

Reader's Digest

NOVEMBER 2020

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Boosts
Creativity

From **PSYCHOLOGY**
TODAY

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NICEST
PLACES
IN AMERICA

They Are United
in Kindness



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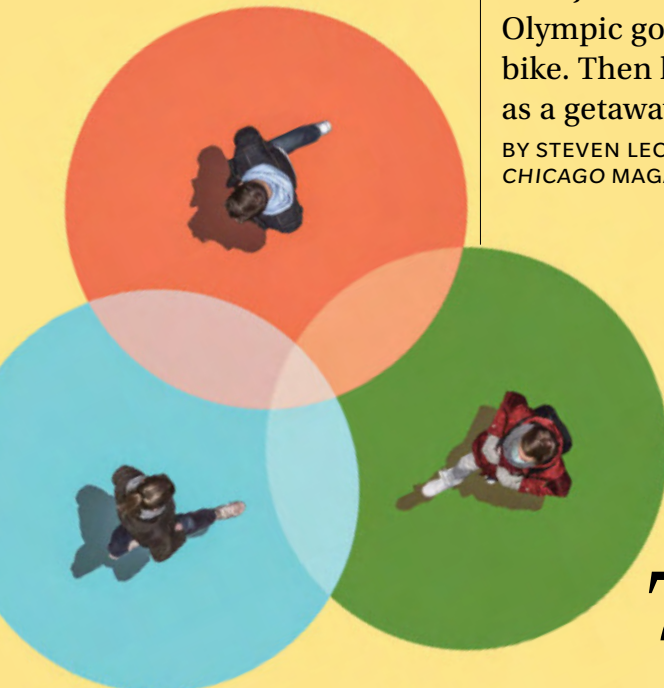
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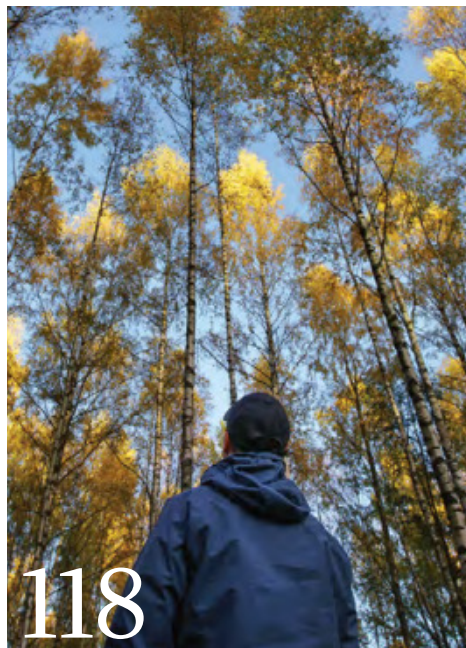
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FROM LEFT: BIG CHEESE PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; ALUXUM/GETTY IMAGES; JARMO PIIRONEN/GETTY IMAGES



CONNECT 2VITAL RESOURCES

Efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as stay-at-home orders and physical distancing, have made another serious health issue, social isolation, worse. With the help of AARP Foundation and United Health Foundation, you can connect to a world of resources to help you stay healthy.

**SEE IF YOU'RE AFFECTED
AND STAY CONNECTED AT
[CONNECT2AFFECT.ORG](https://connect2affect.org)**

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DEAR READER

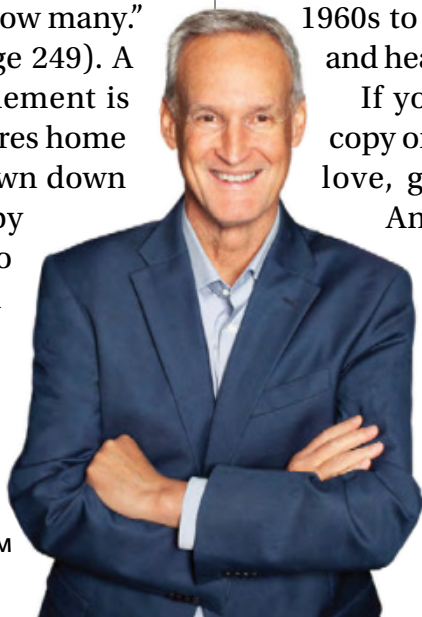
Bundle of Joy

I'VE BEEN ENJOYING a gift lately. It arrived in the mail and quickly became my companion. I'd read a few stories before bed, one after coffee on a Sunday, a few with my lunch. Let me narrate my reactions to random pages:

Gasping a bit (page 20). A downed wire has landed on a school bus in rural Michigan. If the kids inside touch metal, they'll get zapped with 46,000 volts. As fire envelops the bus, the 65-year-old driver has no choice. He must toss each child out the door to a bystander. *Please* let this work.

Almost spitting up coffee (page 134). A cartoon. A man stands before an angel. To the left is glorious heaven. To the right, hell. On the angel's desk is a jar full of jelly beans. "New system," the angel explains. "Guess how many."

Private fist pump (page 249). A man named Ricardo Klement is walking to his Buenos Aires home in 1960 when he is thrown down and tossed into a car by Israeli agents. Is he who they think he is? When they get to their safe house, they strip his shirt off. Yes—the tell-tale scar is there! The



Mossad—including agent Peter Malkin, who tells this story—has captured Nazi mastermind Adolf Eichmann.

Tearing up (page 73). A woman holds the phone, ashamed of losing her temper after her mother's fifth frantic call to report an imaginary disaster. Her mom's memory has been ruined by a stroke. Suddenly her five-year-old takes the phone and says, "Hi, Grandma! Do you want me to sing you a song?" Grandma miraculously comes back to reality: "Sweetheart. How are you?"

These stories (as well as unforgettable photos, such as the tiger above) appear in *The Best of Reader's Digest 2020*, the first volume in a new series. When I call it a gift, I mean it. Thank you, *RD* editors and readers from the 1960s to the 2010s, whose minds and hearts live on in these pages.

If you would like your own copy or to gift it to someone you love, go to rd.com/2020best.

And as always, thanks for reading.

Bruce Kelley,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Write to me at
letters@rd.com.

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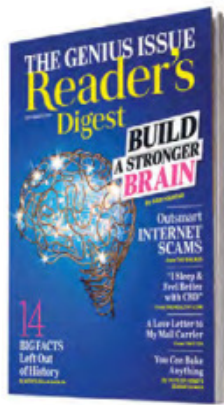
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LETTERS

NOTES ON THE
September ISSUE



How to Build a Better Brain

My wife and I ate a balanced diet. She slept well—I didn't. She liked puzzles—I didn't. We took 40-minute walks every day. At 75, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. At 84, my brain still works well (I think). How did she get Alzheimer's? I've spent many hours wondering but do not have an answer.

—ROBERT LAMBERSON *Canandaigua, New York*

The Smartest Dog in America Is ...

I read the story of Colby, the retired service dog who helped a one-year-old learn to walk. My poodle mix, Smokey, would stand very still as my son grabbed his hair and pulled himself up to walk. My son is 50 now, and Smokey went over the rainbow bridge long ago. Thank you for the warm memories.

—SANDRA PEARSON
Fairmont, West Virginia

Dear Reader

We lived in a foreign country for a while where they didn't value the freedom of speech or the right to protest. It was a lovely place, but they denied their social problems easily because of ignorance or because they felt powerless to fix them. America may be a messy, imperfect place, but that is because we wrestle with our problems instead of letting

the status quo dictate our lives. It gives me hope when I see people using their platform to uphold our right to speak out. That sense of integrity makes me proud to be an American.

—MEREDITH MCCANN
Plymouth, Massachusetts

“Will You Be My Grandparents?”

My wife and I feel the same as Bill and Arlene about our granddaughter, Kira. She and her parents lived with us her first four years and have since moved out, but she stays with us once a week. She is a joy and more precious than I could ever imagine. When she gets older, I hope that she will feel about us as Katie does her grandparents. I saved the article to share with Kira when she gets older.

—J.Y. *via e-mail*

Word Power

I successfully completed the “legal lingo” quiz in under two minutes. It's now “clearly

evident” and safe to “presume” that 30 years of dedication to *Law & Order* educated me properly in courtroom decorum.

—FRENCHY
LETOURNEAU
Las Vegas, Nevada

Everyday Heroes

I was lucky to find someone in Twin Cities who does tattoos to help camouflage medical ailments like Mr. Catalano does. She also creates nipples and areolas for breast cancer survivors. I didn't need to get them after my own breast cancer, but I did lose my eyebrows from chemotherapy and had eyebrow tattoos done. I was so thankful to find her.

—KAREN BRENTESON
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Surprising Facts About the U.S. Army

The list of five-star generals wasn't quite right. Henry H. “Hap” Arnold was commanding general in the Army Air Forces, the equivalent of a five-star rank. Also, George Washington was posthumously promoted to “general of the armies” rank, which is equivalent to a six-star!

—G.M. *via e-mail*

Clarification

In our September Brain Games, we asked readers to select which of three dice did not portray a flat template folded into a cube. Several clever readers noticed that not one but *two* of the given choices could not represent the resulting die.

RIGHTING AND REWRITING HISTORY

◆ Another “Fact Left Out of History”: Eleven years before Claudette Colvin, Irene Morgan was arrested for not moving for White bus riders. Her case went to the Supreme Court, which declared segregation in interstate transportation unconstitutional. I always wondered why she was not widely recognized.

—Jerry Varner
ACHILLES, VIRGINIA

◆ Two weeks before Alcock and Brown, the first transatlantic flight was made by Lt. Commander Albert Cushing Read, flying from Rockaway Naval Air Station in New York to Plymouth, England, in 23 days, making five stops on the way.

—Tim Rivard
SHREWSBURY,
MASSACHUSETTS

Life's Second Acts

Some people resist change. Others eat it for breakfast. Has there been a time in your life (maybe after a breakup, or when a job ended, or during a certain current pandemic) when you had to reinvent yourself? Do you think your story might inspire others? If so, tell us about it and see terms at rd.com/startingover.




 EVERYDAY HEROES

Surfer Dudes to the Rescue!

Two swimmers struggle for their lives until a group of teens arrive on their boards

BY *Andy Simmons*

PAST THE BREAKERS, about 50 feet from shore, two brothers were fighting for their lives. They had been swept out to sea in a rip current, their mouths barely able to stay above the water. Thick fog made it difficult for beachgoers on Northern California's Trinidad State Beach to see the guys, but the screams were unmistakable. And every second counted. The brothers, ages 15 and 20, were wearing shorts and T-shirts, unsuitable for a November day, let alone the 50-degree water. Keven Harder, a supervising ranger, told the *North Coast*

Journal in nearby Eureka that swimming in such a temperature "takes the fight right out of you."

Luckily, four surfers in wet suits were nearby. Narayan Weibel, Spenser Stratton, and Adrian York, all 16, along with Taj Ortiz-Beck, 15, were on their surfboards riding up and down the coast on five-foot waves when they heard the cries. They turned and saw two bobbing heads and four flailing arms.

"We looked at each other and knew these guys were about to drown," Weibel told the *Washington Post*.

