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INSIDE

World.....A2
China.....A4
US.....A6
AU.....A8
Opinion.....A9

FEATURES
Travel.....B1
Mind & Body.....B10

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Medical staff move a patient infected with COVID-19 from an ambulance to a hospital in Seoul, South Korea, on March 9, 2020.

CHINA

Chinese Embassy Claims Journalists Are ‘Politicising’ Coronavirus

Journalists pressured to report like China’s state press

KATABELLA ROBERTS

The Chinese Embassy in Canberra has emailed Australian journalists, accusing them of “politicizing the coronavirus” by saying it originated in China, “without any supporting facts,” according to a journalist at the Australian Financial Review.

Financial Review journalist Michael Smith explained in an article published March 9 that he received an email last week from the Chinese embassy in Canberra, explaining comments made by Beijing’s Foreign Ministry during a press conference on March 4 about “highly irresponsible” references by some media to the “China virus.”

Smith explained that the letter was evidence of how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has pivoted its propaganda narrative, now insinuating that the virus originated in other countries.

Up until recent weeks, China’s own state media said that the novel coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19, likely originated from the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, which was shut down shortly after the emergence of the virus.

In the press conference mentioned in the letter, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters it was “highly irresponsible for some media” to dub the novel coronavirus the “China virus.”

“We firmly oppose that,” he said, adding that “no conclusion has been reached yet on the origin of the virus.”

In fact, many researchers and the World Health Organization have established that the virus outbreak originated in the Chinese city of
Continued on A8

Smith said that the Chinese authorities are continuing with their efforts to deflect all criticism and blame ...

CHINA

China’s Rural Migrants Are Paid One-Third of What Urbanites Make

CHRISS STREET

China’s three-decades-long economic miracle was more of a class warfare powered by exploiting rural migrants with wages equal to one-third of what urbanites are paid, according to a new book by ex-Bloomberg China bureau chief Dexter Roberts.

“The Myth of Chinese Capitalism: The Worker, the Factory, and the Future of the World” is described by Publishers Weekly as “a clearheaded and persuasive counter-narrative to the notion that the Chinese economic model is set to take over the world.” The book illustrates that hundreds of millions of rural migrants who left home for coastal factory jobs with “meager wages and poor working conditions” are begin-

ning to rebel against the Communist Party’s exploitive policies that has “pushed workers’ resentments to unstable levels.”

Roberts served for more than two decades as Bureau chief and Asia News Editor at Bloomberg Businessweek based in Beijing, where he reported from every province and region including Tibet, Xinjiang and neighboring North Korea. He currently is a Fellow at the University of Montana’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center.

According to Roberts’ new book, China’s centrally-planned economic development path that is often hailed as a model for nations around the world to escape poverty, is an exploitive system that relegates half of its citizens into second-class migrants who are locked out of the huge economic wind-



Snow falls around migrant workers waiting for a bus in Nanjing of Jiangsu Province, China, on Jan. 26, 2008.

fall enjoyed by urbanites.

In an interview with the Quartz tech blog, Roberts calls it a myth that China has vastly expanded its middle class, created competitive companies and cutting edge technologies that would dominate global markets.

Roberts claims that China’s
Continued on A5

UNITED NATIONS

Whistleblower: I Was Silenced for Exposing Chinese Influence at UN

ALEX NEWMAN

This is part one of a two-part story about a whistleblower who exposed corruption at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Reilly was a former staffer at that office, which declined to comment when contacted by The Epoch Times about her accusations.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is facing criticism after being exposed for revealing the names of dissidents and human rights activists to the Chinese com-
Continued on A4

MARCO DI LAURO/GETTY IMAGES



A passenger wearing a protective mask is seen traveling on the train from Rome to Venice, Italy, on March 8, 2020.

CORONAVIRUS

Visitors From Italy Banned Over Coronavirus

Visitors from Italy will be banned from Australia as the government steps up efforts to protect the country from coronavirus.

The ban, which started at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, comes as the Morrison government announced a A\$2.4 billion boost to health services.

A multi-billion-dollar federal economic stimulus plan announced on Thursday will accompany free telehealth services and pop-up testing clinics that the Morrison government is coordinating in response to the virus. From Friday, phone hook-ups with GPs to diagnose coronavirus symptoms can be bulk-billed, the government said.

“We’ve been working hard to stay ahead, and it’s important that we all
Continued on A8

CHINA

Funeral Home Says Clients Who Died From ‘Unidentified Pneumonia’ May Be COVID-19 Victims

NICOLE HAO

A funeral home director in the Chinese city of Jining recently discovered that some bodies the facility received from local hospitals had death certificates marked with “unidentified pneumonia” as the cause of death.

Jining is a city located in eastern China’s Shandong province.

He became concerned that authorities were covering up deaths related to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

“My staff only know how to burn bodies. They have very little medical knowledge,” said the funeral home director in an interview with the Chinese-language Epoch Times. “The hospitals wrote the cause of death as unidentified pneumonia. It terrified my staff.”
Continued on A4

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.

Putin Backs Term-Limit Freeze Allowing Him to Stay in Office

MOSCOW—Russian President Vladimir Putin revealed his tightly guarded political plans on March 10 and supported a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow him to seek reelection in 2024 by suspending a law that limits presidents to two consecutive terms.

The constitutional change would pave the way for the 67-year-old Russian president to stay in office until 2036, if he desires.

A lawmaker who is revered in Russia as the first woman to fly in space proposed either scrapping Russia's two-term limit for presidents or stopping the clock so the law wouldn't apply to Putin's time in office.

The Russian leader and the lower house of parliament quickly endorsed the proposal put forward by 83-year-old former Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkov. Kremlin critics denounced the move as cynical manipulation and called for protests.

In a speech to lawmakers debating the package of amendments, Putin opposed doing away with the presidential term limit but backed stopping the count and restarting it in 2024, if the constitution is revised. Putin's second consecutive six-year term ends in 2024.

A nationwide vote on the amendments is scheduled for next month.

Putin has been in power for more than 20 years, and he is Russia's longest-serving leader since Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. After serving two presidential terms in 2000–2008, he shifted to the Russian prime minister's office while protege Dmitry Medvedev served as a placeholder president.

After the length of a presidential term was extended to six years under Medvedev, Putin reclaimed the presidency in 2012 and won another term in 2018.

Observers had speculated that to retain the presidency, Putin could use constitutional amendments he unveiled in January to scrap term limits, move into the prime minister's seat with strengthened powers, or continue calling the shots as the head of the State Council.

However, Putin had dismissed

Putin has been in power for more than 20 years, and he is Russia's longest-serving leader since Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.



Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses lawmakers during a session of Russia's lower house of parliament, in Moscow on March 10, 2020.

those suggestions, and it wasn't clear until March 10 what option he might use to keep power. The Russian leader finally revealed his cards after Tereshkova, a legendary figure glorified for her pioneering 1963 space flight, offered her ideas.

"I propose to either lift the presidential term limit or add a clause that after the revised constitution enters force, the incumbent president, just like any other citizen, has the right to seek the presidency," she said to raucous applause in the State Duma.

After Tereshkova unveiled her proposal in an apparently choreographed move, Putin quickly arrived in parliament to address lawmakers.

He said he was aware of public calls for him to stay on as president and emphasized that Russia needs stability above all.

"The president is a guarantor of security of our state, its internal stability, and evolutionary development," Putin said. "We have had enough revolutions."

However, he said that since the constitution is a long-term document, scrapping the term limit wasn't a good idea.

"In the long-term perspective, the society must have guarantees of regular government rotation," he said. "We need to think about future generations."

And only then did Putin drop the bombshell, saying he positively viewed Tereshkova's alternate proposal to restart the term count when the revamped constitution enters into force.

"As for the proposal to lift restrictions for any person, any citizen, including the incumbent president, to allow running in future elections ... this option is possible," Putin said.

He added that the Constitutional Court would need to judge if the move would be legal, although the court's assent is all but guaranteed.

At the same time, Putin quashed speculation that the Kremlin might call an early parliamentary election for the fall, saying he considered it unnecessary. Moments later, the Duma's speaker could be heard directing his deputy to ask the lawmaker who proposed holding the early vote to withdraw his motion.

Putin's statement came as lawmakers were considering the amendments in a crucial second reading when changes in the document are made.

The Kremlin-controlled lower house, the State Duma, quickly endorsed the proposed amendments by a 382–0 vote with 44 abstentions. A vote on a third reading will be a quick formality. A nationwide vote on the proposed amendments is set for April 22.

Russia's leading opposition figure, Alexei Navalny, mocked the proposed change.

"Putin has been in power for 20 years, and yet he is going to run for the first time," Navalny wrote on Twitter.

A group of opposition activists called for a March 21 protest rally in Moscow, which they expect up to 50,000 people to attend.

"The country where the govern-

ment doesn't change for 20 years has no future," the activists said in a statement.

After the group announced the rally, Moscow authorities quickly banned outdoor events with an attendance of more than 5,000 until April 10, saying it was part of precautionary steps to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Putin's approval ratings have remained high despite a recent drop amid Russia's economic troubles and stagnant living standards. It's unclear if the fragmented and disorganized Russian opposition can mount a serious challenge to the Kremlin.

The ruble's sharp drop this week, caused by a steep fall in global oil prices in the wake of the collapse of OPEC's agreement with Russia to control crude output, could herald deeper economic problems and hurt Putin's popularity.

"It looks like this crisis situation has made Putin drop his mask and do something he had originally planned, and to do it quickly," Abbas Gallyamov, an independent political analyst said.

In a speech to lawmakers, Putin vowed that the coronavirus and plummeting oil prices would not destabilize Russia.

"Our economy will keep getting stronger, and the key industries will become more powerful and competitive," he said.

By Vladimir Isachenkov & Daria Litvinova
From The Associated Press

US Starts Troop Pullout, Seeks End to Afghan Leaders' Feud

KABUL, Afghanistan—The United States began withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, the U.S. military said March 10, taking a step forward on its peace deal with the Taliban while also praising Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's promise to start releasing Taliban prisoners after he had delayed for over a week.

The U.S.-Taliban deal signed Feb. 29 was touted as Washington's effort to end 18 years of war in Afghanistan. The next crucial step was to be intra-Afghan talks in which all factions including the Taliban would negotiate a road map for their country's future.

But Ghani and his main political rival, Abdullah Abdullah, were each sworn in as president in separate ceremonies March 9. Abdullah and the elections complaints commission had charged fraud in last year's vote. The dueling inaugurations have thrown plans for talks with the Taliban into chaos, although Ghani said March 10 that he'd start putting together a negotiating team.

The disarray on the Afghan government side is indicative of the uphill task facing Washington's peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad as he tries to get Afghanistan's bickering leadership to come together. In an early March 10 tweet, Khalilzad said he hoped the two leaders can "come to an agreement on an inclusive and broadly accepted government. We will continue to assist."

U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan Sonny Leggett said in a statement March 10 that the military had

U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan Sonny Leggett said that the military had begun its 'conditions-based reduction of forces to 8,600 over 135 days.'

begun its "conditions-based reduction of forces to 8,600 over 135 days."

Currently, the U.S. has about 13,000 soldiers in Afghanistan—8,000 of whom are involved in training and advising Afghanistan's National Security Forces, while about 5,000 are involved in anti-terror operations and militarily supporting the Afghan army when they are requested.

Ghani had been dragging his feet on releasing some 5,000 Taliban prisoners, something agreed to in the U.S.-Taliban deal. Ghani promised March 9 to announce a decree to free the prisoners after the U.S. and a number of foreign dignitaries appeared to back his claim to the presidency by sending their representatives to his inauguration.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo released a statement March 9 saying, "We also welcome President Ghani's announcement that he will issue a

decree March 10 on Taliban prisoner release."

Taliban officials said late March 9 that a flurry of biometric identifications were being conducted on Taliban prisoners, hinting at a mass release, according to prisoners currently in lockup. The Taliban officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to talk to the media.

Sohail Shaheen, the Taliban's spokesman in Doha where the insurgent group maintains an office, wrote on Twitter March 10 that the names of the 5,000 prisoners are with an "American delegation and the list cannot be manipulated," without elaborating.

In his tweet, Shaheen said any prisoners handed over will be verified before being accepted. The Associated Press contacted a Taliban prisoner in Afghanistan's Pul-e-Charkhi Jail on the outskirts of Kabul who said four Taliban had been released March 9 and another three on March 10. The seven had completed their sentence, said Maulvi Niaz Mohammad in a telephone interview.

They were not part of the 5,000 on the Taliban prisoner list, he said. Mohammad, who had also been interviewed by The AP in the prison in December, is in telephone contact with the Taliban's Prisoners Commission, which is headed by Maulvi Nooruddin Turani, a former Taliban justice minister and a violent enforcer of the Taliban's strict code of conduct.

Meanwhile, Pompeo said he

"strongly opposed" the establishment of a parallel government in Kabul, despite early signs of one emerging. Abdullah had quickly sent his vice presidents to occupy the official offices March 9, ahead of Ghani's plan to send his vice presidents to their offices March 10.

Pompeo warned against "any use of force to resolve political differences." Both candidates—but particularly Abdullah—are backed by warlords with heavily armed militias, underscoring fears they could use force to back their candidate.

The U.S. has said its partial troop withdrawal over an 18-month period provided for in the deal will be linked to the Taliban keeping their promises to help fight terror in Afghanistan, but not to the success of talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

Over the weekend, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed said the insurgent group was committed to its agreement with the U.S. and called on Washington to do its part to make sure its prisoners were freed.

ISIS claimed responsibility for a rocket attack that took place during Ghani's inauguration ceremony. ISIS also claimed a brutal attack last week on a gathering of minority Shiites that killed 32 and injured scores more. The U.S. in reaching its deal with the Taliban said it expected the Taliban, which has been battling Afghanistan's ISIS affiliate, to further aid in the effort to defeat ISIS.

From The Associated Press



A U.S. Chinook helicopter lands on a field in Maidan Shar, Afghanistan, on June 6, 2019.

Coronavirus Kills 180 North Korean Soldiers, Thousands More Quarantined: Report

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN

Almost 200 North Korean soldiers have reportedly died from COVID-19, the deadly disease caused by the novel coronavirus, and thousands of others are being quarantined.

According to the Daily NK, a South Korean news outlet, 180 North Korean soldiers were killed by the virus in the months of January and February, and another 3,700 have been quarantined.

The Daily NK quoted a source, allegedly from North Korea's military, who on March 6 cited figures from a report that detailed the impact of the virus on North Korea's soldiers. The Epoch Times has not been able to independently verify the reports.

The North Korean soldiers who reportedly died were stationed predominantly on or around the Sino-North Korean border in North Pyongan, Chagang, Ryanggang, and North Hamgyong provinces, according to the news outlet.

The report was sent to the regime's military leaders, and the source claimed there are "just too many bodies" that the North Korean military is struggling to cremate the soldiers killed by the disease.

"I haven't heard of corpses being cremated in military hospitals," the source allegedly said. "The military leadership likely believes that suddenly asking the hospitals to cremate all the bodies would create a big headache for medical staff."

North Korea has not confirmed any cases of COVID-19. However, experts have become increasingly concerned that Pyongyang is covering-up cases and deaths.

According to reports, North Korea last week placed at least 7,000 people



DAMIRSAGOLJ/REUTERS

A soldier films North Korean soldiers, officers, and high ranking officials attending a military parade marking the 105th birth anniversary of the country's founding father Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang, North Korea, on April 15, 2017.

The report was sent to the regime's military leaders, and the source claimed there are "just too many bodies" that the North Korean military is struggling to cremate the soldiers killed by the disease.

ple under quarantine in an attempt to prevent coronavirus spread in the country.

It has also put in place "high-intensity" measures that the country's state media says are to prevent coronavirus infections.

These measures include a ban on foreign tourists, reinforced border checks, and the suspension of most air and rail travel within and out of the country. State media outlet KCNA also said that a month-long quarantine period had been imposed on people showing symp-

toms of the virus.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last week sent South Korean President Moon Jae-in a personal letter expressing his condolences over the coronavirus outbreak, marking Kim's first public exchange with his counterpart in more than four months. It wasn't immediately clear if Kim sent the letter to improve strained ties with South Korea amid a deadlock in broader nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

Kim in his letter expressed con-

cern over Moon's health and extended a "message of comfort to the South Korean people" amid the escalating novel coronavirus outbreak in South Korea.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 242 new coronavirus cases in South Korea on Tuesday, down from a peak of 909 on Feb. 29. The March 10 figures brought the national tally to 7,755, while the death toll rose to 60.

Reuters contributed to this report.

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A general view of the United Nations Human Rights Council room on June 26, 2019.

Whistleblower: I Was Silenced for Exposing Chinese Influence at UN

CONTINUED FROM A1

munist regime, and then persecuting the whistleblower who exposed the scandal.

Among those targeted by the regime with help from the OHCHR were Uyghur Muslims, pro-Tibet activists, and others who were planning to expose Beijing’s abuses in testimony at Geneva-based U.N. human rights bodies.

In some cases, individuals whose names were given to the regime were prevented by Chinese authorities from testifying. Family members of those involved who were still in China were also kidnapped, tortured and in some cases, killed in detention, according to the whistleblower and other sources.

In at least one case, the dissident identified by the U.N. was detained before leaving China and died while in custody.

