

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Controlled Mass Media. Disdain for Human Rights. Identification of Enemies as a Unifying Cause. Supremacy of the Military. (Dick Cheney said I had other priorities in the sixties than military service.) Powerful and Continuing Nationalism. Rampant Sexism. Obsession with National Security. Religion and Government Intertwined. Corporate (there's is a RAT in Corporate) Power Protected. Labor Power Suppressed. Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts. Obsession with Crime and Punishment. Rampant Cronyism and Corruption. Fraudulent Elections. Laurence W. Britt wrote about the common signs of fascism in April, 2003, after researching seven fascist regimes. Those were Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany, Benito Mussolini's Italy, Francisco Franco's Spain, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's Portugal, George Papadopoulos' Greece, Augusto Pinochet's Chile, Mohamed Suharto's Indonesia. These signs resonate with the political and economic direction of the United States under Bush/Cheney/Trump/Vance. (Vance said: "Trump is America's Hitler.") Visiting The Maltz Museum exhibit: DEGENERATE! HITLER'S WAR ON MODERN ART: *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) 1925 by Adolf Hitler became a nationwide best-seller, prominently displayed in every bookstore, every house, and every classroom in the Third Reich. The state gave all newly married couples a copy of the book as a wedding present. After the war, many countries restricted the sale or display of *Mein Kampf*. In Germany, Bavaria — the state that inherited the copyright after Hitler's suicide — refused to permit its publication, and it was only after the book came to into the public domain in 2015 that a heavily annotated scholarly edition of the work was published in the country. Amazon, after refusing to no longer sell copies of the book, reinstated the book, saying it "served an important educational role in understanding and preventing antisemitism." The debate continues, with some people claiming that publication exposes Hitler's lies. A number of Jewish groups have long called for the book's outright ban. Hitler said: "People believe a big lie rather than a small lie. Lie, keep repeating it and eventually people believe it."

David Hancock
Chesterland

Lord of Life Offers Pub Theology

The Pub Theology movement has been growing across the nation. Lord of Life in Bainbridge has offered a Pub Theology gathering since 2016. If you like talking about God alongside a cold brew, a glass of wine, or even coffee, tea and dessert, then Pub Theology may be the thing for you.

Pub Theology provides a space for people who might not feel comfortable in a church setting to have discussions about faith. Lord of Life's Pub Group gathers on the second Wednesday of the month at Papous in Aurora or at Mavis Winkle's Public House in Solon.

The group is open to all ages, and the conversation is always spirited. Recent conversations have taken place around the subjects of Awe, Scars, Suffering and the value of Ritual. The amazing value of God's mercy, grace, and unconditional love always weaves itself into our conversations. We also regularly ponder the best way to find God in the midst of pain.

Pub Theology is a diverse group made up of 20-somethings to folks in their seventh decade who grow together in their faith by sharing their wisdom with one another.

The next Pub Theology will take place on May 14 at 7 p.m. Please get in touch with the church for the specific location of this gathering. For more information about this or anything at Lord of Life, please contact the church office at (440)543-5505. Lord of Life is located at 17989 Chillicothe Rd. in Bainbridge Township, just south of Rt. 422.

Our next issue will be delivered May 23,
and will include our fifth
Spring Home & Garden Guide,
our *Summer Pet Guide* and
our *Summer Fun Guide*.

Editorial Deadline is April 18.
Advertising Deadline is April 23.
For more information, email us at
spiritofbainbridge@gmail.com.

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440.487.0829 David A. Hancock, MA professordhancock@gmail.com



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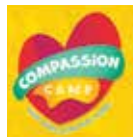
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What's Happening at Valley Presbyterian Church



Pass-It-On Resale Store Will be OPEN
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Saturday, May 3, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



For a list of donations accepted or a list of the organizations to whom we donate, check out our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/passit.on.716>, or email us at passitonamissionoflove@gmail.com.

Compassion Camp: What Every Living Thing Needs
 Join us this summer for a week of wonder, kindness, and connection!