Weibel, Stratton, and Ortiz-Beck

COURTESY EVA YORK

When swimmers were at risk of drowning, Spenser Stratton, Taj Ortiz-Beck, and Adrian York (left to right), along with Narayan Weibel, jumped in to help.



paddled toward the distressed swimmers while York headed to shore to alert someone to call 911. He then dived back in to help his friends.

As the surfers drew close, the brothers were struggling. "It was pretty stressful, but there wasn't any time to think about it, and that helped me keep my cool," Ortiz-Beck says.

Ortiz-Beck pulled up alongside the younger brother. Grabbing him under his arms, he hoisted him up onto his board. Stratton and Weibel, meanwhile, were straining to help the older brother. He was large, 250 to 300 pounds, and he was panicked.

"WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND KNEW THESE GUYS WERE ABOUT TO DROWN."

"We told them, 'Calm down—we got you!'" says Weibel. "They thought they were going to die."

York arrived in time to help get the older brother atop the second board. The surfers then paddled several minutes through choppy water to the medical help waiting onshore. The brothers were scared but fine.

"When we get a call like this one, it's usually too late by the time we get there," says Dillon Cleavenger, a first responder. "I can't say enough about what these boys did. They were willing and prepared to risk their lives." **R**

The Chase Is On

BY *Kristen Warfield*

IT WAS DARK outside, just after the dinner hour, when Benny Correa and Amanda Disley and three of their five kids climbed into their black Cadillac Escalade. As they prepared to exit the parking lot of the restaurant where they'd just eaten, a dark blue Honda Civic with heavily tinted windows crossed their path.

"Yo, babe," Correa hollered, "that's that car. That's *that* car!"

Earlier in the day, Disley had mentioned an Amber Alert issued for a missing 11-year-old girl in Brimfield, Massachusetts, less than 30 miles from the family's home in Springfield. The car that passed them was the same make and model as the one that had been used in her abduction.

Correa took a hard right out of the parking lot and tailed the Honda in an effort to view the license plate. The driver immediately sped up and blew through a stop sign. Correa shocked his family by following suit. He wasn't about to lose the Honda. "Being a father, I had to do what I had to do," he told ABC News.

The Honda pulled around the back of a liquor store. "They're trying to



Amanda Disley and Benny Correa’s car suffered serious damage in the chase. A local repair shop offered to do the work for free.

ditch me,” Correa yelled. When the Honda came around to the front, Correa caught up and pulled ahead, trying to cut it off. The Honda hit the brakes and then jumped a curb. The Cadillac’s high beams flashed on the driver—a young man with black hair, pulling a hooded sweatshirt up over his face. They could see him forcing a girl’s head down in the back, as if trying to hide her.

Disley, who by then had called 911, was frantically relaying their situation to the dispatcher. “It’s him!” she yelled into the phone. “The kidnapper!”

Confused, the dispatcher asked, “The blue Honda?”


“Yes, it’s him!”

Correa stayed close behind the Honda, cutting off cars to do so. They were now barreling down the road at 100 mph. “He’s going through red lights!” Disley yelled to the police.

Correa slammed on the brakes to avoid an oncoming car and then hit the gas to catch up. “Get him, Dad!” his son shouted excitedly from the back.

Keeping on the Honda’s tail, Correa discovered another problem: The low-gas light was blinking on the Cadillac’s dashboard. In fact, it had been blinking for much of the 15-minute chase, and the beat-up Caddy—they’d find out later that the suspension had been damaged during the chase—was running on fumes. The car soon sputtered to a halt. The Honda disappeared onto the Massachusetts Turnpike. But thanks to Disley’s chatter and directions, the cops had plotted the path the kidnapper was taking and set up a roadblock on the turnpike, trapping the car soon after.


The driver was 24-year-old Miguel Rodriguez. He’d pulled a knife on Charlotte Moccia as she walked home from school and forced her into his car. If she screamed, he’d warned, he would kill her. Moccia was found huddled in the back seat, terrified but unharmed, which might not have been the case had it not been for Correa and Disley.


“It felt like we won the lottery,” Disley says. “The feeling of knowing she’s safe and back with her family because of us is just unexplainable.” 

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- 8 pounds on 14 mg of RYBELSUS®
- 3 pounds on a sugar pill

While many people in medical studies lost weight, some did gain weight.



RYBELSUS® does not increase the risk of major cardiovascular (CV) events such as heart attack, stroke, or death^d

^cIn a 6-month study looking at A1C with 703 adults with T2D comparing 7 mg RYBELSUS® and 14 mg RYBELSUS® with a sugar pill when both were added to diet and exercise.

^dIn a cardiovascular safety study, 3183 adults with T2D and a high risk of CV events were treated with either 14 mg RYBELSUS® or a sugar pill in addition to their usual diabetes and CV medications.

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What is Rybelsus®?

Rybelsus® (semaglutide) tablets 7 mg or 14 mg is a prescription medicine for adults with type 2 diabetes that along with diet and exercise may improve blood sugar (glucose).

- Rybelsus® is not recommended as the first choice of medicine for treating diabetes
- It is not known if Rybelsus® can be used in people who have had pancreatitis
- Rybelsus® is not for use in people with type 1 diabetes and people with diabetic ketoacidosis
- It is not known if Rybelsus® is safe and effective for use in children under 18 years of age

Important Safety Information

What is the most important information I should know about Rybelsus®?

Rybelsus® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Possible thyroid tumors, including cancer.** Tell your healthcare provider if you get a lump or swelling in your neck, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, or shortness of breath. These may be symptoms of thyroid cancer. In studies with rodents, Rybelsus® and medicines that work like Rybelsus® caused thyroid tumors, including thyroid cancer. It is not known if Rybelsus® will cause thyroid tumors or a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) in people

Do not use Rybelsus® if:

- you or any of your family have ever had MTC, or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2)
- you are allergic to semaglutide or any of the ingredients in Rybelsus®

Before using Rybelsus®, tell your healthcare provider if you have any other medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had problems with your pancreas or kidneys
- have a history of vision problems related to your diabetes
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Rybelsus® will harm your unborn baby. You should stop using Rybelsus® 2 months before you plan to become pregnant. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to control your blood sugar if you plan to become pregnant or while you are pregnant
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment with Rybelsus®

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Rybelsus® may affect the way some medicines work and some medicines may affect the way Rybelsus® works.

What are the possible side effects of Rybelsus®? Rybelsus® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).** Stop using Rybelsus® and call your healthcare provider right away if you have severe pain in your stomach area (abdomen) that will not go away, with or without vomiting. You may feel the pain from your abdomen to your back
- **changes in vision.** Tell your healthcare provider if you have changes in vision during treatment with Rybelsus®
- **low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).** Your risk for getting low blood sugar may be higher if you use Rybelsus® with another medicine that can cause low blood sugar, such as a sulfonylurea or insulin. **Signs and symptoms of low blood sugar may include:** dizziness or lightheadedness, blurred vision, anxiety, irritability or mood changes, sweating, slurred speech, hunger, confusion or drowsiness, shakiness, weakness, headache, fast heartbeat, and feeling jittery
- **kidney problems (kidney failure).** In people who have kidney problems, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting may cause a loss of fluids (dehydration), which may cause kidney problems to get worse. It is important for you to drink fluids to help reduce your chance of dehydration
- **serious allergic reactions.** Stop using Rybelsus® and get medical help right away, if you have any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction including itching, rash, or difficulty breathing

The most common side effects of Rybelsus® may include nausea, stomach (abdominal) pain, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vomiting, and constipation. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are most common when you first start Rybelsus®.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information on the following pages.

RYBELSUS®
semaglutide tablets 7mg | 14mg

Brief Summary of information about RYBELSUS® (semaglutide) tablets

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Read this Medication Guide before you start using RYBELSUS® and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Possible thyroid tumors, including cancer.** Tell your healthcare provider if you get a lump or swelling in your neck, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, or shortness of breath. These may be symptoms of thyroid cancer. In studies with rodents, RYBELSUS® and medicines that work like RYBELSUS® caused thyroid tumors, including thyroid cancer. It is not known if RYBELSUS® will cause thyroid tumors or a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) in people.
- Do not use RYBELSUS® if you or any of your family have ever had a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC), or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).

What is RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® is a prescription medicine used along with diet and exercise to improve blood sugar (glucose) in adults with type 2 diabetes.

- RYBELSUS® is not recommended as the first choice of medicine for treating diabetes.
- It is not known if RYBELSUS® can be used in people who have had pancreatitis.
- RYBELSUS® is not for use in patients with type 1 diabetes and people with diabetic ketoacidosis.

It is not known if RYBELSUS® is safe and effective for use in children under 18 years of age.

Do not use RYBELSUS® if:

- you or any of your family have ever had a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).
- you are allergic to semaglutide or any of the ingredients in RYBELSUS®.

Before using RYBELSUS®, tell your healthcare provider if you have any other medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had problems with your pancreas or kidneys.
- have a history of vision problems related to your diabetes.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if RYBELSUS® will harm your unborn baby. You should stop using RYBELSUS® 2 months before you plan to become pregnant. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to control your blood sugar if you plan to become pregnant or while you are pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment with RYBELSUS®.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. RYBELSUS® may affect the way some medicines work and some medicines may affect the way RYBELSUS® works.

Before using RYBELSUS®, talk to your healthcare provider about low blood sugar and how to manage it. Tell your healthcare provider if you are taking other medicines to treat diabetes, including insulin or sulfonylureas. Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take RYBELSUS®?

- Take RYBELSUS® exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Take RYBELSUS® by mouth on an empty stomach when you first wake up.
- Take RYBELSUS® with a sip of water (no more than 4 ounces).
- Do not split, crush or chew. Swallow RYBELSUS® whole.
- After 30 minutes, you can eat, drink, or take other oral medications. RYBELSUS® works best if you eat 30 to 60 minutes after taking RYBELSUS®.
- If you miss a dose of RYBELSUS®, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about how to prevent, recognize and manage low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), high blood sugar (hyperglycemia), and problems you have because of your diabetes.

What are the possible side effects of RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about RYBELSUS®?”**
- **inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).** Stop using RYBELSUS® and call your healthcare provider right away if you have severe pain in your stomach area (abdomen) that will not go away, with or without vomiting. You may feel the pain from your abdomen to your back.
- **changes in vision.** Tell your healthcare provider if you have changes in vision during treatment with RYBELSUS®.
- **low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).** Your risk for getting low blood sugar may be higher if you use RYBELSUS® with another medicine that can cause low blood sugar, such as a sulfonylurea or insulin. **Signs and symptoms of low blood sugar may include:**
 - dizziness or light-headedness
 - blurred vision
 - anxiety, irritability, or mood changes
 - sweating
 - slurred speech
 - hunger
 - confusion or drowsiness
 - shakiness
 - weakness
 - headache
 - fast heartbeat
 - feeling jittery
- **kidney problems (kidney failure).** In people who have kidney problems, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting may cause a loss of fluids (dehydration) which may cause kidney problems to get worse. It is important for you to drink fluids to help reduce your chance of dehydration.
- **serious allergic reactions.** Stop using RYBELSUS® and get medical help right away, if you have any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction including itching, rash, or difficulty breathing.

