

Europe
Slow-Walks
Climate
Measures

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Benoit Morenne
and Matthew Dalton

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

When President Trump shredded U.S. climate policies last year, much of the Western world chastised him for ignoring climate change. Now, Europe, the U.K. and Canada are walking back their own environmental regulations.

The European Union has proposed to relax its landmark carbon-pricing system, and allow automakers to sell gasoline-burning cars for longer.

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TO BHMA International edition

Santorini
Volcano
Festival: Paying
Tribute
to the Forces
of Nature

By Maria Paravantes

Who isn't impressed by Santorini and its spectacular caldera, formed thousands of years ago by the massive eruption of its notorious volcano?

For more than 30 years, islanders have honored that very volcano with an annual festival celebrating the force that helped make Santorini one of the world's most visited and sought-after destinations, and its caldera among the most photographed landscapes on Earth.

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Arctoid macaques (*Macaca arctoides*) groom a dog at Khao Tao Mo Temple in Thailand.

NEIL CHALLIS

TO BHMA International edition

Ape's Best Friend

By Theodora N. Tsoli

A dog may be man's best friend, but sometimes it is also a monkey's or gorilla's best friend. And dogs are far from the only ones. An interna-

tional study led by researchers at the University of Oxford has documented, for the first time, unexpected friendships between primates and species no one might have imagined, including deer, squirrels, mice and pigs.

The study, recently pub-

lished in the scientific journal *Primates*, also sheds light on the human need for companion animals, suggesting that the behavioral "foundations" of our relationships with animals that eventually become members of our families may be far deeper

in evolutionary terms than previously thought.

Unusual observations

As the study's lead author, Dr. Cyril Grueter, associate professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford's Institute of

Human Sciences, explained to *TO VIMA-Science*, the idea for the study, which was essentially a review of all existing evidence on the subject, came from some observations of his own that he described as "unusual."

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TO BHMA International edition

Summer Vacation, Interrupted

By Konstantinos Dedes

Spyros watches the stormy Aegean Sea from his vacation home. He went to bed late, and the heaviness in his eyes, combined with the glare of the sun and a lack of caffeine, is gradually lulling him into a stupor. But he has

to concentrate. In the next few minutes, his colleague, who woke him around nine, will call again, and together they will try to solve a problem that has arisen with the software. Spyros is on Tinos, while his colleague is in Athens.

Spyros has taken a few days off; his colleague has not. By the end of the day,

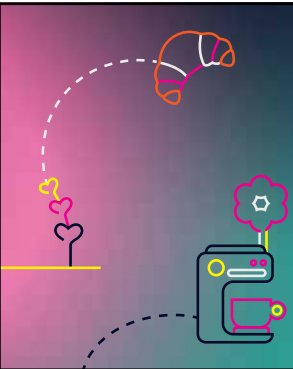
regardless of each other's workload, they both will have worked. "It's always the same thing," Spyros says, as the sound of the coffee machine can finally be heard in the background.

The image of a sunbed by the water is now accompanied by notifications from a device.

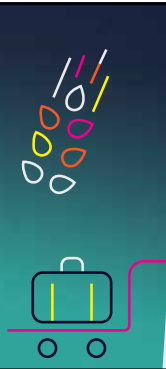
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A woman working from a hotel balcony on Santorini.



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One with the future

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The U.K. appears poised to allow new oil production in the North Sea—after banning exploratory drilling last year—and is reviewing targets for sales of electric vehicles. Canada dismantled an unpopular carbon tax and is backing new oil-and-gas infrastructure.

Europe’s slow-walking of its climate measures is notable because the continent has long been at the vanguard of climate action. But its aggressive plans to transition away from fossil fuels are running up against concerns that the policies are stifling industry by pushing up energy prices.

“The Green Deal had been a central focus of Europe,” said Daniel Yergin, a veteran energy historian and vice chairman of S&P Global. “Now, for Europe, the focus is obviously on security and on being economically competitive.”

Europe’s shift appears subtle compared with the Trump administration’s chainsawing of U.S. green policies, but it shows that the continent’s lofty goals have tested the limits of what is politically possible to fight climate change.

Europe had been charging ahead on renewables: Wind and solar now account for 34% of the continent’s power generation, compared with 20% in 2021. The EU still maintains that it can curb its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels, and to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

An April report by the European Environment Agency said that achieving the EU minimum target of

Europe Chastised Trump’s Climate Rollback. Now It’s Delaying Its Own Green Goals.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Developed nations are increasingly balking at the cost of measures to cut down on fossil fuels



The Three Mile Island Nuclear power plant is seen at sunrise in Middletown, Pennsylvania, U.S., October 16, 2024.

42.5% renewable energy by 2030 will require doubling the average renewable project deployment rate when

compared with the past decade.

European fossil fuel companies that once tout-

ed renewable goals, including Shell, BP and Norway’s Equinor, have dialed them back and doubled down on

more profitable oil and gas. Shell called off a biofuels plant in the Netherlands. BP said it would reduce spend-

ing on projects to transition to a greener energy future by more than 70% a year, and only invest in top-tier offshore wind and solar projects in a “capital light” way. Equinor recently abandoned its target to install 10 to 12 gigawatts of renewable power by 2030.

Developed nations are increasingly balking at the cost of measures to cut down on fossil fuels—despite scientists’ warnings that climate change is exacerbating extreme weather events, including the wildfires that are turning Europe’s forests into ashes this summer and intense heat and a lack of rain cause its rivers to run dry.

Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, has seen growth stall as households and businesses pay some of the highest electricity bills in the world. Faced with growing discontent, authorities have cut taxes and fees used to subsidize renewables. Lawmakers also rolled back a controversial mandate that would have required most Germans to install costly renewable systems to heat their homes, in favor of letting them continue to burn oil and gas.

European industry was hit hard by a big increase in power and natural-gas prices in recent years. That was largely because its supply of Russian fuel was slashed in the months after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, forcing the bloc to import tens of billions of dollars’ worth of more expensive natural gas from the U.S. But the EU’s decision to tighten its climate regulations also played a significant role in the rising price of electricity.

The bloc said in 2021

How I Got Hooked on Chasing Solar Eclipses

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Traveling the globe for celestial events might seem downright loony—until you get a taste of the addictive world of ‘eclipse chasing’

By Pamela Paul

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Once considered a portent of end times, a solar eclipse is an undeniably eccentric way to orient a vacation calendar.

Hopping around the globe in pursuit of a cosmic coincidence—those rare instances in which the moon, 400 times smaller than the sun, traverses it while 400 times closer to the earth—requires a significant

amount of time, money and dedication. It means going places you may never have wanted to go, sometimes at the worst times of year, with no guarantee that the spectacle won’t be rained out. To the uninitiated, it can seem downright loony.

I am now one of those lunatics. Which is how I ended up in León, Spain, on Aug. 12.

My conversion came in 2017, in Casper, Wyo. I watched a near-high-noon sun darken the sky while a halo of light stretched around the circumference

of the distant horizon—a 360-degree glimpse of daylight from beyond the zone of totality.

Birds hushed. Dogs barked and then quieted. People grinned and then gasped, some with tears streaming down their faces. There was a palpable unified purpose among those who gathered.

The result was a kind of secular transcendence, a communal experience in which everyone looks skyward, collectively transfixed. I knew at once that not seeing this again was not an option.

These days, thanks to astronomical science and modern air travel, a total solar eclipse is the kind of thing one can plan a life around. Though unable to fly to Chile for the eclipse in 2019, I made it to Buffalo, N.Y., in 2024 and then to León.

The latest eclipse was my third time swallowing the expense and impracticality of following them. In the world of astro-tourists, for whom a partial eclipse barely registers and missing a year feels like an abdication, that makes me an amateur.

“We’re eclipse chasers,” Lorraine Whitman Check, 84, a former rocket scientist from the Upper West Side of Manhattan, told me when asked what brought her and her 90-year-old husband to sunburned León during a heat wave. Her first eclipse, seen in 2006 from a cave in Cappadocia, Turkey, made Whitman Check hyperven-

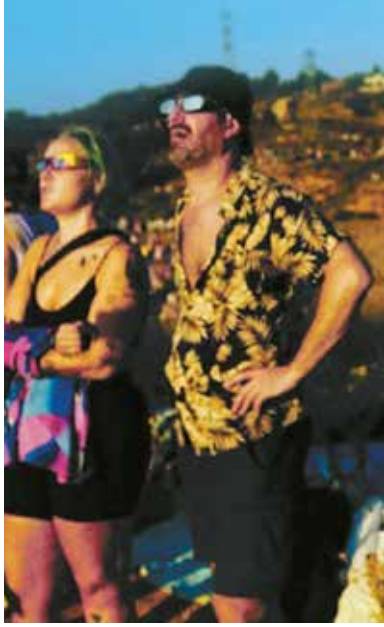
tilate and her husband cry. They were hooked.

“It was glorious,” Whitman Check, now on her fifth, said. “For me, there is something sacred about the eclipse. It’s the face of God I don’t believe in.”

Whereas momentous earthly phenomena like tidal waves, hurricanes and tornadoes inevitably involve disaster, their celestial counterparts (aurora borealis, meteor showers, lunar eclipses) inspire unadulterated, transportive awe. An eclipse takes place beyond our planet. It is, by definition, otherworldly.

My vista for this year’s eclipse was the cliffs of Mirador de Las Lomas, 45 minutes outside León, where a line of seekers snaked along the cliffside in either direction. Like others, I’d landed on the spot via Reddit forums discussing the benefits of various vantage points (a clear, treeless view, a suitable backdrop, access by foot). In

The author witnessing the August 12 solar eclipse from the cliffs of Mirador de Las Lomas near Leon, Spain.



ALBERT BONGSILUS FOR WSJ

that it would cut the number of emissions allowances on the market, sending their price soaring, which in turn helped drive up the price of power. Emissions allowances now account for a quarter to a third of the EU’s wholesale power price. Cement makers, steel producers and other energy-intensive industries are only partly compensated by government rebates.

The chief executives of heavy industries have denounced the policies, citing crippling energy and carbon costs as some of the reasons they have shut down factories. British chemical maker Ineos said last year it planned to shut two plants in Germany, after closing plants in the U.K. and Belgium and mothballing facilities in France and Spain.

“Europe is committing industrial suicide,” Stephen Dossett, chief executive of subsidiary Ineos Inovyn, said at the time.

Last month, the EU proposed to keep more allowances on the market over the next 15 years to ease the impact on industry. The bloc says the change still will allow the EU to meet its main emissions target—a 90% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2040 compared with 1990—but some analysts believe the proposal could leave the market with an oversupply of allowances. That would crater their price and reduce the incentive for low-carbon energy technologies.

