

TO BHMA

International edition

SUNDAY,
MARCH 1, 2026

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Two Centuries Of American History Through Board Games

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By **Mary Pilon**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In 1822, F. & R. Lockwood, a small cartography firm in New York, published what historians today believe was the first of its kind: a board game invented and marketed in America.

Travellers' Tour Through the United States was a novelty that featured a hand-colored map of the then-24 states, peppered with towns and landmarks. Players would make their way across the map by naming geographical facts, with the winner being the first to reach New Orleans.

Please turn to Page 4

How Popcorn Took Over The Movies

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By **Heidi Mitchell**

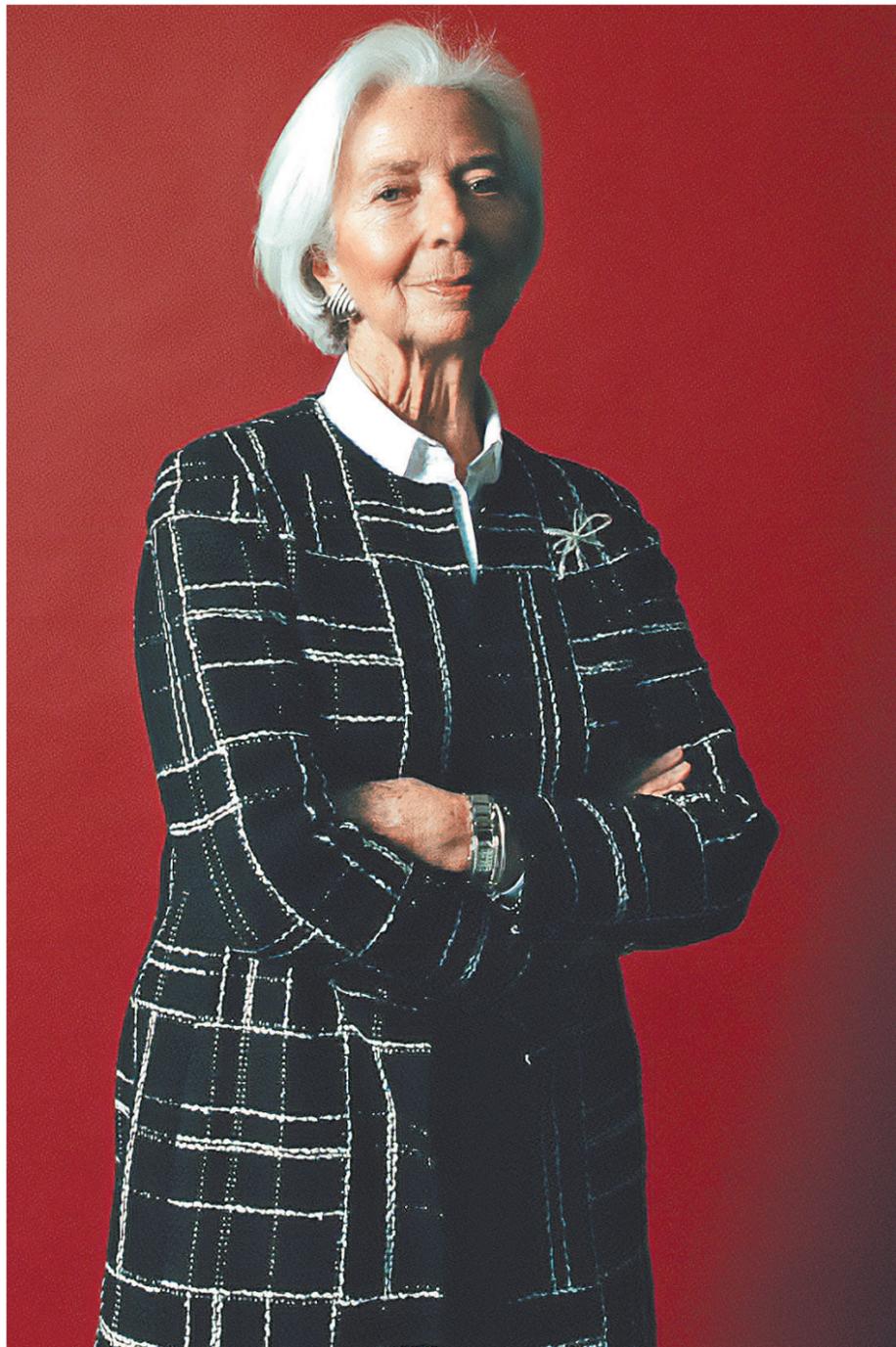
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Popcorn and movies—as intertwined as Laurel and Hardy, Fred and Ginger, Butch and Sundance.

But it wasn't always so.

Long before its buttery aroma seeped into the upholstery of American theaters, the snack lived a humbler life. Indigenous peoples in South America had been popping corn for millennia, but it didn't reach the U.S. until the 19th century, when whalers returned from South America with the whole grain in tow.

Please turn to Page 5



Christine Lagarde Isn't Done Trying to Fix Europe

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By **Chelsey Dulaney**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Christine Lagarde was seated among prime ministers, presidents and European royalty in Davos, Switzerland, last month when Howard Lutnick took the mic. The U.S. Commerce Secretary launched into an attack on Europe, railing against the continent's energy policies and declining place on the world stage.

Lagarde had heard enough. The president of the European Central Bank stood up and left the opening dinner of the annual World Economic Forum. Others followed.

“To have as a last speaker, without any rebuttal of any arguments, someone who just bashed Europe, right, left, and center. I thought it was just too much,” Lagarde said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal this week. (A Lutnick spokesman at the time said no one left the speech hastily.)

Lagarde, 70, has spent much of her career as a trans-Atlanticist. She first moved to the U.S. from France at 17 and worked as a lawyer in Chicago and later at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C.

