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Study Finds Billions of DNA Fragments in a Dose of mRNA Vaccine

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QUOTES *In the News*

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Shadow Immigration Minister Dan Tehan responds to the arrest of former detainees released from immigration detention

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“As a business and members of the Ethical Trading Initiative, we have strict policies in place ...”

British fashion brand Regatta replies to reports of a Chinese prison ID being found sewn in one of its coats

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COP28 President Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (R3), U.S. special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry (R2), Chinese official Xie Zhenhua (L3), President of the World Bank Ajay Banga (R1), and UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen (L1) during the Energy Session at the UNFCCC COP28 Climate Conference at Expo City Dubai on Dec. 2, 2023.

CLIMATE POLICY

UN COP28 SUMMIT

Australia Signs Renewables Pledge, But Not Nuclear Energy Call

Monica O'Shea

Australia's opposition is concerned the Labor government did not sign up to an international pledge calling for the tripling of nuclear energy.

However, Australia has committed at COP28 to triple renewable energy around the world by the year 2030.

Shadow Climate Change and Energy Minister Ted O'Brien said

The Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy was signed by 22 countries, including the United States and United Kingdom ...

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AAP IMAGE/DARREN ENGLAND



Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner speaks during an Olympic Games 2032 Legacy Forum in Brisbane on March 22, 2023.

NATION

'Dysfunctional': Brisbane Lord Mayor Resigns From 2032 Olympics Forum

Monica O'Shea

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has resigned from a key infrastructure delivery forum ahead of the 2032 Olympic Games.

Adrian Schrinner is stepping down from the Brisbane 2032

Olympic and Paralympic Games Intergovernmental Leaders Forum.

The Liberal National Lord Mayor is also concerned about the Labor state government's plans to demolish and rebuild a major stadium for the Olympics open-

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WORLD

Traders Shorted Israeli Stocks Just Before Hamas Attack: Study

Bill Pan

The Israeli government is investigating claims by American researchers that some stock traders

Continued on A13

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES



Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (C), president of UNFCCC COP28, at the opening session in Dubai on Nov. 30, 2023.

WORLD

'No Science' to Support Phasing Out Fossil Fuels to Limit Global Warming: COP28 President

Naveen Athrappully

The president of the U.N Climate Change Conference, also known as COP28, dismissed the idea

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OPINION

Questions Still Linger Around Big Pharma's Support for Regulators

Alan Jones



Vaccination, made compulsory, and denying employment to the unvaccinated, may well become

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Accuracy & Integrity

The Epoch Times was founded in 2000 to provide honest and uncensored news coverage of China. Based in New York City, our newsroom is dedicated to restoring accuracy and integrity in media. We stand outside political interests and the pursuit of profit. And we stand against the systematic destruction of traditional culture by destructive ideologies such as communism.

Sex Offender Charged After Being Released from Immigration Detention

Alfred Bui

An Afghan sex offender has been charged in South Australia just a few weeks after he was released from immigration detention, sparking criticisms about the government's failure to protect citizens.

On Dec. 4, Aliywar Yawari, a 65-year-old man, appeared in the Adelaide Magistrates Court after being charged with two counts of indecent assault for attacking a woman.

Prior to his latest arrest, Mr. Yawari assaulted three elderly women between 2013 and 2014 and was considered a "danger to the Australian community" by an SA judge.

Mr. Yawari was set free after the High Court ruled on Nov. 8 that the federal government's practice of holding asylum seekers in indefinite immigration detention was unlawful.

All seven justices agreed that sections of the Migration Act which had previously been interpreted to authorise the measure went beyond legislative power.

The review was triggered by the case of NZYQ, a Myanmar man who arrived in Australia by boat as a teenager in 2012.

His temporary visa was cancelled in 2015 when he was convicted of sex with a minor. When his sentence ended in 2018, the government transferred him to immigration detention.

The court decided that because there was "no real prospect of his removal from Australia ... in the reasonably foreseeable future," his detention was unlawful. It ordered his immediate release, with the Commonwealth to pay his costs.

The decision sets a precedent that will affect an estimated 340 offenders detained under the indefinite detention regime. So far, 148 have already been released, and three have reoffended almost immediately.

The most recent arrest caused an uproar in the Senate, where shadow attorney general Michaelia Cash claimed the man was the "ringleader of a child exploitation gang."

Meanwhile, the NSW authorities have charged another asylum seeker released from immigration detention with the possession of cannabis.

This is a catastrophic failure.

Dan Tehan,
shadow immigration minister

Opposition Calls For Ministers to Resign

Following the arrest of former detainees, Shadow Immigration Minister Dan Tehan condemned the Labor government and urged Immigration Minister Andrew Giles and Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil to resign.

"This is a catastrophic failure. The Albanese government has failed their number one duty, which is to keep the Australian community safe," he told Seven News.

"The time has come for the prime minister to do the right thing and ask for these ministers to resign, and if they don't he should sack them."

The shadow minister also alleged that the Labor government failed to prepare necessary mea-



Thousands of Melbournians rallied to protest the High Court's decision regarding the 267 illegal immigrants facing deportation, on the steps of the state library in Melbourne on Feb. 8, 2016.

asures to deal with the outcome of the High Court ruling.

"We warned about this. We said that they needed to have tough measures in place immediately after the High Court had made the decision," he said, noting that the government was warned as early as June.

"They failed to be ready for that eventuality, and that failure has led to the community not being safe."

Meanwhile, the government has rejected the opposition's calls for the two ministers to resign.

Government Services Minister Bill Shorten said it made no sense for Mr. Giles and Ms. O'Neil to step down from their positions.

"The logic of that is that the High Court should resign if you really think there was some way to prevent this," he told Nine radio.

"The reality is the High Court has made this decision. That is their right and prerogative in

our judicial system."

Government to Amend Laws to Bring Serious Offenders Back to Detention

Despite the blame-shifting, Labor and the Coalition have moved to counteract the High Court's ruling through legislation legalising indefinite detention, with Labor's preventive detention regime passing the Senate with Coalition support. It will go to the House of Representatives on Dec. 7.

Under the scheme, the immigration minister can apply to courts to redetain a released detainee if they are considered to be a high-risk offender.

However, the detainee must have been charged with a crime resulting in at least seven years of imprisonment. In addition, the minister has to convince the court that the person is a

danger to the community.

If the judge is convinced that the released detainee has a "high degree of probability" of reoffending, they will be sent to prison. A preventative detention order will take effect for three years but must be reviewed annually.

Violating an order will cause a detainee to face a minimum sentence of one year of imprisonment and a maximum of five.

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton stated that his party could back the legal changes provided they were reasonable.

"If the government has adequate measures to keep Australians safe, then we will support those measures, and we'll see what they have to say," he told reporters.

"If we see a bad bill, we're not going to support it."

Rex Widerstrom contributed to this report.

Israel Issues Travel Warning to Citizens Going to Australia

Monica O'Shea

Israel's National Security Council (NSC) has issued a warning on travel to Australia and multiple countries in Western Europe, but not the United States.

The threat level in Australia has been raised to level 2 with the recommendation to "exercise increased precaution."

The warning comes amid multiple pro-Palestinian protests in Australia including people chanting, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." This phrase is widely interpreted as implying the destruction of Israel.

Israelis have been warned to check "whether there have

been anti-Israel protests at the destination," even for countries where no travel warnings have been issued.

This included a warning against "openly displaying your Israeli and Jewish identities and any relevant symbols."

The United States, Canada, and Mexico are among the nations that have remained at the green level 1 for travel.

Australia Joins China, Venezuela

China, France, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Zambia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom are among 80 countries that are listed with an upgraded travel warning.

"The threat level for many countries in Western Europe (including the UK, France, and Germany), South America (including Brazil and Argentina), as well as Australia and Russia, has been raised to level 2, with the recommendation to exercise increased precaution," the NSC said.

Israelis were warned to check "their destinations wisely" while exercising precautionary measures "wherever they are."

Citizens were recommended to postpone travel to countries where travel warnings have been issued, especially Arab and Middle Eastern countries, the North Caucasus, countries bordering Iran, and several Muslim nations in Asia.

The threat level for African nations including South Africa and Eritrea has been raised to 3, along with Central Asia including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Level 3 means reconsidering non-essential travel to these countries.

"Since the beginning of the war, we have identified increased efforts by Iran and its proxies, including Hamas and Global Jihad factions, to harm Israeli and Jewish targets around the world," the NSC said.

"At the same time, there is a constant and significant rise in incitement, attempted attacks, and manifestations of anti-semitism in many countries."

Australians Travelling to Israel

Meanwhile, Australian authorities have placed a "reconsider your need to travel" to Israel and occupied Palestinian territories, amid conflict in the Middle East.

There is also a "do not travel" warning in Gaza for areas near the border with Lebanon, and the West Bank.

The travel warning was updated on Oct. 27 and is listed as current as of Dec. 5, 2023.

"We continue to advise reconsider your need to travel to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories overall due to the volatile security situation, including the threat of terrorism, armed conflict and civil unrest," the Australian government stated.

ABC's Own Audit Finds Bias in Its Coverage of The Voice

Rex Widerstrom

An internal ABC report has found that the public broadcaster gave more than twice the amount of coverage to content in favour of The Voice proposal to change the Constitution, than it did to negative or undecided views.

The Voice was a referendum to determine whether an indigenous "Voice to Parliament" should be enshrined in the Constitution. The official campaign period started on Aug. 30, 2023 and the vote occurred on Oct. 14, with 60.06 percent voting "no."

The ABC established a Referendum Coverage Review Committee (RCRC) in July 2023 to review its content of the vote.

ABC's Coverage

Millions of people engaged with the ABC's referendum content across various platforms, which included 243 digital articles, which accumulated 30.4 million page views, and 98.4 million engaged minutes.

As well as, TV coverage including "Australia Votes: The Voice Referendum," which reached 3 million viewers in the combined five-city metro and regional markets across ABC TV and ABC News Channel.

On ABC iView, the broadcaster

had 451,000 live streams on the date of the referendum, up 406.7 percent on the 2023 year-to-date Saturday average. On its ABC listen app, ABC NewsRadio had 85,000 live streams that day, up 93.2 percent on the 2023 year-to-date Saturday average.

While the ABC News' Instagram account accumulated 1 million views across the referendum weekend.

The Review

The RCRC established two separate monitoring platforms to review the nature of the broadcaster's coverage.

Media monitoring company Isentia began its work on Aug. 30, while an internal tracker covered a wider range of content over a longer period.

The ABC's report explained that "its purpose was not to give an overview but to assist individual programme teams and managers keep track of whether they were providing a fair diversity of perspectives in the programmes and platforms under their control."

The report goes on to note that, "Despite the sampling differences, the two systems gave roughly similar results."

That was that more than twice the coverage was given to content that favoured or promoted a "yes"



The ABC's studio in South Bank, Brisbane, on Aug. 11, 2023.

All teams reported that it was significantly more difficult getting No voices to speak on the record.

Report of the referendum coverage review committee

vote than that given to either the "no" or "neutral" perspectives. This pattern was broadly repeated across all media.

Difficulties Convincing Opponents to Speak

According to the review, "all teams reported that it was significantly more difficult getting No voices to speak on the record."

"This was true of both high-profile representatives of the campaign ... and ordinary citizens for talkback and vox pops. It was true in both predominantly Indigenous communities and predominantly non-Indigenous communities."

It claims prominent Indigenous "No" campaigner Jacinta Nampijinpa Price declined at least 52 interview requests with ABC and did not agree to a single interview on a major broadcast programme.

Complaints

The ABC's Ombudsman's Office received a total of 383 content complaints related to its referendum coverage, the overwhelming majority of which (315, or 82 percent) claimed bias or lack of balance.

About 121 were investigated, and four were found to be in breach of editorial standards.

Five were resolved to the satisfaction of the Ombudsman (the content area having taken appropriate remedial action). All of the breach findings were about an inaccurate reference in a 7:00 p.m. TV news story that claimed the 1967 referendum granted Indigenous Australians the right to vote.

The ABC concluded that, despite the outcome of the report, its coverage was "high quality and successfully included diverse voices and opinions from all parts of Australia," and that the broadcaster was "ever mindful of its responsibility to facilitate a comprehensive but responsible debate in an impartial manner."

South Australia Omits 'Christmas' and 'Australia Day' From Public Holiday Legislation

Monica O'Shea

The South Australian government has declined to name Christmas Day, Australia Day, ANZAC Day, and Proclamation Day in the new public holiday legislation.

The stated aim of the legislation was to declare Easter Sunday as a public holiday and increase the total number of public holidays in SA from 11 to 12.

The Public Holidays Bill 2023 mentioned Dec. 25, Dec. 26, Jan. 1, Jan. 26, and April 25 without providing names for these public holidays. Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday, and Easter Monday were named.

The legislation repeals the Holidays Act 1910, which references Christmas, Anzac Day, Proclamation Day, and Australia Day.

Shadow Treasurer Matt Cowdrey moved an amendment to insert the words New Year's Day, Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Christmas Day, and Proc-



Koori Klaus and Santa Claus pose for a photograph with Christmas elves at Federation Square in Melbourne on Nov. 18, 2021.

lamation Day into the legislation among other public holiday names.

Debate in Parliament

Speaking on the amendment in Parliament, Mr. Cowdrey said, "the opposition is moving a series of amendments to essen-

tially give rise to the name of the particular public holiday with the date of the public holiday."

Mr. Cowdrey also made an amendment seeking to ensure that a proclamation cannot be made to declare a different day to be a public holiday in the year instead of Australia Day

without a resolution passed by both houses of parliament.

"The last number of amendments deals with providing a safeguard to a potential future government that may or may not wish to change the date of Australia Day at a future point in time," Mr. Cowdrey said in Parliament.

"There is nothing to fear for those on the other side, unless they have a plan to change the date for Australia Day."

But the government declined to support these amendments and the legislation passed without these names or the safeguard on Australia Day.

Deputy Premier Susan Close said she would not be indulging in "culture wars" and claimed the Holidays Act does not include these names.

"Somehow, South Australia has survived for 110 years with the Holidays Act without including these names. Somehow we have managed to work out that we have those holidays

on those days," Ms. Close said.

"Further, amendments Nos 15 and 16 are seeking to prevent the public holiday on Australia Day being moved. It is late, it is after dinner, I am not indulging in culture wars.

"We have 26 January. It is the day that NSW was founded by the British. It is the day we have chosen as Australia Day. It is in here. I am not interested in getting into this ridiculous dog whistle of having a different debate within this. This is about worker entitlements."

Ten members of parliament voted for the amendment, while 22 voted against it in the SA House of Assembly.

In the Upper House of Parliament, the Opposition also attempted to move amendments to insert New Year's Day, Australia Day, Adelaide Cup, ANZAC Day, and the sovereign's birthday into the legislation.

However, this attempt was also defeated by three votes in the SA Legislative Council.

'Dysfunctional': Brisbane Lord Mayor Resigns From 2032 Olympics Forum

CONTINUED FROM A1

ing ceremony and athletics, the Gabba.

The Olympics are due to be held from July 23 to Aug. 28, 2032, in Brisbane, 3,155 days from now. The 2024 games will be held in Paris, while Los Angeles will host the 2028 summer Olympics.

Mr. Schrinner believes the Olympics should be overseen by an independent games coordination authority, which he says was promised to the international Olympic committee and Queenslanders.

"This week it became very apparent that the Intergovernmental Leaders' Forum is a dysfunctional farce, a pointless talkfest established to placate key stakeholders while all the real decisions are made by the state government behind closed doors," he said.

Concerns With \$2.7 Billion Gabba Redevelopment

Mr. Schrinner said he will no longer "fall into line" and support the state government's current \$2.7 billion Gabba plan, stating it had "become clear" that there must be better options than demolishing and rebuilding the Gabba.

"I have no doubt there are good alternatives to the full demolition and rebuilding of the Gabba, but the State Gov-

ernment has never genuinely looked for them with an open mind," he said.

"If they won't do it, let's appoint an independent body that will. We could even look at alternatives for the opening and closing ceremonies, such as events along the Brisbane River that are open to all."

In response, Sport Minister Stirling Hinchliffe told Nine News, "it's a bit bewildering but I am starting to expect backflips from the Lord Mayor."

The Intergovernmental Leaders' Forum is a dysfunctional farce, a pointless talkfest established to placate key stakeholders.

Adrian Schrinner,
Brisbane lord mayor

Energy Minister Mick De Brenni said, "I think ratepayers will be seriously considering whether they'll be returning him to office. If he's not going to be at the table doing his job, why be the Lord Mayor?"

The state government left the door open for Mr. Schrinner to return to the committee anytime.



People watch a fireworks celebration after Brisbane was announced as the host city of the 2032 Olympics at the Brisbane Olympic Live Site on July 21, 2021.

The Lord Mayor travelled with Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk in 2021 to bid for the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

"Ever since the premier and I travelled to Tokyo together to secure the 2032 Games, I have been a committed team player, despite numerous setbacks and political differences," Mr. Schrinner said.

"I have done this because I strongly believed that only by working together can we stage the best-ever Games and deliver a legacy that benefits all residents.

"However, it's clear that the Games have become more about over-priced stadiums rather than the promise of vital transport solutions."

Queensland is set to face two elections next year, with local government elections on March 16 and a state election on Oct. 26.

Main Arena Upgrade During Gabba Rebuild

On Dec. 1, Minister Hinchliffe announced a \$137 million upgrade for the RNA Showground Main Arena to host cricket, the Brisbane Lions, and major events during the Gabba redevelopment.

"An extensive South East Queensland-wide review has identified the RNA Showgrounds' Main Arena as the best possible temporary venue during The Gabba rebuild," Mr. Hinchliffe announced.

"The RNA Showgrounds Main Arena will be upgraded to deliver a cost-effective, 20,000-seat alternative home for the Brisbane Lions, cricket and major events."

However, out of this funding, the Palaszczuk government has only committed \$45.7 million, asking for the Brisbane City Council for more support.

"Brisbane City Council, the

RNA, and The Gabba's primary tenants have been asked to share the remaining \$91 million cost for the Main Arena upgrade to proceed," Mr. Hinchliffe said.

In response, Mr. Schrinner said, "Friday's farcical demands over the RNA stadium aptly demonstrated that the state is not interested in team work and that the Gabba rebuild should be independently re-evaluated."

However, Mr. Hinchliffe claimed Mr. Schrinner had been "out there calling for the RNA as the solution," in quotes cited by the ABC.

"It's so surprising that Lord Mayor wants to step away from the one way in which he can have his and the city's voice heard," Mr. Hinchliffe said.

"While the city is contributing zero dollars to delivering the games, it seems that it is important that we do engage the city in solving the root problems that they can be part of solving."

Cost of Living Crisis Threatens Australia's Most Iconic Food

Cindy Li

The rising cost of living has impacted even one of Australia's most cherished foods, a fact underscored by a shopper who recently stumbled upon its new "low" price.

"It's nearly 10 bucks for Vegemite now? And this is a low price?" questioned Dark-Lake, a user on the Australian Reddit page, alongside a photo showing 560g jars of Vegemite priced at \$9.40 at Woolworths.

The product in the photo is part of Woolworths' latest campaign to address the cost of living pressures as it draws closer to the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The social media post has attracted heated discussions from people feeling the pain of inflation.

"What used to be cheap army

rations is now a luxury item," one user commented under the post, referring to the history that Vegemite was included in Australian Army rations during World War II.

"According to finder.com, this was \$8 in 2017, so that's about 2.7 percent per year inflation which is about right, maybe even too low," another said.

"The minimum price for literally anything is now \$5," a third wrote.

However, some others defended the new price, citing the big capacity of the jar.

"It's also over half a kilo of Vegemite. I reckon that would last the average person a long while," one user posted.

"Yeah, I get it's pricey, but that's a huge jar. Doesn't seem super unreasonable to me," another said.

The argument about the quan-

tity seems to depend on varying needs in different households.

"Thank god. It lasts 3 years," one wrote.

"Not in my house. It's almost like it evaporates. Not going to spread it thinner though," another replied to the above comment.

Reflection of Inflation Rate

The price of Vegemite is a reflection of the inflation rate and general living costs Australians face.

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that working families saw a 9 percent year-on-year increase in living costs.

The consumer price index (CPI) rose 5.4 percent over the 12 months leading to the September 2023 quarter, with notable increases in fuel and electricity costs.

The CPI experienced a spike unseen in decades at the onset of COVID-19 when between December 2020 and June 2022 it hiked 8.1 percent.

These inflationary pressures will likely persist, stemming from factors outside of the realms of control of the Reserve Bank, which only has access to the cash rate lever.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese promised that the cost of living would be his government's top priority.

"Our government understands the cost of living is the number one pressure on Australian families," he said in a keynote address to the Economic and Social Outlook Conference on Nov. 2.

"Getting the Budget onto a stronger foundation and getting wages moving again are essential elements of this."

This discussion follows

the 100-year anniversary of Vegemite, which was originally developed by Australian chemist and food technologist Cyril Callister in 1922 and first sold in stores in 1923.

Invented in Port Melbourne as an imitation of British spread Marmite, Vegemite has evolved into a staple in every supermarket across the nation, with over 20 million jars sold annually.

In 1926, three years after it was developed, Vegemite was sold to American company Kraft Foods, which later became Mondelez International.

In 2017, Australian dairy producers Bega Group purchased multiple Kraft assets in a \$460 million deal that returned Vegemite to Australian ownership.

Nick Spencer contributed to this report.

2 City Councils Vote to Scrap Indigenous Ceremonies During Meetings

Henry Jom

Two South Australian councils have axed the Indigenous “Acknowledgement of Country” ceremonial procedure—performed at all official meetings or on correspondence—with members saying their reason for doing so was because Australia was “one country.”

On Nov. 21, the Northern Areas Council in regional SA passed a motion without notice to “delete the Acknowledgement of Country and banner on correspondence.”

The motion was moved by Councillor Hank Langes and seconded by Councillor John Barberien.

Mayor Sue Scarman said an Acknowledgement to Country has been read at the start of council meetings for around two years, and there was no opposition to the motion.

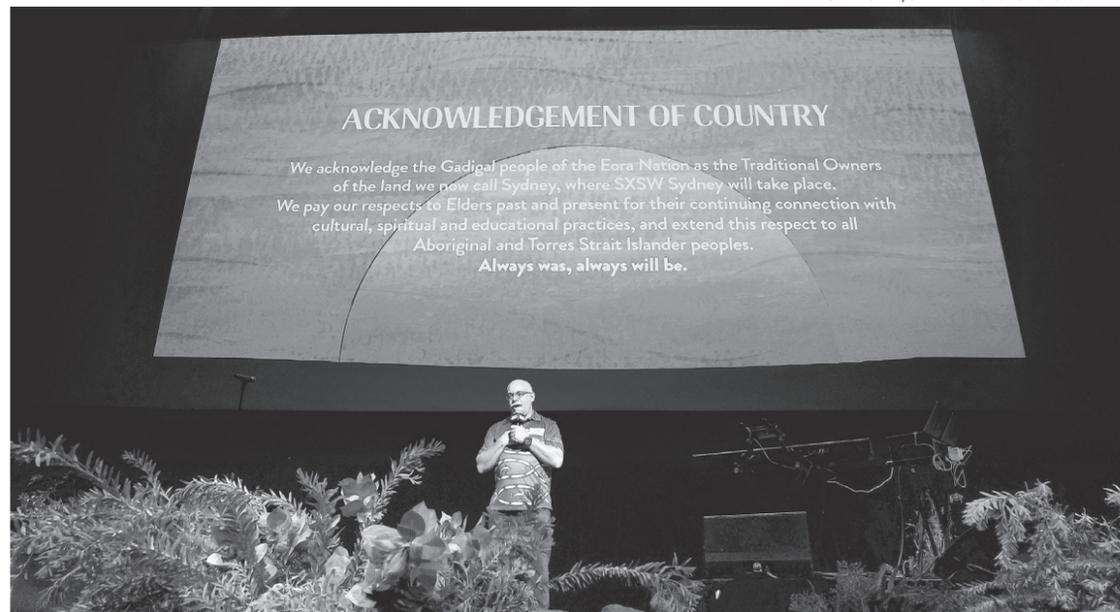
Ms. Scarman said her fellow councillors were told at the meeting that the policy should be changed because “we’re one country.”

Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies, first popularised in the 1970s, are performed prior to formal proceedings to show respect to Indigenous communities and their connection to their land, while Welcome to Country is an actual physical ceremony.

“It’s a democracy,” Ms. Scarman said, reported *The Advertiser*.

“This was a motion of council, and it was carried, so I support it. My personal take is now null and void.”

Meanwhile, the Acknowledgement of Country still appeared on the recent November meeting minutes, and stated: “We acknowledge and pay respect to the Nukunu and Ngadjuri people—



A man reads an Acknowledgement of Country at an event in Sydney on Oct. 21, 2023.

I think it’s gone a little too far and, for me, I also don’t think it’s balanced.

David Kerrison,
Playford councillor

Traditional Owners of the land the Northern Areas Council occupies—to their Elders past, present and emerging, and we extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are present today.”

However, members of the Aboriginal community have complained about the move, describing the decision as “hurtful” and “disgusting.”

“[I’m] feeling that Ngadjuri people are not wanted in that place, in that region,” Ngadjuri elder Parry Agius told ABC on Nov. 29.

“The reason behind an Acknowledgement is really about acknowledging that there were

Aboriginal people before the area was colonised, and there are Aboriginal people who are now wanting to come back into the region for work, for play, for pleasure, for reconciliation, and now it’s dampened that approach.”

Additionally, Adnyamathanha elder Vince Coulthard, who won a NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010, described the move as “outrageous” and “racist.”

2nd City Council Votes to Scrap Acknowledgement a Day Later

Playford Council, also in SA, also voted to scrap its Acknowledgement of Country following a lengthy debate between councillors, reported *The Advertiser*.

Councillor David Kerrison, who introduced the motion, said the current policy of reading the Acknowledgement of Country at every meeting was “going overboard.”

“I listen to the younger generation who attend university

and colleges—it’s being read out before every lecture,” Mr. Kerrison said.

“I think it’s gone a little too far and, for me, I also don’t think it’s balanced.”

However, councillor Rebecca Vandeppear dismissed the motion to ban the acknowledgement and said it was a sign of respect.

“Councillor Kerrison talks about the inefficiency of reading out an Acknowledgement of Country in council meetings and university lectures, yet we’re spending a significant amount of time debating culture wars right now,” Ms. Vandeppear said.

Indigenous Ceremonies Removed From Church Services

In September, the Presbyterian Church of Australia banned congregations from conducting Aboriginal Australian ceremonies during services, saying it was not appropriate.

The church argued that the

practice was incompatible with Christian belief.

However, the ban did not apply to “other circumstances” outside of worship services held at its churches.

“I wouldn’t say it’s a ban, the assembly was clear in expressing what it considers would be appropriate in the Presbyterian church and is relevant to all congregations,” John McClean, a spokesperson for the Presbyterian Church of Australia, said.

