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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **Amazon reported** quarterly profit that trounced expectations, capping earnings reports from tech giants that showed improving health in areas from online retail to digital advertising after a stretch of slowing growth and mass layoffs. **A1**

◆ **Apple said revenue** declined for the third consecutive quarter, the company's most prolonged sales slump since 2016 as the iPhone-maker continued to deal with declining demand for consumer devices. **B1**

◆ **Disney's ESPN** is hunting for a strategic partner as it tries to bring order to the messy world of streaming and secure its own future. **A1**

◆ **U.S. stocks extended** their recent slide, with the S&P 500, Dow and Nasdaq declining 0.3%, 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively. **B11**

◆ **The UAW is pressing** the Detroit car companies to give its factory workers a 40% pay hike over four years, an increase that would be the largest in recent memory. **B1**

◆ **AB InBev said** its U.S. sales, profit and market share fell sharply in the second quarter as consumers abandoned Bud Light after a promotion it did with a transgender influencer. **B1**

◆ **The Bank of England** raised its key interest rate for the 14th time in a row, and said it may do so again as it tries to cool the fastest rise in consumer prices in the G-7. **A7**

◆ **KKR is in advanced talks** to acquire Simon & Schuster for about \$1.65 billion, according to people familiar with the situation, capping a years-long effort by Paramount Global to sell the publisher. **B1**

World-Wide

◆ **Trump pleaded** not guilty to charges that he conspired to overturn the results of the 2020 election, appearing in a federal courtroom just blocks from the U.S. Capitol his supporters stormed on Jan. 6, 2021. **A1, A4**

◆ **Israeli military reservists** began skipping duty, following through on a threat from thousands of their peers to suspend service after the government moved to limit the Supreme Court's power. **A1**

◆ **A federal appeals court** allowed the Biden administration to enforce its new asylum rules while litigation continues over the policy, blocking a lower court decision that would have barred enforcement. **A3**

◆ **Russia is looking to buy** more ammunition from North Korea to replenish its dwindling stockpiles amid Moscow's ongoing war in Ukraine, the U.S. said. **A8**

◆ **Striking Los Angeles hotel workers** are calling for a levy on employers to subsidize the construction of affordable employee housing, saying inflation has eroded their previous wage increases. **A3**

◆ **The American Academy of Pediatrics** plans to review the evidence for gender-affirming medical care and potentially amend its policies that help guide doctors and clinicians providing the treatment to transgender youth. **A3**

◆ **Islamic State said** its little-known top leader had been killed, a confirmation that came months after Erdogan said the man died in the course of a Turkish intelligence operation in Syria. **A16**

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Trump Pleads Not Guilty to Vote Plot

Former president is arraigned on charges that he conspired to overturn election

WASHINGTON—Former President Donald Trump pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that he conspired to overturn the results of the 2020 election, appearing in a

By Sadie Gurman, Andrew Restuccia and Byron Tau

federal courtroom just blocks from the U.S. Capitol his supporters stormed on Jan. 6, 2021.

While the plea amounted to two words, their resonance was enormous. Trump denied the charges in the indictment, the first time a U.S. president has been accused of blocking the peaceful transfer of power to his successor.

To his supporters, Trump's postelection campaign to claim he actually won the election was an act of courage for his detractors, the charges are a long-awaited accounting for the loss he refused to accept. The charges brought in Washington di-



Donald Trump at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport after his court appearance.

rectly relate to Trump's conduct in the aftermath of the 2020 election that he lost to Joe Biden, and will shadow him on the 2024 campaign trail as he seeks to win the Republican nomination and recapture the White House.

"This is a very sad day for America," Trump said after the hearing. "This is a persecution of a potential political opponent."

Hundreds of people massed outside the courtroom to watch the spectacle as Trump

and his team arrived in black SUVs for him to surrender to authorities. It marked the third time in four months that Trump has been arraigned on criminal charges.

In a separate federal case, Trump is facing charges that

he improperly retained classified government documents at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, and obstructed the government's efforts to retrieve them. Local prosecutors in New York have charged him with 34 felony counts related to a hush-money payment made to a porn star in the final stretch of the 2016 election. And the district attorney in Fulton County, Ga., also has been investigating Trump for election interference.

The latest indictment, returned earlier this week and brought by special counsel Jack Smith, accuses Trump of conspiring to subvert the will of American voters by trying to cling to power after his defeat in 2020, actions that culminated in the attack on the Capitol. Smith personally appeared in court Thursday, sitting quietly behind Thomas Windom and Molly Gaston, the prosecutors handling the hearing.