The scandal comes amid growing global concerns about communist China’s increasing clout at the U.N.

Now, after refusing to protect the whistleblower in the case, the U.N.’s internal justice system, which is supposed to protect whistleblowers from retaliation, is itself coming under scrutiny as well.

Critics and analysts even say it is time for outside intervention.

A U.N. judge who was set to rule on the case, likely in favor of the whistleblower, was mysteriously removed from office with 24 hours notice.

In interviews with The Epoch Times, the whistleblower involved and experts within the U.N.’s internal justice system say the case raises serious concerns about systemic corruption within the organization.

“The U.N. should not facilitate identification of victims for genocide, and that should not be a controversial statement,” said Emma Reilly, the whistleblower. “All the U.N. ever needed to do was stop handing over names to China.”

Instead, the U.N. spent millions of dollars defending that policy and demonizing the person who exposed it all, while publicly denying it, she said.

“And none of the managers responsible for this will ever face the slightest consequence,” Reilly added.

Among other issues, Reilly and others who spoke with The Epoch Times suggested that the corruption that led to this latest series of explo-

The U.N. should not facilitate identification of victims for genocide, and that should not be a controversial statement. All the U.N. ever needed to do was stop handing over names to China.

Emma Reilly, whistleblower



U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers a speech at the opening of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on Feb. 27, 2017.

sive scandals has become pervasive within the U.N. system.

Only outside intervention will be able to clean up the mess, they said.

A Scandal Uncovered

In early 2013, Reilly, a young Irish national with a passion for human rights, took over responsibility as the non-governmental organization (NGO) liaison within the Human Rights Council Branch of the OHCHR.

Her boss, the chief of branch, instructed her to ensure that the names of Chinese dissidents were handed over to the regime in Beijing. Naturally, Reilly was shocked.

“I immediately reported it,” Reilly told The Epoch Times, confirming a long trail of documents and correspondence that began around that time.

First, Reilly reported it to the chief of branch’s superior. When that failed, she reported it to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights at the time, as well as the U.N. Ethics Office.

According to Reilly, the head of ethics’ response was “we both know how the U.N. works,” and that she “should use the information to bribe the Chief of Office to ensure a promotion.”

“That’s how deep the rot goes,” Reilly said in an interview.

Eventually, after doing everything possible to keep Beijing from getting the names, Reilly reported it to officials with the European Union’s delegation, too.

“The chief of branch simply lied to them and pretended this was not happening,” Reilly recalled.

The Reactions

After trying to stop the abuse and expose it, Reilly’s life forever changed. Following a pattern that has developed at the U.N., she faced extreme retaliation.

“I have been ostracized, deprived of functions, forcibly transferred to non-existent posts without functions, defamed to journalists and NGOs, and more,” she said.

At one point, knowing that Reilly suffers from an autoimmune condition that can require emergency medical attention, U.N. officials even tried to forcibly transfer her to Mauritania, which does not have a functioning health care system.

And all of this retaliation was directed from the very top, she said. The OHCHR declined to comment when contacted by The Epoch Times about Reilly’s allegations, citing ongoing litigation.

Among those responsible, Reilly named then-U.N. High Commissioner Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, an Islamic prince who has equated the tactics of U.S. President Donald Trump and other Western political leaders with those used by the ISIS terrorist group.

Also implicated was Prince Zeid’s deputy, Kate Gilmore.

“I had a stellar career and was

actually highly respected in the U.N. until the moment I blew the whistle,” Reilly continued. “I knew the likely consequences, but could not stand by and do nothing.”

Why Do It?

As for why Reilly decided to act despite knowing the risks, for her, it was obvious.

“It was so clearly the opposite of what the human rights office of the U.N. should be doing,” she said.

Reilly’s reporting of the scandal led to email exchanges among others in the U.N. office discussing whether or not it was appropriate to give the names to Beijing.

About 20 people—mostly senior managers—were copied on the emails debating handing over the names of Chinese dissidents to their persecutors.

Reilly was actually the most junior person on the list, and the only one to ultimately speak out about it.

However, as those emails were flying, Reilly discovered the scheme had been going on for some time, “probably since the establishment of the Council,” she said.

“It was, and I believe still is, policy,” continued Reilly, noting that in court documents, the U.N. argued that it was “unreasonable” for her to object to this.

Documents show that the U.N. Ethics Officer assigned to the case recognized in writing that Reilly believed the policy was against the rules of the U.N. Human Rights Council, against the fundamental principle of “do no harm” in human rights work, and a violation of the U.N.’s confidentiality obligations.

But to the U.N., it was “unreasonable” to believe such lofty principles could “trump” the possibility of better relations between communist China and the U.N.

Senior U.N. managers knew all about the transferring of names to Beijing, the Ethics Office argued. As such, it must not be such a big deal, so Reilly wouldn’t be entitled to whistleblower protections.

“I still fail to see the logic of why systemic corruption and bowing to Chinese interference is okay,” said Reilly, who worked with Amnesty International in Hong Kong and so is very familiar with the dangers faced by Chinese dissidents.

If she had to do it all over again, the only thing Reilly said she would do differently is that she would have broken the rules and made those email exchanges on the subject public immediately, she told The Epoch Times.

Visit www.theepochtimes.com to read the rest of this article.

Alex Newman is an award-winning international journalist, educator, author, and consultant. He serves as the CEO of Liberty Sentinel Media and writes for diverse publications in the United States and abroad.

Funeral Home Says Clients Who Died From ‘Unidentified Pneumonia’ May Be COVID-19 Victims

CONTINUED FROM A1

The director said that in February, his funeral home received four or five bodies with cause of death as “unidentified pneumonia” from the city’s No. 1 Hospital and No. 2 Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Jining city government announced on March 8: “As of March 7, 260 patients have been diagnosed with COVID-19 [the disease caused by novel coronavirus] ... No patient is in severe or critical condition.”

The funeral home director was concerned that hospitals were not reporting deaths related to the current outbreak. “Hospitals have the capacity to write clearly the cause of death, but they didn’t label it [clearly].”

The director formally lodged complaints with the mayor’s hotline twice in early February.

The call records were confirmed via an internal government document that The Epoch Times obtained. The above-mentioned director first called for help on Feb. 3, saying the unknown cause of death could “put my staff in danger.”

On Feb. 4, the city’s health commission responded to the director’s inquiry, saying that no deaths have been recorded among novel coronavirus patients in the city.



Medical staff are checking on a COVID-19 coronavirus patient at the Red Cross hospital in Wuhan, China, on March 6, 2020.

On Feb. 7, the director called the mayor hotline again and asked: “Do these bodies contain contagious viruses?... Our staff at the funeral home don’t have protective suits,” according to the call record.

After the hotline calls, the director said the hospitals no longer sent bodies that died of pneumonia.

“Since Feb. 21, we no longer received these types of bodies from the No. 1 Hospital, No. 2 Hospital, and the Maternal and Child Health Hospital,” the director told The Epoch Times. “The bodies that died of pneumonia were sent to other funeral homes in the city.”

When The Epoch Times contacted the No. 2 Hospital, it responded that it was not a designated hospital for COVID-19 treatment, and does not have the capability to detect whether a patient is infected with the novel coronavirus or not.

Meanwhile, the No. 1 Hospital said they have the capability to detect COVID-19, but the hospital would not conduct a diagnostic test on a patient unless a doctor has approved such testing.

The hospital declined to say whether any of its patients died of the novel coronavirus. It also would not say what criteria doctors use to determine whether a patient should receive a COVID-19 diagnostic test.

China Goes on Propaganda Offensive With ‘Positive’ Coronavirus Response Stories

NICOLE HAO

Chinese authorities are ramping up propaganda that portrays their efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus in a positive light. As censors aggressively monitor and delete posts critical of officials’ handling of the outbreak, the Chinese regime is hyping its capability to contain the disease. The central government recently declared 113 medical teams and 506 medical staffers as “model citizens” for their participation in the outbreak response. The goal is to “promote government policies,” “monitor public opinion online,” “discover exemplary models among the frontlines of epidemic control work,” and “create a strong atmosphere of people united in working together,” according to an internal document from Shanghai authorities that was obtained by The Epoch Times.

Positive Propaganda

Among the honored medical staff, 34 of them have died, some after contracting the virus themselves. The majority of them died of sudden cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases—likely due to exhaustion. Most were staff working in the epicenter of the outbreak, in Hubei province, and doctors in remote areas of the country. The Chinese regime published stories about their deaths to promote them as paragons of sacrifice for the country. For example, Bao Changming was a disabled doctor from a village in Inner Mongolia. He had a deformed spine and was the only doctor in the village. On Jan. 22, local authorities



A woman wearing a plastic face cover and a mask travels on a subway train in Shanghai, China, on March 5, 2020.

We must build a defense line online and offline, to win the war against the coronavirus epidemic.

Communist Party boss Ni Yaoming

mandated that doctors in all villages visit each household and screen the body temperatures of those who recently traveled to other cities. While on the way to visit a family for temperature screening on Jan. 26, Bao fell. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage on Jan. 27, at the age of 50. The Shanghai government also created its own list of “model citizens,” according to internal documents obtained by The Epoch Times. Within three days, Shanghai authorities found 415 individuals whose stories could be part of the propaganda. Lawyers at 17 law firms in Minhang district (a locale within Shanghai) were honored for promoting state media articles on their social media platforms. The articles were reports about recent speeches by Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the country’s virus containment measures, according to the document. “Lawyers in Minhang district actively guided people to say only the words that benefit social sta-



Medical staff gesturing after work in Wuhan in China's central Hubei province, on Feb. 29, 2020.

bility and work related to disease control, and to only perform actions that maintain social stability,” the report said. “Maintaining social stability” is an oft-used euphemism for stifling dissent. Other individuals named as “model citizens” include medical staff who treated coronavirus patients, government staff, and ordinary people who donated their belongings or savings to the government for disease prevention. For example, Mr. Huang lives in Gucun township, in the Baoshan district of Shanghai. Huang’s family is poor, but he donated his life savings—300,000 yuan (about \$43,190)—to Wuhan, where the outbreak first emerged. ‘A War’ Minhang district convened an internal meeting with all local officials and Party leaders on Feb. 28 to discuss guiding principles in spreading propaganda. “We must build a defense line online and offline, to win the war against the coronavirus epidemic,”

the district’s Communist Party boss Ni Yaoming said, according to an internal copy of his speech at the meeting. The “war” online includes “strictly controlling online information,” while offline, officials should “design and compose a series of literary and artistic works that can inspire people’s fighting spirit,” Ni said. The Minhang district Party committee notified all local Party organizations—which are set up within companies and government agencies—to collect “model” stories. In addition, Party members are being encouraged to write their own stories of helping to combat the coronavirus. The district committee will then choose the best stories for dissemination in its Party-published magazine and social media. “The model citizens should hand in their photos. One should be a photo without wearing masks or protective suits. Other photos should be related to the coronavirus, but the photos must look real, not like posing for a photo,” according to the district notice.



South Korean soldiers, wearing protective gear, spray antiseptic solution to guard against the coronavirus along a street in Gangnam district in Seoul, South Korea, on March 9, 2020.

Coronavirus Outbreak Highlights Beijing’s Global Economic Coercion, Expert Says

CATHY HE

The coronavirus outbreak has raised concerns about the negative effects of the Chinese regime’s economic and political influence worldwide, an expert says. Since the emergence of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, the coronavirus has spread to 115 countries and regions, with a total infection count of more than 118,000 cases, of which about 32 percent are outside of China. For some affected countries that are economically dependent on China, their ability to respond effectively to the outbreak has been impaired by concerns over not wanting to antagonize the Chinese regime, said Daniel Kliman, senior fellow and director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Washington-based think tank Center for a New American Security. “China’s economic statecraft promotes putting some countries on the horns of a dilemma in terms of how they deal with this virus,” he said at a panel discussion at the National Press Club in Washington on March 9. South Korea’s handling of the outbreak exemplified this dilemma, Kliman noted. China is the

country’s largest trading partner. “The South Korean government has really struggled to both address coronavirus domestically while not trying to antagonize China, out of fear of economic retribution,” Kliman said. “And this has caused political blowback against the current administration in South Korea.” South Korean President Moon Jae-in has been harshly criticized by opposition politicians and health experts in South Korea over what they say is his mishandling of the crisis by not closing its border with China during the “golden time” window to limit the spread in the country. Moon has declined to issue a full travel ban on travelers from China, and instead issued a limited travel ban on visitors from Hubei Province, which is the coronavirus epicenter, on Feb. 4—five days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a global health emergency. The country now has more than 7,500 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the disease the virus causes, with the largest outbreak clusters coming from members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, a Christian religious sect

based in the city of Daegu. Undermining Governance Kliman also said the regime’s infrastructure investment project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road), has played a role in undermining governance in partner countries, especially in developing countries, which may then make it harder for those countries to contain the coronavirus in the future. The BRI, which seeks to link the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa through a network of railways, ports, and roads, has been used by the regime to further its geopolitical influence. The policy has been criticized for facilitating corruption in developing countries, as well as putting developing countries into a “debt trap,” as they struggle to pay back hefty Chinese loans. “Chinese practices [in relation to BRI] sometimes weaken governance, especially in the developing world, where you see potential for corruption, co-optation of local elites, a loss of kind of transparency,” Kliman said. “Better governance, more transparency tends to help countries and governments combat epidemics, and so to the extent that you see a weakening of governance where China is operating in developing countries, this may make it harder not only to detect but also to combat coronavirus going forward.”

Co-Opting International Organizations The outbreak, Kliman said, has also drawn attention to the regime’s influence at the WHO, which has been criticized for its initial handling of the crisis. Kliman said the global response to the outbreak highlighted the “real-world impact of China’s co-optation of international organizations, that the World Health Organization, which China today heavily influences, was fairly slow to address coronavirus.” “Initially, I would say, it played down the scope and need for a forceful response.” The WHO hasn’t yet declared the coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic-level event.

China’s Rural Migrants Are Paid One-Third of What Urbanites Make

CONTINUED FROM A1

economic development was based on three key policy tools: 1) hukou household registration policy; 2) one-child policy; and 3) the dual land system. Hukou is an official system of household and family registration that identifies individuals as residents of an area. It is directly connected to government social programs, which assign benefits based on agricultural and non-agricultural residency status (rural and urban). Since the Communist Party’s takeover of China in 1949, the hukou acted as a caste system. Urban residents receive benefits ranging from retirement pension, education and health care, while rural citizens often are left to fend for themselves. The household registration policy ensured that China for decades would have a relatively low-paid and very docile rural migrant work force to build its “factory to the world.” Under the nationwide agricultural land reforms that took place from 1950 through the spring of 1953, Chinese rural lands were collectivized. Farmers cannot sell the land, but local governments can buy rural land at very cheap prices, re-define land as industrial or commercial, and then mark-up values and sell it to developers for huge profits. But in Chinese cities there have been an “enormous and very, very lucrative real estate market for the urban people” where residents buy and sell ownership in 70-year residential leases, creating an “explosion of wealth.” Roberts argues that the hukou acted as an “internal passport system” to make it very difficult for rural Chinese to permanently settle in cities. As a result, rural residents have no access to affordable health care in cities and their children can’t go to the urban schools without paying a lot of money. Children of migrant parents still living in the countryside suffer from much higher school drop-out rates than children of urban parents. Roberts doesn’t believe China’s initiative to build a new high-tech innovation



driven economy is achievable if a substantial portion of the population’s children “end up being high school drop-outs.” Roberts argues that China’s one-child policy has created a demographic implosion for the size of its workforce that is ending its “factory of the world development model.” As a result, China no longer has cheap labor and no longer has a docile labor force. Despite observations by other China watchers that the Chinese Communist regime has continued to solidify its grip on power, Roberts argues there is “more of a threat now.” Being forced to pay higher wages in China, foreign firms are moving their production to other countries that can offer cheaper labor. Coupled with the policy push from the highest levels of the government in Beijing to try to automate factories, jobs that have supported migrant workers are going away. Urbanites financially benefited from the old authoritarian model that made migrants low-paid and second-class citizens. The Chinese regime expects migrant workers who will no longer be working in city factories or construction sites to quietly go back home and “re-invent themselves with a new form of employment,” such as being entrepreneurs. Roberts suggests that with almost no technical skills and little savings, there is now the potential for a Chinese class struggle that could involve hundreds of millions of rebellious rural migrants.

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Former Acting Inspector General for Department of Homeland Security Indicted

JACK PHILLIPS

The former acting inspector general for the Department of Homeland Security was indicted for alleged fraud and theft, according to the Department of Justice.

Charles Edwards, 59, served as the acting inspector general for the agency between 2011 and 2013 as part of former President Barack Obama’s administration.

Edwards, of Maryland, and 54-year-old Virginia resident Murali Yamazula Venkata were both charged with wire fraud conspiracy to commit theft of government property, conspiracy to defraud the United States, aggravated identity theft, and theft of government property. Additionally, Venkata, a former subordinate of Edwards, is accused of destroying records, said the Justice Department.

The pair were accused of hatching and executing “a scheme to defraud the U.S. government by stealing confidential and proprietary software from [Homeland Security’s] Office of Inspector General,” said the Justice Department in a news release on Friday, adding that “sensitive government databases containing personal identifying information” of Homeland Security and U.S. Postal Service employees were accessed and

Sensitive government databases containing personal identifying information of Homeland Security and U.S. Postal Service employees were accessed and stolen.



