**Person of the Week**

**During her 24 years on the Supreme Court, Sandra Day O’Connor was the most powerful woman in America. A rancher’s daughter who became the first female justice, she was such a pivotal force at the ideological center that pundits referred to it as the O’Connor court, even though William Rehnquist was chief justice for most of her tenure. From restrictions on abortion to the dispute over the 2000 presidential election, it was O’Connor’s position that largely dictated the law. She projected unflinching confidence, yet when she learned she was President Reagan’s choice to fill a court vacancy in 1981, she got nervous. “It’s all right to be the first to do something, but I didn’t want to be the last woman on the Supreme Court,” she said. “If I took the job and did a lousy job, it would take a long time to get another one”**

**Sandra Day grew up on her family’s Arizona cattle ranch, the Lazy B, riding horses and doing chores. There was no electricity or running water until she was 7, and during the school year she would stay with herf grandmother in El Paso. She excelled in school, “skipped two grades,” and enrolled at Stanford University at age 16, said The New York Times. At Stanford Law School, she dated Rehnquist, a fellow student. But then she met John O’Connor III and married him after graduating in 1952 – disappointing Rehnquist, who had also proposed.**

**While O’Connor finished near the top of her class, she couldn’t get a job practicing law, said Politico, as firm after firm told her, “We don’t hire women.” Instead, she worked in the public sector, had three sons, and then got involved in Republican politics in Arizona. In 1969, when she was an assistant state attorney general, she was appointed to fill a vacancy in the state senate and won reelection twice. That gave her a background as a legislator that became key to her later views on states’ rights and on the primacy of the legislature over the judiciary in determining the law.**

**O’Connor “inspired generations of female lawyers” in a time of overt sexism, said CNN.com. After liberal Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined the court, male lawyers frequently confused the two – even though they looked nothing alike – prompting O’Connor to wear a shirt saying “I’m Sandra, not Ruth.” She worked through a bout with breast cancer and retired in 2006 to care for her husband, who had dementia. While she often lamented the court’s rightward turn, she maintained pride in her historic career. “In terms of having the American people look at the court and think of it as being fair,” she said, “it helps to have women, plural, on the court.” *(The Week magazine, December 15, 2023)***

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**Matthew Perry thought he may have been cursed by having his dream come true. By age 24, the actor had appeared in bit parts in sitcoms such as Charles in Charge, Who’s the Boss?, and Growing Pains, but he craved more. He knelt in his bedroom and prayed to become famous. Three weeks later, he was cast as Chandler Bing in Friends, a smash hit watched by 25 million viewers a night during its 1994-2004 run, which eventually enabled him and his five co-stars to command more than $1 million per episode. But for Perry, the fame and wealth also enabled a crippling addiction to drugs and alcohol. “I have a never-ending need for attention,” he said last year, but getting it “didn’t fix that hole in me.”**

**His Canadian childhood was shaped by both privilege and neglect, said BBC.com. His parents, an actor and a “beauty queen turned journalist” who was press aide to the prime minister, divorced when he was a baby, and he was alone a lot. As a kid in Ottawa he acted out, smoking, drinking, “and at one point beating up his schoolmate,” who grew up to be Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. A nationally ranked junior tennis player, Perry moved to Los Angeles at 15 to play but soon switched to acting.**

**Perry’s addictions had become an open secret,” said The New York Times. He started abusing painkillers after a 1997 Jet Ski accident, eventually taking 55 Vicodins a day, and later said he could tell from his weight in each Friends episode whether he was on booze or pills while filming it. Through periods of sobriety and relapse, he continued acting, appearing in shows like The West Wing and The Good Wife. But the drug abuse had dire health effects: “an exploded colon, a stint on life support, two weeks in a coma, nine months with a colostomy bag, and more than a dozen stomach surgeries.”**

**Perry tried to focus on “using his experience to help others stay sober,” said Variety. From 2012 to 2015, he ran a sober-living facility in his Malibu beach house, and he dedicated his best-selling 2022 memoir to “all of the sufferers out there.” He hoped that his attempts to help the addicted would be his legacy. “When I die,” he said last year, “it would be nice if Friends were listed far behind the things I did to try to help other people. I know it won’t happen, but it would be nice.” *(The Week magazine, November 10, 2023)***

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**Rosalynn Carter was a key policy adviser to her husband, President Jimmy Carter, and a full partner in his work, not only in the White House but also for decades after as the couple dedicated themselves to humanitarian causes. He called her an “extension of myself.” Instrumental on the campaign trail, she was assertive in the role of presidential spouse, establishing the first Office of the First Lady in the East Wing. Often described as the most politically active first lady since Eleanor Roosevelt, Carter attended cabinet meetings, testified before Congress, and led a 13-day diplomatic trip to seven countries across Latin America.**