Wearing a red tie and a navy blue suit, Trump, 77 years old, sat in the hearing. *Please turn to page A4*

◆ **New lawyer says case is abuse of power.**..... A4
◆ **Trump attorneys hint at defense strategy.**..... A4

Amazon Profits Soar as Tech Giants Show Signs of Recovery After Cuts

By DANA MATTIOLI

Amazon.com reported quarterly profit that trounced expectations, capping earnings reports from tech giants that showed improving health in areas from online retail to digital advertising after a stretch of slowing growth and mass layoffs.

The Seattle company's earnings nearly doubled analysts' estimates, buoyed by resilience in its core consumer

e-commerce business, which had plunged into the red last year amid a pandemic hangover. Overall revenue for the second quarter rose by nearly 11% to \$134.2 billion, which also beat expectations, and the company projected a similar pace of expansion in the current quarter.

Amazon's earnings report on Thursday followed strong results last week from Google parent Alphabet and Facebook parent Meta Platforms that

showed recovery in digital advertising revenue. Semiconductor giant Intel posted a surprise quarterly profit, after two quarters of record losses, thanks to strength in the personal-computer market. And Uber Technologies on Tuesday posted the first operating profit in its history, thanks to robust demand for both its ride-hailing and deliveries businesses.

The improvements for tech companies in recent months

have been uneven. Apple on Thursday said revenue declined for the third consecutive quarter, the company's most prolonged sales slump since 2016, amid soft demand for iPhones and other consumer devices—though it also reported record revenue in its services unit.

And Amazon reported a continued deceleration in its cloud-computing business, long the engine of its profits. *Please turn to page A6*

Israeli Reservists Skip Duty In Protest

By DOV LIEBER

TEL AVIV—Col. Nissim Yosev spent 25 years as a combat flight navigator in the Israeli Air Force, where he fought in Israel's war with Lebanon and saw his best friend disappear in combat, never to return.

Last week, he said he made the hardest decision of his life when, with tears streaming down his face, he wrote to his commander that he would stop reporting for volunteer reserve duty, where he trained cadets at the air force's only flight school. "The flight school will probably be OK without me, but I cannot be OK with myself as long as things continue this way," he wrote.

When Yosev, 64, missed his first day of teaching last week, he was following through on a threat from thousands of volunteer military reservists like him to suspend their service after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition passed the first part of an effort to limit the Supreme Court's power. The reservists say the legislation undermines Israel's liberal democracy, breaking the social contract for which they have put their lives at risk. Brothers in Arms, one of the largest groups organizing the push for refusing to serve, said there are thousands of others like Yosev who have withheld their reserve-duty service.

It is unclear how many reservists have missed days yet. *Please turn to page A7*

For Some New Moms, a Difficult Reality

Mood and anxiety disorders are common—but for many, help is hard to find

By ANNA MUTOH

Jaclyn Ohmer couldn't wait to have a baby. Before she was pregnant, she bought onesies and beagle-shaped booties. She and her husband, her high-school sweetheart, found out they were having a son and prepared a Star Wars-themed baby room. The 26-year-old from Parma, Ohio, was ready for his arrival.

Things got harder after he was born in June of last year. Ohmer loved him but she often felt sad. She grew anxious waiting for his next cry. She wasn't sure she was fit to be a mom.

When he was shrieking one day, Ohmer had a terrifying thought: "If I put my hand over his mouth, he will be gone. He wouldn't have to live with me, or go through this." She became increasingly fearful of hurting her baby—and more convinced that her family would be better off without her. Ohmer tried to seek help, but help was hard to find.

Researchers estimate that one in five new



Jaclyn Ohmer shuttled between doctors and hospitals in search of treatment.

Where Have All The Lindas Gone?

Those who share the once-popular name still gather for an annual convention

By JON KAMP

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y.—Giving instructions with military precision, a retired U.S. Army Sergeant First Class developed in Network Development Association, or told conventioners in a Sheraton hotel function room here when to assemble for breakfast, a group photo and a trip to the falls.

She also repeatedly implored them to don the right uniform, lest anyone forget.

"Be in your Linda shirts!" Linda Norris said, addressing more than 40 other Lindas in the crowd.