Mark Sullivan (L), then-Director of the United States Secret Service, looks toward Charles K. Edwards, then-Acting Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, during a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee in Washington on May 23, 2012.

stolen.

Then, according to the release, Edwards’s firm Delta Business Solutions “could later sell an enhanced version of” the software to the U.S. Department of Agriculture “at a profit.”

The Washington Post had reported that Edwards was accused by agency whistleblowers of abusing his power. He resigned in December 2013 prior to a scheduled appearance at a Senate hearing about the matter.

However, Edwards remained employed at Homeland Security’s Office of Science and Technology and used his relationship with agency employees and Venkata, who worked there, to “steal the software and the sensitive government databases,” said

the release. Venkata also helped Edwards set up his laptop to upload the stolen databases and software, and he provided troubleshooting when Edwards asked.

“As further part of the alleged scheme, Edwards retained software developers in India for the purpose of developing his commercial alternative” of Homeland Security’s software, said the release.

In April 2014, the Homeland Security and Government Operations Committee discovered that Edwards also delayed investigations at the request of senior Obama administration officials. They said that his actions compromised his role as an inspector general for the agency, ac-

cording to Washington Post’s review of the report.

The indictment came after a joint probe by Homeland Security’s inspector general and the U.S. Post Office’s inspector general. It’s being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Victor R. Salgado of the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney David B. Kent of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia, according to the news release.

Homeland Security’s office of the inspector general is tasked with providing independent oversight of the agency. According to Forbes magazine, it had a budget of \$51.7 billion for the 2020 fiscal year.



This courtroom sketch depicts Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev standing with his lawyer Miriam Conrad, left, before Magistrate Judge Marianne Bowler, right, during his arraignment in federal court on July 10, 2013.

FBI Weaknesses Left Openings for Homegrown Terrorists, DOJ Watchdog Says

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN

The FBI has failed in its duties to identify and stop homegrown violent extremists in the United States, the Justice Department inspector general said in a report released last week.

Many individuals identified as so-called homegrown violent extremists, or HVEs, weren’t stopped because the FBI failed to conduct follow-up investigations into individuals who had been flagged as potential threats, Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz said in a 41-page report.

“The FBI has not taken a comprehensive approach to resolving deficiencies in its counterterrorism assessment process,” Horowitz wrote.

The report, which covered the time from November 2009 to January 2017, found shortcomings in the FBI’s efforts to prevent mass attacks by U.S. residents who were inspired by international terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaida, which the agency says is its highest counterterrorism priority.

For example, the FBI closed the cases of at least six terrorists who killed 70 people in separate attacks between 2009 and 2017 after the bureau determined they weren’t national security threats, Horowitz said. The FBI’s shortcomings allowed multiple HVEs to go on and commit deadly attacks, including the perpetrators of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, foreign radical groups have been able to recruit and indoctrinate homegrown violent extremists who have killed more than 100 people in the United States, according to the New America Foundation. More than 20 attacks have been carried out by American jihadis since, Horowitz added.

“The FBI has acknowledged that various weaknesses related to its assessment process may have impacted its ability to fully investigate certain counterterrorism assessment subjects, who later committed terrorist acts in the United States,” Horowitz wrote in his report.

Horowitz said that although the FBI seemed to recognize its shortcomings, it had “not taken sufficient action” to fix the issues. He added that roughly 40 percent of the bureau’s counterterrorism assessments went unaddressed for 18 months, although officials were aware of lapses in their investigations.

The FBI “did not ensure that all field offices and headquarters implemented recommended improvements and subsequent policy requirements,” according to the report.

In response to the report, the FBI sent a letter to Horowitz’s office saying it had accepted seven separate recommendations for amending how it conducts its investigations, and planned to implement them nationwide.

Reuters contributed to this report.

... roughly 40 percent of the bureau’s counterterrorism assessments went unaddressed for 18 months, although officials were aware of lapses in their investigations.

Ex-Nazi Living in US for Decades to Be Deported

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—The U.S. government said Thursday that it is deporting a 94-year-old German ex-Nazi who has been in the United States for decades.

An immigration judge ordered Friedrich Karl Berger’s deportation on Feb. 28 after a two-day trial in Memphis, authorities said. It’s unclear when he will be removed. Berger, who’s been living in Tennessee, has 30 days to appeal the ruling.

The government says Berger was an armed guard at a concentration camp near Meppen, Germany, in 1945.

The immigration judge found that the prisoners Berger guarded were held in atrocious conditions and were exploited for forced labor. Berger also was accused of guarding prisoners during a forced evacuation to a main camp that took two weeks and left 70 prisoners dead as they traveled in inhumane conditions, according to two government news releases.

He has been living in the United States since 1959.

Berger acknowledged that he never requested a transfer from the concentration camp guard service and that he still gets a pension from Germany. He has been living in the United States since 1959.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Human Rights and Special Prosecutions unit launched an investigation into Berger in 2017. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center also investigated.

In August 2018, American authorities deported a 95-year-old former Nazi concentration camp guard who had lived quietly in New York City for decades. The man died in Germany about five months later.

From The Associated Press

SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES



The Department of Justice seal.

China Gave Imperfect Data on Coronavirus Epidemic: Pompeo

ZACHARY STIEBER

China has delivered imperfect data on the new coronavirus, which emerged in the country in late 2019 before spreading to more than 50 countries around the world, a top U.S. official said on Friday.

“Remember, this is the Wuhan coronavirus that’s caused this,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, using a colloquial name for SARS-CoV-2, the new virus. “And the information that we got at the front end of this thing wasn’t perfect and has led us now to a place where much of the challenge we face today has put us behind the curve.”

Infectious disease doctors have told Pompeo that how the situation unfolded isn’t the way it should have gone, the secretary of state said during an appearance on CNBC.

“It has proven incredibly frustrating to work with the Chinese Communist Party to get our hands around the dataset, which will ultimately be the solution to both getting the vaccine and attacking this risk,” Pompeo said.

The recent claims from Chinese authorities that the virus might not have originated in China directly contradict the communist regime’s



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks during a media briefing at the State Department in Washington in a file photograph.

earlier statements that the virus came from Wuhan, a city of some 11 million in China where thousands of people have been infected, he added.

“We have pretty high confidence

that we know where this began and we have high confidence, too, that there was information that could have been made available more quickly, and data that could have been provided and shared among

health professionals across the world,” he said. “It’s most unfortunate.”

Pompeo’s criticism of China is the latest from the White House. Larry Kudlow, a top adviser to President Donald Trump, said last month that U.S. leaders were “disappointed” with the way China handled the epidemic.

“I wish we did know more. You know, this should not be about politics or for that matter, trade. This is just plain, ordinary health, public health, to help people,” Kudlow told reporters in Washington.

“We have very good trade deal with them and so forth. But, on this particular matter, we are quite disappointed in China’s response,” said Kudlow, the National Economic Council director.

China for weeks blocked U.S. experts from entering the country to study the virus, ultimately only allowing a few to enter as part of a World Health Organization (WHO) team.

The team produced a report with Chinese health officials that largely praised the Chinese response to the virus and WHO officials have maintained that the actions China took helped delay the spread of the virus to other countries.

US Senators Introduce Legislation To Monitor China’s Overseas Mineral Investments

FRANK FANG

Two U.S. senators on March 5 introduced legislation drawing attention to China’s plans to dominate rare earth supplies in other countries through its “One Belt, One Road” foreign policy initiative.

Rare earths are a group of minerals used to manufacture a range of consumer products and military technologies, including smartphones, electric vehicles, satellites, missiles, and semiconductor chips that power all electronic products.

Senators Mitt Romney (R-Utah) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) proposed legislation that would require the director of national intelligence to submit a congressional report, at least once annually, assessing the extent of China’s mineral investments through its One Belt, One Road (OBOR, also known as Belt and Road) initiative.

“The U.S. must monitor China’s mineral investments to prevent mineral assets in developing countries from becoming beholden to the Chinese government and to thwart any efforts to weaponize those mineral investments against us,” Romney said, according to a press release.

Beijing rolled out OBOR in 2013, with the objective of increasing geopolitical influence by building up trade routes linking China, South-east Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Through OBOR, the Chinese regime has been accused by critics of putting developing countries into a “debt trap” by offering unsustainable loans, while exploiting their natural resources like timber, crude oil, and minerals to drive the Chinese economy.

A part of the report would include an assessment of whether China’s efforts to acquire minerals through OBOR “counter or interfere with the goals of the Energy Resource Governance Initiative” by the U.S. State Department.

The State Department’s initiative aims at “promoting sound mining sector governance” while engaging with other countries.



GRIFF TAPPER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The proposed legislation is an amendment to the American Energy Innovation Act (AEIA), a bipartisan Senate bill introduced by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Ala.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) last week, intending to modernize the U.S. energy laws.

“Not only will this legislation bolster U.S. national security by ensuring the Administration is monitoring Chinese investments in vital resources and keeping Congress informed, but it will also protect American industries and help Nevada’s growing critical mineral operations access information relevant to industry market competition,” Cortez Masto said in the press release.

Rare Earths

China produces over 70 percent of the world’s rare earths, as the result of its cheap labor, lax environmental regulations, and rich deposits—about 35 percent of the world’s rare earth deposits are in China.

The United States is heavily dependent on China for its rare-earth needs, buying about 80 percent of its mineral imports from China from 2014 to 2017.

Despite its own rich rare-earth deposits, China lacks three key minerals inside its border: cobalt, lithium, and platinum-group metals, according to a 2019 report by Foreign Policy.

Lithium is a critical element used to manufacture batteries to power smartphones and electric vehicles. According to Foreign Policy, in 2017 China had stakes in 61 percent of lithium production in Australia, 67 percent in Chile, as well as having stakes in mining projects in Argentina and Bolivia.

In terms of cobalt, which is used to manufacture products such as electric vehicles and satellites, China, as of 2017, influenced over 52 percent of cobalt production in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the report said. In 2017, Amnesty International raised concerns that Congolese children were being exploited to mine cobalt, which ended up at a Chinese processing company.

People work at the Kalimbi cassiterite artisanal mining site north of Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, on March 30, 2017.

In 2017, China had stakes in 61 percent of lithium production in Australia, 67 percent in Chile, as well as having stakes in mining projects in Argentina and Bolivia.

Romney to Vote for Subpoena on Records About Hunter Biden’s Ukraine Job

JACK PHILLIPS

Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) confirmed he will vote in favor of a subpoena to seek records on former Vice President Joe Biden’s son’s work in Ukraine, according to a spokesperson.

Senate Homeland Security Committee Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) assured the freshman Utah senator that a witness in the investigation, former Ukrainian diplomat Andrii Telizhenko, would be interviewed privately.

“Senator Romney has expressed his concerns to Chairman Johnson, who has confirmed that any interview of the witness would occur in a closed setting without a hearing or public spectacle,” Romney’s spokeswoman, Liz Johnson, told media outlets on Friday. “He will therefore vote to let the chairman proceed to obtain the documents that have been offered.”

Earlier this week, Johnson announced he is intending to seek a subpoena against Telizhenko, who was a consultant at Blue Star Strategies, which represented Burisma Holdings in the United States. Hunter Biden sat on the board of Burisma for several years. Some Republicans, including President Donald Trump, have suggested that he got the job because of his father.

Republicans have questioned why he sat on the board of the firm—whose founder, Mykola Zlochevsky, has been investigated for corruption in Ukraine—while Biden was in office and leading the Obama administration’s Ukraine policy. Hunter and Joe Biden have both denied Republicans’ allegations, but the issue became a central portion of the impeachment fight that led to Trump’s acquittal in February.

During an October interview with ABC News, Hunter said he

realized that his role on Burisma’s board created the impression of a conflict of interest, and his father told reporters earlier this year that it was “a bad image.”

Before his spokeswoman confirmed his intention, Romney said the Senate investigation into the Bidens has the “appearance” of being politically motivated, as Biden has emerged as the Democratic frontrunner in the 2020 election. “There’s no question the appearance is not good,” Romney told reporters on Thursday. “I would prefer that investigations are done by an independent, nonpolitical body,” he said.

Republicans have an 8-6 majority on the Homeland Security panel. If Romney should break ranks with his party—like he did with last month’s vote on impeachment—the subpoena effort would be essentially derailed.

“As part of the committee’s ongoing investigation, it has received U.S. government records indicating that Blue Star sought to leverage Hunter Biden’s role as a board member of Burisma to gain access to, and potentially influence matters at, the State Department,” Johnson told other members of the committee about his intention to issue a subpoena, The Hill reported.

Before that, Grassley and Johnson have been investigating whether there was a conflict of interest when the younger Biden served on the board of Burisma. Last month, the two senators submitted a request for Hunter Biden’s travel records.

But Johnson said in his letter that Telizhenko’s “records and information would be responsive to the committee’s requests” after Blue Star refused to hand them over.



ZACH GIBSON/GETTY IMAGES

Sen. Mitt Romney speaks to reporters near the Senate Subway on Capitol Hill on Jan. 24, 2019.

Visitors From Italy Banned Over Coronavirus

CONTINUED FROM A1

keep our heads as well,” Morrison told reporters in Canberra.

“Every Australian has a role to play—whether you’re in government, federal, state, local, whether you’re an employer, whether you’re an employee, wherever you happen to be.”

The Italy measure joins bans already in place for visitors from China, Iran, and South Korea.

“I think that it is important not to overstate this,” Morrison said.

“Italy itself has effectively put itself into lockdown with travel now, and this largely closes that loop.”

Under the health boost, authorities will establish up to 100 “pop-up” clinics, with each expected to handle 75 patients a day.

Health Minister Greg Hunt said some pop-up clinics were already running, including at hospitals in Melbourne and South Australia.

The Australian Medical Association will help the government with locations for the rest, which will be progressively rolled out.

AMA president Tony Bartone says people with symptoms should only go to a clinic if they’ve recently been overseas or had contact with someone diagnosed with the virus.

The government hopes the clinics will divert people with coronavirus away from hospitals.

As well, extra funds will be spent on research and a communication strategy.

Aged care coronavirus-related ser-

Passengers arrive at Sydney International Airport on Jan. 23, 2020.



DON ARNOLD/STRINGER

vices will be boosted with training of staff in infection control, extra staff in cases where an urgent health response is needed and specialist onsite pathology services.

Meanwhile, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg met with bank CEOs on Wednesday to discuss the impact of the virus on the economy.

Australian Banking Association chief Anna Bligh said banks were in the “best-ever shape” to face the challenge and were well capitalised,

with strong balance sheets.

“Banks stand ready to assist and if anyone is in need of assistance, they shouldn’t wait to come forward,” she said.

A number of schools in NSW and Melbourne have temporarily closed because of the coronavirus, but Education Minister Dan Tehan doesn’t expect state-wide closures.

Tehan said it would be more likely for schools in particular areas to close, with the government relying

on expert medical advice.

Universities are scaling back their course offerings or providing more online tuition.

But Southern Cross University has gone further, temporarily closing its Gold Coast and Lismore campuses on Wednesday after a staff member visiting from the Philippines tested positive to the virus.

*By Paul Osborne
From AAP*



AAP IMAGE/DAVID MARIUZ

South Australia Hospital staff simulate a drive through coronavirus testing at the Repatriation Hospital in Adelaide on March 10, 2020.

Australia Opens First Drive-Through Virus Testing Station

In an Australian first, a formal drive-through coronavirus testing station has been set up at an Adelaide hospital, a move aimed to ease pressure and risk for GPs.

It is one of two formal clinics of its kind that exists globally, although a Melbourne doctor runs a solo operation with a similar structure in the car park outside his practice. The other clinic was first seen in South Korea.

Patients will drive through the site at the Repatriation Hospital, wind down their windows and be tested directly out of the car window by SA Pathology nurses.

Those tested will have a swab taken from the back of their throat and nose from the comfort of their driver’s seat.

The service is only offered for people referred by their general practitioner.

The station will be open up to nine hours a day, testing patients once every 20 minutes.

South Australia Pathology’s clinical services director Dr. Tom Dodd says the number could be escalated depending on the demand over time.

“A number of GPs, for a variety of reasons, are not able to easily collect specimens so this will be a useful alternative to send patients for specimen collection,” Dodd said.

“We believe this will be effective in supporting isolation and barriers for patients with respiratory infections.”

The drive-through clinic comes after three dedicated COVID-19 clinics opened in the state within a week.

SA Health is also in talks with the Women’s and Children’s Hospital which is likely to have a clinic running in the future, the organisation’s chief public health officer Nicola Spurrier said.

Opening a second drive-through site in Adelaide’s northern suburbs is also being considered.

Premier Steven Marshal said it was important the state government was as prepared as possible.

“We’re not immune from the virus but we can take action to minimise the effects of the virus to slow its spread,” he said.

*By Emily Cosenza
From AAP*

The station will be open up to nine hours a day, testing patients once every 20 minutes.

Chinese Embassy Claims Journalists Are ‘Politicising’ Coronavirus

CONTINUED FROM A1

Wuhan. But scientists are still researching how the virus first emerged and began infecting humans.

Zhao claimed that “some media clearly want China to take the blame and their ulterior motives are laid bare.”