Please turn to Page 2

Christine Lagarde's tenure in one of the continent's most powerful jobs is entering its final stretch

Greek: The Language That Refuses To Fade

TO BHMA International edition

By **Maria Katopodi**

On Feb. 9, UNESCO celebrates the Greek language as one of the oldest and most influential languages in the world, noted Greek-Australian MP Steve Georganas in the Parliament of Australia, delivering part of his speech in Greek and emphasizing the importance of the language as a shared

global heritage. Historically, Greek served as the official or administrative language of great empires, from the Hellenistic era shaped by the conquests of Alexander the Great to the Byzantine Empire founded by Constantine the Great.

Today, it is the official language of around 12 million people, primarily the residents of Greece and Cyprus.

One of the most

salient characteristics of the Greek language is perhaps its resilience over time, as it is among the very few languages—alongside Chinese and Hebrew—that have been spoken continuously and without interruption for more than 4,000 years. The recent discovery of Linear B tablets dating from around 1450–1350 B.C. clearly demonstrates this continuity.

Please turn to Page 8



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One with the future

Christine Lagarde Isn't Done Trying to Fix Europe

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The ECB boss is laying out a vision for how Europe can survive the fracturing of its relationship with its closest ally

Continued from Page One

Last week, Lagarde had to address media reports that she would quit the ECB early to give French President Emmanuel Macron the chance to help pick her successor ahead of April 2027 elections. Lagarde, while declining to comment on those reports, said her work at the ECB isn't done yet.

But as Lagarde's tenure in one of the continent's most powerful jobs enters its final stretch, she is laying out a vision for how Europe can survive the fracturing of its relationship with its closest ally.

"Is Europe now going to change, to transform, to improve? My optimistic view of this continent—my continent, Europe—is yes," she said. "I'm not suggesting it's a tribute to President Trump, but...his assessment and grievance about Europe is more than a wake-up call."



AMIR HAMZA FOR WSJ

Other possible option for Lagarde after her ECB term ends is to take over the World Economic Forum.

Lagarde's central role in shaping European debates outside the realm of monetary policy stems in part from her political experience and charismatic public persona—she has appeared on Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show" to discuss inflation, and on the cover of fashion magazines such as Vanity Fair in France.

But the ECB also holds a unique position within the EU. It is one of the bloc's few federal institutions and can make decisions affecting hundreds of millions of people without being constrained by Brussels's political gridlock.

"This is the most powerful institution we have, and this is why Christine is so powerful," said Aurore Lalucq, chair of the European Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee. "When she speaks, everyone listens."

As deep divisions

among EU countries slow progress toward self-sufficiency, Lagarde argues that Europe needs a more pragmatic approach—such as "coalitions of the willing," smaller groups that can move ahead on stalled projects like unifying Europe's capital markets.

She pointed to the success of the eurozone—which includes 21 of the 27 EU members—as "one of those examples where we do not have the 27 around the table, and yet it works."

Lagarde said Europe should take a more militaristic approach to change, with "action plan, deadline, imperatives—the sort of key performance indicator where you know who is doing what, by when, and with what test of success."

In a sign that Lagarde's patience with the EU's slow progress is wearing thin, this month she sent a checklist of five urgently needed

reforms to EU leaders, with the subject line: "time for action," according to a copy seen by the Journal. Among them: unifying capital markets, harmonizing corporate regulations and coordinating research and development spending.

"If only 50% of it was to be done, I'm convinced, we are convinced at the ECB, that it would significantly improve the growth potential of Europe," she said.

Lagarde took over the European Central Bank in 2019 when it was heavily divided over nearly everything: the effectiveness of quantitative easing, negative interest rates, its 2% inflation target.

Her predecessor, Mario Draghi, was a central-banking giant whose unscripted pledge to "do whatever it takes" to hold the currency union together in 2012 is widely seen as having saved the euro from collapse. But

In Trump Era, the Only Sure Thing for Businesses and Governments Is Uncertainty

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Supreme Court ruling leaves foreign officials, exporters scrambling to figure out whether to rewire supply chains, reopen trade deals

By Tom Fairless and Jon Emont

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Supreme Court ruling on President Trump's tariffs has unleashed a fresh wave of global uncertainty, as governments and businesses scramble to figure out whether to rewire global supply chains, reopen trade deals and seek refunds for hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs.

While major U.S. trading partners such as the European Union, South Korea and Japan have signaled that they would stick to the trade deals they struck, the ruling has left them with a host of questions over how it will affect Trump's tariff policies and negotiating power.

"Frankly, it's a total mess," said Itsunori Onodera, tax-policy chief of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, when asked about

Trump's latest tariffs on a television program Sunday. "As an ally, Japan is worried that countries are increasingly going to keep their dis-

tance from the U.S. when the U.S. is in such a mess."

Uncertainty for global trade has been a feature of Trump's presidency. He has

sought to use unpredictability to extract concessions from foreign governments and encourage businesses to relocate production to the U.S.

Since the ruling, Trump has warned countries not to "play games." On Monday, he said on social media that he could use other levies in a "much more powerful and obnoxious way." He said he could use licenses to do "absolutely 'terrible' things to foreign countries," without specifying what he was referring to.

Still, by setting limits on Trump's ability to impose tariffs at will, Friday's court ruling might offer a degree of comfort to foreign governments and businesses. It marks a step toward re-establishing global trading norms and stabilizing the outlook for exporting nations, business executives and economists said.

"The entire Trump strategy of weaponized un-

certainty...has now been greatly reduced," said Jacob Kirkegaard, nonresident senior fellow in Brussels at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a nonpartisan, pro-free-trade think tank based in Washington, D.C.

The Supreme Court ruled that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the 1977 law that Trump has used to justify sweeping reciprocal and fentanyl tariffs, doesn't grant the president power to levy taxes.

But the ruling doesn't touch other more specific trade laws designed for targeted intervention. These include Section 232, which allows Trump to impose tariffs on sectors such as steel, aluminum or automobiles if he can link them to national security; and Section 301, which allows the president to target specific industries or countries if an investigation finds they have engaged



INA FASSBENDER/REUTERS

A steel worker controls a blast furnace in Duinsburg, Germany.



KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

U.S. President Donald Trump during a press briefing at the White House, following the Supreme Court's ruling that he had exceeded his authority when he imposed tariffs, in Washington, D.C., U.S., February 20, 2026.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Draghi's command over the central bank's policy left deep rifts among the ECB's governing council.

Lagarde was an unusual pick for the job. While she had led the IMF and was French finance minister during the European debt crisis, she never trained as an economist. She wasn't just the first woman to lead the ECB, but also the only one on its 25-member council until the addition of German economist Isabel Schnabel.

"There remains sexism in the world of central banking," said Janet Yellen, former chair of the Federal Reserve, who took notice of Lagarde's efforts to elevate women when working with her. "She always went out of her way to make sure there was a woman around the table."

One of Lagarde's first moves at the ECB was to replace the oval table in the ECB headquarters with a round one, said Klaas Knot, former president of the Dutch central bank, who is widely seen as a front-runner to replace Lagarde when her term ends next year.

"The problem with an oval table is there's an implicit hierarchy between people sitting at the center and people sitting at the edges," said Knot. "She said 'No, I believe that all 25

members of the governing council should be treated as equal.'"

Her early tenure was rocky. She fueled a market panic in March 2020 by suggesting the central bank wouldn't step in to help Italy as its borrowing costs soared. Investors dumped Italian bonds, and the ECB was forced to launch an emergency program of bond purchases.

Even Lagarde's critics today give her credit for managing to bring down inflation with higher interest rates without setting off a crisis in financially weaker countries like Italy. Today, inflation is below the ECB's 2% target, and the economy is growing.

"The start was a bit chaotic," said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro at ING, who was critical of Lagarde at the start of her term. "She has clearly improved."

If Draghi's legacy was saving the euro, Lagarde hopes hers will be propelling it into a truly global currency. The euro has risen over the past year, but it has struggled to gain ground as a reserve currency despite questions over the dollar's role which have intensified under Trump.

"I want the euro to be fit for the future," Lagarde said. "But it's not going to happen because I would decide or I would give a speech...You



European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde addresses the press following the ECB's Governing Council meeting, at the ECB headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, February 5, 2026.



Christine Lagarde provides the signature which will be found on the newly printed euro banknotes at the bank's headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, November 27, 2019.

have to earn it, essentially."

The ECB recently said it plans to expand its repo facility to nearly all global central banks, a move intended to bolster the euro's usage by mitigating the risk of funding crunches during periods of market stress.

"That's our way to say, 'If you trade in euros, if you invoice in euros, and there is a crisis or there is an issue, liquidity in euro will be there for you,'" she said.

Lagarde hopes the creation of a digital version of the euro will also be part of her legacy. The ECB president has stressed a "digital euro" is necessary to reduce Europe's reliance on U.S. companies like Visa and Mastercard, which still process most European transactions. A pilot version is expected to start next year.

Lagarde said she is considering her options for the future, including taking over the World Economic Forum after her role at the ECB ends, and hopes to be closer to her family. But for now, she said her mission isn't complete.

"When I look back at all these years, I think that we have accomplished a lot. That I have accomplished a lot," she said. "We need to consolidate and make sure that this is really solid and reliable. So my baseline is that it will take until the end of my term."



in unfair trade practices.

Already, Trump has re-introduced a 15% tariff rate on U.S. trading partners using Section 122, which is meant to address specific currency or debt crises and is legally limited to 150 days.

"It is not clear that the new threats are materially less powerful than the old ones," said Simon Evenett,

professor of geopolitics and strategy at IMD Business School in Switzerland.

After the European Commission said on Sunday that it would stick by its U.S. trade deal, the European Parliament took a tougher line on Monday and halted its ratification. "The situation is now more uncertain than ever. This runs counter

to the stability and predictability we sought to achieve with the Turnberry Deal," said Bernd Lange, chairman of the parliament's trade committee, referring to the trade deal the EU struck with Trump at his golf resort in Scotland.

Still, it was far from clear that there was appetite in Europe to reopen negotiations. Many EU officials believe they have already weathered political heat for the deal and may as well press ahead, Kirkegaard said.

In Japan, tax-policy chief Onodera noted that Japan had negotiated down the U.S. tariff on cars to 15% and expressed concern that reopening the discussions could harm Japanese car-makers.

After months of negotiations, Indonesia had only signed its trade deal with the U.S. on Thursday, the day before the Supreme Court issued its ruling. They agreed to a rate of 19% on Indonesian products and large market concessions to American producers. That rate is now higher than the temporary blanket rate of 15% for countries that haven't negotiated any agreement.

On Saturday, Indonesian officials said that

they expected their products would be in line for the lower blanket rate and were working to ensure that products such as palm oil and certain electronics components would receive 0% tariffs as stipulated in the U.S.-Indonesia agreement, as opposed to the 15% rate.

"The principle is that Indonesia is ready for every possibility," said Cabinet Secretary Teddy Indra Wijaya when asked what his country gained from making a deal before the ruling. "We readied the umbrella before the rain."

The ruling has left businesses worldwide with questions about how they should respond and what they should expect.

In Germany, Klaus Geissdoerfer, the chief executive of fan manufacturer EBM-papst Group, said he had received inquiries over the weekend from customers seeking tariff refunds. He is pressing ahead with a roughly \$30 million expansion of his factory in Tennessee, convinced that he needs to localize more production in the U.S. to sidestep tariffs.

He said he hoped that Friday's court ruling could be "a starting point toward more normality." Provided that U.S. import tariffs remain in the range of 15%

to 25%, "from the business point of view we can handle it," Geissdoerfer said.

Ferdinand Dudenhofer, a former German auto-industry executive, said that the country's large car manufacturers could handle the new 15% tariff for the 150-day period. "The strategy is: wait and see, and maintain daily business," Dudenhofer said. "I assume that since Friday evening, all investments by the German automotive industry in the U.S. have been frozen."

