruth Graham in Slate.com. Consider a moment from 2006, when after a heated on-air debate about emergency contraception pills, conservative co-host Elisabeth Hasselbeck tore up her notes, walked off set, and threatened to quit. When such stories leak out, “The View makes women look like backstabbing, ill-informed dingbats.”

But in an era when rival networks were peddling only junk, “The View was the show that believed that the audience for daytime television—low-income mothers, mostly—could cultivate an interest in politics and policy.” And the plan is working.
Best books... chosen by Andrea Wulf


Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie by Lauren Redniss (2010). Category-defying, stunningly beautiful, and utterly mesmerizing, Radioactive represents the perfect marriage between art and science. Redniss’ text and magical images take the reader on a biographical and visual journey.

Half-Earth by Edward O. Wilson (2016). One of the most memorable passages I’ve ever read about environmental destruction is Wilson’s list of the 19 species of freshwater mussels that have gone extinct in Alabama’s Mobile River basin. Half-Earth is almost like an obituary: evocative, and in its sparse itemization strangely emotional.


The Moth Snowstorm by Michael McCarthy (2015). Some books change the way you see things and stay with you forever. This is one of them. It’s an unashamed plea for the importance of seeking joy in nature—a joy that humans have experienced for more than 50,000 generations. Our ability to imagine developed as we evolved, McCarthy explains, and our bond with the natural world lies buried in our DNA. It’s the best argument I’ve heard so far for nature appreciation as part of our very essence.

Views of Nature by Alexander von Humboldt (1808). Humboldt, the most famous scientist of his age, was obsessed with scientific measurements, but he also said that we need to use our imagination to understand nature. In Views of Nature, he combined poetic landscape descriptions with scientific observations, thereby creating the blueprint for nature writing today.

Horizon by Barry Lopez (2019). Lopez is one of my all-time favorite writers. Like so many others who loved 1986’s Arctic Dreams, I waited patiently (or maybe impatiently) many years for a new full-length Lopez nonfiction book. When it finally arrived this year, I devoured it. It’s a masterpiece of nature writing that reminds us of the environmental crisis we’re facing. I don’t know of any other writer who so evocatively and poetically weaves together science, culture, and nature.

Also of interest... in the meeting of minds

Zora and Langston by Yuval Taylor (Norton, $28)

We can’t return to 1927 to join friends Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes when they bonded on a fun-filled road trip. But “reading Yuval Taylor’s book may be the next-best experience,” said Maureen Corrigan in NPR.org. The two Harlem Renaissance legends met up by chance while Hurston was cruising the South to study African-American folkways, and their adventure shaped the direction of black literature. The pair split bitterly just four years later, but for now, “let’s not go there.”

The Club by Leo Damrosch (Yale, $30)

Among the small group of men who joined Samuel Johnson at a London tavern for Friday dinners in the 1760s and ’70s, “a surprising number would rise to lasting greatness,” said Lyndall Gordon in The New York Times. The Club, as the group was called, began in lively conversations among such friends as Johnson; his biographer, James Boswell; and economist Adam Smith. Author Leo Damrosch “brilliantly brings together the members’ voices,” homing in as he does so on the nature of creative social stimulus.

Einstein’s Wife by Allen Esterson & David C. Cassidy (MIT, $30)

Anyone that Albert Einstein called his equal deserves our attention, said Erin Blakemore in The Washington Post. But did Mileva Maric, Einstein’s onetime university classmate and first wife, co-create the theory of relativity? This scholarly book punctures that popular rumor, but it honors her by recognizing what she and Einstein actually achieved in collaboration. “It tells the story of a brilliant but frustrated scientist who may well have changed physics—if she had ever gotten the chance.”

Solid Seasons by Jeffrey S. Cramer (Counterpoint, $26)

Henry David Thoreau has more fans today than his Transcendentalist mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, said Bob Blaisdell in CSMonitor.com. But in this double biography of the Concord, Mass., icons, Emerson “comes off better and wiser.” He understood and forgave his younger friend’s faults, while Thoreau was prone to aloofness and argument, and wrote nothing that offers real insight into his older friend’s personality—“or anybody else’s.” He “lacked Emerson’s ability to love another, warts and all.”
Exhibit of the week
Tintoretto: Artist of Renaissance Venice
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., through July 7

Don’t be surprised if either of Tintoretto’s best-known self-portraits seems to be staring back at you, said James Panero in The Wall Street Journal. The great Venetian painter (1519-1594) was more aware than any artist before him of the viewer’s experience, and “his achievement was to break the fourth wall of Renaissance art.” In the large, action-filled scenes from the Bible and myth that he’s best known for, “he brought narrative art down to the real world with figures that look, fly, and flop out of his paintings into our own space.” As you wander among the 46 paintings and 10 drawings at the first substantial Tintoretto retrospective shown in America, you’ll never wonder why Jean-Paul Sartre dubbed him “the first film director.” Tintoretto didn’t idealize his godly or saintly subjects and set them at a remove. He put us nose-close to figures in swirling, cinematic motion; “his high-wire scenes dare us to look away.”

It has been tempting to see Tintoretto as a working-class rebel who vanquished all doubters, said Maria Loh in Art in America. He was born in Venice when Titian was already a recognized master, and his adopted name, which means “Little Dyer,” sounds like a hat tip to an ink-stained father. But Dad was actually a manager of a dye works, like a hat tip to an ink-stained father. But the new Malibu, his 2016 breakthrough. On Ventura, Paak leans back into the “sandpaper” singing voice with which he made his name, “recapturing its essence with newly sunny vibrancy and maturity.” The opener, “Come Home,” is an “arrestingly beautiful” love song, and on the breezy single “Make It Better,” he even sings with Smokey Robinson. But Malibu was a more idiosyncratic and personal effort, said Sheldon Pearce in Pitchfork.com. Paak’s personality “still shines through from time to time,” such as on “Good Heels,” an amusingly racy vignette. Too often, though, he’s just imitating past greats, and the album, as pleasant as it is, “never becomes more than the sum of its sounds.”

Anderson Paak
Ventura
★★★★

Anderson Paak has rebounded quickly from last fall’s hard turn into bombast, said Brandon Yu in Variety. On his second album in five months, the California drummer and vocalist has cut back on his braggadocio and rapping and returned to “the earnest tenderness of old-school soul”—the same spirit that defined Malibu, his 2016 breakthrough. On Ventura, Paak leans back into the “sandpaper” singing voice with which he made his name, “recapturing its essence with newly sunny vibrancy and maturity.” The opener, “Come Home,” is an “arrestingly beautiful” love song, and on the breezy single “Make It Better,” he even sings with Smokey Robinson. But Malibu was a more idiosyncratic and personal effort, said Sheldon Pearce in Pitchfork.com. Paak’s personality “still shines through from time to time,” such as on “Good Heels,” an amusingly racy vignette. Too often, though, he’s just imitating past greats, and the album, as pleasant as it is, “never becomes more than the sum of its sounds.”

Lee Fields & the Expressions
It Rains Love
★★★★

“Not many artists who made their first record in 1969 can honestly be said to be working at the top of their game 50 years later,” said Mark Deming in AllMusic.com. But the new album from Lee Fields shows just how much the 68-year-old soul singer has evolved since his early days as a James Brown–style shouter. The North Carolina native can still belt it out, but “he also brings the heart and passion of a Bobby Womack or a Wilson Pickett to his material,” and the combination of great songwriting and “sterling” performances make It Rains Love “a master class in the art of modern soul music.” Give credit to songwriter and producer Leon Michels, said Hal Horowitz in AmericanSongwriter.com. Though the album doesn’t sound dated, its mix of balladry and sweet funk delivers “an R&B-soaked, horn-enhanced vibe you might have heard blasting from your AM radio in the pre-disco ‘70s.” And at a time when many young artists are recording retro soul, “there’s nothing like hearing this music from someone who lived and breathed it in its heyday.”