The most common side effects of RYBELSUS® may include nausea, stomach (abdominal) pain, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vomiting and constipation. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are most common when you first start RYBELSUS®.

Talk to your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or does not go away. These are not all the possible side effects of RYBELSUS®.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store RYBELSUS®?

- Store RYBELSUS® at room temperature between 68°F and 77°F (20°C to 25°C).
- Store in a dry place away from moisture.
- Store tablet in the original pack.
- Keep the tablet in the pack until you are ready to take it.
- **Keep RYBELSUS® and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

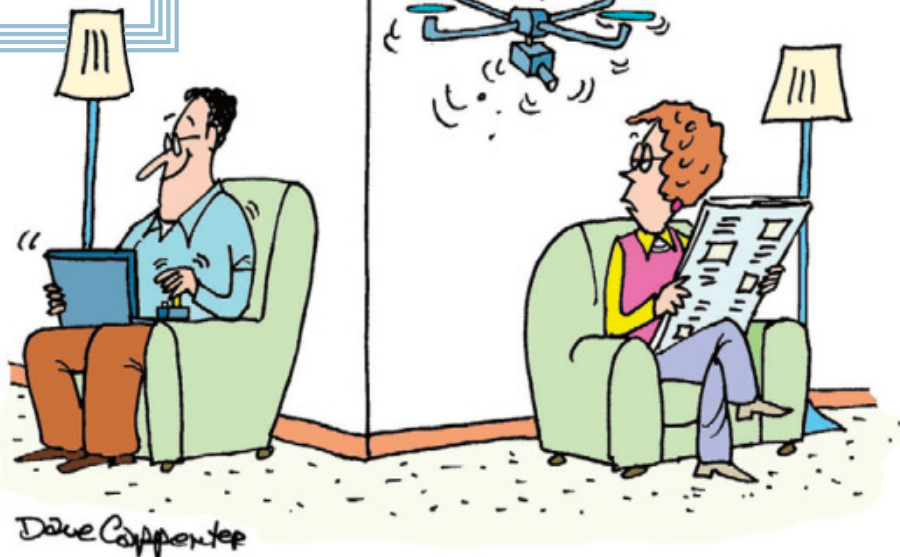
Revised: 01/2020

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LIFE
IN THESE
United States



“Would you please stop reading over my shoulder?”

A gust of wind through an open living room window blew over a tall lamp, causing it to smash the curved glass side of a priceless antique French cabinet. I was distraught. Thank goodness my six-year-old son was there to console me. “Don’t worry, Daddy,” he said. “It was old.”

—JOHN MELMED
Rockville, Maryland

My wife and I decided we’ll need a vacation once the world re-opens. I taped a world map to the refrigerator, gave my wife a magnetic dart, and said, “Wherever it lands is our vacation spot!”

Seems we’ll be spending two weeks behind the fridge.

—JOSEPH HUBISZ
*Bradford,
New Hampshire*

Kids are finicky eaters. On the Facebook page My Kid Can’t Eat This, parents share just how finicky their little food critics are:

♦ “My kid can’t eat onion rings because, although he loves onion rings, recently he learned they contain onions.”

♦ “After my kids watched the movie *Ratatouille* 658,098,764

There's going to be a point in my life when my son looks up at me and thinks, "Gee, my mom knows everything!" Then he'll get to sixth-grade math class, and I'll say, "Well, kid, this is where we part ways."

—@HANNAHEINBINDER

times and asked me to make what they made 787,628 times, I spent hours scouring the Internet for the exact same recipe from the movie and made it. And now they can't eat it because a rat didn't make it."

◆ "Because she asked for cheese and crackers, not crackers and cheese."

◆ "My kid can't eat corn unless I cut it off the cob. He's 27."

My three-year-old great-grandson and I

spent the day reading, watering flowers, and baking cookies. As he sat on a stool in front of the oven waiting for the cookies, he turned to me with a sense of excitement and announced, "This is the greatest day of my life!"
—NANCY WRIGHT
Shelton, Washington

GOT A FUNNY STORY about friends or family? It could be worth \$\$\$\$. For details, go to RD.COM/SUBMIT.

THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED HOLLYWEIRD!

Angelenos might think of themselves as laid-back, the kings and queens of California cool. But according to the Instagram account OverheardLA, many La-La Land residents have very grave concerns.

Scene: Woman buying wine and cookies

Cashier: Do you want your receipt?

Woman: Does this look like a transaction I want to remember?

Over the loudspeaker at LAX:

Would a dog by the name of Ray please report to gate 2. Your owner is waiting for you at gate 2.

Girl to hostess: Please help me sneak out of here; I am on the worst first date.

Hostess: OMG, this is what I live for.

Friend 1: I need to go to therapy, but I can't afford it.

Friend 2: That's OK, just write down all your problems and I'll tell them to MY therapist, pretend they're MY problems, and tell you what advice she gives me.



QUOTABLE QUOTES

It's not what you've accomplished, it's the relationships you have.
You're survived by things that matter—
the people you love and those who love you back.

—Chris Evans, ACTOR

Start unknown, finish unforgettable.

—Misty Copeland, DANCER

Friendship is the habitual inclination to promote
the good in one another.

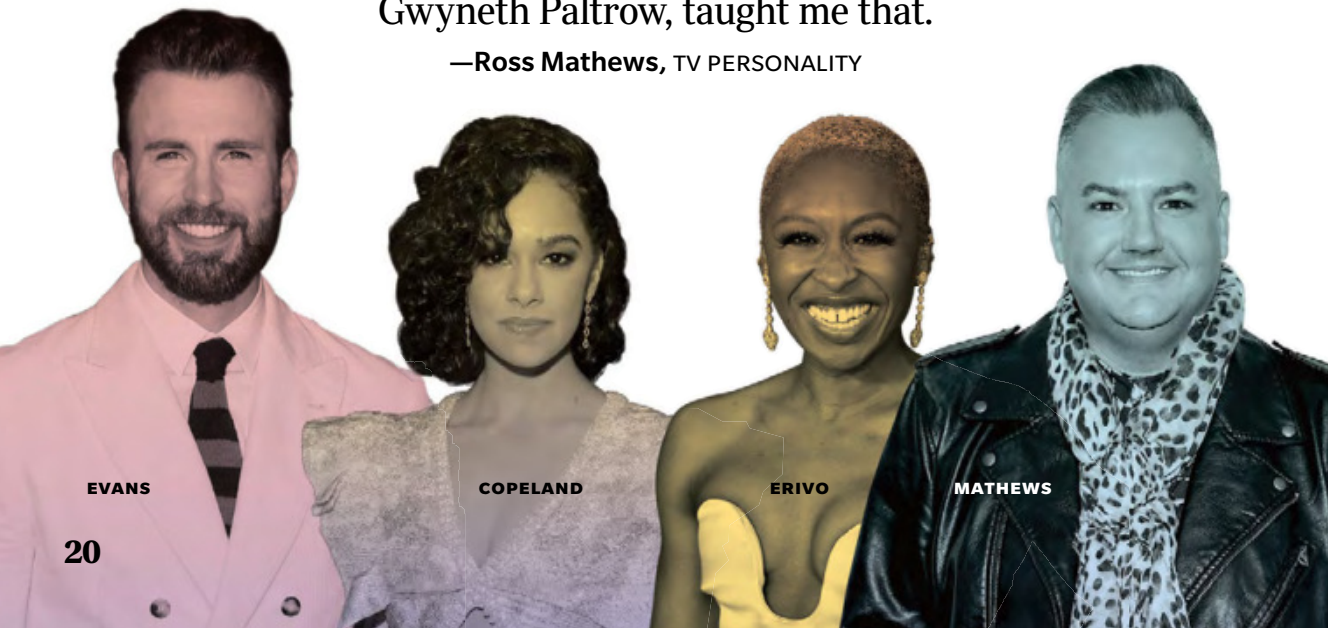
—Eustace Budgell, WRITER

**Don't say yes to everything. "No" is also an answer,
and it can be a full sentence.**

—Cynthia Erivo, ACTOR

I would never name-drop. It's tacky. My best friend,
Gwyneth Paltrow, taught me that.

—Ross Mathews, TV PERSONALITY



EVANS

COPELAND

ERIVO

MATHEWS

Some say never meet your heroes. But I say if you are really blessed, you get them as your parents.

—Laura Dern, ACTOR

You can't make old friends. You either have them or you don't.

—Kenny Rogers, MUSICIAN

Joy is not made to be a crumb.

—Mary Oliver, POET

POINT TO PONDER

I know the last thing you want to hear right now is stay home. That's not my message to you. My message is to stay close to home. Maybe not physically, but in every other way possible. Make community your priority.

—LeBron James, ATHLETE

GETTY IMAGES (7)



DERN

JAMES

ROGERS

YOUR TRUE STORIES

IN 100 Words

One Big Happy Family

My two-year-old nephew asked how my brother—his other uncle—and I were related. I explained that we have the same mommy, which makes us brothers. Then I asked him, “You and your brother Rafi have the same mommy—what does that make you?” Without missing a beat, he replied, “Happy!”

—Wayne Brecher

BROOKLINE,
MASSACHUSETTS

TO READ MORE true stories or submit one, go to RD.COM/STORIES. If we publish yours in the print magazine, it could be worth \$100.

The Sweetest Grandson Ever

We recently had dinner at my son and daughter-in-law’s home. She had prepared a beautiful pecan pie for dessert, but I do not eat refined sugar in an attempt to lessen inflammation from my rheumatoid arthritis. My young grandson generously set two pecans on my empty plate. “These are for you, Grandma,” he said. “Thank you, sweetheart, but these pecans are coated with sugar,” I replied. “No, Grandma, there is no sugar on these. I licked it all off.”

—SHARON LEWANDOWSKI

Hastings, Minnesota



He Gave Her a Lift

My mom uses a wheelchair. Our city has buses with wheelchair lifts, but they slow things down and drivers don’t like that. They often say, “The lift is broken.” One day, Mom was waiting at the bus stop while a man snored on a nearby bench. But when the driver made his lame

excuse, the man on the bench awoke and yelled at the driver for his heartlessness toward this old disabled lady. Ashamed, the driver “miraculously” discovered that the lift worked after all. My mom got on the bus, and the guy on the bench went back to sleep.