“Certainly for Presbyterians, the question of what you do in church as public worship is a particularly sensitive issue.”

Lyle Shelton, former director of the Australian Christian Lobby, said that the ceremonies were incompatible with Christian practices.

“I don’t think they’re trying to be disrespectful to Aboriginal people, but they’re just trying to acknowledge a higher truth that we as Christians hold,” Mr. Shelton previously told *The Epoch Times*.

“And so to acknowledge anyone, we should acknowledge the Creator of the country, which is the Almighty God. That’s why I have a problem with Acknowledgements of Country ... so I think the Presbyterians are onto something here.”

Indigenous advocate Noel Pearson has also stated that the procedure had become overused.

“When someone opens a meeting, that’s fine, but often I see every speaker then subsequently does their own welcome, it cuts into the meeting, I can tell you,” he told 2GB radio.

“I think it’s an important development but we in Australia are still learning, we’ve got to adopt a sensible approach to rituals in our public life,” he said.

Victorian Greens-Labor Deal to Triple Vacancy Land Tax for Owners

Alfred Bui

Victorian residents who own multiple homes could face a triple vacancy land tax following a deal between the state Labor government and the Greens Party.

On Nov. 28, the Greens announced that it had reached an agreement with Labor over a proposal to reform Victoria’s land tax system.

If the legislation passes the parliament, the state’s vacancy tax for homes that are unused for more than three years will rise from one to three percent.

A Win for Renters: The Greens

The Greens hailed the outcome as a “win” for struggling renters,

saying that wealthy investors were keeping homes empty while people experienced record levels of housing stress and homelessness.

The party believed that raising the vacancy land tax could force thousands of homeowners across the state to offer their unused homes for long-term rentals.

“Every day, this housing crisis is getting worse. We’re seeing renters face unlimited rent increases and struggle to find a rental home,” Victorian Greens Leader Samantha Ratnam said.

“With up to 5,000 extra homes freed up as long-term rentals, these changes secured by the Greens will help drive down rents and mean more people can access a home.”

The Greens also noted that they had secured a trial of a new enforcement system across metropolitan Melbourne, which would make it impossible for homeowners to avoid the tax.

Around 5,000 empty properties in Victoria will be required to make their home available for rent or pay the vacancy tax.

The Greens’ announcement comes as the state Labor government is pushing for a land tax reform that would expand the vacancy land tax to the whole state rather than just metropolitan Melbourne.

The bill will be put before the state upper house in the week ending Dec. 3, and Labor needs the support of crossbenchers as the Opposition opposes the

legislation.

Ms. Ratnam explicitly stated that Labor needed to work with the Greens if it wanted to pass the bill.

Response from Other Parties

Following the announcement, Shadow Treasurer Brad Rowswell allegedly stated that Labor was engaging in a desperate cash grab as it had not shown how the land taxes would lift Victoria’s housing supply.

Property Council Australia’s Victorian executive director, Cath Evans, also did not support the tax rise.

“Victoria already has the heaviest property tax burden of any state in the nation,” she said.

Currently, Victoria is under huge debt pressure due to high infrastructure spending and massive debts caused by its COVID-19 pandemic measures.

A recent report by the state’s Auditor-General office revealed that Victoria experienced a fourth consecutive year of operating loss in 2022-23, resulting in accumulated losses of \$43.7 billion.

The state’s total gross debt is also expected to hit \$256 billion by June 30, 2027.

However, the report pointed out that the Victorian Labor government had not provided any specific details about how and when it would be able to start to pay down the accumulated debt.

Young Australians Rank Climate Change as Top Concern

Isabella Rayner

Nearly half of young Australians view climate change as very concerning for the nation, ahead of discrimination and cost of living.

Mission Australia's 2023 Youth Survey found that 44 percent of people aged 15 to 19 are concerned about climate change, and 21 percent were "extremely" concerned about it.

Other top worries are equity and discrimination (31 percent), the economy and financial matters (31 percent), mental health (30 percent), and housing and homelessness (19 percent, up from 12 percent in 2022).

Mission Australia CEO Sharon Callister said the results show that young people are actively involved in the country's environmental, political, and societal issues of the day.

"Young people have shown they care about issues facing Australia and themselves, are strong and resilient, diverse and very capable," she said.

Therefore, she called for all levels of government to "seriously act upon" their concerns.

"This includes committing to homelessness prevention measures and investment in youth-specific services," she said.

"Homelessness is a traumatic experience which can have ongoing impacts on a person's life, their wellbeing and their future."

The 22nd Youth Survey, with over 19,500 respondents, was conducted between April and August during severe weather events, The Voice referendum, increasing cost of living, and

the housing and homelessness crisis. The results are shared with schools, governments, and other key decision-makers.

Top Personal Worries Revealed

In addition to societal concerns, top personal concerns were school (49 percent), mental health (24 percent), and relationships (21 percent).

One-quarter of youth said they had high levels of psychological distress, more said they were unfairly treated in the past year, and one-fifth said they felt lonely most or all the time.

Further, one in 10 said they had no control over their life.

Ms. Callister said mental health is a "deeply" significant personal and national concern, urging government action.

"They [young people] want better access to mental health-care services, accurate diagnosis and treatment, support from their family and friends, and professional help," she said.

They also wanted "greater understanding" about their stress levels from teachers and parents.

Meanwhile, she said half of young people are optimistic about their futures, but this positive outlook has declined since 2020, which was "a concerning trend."

To curb the trend, she said youth must have their needs met for their future and the future of Australia.

She said it's crucial to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, too, because they often rate their well-being lower than their non-Indigenous peers.



Young girls protest in The Domain ahead of a climate strike rally in Sydney on Sept. 20, 2019.

Other top worries are equity and discrimination, the economy and financial matters, mental health, and housing and homelessness.

"And a greater proportion [of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth] reported they were subject to unfair treatment or discrimination," she said.

"This disparity and its persistence remind us yet again of the urgent action that's needed to make our country a place where all young people can thrive."

Why Are Young People So Worried?

Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation pointed to some reasons young people are worried.

Headspace CEO Jason Tre-

thowan said the news content they see on social media can be overwhelming, with almost half (44 percent) of 3,107 young people surveyed by Headspace saying the content is more negative than positive.

He said they also compare their lives to friends, celebrities or social media influencers online.

"Young people are aware of how social media can impact their mental health now and into the future, with 55 percent of survey participants agreeing the content they post today will impact their job prospects and relationships going forward," he said.

Further, he said time spent on social media takes away from parts of life that can positively affect well-being.

"Like being active, getting into life, sleeping, and eating well," he said.

Allied Health Research Professor Carol Maher also weighed in.

She said that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, lifestyle

changes in physical activity, screen time, sleep and diet, and the widespread influence of social media are likely affecting the wellbeing of youth worldwide.

Uneven Decline in Youth Well-Being

However, University of South Australia (UniSA) senior researcher Dot Dumuid said the decrease in youth wellbeing is not uniform; it is multi-faceted and more pronounced in certain groups.

"For example, girls have shown a more significant drop in wellbeing scores than boys [up to 14 percent difference]," she said, citing a recent UniSA study.

She said this difference suggests girls experience stressors or societal expectations specific to their gender.

She said socioeconomic status and age weighed in, too.

"Older children and those from lower socioeconomic families were likelier to have poor wellbeing than those from more privileged backgrounds [up to 10 percent difference]," she said.

"This trend is especially concerning given that adolescence is a critical mental and emotional development period. A decline in wellbeing during these formative years could have long-lasting effects that extend into adulthood," she said.

She welcomed initiatives like the federal government's new national well-being framework for monitoring the country's overall well-being.

"But a lot more needs to be done to ensure this young group of Australians does not slip through the cracks," she said.

Electric Vehicle Sales in Australia Increase By 50,000

Monica O'Shea

Electric vehicle (EV) sales in Australia have soared by more than 50,000 in just 12 months, new data shows.

Battery EV sales in the year to date up to November have hit 80,446, up from 28,326 at the same time last year, VFACTS data released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries states.

EV sales accounted for 7.7 percent of monthly vehicle sales overall in Australia, and 7.2 percent of sales in the year to date.

"Year-to-date sales of battery electric vehicles have reached 80,446. The growth in EV sales from the same time last year (28,326) underscores the increasing interest in low emission alternatives among Australian consumers," the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries said.

In the full calendar year of



A Tesla Model Y charges at a EV charge station in Lane Cove in Sydney on Jan. 19, 2021.

2022, 33,410 electric vehicles were sold, accounting for 3.1 percent of total sales.

In October, EV sales accounted for 5.7 percent of the market.

Overall, vehicle sales in Australia broke prior records, with 112,141 vehicles delivered to Australians in the month of November.

In the year to date, Australia-

lians have bought more than 1.1 million vehicles, the statistics reveal. Sales in every state and territory lifted compared to November 2022.

Total vehicle sales in NSW rose 17.5 percent, while they jumped 16 percent in Victoria, and 17.7 percent in Queensland.

In SA, vehicle transactions rose 28.3 percent, while they surged

20.8 percent in WA, 13 percent in the ACT, 13.4 percent in Tasmania, and 13 percent in the NT.

Vehicle sales on track to break records in Australia

In six out of the past seven months, new vehicle sales in Australia have reached the highest level on record, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries noted.

Commenting on vehicle sales overall, FCAI Chief Executive Tony Weber noted there is strong demand for a variety of vehicle options across various price brackets.

"This is an extraordinary result in what is now likely to be an extraordinary record-breaking year. Another record-breaking month underscores the dynamic and competitive nature of Australia's automotive landscape, showcasing the wide array of choices available to consumers," he said.

"As the challenges of the past

year's supply chain disruptions recede, consumers have greater access to a broad range of choices and increased accessibility in the market."

Looking ahead, Mr. Weber expressed cost of living pressures could lead to a market cooling in 2024.

"The automotive sector remains a testament to the resilience and adaptability of both industry players and consumers alike. However, as cost-of-living pressures hit we may see a market cooling in the coming months, and we anticipate a more challenging 2024," he said.

Toyota was the top-selling market with 21,002 sales in November, followed by Mazda, Ford, Hyundai and Mitsubishi.

The most popular type of vehicle in Australia was the Ford Ranger with 6,301 sales, followed by Toyota HiLux, Isuzu Ute D-Max, Tesla Model Y and Toyota Prado.

Australia Signs Renewable Pledge, but Not Nuclear Energy Call at UN COP28

CONTINUED FROM A1

Australia has “foolishly isolated itself” from AUKUS allies and 20 other countries by refusing to back the nuclear call.

The Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy was signed by 22 countries, including the United States and United Kingdom, at the COP28 United Nations climate change conference in Dubai.

Mr. O’Brien said getting to net zero requires “all technology to be on the table” and that includes zero-emissions nuclear energy.

“If you’re not serious about nuclear, you’re not serious about net-zero. It’s why the Coalition is adopting an all-of-the-above approach. We’re open to all technologies from renewables, to carbon capture and storage, zero-emissions nuclear energy, and so much more,” Mr. O’Brien said.

The nations to sign the pledge were the U.S., UK, France, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Bulgaria, Ghana, Hungary, Japan, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and the Republic of Korea.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) said the declaration “recognises the key role of nuclear energy in achieving global net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and keeping the 1.5-degree goal within reach.”

“Core elements of the declaration include working together to advance a goal of tripling nuclear energy capacity globally by 2050 and inviting shareholders of international financial institutions to encourage the inclusion of nuclear energy in energy lending policies,” the DOE said.

Participants attend day four at night of the UN COP28 Climate Conference at Expo City Dubai in the United Arab Emirates on Dec. 3, 2023.

If you’re not serious about nuclear, you’re not serious about net-zero.

Ted O’Brien, shadow climate change and energy minister

PETER WALLIS/GETTY IMAGES



Federal member for Fairfax Ted O’Brien speaks on stage during the Australian 2020 Tokyo Olympic & Paralympic Celebration at University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland, on Oct. 7, 2021.



SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

‘Radical Experiment’: O’Brien

Mr. O’Brien said the government is “attempting a radical experiment” by embarking on a pathway to net zero which will “make our nation poorer, weaker, and more dependent on foreign powers.”

“They should instead learn from other nations which are being far more pragmatic as they base their policies on engineering and economics,” he said.

“Prime Minister [Anthony] Albanese and Minister [Chris] Bowen claim to know more about zero-emissions nuclear energy than the 32 countries which currently use the technology and 50 others which are looking at introducing nuclear for the first time.”

In parliament, Mr. Bowen, the climate change and energy minister,

cited a report showing nuclear energy is the most expensive form of energy in Australia.

“I met with the director general and senior executives of the International Energy Agency just two weeks ago, and they pointed out that utility-scale solar PV and onshore wind are the cheapest options for new electricity generation in the significant majority of countries worldwide. It is the case not just in Australia but around the world,” he told parliament in February.

“Of course, we have the GenCost report, a collaboration between the CSIRO and AEMO, which has found consistently for several years that wind and solar are the cheapest forms of energy and that nuclear energy is by far the most expensive form of energy,

and that’s particularly the case in Australia, where we don’t have a nuclear industry of any scale, and where scaling it up would come at a very significant cost.”

Australia Joins Renewable Pledge

Meanwhile, Australia has joined an international pledge involving more than 100 countries around the world to triple renewable energy capacity and double global annual energy efficiency by 2030.

The world leaders signed the Global Renewable Pledge and Energy Efficiency Pledge on the third day of COP28.

“We know that renewables are the cleanest and cheapest form of energy—and that energy efficiency can also help drive down bills and emissions,” Mr. Bowen said.

“That’s why the Albanese Government is supporting the UAE’s signature initiative to triple global renewable energy generation capacity and double global average annual energy efficiency improvements by 2030.

Mr. Bowen said the government’s Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS) will help deliver 32 gigawatts (GW) of new renewable generation and storage.

“Australia has the highest penetration of rooftop solar in the world and has a plan to get to 82 percent renewables by 2030 to deliver cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable energy, for emissions to go down around the world, we need a big international push,” he said.

“Australia has the resources and the smarts to help supply the world with clean energy technologies to drive down those emissions while spurring new Australian industry.”

SUSAN MORTIMER/THE EPOCH TIMES



Solar panels can be seen on the roof of a medical practice in Albany, Western Australia, on Sept. 24, 2023.

Communist China Is 'Using Climate to Subvert the United States:' Analyst

Dorothy Li & Jan Jekielek

The Chinese communist regime has laid out the strategy to take over the United States as the world's dominant power by 2049. Meanwhile, the United States is reducing its national security by voluntarily making itself more dependent on the "green energy" that China dominates, analysts say.

"China is using climate to subvert the United States," Steve Malloy, a senior legal fellow at the Energy and Environment Legal Institute, said in a recent interview on Epoch TV's "American Thought Leaders."

"China has gotten the United States and Western Europe, and really all the developed countries, hooked on green technology," Mr. Malloy said. At the heart of this alternative energy are technologies including wind turbines, solar panels, and electric vehicles, which are reliant on certain critical raw materials, such as graphite and rare earth elements. For many of these materials, China—the United States' top adversary—is the world's major supplier and processor.

"I think their strategy is to get the Western world dependent on China for technology," Mr. Malloy said. "It's a fighting with-out fighting."

Chinese Monopoly

Mr. Malloy cited an example of rare earths, a group of 17 elements that China has a near global monopoly on.

"And all these rare earths go into wind technology and solar technology, EVs, as well as our mobile phones and computers," Mr. Malloy said. "The whole world really depends on China for this."

Minerals that fall under this label actually aren't that rare. In fact, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) described rare earths as "relatively abundant."

"It's just that they're present in [the] soil at very low concentrations. So you have to strip mine do this," Mr. Malloy explained.

A reason that the West stopped mining rare earths, according to Mr. Malloy, is the environmental pressure, as such practices are notoriously polluting. "But you can strip mine in China. They have no environmental regulations," he said. "So China has volunteered to do this."

Now, China accounts for 70 percent of global rare earth mined production, according to data compiled by the USGS. According to a 2019 study by consultancy firm Adamas Intelligence, China at the time ac-



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Workers at a factory for Xinwangda Electric Vehicle Battery Co., which makes lithium batteries for electric cars and other uses, in Nanjing in China's eastern Jiangsu Province, on March 12, 2021.



ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Workers stand on a roadside near a toxic lake surrounded by rare earth refineries near the inner Mongolian city of Baotou on Aug. 19, 2012.

counted for 85 percent of the global capability to transform these mined minerals into usable forms for manufacturers.

The United States imports most of its rare earths from China, though that sole reliance has eased in recent years. From 2018 to 2021, China was responsible for 74 percent of rare earths imported to the United States, down from 80 percent between 2014 and 2017, the USGS data shows.

The Chinese regime has floated the idea of cutting off supplies of these materials that are crucial to the U.S. economy. In 2019, amid the peak of the U.S.-China trade war, China's powerful state planning agency threatened to limit the sale of rare earths to the United States, after President Donald Trump blacklisted Huawei, a Chinese telecom giant with close ties to the regime's military.

That was not the first time the

regime used its monopoly over critical metals to gain leverage. In 2010, the Chinese regime temporarily blocked the export of rare earths to Japan as tensions between the two Asian powers escalated over disputed islands following the arrest of a Chinese captain.

Growing US Dependence

Mr. Malloy expressed concerns over the Biden administration's push to transition the nation toward energy sources that China dominates.

President Joe Biden has unveiled federal rules aimed at ending the purchase of petrol-powered vehicles by 2035. California is banning light-duty petrol-powered cars, while other states, like Virginia and New Jersey, are moving in that direction.

"It's extremely frustrating to see our politicians with these wind mandates, and solar man-

dates, and EV mandates," Mr. Malloy said. "Where are the EVs going to come from? How are we going to make them if we don't have a good relationship with China?"

The risk of relying on a communist regime for those key elements was in focus once again when Beijing announced export controls on graphite, which is essential for powering electronic vehicles.

It's extremely frustrating to see our politicians with these wind mandates, and solar mandates, and EV mandates. Where are the EVs going to come from? How are we going to make them if we don't have a good relationship with China?

Steve Malloy, senior legal fellow at the Virginia-based Energy and Environment Legal Institute

China controls over 65 percent of the world's supply of graphite. The restriction will ban Chinese exporters from shipping natural and artificial graphite and their products from Dec. 1, unless companies obtain licenses. The regime's order came just three days after Washington unveiled new curbs on semiconductor exports to Beijing. China's ministry of commerce

said its order was to "safeguard national security and interests," but U.S. lawmakers called the restriction the latest evidence of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) weaponisation of trade over supply chain chokepoints.

"China is the sole producer of the refined graphite that goes into every EV battery," Mr. Malloy noted. "So if China, right now, were to stop exporting refined graphite, there would be no EV batteries made."

While some concerned companies and governments in the West have sought to get into the graphite market, Mr. Malloy suggested it takes years to build up an industry in which China already has a decades-long lead.

The way the CCP approaches the world is "completely different" from that of Westerners, Mr. Malloy said, contending that not so many on Capital Hill appear to understand the regime's strategy, especially in the green technology sector.

"China's avowed goal is to be the lone global superpower by 2049," while the United States is accelerating the nation's transition to green energy technology and aiming to achieve "carbon neutrality" by 2050, Mr. Malloy said. "We're actually kind of working in the same direction" as the CCP.

"We have this geopolitical rival out there, if not a mortal enemy, called China," Mr. Malloy said. "We are making ourselves more economically dependent on them."

"China is going to own us very soon, if they don't already. And we're going to be helpless."

China Bribed, Spied in Micronesia to Suppress Opponents: Former President

Andrew Thornebrooke & Jan Jekielek

Chinese communist agents engaged in bribery and espionage in Micronesia as part of an effort to suppress negative views of the regime's attempted expansion in the region, according to the former president of the Pacific island nation.

In response, then-President David Panuelo sent a series of now-leaked letters to fellow members of his government, warning them about the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) "political warfare" in the region.

"I want to say it very clear and upfront that our foreign policy is that we're friends to all and enemies to none," Mr. Panuelo said during an interview with EpochTV's "American Thought Leaders." "[But] I felt I needed to take a strong stance to make sure that the sovereignty of our nation was protected."

One of the CCP's overarching goals was to ensure that Micronesia would overtly support China during a war for Taiwan or remain neutral in the conflict.

He said that while he loves the Chinese people, their traditions, and their culture, the CCP's malign influence threatened the very sovereignty of Micronesia and the stability of the Indo-Pacific as a whole.

As such, it required a decisive response from him, according to Mr. Panuelo.

"Over the course of time, I learned that I must take some bold actions to make sure that the sovereignty of our nation is protected and also for the Pacific region as a whole, because security is very important," he said.

CCP Infiltrating Pacific Islands

Mr. Panuelo said the CCP's efforts were part of a larger push

Our relationship with China is always and will always be only on economic and technical terms, and cannot be strategic. But China always takes the opportunity to unilaterally come out with press releases that call our relationship a strategic partnership ...

David Panuelo, former president of the Federated States of Micronesia

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (L) and Micronesia's President David Panuelo shake hands at a news conference in Kolonia on Aug. 5, 2019.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang talks with Micronesia's President David Panuelo at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Dec. 13, 2019.

to expand throughout the region, effectively using Pacific island nations as pawns in its scheme to undermine the United States and the international order.

At one point, he recalled, he sent a letter to Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare to express concerns about a sweeping agreement that the CCP sought to sign with 10 regional nations that would have allowed the expansion of Chinese police and naval forces throughout the region.

"China was looking to have that sort of overreaching agreement," Mr. Panuelo said. "It may be general in nature, but would give them access into the Pacific economically, politically, and probably strategically."

He said he urged Mr. Sogavare to share the document and vow not to allow China to militarise the islands or "escalate tensions."

"I wrote to Prime Minister Sogavare in a very friendly manner, because he's like a brother to me, and as family, we share what we're concerned about," Mr. Panuelo said.

The resulting review of the agreement found that the CCP had indeed inserted language into the deal that would have granted the regime expansive and unprecedented economic and military

rights in the region, allowing it to prospect the Pacific Islands' exclusive economic zones and even monitor who entered and left their nations.

"We reviewed that common development agreement and learned that, by signing, we would have given away and compromised our sovereignty," Mr. Panuelo said.

"[We discovered that it] would allow Chinese to come in and also look at the minerals of our exclusive economic zone; it will give them access into knowing who's entering our country, who was getting out of our country through electronic means through customs and immigration, among other things."

The deal was ultimately shelved after Mr. Panuelo wrote to fellow Pacific leaders, urging them to work in "the collective interests of the Pacific."

The act sparked retaliation from the CCP, however.

After the leak of one of the letters, a regional governor in Micronesia informed Mr. Panuelo that he had been approached by a CCP agent, who attempted to bribe him into publicly denouncing the letter.

"The governor confided in me, and he said, 'Mr. President, of course, I told them no, because that would be treason, you know,'" Mr. Panuelo said.

"I'm sure [the CCP] went to the other states to do similar things."

US a Vital Partner in Indo-Pacific

Micronesia is one of three nations in the Indo-Pacific that maintain Compacts of Free Association with the United States. These agreements give the nations access to U.S. economic programmes in exchange for granting the United States security privileges in the region.

Mr. Panuelo said Pacific Island leaders shouldn't be dissuaded from championing the values shared by the Pacific islands and the United States and shouldn't

give in to fear of retaliation by larger nations like communist China.

"During my time as president, I always said that the compact nations must be the nations that very strongly champion democracy, the rule of law, because these things work well," he said.

"Working together with allies to preserve the rules-based international order, the shared values that we have, is something we need to be strong about."

To that end, Mr. Panuelo said he never felt that Micronesia was a pawn caught between two powers because he understood what was needed for the island nation to thrive objectively.

"I've been asked the question, you know, a few times by the media, whether as a small island country, I feel like I'm sandwiched between two superpowers. And my pointed [answer] was 'No,' because I definitely know the best interest of our nation," he said.

"I think if you know that, it makes it easier because we know our partner [the United States] ... and who to work with to advance the overall security of the Pacific and the entire world together."

Similarly, Mr. Panuelo expressed gratitude for the good that has come of Micronesia's relationship with China, although he noted that the regime's propaganda often attempted to mischaracterise the relationship between the two nations.

"Our relationship with China is always and will always be only on economic and technical terms and cannot be strategic," he said. "But China always takes the opportunity to unilaterally come out with press releases that call our relationship a strategic partnership, even though we've said, 'No, it's not a strategic relationship.'"

"They've always done that, and they're good with the propaganda of carrying out that message."

Jan Jekielek contributed to this report.

JONATHAN ERNST/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Chinese Prison ID Found Sewn in Coat Sold in UK

Lily Zhou

A Chinese prison ID was found sewn into a coat purchased by a shopper during a Black Friday sale in Derbyshire, England.

The discovery has raised fresh concerns over the presence of forced labour in the UK's supply chains.

Regatta, the British fashion brand that sold the coat, said the card appeared to belong to an employee of the Chinese factory who had previously spent time in prison. It also refuted the implication that they use forced prison labour.

The woman who bought the coat, who didn't want to be named, told the Guardian that she received the coat on Nov. 22 and cut it after feeling a hard rectangular item in the right sleeve that restricted the movement of her elbow.

The report said a customer service agent initially told the woman it was a work ID from the factory and that she could throw it away, but the company contacted her later, asking her to return the ID and offered to send her a new coat.

The woman "declined the offer but retrieved the card from the bin," the report said.

She told the Guardian, "I don't feel very comfortable with it ... I know it is legal in China, and we have different standards and things like that in the UK, but you still don't expect prisoners to be making clothes."

The incident sparked concerns of modern slavery as forced labour is common practice in Chinese prisons.

In 2019, Tesco suspended a Chinese supplier of Christmas cards



A guard looks through the window of a hallway inside the No.1 Detention Centre during a government guided tour in Beijing, China, on Oct. 25, 2012.

I know it is legal in China, and we have different standards and things like that in the UK, but you still don't expect prisoners to be making clothes.

Unnamed woman who found a prison ID card stitched into coat

after British schoolgirl Florence Widdicombe found a card that reads, "We are foreign prisoners in Shanghai Qingpu prison China. Forced to work against our will. Please help us and notify human rights organisation."

Sun Yi, a practitioner of the Falun Gong spiritual discipline who was imprisoned in China, hid SOS letters in packages made in a Chinese jail, with one of them, lying in a box of K-Mart Halloween decorations, finding its way to Julie Keith, a mother of two in Oregon.

Alicia Kearns MP, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee who is sanctioned by the Chinese regime for raising human rights concerns, said the story suggests "brands are not doing enough."

Regatta later said in an email to The Epoch Times that its investigation "found credible evidence that points toward this being an isolated incident."

The company took the incident

"very seriously" and launched "an immediate investigation," a spokesperson said.

"As a business and members of the Ethical Trading Initiative, we have strict policies in place to ensure ethical working standards for all, and zero tolerance for forced or prison labour."