The 65-year-old, who grew up nearby and lives in Kentucky, took charge of this year's 35th convention of Lindas involved in Network Development Association, or the L.I.N.D.A. Club. They formed in the Midwest in the 1980s over a sisterhood shared by many women of a certain age: the U.S. is just stuffed with Lindas. The name saw an extreme boom during the extremes of the baby boom, but also fell sharply and has yet to regain its mojo. The women who assembled



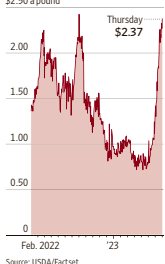
Linda

Pork Prices Fly High

Animal-welfare law in California helps fuel rise in pork-belly prices. **B11**

Wholesale pork-belly price

\$2.50 a pound



Source: USDA/Factset

Disney's ESPN Charts Its Streaming Future

By JESSICA TOONKEL AND ISABELLA SIMONETTI

ESPN is hunting for a strategic partner as it tries to bring order to the messy world of streaming—and secure its own future in the process.

Talks with potential partners and investors have touched on several roles ESPN can play in the fragmented streaming industry, from carrying local broadcasts for professional sports teams to serving as an industrywide hub to stream any live game, people familiar with the discussions said.

On another track, ESPN is working to make a stand-alone version of its flagship television channel available to cord-

cutters in two to three years, or once its reach in the cable-TV world falls below 50 million households, people familiar with the plans said.

Major League Baseball has had early talks with ESPN about having the network stream local baseball games in certain markets, people familiar with the matter said. The bankruptcy of the largest player in local sports TV, Diamond Sports Group, has led the league to explore new options for delivering games to consumers.

ESPN could offer those baseball games as an add-on to *Please turn to page A6*

◆ **Warner Bros. Discovery sets news, sports to stream.**..... B2



\$138.83 Million
A Connecticut estate sets a record. **M3**

MANSION

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Fab Food
Agents recall over-the-top open-house catering. **M8**



HOMES | MARKETS | PEOPLE | REDOS | SALES

Friday, August 4, 2023 | **M1**



Living Like a Star On Lake Como

George and Amal Clooney brought a spotlight to this famous Italian lake. Now non-celebs are searching for a slice of it, too.



Dina Branham fell in love with Italy more than a decade ago. Her search for a home on Lake Como ended when she bought an apartment in Menaggio, left, with spectacular lake views.

By RUTH BLOOMFIELD

Dina Branham first visited Italy more than a decade ago and, like generations of travelers before her, fell head-over-heels in love. “I thought it was just magical, the architecture, the charm,” she said. More vacations followed, and Branham found a favorite spot, Lake Como, because it reminded her of her childhood spent close to Lake Minnetonka, Minn. With time on her hands during the pandemic, Branham, a real-estate agent based in Sarasota, Fla., began to research the Italian property market. In 2020, she began negotiating the purchase of a roughly 1,000-square-foot, two-bedroom, one-bathroom condominium in a small, gated community with water views in the waterside town of Menaggio. It cost \$254,000 and Branham said she found the process of getting a mortgage from an Italian bank “surprisingly easy.” Unable to travel to Italy, she bought the property on the strength of photographs, videos and research on Google Earth. Happily, when she finally managed to visit, in June 2021, the condo very much lived up to her expectations. Since then, she has made seven more trips to Menaggio, and has been approved for Italian citizenship, giving her the option of retiring to Italy one day. “It is my little sanctuary,” she said. Buyers who want to emulate Branham, and the actor George Clooney, Lake Como’s most famous resident, will first need to deal with a highly nuanced market

Please turn to page M6



A key driver of the Como real-estate market is foreign buyers. They now hail primarily from North America, Germany and Switzerland.

Triple-Digit Heat, but No Electric Bill?

Three certified passive houses in Boston were built to offer clean inside air, reduced emissions and little to no energy costs



Negative monthly electric bill



Energy savings: \$700 to \$1,200 a month



Electric company owes owners \$1,000

The homes, in the West Roxbury area of the city, have airtight construction, triple-glazed windows, a foundation of concrete slabs on foam blocks, and strategic shading.