**Eleanor Rosalynn Carter was delivered by Jimmy Carter’s mother, who was a nurse, in the 600-person farming town of Plains, Georgia. Her future husband caught his first glimpse of her when he was just 3 as he peeked into her bassinet.**

**It was after the White House, though, that she found her true calling, said NPR.org. Rosalynn had begun pushing to modernize mental health services as first lady of Georgia, framing mental health care as “a basic human right,” and she continued that work through the Carter Center, which the couple ran together. The Carters drew on their shared Christian faith to fuel a life dedicated to charitable work, promoting peace, health projects, and election integrity around the globe. In 1999, they jointly received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for that work. *(The Week magazine, December 3, 2023)***

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**He was born Anthony Benedetto in Queens, New York, said Bloomberg. His Italian-born grocer father died when he was 10, and his mother worked as a seamstress to support the family, “the kitchen stove providing the only heat” in their small apartment. Tony Bennett excelled at art and music in high school but dropped out to help support the family, working as an elevator operator and singing waiter before being drafted at 18, in 1944. The horrors of frontline combat in World War II made Bennett a lifelong pacifist, said Rolling Stone. And he was shaken and angered by the racism he said was “so widespread in the Army,” where he was stripped of his corporal’s stripes after dining with a Black friend. In later years he became a civil rights advocate, marching with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama, in 1965 and performing alongside Harry Belafonte at a rally outside Montgomery. *(The Week magazine, August 4, 2023)***

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**It Is The Soldier**

**It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.**

**It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.**

**It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.**

**It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.**

**It is the soldier, like all veterans, who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag. *(Heard on KFAB Radio in Omaha, Nebraska)***

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**Are soldiers still dying for freedom? For most Americans, Memorial Day simply marks the beginning of summer, said Andrew Bacevich. That’s what the holiday meant to me, too – until three years ago, when my son was killed fighting in Iraq. Now, when I visit his gravesite, I’m haunted by “uncomfortable questions” about why he and so many other brave Americans have died in the service of the country. We like to tell ourselves that “the fallen gave their lives so we might enjoy freedom,” and certainly that was true of those killed in the battle of Gettysburg or on Omaha Beach. But in recent decades, from Vietnam to Bosnia to Iraq to Afghanistan, “the connection between American military intervention and American freedom has become ever more tenuous.” In playing world policeman, the U.S. repeatedly has become “engaged in never-ending wars that we cannot win and cannot afford.” It’s easy to blame politicians for sending young men like my son to die in another nation’s civil war, fighting for goals no one can define. But as citizens of a democracy, we all bear some responsibility. Perhaps that’s worth thinking about, as we light up our barbecues and head to the beach. *(The Week magazine, June 11, 2010)***

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**Before she became a country star, Naomi Judd lived an album’s worth of country songs. She’d endured poverty, sexual abuse, divorce, single motherhood, and mental illness by the time she and her daughter Wynonna formed a duo built around their Appalachian-tinged harmonies in the late 1970s. The Judds became one of the biggest country acts of the 1980s, with a sound combining traditional back-porch country and a pop sheen. The pair sold more than 20 million albums, winning five Grammy’s and racking up 14 No. 1 hits, including “Girls Night Out,” “Why Not Me,” and “Love Can Build A Bridge.” Judd spoke openly about her battles with severe depression, which at times required hospitalization – and which led to her death, reportedly by suicide. “I’m still desperately trying to help myself,” she said in 2016. “But I’m vulnerable.” (The Week magazine, May 13, 2022)**

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**At a later date you can find this excerpt in the How’s That Again? document. Scroll down to the How’s That Again? document in the H-section of documents, click it open, and put the words Jan. 6th in to the search box. With a click of the mouse you will be taken to this excerpt to read all about it.**

**Or, key words describing each excerpt are listed in blue (all entries except for funnies) or red (funnies) and are in alphabetical order. So after opening the How’s That Again? document, you only have to scroll down almost to the middle of this document to the words Jan. 6th, in this same color blue, and read all about it!**

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**At a later date you can find this excerpt in the Determination & Effort document. Scroll down to the Determination & Effort document, click it open, and put the word Poitier in to the search box. With a click of the mouse you will be taken to this excerpt to read all about it.**

**Or, key words describing each excerpt are listed in blue (all entries except for funnies) or red (funnies) and are in alphabetical order. So after opening the Determination & Effort document, you only have to scroll down to the P-section of this document to the word Poitier, in this same color blue, and read all about it!**