The spokesperson said a "thorough investigation" found the Chinese factory to be "fully compliant," and that "numerous inspections of the factory, including a certified third-party visit to the site, found no breaches of any of our policies."

"Our investigation has found credible evidence that points toward this being an isolated incident by an employee who had spent time in prison before his employment with the factory. Our investigation showed no indicators that prison labour was present in the factory at any time," the statement reads.

"From the limited images

shared by the customer, it is perceived that the ID is dated 2022. Regatta Ltd. has payroll documentation to show the person pictured on the ID was an employee who received a wage. The individual had an employment contract with the factory and was not working under forced or prison conditions. The employee shown on the ID was employed by the factory from March 2023—June 2023. The garment in question was produced during the individual's employment and shipped from the factory in July 2023 (one month after the individual's employment ceased)," the spokesperson added.

Regatta said it's continuing to investigate how the card ended up in the coat.

The company also said it has taken advice from the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in relation to this matter.

Regatta didn't answer The Epoch Times's follow-up questions, including the name of the factory.

In a statement emailed to The Epoch Times by Regatta, ETI executive director Peter McAlister said, "Regatta has been an active member of ETI since 2012 and fully understands their responsibilities with respect to workers in their supply chain. Regatta alerted us to the situation of alleged prison labour at one of the factories producing for them in China. They have undertaken the steps we would expect to investigate this allegation and gather evidence to determine what the situation is at the factory. We know that Regatta takes this allegation seriously and we will work with them to ensure the situation is clear and any needed action is taken."

China Leads 'New Axis' in Harvesting DNA from Pregnant Women, Foetuses: British MP

Andrew Thornebrooke

Communist China is gaining a significant strategic advantage through its application of artificial intelligence (AI) to DNA editing technologies, according to one British lawmaker.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could wield an unprecedented amount of power over the international community if its influence in AI and genomics isn't slowed, UK member of Parliament (MP) Sir Iain Duncan Smith said.

"China now has a head start on applying AI to genomics, which poses a significant threat to our collective national security," Mr. Duncan Smith said during a Nov. 28 talk at the Heritage Foundation.

"If China dominates AI and genomics, it will wield unprec-

edented influence over major industries including, of course, global health care."

Mr. Duncan Smith urged the need for heightened vigilance and strategic measures following news that the CCP is harvesting DNA from millions of people around the world through the clandestine use of its health care products.

A failure to confront the threat, he suggested, could threaten global security in a way unparalleled since World War II.

"The threat that we now face is on par to that which we faced during the Cold War and even that which we faced in the 1930s," Mr. Duncan Smith said.

China Harvests DNA From Millions of Women, Foetuses Globally

Mr. Duncan Smith highlighted

ongoing investigations across five countries into the CCP's use of prenatal tests to gather DNA from pregnant women and their foetuses.

These tests allow China to access the genomic data of both mother and foetus from all over the world, and we have granted them the rights to use that data back in China.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith, UK member of parliament

The tests, marketed as "NIFTY," were designed by Chinese

genomics giant BGI in consultation with the CCP's military wing. While the tests purport to screen for Down syndrome and other genetic conditions, collected DNA data is stored on servers in mainland China, where the CCP can access it at any time.

"These tests allow China to access the genomic data of both mother and foetus from all over the world, and we have granted them the rights to use that data back in China," Mr. Duncan Smith said.

BGI has also been implicated in other human rights abuses, including the forced harvesting of DNA from predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region of China. The United States has subsequently blacklisted some units of BGI.

'New Axis' Seeks to Expand Brutal Authoritarian Governments

Mr. Duncan Smith said that the threat needs to be understood within the larger context of a "new axis of totalitarian states" including Iran, North Korea, and Russia that's led by China.

The four powers, he said, present a "growing threat to the free world" and are increasingly coordinating with "brutal regional powers" such as Burma (also known as Myanmar) and Syria to propagate their authoritarian vision for the future.

Given that communist China is rapidly becoming the global leader in both AI and genomics, he said, it's imperative that international leadership recognise that this new axis poses an "existential risk to humanity."

Hong Kong Journalist Feared 'Missing' After Attending Beijing's Security Forum

Aldgra Fredly

A reporter for the Hong Kong daily South China Morning Post (SCMP) has been missing for over a month after attending a security forum in Beijing, sparking fears that Chinese authorities might have detained her.

Minnie Chan, a senior reporter covering defence and diplomacy in China, disappeared after travelling to Beijing to attend a three-day security forum on Oct. 29, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on Dec. 1.

Her friends said they were worried that the award-winning reporter might have been detained by Chinese authorities, as they have been unable to contact her since, the CPJ stated.

"Reports about the disappearance of Hong Kong journalist Minnie Chan after a work trip to Beijing are extremely concerning, and Chinese authorities must immediately disclose her location and guarantee her safety," Iris Hsu, CPJ's China representative, said in a statement.

SCMP told Reuters that Ms. Chan is on "personal leave" and is currently in Beijing attending to "a private matter." It added that Ms. Chan's family is assured

of her safety but "requested that we respect her privacy."

The newspaper said, "the safety of our journalists in the course of their professional work is of the utmost importance," and that it would continue to communicate with Ms. Chan's family and "provide all the necessary support they need."

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Journalists Association said it was "deeply concerned" about Ms. Chan's disappearance and is requesting more information from SCMP—which is owned by Chinese tech giant Alibaba.

Ms. Chan's last article, published on SCMP on Nov. 1, pertained to a "Middle East discussion panel" at the Beijing forum concerning China's response to the Israel-Hamas war, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

RSF Asia-Pacific Bureau Director Cedric Alviani expressed "deep concern" about her disappearance, saying that "it has become a common practice for the Chinese regime to kidnap journalists and arbitrarily detain them for months in black jails."

"We urge Beijing to immediately disclose her whereabouts and, in case she is detained, to proceed with her immediate release," Mr.



ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A copy of the South China Morning Post is displayed at a newsstand in Hong Kong on Dec. 12, 2015, following its acquisition by Chinese Internet giant Alibaba.

Reports about the disappearance of Hong Kong journalist Minnie Chan after a work trip to Beijing are extremely concerning, and Chinese authorities must immediately disclose her location and guarantee her safety.

Iris Hsu, Committee to Protect Journalists

Alviani said in a statement.

Ms. Chan is believed to be the second reporter from a Hong Kong newspaper to go missing. Al Jazeera reported that another SCMP journalist disappeared for nine months in 2022 before returning and being moved to a

"less politically sensitive" desk.

'Second-Worst Jailer of Journalists'

The CPJ ranked China as "the world's second-worst jailer of journalists" in its 2022 prison census, which documented those imprisoned on Dec. 1, 2022, with at least 43 journalists behind bars.

Peter Dahlin, the founder of Safeguard Defenders—a Pan-Asian human rights NGO—said that "China has had a system for disappearing people for up to half a year, incommunicado, at secret locations for quite some time."

"It's called 'residential surveillance at a designated location' or RSDL," Mr. Dahlin stated in a commentary piece on July 21.

"It might sound innocuous, but it's, in fact, feared far beyond being arrested and has been used en masse on rights defenders, local activists, and even celebrities such as Fan

Bingbing," he added.

Mr. Dahlin stated that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was not satisfied with RSDL alone; it also constructed the "Liuzhi system," which is administered by the CCP's internal police.

"As it isn't in any way, shape, or form part of the judicial system, the power over its targets is absolute," he remarked.

"The body in question can't be sued for torture or misconduct, and if authorities hold you longer than the supposed maximum of six months, there's nowhere to go to make an appeal.

Mr. Dahlin said the Liuzhi system doesn't only apply to Party members but also to "state functionaries, those working in government agencies, state-owned enterprises, hospitals, labour unions, schools, and contractors."

Reuters contributed to this report.

Fears of More Mainland Control Over Hong Kong, Macao Through New Digital Plan

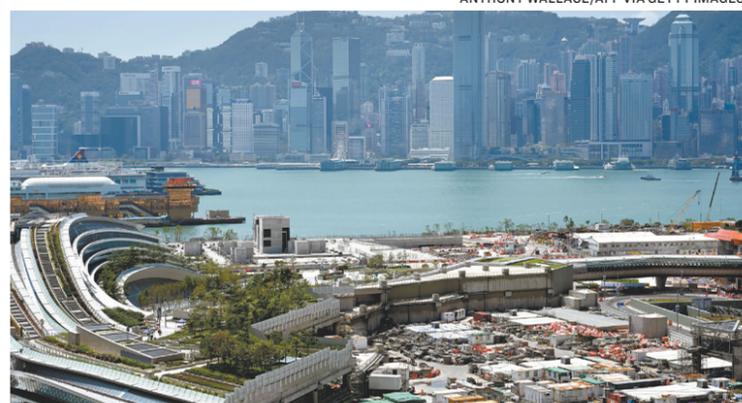
Angela Bright & Grace Song

Beijing's promotion of the "Digital Bay Area" to unify identity verification for Hong Kong and Macao residents with mainland China has sparked widespread concern.

The Guangdong provincial authorities issued a three-year action plan on Nov. 21 for building the "Digital Bay Area." The plan states that administrative services across Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao will be integrated before 2025.

The integration will enable mutual recognition of identity and electronic signatures for residents of these three regions, aiming to establish seamless connectivity in systems, data, and credentials across the Greater Bay Area.

The plan also proposes the creation of a "Hong Kong-Macao Data Special Zone," where residents of Hong Kong and Macao can electronically process various applications using their mainland travel permit. Additionally, the plan includes provisions for establishing offshore data centres and offering cross-border data



ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A general view shows the harbour-front West Kowloon train station (L) of the High Speed Rail Link from Hong Kong to Guangzhou, China, on Sept. 21, 2018.

services among the three regions.

The new plan, which emphasises the "deep integration of social governance," effectively means unified management of population movement and security between these three regions, according to Chen Daoyin, an independent Chinese political analyst.

He views this as a move driven by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s stability maintenance efforts, which would require the consolidation of the

existing systems and comprehensive surveillance, potentially involving the transfer of Hong Kong residents' personal files and data to mainland China.

"One crucial aspect of governance integration is the early detection and control of factors that could impact stability," he told Radio Free Asia.

"They will treat Hong Kong and Macao residents the same as mainland residents. To achieve this, they need to access your basic data as an individual.

Through digitised management of ID cards, your biometric information is stored in the public security's population database, just like mainland residents.

"They also aim to control your social relationship networks and more, advancing step by step. For Hong Kong and Macao, especially Hong Kong, [this is] to prevent the possibility of a second anti-extradition protest movement."

Independent commentator and columnist Cai Shenkun provided an economic perspective on the new policy, pointing to the fact that Hong Kong and Macao residents previously enjoyed preferential treatment beyond ordinary Chinese nationals.

"Since the reform and opening-up, foreign investment attracted by the mainland is mainly from Hong Kong, which accounted for as much as 70 percent of the total," he wrote in a Nov. 22 post on X, formerly Twitter.

"In 2019, mainland China set a historic record in utilising foreign capital, with Hong Kong capital representing 70.9 percent. In 2018, mainland China

attracted US\$128.46 billion in foreign investment, with Hong Kong capital accounting for 71.13 percent, reaching US\$96.01 billion. This underscores that becoming a global financial centre is not something that can be achieved overnight or designated to any single city, except in the case of Hong Kong.

Mr. Cai argued that it was precisely due to Hong Kong's unique status that [former CCP leader] Deng Xiaoping promised to keep its political system unchanged for 50 years.

"With the full implementation of the National Security Law in Hong Kong and the rapid 'mainlandisation' of Hong Kong and Macao, they no longer possess any institutional advantages compared to cities like Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

"The unified identity verification for residents of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area effectively brings Hong Kong and Macao compatriots under Guangdong's jurisdiction, bringing an end to the special treatment they once enjoyed."

War on Christmas in Canada: Movement to Cancel Holiday Seen Before in Communist Regimes

Tara MacIsaac

The Canadian Human Rights Commission said in a recent report that having statutory holidays for Christian celebrations such as Christmas is “a form of discrimination ... deeply rooted in our identity as a settler colonial state.”

It’s the latest shot across the bow in what’s often called a “war on Christmas,” primarily driven by those seeking to secularise public life, says Christmas expert and historian Gerry Bowler of the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

The children’s classic, “The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe,” illustrates the loss of joy a society experiences when Christmas is downplayed or outright cancelled, he told *The Epoch Times*.

“Under the reign of the evil ice queen, the complaint is that it’s ‘always winter and never Christmas,’” Mr. Bowler said.

Like the ice queen, communist regimes in China and the former Soviet Union have cancelled Christmas in the past. Communism is fundamentally atheist. “Communism begins from the outset with atheism,” Karl Marx once said, according to historian Dimitry Vladimirovich Pospelovsky.

In the 1920s, Christmas celebrations were banned in the Soviet Union, and Ded Moroz, Russia’s version of Santa Claus, was effectively exiled. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin did eventually bring Ded Moroz back as a way to gain some needed popular support, but he associated the figure with New Year celebrations instead of Christmas.

The Chinese Communist Party, with its anti-Western sentiments, has portrayed Christmas

as a “white, Western interloper,” Mr. Bowler said. The Canadian Human Rights Commission’s Oct. 23 report that included the statement against Christmas contains similar language. It says favour should not be given in Canadian society to “white, male, Christian,” and other identities, as it excludes others.

“Christmas is an engine of good feelings,” Mr. Bowler said. “For a government organisation to claim that it’s part of some evil, settler colonial mentality is just to reveal the poverty of that kind of leftist thinking that has penetrated pretty much every institution.”

Cultural Traditions

Just as Ded Moroz became a more secular symbol under Soviet rule, Mr. Bowler noted efforts in Canada to separate Christmas traditions from the celebration of Jesus’s birth.

“In public schools, we no longer have Christmas pageants, we have a winter pageant,” he said.

He heard of a student who was turned away from a school costume party one December because he was dressed as Santa. Some schools and universities have banned red and green decorations, he said.

Canada and the United States had a spate of such incidents in the early 2000s, Mr. Bowler said, and now it’s “just about as bad.” But many of the incidents have met with pushback, providing hope that Christmas will endure.

He gave the example of how a town council in the U.S. city of Kensington, Maryland, voted in 2001 to exclude Santa from a tree-lighting ceremony. In response, hundreds of people showed up dressed as Santa.

Another example Mr. Bowler gave in the ongoing efforts to



People take pictures in Place des Arts in Montreal, Canada, as the snow comes down on Dec. 22, 2022.

The Chinese Communist Party, with its anti-Western sentiments, has portrayed Christmas as a ‘white, Western interloper.’

Gerry Bowler, historian with Canada’s Frontier Centre for Public Policy

undermine Christmas was when a Toronto judge ordered a Christmas tree removed from a federal courthouse in 2006, inciting much backlash.

“She was forced to retract that,” he said.

Christmas ‘Not Racist’
During question period in the

House of Commons on Nov. 29, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was asked whether Christmas is “racist,” in light of the report from the federal human rights watchdog.

“Obviously, Christmas is not racist,” he replied. “This is a country of diversity, a country that celebrates not just our personal individual beliefs, but we share and celebrate the events of our neighbours too. That’s what makes this country so rich.”

The House of Commons on Nov. 30 unanimously passed a resolution to denounce the claim by the Human Rights Commission’s report that Christmas is discriminatory. A day earlier, Quebec’s National Assembly adopted a similar motion defending Christmas.

Despite attempts to downplay Christmas in the name of diversity and inclusion, a Leger

opinion poll published last year showed most non-Christians in Canada are fine with being wished a “Merry Christmas” and 70 percent of Canadians say “Merry Christmas” instead of “Happy Holidays.”

Mr. Bowler also says that, in his observation, most Canadians of other faiths are supportive of the public celebration of Christmas in Canada. “The only people who are opposed to it are the secular fundamentalists,” he said.

Christians and non-Christians alike get caught up in the good spirit of the holiday, he said. “It’s the one time of year when we expect other people to behave better.”

“It’s one of Christianity’s major cultural gifts to the world,” he added, “and Christians certainly aren’t going to stop celebrating it.”

Apple Releases Urgent Security Updates for iPhone After Hackers Exploit Gaps

Tom Ozimek

Apple has released urgent security updates for its iOS and other operating systems to patch against vulnerabilities that both the tech giant and U.S. cyber security officials say are being actively exploited by hackers.

Apple’s security updates patch gaps in operating systems for the iPhone, iPad, and Mac products, as well as its Safari web browser.

Specifically, the software updates target iOS and iPad 17.1.2, macOS 14.1.2, and Safari 17.1.2, with Apple noting that the patches fix two vulnerabilities in WebKit, the browser engine that powers Safari and other apps.



Customers test iPhone 15 handsets at the Apple Store in London, England, on Sept. 22, 2023.

The vulnerabilities, which Apple said were discovered by Google’s Threat Analysis Group, allow hackers to plant

spyware or other types of malicious code on users’ devices over the internet.

One of the Webkit vulnerabili-

ties allows hackers to steal users’ sensitive information that is exposed while processing web content. The other Webkit gap may lead to arbitrary code execution.

Apple said that the security updates involve improving input validation to address the risk that processing web content may disclose sensitive information. The other gap that could lead to arbitrary code execution was patched by improved locking in order to fix a memory corruption vulnerability.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) also took note of the security gaps in the Apple products.

“A cyber threat actor could exploit one of these vulnerabilities

to take control of an affected system,” CISA said in an alert.

No information was available as to who may be exploiting these vulnerabilities.

The security updates for iOS and iPadOS are available for the following: iPhone XS and later, iPad Pro 12.9-inch 2nd generation and later, iPad Pro 10.5-inch, iPad Pro 11-inch 1st generation and later, iPad Air 3rd generation and later, iPad 6th generation and later, and iPad mini 5th generation and later.

The security updates for the Mac operating system are available for macOS Sonoma 14.1.2.

Those for the Safari web browser are available for macOS Monterey and macOS Ventura.

Traders Shorted Israeli Stocks Just Before Hamas Attack: Study

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may have had prior knowledge of the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel and used that information to earn millions of dollars by short-selling Israeli companies.

In a draft paper released on Dec. 4, law professors Robert Jackson Jr. of New York University and Joshua Mitts of Columbia University said they identified a “sharp and unusual” spike in trading in “risky short-dated options” on Israeli companies in the days leading up to the deadly Hamas invasion of Israel.

Short-sellers bet against companies whose shares they expect to fall in price. They pay a fee to borrow shares in those companies and then sell them for the current market price, hoping to make a profit by buying them back for less before the shares have to be returned.

“Our findings suggest that traders informed about the coming attacks profited from these tragic events,” the professors wrote in the paper entitled “Trading on Terror?”

“Days before the attack, traders appeared to anticipate the events to come,” they explained, noting that short interest in the MSCI Israel Exchange Traded Fund (EIS), which tracks the performance of a basket of Israeli securities, “suddenly and significantly spiked” on Oct. 2, five days before Hamas terrorists attacked Israel and reignited the Middle East war.

“And just before the attack, short selling of Israeli securities on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange increased dramatically,” they added.

To illustrate how unusual the bet against the Israeli market was, the New York professors pointed to the volume of short transactions in EIS units from 2009 to 2023, during which



The immediate family of Liel Hetzroni, 12, and her aunt, Ila Hetzroni, who were killed at kibbutz Be'eri on Oct. 7 by Hamas, grieve during a funeral and farewell-ceremony at Kibbutz Revivim on Nov. 15, 2023.

And just before the attack, short selling of Israeli securities on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange increased dramatically.

Law professors Robert Jackson Jr. of New York University and Joshua Mitts of Columbia University

Israel experienced many crises—from the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis to the 2014 Gaza conflict to the global COVID-19 pandemic to the more recent nationwide protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s judicial reform proposal.

Throughout all 3,750 trading days in this 14-year period, the short volume on EIS on Oct. 2

was in the top 99 percent percentile, according to the paper.

“This indicates that it is extremely unlikely that the volume of short selling on October 2 occurred by random chance,” it read.

For their 66-page paper, the professors used data from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, a Washington-based self-regulation and market surveillance agency. Upon examining the data, they also identified a similar attempt to short Israeli stocks this April, ahead of what was reportedly a Hamas plan to attack Israel on the Jewish holiday of Passover, which this year fell on April 5.

Specifically, according to the paper, short volume in EIS peaked on April 3 at levels very similar to those observed on Oct. 2, and had a much greater magnitude than every other day prior to April 3.

Similarly, the short ratio peaked at 94 percent on April 3, which was higher than every other day throughout the period from March 1 to April 3, 2023.

“Over that period, the average short ratio was 38.87 percent, so this ratio on April 3 was exceptionally high,” the authors concluded. “Taken together, this evidence strengthens the interpretation that the trading observed in October and April was related to the Hamas attack rather than random noise.”

In terms of profits, the authors said those behind the scheme might have profited millions of dollars from just one short transaction alone.

In one example documented in the paper, 4.43 million new shares in Leumi, the largest bank in Israel, were sold short between Sept. 14 and Oct. 5. In the immediate aftermath of the

Hamas attack, Leumi’s share price dropped from a high of 3,185 agorot (\$13 per share on Oct. 4 to a low of 2,451 agorot (\$10) on Oct. 23, potentially allowing the trader to pocket a profit—or avoid a loss—of over \$13.2 million.

The authors also noted that they found no evidence of an overall increase in short selling in Israeli companies traded on U.S. exchanges. They discussed some potential explanations, including that some of these companies in the defence sector may have benefitted from the attacks.

“Our evidence is consistent with informed traders anticipating and profiting from the Hamas attack,” they wrote. However, “we are unable to link particular market participants to the pre-attack developments we see in securities markets—to say nothing of the underlying sources of information that produced the trades.”

According to the paper, trading on advanced knowledge of a terrorist attack is, at least for now, “not meaningfully regulated by existing law.”

In the meantime, the law professors offered some advice for policymakers on whether and how to regulate “trading on terror,” including creating incentives to encourage traders to use their inside information to prevent tragedy rather than profit from it.

“Lawmakers could consider incentives for traders to report the information to authorities, replacing trading profits with different rewards,” they argued. “While the design of such a mechanism is beyond our scope, policies of this kind are not without precedent.”

The Israel Securities Authority said it is aware of the matter and that it is investigating the claims, reported Reuters.

US Official Says Failed Hostage Negotiations Point to Abuse of Women by Hamas

Stephen Katta

A U.S. official has speculated that Hamas is refusing to release more hostages, specifically female hostages, out of fear that could reveal the poor treatment and other atrocities inflicted upon them by the terrorist organisation.

In a Dec. 4 U.S. Department of State daily press briefing, Spokesperson Matthew Miller said the Biden Administration had no reason to doubt reports of alleged sexual violence and rape against female hostages perpetuated by Hamas. However, he did note that one of the main reasons the White House had yet to make a firm statement condemning the actions

was because they hadn’t independently verified some of the reports yet.

Mr. Miller speculated during the briefing that one of the causes of the recent ceasefire negotiations ultimately falling apart was because Hamas “don’t want those women to be able to talk about what happened to them during their time in custody.”

“Certainly, there is very little that I would put beyond Hamas when it comes to its treatment of civilians, and particularly, its treatment of women,” he added.

He also revealed that a “number of people” hold the same belief. However, Mr. Miller later corrected earlier statements he made in the briefing, when he

called the reports of sexual violence against hostages fact.

“I won’t say fact, because I don’t know it for a fact. But certainly, one of the reasons that a number of people believe they refused to release them is that they didn’t want people to hear what those women would have to say publicly,” he said.

Israel’s war with the Hamas resumed on Dec. 1 after a week-long truce ended. Israel agreed to release 240 Palestinian prisoners as Hamas freed over 100 hostages during this time. It’s estimated at least another 100 Israeli hostages remain in captivity with the terrorist group. Their condition is unknown.

U.S. and Israeli officials blame

Hamas for the truce falling apart. They accused Hamas of failing to produce a list of additional women and children for release. Hamas blames Israel for the truce ending, claiming they won’t release any more hostages until the fighting ends.

Mr. Miller said the “humanitarian pause” was negotiated in very clear terms, including that “children and women would be the first priority to be released,” an agreement he claims that Hamas violated almost immediately.

After the truce ended, Mr. Miller says Hamas continued to hold women who “should have been the next to be released,” and when it came time to follow through on the

agreement, Hamas “refused to release them.”

“They broke the deal, came up with excuses why. Ultimately, I don’t think any of those excuses were credible and I shouldn’t get into any of them here,” he added.

Israeli officials continue to investigate and collect evidence of Hamas committing sexual violence as a tool of war—including rape and other grievous atrocities—mainly targeting Israeli women as part of the group’s assault on Israel.

According to the U.N. Security Council resolution 1820, adopted in 2008, “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

Ex-CNN Host Chris Cuomo Is 'Open' to Voting Trump Over Biden in 2024 Election

Jack Phillips

Former CNN host Chris Cuomo said that he would be "open" to voting for former President Donald Trump over President Joe Biden in the 2024 election.

In the interview, Mr. Cuomo, who frequently criticized the former president while he worked for CNN, said the United States would "survive another" Trump administration. "We survived a Trump administration. Would we survive another? Yes," he said in a recent interview.

"And for people who are now going to attack me and say, what are you talking about? Trump is like this crazy man. Well, look, you know, as Patrick says, the data is the data. Nobody was trying to kill us when Trump was president in a way that they're not now," Mr. Cuomo told Patrick Bet-David, Adam Sosnick, Tom Ellsworth, and Vincent Oshana in a podcast interview. "So you're open to a Trump vote?" one of the hosts asked him.

Mr. Cuomo responded, "I am always open. And I'll tell you this. People say ... 'you've never voted for a Republican in your life.' Wrong." The former host said he has voted for a GOP candidate, saying that "the first vote I ever cast was for a Republican," although he didn't elaborate.

Currently, Mr. Cuomo works for NewsNation after he was suspended indefinitely by CNN in late 2021 over allegations that he helped defend his brother, then-New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, from sexual harassment allegations. He was fired

by the company weeks later before joining NewsNation, which is owned by Nexstar Media Group.

After he departed CNN, Mr. Cuomo filed an arbitration claim seeking US\$125 million from CNN, claiming the firing was "unlawful."

"It should be obvious by now that Chris Cuomo did not lie to CNN about helping his brother," said his lawyer, Bryan Freedman, earlier this month. "In fact, as the limited information released from Warner Media's investigation makes clear, CNN's highest-level executives not only knew about Chris' involvement in helping his brother but also actively assisted the governor, both through Chris and directly themselves."

During a recent interview with Vivek Ramaswamy, Mr. Cuomo stated that "of course I covered for my brother. Of course I help my brother. [Of] course I do." That was in response to a claim from Mr. Ramaswamy, a Republican 2024 presidential candidate, that he and other members of mainstream media outlets are biased.

The two brothers' close relationship was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when Chris Cuomo would often interview then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo on his CNN programme. The two would often engage in small talk and jokes, while critics accused the network of engaging in softball interviews with the former governor amid a scandal involving state nursing homes.