—Ray Martin

GLENDORA, CALIFORNIA



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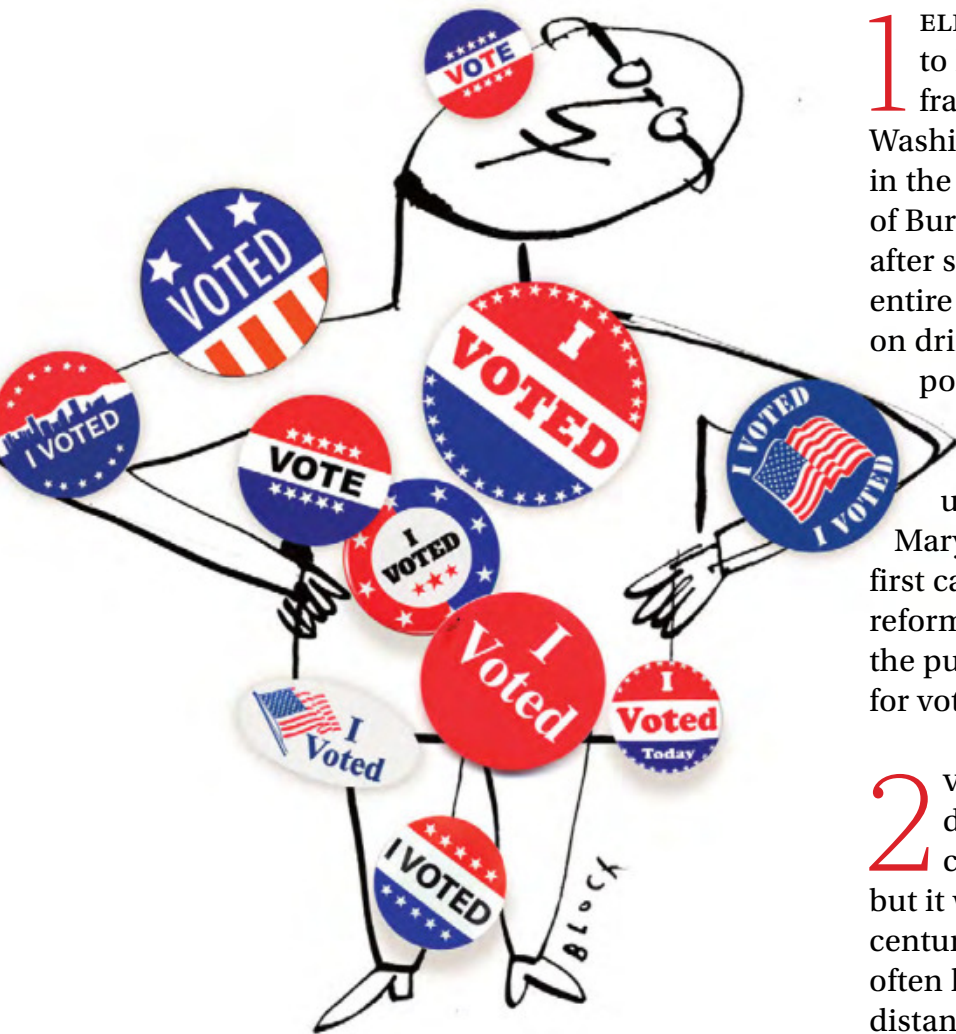


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13 THINGS

On the Ballot: Election Day Facts

BY *Emily Goodman*



1 ELECTION DAY used to look a lot like a frat party. George Washington won a seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758 after spending his entire campaign budget on drinks for his supporters. Buying votes with booze was the norm until 1811, when Maryland passed the first campaign finance reform law prohibiting the purchase of alcohol for voters.

2 VOTING ON Tuesday is hardly a convenience now, but it was in the 19th century, when farmers often had to travel long distances to the nearest

polling place. They didn't want to travel on Sunday, and they needed to be back home for market day on Wednesday. Farming also explains why we vote in November—the harvest was over.

3 AMONG THE democracies that vote on weekdays, the United States is one of the few that doesn't deem Election Day a national holiday, although it's a civic holiday in Puerto Rico and a growing list of states. (Virginia governor Ralph Northam added his to the list earlier this year.) Meanwhile, Estonia has let its citizens vote online since 2005. Now nearly a third of Estonians vote this way.

4 IMAGINE NOT knowing who the next president will be just two days before the inauguration. That happened in the election of 1876, when both Samuel Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes declared victory. Tilden

had 19 more electoral votes, but another 20 were contested. Congress established a bipartisan commission to decide those 20. Their 8-7 vote along party lines awarded them all—and the presidency—to Hayes.

5 A MORE recent close call: the 1994 House of Representatives race in Wyoming. It ended in a tie, which the governor broke by pulling a Ping-Pong ball adorned with the name of the winner out of a cowboy hat. In Nevada, fittingly, they settle ties by drawing cards—high card wins. This last happened in 2011, when neither candidate in a North Las Vegas city council primary would pay \$600 for a recount.

6 THE UNITED States has notoriously low voter turnout. In many of the countries with near 100 percent turnout, voting is compulsory. Australians who don't cast ballots face fines that

more than double after the first offense. A Belgian who fails to vote four times loses the right to vote for the next ten years. Voting is also mandatory in Ecuador, but only for those who are literate.

7 GAMBIA HAS its own literacy issue, so citizens there cast votes by dropping marbles into metal drums adorned with pictures of the candidates. Each drum has a bell inside that rings after a marble is dropped. This also eliminates voter fraud—if the bell rings more than once, someone has tried to cast multiple votes. The drum system is tedious, however. Starting next year, Gambians will vote on paper ballots.

8 TAKING A photo of your completed ballot is illegal in more than a dozen states. And in New Zealand, any media coverage—including social media—about politics is

prohibited on Election Day because it could influence the outcome. New Zealanders who violate this law can pay up to \$20,000 in fines.

9 **ASTRONAUTS FROM** Texas who find themselves in space on Election Day can still vote, thanks to a law in their state that allows secure ballots to be sent to space by Mission Control in Houston. After they make their choices, astronauts beam their ballots back to Earth, with their out-of-state address listed as “low-earth orbit.”


10 **SHOULD PEOPLE** with limited mental capacity be allowed to vote? Ohio’s state constitution reads, “No idiot, or insane person, shall be entitled to the privileges

of an elector.” Similar clauses have existed in other state constitutions to prevent the mentally disabled from casting ballots. Some states, such as Iowa, have removed theirs, while others, like New Jersey, have kept them—with revised language.

11 **INDIA, GREECE,** Ukraine, and Colombia have a “none of the above” option on their ballots, which allows voters to indicate disapproval of all the candidates without staying home and sitting out the election. Stateside, only Nevada has this option.

12 **WRITE-IN** candidates have won seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, including

Congressman Charlie Wilson of Ohio, who won his primary in 2006, and Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who won in 2010. But the strangest write-in winner was Pulvapiés, a foot powder that took a local election in Picoazá, Ecuador. The brand’s ad campaign (“If you want hygiene, vote for Pulvapiés”) was a joke, of course, but a majority of Picoazá’s residents wrote it in.

13 **BY ITS** end, the 2020 American presidential race will have lasted 1,194 days, or the equivalent of 99 election seasons in Japan. By law, Japanese political campaigns cannot last more than 12 days. In France, they can last no longer than two weeks. 



It's Not Rocket Science

My three-year-old said she wanted to be an astronaut, and I said she had to study hard, go to college, learn a lot of science, and take a physical fitness test. She shrugged and said, “That’s just four things.”

 @JENDZIURA

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ALL
in a Day's
WORK



"I'm working from home today."

As my roommate drove me to work, I begged him to stop off at a diner. In a hurry, he begrudgingly pulled over. I jumped out and grabbed a coffee to go, and soon we were on our way again. But just as I was opening the lid to take a sip, he hit a large pothole, causing me to spill coffee all over myself.

"Didn't you see that

pothole?" I yelled.

He replied tersely, "I hit it, didn't I?"

—JOHN CUFF
Norwich, Connecticut

Client: Can you make that color better? Or maybe use a cooler font?

Me: That's really not helpful feedback.

Client: OK. Make it nicer, then.

—CLIENTSFROMHELL.NET

A customer came into the bookstore I managed and asked about a Bible to lay alongside a deceased person in an open casket. I showed her a pocket-size white Bible. As she thumbed through the pages, she remarked, "Isn't the print too small?"

—RODGER TURLEY
Garland, Texas

A customer at our coffee shop said, “Imagine a hot veggie smoothie.” I’m wondering how to break it to her that soup exists.

—@DAYNAMCALPINE

At the height of coronavirus chaos, our HR director sat the employees down and explained the elaborate procedures for visitors coming to the locked front door of our business. “Visitors must ring the bell, sign in, be interrogated about their health, and not pass the inner entryway once inside,” he said. Turning to one of my colleagues, he asked, “So what do you do when the doorbell rings?”

My colleague replied, “Go to the bathroom.”

—SHERRY CAMPBELL
Airway Heights,
Washington

I conducted training on stress management and visualizations for relaxation. I seated the hearing-impaired up front so they could read my lips. At the

end of the session, they shared a minor critique with me. It seems it was difficult for them to follow the visualization when I asked them to close their eyes.

—DUMBEMPLOYED.COM

Spotting a candle in my dentist’s bathroom with the helpful inscription “CALMING,” I smiled cynically and thought, Oh sure. Later, as I nervously settled into the dental chair, I told my dentist that his candle wasn’t working. He replied, “That’s for us.”

—JEAN BROWN
Elgin, Illinois

ANYTHING FUNNY
happen to you at work?
It could be worth \$\$\$.
For details, go to
RD.COM/SUBMIT.



I CAN EXPLAIN!

Now that some of us have gone back to the office, it’s time to stock up on excuses for being late. Just don’t use these tried-and-failed beauts:

- ◆ “I got my fingers stuck in a bowling ball.”
- ◆ “I had a dream that my cat died, and now I’m afraid to leave her.”
- ◆ “I rolled out of bed and knocked myself out, so I missed my alarm.”
- ◆ “I accidentally got on a plane.”
- ◆ “My goldfish was ill.”
- ◆ “I slept funny on my arms, and now they’re asleep.”
- ◆ “I thought it was Saturday today.”
- ◆ “My football team lost last night.”
- ◆ “I needed a few hours to get the alcohol in my blood down to a legal level.”

—COBURGBANKS.CO.UK



News FROM THE
**WORLD OF
 MEDICINE**

FISH OIL DOESN'T STOP DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY

Fish oil supplements aren't the magic bullet doctors had once hoped they were. Studies have shown that they aren't much help in fighting cancer or heart disease, and a meta-analysis commissioned by the World Health Organization has found they have little effect on mental health. People who consume more omega-3-rich foods, such as salmon, sardines, nuts, and seeds, are at lower risk of developing depression, but the WHO study found that omega-3 supplements likely don't stave off depression or anxiety.

Higher-Intensity Exercise Boosts Memory Most

When it comes to improving your memory, the old line is true: no pain, no gain. In a Canadian study, 64 sedentary adults between the ages of 60 and 88 were divided into three groups. One group did four sets of high-intensity intervals, alternating between walking fast for four minutes and at a leisurely pace for three minutes. A second group simply walked at a medium intensity for about 45 minutes, and the third did stretches. After doing their routines three times a week for 12 weeks, the high-intensity group improved its performance on a memory test by up to 30 percent; the medium-intensity and control groups didn't improve at all. However, both the high- and medium-intensity groups did better on tests measuring reaction time, focus, and accuracy.

Diabetes Hurts Women's Hearts

Researchers have long known that diabetes raises the risk of developing heart disease. Now a series of analyses shows that this increased risk is greater for women. Women in general have a 44 percent higher risk of coronary disease (as well as a 27 percent higher relative risk of stroke) compared with men. But women with type 1 diabetes had a 47 percent higher risk of heart failure (when the heart pumps blood inefficiently) compared with men; women with type 2 diabetes had a 9 percent higher risk. Researchers aren't sure why, but they speculate that undertreatment of women with diabetes may lead to poorer blood sugar control and the development of diabetic cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart that causes it to become thick or rigid.