Weyes Blood
Titanic Rising
★★★★

You will feel, while listening to the new Weyes Blood album, “like an astronaut looking down at the earth through layers of atmosphere,” said Katie Riffee in AVClub.com. On her fourth album recording under that name, 30-year-old Natalie Mering has gotten “highly cinematic,” mixing “anthemic piano pop” with strings, ambient synthesizers, and her usual sardonic lyrics. The songs often focus on humankind’s uncertain future, and even those planet-scale worries “contribute to the album’s daydream quality.” Here and there, “the rich orchestrations of Titanic Rising, paired with Mering’s crystalline voice, recall the AM radio gold of the Carpenters,” said Mark Richardson in The Wall Street Journal. But the content of the songs “comes from a very different world,” and there’s a deeper structure at work in the album that makes it especially alluring. When she sings the final line—about “waiting for something with meaning to come through”—you can’t forget all the images of floods and other disasters. “Hope holds back the destructive forces—just barely.”

The Deposition of Christ (1562): The hands tell the story.
Review of reviews: Stage

Oklahoma!

“God only knows” what Rodgers and Hammerstein would make of the new Broadway production of Oklahoma! said Todd Purdum in TheAtlantic.com. Unlike the classic 1955 movie or every high school staging you’ve seen, Daniel Fish’s interpretation isn’t a sunny paean to the frontier spirit, but a more complex American story that may leave you in tears. Barely a word of the 1943 original has been changed, and the plot still revolves around which of two suitors a winsome farm girl in pre-statehood Oklahoma will take to a party. “But just beneath the surface, sex and violence and the tension between order and lawlessness are always lurking”—as they have been since Oscar Hammerstein invented the tale. Fish’s daring reinterpretation, said Elizabeth Vincentelli in The New Yorker, offers “a textbook illustration of how to revisit a classic while honoring it.”

“If the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization had any self-respect, it would shut the whole thing down,” said Terry Teachout in The Wall Street Journal. Fish has, in fact, staged “a sneering burlesque” of the beloved original, treating its all-American optimism as “a tool of the patriarchy at its most violently oppressive.” Except for Jud, the suitor and farmhand who’s usually cast as a potential menace, all the men here are “loutish clods,” a danger to the women, including Rebecca Naomi Jones’ Laurey Williams, and the evening now ends “not with an explosion of joy but in a pool of spilled blood.” The show tips its hand from the start, setting the action on a stage set up like a contemporary red-state community hall, with crockpots on a string of trestle tables and guns bristling on the walls. Some elements do work: Ali Stroker, who uses a wheelchair, is “the sexiest Ado Annie I’ve ever seen,” and Richard Rodgers’ songs have been brilliantly re-arranged for a “smoking hot” seven-piece, country-style pit band. By and large, however, “Mr. Fish’s Oklahoma! is a travesty.”

Theatergoers who are ready to question old assumptions won’t think so, said Ben Brantley in The New York Times. Here, though the lead remains a strutting cowboy, Damon Dunno’s Curly is “doing his best to project a confidence he doesn’t feel,” and in that, “he’s a lot like the feisty nation he’s so proud to belong to.” Jones’ Laurey is right to be wary of Curly. Such raw energy, this production regularly reminds us, “can be harnessed for different ends, for ill as well as good,” and the shocking ending proves to be “disturbing for all the right reasons.” It all works, which explains how a 76-year-old chestnut has become, for the moment, “the coolest new show on Broadway.”
**Her Smell**

**Directed by Alex Ross Perry** (R)

Elisabeth Moss channels her inner riot grrrl.

Playing a ’90s rocker in full flameout, Elisabeth Moss “does something you almost never see,” said A.A. Dowd in AVClub.com. The Handmaid’s Tale star “sucks all the cool out of a downward spiral,” daring to make this film’s Courtney Love–like subject “not just unlikable but downright irritating.” As Moss’ Becky Something drags down her once celebrated band, she lashes out at everyone around her, and director Alex Ross Perry “locks the audience into the extended spectacle of Becky’s self-immolation.” Unfortunately, the film “takes itself very, very seriously,” said Mary Elizabeth Williams in Salon.com. Its five scenes stretch for 2 ½ hours, much of that a real-time dramatization of a breakdown we have no stake in. Becky is no musical genius, and Perry doesn’t seem to have decided whether she’s battling addiction or bipolar disorder. “Tellingly,” though, the most anxiety-inducing scenes come late in the film, “when Becky has clawed her way to sobriety,” said Emily Yoshida in NYMag.com. Though better days have finally arrived, “there’s suddenly far more to lose.”

**Long Day’s Journey Into Night**

**Directed by Bi Gan** (Not rated)

A lost soul searches for answers.

Watching the radical new feature from Chinese director Bi Gan “very often feels like dreaming with your eyes open,” said Glenn Kenny in The New York Times. Following up on Kaili Blues, a 2015 debut that played to raves in art houses the world over, Bi has made a noir-inspired mystery culminating in a one-hour scene that appears to be a single continuous shot and is meant to be viewed with 3D glasses. The plot, if there is one, centers on a man haunted by his past, a friend murdered years ago, and the search for an ex-lover. But, starting with a title taken from a 1950s play that has nothing to do with this story, Bi’s Long Day’s Journey is a puzzle “that will require multiple viewings for audiences to untangle,” said David Sims in TheAtlantic.com. Instead of trying to follow a linear narrative, “the viewer should soak up Bi’s gift for stark imagery.” That final hour is “a feat of visual acuity that’s astonishing to behold, even though it’s as enigmatic as the rest of the film.”

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The Week’s guide to what’s worth watching

**Nova: Saving the Dead Sea**
The Dead Sea really is dying. The wondrous salt-water lake that lies at Earth’s lowest land elevation is losing water at unprecedented speed, with 30 percent of its surface area vanishing in the past five decades. This special examines the numerous challenges facing an innovative attempt to save this natural wonder and crucial resource by pumping water into it from the Red Sea. **Wednesday, April 24, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings**

**2019 NFL Draft**
Are you ready for some podium? Once solely the province of the most die-hard fans, the NFL draft now draws as much attention at the league’s big games. Capitalizing on the interest, ABC will broadcast the event in prime time across two nights. Anything can happen, but Heisman Trophy–winning quarterback Kyler Murray is considered likely to be the first pick, chosen either by the Arizona Cardinals or a team that trades into the top spot. **Begins Thursday, April 25, at 8 p.m., ABC**

**Chambers**
A heart holds many surprises, especially when it isn’t your own. Sivan Alyra Rose stars in this new young-adult horror series as a teenager who begins exhibiting strange and sinister behaviors after receiving a heart transplant from an accident victim. Uma Thurman and Tony Goldwyn co-star as the deceased girl’s grieving parents, who may hold clues to the emerging supernatural mystery. **Available for streaming Friday, April 26, Netflix**

**Not the White House Correspondents’ Dinner**
With comedians no longer welcome at the annual White House Correspondents’ Dinner, Samantha Bee is stepping in to raise an African-American teenage daughter as the white husband of the victim, now trying to prove he didn’t bow to power at all. **Saturday, April 27, at 10 p.m., TBS**

**The Red Line**
Ava DuVernay and Greg Berlanti have each shown a knack for producing riveting TV drama. Here they pair up for an eight-episode series that goes for the heartstrings at every turn, starting with the fatal shooting of an unarmed black doctor by a white Chicago cop. Noah Wyle co-stars as the white husband of the victim, now trying to raise an African-American teenage daughter on his own. But the show also shadows the guilt-ridden cop and follows an aspiring elected official more closely tied to the tragedy than voters know. **Sunday, April 28, at 8 p.m., CBS**

**Other highlights**

**Cobra Kai**
In Season 2 of the surprisingly funny Karate Kid sequel series, a grown-up Daniel LaRusso opens a karate dojo to compete with his old rival Johnny Lawrence. **Available for streaming Wednesday, April 24, YouTube**

**ReMastered: Devil at the Crossroads**
Musicians, family descendants, and scholars re-examine bluesman Robert Johnson, who according to legend gained his mastery of the guitar in a pact with the devil. **Available for streaming Friday, April 26, Netflix**

**2019 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony**
A night of performances celebrates inductees the Cure, Janet Jackson, Radiohead, Def Leppard, Stevie Nicks, Roxy Music, and the Zombies. **Saturday, April 27, at 8 p.m., HBO**