At Compassion Camp, kids will explore what all living things need to grow and thrive—love, care, shelter, food, water, and belonging. Through stories, music, games, crafts, and mindful movement, children will discover how showing compassion for ourselves, others, and the earth can transform the world around us.

Open to ages 3 to entering 5th Grade
 Location: Valley Presbyterian Church
 Dates: Tuesday, June 24 to Friday, June 27
 Time: 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
 Cost: \$20.00 per child; \$40.00 max per family

Let's grow a community rooted in compassion—one heart at a time.
 Register online or contact the church office.
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Heart of Valley Christian Preschool
 We have a few openings left in our morning classes for Fall 2025!
 Contact the Preschool Office at (440) 708-2572

For more information, contact the church office at 440.543.1071
 or email valleycecommission@gmail.com

Valley Presbyterian Church, 17560 Chillicothe Road, Chagrin Falls
 Phone: (440) 543-1071 Email: valleyvpc@netlink.net
 Worship Service 10:30-11:30 a.m.
 Or join us online

Everything but the Kitchen Sink!

By Anne E. North

Is there anything more humorous than blunders we make in the kitchen?! Oh, I know they don't seem funny at the time, especially when you're pressed for time and trying to put a meal on the table, or you have guests and things go sideways.

Talking with friends "of a certain age" recently and it was laughable how many of us left the sack of giblets inside the turkey the first time we cooked one!

And speaking of roasting a turkey, I recall the time my mom was basting a turkey (which was usually my dad's domain) and it somehow slid to the floor. And one of our guests was a noted chef and restaurant manager who happened to witness the mishap. With his wry sense of humor, he said, "Calm down, Mary!" and picked up the poultry, rinsed it off and put it back into the oven! I guess that was the Five-Second Rule in action, folks!

We recently made white chicken chili. Soon after I assembled the ingredients and diced the onions, I suffered a bout of heartburn, so my husband took over in the kitchen. Later he commented that the chili seemed rather bland. I asked, "You did put the salsa verde into the pot, right?" Oops. Well, we added that and the dish turned out perfectly!

When I related that escapade to my daughter, she commented, "That's like the time I made regular chili and forgot the chili powder!"

And I'd rather not mention the mashed-potatoes-on-my-shoes incident...or the potato peeler in the compost bin...as Jeff Griff said a couple of issues ago, you can't make this stuff up, folks!

On a not-so-funny note, let me tell you about an interesting grocery store encounter we had last month. A young man approached us as we were selecting bananas from the organic produce counter. He asked, "Are those really any better than regular bananas?" We were a bit taken aback because we seem to be invisible to young people, especially at the grocery. My husband recovered quickly and answered him. "It's not that they taste any better but they were not grown with pesticides." (And he mentioned to me later that he should have added, "Anyone battling cancer knows the danger of those pesticides!" and we both nodded, thinking of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*.) And the resulting action? That young man bought the organic bananas! Really!

If you have a great recipe you would like to share in this space, we'd love to hear from you at spiritofbainbridge@gmail.com

Bon appetit, folks!

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Photos by Olivia Hoffman

When We Have No Words

By Marcia Peiffer

As we go through Ohio's post-winter thaw, as we come out of our homes and re-enter society after a few months of bitter cold, we are coming to terms with some realities. Our lawns and driveways took a beating and so did we — no longer can we hide our Netflix and Häagen-Dazs nights of February binge-watching *Tracker* under oversize winter coats. It is a time of reckoning.

In the listlessness of winter, our bodies but also our inner lives can take a real beating. It is a slog to grab groceries when it's 20 degrees outside or drive to work and school when it's pitch black; the weather can indeed wear on our souls.

Which brings me to an essay by N.T. Wright, "The Freedom of Formal Prayer." I read this the other morning while clutching my English Breakfast tea with half and half and found Wright's words reassuring:

"There's nothing wrong with having a form of words composed by somebody else. Indeed, there's probably something wrong with not using such a form. Some Christians, some of the time, can sustain a life of prayer entirely out of their own internal resources, just as there are hardy mountaineers (I've met one) who can walk the Scottish Highlands in their bare feet. But most of us need boots; not because we don't want to do the walking ourselves, but because we do."