The former governor, who



Then-Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo and his brother Chris Cuomo attend the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City on April 26, 2018.

I hope that Mayor Eric Adams, Andrew Cuomo, and all of the others that got sued based on this ridiculous law where someone can be sued decades later, and with no proof, will fight it on being totally unfair and unconstitutional.

Donald Trump,
former U.S. president

resigned in mid-2021, has denied the harassment claims. An investigation by New York Attorney General Letitia James,

a Democrat, alleged that Chris Cuomo was helping his brother regarding messaging.

A separate internal CNN investigation into Mr. Cuomo also revealed the former CNN boss Jeff Zucker was involved in a years-long relationship with a top CNN marketing official, Allison Gollust. In 2022, Mr. Zucker exited his position and weeks later, Ms. Gollust resigned.

Meanwhile, Andrew Cuomo was sued for alleged sexual assault earlier this month by his former executive assistant Brittany Commisso, according to court papers.

"It disgusts me that Andrew Cuomo is even considering running for public office in the wake of Mayor Adam's alleged sexual harassment when he himself will not accept re-

sponsibility or even acknowledge his sexual harassment of me, aside from numerous other victims, while the governor of our state," she told the New York Post this week.

The lawsuit filed against Mr. Cuomo as well as similar lawsuits recently filed against New York City Mayor Eric Adams and former President Donald Trump come under a New York state law that spurred thousands of claims.

"I hope that Mayor Eric Adams's [sic], Andrew Cuomo, and all of the others that got sued based on this ridiculous law where someone can be sued decades later, and with no proof, will fight it on being totally unfair and unconstitutional," President Trump wrote on Truth Social on Nov. 29.

'I Have No Problem Being Hated,' Musk Says Amid X Advertising Exodus

Samantha Flom

X owner Elon Musk set off a firestorm last week when he appeared to endorse a post on his platform that some deemed anti-Semitic, leading many advertisers to abandon the site.

But if those advertisers are hoping to influence his views or posting habits, they're in for a disappointment.

"I have no problem being hated," Mr. Musk said when asked about the controversy at The New York Times DealBook Summit in New York on Nov. 29.

The backlash surrounds Mr. Musk's response to a Nov. 15 X post that asserted that Jewish communities "have been pushing the exact kind of dialectical hatred against whites that they

claim to want people to stop using against them."

In a brief reply, Mr. Musk wrote, "You have said the absolute truth."

He later clarified in subsequent posts that he was mainly referring to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which he claimed "unjustly attacks the majority of the West, despite the majority of the West supporting the Jewish people and Israel."

He added that such behaviour does not extend to all Jewish communities, "but it is also not just limited to ADL."

The posts resulted in some major advertisers halting spending on the platform, including Apple, Disney, and IBM.

But Mr. Musk appeared unconcerned by that on Nov. 29,

stating that he didn't want their money.

"If somebody's going to try to blackmail me with advertising, blackmail me with money—go [expletive] yourself," he said, before pointedly adding, "Hey Bob, if you're in the audience."

Earlier in the day, Disney CEO Bob Iger had spoken at the event.

However, Mr. Musk did acknowledge that the loss of advertising revenue could hurt and potentially even "kill" his company. But in that case, he contended, the world would blame advertisers for X's downfall, not him.

"Let the chips fall where they may," he said.

But even while he took a strong stand against his crit-

ics, Mr. Musk added that he did regret making the post that started the controversy, calling it "one of the most foolish" things he had done on the platform.

Further clarifying his position, he stressed that his reply was only meant to convey that he found it "unwise" for Jewish people to support groups that want their annihilation, like Hamas.

Mr. Musk also spoke about his trip to Israel earlier this week, during which he toured one of the sites of Hamas's brutal Oct. 7 terrorist attack.

Noting that the trip was not meant to be an "apology tour" for his recent post, he drew the audience's attention to a necklace he was wearing.

"It says, 'Bring them home,'

—the hostages," he said. "It was given to me by the parents of one of the hostages, and I said I would wear it just as long as there was a hostage still remaining. And I have."

Mr. Musk also expressed his support for Israel in its war against Hamas on Nov. 27 during an X Spaces chat with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Those that are intent on murder must be neutralised. The propaganda must stop training people to be murderers in the future," he said.

He added that once that objective has been achieved, he hopes to help rebuild Gaza into a prosperous region.

"If that happens, I think it will be a good future," he said.

'No Science' to Support Phasing Out Fossil Fuels to Limit Global Warming: COP28 President

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

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that there's "science" supporting the elimination of fossil fuel usage to meet climate change targets.

"There is no science out there or no scenario out there that says that the phase-out of fossil fuel is what's going to achieve" the target of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber said during a Nov. 28 online discussion held by activist group SHE Changes Climate.

While admitting that a phase-out of fossil fuel is "inevitable," Mr. Al Jaber insisted that "we need to be real, serious, and pragmatic about it."

In a heated discussion with Mary Robinson, chair of The Elders, a global leadership group, Mr. Al Jaber criticised the push for eliminating the use of fossil fuel.

"You're asking for a phase-out of fossil fuel. Please help me, show me a roadmap for a phase-out of fossil fuel that will allow for sustainable socioeconomic development, unless you want to take the world back into caves. Show me. Give me the solution," said Mr. Al Jaber, who's also the United Arab Emirates (UAE) minister of industry and advanced technology.

Mr. Al Jaber said the UAE is a leader in low-carbon energy but that the world will continue to need reliable energy sources.

"We don't want alarmists. We want solutions. Enough of alarmists. Enough of pointing fingers," he said.

Mr. Al Jaber's COP28 presidency has been controversial as he's the head of state-owned UAE energy firm Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

Reaction to Comments

Responding to Mr. Al Jaber's comments, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry told CNBC that "every decision we make should be geared to say, 'Does this advance the 1.5 degrees or is it going to be more destructive and take us in the wrong direction?'"

The COP28 president's comments were welcomed by some online.

"Kaboom at #COP28 ... conference president Sultan Al Jaber rejects climate hoax," Steve Milloy, a Fox News contributor, said in a Dec. 4 X post. "The hoax will never be the same."

"FINALLY SOMEONE IS TELLING THE TRUTH," Australian politician Craig Kelley said in a Dec. 3 X post. "This is a death blow to NET ZERO—Australia must abandon NET ZERO."

Mr. Al Jaber also faced criticism for rejecting the climate change narrative.



John Kerry (L), U.S. special presidential envoy for climate, and Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, president of the COP28 UNFCCC Climate Conference, speak during Day 2 of the conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Dec. 2, 2023.

Show me a roadmap for a phase-out of fossil fuel that will allow for sustainable socioeconomic development, unless you want to take the world back into caves.

Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE minister of industry and advanced technology

"The COP 'president' designated by UAE, oil exec Sultan Al Jaber, is making a complete mockery of the #COP28 climate summit," Michael Mann, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said in a post. He asked U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to "speak out on this."

As Mr. Al Jaber's comments spread online, COP28 came out with a clarification that reports about no phase-out of fossil fuels were "another attempt to undermine the Presidency's agenda," per CNBC.

"The COP President is clear that phasing down and out of fossil fuels is inevitable and that we must keep 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach. We are not sure what this story was supposedly revealing. Nothing in it is new or breaking news."

Climate Change Alarmism

The Conference of Parties (COP) is the "supreme decision-making body" of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. COP28, or the 28th U.N. climate change conference, is currently being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, through Dec. 12.

Mr. Al Jaber's rejection of immediate fossil fuel phase-out as a means to keep global warming below the 1.5 degree limit contrasts sharply with the official U.N. position on the matter.

"My hopes for #COP28—commitments to get nationally deter-

mined contributions in line with 1.5 degrees Celsius limit, fossil fuel phase-out & big investments in renewables, acceleration of climate justice," Mr. Guterres said in a Dec. 3 X post.

A U.N. report found that global governments "still plan to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius."

It suggested that "countries should aim for a near total phase-out of coal production and use by 2040 and a combined reduction in oil and gas production and use by three-quarters by 2050 from 2020 levels, at a minimum."

During a speech at COP28, Mr. Kerry said that "there shouldn't be any more coal-fired power plants permitted anywhere in the world." According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, coal accounted for 19.7 percent of electricity generated in the United States last year.

Models and Data

While climate alarmists, along with the United Nations, continue to insist that global warming is a catastrophic threat, some data suggests otherwise. The issue of climate change is broadly more complicated and involves a range of variables, most of which are ignored by mainstream scientists and media.

Over 1,800 scientists and pro-

fessionals from around the world have signed a World Climate Declaration, stating that there is "no climate emergency."

"Climate science should be less political, while climate policies should be more scientific. Scientists should openly address uncertainties and exaggerations in their predictions of global warming, while politicians should dispassionately count the real costs as well as the imagined benefits of their policy measures," the declaration stated.

In July 19 testimony submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, two professors—one from Princeton University and another from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—criticised the climate models being used to support climate change policies.

"All of the models that predict catastrophic global warming fail the key test of the scientific method: they grossly overpredict the warming versus actual data," they wrote. "Even at today's relatively low levels, atmospheric CO2 is now 'heavily saturated,' in physics terms, meaning that additional increases in atmospheric CO2 can have little warming effect."

"600 million years of data prove that today's CO2 level of 420 parts per million (ppm) is very low, not high. 600 million years of data show that higher levels of CO2 do not cause or even correlate with higher temperatures."

OPINION

TAMATI SMITH/GETTY IMAGES



A girl watches as two boys play with a bicycle in Pia Wadjarri, WA, on Oct. 4, 2023.

6 Things We Need to Do to Start Fixing Youth Crime

Eric Abetz



“Youth crime is out of control” is the refrain heard on many lips around Australia and the

Western world.

Another common phrase is “The youth are our future.”

Put those two phrases together and we are left contemplating, indeed fearing for, the future well-being of our society.

The statistics on youth crime regularly adorn newspapers and lead electronic media bulletins. Youth crime is a scourge.

So how did we get here? What can we do about it?

Like with any ingrained social problem, there is no quick fix. Something that took a generation or two may well

take a similar time to repair. It takes a lot less time to crash a car than it does to repair it. So it is with society.

1. Start With the Family

The social data is relatively clear. A good home life with a mother and a father who are married in a loving long-term relationship is an important influence on a child’s positive social behaviour.

Broken homes with a lack of an authority figure tend to produce the opposite. Explore the background of a youth offender there will nearly always be the scars of trauma.

As with all things social data, the statistics deal in generalities and there are exceptions, indeed many exceptions.

Nevertheless, a stable home life with mum and dad is the best start in life a young person can be given. Pro-family

policies help to keep families together and reduce cost of living pressures. And the real choice of having a parent stay at home, especially in the formative years, is urgently needed.

2. Bring Back Education on Traditional Values

To back up the home influence, we need a school system that teaches genuine respect for others and parents.

Too often we hear how the education system, which should be complementing the parental role, is undermining it. Rather than emphasising the nuclear family it is denigrated for not being “diverse.”

While parents hope and strive to get their children job-ready, we have a schooling system teaching every “right” imaginable forgetting that “responsibility” comes before “rights” and not only in the

dictionary—a book which one suspects the children have not been told about.

While students are encouraged to defy authorities by leaving classes to demonstrate all manner of things, including supporting the terrorist group Hamas rather than learning basic skills, we witness an abhorrent indoctrination of our young.

A reformed education system focusing on virtues, values, service, and equipping our young with real-life skills would be another essential policy change.

3. A Better Media

The media and entertainment houses have a social responsibility to present role models for young people to whom they can look up.

Social chaos and lack of morals, combined with denigrating parents and vital social institutions

Continued on A23

The future of our society and the wellbeing of our young requires a wholesale acceptance that the current methodologies are not working.

Another Trip Down the Rabbit Hole

Graham Young



The Australian energy minister's transition policies are like something out of Lewis Carroll's Alice books: it seems the harder Chris Bowen

tries to run towards his destination, the further away from it he gets.

Take his newer and harder-running Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS), a development on his original scheme announced in December 2022.

It promises a lot but is likely to be nothing more than a poorly shuffled deck of cards.

The original scheme was to provide 6 gigawatts (GW) of dispatchable renewable power, and the results of the first pilots have just been announced. The first participants in this scheme will be six projects providing 1.075 GW of "reliable capacity" in NSW.

The revised plan expands the scheme to 32 GW all-up, with 9 GW of dispatchable capacity and 23 GW of variable capacity. This is meant to meet the government's aim that 82 percent of electricity generation will be renewable by 2030.

The numbers sound impressive, but what do they really mean?

Australia currently produces 273,265 gigawatt hours of power every year. Of that, 88,208 GWh is renewable.

To get to 82 percent, the government needs to generate another 135,869 GWh with renewables.

On average that is 15.51 GW every hour.

So, you might be thinking that Mr. Bowen's 32 GW capacity will more than do the trick, in which case you would be wrong.

As is well known by now, the sun doesn't always shine, and the wind doesn't always blow.

If 32 GW were all wind capacity, it would only produce 11.2 GW on average each hour, varying between zero and 32 GW. If it were all solar then the average figure would be 6.4 GW.

In fact, not only will the capacity be a mix of wind and solar, but it also includes 9 GW of batteries. They complicate the picture because they store energy, they don't produce it, and they will need to get that energy from variable sources, further reduc-

BROOK MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES



Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, speaks at the Sydney Energy Forum on July 12, 2022.



Solar panels can be seen on a roof in Albany, WA, on Aug. 13, 2023.

A sensible person would slow down the implementation of renewables until storage was in place.

ing their capacity utilisation.

And while wind can run for 24 hours under the right conditions, and solar for 12 hours, the very best batteries can run for four hours, but most can only manage two.

So 9 gigawatts of batteries cannot backup (firm) 23 gigawatts of wind and solar.

Coal and Renewables Are Not Equal

In his release announcing the extension of the original scheme Minister Bowen implies that it will replace 26.7 GW of coal-fired power capacity.

But just on the averages, you would need between 61 GW and 107 GW of wind or solar capacity to meet this challenge—plus huge amounts of batteries.

The equation gets worse.

One of the reasons for the revised scheme is that the speed of installation of renewable power has stalled.

The Clean Energy Council reported in August that "investment levels so far this year are 50 percent below the rolling 12-month quarterly average of 699 MW and are a long way off the pace necessary for Australia to achieve an 82 per cent renewable energy share by 2030."

Why is that happening?

One reason is that it is becoming increasingly hard to make money out of renewable energy because it is all available at the same time. When the sun is up, solar panels everywhere are producing power, and when the wind is blowing the same applies to wind turbines over large swathes of the country.

This leads to famine and feast where electricity prices can go from less

than -\$50 a MWh (it was -\$99.99 at one stage in SA recently) to \$15,500 a MWh (the all-time record).

So here's the problem—the more unreliable renewables you have the worse this gets, unless you have storage capable of soaking it up when the price is low and selling it when the price is high, which we don't.

Mr. Bowen's plan tacitly acknowledges that part of the scheme is for the government to subsidise the losses of the generators when they sell below cost in return for a share of the profits when they sell above a nominated price.

This will only mask the problem. It doesn't matter who directly bears the loss, in the end, it will be the taxpayer either in taxes or electricity tariffs, the losses will still be there, and they will be worse if Mr. Bowen is successful in pulling in more unreliable generators without storage.

A sensible person would slow down the implementation of renewables until storage was in place. This would mean ditching the government's fantasy commitment to 82 percent by 2030.

The only form of grid-scale storage that is commercially viable is pumped hydro, but we are looking at the end of this decade to the beginning of the next before there is much of that available.

Timelines will probably blow out—after all, Snowy 2.0 was supposed to be operating by now.

Taxpayers Bear the Cost

There is also nothing in this package to accelerate the uptake of network capacity, which is also sorely needed.

Still, this accelerated policy may not have as big an effect as the government intends.

Each project has to bid for government support, and the terms and conditions will vary depending on the project. The guidelines require the projects to be well-advanced, and the government has indicated it wants as

short a contract as possible.

When you're venturing hundreds of millions to billions on an energy project you generally want to know what the parameters are at the planning stage, not halfway down the track.

Rent-seeking capital is international, and there are probably better deals elsewhere.

Unfortunately, before the scheme fails the government may have squandered a lot of taxpayer money.

We don't know how much the scheme will cost—Mr. Bowen says this is commercial-in-confidence—so with this lack of transparency, the government could be tempted to spend up in a "whatever it costs" attempt to meet their arbitrary targets and get re-elected.

Mr. Bowen takes a shot at nuclear in his media release announcing the CIS: "The same [Liberal-National Party] that had 22 failed energy policies in government now has none—just a risky all-in bet on small modular reactors that are unproven, too slow, and too expensive."

But if he wanted to get to net zero by 2050, nuclear could clear his "through the looking glass" problem and get him to his target sometime next decade at a lower cost.

For starters, he'd only need around 25 GW to replace all the remaining non-renewable generation in the country, he wouldn't need storage, he wouldn't need extra networks, and he wouldn't need to bribe rent seekers.

And he would call time on the Mad Hatter's Tea Party that is Australian electricity generation.

Graham Young is the executive director of the Australian Institute for Progress. He is the editor and founder of www.onlineopinion.com.au and has conducted qualitative polling on Australian politics since 2001. Mr. Young has contributed to The Australian newspaper, The Australian Financial Review, and is a regular on ABC Radio Brisbane.

Fear and Loathing in the Age of Woke

David Daintree



We all recognise the power of peer pressure. It's part of human nature to run with the pack—at least

most of the time—and to be nervous about striking out too far on one's own. This is the herd instinct of animals raised to a human level. It's part of our DNA.

That doesn't mean that we aren't sometimes brave enough to stand up against the majority view. We all have some brave moments, but we often fall short and feel ashamed afterwards, knowing that when a friend was in trouble we weren't quite gutsy enough to resist and face the bullies.

You know the feeling? We've all been there.

But peer pressure is a cosy thing compared to what's often going on now. Pressure has morphed into force.

The woke movement (not an ideal term, I guess, but you know what I'm talking about), with its silencing, its fear-mongering, its un-platforming, and all its other techniques of repression, has raised the stakes. Fear stalks us.

A couple of recent experiences brought this home to me.

The first was a meeting of experienced teachers and educational professionals when the issue of "transitioning" came up.

The increase in tension was almost palpable. The language used by the speakers was evasive and hesitant.

One said that more attention should be paid to the environment (if that's not evasion I don't know what is!).

Another went to great lengths to avoid using language that actually described the situations teachers encounter—he stuttered his way through euphemisms and motherhood (er, sorry, parenthood) statements, all based around caring, kindness, and such generalised

A transgender flag lies on the grass outside of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, on May 22, 2023.

It's part of human nature to run with the pack—at least most of the time—and to be nervous about striking out too far on one's own.

Signage denoting a unisex bathroom can be seen at Melbourne Airport on Oct. 31, 2023.

SUSAN MORTIMER/THE EPOCH TIMES



vacuities.

Another speaker, a parent, told us that her primary school daughter had been told by her teacher that one of her friends in class had transitioned and had to be renamed.

The daughter was worried: "What does this mean? will I get into trouble if I call her by the wrong name?"

All concern seemed to focus on the transitioning child, with very little sympathy for her perplexed classmate. The simplicity of children struggles to grasp the cautious diplomacy of adults. Diplomacy, do I mean, or fear?

After the meeting, one participant asked me what my "take" on the meeting was. I reacted at once by saying that I thought we were all frightened. He said, "That's exactly what I thought!"

We both agreed that there had been an elephant in the room, a big one too, and that we were all (he and I as well, of course) too frightened to tackle it.

Driving home I reflected that fear explains almost everything that happens in schools nowadays. We're all afraid of saying the wrong thing, of upsetting our colleagues (who are also afraid, but can't be completely trusted—they could join the pack against a lone transgressor).

We're scared of the children we teach, and of our colleagues, and now we're scared of the law. You see the same thing in the media.

Senator Lidia Thorpe's utterly ridiculous speech to the National Press Club in August was received in silence, or even with

approval.

No one there was bold enough to complain about her vulgar, coarse, junior-high-school-theatricality. Nor to question why this woman of predominantly Irish and English descent could have the hide to speak for the Aboriginal community, and to do so with such vengeful anger.

Afraid to Speak and Stand Up
The second incident.

A senior academic and head of school was stood down on the still-to-be-defined grounds that the workplace he managed was "unsafe."

Now the term unsafe nowadays has a new meaning: it refers to a situation in which one might be faced with opinions and ideas that are uncomfortable or distressing. Trigger warnings may even be required to defend the intellectual and emotional purity of those who encounter these dangerous views.

I had no role whatever in this matter, but I did subsequently attend a function at which some of the disgraced academic's students were present, and I learned that they very much liked and even admired him, and knew of no evidence at all to justify the complaint.

But—and here's the crunch—they were afraid to speak up for him or otherwise appeal on his behalf.

Some of them had gone so far as to start a petition, but they were afraid to lodge it. The plan to defend him was stillborn.

This is incomprehensible to me. As students in the 70s we would have signed any number

of petitions without anxiety—and indeed with a certain bold bravado.

If it's true that when we demonstrated against the Vietnam War we were being secretly photographed by ASIO, we didn't really care, because the stakes were lower then. We knew we'd get some kind of a job when we left university.

We weren't crushed by fears of climate change either—though I distinctly remember a transient anxiety about the possibility of global cooling.

Nowadays, there are still students who protest loudly and publicly, but only when the cause they support is consistent with the "orthodoxy" of the Left. Everyone else is afraid to speak out.

The two instances of fear in action that I have related touched me deeply.

I was keen to write this stuff up but struggled to do so without revealing too much detail that could embarrass those involved.

There you go, I'm afraid too. That's what this crazy world is doing to us.

David Daintree is director of the Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies in Tasmania. He has a background in classics and teaches Late and Medieval Latin. Mr. Daintree was a visiting professor at the universities of Siena and Venice, and a visiting scholar at the University of Manitoba. He served as president of Campion College from 2008 to 2012. In 2017, he was made a member of the Order of Australia on the Queen's Birthday Honours List.



Should Canada Hold an Indigenous Referendum?

Brian Giesbrecht



Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand all share one important historical feature: Indigenous peoples were already present

when the Europeans arrived. The histories are all similar in that the indigenous populations had to be accommodated before large-scale settlement could occur.

Peace was achieved after some bloodshed, and the native populations were left with some special rights not accorded to the general population. In each country there has arisen an integrated educated indigenous elite class that demands more special rights, and a large, poor, semi-integrated indigenous underclass.

In the United States, Australia, and New Zealand there is increasing pushback from the citizenry against the demand for more special indigenous rights. And now, in New Zealand, there is a demand that those special rights, and the quasi-apartheid systems that inevitably result from the granting of rights based on race, be ended entirely.

New Zealand's newly elected government has announced that it will review the country's special Māori treaty rights. Despite voicing fears that a referendum would be divisive, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has agreed to support consideration of a proposed bill that would pave the way to a referendum.

In Australia a similar vote has already been held. At the culmination of a fair, well-funded, and comprehensive public consultation campaign, Australians massively voted in favour of the principle of equality for all citizens. The plan to grant special rights based on race was firmly rejected.

In the United States, Americans have consistently objected to efforts to grant more special rights to native Indians as a group.

But in Canada there is no political party or group pushing back against the further extension of indigenous rights, or calling for the outright elimination of indigenous apartheid systems.

Oddly, the integration plan for Canada's indigenous population that was accepted by virtually everyone—indigenous and non-indigenous—for the first 100 years of Canada's existence as a nation has somehow undergone a radical transformation in the last few decades. The plan since 1867 was that indigenous people would take their place as equals in the mainstream, as indigenous Canadians. The plan now seems to be the exact opposite—namely, that rural indigenous people will draw further away from the mainstream, and operate as separate “nations.” Instead of rights belonging to the individual, these indigenous “nations” will emphasise tribal rights.



'Vote NO' campaign signage is seen outside a polling centre in Perth on Oct. 7, 2023.

This radical change in plan has serious consequences for all Canadians. Not only is this process being undertaken at great public expense, it has already resulted in the forfeiture of large chunks of Canadian sovereignty. Future plans of indigenous leaders promise more of the same. “Land Back” is the most extreme of such notions, whereby Canadian territory is “returned” to people who claim to be the descendants of ancient peoples who once hunted in the area.

And the level of indigenous spending is staggering. Professor Tom Flanagan, University of Calgary professor emeritus, notes that 74.3 percent of Canada's 2022 deficit consisted of spending on indigenous claims. Simply put, if not for this incredibly high indigenous spending, Canada could vastly improve services for all.

But the single most astounding thing is that this radical, and crushingly expensive “nation to nation” change in plan has occurred with virtually no input from the Canadian citizenry. Canada is being fundamentally changed, and not only has no Canadian been asked to vote on such a change, but no political party has ever campaigned on the issue. Judges and politicians are transforming the country without the consent of its citizens.

So, questions should be asked: Should Canada now have a debate about these important issues, as New Zealand and Australia are doing? Should Canadians be consulted about measures, like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, that further extend special indigenous rights? Should Canadians be asked the same question that New Zealanders will be

In the United States, Australia, and New Zealand there is increasing pushback from the citizenry against the demand for more special indigenous rights.

asked to answer if a referendum is held, namely: “Is it time to end, once and for all, a quasi-apartheid system that grants special citizenship rights to only indigenous people, even if this entails reopening the constitution to do so?” And should Canadians be asked a similar question that Australians have massively answered with a very definite “No”—namely, “Do you want your country to give extra political rights to groups based on race? Should Canada end the Indian Act and reserve system?”

I suggest that the answer is “Yes, we should have a national discussion, followed by a referendum.” The fact is that Canada has had its Indian Act and reserve system since 1876, and despite spending a staggering amount of money on special indigenous concerns, the majority of indigenous people still do far worse than the mainstream population on every socio-economic and health indicator. Simply put, the very expensive status quo is not working.

Canada is not an outlier in this regard. In the United States, Australia, and New Zealand the results of granting special indigenous rights, and the spending of massive amounts of money on special indigenous programmes, have been exactly the same—the large indigenous underclass remains mired in poverty

and intractable social problems.

However, the results of these quasi-apartheid systems have also created the same privileged indigenous elites in each country—elites that all benefit financially from the special rights and extra spending. This phenomenon largely explains why in every one of the four nations those elites actively oppose the questioning of special racial rights, while demanding more separateness and special privileges. Those elites also largely control the narrative. They resist changes to the status quo.

That is why the Australian and New Zealand referendums are so significant. They are a recognition that the subject is too important to be left to these privileged elites—elites that are essentially holding the rest of the country hostage.

Ontario lawyer Peter Best makes a detailed case for equal rights for everyone in his comprehensive book, “There Is No Difference.” He argues, convincingly, that only by gradually eliminating all legal differences between indigenous people and ordinary Canadians can this country achieve its potential.