For those countries in the Global South that have seen a reduction in tariffs, Friday's ruling opens a weeklong window to restock supplies in the U.S., said Ludovic Subran, group chief investment officer at German insurer Allianz. That window is likely to be seized by manufacturers in China, India, Indonesia and South Africa, among other countries, Subran said.

The new blanket 15% tariff rates introduced by the Trump administration represent a roughly 7 percentage point drop on tariffs for products coming from China, according to analysis from Morgan Stanley, versus a 3 percentage point drop for products from Vietnam.

Renaud Anjoran, owner of an electronics factory in

southern China, said he was worried that Friday's ruling could mark a return to last year's trade chaos.

Anjoran said he was afraid buyers would overwhelm his roughly 300-person factory with requests to make and ship products during the current low-tariff window. He said he was concerned the Trump administration's plan to restore high tariffs could invite Chinese retaliation and lead to a new escalatory cycle between the great powers.

China's Ministry of Commerce hinted at that possibility on Monday, saying China would "firmly safeguard its own interests" in response to any U.S. measures to maintain tariffs.

"This reopens the can of worms," Anjoran said. "That's exactly what we don't want."

Meanwhile, for some countries, Trump's global 15% tariff would represent an increase. For example, many goods in Australia, Singapore and the U.K. were previously covered by a 10% tariff.

"It's a stark reminder to all of us that we are now facing a very unpredictable and uncertain operating environment," said Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong.

What We See When We Look at Two Centuries of American Board Games

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

In the original Game of Life, players could land on some disheartening spaces, including Ruin, Disgrace and Suicide

Continued from Page One

The game's price and the number sold are lost to history. In hindsight, though, F. & R. Lockwood gave birth to an industry. Board games in the U.S. in 2024 generated almost \$4.6 billion in revenue, according to the market-research company Imarc. Charting that growth—and looking at some of the most popular games in the past two centuries—reveal much about the nation's evolving attitudes and values.

Board games, of course, were popular in North America long before 1776. Card games reigned in taverns. Colonists played chess, checkers, dominoes and backgammon, among other diversions. These games, though, had their roots in Europe, Africa and Asia. The Travellers game was something new: a homegrown product, one that seemed to reflect the American psyche.

"There's this huge national pride going that has never really stopped," says Matthew W. Sivils, a professor of English at Iowa State University who has studied Travellers and owns more than 800 tabletop games himself. "Manifest Destiny gets coined as a term, and you had this nationalist, expansionist mindset."

Expansionist—with a healthy dose of puritanism. By the mid-1800s, Salem, Mass., became a hub of early game development aided by European printing technology that had made its way across the Atlantic. There, in 1844, brothers William and Stephen B. Ives released the Game of Pope and Pagan, or Siege of the Stronghold of Satan, by the Christian Army. In the game, players act as missionaries attacking (as the title makes clear) Lucifer, the pope and pagans, reflecting both the tight-laced culture of the day and antipathy toward Catholicism and immigrants.

Indeed, a moral message was central to many board games of the era. Among the most popular: the Checkered Game of Life, created by game pioneer Milton Bradley in 1860. Profoundly religious and an early advocate of the kindergarten movement in America, Bradley developed his game for children as much as their parents. Players navigated a board



The Game of Life, bottom, has had a long life. Iconic Monopoly, top, often served as an 'entry level' experience to capitalism, at least in the board game dimension.

with spaces identifying the highs of life—College, Success, Happy Old Age, among others—and several frightening lows, including Ruin, Disgrace and Suicide.

Follow the money

As the 19th century drew to a close, a growing middle class found itself with disposable income, shorter workweeks, mail-order catalogs and department stores, all of which helped board games evolve into consumer products. The railroad boom of the 1880s fueled the games industry, which became increasingly focused on capitalism in addition to moral uplift.

Starting in 1886, a series of games derived from the Horatio Alger books—with

titles like From Log Cabin to the White House—caught the public's fancy. A boy (always a boy) popularized the rags-to-riches fantasy, pulling himself up by his bootstraps toward wealth and respectability. Women, however, frequently received a different message. In one called Marriage Auction, a popular game from the early 1900s, card values laid out a bride's worth, noting that "the bridesmaids have no value, however they rank." The rules note: "Marriage they say is a gamble, one thing very certain is that money plays an important part." Both types of games centered on economic survival, but only one offered agency.

As the Gilded Age rolled

on, one female game designer subverted the script. Lizzie Magie was an impassioned follower of Henry George, a popular political economist and author of the bestselling book, "Progress and Poverty." George believed that taxing land, and only land (a "single tax"), was the path to a more just world.

In 1904, Magie received a patent for her Landlord's Game, which millions know today as Monopoly. What most people don't know: Her game was created to teach about the ills of concentrated wealth. For decades, Magie's creation spread as a folk game including to Quakers in Atlantic City, N.J. It was a version of that game, complete with Atlantic City

place names like Ventnor Avenue and Boardwalk, that was taught to Charles Darrow, who pitched it to game maker Parker Brothers as his own invention. It wasn't until economist Ralph Anspach became entangled in a legal battle with the game maker in the 1970s that the true story and Magie's brainchild came to light.

Depression fantasies

From the 1900s through the 1930s, financial games gained favor. The games Finance, Inflation and others thrived during the Great Depression as a fantasy of an American Dream far out of reach for most homes. Magie also published Bargain Day, a 1937 game in which players move

through a store making purchases by trying to save the most. The player who shops most thriftily wins.

After World War II, strategy games like Risk, in which players seek to capture territories across the world, reflected Cold War anxiety. Candyland was designed in 1948 to brighten spirits of children in hospital wards. By now, board games were a nostalgia lifeline, an intergenerational pastime that brought people together and reminded them of times before the war.