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**Movies on TV**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, April 22</td>
<td>The Yearling</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
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<td>A boy learns a hard lesson</td>
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<td>With Gregory Peck as the</td>
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<td>dad. (1948)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 23</td>
<td>Remember the Titans</td>
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<td>Denzel Washington elevates</td>
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<td>Virginia. (2000)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 24</td>
<td>North by Northwest</td>
<td>9:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>In Alfred Hitchcock’s</td>
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<td>Heaven’s Gate</td>
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<td>Judged a disaster upon its</td>
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<td>release, Michael Cimino’s</td>
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<td>widely considered a master-</td>
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<td>piece. Kris Kristofferson,</td>
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<td>Isabelle Hupper co-star.</td>
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<td>Friday, April 26</td>
<td>Blindspotting</td>
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<td>Oakland. Starring co-writers</td>
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<td>Davede Diggs and Rafael</td>
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<td>Casal. (2018)</td>
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<td>Deadpool 2</td>
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<td>a boy superhero. (2018)</td>
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<td>Sunday, April 28</td>
<td>War Horse</td>
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<td>A bond between a boy and a</td>
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<td>hit novel and play. (2011)</td>
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**Show of the week**

**Gentleman Jack**
Don’t expect polite period drama from this new HBO-BBC series. Its title character, Anne Lister, gained her nickname because she charged through life in pre-Victorian England wearing men’s clothes and insisting on her right to love other women and maximize the profits from her inherited Yorkshire estate. Suranne Jones delivers a star-making performance as Lister as she decides in her 40s to court a younger heiress (Peaky Blinders’ Sophie Rundle). The writers didn’t have to invent much, because Lister kept coded diaries from age 15 until her death, at 49. **Monday, April 22, at 10 p.m., HBO**
**Critics’ choice: Learning to love the robots in our kitchens**

Everywhere you look in the restaurant business these days, “the robots are coming,” said Tony Naylor in *The Guardian*. In Denver, **Good Times Burgers** recently became perhaps the first fast-food business to put an artificially intelligent voice assistant in charge of its drive-through orders. In Boston, a restaurant that serves a variety of grain bowls prepped by a van-size machine was recently named one of the city’s best new restaurants. On a couple of college campuses and in one Silicon Valley pizzeria, robots have also broken into serving and delivery. If anyone wished to create an eatery where the order-taking, cooking, and serving were all performed by robots, it could be done. “The technology exists—it just needs knitting together cost-effectively and in a way diners buy into.”

Customer response to automation is clearly a major concern at our town’s *Creator*, said Soleil Ho in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In fact, “I have never dined at a restaurant that was so devoted to not scaring me.” What worries the management is that the public might not be ready for a robot that cooks and assembles every burger served. To ease fears of a robot takeover, the machine itself hides nothing. Behind a glass front, the mechanical wonder grinds the pasture-raised beef right before your eyes, then smashes it down and grills the patty as it inches forward on a conveyor belt. Various local chefs created the suggested combinations of toppings (think shiitake mushroom sauce and smoked-oyster aioli). And in a further effort to combat alienation, a friendly human greets you and takes your order. The burgers don’t disappoint. All are made from a “just fatty enough” blend of brisket and chuck, so they retain moisture and tenderness when cooked to well done. With the gourmet toppings and $6 price, they’re satisfying enough that I plan to keep coming back—“even if it does turn out that the bot in the kitchen has been plotting revolution.”

Boston’s **Spyce** fills a similar role, said Devra First in *The Boston Globe*. At the fast-casual restaurant in Downtown Crossing, a robot created by four MIT graduates turns out several easy lunches—a Moroccan bowl and a Thai bowl among them. At $7.50 each, the customizable meals are $2 to $4 cheaper than the fare assembled by line cooks at similar places, and “Lord help us, they taste good too.” The machine, which cooks on several woks at once, is “mesmerizing to watch.” But people are still necessary to Spyce’s operation. Famed chef Daniel Boulud brought in an executive chef who’s responsible for creating and fine-tuning every Spyce recipe. The team also uses humans to prep ingredients and to serve each bowl, and the staffs fall into conversation with customers, just as in the days before robots. Most importantly, the food “tastes of the world’s great civilizations,” with thousands of years of culture in every bite.

And no matter how quickly the revolution comes, “robots won’t be taking all the jobs,” said Jennifer Marston in *The Spoon*. A recent report by the National Restaurant Association projects that the industry, which currently employs 15.3 million people in the U.S., will add 1.6 million jobs by 2029. “That’s good news both for the workforce and the customers, who often prefer a side of emotional contact served up with their chicken tenders.”

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**Recipe of the week**

Whenever spring’s rhubarb arrives in her California yard, baking blogger Jackie Bruchez turns to a recipe she learned from her husband’s French grandmother, said Chris Ross in *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. It’s a reader favorite on Bruchez’s website, *TheSeasideBaker*, and it’s also featured in her new cookbook, *Page Street Publishing’s Decadent Fruit Desserts*.

### Quick rhubarb cake with crème anglaise

- 3 large eggs • ¾ cup plus 5 tbsp granulated sugar • 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted • 2 tbsp milk or buttermilk • 2 tsp vanilla extract • 1 cup plus 2 tbsp all-purpose flour • ¾ tsp baking powder • ½ tsp salt • 2 cups rhubarb, diced • ½ cup milk • ½ cup heavy whipping cream • 3 large egg yolks

- Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour an 8- or 9-inch cake pan. In a bowl, beat eggs and ¾ cup sugar about 3 minutes. Beat in butter, milk, and 1 tsp vanilla. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt. Pour batter into pan. Spread rhubarb on top and sprinkle with 2 tbsp sugar. Bake 30 minutes.

- Meanwhile, combine milk and cream in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Over medium-high heat, bring to a simmer, then remove from heat. In a bowl, whisk egg yolks and 3 tbsp sugar until mixture is pale. Temper yolk mixture by whisking in small amounts of hot milk mixture, until fully combined. Return custard to saucepan. Stir over low heat until custard thickens, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in 1 tsp vanilla. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, then cover and chill. When cake is ready, cut it for serving and drizzle sauce over each slice.
This week’s dream: Touring Ethiopia on a state-of-the-art train

A new train has opened up central Ethiopia to visitors, and the opportunity shouldn’t be missed, said Henry Wisnaymer in *The New York Times*. “A concrete embodiment of progress,” the 470-mile state-of-the-art rail line that connects the landlocked country to Djibouti and the Red Sea is just the start of a Chinese-financed electric rail network that’s planned to be six times larger. The line moves freight, of course, but it also delivers “cheap, air-conditioned travel” from Ethiopia’s capital through a region that holds “some of the most remarkable sights in the African Horn.” With a photographer, I recently returned to Ethiopia to explore those sights, boarding the new train at Addis Ababa.

Though the train itself was “a sterile beast,” the passengers “brought the atmosphere with them.” We shared our row with a family as excited as I was, and we all enjoyed the view out the large windows as the tiled roofs of the capital gave way to “a moving pastoral of Ethiopian life.” Yellow domes of harvested teff, Ethiopia’s principal grain crop, stood just outside every village, and boys herding livestock paused to watch the train pass. In Awash National Park, which we passed through three hours later, antelopes were grazing on acacia trees. At Dire Dawa, Ethiopia’s second-largest city, we disembarked to catch a bus to Harar, one of the holiest sites in Islam and a town “designed to intoxicate the senses.” Inside its ancient walls, we walked a narrow street where tailors worked clattering sewing machines, to reach a spice market whose red peppers induced sneezes.

On our train to Djibouti City, a happy group of Djiboutians high on khat tea took over our train car and turned it into a daytime party. But we were well rested by the next morning, when a guide drove us to Lake Abbé—or what’s left of it. Because of an irrigation project, the water level has receded drastically, “marooning the otherworldly landscape of limestone towers for which Abbé is famed.” Where flaminigos once splashed, we kicked up dust, but the fumeroles created by cons of mineral deposits were still astonishing. Where they were most densely clustered, their haunting silhouettes reminded me of 15th-century paintings of the Last Judgment.

Getting the flavor of...

Underappreciated San Jose

“Nobody really loves San Jose,” said Matt Meltzer in *Thrillist.com*. But maybe it’s time to start. Though California’s third-largest city can’t match nearby San Francisco for tourist attractions, it is the true heart of Silicon Valley, and its metro area “embodies everything that makes California great—world-class wineries, outdoor recreation, fascinating cultural diversity, and a creative class that’s influencing the world.” None of the Bay Area’s other big cities sits as close to a great beach, and San Jose is also a gateway to the Santa Cruz mountains, where you can frolic in the woods like John Muir. If you visit, do consider a guided tech-related history tour. But enjoy the city’s neighborhoods too. San Jose is “teeming with little international enclaves,” including Japantown, Little Saigon, and Little Portugal, home to the Michelin-starred restaurant Adega. Places like that “prove that San Jose can do anything San Francisco can, even if nobody knows about it.”