Approximately 1 percent of Canada's total population live on reserves. But only perhaps 1 percent of that 1 percent make up the indigenous elite that profit from the status quo. Is that small group entitled to have Canada completely remade to suit them? And is that remaking of Canada what Canadians want?

It is time to follow Australia and New Zealand's lead, and put these questions to all Canadians.

Brian Giesbrecht is a retired judge and a senior fellow with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

8 Espionage Hacks to Outsmart the Masters of Miscommunication

Nicole James



In the era of pervasive surveillance reminiscent of Orwellian nightmares, old-school Cold War hacks have staged a comeback, offering a

clandestine refuge for the exchange of information.

As Big Brother looms large on every screen, the savvy practitioner must resurrect time-tested techniques to outsmart the puppeteers of miscommunication particularly in the face of impending legal consequences for government-designated purveyors of deceit.

Here, in the spirit of cloak-and-dagger intrigue, are eight tried-and-true methods to outwit the masters of miscommunication:

1. Auslan, Elvish, Klingon

Elevate your discourse to heights beyond the reach of prying bureaucrats. There are many mythical languages you can learn that government agents and their goons are unlikely to master, such as conversational Klingon.

Start with simple phrases but be careful as a seemingly anodyne statement such as “xab soş.lir? q̄χutj” which is pronounced “Hab SoSI’ Quch” and means “Your mother has a smooth forehead” is, as Star Trek fans know, a grave insult.

It may be worth memorising, “mIpHa’wI’ vIVumlaH?” (Where can I get a fake vaccine passport?) which is bound to be useful.

Traditionalists might favour Elvish, while those with a penchant for hand movements could find sanctuary in the sign language Auslan’s silent eloquence when under surveillance of eavesdropping adversaries.

2. Combustible Notepaper

Add a combustible notebook to your shopping list.

This was used in World War II and contained film that, when triggered by a pencil, would go up in smoke, disappearing in seconds.

The CIA, masters of subterfuge, employed water-soluble paper for note-taking—an item easily disposed of, whether discreetly in a toilet sans flushing, or employed for the mundane task of nose-blowing (albeit with a potential mess).

3. Cryptography

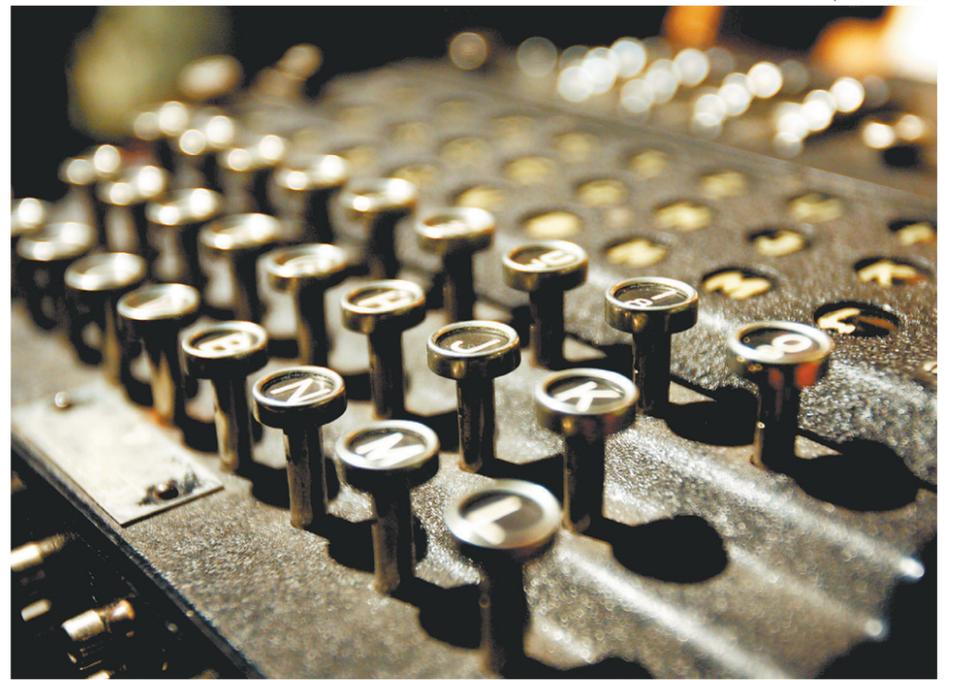
In the realm of artful communication, classical codes emerge as the silent orchestrators of secrecy. The art of rearranging letters or substituting one for another stands as an age-old technique.

As Big Brother looms large on every screen, the savvy practitioner must resurrect time-tested techniques to outsmart the puppeteers of miscommunication.

Consider the transformation of “The solar panel is booby-trapped” into “Uif tpmbs qbofm jt cppcz usbqqfe,” achieved by a simple letter-by-letter shift.

Julius Caesar used it with a shift of three to communicate with his generals, although messages such as “Ichmy nby vfiix izz gs niau” or “rinse the blood off my toga” may have been meant for the local laundromat.

Cryptographic history traces back to ancient Egypt, where the first known code was etched in stone around



The Enigma coding machine that was used by the Germans in WWII on display at Bletchley Park National Code Centre in Bletchley, England, on Nov. 25, 2004.

1900 BC. Even the ancient Israelites engaged in the art of Atbash, an early Hebrew code.

For an added layer of protection in these trying times, consider translating conversational Klingon into Atbash.

4. The Dead Drop

The dead drop involves putting a message (usually in code) in seemingly innocuous items.

Picture hollow coins or, for a touch of Dutch—or is it French?—bravery, a bottle of Bolly.

Coins have limited space but can hold messages in microdots, a writing system developed during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War to lighten the load of carrier pigeons. Even the future Queen Elizabeth found solace in these pigeons for her missives.

The most famous case of a hollow coin being intercepted was when a Russian spy accidentally gave his hollow coin to a newspaper boy.

When the boy dropped the coin, the microdot photo fell out, but the secret message was still safe for four years because that’s how long it took the FBI to crack its code.

5. Poetry

Ever thought poetry could be a covert tool? The French Resistance certainly did. They turned verses into codes, using them not just to convey messages but also to spot fellow rebels.

One standout piece was “The Life that I Have,” penned by Leo Marks.

Chelsea Clinton even had it recited at her wedding to Marc Mezvinsky. Was it a subtle nod to some family secret? Maybe in Klingon? We’re not ruling anything out.

6. Pyramid Power

The French Resistance had another trick up its sleeve: the Pyramid structure. This furtive pyramid was built on the notion that members only engaged with one or two comrades.

A shroud of secrecy enveloped the organisation as no official records of membership were maintained, and messages traversed only through the sacred conduit of whispered exchanges.

The brilliance lay in limiting exposure; enemy infiltrators, at best, could unmask merely two resistance

members, leaving the remainder of the organisation veiled in safety.

It worked until it didn’t, with the Gestapo insinuating themselves into the command echelons of select resistance groups.

Trust, a rare commodity in these precarious times, may find a shaky foundation, but discovering someone with a lifetime subscription to The Epoch Times could be a promising initiation.

7. Tying Your Shoelaces

Behold the mystique within the magicians’ code, where the simple act of tying shoelaces transcends its pedestrian facade.

Variations in knots carry a covert language, from the ominous “I am going to blow up the wind turbine” to the whimsically perplexing, “The woman standing next to you, I think she likes you.”

Concealing messages in the mundane theatre of daily life remains a timeless strategy.

Proceed with caution, however—tying both shoes together risks not only revealing your covert semaphore but also the perilous pratfall of a well-executed trip.

8. Jack-in-the-Box

In the arsenal of evasive tactics, the Jack-in-the-Box emerges as an unconventional ally, though not necessarily in the realm of communication.

A Jack-in-a-Box was used in 1982 by a CIA agent to evade KGB surveillance.

It is a suitcase that hides a dummy that looks like you from the shoulders up.

If you’re in a car chase, just wait for a sharp turn, open the Jack-in-the-Box, and roll out the passenger door. (If cars are banned, this may not work as well on a bicycle.)

Nicole James is a freelance journalist for The Epoch Times based in Australia. She is an award-winning short story writer, journalist, columnist, and editor. Her work has appeared in newspapers including The Sydney Morning Herald, Sun-Herald, The Australian, the Sunday Times, and the Sunday Telegraph. She holds a BA Communications majoring in journalism and two post graduate degrees, one in creative writing.



A boy ties his shoelace as he takes an evacuation train with his mother and sister in Pokrovsk amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine, on Feb. 25, 2023.

Are University's Universities When Diversity Trumps Merit?

Gabriël Moens



It has recently been reported that the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has removed the word "merit" from its hiring process.

In a radio interview, the University's Vice-Chancellor Margaret Sheil, communicated her concern that the university's hiring strategy could be biased.

Hence, the university will seek to appoint diverse individuals, including those from Indigenous, multicultural, and LGBT backgrounds, implying that the goal of "diversity" trumps "merit."

Admittedly, the concept of merit itself is indeterminate—an empty vessel, the meaning of which has to be filled in by the university's leadership team.

As such, it could be argued that the university, rather than ditching merit, has simply embraced a competing version of merit that is radically different, and hostile, to the traditional concept.

In its first conception, merit refers to the relevant individual characteristics needed by the university to fulfil its educational functions.

We know that, logically, two candidates cannot be equally qualified because there is always room for differentiation. There are thus always open-ended degrees of excellence.

In contrast, merit, in its second sense, is the possession of desirable group characteristics that can produce suitable social outcomes or results, for example, the representation of minority members in university teaching, research, and administrative positions in accordance with their numerical strength in society.

Proponents of this diversity-enhancing conception of merit argue that its content varies according to the needs of the community, thereby implying that membership in such a group may, in itself, be a sufficient meritorious qualification.

In contrast, others argue that such a view of merit would transform a university "into a political instrumentality" and destroy the principle of reward according to relevant individual characteristics.

Role of a University

Of course, there is no general agree-



AAP IMAGE/ETHAN JAMES

Demonstrators are seen during a protest against an event by British activist Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull at the Tasmanian Parliament House lawns in Hobart on March 21, 2023.

QUT has removed the word 'merit' from its hiring process.

ment among educational authorities as to the proper function of a university.

While some writers emphasise its traditional functions, such as teaching, research, and professional training, proponents of diversity appointments maintain that universities are instruments of social engineering aimed at solving perceived ills in wider society.

The adoption of diversity, which involves appointments on the basis of group characteristics, has gradually transformed universities—in some cases even without design—into institutions that are supposed to more accurately reflect society at large.

Such a process radically alters the function of a university, which the late John Passmore, who served as professor of Philosophy at the Australian National University, described as the "advancement and the diffusion of learning."

In his article, *Quality and Equality Reconsidered*, the professor explored the use of affirmative action as a means to provide equality of opportunity.

Similarly, for Alfred North White-

head, a former professor of Education at Harvard University, the function of the university is to impart information, and to impart it "imaginatively."

Rejecting Excellence

QUT's hiring strategy does not involve the ditching of merit, but instead entails the adoption of this competing version.

In this context, it is appropriate to refer to a statement by Barry R. Gross, a philosophy professor, who has been critical of such approaches: "This new 'equality' substitutes for the rule of law or principle which took many centuries to establish, a rule of men which is no more than a rule of privilege and influence so rightly despised by the founders of liberal democracy."

One thing is certain. The ditching of the traditional concept of merit promotes QUT's slogan "A university for the real world."

Indeed, regardless of the deceptive appeal of the slogan, the diversity conception of merit is supportive of this slogan.

The removal by QUT of the traditional notion of merit from its appointment process is problematic because universities have been established to pursue excellence. The achievement of this goal necessitates and condones

discrimination against those who do not have the capacity, will, or intellect to contribute and profit from their involvement with the university.

The traditional function of the university is to pursue intellectual and professional excellence for its own sake, thereby ensuring that sufficiently qualified people are trained to serve society in distinct roles.

Nevertheless, waging war against excellence continues to be the rallying cry of those who control the mainstream academia and politics.

While the diversity conception of merit seeks to institute policies of societal equality and fairness, it treats candidates for appointment to university positions as members of a group, and subjects them to stereotypical practices and, hence, harms their long-term interests.

Gabriël A. Moens AM is an emeritus professor of law at the University of Queensland, and served as pro vice-chancellor and dean at Murdoch University. In 2003, Mr. Moens was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal by the prime minister for services to education. He has taught extensively across Australia, Asia, Europe, and the United States.

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SPECIAL SERIES: How the Spectre of Communism Is Ruling Our World

Sabotaging Education

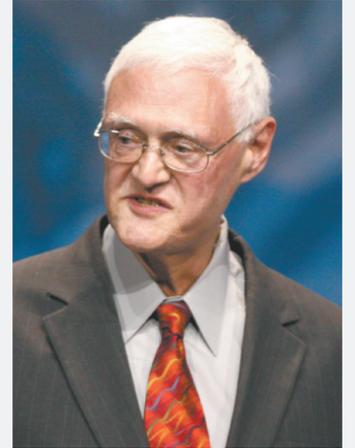
The Epoch Times here serialises an adaptation from the Chinese of “How the Spectre of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” a new book by the editorial team of the “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party.”

CHAPTER
12



KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

GAGE SKIDMORE/PUBLIC DOMAIN



Don Downs speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in National Harbour, Maryland, on March 15, 2013.

Students take a break on the campus of UCLA in Los Angeles, California, on April 23, 2012.

2. Communism in Western Universities

g. Monopolising Textbooks and Liberal Arts (cont.)

Many journals in the humanities are guided by critical theory and filled with obscure technical jargon, while the main theme is to reject the divine, reject traditional culture, and incite revolutions to overturn the current social, political, and economic order. One category of scholarship aims to prove that all traditional morals and standards, including even the scientific process, are social constructs whose purpose is to safeguard the power of the ruling class by forcing their norms on the whole society.

In 1996, New York University physics professor Alan Sokal had a paper published in Duke University's cultural studies journal *Social Text* titled “Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity.” With 109 footnotes and 219 sources referenced, the paper argued that “quantum gravity” is constructed by society and language. [96] Soon after, Sokal published a declaration in another magazine stating that his paper was a prank. [97]

During an interview on National Public Radio, Sokal said he found inspiration in the 1994 book “Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels With Science.” The book's author said that some publications in the humanities will publish anything so long as it contains “the proper leftist thought” and quotes well-known leftist thinkers. Sokal tested this by filling his paper with leftist ideologies, pointless citations, and complete nonsense. [98] He later wrote: “The results of my little experiment demonstrate, at the very least, that some fashionable sectors of the American

academic Left have been getting intellectually lazy. The editors of *Social Text* liked my article because they liked its conclusion: that ‘the content and methodology of postmodern science provide powerful intellectual support for the progressive political project.’ They apparently felt no need to analyse the quality of the evidence, the cogency of the arguments, or even the relevance of the arguments to the purported conclusion.” [99] Sokal's satirical approach highlighted the dearth of academic principle or credibility in the fields of critical theory and cultural studies.

=====

The American tradition of liberal arts education requires that students take a number of humanities courses, regardless of the students' majors. Today, these required courses are usually taught by leftist professors from the disciplines of literature, history, philosophy, and social sciences.

The extent to which communist thought has penetrated the social sciences becomes apparent when one browses the papers given at meetings of the major U.S. academic bodies. The Modern Language Association is the largest of such societies, boasting 25,000 mem-

bers comprising professors and scholars in the fields of modern language research and education. Thousands attend the association's annual conference. A large number of the papers listed on the association's website utilise the ideological framework of Marxism, the Frankfurt School, deconstructionism, post-structuralism, and other deviant theories. Others use feminism, gay research, identity politics, and other radical trends. Similar organisations, including the American Sociological Association, reflect much the same slant, though to varying degrees.

The American tradition of liberal arts education requires that students take a number of humanities courses, regardless of the students' majors. Today, these required courses are usually taught by leftist professors from the disciplines of literature, history, philosophy, and social sciences. American scholar Sowell has noted that required courses leave students with no alternative but to listen to these professors, who often use their classrooms as forums for spreading their leftist ideologies, even using grades as an incentive to have students accept their views. At the University of Michigan, for example, students in an introductory biology course were required to watch films about politics. The Marxist views of these humanities and social science professors not only corrupt students in their academic fields, but affect almost the entire student body. Students who dare to challenge a professor's views often receive lower grades. [100]

College students wish to be respected as adults, but both their knowledge and practical experience are limited. In the relatively closed environment of the university, few of them suspect that their respected profes-

SPECIAL SERIES

sors would take advantage of their innocence and trust to instil in them a set of damaging ideologies and values. Parents pay high tuition fees for their children to master the knowledge and skills they need as they find their place in society. How could they imagine that their children are actually being robbed of their invaluable years as they are transformed into followers of radical ideologies that will affect them for the rest of their lives?

Generation after generation of youth have entered this education system that has been heavily infiltrated by communist ideologies. They study textbooks penned by leftists and internalise their deviated theories, hastening the decline of culture, morals, and humanity.

h. University 'Re-education': Brainwashing and Moral Corruption

With the growth of Marxist ideology in universities, campus policy since the 1980s has increasingly focused on preventing "offensive" remarks, especially when it comes to offending women or ethnic minorities. According to American scholar Donald Alexander Downs, from 1987 to 1992, about 300 U.S.

universities implemented policies for the regulation of speech, creating a paralegal system that forbids certain language regarding sensitive groups and topics. [101]

Those who support these prohibitions may mean well, but their actions lead to a ridiculous outcome, as ever greater numbers of people claim the right not to be offended for any reason. In fact, no such right exists according to the law, but the prominence of cultural Marxism has allowed anyone to claim an association with oppressed groups, citing reasons such as culture, ancestry, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. Administrative staff at universities have consistently afforded privileged treatment to those who claim victimhood.

According to Marxist logic, the oppressed are morally correct in all circumstances, and many people do not dare to question the authenticity of their claims. This absurd logic is based on twisting the criteria for judging what is moral. As group identities and sentiments intensify (in Leninism and Stalinism, this is called a high level of class consciousness), people unconsciously abandon the traditional standards of good and evil, replacing them with groupthink. This

has most markedly manifested in totalitarian communist states, where the "oppressed" proletariat was given a justification for killing the landowning and capitalist "oppressors."

Notes

96. Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," *Social Text*, no. 46/47 (Spring-Summer 1996): 217-52.

97. Alan D. Sokal, "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," *Lingua Franca*, June 5, 1996.

98. Alan D. Sokal, "Parody," *National Public Radio*, May 15, 1996.

99. Alan D. Sokal, "Revelation: A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," in "Sokal Hoax: The Sham That Shook the Academy," ed. Editors of *Lingua Franca* (Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, 2000), 52.

100. Thomas Sowell, "Inside American Education: The Decline, the Deception, the Dogmas" (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 212-213.

101. Donald Alexander Downs, "Restoring Free Speech and Liberty on Campus" (Oakland, Calif.: Independent Institute, 2004), 51.

See next edition for the next installment.

John Xiao, Editor-in-Chief
Daniel Y. Teng, Assignment Editor
Melanie Sun, Print Editor
Amy Yip, Layout Artist
Yangyang Sun, Layout Artist

ABOUT US

The Epoch Times is a media organisation dedicated to seeking the truth through insightful and independent journalism.

Standing outside of political interests and the pursuit of profit, our starting point and our goal is to create a media for the public benefit, to be truly responsible to society.

We endeavour to educate readers about today's most important topics, seeking to broaden and uplift minds. We believe that rational, balanced debate is key for fostering a healthy democracy and a compassionate society.

As an independent media outlet, we use our freedom to investigate issues overlooked—or avoided—by other media outlets. We seek to highlight solutions and what's good in society rather than what divides us.

We report respectfully, compassionately, and rigorously.

We stand against the destruction wrought by communism, including the harm done to cultures around the world.

We are inspired in this by our own experience. The Epoch Times was founded in 2000 to bring honest and uncensored news to people oppressed by the lies and violence in communist China.

We still believe journalism is a noble vocation, but only when it genuinely seeks to serve its communities and help them to flourish. In all that we do, we will hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity. This is our promise to you.

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6 Things We Need to Do to Start Fixing Youth Crime

CONTINUED FROM A16

tions, serve to unsettle children and their direction in life.

The idea that a life is best served by asking, "What is expected of me" rather than "What is in it for me" is now totally absent.

A responsible media analysing its duty for partnering to develop a healthy social consciousness is yet another step.

4. Don't Fear the Preacher

We all need hope and purpose in life. Hope is largely provided through the religious/spiritual institutions.

Individual faith today is ridiculed and besmirched by the education system and the media, even though it is often the religious-based organisations that provide support and offer an alternate pathway.

Closely linked to religious belief, which provides hope, is the need for purpose.

Without it, the young will fall into a life of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

5. Power to Law Enforcement

To help counter this trend, law enforcement agencies must be fully empowered to protect the community rather than the perpetrator.

With the vast majority of young perpetrators being



Students walk up the stairs of the overpass at the Sydney Light Rail Moore Park stop on their way to school in Sydney, on May 25, 2020.

released on immediate bail and portrayed as victims (of society), their interaction with the legal system is hardly a deterrent.

To make matters worse we have a justice system more interested in the immediate happiness of the perpetrator than in providing a punishment to drive home the seriousness, and consequences on others, of their unacceptable behaviour.

6. It's About Personal Responsibility

Rehabilitation has to be the societal goal for those who have offended. However, the desire to rehabilitate is only activated

by the recognition that the individual has a problem.

Reinforcing that the issues faced are not really the perpetrator's fault, and they don't really possess the agency and capacity to reform, hardly encourages self-reflection.

The future of our society and the well-being of our young requires a wholesale acceptance that the current methodologies are not working.

We need focused pro-family policies, a recognition that agency and responsibility are required of us all, irrespective of our background, together with the strong acceptance that there will be felt conse-

quences for those disregarding their fellow's rights to safety and protection of property.

The individual well-being of our young demands such changes as does the well-being of society as a whole and our collective future.

Let's get started.

The Hon. Eric Abetz was an Australian Liberal Party senator from 1994-2022. He has held several cabinet positions and served on parliamentary committees examining Electoral Matters, Native Title, Legal and Constitutional Affairs, as well as Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

Questions Still Linger Around Big Pharma's Support for Regulators

CONTINUED FROM A1

There we were during COVID-19, forced to be vaccinated.

Let me say, I have been vaccinated since the age of two against everything.

But I wasn't forced.

The former Morrison government, supported by the Labor Opposition, allowed vaccinations to become mandatory.

And they told us which vaccinations—AstraZeneca, Moderna.

I have done a lot of reading on the little tablet, ivermectin, which, taken with other recommended medicines, had, for years, been proven safe and effective.

But you weren't allowed to mention the little tablet.

You were cancelled.

Doctors in Queensland were threatened with jail.

One young female doctor I could name here, still doesn't have a medical practising certificate because she prescribed ivermectin to a seriously ill patient who recovered.

Now, the Albanese Labor government won't have a Royal Commission into the COVID response; but there are questions that must be answered.

The regulatory authority, amongst others here, is the TGA, Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Is it true that Australia has the highest proportion of funding of these regulatory bodies, by drug companies?

Ninety-six percent of the funding yet

more than 9 out of 10 drug company applications are approved.

Wasn't the TGA founded as an independent institute?

Is the almost exclusive reliance on pharmaceutical industry funding a conflict of interest when these regulatory bodies are approving applications from drug companies?

We aren't told how much the drug companies were paid to provide vaccinations.

The poor taxpayer was told, vaccinations were free.

They weren't.

I suspect we paid billions to drug companies.

So, were ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine banned because the regulatory authorities were getting their money from drug companies?

Is the TGA still taking money, donations, and budget funding from Big Pharma?

Which drug companies are paying our regulatory authorities and how much money is involved?

Why hasn't the current federal minister for health been questioned about this in the Parliament?

Surely the payments should either be stopped or the TGA should be shut down.

What other direct payments are made by pharmaceutical companies to various health authorities, even state health departments?

Surely the case now exists, overwhelmingly, for regulatory authorities to be subjected to their own watchdog.



People are seen outside the Royal Exhibition Building Vaccination Centre in Melbourne on Aug. 25, 2021.

Do we need a Drug and Vaccination Board, independent of the drug regulator to investigate these funding practices but, more importantly, to investigate what compulsory vaccination has done to the health and employment of many Australians?

We have an independent safety board for airlines and their passengers, why not for patients?

The overriding issue is this.

Ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine were banned.

You couldn't mention them, talk about them, or recommend them.

Big Pharma was raking in the money from government.

It had to be AstraZeneca or Moderna so said the regulatory authority; so said the government.

Let's start with one question.

How much money do these drug companies pay to the same regulatory agencies that are supposed to be regulating the drug industry?

Is it true that the Therapeutic Goods Administration relies almost exclusively on the pharmaceutical industry for its funding?

Is this why ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine were banned?

The drug industry presumably won the day with the government and the regulatory authorities.

Think about it.

We are short on critical answers.

Alan Jones AO is one of Australia's most prominent conservative voices who now hosts his own programme on ADH TV. Mr. Jones has an extensive career stretching back to the 1980s across radio, print, and television, and has been a major contributor to the country's political discourse. He is also the former coach of Australia's national rugby union team, the Wallabies, and has held major roles in sports and the arts. Mr. Jones was a former senior advisor and speechwriter to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

Injuring Divers With Sonar Shows Us What the CCP Really Thinks

Kevin Andrews



Imagine the outcry from the Chinese regime if an Australian naval vessel had set off its sonar system at divers from a People's Liberation Army Navy

ship, while they were attempting to disentangle fishing nets from their propeller while stuck in another country's economic zone.

There would be no end to the bellicose militaristic rhetoric by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its media outlets, such as the Global Times. All manner of threats would have been made about breaches of laws and conventions and the malign intentions of Australia.

The recent incident in Japan's economic zone, in which Australian divers from the HMAS Toowoomba were injured, exposes the continuing aggression from Beijing.

Instead of showing regret about the incident, the regime sought to generate confusion. Consider the obfuscation by the Global Times.

Zhang Junshe, a Chinese naval expert, told the paper that while Australia



The type 052C destroyer Haikou of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy participates in a naval parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of China's PLA Navy in the sea near Qingdao, in eastern China's Shandong province on April 23, 2019.

lia claimed the incident happened in Japan's exclusive economic zone, it did not give the exact location.

"If the incident took place in waters to the west of Japan, China and Japan have not carried out maritime delimitation in relevant waters, so Japan's self-proclaimed exclusive economic zone could be well within waters administered by China," Mr. Zhang said.

This latest incident is worrying for many reasons.

First, it is another event in an ongoing series of aggressions by the Chinese military. It follows the inter-

ception of foreign vessels and aircraft on a continuing basis, especially in international waters and skies.

The use of sonar on individuals can have deadly consequences for health and safety. Depending on the level of the sound, the sonar can cause damage to hearing and memory.

At severe levels, sonar can rupture eardrums, rupture organs, and even cause a brain haemorrhage.

Secondly, the actions are not only dangerous, but can lead to deadly misadventure.

It is difficult not to conclude that

Chinese military commanders either believe they can act with impunity or are following orders. Either scenario could set off an actual conflict.