The mounting cost of the EU’s green policies has been sobering. It once described the measures as a new growth strategy that would boost innovation and create new businesses



Cars ride in traffic along the I-5 freeway is shown in Los Angeles, California, U.S., July 12, 2023.

and markets. Since then, the EU has been walking a tightrope trying to stick to its climate aspirations while cutting its businesses some slack—all the while enduring the wrath of the Trump administration.

The Trump administration has repeatedly pointed to the EU as an example of green policies gone haywire to justify its screeching U-turn on U.S. climate policies. U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright earlier this year said

the “climate cult” had weakened Europe and resulted in jobs lost to Asia and reduced economic opportunities for Europeans.

The EU has also wrestled with internal dissent. Some of its most industrialized members—including Germany, whose manufacturers face severe competition from China—have successfully pressured Brussels to ease climate requirements. Last year, the EU proposed allowing automakers to keep

selling gasoline cars after 2035, after initially planning to effectively ban the sale of new combustion-engine cars from that year on. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz had urged the commission to ease the ban.

The group hasn’t been alone in reconsidering its climate policies.

U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham’s government said earlier this month it would review electric-vehicle sales targets to ensure

they remain “pro-business and grounded in the real world.”

Up for review: A mandate to increase the share of EVs sold annually, and how the U.K. can ensure all new cars and vans are zero emissions by 2035. The auto industry has said that regulation is running ahead of consumer demand and making the sector less competitive.

The U.K. is also weighing whether to greenlight new drilling in the crude-

rich North Sea. Burnham said he has told Trump in a phone call that he would take a “pragmatic” approach to developing resources there.

“When people are struggling, you can’t ignore that,” he told reporters last month. Industry trade groups say that new drilling would boost investments and support jobs.

In Canada, Prime Minister Mark Carney, once the face of the global fight against climate change, has dismantled some of the central planks of predecessor Justin Trudeau’s energy policy—including an unpopular consumer carbon tax. His government is supporting more oil and gas drilling, and it has backed several new projects to chill and export natural gas from the coast of British Columbia despite criticism from climate activists.

The Canadian Climate Institute, a policy research organization, said earlier this year that Canada isn’t on track to meet its climate goals, including a 2035 target and net zero emissions by 2050.

Some energy experts say that some of the emission-reduction targets set by governments were unrealistic to begin with, but that they are still worth pursuing to stave off further increases in temperatures.

“What’s not happening is a deeper acceleration of the energy mix to really get carbon out of the atmosphere,” said Lord John Browne, who served as BP’s chief executive until he resigned in 2007 and has called for more climate action. “That’s not on the agenda at the moment.”



town that afternoon, people described staking out different sites in the lead up. My fellow chasers had come from Scotland, from France, from Australia, from the U.S.

León is an important stop on the sacred Camino de Santiago, but the eclipse made for a different kind of pilgrimage. Afterward, along the winding descent, I met Alex House, a 36-year-old former Airman. He and Olivia Walker, a 30-year-old firefighter, had come to León from Clearfield, Utah. Both were euphoric and eager to share the story of their first eclipse.

“Did you see that diamond ring?” House had asked Walker the moment the glowing corona of totality disappeared and the sun re-emerged. Yes, she replied.

“Do you want to see another one?” he then said, producing a ring from his pocket. Yes, again.

“She said yes!” House cried out to the gathering

of onlookers. They broke into cheers and applause, cheered again when the eclipse ended, and once more an hour later when the sun set, a burnished ocher illuminating León’s cathedral. An outpouring of gratitude. It’s a feeling no cloud can fully dispel. Two years ago, in Buffalo, I gathered alongside a sizable crowd in a public park, all of us audibly pleading with nature as the eclipse arrived only to be muted by cloud cover. Even so, we were united in a moment of reverence.

For some, unpredictability only heightens the drama.

“When you have that level of anxiety over the clouds, it juices the experience,” Elliot Borgman, a 77-year-old retired astronomer from Lansdowne, Penn., told me over breakfast the morning after August’s eclipse. It was his 21st, 17 of which were “successful,” he said, adding that the

clear conditions in León had made the most recent one almost too easy. But all of them were worth it.

His first was in Puerto

Vallarta, Mexico, in 1991. Afterward, Borgman said, “Like most people who see an eclipse, I was like, ‘Oh, my God, when’s the next one?’”

See You in 2027

The next solar eclipse, on Aug. 2, 2027, looks to be a blockbuster. The moon will be near its closest point to earth, resulting in unusually long periods of totality over North Africa. It has already been dubbed the “eclipse of the century.”

Location, Location: There are multiple options, depending on your priority. In Egypt, totality is projected to last for more than 6 minutes. In Tangier, Morocco, the chance of clear skies is high—and you’ll have plenty of post-viewing excursion options, like the legendary Caves of Hercules. Alternatively, stick to Europe and watch from the Rock of Gibraltar, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, where you can expect more than 4 minutes of totality.

Book Now: Hotels are filling up fast as are organized tours, like a cruise with National Geographic that will watch the eclipse from the Strait of Gibraltar (from around \$27,000). Sirius Travel is organizing a Nile cruise, from around \$7,300, that ends with an eclipse viewing in the ancient city of Luxor.

