

Chinese firm could bring jobs back to U.S.

Aims to boost domestic manufacturing as tariffs pose challenges

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

LOUISVILLE — For several decades, the sight of an empty factory in the American heartland usually meant one thing: More manufacturing jobs had departed to a foreign locale.

But here at GE Appliances' sprawling industrial headquarters, a vacant plant is a sign that jobs are coming home. This 1950s-era facility, one of five that turns out home appliances under familiar GE brands such as Hotpoint and Profile, is preparing to reclaim a manufacturing line that currently hums in China.

If all goes well, about 800 American workers will begin producing a combination clothes washer and dryer here next spring. The work, which also includes a line of front-load washers, will mark a milestone in GE Appliances' \$6.5 billion, 13-year bid to boost domestic manufacturing.

This reshoring success story has drawn plaudits from the White House, even though a Chinese corporation now owns GE Appliances and its American boss complains about President Donald Trump's tariffs.

As the United States races to produce more of what it consumes, GE's experience shows that bringing work home offers real advantages over ocean-spanning supply chains. But reviving SEE ON SHORE ON A13

'Landmark' trial offers hope against lethal disease

After decades of work, drug is big step in fight against pancreatic cancer

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON

A pancreatic cancer drug more than four decades in the making has cracked one of the most stubbornly lethal cancers, extending people's lives and keeping their tumors in check for twice as long as those on regular chemotherapy.

The detailed results of the clinical trial, presented Sunday at a plenary session of the American Society of Clinical Oncology's meeting in Chicago and simultaneously published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, are some of the most hotly anticipated medical results in cancer in years. Oncologists who have traditionally had few options and little hope to offer patients are calling the results "unprecedented," "compelling" and "spectacular."

"It really blows it out of the water. It's a really remarkable and landmark study," said Harjot Singh, the program director of hepatobiliary and pancreas oncology at Mass General Brigham Cancer Institute. "This is possibly the biggest advance we have seen in pancreatic cancer, period."

Scientists at Revolution Medicines, the biotech company that SEE CANCER ON A2



A suburban staple becomes a rarity

The desire for privacy is slowly killing this symbol of the American Dream

BY DANIELLE PAQUETTE

SOUTHINGTON, CONN. — Chipped paint and mildew bedeviled the first job of the day was still a rare treat. Check out those New England-style post caps, the fence salesman thought, that classic mortise-and-tenon construction. Yes, he'd be thrilled to restore an icon of suburbia: the white picket fence.

"I live for this," Mike Dominique gushed.

He crouched to run his measuring wheel along the weathered planks. Four feet tall, he jotted on his clipboard, with 2½-inch spacing. Look how it framed, not blocked, his client's pale-blue 18th-century colonial house. Back at his shop, he had just enough cedar to forge a faithful replica.

"Would you like it stained white?" he asked.

The owner of Southington Rustic Fence Company, 48, craved jobs that required craftsmanship, but he rarely booked them anymore. SEE FENCES ON A7



TOP: A white picket fence in Cheshire, Connecticut. ABOVE: Mike Dominique and his father, Clarence, in the workshop at Southington Rustic Fence Company. Mike craves jobs that require craftsmanship and is thrilled when customers want to restore a white picket fence.

Stiff tax pitched for payouts

DEMOCRATS RALLY BEHIND TACTIC

Try to stymie \$1.8 billion 'anti-weaponization' fund

BY HANNAH KNOWLES AND DAN MERICA

Democratic state leaders around the country have an unusual strategy to stymie President Donald Trump's \$1.8 billion settlement fund for people who claim they were wrongly investigated by the government.

Their plan: Tax the payouts at 100 percent.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) has endorsed the idea, saying, "It's an action we look forward to taking." State legislators in New York and Wisconsin are crafting bills on the topic. And Democratic candidates are rallying behind the tactic in blue states.

"The slush fund is a blatantly corrupt theft of taxpayer dollars, and we need to do everything we can to stop it," Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colorado) said in an interview with *The Washington Post*. Bennet is the leading Democratic candidate for governor in Colorado.

"I actually think this won't wear well with Republicans or Democrats in America," Bennet said of the politics of Trump's fund.

The issue is particularly relevant in Colorado, where Gov. Jared Polis (D) recently granted clemency to Tina Peters, a former county clerk who helped secretly copy voting machine hard drives in an effort to bolster Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen. Last month, Vice President JD Vance said it was "reasonable" that Peters "get some compensation" from the state.

The Trump administration drew backlash from Democrats as well as some Republicans when it announced last month that it was establishing a fund to pay people who claim they were wrongly investigated or prosecuted, echoing the president's claims SEE FUNDING ON A2



Demonstrations continue in New Jersey

Clashes between police and protesters outside the Delaney Hall immigration detention center led Newark Mayor Ras Baraka to impose a nightly curfew around the facility early Sunday. Protests began last month after detainees went on a hunger strike over poor living conditions.