Smith said that the Chinese authorities are continuing with their efforts to deflect all criticism and blame “for the fact that authorities in Wuhan failed to report the seriousness of the health crisis for those crucial weeks in January before millions left the city for Chinese New Year.”

A month after the head of China’s Center for Disease Control and Prevention told reporters that health experts believed the virus likely came from wild animals at the Wuhan wet market, although the source animal had not been identified, Zhong Nanshan, a Chinese epidemiologist and pulmonologist who researched the SARS coronavirus in 2003, told reporters that the novel coronavirus may not have originated from China.

Speaking at a press conference in the city of Guangzhou on Feb. 27, Zhong, who also heads the Chinese regime’s panel of experts overseeing efforts to contain the epidemic, said that “although COVID-19 was first discovered in China, it does not mean that it originated from China.”

“This is a human disease, not a national disease,” Zhong added.

In a separate press conference on Monday, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said it was a “despicable practice” to call the virus the “Wuhan coronavirus,” after

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used the term.

The Chinese regime has since taken extreme measures to contain the virus after its slow initial reaction, including locking down entire cities and not allowing people to leave their homes.

But as the virus spread to more and more countries, the CCP has received criticism for covering-up the extent of the outbreak and underreporting the number of infections and the death toll.

Last week, The Epoch Times spoke to a funeral director in the Chinese city of Jining, in eastern China’s Shandong province, who said he was concerned that authorities were covering up deaths related to the novel coronavirus outbreak after discovering that some bodies the facility received from local hospitals had death certificates marked with “unidentified pneumonia” as the cause of death.

“My staff only know how to burn bodies. They have very little medical knowledge,” said the funeral home director in an interview with the Chinese-language Epoch Times. “The hospitals wrote the cause of death as unidentified pneumonia. It terrified my staff.”

The director said that in February, his funeral home received four or five bodies with cause of death as “unidentified pneumonia” from the city’s No 1. Hospital and No. 2 Hospital, adding that “hospitals have the capacity to write clearly the cause of death, but they didn’t label it [clearly].”



AAP IMAGE/LUKAS COCH

The Chinese Embassy is seen from a hot air balloon in Canberra on March 9, 2013.

OPINION

MEHDI MARIZAD/FARS NEWS AGENCY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Iranian sanitary workers disinfect Qom’s Masumeh shrine to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in Iran on Feb. 25, 2020.

Virus May Appear to Iranians to Be Divine Justice

MICHAEL LEDEEN



The virus could bring down the regime in Iran. Really.

And it would be entirely in keeping with the country’s traditions. The Iranian people are used to being lied to, and the virus is only the most recent example.

As of March 4, there are almost 3,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus infections in Iran, and the tempo of spread is increasing. The holy city of Qom is the hardest-hit, and demonstrations have been widespread, having reached medical centers. Twitter had several videos of people passing out in streets and stores, and there were reports of high-ranking officials diagnosed with the virus.

The Trump administration offered medical treatment for infected persons in Iran, but the regime of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dismissed the offer, claiming the disease didn’t constitute a serious threat to public health, and then lied about U.S. sanctions.

“The claim to help Iran in dealing with corona from a country who with their economic terrorism has created widespread pressure for the people of Iran and even closed the paths for buying medicine and medical equipment, is a ridiculous claim and a political-psychological game,” Abbas Mousavi, the spokesman for the foreign ministry, said.

So the regime leaders lie about the disease, as they lie about everything else. Medical supplies have never been blocked by the Trump administration, and are not blocked today. A clinic in Bandar Abbas was torched, ostensibly because patients from Qom were being housed there. Two high-ranking officials of the regime have died of the virus, and a number of others are reported to have it. Over the weekend, the main international terminal in Tehran was empty.

Throughout the Islamic Republic, armed forces were patrolling the streets, purportedly to stem the flow of disease,

Suppressing the masses’ anger, rather than tending to public health, seems to be the only thing that Tehran’s officials are doing.

but in reality, they were putting down demonstrations against the failed state.

The editors of the Free Iran Herald report (via Gateway Pundit) wrote: “Suppressing the masses’ anger, rather than tending to public health, seems to be the only thing that Tehran’s officials are doing. On Sunday, March 1, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Basji units poured into the streets of Iranian cities, with trucks bearing water cannons, claiming that they were going to ‘fight coronavirus’ and that they would not return to their bases until the epidemic had passed. Of course, everyday Iranian knew this was really done in order to prevent new anti-regime demonstrations from commencing.”

It’s apparently just a matter of time before the Islamic Republic fades away. Or crashes.

Only a few weeks ago, Iran was the dominant power in neighboring countries, but the virus is tearing apart these efforts. Tawfiq Allawi resigned as prime minister of Iraq, throwing the country into political chaos, and there were daily funerals for dead Hezbollahis in Lebanon.

The editors of Free Iran Herald wrote: “The regime’s inattention to the people’s health stands in contrast to how well they treat their own. On Saturday, 10 clerics who had contracted coronavirus in Qom, where the outbreak is most intense (over 200 coronavirus deaths in Qom alone), were transported to the Towhid Clinic in Bandar Abbas, along the shores of the Persian Gulf, so that they could feel better by being in a warmer climate.”

Residents of Bandar Abbas, enraged not only by the fact that the clerics were taking needed hospital beds away from them, but also by the reality that bringing the clerics there increased their risk of becoming infected, took to the streets and set the clinic on fire.

Khamenei swore that the regime had been candid about the virus from the beginning, and added that there were countries worse off than Iran, for which

Iranians were praying. Iranian military forces were ordered to combat the virus, although it wasn’t immediately obvious how military power could thwart a rapidly expanding pandemic. Nor was it obvious how the regime could prevent the pandemic.

Prisoners were released on a temporary basis, under the pretext of containing the virus, but for the most part, this was done in exchange for cash. Given the regime’s desperate need for money, and the prospect that such deals could be repeated as long as the families’ money held out, it made good sense for the captors to use any excuse to lay their hands on the victims’ savings.

There was also widespread skepticism at official announcements of high-ranking victims of the coronavirus, as for example Ramezan Pourghassem, the head of the Revolutionary Guards Land Forces counterintelligence unit. The people of Iran suspect some of these people are well, but pretending to be ill so that they can stage a miraculous recovery, which would be evidence of divine favor.

The regime’s multiple schemes may well backfire. Should Khamenei contract the virus, the people may well read the event as divine revenge on a religious kleptocracy most Iranians despise. If that happens, the next wave of demonstrations may bring a new generation to power in Iran.

Michael Ledeen is a freedom scholar at Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He has served as a consultant to the National Security Council and the departments of State and Defense, and as a special adviser to the secretary of state. He is the author of 35 books, most recently “Field of Fight: How to Win the War Against Radical Islam and Its Allies,” co-authored with retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn.

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cause it has three constituencies who will forever advocate for it. It appears Schumpeter's analysis has come true so far, as socialism remains en vogue, even though it has a history of mass murder, poverty, and misery everywhere it has been implemented.

Schumpeter is credited with devising the term “creative destruction” in reference to capitalism. According to Schumpeter, creative destruction is the “process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one.”

In every one of these examples, society as a whole is better off because the standard of living has improved. However, there is a downside to creative destruction. It almost instantly deems an entire group of people obsolete. As technology progresses exponentially, the dynamic nature of capitalism is accelerated, making more and more people vulnerable to creative destruction.

When this group is combined with those who are opposed to the hypercompetitive (in their words, cutthroat) nature of capitalism, there is likely a large group who will always be willing to replace capitalism with socialism.

A group of people are participating in a protest on a city street. In the foreground, a large yellow banner is held up, featuring the text "KILL CAPITALISM" in large, bold, black letters. Below this, in smaller black letters, is "★ FEDERATION ANARCHISTE". There are red paint splatters on the yellow banner. Behind the yellow banner, a purple banner is visible with the text "REVOLUTION INEVITABLE" and "CROUPE ANARCHISTE". The protesters are wearing various clothing, including hoodies, t-shirts, and jeans. The background shows trees and a city street.

FREIBURG UNIVERSITY VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



inevitable paradise that humanity will reach, if only they are allowed to tinker and experiment enough with their central planning ideas. Ivory tower elites, who are totally out-of-touch with economic reality, will forever advocate for socialism because it is the only way they can enforce their progressive vision of the world.

Like the intellectuals, bureaucrats, by nature, are also immune to the miracle of “the invisible hand” of capitalism. In their world, the market must be massaged and regulated, and they are just the people to do this. Sadly, this means that these people—there are millions of them in the United States—will constantly advocate for less freedom (eco-

conomic, social, etc.) and more government control. In other words, they are skewed to support socialism, whether they are aware of it or not.

When these three permanent constituencies are coupled with ordinary voters who think socialism sounds good in theory, it is a recipe for the effervescence of the sordid ideology known as socialism.

Chris Talgo is an editor at The Heartland Institute. He can be reached at ctalgo@heartland.org.

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How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

The Communist Economic Trap

The Epoch Times here serializes a translation from the Chinese of “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” a new book by the editorial team of the “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party.”

Chapter Nine (Cont.)

6. Hatred and Jealousy: The Origin of Absolute Egalitarianism

b. Communism’s Use of Unions to Undermine Free Societies (cont.)

Trade unions in Western and developed countries also are widely infiltrated and used by communist elements. Workers and capitalists are supposed to be symbiotic, yet communists try to provoke, expand, and intensify conflict between them. One of communism’s most important tools is the trade union. Trade unions are used to escalate the bargaining process between management and workers to the level of a struggle between classes. They rationalize and intensify the confrontational side of the relationship and use it to legitimize their own existence. From then on, unions inflame the workers’ dissatisfaction, blame the capitalists for any problems, and provoke conflict between the two. This has been one of the unions’ keys for survival.

Trade unions may be able to bring workers profit in small ways for a short period of time, but from a long-term economic point of view, the biggest victim under the union movements led by communists is the working class. This is because when capitalist enterprises crumble, the biggest losers are the workers, who lose their jobs and livelihoods. On the surface, trade unions are fighting for the interests of workers, but in fact, they are undermining industrial competitiveness. There are two reasons for this.

First, under the pretext of protecting workers’ rights and interests, unions make it difficult for enterprises to lay off employees who don’t perform well and who achieve little. This gives rise to a culture of laziness. Not only is this unfair to employees who work diligently, but it also makes them less proactive. The most important factor in the growth of a company is its workers, but with the union’s umbrella of protection over employees who fail to perform, enterprises lose their competitiveness.

Second, under the pretext of protecting employees’ welfare (including pensions, health insurance, and the like), unions constantly elevate enterprise costs. In the end, it forces companies to cut their investment in research and development, which hurts their competitiveness. It also results in companies’ having to increase product prices, which harms consumer interests. Studies show that this is why companies without unions, such as Toyota and Honda, were able to produce high-quality cars at lower costs, and why American automobile factories with labor unions in Detroit became less competitive.

As Edwin Feulner, founder of the American Heritage Foundation, said of unions, “They function like an albatross around a company’s neck—making it less flexible, less able to react wisely to the demands of a changing marketplace.”

All this is aggravated with union monopolies in the labor market. This then exerts deleterious influence over business decisions and results in numerous unreasonable demands, some of them harsh. Enterprises that fail to meet these union demands are then the targets of struggle, including strikes and protests, which further disable the businesses.

The United Auto Workers is the union representing the autoworkers in Detroit. It routinely went on strike. Prior to the financial crisis in 2008, the union demanded \$70 an hour in wages and benefits. Consequently, the U.S. automobile manufacturing industry was almost on the brink of bankruptcy.

The loss of job opportunities in the U.S. manufacturing industry is now known to all, but many people don’t know that unions are a key driver of the job losses. Unionized manufacturing jobs fell by 75 percent between 1977 and

2008, while non-union manufacturing employment increased by 6 percent over that time, according to a report by The Heritage Foundation.

The situation outside the manufacturing sector is also similar. Take the construction industry, for instance. “Unlike the manufacturing sector, the construction industry has grown considerably since the late 1970s. However, in the aggregate, that growth has occurred exclusively in non-union jobs, expanding 159 percent since 1977,” the report states.

In addition, labor unions are the tools employed by communist elements to promote egalitarianism in enterprises. The Heritage Foundation notes that unions demand that companies pay wages according to the length of service of the employee (equivalent to years of service in socialist countries), without regard to the employee’s contribution to the company or performance. “Union contracts compress wages: They suppress the wages of more productive workers and raise the wages of the less competent,” it states.

Many Westerners today have never had the tragic experience of living in a communist totalitarian state. They continue to harbor the illusory hope for a communist paradise, and therefore fan the flames by advocating communist and socialist ideas.

The idea at work here is the same as absolute egalitarianism under communism, which is effectively the redistribution of wealth among employees within the enterprise. The interference with the internal decision-making of enterprises and the monopoly of the labor market is an erosion of the free market.

Unions’ aggressive advocacy for what they describe as workers’ welfare ends up favoring some workers over others and puts a drag on individual companies and the economy as a whole. A survey conducted in 2005 showed that “most union households disapprove of American unions” and that “the main reason for their disapproval is never openly discussed in union media or addressed at union conventions.”

In all respects, those workers who are truly diligent have become victims, and communism has become the biggest winner. Fundamentally, communists use labor unions to destroy the capitalist free economy, subvert the capitalist system, and undermine the normal life of man in a gradual and step-by-step manner.

Labor unions infiltrated by communism and under the guidance of the progressive movement have evolved into a special interest group, similar to a large-scale for-profit corporation. The leadership has huge personal interests in the enterprise, and corruption is common.

In democratic countries, labor unions have largely become a tool for leftists to fight against capitalism. They single-mindedly demand “social justice” and

“fairness,” creating a huge welfare burden on society and industry, and becoming an obstacle for reform and attempts to improve efficiency in the manufacturing, service, and education industries, as well as in government administration. When the time is not ripe, they hide, but when conditions are favorable, they come out and mobilize a social movement to promote their ends. Labor unions have thus become a wedge communism uses to divide free societies.

7. Communist ‘Ideals’: Tempting Man Toward His Own Destruction

Despite communist theory being full of loopholes and contradictions, many are still deceived by it. This is because Marx described a communist paradise that people all over the world would enjoy. This is the central fantasy and delusion. His depiction includes “overwhelming material abundance,” much higher moral standards, and “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” There would be no private ownership, no gap between the rich and the poor, no ruling class, no exploitation, freedom, and equality for all, and each person would be able to develop his or her particular talents. Life would be wonderful.

This set of deceitful arguments attracted many to fight for it. Many Westerners today have never had the tragic experience of living in a communist totalitarian state. They continue to harbor an illusory hope for a communist paradise, and therefore fan the flames by advocating communist and socialist ideas.

In fact, all the ideas put forward by Marx are simply illusions.

Marxism claims that a communist society will enjoy a superabundance of material goods. However, human desires and human wants are endless. Under the constraints of limited human knowledge, limited working hours, and limited resources, shortages and deprivations are inevitable. This is the most basic starting point for all economic studies. Without these constraints, people wouldn’t have to explore which kind of production method was most efficient, as the supposed superabundance would provide for all and could be squandered at will.

Marxism claims that moral standards in communist society will have greatly improved. However, good and evil coexist in each person, and the improvement of moral standards requires the guidance of orthodox beliefs and values, as well as personal efforts in self-cultivation.

What Marxism preaches is atheism and class struggle, which enlarge the evil side of man. People are not allowed to have freedom of belief, and religion is only a political tool of the Communist Party. What’s more, under communism, religious institutions are used to safeguard tyranny, to mislead the world, to resist God, to oppose God, and to turn people further away from God. Without righteous belief in God and self-discipline, morality can only decline. In addition, all communist leaders were tyrants—arrogant, lewd, and completely unethical. To expect their followers to be so vastly improved in moral standards runs counter to reason.

Marxism also proclaims there will be equality for all. But as discussed earlier, socialism inevitably leads to totalitarianism. Power is the basis of resource distribution, yet the distribution of power under a totalitarian state is most unfair. Therefore, resource distribution under totalitarianism also will be most unfair. In all countries where socialism rules or has ruled, people see a privileged stratum form, as well as extreme gaps between the rich and the poor and the suppression of people by the state.

See next edition for the next installment.

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NUTRITION FACTS

Diet Soda and Sugar Cravings
Trying to satisfy your sweet tooth with diet soda won't help, say researchers.

See B10

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING

What's the best way to avoid the new coronavirus?
It's simple. Focus on washing your hands, writes a former China correspondent who was in China during the SARS outbreak
See B12

MARCH 12 - 18, 2020 B1

LIFE

THE EPOCH TIMES



VISIT MADEIRA

Madeira's beautiful coastline.

Ups and Downs in Madeira

The volcanic island, a 90-minute ride by plane from Lisbon, is Portugal's most exotic and geographically diverse destination

WIBKE CARTER

It's 6:45 a.m., pitch dark, eerily quiet, and I'm still half-asleep as I carefully follow my guide on a stony trail on the side of Pico do Arieiro, Madeira's third-highest mountain.

We lay down the blanket, pour a much-needed coffee and then we wait. And wait. And wait. Suddenly, the birds begin to sing, the sky changes quickly from almost black, to gray, and then to orange. Only a few minutes later, the sun pierces the horizon and rises above the ocean.