ASPIRIN REDUCES CANCER RISK

An analysis of data from 113 studies found that taking at least one aspirin a week was associated with a 27 percent lower risk of colorectal cancer, a 36 percent lower risk of stomach cancer, and a 38 percent lower risk of gallbladder and bile duct cancers. While the study cannot prove causation (and aspirin has been shown to increase the risk of bleeding, among other side effects), people with a family history or other cancer risk factors may want to discuss these findings with their doctor.

A Warm Bath Improves Sleep

Want to sleep more soundly? Take an evening bath or shower. A University of Texas at Austin review found that taking a warm shower or bath one to two hours before bed will help you fall asleep faster and sleep better over the course of the night. Your sleep-wake cycle is intertwined with your body temperature, which peaks in late afternoon and naturally cools as you approach slumber. The warm water may aid that circadian rhythm by bringing blood and heat from your body's core to your hands and feet. From there, the heat can escape more easily as the day winds down.

RACIAL BIAS IN MEDICAL DECISION MAKING

DOCTORS RELY ON guidelines developed by medical associations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to help them decide when to recommend surgery or specialized care. Recent studies show that many of these statistically based analyses are racially biased and can result in Black and Hispanic patients receiving inferior care.

A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* examined 13 algorithms used in cardiology, obstetrics, and other specialties. One uses levels of creatinine, a waste product made by muscles, to estimate kidney function. Kidneys remove waste from the body, so if a patient has less creatinine, he or she is presumed to have better kidney function. Because studies have shown that Black people on average have higher creatinine levels than White people do (perhaps because, as studies have also found, Blacks have higher muscle mass on average), the algorithm “race-corrects” by lowering their level. Thus, Black people appear to be healthier and are less likely to be referred to a specialist for further care.

The rationale for such adjustments is based on studies showing correlations between race and certain medical outcomes. But in some cases, other factors that might be the true drivers of the correlation, such as socioeconomic status, were discounted. In others, the studies have since been proved to be incorrect.

While it may sometimes be appropriate to include race in medical diagnostics, the researchers caution that many commonly used algorithms need to be revised to remove these statistical biases.



What the #@%&!? Swearing Increases Pain Tolerance

In a recent experiment, 92 volunteers held their hands in an ice bath while repeating either actual expletives or the fake swear words *twizpipe* and *fouch*. Using real swear words boosted participants' pain tolerance by 33 percent. The fake swear words had no effect.

Indoor Sunscreen?

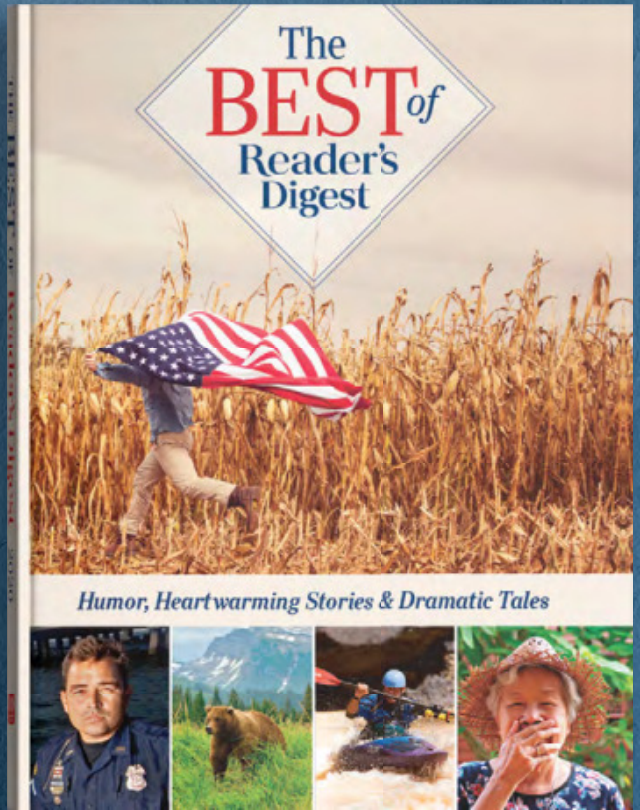
Don't pack away your sunscreen just because you're spending most of your time inside. While research has shown that exposure to sunlight has health benefits (as we reported in July/August 2020), you might be getting too much of a good thing if you sit near a window all day. Plus, blue light like that emitted by computers, TVs, and phones may raise the production of melanin and free radicals, which can cause inflammation and age spots. **R**

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9 TRICKS TO
*Improve Your Life**

1 Train Your Cat with Texture

PETS Because cats are so particular, you can take advantage of their sensitivities to guide their behavior. If you've got a rascal who likes to spend the night sleeping on your antique couch or prancing across the kitchen counter, cover the surface with a sheet of aluminum foil or sticky paper before you go to bed. Cats hate both textures and will soon learn to find a new, more agreeable perch—and the days of finding little paw prints next to the microwave in the morning will be over.

CONSTANTINIS/GETTY IMAGES

**From RD.COM and THEHEALTHY.COM*

2

Defog Your Windshield

AUTO Cool weather brings foggy windshields, obstructing your view and distracting you from the road as you try to find the right air-vent/temperature combo. Instead of fiddling with the knobs, toss a few silica packets—the kind you find in shoeboxes and new purses—up on the dash. They'll absorb the moisture that would otherwise cling to your windshield.

3

Peel Apples in a Snap

FOOD There's more than one way to skin an apple. Instead of taking a peeler to the whole bunch, drop them in boiling water for 20 seconds, then promptly move them to a bowl of ice water. The skin will come off clean in your hands.

4

Snap a Photo Even with Full Storage

TECH If you don't have time to go through the pictures on your phone to free up storage space before snapping a photo, begin a new post in the Facebook or Twitter app instead. Click the camera icon and take the photo there. It'll circumvent your phone's built-in camera app and save the photo to your camera roll.

5

Zap Static Cling

HOME Colder, drier months mean more static electricity in the air and in your clothes, causing the fabric to bunch and stick to your body. Attach a few safety pins to a sock and toss it in the dryer with your most staticky threads (namely, synthetics such as nylon and polyester). The tiny bits of metal will act as lightning rods and absorb all that static electricity you'd otherwise carry around with you.



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6

Trick Yourself into Spending Less

MONEY When you go holiday shopping, try using cash—specifically, new bills. A study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* found that people spend old bills more readily. In fact, they spend more than twice as much when they've got old bills in their wallets as they do with crisp new bills. A little psychology could save you a lot.



7

Freeze Away Candle Wax

HOME Don't struggle to get that melted candle stump out of the holder. If the wick isn't glued down, put the whole thing in the freezer. After about an hour, the last of the wax will shrink away from the sides, allowing you to pop it out with tweezers or a knife.

8

De-Gunk a Can Opener

CLEANING Those tiny metal gears have a way of holding on to bits of food and not letting go. To clean them, clamp the opener onto the edge of a folded sheet of waxed paper and twist as if opening a can. The stiff sheet will break off bits of grime from the wheels while the wax residue lightly lubricates the gears for a smoother operation.

9

Heal a Cut with Petroleum Jelly

HEALTH Paper cuts and other finger nicks hurt like crazy. Instead of messing with an ill-fitting bandage, spread petroleum jelly over shallow cuts. That will stop any bleeding and help start the healing. **R**

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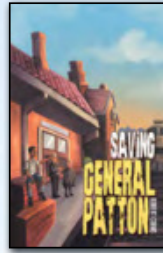
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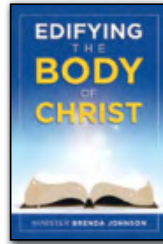
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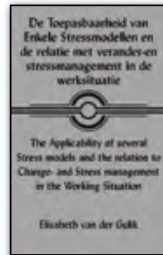
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LAUGHTER

THE BEST *Medicine*

A little old lady had just returned home from an evening church service when she was startled by an intruder. As she caught the man in the midst of robbing her home, she yelled, “STOP! ACTS 2:38!” (That’s the one that goes, “Repent and be baptized, in the name of the Lord, so that your sins may be forgiven.”)

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police to explain what she had done. As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, “Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell scripture.”

“Scripture?” replied the burglar, stunned. “She said she had an ax and two .38s!”

—ELDEROPTIONSOFTEXAS.COM

WHOA, I THOUGHT I WAS BETTER LOOKING.



THE INVENTION OF THE MIRROR

A husband and wife are playing a trivia game. “How did you know there are seven rays on the Statue of Liberty’s crown?” she asks.

“Easy—the seven original colonies!”

—GCFL.NET

You come from dust. You will return to dust. That is why I don’t dust.

It could be someone I know.

—Submitted by

NICK GIDWANI

Colonia, New Jersey

Let's Talk Turkey

◆ My wife got a free-range, organic, non-GMO, antibiotic-free turkey this year—and every one of those adjectives added 20 bucks.

—[@KENTWGRAHAM](#)

◆ Most turkeys taste better the day after. My mother's tasted better the day before.

—RITA RUDNER, *comedian*

The thing I hate most about daylight savings is getting up at 2 a.m. to change the clock.

—Submitted by BRADFORD BOYLE *Neotsu, Oregon*

A linguistics professor is lecturing. "In English," he says, "a double negative forms a positive. But in Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language in which a double positive forms a negative."

A student at the back of the room snorts, "Yeah, right."

—BUSINESSINSIDER.COM

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RATE A SPECIES

"Waterproof, great for winter, only comes in brown." When Shervin Hess of the Oregon Zoo read this product review for hiking boots, he realized it also described sea otters. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums picked up on his idea and published an entire collection called *Animals: Reviewed*. A few of their ratings:

Linnaeus's two-toed sloth

★★★★★

Built-in hooks make it easy to hang, but it quickly runs out of power and needs most of a day to recharge.

Blue-and-gold macaw

★★★★★

Cool colors, but the playback feature sometimes doesn't work, and there is no volume control. Might peck at you if you try to fast-forward.

Giant anteater

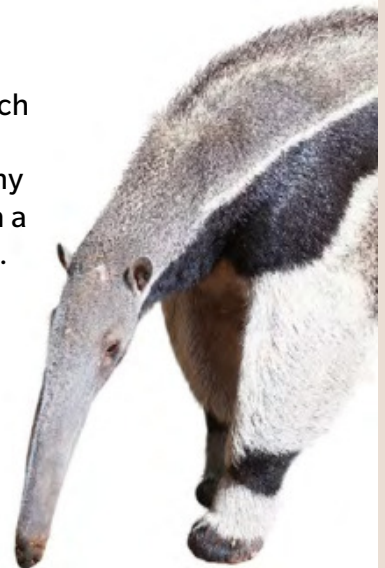
★★★★★

Works well in hard-to-reach places. The nozzle does NOT detach. Leaves a slimy residue, but it comes with a bonus duster on the back.

Giant Pacific octopus

★★★★★

Customizable color blends easily with any decor. Suction cups secure to any surface, even underwater.