Turbulent times at '60 Minutes'

As Nick Bilton takes charge, the question is whether the news program needs fixing at all

BY SCOTT NOVER AND LIAM SCOTT

Nick Bilton has spent his career writing about tech start-ups and Silicon Valley titans hell-bent on smashing totems and disrupting industries. Now, he's ready for the chance to play disrupter to one of journalism's most storied institutions: "60 Minutes."

On Thursday, he told CBS News staff that's why he was named executive producer of the Sunday evening news show.

"I am here because the world outside this building has changed a lot since this show was conceived — and we have to talk honestly about what that means," Bilton wrote in an email introducing himself. "I'm here to lead this show, not preserve it under glass."

Barl Weiss and Tom Cibrowski, the two top leaders at CBS News,

announced Bilton's appointment Thursday just as staff were learning that two of eight "60 Minutes" correspondents and most of the show's production leaders had been fired.

"The mission of the program remains as vital as ever: pursuing the truth, holding power to account and remaining fearless in the face of any external pressure or influence," Bilton said in a statement.

Bilton, 49, will be only the fifth executive producer in the program's nearly 60-year history, stepping into one of the most insular, demanding and fiercely proud institutions in American journalism at one of its most turbulent moments.

His fired correspondents are accusing Weiss of editorial meddling, censorship and appealing SEE 60 MINUTES ON A16

IN THE NEWS

Battle points A rewards program for Ukrainian drone pilots who submit video proof of successful attacks is evidence of the increasing gamification of war. **A9**

Enduring mystery A husband and wife exchanged hundreds of letters during World War II, but little is known about the two. **C7**

THE NATION **Xavier Becerra** is the favorite in the race to become California's next governor, according to polls, but his candidacy has divided his former colleagues in the Biden administration. **A3**

THE WORLD **Dozens were killed** in Myanmar in a blast at a building storing explosives for mining. **A10**

THE ECONOMY **Tech firm Dell** signed a \$9.7 billion contract with the federal government after President Donald Trump bought company stock. **A11**

STYLE **Hollywood studios** are finding the next generation of horror filmmakers on YouTube. **B1**

THE REGION **The victims** in a deadly crash on Interstate 95 included a family of four from Massachusetts. **C7**

BUSINESS NEWS **A11**
COMICS **B4**
ENTERTAINMENT **C12**
OPINION **A16**
TELEVISION **B6**
WORLD NEWS **A9**

COMMENT © 2026
The Washington Post
Year 146, No. 54599



FENCES FROM A1

Even in the ample historic districts of central Connecticut, more buyers sought hulking vinyl barriers. His father used to order so much Canadian lumber, Mike climbed the stacks as a kid to reach the warehouse rafters. Now their small business was stuffed with polyvinyl chloride, which starved his inner artist but paid the bills. Mike's sales ledger in recent years reflected what one of his favorite industry podcasts was reporting: Customers nationwide increasingly preferred privacy and security styles to more open designs, including the waist-high emblem of the American Dream.

This spring, for the first time ever, no one had hired him to install a white picket fence.

"Yes, stain it white," replied the owner, Edward Cink. "We made the mistake of painting it, and the paint doesn't last."

They stood together in the dewy grass, scooping the decay. Some sections were rotting. The gates sagged. A retired firefighter, Cink blamed his bad back and knees. "It gets to be a pain to do stuff," he said.

Two backyards over, a six-foot white vinyl privacy fence reflected the 9 a.m. sunlight. Wood wouldn't produce such a glare, but synthetic material like that was easier to manage. No resealing necessary, with a lifespan of 30-plus years. Not to mention cheaper. Mike didn't get a chance to present that head-over-heart option before his client began explaining.

"This just says, 'I'm home,'" Cink said.

Mike liked watching the property come into view through the inch gaps: the holly bushes, the red barn, the swimming pool. This was the life he'd labored to build for his family. Now his son was 24 and daughter was 22. Time to downsize. He wanted to list the house in two days, and he could dangle a brand-new fence as a pending upgrade.

"If you could get me a quote..." Cink said.

Mike sensed the urgency. Besides, he thought, what he advertised as "perhaps the most traditional of American fences" was at risk of extinction.

"As soon as possible," he replied.

Mike's office was cluttered with evidence of how much had changed. There was the wooden pulley from a 1950s drill press, the vintage carpentry books he'd tracked down on Amazon, the yellowed pamphlet extolling the "charming Picket Fence," a Cape Cod style which achieved "matchless beauty and protection."

"I can't let anything go," Mike said with a chuckle.

That brochure predated his family's ownership of the business. His father had moved from Canada's eastern seaboard as a penniless 18-year-old to find work in a small town he saw as a land of blue-collar opportunity. Clarence Dominique wound up handling repairs for the fence company's founder before leaving-to-buy it in 1979.

Back then, Clarence smoked Marlboro Lights while sawing posts. "Everything, we made by hand," the 78-year-old recalled. Most customers wanted stockade fences. A healthy 40 percent, though, opted for pickets. The design was popular among dwellers of Victorian and salt box and Cape Cod-style homes who weren't concerned about privacy or safety and enjoyed chatting with their neighbors.