More worrying is the refusal by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to reveal whether he raised the matter during his recent meeting with CCP leader Xi Jinping.

His refusal suggests that he did not broach the issue. If he had protested to Mr. Xi, why not say so?

If Mr. Albanese did not raise the incident, it would have been a dereliction of his duty.

Suggesting that a protest about the incident would have been delivered through some other diplomatic channel is unsatisfactory.

Whether it was the prime minister's intention or not, a failure to protest directly to the CCP leader smacks of an eagerness to please rather than uphold our national interests.

What is the use of meetings with overseas leaders if dangerous incidents are downplayed?

The Hon. Kevin Andrews served in the Australian Parliament from 1991 to 2022 and held various cabinet posts, including Minister for Defence.

APPETISERS

Peppers That Pop

Marinated red peppers are the ultimate low-effort, high-reward snack.

See B6

KRISTIN TEIG/TNS



SHUTTERSTOCK



LARGER THAN LIFE

Dresden's Zwinger Palace

Dresden's Zwinger Palace is a prime example of Baroque architecture in Germany.

See B8

DECEMBER 7-13, 2023 B1

MIND & BODY

THE EPOCH TIMES

MONTY RAKUSEN/GETTY IMAGES

COVID-19 VACCINE

The loads of SV40 enhancer-promoter, ori, and virus spike in Pfizer are

UP TO

186

BILLION COPIES PER DOSE.

David Speicher, molecular virologist

Studies link vaccine vials that have more DNA content to more adverse reactions.



Study Finds Billions of DNA in a Dose of mRNA Vaccine

A new preprint study up for peer review finds billions of residual DNA fragments in COVID-19 mRNA vaccine vials

Marina Zhang

A new preprint study up for peer review finds billions of residual DNA fragments in COVID-19 mRNA vaccine vials.

The lead author of the study, molecular virologist David Speicher, who has a doctorate in virology, told The Epoch Times that the study is “the largest study” on residual DNA in COVID-19 vaccines to date.

“In our study, we measured DNA cop-

ies of spike, ori (origin of replication), and SV40 enhancer genes,” he told The Epoch Times. “The loads of SV40 enhancer-promoter, ori, and virus spike in Pfizer are up to 186 billion copies per dose.”

The spike he refers to is the DNA sequence of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, which can be transcribed to spike mRNA to be used in the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. The other two DNAs—SV40 enhancer genes and ori—help facilitate the replication of spike DNA.

However, the final mRNA vaccines

should only include RNA and not residual DNA instructions for spike production.

The researchers sequenced the gene material in 27 mRNA vaccine vials from 12 different lots. Nineteen vials were from Moderna, and eight were from Pfizer.

“Further work is needed to investigate if anything in these vaccines is actually integrating into the human genome and what effect that may have,” the lead author wrote.

The presence of SV40 enhancer genes in vaccines increase the risk of DNA integration.

Continued on B4

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

7 Ways to Reduce Chronic Gut Inflammation

Use diet and Chinese medicine to improve gut health and enhance immunity

T C Yang & JoJo Novaes

Chronic inflammation weakens the body's immunity, making it susceptible to viral and bacterial invasions, and is a precursor to various diseases. The gut is the body's primary defence, and a healthy gut can help reduce chronic inflammation.

Chen Junru, director of the Wonderful TCM Clinic in Taiwan, shared on The Epoch Times' "Health 1+1" programme how to enhance gut health and reduce inflammation through dietary therapy.

Many diseases and conditions are linked to chronic inflammation, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, cardiovascular diseases, and even cancer. Chronic inflammation can be triggered by factors ranging from high-stress lifestyles to poor sleep quality, consumption of unhealthy fats, smoking, and excessive

alcohol intake—all of which lead to a weakened immune system.

Furthermore, we are exposed to a variety of viruses and microorganisms every day. Inadequate sleep and fatigue weaken the immune system. This weakened state can lead to the development of certain conditions, such as hives, atopic eczema, nasal allergies, and severe immune reactions such as arthritis and vascular blockage. Over time, as the

The gut is the body's primary defence, and a healthy gut can help reduce chronic inflammation.

Disordered gut health can take a heavy toll on overall well-being.



LIUBOMYR VORONA/GETTY IMAGES

body struggles to effectively eliminate intruders, tumour cells can form, ultimately resulting in the development of cancer.

4 Types of People Prone to Inflammation

According to Ms. Chen, from a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) perspective, there are four characteristics of people who are particularly susceptible to chronic inflammation:

1. Blood and Qi Deficiency

This is a typical example of a chronic inflammatory constitution that causes people to experience fatigue.

In traditional Chinese medicine, "qi" is the energy or power that constitutes life within the body, and all nutrients that supplement the body are collectively referred to as "blood." The circulation of qi and blood maintains the stability of various tissues and organs. When there is an imbalance or deficiency of qi and blood in the body, diseases or other conditions may occur.

2. Phlegm-Damp Constitution

This often pertains to overweight people with conditions such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, high blood lipids, and high uric acid levels. They tend to have a weaker immune system and are more prone to infections.

3. Qi-Stagnation Constitution

This refers to people who experience high levels of stress and have poor sleep quality, leading to inadequate circulation of qi and blood in the body. Additionally, the accumulation of pent-up emotions can weaken their immune system over time.

4. Blood Stasis Constitution

Blood stasis refers to poor blood circulation, which hinders white blood cells from promptly reaching inflamed areas in the body to eliminate foreign invaders. Over time, this can lead to stagnation in affected areas, making them more susceptible to chronic inflammation.

The Significance of the Gut in Enhancing Immunity

Maintaining optimal gut health is crucial for reducing chronic inflammation. Compromised gut health reduces the number of defensive bacteria, hindering the ability of beneficial bacteria to com-



AKKALAK AIEMPRADIT/SHUTTERSTOCK

NATURAL WAYS TO BOOST IMMUNITY

Ms. Chen recommends incorporating five types of foods to enhance gut health and boost immunity.



Imbalances or deficiencies in qi and blood can lead to diseases or other conditions.

It's crucial to drink enough water.

bat harmful ones. Therefore, the state of the intestinal mucosa is closely linked to overall well-being.

A research review published in the *Nutrients* journal in 2021 stated that the human gut microbiome plays a crucial role in overall health. The microbiome is the complex community of microorganisms residing in the digestive system that influences various functions, including digestion, immune responses, and more. This community of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microorganisms interacts closely with the mucosal immune system and can affect local immune responses in the gut. And its influence isn't limited to the gastrointestinal tract; studies suggest that it also has systemic implications, affecting broader

JORDAN LYE/GETTY IMAGES



The first step to enhancing gut health is ensuring regular bowel movements, which facilitate the removal of harmful toxins.

immune responses throughout the body.

The first step to enhancing gut health is ensuring regular bowel movements, which facilitate the removal of harmful toxins from the body through the intestines. Ms. Chen shared a case in which she assisted her nearly 80-year-old father in reducing age spots on his face within 10 days. The Chinese herbal medicine she prescribed was intended to regulate the gut, but it also unexpectedly resulted in the reduction of age spots. This underscores the importance of a well-functioning gut in the body's detoxification process. This is particularly crucial for overweight people with a phlegm-damp constitution.

Ms. Chen explained that traditional Chinese medicine frequently employs three therapeutic approaches, "sweating, vomiting, and purging," to eliminate internal toxins and metabolic waste from the body. The first approach involves inducing sweat, and it's often

used during a fever or a common cold to help regulate body temperature. The second approach, vomiting, is less commonly used today.

Currently, the most commonly used approach is purging, which can be divided into two methods. The first method involves expelling undesirable substances from the body through the digestive system. Modern-day stresses and impaired intestinal peristalsis can lead to infrequent or incomplete bowel movements, resulting in the accumulation of substances such as excess cholesterol in the body. Regular elimination of what you consume each day is essential to prevent an increased burden on the body. The second method of purging involves expelling urea and certain metabolic waste products from the kidneys out of the body.

Note

Some herbs mentioned in this article may be unfamiliar, but they are generally available in health food stores and Asian grocery stores. It's important to note that treatment methods may vary depending on the individual. Consult with a health care professional for a specific treatment plan.

1. WHOLE GRAINS

Starchy foods rich in dietary fibre are also essential for gut health. It's recommended to opt for whole grains such as brown rice and multigrain rice, which contain soluble fibre. This type of fibre not only supports the growth of beneficial gut bacteria but also enhances intestinal peristalsis, promoting bowel movement.



2. HIGH-FIBRE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

High-fibre vegetables and fruits provide essential prebiotics for nurturing beneficial gut bacteria. Eating more of these foods can promote gut health. Ms. Chen emphasised the importance of staying well-hydrated when eating high-fibre vegetables and fruits, as these insoluble fibre compounds can accumulate and make it difficult for stool to pass.

3. HIGH-QUALITY FATS

The Mediterranean diet, a well-established healthy eating plan, emphasises the consumption of high-quality fats, such as olive oil. If you prefer high-temperature cooking methods such as frying and sautéing, Ms. Chen suggests using oils such as rice bran oil or camellia oil as alternatives. These oils not only are heat-resistant but also contain anti-inflammatory components, making them a healthier choice than animal fats rich in saturated fatty acids.

4. FISH OIL

Fish oil is beneficial for cardiovascular health as it can reduce the risk of cardiovascular blockages and possesses anti-inflammatory properties. It's recommended to choose deep-sea fish oil that is free from oceanic heavy metal contamination.



5. CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

Many Chinese herbal medicines, derived from nature, also serve as a prebiotic, offering essentially food for gut probiotics. Ancient medical texts have long documented specific medicinal herbs that are beneficial for different organs. For example, herbs found in the traditional Chinese medicine formula ShenLing BaiZhu San (SLBZS) are recognised for their ability to improve the gastrointestinal system. Additionally, herbs such as hawthorn and tangerine peel can aid in the absorption of nutrients in the digestive tract.

A research review published in Trends in Food Science & Technology in April highlighted that Chinese yam has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. It also offers benefits such as gastrointestinal protection, gut microbiota regulation, treatment of cardiac disease, blood sugar reduction, and anti-tumour effects.

The main components of SLBZS are *Atractylodes macrocephala*, *Poria cocos*, and Chinese yam. An experiment conducted in 2021 using a rat model of ulcerative colitis found that SLBZS improved colonic lesions by reducing both macroscopic and microscopic colon injuries, enhancing antioxidant capacity, and regulating the gut microbiota, ultimately improving colon lesions.

6. EXERCISE

Exercise for stress reduction is essential for enhancing immunity. Ms. Chen recommends that people in high-stress work environments clear their minds by jogging for half an hour, which helps relax the brain and body. During exercise, many thoughts and insights may come to mind. Engaging in activities such as walking in the park, enjoying the beauty of nature, and practising meditation and mindfulness are also excellent ways to relieve stress and improve the endocrine system.

7. ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is another effective method for improving gut health. When performed by a professional traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, it can enhance the body's circulation of qi and blood, thus promoting intestinal well-being.

According to TCM, meridians are the channels through which energy flows in the human body. They are responsible for transporting qi and blood—the fundamental substances that constitute and sustain human life—throughout the body. The internal organs are connected to the body's surface through these meridians. Along the meridians are specific points known as acupoints, which possess unique functions. By stimulating the corresponding acupoints through techniques such as acupuncture and massage, it's possible to treat diseases related to specific organs.



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COVID-19 VACCINE

Study Finds Billions of DNA in a Dose of mRNA Vaccine

Continued from B1

Why Would There Be DNA in mRNA Vaccines?

The mRNA vaccines are made from DNA.

Initially, Pfizer reported that it would use a PCR machine to produce the DNA for its mRNA vaccines. The PCR machine would first make many copies of DNA, and then the same DNA would be sequenced into RNA.

However, because this process wouldn't be fast enough to meet demands, Pfizer announced it would use bacteria to mass produce the spike DNA instead. The DNA produced from the bacteria would then be harvested and sequenced to RNA in a machine.

Moderna's manufacturing report submitted to the European Medicine Agency also showed that the company used plasmid DNA to produce the vaccines. A plasmid is a strand of circular DNA common to bacteria and certain parasites. Plasmids are circular, while human DNA is linear.

Using bacteria to produce genes and proteins is a standard biotechnological process employed in the production of pharmaceuticals.

Foreign DNA introduced into the cell alongside the mRNA is at risk of being mistaken as human DNA.

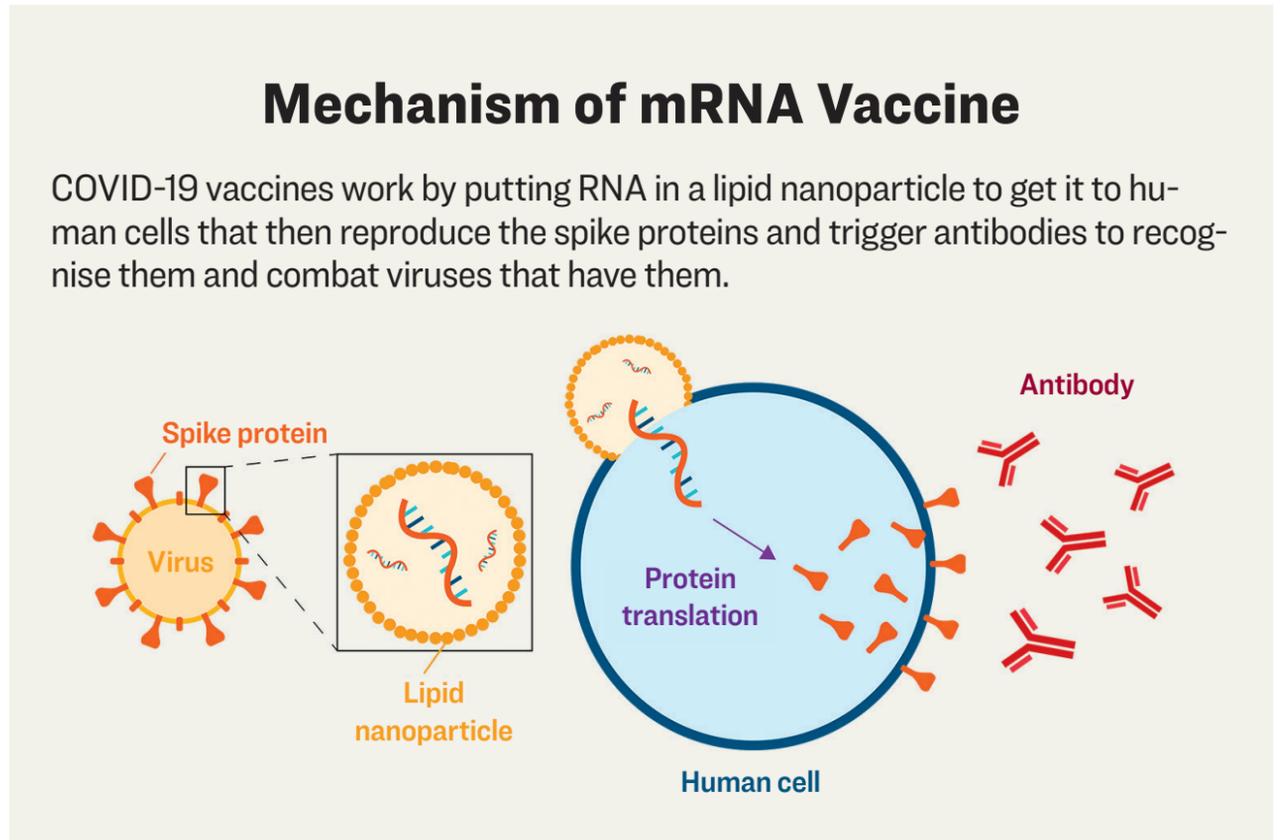
To have the bacteria replicate spike protein DNA, scientists first have to introduce spike protein DNA into the bacteria. As the bacteria multiply, so do the spike protein DNA that they carry.

However, the spike DNA can't be introduced alone; other sequences—such as the ori, which signals for DNA replication; the SV40 enhancer gene, which encourages more DNA replication; and an antibiotic resistance gene, which helps scientists identify the bacteria that have taken up the gene—would all be introduced together in a circular bacterial DNA.

It should be noted that the SV40 enhancer gene is a genetic sequence from the polyomavirus simian virus 40 (SV40), a DNA virus known to cause cancer in laboratory animals. The gene isn't the SV40 virus itself.

Once the mRNA and DNA are harvested from the bacteria, the DNA is then supposed to be removed.

However, it wasn't cleared efficiently, as the billions of copies of spike, ori, and SV40 enhancer DNA detected in the Pfizer vials suggest. Several millions of copies of ori and spike DNA were also found in the Moderna vials, but the SV40 en-



COVID-19 vaccines work by putting RNA in a lipid nanoparticle to get it to human cells that then reproduce the spike proteins and trigger antibodies to recognise them and combat viruses that have them.

hancer gene wasn't detected.

Why DNA Impurities in mRNA Vaccines Are Concerning

Foreign DNA introduced into the cell alongside the mRNA is at risk of being mistaken as human DNA. If it is, it can then be integrated into the cell's blueprint.

The presence of SV40 enhancer genes increases the risk of DNA integration, said the lead author, citing a study published in 1999 that found maximal transport of DNA using the SV40 enhancer. The peak period for SV40 research, in terms of the overall rate of publication, spanned from the 1980s to 1999.

If the DNA for spike protein is integrated into the host genome, cells will forever contain spike protein sequences. Integration of foreign DNA into the human genome can also cause cancer, as shown in studies of viral DNA integration.

The SV40 enhancer gene is highly controversial in the field of vaccination because it comes from a virus linked to cancer.

Some of the polio vaccines administered between 1955 and 1963 were found to be contaminated with the complete SV40 virus. Even so, studies have concluded that those vaccinated with the entire SV40 gene aren't at a higher risk of developing cancer.

Vials With More DNA Fragments Related to More Adverse Events

The research paper further suggested that vials with higher doses of DNA content could potentially

cause more adverse reactions like those found on the Vaccine Adverse Reaction Reports System (VAERS).

These vaccines tended to be the purple-top vials that required dilution before administration. If pharmacists forget to dilute the vials, they may accidentally inoculate children with five times the recommended dose. Therefore, the higher adverse events could also be linked to incorrect dosing of the vaccines.

The researchers used two techniques to determine DNA content dosage: fluorometry and qPCR.

The fluorometry test showed that the DNA content exceeded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) limits of 10 nanograms per dose by 188 to more than 500 times. However, the qPCR test indicated that the DNA levels detected were below the regulatory standard.

Kevin McKernan, one of the study's authors with 20 years of experience in genomic sequencing who previously worked on the Human Genome Project and who's currently the chief scientific officer and founder of Medicinal Genomics, explained that the discrepancy in tests was because while fluorometry can detect double-stranded DNA of any size, qPCR can only detect DNA that has 100 base pairs or more.

However, while the qPCR tests rendered a result below regulatory standards, Mr. McKernan explained previously that the FDA standards were published at a time when residual DNA in the vial would only be naked DNA that would have difficulty entering cells. This is different

from the current mRNA vaccines; now, DNA can be packaged into lipid nanoparticles, transporting it directly into the cell.

The study's additional authors include pharmacotherapeutic specialist L. Maria Gutsch, immunologist Jessica Rose—recognised for her VAERS analysis reports—and pharmaceutical expert David Wiseman, who has also published research on COVID-19 treatments.

What's Next?

The lead author told The Epoch Times that far more research is needed to be done in investigating DNA contamination in the COVID-19 vaccines.

Other laboratories also need to trial his team's tests and reproduce their work to come to a more accurate conclusion on the effect that DNA dosage has on post-vaccination symptoms.

Other unanswered questions include whether the SV40 sequence in the vaccines is triggering "turbo cancer," according to the lead author. Animal studies must also be done to determine whether residual DNA is causing an immune response.

As noted in recent Epoch Times reports, the FDA refused to recall Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines despite vaccine experts such as Dr. Robert Malone speaking out about the vials' DNA contamination. The European Medicines Agency also told The Epoch Times that Pfizer didn't highlight that its vials included SV40 genes.

LIFE & LEISURE

Hosting the Perfect Summer Seafood Boil

It's a messy, shared, convivial affair—and this recipe has the cooking method down to a science

Maria Do

A seafood boil never fails to please. With ingredients like prawns, crab legs, and lobster, seafood-lovers will be RSVPing real fast to your boil.

For a perfectly cooked seafood boil, the order of when to add ingredients is everything. As a Louisiana girl, I've got this pacing down to a science after many holidays as sous chef for my favourite boil masters (what I call the cool people who host boils year after year). While boils in Louisiana are mostly crawfish boils, the same boil method applies here too.

From when to add the veggies or when to drain, this recipe will help you nail the perfect cook times. The result is a succulent spread of tender seafood, corn, mushrooms, and potatoes that will make you want to crack open a beer and dig in.

The Process

You'll saute aromatics such as garlic and onion and andouille sausage. Then you'll pour in water and add seasoning. You'll boil potatoes, corn, and mushrooms until tender; turn off the heat; then add seafood to cook in the latent heat. Finally, you'll drain and serve. It's that easy!

Maria Do is a contributor to TheKitchn.com, a nationally known blog for people who love food and home cooking. Submit any comments or questions to editorial@thekitchn.com. Copyright 2023 Apartment Therapy. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.



This recipe simmers king crab legs, king prawns, lobster tails, sausages, corn, and potatoes in a seasoned broth, to be served with lemon and parsley.

SEAFOOD BOIL

SERVES 6

- 6 king crab legs (about 900 grams), thawed if frozen**
- 900 grams unpeeled raw king prawns, thawed if frozen**
- 3 (220-gram) lobster tails, thawed if frozen**
- 2 medium lemons**
- 8 to 10 sprigs fresh parsley**
- 1 medium yellow onion**
- 2 heads garlic**
- 400 gram andouille sausage**
- 450 gram baby red potatoes (6 to 8)**
- 3 ears corn**
- 3 tablespoons olive oil or neutral cooking oil**
- 4.5 litres water**
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon Cajun or Old Bay seasoning, divided**

220 gram mushrooms (optional)

4 tablespoons salted butter

Tabasco sauce, for serving (optional)

Thaw king crab legs, prawns, and lobster tails in the fridge if frozen, about 36 hours.

Halve lemons crosswise. Pick the leaves from fresh parsley sprigs and finely chop until you have about 1/4 cup. Reserve for the sauce and serving.

Prepare the following, adding each to the same medium bowl as you complete it: Peel and quarter yellow onion. Cut garlic heads in half across the equator to expose the cloves. Cut andouille sausage crosswise into 2-inch pieces.

Halve baby red potatoes. Shuck ears corn and cut crosswise into 3-inch pieces.

Rinse the king crab, prawns, and lobster tails in cold water, then drain. Cut the lobster tails in half lengthwise, cutting through the shell.

Heat olive oil in a 8-litre or larger pot over medium heat until shimmering. Add the garlic, onion, and sausage, and saute, keeping the garlic cut-side-down, until the onions are softened and the garlic is golden-brown, about 3 minutes. Add 4.5 litres water, increase the heat to high, and cover. Bring to a boil, 10 to 15 minutes.

Add the potatoes, corn, and 1/2 cup of the Cajun or Old Bay seasoning, and stir to combine. Cover and cook until the water returns to a boil. Uncover, add mushrooms if desired, and simmer, adjusting the heat as needed, until the potatoes are fork tender, 10 to 12 minutes.

Add the crab legs, lobster, and prawns, and stir to combine. Turn off the heat, cover, and let sit for 3 minutes. (The seafood will gently cook in the residual heat.) Uncover and reserve 2 cups of the cooking liquid. Drain the seafood and vegetables, then transfer onto baking sheets or directly onto the centre of a newspaper-lined table.

Add salted butter and the parsley to the reserved cooking liquid. When the butter is melted, stir to combine to make the sauce. Pour half of the sauce over the seafood and vegetables. Squeeze the lemon halves over everything and sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon Cajun or Old Bay seasoning. Serve with the remaining sauce for dipping and Tabasco if desired.

NOTES

Salted butter substitution: You can replace the salted butter with 4 tablespoons unsalted butter and 1 teaspoon kosher salt.

Seafood alternatives: Feel free to switch up the seafood or add in others like mussels, clams, or crab! Those options are less tender than king crab, lobster, or prawns, so they require more boiling time—add shellfish in at the same time as the mushrooms.

Make ahead: The seafood and vegetables can be rinsed and chopped the day before and refrigerated until ready to boil.

Peppers That Pop

Kelli Foster

I am a Type A planner. So it should come as no surprise that I have a back-pocket recipe I can rely on for basically any and all occasions. For example, honey-glazed pork tenderloin is a special-occasion and holiday staple. But when there are a lot of people around the table or I want something a little more hands-off, then I go with slow-roasted herby salmon. Greek yoghurt panna cotta is my go-to dessert for most occasions. I'll usually serve a mushroom tart or savoury galette for lunch guests. Unless it's summer, then grilled chicken salad it is. Overnight guests will likely wake up to baked oatmeal. I could go on, but I think you get the picture.

Missing from this list is an appetiser. I spent years trying to find a great back-pocket appetiser that I could affectionately describe as fast and fancy. Something almost effortless to pull together, yet totally dazzling and impressive, and of course delicious. Then three years ago, I picked up my fellow Kitchn editor Sheela Prakash's first cookbook, "Mediterranean Every Day," which has a chapter dedicated to easy, simple bites and snacks.

I bookmarked the recipe for slinky red peppers immediately. It seemed right up my alley and I already had the ingredients it required. Having tested and cooked countless of Sheela's recipes over the years, I already knew I was bound to enjoy these peppers. But I was truly not prepared for just how absolutely amazing they are.

These slinky red peppers are the appetiser that will raise eyebrows and have people asking for the recipe.

Low-Effort, High-Reward

I've never before made any kind of recipe that checks so many boxes. These tangy peppers are a total unicorn of an appetiser.

This is the most low-effort, high-reward appetiser I've ever met. It requires four pantry ingredients, all of which I happen to always keep stocked, and tastes far, far greater than the sum of its parts. Not only can they be made in advance, but they're actually better for it; the sharp tang of the sherry vinegar, briny capers, and richness of the olive oil have time to meld with the peppers. I always love a good make-ahead dish, but more times than not I've thrown

this snack together on the fly (it takes less than five minutes!) when friends are already at my house. We dig right in, and it's still amazing every time.

Best-case scenario, I've planned ahead and have a baguette that can be sliced, toasted, and used as a slinky pepper vessel. Otherwise, I know I can always pair them with sturdy crackers or pita chips—one of which I'm certain to have. Or I spoon a mess of peppers over some store-bought hummus or Greek yoghurt for an instant dip.

And if I'm being totally honest, I also love these savoury peppers for the ku-

dos they garner every time I serve them. No matter the gathering, I know when I set the bowl out, that's where everyone will gather. The entire bowl of peppers will be devoured and someone is bound to ask for the recipe. And those in the know now ask in advance if I'll be making "the peppers."