NANCY KEATES

IT WAS THE OPEN, modern style of the house in West Roxbury, Mass., that first got one couple’s attention: a box made of clear-finished white cedar siding that seemed to float above a dark metal

base, with large windows, panels of wood slats and high ceilings. But the main reason they paid \$1.4 million for the 2,500-square-foot home was the technology. “This winter it got freezing, and we were in our shorts,” says Amod Athavale, 37, who moved

into the newly built house with his wife, Manasi Datar, 36, in July 2022. This summer, the house has remained at 72 to 75 degrees with only a few hours of air conditioning each day, despite the triple-digit heat that hit the city. In fact, their electricity bill currently has

a negative balance of about \$1,000, meaning the electric company owes them, Athavale says. Their home is one of three side-by-side certified “passive houses,” meaning they meet the standards set by the Passive House Institute in Darmstadt, Germany. Designed

by Boston-based RODE Architects and built by developer Dmitry Baskin of Passive House Construction, they use airtight construction, triple-glazed windows, a foundation made from 12-inch concrete slabs set on 8-inch foam blocks,

Please turn to page M4

MANSSION



Dina Branham purchased her 1,000-square-foot, two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment on the shores of Lake Como sight unseen. She has now visited the home numerous times and has been approved for Italian citizenship.



Lake Como Living

Continued from page M1 where not all picturesque villages are equal, and homes on the water cost twice as much as other properties.

Across the board, average sale prices around the lake have dropped over the past decade, due to the ongoing effects of the European financial crisis and the pandemic. But beneath the surface, agents say historic waterfront villas in sought-after towns and affordable family-size holiday homes above the lake are bucking that trend.

Paola Cleps, a real-estate broker with Habitat Real Estate, Savills's associate in



Camille Bressange/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

the region, said most foreign buyers prefer the lake's west shore, between the towns of Como and Menaggio, 21 miles north.

There are more than a dozen small towns and villages in this stretch of real estate, and their location is ideal, said Cleps. "It is a two-hour drive to the coast. If you want to ski, you can get to the mountains," she

said. "You are close to the Swiss border and 40 minutes by train to Milan for the airport."

Average sale prices across the Como province are low, compared with values in its prime waterfront villages. According to figures published by OMI-



Agenzia delle Entrate, the Italian Revenue Agency, in June, property sold at an average of \$147 per square foot in 2022, up 0.4% compared with 2021. This represents a drop of about 10% compared with the 2011 figure of \$163 per square foot.

At the top end of the market, the performance is stronger. Estate agent Knight Frank reports price growth of 8% during 2022. Prime property sells at around \$1,024 per square foot. For a waterfront home, prices are even higher.

A 3,000-square-foot historic villa in picturesque Cernobbio with direct access to the lake would cost \$11 million and up, said Cleps. An identical property just one street inland would cost around \$3.9 million to \$5.5 million. If that same property was half a mile up the hillside, which rises sharply behind Cernobbio, it would cost around \$3.3 million, she said.

Meanwhile, Cleps said that buyers willing to trek to the north end of Lake Como—a distance of around 40 miles from the town of Como—could pick up a similar lakefront house for around \$5.5 million.

Part of the reason for this dramatic price variation is the very limited number of lakefront homes for sale. Many prime lots have been repurposed as hotels, restaurants or institu-

tions, or been carved up into apartments. Those that survive as single-family homes are often kept within families for generations, and during the pandemic the supply of homes for sale dried up almost entirely, said Cleps.

People have stopped selling, said Yasemin Baysal, managing partner of Engel & Völkers Lake Como, because other investment options, such as the stock market, are currently seen as risky. This has driven some buyers to desperate measures, making direct approaches to the owners of lakefront homes they like the look of and offering them premium prices to move out. "We know recently some owners have been offered crazy prices for their properties, but they have no will to sell them," said Cleps.

**70-80%
Estimated sales
of homes to
non-Italian buyers**

ney, their 6-year-old twins, plus famous friends including Cindy Crawford, Brad Pitt, and Matt Damon, have heightened the global profile of Lake Como.

"Since he arrived, it has made a very big impact," said Cleps. "There are other famous people living here, but there is something about Clooney. He created a buzz. At first, it was crazy, with flowers being left at the gates of his villa, people renting out homes nearby with telescopes looking into the garden. It was embarrassing. But now people are used to seeing him, and he is always very pleasant." Clooney did not respond to requests for comment.

Buyers without a Clooney-scale budget can still find a home in Como. They include Spanish-born artist Jose Molina. He moved to Milan in 2001 after meeting his wife, Chiara Garone, and in 2011, the couple were ready to leave the city. They decided to move to



PHOTO TOP: FRANCESCO LARICINO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; GEORGE AND AMAL CLOONEY: NELSON TITUS/GETTY IMAGES; ANNA KAREN: NELSON TITUS/GETTY IMAGES

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George and Amal Clooney own this estate on the shores of Lake Como in Laglio.