



STIFEL *Bits*

February 25, 2026

The Appetizer

“I saw no evidence during my presidency that extraterrestrials have made contact with us. Really!”

– Former U.S. President Barack Obama clarifying his previous comments on a podcast where he initially said that aliens are real, but that he has not seen them.

Now, on to the numbers. Drum roll, please ...

- **3:** The total number of **career gold medals** won by Mikaela Shiffrin after her latest gold in the slalom, tying her for second-most golds by a U.S. Winter Olympian.
- **\$165 billion:** The estimated cost of what **Americans pay in time, fees, and irritation** to navigate their daily lives, according to a recent study.
- **\$3.6 million:** The value of **gold bars** given by an anonymous donor to the Osaka, Japan, city government to help improve the city’s aging water pipes.
- **15,000:** The number of **fake mustaches and glasses** the Mets plan on giving out for Bobby Valentine Disguise Night on May 29. Valentine famously used the disguise to return to the dugout in a game he was ejected from.
- **51%:** The increase in complaints in Honolulu about **feral chickens** in 2025, according to a city agency spokesperson.
- **7 million +:** The number of Meta **AI glasses** Ray-Ban maker EssilorLuxottica sold in 2025, up from 2 million in 2023 and 2024 combined.

Dig In

Olympic Moments

For more than two weeks, thousands of athletes from around the world came together to do extraordinary things on snow and ice. I don't know about you, but my eyes were glued to the TV, jaw dropped, watching a level of talent that never gets old. The 2026 Winter Olympics also made history as the first Games **co-hosted** by two cities, stretching across Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo and turning much of northern Italy into an Olympic stage.

As always, the medal count told part of the story. Team USA brought 235 athletes, and while the **final medal count** had Norway at the top, the U.S. finished strong with 12 golds and 33 medals total. But medals only tell some of the story.

One of those moments came from our very own Stifel-sponsored athlete, **Mikaela Shiffrin**, who captured Olympic gold in dominant fashion. Watching her attack the course with precision and confidence was a reminder of why she's one of the most respected athletes in the world, and why she continues to set the standard on the sport's biggest stage.

Across another podium, U.S. snowboard icon **Chloe Kim**, recovering from a shoulder injury, took silver in the halfpipe. Instead of disappointment, there was celebration. She embraced the new gold medalist, her own former mentee, an inspiring display of sportsmanship and mentorship. And don't even get us started on the incredible hockey gold medal games between the U.S. and Canada on both the **women's** and **men's** sides.

From **comebacks** standing on the podium to **veterans adding to their legacy**, these games delivered on every level. The Winter Olympics remind us that greatness doesn't follow a script, and that's what makes them so fun to watch.

Weekly Specials

Boneless wings are just chicken nuggets ... or saucy tenders ... or boneless lies! WRONG – they are wings! The court demands it! After a Chicago man sued Buffalo Wild Wings for false advertising in 2023, a judge finally tossed the case, saying the claim “has no meat on its bones.” Honestly? 10/10 legal humor, your honor.