Hotel of the week

**Acqualina Resort & Spa Miami**

This sumptuous property is often rated the top luxury beach resort in the mainland U.S., and after a recent stay, “I can attest to the legitimacy of the claims,” said Carol Ann Davidson in the *Miami Herald*. Past the many Rolls-Royces at the entrance, I was greeted by warm smiles and a cool towel in the Italian villa-style lobby, and directed to a suite with a terrace, gourmet kitchen, and views of the sun-speckled Atlantic. Three outdoor pools sit near the hotel’s beach, and when you tire of the restaurants and two-story spa, you can watch kids playing chess with two outdoor oversize sets. acqualinaresort.com; doubles from $435

The Met’s ode to guitar gods

“In these days of GarageBand and samplers, it’s easy to forget that nearly all pop music was once banged out on instruments made of wood or metal,” said David Browne in *Rolling Stone*. Anyone who cares about rock history will gasp repeatedly while walking through “Play It Loud,” a new exhibition at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art where more than 130 instruments are presented as holy relics. Visitors can get up close to guitars played by Presley, John Lennon, Jimmy Page, Eddie Van Halen, and Prince, to name a few. “Encountering those instruments can be a humbling experience,” especially when you notice the wear and tear they’ve been through. It’s not all guitars, said Cory Oldweiler in *AM New York*. Other instruments share the space, including Keith Moon’s drum kit, a purple acrylic piano played by Lady Gaga, and a full-stage Beatles setup.

Last-minute travel deals

**An Andean adventure**

Mountain Lodges of Peru is offering 20 percent off guided June and July treks to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley. The lodge-to-lodge adventures last five, seven, or 10 days and start at $2,125 a person with the discount. Book by April 30. mountainlodgesofperu.com

**Canyonlands of the West**

See the Grand Canyon, Zion Canyon, and Monument Valley on a six-night Great Value Vacations tour that starts at $880—down from $1,080—and includes a round-trip flight from Los Angeles. Book by April 30; use code GUIDEME. greatvaluevacations.com

**15 days in China**

Cruise the Yangtze and explore Beijing and Shanghai on a tour of China that departs July 24. The package, which starts at $2,599 a person, is one of 150 itineraries available this month at a discount in EF Go Ahead Tours’ Seven Continent Sale. goaheadtours.com
The 2020 Jeep Gladiator: What the critics say

Road & Track
Jeep’s first truck in nearly 30 years is finally here, and “it’s exactly what we always wanted: a Wrangler with a pickup bed.” Today’s Wranglers are already better than they’ve ever been before—“more civilized on-road and more capable off-road.” Yet the Gladiator “takes the improvement even further.” Because its wheelbase is longer, the truck is even calmer and more composed. Plus, it’s “good at all the midsize pickup stuff it needs to be good at.”
Jalopnik.com
It actually ranks as best in class on tow rating (7,650 pounds) and payload rating (1,600 pounds), thanks to a “rock-solid” V-6 engine and beefy suspension. But the Gladiator, which starts at $33,545, also feels “significantly more modern” than any rivals, starting with its simple but elegant interior. “A monster” off-road and “glider-smooth” on the highway, the truck shows its limits only on twisty roads, where it’s “tall and loose in the turns.”

PickupTrucks.com
You could cross-shop the Gladiator with a Ford Ranger or Chevy Colorado, but we suggest setting all spec sheets aside. There is, for now, “no other pickup truck in the world that can turn into a toplevel, doorless, windshield-less dune buggy in a matter of minutes.” The Gladiator “rests comfortably in a category of its own.”

The best of...bath time

Pottery Barn
Hydrocotton Towel
Made in Turkey, this quick-drying towel topped 39 others in a recent Good Housekeeping showdown. A special weaving process results in a towel that “feels plusher” and “absorbs more.” Available in 10 colors. $29, potterybarn.com
Source: Good Housekeeping

Christian Dior Figue Méditerranée
The ideal bath begins with the lighting of a scented candle, and when this House of Dior product is burning, you’ll feel as if you’re soaking somewhere near a fruit-laden fig tree warmed by the Mediterranean sun. $85, dior.com
Source: Elle Décor

Kohler Iron Works
Historic Bath
You’ll need a claw-foot tub, of course. This elegantly modernized throwback offers excellent back support and has a slip-resistant floor. Like the classics, it’s enameled cast iron.
From $3,892, us.kohler.com
Source: Real Simple

Susanne Kaufmann
Oil Bath for the Senses
“What could be more decadent than a liter of luxury bath oil?” Combining the soothing scents of ylang-ylang, patchouli, and lavender essential oils, this limited-edition jug of Susanne Kaufmann bath oil will last a lifetime.
$214, wantapothecary.com
Source: Vogue.co.uk

The Ritz-Carlton
Waffle Terry Robe
“There’s nothing quite like slipping into a soft bathrobe in your hotel room after a long day of travel.” Now that Ritz-Carlton sells its products online, you can feel “heaven on your skin” without leaving home.
$106, ritzcarltonshops.com
Source: TravelAndLeisure.com

Tip of the week...How to clean four tricky household items

- Ceiling fans collect dust all winter long. Use an old pillowcase to wipe each blade and catch the dust. Then wipe the blades with soapy water or a cleaning solution.
- Blinds should be vacuumed regularly with a brush attachment to prevent dirt buildup. A dry microfiber cloth also works. Don’t spray a glass cleaner on blinds or shades—it’ll stain.
- Wicker baskets don’t require cleaning, except to remove dust or any mold, perhaps from holding fruits or vegetables. A soft brush or dry cloth will remove dust. For anything more serious, dip the soft brush in soapy water. Never use bleach, and don’t soak the basket—it could swell.
- Leather upholstery can be wiped down with a damp cloth and gentle soap like Woolite or Castle—something gentler than dish soap. Rubbing alcohol or lemon juice can remove ink and stubborn stains. Leather cream can camouflage small scratches.

Source: The Washington Post

And for those who have everything...

Ever met a jellyfish that tells time? The Medusa is the latest horological marvel co-created by the Swiss clockmaker L’Epée and the avant-garde Swiss watch brand MB&F, whose shared collection of clocks also includes robots, aliens, giant spiders, and an array of sea creatures, including an eight-legged tabletop clock called the Octopod. The limited-edition Medusa can either sit on a table or hang like a light fixture. The clock’s body (available in green, blue, or pink) is made of hand-blown Murano glass, through which you can read numerals that glow in the dark—just like the bioluminescent innards of a real deep-sea jellyfish.
About $25,500, mbandf.com
Source: RobbReport.com

Best websites...Five furniture sources you might not know

- EBTH.com, or Everything but the House, is an online estate sale marketplace where you can bid on vintage home goods “in just about every style from every era.” You can also browse by manufacturers.
- MidcenturyMobler.com is the place to find “all the ‘50s and ’60s furniture of your dreams.” Each piece is hand-selected and imported from Europe, including a huge assortment of Danish acquisitions.
- JaysonHome.com has a “small but mighty” vintage section with a regularly updated inventory. Check out the Curiosities tab for “delightfully unique” collectors’ items.
- Rejuvenation.com doesn’t only sell antiques and vintage furniture in all styles. It restores them too.
- Pamono.com can tailor vintage furniture to your color and design scheme because the chairs and sofas listed in its Custom Vintage section all can be custom reupholstered.
Source: HouseBeautiful.com

Leisure 29

The Week April 26, 2019
**This week: Homes in Atlanta**

**Mount Paran/Northside**
Japanese architects and craftsmen designed and built this Zen-inspired estate in 1975. The five-bedroom house features beams, woven ceilings, cabinets, and decks of locally recovered cypress; sliding shoji doors; tatami floors; floor-to-ceiling windows; a bathroom with a sunken stone tub; and a master bedroom with a meditation room. The 2.1-acre landscaped property features koi ponds, waterfalls, a bridge, two teahouses, and rock-lined Japanese gardens. $1,745,000. Heery Brothers, Atlanta Fine Homes/Sotheby’s International Realty, (404) 974-4319