All tiredness gone, I enjoy every minute of this awe-inspiring and somewhat humbling experience. For a city slicker like me, the wonders of nature don't come along that often.

The volcanic island of Madeira, about 360 miles off the west coast of Africa or 90 minutes by plane from Lisbon, is Portugal's most exotic and geographically diverse destination. Unlike some European party islands such as Ibiza or Mallorca, it attracts a slightly older clientele, and raving is limited to gushing about the island's

rugged cliffs, which rise steeply from the sea, the evergreen flora and fauna, and the lush flower gardens.

In the afternoon, I join a group of hikers on my first "levada" walk. Levadas are man-made irrigation channels dug into the rock to carry water from the mountains to the lower-lying farmlands, a system that still works today.

"I pay a very small fee for my levada water," says guide Fabio Castro. "For that, I get a weekly, hourly slot during which the water gets diverted to my property. I can irrigate my garden but also store any excess water."

There are hundreds of miles of levada walks, many of them passing through the more-than-50-million-year-old Lauris-silva Forest, a precious natural environment only found in Madeira, the Azores, and the Canary Islands. I walk next to the gently sloping water channels past some indigenous vegetation before breaks in the trees reveal views over grand gorges. Before long, I'm sprayed by rushing waterfalls and swallowed again by jungle.

Continued on B2



VISIT MADEIRA

Levadas are man-made irrigation channels dug into the rock to carry water from the mountains to the lower-lying farmlands, a system that still works today.



WIBKE CARTER

A view of Funchal Bay from the cable car.

Ups and Downs in Madeira

Continued from B1

Subtropical Climate

Madeira has a subtropical climate, thanks to the Gulf Stream, which results in a wide variety of flora including some rare orchid species. On the island’s plantations, there are bananas, avocados, custard apples, cherries, and papaya.

“My pregnant wife is craving these,” Castro says with a laugh, as he pockets a handful of banana passionfruit.

The island’s natural and introduced resources, as well as its geostrategic position, made it an important port of call in the Portuguese Age of Discovery, which led to the discovering and mapping of the coasts of Africa, Canada, Asia, and Brazil in the 15th and 16th centuries.

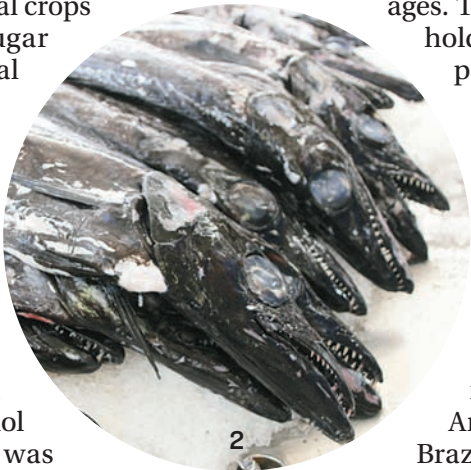
It’s believed that explorer João Gonçalves Zarco, who discovered Madeira exactly 600 years ago, in 1419, named the island “Madeira,” which means “timber” or “wood.” Colonization began soon after, and the introduction of agricultural crops such as cereals and sugar turned the capital Funchal into a commercial hub, though one of the island’s most famous exports, Madeira wine, was born by accident.

How Madeira Wine Came About

To prevent the fine grapes from spoiling, a small amount of distilled alcohol made from cane sugar was



WIBKE CARTER



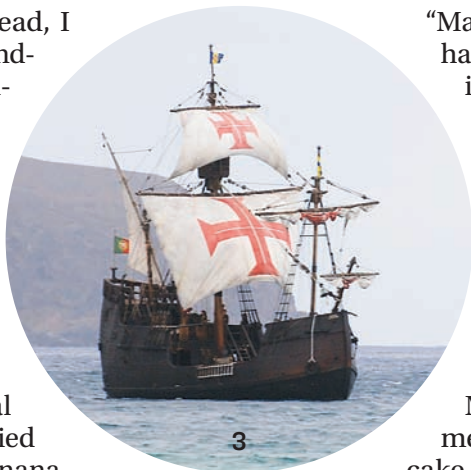
added during the long sea voyages. The heat of the ship’s hold dramatically improved the wines, making them more complex, as well as stable and capable of aging almost indefinitely.

The 18th century was the “golden age” for Madeira. The wine’s popularity extended from the American colonies and Brazil in the New World

to Great Britain, Russia, and Northern Africa. It was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson’s, and was used to toast the Declaration of Independence in 1776. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams are also said to have been connoisseurs of Madeira wine.

Its fortified charms are lost on me, though, and instead, I take a shine to the islanders’ local drink. Madeirans process their small sugar-cane crop into a sweet distilled liquor called “aguardente de cana,” then mix it with fresh lemon and honey into a cocktail called “poncha.” And it’s delicious!

Another delicious local specialty is a meal of fried black scabbard with banana. The fresh fish are sold at the Mer-



VISIT MADEIRA

cado dos Lavradores, Funchal’s famous farmers market. I wonder about the eerie, zombie-like appearance until a fisherman explains that black scabbard is a deep-water predator, and its eyes turn milky when brought up from the depths of the ocean. Several times, I try to find Madeira cake on the menu but to no avail.

“Madeira cake as you know it has nothing to do with our island,” laughs a Madeira local, Luís Gonçalves.

“It was actually named after Madeira wine, with which it was served in England in the 18th century.”

He directs me to Fábrica Santo Antonio, where the traditional Madeira cake—bolo de mel, a dark, spicy, honey cake—has been made since 1893.



VISIT MADEIRA

- 1. Fabio Castro points at some banana passionfruit.
- 2. Black scabbard fish at the market.
- 3. Madeira was discovered in 1419.
- 4. Hikers take in the view.
- 5. Taking a ride in a two-seat wicker toboggan.
- 6. Marcia Gomes (L) shows a tablecloth priced at \$4,000 at Bordados da Madeira.
- 7. Funchal Bay.
- 8. A shopkeeper demonstrates how to tear off a piece of traditional Madeira cake at Shelves of artisanal treats at Fábrica Santo Antonio.

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“When we serve it, it is customary not to cut the cake, but rather to tear pieces off by hand,” explains the shop assistant.

Embroidered Treasures

An even older tradition is Madeira embroidery, which dates back to the early days of colonization, but it wasn't until the second half of the 19th century that the fabric was sold offshore. English traders established in Funchal began exporting embroidered pieces to England, with Germans and Americans following suit.

“Unfortunately, ours is a dying art,” says Marcia Gomes at the Bordados da Madeira, a manufacturer and exporter of Madeira embroidery. “We have about 400 women working for our company on the island but the youngest is 45 years old, and embroidery isn't taught in the local schools.”

The women pick up fabrics such as linen, natural silk, organdy, or cotton at the factory in Funchal, then return it completed to be paid by stitch. The most expensive item on sale is a tablecloth for \$4,000, which takes a year to finish—clearly too big for my hand luggage (or pocket). I buy a small lavender bag instead.

With purchase in hand and muscles aching from hiking, I choose to forego yet another climb in the steep hills of Funchal and take the cable car up to

Madeira has a subtropical climate, thanks to the Gulf Stream, which results in a wide variety of flora including some rare orchid species.

Wibke Carter is a travel writer who hails from Germany. She has lived in New Zealand and New York, and presently enjoys life in London. Her website is WibkeCarter.com



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VISIT MADEIRA



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Alex Snodgrass, the Dallas-based food blogger and mother of two behind The Defined Dish blog, has built a loyal online community of home cooks—including over 388,000 Instagram followers—drawn to her healthy, family-friendly, easy-to-make weeknight recipes. Her accompanying drool-inducing, technicolor photos don’t hurt, either.

Now, Snodgrass has released her first cookbook, “The Defined Dish: Whole30 Endorsed, Healthy and Wholesome Weeknight Recipes.”

As with her blog, many of the book’s recipes are Whole30-compliant. Snodgrass first completed the program in 2015, when she says it helped her manage post-partum anxiety after the birth of her second daughter and revolutionized her relationship with food. She began sharing her Whole30 recipes on The Defined Dish, and has since become a passionate advocate and source of knowledge and inspiration.

But any kind of home cook will appreciate Snodgrass’s creations, from hearty soups and salads to healthier takes on favorites like chicken piccata, gumbo, crispy carnitas, and enchiladas con carne.

Here, Snodgrass shares some of her family’s favorite recipes from the book, and dishes on the importance of eating together, her healthy pantry staples, and keeping it simple in the week-night kitchen.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What does the family meal mean to you and your family?
ALEX SNODGRASS: To me, food is what brings us together as humans. Dinner time is extremely important to me, not only because I can nourish my family but also because it is a time when we gather around the table

 SKILLET CHICKEN PICCATA



Growing up, my favorite dish that my mom made was her baked lemon chicken. I crave this dish on the reg, so I still have her make it for me when I go home. I very much look forward to these chicken cutlets baked in a thick, rich, buttery lemon sauce. This is my version, which I make in a skillet for even easier weeknight prep. I also use clean, Whole30-compliant ingredients, but don’t worry, it’s still just as decadent and comforting as the original.

PREP & COOKING TIME
Total Time: 40 minutes

SERVES 4

1kg skinless, boneless chicken cutlets (see Note)

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup arrowroot starch

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more as needed

1 tablespoon ghee

3 garlic cloves, minced

2 heaping tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed, plus more for serving

1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (1 lemon), plus lemon sliced for garnish (optional)

1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, for serving

Season the chicken cutlets on both sides with the salt and pepper and set aside.

Pour the arrowroot onto a large plate or a wide bowl. Lightly dredge each individual cutlet in the arrowroot until evenly coated, then shake off any excess. Place the dredged cutlets on a clean plate and continue until all are complete.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil. Working in batches so as to not overcrowd the skillet, carefully add the cutlets and cook until golden brown on both sides, 3–4 minutes per side. The chicken does not need to be completely cooked through, just golden brown. Transfer to a parchment-lined plate. Repeat with the remaining chicken, adding more oil to the pan if necessary.

Reduce the heat to low, add the ghee to the skillet, and swirl to evenly coat the bottom of the pan. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, stirring to prevent burning, about 30 seconds. Stir in the capers, chicken broth, and lemon juice. Increase the heat to a simmer. Nestle the chicken into the sauce and cook, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened and the chicken is tender, about 15 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper, if desired. Garnish with the parsley and fresh lemon slices, if desired, and serve.

NOTE
A chicken cutlet is a chicken breast that has been butterflied so it opens like a book. You can either do this yourself, or purchase it already done. Once you have opened your chicken into “cutlets,” finish the cut through the center so that they are divided in half lengthwise and no longer attached to each other. You should be left with two separate, thin pieces of chicken.

“**I think there is so much value in the simple act of just eating around the table as a family, at least once a day.**”

Alex Snodgrass, author, ‘The Defined Dish’

together, connect, discuss how our days went, and catch up with one another. I think there is so much value in the simple act of just eating around the table as a family, at least once a day.

The girls also like getting involved when I cook: they are very interested in helping me chop, stir, and set the table. I think they know how important food is to Mommy and it's been imprinted on them!

THE EPOCH TIMES: Where do you get your cooking inspiration from?

MS. SNODGRASS: Everywhere! I get inspiration from my childhood, my mom's Italian cooking, my grandma's southern recipes, plus a little Tex-Mex thrown in from my Texan roots. I also love learning about new flavors through traveling, reading, watching TV, and more.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What ingredients are always in your pantry and fridge?

MS. SNODGRASS: In my pantry, I always have arrowroot starch (a great substitute for cornstarch in Whole30 cooking), almond flour, Siete Foods chips, Rao's marinara sauce, canned tomatoes, anchovies, capers, and all sorts of nut butters. In my fridge, I always have eggs, bacon, a variety of greens, Siete Foods tortillas, so many hot sauces, Primal Kitchen ketchup, kimchi, and sauerkraut.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What kitchen tool can't you live without?

MS. SNODGRASS: A good knife! I hate traveling and cooking without my own set of knives. I love my Made In knife.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are some of your favorite game-changing, time-saving weeknight cooking tips?

MS. SNODGRASS: Keep it simple! I am not one of those people who like to meal prep everything on Sundays; however, I do find that preparing easy grab-and-go breakfasts is super helpful, as is



Alex Snodgrass in the kitchen with her daughters.

making a few homemade salad dressings, or chopping ingredients in advance.

Then, for each dinner I like to think about the simplest and most flavorful recipe I can whip on a weeknight: think tacos and taco salads, quick and easy stir-fries, or even bun-less burgers. Anything that you don't have to use too much brainpower or time to make, but that the whole family will love.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are some of your best tricks to make a dish healthier, without sacrificing flavor?

MS. SNODGRASS: To me, food is supposed to taste good and be a lovely experience from start to finish. With that, the simplest way to add flavor, in my opinion, is through a lovely assortment

“
The girls also like getting involved when I cook ... I think they know how important food is to Mommy and it's been imprinted on them!

Alex Snodgrass, author, 'The Defined Dish'

of spices and fresh herbs. With plenty of flavorful spices and fresh herbs on hand, you can make just about anything taste great.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What makes a dish a winner for you and your family? What weeknight recipes do you go back to time and time again?

MS. SNODGRASS: If everyone cleans their plates, it's a win! Some of my family favorites include Chicken Piccata, Perfect Whole30 Italian Meatballs, Grain-Free Chicken Parmesan, Steak Street Tacos, Lemony Greek Chicken Thighs and Potatoes, One-Pot Mexican Chicken and Rice, and Slow-Cooker Chicken Tikka Masala. All can be found in the cookbook.

Interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

ALL PHOTOS BY KRISTEN KILPATRICK



STEAK STREET TACOS

Sometimes the best things in life are the simplest things. This recipe? Case in point! When it comes to street tacos, they are incredibly easy to make and have only a few ingredients. This beef version is one of my family's favorites so it gets requested often, which, as a busy momma, makes me happy because they are super quick to whip up any night of the week. The filling is also just as delicious wrapped up in lettuce leaves if you're looking for a tortilla alternative. Simple, delicious, and classic! You just can't go wrong.

- PREP & COOKING TIME**
Total Time: 35 minutes
- SERVES 4**
- FOR THE STEAK**
- 750g skirt or flap steak
 - 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 1/4 cup finely diced white onion
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - 1 teaspoon chili powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper

- TO ASSEMBLE**
- 1 head of butter lettuce leaves or 8 grain-free tortillas (I use Siete brand)
 - 1/2 white onion, finely diced
 - 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves
 - 2 limes, cut into wedges
 - Your favorite hot sauce or salsa (optional)

FOR THE STEAK

Place the steak on a cutting board and cover it with a sheet of parchment paper. Use a meat mallet to pound the steak 20–30 times to tenderize. Discard the paper, then slice the steak into small 1/4-inch cubes.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the diced steak and onion. Spread them into a single even layer and let brown, about 4 minutes. Add the cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper and toss to evenly coat. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the steak is cooked through and slightly crisp around the edges, 4–5 more minutes.

TO ASSEMBLE

Spoon the beef over the butter lettuce leaves or warm tortillas and serve with the onion, cilantro, lime wedges, and hot sauce. Enjoy!

ENCHILADAS CON CARNE

Enchiladas always take me back to my childhood and, to be perfectly honest, both of my pregnancies! Seriously, all I wanted to do when I was pregnant with my girls was head to the closest Tex-Mex restaurant and chow down on a big platter of enchiladas. They always tasted great, but I always regretted it afterwards because I knew they weren't the most nutritious option I could have gone for. But hey, when you're pregnant, it's hard to make clear decisions sometimes. The cravings tend to win!

Now that I am not pregnant and don't have the "excuse" to just chow down on a platter of enchiladas on the regular, I had to make my own wholesome—but just as indulgent—version in my own kitchen. These enchiladas are the real deal. I know because, well, I've eaten a lot of enchiladas in my lifetime! And when I make them for friends and family (see Note), I'm told they're even better than the Tex-Mex restaurants in town. Heck yeah.

PREP & COOKING TIME
Total Time: 35 minutes

SERVES 4

FOR THE ENCHILADA SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons ghee
- 2 tablespoons arrowroot starch
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano

- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 - 3 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 2 cups low-sodium beef broth
- FOR THE ENCHILADAS**
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
 - 1 750g ground beef, 85 percent lean
 - 1 400g can chopped mild green chiles
 - 1 cup finely diced white onion (1/2 medium)
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 8 (20cm) grain-free tortillas (I use Siete cassava or coconut tortillas)
 - 1/2 cup shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese mixture (omit for dairy-free, paleo)
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- FOR SERVING**
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
 - 2 tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro
- Preheat the oven to 160 degrees C.

MAKE THE ENCHILADA SAUCE

In a small saucepan, melt the ghee over medium heat. Add the arrowroot and whisk just until combined. Add the chili powder, garlic powder, cumin, paprika, onion powder, and cayenne pepper. Whisk to combine. Continue whisking as the spices toast to prevent them from burning, about 2 minutes.

Whisk in the tomato paste, then slowly pour in 1 1/2 cups of the broth. Cook, whisking constantly, until the

sauce thickens, 4–5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and slowly pour in the remaining 1/2 cup of broth and salt. Whisk the sauce until smooth, remove from heat, and set aside.

