



MORNING BREW

Week of March 22, 2021

Review of the Week!!

3 HEADLINES AND A LIE

Three of the following news stories are true, and one...we made up. Can you spot the odd one out?

- A. An artist remotely tattooed someone using a teleoperated robotic arm and 5G.
- B. A Tesla on autopilot crashed into a police car.
- C. A robotic pet “bit” its owner by accident.
- D. A helicopter named Elvis is being reborn as a drone.



Students choose an option

WORK FROM HOME? - [LINK](#)

Ford gives 30,000 employees the option to work from home forever, another sign of workforce transformation.

Starting in July, Ford employees will be able to return to the office for assignments that require face-to-face interaction, such as group projects and meetings, and remain home for more independent work. The goal is to **personalize** work schedules to best suit employees' needs, Dubensky said. Some 30,000 employees in North America will have the option to stick with remote work, with flexible hours approved by their managers.

The move is another sign of how the pandemic has transformed the workplace, as corporations have reevaluated workflows, wellness resources, wages and sick leave compensation.

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg has said that as much as half of the company's workforce would be permanently remote within five to six years.

Question:

What are your thoughts? Is someone at your house still working from home? If you work how has it transformed?



Students, write your response!

MARKET RESEARCH

Fagradalsfjall, a small volcano in Iceland, recently started erupting for the first time in **eight centuries**. For the last eruption, Icelanders didn't have drones to get up close and personal with the volcano, but this time, they do.

Intrepid pilot Bjorn Steinbekk [flew his FPV drone](#) over the volcano as lava was shooting out, producing incredible cinematography and nearly losing his flying robot in the process.



GAS PRICES

Not to get all 2008, but gas prices are going up: The US reached an average of \$2.88 a gallon last week, per AAA. That's about a 37% [increase](#) from last March when everyone called it Corona instead of Covid.

Whose fault is it, anyway? Gas prices always tend to rise leading up to the summer, but the 2021 jump can be attributed to two biggies: 1) large, pent-up demand to drive through the mountains listening to Lana's new album and 2) oil refiners not yet refining at full speed. Last month's historic freeze in Texas, the nation's largest natural gas producer, set production back bigtime.

What's next? Many Americans are still working from home without lengthy commutes, but a slew of cross-country road trips could help send gas prices even higher. Analysts [think](#) average prices could soon rise above \$3.



FUN TECH FACT...

Twenty years ago, Google Images launched. You can thank Jennifer Lopez.

So many people searched for photos of the green Versace dress she wore to the 2000 Grammy Awards that it inspired Google to design a dedicated tool. Call it the dress searched round the world.



TRAVELERS ARE ON THE MOVE!

The CDC is still advising against travel, as ~54k new cases of COVID-19 are being reported in the US every day.

But travelers aren't shying away from airports.

According to a report, the TSA recently screened 1m+ airline passengers for 11 consecutive days -- almost 2x the volume of travelers reported at the same time a year ago.

The travel site Kayak told CNBC that travel searches on its platform are up 27% week-over-week and airline queries are up 7% month-over-month.

And more travelers means a return to 'normal' prices. Here's what those figures above look like now:

- Average airline ticket: \$187 (+28%)
- Average daily hotel rate: \$103 (+22%)
- Average national gas price: \$2.88 (+44%)

Students, write your response!

Question:

What are your thoughts?

Is travel back? Are you or people you know traveling for spring break?



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3 HEADLINES AND A LIE

Sometimes when we write the fake headline in this game, we feel like Thanos when he bends reality using Infinity Stones. Three of these headlines are real and one is made up. Can you spot the fake?

- a. “Reddit investors adopt 3,500 gorillas in six days”
- b. “Domain name ‘Cantfocusbecauseoflocusts.com’ fetches \$800,000 price tag ahead of coming hoard”
- c. “Florida man arrested for zapping Scientology cameras with laser pointer during ‘Cult City Tour’”
- d. “Taiwan urges citizens not to change their name to ‘salmon’ to get free sushi”



Students choose an option

BOAT SALES ARE BOOMING

According to a [report](#) by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), sales of boats and related marine gear hit \$47B in 2020 -- a 9% bump from 2019, and a 13-year high.

Per [Boating Industry](#), all types of big-boy water toys saw a bump in 2020:

- Freshwater fishing boats and pontoons: 143k units (+12%)
- Personal watercraft (Jet Ski, Sea Doo): 82k units (+8%)
- Wake boats: 13k units (+20%)

Who's buying?