**Druid Hills**
Villa Luponi was built in 1927. The five-bedroom house features Victorian façades imported from England and a formal dining room with fireplace, exposed beams, and three sets of arched French doors leading to a central courtyard. The nearly 1-acre grounds are landscaped with grass paths, mature trees, a sculpture fountain, an arbor, and walled gardens. $2,150,000. Harvin Greene, Dorsey Alston Realtors, (404) 314-4212

**Virginia Highland**
Recently updated, this Craftsman-style home near Piedmont Park was built in 1917. The house includes a main living area with shiplap walls, arched doorways, and a chef’s kitchen with marble counters; laundry on two floors; and a master suite with vaulted ceiling, kitchenette, steam shower, and balcony. Outside are fenced back and front yards and a large covered porch. $1,499,000. Jared Sapp, Atlanta Fine Homes/Sotheby’s International Realty, (404) 668-7233
West End This 1920 Craftsman bungalow is near parks, shopping, transit, bike trails, and the Beltline. The three-bedroom, open-plan home features dark hardwood floors throughout and a kitchen with granite counters and stainless appliances. Outside are a covered front porch with a sitting area and a large fenced backyard ringed by mature trees. $330,000. Dustin Kimberley, Beacham and Co. Realtors, (470) 201-9036

Margaret Mitchell This 1960 brick home was completely renovated over the past year. The four-bedroom house features wood and tile floors, vaulted ceilings, skylights, a double-sided fireplace, a formal wood-paneled dining room, and a kitchen with a walk-in pantry. The half-acre property includes a tree-shaded, stone-walled backyard and a sunken tiled patio. $1,050,000. Jane Warring, Atlanta Communities, (404) 844-4977

Buckhead Forest Built in 1999, this three-bedroom condo has been renovated and designed like a converted loft, with exposed ductwork and 13-foot ceilings. The home has a kitchen with marble counters and a SubZero refrigerator, a comprehensive smart-home system, and two balconies with city views. Amenities include gym and pool access, two parking spaces, and proximity to a park, shops, and restaurants. $925,000. James Simons, Harry Norman Realtors, (404) 317-1185

Steal of the week

Georgia
Atlanta
The bottom line

- The U.S. government collected $4.7 billion in taxes from cannabis companies in 2017. Marijuana is illegal under federal law, but cannabis businesses still have to pay federal taxes on gross income and are not allowed deductions or credits. Seven states also tax pot. Alaska, for example, takes $50 per ounce of marijuana buds. 

- The Martha Stewart Living brand was sold for $215 million to Marquee Brands, owner of women’s retailer BCBG Max Azria. That’s $140 million less than the seller, Sequential Brands, paid for Martha Stewart’s company in 2015. 

- The average physician’s salary has hit a new all-time high of $331,000 a year. There’s a major gap between men and women; male primary-care physicians make $151,000 a year more than women, and male specialists—who average $372,000 in pay—earn $92,000 more than female peers. 

- More than a billion dollars has been pledged so far toward the reconstruction of Notre-Dame cathedral. That includes $450 million from three of France’s wealthiest families: the Pinaults and Arnaults, who dominate the French luxury-goods business, and the Bettencourt Meyers family, which controls L’Oréal. The Pinault pledge of 100 million euros came first, and minutes later the Arnault family doubled that, pledging 200 million.

- A record 174 million people tuned in HBO’s final season premiere of Game of Thrones. It was the most-watched scripted entertainment program of the year, topping the 14.1 million viewers for CBS’s Big Bang Theory in February.

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**BUSINESS**

The news at a glance

**Phones: A truce in the war over 5G tech**

Apple and Qualcomm agreed to end “one of the longest-running and most expensive disputes in tech history” this week, said Camila Hodgson in the Financial Times. Apple first sued Qualcomm for $1 billion in 2017, arguing that the prices to license its pioneering mobile technology—including key standards underlying modern communications—“were so high as to be anti-competitive.” The chipmaker countersued and accused Apple of “stealing its intellectual property and giving it to rival Intel.” The fight grew into a globe-spanning multilawsuit showdown. The two sides reached a six-year global patent license agreement just as a trial began in federal court.

**Federal Reserve: White House reconsidering picks**

The White House is interviewing candidates who could replace Herman Cain and Stephen Moore as President Trump’s nominees for the Federal Reserve board, said Sylvan Lane in The Hill. Trump’s top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said this week, “We’re talking to a number of candidates,” suggesting Trump might be rethinking his contentious picks before they are even formally nominated. Already, “a handful of GOP senators all but doomed Cain’s potential Fed nomination” over sexual harassment allegations. Moore has been criticized over “close ties to Trump, controversial commentary, and past economic predictions.”

**Media: Disney undercuts Netflix**

Disney will price its new streaming service well below that of competitor Netflix, said Erich Schwartzel and Joe Flint in The Wall Street Journal, charging $6.99 per month when it arrives in November. With its own service on offer, Disney will pull content from Netflix, “forgoing substantial licensing revenue” when it cuts ties. In its first year, Disney+ expects to offer 7,500 television episodes and 500 movies spanning its vast portfolio, from Star Wars and Marvel Studios blockbusters to The Simpsons and National Geographic nature documentaries.

**Trade: U.S.-China deal within sight**

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the U.S. and China have nearly cleared one of the biggest hurdles in a way of a trade agreement, said Shawn Donnan and Jenny Leonard in Bloomberg. The U.S. has pushed for an enforcement mechanism “that would allow it to quickly punish” China with tariffs if Beijing fails to live up to its promises. Mnuchin suggested last week the two countries could reach an agreement giving each similar powers. Both sides might also give up their right to “challenge any enforcement action by the other at the World Trade Organization.”

**Health care: Insurer strikes at Medicare for All**

The head of the nation’s largest health insurer this week launched an attack on the Medicare for All plan favored by many Democrats, said Berkeley Lovelace Jr. in CNBC.com. UnitedHealth CEO David Wichmann warned investors that the proposal, popular among 2020 Democratic presidential candidates, would “destabilize the nation’s health system.” Until now, insurers have mostly kept quiet about plans for a single-payer system that would replace private insurance. Sen. Bernie Sanders recently “unveiled a bill that would create a government-run system to provide health insurance for all Americans.”

**Can man live on tweets alone?**

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey eats one meal a day and fasts on the weekends, said Catherine Clifford in CNBC.com, and that’s only the beginning of his unusual habits. In a podcast last week, Dorsey said he meditates twice a day and walks 5 miles a day—a trek that takes him a mile and 15 minutes. Dorsey believes in cold baths and subjects himself to one every morning. “Going into an ice-cold tub from just being warm in bed...just unlocks this thing in my mind,” Dorsey says. In his home office, the billionaire has a single near-infrared bulb, which some research shows promotes cellular regeneration, placed near his standing desk. As for his diet, Dorsey “only eats dinner,” choosing a “meal of fish, chicken, or steak with a salad, spinach, asparagus, or Brussels sprouts,” with mixed berries or dark chocolate for dessert. On the weekends, he has nothing but water.
Inequality: Can the capitalists fix capitalism?

Hedge-fund billionaire Ray Dalio and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon are among a growing chorus of capitalists questioning the efficacy of capitalism, said Kate Rooney in CNBC.com. Dalio, who predicted the 2008 financial crisis, wrote last week that the inequality gap has reached levels unseen since the 1930s. This represents an “existential risk for the U.S.” He went even further on CBS’s 60 Minutes, saying that “the American dream is lost.” Dalio’s critiques echoed Dimon’s words in a shareholder letter that capitalism is “leaving people behind.” Dalio, who has a personal fortune of $18 billion, said that “he supported raising taxes on the wealthy.” These business titans aren’t backing socialism. But they are “calling for changes to the system that enabled them to get rich.”

The business press is eating up Dalio’s “little capitalism-bashing media tour” like it’s an extra helping of ice cream, said Charlie Gasparino in FoxBusiness.com. Of course they are: You can’t give liberal reporters enough about the “various evils of capitalism.” But Dalio’s a strange courier for this message. “He’s a billionaire many times over, not from inventing anything special, but as a market speculator.” He runs a “cult-like” organization that feels like a police state, where he videotapes and records his employees. And “charging big bucks for investing money” doesn’t automatically make Dalio a deep thinker. When taxes go up, billionaires like Dalio will just leave. And the people who will get hammered are the ones who are really trying to achieve that American dream.

