

Make Me Smart August 6, 2021 transcript

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Meghan McCarty Carino: Okay! I'm having some fun, technical difficulties on Friday here.

Kimberly Adams: Well, this is why we have drinks.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I'm glad.

Kimberly Adams: The drinks are what make it all worthwhile. Hey everybody, I'm Kimberly Adams, welcome back to Make Me Smart where we try to make today make sense when our tech works with us, right, Megan?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Um, yes. And actually, somehow I had the completely wrong script open as well.

Kimberly Adams: That works too because it's Friday. Yay. And it's also economics on tap, the Friday happy hour, the live stream is up and running. The chat is poppin' off on YouTube. And I'm sure as soon as this pop up goes away on discord as well. And so thank you everybody for joining us. And we have the wonderful Meghan McCarty Carino who is filling in for Kai and/or Molly, depending on who you think is swapping for whom.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Yeah, I know, who is who? I think, I think we should sort that out maybe. Who's mom and who's dad?

Kimberly Adams: Who do you want to be, Kai or Molly?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Gosh, I feel like this is a very political decision.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, pass. Hard pass. What are you drinking?

Meghan McCarty Carino: So I, I am drinking some sweet vermouth on the rocks, which is maybe a unique choice. I usually use this sweet vermouth to make Negronis, which are my beverage of choice. But I was both not having enough time to make a Negroni and also a little bit scared of the high alcohol content of a Negroni given the task at hand. So that's, that's what I've gone with. Yeah. What about you?

Kimberly Adams: So I have a mocktail today because, God bless him, I'm on the final day of a two week visit by my beloved nephew and I decided it would be best to be sober for this. And so

I have a mocktail. And I got a recommendation and, oh my gosh, I've just closed my Twitter, but it is from somebody in Sedona, Arizona, whose name I'm going to find before this is over, who suggested a fauxmosa, like faux Mimosa, so it's just orange juice and club soda. But she suggested that I add like something to spice it up. So of course I put in some orange and fig bitters and some cherries that I had, so it's orange juice, club soda, orange fig bitters, and cherries, and it's delicious.

Meghan McCarty Carino: That sounds--I need to get some of these orange fig bitters. What do you usually use that for?

Kimberly Adams: Everything. Everything. Everything is better with orange fig bitters. Alright, so.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Especially the news.

Kimberly Adams: The news, the news, especially if it's gonna be like you yesterday, which for the love of God, please, not.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Okay, I know. I said, I said after that, just call me extinction event Meghan.

Kimberly Adams: We all have to have our nicknames. So, but we are going to do some news, then we're going to play the wonderful game half full, half empty. So Meghan, do you want to start this time and maybe like not take us into the abyss? But, you know, as one does.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I mean, the abyss is open and it's just like waiting for me to go in. So I go there, but no, today, I think, I think I'm like a little bit more chill today. So I have done a lot of reporting as Marketplace's workplace reporter about sort of the ways the pandemic has changed where people are living because they can now work from anywhere. And so we've seen, you know, these kinds of migrations out of the biggest, most expensive, densest cities, people buying houses sort of out in the country, in the exurbs, towards the fringes of, you know, kind of big cities. And today in the San Francisco Chronicle, there was an article about how specifically like in California, but I would imagine this applies to many places, but a lot of people moved out of the San Francisco Bay Area and moved to kind of like the Sierras, the Sierra foothills, kind of these rural areas, which are now facing all of these fire dangers. There's, you know, the, the big fire that's happening in Placer County right now in California. It's, I think it's like the ninth biggest fire in California state history at this point, or the sixth biggest. It's a really weird--okay.