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**Betty White’s small-screen career was one for the record books. In February 1939, a then 17-year-old White danced in front of the cameras for an experimental TV broadcast, and over the following eight decades was rarely absent from the medium. Though best known as a comedic actress, she was likely the first solo female talk show host in history and one of the few successful female producers of the 1950s. Dubbed the First Lady of Television, she worked on comedies, dramas, game shows, commercials, and televised parades. White had her most memorable roles in two classic sitcoms, as the nymphomaniacal Sue Ann Nivens on The Mary Tyler Moore Show and the delightful but dim Rose Nylund on The Golden Girls, and cultivated a sunny, chipper persona that belied a wicked sense of humor.**

**Asked at age 88 if there was anything left she would like to do, she replied, “Robert Redford.”**

**Betty White later hosted and produced her own variety show, The Betty White Show. When NBC pressured her to fire Black tap dancer Arthur Duncan because of complaints from local affiliates in the Jim Crow south, “she refused and increased his airtime. The show was canceled within the year.”**

**She worked well into her 90s, appearing on the 2010-2015 sitcom “Hot in Cleveland” and in 2019’s Toy Story 4 as Bitey White, a tiger-shaped chew toy.**

**“I’m the luckiest old broad on two feet,” she said in 2017. “I will go to my grave saying, ‘Can I come in and read for that tomorrow?’” *(The Week magazine, January 21, 2022)***

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**February 8th, 2022 - Numerous rioters who infiltrated the Capitol on Jan. 6 called Nancy Pelosi’s office the next day trying to recover items they’d lost during the insurrection. The rioters were “asking whether there was a lost and found because they forgot their phone there, or they left their purse,” said Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.). He said the callers were put through to police officers who took down their names and addresses. *(Business Insider, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 28, 2022)***

**January 21st, 2022 - A San Francisco woman started with a single bobby pin and in a series of 28 trades flipped it into a house near Nashville. Inspired by a Canadian blogger’s similar 2006 journey, Demi Skipper, 30, documented on social media how she leveraged the original trade of the pin for such items as a pair of earrings, a diamond necklace, several cars, a solar-powered trailer, and finally the two-bedroom house. She’ll move in along with her husband in January. “It’s been so surreal,” Skipper said. “I wake up and think, “Is this actually real? Is this actually my house.” (The Week magazine, December 31, 2021 / January 7, 2022)**

**January 14th, 2021 - At the very least, many retailers now offer free shipping, free returns, and frequent discount codes, all of which promote more buying – and more returns. Last year, U. S. retailers took back more than $100 billion in merchandise sold online. All of that unwanted stuff piles up. Some of it will be diverted into a global shadow industry of bulk resellers, some of it will be stripped for valuable parts, and some of it will go directly into an incinerator or a landfill. (Amanda Mull, in The Atlantic, November, 2021, p. 22)**

**January 7th, 2021 - As a youth, Sidney was raised in poverty on Cat Island in the Bahamas. At sixteen, with less than two years of education and three dollars in his pocket, he moved to New York City in search of a better life. When he arrived, the only place he could find to sleep was a rooftop. His first job was that of dishwasher. Although he knew nothing about acting, Sidney responded to a want ad listed by the American Negro Theater. Because of his limited education, he could not read all the words in the script. The director interrupted his audition, shouting, “Stop wasting my time.” While that rejection would have stopped and even destroyed the ambitions of most people, the young man walked away more determined than ever. Saving money from his meager dishwasher’s salary, Sidney bought a radio. He used it as an educational tool, listening to people’s voices for hours, trying to enunciate as clearly as they did. At the restaurant, he found a waiter to tutor him in reading. Later Sidney returned to the American Negro Theater persuading officials to let him take acting lessons. Privately, he resolved to become not only the best black actor but the best actor. His name is Sidney Poitier, and he is regarded as one of the finest actors of his generation. *(Victor M. Parachin, in Unity magazine)***

**December 31st, 2021: A couple in Belgium have given their 11 children names using different variations of the same four letters: a, e. l, and x. Gwenny Blanckaert and Marino Vaneeno landed on the novel strategy after naming their first child Alex and second one Axel. “We realized that they were the same letters, so we decided to continue like this,” said Gwenny. The next nine became Xela, Lexa, Xael, Xeal, Exla, Leax, Xale, Elax, and Alxe. No name has been selected for their 12th child, due in April, but they have 13 remaining combinations to choose from. *(The Week magazine, November 5, 2021)***

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