Thanks for the feedback, Ray, said Helaine Olen in The Washington Post—your idea of creating a “bipartisan commission” to fix things is sure to be a real game changer. Just one question: “Who is going to select the members of the bipartisan commission Dalio thinks can restore mass prosperity to the American people?” Or should we assume that people like Dalio and Dimon believe such a committee can be staffed by business titans like themselves, “the best and the brightest of our time”? These billionaires can see, as the rest of us do, that the system that earned them their wealth and power is breaking down. But let’s face it: The plutocrats who are the “biggest beneficiaries of our record-breaking age of inequality are not the people who are going to end it.”

Sure, some of the “sentiments may sound a little rich,” said the Financial Times in an editorial. These are “paid-up members of the Davos elite.” At least they do see the problems, and their “efforts to consider the growing malaise at the heart of the global economy” are worth applauding. But their proposals will be “inconsequential unless there is a broad rethink of attitudes across business and government.”

What the experts say

Selling a piece of your future

Some college students are electing to hand over a cut of their future earnings rather than take out a student loan, said Claire Boston in Bloomberg Businessweek. “A new kind of financial instrument called an income-sharing agreement, or ISA,” allows students to fund part of the cost of tuition. The loan is repaid with a set percentage of their salary after graduation; the terms vary by major. At Purdue University, an English major who borrowed $10,000 would pay 4.5 percent of income for an English degree for a little under 10 years. A grad with a degree in computer science would pay 2.57 percent for about seven years. “The last big ISA experiment—at Yale University in the 1970s—ended up as a cautionary tale” after many students defaulted and others were left on the hook for far more than they expected. But students will have “more protection under newer plans,” which are managed by investment firms, not schools.

What makes a ‘super saver’

Housing costs are the biggest difference maker for those who save a lot of money versus those who don’t, said Catey Hill in Market Watch.com. According to new research from TD Ameritrade, “super savers spent just 14 percent of their incomes on housing, while regular folks dropped 23 percent.” It’s true that some people pay more for housing to get into a better school district or a safer area. “But there’s plenty of room to downsize”: New homes “on average have 1,000 more square feet than they did in the 1970s.” And you probably don’t need that extra space. One family in Colorado downsized from a three-story condo to an 845-square-foot apartment, saving $7,300 a year.

Investors avoid a Millennial fund

An investment fund that focuses specifically on companies that target Millennials has struggled to generate interest despite very strong returns, said Simon Constable in The Wall Street Journal. The Global X Millennials Thematic ETF has gained 60 percent since its launch in 2016. The theory is that Millennials’ purchasing power will increase over the next few decades, providing a lift for the “companies that cater to them.” But assets under management totaled just $35.2 million—“on Wall Street, that’s considered paltry”—and one analyst believes the use of the term “Millennial” has limited its appeal. “If we’d called it a ‘new consumer fund,’ the reaction would have been different,” the analyst said.
**Best columns: Business**

## Uber: Giant IPO hopes, and equally big losses

Uber is seeking a staggering $100 billion valuation when it makes its long-awaited public debut, said Mike Isaac and Kate Conger in *The New York Times*. The transportation giant filed the prospectus for its initial public offering last week, and the numbers are striking. The IPO seems designed to rival that of Facebook, which went public at $104 billion in 2012. But while Facebook was profitable at the time, Uber lost $1.8 billion in 2018. That’s one reason that “the prospectus renewed questions about how sustainable Uber’s business actually is.” Most of the fares paid to Uber go to drivers; last year, the company’s ride-hailing business took in $41.5 billion in bookings, but only $9.2 billion of that came back to Uber—which has not had to rest “persistent questions” about driver pay and working conditions. Still, Uber is making the case that it can seize opportunities “beyond its original ride-hailing mission” to disrupt industries ranging from food delivery to long-haul trucking. “I’m not sure I’ve ever read a more sprawling IPO document,” said Shira Ovide in *Bloomberg.com*. It was 285 pages—48 of them devoted to detailing “risk factors” that could jeopardize Uber’s ambitions—plus 83 pages of financial statements. And for all that ink, still “it remains unclear whether there is lasting demand for Uber’s two main products—on-demand rides and restaurant meal deliveries”—or if either will ever be profitable.

Profitable or not, for early investors Uber will “deliver one of the biggest jackpots in Silicon Valley startup history,” said Rolfe Winkler and Scott Austin in *The Wall Street Journal*. The venture capital firm Benchmark gave roughly $9 million in early funding in 2011—an investment that could be worth $8.25 billion now. But for ordinary investors, the stock offering is a gamble. Those who bought the hype around Uber rival Lyft have seen their stock’s value tumble nearly 30 percent in three weeks. Also unlikely to benefit much: Uber’s drivers, said Joe Nocera in *Bloomberg.com*, who get no regular salary or benefits. Some estimates find that “Uber drivers make less than someone working at McDonald’s.”

### What if we crash out of NAFTA?

**Peter Schechter**

*Los Angeles Times*

“President Trump’s NAFTA 2.0 trade accord—the United States–Mexico-Canada Agreement—is in trouble,” said Peter Schechter, and the timing could be catastrophic. Republicans are signaling concern about trade restrictions in Trump’s pact, while Democrats insist that Mexico change its worker protection laws. Trump’s immigration rhetoric doesn’t help—it’s hard to pass a major trade agreement as the president “is threatening to completely shut down the border.” But if Congress rejects this revised agreement, or stalls until after 2020, Trump could “withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement without a backup plan.” Trade feuds with China and Europe have gotten more attention, but an imposition of the USMCA would amount to our version of Brexit. Ending NAFTA without a replacement “could eliminate 1.8 million to 3.6 million mostly blue-collar jobs in the next few years” in the U.S., while putting as many as 10 million Mexicans out of work—thus increasing pressure on the border. It would also hurt Trump’s deal-making credibility when he needs it most. The U.S. is closing in on a long-awaited agreement with China that could end that trade war. Failure to ratify an agreement with our close allies “will have irrevocable negative consequences on the U.S.-China negotiations.” The USMCA isn’t perfect. But it’s a better stopgap than “a no-deal crash out.”

### Our corporate overlords have arrived

**David Dayen**

*The New Republic*

The big tech companies are waging “a war of all against all,” said David Dayen. Thomas Hobbes used that phrase to describe the chaos that might ensue in the absence of government. But “it’s also an accurate description of the U.S. economy right now.” Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Google used to be content staying in their own lanes. “Facebook had social media, Google had search, Amazon had e-commerce, and Apple had hardware.” But Apple’s new streaming services “reveal the industry-wide quest for total domination.” Amazon Prime is already well on its way, and Google and Facebook aren’t far behind. Each of these companies wants to make users unable to live without it. It might seem positive for consumers that these companies are fighting for their attention. But if their war continues, “the outcome could be a kind of digital tyranny,” where your main choice is which “giant corporate overlord” you sign up with. Want to make a film or video game, or start a news organization? Be prepared to subject yourself to the whims of the digital gatekeepers and give up as much as 30 percent of your revenue. The government must intervene in this war, or “the American public will become collateral damage.”
Charles Van Doren
1926–2019
For a few years in the late 1950s, Charles Van Doren was considered by many TV viewers to be the smartest man in America. An English instructor at Columbia University, Van Doren trounced 13 competitors in a row on NBC's big-money, general-knowledge quiz show Twenty-One. Van Doren, 30, dazzled viewers with his smarts. He named the second, third, fourth, and fifth wives of King Henry VIII—and their fates; listed the four Balearic Islands; and gave the common names for caries, myopia, and missing patellar reflex. He took home $1 million in today's money. But it was all a fix: The educator had been fed answers by producers who scripted the hit show for maximum entertainment value. When the ruse was revealed in 1959, Van Doren went from public hero to villain. “I have deceived my friends,” he said in an apology, “and I had millions of them.”

Van Doren was born in New York City “into a family of intellectual achievers,” said the Los Angeles Times. His father won the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, and his mother was a novelist and editor of The Nation. Van Doren studied at Columbia, Cambridge University, and the Sorbonne and seemed destined for academic stardom when he was spotted at a party by NBC producer Al Freedman in 1956. Freedman decided the tall and handsome Van Doren would be a guaranteed ratings winner, and coached him to dramatically mop his brow and bite his lip while he searched his mind for answers he already knew, said The New York Times. When Van Doren finally faltered on his 14th appearance—“missing the name of Belgium's king”—viewers’ hearts were shattered.