So, sharing a few liturgical songs and Scriptures with you, dear readers, that have kept me going:

The kids and I recite Psalm 23 before bed each night and I'm relishing the words "He restoreth my soul." What is broken, helpless, hopeless...can be resurrected. God is in the work of restoration.

Or this song (by the Gettys): "He will hold me fast/ He will hold me fast/ For my Saviour loves me so/ He will hold me fast." We are so loved. So held. And nothing can take us from His grasp.

Or this description of God as a "a bulwark never failing" from *A Mighty Fortress*. Whatever life may bring, whatever suffering comes our way whether it be cancer, parenting woes or loss — God is our reliable protector. He is with us. All the way.

Wright goes on to explain: "The idea that I must always find my own words, that I must generate my own devotion from scratch every morning, that unless I think of new words I must be spiritually lazy or deficient — that has the all-too-familiar sign of human pride, of "doing it my way," of, yes, works-righteousness. Good liturgy — other people's prayers, whether for corporate or individual use — can be, should be, a sign and means of grace and gratitude."

Not gonna lie, I've felt spiritually lazy managing norovirus, snow suits and "cold days" with the kids all home (we turned the living room into a football field and a roller skating rink). And in these times David's words in Psalm 57 that God is our "refuge," our actual home? I can't come up with anything better than that.

GAO Welcomes Retired Racing Greyhounds from Australia with Help from Girl Scout to Provide Forever Homes

Eight retired racing greyhounds from Melbourne, Australia are finding a second chance at life thanks to Greyhound Adoption of Ohio, a Clevelandbased non-profit organization, and the dedication of 17-year-old Girl Scout Brynn Krahe, a junior at Kenston High School.

As part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project — the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve — Brynn coordinated the international transport and adoption effort to bring the dogs from the racetracks of Australia to loving homes in Northeast Ohio.

The greyhounds' journey began in Melbourne and included stopovers in Vancouver, British Columbia and Toronto, Ontario, before reaching their final destination in Cleveland on April 12. The dogs are settling in at the GAO kennel where they will be evaluated, cared for, and matched with forever families.

With greyhound racing on the decline in the United States, there are fewer and fewer greyhounds available for adoption. However, there remains strong demand for the breed as pets due to their loving and loyal demeanor. "This project is about showing people that there are still lots of greyhounds that need homes around the world and giving these amazing dogs the chance to live the rest of their lives as beloved pets," said Brynn. "They've spent their lives on the track, and now it's their time to relax, play, and be part of a family."

Brynn worked with Racing 2 Rehome, a greyhound adoption organization in Australia as well as international animal transport specialists, local volunteers, and Greyhound Adoption of Ohio to ensure a smooth and safe journey for the dogs. She also raised funds to cover travel costs and support the dogs upon their arrival.

"Brynn's passion and determination are inspiring," said Linda Perko, President of Greyhound Adoption of Ohio. "This project will make a lasting impact—not only for these eight dogs, but for others in the future."

Greyhound Adoption of Ohio is now accepting adoption applications for the Australian greyhounds. To learn more or to support the efforts, visit www.greyhoundadoptionoh.org.

About Greyhound Adoption

Greyhound Adoption of Ohio is a nonprofit organization based in Chagrin Falls, Ohio dedicated to helping greyhounds transition from the track to the couch. With a focus on education and community outreach, Greyhound Adoption of Ohio has placed over 3,500 dogs in loving homes since its inception in 1992.

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When it comes to recovery, consistency and compassion can make all the difference. That's exactly what sets Family Tree Rehabilitation apart—and why, as it celebrates 15 years of service, more families than ever are turning to this trusted name in therapy.

Part of the Anna Maria of Aurora continuing care community, Family Tree has redefined what rehabilitation can look like. Unlike many facilities that outsource their therapy, Family Tree directly employs its team of physical, occupational, and speech therapists. That means the same friendly faces are there with you or your loved one every step of the way. It's care that's not only more personal, but more effective.