Summer Vacation, Interrupted

For many workers, time off no longer means disconnecting, as smartphones, remote work and workplace expectations keep the office within reach even by the sea



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For a large number of workers, summer vacation is little more than a change of scenery, with the pressure of work simply transferred outside the office and placed in front of the sea. The idea of fully disconnecting is increasingly becoming a luxury, adding the burden of invisible work to vacations, even when that work lasts only a few minutes, as in Spyros' case.

The 'urgent' message follows you everywhere

This shift is being driven directly by the technological trap of constant connectivity. Apps and company emails remain open year-round, with the smartphone serving as a digital channel that carries outstanding work tasks in an employee's pocket. As a result, every notification becomes a potential emergency. At the same time, the widespread adoption of remote work has further blurred the boundaries, fostering the expectation that if someone can work from anywhere, they should be available at any time.

"I usually know whether I need to keep an eye on my phone even when I'm on vacation. Of course, it's not always up to me," says Fanis Chr., 32. "Even if I know I need to keep an eye on it, the sound of emails distracts me. It doesn't upset me, but it puts me in a mindset of hav-

ing to think about work, just as I would when I'm at the office, while I'm on vacation. If I know I don't need to do anything, I'll put my phone on silent for a few days and check it only once a day. Unfortunately, I always respond to urgent messages, and if for some reason I don't see one in time, I'll feel a little guilty," he says.

The cost of this situation is primarily psychological. The inability to disconnect creates what is known as workplace FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) the constant fear that being absent from what is happening within the company will lead to a loss of control, misunderstandings or being sidelined. At the same time, the guilt associated with doing nothing can make an employee feel that failing to respond to an email outside working hours amounts to a lack of professionalism.

The rest and relaxation that never comes

Marina M., 30, experiences this pressure as a constant internal deadlock. "When I'm going through a stressful period or I'm on vacation during a particularly busy time at the office, I usually feel like I'm sinking, but at the same time I feel that I need to stay alert, it's a very dangerous duality. When I choose to check my phone, I'm clearly doing it by choice, which is also problematic. I don't feel guilty if someone messages me because

I respond 99% of the time. I respond as briefly, directly and informatively as I can so that I don't get additional questions, and usually they don't message me again," she says.

The result of all this is what is known as vacation

burnout: the brain remains on alert, rest is never fully achieved, and returning to everyday life is accompanied by physical and mental exhaustion.

Psychologist Nasia Fanti explains the deeper roots of this behavior and how

modern culture shapes our psychological makeup: "The constant need to prove and reinforce our professional value and self-image through unlimited availability to our jobs creates what is known as 'hustle culture.' This is something that has been embedded and continually reinforced by workplace culture, both in large corporate environments and in small businesses: the idea that in order to be worth your salary, get a raise, advance and be recognized, you have to constantly give more than what is asked of you. More hours, availability even outside working hours, minimal vacation days," the psychologist says.

The guilt starts in childhood

According to Fanti, however, the problem begins much earlier. "During childhood and adolescence, many people felt guilt or even shame when they were doing nothing. Inactivity and rest were often labeled as 'laziness' and required immediate action. When taking a break is given a negative connotation, that is reflected in vacations. So-called 'vacation burnout' occurs when time off causes further exhaustion instead of rest, as limited time puts pressure on us to disconnect and see everything, meaning our pace never actually slows down. In the long term, this creates a vicious cycle of burnout and anxiety disorders that

affects performance, interpersonal relationships and a person's ability to function," she stresses.

The trend is particularly pronounced in Greece, where the working environment is characterized by high intensity. According to official Eurostat data, Greece consistently ranks first in the European Union in terms of actual hours worked, with the average reaching 39.6 hours per week, compared with the EU average of 35.9 hours. More than 12% of workers report that they regularly work more than 49 hours a week.

When a team manages to provide a safety net, disconnecting becomes possible, Fanis notes. "I feel that I've rested when the team covers for one another. There have been times when I haven't needed to deal with anything at all during my entire vacation. But when I have to get involved, even a little, it affects my rest," he says emphatically.

Within this context, the legally established "Right to Disconnect," which guarantees employees the ability to refrain from digital communication outside working hours and during their vacations, remains, in practice, without any meaningful effect. Spyros, who went to Tinos to celebrate his friend's wedding and ended up remotely solving a software problem, is proof of that. And he hadn't even had his coffee.



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TO BHMA International Edition spoke with Santorini Mayor Nikos Zorzos about the importance of the Santorini Volcano Festival (Ifestia Festival), and why the event remains so significant to the island.

“The volcano isn’t just a spectacular backdrop to Santorini. It is at the core of the island’s natural and cultural identity. It sculpted the caldera, the terrain and the landscape, but also influenced the architecture, the crops and, overall, the way the island’s people lived and created,” Zorzos explains.

The Santorini Volcano Festival began in 1991, he says, as a way of keeping this relationship alive. “It’s not just a spectacle. It’s a way to remember and highlight the power of the volcano that shaped our home and forms an integral part of our identity.”

More than just an image

Santorini hardly needs an introduction to attract international attention. Its beauty speaks for itself. Over the past 50 years, the island has undergone a remarkable transformation: from a small, dry Cycladic island that suffered immensely in the devastating 1956 earthquake, to one of Greece’s most visited destinations.

But for Zorzos, the challenge is to ensure that visitors see more than Santorini’s postcard-perfect image.

“Yes, Santorini is one of the most recognizable locations in the world,” he says, “But the goal is to show what lies behind this image.”