JACKF/GETTY IMAGES

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BOARDING PASS

**IS YOUR
BLADDER
ALWAYS
TAKING YOU
ON A TRIP
OF ITS OWN?**

-  **Urgency**
-  **Frequency**
-  **Leakage**



In clinical trials, those taking Myrbetriq made fewer trips to the bathroom and had fewer leaks than those not taking Myrbetriq. Your results may vary.

**TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR
OAB SYMPTOMS BY TALKING
TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT
MYRBETRIQ TODAY.**



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USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder (OAB) with symptoms of urgency, frequency and leakage.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Myrbetriq is not for everyone. Do not take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any ingredients in Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.



IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Myrbetriq may cause allergic reactions that may be serious. If you experience swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue, with or without difficulty breathing, stop taking Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril™ and Mellaril-S™), flecainide (Tambocor®), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®) or solifenacin succinate (VESIcare®). Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include

increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), dry mouth, flu symptoms, urinary tract infection, back pain, dizziness, joint pain, headache, constipation, sinus irritation, and inflammation of the bladder (cystitis).

For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional and see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) on the following pages.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Like us on Facebook 
and visit Myrbetriq.com



 **Myrbetriq®**
(mirabegron)
extended-release tablets
25 mg, 50 mg



Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for adults used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called overactive bladder:

- Urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- Urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- Frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

Who should not use Myrbetriq?

Do not take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any of the ingredients in Myrbetriq. See the end of this summary for a complete list of ingredients in Myrbetriq.

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-S™)
- flecainide (Tambacor®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- solifenacin succinate (VESIcar®)

How should I take Myrbetriq?

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not chew, break, or crush the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.
- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking

other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.

- **angioedema.** Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include:

• increased blood pressure	• dizziness
• common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)	• joint pain
• dry mouth	• headache
• flu symptoms	• constipation
• urinary tract infection	• sinus (sinus irritation)
• back pain	• inflammation of the bladder (cystitis)

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store Myrbetriq?

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit www.Myrbetriq.com or call (800) 727-7003.

What are the ingredients in Myrbetriq?

Active ingredient: mirabegron

Inactive ingredients: polyethylene oxide, polyethylene glycol, hydroxypropyl cellulose, butylated hydroxytoluene, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, yellow ferric oxide and red ferric oxide (25 mg Myrbetriq tablet only).

What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

Marketed and Distributed by:

Astellas Pharma US, Inc.

Northbrook, Illinois 60062


Myrbetriq®
(mirabegron)
extended-release tablets
25 mg, 50 mg

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EVERYDAY MIRACLES



The Goose That Came Home

BY *Steven Lynn*, AS TOLD TO *Corey Whelan*

IF YOU'VE EVER witnessed the majesty of a Canada goose flock flying into the clouds, you know that these noble birds are a force to be reckoned with. Each group is composed of couples that mate for life, as well as their goslings and friends. Together, they are one large family. Apart, they are individuals with quirks and personalities, just like us. No one knows

this more than my family, who raised a silly little goose we named Peeper after he was abandoned as a baby.

In 2000, when I was around seven years old, my parents, sister, brother, and I were coming back from a T-ball game one late spring afternoon. That was our usual weekend adventure in suburban Pearl River, New York, about 25 miles from New York City. But

COURTESY STEVEN LYNN



Peeper, from backyard newcomer to adult (above) and in the family pool (left)

unlike other weekends, on this day a surprise was waiting in our driveway: two adult geese and a gosling. The adults were startled by us and flew away, but their baby was too young to fly and couldn't follow. We are no strangers to the ways of wildlife, so we knew to avoid contact with the gosling lest it imprint on us and be lost to its family forever.

Hours passed, and night fell. With it came a deep chill and a fear of watchful predators. The tiny little thing was wandering around our yard, unaware of what could happen. It was clear that the gosling needed protection, warmth, and sustenance to make it to the morning, so we brought him onto our back porch and set up a makeshift wire fence to enclose and protect him.

We all pretty much slept with one eye open till morning. And then another morning. And another. Each day, we would try to scurry the goose over to his parents, who kept coming back to our yard. He wouldn't go to them, though, and they wouldn't come close enough to claim him. We kept this up for five days, but no luck. By then, the young goose had clearly decided we

were his new family, so we had to give him a name. My eight-year-old sister, Joanna, called the little guy Peeper because he would follow us around the yard making a peeping noise, nonstop. We also decided that Peeper was a boy. I don't know why; it just felt right.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months, until almost a year passed. We settled into a routine

THE YOUNG BIRD HAD CLEARLY DECIDED WE WERE HIS NEW FAMILY.

filled with feathery hugs and camaraderie. Peeper slept on our back porch and, in typical goose fashion, also used it as a latrine. My dad would spray off the droppings daily with a hose. Part of this ritual included Dad throwing Peeper up into the air so he could fly a loop around the house, coming back again once the porch was clean.

One evening, my uncle was over, and my dad wanted to show him Peeper's loop. He threw him up in the air, but

this time Peeper flew off. Everyone was very, very sad. It was dark, and we were worried. We looked for him for days, calling his name, but he didn't come back. We hoped he'd found a flock and had gone off on his natural way.

Again, days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months—then years. I missed my little buddy, and I would call for him every time I saw a flock of Canada geese fly by in V formation. Twenty years passed, and Peeper became a fond memory for my family.

GEESE ARE VERY LOYAL. THEY NEVER FORGET THEIR FIRST HOME.




Geese live to be around 25 years old and are very loyal. They never forget their first home. Even so, it came as a shock last year when an aging adult goose made his way back to my family home. Geese love houses with large, green lawns; the flat terrain makes it easier to scout for predators. So at first, I assumed it was just another goose. And yet something about the lone male seemed oddly familiar to me.

After two weeks of his coming back

repeatedly, it became clear this was not a random goose. He did all the things Peeper used to, like trying to come in through the front door and sleeping in our enclosed pool area. This goose also responded to the name Peeper—he would turn his head and waddle closer to us. To my amazement, my old best friend had returned, 20 years later.

Why did Peeper come back? Perhaps his mate had died, leaving him lonely. It's also possible that he is approaching his twilight years, making him crave his early home. This behavior is typical of geese. Whatever the reason, Peeper continues to live with me. It's a good thing I stayed in my childhood home.

He doesn't come back every single night, the way he did as a baby. Some nights he may seek out the comfort of his own kind at the lake nearby. Geese in the wild typically sleep on water. But he's here a lot, making his presence known and giving me joy.

This experience has been as meaningful to me as anything in my life. I hope that my children get the opportunity to connect with nature and a wild being in this same way. People crave connection with the natural world. Through Peeper, I have learned so much about myself and about the love that lives in all of nature. 



Pear of the Dog

Fruit cocktail is the most disappointing of all the cocktails.

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UNITED IN KINDNESS

The
NICEST PLACES
in **AMERICA**

Even in these toughest of times, people everywhere reached out a hand to lift up their neighbors—and the nation



ILLUSTRATION BY
Benedetto Cristofani



AND THE TOP HONOR GOES TO ...

BUCHANAN,



MICHIGAN

BY *Jeremy
Greenfield*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Callie Lipkin



Clockwise from top left: Mary Fisher of the Scarecrow Factory; Deejra Lee and her baby, Dayna Rae; Kadin Mills in front of the windows he stenciled; Mickey Frost (left) and Mayor Patricia Moore holding a banner; Buchanan's Nicest Places nominator, John D. Van Dyke



BUCHANAN, MICHIGAN

Where Democracy Lives

THE MEMORIAL DAY parade in Buchanan, Michigan, isn't the biggest in the country, but pound for pound these 4,300 residents might generate more red, white, and true-blue spirit than anywhere. Of course there's the boom-boom-boom of the high school marching band and the flashing lights of the police cars, fire trucks, and Buchanan's one ambulance. One year, the town hitched its new rescue boat to a trailer to join the procession, where it dodged the usual caravan of red-hatted Shriners on mopeds. There are cheers all along the 1.4-mile route, for the floats and the kids and the candy and especially when the marchers pass under the 11-by-16-foot American flag casting its extra-large shadow over the intersection of Main and Front Streets.

But this is also a day of remembrance, and when the parade reaches Oak Ridge Cemetery, the mood changes. The crowd grows quiet for the laying of wreaths on the graves of Buchanan's war dead. Members of the American Legion fire a full 21-gun salute. Finally, the high school's lead trumpeter plays taps. Buchanan has been celebrating the day since at least 1870, a full century before the nation

established Memorial Day. In 2020, their almost 150-year-old tradition ended. "This year," says John D. Van Dyke, a middle school science teacher who nominated Buchanan as the Nicest Place in America, "we weren't able to honor our war dead." The enemy: the COVID-19 pandemic.

At first, people were terribly disappointed. Yet this four-stoplight town has taught itself—and the rest of the country—a big lesson about kindness and patriotism and where the two join. Folks here face challenges head-on, but they've also discovered that being American is not about making a lot of noise and waving flags. It's about honoring the First Amendment and finding new ways to help people make a living. And it means caring for your neighbor not just when it's easy but also when a pandemic makes it very hard.

"I don't want to give you the mistaken idea that this is Mayberry. We argue a lot because we care about everything," says Mayor Patricia Moore. "This is where democracy lives."

BUCHANAN IS A classic Midwest town, a rivet in the buckle of Michigan's rust belt. A huge smokestack, a reminder of the town's

When these girls learned that the food bank needed funds, they got busy making lemonade.



industrial past, rises above low-rolling hills covered in forests. Winding country roads connect the small businesses along tree-lined Front Street with surrounding farms. South Bend, Indiana, home to the University of Notre Dame, is 16 miles to the southeast. Folks here root for the Cubs and the Bears, who play about 90 miles west, in Chicago.

So how did this ordinary-seeming hamlet become the Nicest Place in America? There’s no better example than what folks did after the parade was canceled—and the event that ended up taking its place.

Memorial Day was also the day George Floyd died in Minneapolis. Although Buchanan has no recent

history of police misconduct or racial strife, Deeja Lee, a 33-year-old Buchanan native, was sure that her neighbors would want to join the national call to action. After all, standing up and making noise is something Buchanan does very well.

“We wanted a way to share our voice,” says Lee. “It was important to do it here because these are people who care and want to see change in the world.”

Even though she was eight months pregnant, Lee organized Buchanan’s own march for racial justice. On June 8, about 250 people—Black and White, young and old, residents and visitors—gathered at the high school, most of them wearing masks. They walked under the massive American flag at Front and Main. They walked past the antiques store on whose windows the names of many of the Black citizens killed in police custody around the country had been stenciled by 18-year-old Kadin Mills. (If the Memorial Day parade had been held this year, he would have been one of the drum majors leading it.) They also stopped at the police station, where they knelt for eight minutes and 46 seconds to memorialize

Floyd's death. The Buchanan police chief, Tim Ganus, was there, too—not to keep the protestors in line, but to join the walkers, to lend his voice to the calls for change.

"We agreed on the message: justice for all, unity and peace," says Ganus.

The march drew on the strength of everyone in town, not just the 8 percent of Buchanan residents who are Black. And the military veterans still made their mark: The crowd that day marched under a new display of 103 red, white, and blue banners

that feature the photos, names, and service branches of Buchanan's vets. The town had ordered them as a way to honor their heroes on Memorial Day and every day. They hang from its lampposts—*Marvin Pruett, Army; Arthur E. Reed, Navy; Victoria Curtis, Air Force*—testaments to the town's unwillingness to let anything overshadow what matters most.