Therapy is available seven days a week, and the team delivers nearly double the industry average in therapy hours. Whether recovering from surgery, managing a chronic condition, or facing the challenges of aging, Family Tree offers programs tailored to your unique goals. From in-facility rehab to outpatient and even in-home therapy, the flexibility is designed around what's best for the patient. And with specialized offerings like fall-risk prevention, Parkinson's care, and VitalStim therapy for swallowing disorders, the services go well beyond the basics.

At the heart of Family Tree's success is a dedicated team led by longtime director Phil Halstead. Many staff members have been with the program for over a decade—a rarity in today's healthcare world and a true benefit for those seeking reliable, outcome-driven support.

If you or someone you care about is in need of short-term or ongoing therapy, now is the time to discover what makes Family Tree different. Visit online www.annamariaofaurora.com or call 330-562-6171.

Adult Day Services Offered

Are you caring for a Geauga County Senior who has beginning stages of dementia? Are you feeling overwhelmed by the daily responsibilities and could use a break? If so, then call the Dept. on Aging's Adult Day Service (ADS) Program. The Adult Day Service staff can care for your loved one in a safe, structured environment, while you take some needed time for yourself.

The Adult Day Service Program is located at 8090 Cedar Rd., in Chesterland and open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Seniors are greeted as they enter ADS by caring staff members who work with the seniors throughout the day.

ADS participants are offered a nutritious lunch, cognitive stimulation, physical exercise and socialization as part of the program. This is not a medically-based program, meaning medications are not given and seniors must be able to toilet and feed themselves.

If you are interested in hearing more about this program, or would like to schedule a visit, call (440) 279-2149 or email vzanella@geauga.oh.gov



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Local Non-Profit Offers Temp Workers to Ease Labor Shortages in NE Ohio

Is your business facing staffing challenges? Better Call SAW!

Northeast Ohio businesses facing labor shortages now have a dependable solution: S.A.W., Inc.'s innovative Temporary Work Program. The Northeast Ohio-based nonprofit organization, known for empowering adults with developmental disabilities, is providing local companies with immediate access to reliable temporary workers.

SAW's Temp Work Program stands apart by guaranteeing availability of trained, supervised work crews within just 48 hours. Participating businesses benefit from SAW managing payroll, transportation, HR responsibilities, and workers' compensation coverage. There are no required contracts, minimum commitments, or termination fees, providing companies with complete flexibility and convenience.

"Our goal is to support local businesses with staffing solutions that also promote meaningful employment for adults with developmental disabilities," said Judith Carey, CEO of S.A.W., Inc. "Businesses receive the staffing they urgently need, and individuals gain valuable work experience, creating a win-win situation."

About S.A.W., Inc.: S.A.W., Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing meaningful employment, vocational training, and adult day services for individuals with developmental disabilities throughout Northeast Ohio. With Adult Activity Centers in Maple Heights, Beachwood, Parma, and Rocky River, SAW is committed to empowering individuals through inclusion, independence, and employment opportunities.

For more information visit www.sawinc.org

Home Delivered Meals Needs Auburn Volunteers!

The Geauga County Dept. on Aging is in need of Home Delivered Meal drivers in Auburn Township on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The meal routes start at the Bainbridge Senior Center, located at 17751 Chillicothe Rd. in Bainbridge.

The HDM program delivers warm, nutritious lunches between the hours of 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Monday through Friday to homebound seniors in the community.

GDA is looking for area agencies, organizations, church and individuals 18 years old or older, with a valid driver's license, who are interested in volunteering for this program. Training includes filing GDA HDM Volunteer paperwork and a short orientation about the program. Volunteers can deliver meals on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or as needed/ substitute basis.

To sign up or for any questions, please contact Nathan Gorton at (440) 279-2138 or email at NGorton@co.geauga.oh.us.

Lord of Life Youth Head for a Life-Changing Mission Trip This Summer!