But suspicions were soon “aroused about game-show cheating and Congress convened hearings,” said The Washington Post. Van Doren, who'd previously denied wrongdoing to a grand jury, confessed all before lawmakers in 1959. He was fired from Columbia, lost a lucrative NBC contract, and received a suspended sentence for perjury. Van Doren went on to work for Encyclopaedia Britannica and to write fiction and nonfiction books. He stayed silent about the Twenty-One scandal—a made famous again by Robert Redford's acclaimed 1994 movie Quiz Show—-until 2008. In a New Yorker article that year, the 82-year-old told his story, and explained how he tried to avoid people who'd ask, “Aren’t you Charles Van Doren?” That's his name, he wrote, “but I'm not who you think I am—or, at least, I don’t want to be.”

Richard Cole
1915–2019
The Army aviator who raided Tokyo with Doolittle
On the early morning of April 18, 1942, Lt. Richard Cole took off from the deck of the USS Hornet aircraft carrier in a specially modified B-25 Mitchell bomber to strike America's first blow against mainland Japan. Lt. Col. James Doolittle was leading the top-secret mission, with the 26-year-old Cole serving as his co-pilot in the lead plane. The Doolittle Raid caused only light damage to military and industrial sites in Tokyo, but it lifted the U.S.'s spirits after Pearl Harbor, going down in military history for its sheer audacity—the 16 bombers had to fly 650 miles to their targets. “Everyone prayed but did so in an inward way,” said Cole, who was the last surviving member of the 80 Doolittle Raiders. “If anyone was scared, it didn't show.”

Born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, Cole grew up watching planes take off and land at a nearby military airfield, said The Washington Post. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1940, flying anti-submarine patrols off the West Coast, spotting mostly whales. When Cole volunteered for Doolittle's covert mission, “he knew only that the flight would be risky, and he assumed he was headed for North Africa.”

The B-25s “ran low on fuel after their bombing runs,” said The New York Times, “and none made it to airstrips prepared for them by the Chinese.” Cole and his crewmates bailed out in rain and fog after crossing the Chinese border, linking up with U.S.-allied forces. Three raiders died bailing out, and four died in Japanese captivity. At the raiders' final public reunion in 2013, Cole co-piloted a restored B-25 bomber during a 40-minute flight over Florida. “It's the same as it was then,” he said. “All I did was prove how rusty I am.”

Marilynn Smith
1929–2019
The golfer who put women on an even par

In 1949, University of Kansas sophomore Marilynn Smith and her father made a request of her college’s athletic director, Phog Allen: Could the school pay Smith’s way to the women’s intercollegiate golf championships? At the time, women’s golf barely registered on the national sports scene, and Smith was the school’s only female player. Allen said he couldn’t help with travel expenses, telling Smith’s dad, “It’s too bad your daughter is not a boy.” She never forgot the slight. Her father drove her to the tournament, which she won, and she quit college soon after to become a pro golfer. The following year, Smith teamed up with 12 other female players to launch the Ladies Professional Golf Association with the aim of elevating the women’s game. They succeeded.

Today, the LPGA has 33 events on its tour, with prizes totaling $67 million. “We’re like that old van of four or five automobiles.” At tournament sites, Smith helped sell the LPGA to locals—she led golf clinics and would go to major league ballparks, hit golf balls from home plate to center field, and invite baseball fans to the tournaments. Smith would win 21 LPGA titles during her career, and always delighted in the success of the women’s game. “It would have been nice to have been around for some of the paydays these gals now receive,” she said in 2000. “But it’s neat knowing we were on the ground floor of it all.”

The early days of the LPGA were a struggle, said The New York Times. Without funds to fly, women players “traveled to tournaments in caravans of four or five automobiles.” At tournament sites, Smith helped sell the LPGA to locals—she led golf clinics and would go to major league ballparks, hit golf balls from home plate to center field, and invite baseball fans to the tournaments. Smith would win 21 LPGA titles during her career, and always delighted in the success of the women’s game. “It would have been nice to have been around for some of the paydays these gals now receive,” she said in 2000. “But it’s neat knowing we were on the ground floor of it all.”
The strokes that created Dr. Rapp

A 63-year-old doctor’s seizures left him obsessed with poetry and speaking in rhymes, said journalist Jeff Maysh in The Atlantic—and made Sherman Hershfield a legend in the L.A. hip-hop scene of the early 2000s.

Dr. R. Sherman

Hershfield woke up one morning and was surprised to find himself behind the wheel of his car. Somewhere between his Beverly Hills apartment and his practice in the San Fernando Valley, the silver-haired physician had blacked out. Somehow, he’d avoided a crash, but this wasn’t the first time. “I didn’t know what was going on,” he admitted.

Apart from his frequent blackouts, Hershfield was in fine health for a man in his 50s. He was tall and lean, ran 6 miles a day, and was a strict vegetarian. Hershfield specialized in physical medicine and rehabilitation, and for decades had helped patients with brain injuries learn to walk again and rebuild their lives. Still, Hershfield didn’t know what was wrong inside his own head.

Not long after the blackouts started, Hershfield suffered a grand mal seizure—the type most people imagine when they think about seizures. He was driven to the emergency room, thrashing like a 6-foot-4-inch fish pulled out of the water. The scan revealed that his blackouts were actually a swarm of small strokes, caused by blood clots that could kill him at any moment.

Doctors prescribed blood-thinning medication and forced Hershfield to quit driving. Like many survivors of stroke, his speech became slurred and he sometimes stuttered. His personality also seemed to change. He suddenly became obsessed with reading and writing poetry. Soon, Hershfield’s friends noticed another unusual side effect: He couldn’t stop speaking in rhyme. He finished everyday sentences with rhyming couplets, like “Now I have to ride the bus / It’s enough to make me cuss.” And curiously, whenever he rhymed, his speech impediments disappeared.

A stroke or “brain attack” can happen to any of us at any time. One occurs every 40 seconds in the United States, and they can lead to permanent disability and extraordinary side effects. Some patients become hypersexual or compulsive gamblers. “There was a famous guy in Italy who had what they called ‘Pinocchio syndrome,’” said Dr. Alice Flaherty, a professor of neurology and psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “When he told a lie, he would have a seizure. He was crippled as a businessman.”

One of Flaherty’s most famous cases was Tommy McHugh, a 51-year-old British man who suffered a subarachnoid hemorrhage—a stroke caused by bleeding around the brain. A grizzled ex-con, McHugh became deeply philosophical and spent 19 hours a day reading poetry, speaking in rhyme, painting, and drawing.

For Hershfield, a love of poetry was also completely out of keeping with anything in his past. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1936, and while his mother was a concert pianist, he followed his father into medical school. In 1973, he arrived in Southern California and set up his practice; he had little time for reading anything but medical journals. The practice ran into financial trouble, and by 1987 he’d filed for bankruptcy. That was around the time the blackouts started.

In the 10 years following his stroke, Hershfield dedicated his free time to a Buddhist organization called Soka Gakkai International, where he loved to chant for hours. He had met his second wife there, Michiko, a beautiful Japanese divorcée he impressed with his intellect. Hershfield also embraced his Jewish heritage. “I did the Holocaust in rhyme,” he recalled of an educational poem he’d perform on the bus. The city sounded like a swinging rhythm section: Brakes hissed. Horns honked. Passengers rang the bell.

As Hershfield recited his rhymes alone, he had become just another crazy person talking to himself on public transport. Then, one afternoon, as he waited at a bus stop in Hollywood, a man selling jewelry overheard him and suggested that he take his lyrics to Leimert Park. Intrigued, he rode a bus headed into South Central, past Crenshaw’s Magic Johnson theater, the neighborhood’s megachurches, and liquor stores. At 43rd and Leimert, he found a crowd of teenagers surrounding a community arts center called the “KAOS Network.” This had to be it: Spontaneous rap battles were breaking out, and dancers writhed on the sidewalk. At the entrance, a young man sized him up.

“Would you like to hear something?” Hershfield asked politely. “Sure, what’s your name?” the man asked. Hershfield looked at him. “My name is Dr. Rapp.”