This philosophy is reflected in the Ifestia Festival, which continues to evolve more than three decades after its launch. “We want Santorini to be more than a photo. We want visitors to know its story,” Zorzos says.

The Volcano Festival, which this year takes place on September 19, recreates the dramatic volcanic eruption that shaped Santorini’s caldera thousands of years ago. After sunset, the night sky will erupt with a spectacular fireworks display inspired by the island’s volcanic past.

But there is more to the event than just fireworks. New technologies and mediums are being used to tell Santorini’s story, with a drone light show adding another layer to the spectacle.

“Last year, we used drones to present unique aspects of our history, culture, tradition, and gastronomy,” Zorzos says.

Each year also brings a new theme. In 2026, the festival will highlight Santorini’s tourist routes and



After sunset, the night sky will erupt with a spectacular fireworks display, recreating the dramatic volcanic eruption that shaped Santorini’s caldera thousands of years ago.

Santorini Volcano Festival: Paying Tribute to the Forces of Nature

Mayor Nikos Zorzos tells TO BHMA International Edition that funding for a Santorini volcano center has been secured

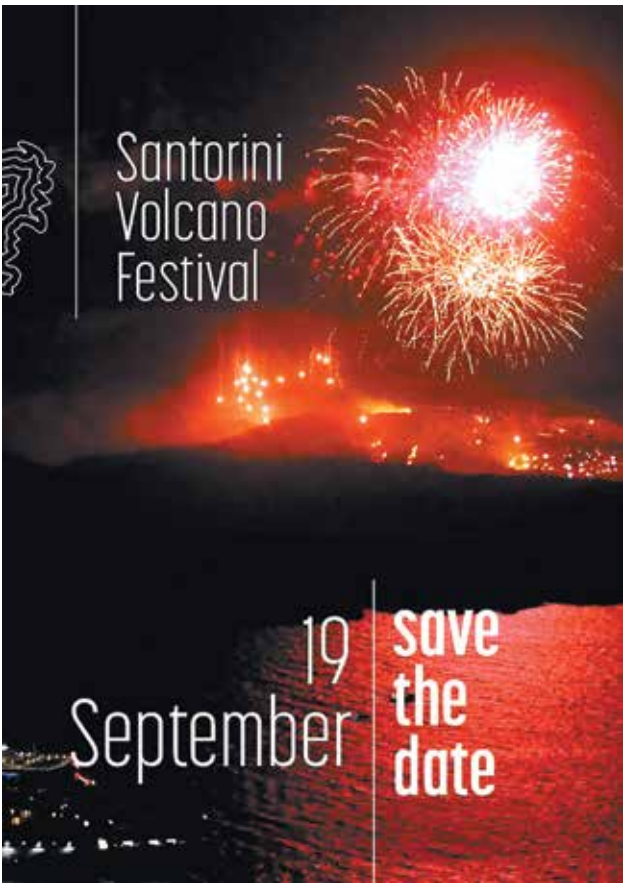
museums, among other subjects.

A volcano museum takes shape

Earlier this year, TO BHMA International Edition discussed the long-standing proposal for a Santorini volcano museum with George Vougioukalakis, former head of the Hellenic Survey of Geology and Mineral Exploration (HSGME) and former president of the Institute for the Study and Monitoring of the Santorini Volcano (ISMOSAV).

Vougioukalakis explained that a wealth of data, research, and documentation is already available for such a museum. He went on to explain that the Santorini caldera is among the most thoroughly researched and closely observed volcanic systems on Earth. Its activity has been monitored continuously for decades and continues to intrigue scientists worldwide.

Speaking at an event at the Acropolis Museum last year, Vougioukalakis confirmed that multiple proposals had been submitted over the years, with some approved and, in certain cases, partially implemented.



The Santorini Volcano Festival (Ifestia) began in 1991 as a way to remember and highlight the power of the volcano that shaped the famous Greek island and its culture.

Now, Zorzos tells TO BHMA International Edition, there has been “a very concrete and positive development” in this direction. The

municipality has secured 1.3 million euros in funding for the creation of the Santorini Volcano Documentation and Information Center. The

center will be housed in a restored historic mansion in Exo Gonia, and serve as a modern hub for geological and volcanological information and education.

“This cutting-edge center will be dedicated to the geological and volcanic history of Santorini, with exhibits, interactive applications and audiovisual material focused on the volcanic complex and the Minoan Eruption,” the mayor explains.

“Santorini really needs this,” he adds. “Visitors shouldn’t just see the volcano; they need to understand its impact.”

Beyond the fireworks

Three decades after it began, the annual Santorini Volcano Festival continues to draw visitors from around the world, introducing them to the island’s geology, history, and the enduring influence of volcanic activity on local culture and identity. In fact, it has evolved into one of Santorini’s signature cultural events.

We asked Mayor Zorzos what he hopes visitors take away from the show. “I would like them to leave with a sense of awe, deeply moved, and eager to get to

know Santorini better.”

For Zorzos, the show is a means to something deeper. “I don’t want the experience to stop at the spectacle. I want visitors to see the caldera in a different light the next day; as something more than just a globally recognizable landscape, but as a place with history, culture, and an identity that continues to evolve.”

The Santorini story

Santorini owes much of its extraordinary beauty to a catastrophe. The island we see today is part of a much larger volcanic system. Around 3,600 years ago, Thera—the ancient name for Santorini—experienced one of the most powerful volcanic eruptions of the last 10,000 years. Ash and volcanic debris were hurled into the atmosphere, enormous tsunamis swept across the Aegean, and as the volcano’s underground magma chamber emptied, the center of the island collapsed into the sea, creating the vast water-filled caldera we see today.