This June, the youth of Lord of Life Lutheran Church are gearing up for an unforgettable mission experience—right here in our home state of Ohio! Our teens will be traveling to Camp Frederick in Rogers, Ohio, where they'll be immersed in a week of service, community and spiritual growth. During the trip, they'll serve in both Columbiana and Mahoning Counties, partnering with local ministries and making a real difference in the lives of others.

In past years, our youth have worked alongside the Mayor of Leetonia, bringing new life to public spaces by painting fire hydrants, revitalizing parks and weeding flower beds—all while enjoying the sunshine and laughter of serving together. Midweek, they took a memorable trip to Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Youngstown, helping maintain a community garden that supports efforts to combat the city's food desert. They also rolled up their sleeves at Zion Lutheran in Canfield, cleaning the grounds and lending a hand in the preschool classrooms. The youth also volunteered at The Way Station in Leetonia and Columbiana—an organization that offers crucial services and support to local needy families. Whether sorting donations, offering hospitality, or simply being present, our youth put their faith into action.

At Lord of Life, we couldn't be prouder of these young disciples stepping out in faith to serve, sow, and grow—serving God's people, sowing seeds of kindness, and growing in their faith journeys. This mission trip is more than just a week away—it's an opportunity to build lasting friendships, deepen spiritual roots, and discover the joy of being part of something bigger than us. Want to learn more or get involved? We'd love to hear from you. Contact Pastor Erin at the church office—we'd love to connect! Let's keep the fire of faith burning bright this summer and beyond.

For more information about Lord of Life, visit our website at www.loloh.org or contact the church office at 440-543-5505. Lord of Life is located at 17989 Chillicothe Rd. (just south of Rt. 422) in Bainbridge.



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Conquering the Hill!

By Jess Skoczen

My family and I recently went on our annual camping trip with my mom's side of the family. We have been going ever since I was little. This is my favorite time of the year. Each family gets their own cabins along the street. We arrive on a Friday afternoon, and go home Sunday afternoon which gives us the whole day on Saturday.

There are so many things that we do, but my favorite is hiking in the woods near the cabins. Saturday morning, a few of my cousins told me that they were going on a hike to see a cable bridge and asked if I wanted to go with them. It was in the middle of the woods across a river. I thought this would be an easy hike, but I soon found out that I was wrong. The first obstacle was a very steep hill. It even had a sign that said, "Big Ass Hill." I have seen this hill before, but I always avoided it for that reason, until this weekend. We had just begun our hike, and I was already out of breath. There were times when I thought about going back to the cabins, but I pushed myself to keep going and I was so proud of myself when we got to the top of the hill.

As we continued, more obstacles made things difficult. Twists and turns, muddy areas around the paths, climbing up and down wooden ladders. But no matter what, I kept thinking about how cool it would be to see the bridge. Eventually, we made it to flat land. Even though my legs were hurting, I was determined to see the bridge. Just then, my cousin pointed out that the bridge was only a few steps away. I was so happy. All of that hard work paid off. You had to be careful, because the bridge would shake a little the closer you walked to the other side. The part that made me a little nervous was when I stood in the middle of the bridge and realized that underneath me was the river. After I got used to the movement, I walked across the bridge a few times before heading back. I could not stop thinking about it the rest of the weekend.

Even though I was tired, my legs were sore, and I started to sweat, the journey to the bridge was definitely worth it. I conquered the "Big Ass Hill." I found out that there was a shorter route which I took later that day, but I am happy we went the long way around. Another fun camping trip in the books!



Film FOCUS

By David King

Better Man B

After writing, producing, and directing the extremely popular *Greatest Showman Ever* in 2017, Michael Gracey was given an almost unlimited budget to make his next film titled *Better Man*. After six years in production and 100 million dollars spent, his new film was theatrically released in England on Christmas Day of 2024 which is traditionally the best possible way to assure a film will become an international blockbuster. But after only three weeks it was pulled from the British theaters and was only shown in very few American locations. Many critics have called it the biggest economic flop of all time but I would rather call it a "misguided masterpiece."