And the act of playing games reinforced wholesome, suburban-family values. Consider the 1965 game Mystery Date, in which girls try to land a dreamy date and avoid the sloppily dressed "dud" guy. The game was developed by Marvin Glass & Associates, a Chicago toy-design firm whose other hits included Simon, Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots, Operation and Mouse Trap. Glass understood that the 1960s represented a new era for the industry. Designs shifted to plastic and away from wooden and metal pieces. TV provided a pipeline that could market wares directly to children rather than just through their parents. In 1966, Twister became a phenomenon and challenged sexual norms, while a revamped version of Milton Bradley's Game of Life—complete with plastic automobiles and destinations including Millionaire Acres—pushed the postwar suburban fantasy.

Today, even with the rise of videogames, board games in the U.S. are more than holding their own. Thanks to Kickstarter, the crowdfunding platform, lower costs of production and online communities, players can enjoy hits like Settlers of Catan, Wingspan, Exploding Kittens and Ticket to Ride, a modern game about railroads that brings the capitalist theme of the 1800s full circle.

People still play physical games because "they're totally different experiences," U.K.-based game historian David Parlett says. "Digital games have only extended the range of games available, not replaced it. Many people prefer to maintain the real-life experience of handling traditional materials in a communal, real-life setting."

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Continued from Page One

By around 1850, popping varieties emerged in New England and “pop-corn” entered the vernacular.

The appeal was obvious: It was cheap, fast and theatrical. Families popped it over wood stoves; peddlers sold it in paper cones at circuses, carnivals and busy promenades. Its umami scent did half the work. A whiff of fresh corn could draw a crowd quicker than any barker’s repetitive shout.

The breakthrough came at the 1893 Columbian Exposition (or Chicago World’s Fair). Chicago inventor Charles Cretors unveiled a steam-powered wagon capable of popping corn consistently and at volume. His patent made commercial oil popping possible, says Charlie Cretors, his great-grandson and chief executive of C. Cretors & Co., which manufactures equipment for popcorn popping in theaters.

“Popcorn wagons became a new business that could support a family,” Cretors says. Adjusted for today’s dollars, “the popcorn man would be earning \$70,000 a year, and the taxes were almost nonexistent at that time.”

Yet when movies arrived in the early 20th century, ornate theaters wanted nothing to do with the noisy snack. Deluxe-theater owners had modeled their palaces after opera houses and temples, complete with velvet drapes, gilt ceilings and live orchestras. Popcorn, with its flying crumbs and sonic crunch, was too low-brow—and too messy—for their polished halls. Many banned it outright.

“They feared oil, butter and crumbs destroying their beautiful carpets, seats and rugs,” says Ross Melnick, professor of film and media studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

A margin business

The Great Depression changed everything. As audiences thinned and revenues slumped, smaller theaters and even high-end movie houses embraced popcorn and its huge 70% profit margins. The arrival of “talkies” further eased its entry: Orchestras disappeared, dialogue filled the soundtrack and a little crunching no longer disrupted the show.

Talkies also democratized moviegoing since literacy was no longer required. Vendors clustered outside theater doors, selling to patrons in nearby stores and in pushcarts as they streamed in and out, until owners realized “if you can’t beat ‘em, own ‘em,” says Wen-



How Popcorn Took Over the Movies

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

At first, theater owners wanted nothing to do with the noisy snack. But then came the Great Depression.

dy Boersema Rappel, who manages marketing for the Popcorn Board, which promotes the product.

By the 1930s, popping machines were increasingly becoming fixtures in lobbies. It was the Golden Age of Cinema, but many audience members were still broke. Theaters responded with double features—two films for the price of one. “You’d get hungry between film A and film B, but you didn’t need to leave because popcorn was satisfying and sold right there for 10 cents,” says Melnick.

World War II cemented the snack’s dominance: Sugar rationing crippled candy production, while popcorn, unrationed and still cheap, filled the void. The treat became a national staple. “The show starts in your nostrils,” Melnick says. “You smell the popcorn and you’re reminded of every film you ever saw.”

Eye-popping math

Popcorn remains one of the most profitable consumer products; kernels cost pennies per serving, store well, generate little waste and require minimal labor. Because corn is purchased by weight but sold by volume, margins are unusually high. Studios capture much of each ticket’s revenue—especially early in a movie’s run—but conces-

sions deliver the profits that keep theaters solvent. In its most recent quarter, for example, AMC Entertainment reported that almost 36% of total revenue came from food and beverages, much of which was popcorn; in some years, concessions have accounted for 40%-50% of operating profit for other big chains.

Popcorn’s reliability is another advantage. As a crop largely grown in the Midwest, it’s comparatively insulated from global price swings that affect candy, packaged goods and soda syrups.

What’s more, as movie theaters struggle with the competition from streaming services, concessions remain a critical lifeline; that’s partly why there has been a rise of dine-in theaters serving full meals, as well as expanded menus of cocktails, pizza and other regional dishes. Still, popcorn endures as the “default order,” says Jeff Waaland, founder and co-chief executive of Golden Link, a maker of licensed film collectible concession vessels. “People walk in thinking about popcorn before they see the food menu. Popcorn and Coke are the nucleus of a theater’s success.”

Collectible cups and buckets—once rare and tied only to blockbuster

film franchises—have also made popcorn even more valuable to theaters; they hold a lot more (and sell for a lot more) than the typical large container. AMC, for instance, sold more than \$50 million worth of merchandise, much of which was collectible buckets in 2023. “When this craze started, it was mainly the large cinema chains buying into the high-end areas,” says Waaland. “Independent theaters are now buying these popcorn buckets, because it’s a part of the fandom experience.”

Popping along

As popcorn becomes even more crucial to the economics of movie theaters, the industry continues to look for new ways to attract customers. Some chains are testing organic kernels, lower-salt offerings and alternative cooking oils. Equipment makers are developing machines that are more energy-efficient, and ventilation systems that waft aroma through the lobby—an old-school marketing tactic that still does the trick.