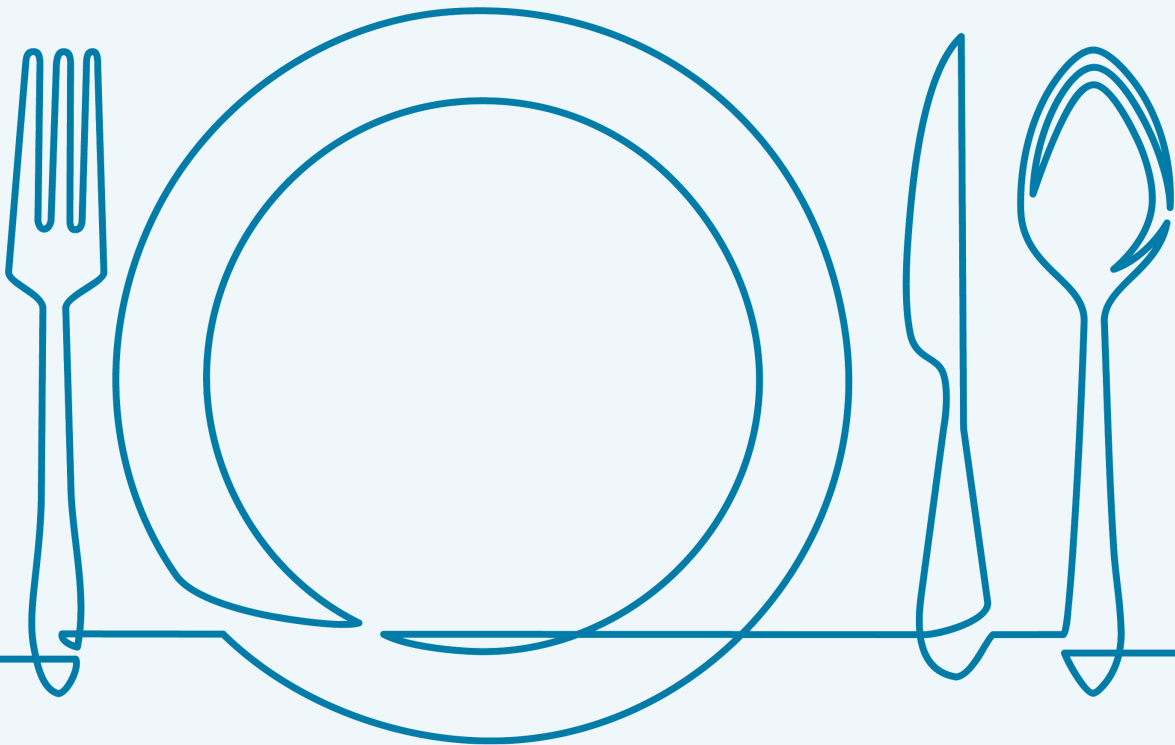
L'intrigue au Louvre continue. French police shut down a large-scale ticket scam at the **Louvre after the museum reported suspicious activity**. Officials say ticket fraud has been rising, prompting a new anti-scam crackdown. One scheme involved guides using the same tickets for multiple visitors. The real masterpiece? Scammers with that level of confidence. Mona Lisa is definitely judging.

MIT loves reminding us they know everything, so they dropped their **2026 Breakthrough Tech list**. Sure, hyperscale artificial intelligence data centers and generative coding? Old news. But embryo scoring and base-edited therapies?! Relax. Let's not start designing babies with customizable eye colors. We're not building Build-A-Baby.

Turns out **old airplane engines aren't retiring** – they're getting second careers powering data centers. FTAI Aviation, a jet engine leasing and repair company, is able to convert jet engines into natural gas turbines in about a month, helping meet massive electricity demand while traditional suppliers face years-long wait lists. Seems like everyone is getting in on the AI datacenter fun these days!

Corporate Lunch

- **UPS, FedEx, and DHL** are racing into **warehouse automation**, so if your package shows up late and maybe a little crushed, just know the robots are still in training.
- **Spirit Airlines** is **navigating its bankruptcy reset** by selling 20 jets ... which, honestly, checks out. I once flew Newark to Orlando on Spirit for \$35 – turns out charging less than an Uber might not be a sustainable business model.
- **Tide** is rolling out **waterless detergent squares** nationwide – flatter, drier, and much less “candy-coded” than Tide Pods (a quiet win for every parent who’s ever panicked).
- **Apple** added **video podcasts** – looks like we are so addicted to our screens even an audio platform now needs visuals.
- **JPMorgan** opened **a pub** in their new NYC headquarters, but with only 55 seats for a building of 10,000, good luck grabbing a table for lunch cocktail ... I mean mocktails!
- **Tesla** is adding the **Grok AI chatbot** to cars in the UK and Europe, even as regulatory probes on the chatbot loom.
- **McDonald’s sales soared** at the end of 2025 as cash-strapped customers flocked to value meals and holiday promotions. We think either a McRib or Szechuan Sauce limited release in Q1 could definitely keep up that momentum ... just saying.
- **Paramount’s** hostile **bid for Warner Bros. Discovery is heating up** – Netflix just gave WBD a seven-day “it’s fine, you two can talk” pass, and Paramount keeps showing up like the messy ex in your DMs: “Just hear me out ... ”



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