One of the reasons that it failed was because it was a true story, biographical film of a singer-songwriter named Robbie Williams who was extremely popular in England in the early 1990s but is hardly known anywhere else. (He still holds the Guinness Record for being the Bestselling Album Solo Performer in British history). In this film, Robbie tells his own story, where he explains that in his early days, he learned that what he lacked in talent and polish could be made up for by being "cheeky and outrageous." He liked to call himself "less evolved" than most others by always playing the clown "like a performing chimp." So to illustrate this, filmmaker Gracey decided to have the role of Robbie played by a computer animated ape much like those seen in the *Planet of the Apes* films. Robbie is not actually a monkey, nor do any other actors acknowledge him being different from any other human characters in the film. It is instead how Robbie would see himself as he balances between a big dose of egomania and self loathing. This chimp gimmick at first seems weird but as the film progresses you find yourself accepting it as an artistic tool to show Robbie's inner thought process. Even during his performances with thousands of adoring fans around him, he will sometimes see frowning scary ape-like faces in the crowds. These will represent his inner demons and insecurities. It is a visually effective use of the technology.

The film follows the same path as many other celebrity bio-pics such as *Rocket Man*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, etc. It shows a tough childhood with an absentee father figure, an early path to fame while performing in a group (this time a U.K.-based boy band called "Take That"), then a promising solo career sidetracked by drug and alcohol abuse, and finally a career resurrection through sobriety with sellout performances at the famed Albert Hall. Some of the best parts of the film are that the dramatic scenes are heart warmingly touching and yet the musical numbers are incredibly exciting and enjoyable. This film has many huge production numbers with hundreds of dancers and marvelous visual effects. Even the romantic duets pairing a lovely woman and an ape are strangely beautiful. After its stunning failure to attract audiences in theatres, the American Paramount film studios have paid \$20 million for the rights to this film hoping it will become a cult hit when seen on their streaming site. I hope their investment pays off because this is an extremely interesting film where a courageous moviemaker takes an artistic risk to tell his story. It deserves to be seen. If you have access to the Prime/Paramount + streaming site I hope you will give it a try. I think you might like it, too.

A Real Pain A

This deeply affecting independent motion picture remarkably walks the fine line between comedy and drama. Starring Jesse Eisenberg, who also wrote and directed it, the film tells the story of two "odd-couple" cousins David and Benji Kaplan who travel to Poland after their Holocaust survivor grandmother's death. The grandmother has left them the funds to make this tour guided "Holocaust Heritage" trip and the two loving grandsons agree to honor her wishes.

David, played by Eisenberg, at first would seem like the more adjusted of the two with a loving wife and child back at home. Benji, played by Kieren Culkin, seems like the more vulnerable and emotionally fragile of the two, even having an attempted suicide in his past. He does not have the same supporting relationships as David, but his personality is much more captivating and charming with an enthusiastic ability to form friendships and develop a sense of camaraderie with the other members of their tour group. As the tour continues Benji proves unwilling to censor his comments which at times may offend others. But in the end most of those offended will respect him for his honesty. David, on the other hand, is very self conscious and almost neurotic about how he and his cousin will appear to others. He spends much of his time apologizing and making excuses for his cousin's explosive outbursts. Whenever he can find a moment alone, he will be on his cell phone connecting with his wife. He needs her constant support as if he is unable to face such relationships on his own. In one speech, he even admits that he is a little envious of Benji's ability to light up a room. Both of these experienced actors are quite skilled in delivering comedy which lightens what could otherwise be very depressing subject matter.

Their actual visit to a concentration camp is quite respectfully handled with the visitors silently taking the tours through the horrific locations. You will only see the emotions on their faces as they view the remnants of some of humankind's most evil actions. This fine film explores topics of grief, loss and generational trauma as the actual survivors are now passing away. These dwindling survivors want future generations to never forget what happened in these places. Depicting such serious topics in a compelling and sometimes humorous manner will hopefully bring their message to new and younger eyes. This film was nominated for many awards, including winning both an Academy Award and a British Academy Award "Bafta" for Kieren Caulkin. Jesse Eisenberg's script was nominated for an Academy Award and he won a best screenplay "Bafta". This film is now streaming on Disney+/Hulu.

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