Kimberly Adams: It just gets worse and worse and worse.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Yeah, I think, I think perhaps I haven't been keeping up with its ascension through the rankings well enough, but yeah, so but you know, I mean, we're in the middle of one of the worst droughts in recorded history throughout the West and these areas

where many people moved from expensive coastal cities are experiencing this, you know, this summer have experienced record heat waves, of course, not only limited to the inland areas, but climate change issues are affecting many of the areas that have seen a lot of growth with remote work and people moving out of cities. And this is just, you know, it's, I think it's just starting to be grappled with as, as you know, fire season is upon us. And we've had these crazy high temperatures. But some of the counties in California that have seen the biggest growth from people moving from the most expensive places where no one can afford to live and have space to have a home office are the very places that are seeing some of the worst effects of climate change right now.

Kimberly Adams: Right, because this is really running up against, you know, our wonderful colleague, Amy Scott, housing, and affordability, and where the jobs are, because it's all well and good to say don't move to these areas. But if you can't afford to live where the jobs are, and housing is in short supply, and it's expensive to build, like, what, what are the options, especially as we are in this climate crisis? But, but tell me in all of these articles that you have many, many of them, that there are some solutions, perhaps, strategies to mitigate?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Sorry.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, anyway!

Meghan McCarty Carino: No, I mean, so certainly there are, you know, efforts to build more sustainably in the face of fire and stuff like this, but I really think this is kind of, it's a second order issue that, you know, we're now starting to think about, you know, what does it mean for more population growth to be happening in areas where maybe it's not the most sustainable and people are moving out of cities, which are fairly energy efficient, you know, more transit friendly, and moving to places where you rely on cars more often to take more of your trips. Maybe you, you live in a bigger house, that's one of the reasons people have moved out, you know, out of the, the more dense cities is to have more space for working from home and just, you know, have more space for your family and stuff like that. And that uses more energy.

Kimberly Adams: I have to tell you about some of the things that are happening in the chat right now in reference to your sign behind you that says "the end." For those listening on the podcast, she has a sign on the door exiting the room that says "the end." So I guess that that is appropriate. But also people want to know why you're wearing earbuds under your headphones and what you're really listening to. Come on, y'all, there's a lot of tech happening here and I forgot to give props to Jen in Sedona, is who gave me the drink suggestion. So I hate to take us back into it--do we have the dark place sting anymore? Because I'm about to go back there.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Okay, but I do, I think that there, there could potentially be some solutions in terms of, I don't know, just maybe investment in like, infrastructure? Is it infrastructure week yet?

Kimberly Adams: It's been a real-life infrastructure week with a real-life infrastructure bill. So yes, there is a ton of green energy and climate adaptation stuff built into that from an electric vehicle infrastructure, which we covered this week and building that out. Lots of broadband development, which could help with remote work and sort of distributing these things. So yeah, there's, as Michael from Houston points out, \$65 billion for broadband. So all of those good things. I do want to bring up another climate change story for, for my news bit, which is about the story that was in The Guardian first, I believe, but it showed up a lot of other places, which is basically that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation might collapse, which is basically the idea that the Gulf Stream might be at risk. And you may have heard of the Gulf Stream, when you're like, listening to the weather report and they're like, oh, the Gulf Stream is doing this and the Gulf Stream is, you know, something that kind of plays into the weather a lot. Yeah. And it seems to be, according to a new study published Thursday in nature climate change, that there's some early warning signals that it's not doing so hot. May be at risk of changing or perhaps collapsing, which, let's not necessarily panic, but, you know, climate crisis is real, let's just watch and maybe change some behaviors and encourage our global leaders to, you know, do better at everything. So, to prevent us--oh, go ahead.

Meghan McCarty Carino: What are you watching in, in the infrastructure talks the most?

Kimberly Adams: Whether it gets done. Really, you know, there's 2700 pages of this thing. There's all sorts of influences at play and lobbying money flowing into this and political, like, negotiations about how they're going to represent this back in their districts. And so unfortunately, the content of the bill is almost less, is getting less attention than the politics around it, which is kind of unfortunate, but that is how we legislate in this country. So to prevent ourselves from going completely and totally into climate apocalypse mode, or what did you call yourself earlier?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Prophylactic hysteria?