Sustainability may be

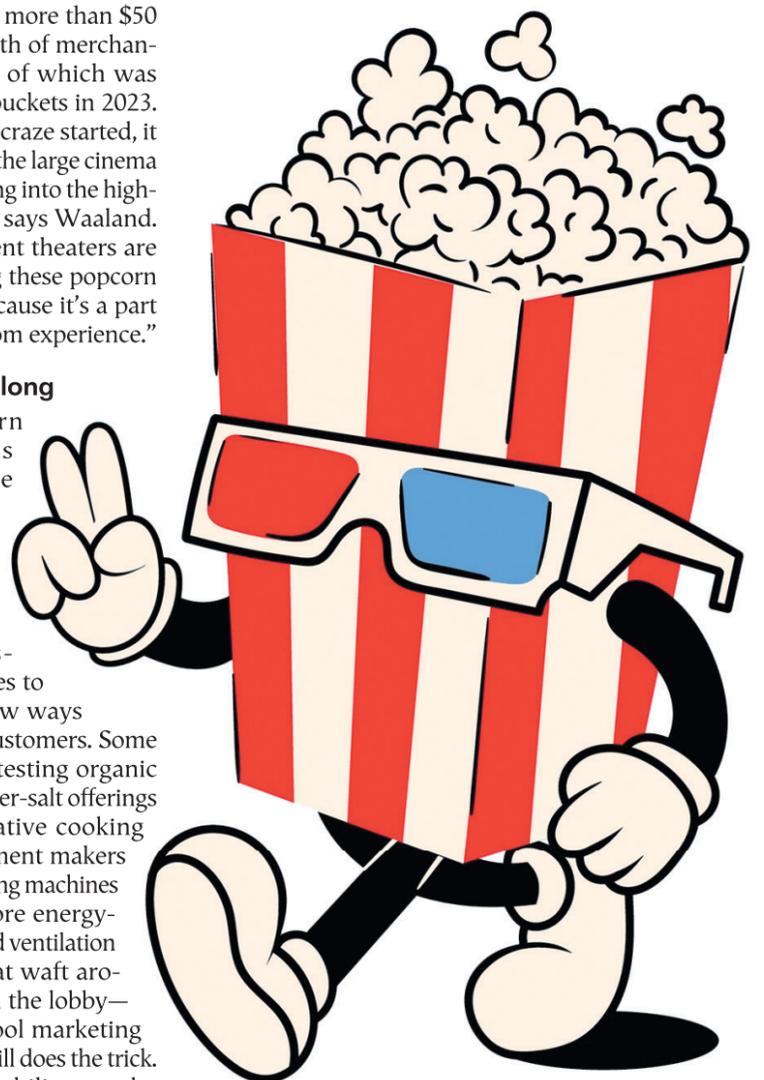
the next trend: Recyclable buckets and compostable bags are on the horizon. Meanwhile, collectible buckets will only grow

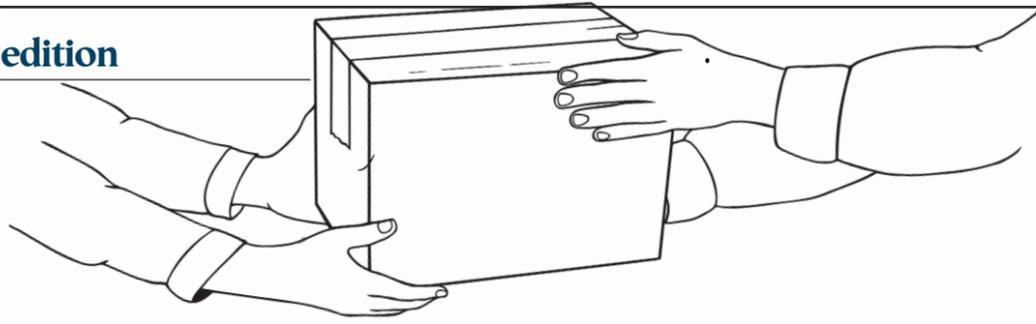
more elaborate, with light-up features, custom molds and limited-run designs tied to premieres.

“Novelty buckets have become such a part of the experience in the past five years,” says Melnick. “But it’s just another permutation of what you take home when you go to the movies.” One hundred years ago, he says, you might get a pin-up of Mary Pickford. “Now you get a Barbie bucket. It creates a connection to a brand and, I believe, represents the somewhat fading star system of Hollywood (Margot Robbie’s stardom notwithstanding) and the importance of IP: In many cases, the brand has become more prominent than the stars.” And that bucket is always filled (originally, at least) with popcorn.

What hasn’t changed is popcorn’s sensual impact: That unmistakable smell signals the beginning of a shared experience, which is increasingly hard to come by. What was once a Depression-era stopgap, then a wartime necessity, has become a pillar of the moviegoing experience and the film business itself.

“You have so many pleasure sensors working at once at the movies,” says Melnick. “The emotions of being with family and friends, the excitement of the dark room and the energy of the film itself. The smell and texture of popcorn, both subconsciously and consciously, have become part of the sensory experience.”



TO BHMA International edition


Pass it On: Places to Donate Old Items and Do Good in Greece

This is your chance to make a difference and give your once loved items a new lease of life. Ten places to donate clothes, shoes, and more.

By Maria Paravantes

The beginning of a new year is always a great chance to start anew. In an age of overconsumption and disposable goods, most of us own far more than we need. Items pile up, taking up precious space and weighing us down. Few of us realize that things we never use but refuse to part with often work against us. And so we hoard.

We all have that drawer, with a capital D, or a closet full of unused things. Not to mention the clothes that no longer fit, the towering stacks of forgotten toys, and the gifts we never liked in the first place.

So what better way to declutter your home (and soul) than by donating items you no longer need for a good cause? It's a small act with a massive impact. This week, *TO BHMA International Edition* selects 10 places in Greece where your unused belongings can make a real difference, whether it's to people in need or a cause close to your heart.