Kelli Foster is a contributor to TheKitchn.com, a nationally known blog for people who love food and home cooking. Submit any comments or questions to editorial@thekitchn.com. Copyright 2023 Apartment Therapy. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

KRISTIN TEIG/TNS



▲ These slinky red peppers are the appetiser that will raise eyebrows and have people asking for the recipe.

SLINKY RED PEPPERS WITH CAPERS AND SHERRY VINEGAR

MAKES 1 CUP; SERVES 4

1 (340-gram) jar roasted red peppers, drained and cut into slices

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

2 teaspoons capers, chopped if large (rinsed well if salt-packed)

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

In a medium bowl, combine the roasted peppers, olive oil, vinegar, capers, a pinch of salt, and several grinds of black pepper. Stir and let marinate for about 20 minutes at room temperature, or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week. Let the peppers come to room temperature before serving with toasted baguette slices or sturdy crackers.

NOTE

Leftovers can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to four days.

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A Few Tips

- **Start with a jar of sliced roasted red peppers.** I always do this because it minimises the prep even more.
- **Make the peppers in advance.** The longer the peppers marinate, the more flavour they have. If you make them more than 20 minutes ahead, refrigerate in an airtight container, and take them out of the fridge about 20 minutes before you plan to serve so they can come to room temperature.
- **Make extra.** You want leftover peppers, trust me! As good as they are as an appetiser, the leftovers are almost better. I love them spooned over fish, chicken, pork chops, and steak. They're great tossed with pasta, spooned over polenta or rice, mixed into a grain or simple rocket salad, and topped with a couple of fried eggs.

From Anise to Zinnia, Your Summer Dishes Just Got Prettier

Nicole Hvidsten

Pansies are among the most common edible flowers and can be found on everything from charcuterie boards to salad. We've long been tossing pansies in salads and sautéing squash blossoms. Roses, lavender, and elderflower infuse water, syrups, and oils; bergamot, bee balm, and hibiscus add dimension to teas, tarts, and tinctures.

But there's also room in the kitchen for geraniums, daylilies, marigolds, and

zinnias. Ditto daisies, orchids, snapdragons, and lilacs. You'll find that some of your garden favourites can pull double duty and turn your summer spreads into works of art.

Use dahlias, impatiens, and geraniums to decorate and flavour cakes. Press marigold petals into pasta, and fresh herbs into biscuits or savoury scones. Don't toss the blooms—those on chives, tarragon, basil, thyme, rosemary, and more are edible and often mimic the herbal flavours.

Before raiding flower beds and herb

gardens, educate yourself and use common sense. Gently wash all parts of the flower before using, don't pluck from unfamiliar sources, and steer clear of pesticides. A word of caution from the University of Minnesota Extension Office: Edible doesn't always mean palatable. Just because you can eat lavender flowers, doesn't mean you'll want to.

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LEILA NAVIDI/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/TNS

▲ You'll find that some of your garden favourites can pull double duty and turn your summer spreads into works of art.

Cucumbers Deserve More Credit

Harness their cooling power in these refreshing summer soups

Gretchen McKay

When it comes to humble, ho-hum vegetables, cucumbers often find their way to the top of the list.

Available in every grocery store produce aisle, no matter what the season, the long, green members of the gourd, or Cucurbitaceae, family of plants are ubiquitous either as a salad vegetable or bathed in brine as pickles.

Yet to dismiss the fruit as nothing more than a reliable, crunchy base for a salad or sandwich, or a crisp green garnish on a bowl of noodles, is to deny yourself of one of the most versatile culinary ingredients.

For instance, cucumbers can be blended into smoothies, thinly sliced and filled with cream cheese and salmon as a roll-up finger food, or stirred together with yoghurt, garlic, and lemon into the Greek dressing tzatziki. They can also add a colourful garnish to certain cocktails and mocktails and, sliced a little on the thicker side, make a great bread substitute for appetiser spreads.

Pureed with a little lime juice and simple syrup, cucumbers can also be frozen into ice blocks.

This time of year, with temperatures

rising, they also make a good base for a cool, fresh-tasting soup.

Cucumbers have the highest water content of any food—more even than the eponymous watermelon. Each is a whopping 96 percent water, which means cukes are not only great for watching your weight (an entire cucumber counts just 45 calories), but also make the perfect ingredient when you need something refreshing and hydrating to chill out on a hot summer day.

To get you started, we offer three recipes where cucumber plays a starring role: a bright-red strawberry-cucumber gazpacho with just a hint of chilli; a spicy curried cucumber soup that gets its kick from fresh ginger, garlic, and lemon; and a classic, no-fuss cucumber soup flavoured with citrusy-tart Granny Smith apple.

All can be made in a blender or food processor, and are best served after cooling in the fridge for at least an hour to allow the flavours to meld.

I used English cucumbers, which have thin skins, minimal seeds, and a mild flavour, but you could easily swap in garden cucumbers, which are the ones you're most likely to find at a farmers

market or grow in your backyard. Just remember they have a thicker skin and grocery store cukes often come waxed, so you may want to peel and seed them before tossing them into the food processor or blender.

When buying, look for cucumbers that are an even medium or dark green colour, without any blemishes or yellow

spots that indicate they're over ripening. They also should be firm, without any soft spots. Smaller cucumbers will have fewer seeds and tend to be a bit crisper.

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This trio of cold soups uses cucumber as a main ingredient.

STRAWBERRY GAZPACHO

The pink-red colour of this gazpacho is amazing! I gave it some kick with a little New Jersey-made Hank Sauce.

SERVES 4

340 gram cucumber, peeled, cut in half lengthwise, seeded then coarsely chopped

3 cups strawberries, hulled and coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1 spring onion, the root end and any dry tips cut off, then coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon hot sauce

Pinch of cayenne

1½ tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Chive stalks, cut into 3 or 4-inch pieces, for garnish

Place cucumber, strawberries, lime juice, spring onion, hot sauce, cayenne, olive oil, and sea salt into a blender or bowl of food processor. Pulse, making sure not to over process—you want a coarse texture.

Taste to make sure it has the level of spicy heat you like—add more cayenne or hot sauce, if desired.

Pour into a bowl and refrigerate until it's time to serve. Put your serving dishes (I used martini glasses, but small bowls also work) into the fridge, too.

To serve, ladle the soup into the chilled glasses or bowls. Garnish by standing 1 or 2 chive stalks in the soup. They will start to droop, but no worries.

Recipe adapted from Blue-Kitchen.com

KYSELOVA INNA/SHUTTERSTOCK



EASY COLD CUCUMBER SOUP

If you have a blender, you can make this soup in about 2 minutes. I used a combination of fresh parsley, dill, and mint.

SERVES 4 TO 6

2 cucumbers, peeled and seeds removed, if desired

1 green apple (I used Granny Smith)

1 clove garlic, chopped

1 cup Greek yoghurt

1 cup fresh herbs

Juice and zest of 2 limes

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling

Sea salt and black pepper

Cut off the ends of the cucumbers and core apples. Cut both into small chunks.

Add cucumbers, apple, yoghurt, herbs, lime juice, and olive oil to a food processor or blender. Blend everything until you have the desired consistency—it should be pretty smooth. If the soup looks too thick, thin with a little water.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add more lime juice, if desired. Chill in fridge for at least 1 hour to allow flavours to meld.

When soup has chilled, portion the soup into pretty glasses or small bowls; or, can allow people to serve themselves from a large bowl. The soup is most refreshing when served chilled, though you can also serve it at room temperature.

Just before serving, drizzle a little olive oil on top of the individual portions, and sprinkle over with some fresh herbs.

Look for firm, evenly medium- or dark-green cucumbers without any blemishes, yellow spots, or soft spots.



HONG VO/SHUTTERSTOCK

CURRIED CUCUMBER SOUP

This vegetarian soup gets a bit of heat from curry powder, fresh ginger, and lemon.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and minced

1 tablespoon curry powder

2 cucumbers, peeled and seeds removed

220-gram container Greek yoghurt

1/2 cup sour cream

2 to 3 tablespoon fresh mint, coarsely chopped

2 to 3 tablespoon fresh parsley, coarsely chopped

Juice and zest of 1/2 lemon

Pinch or 2 of cumin

Pinch or 2 of turmeric

Salt and pepper, to taste

Thinly sliced cucumber, for garnish

In small skillet, warm oil over medium heat. Add garlic, ginger, and curry powder and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Set aside to cool while you prepare cucumbers.

Chop peeled cucumbers into chunks and place in the bowl of a food processor or in a blender. Add yoghurt, sour cream, mint, parsley, and lemon juice and zest. Blend everything until you have the desired consistency—it should be quite smooth. If the soup looks too thick, thin with a little water.

Add a pinch or two of cumin and turmeric, and give it another whirl to combine. Taste, and adjust seasoning to desired spiciness.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill in fridge for at least 1 hour to allow flavours to meld.

To serve, ladle the soup into the chilled glasses or bowls and garnish with cucumber slices.



▲ The palace is surrounded by geometric Baroque gardens. Named after the fortress that previously stood there, the vast courtyard comprises symmetric parquets, water features, and Baroque buildings, with carved sculptures.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ARCHITECTURE THROUGH THE AGES

Dresden's Zwinger Palace

Ariane Triebswetter

Originally designed as a site for court festivities, the 18th-century Zwinger complex now houses three museums. A hub of history, art, and culture, the elegant complex is one of the best examples of Baroque architecture in Germany, built during the reign of Augustus II, former king of Poland and elector of Saxony.

The Zwinger, also known as the Zwinger Palace, originated in 1709 after Augustus II visited the Versailles Palace. Inspired by its beauty and grandeur, Augustus commissioned architect Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann and sculptor Balthasar Permoser to bring his vision to life, in his hometown of Dresden. Based on the plans of Augustus himself, Pöppelmann designed six large Baroque pavilions connected by ornate galleries to encircle a large courtyard made up of gardens and an orangery.

Originally, Augustus II envisioned Zwinger Palace as a festival venue for

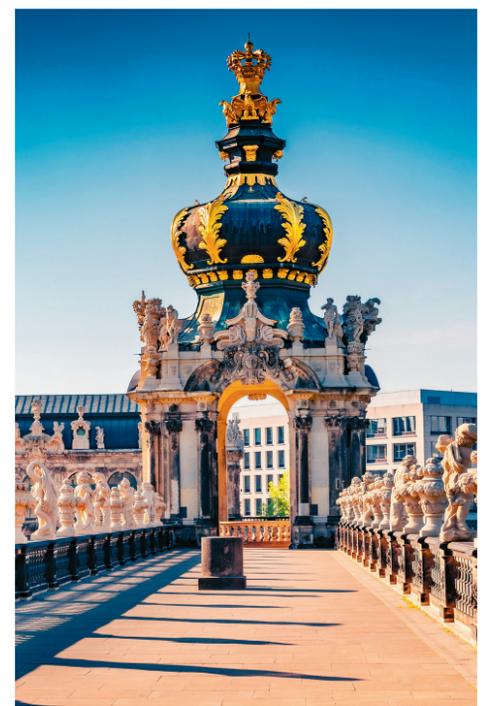
royal festivities and tournaments in Saxony. Unfortunately, Augustus never saw his project come to life, and construction was paused after his death. It was only a century later, in 1855, that the architect Gottfried Semper completed the Zwinger Palace and added the Semper Gallery toward the Elbe river, in the Neoclassical style.

From then on, the Zwinger Palace expanded and became an important museum complex, with the Old Masters Picture Gallery, the Dresden Porcelain Collection, and the Royal Cabinet of Mathematical and Physical Instruments within its Baroque walls. While the bombing of Dresden during World War II destroyed most of the complex, a renovation team reconstructed the original 18th-century buildings in the 1950s and 1960s.

Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.

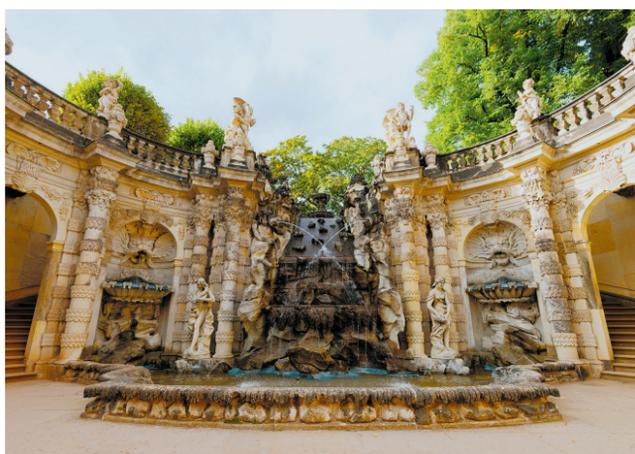


▲ The carved statues of satyrs around the complex reference Bacchus, the god of wine and festivals. The sculptures can be found along the roofs and balconies of the complex. They are shown as supporting the stone structure and are surrounded by flora and fauna. Round curves and countless embellishments that surround the sculptures were made by Balthasar Permoser and his assistant, Paul Hermann.



▲ The main entrance to the complex is known as the Crown Gate (Kronentor in German). Along this 18th-century Baroque gateway are decorative and whimsical statues on the stone balustrades along the triumphal arch, which is topped with an ornate gilded crown.

► The Nymphenbad, or Nymph's bath, is located in the northwest corner of the complex. The small enclosed courtyard features a Baroque fountain decorated with natural motifs and classical statues. In Roman times, these types of baths, called a nymphaeum, were monuments consecrated to the nymphs, ancient water deities. The baths were a place to celebrate or to relax, which was the original purpose of the palace.



◀ The two-story Baroque façade of the Royal Cabinet of Mathematical and Physical Instruments (Mathematisch-Physikalisches Salon in German) dates to 1728, and features elaborate motifs and decorations. Notable are rows of symmetrical windows and roof sculptures. Today, this building hosts a museum of historic clocks and scientific instruments, such as globes and astronomical devices.

Every Last Kilometre

Simple tips to get 320,000 or more kilometres out of your car

With new and used cars still painfully expensive, it seems that Australians are holding on to their vehicles longer. The average age of a passenger vehicle on the road has climbed to 11.3 years in 2023, up from 10.8 years in 2022. And no wonder, now that the average weekly car loan repayment hit \$183.30 in the second quarter of 2023.

Suddenly, for many, taking on that kind of new debt feels a lot worse than driving a new car feels good.

The useful life of cars is very subjective, but in general, it keeps getting longer. A truck from the '90s that's been well maintained is going to be a lot more useful now than a truck from the '60s was in the '90s. As vehicles get better, their useful life gets longer. Still, wringing 320,000 kilometres out of a car is no small feat.

Most cars and trucks are built to last far longer than we can imagine. And when all is said and done, the difference between a clunker and a cream puff is mainly the difference between how the owner has cared for it.

Want to improve your ability to squeeze every last kilometre out of that beauty sitting in your driveway, while you scrimp and save to have the money available to replace it when it's taken its final breath? Treat that car like an investment.



Anticipate

Research by major car manufacturers reveals that neglect of routine service and maintenance is the No. 1 reason for major car repairs. Routine maintenance doesn't cost; it saves money, aggravation, frustration, and lives. Pay attention. Anticipate maintenance so you don't have to pay for repairs.



Estimate, Estimate, Estimate!

When you need a major repair, if at all possible, get three estimates before you proceed. Don't only judge by the lowest price but judge by competence, ability, experience, equipment, and after-service care.



Be Loyal

When you find a good mechanic you trust, stick with them even if the prices are a bit higher. All things being equal, you'll save time, money, and aggravation in the long run. Plus, your mechanic will get to know your car more intimately.



Keep It Clean

It's true. A clean car—inside and out—lasts longer because you are routinely washing away gunk, grime, and con-

taminants that cause corrosion. A sparkling clean car makes you feel better. And when you feel better, you do better by taking better care of it. It's called pride of ownership.



Read the Manual

The owner's manual is your bible for making your car last longer. Read it. Know what to expect and how to head off trouble. And be sure to keep it in the vehicle. Can't find it? Search online. You should be able to find it, and when you do, print it out.



Keep It Covered

Statistically, we know that a garaged car lasts longest, a carport is the next best, and a car cover is close behind. If you can't garage, carport, or cover your car, park under trees or any covering to protect it from the sun.



Take It Easy

Avoid jerky starts and stops. This will save petrol and conserve wear and tear on your brake pads, transmission, and suspension. In extremely slow or stop-and-go traffic, don't ride the brake pedal. This wears out your brake pads prematurely and wastes fuel. It's best to shift into a lower gear.



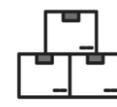
Get Fuel-ish

Avoid running your car with the tank low on fuel. Keeping the tank low increases the chance that dirt, water, and moisture will settle into your fuel system. One government study pointed to these top three causes of car breakdowns while on the road: tyre trouble, cooling system problems, and running out of petrol.



Change the Oil

Regular oil changes according to the manufacturer's guidelines are the most important thing, dollar for dollar, you can do to protect your engine and make it last longer. Err on the side of changing the oil too often rather than not often enough.



Weight Control

The more a car weighs, the harder the engine, transmission, brakes, and suspension have to work. While cars are designed to carry extra weight, over the long term, any unnecessary strain will take kilometres off its life. Don't use the boot as a mobile garage. Keep it as light as possible.

Follow these suggestions and you can look forward to doubling your car's useful life.

The Problem With Groupon

Answering reader questions about coupon plans, unexpected fees, and stubborn birds

My virtual mailbag is turning up questions and situations that I doubt are exclusive to only the writers. We all face the same kinds of problems and situations, so I hope that these few letters I answer today will have far-reaching answers and solutions for many of you. Or at least give you some entertainment!

Q Dear Cheapskate, What do you think about Groupon and similar coupon plans? The deals are often very good, but they generally are not for items that I have planned to purchase. They seem to encourage unplanned spending, but perhaps they can be used prudently?

—Melissa

A Dear Melissa, This is my opinion on Groupon: This company flat-out preys on weak people who are prone to reacting impulsively, tricking them into buying stuff because it looks like such a great deal, not because they really need to eat out at a fancy restaurant, hire four hours of maid service, or have an exquisite family portrait taken at the beach.

Groupon and other similar social networking coupon companies that load your email box with daily offers of everything from spa treatments to knit-

ting lessons are clever, albeit somewhat devious.

Do not ask me how I have become so knowledgeable on how this Groupon thing works, and how it's impossible to have a normal relationship with Groupon. Just don't. And believe me when I tell you that the only way to deal with this monster known as Groupon is to unsubscribe.

—Mary

Q Dear Mary, We are retirees with superannuation funds at a major financial services company. These money market accounts and mutual funds were originally sold to us about 10 years ago on a "no fee for life" basis. This quarter, the company charged us a custodial fee on three accounts. We invested in these because they were "free for life" and we've never been charged a fee in the past. When we called to inquire, they said they changed the minimum requirement. Is there a way we can extricate ourselves without incurring more fees? We no longer have a financial advisor because our original advisor, the one who advised us to purchase these products, retired.

—Marcia



Be careful not to get sucked into the financial trap of buying a good deal just because it's a good deal.

A Dear Marcia, I am so sorry to hear this. Before you do anything, you need to consult with a professional who can look at your accounts and advise you so that you do not suffer unintended consequences. I am not that person. I can tell you that whenever you deal with tax-advantaged money, you risk triggering a taxable event otherwise known as expensive unintended consequences.

Regarding banking and investing, the days of the free lunch are over. Banks charge fees for everything, so we must

adjust our expectations and get used to a new normal.

Your letter indicated that you were charged a custodial fee of 1.1 percent. I do find that to be quite reasonable. If I were you, I would call and ask Customer Service to connect you with an advisor who can look at your account and answer a few questions. Given the fact that you are retired now and will be counting on these funds in the future, this is not a good time to "go it alone."

—Mary

Continued on B12

* Use American spelling to enjoy these puzzles made by our parent company in New York.

CROSSWORD CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Crossword grid with numbered squares for clues.

Across

- 1. Marathon
5. Respighi's '... de Roma'
12. Certain college deg.
15. Heavenward
17. Shoreline problem
18. She won a Tony for playing Martha in 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'
19. Be a bad winner
20. Facial characteristic
22. Debussy's '... Cake Walk'
24. National park in Alberta
25. Big screen letters
26. Sweetums
27. 'Please do explain...'
30. 'Space blanket' material
32. Small glass bottle (alt.)
34. 'The Book of Mormon' co-writer Parker
35. Done well enough to earn a C, maybe
38. 'The... Ascending,' George Meredith
41. Big banger
42. 1935 Triple Crown winner and a Nebraska city
47. At the leading edge?
52. Early capital of Macedonia
53. Vinegar's companion
54. Affirmative actions?
55. Debussy's '... are Dancing'
60. 'Faerie Queene' lady et al.
64. '... My Heart...'
65. Dumas character
68. English county name for author Maugham
70. 'A Bug's Life' bug
71. Stock page heading: Abbr.
73. Nine: Prefix
74. Tightwad?
77. One of two French islands in Canada
81. Japanese-American
82. Tail: Prefix
83. Ivy feature
84. Cunning
85. Goals, e.g.: Abbr.
86. 'Awkward Black Girl' creator and star
87. Merlin, e.g.

Down

- 1. 'Under Mi Sleng Teng' e.g.
2. Flowering
3. In a controlled manner
4. Appraisal, for short
5. Devoured
6. (0,0), in a graph: abbr.
7. ... de plume (literary aliases)
8. Abbr. on a cough syrup bottle
9. Be sick
10. 'Into the Void' director Gaspar
11. Be over no later than
12. Mariner outfielder Jay
13. Quell
14. 'I..., or I can run' (Milton)
16. Middle East airline that sponsors the jerseys of New York City FC and Manchester City
21. Suffragist Carrie Chapman ...
23. 'She... a Yellow Ribbon'
27. Barbecue site
28. Explorer of the Canadian Arctic, John
29. '... a sudden...'
31. Big piles of rupees
32. Metropolitan Region in India
33. 'Congratulations!'
36. 12 min. in the NBA
37. 50's coloratura soprano Sumac
38. Adore, in Scotland

- 39. Boolean logic operator
40. '... 66' 'Easy Rider' highway
43. Soaked
44. Monet's contribution to Constable's 1821 transport
45. Blvd.
46. French pronoun
48. 'Heir' attachment
49. ... Major
50. A Don Quixote joust
51. Motor suffix, commercially
56. Corrida call
57. All ...
58. German philosopher Immanuel
59. 'Love Me or Leave Me' singer Ruth
60. Exhausts
61. Dada, for example
62. OB's perform them
63. Dated
66. 'Clumsy me!'
67. Writer Shelby
69. Family name of Pope Pius XI
70. Designer Simpson
72. 'Hear ye!' shouter
74. Winter comment
75. Pavarotti solo
76. One of 12 popes
78. Latin foot
79. Electees
80. Author LeShan

4NUMBERS CONSTRUCTED BY C. CHANG AT 4NUMS.COM

Use the four numbers in the corners, and the operators (+, -, and x) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one 'unique' solution but, there may also be 'equivalent' solutions. For example: 6 + (7 x 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 x 3) + 6 = 28

4Numbers puzzle 1: Corners 12, 35, 3, 31. Solution 51.

4Numbers puzzle 2: Corners 26, 31, 12, 30. Solution 47.

4Numbers puzzle 3: Corners 4, 10, 3, 5. Solution 29.

4Numbers puzzle 4: Corners 7, 10, 1, 10. Solution 69.

SUPER KAKURO CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Kakuro puzzles are like crosswords that use numbers instead of words. The goal is to fill the blank squares associated with a clue (called a 'run') with the numbers 1-9 so that the numbers add up to the corresponding clues. Like Sudoku, digits in a run cannot repeat. When the grid is filled, the puzzle is complete.

Super Kakuro grid with numerical clues.

WORK SPACE

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

Crossword solution grid.

SUPER KAKURO

Super Kakuro solution grid.

4NUMBERS

- (35 - 31) x (12 + 3) = 35 + 31 - 12 - 3
Hard 1
31 + 30 + 12 - 26 = 48
Hard 2
10 x 3 + 4 - 5 = 27
Easy 1
5 x 3 + 10 + 4 = 29
Easy 2
(7 - 1) / (10) x 10 = 6

SUDOKU CONSTRUCTED BY KANNAN SANKARAN

Fill in the boxes using numbers between 1 and 9 so that each column, each row, and each 3x3 square contain all nine numbers only once.

Hard

	8							
	3			6				7
		6			1	2	9	
		4						
8		1			2			
			3	4				5
		3						
6				5	9			
2			4	7	6			1

Easy

		3	8		5	9	7	
5		7					2	
		2	7		3			1
2				8		5	9	
				5		1	3	2
							6	4
6		4				7	8	9
9		8			6			
7		1	9			6		

EPOCH DOKU CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

17 +			140 ×	11 +				32 ×
5 -		3 +		21 ×	210 ×			
5 -	7 +					5 /	2 -	
		10 +	12 ×	7 +				
60 ×	1 -						15 +	
		288 ×		13 +	28 ×			
			13 +					14 ×
		5			48 ×			

SUPERSUDOKU CONSTRUCTED BY KANNAN SANKARAN

Fill in the boxes using numbers from 0 to 9 and letters from A to F so that each column, each row, and each 4x4 square contain all ten numbers and six letters only once.

A	2					F		9							
			1	A		4	7	B	D				F		5
						E	D		C	F	5		1		0
	F		D			1	6		2		A	7			
C	A				0	B		3		E		2			
	6	2		4		3		7					9	8	
			3	E			5		6	9					D
9						6		A			4		E		
	7	5			0		E								C
0				F	9		3				D	8			
	B	E				2		6	8		0	D			
			8	E	C		F	1				6	7		
		C	7		5		0	D			E		F		
3	6		1	A	7		9	4							
5	F				C	4	8	E		A	B				
					D		2						0	9	

KAKURO CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Kakuro puzzles are like crosswords that use numbers instead of words. The goal is to fill the blank squares associated with a clue (called a "run") with the numbers 1-9 so that the numbers add up to the corresponding clues. Like Sudoku, digits in a run cannot repeat. When the grid is filled, the puzzle is complete.

