

[Weekly Review]

## Weekly Review

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by Harper's Magazine

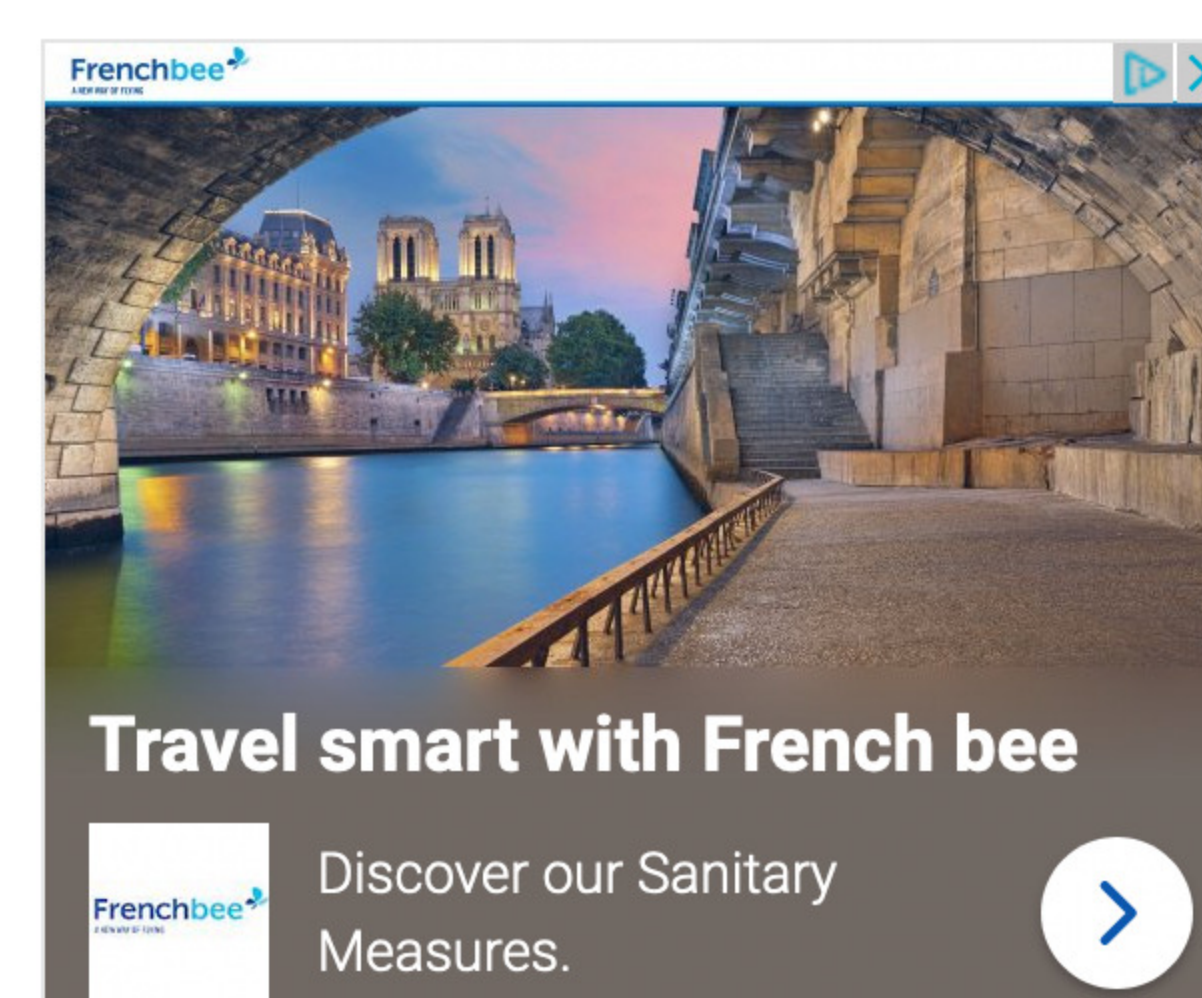
In Gaza—where same-sex relationships have been legal since 1951—Israeli military air strikes, which were ordered after Hamas—an organization that punishes “unnatural” intercourse with 10 years of prison and killed more than 1,400 Israelis and wounded over 3,900 in an attack last week—killed at least 2,808 Palestinians and wounded 10,850 others. Israel—where gay marriage is not legal but where same-sex couples have been allowed to jointly adopt since 2008—ordered the evacuation of 1.1 million northern Gazans.<sup>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</sup> Seventy evacuees, most of them women and children, were killed by Israeli air strikes as they attempted to flee.<sup>8</sup> “I firmly denounce the act of war against Israeli citizens and Americans in Israel and support Israel’s right to defend itself from these barbaric attacks,” said Texas Governor Greg Abbott, who has signed laws that ban gender-affirming care for minors, transgender athletes from competing in certain college sports, and drag queen story hour.<sup>9 10 11 12</sup> The Israeli military updated the count of hostages taken by Hamas to 199, and a landlord was accused of demanding that the roommate of a 27-year-old Israeli who was kidnapped from the Supernova music festival pay the hostage’s half of the rent.<sup>13 14</sup> “You are not doing me a favor by living there,” he allegedly said. “We will not leave the hospital—except to heaven,” said the director of the Kuwaiti medical center in Gaza after Israeli forces ordered staff to abandon their patients.<sup>15</sup> “We’re going to be careful not to get into armchair-quarterbacking the tactics on the ground,” said a spokesman for the U.S. National Security Council, which wrote in an internal email that officials should avoid the phrases “de-escalation/ceasefire,” “end to violence/bloodshed,” and “restoring calm” in press materials.<sup>16</sup> Tens of thousands of people on both sides of the conflict took part in protests and rallies across the world, including in Germany and France, where pro-Palestinian demonstrations were banned, and after 34 Harvard student groups released a statement blaming Israel solely for the violence, a digital billboard truck drove near campus displaying student members’ names and photos.<sup>17 18</sup> The Wexner Foundation, which was formerly chaired by Jeffrey Epstein, withdrew its support from the university for failing to “take a clear and unequivocal stand” on Israeli casualties.<sup>19 20</sup> House Republicans introduced the Guaranteeing Aggressors Zero Admission (GAZA) Act, which would block the Department of Homeland Security from allowing Palestinians into the United States through its parole program; Florida Representative Brian Mast arrived at work wearing the uniform of the Israeli Defense Forces; and New York Representative George Santos, who, after falsely claiming that his grandparents survived the Holocaust, revised his religious status to “Jew-ish,” berated pro-Palestinian protesters in a confrontation that began while he held a baby of unclear provenance.<sup>21 22 23 24</sup> “You are a terrorist sympathizer,” shouted the congressman, who currently faces 23 felony charges.<sup>25</sup> “You are human scum.”