Kindness Starts Here

1. Caritas Athens

Based in Athens, Caritas Athens supports vulnerable people, including Greeks, asylum seekers and displaced individuals, regardless of religion, nationality, gender, race, language, or age.

The organization is part of the wider Caritas network, a global Catholic Church-linked charity. Caritas Athens' work includes the distribution of daily meals, clothing and essentials, social support, and outreach to people experiencing homelessness.

Since the refugee crisis began in 2015, its work has also included food programs, language and integration support, psychosocial help, and assistance with housing and employment.

What you can donate: clothing, shoes, linen, blankets

2. SOS Children's Villages

Active in Greece since 1975, SOS Children's Villages sup-



A view of Reto Hellas' space.



SOS Children's Village organizes sales to generate funds for projects.

ports children who lack, or are at risk of losing, parental care. With facilities and programs across Attica, Thessaloniki, Alexandroupoli, and Crete, the organization provides long-term care, family support, and youth empowerment initiatives. The organization is active in more than 130 countries and territories worldwide.

What you can donate: computers, laptops, printers, office supplies, school bags, toys and board games

3. Fabric Republic

This Athens-based circular-fashion initiative collects unwanted clothes, then cleans, sorts, and redistributes them to people in need through solidarity organizations. Supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Fabric Republic also creates jobs and forms partnerships with municipalities and major retail chains such as Zara, Parabita, and My-Market stores.

By reusing clothing, Fabric Republic helps reduce waste and encourages people to think more responsibly about what they buy and throw away. Its goal is to turn extra clothing into help for communities in need. The organization also works with the municipalities of Athens and Nea Filadelfia as well as with NGOs.

What you can donate: clothes and usable textiles

4. Praksis

PRAKSIS supports homeless people, refugees, and low-income families by providing free medical care, social services, and basic goods such as clothes and household items. Active across Greece, it assists anyone facing social or financial exclusion, including uninsured, economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors, trafficking survivors, sex workers, drug users, Roma, Hepatitis B and C patients, prisoners, people released from prisons and unaccompanied minors.

All services provided are free. Praksis is active throughout Greece, but mostly in the regions of Attica and Central Macedonia,

Volunteers dance with children during a PRAKSIS initiative.



the islands of Lesbos, Chios and Samos, and the greater Patras area.

What you can donate: clothes and footwear, occasionally medical devices, mobility aids, computers, tablets, printers (call ahead)

5. Hatzikiriakio Child Care Institution

Founded in 1889, this historic Greek institution supports girls aged six and up who come from families facing hardship. It provides housing, education, healthcare, emotional support, and life skills, helping more than 100 girls and families each year build a stable future.

What you can donate: books, clothes, school bags, stationary, office furniture, gym supplies, board games, toys and bazaar-sale items

6. Kotsovolos Second Home

Electronics and appliance retail chain Kotsovolos has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of families in Greece through its innovative Second Home program, which it runs in collaboration with the Central Association of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE).

You can donate your old appliances or electronic devices, which then go to households and families in need. Kotsovolos collects the appliances free of charge, then repairs, disinfects, and delivers them to their new homes through municipal social support organizations in Attica (Athens), Corinth, Halkida, Livadeia, Thiva, and Amfissa.

What you can donate: washing machines, refrigerators, and stoves that still operate and are less than 10 years old. Donations are rewarded with a 30-euro voucher for a future purchase.

7. Reto Hellas

Reto Hellas supports people affected by addiction, substance abuse, and social exclusion using community living and meaningful work as tools for recovery and reintegration.

The group is part of Reto International, a global network of non-profit organizations active in more than 20 countries.

The group also operates reuse and recycling shops in Athens, Koropi, Kamatero, Crete (Heraklion) and Thessaloniki, where donated furniture and household items are repaired, restored, and resold. These shops provide meaningful, hands-on work opportunities for people recovering from substance abuse, helping them rein-

troduce routine into their lives and rebuild their sense of self-worth, while also promoting environmental sustainability.

The donated items fund recovery programs and create work opportunities.

What you can donate: furniture, household items, clothes, shoes, books, electronics, office furniture (good condition), books, records, CDs, and DVDs

8. Attika Human Support

Founded in 2015 on the is-

land of Lesbos, Attika Human Support helps displaced people, asylum seekers, and vulnerable populations affected by war, persecution, and crisis.

It operates one of the largest warehouses for donated goods in Greece, collecting, sorting, and distributing essential items such as clothing, shoes, blankets, food, water, hygiene products, baby supplies, and medical items to refugees and other people in need. It does so both directly and through partner NGOs on

Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Kos, and in Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa, and Corinth. The organization also supports housing programs and conducts search-and-rescue operations at sea.

What you can donate: clean clothes, shoes and jackets, baby carriers, sheets, blankets, sleeping bags and towels

9. Spaz Greece

SPAZ Greece is a volunteer-run Greek animal welfare organization dedicated to the care and protection of

What You Should Know Before Donating

Needs change frequently based on arrivals and available funding, so it's best to:

- Call or email before donating to confirm hours and current needs
- Ask which items are accepted and in what condition
- Check for collection days or local drop-off points
- Ensure items are clean, complete, and usable.

If goods aren't needed, consider donating money or time; every organization listed here also welcomes volunteers.

stray dogs and cats. It organizes and funds the sterilization and medical care of stray animals to help control their populations humanely, and finds homes through adoption initiatives and awareness events.

Founded in 1986, SPAZ also engages in public education about responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, running school programs and community outreach. The group operates through donations and volunteer efforts and collaborates with local authorities, vets, and other animal welfare organizations to further its mission.

Donations and funds raised through bazaars and second-hand sales support food and veterinary costs.

What you can donate: clothes, accessories, shoes, bags, household goods, furniture, books, records, DVDs, toys, games, kitchenware, small appliances, art and jewelry

10. Hope Spot - Center of Hope

Based in Thessaloniki, Hope Spot - Center of Hope supports women survivors of human trafficking and domestic abuse. Alongside shelter and essential services such as food, clothing, and medical care, it provides psychological and legal support, empowerment programs, and awareness-raising initiatives, including seminars, community events, and school outreach campaigns.