Experts say this trend has largely been buoyed by first-time boat buyers, many of them on the younger side -- a demographic that hasn't historically been the industry's strong suit.

As it turns out, boating enthusiasts aren't as niche of a community as one might expect. Per NMMA:

- 100m Americans report going boating every year, making it one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in the US.
- 61% of boaters earn <\$75k in household income/year.

Collectively, these boaters [make up](#) a \$12B/year industry -- and ~4.3k boat dealers exist to cater to their needs.

JELLO DIY STAPLER - [LINK TO VIDEO](#)

The U.S. version of [The Office](#) was inspired and adapted from its British predecessor of the same name, which first aired on the BBC in 2001.

The Kraft Heinz-owned brand has created a limited edition “Stapler Mold Prank Kit” giveaway, which includes a stapler-shape mold, five boxes of Jell-O and a step-by-step guide to help fans recreate the famous prank.

QUESTION: What item from a TV series or movie do you wish was available for purchase?



Students, write your response!

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QUESTION: WHAT'S THE HYPE AROUND AIR FRYERS? DO YOU HAVE ONE?



In the early 2000s, Dutch engineer Fred van der Weij was struggling to quickly whip up a batch of fresh, Red Robin-worthy french fries. None of the methods he tried produced a sufficiently moist, crispy fry. So, van der Weij decided to build a contraption of his own that would get the job done, he [told the Washington Post](#).

A few years later, van der Weij licensed the tech to Philips, which debuted the first modern air fryer at a consumer electronics show (CES) in Berlin in 2010.

- The air fryer got [shoutouts](#) from celebrity chefs including Emeril Lagasse and Gordon Ramsay.
- It made Oprah's "Favorite Things" list in 2016.
- With growth accelerating, in 2018 New Yorker food writer Helen Rosner [asked](#), "Is the air fryer the new Instant Pot?"
- an air fryer pummels your food with hot air circulated by a high-speed fan. This process "browns" the food through what's known as the [Maillard reaction](#). You encounter the Maillard reaction when you eat all kinds of delicious foods, including campfire-roasted marshmallows, seared steaks, and french fries



Students, write your response!

WHAT DID AMERICANS SPEND THEIR STIMULUS MONEY ON??

Question:

If you received \$1,400 what would you spend it on?

- In January, Americans largely spent their payments on furniture, electronics, and appliances.
- In February, buyers spent less on cars, electronics, furniture, home improvement, and apparel, while food and beverage sales remained steady, and gas sales increased.
- Sales at bars and restaurants, which were arguably hardest hit during quarantine, increased 6.9% from December to January.



Students, write your response!

3 HEADLINES AND A LIE

When you figure out which of today's stories is the faux, you gotta admit it's completely plausible. Can you spot the fake story below?

- A. 7-Eleven Sweden has released a limited edition [pajama set](#).
- B. Watch out, Cacti: White Claw has launched iced tea [flavors](#).
- C. Kanye West is reportedly a multibillionaire. Turns out a sliver of his fortune is tied to his antique milk glass [Easter egg collection](#).
- D. A CPG company has unleashed a Friends-themed pint of [ice cream](#).



Students choose an option

FOR PASTA LOVERS BORED BY SPAGHETTI, THERE'S A NEW SHORT, WAVY, SAUCE-HOLDING SHAPE

Why does the world need a new pasta shape?

"Spaghetti is just a tube," he tells Morning Edition. "After a few bites, it's the same." And its round shape means it's not great at holding on to sauce. Meet his **cascatelli** — Italian for "little waterfalls."

To come up with his own shape, he bought, ate, studied and catalogued all kinds of existing pasta. "I brought together attributes from different shapes that I especially like that have never been brought together in this way before," he says.

Cascatelli is short, with a flat strip and ruffles that stick out at a 90-degree angle. The ruffles give the shape texture, Pashman says.

"That right-angle element is really key to what I think makes this shape different," he says. "There are very few pasta shapes that have right angles. It provides resistance to the bite at all angles. It creates kind of like an I-beam, and that makes for a very satisfying bite."



Question:

What are your thoughts?
Would you try it? What
makes it different?



Students, write your response!

SAY THE WORLD IS LOCKED DOWN DURING A PANDEMIC. BAD NEWS FOR A GAMEMAKER THAT WANTS YOU TO GO OUTSIDE, RIGHT?



Question:
What changes have they made to Pokemon?