In Poland, in an election with over 74 percent turnout, citizens supported centrist parties that promised to reverse democratic backsliding under eight years of rule by the Law and Justice Party.<sup>26</sup> “We will finally be able to live in a normal country, for real,” said one Pole. In Ecuador, Daniel Noboa, a banana scion who promised to stick hardened criminals on prison ships off the coast, was elected the nation’s youngest-ever president, and, in Austria, a beer-themed political party surged in polls.<sup>27 28</sup> Russian officials in the Belgorod region held a ribbon-cutting for a new bridge that appeared to be stolen from a neighboring village; a Russian volunteer asked social media followers for donations of body bags for soldiers who had been attempting to take the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka; and Russia lost a secret ballot to regain a seat on the UN’s Human Rights Council.<sup>29 30 31 32</sup> Representative Steve Scalise (R-La.) won a secret ballot to become the Republican nominee for Speaker of the House, then withdrew after it became clear that he did not have the support necessary to secure the gavel.<sup>33</sup> Republicans then nominated Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) and decided to go home after polling indicated that he did not have enough support, either.<sup>34</sup> It was reported that the Army doesn’t know where many of its excess weapons are.<sup>35</sup> The state of Oklahoma was found to have spent less than one percent of its COVID-19 recovery funds, and it was reported that an Oklahoma man who was wrongfully imprisoned for murder used his pandemic relief money to hire a private investigator who successfully cleared his name.<sup>36 37</sup> The suspected bomb that caused a flight from Panama to Florida to turn back was revealed to be an adult diaper.<sup>38</sup>

It was reported that the office of Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro had quietly settled sexual harassment allegations against a top aide, and researchers discovered that female frogs will avoid unwanted sexual attention from males by pretending to be dead.<sup>39 40</sup> A CDC study revealed that wealth, exercise, and smoking reduce the risk of death from depression, and scientists found that ultra-processed fare is just as addictive as nicotine, cocaine, or heroin.<sup>41 42</sup> “Ask yourself,” advised an author of the study, “is this really food?” A Japanese man was sentenced to three years in prison for licking a soy sauce bottle at a conveyor-belt sushi restaurant.<sup>43</sup> Oklahoma’s top jurist called for the removal of a district judge who exchanged more than 500 text messages with her bailiff during the trial of a man accused of murdering a toddler, in which she demeaned jurors, attorneys, and witnesses.<sup>44 45</sup> “He looks constipated,” she wrote of a prosecutor. “Why does he have baby hands?” Florida parents were upset after fourth graders were accidentally shown *Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey*, in which the beloved character, now in the public domain, goes on a killing spree, and it was reported that a Kansas teacher and stand-up comedian had been fired for TikToks in which he described “crop dusting” students with “big milky lactose intolerant farts” and teaching them that Abraham Lincoln was the inventor of the car.<sup>46 47</sup> “The reason I’m doing comedy on TikTok,” said the teacher, “is because you only pay me \$45,000 a year.” Amateur astronomers sued telescope makers, alleging a price-fixing conspiracy, and crowds gathered in eight American states, Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Brazil to watch a rare “ring of fire” solar eclipse.<sup>48 49</sup> “Good job, sun,” shouted an onlooker in Utah. “You did it!” —*Jon Edelman*

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