MAKE THE ENCHILADAS

Heat the avocado oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef, green chiles, onion, salt, and pepper. Use a wooden spoon or the end of a spatula to break the meat up into small pieces and cook, stirring, until no longer pink, about 7 minutes. Carefully drain the excess fat from the pan and discard. Add 1/2 cup of the enchilada sauce to the ground beef mixture and toss to coat.

Pour another 1/2 cup of the enchilada sauce into a wide bowl. Dip each tortilla individually into the sauce to coat both sides, then shake off excess. Fill each tortilla with 2 tablespoons of the meat mixture and carefully roll it up. Place the rolled tortillas in a 9 x 13-inch casserole dish seam-side down. Repeat until all of the tortillas are filled, rolled, and in the casserole dish.

Pour the remaining meat mixture across the top of the enchiladas, followed by the remaining enchilada sauce. The enchiladas should be completely covered in sauce. Top with the shredded cheese if desired. Bake, uncovered, for 15 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and golden brown and the sauce is bubbly.

To serve, top with sliced avocado and cilantro.

NOTE

This is a great make-ahead dish to take to someone in need of a home-cooked meal. I love taking a batch to new parents, someone who lost a loved one, or a dear friend who is a little down. I don't bake it off, but cover it with foil and pop a note on top with directions



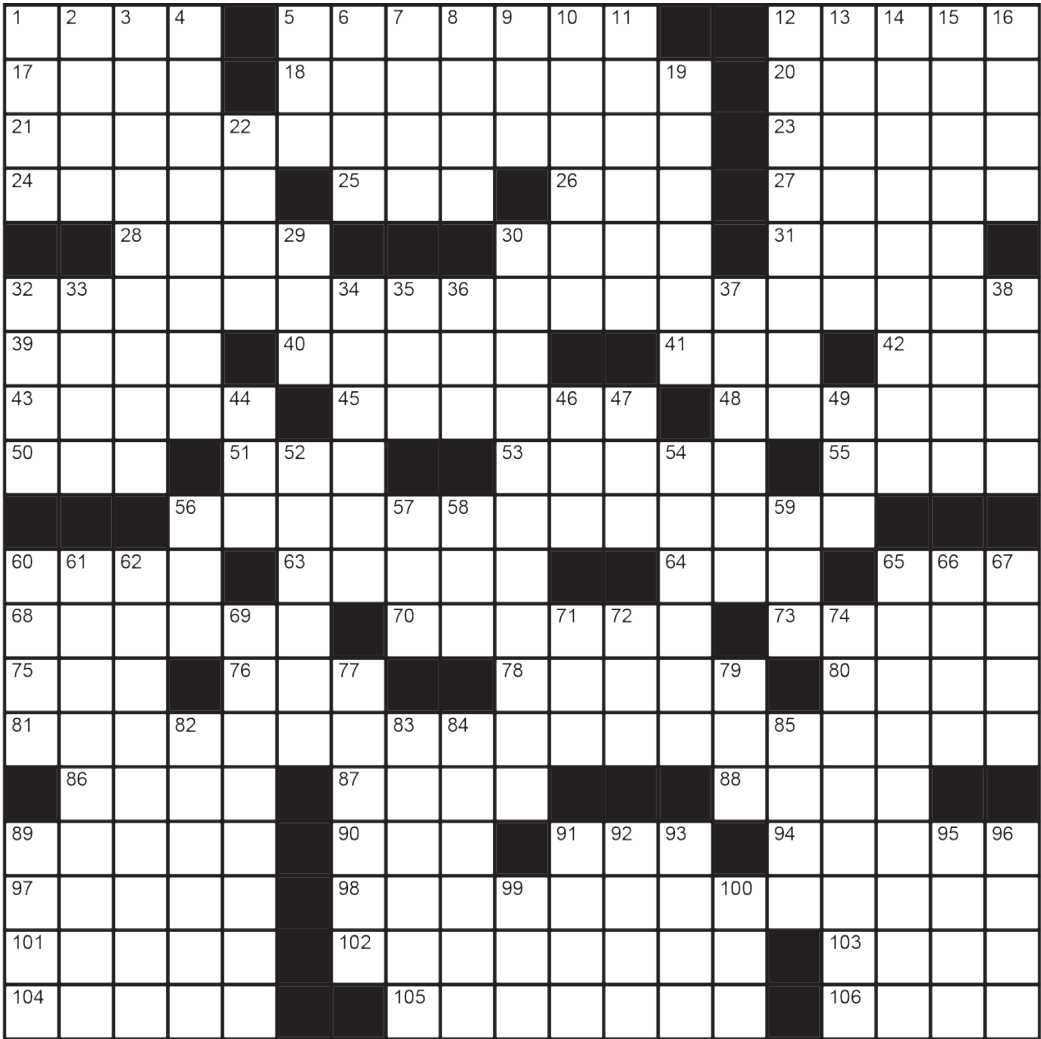
to bake at 160 degrees C for 15 minutes. They'll be so happy to have a healthy and comforting meal that is made with love.

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* Use American spelling to enjoy these puzzles made by our parent company in New York.

CROSSWORD

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON
EPOCH TIMES STAFF



Across

1. Sun hat
5. Aid for finding one's way
12. Range rovers
17. Shakespeare, the Bard of ____
18. The New World
20. Leave from Oxford
21. Making a fool of oneself
23. Former Greek pennies
24. Whale food
25. "... you'll say a beggar ____": Shak.
26. "Formerly"
27. Slacker
28. Young seal
30. Pickle flavoring
31. Husk
32. Aspirin
39. Cockeyed
40. Shoe part
41. 1960s-'70s pro hoops league
42. "Wheel of Fortune" purchase
43. Muffler
45. Big test
48. Pleased as punch
50. Pole with a blade on one end
51. Frequently
53. All alternative
55. Mexican moolah
56. Trade policies the WTO concerns itself with over-coming

60. Opportune
63. Church assembly
64. 1940s foe: Abbr.
65. Marvelous, in slang
68. Paragons
70. 3-D, as photos, in NASA-speak
73. Skirt style
75. Break a Commandment
76. Symbol of might
78. Of weight, in physics
80. Creative
81. Effectiveness evaluation
86. Big mouths
87. Mine entrance
88. "Contract With America" first name

89. Unspoken
90. Annoy
91. Epitome of easiness
94. Alarms of a sort.
97. Answer (for)
98. Fundamental right of governments
101. Edmonton skater
102. "Come ____ Morning" (1970 hit)
103. Early pulpit
104. Battle marks
105. Part of a heartbeat
106. Love ____

Down

1. Function
2. Throughout
3. Adam-12 unit
4. Air pump?
5. Truck's passenger area
6. Arabian Peninsula land
7. City near Phoenix
8. Target
9. Prepare to shoot
10. Worth a look
11. In a rational fashion
12. Near the sun, in as-
tronomy
13. Semicircular recess in Roman architecture
14. Copy
15. "Can I call you again?" and the like?
16. "...following yonder ____"
19. Stanley Kowalski's wife
22. Unite
29. Kind of shot
30. Automatic bill payment
32. Additionally
33. Sid Caesar's sidekick
34. Erratic
35. 30-day mo.
36. Directed

37. Spain and Portugal
38. "Here With Me" singer
44. "... ____ spacious skies"
46. Sashimi platter option
47. "Seinfeld" uncle
49. Appropriate
52. Anatomical cavities
54. Prohibit
56. Prankster's projectile
57. Half ems (print)
58. "Three hots and a ____" (basic necessities)
59. Calistoga, for one
60. First aid program for combat journalists
61. Characteristic of a particular language
62. Blue Angels' home
65. Birth bestowal
66. Debate side
67. Former Tunisian rulers
69. Bib depictions at cer-
tain eateries
71. Scoundrel
72. Victorian ____
74. She's not a cleric
77. Jacks
79. Preserve
82. Braid maker
83. Swellings
84. Stable quality
85. Kind of block
89. New Mexico art com-
munity
91. Sassy
92. Prefix with European
93. And others: Abbr.
95. Fixed tomcat
96. A nasal runoff, embar-
rassingly
99. Delta ____ ("Legally
Blonde" characters)
100. Hair colorer

4NUMBERS

CONSTRUCTED BY C. CHANG
AT 4NUMS.COM

Use the four numbers in the corners, and the operands (+, -, X, and ÷) to **build an equation** to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" so-
lution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7X3) +1 =28 and 1+ (7X3) +6 =28

30

36

40

10

34

+

-

X

÷

Hard 1 - 1 Solution

11

33

22

1

20

+

-

X

÷

Hard 2 - 1 Solution

2

5

41

1

4

+

-

X

÷

Easy 1 - 1 Solution

5

8

92

4

5

+

-

X

÷

Easy 2 - 1 Solution

WORDSEARCH

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Help with Today's Crossword Puzzle?

P E N S A C O L A V S C S S R
S W N U A L I N E A I E A R I
C G N H A K Q D C R V M E L J
A P I E E D I I A A E L O O S
R C D L E R R B N D I C E B T
S R E T E E D K E O T V L S E
O N A M M P E S S R W L A T L
H L L A Z L T X F A I A T E L
E A S C S I W A E R N A G R A
L Y T O M C D U K D E E J S F
I W A O E A E L P X R Z L S O
A O C B N T F N E P N A N Y S
C M I C H E E R I R E S E N S
A A T G O N G S S C A R F O A
L N L C D I N F L A T O R D E

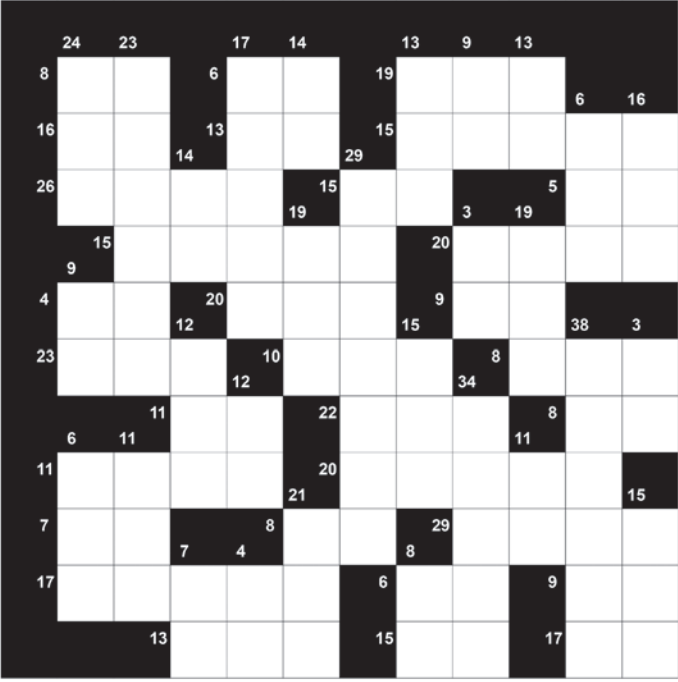
- ATONE
- BARIC
- CHEER
- ELATED
- EXEAT
- EXEDRA
- FOSSAE
- GONGS
- HELIACAL
- HERDS
- IBERIA
- IDEALS
- IDLER
- INFLATOR
- KNAVES
- KRILL
- LAYWOMAN
- LEPTA
- LOBSTERS
- OILER
- ORDEAL
- PENSACOLA
- SANELY
- SCARF
- SCARS
- SCENIC
- STELLA
- SYNOD
- TACIT
- TWINER
- UPPER
- ALINE
- AMERICAS
- EDEMAS
- REPLICATE

KAKURO

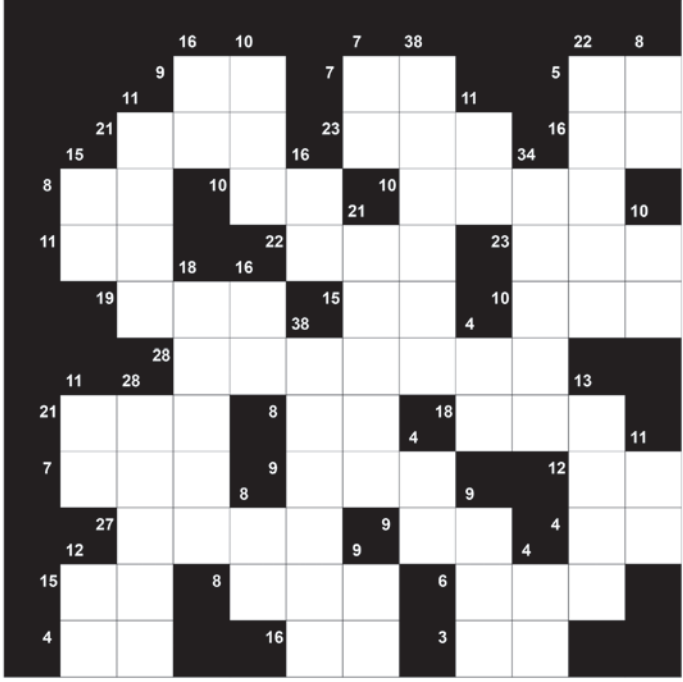
CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

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.

Large: Hard



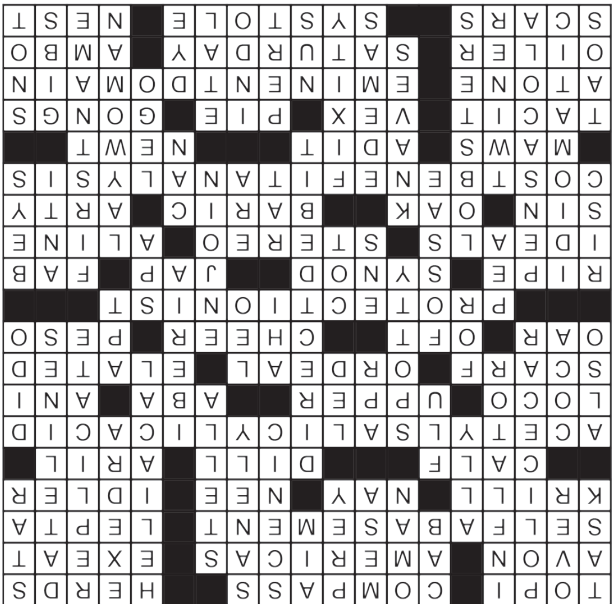
Large: Easy



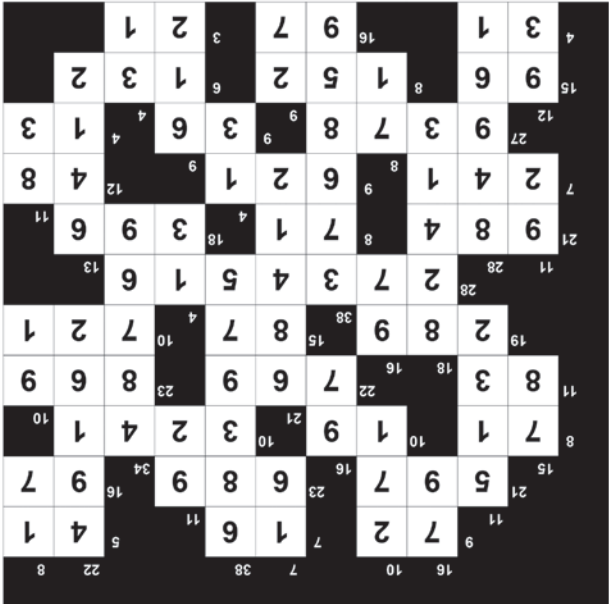
WORK SPACE

SOLUTIONS

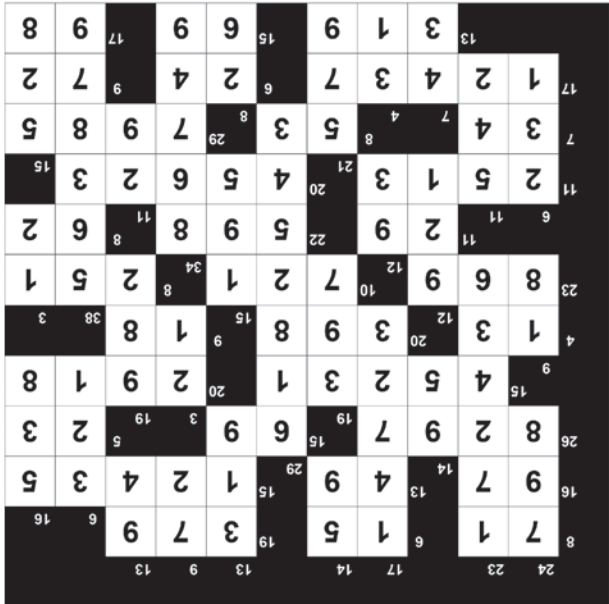
CROSSWORD



KAKURO LARGE: EASY



KAKURO LARGE: HARD



4 NUMBERS

- HARD 1
(30 - 10) × (3 - 1) = 34
- HARD 2
33 ÷ 11 + 20 - 1 = 1
- EASY 1
5 × 4 × 2 + 1 = 41
- EASY 2
5 × 5 × 4 - 8 = 92

Masaccio: The Early Renaissance Painter

LORRAINE FERRIER

FLORENCE, Italy—The Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria Carmine in Florence is where you’ll find one of the most important fresco cycles of the early Italian Renaissance. It’s important not because of the subject matter, but because of the innovative techniques that Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone, known as Masaccio, employed to paint the life of St. Peter.