Wrong. Niantic [shipped updates](#) to make Pokémon GO playable indoors, stayed plenty busy with tech development, and, yesterday, announced a partnership with Nintendo. The two will [co-develop](#) mobile AR apps, starting with a Pikmin game launching later this year.

- “The app will include gameplay activities to encourage walking and make walking more delightful,” Niantic says.

Nintendo has been leaning into AR projects, from an enhanced roller coaster that opened at its Osaka theme park last week to the Mario Kart mixed-reality Switch game released last year.

Who better to tap than Niantic? The studio makes the most recognizable mobile AR games in the world. The tech startup is also developing powerful [occlusion capabilities](#) (which could let digital Pokémon move behind real-world objects) and [talking about](#) planetary-scale AR.

Our read: Niantic's partners bring powerful IP to the table, allowing the AR publisher to focus on tech rather than entirely new storylines. In turn, Niantic's user base is also validating AR gaming and helping it build a digital twin of the world.



Students, write your response!

QUESTION? IS IT TIME TO UPDATE THE DRIVE THRU? WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?

Taco Bell and Chipotle will roll out new restaurant models focused on the drive-through experience, both as a place to order food on four wheels and to easily scoop up an online order. The reason: They anticipate demand for contactless (or contact-lite) options to continue post-pandemic.

- Taco Bell's [remodeling](#) some restaurants to feature two drive-through lanes and smaller dining spaces. T-Bell plans to open at least 30 such stores by year's end, after piloting its "Go Mobile" format in Oklahoma last year.
- 70% of Chipotles [opened](#) in 2021 will have dedicated "Chipotlanes." The stores are built to facilitate more digital orders via expanded drive-through lanes that serve both mobile (car) and mobile (phone) orders.

By the numbers: Taco Bell's parent company, Yum Brands, said its US chains, including KFC, [saw](#) "record-breaking drive-thru performance" in 2020. Meanwhile, Chipotlanes are meant to further drive Chipotle's digital sales, which last year grew higher than the price of a burrito bowl with guac and double steak, accounting for 70% of its total sales versus the typical ~20%.

And across all restaurants, drive-throughs [accounted for](#) 44% of off-premise sales.



Students, write your response!

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE SHRIMP TAILS IN CINNAMON TOAST CRUNCH.

Since Monday, Twitter (and now the entire web) has been alight with writer and podcaster Jensen Karp's discovery of discovered several sugar-coated shrimp exoskeletons in his box of Cinnamon Toast Crunch cereal.

Many have expressed sympathy for the brand's social media managers, who, as is often the case, bore the brunt of the brand's clumsy response, which only exacerbated the situation and drew more attention to it.

His series of tweets went viral -- and Google search interest in "Cinnamon Toast Crunch" skyrocketed.

Cinnamon Toast Crunch gets some unwelcome press

Google search popularity for "Cinnamon Toast Crunch" skyrocketed after a man found sugar-coated **shrimp tails** in his box of cereal.



Question:

How do you think the brand should've responded to this viril tweet?

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Students, write your response!

MARCH MADNESS

For the NCAA: The D1 men's tournament accounted for 79% of the \$1.1 billion the organization brought in during the 2019 fiscal year.

For schools: The NCAA has a pool of money that factors in results of the men's tournament, dishing out one "unit" for each game a team plays until the Final Four. The further a team advances in the tournament, the more money the team's conference is paid by the NCAA on a rolling 6-year basis.

- As of 2019, each unit was worth \$280,000, which means that a run to the Final Four could generate around \$1.1 million for a conference every season for the next six years.

For gamblers: Research from PlayUSA projects that this year's tournament could generate as much as [\\$1.5 billion](#) in legal bets. For context, Legal Sports Report estimated that \$462.4 million was legally wagered on this year's Super Bowl.

- Investors are getting in on the action. Yesterday, shares of Barstool Sports owner Penn National Gaming and sports betting app DraftKings jumped 4.9% and 6.5%, respectively.

+ Some fun bracket math to take you into the weekend. According to the NCAA, the odds of filling out a perfect bracket are **1-in-9,223,372,036,854,775,808** (if you just guess or flip a coin) and 1-in-120.2 billion (if you know a little something about basketball).



Students choose an option

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB RECENTLY RELEASED THE MOST POPULAR DOG BREEDS IN THE US FOR 2020.