Kimberly Adams: Oh, that too. I actually meant the other thing. What was it, like doomsday Meghan or something like that?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Extinction event Meghan!

Kimberly Adams: Extinction event Meghan, there we go. Let's talk about something beautiful outside. I know, we don't actually have a make me smile section of this, but nevertheless I'm gonna squeeze it in because it's been sad. This weekend, the Perseid meteor shower is going to start, and there's a new moon on the 8th, and so you should really be able to see the meteor shower. The absolute best day is supposed to be August 12th, but with the new moon on the 8th, you should be able to see some of those meteors, and I for one, because my uncle's birthday is on the 7th and so I may be out in the boonies anyway, so I'm going to try to see if I can see some of those and yay, stars.

Meghan McCarty Carino: That sounds lovely. Yes. The stars are shining for you.

Kimberly Adams: Aww! Thanks, Meghan. Let's play a game. Okay, this is half full, half empty, where we give you our predictions on various topics. Drew is out today, but the wonderful Lianna Squillace is here. Take it away, Lianna.

Lianna Squillace: Are you half full or half empty on the CDC's new 60-day eviction ban?

Kimberly Adams: Hmm. Half empty that it's going to actually survive the courts. Because, so after a ton of pressure from members of Congress and from the public that the CDC needed to extend this, at first the Biden administration tried to say no, Congress needs to do something. And Congress was like, well, we already appropriated all this money to help people and landlords, renters and landlords, deal with the backlog but the states aren't doing it. And so then the Biden administration was like, states, please give away this money. And then the eviction moratorium ran out, and it was still going to actually affect people. So the Biden administration was like, okay, fine, we're gonna extend this eviction moratorium. But the Supreme Court has already kind of said that the CDC probably overstepped its authority a bit with this. So of course, it's being challenged. But what the Biden administration and Democrats seem to be hoping is that the time it takes to litigate this newest moratorium, which is slightly different from the last one, is going to be enough time to get more of that money through the pipelines and hopefully keep people in their homes, and so, half empty on it standing up, but maybe half full on some of those funds actually getting to people.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna say half full on just the, you know, having a little bit more time to sort things out, it's triage, it's triage. And hopefully it's better than nothing for the folks that are in dire straits. So I'm gonna, I'm gonna say triage is better than no triage. Half full.

Kimberly Adams: Okay. Great. Next topic.

Lianna Squillace: Are you half full or half empty on privacy nutrition labels?

Meghan McCarty Carino: I'm gonna say half empty. Given the relationship of sort of me to regular nutrition labels, I don't, I don't necessarily think they do that much. No, but so you know, Apple added these nutrition labels. We covered it on tech this week. You know, back, back along when the new iOS came out, which prompts you to, whether you want to be tracked by apps or not. Google is doing something similar with the nutrition labels, but not adding the ask. So you won't be asked. So you kind of have to go look, seek out the information for yourself and decide. A lot of that information is probably already out there for the curious person. So I don't know the degree to which just having the information available to consumers is really the same as giving consumers a real choice in whether they want to be tracked or not. So I'm gonna go half empty.

Kimberly Adams: I'm gonna go half full only because it seems Facebook is freaking out about it, which seems to indicate that it's actually gonna do something. And yes, the curious consumer

could look at a privacy policy and know what's up, assuming they're not lying, the privacy policy, which happens all the time, but I mean, who looks at those, and I think getting a prompt in your face as you're downloading something is a little bit different. And even being able to, when you go to the App Store and see what's in there, like, this is what they're doing, it may be a little bit different, or at least potentially prompt some best practices if they get rewarded in the app store. That--what did I say? Did I say half full? I don't know. And I don't even have any booze in this. Next!

Lianna Squillace: Okay, are you half full or half empty on whether or not half of the cars sold by 2030 are going to be electric?