In fact, Santorini’s volcanic story is far from ordinary. Recognized as one of the world’s 16 Decade Volcanoes by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth’s Interior (IAVCEI), Santorini is one of the largest calderas in the Mediterranean. Recognizing its geological importance, the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) has included the Quaternary Santorini Caldera among its 100 Geological Heritage Sites worldwide.

So Santorini’s dramatic cliffs, rising almost vertically from the sea, are actually the exposed walls of this ancient volcanic crater. The main island, together with Therasia and tiny Aspronisi, forms the rim, while the volcanic Kameni islands (Nea and Palia) rise from the caldera’s center.

Volcanic activity has continued to shape Santorini down the millennia. Even the name of the island’s Ifestia Festival reflects this heritage—it comes from Hephaestus, the ancient Greek god of fire, volcanoes and metalworking.

The Ifestia Festival takes place on September 19 after the famous Santorini sunset. Visitors to the island are invited to experience a celebration inspired by the volcanic forces that molded the breathtaking landscape they see around them. The best views are from the villages overlooking the Kameni cliffs, including Oia, Firostefani, Imerovigli, and Fira.

The Santorini Volcano Festival is organized by the Municipality of Thira - GEOTHIRA S.A. - Loula & Evangelos Nomikos Foundation.

By Kosmas Vidos

Twenty years after the euro banknotes were first issued, they are being redesigned, with the new series set to gradually replace the ones currently in circulation. The European Central Bank officially began the process on December 6, 2021. In November 2023, two potential themes were selected: “European Culture” and “Rivers and Birds.”

The process has now reached its final stage. Ten designs, five for each theme, selected through a competition that drew 1,241 entries from designers across the European Union, are being put to the public in an open online survey that runs through September 21. Among the finalists is Greek visual artist Myrsini Vardopoulou.

A final decision on which of the two themes will be chosen is expected toward the end of 2026, while the banknotes themselves will still take several more years to reach our wallets. Under the “European Culture” theme, among the figures proposed as motifs for the new banknotes is a woman deeply connected to both Greek and global cultural identity: Maria Callas. The Greek-American soprano has been selected as the face of the €5 banknote, with the series also featuring Ludwig Van Beethoven on the €10 note, Marie Curie on the €20, Miguel de Cervantes on the €50, Leonardo da Vinci on the €100 and writer and Nobel Peace Prize winner Bertha von Suttner on the €200.

Maria Callas was one of the most powerful and influential figures in the cultural history of humanity. A few seconds of her singing are enough to understand why. In reality, the great artist needs no honors, awards or official recognition to prove her stature; she shines above them all. Yet the prospect of seeing her face on a banknote circulating daily through the hands of millions of Europeans carries its own significance. It confirms that, nearly 50 years after her death, Callas’ voice is still regarded as part of the identity of an entire continent. In a way, it is also recognition that culture does not belong only in museums, theaters and books, but also in the everyday symbols we carry with us.

If she is ultimately selected, however, this will not be the first time Maria Callas’ image has appeared on currency as a tribute. In 2007, when the year was designated the “Year Dedicated to Maria Callas”, Greece issued a €10 silver commemorative coin. Then, in 2023, marking the

Greece’s Infamous ‘La Divina’ Could Be on a €5 Note

The legendary Greek-American soprano is among the cultural figures proposed for the redesigned euro banknotes, nearly 50 years after her death



Myrsini Vardopoulou’s original design proposal for the five euro banknote.



Jan Robert Dunnweller’s design utilizes the art of collage.



Collection of commemorative stamps of Maria Callas on display in the Maria Callas Museum in Athens. Donated by the Maria Callas Greek Society.

100th anniversary of the diva’s birth, the Bank of Greece issued both a €200 gold commemorative coin and a €2 commemorative circulation coin designed by George Stamatopoulos.

On a 1980 postage stamp

Callas has also appeared on Greek postage stamps, beginning with one issued in 1980, three years after her death, as part of the Hellenic Post (ELTA) series honoring figures from literature and the arts. The stamp depicts the soprano against the backdrop of the ancient theater of Epidaurus. In 2007, on the 30th anniversary of her death, ELTA returned with a commemorative issue. In 2023, it released a commemorative stamp series marking the 100th anniversary of her birth.

Greece is not the only country to have honored her on a stamp. Italy issued a stamp featuring Callas in 2007 to mark the 30th anniversary of her death. It was a commemorative sheet of three stamps featuring, alongside the Greek soprano, tenor Beniamino Gigli and actor Amedeo Nazzari. France’s postal service issued a Callas stamp in 2023 to mark the 100th anniversary of her birth. That same year, the postal services of Monaco and Portugal issued their own editions.

There are also medals featuring Callas. One was issued by La Scala in Milan to mark the 25th anniversary of her death. The Festival Internazionale Maria Callas, meanwhile, created the “100 Petali per Maria Callas” medal, made of plated bronze and red enamel and designed by Christian Fez. The edition consisted of 100 numbered pieces intended to be awarded to major institutions, theaters and prominent figures.

If Maria Callas ultimately appears on the new €5 banknote, something strangely beautiful will happen: the voice that once filled the world’s greatest stages and moved the most demanding audiences with its musicality, allure and truth will fit onto a small piece of paper, destined to pass from hand to hand, travel from country to country, slip into wallets and pockets, and become part of the everyday lives of millions of people.