Easy

			33		17					3		16		
	9								10					
16					28		5							
41														
4				3						21		20		
13				9										
								16						
41														
9						29								
				16										
			10							5				
	15		4						7					
28														
12									8					

JUMBLE BY DAVID L. HOYT & JEFF KNUREK

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FINSF
 DRRAA
 VRAYIA
 CANNUE

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IT WAS GOING TO COST \$500 TO CHANGE HER FLIGHT WHICH SHE THOUGHT WAS AN ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

WORK SPACE

SOLUTIONS

SUPERSUDOKU

4	5	0	6	8	1	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0
5	0	6	8	1	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0	
6	8	1	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0			
7	2	1	0												
8	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0					
9	5	0	6	8	1	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0
0	6	8	1	9	4	7	D	E	3	B	2	1	0		
1	0														
2	1	0													
3	2	1	0												
4	3	2	1	0											
5	4	3	2	1	0										
6	5	4	3	2	1	0									
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0								
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0							
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0						
0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0					
1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0				
2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0			
3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4
0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5

SUDOKU: Easy

7	2	1	9	3	8	6	4	5
9	5	8	4	7	6	2	1	3
6	3	4	5	1	2	7	8	9
3	7	5	2	9	1	8	6	4
4	8	9	6	5	7	1	3	2
2	1	6	3	8	4	5	9	7
8	9	2	7	6	3	4	5	1
5	6	7	1	4	9	3	2	8
1	4	3	8	2	5	9	7	6

SUDOKU: Hard

2	9	5	4	8	7	6	3	1
6	4	8	3	1	5	9	7	2
7	1	3	9	6	2	4	5	8
9	2	7	6	3	4	8	1	5
8	6	1	5	7	9	2	4	3
3	5	4	1	2	8	7	9	6
4	7	6	8	5	3	1	2	9
1	3	9	2	4	6	5	8	7
5	8	2	7	9	1	3	6	4

EPOCH DOKU

1	4	5	3	2	8	6	7
6	3	4	8	5	1	7	2
2	7	6	1	8	4	3	5
5	8	7	6	1	2	4	3
8	1	3	2	4	7	5	6
3	6	2	4	7	5	1	8
7	2	1	5	3	6	8	4
4	5	8	7	6	3	2	1

JUMBLE
 UNFAIR AIRFARE
 which she thought was an ---
 change her flight
 It was going to cost \$500 to
 Answers:
 NUANCE
 AVIARY
 RADAR
 SNIFF
 Jumbles:

EASY KAKURO

6	2	3	9	12
9	1	7	3	28
2	7	5	4	14
8	9	1	7	9
2	7	9	7	9
4	9	6	7	41
5	4	9	6	13
3	1	4	3	4
1	3	5	1	4
3	2	1	2	13
6	8	9	5	41
1	8	1	8	16
9	1	9	1	9
3	16	3	17	3

ASK THE VET

Secondhand Smoke Causes Cancer in Cats

Protect your pets—and yourself—from preventable diseases

Lee Pickett

Q I recently adopted my first pet, a young cat named Tulip, and took her to the veterinarian, who smelled cigarette smoke on her fur and recommended I stop smoking or smoke outdoors to protect Tulip from cancer.

I feel the veterinarian is overstepping her role. Still, I need to know whether my smoking could really give Tulip cancer.

A Our job as veterinarians is to give you the facts you need to make informed decisions. But I can't help reflecting that many of us are better at taking care of others than we are at caring for ourselves. Who knows? Perhaps Tulip will end up saving your life by helping you quit smoking.

Research shows that secondhand cigarette smoke increases the risk of two of the most common kinds of cancers in cats: lymphoma and squamous cell carcinoma. The risk is especially high in cats because they both inhale and ingest the cancer-causing substances in tobacco smoke.

As you smoke, cigarette toxins settle on the furniture and floor. When Tulip dozes there, the toxins cling to her fur, and she ingests them when she grooms. To make

matters worse, Tulip undoubtedly spends all her time in your smoky home, whereas you can get away for hours every day.

Research shows that lymphoma risk increases with the number of smokers in the home, the quantity of cigarettes smoked, and the years of exposure to tobacco smoke. Even with aggressive chemotherapy, median survival time is only 6 to 9 months.

Squamous cell carcinoma, or SCC, is the most common oral cancer in cats. The tumours most often develop beneath the tongue, likely because the cancer-causing chemicals and other irritants accumulate there during grooming. Tumours also arise on the gums and in the back of the throat.

The risk is especially high in cats because they both inhale and ingest the cancer-causing substances in tobacco smoke.

Without treatment, most cats die within 4 to 6 weeks. Even with aggressive therapy, fewer than 10 percent of cats with SCC survive for one year.



You already know that smoking increases your own risk of disease and makes your clothing and hair smell bad. Another good reason to stop smoking is that you'll help prolong Tulip's life.

Q My veterinarian recommends a medication to kill ticks on my dog, Barney, but I can't see what harm they do since they don't make him itch like fleas do. Why does Barney need a tick preventive?

A You're right that ticks don't cause itchiness like fleas. Ticks inject a local anaesthetic when they bite so the dog or human being bitten won't feel the tick and remove it.

But while the tick is attached, it can regurgitate harmful bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and even fungi and worms into its host.

Fortunately, not all ticks are infected, but those that are can spread Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, anaplas-

mosis, and many other diseases that zap Barney's energy and appetite, cause pain, and damage his joints and organs.

So follow your veterinarian's guidance, and start a tick preventive. The Companion Animal Parasite Council recommends that all dogs receive year-round tick control because "ticks transmit a wide variety of disease agents to pets and people and are active throughout the year."

Options include a product applied to the skin, a chewable tablet, or a collar. Most tick preventives also kill fleas. Many products applied to the skin additionally repel mosquitoes, those annoying insects that spread heartworms. Your veterinarian can advise you about the best choices for Barney.

Lee Pickett, VMD, practices companion animal medicine in North Carolina. Her website is AskTheVet.pet. Copyright 2023 Lee Pickett, VMD. Distributed by Creators.com

▲ Pets are at home all day, prolonging their exposure to dangerous smoke and toxins.

The Problem With Groupon

Continued from B9

Q Dear Mary, I have a problem with birds in my yard. They perch on my deck railings and leave droppings all over the place. It's a big mess to clean up and very unhealthy. How can I deter birds from perching on my deck railings?

—Lori

A Dear Lori, I feel your pain. We've dealt with problematic pigeons at the Hunt house in the past, and nothing—not even the installation of little spikey things where they love to sit—could send them away until they were good and ready to leave. They just figured out how

to make themselves at home by settling in between the spikes.

I have no idea if you are dealing with pigeons, minor birds, or some other feathered friend. I dare not suggest that you lace peanut butter with something toxic so they just fly away to die. My mailbox could not withstand the barrage of anger generated by that kind of sure remedy. (It's a joke, people.) So of course, I will not do that.

Instead, I suggest you look to technology. Many people with similar bird problems report that the Bird-X Balcony Guard Ultrasonic Bird Repeller does work and will give you back your deck. You plug this little box in, and it emits

Banks charge fees for everything, so we must adjust our expectations and get used to a new normal.

a piercing sound that only birds can hear. It takes a little time for the birds to become sufficiently annoyed to actually leave, but given enough time, they will.

Reviews on the product are mixed, but my readers with similar issues to yours tell me that patience is the key. You won't get great results overnight, so plan for the long haul. You can get this gizmo from Amazon for about \$35, which I can imagine will be money well spent.

—Mary

Do you have a question for me? You can land it in my virtual mailbag when you follow the guidelines at EverydayCheap-

skate.com/contact.

Mary Hunt is the founder of EverydayCheapskate.com, a frugal living blog and the author of the book "Debt-Proof Living." She invites you to visit her at her website, where this column is archived complete with links and resources for all recommended products and services. She invites questions and comments at EverydayCheapskate.com/contact, "Ask Mary." Tips can be submitted at Tips.EverydayCheapskate.com. This column will answer questions of general interest, but letters cannot be answered individually. Copyright 2023 Creators.com

CULTURE & TRADITION

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▲ With the exception of St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Stephen Walbrook, with its Corinthian columns and coffered dome, is considered the finest of Christopher Wren's churches.

ARCHITECTURE

The Great Fire That Sparked Sir Christopher Wren's Churches

Quintessential London architecture from a Baroque master who redefined the city's look

Lorraine Ferrier

On Sept. 2, 1666, the Great Fire of London razed the city to the ground. Onlookers, such as diarist John Evelyn (1620–1706), saw the apocalyptic blaze turn night into day “for 16 kilometres round about.”

He wrote:

“All the skie was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seene above 64 kilometres round about for many nights. God grant mine eyes may never behold the like, who now saw above 10,000 houses all in one flame; the noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, ye shrieking of women and children ... the aire all about so hot and inflam'd that at the last one

was not able to approach it, so that they were forc'd to stand still and let ye flames burn on.”

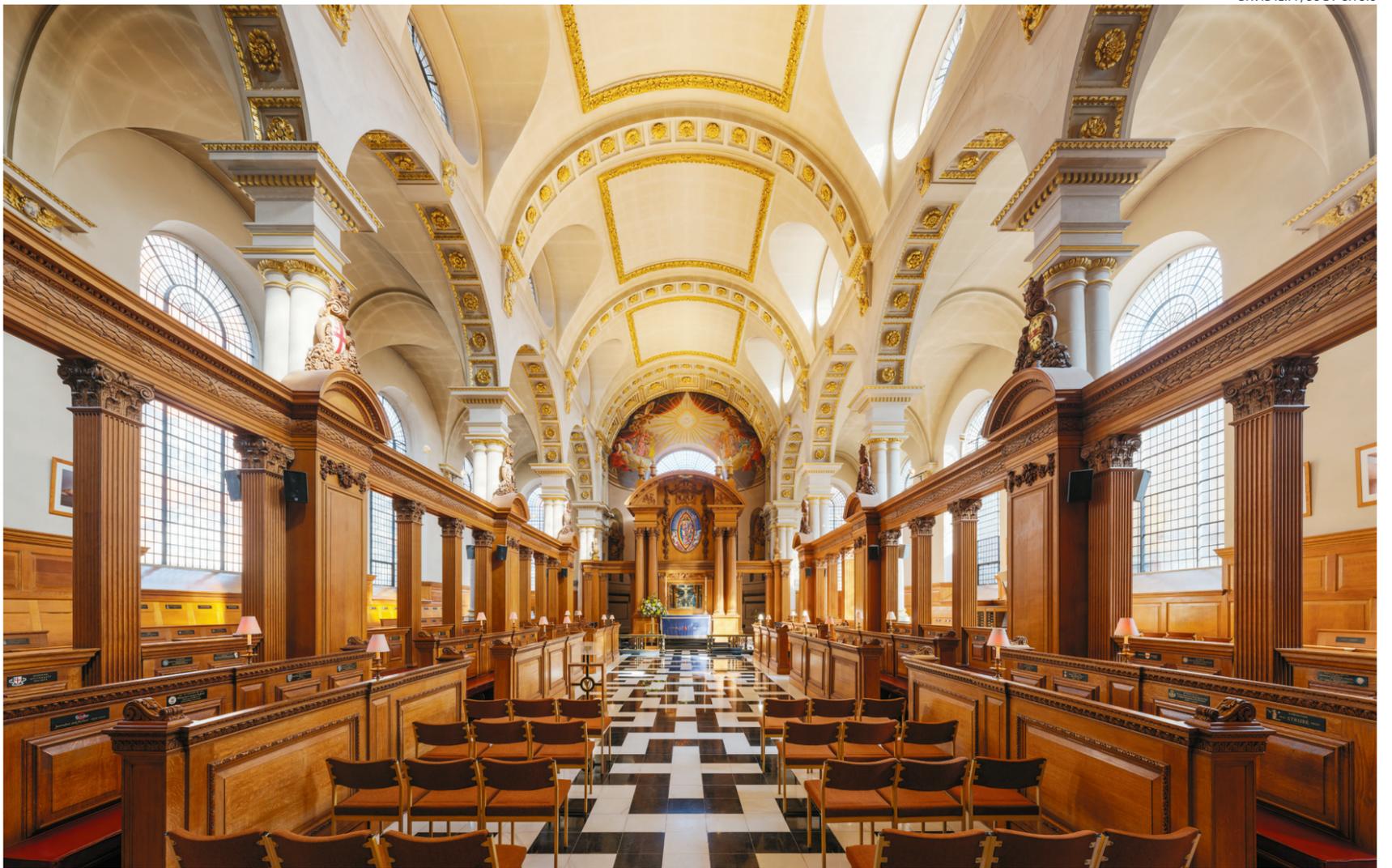
Evelyn's estimate was a little off. The fire destroyed 13,200 central city houses (the homes of 70,000 people), 87 parish churches, Guildhall, The Royal Exchange, and St. Paul's Cathedral—erasing centuries of architecture.

Before the Great Fire, towers and

church steeples dominated London's skyline. One hundred churches stood in the city's “square mile” alone. The square mile (now London's financial district) had once included the ancient Roman town of Londinium and was a rabbit warren of narrow, dusty streets packed full of wooden buildings, a tinderbox for fire.

Continued on B14

▶ St. Bride's Church, as viewed from the nave looking east toward the altar. The design, by Christopher Wren, reflects Vitruvius's ancient Roman Basilica at Fano (which is believed to be Vitruvius's only design).



ARCHITECTURE

The Great Fire That Sparked Sir Christopher Wren's Churches

In lieu of expensive gems and lavish decoration ill-afforded on such a vast rebuilding project, Wren's steeples are the jewels of his churches.

Continued from B13

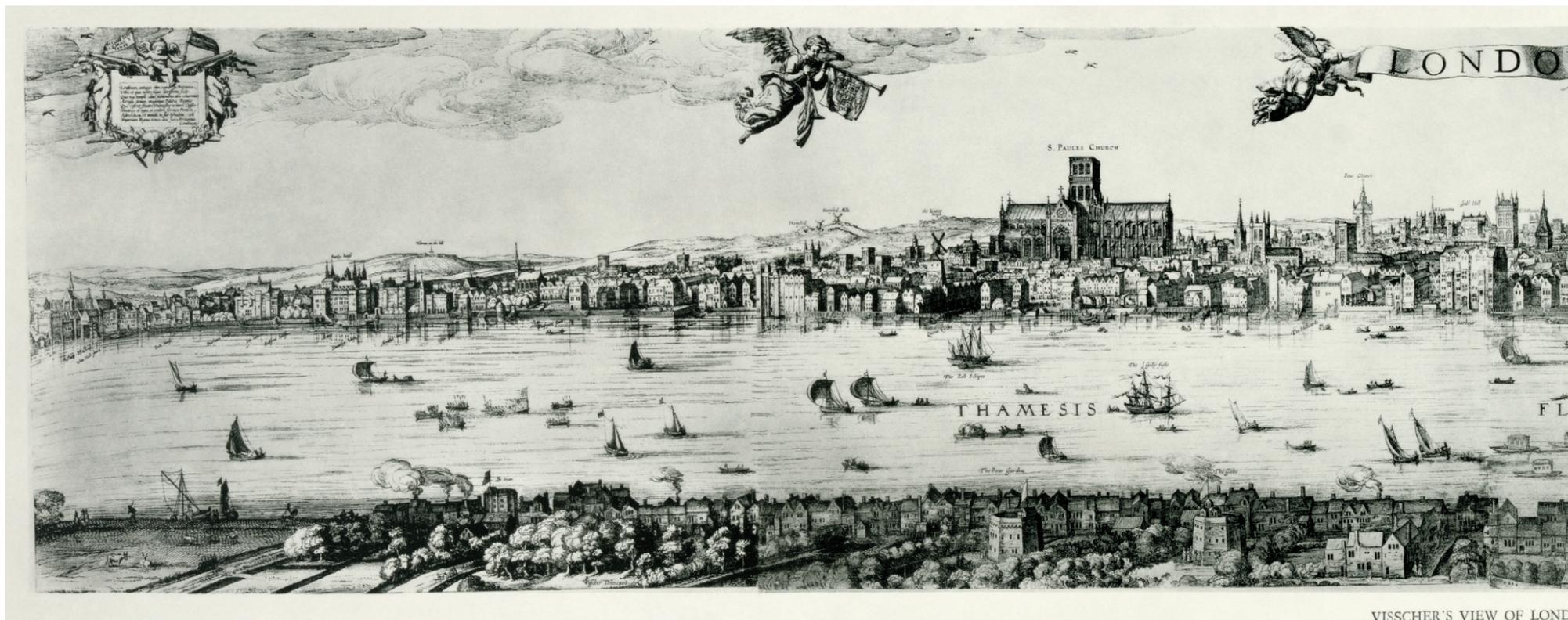
A Monumental Task for an Amateur

King Charles II (1630–85) commissioned Christopher Wren (1632–1723) for the monumental task of surveying the damage and rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral and 51 churches.

Interestingly, in the late 17th century, all architects were amateurs for architecture wasn't yet a profession. When Wren became an architect, he was already known across Europe as a great mathematician, astronomer, and inventor. Physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton (1643–1727) described Wren as one of "the

greatest geometers of our times." He was one of the founders of the Royal Society, which by 1663 was known as "the Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge." He'd held his position as professor of astronomy at the University of Oxford since he was 25 years old.

In 1663, Wren accepted his first ar-



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1. Christopher Wren's first work, the University of Cambridge's Pembroke College Chapel is one of the first churches or chapels built in England in the classical style.

2. The multistory stone steeple of St. Mary-le-Bow.

3. The sharp lead spire of St. Martin-Within-Ludgate in front of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. Both adorn buildings designed by Christopher Wren.

architectural project at the University of Cambridge's Pembroke College Chapel, commissioned by his uncle, Bishop Matthew Wren. Then, in 1664, he started building the University of Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre, based on sketches of the ancient Roman D-shaped theatres described by the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius. He, however, reversed the traditional Roman interior by placing the audience on the flat wall and the chancellor's chair on the wall at the centre of the semicircle. His scientific genius allowed him to create a greatly admired 70-foot ceiling supported by an internal roof truss.

Between 1664 and 1665, Wren travelled to the continent, spending several months in Paris. This year, in his June 24 talk on "Christopher Wren: A Life in Letters" at Wadham College Oxford

(University of Oxford), architectural lecturer Matthew Walker explained how Wren received his architectural education in Paris by observing the city's architecture, especially the building of the Louvre. In the summer of 1665, he wrote from Paris:

"I have busied myself in surveying the esteem'd Fabricks of Paris, and the Country round; the Louvre for a while was my daily Object, where no less than a thousand Hands are constantly employ'd in the Works; some in laying mighty Foundations; some in raising the Stories, Columns, Entablaments, &c. with vast Stones, by great and useful engines; others in Carving; inlaying of Marbles, Plaistering, Painting, Giliding &c. Which altogether make a School of Architecture, the best probably at this Day in Europe."

Reinventing London's Churches

After the fire, Wren rebuilt 51 of the 87 destroyed churches, as some church parishes merged. Most of them were rebuilt between 1670 and 1684 with the help of Wren's friends and followers, notably architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (circa 1661-1736) and physicist Robert Hooke (1635-1703). They had to build quickly, cheaply, and often on irregular-shaped sites due to the high density of housing and other city buildings.

Wren successfully created a new style of church fit for reformed Protestant church services, designing each church so that "all should hear the service and both see and hear the preacher," according to "The Oxford Companion to Art," edited by Harold Osborne.

Wren regarded himself as a classicist, yet his style of architecture is classified

as English Baroque, which, according to "A World History of Art" by Hugh Honour and John Fleming, is "a pragmatic and somehow sparer [style] than its continental forbears."

"Wren's interiors are clean, beautiful rooms, with gold-and-white plaster work and large pale windows; with galleries round the walls for the extra people that lived in the city," according to "The Observer's Book of Architecture" by John Penoyre and Michael Ryan.

To reduce costs, Wren used ordinary bricks and roofing tiles, creating characteristically sparse exteriors that he later crowned with steeples adorned with classical motifs. In lieu of expensive gems and lavish decoration ill-afforded on such a vast rebuilding project, Wren's steeples are the jewels of his churches. He created many steeple styles, such as small open cupolas (St. Magnus the Martyr), sharply pointed lead spires (St. Martin-Within-Ludgate), stone steeples with a ring of columns (St. Stephen Walbrook and St. James), and multistoried stone steeples (St. Bride and St. Mary-le-Bow).

In Wren's church architecture, we can see snippets of the ancient world and that of his European counterparts, executed in a very English manner. For instance, we can see the ancient architect Vitruvius's Roman basilica in St. Bride's Church; Dutch architecture, such as the robust steeple and austere exterior in St. Mary-at-Hill; and an Italian-style dome in St. Mary Abchurch.

With the exception of St. Paul's Cathedral, many experts see St. Stephen Walbrook as Wren's finest domed church. He created a light, open room with an ingenious coffered dome finely finished in plaster.

Steel skyscrapers now soar above Wren's church steeples. Yet ask anyone to name England's greatest architect, and Sir Christopher Wren will always be the answer.

Three hundred years ago, Wren was laid to rest in St. Paul's Cathedral. His epitaph reads: "Here in its foundations lies the architect of this church and city, Christopher Wren, who lived beyond ninety years, not for his own profit but for the public good. Reader, if you seek his monument—look around you. Died 25 Feb. 1723, age 91."

PUBLIC DOMAIN



◀ Fifty years before the Great Fire, a Dutch artist created a panorama of London. "Visscher's Panorama of London," 1616, by Claes Janszoon Visscher II. Engraving. Library of Congress.

FILM REVIEW

Documentary in the Spirit of ‘Schindler’s List’

Michael Clark

See if this sounds familiar.

A highly contagious virus is discovered in a densely populated city, and without proper attention it could spread to the rest of the continent, if not the entire planet. Those affected are quarantined or isolated, and selfless caregivers put their own lives at risk while frantically working on a cure and vaccine.

This particular disease was not hatched in Wuhan, China, in 2020 but rather at the Fatebenefratelli Hospital on Tiber Island (Italian: Isola Tiberina) in Rome, in October of 1943. Primarily used as a hospice at the adjoining San Giovanni Calibita Church since its founding in 1535, the facility was expanded into a full-service hospital in 1934 by Dr. Giovanni Borromeo and Catholic priest Father Maurizio Blalek.

A ‘Fake’ Virus?

In the wake of the Nazi invasion in September, Borromeo, Dr. Adriano Ossicini, and Dr. Vittorio Sacerdoti discovered what would soon be known as “Syndrome K” (Italian: Il Morbo di K).

Well, perhaps “discovered” is the wrong word; the three physicians “invented” Syndrome K. Correction: The doctors didn’t actually invent the disease; they made it up out of thin air. Syndrome K the “disease” never existed, but the propaganda theory Syndrome K served as a carefully orchestrated ruse to fool some of the most abhorrent human beings to ever inhabit the earth.

The creators of the plan evidently also had wicked senses of humour, as the “K” stood for both Herbert Kappler and Albert Kesselring, two high-ranking German SS officers present in Rome at the time. On the surface and officially, the “K” stood for “Koch” or “Kreps” diseases, which were also fictitious monikers (although a Dr. Koch discovered the tuberculosis bacteria). Unofficially, the “K” was used to identify Jewish patients.

The Not-So-Scarlet ‘K’

When the Nazis began transporting Italian Jews to concentration camps in Eastern Europe, others sought refuge or asylum in the hospital across the Tiber River from the Jewish ghetto. This was the sole reason that “Syndrome K” was

instituted: to hide Italian Jews in plain sight, right under the Germans’ noses.

One wonders why the Germans didn’t bring in one of their own physicians to confirm the Italians’ claims, but this could be because the doctors painted such a grim and horrific picture of the situation. When offered an opportunity to actually see the “patients,” the non-medically trained German officers demurred and split the scene with their metaphorical tails between their legs.

In order to make the whole endeavour convincing, the doctors kept the entire hospital staff (for their own safety) in the dark. If they didn’t know that the mission was thoroughly concocted, they could never be accused of any type of criminal (or anti-German) conspiracy.

The physicians also “coached” the patients to act sick: to cough loudly as if they were afflicted with tuberculosis. In theory, Syndrome K was a neurological illness with symptoms that included, but were not limited to, convulsions, paralysis, dementia, and eventually death from asphyxiation.

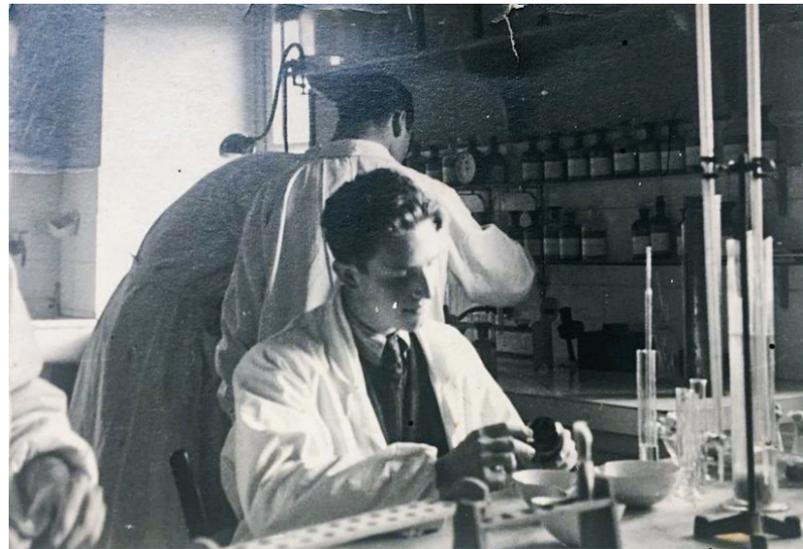
While the number is not official, it is estimated that the three Italian doctors and their unwitting staff saved approximately 100 Italian Jews over about 10 months until U.S. Gen. Mark Clark’s 5th Army liberated Rome in May of 1944.

That might not be many when compared to the 1,200 Polish Jews saved by Nazi Party member Oskar Schindler, but think of the countless generations that survived only because of the efforts of these brave men.

If you choose to (but shouldn’t) exclude Sacerdoti, who because he was Jewish had to go under the alias “Salviucci,” Schindler, and the two other doctors had no reason to risk their lives for such dangerous undertakings. They must have decided that they had the will and wherewithal to simply do the right thing.

Unfortunate Errors

The principal purpose of a film critic (if I’m doing my job correctly) is to judge all aspects of a movie, which includes not only its intent and message(s) but also its technical prowess and shortcomings. Based solely on content, this movie would rate 5 out of 5; based on execution, 1 out of 5.



FREESTYLE DIGITAL MEDIA

Dr. Adriano Ossicini, circa 1940s, in his laboratory.

It is not unusual for documentaries, particularly those dealing with subject matter as old as this one’s, to rely mostly on still photos as well as stock and archival footage that is visually less than ideal; it’s almost expected, and that is the case here. Unfortunately, many of the post-war and all of the modern-day segments of the movie—where the doctors, survivors, and their descendants are interviewed—are a de facto disaster.

While the interviewees are speaking in Italian, their words are also spoken by voice actors in English with real (or not) Italian accents and in text as English subtitles. While unnecessary, this wouldn’t be a total bust if the English subtitles matched their English audio counterparts, but frequently they don’t. For example, when someone says “Pope Pius,” the accompanying text reads “Popeyes.”

These completely avoidable and constantly distracting faux pas should have been addressed during post-production, but obviously they were not.

Presented in English and Italian with dubbed English and subtitled Italian.

The three Italian doctors and their unwitting staff saved approximately 100 Italian Jews over about 10 months

‘Syndrome K’

Documentary

Director: Stephen Edwards

Running Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Release Date: Aug. 16, 2022

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favours dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.



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