When Mike took over in 2001, he invested in automated production technology, like the \$80,000 machine that helps him crank out 10 fences each week. At the moment, the robot was routing square-shaped holes into what would become a vinyl gate. There was no more lumber to climb — just a few dozen panels sitting in a trailer — and PVC everywhere.

To nourish his spirit, Mike geeked out on woodworking podcasts and vlogs and projects he described as "majestic." Each winter, Mike and his wife aimed to craft one cedar gate from "Fences: Authentic Details for Design and Restoration," a book by Peter J. Harrison, his aesthetic hero. One gate sawed in his shop, he hosted it on Facebook Marketplace, and a man in the Hamptons sent a truck three days later.

"What a rush," Mike said. Still, he understood why most of his clients prioritized practicality. Many lacked the time or skill to care for a white picket fence. Tariffs weren't helping. His cedar supplier had hiked prices by a third over the last year, compelling Mike to lift his.

By this time last year, he'd sold 20 of those old-school designs — a steep drop in "majestic" from his father's days, yet enough to keep things interesting. The idea of zero disturbed him. Appetites for higher gap-free borders surged during the pandemic, netting Mike a couple of record seasons, but he'd assumed openness



The home of Mark Kane in Cheshire, Connecticut. Kane has a white picket fence that he wants to replace with a vinyl privacy fence.

Once iconic, picket fences become a thing of the past



A historic house in Cheshire, Connecticut, with the fence and roses maintained in the historical style.

would rebound once the world felt safer. Six springs later, making it in America looked less like being seen and more like being inaccessible.

"Boxed in," he said.

His Google calendar that May morning showed two more consultations. Mike knew what was coming. He'd seen only one type of fence in the next client neighborhood.

Across the street from what she called her dream home, a white vinyl privacy fence gleamed under the cloudless sky. Ana Confrancesco couldn't see an inch of her neighbor's backyard.

"Great," she said.

The respiratory therapist, 36, moved two years ago to this neighborhood of new builds and relished choosing the finishing touches for her four-bedroom house. A Miami native who loves the ocean, she picked "seaport blue" for the vinyl siding.

Today's decision: what to do about the yard.

On the real estate hunt, the mother of a 5-year-old girl and a 2-year-old girl had considered historic properties, but she'd only ever spotted a white picket fence on television. They looked "cute, homey, American pie," she thought, but her son could probably climb them, along with practically everybody else. Despite having their own backyard swing set, her kids kept dashing 50 meters to the green lawn next door. Finding a way to contain them, she reasoned, would be the neighborly thing to do.

"Everyone is friendly," she said, "but it's just to keep the peace."

Fear was a fact of motherhood, though, so even in the subdivided calm, the just-in-case corner of her brain desired more of a fortress. What if her children bounded into the street? Any sturdier boundaries seemed contentious. On her block, three other families had recently erected shiny white barriers. Strolling down the road, she could spot four more in the distance.

When Mike pulled up on his silver Ford F-150, she padded outside with a smile.

"I want one just like that," she told the salesman, pointing to her neighbor's vinyl privacy fence.

Maybe there was no turning back. Maybe the white picket fence embodied an America that no longer exists, one where dopamine springs from outdoor interactions instead of indoor scrolling, and trust in community wins over paranoia. Maybe it was best not to pine for what Hollywood moguls and 20th-century ad executives popularized as shorthand for prosperity. Maybe the architects of yesteryear tailored these fences for soldiers returning from World War II, striving for respectability even as the rush to accommodate a rising middle class demanded conformity. Maybe no one had considered marjuianna.

"I smoked the cannabis," Mike's next client told him. "But I feel awkward doing it in front of schoolchildren."

Mark Kane, 66, pointed to the Catholic church and elementary school on the other side of his property line. When the retired book publisher bought his grasshinged cottage four decades ago, towering sugar maples shielded him from young eyes. Then the branches began falling off, and one by one, he had to chop down the trees.

"We are leaving the whole Cape Cod look," he said, gesturing toward his white picket fence.

It was faster to replace it with a seven-foot, prefinished Trex, a blend of recycled wood and vinyl that Kane wouldn't have to continually scrape and repaint. He already had a color in mind. Winchester gray.

"Very simple," Mike assured him, sketching the dimensions on his clipboard. "Really nothing much to it."

In two afternoons, they could seal Kane off from the drop-off and pickup bustle, and he could enjoy what he joked would be his "cannabis corner." He'd miss the spectacle of Halloween, though, when the second- and third-graders all showed up in their costumes.

"I'll still see them, I suppose," Kane smiled. "From a distance."

Mike laughed, tickled by a socially responsible argument for a big wall. Casting Trex as a protector of innocence certainly made the job more amusing. But the white picket fence that Kane wanted to tear down would all be more charming.

Three days later, he got the email from Mike.

"I'd like to accept your quote," the retired firefighter had written, "including staining it white." Yes! Mike thought. So there was hope, as long as the next homeowner didn't intervene to switch up the style or hire another contractor. Cink's open house, it turned out, was a week away.

"Okay, sounds good!" Mike typed back, and zero orders tentatively ticked to one.