Perhaps that is the most unexpected form of immortality: to continue living, almost silently, within people’s everyday lives. Although, as we have already said, the great soprano needs no banknotes, coins or stamps to remain present. Callas has secured a place in the collective memory that needs no official seal to confirm it. If the €5 note ultimately comes, it will not make her any greater; it will simply be an honor she deserves.

Monkeys, Dogs and Deer: Animal Friendships We Never Expected

A new Oxford-led study reveals hundreds of surprising bonds between primates and other species, from monkeys grooming deer to gorillas caring for baby galagos



↑ PHOTO BY CYRIL GRUETER
 A female northern white-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) holds a mouse at Shanghai Zoo in China.

←
 A young black-and-white snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus bieti*) plays with a domesticated pig in Yunnan Golden Monkey National Park in China.

Continued from Page One

“I first saw a gibbon (family *Hylobatidae*) in a zoo holding and stroking a mouse that had entered its enclosure, and later I saw a young snub-nosed monkey (genus *Rhinopithecus*) repeatedly playing with pigs in China. I then began searching the scientific literature and discovered many similar reports, but they were scattered across several decades, and no one had ever brought them together. This led both myself and my team to wonder whether these were isolated incidents or whether they reflected a broader pattern of primate behavior.”

And once the researchers started looking, they found plenty. They combined evidence from the scientific literature, a total of 303 cases, with 58 cases reported in the media and another 66 cases gathered through interviews with primatologists, creating the most comprehensive review to date of primates’ social behavior in their interactions with other species.

In total, the researchers collected records of 427 friendly interactions involving 88 different primate species and 127 species of “com-

panions,” 55 of which were non-primate species. The records revealed an entirely new world, previously unknown to science, in which monkeys and apes frequently play with other, unexpected species, groom them, hold them, carry them and, in some cases, even adopt them.

The most striking examples

Some of the most striking examples identified by the researchers involved bear macaques (*Macaca arcoides*) grooming the fur of stray dogs in Thailand, tufted gray langurs (*Semnopithecus priam*) gently stroking giant squirrels in Sri Lanka, young black-and-white snub-nosed monkeys playing with pigs in China, and ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) grooming bamboo lemurs (genus *Prolemur*). Researchers also documented an extraordinary case in Brazil in 2006, when capuchin monkeys (family *Cebidae*) adopted a baby marmoset (family *Callitrichidae*) and cared for it for several months.

Dr. Grueter highlighted several other examples that particularly caught his attention.

“There are numerous records of Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) that not only regularly groom sika deer

(*Cervus nippon*), but often ride on them for a walk! Other remarkable examples include a mountain gorilla (genus *Gorilla*) that lulls a baby galago — a small, nocturnal African primate with large eyes from the family Galagidae — to sleep, as well as bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) that tenderly hold mongooses (small carnivorous mammals from the family *Herpestidae*).”

Play and grooming

But what were the main forms of interaction between primates and other species? According to the analysis, play was the most common, with 139 cases, followed closely by grooming, one of the main forms of social behavior among primates, with 136 cases.

Younger animals were far more likely to play with members of other species, while adult females were much more likely to engage in grooming, as they typically do with their own young. Adult males, meanwhile, were far less likely to engage in friendly interactions with other species.

The researchers also found that primates were more likely to develop social relationships with closely related species. That did not rule out unexpected friend-

ships with birds or even reptiles, however. Notably, it was mainly the primates that took the first step toward social interaction — essentially asking, “Do you want to be friends?”

But what do all these findings tell us, both about the social behavior of other primates and about us humans, who, let us not forget, may be the highest branch but are still part of the very same tree? We asked Dr. Grueter.

“For a long time, there was a belief that humans were unique in their ability to form relationships with other species. Our study shows that many primates also display great curiosity, as well as patience and care, toward animals that do not belong to their own species. We cannot say that these behaviors prove that primates have pets, in the strict sense of the term as we understand it, but they likely represent the evolutionary foundations from which the close companionship between humans and animals eventually emerged.”

The professor explained that when animals from different species “hang out” together, it usually happens for practical reasons. There is safety in numbers: a larger group means more

individuals and therefore a greater chance of confronting a potential threat. At the same time, being together can make finding food easier.

“However, the primates we documented in our study went not just one but many steps further, playing with, grooming, carrying and caring for other animals without any obvious reward for doing so. This suggests that they developed relationships out of social curiosity and showed an unparalleled willingness to make friends with members of other species — something that feels very familiar to us, right?”

Practical applications

The new analysis does more than shed light on the roots of relationships between primates and other animal species, and ultimately on the relationship between humans and animals.

According to Dr. Grueter, it could also have practical applications for the treatment and welfare of animals in zoos and sanctuaries.

“Understanding why some species form positive relationships with other species could help improve the management of mixed-species groups in zoos and sanctuaries. At the same time, it is expected to improve our

knowledge of how the increasingly frequent contact between wild animals, domestic animals and humans can affect disease transmission, species conservation and animal welfare.”

In closing, Dr. Grueter expressed hope that now that this “friendly” beginning has been made with the study, it will encourage primatologists to systematically document in the field these important but, until now, largely overlooked interactions between primates and other species.