Established in 1984 as a media-production center, KAOS Network was famous for Project Blowed, an open-mic workshop for up-and-coming rappers. “It was underground, powerful, strong, and scary for people if they weren’t ready, because it was really volatile,” explained the proprietor, Ben Caldwell, a 73-year-old African-American filmmaker. The project was a tough breeding ground for rappers, who hoped to “blow up,” like the underground performer Aceyalone, or more mainstream stars like Jurassic 5. But Hershfield knew nothing about any of this.

“He said he wanted to do a rhyme on the Holocaust,” Caldwell remembered. This was unusual, but not against “da mutha f*ckin rulz” pinned to the door, that began: “PROJECT BLOWED IS PRESENTED FOR THE LOVE OF HIP-HOP ENTIRELY FOR BLACK PEOPLE.”
The entrance fee was $2 to perform, $4 to watch. When a rapper forgot his lines, stuttered, or showed up unprepared, the crowd forced him offstage with a devastating chant: “Please pass the mic!”

The DJ demanded Hershfield’s backing music. He handed over a cassette tape of Chopin. Alone on the stage, Hershfield gripped the mic, and began: “God, this is a tough thing to write / The feeling I got in my heart tonight / Just to think of the Holocaust / So deep and sadly blue / And still so many people / Don’t think it’s true.”

“The first time he was up there, he wasn’t that successful,” Caldwell said. The crowd was silent. Here was an old man, reading a poem. As he emerged into the hot South Central night, Hershfield heard a voice from Fifth Street Dick’s, the neighboring coffee shop: “If you can’t keep up with those kids, then you’d better do something else.”

Undeterred, Hershfield put aside his Tchaikovsky records and listened to N.W.A and Run-DMC. When Michiko found out he was preparing for rap battles in South Central, she told him, “You’re crazy!” But she couldn’t stop him from returning to Project Blowed every week.

“Sherman’s leaving at 10 o’clock at night and going to Crenshaw,” she told her son, Scott. Scott, who had transitioned from a teenage professional skateboarder into a hip-hop DJ, was now in his 20s. Scott encouraged his stepfather to be more like the hip-hop rappers he admired—among them, KRS-One.

In the mid-1980s, KRS-One had emerged from the Bronx as the emcee of Boogie Down Productions, with the seminal album Criminal Minded. As a solo artist, he’d created one of hip-hop’s most enduring records, Sound of Da Police. One evening in October 1999, Hershfield heard that KRS-One was speaking about rap history at an event in Hollywood and decided to swing by.

During the Q&A, Hershfield grabbed the mic. He explained that he was getting his language back together after a stroke by listening to rap records. “One of which was one of my songs,” KRS-One recalled. Hershfield couldn’t stop himself.

“I started to have a stroke,” he rapped. “Went broke / I started to think and speak in rhyme / I can do it all the time / And I want to get to do the rap / And I don’t take any more of this crap.”

“He got a standing ovation,” recalled KRS-One. He gave the doctor his telephone. When Hershfield told his stepson about his new friend, Scott was stunned. “You know, you should really listen to his music and listen to his lyrics,” he told his stepfather. But inside, Scott was thinking: Let’s see how long this lasts. KRS-One?

Every week for two or three years, Hershfield climbed onstage at Project Blowed and gave his everything, sweat on his brow, steam on his glasses, fists pumping. Sometimes he electrified the crowd, other times: “Please pass the mic!” He learned to self-promote and name-check “Dr. Rapp” in his lyrics just like the pros. He performed on the stage and in impromptu “ciphers” under street lamps, until the sun came up.

“He was tight,” the rapper Myka 9 told me, while he smoked in an alleyway before a performance in Culver City. “He had a little bit of an angular approach. He had flows, he had good lines that were thought out, I remember a couple punch lines that came off pretty cool.”

Hershfield’s double life became strained. His voice became hoarse from shouting in rhyme just like the pros. He performed in Culver City. “He had a seizure,” recalled Tasha Wiggins, who had a stroke.

“Went broke / I started to think and speak in rhyme / I can do it all the time / And I’m just a beginning medical intern of rap / Trying to express and open my trap...”

Hershfield’s stepson, Scott, remembers the morning he opened the Times and saw a photograph of Dr. Rapp, wearing an Adidas tracksuit, mid-flow, on the paper’s Metro pages. Dr. Rapp had finally “blown up.”

Radio and television crews soon descended on Leimert Park. Ben Caldwell showed me a photograph of Dr. Rapp, wearing an Adidas tracksuit, mid-flow, on the paper’s Metro pages. Dr. Rapp had finally “blown up.”

“I can’t clearly tell you whether [rap] helped him,” said Michiko, “but I can tell you he was happy when he was doing rap music.”

Hershfield represented Project Blowed until ill health forced him to quit both music and medicine. He died from cancer in Los Angeles, on March 29, 2013, at age 76.

Today, Project Blowed lives on, every third Tuesday at KAOS Network in Leimert Park. But Leimert Park is now fighting a new battle, against gentrification. The reason Hershfield was accepted at Project Blowed, said Caldwell, was that he arrived with an open mind, and he listened and learned. “That’s one wonderful thing I like most about black American communities,” he said. “As long as you don’t try to tell them how to do their own culture, you’re good.”

Ever since Dr. Rapp’s days, performers of all races and backgrounds have jumped onstage, added Caldwell. But the moment they stutter or slur, it’s always the same: “Please pass the mic.”

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**Crossword No. 501: Life Is a Song** by Matt Gaffney

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**ACROSS**

1. Mazda manufactured in Hiroshima
6. Pronoun for a prince
9. Cyclist’s challenges
14. 30-day period
15. environmentally sound
16. Dostoyevsky novel, with The
17. Forthcoming Elton John biopic whose name is taken from one of his songs
19. “I’m being serious!”
20. Cover over Antarctica
22. Word often rendered as “r” when texting
23. Airport guesses, for short
26. Forthcoming biopic about the Sugar Plum Fairy?
28. ___, Manuel Miranda
29. Mont Blanc, e.g.
30. South Bend mayor Buttigieg
31. Unspecific
33. Sen., Kaine or Scott
34. Parks born in Tuskegee
38. Forthcoming biopic about the Venus de Milo?
42. Posh phrase of denial
43. Acorn bearer
46. Traffic cone
47. Good surname for an Indy 500 driver
48. 13 under ___. (Tiger Woods’ winning 2019 Masters score)
49. “I kiss’d thee ___ I kill’d thee”: Othello
50. Forthcoming biopic about Moana?
54. Materials to be smelted
55. Designing Anna
56. “Isn’t it obvious?”
58. State of uncertainty
60. Forthcoming biopic about Garry Kasparov?
64. Temporarily fended off
66. Pronoun for a princess
67. Features of the Arizona landscape
68. Goddess of the dawn
69. Spare part?

**DOWN**

1. Viña del ___, (Chilean city)
2. Event covered by the WSJ
3. Curved line
4. Maori carvings that share their name with a type of torch
5. One of the Baldwin brothers
6. Leaves with little wiggly room
7. Financier Carl
8. House that needs endless repairs, say
9. Suggest
10. Wedding day words
11. Purple ___ (state flower of New Hampshire)
12. Longest river in France
13. Ranch resident
18. Head of Quebec
21. Swelling during pregnancy, e.g.
23. NBA Hall of Famer Hayes
24. “I love you,” in Livorno
25. Inner turmoil
27. Super-smart, to haters
29. Architect who turns 102 years old on April 26
32. City between Syracuse and Saratoga Springs
33. “That was naughty!”
35. Wayne Gretzky, for nine seasons
37. of God (1985 Jane Fonda movie)
39. One-named singer of “Royals”
40. Philanthropist’s generosity
41. Invisibilia aired
46. Gets under one’s skin
47. Information on tags
48. Spray once used on apples
50. Faith for most Tajiks and Tunisians
51. Expensive hotel room
52. An arm and a leg, say
53. Sun Valley’s state ___ point (center of activity)
57. Sound asleep?
62. “Isn’t it obvious?”
63. “We can revisit this another time”
65. “Isn’t it obvious?”
66. “I kiss’d thee ___ I kill’d thee”: Othello
67. Features of the Arizona landscape
68. Goddess of the dawn
69. Spare part?

**Sudoku**

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: super-hard

Find the solutions to all The Week’s puzzles online: [www.theweek.com/puzzle](http://www.theweek.com/puzzle).

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Author and Television Writer/Producer

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