"When the banners appeared," says city manager Bill Marx, "it provided a little confidence that the whole world isn't going crazy."

Lee, whose father and brother both served in the Army, says there is a natural connection between the march and the honoring of soldiers. "Those vets are important," she says. "They're the reason we're able to protest."

Mickey Frost, 65, had a similar reaction to the marchers walking under the lampposts. Banners for her father, who fought in the Korean War, and her husband, a Vietnam vet who passed five years ago at age 61, hang together on one post.

"What perfect timing, the walk coinciding with this being



"Listen to what the people want," says police chief Tim Ganus. "We are in this together."

Jan Nowak-Walters and her crew made sure the food bank's shelves stayed full.



the first time that these flags have ever hung in the community,” Frost says. “It was meant to be.”

BUCHANAN'S TOWN MOTTO is “Life is better here,” but economically it has been a struggle for some in recent years. Clark Equipment and Whirlpool once employed thousands, but both are long gone now. The town’s median income is \$34,000, compared with \$54,000 statewide.

Yet Buchanan’s willingness to embrace the greater good also helped it find an unlikely economic lifeline. After Michigan passed a medical marijuana law in 2008, Buchanan residents spent nearly ten years in contentious but polite debate about whether to allow its sale in their state. In 2017, the city commission finally voted yes. Redbud Roots, a company that focuses on

cannabis as medicine, has invested \$25 million in the area, building facilities and hiring hundreds of people. When a recreational marijuana law was passed in Michigan in 2018, the city said yes again, bringing more jobs to town.

“I was actually the one no vote for the original ordinance,” says Mayor Moore. “But I’m happy with how things turned out. We’ve done a very good job of protecting the public and at the same time letting the public have access to a product that they are wanting.”

Supporting people when they need it most is a time-honored act in Buchanan. It’s the idea that gave rise to the Scarecrow Factory, which is exactly what the name suggests: an assembly line for festive scarecrows. They are handmade—by volunteers whose average age is 76—and sponsored by businesses for \$55 a straw-filled head. Last year, they raised \$20,000 for local charities. The virus slowed production at the Scarecrow Factory for a time in 2020, but Buchanan quickly came up with another irresistible funding source. Says Mary Fisher, who helped launch the scarecrow tradition in 2007, “This year,

we're gonna sell garden gnomes!"

One of the town's largest benefactors is called Redbud Area Ministries (RAM). (Buchanan is called Redbud City for the vibrant redbud trees that line its streets.) RAM provides food, clothing, employment assistance, and counseling to their "guests" and "friends"—never "the needy" or "clients," says executive director Jan Nowak-Walters.

Stephanie was one of those guests. She arrived a few years ago with her four-year-old son, fleeing a boyfriend she said abused her and left her with a ton of unpaid bills. RAM negotiated a deal with her landlord, found her a job, and helped her quit drinking. The last time she came to RAM, a few months ago, she told Nowak-Walters, "I don't need a thing. I just came back to ask for prayer because everything is going well."

COVID-19 forced RAM to close this spring—temporarily. But volunteers worked day after day to set up work-arounds, retrofitting the RAM offices so people could come in and get counseling and organizing new ways to collect and distribute food.

"We put the best procedures in place and trusted that if we were on God's errands, we would have God's protections," says Nowak-Walters.

IN MANY RUST BELT towns, young folks can't wait to grow up and move away. That doesn't happen as much here, thanks in part to the

Buchanan Promise. Modeled after similar initiatives in nearby Kalamazoo and elsewhere, the Promise is a college scholarship of up to \$10,000 for anyone who attends Buchanan High for four years and graduates.

Walter E. Schirmer Jr., son of the president of Clark Equipment, left more than \$8 million to the future of Buchanan when he died in 2016. The first checks were cut in 2017. The Promise currently supports 300 students, with tuition payments of \$600,000 so far. Kadin Mills, the drum major who stenciled the downtown windows, is putting the money toward tuition at Northwestern University.

Megan Goodrich had her own idea of giving back. After she saw a video about how women experiencing homelessness often lack sanitary products, she asked local businesses to host donation boxes. Some 2,000 donated items and \$500 later, neighbors began asking Goodrich, "Are you going to keep doing this?" They wanted to keep it going, and so did she. She's named her ongoing effort One Month at a Time.

"Buchanan is a very supportive community," says Goodrich, 27. "If you have an idea and you want to do something, there's bound to be people here who will try to help you figure out how to make it happen."

"Make it happen." If Buchanan didn't already have a motto, that would do nicely too.

A CONVERSATION WITH MITCH ALBOM

“We Are More Alike Than Different”

MITCH ALBOM, the author of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and eight other books, joined the advisory council (see next page) to help decide this year’s Nicest Places in America honorees. The proud Detroit resident spoke to senior editor Jeremy Greenfield about how his writing brought him to *RD*’s signature project.

RD: *You published a serialized book this year called Human Touch that’s*

set in the COVID-19 pandemic. That’s not the kind of thing you usually write.

MA: When I announced it, I got an extraordinary number of messages from people saying, “Please write something hopeful.” I wanted to write about how a small community changes, maybe suffers, but ultimately endures. If you read it, you know one of the main characters dies from the virus, but the community still goes on. I wanted something that looked up at the end, not down.

RD: *There’s a line near the end that says, “They were more than neighbors now. The crisis had made them a community.” It sounds like the theme of many of our Nicest Places entries this year. Did you see that connection too?*

MA: Yes. Nicest Places emphasizes the positive. Sometimes in America we focus on the negative, despite all the positivity that’s around us. I don’t know why that is. As someone who travels around the world a lot, I see how America is held in such high regard. It doesn’t matter who is in the

Knox came to live with the Alboms from an orphanage they run in Haiti. You can read more about it at havefaithhaiti.org.

COURTESY MITCH ALBOM



White House at any given time. It's about the advanced level at which we live, the technology, the beauty of our country. I like the idea of what you're doing, and I like the fact that you're talking about how united we could be.

RD: *And you must have loved that a town in Michigan won!*

MA: The people of Buchanan personify the ability to love your country and also love all different members of the country. The whole town came together, including police, and kneeled to honor George Floyd. When the Memorial Day parade was canceled because of COVID-19, they came up with a great solution to basically turn their lampposts into a parade—if the

lampposts could march, they would be marching down the street. I'm so glad you showcased a midwestern town that loves its country, loves its history.

RD: *What would Morrie say if he were alive today?*

MA: Morrie was always interested in making the best peace. I think he would reiterate the lesson he said to me many times: We are all more alike than different. When we recognize that, we realize we have much more in common than our differences suggest. Morrie's favorite line from poetry was, "Love each other or perish." I'm sure he would say the same thing right now.

The "Nicest" Advisory Council

MITCH ALBOM

Bestselling author

CLAIRE

BABINEAUX-FONTENOT

*CEO,
Feeding America*

SARAH FRIAR

*CEO,
Nextdoor*

KELLI HARDING, MD

Author of The Rabbit Effect: Live Longer, Happier, and Healthier with the Groundbreaking Science of Kindness

BRUCE KELLEY

*Editor-in-chief,
Reader's Digest*

BONNIE KINTZER

*President and CEO,
Trusted Media Brands*

ERICH OFFENBURG

*Executive director,
Chamber of Commerce,
Columbiana, Ohio
(the 2019 Nicest Place
in America)*

GERI WEIS-CORBLEY

*Founder and CEO,
Good News Network*

COURTESY L MICHAEL BOUYER



RIO VISTA, CALIFORNIA

Walking the Walk

BY *Bill Hangle Jr.*

THERE ARE MOVEMENTS, there are grassroots movements, and then there are blade-of-grass movements. Richard Lynn is that blade of grass: one man popping up out of the dirt at the edge of California's Central Valley, hoping to make his town and the world a better place.

Lynn's over-55 gated community, Trilogy draws modestly prosperous retirees and older workers like Lynn, promising a peaceful, pleasant place to wind down a hardworking life. There's a golf course. There's a park and a senior center.

But for Lynn, there is also a shadow of menace. He is African American. The vast majority of his neighbors and elected officials are White. Usually people get along, he says, but things can get ugly, like the time in 2019 when local police were caught on video body-slaming a Black woman following a traffic stop. (This was one of several civil rights controversies that led Rio Vista to disband its police department last January; now Solano County sheriff's deputies patrol the town.)

When Lynn moved to Trilogy in 2018, one of a handful of minorities, he tried not to worry about the neighbors who didn't seem to want to say hello. He enjoyed the palm trees and lived his life. He often took a walk or a jog at night.

But when the one-two combo of the COVID-19 quarantine and the George Floyd protests hit, Lynn realized he



Rich Lynn (front row, red sneakers) and his walking buddies

Lynn, 57, is a union electrician. He lives in a housing development in Rio Vista, population 8,200. Half the town is a cluster of homes and businesses built by the Sacramento River. The other half is the Trilogy subdivision,

felt afraid to leave his house. He was afraid to take his nightly jaunts. In addition to worrying about the virus, the news stirred up an even deeper fear: What if someone calls a cop, thinking he's a burglar? What if the responding officer has an itchy trigger finger?

"That was the first time as an adult that I felt unsafe," says Lynn. That night, instead of going out to jog, he sat down to write a [nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com) post.



"Seeing all these people show up made me feel pretty good," says Lynn.

"Can't go for a walk because I am Black. Can't go for a drive because I am Black," Lynn wrote. "Can't get angry because I am Black. I am home and I am crying. What can I do?"

Little did he know that he'd already done it. His neighbors saw his post. They felt his pain. He wasn't the only blade of grass in town. Offers poured in to join Lynn for a walk. "They didn't say, 'He's crazy!'" he recalls. "They said, 'Let's support him.'"

Soon, dozens of neighbors joined Lynn for twice-daily walks through Trilogy that continue to this day, morning and evening at 7:25, marking the time of Floyd's death: 7:25 a.m. Pacific time. As part of each walk, the group takes a knee for the amount of time it took Floyd to die beneath an officer's knee, to reflect on past victims of injustice and imagine a future when Americans see one another as people, not racial stereotypes.

"This is a solidarity walk, not a walk of anger. This is a walk of celebration," Lynn says. "It's a celebration of the beginning of the death of racism."

His neighbor Jeanne Brown says the response to Lynn's post restored her faith in humanity. At one of the first walks, "seventy-five people showed up," she recalls, "including the fire department chief."

Not everybody in town supports Lynn. Passing drivers sometimes yell "All lives matter!" says Lynn's friend Tom Watson. "And I say, 'All lives will matter when Black lives matter!'"

Now, on a typical day, a dozen or more people show up. Whether these walks can change the world, Lynn can't say. At first, all he wanted was to get something off his chest. But he feels energized. He's even running for mayor. Win or lose, when he steps out the door to walk, "There's an hour a day where I'm in a race-free society," he says. "When in life do you have that opportunity?"