What you can donate: clothes, bed sheets, towels, blankets, toys, school supplies



Clothing donated to Fabric Republic.

Greek: The Language That Refuses to Fade

Continued from Page One

At the same time, Greek has played a decisive role in shaping not only Western languages, but also languages of the East, enriching their vocabularies with words rooted in Greek—particularly in fields such as science, political life, and the arts. The English language alone has over 50,000 words derived from Greek.

Despite the decline in the number of Greek speakers over the centuries, the enduring appeal of Greek continues to attract people from all corners of the world. But who are these people, and what makes Greek appealing to them? According to Emily Intzekostas, a Greek teacher and co-founder of Greek Language Experts based in New York City, interest in learning Greek appears to be on the rise.

Why people around the world are turning to Greek

The reasons vary widely, with each learner driven by different personal, cultural, or academic goals. Intzekostas speaks of 2 different categories of learner, based on her own experience: those of Greek origin and non-Greeks. “I believe the need to learn Greek has deep roots, going back to the first generations of Greeks who migrated abroad. As these communities began building families, the desire to pass on their language and cultural identity to their children grew stronger,” she says.

In recent years, however, she points out that there has been a noticeable increase in interest not only among second- or third-generation members of the diaspora, but also among people without a Greek background.

Diaspora children and second- or third-generation adults who didn’t have the opportunity to learn Greek at a young age now want to reconnect with the language and culture of their ancestors, Intzekostas notes. “Many students want to learn Greek because their parents or grandparents speak the language. Others are married to Greeks and want to communicate more meaningfully with their partner’s family,” she says, presenting her own husband as an example, who speaks English and Spanish, while her mother speaks very little English.

Alex, a Londoner, also falls into this category. “I started learning Greek because of my Greek girl-

From ancient inscriptions to global classrooms, Greek continues to connect people, cultures, and generations across the globe.

“If the violin is the most perfect musical instrument, the Greek language is the violin of human thought.”
Helen Keller

friend—I wanted to be able to speak her language and communicate properly with her family, especially her ‘giagia’ (grandmother) and ‘pappou’ (grandfather). It felt important to make that effort and be part of their world. Plus, if I’m being honest, it definitely makes ordering a beer in Greece a lot easier, which is always a bonus!” he notes. Meanwhile, Kerrin, a graphic design student living in Indonesia and a self-taught learner, says she started because of her love of Greek culture and language, as well as her deep appreciation for the country’s history.

For many, however, Greek is necessary for their work, since they conduct business with Greeks. Alex points out that he interacts with Greek clients and colleagues through his work in the shipping sector. “Even being able to greet someone politely or have a short conversation in Greek helps build stronger relationships and shows respect,” he emphasizes. Another notable example is Nia Vardalos, who took daily lessons to prepare for her performance at the Pallas Theater, demonstrating how language preparation can be essen-



tial for professional work in Greece.

Another factor that has contributed to the growing interest in learning Greek, especially among young people, is Greece’s growing status as a digital nomad hub. Intzekostas confirms this trend when she notes: “Many of my students are planning to live or work in Greece in the near future, which makes the language an essential tool for connection, integration, and everyday communication. Add to that the rise in digital nomads and Greece increasingly becoming a destination of choice.”

Technology opens new doors for learners

The demographic profile of students has also broadened significantly, largely thanks to the introduction of technologies such as online lessons and applications that allow access to courses without the need for physical attendance in a classroom.

“At the moment, our students come from the United States, Canada, Chile, England, Australia, and China.” She adds that technology has played a crucial role in spreading the Greek language. In the past, many diaspora Greeks relied mainly

on community centers and churches to learn the language—options that were not accessible to everyone. Online schooling has now opened many doors for students who wish to learn Greek, but have limited time or live far from organized learning centers.

Moreover, Intzekostas stresses that educational apps make lessons more interactive and effective. “In practice, we use many of these tools alongside printed or digital materials, so students can enjoy a comprehensive and flexible learning experience,” she says.

Kerrin also highlights

how these new technologies were essential in her own learning journey. Living in Indonesia, she has no access to Greek teachers or language schools, as Greek is a rare pursuit in the region. “So I learned mostly on my own,” she explains. Initially, she used Duolingo, but later she began connecting with Greek people online through platforms such as Instagram and Discord to practice the language and make friends. “We chatted in Greek and sometimes had voice calls on Discord servers. Whenever I made mistakes, they helped correct me, so I could improve,” she says.

The challenge—and the rewards—of learning Greek

The experience of learning also varies greatly and is heavily influenced by geography, as well as by the availability of suitable educational materials for language learning. So, while Kerrin finds it quite difficult in Indonesia, Alex says his own experience has been fairly trouble-free, because he does most of his lessons online. He notes, however, that if he wanted to learn face-to-face, he isn’t far from several teachers, as the Greek community where he lives has been incredibly supportive. “Living in London also helps, because there’s such a strong Greek and Cypriot presence, so you’re never too far away from someone willing to help or practice with you,” he added. Intzekostas says that educators are also challenged by the limited learning material designed to cater to the specific needs of Greek-as-a-second-language students, including authentic audio and visual material. “There aren’t many Greek films or series accessible abroad with English or Greek subtitles that we can consistently use to give students more exposure to the language in real-life contexts,” she noted.

Finally, although they may sometimes encounter challenges, Greek learners focus on how rewarding the journey can be. “The difficulty of the language is actually part of what makes it so enjoyable — it’s incredibly rewarding when Greeks reply to me in Greek and encourage my efforts,” Alex said. Meanwhile, Kerrin stressed: “When I speak Greek, I feel connected to Greece’s history and culture. I can better understand and follow what is happening in Greece and in Greek communities around the world.”