Interestingly, Masaccio’s new method of painting is side-by-side with the work of Tommaso di Cristoforo Fini, known as Masolino, who painted in the style of the day.

It was in 1423 that Felice Brancacci, a wealthy merchant, commissioned Masolino and Masaccio to paint the fresco cycle in the chapel that was originally dedicated to St. Peter. However, the frescoes were left unfinished in 1427 when Masolino had to leave for Hungary and Masaccio left for Rome. Filippino Lippi completed the unfinished and missing scenes between 1481 and 1483.

Here, we focus on two of the frescoes by Masaccio: “The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden” and “The Tribute Money.”

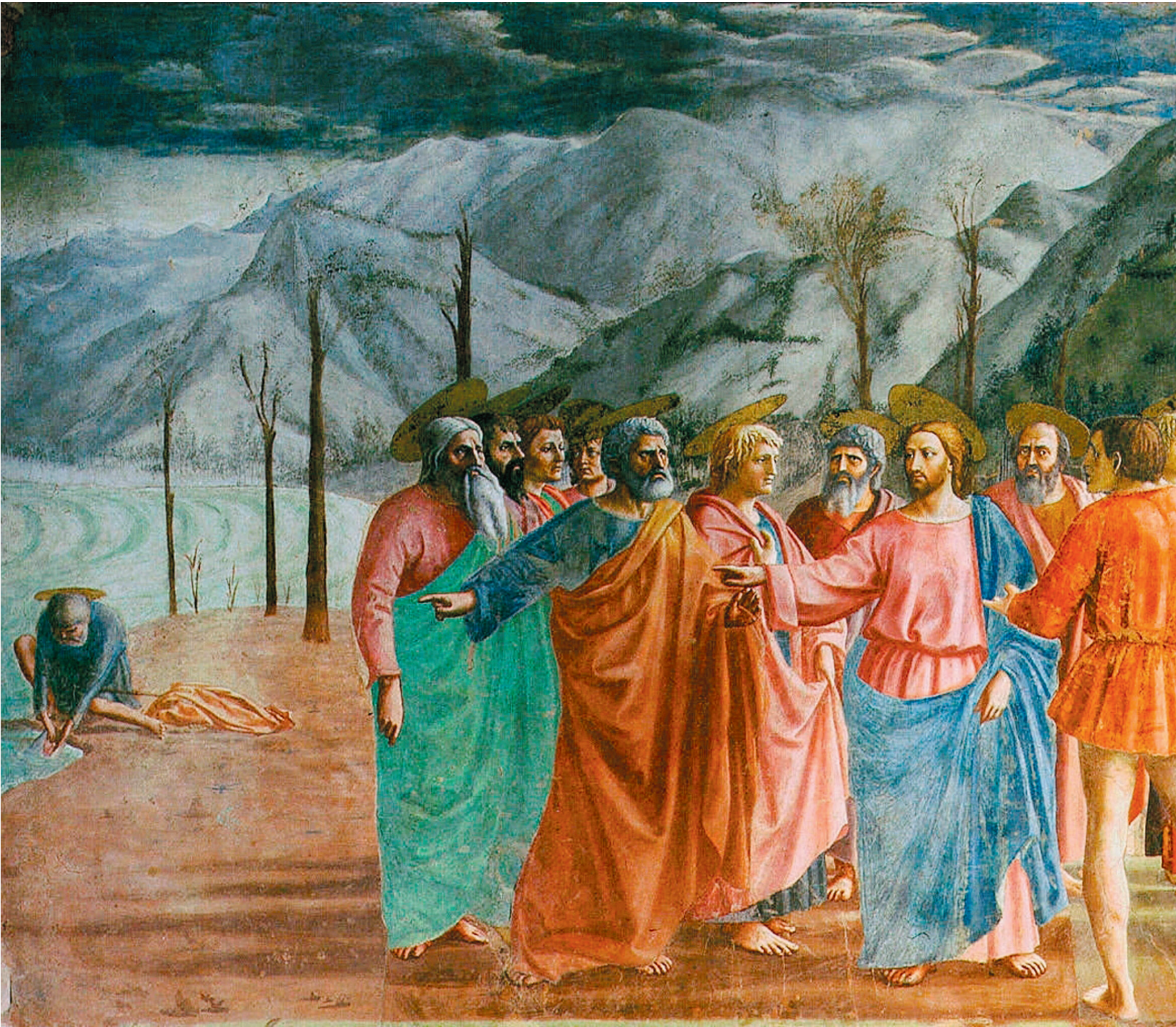
Masaccio may not be as well-known as Michelangelo, but his impact on the art of painting has been far-reaching.

“All those who have endeavored to learn the art of painting have always gone for that purpose to the Brancacci Chapel to grasp the precepts and rules demonstrated by Masaccio for the correct representation of figures,” wrote Giorgio Vasari in “The Lives of Artists.”

And indeed, the great masters Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo himself did study Masaccio’s frescoes. It’s interesting to note that Masaccio’s painting style was appreciated more after his death than in his short lifetime; he died at just 26 years old.

Vasari wrote that Masaccio was so devoted to his art that he cared little for his appearance or for worldly affairs, which may have led to his nickname Masaccio, meaning “sloppy Tom” or “bad Tom.” It certainly wasn’t a reflection of his character, as Vasari describes him as “goodness itself.”

Masaccio was both a maverick and a traditionalist. While Masaccio’s contemporaries were painting in the international gothic style characterized by its elegant posture and gestures, Masaccio was pioneering the use of perspective and chiaroscuro (light and shade) to develop a more realistic style of painting. He took his inspira-



Masaccio was pioneering the use of perspective and chiaroscuro (light and shade) to develop a more realistic style of painting.

tion from the past: from Giotto and further back to the classical art of antiquity.

Masaccio was one of the first to refine painting, Vasari said, by removing “its harshness, imperfections, and difficulties,” to create natural figures full of “expressions, gestures, boldness, and vitality.”

Indeed, Masaccio puts the human firmly in the painting. He painted in solid forms that seem to set his figures in motion, and in turn, the figures’ emotive gestures can move any viewer’s heart. Through Masaccio’s “The Tribute Money,” we can see how he led the way in the early Italian Renaissance.

“The Tribute Money”
Standing in front of the fresco “The Tribute Money,” you certainly get a sense of the story unfolding. Here, Masaccio depicts a scene from Matthew 17: 24-27 when Christ, surrounded by his disciples, is confronted by a tax collector who demands tribute money. Christ gestures to Peter to cast

a line into the sea, and Christ says that the first fish Peter catches will have the money in its mouth.

In this continuous narrative painting, several scenes play out within the picture frame. Three parts of the story are laid out before you: In the center, the tax demand is made; to the left of the painting, Peter retrieves the money from the mouth of the fish; and to the right, Peter pays the tax collector.

Masaccio uses clever innovations inspired by classical antiquity to pull you into the painting: First, our attention is drawn to Christ in the center. Masaccio uses single-point perspective, a mathematical technique that his friend, the architect Filippo Brunelleschi, revived from classical times.

In this case, Christ’s head is the single focal point. All the disciples, dressed in the clothing of ancient Greece, gather around Christ in a semi-circle, a classical composition that Brunelleschi had revived in his architectural designs. The

overall composition of the main group is harmonious, even though each character’s face expresses a different emotion.

Look at the tax collector. He stands to the right of Christ in the painting, with his clothes differing from the others in the scene. Most of his weight is on his left foot with his right knee slightly bent, a classical stance from antiquity called contrapposto, and a stance used by Masaccio’s friend Donatella in his sculptures. The tax collector appears tentative on his feet, almost taken aback as he demands the tax. His back foot almost steps out of the frame, almost into our space, a device to pull us into the painting.

Then, we see Christ and Peter who both gesture to the left of the painting to move us to the second scene, where Peter collects the money from the mouth of the fish.

As you gaze over to the sea on the left, notice how the dark-brown foreground contrasts with the almost hazy gray-blue mountains in the background,

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That Great Masters Followed



Masaccio's "The Tribute Money," one of many frescoes in the Brancacci chapel in Florence, Italy.

Masaccio was one of the first to refine painting, Vasari said, by removing 'its harshness, imperfections, and difficulties,' to create natural figures full of 'expressions, gestures, boldness, and vitality.'

to give a sense of distance and an awareness of space, a technique called "atmospheric perspective," or as Leonardo da Vinci called it, "aerial perspective."

Then rather cleverly, Masaccio uses the natural light in the Brancacci Chapel that enters from the window on the fresco's right, as the light source in the painting. This light defines the pictorial space, solidifies the forms and structures, and allows shadows to naturally fall, as seen in life, and in classic Roman art. This technique hadn't been used for 1,000 years.

You could say that Masaccio uses the chapel window light to put you in the space of the painting; or, it could be that the people in the painting are in the chapel with you. That's the magic of Masaccio's masterpiece; it's painted in a way that makes you wonder.

Masaccio humanizes the painting, and even divine symbols are solidified. Notice the foreshortened halos. Masaccio takes this ethereal symbol, and places it firmly in our reality. He



The Brancacci Chapel, in Florence, Italy, houses a fresco cycle painted by Masaccio and Masolino circa 1425-1427.

makes the halos solid, as if they are on our earthly plane. He's saying these are real, perhaps to inform us that there's no separation between us and the divine. Vasari notes that Masaccio perfected foreshortening

from every viewpoint possible in his paintings.

And, lastly, John with his golden locks of hair, to the left of Christ, has classical Roman facial features, and as you follow along to the far right of the

painting, there stands a man whose pose almost mirrors John's, and who according to Vasari, is Masaccio himself.

'The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden'

Let's leave the relative harmony of "The Tribute Money" for a moment and glance at Masaccio's first fresco of the cycle, to the left, as you enter the Brancacci Chapel: the emotive "The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden." It certainly packs a punch.

Here, we can see the full shame of Eve's actions, shown in her raw emotion and grief-stricken stride. She's been exposed and covers her naked shame in a very particular classical pose: that of the aptly named "Venus pudica," or modest Venus. There are no delicate details on Eve's face; here is a woman in agony and momentarily aghast with the horror of what has just happened. Adam holds his head in shame, in what appears more a mental pain than Eve's physical pain.

The painting is in stark contrast to the international Gothic style of the time, and can be seen directly opposite in two of Masolino's paintings, in the same fresco cycle: "The Temptation of Adam and Eve," and "The Healing of the Cripple and Raising of Tabitha." In these paintings, beautiful, elegant figures were almost rooted to the ground in a two-dimensional fashion.

A Tribute to Masaccio

To us, Masaccio's painting techniques may now seem normal, but in his time, they were revolutionary.

Vasari confirms that Masaccio was a pioneer: "Works created before Masaccio can be described merely as painting, while his creations compared to those executed by others are lifelike, true, and natural."

Masaccio joins his friends Brunelleschi and Donatello as one of the fathers of the early Italian Renaissance; Masaccio's techniques advanced painting in the same way that Brunelleschi advanced architecture and Donatello advanced sculpture.

And although Masaccio died young, and no memorial was made, several epitaphs were written. One by writer and poet Annibale Caro sums up Masaccio's legacy:

I painted, and my painting was equal to truth;
I gave my figures poses, animation, motion,
And emotion. [Michelangelo]
Buonarroti taught all the others
And learned from me alone.



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Why Drinking Diet Soda Makes You Crave Sugar

Your tongue might be fooled, but your body and brain pay a price for sweet cravings

MICHAEL GREGER

Recommendations on limiting sugar consumption vary around the world, with guidelines ranging from one sweet dessert every other day to keeping sugar consumption to four or less occasions per day.

In the United States, the American Heart Association calls for “dramatic reductions in the consumption of soft drinks and other sweetened products” and recommends fewer than 5 percent of our daily calories come from added sugars, which can be less than a single can of soda.

Why is the American Heart Association so concerned about sugar?

“Overconsumption of added sugars has long been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease,” warns researcher Laura A. Schmidt in a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

We used to think added sugars were just a marker for an unhealthy diet. At fast-food restaurants, for example, people may be more likely to order a cheeseburger with their super-sized soda than a salad. However, the new thinking is that the added sugars in processed foods and drinks may be independent risk factors in and of themselves. Indeed, worse than just empty calories, they may be disease-promoting calories.

The data show that only about 1 percent of Americans meet the American Heart Association recommendation to keep added sugar intake down to 5 or 6 percent of daily caloric intake. Most people are up around 15 percent, which is where cardiovascular disease risk starts to take off. There is a doubling of risk at about 25 percent of calories and a quadrupling of risk for those getting one-third of their daily caloric intake from added sugar.

Two hundred years ago, we ate an estimated seven pounds of sugar annually. According to the Diabetes Council, that figure rose to 17.5 pounds by 1915. As of today, Americans consume around 66 pounds of added sugar, which doesn’t include naturally occurring sugars in fruit and milk.

We’re hardwired to like sweet foods because we have always been surrounded by fruit, not Froot Loops, but this adaptation has been hijacked by the food industry for our pleasure and their profits.

“Why are we consuming so much sugar despite knowing too much can harm us?” asks a 2015 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine. Yes, it may have an addictive quality and there’s the hardwiring, but the processed food industry isn’t helping. Seventy-five percent of packaged foods and beverages in the United States contain added sweeteners, mostly coming from sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, which are thought responsible for more than a 100,000 deaths worldwide and millions of years of healthy life lost.

Can we switch to diet sodas? Unfortunately, no.

Artificial Sweeteners Versus the Brain

It seems switching to diet soda makes little difference.

“Routine consumption of diet soft drinks is linked to increases in the same risks that many seek to avoid by using artificial sweeteners—namely type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome heart disease, and stroke,” warns Susan E. Swithers in her 2015 study, “Not so Sweet Revenge: Unanticipated Consequences of High-Intensity Sweeteners.”

“In other words, the belief that artificially sweetened diet beverages reduce long-term health risks is not supported by scientific evidence, and instead, scientific data indicate that diet soft drink consumption may contribute to the very health risks people have been seeking to avoid,” writes Swithers.

But, why? It makes sense that drinking all that sugar in a regular soft



Only about 1 percent of Americans meet the American Heart Association recommendation to keep added sugar intake down to 5 or 6 percent of daily caloric intake.

Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, are thought to be responsible for more than a 100,000 deaths worldwide and millions of years of healthy life lost.



drink might increase stroke risk, due to the extra inflammation and triglycerides, but why does a can of diet soda appear to increase stroke risk the same amount?

It’s possible that the caramel coloring in brown sodas like colas plays a role, but another possibility is that “artificial sweeteners may increase the desire for sugar-sweetened, energy-dense beverages/foods,” finds a 2014 study published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

The problem with artificial sweeteners “is that a disconnect ultimately develops between the amount of sweetness the brain tastes and how much glucose [blood sugar] ends up coming to the brain,” writes influential cell biologist Lewis Cantley in a 2013 study. The brain feels cheated and “figures you have to eat more and more and more sweetness in order to get any calories out of it.”

“As a consequence, at the end of the day, your brain says, ‘OK, at some point I need some glucose [blood sugar] here.’ And then you eat an entire cake, because nobody can hold out in the end,” he writes.

How strangely fake sweeteners affected eating habits was explored in a 2014 study by the Department of Psychology at Texas Christian University.

If people are given Sprite, Sprite Zero (a zero-calorie soda), or unsweetened, carbonated, lemon-lime water, but aren’t told which drink they’re getting or what the study is about, when they’re later offered a choice of M&M’s, spring water, or sugar-free gum, who do you think picks the M&M’s? Those who drank the artificially sweetened soda were nearly three times more likely to take the candy than those who consumed either the sugar-sweetened or unsweetened drinks.

So, it wasn’t a matter of sweet versus non-sweet or calories versus no-calories. There’s something about non-caloric sweeteners that somehow tricks the brain.

Researchers did another study in which everyone was given Oreos and were then asked how satisfied the cookies made them feel. Once again, those who drank the artificially sweetened Sprite Zero reported feeling less satisfied than those who drank the regular Sprite or the sparkling water.

Ending Sugar Addiction

Just like addictive drugs, sugar isn’t something you can dabble in.

“The only way really to prevent this problem—to break the addiction—is to go completely cold turkey and go off all sweeteners—artificial as well as fructose. Eventually, the brain resets itself and you don’t crave it as much,” advises Cantley.

We’ve always assumed consuming sweetened foods, whether that be artificially sweetened or not, changes our palates, and research appears to back that up.

Carole Bartolotto, formerly with a major health care consortium in Southern California, did a study that had 20 people agree to cut out all added sugars and artificial sweeteners for two weeks. Afterward, 95 percent said sweet foods and drinks tasted “sweeter or too sweet.” They also said they would use less sugar or no sugar in the future.

What’s more, most stopped craving sugar within the first week—after only six days. This suggests a two-week sugar challenge, or even a one-week challenge, may “help to reset taste preferences and make consuming less or no sugar easier,” she writes. Perhaps, concludes Bartolotto, we should recommend it to our patients.

“Eating fewer processed foods and choosing more real, whole, and plant-based foods make it easy to consume less sugar,” she advises.

Dr. Michael Greger is a physician, New York Times bestselling author, and internationally recognized speaker on nutrition, food safety, and public health issues. A founding member and Fellow of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, Dr. Greger is licensed as a general practitioner specializing in clinical nutrition. This article was re-published from NutritionFacts.org



Staying mentally active, by doing things like reading books to grandchildren, can help some older adults ward off dementia.

