

Bits n' pieces from east, west and beyond (for 7-31-2025)

Compiled by Lorraine H. Marie

East, west or beyond, sooner or later events elsewhere may have a local impact. A recent sampling:

Reuters recently reported that close to **two-thirds** of lawyers at the Dept. of Justice, whose job was to defend Trump Administration policies, have **quit**. One attorney said they came to defend “**aspects**” of the Constitution, adding “How could they participate in the project of **tearing it down?**”

DOGE staff will use artificial intelligence to eliminate **half** of the **government regulations** by next January, *The Washington Post* reported.

The Supreme Court has handed “**unprecedented**” power to President Donald Trump, *Slate* reported, when conservative justices said he could fire 1,400 Dept. of Education employees, as part of the plan to abolish DOE. The ruling came through the **shadow docket**, and shared **no legal justification**, thereby accelerating “this administration’s **lawless seizure** of duties...expressly assigned to **Congress**.” In contrast, when Joe Biden was president, conservative justices **repeatedly** limited his authority.

NBC says as of late June the U.S. was **holding more than 56,000 people** in detention centers, of which nearly **72%** had **no criminal history**. As well, the *Texas Tribune* says the Dept. of Defense awarded a **\$12.6 billion contract** to build the nation’s largest detention facility, to “house” 5,000 people in **tents** at Fort Bliss. And, U.S. detainees released from El Salvador’s CECOT prison have **shared details** of their four-month stay: beatings, sexual assault, being told to “commit suicide,” lack of due process, torture.

Immigration headlines: Immigrants at Florida detention facilities faced **life-threatening** medical delays [such as no insulin access, being shackled for long periods during transportation --without food, water or functioning toilets; held in overcrowded cells, forced to sleep on concrete floors, even being forced to eat “like dogs”]; ICE **secretly deported** Pennsylvania grandfather, 82, after he **lost** his Green Card; Masked ICE agents **shatter car window** to arrest man outside grandchild's daycare; State, local officials, want to **ban** ICE masks [and require them to wear ID when making arrests], and, Appeals court finds Trump's effort to end birthright citizenship **unconstitutional**, upholds block.

France’s prime minister says the U.S. European Union **trade deal** represents a “dark day” for Europe. *Axios* noted that the deal gives the U.S. “plenty,” but the U.S. **gives nothing** in return.

For the first time **since 1923** Paris recently opened the Seine to swimming, *The Week* said. It took **\$1.6 billion** to clean the river of pollutants, which included upgrading old water treatment plants and connecting 20,000 homes to sewer systems, instead of **flushing directly into the river**.

The Justice Department has **100,000 pages** of Jeffrey Epstein files it **refuses to release** to the public, *The New York Times* stated. Recent **Epstein headlines:** “It's not a hoax”: Speaker Mike Johnson bluntly breaks with Trump

on Epstein files; Newly discovered photos and video shed fresh light on **Trump's ties to Epstein**; House subcommittee [supported by three Republicans] votes to subpoena Justice Department for Epstein [sex trafficking] files.

A new analysis of health studies, pooling **200 million people** from 24 studies, shows regular **marijuana** users have a **29% higher risk** of heart attack and a **20%** higher risk of stroke as compared to abstainers -- whether using edibles or smoking. A University of California epidemiologist told CNN that those at risk of heart disease should be "**very cautious** about using cannabis."

Israeli-Gaza headlines: Gaza doctors "becoming **too weak to treat patients**" as Israel-induced hunger crisis deepens; UN says **6,000 trucks** worth of aid ready to enter Gaza and urges Israel to **allow** access; Holocaust professor says Israel's destruction of Gaza now "**greater than destruction of Hiroshima**"; Israel again **intercepts Gaza-bound ship** carrying activists and humanitarian aid; Israel announces "**tactical pause**" in Gaza fighting after **outrage** over starving Palestinians, and, Israel allows new trickle of aid into Gaza, but **not enough** to "stave off famine," UN warns.

Since 2020 median **CEO pay** has **increased 31%** (worker pay increased **13%**), to \$16 million annually, the *Lever* reports. Translated: CEOs get **216 times more** than their workers.

And **still more** headlines: **US heat dome** causes dangerous conditions for more than 100 million people; [Trump's] EPA seeks to end its ability to fight climate change; Dropped cases against LA protesters reveal false claims from federal agents; 'A black hole': **Mercury emissions fall 70%** over the last four decades thanks to UN treaty, coal phase-out; Alzheimer's may be delayed through lifestyle changes, new studies show, and, Wall Street gets a Trump **tax break to fire workers**.

Blast from the past: The Trump Administration just published 230,000 Martin L. King Jr. documents related to his assassination, sealed since 1977. The release has been regarded an attempt to distract from Epstein headlines. Historian Heather C. Richardson does not see the ploy working, since the Epstein files suggest a cover up of powerful men, while the MLK files show government harassment by trying to pin illegal activity on MLK -- using illegal surveillance under FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover's goal, she pointed out, was to discredit people he regarded as a danger to American society.