Meghan McCarty Carino: I'm to say, I'm half full. Oh, we're both half full! I'm half full because the auto industry is on board with it and having something, having a policy that basically, you know, takes it like so it's not completely in their hands, having, having it be a matter of policy, which hopefully also will make it a matter of some kind of, you know, incentives and that kind of stuff in order to meet that mandate. I think we'll, you know, automakers like that and automakers are on board with wanting to sell more electric vehicles as they transition their business models in major ways to pumping out more EVs, so because of the kind of marriage of industry and government here. gonna go half full. I mean, I don't necessarily think it's enough and maybe it's not fast enough, but I'm gonna go half full on it actually happening.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, that's, yeah, Sarah Schlosser and a bunch of other people in the YouTube chat are saying like, you know, half empty because it's not a big enough goal. And someone else in discord who it flew by already was saying that what will our electric grid look like? And is our electric grid going to get enough infrastructure to support that? And not to mention all the used cars on the market. And so if we're talking about 2030 and what does an average car last if you really keep it up, like what, 10, 15 years? So that means, you know, all of those cars that are new and not EV at the moment would have to just stop existing. But I guess the new goal is for new cars, so anyhow, it's-- Kristin Schroeder, public mass transit, all caps, got it. That's what we really need. Half full on public-- full full on public mass transit. Alright, what else we got?

Lianna Squillace: Are you half full or half empty on ever given tourism?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Wait, what is ever given--I don't know what this is.

Kimberly Adams: I'm guessing it has to do with the boat in the, that was stuck in the Suez Canal.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Oh! Oh!

Lianna Squillace: Yes. Yes, it's the boat. They're talking about the boat. Apparently you can get on a smaller boat, and then be ferried past the much larger boat.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Hmm, this feels a little bit like Titanic tourism or something. It's like, you wanna be on a--well, yeah. You know, like, let's tour something that didn't work right.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, okay. Oh, Meghan.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I mean, I just don't know what that tour would be like, you know, it's like, I just don't.

Kimberly Adams: You get to look at a big boat, and it's, it's an Instagram tour effectively. It's like, selfie!

Meghan McCarty Carino: Lianna, where will these tours take place? It's not still stuck, so.

Lianna Squillace: I believe Rotterdam.

Kimberly Adams: It's at the port of Rotterdam, I think. Yeah.

Meghan McCarty Carino: So it's just a tour of a boat that gets stuck in a port.

Kimberly Adams: I'm not even sure you can get on the boat.

Lianna Squillace: I don't think you can--I think you literally just can see it from another boat.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I can see it online! What?

Lianna Squillace: Yeah. You sound pretty half empty to me.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I'm gonna say half empty on this.

Kimberly Adams: I also have to shout out Elise in Dallas, who, you know, if, this is a little bit geographically odd, but there are pyramids relatively close by that have been around for thousands of years but okay, let's look at an engineering fail.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Exactly. That's what I'm talking about.

Lianna Squillace: Instead of an engineering marvel.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, what--do we have another one, Lianna?

Lianna Squillace: That's it.

Meghan McCarty Carino: That's it. That's all she wrote.

Kimberly Adams: Oh my God, we survived.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Barely.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, wow. That was, that was an adventure all over the world, like Carmen Sandiago or something like that. Hmm. Okay, so that is it for us today. We will be back next week with Marketplace's Andy Uhler. And in the meantime, send us your comments, your questions, and your answer to the make me smart question, which, you know, is what is something that you thought you knew that you later you found out you were wrong about and again, sorry miss reader for ending the question with a preposition but whatever! You can send us your email or a voice memo at makemesmart@marketplace.org, or you can call us on our number 508-287-6278, otherwise known as 508-UB-SMART.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Make Me Smart is produced by Marissa Cabrera. Today's episode was engineered by Charlton Thorp. Steven Byeon produces our favorite game, half full half empty, and the YouTube live stream.

Kimberly Adams: Yes, and the senior producer is Bridget Bodnar and the executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves. Happy weekend everybody!

Meghan McCarty Carino: The end!