People Who Can’t Read May Be 3 Times More Likely to Develop Dementia

KRISTINA MARTIN

Keeping your mind engaged is often suggested as a way to stave off dementia, and something as simple as reading and writing can make a huge difference. Dr. Jennifer J. Manly of Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York says:

“Being able to read and write allows people to engage in more activities that use the brain, like reading newspapers and helping children and grandchildren with homework. ... Previous research has shown such activities may reduce the risk of dementia. Our new study provides more evidence that reading and writing may be important factors in helping maintain a healthy brain.”

The Study

Manly is the author of a new study examining dementia that’s been published in Neurology, the journal published by the American Academy of Neurology. The study administered memory and thinking tests to 983 people in northern Manhattan with low levels of education and an average age of 77 to determine if literacy affects dementia risk levels. Of those evaluated, 237 people were illiterate.

The test subjects who hadn’t learned to read or write began at a disadvantage. Thirty-five percent of test subjects who couldn’t read began the study with dementia as opposed to only 18 percent of the literate subjects. The gap between literate and illiterate continued throughout the study. After follow-up evaluations that occurred an average of four years later, 48 percent of the illiterate group had developed dementia while 27 percent of the literature group registered dementia.

Maintaining an active brain is a crucial strategy for lowering the risk of dementia.

Healthy Brain While Aging

Maintaining an active brain is a crucial strategy for lowering the risk of dementia. Crossword puzzles or learning new skills are frequently mentioned as viable options. Researchers at the University of Michigan published a 2017 study that attributed America’s decline in dementia to an increase in levels of higher education. While getting a college degree might not be an option or even something you want, Manly’s study suggests that even mental activities we take for granted can provide surprising benefits.

Kristina Martin works at Green Lifestyle Market and is a natural health wellness reporter for Organic Lifestyle Magazine, which first published this article.

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

Harnessing the Power of Music to Inspire

Why Shen Yun’s music resonates with our souls

CATHERINE YANG

Shen Yun Performing Arts famously uses a unique ensemble, blending sounds and instruments of the East and the West, but what truly makes the music special, says conductor Chen Ying, is the meaning behind the music.

“I believe our music tries to warm and uplift people’s hearts. It has something to do with our belief in the function of music. What music is meant to be is to be something positive for people,” Chen said.

“It comforts them and soothes them, or it inspires them and encourages them,” she said. “So in terms of what we try to accomplish with our music, it’s pretty different from many other methods that are just trying to do ... something unconventional or something other people haven’t done before.”

Even before a single note is written, the composers and arrangers work with the choreographers and designers to find an idea. Then, from the arrangement to the performance, from the tone colors to musical architecture, the conductor works to shape everything in pursuit of an artistic idea that is truly beautiful, positive, and can be transported to the audience.

Much of this beauty stems from tradition, Chen said. The unique ensemble is in effect an homage of the best of the Eastern and Western cultures, and Shen Yun seeks to cherish and convey the traditional values found in the best of these cultures.

A Connection to Something Higher

Music has its beginning in sacred spaces. Whether in the East with the music of sages or in the West with our Gregorian chants, music has for centuries been used to convey reverence for the heavens, express human emotion, and connect with the world around us.

“In Chinese culture, there are a lot of sayings about music, like ‘virtuous music nourishes people’s souls,’ and it gives people guidance, or

“I believe in probably most cultures, music was originally for communication, a way in which people communicated the divine sense of gods in their hearts.”

Ying Chen



Conductor Ying Chen.

connection with nature,” Chen said. “In ancient times, people perceived nature to have spirituality, with their connection to the heavens.”

“I think from the time that music was formed, it resonated with the body, heaven, and earth.”

With ancient China, the five tones of the pentatonic scale had direct relationships with the five elements in our physical world, and the five major organs of our human bodies. Whether it be singing or playing tunes on a bamboo flute, music was meant to aid in connection between heaven, earth, and humankind.

In the West, chants and hymns began in spiritual settings, used to convey appreciation for divine protection and the relationship between humans and the gods who watched over them.

“I believe in probably most cultures, music was originally for communication, a way in which people communicated the divine sense of gods in their hearts,” Chen said.

A beautiful musical experience can feel timeless, evoke awe, and even move us to tears.

“That view was lost in the last several decades,” Chen said. “But I think the musicians and other artists at Shen Yun really share this vision, or mission, to restore those treasures from the past and bring back the tradition, the positive role that music can play in people’s lives.”

The artists at Shen Yun don’t just believe this traditional philosophy of music, they live it, Chen said.

“We believe that to be a true artist, a good artist, we believe it’s important to improve ourselves as a person,” she said. “To become a more virtuous person. Even in ancient China, people believed that all the great masters were extraordinary persons as well; their character and integrity would come through in their artistic work.”

Chen believes the pure thoughts and energy the artists put into their work comes through in each performance—that this is why Shen Yun has been so well received worldwide by audiences, no matter their back-



Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra.

ground or culture.

“At our symphony concerts, so often people tell us they were moved to tears, and we just feel that their hearts were touched,” she said. “The messages we try to give them are positive ones, and are genuine and powerful, because it comes from kindness and sincerity.”

Best of Both Worlds

The conductor’s role is a dynamic one.

While the task of combining two very different musical languages may be a Herculean one for arrangers, and playing the incredibly precise music a challenge for the musicians, the conductor, in a way, gets to reap the rewards with a powerful, versatile ensemble at her fingertips.

“This orchestration remarkably expands our orchestra’s palette of tone colors and versatility, stylistic capabilities, and vigor,” Chen said. “The fact that we integrate Chinese instruments—pipa, erhu, the percussion—gives us the ability and versatility to tell these stories very vividly and authentically.”

“For a conductor, you have to know the music, you have to love the music, you have to have enough knowledge about each instrument, and, very importantly, you have to be able to blend all of the music together so you can help achieve the effect.”

Sometimes the story takes a turn and characters find themselves in a celestial palace, and the music

has to be able to evoke a heavenly feeling, a sound so convincing you almost glimpse heaven. Sometimes the story calls for warriors on a battlefield, and the orchestra provides the strength and power and intensity of the battle. Sometimes the dance is an ethnic or folk dance, and the music takes on the sound of horses roaming the Mongolian grasslands, for example.

Then there’s the timing, because all of it—the animated backdrop, the lighting, the choreography on-stage—depends on the precision of the musical tempo.

“So it’s a very exciting job,” Chen said with a laugh. “It’s a lot of fun.”

“I really feel privileged and honored to do something like this because I truly love and admire the music of Shen Yun. To have the opportunity to use my skills to help bring this music to life and present it to the audience is just unbelievable. I feel unbelievably fortunate to do this, because of the idea behind the music.”

“In ancient Chinese times, people also believed the ideas behind the music were more important than what’s on the surface ... and that’s why I love Shen Yun music so much. It’s very inspiring and powerful—invigorating at the same time. It can be humorous, it can really cheer people up.”

“It all ties into this mission to celebrate the best of humanity, both East and West, the values and the heroes from the past, or even today.”

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS Audience Reactions



In fact, I am going to recommend to all grandchildren and my children and my friends to come, because it is a special uplifting spiritual—quite unusual in today’s world which seems bereft of good ideas and goodness.

CARLA ZAMPATTI, fashion designer, at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney, on Mar 4, 2020



You won’t regret it. You get goosebumps watching it. It’s really something magnificent ... The whole thing is a feast for the senses.

SOPHIE YORK, law lecturer, barrister and author, at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney, on Mar 7, 2020



In one sense it’s ethereal, but I don’t want to use that word in a loose way. It’s elevating...For me, it’s real art. It’s a form of art I’m not familiar with, but I feel very privileged to have been introduced to it ...

PAUL MACNEILL, Associate Professor in Ethics and Law at the University of Sydney, at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney, on Mar 6, 2020



There needs to be a purpose, not just gymnastic tricks. There’s a beautiful connecting with the artistry in the dance as well... As a dancer and dance teacher, it’s something where I’m consistently wanting to connect with the arts [and] see professional performances because it inspires me as a dance teacher but also as an artist myself.

KRISTIE HOOD, dance teacher, at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney, on Mar 8, 2020



The amount of discipline that goes into that kind of performance—I think that centers the self and the soul, I think those performers made that very present on stage.

To watch human beings contort themselves into moving that way almost suggests some sort of divine intervention.

BART BEYERS, local business owner, at the Stifel Theatre in St. Louis on Feb. 29, 2020



This tradition from China, of which I had not known about before, but which is outstanding and thousands of years old, must be kept alive...We need a renaissance of humanness. This is what the Shen Yun show imparted to me.

FELIX RUDOLF VON ROHR, who was awarded the “Européen de Coeur” in 2019, at the Musical Theater Basel in Switzerland on Feb. 25, 2020



It brings hope. It brings comfort and peace and that’s meaningful to many, many people. ... It’s more than merely visceral. It’s again something that’s spiritual. It’s something that speaks to the inner man.

BRUCE HAHN, Washoe County assistant district attorney, at the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts in Reno, Nev., on Feb. 28, 2020



I think it inspired people to live a healthy life, one where you love other people, where you connect with other people, where you share with them, and it’s all about the good in man.

MARC KRAMER, entrepreneur, at the Merriam Theater in Philadelphia on Feb. 27, 2020



I really did love the message [that] ... we all are students of beauty, and flow, and the synchronicity, and life in general, but also of how we all become more one.

LEEZA BOCK, corporate director, at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas on March 1, 2020

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

There’s No Masking the Best Way to Avoid Coronavirus

Coronavirus is scaring up sales of face masks but to ward off the disease, focus on washing your hands

ELISABETH ROSENTHAL

People around the world are watching with alarm as a new coronavirus spreads in China and cases pop up in their home country. They are barraged with information about what kinds of masks are best to prevent viral spread. Stores have run out or are running low on masks, while governments are preparing to tap into their emergency stockpiles.

Having a mask with you as a precaution makes sense if you are in the midst of an outbreak.

Hang on. I’ve worked as an emergency room physician. And as a New York Times correspondent in China, I covered the SARS outbreak in 2002 and 2003 during which a novel coronavirus first detected in Guangdong sickened more than 8,000 people and killed more than 800. My two children attended elementary school in Beijing throughout the outbreak. Here are my main takeaways from that experience for ordinary people on the ground:

1. Wash your hands frequently.
2. Don’t go to the office when you are sick. Don’t send your kids to school or day care when they are ill, either.

Notice I didn’t say anything about masks. Having a mask with you as a precaution makes sense if you are in the midst of an outbreak, as I was when out reporting in the field during those months. But wearing it constantly is another matter. I donned a mask when visiting hospitals where SARS patients had been housed. I wore it in the markets where wild animals that were the suspected source of the outbreak were being butchered, blood droplets flying. I wore it in crowded enclosed spaces that I couldn’t avoid, like airplanes and trains, as I traveled to cities involved in the outbreak, like Guangzhou and

Hong Kong. You never know if the guy coughing and sneezing two rows ahead of you is ill or just has an allergy. But outdoors, infections don’t spread well through the air. Those photos of people walking down streets in China wearing masks are dramatic but the subjects appear uninformed. And remember if a mask has, perchance, intercepted viruses that would have otherwise ended up in your body, then the mask is contaminated. So, in theory, to be protected maybe you should use a new one for each outing.

The simple masks are better than nothing but not all that effective because they don’t seal well. For anyone tempted to go out and buy the gold standard, N95 respirators, note that they are uncomfortable. Breathing is more work. It’s hard to talk to people. On one long flight at the height of the outbreak, on which my few fellow passengers were mostly epidemiologists trying to solve the SARS puzzle, many of us (including me) wore our masks for the first couple of hours on the flight. Then the food and beverage carts came.

Though viruses spread through droplets in the air, a bigger worry to me was always transmission via what doctors call “fomites,” infected items. A virus gets on a surface—a shoe or a doorknob or a tissue, for example. You touch the surface and then next touch your face or rub your nose. It’s a great way to acquire illness. So after walking in the animal markets, I removed my shoes carefully and did not take them into the hotel room. And, of course, I washed my hands immediately.

Remember, by all indications SARS, which killed about 10 percent of those infected, was a deadlier virus than the new coronavirus circulating now. So keep things in perspective.

Faced with SARS, many foreigners chose to leave Beijing or at least to send their children back to their home country. Our family stayed, kids included. We wanted them with us and didn’t want them to miss school, especially during what would be their final year in China. But equally

important in making the decision was that the risk of getting SARS on an airplane or in the airport seemed greater than being smart and careful while staying put in Beijing.

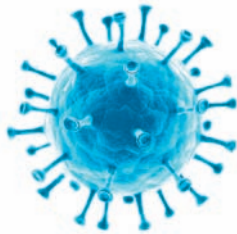
And we were: I stopped taking my kids to indoor playgrounds or crowded malls or delicious but densely packed neighborhood Beijing restaurants. Out of an abundance of caution, we canceled a family vacation to Cambodia—though my fear was less about catching SARS on the flight than that one of the kids would have a fever from an ear infection upon our return at a border screening and would be stuck in a prolonged quarantine in China. We instead took a vacation within China, where we carried masks with us but didn’t use them except on a short domestic flight.

In time, during the SARS outbreak, the government shut down theaters and schools in Beijing, as it is doing now in many Chinese cities because these viruses are more easily transmitted in such crowded places.

But there was also a lot of irrational behavior: Entering



By all indications SARS, which killed about 10 percent of those infected, was a deadlier virus than the new coronavirus circulating now.



Masks might be all the rage when it comes to keeping microscopic pathogens from finding their way into our bodies, but washing our hands is far more important.



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

a village on the way to a hike near the Great Wall, our car was stopped by locals who had set up a roadblock to check the temperature of all passengers. They used an oral thermometer that was only minimally cleaned after each use. What a great way to spread a virus.

The International School of Beijing, where my children were students, was one of the few in the capital—perhaps the only one—that stayed open throughout the SARS outbreak, though the classes were emptier since so many kids had departed to their home countries. It was a studied but brave move because a parent at the school had gotten SARS at the very beginning of the outbreak on a flight back from Hong Kong. She recovered fine, but it was close to home and families were scared.

The school instituted a bunch of simple precautionary policies: a stern note to parents reminding them not to send a child to school who was sick and warning them that students would be screened for fevers with ear thermometers at the school door. There was no sharing of food at lunch. The teacher led the kids in frequent hand washing throughout the day at classroom sinks, while singing a prolonged “handwashing song” to ensure they did more than a cursory pass under the faucet with water only.

If a family left Beijing and came back, the child would have to stay at home for an extended period before returning to class to make sure they hadn’t caught SARS elsewhere.

With those precautions in place, I observed something of a public health miracle: Not only did no child get SARS, but it seemed no student was sick with anything at all for months on end. No stomach bugs. No common colds. Attendance was more or less perfect.

The World Health Organization declared the SARS outbreak contained in July 2003. But, oh, that those habits persisted. The best first-line defenses against SARS or the new coronavirus or most any virus at all are the ones that Grandma and common sense taught us, after all.

Elisabeth Rosenthal is a doctor, author, and editor-in-chief at Kaiser Health News, which first published this article.

Steps to a Stronger Immune System

You can support the system that fights off disease with these habits

MOHAN GARIKIPARITHI

Your immune system is central to overall health, yet it can be easy to overlook. When thinking about good health, people tend to focus on their heart, muscle strength, weight, and bones.

Your immune system, however, complements all of those components.

A healthy immune system can help protect you from danger, toxins, infections, allergens, and more. Sometimes it can become overactive and attack healthy cells, leading to inflammation and chronic disease.

There is a growing body of research that indicates you can help manage and control your immune system. You may hold the power to increase its strength while keeping it in check if you have an autoimmune condition. As a result, you may experience less illness and improved symptoms.

There are five steps that can help build a healthy and functional immune system. They include:

Eliminating immune-system weights: Certain things can pull your im-

mune system down and leave you more susceptible to illness or painful symptoms. Smoking, excess alcohol and drug intake, and unprotected sun exposure can all beat your immune system down.

Smoking, excess alcohol and drug intake can all beat your immune system down.

Focus on an anti-inflammatory diet: Including more plant-based foods, like colorful fruits and vegetables, can help build a healthy immune system and limit inflammation. Limit foods commonly featured in the standard American diet, like fried foods, refined grains, high-sugar snacks, sweetened beverages, and processed meats.

Exercise: There is a relationship between exercise and immunity. Whereas moderate exercise for about 150 minutes

per week can reduce the risk of cold, flu, or other infections, being sedentary increases the risk of illness. Exercise can be performed in 10-minute bundles throughout the week if you don’t have time to commit to a half-hour per day.

Modify stressors: Working on mental and spiritual health so you’re less affected by stress and anxiety can also contribute to a healthy immune system. Stress wears you down and increases the chance of illness, so seeking therapy, practicing mindfulness, meditation, yoga, tai-chi, or other stress-relieving activities can all help with immunity.

Good sleep: Poor sleep is also a drag on the immune system. Failing to give your body adequate time to rest and recover makes it hard to stand up to the challenges of the day. Good sleep hygiene and a regular sleep schedule help you achieve better and more consistent sleep.

Mohan Garikiparithi holds a degree in medicine from Osmania University (University of Health Sciences). This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.

ZORAN PUCAREVIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