Retrievers (Labrador)	1	Pembroke Welsh Corgis	11
French Bulldogs	2	Australian Shepherds	12
German Shepherd Dogs	3	Yorkshire Terriers	13
Retrievers (Golden)	4	Boxers	14
Bulldogs	5	Great Danes	15
Poodles	6	Siberian Huskies	16
Beagles	7	Cavalier King Charles Spaniels	17
Rottweilers	8	Doberman Pinschers	18
Pointers (German Shorthaired)	9	Miniature Schnauzers	19
Dachshunds	10	Shih Tzu	20

Are you a
dog lover?

YES

No



Students, drag the icon!

Pick an article of your choice and tell me about it!

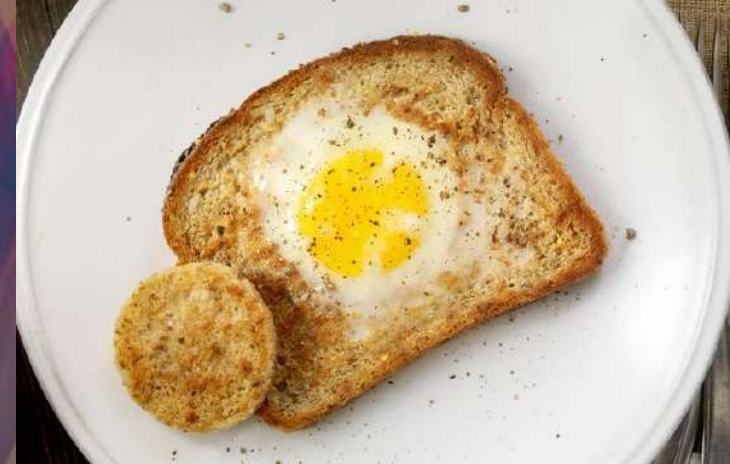
- In December, Ikea [dropped](#) its famous 70-year-old print catalog after [transitioning](#) to Pinterest in June 2019. The company recently [published](#) an audiobook to replace its 200+ page catalog.
- [DoorDash](#) is investigating grievances its drivers have with Walmart.
- [Tommy Hilfiger](#) is increasing its investment in adaptive apparel.
- [Krispy Kreme](#) will give free donuts to any customer with a Covid-19 vaccine card.
- [Ralph Lauren](#) developed a garment dyeing process to reduce water waste.
- [Dick's Sporting Goods](#) will donate equipment to the women's NCAA tournament.
- [Twitter](#) will set up a legal representative in Turkey to comply with the country's new internet law. All social media giants will soon have splinternet divisions.
- [Vuzix](#) announced a strong Q4 and said a Fortune 100 insurance company had placed a \$400,000 purchase order for its M400 Smart Glasses. The AR device maker's stock shot up 20% last week.
- [Mark Zuckerberg](#) says that actually, Facebook's ad empire may be strengthened by Apple's OS-level privacy controls.
- [Andrew "Boz" Bosworth](#), FB's hardware boss, tells Protocol that his team is building personified digital assistants for AR.
- [YouTube Shorts](#), Google's TikTok competitor, has a secret weapon: Creators can pull, demo, and remix audio from any YouTube video when making a Short.
- [Ford](#) is letting 30,000 employees WFH forever. Elsewhere, Apple CEO Tim Cook [said](#) remote work isn't optimal.
- [Coinbase](#) swapped out the traditional IPO roadshow for a Reddit AMA. Separately, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission fined Coinbase [\\$6.5 million](#) over allegations of self-trading cryptocurrencies from 2015-2018.



Students, write your response!

WEEKEND CONVERSATION STARTERS - ANSWER ONE OF THEM :)

- What does being seven smell like to you?
- What do you call this breakfast dish? →
- What's the first vacation you'll go on post-pandemic?



Students, write your response!

Pick an article of your choice and tell me about it!

- [Apple's](#) HomePod mini has a secret temperature and humidity sensor, according to an iFixit/Bloomberg teardown. While currently disabled, this undisclosed sensor could be activated in a future software update.
- [Whole Foods](#) is piloting virtual beauty try-ons in some stores.
- [Peloton](#) acquired tech three companies, including a wearables maker.
- [Tesla](#) is now accepting bitcoin as payment for its cars.
- [A National Treasure](#) TV series has been greenlit by Disney+
- [Nordstrom](#) developed an in-house livestream shopping service.
- [Walmart](#) hired designer Brandon Maxwell to revamp its private-label clothing brands.
- [Starbucks](#) will expand in-store accessibility features for visually impaired shoppers.
- [Cava](#) plans to open more stores in the suburbs.
- [Chobani](#) partnered with PepsiCo to expand its retail presence.



Students, write your response!