“More detailed observation is expected to answer key questions, such as why some species develop friendly relationships while others do not. At the same time, our research team plans to investigate whether these types of interactions become more common as wild animals gradually lose their habitats and come into more frequent and closer contact with humans and domestic animals. We hope that now that the process has begun, what comes next will be even more illuminating.”

Because better knowledge will translate into better animal management. And then the apes, monkeys and their great, wonderfully diverse circle of friends may be able to play even more carefree.

A Billionaire CEO, a Hamptons Town and the Endless Fight Over a Seafood Shack

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Apollo Chief Marc Rowan’s seaside joint in Montauk draws celebrities and influencers. The neighbors say it shouldn’t be there at all.

By Erin Mulvaney
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MONTAUK, N.Y.

For a dozen years, Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan has operated a side gig in Montauk: a seafood shack that draws celebrities and influencers with sunset views, Dom Pérignon and a \$97 lobster salad.

Just don’t call it a restaurant in front of the neighbors. Many of them say it shouldn’t be there at all.

They contend the business, known as Duryea’s Lobster Deck, has never gone through the proper approval process. “Money and power should not exempt you from the same laws that we have to follow,” said Hannah Kirschner, who’s had a home nearby since 1994.

Dating back to the 1920s, the property served as a rustic bait shop. The previous owner began to expand in the 1990s, adding picnic tables and a larger deck. Amid complaints from residents, the East Hampton Zoning Board found that a full-scale restaurant wasn’t permitted, and prohibited any expansion without obtaining approvals from the town.

By the time Rowan bought the place in 2014, he inherited what his lawyer once called a “blood feud.”

Rowan, who originally had grander plans for the property but pulled back, has filed multiple lawsuits and spent years battling the local zoning board over septic systems, dock rights, and parking complaints. Along the way, he has slowly transformed Duryea’s into the upscale Cape Cod-inspired destination it is today.

After years of litigation, the dispute is remarkably back at what a judge described as “square one,” leaving the future of seaside dining on seafood towers and lobster rolls uncertain. The judge has allowed the venue to operate while the case continues.

The drama reflects broader tensions in the hamlet, the rustic counterpart to nearby Hamptons enclaves. The town has been bullish in preserving its way of life,



Marc Rowan has transformed Duryea’s into an upscale Cape Cod-inspired destination.



The property once served as a rustic bait shop.

including attempting to remove an unpermitted art installation on a rancher’s property and tamping down on noisy jets at a regional airport.

Duryea’s sits on a rugged stretch of road with no sidewalks, surrounded by marshland and sparkling bay views. Built into the undulating terrain are brick homes, shingled cottages and a long-standing dive bar.

Though Rowan’s camp insists it isn’t technically a restaurant, it has clear el-

ements of luxury dining. Distressed wood tables and cushioned couches overlook the bay with capacity for about 100 guests. Speed boats and yachts dock along the pier. A line forms before it opens at noon. At peak times on Saturday, just before sunset, the narrow two-way street to Duryea’s is filled with cars as high-heeled and preppy patrons walk along the sloped grassy shoulder of the road.

There’s a team of uniformed servers with white

shirts and gray aprons, though they don’t take orders directly; table service isn’t allowed under the current zoning restrictions. Instead they hand out clipboards with paper menus where patrons can circle what they want. Customers pay at the counter.

Rowan insists Duryea’s footprint is the same as before he bought it, saying the property, even in the old days, had a cookhouse where seafood was prepared and sold. “Duryea’s contin-

ues to be a beloved Montauk institution where families and friends come for fresh fish, shellfish, and perfect sunsets over Fort Pond Bay, as they have for decades,” a spokesman said.

The decision to do business there was personal for Rowan, who has a beachfront compound in nearby Southampton and owns several restaurants in the Hamptons.

“I have mountain biked in Montauk for better than 20 years,” he said in a depo-

sition. “I absolutely love the place.”

Rowan said he was aware the neighborhood would be hostile based on battles it had with the previous owner. When he first bought the property, he hosted a lunch with residents for them to see his plans and air their concerns. He made sure they had his cellphone number. One neighbor said he was “technically very nice,” but the majority wasn’t swayed, and locals opposed him at every turn over the next decade.

For a brief time in 2019, it appeared there was a truce. A town lawyer and Rowan reached a settlement that blessed the property as a restaurant, with some concessions from the private-equity billionaire, including a promise to never provide ferry access.

In an unexpected municipal rift, town board members said that ship never should have sailed. They said they never saw a draft of the settlement and never adopted a formal resolution to approve it.

This May, a judge reluctantly agreed. Settlements aren’t lightly set aside, the judge said, but the facts showed that the town hadn’t ratified the agreement.

Montauk just wants its processes to be followed, said Steven Stern, a New York lawyer who is now representing the town. “Zoning is there for a reason,” he said.

Through it all, neighbors have been vigilant watchdogs, monitoring Duryea’s social media for potential malfeasance. They’ve raised concerns about a sunshade placed over the dock, a wooden walkway to connect the restaurant to handicap parking spots, and a wedding that was held on site.

Robert Pluhowski, whose family has summered next door to Duryea’s since the 1970s, said the problem goes beyond Rowan. “It’s happening throughout the whole town,” Pluhowski said. “He’s our scapegoat: the hedge fund guy who bought the mom-and-pop shop.”

He’s hopeful that the establishment’s popularity will eventually wane with the ritzy crowd.

“How much are they really going to stay in Long Island?” he asked. “It’s not the French Riviera.”