

Scientific & Digital Briefs

By Shopper Editor Dave Bunting

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Today is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Congressman Dan Newhouse of Eastern Washington reminds us:

"Today is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and in honor of America's greatest Civil Rights leader, I want to encourage you to reflect upon and honor his life and legacy.

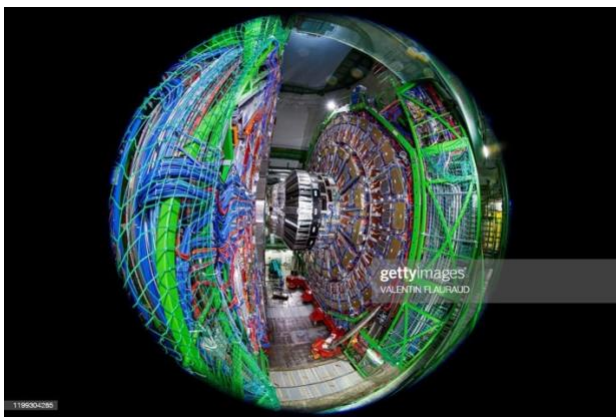
"Dr. King was one of America's greatest heroes, and his work paved the way for our nation to abandon the divisions of the past and move forward in a spirit of unity."

"Dr. King said,
'Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.'"

How we think; reasons and ways to change it.

Some people say their thought takes place in images, some in words. But our mental processes are more mysterious than we realize.

In one of many examples given, Ethan Kross, a psychologist and neuroscientist, advises trying "distanced self-talk": by using "your name and the second-person 'you' to refer to yourself." He writes, you can gain more command over your thinking. You might use your inner voice to pretend that you're advising a friend about his problems; you might redirect your thoughts toward how universal your experiences are (*It's normal to feel this way*), or contemplate how every new experience is a challenge you can overcome (*I have to learn to trust my partner*). The idea is to manage the voice that you use for self-management. Take advantage of the suppleness of dialogue. Don't just rehearse the same old scripts; send some notes to the writers' room.



Wide angle image of a detector array in the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. Image: VALENTIN FLAURAUD/AFP

Nuclear reactor experiment rules out one dark matter hope

It was an anomaly detected in the storm of a nuclear reactor so puzzling that physicists hoped it would shine a light on dark matter, one of the universe's greatest mysteries.

However new research has definitively ruled out that this strange measurement signaled the existence of a "sterile neutrino", a hypothetical particle that has long eluded scientists.

Neutrinos are sometimes called "ghost particles" because they barely interact with other matter—around 100 trillion are estimated to pass through our bodies every second.

This Avian Flu is serious!

Avian influenza viruses of the H5 subtype and H7 subtype have caused 2634 human cases around the world, including more than 1000 deaths. These viruses have caused numerous disease outbreaks in wild birds and domestic poultry and are responsible for the loss of at least 422 million domestic birds.



A 10-minute workout does more than you think

A 10-minute stretch session can undo the effects of sitting at a desk all day.

Finding time to exercise can create added stress. Here's the good news: You don't need an hour to do it.

Better fitness in 10 minutes or less sounds like an infomercial scam, but recent research has shown that short bouts of physical activity sprinkled throughout the day can have big benefits when performed correctly.

Experts say brisk walking, jumping rope, stair climbing, high-intensity interval workouts and other quick hits of activity that get the body moving and the heart rate up can bring positive results ranging from reduced blood pressure and anxiety to improved sleep quality and focus.



Christians vs Game of Thrones

To truly care about virtue is to recognize that it matters how you win: Ends don't justify means.

So instead of a principled commitment to limited government and individual liberty, the argument goes, conservatives who "know what time it is" should be willing to use public power to attack their foes. Anything less amounts to unilateral disarmament or even suicide.

The stakes, in this telling, are existential. It's not uncommon to hear that a future of Soviet-style persecution awaits those who refuse to embrace a sufficiently "muscular" response. A New Right influencer once told me that the liberalism of the American founding, by making conservatives squeamish about fighting fire with fire, was apt to land her in a gulag. Like the famous maxim from *Game of Thrones*, it's a vision of politics as a literal war in which you win, or you die.

But how like Westeros is the United States? Are American leftists really plotting to round up religious traditionalists and Republican voters? If they were, would they stand a chance of getting away with it under the American system as it exists?

Perhaps the leading argument for classical liberalism is that it turns down the temperature of our politics. By ensuring that the rights even of minority groups are respected, good institutions can remove, or at least significantly reduce, those supposedly life-or-death stakes. Meanwhile, Americans by all accounts want a government that protects basic rights and liberties, not one that imposes a single moral orthodoxy on the country, however much some progressives might wish to do so. Given all this, perhaps the worst thing conservatives could do is to tear down the liberal institutions and norms that keep the left's worst impulses in check.

Dave Bunting, Jan. 16, 2023. Credits are in links behind item titles.
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