COURTESY L MICHAEL BOUYER



GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

Kid Power

BY *Bill Hangle Jr.*

AS COVID-19 CASES raged in April, Denise Cherry was afraid to leave her home. She had lost three family members to the virus, and with medical problems of her own, she wasn't taking any chances. Desperate, Cherry, 65, responded to a nextdoor.com post from a stranger offering help. That stranger was Christy Cheung, who lived a few neighborhoods away in Gaithersburg, a hard-working but increasingly techy city of 70,000. She came the next day with her four-year-old son, Ethan. They took out Cherry's trash and brought in her mail, and they kept coming until she was well enough to do for herself.

"On our street, we have a few elders, so we're the eyes and ears for them. Fixing doors and computers, mowing their lawns," says Cheung, 32. "We said, 'There's a grandma that needs help.' And Ethan was excited: 'I'm going to help. I'm going to be a helper!'"

Gaithersburg is a notably young and diverse community, so it's no surprise that the city's youth are

leading the way. In April, seven-year-old Cavanaugh Bell spent his life's savings—\$600—to make care packages for his grandmother's friends. (He calls himself the city's chief positivity creator.) Area teens are helping their elders, too, volunteering for Teens Helping Seniors, a grocery-delivery service created by high school pals Dhruv Pai and Matt Casertano.

For Cherry, who grew up in North Carolina during Jim Crow, young people offer hope. "We were taught if you can't change something, accept it," she says. "But these young people, their attitude is, 'I'm going to change what I can't accept.'"



When Denise Cherry needed help,
Christy and Ethan Cheung showed up.

PHOTOGRAPH BY *André Chung*

**PAWLEYS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Showing Their Gratitude

BY Emma Taubenfeld

SOME CARDS ARE in a child's scrawl, complete with stickers: "You are a blessing. Love, Braylon."

Others are written in flowing penmanship: "We want you to know just how much we appreciate all your hard work and dedication to such a difficult job! We lift you up in prayer each day to keep you safe through this horrible virus. We are all so very proud of everything you do. Love, Betty McCulley."

All of them—1,861 thank-you notes in total—have one thing in common: They were written from the heart by the people of Pawleys Island, South Carolina, to health-care professionals working around the clock during the scariest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. "There's a lot of love in those cards," says Jim Coggin, a leader at Pawleys Island Community Church.

When he organized the card drive seven months ago, Coggin already knew that local residents appreciated the employees of Tidelands Health, a medical group that staffs four hospitals in the area. He set a basket outside the church to collect the notes and had ambitiously expected to receive 800 cards. Within

just days, the basket was beyond full.

"It was overwhelming," says Amy Stevens, Tidelands' vice president, after Coggin and a few others dropped off the cards. "I just sat in my office and cried looking at the cards. I really did."

The church members are some of the 100 or so year-round residents of Pawleys Island, a barrier island about 25 miles south of Myrtle Beach. In spots, the charming sliver of land is just one house wide. In the summer, some 5,500 tourists arrive. But this past July, that population surge resulted in a 1,700 percent increase in patients hospitalized with COVID-19. First responders of all types were overwhelmed.

So the church stepped up to help once again. They reached into their coffers and had lunches delivered to the local hospitals, as well as to the police, the fire department, and the local Coast Guard station.

"We want to serve those who serve us," says Pastor Don Williams, whose parishioners kept the meals—and the prayers—coming, for weeks.

Around the time of these acts of mercy, anger over the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers erupted. Georgetown County sheriff Carter Weaver, whose



jurisdiction includes Pawleys Island, decided to write a note denouncing the police officers' actions. He shared it with his staff, then posted it on Facebook. "I will not sit back and remain silent," it began.

Shortly after that, Weaver got a call from Eileen Carter, a sophomore at Waccamaw High School in Pawleys Island. Carter, 15, had gone to a racial-justice march in Myrtle Beach and was inspired to bring the movement home. She wanted to organize a peaceful protest.

"I think it's important for people to speak about things in a peaceful way," Carter explained. Weaver agreed. She put out a call to march on social media, and approximately 100 people answered her. They walked about a mile, from the Dollar General to the Speedway convenience store and back, while carrying signs of support and protest. One of those who marched

For Tideland's Health workers, heartfelt thanks go back to the card makers.

was Sheriff Weaver. "You couldn't help but want to be a part of what she was doing," he says.

The active partnership with the police and the people of Pawleys Island didn't end that day. A planned Youth Advisory Board will offer people like Carter a forum to speak up. The county's Citizens Use of Force review panel will look at files, body- and car-camera footage, statements, and other recorded evidence anytime officers use force in the line of duty.

"I think it's important for transparency," says Weaver. "My biggest stance is that law enforcement talks too much. We just do. And we don't listen. And that's what we have been trying to do since this has happened. Eileen was a huge kick starter in that process."

**RED HANDED TATTOO IN SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA**

Under One Roof

BY *Caroline Fanning*
AND *Jeremy Greenfield*

IN JANUARY, 20-YEAR-OLD Joshua Jefferson held up Red Handed Tattoo at gunpoint, took \$300, and escaped through a window. When his trial began, Micah Harold, the shop's owner, was quick to testify—in Jefferson's defense.

"I want leniency," Harold, who had also attended Jefferson's arraignment, said at the time. "I'd give him a job if he wanted."

That's the kind of humanity you'll find in Harold, and in Shreveport, the city that's home to Red Handed Tattoo. Call it compassion that's relentless beyond reason. Another example: Harold closed his shop in March, more than a week before Louisiana mandated the closure of nonessential businesses. Why short himself the revenue? Because he was worried that Shreveport wasn't ready for a spike in COVID-19 cases and he thought he could help.

He started by giving away rubber gloves and rubbing alcohol to anyone who needed them. Within days, he had transformed Red Handed into a kind of general store. Shelves that once held needles and ink were

now stocked with groceries and toilet paper. "My tattoo shop looked like a Circle K," Harold jokes, referring to the chain of convenience stores.

More remarkable: Every item was on sale for the remarkable price of free ninety-nine. Harold, 45, wouldn't accept a dime. "You see the world differently in desperate times. You start asking, 'Is this person loving or hateful? Draining or inspiring?' That's how I've been able to break down the world in light of the pandemic. Everything else falls to the side," he says.

Tucked into a robin's-egg blue building that flies a red pirate flag on its roof, Red Handed Tattoo is a warm place that's as notable for the friendly faces inside as it is for the motorcycles in the parking lot. It's located in an artsy area along busy King's Highway, so friends and clients have long stopped by at all hours just to say hi.

Once the pandemic struck, folks still dropped in, only now they brought donations of masks, hand sanitizer, and anything they could spare from grocery runs. Restaurants called to offer food they'd no longer be able to serve. A manager at the Family Dollar agreed to set aside a portion of



Micah Harold in the tattoo shop he turned into an ad-hoc community center

the most in-demand products as soon as they came off the truck.

Nearly \$10,000 of cash and supplies flowed to Harold's shop—and from there to where they were needed most. A network of 20 volunteers organized to provide contactless deliveries to residents who had trouble getting

around. Soon, even health-care workers at the nearby Willis-Knighton Hospital knew where to get personal protective equipment (PPE) or a thermometer when supplies dwindled.

"This pandemic has exposed decades of old economic and health disparities," says Shreveport mayor

Adrian Perkins. “Shreveport is full of hardworking people who go above and beyond for their neighbors. Michah exemplifies that selfless spirit.”

You might say that Harold was born into helping. His mother, Deborah Allen, is a longtime equal rights activist. As a social worker, she was deeply involved with the AIDS pandemic in the '80s, while Harold was growing up. Almost 40 years later, when Shreveport badly needed masks to help combat COVID-19, Harold's first call was to his mom. She's also a former fashion designer—and, he says, the best seamstress in town.

SHREVEPORT IS A sprawling city of 190,000 nestled in the northwest corner of Louisiana. No stranger to the regular storms that batter the Gulf, residents often sense when one is coming and prepare quietly—and not only for those bringing bad weather. Like so many working-class cities, Shreveport has had its share of struggles. One of the most recent came on April 6, when a 44-year-old Black man named Tommie McGlothen Jr. died in Shreveport police custody after being detained on suspicion of breaking into a car. The anger started at a slow boil.

“Every Saturday was like a barometer,” says Will James, 42, a community activist and performance artist. “You knew a storm was coming, and you could smell the rain in the air.”

After the May 25 death of George

Floyd, the commitment to protesting racism and McGlothen's death only grew. On June 1, Omari Ho-Sang, 30, a civil rights activist, launched a movement called 45 Days of Action. The idea was to hold an event—talks, marches, voter registration drives—every day for 45 days, each with the goal of improving life in the city and beyond.

On June 4, hundreds of people joined a Justice for Tommie march downtown. “We provided PPE and masks, making sure that people stayed socially distant, so we could get our message out without increasing COVID-19 numbers,” says Ho-Sang.

The march was peaceful, but things heated up later that month, outside the Caddo Parish Courthouse. That's the home of a 30-foot monument built in 1905 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to honor “the men who gallantly, nobly, and conscientiously defended the cause.” It features busts of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and other Confederate soldiers.

James, a Shreveport native who remembers the bad old days when robed Ku Klux Klan members freely marched through the streets, has long seen the problem posed by the Confederate tribute, and he has spent the past three years fighting to remove it.

“I can appreciate this as a piece of art, but there's a right place for everything,” James told the *Shreveport Times*. “This monument shouldn't be in front of a place where the 14th



Will James (left) protested outside the Caddo Parish Courthouse (above) for three years. These days, he's grateful for the added support.

Amendment says that we will have equal justice for all.”

In the early days, James protested alone, delivering theatrical monologues highlighting the pain that discrimination can bring. But as monument protests gained currency across the country, so did those in Shreveport. Hundreds of people began regularly showing up to watch James and support his message.

On June 27, with little warning or provocation, 140 counter-protestors massed across the street from James’s usual spot, brandishing guns and shouting hateful words. James stayed on the mic for hours that day, telling

the gathered to keep the faith until his voice gave out. Others then took turns speaking, and the crowd became so engrossed in one another’s shared hopes and fears that they just tuned out the shouts from the opposition. Finally the counter-protestors left—and never came back.

“It turned into a moment that brought unity when there was anger an hour before. It shows how deep at heart we all really want peace,” says James. A few weeks later, on July 20, the United Daughters of the Confederacy agreed to remove the monument to an as yet undecided location.

HOW HAS SHREVEPORT been able to effect real change with minimal arrests, violence, and property damage?

“Credit goes to the citizens,” says police chief Ben Raymond. “They didn’t want to destroy their city. They just wanted to be heard.”

Not surprisingly, Micah Harold lent a helping hand to the protesters too.

Stacie Archibald, a nurse friend who staffed the medical tent at the first Black Lives Matter march following George Floyd's death, says that rags dunked in ice water, all donated by Red Handed Tattoo, were essential in keeping marchers cool.

In the days since the protests, Harold has kept his "marketplace of caring" up and running, though he has also gone back to his first love: inking designs on people who want to express themselves in their own way. The tattoo shop and the extended family he has found there, both in his staff and customers, have provided Harold with some of the most important connections in his life. One of the most surprising was with the family of Joshua Jefferson, the young man who robbed his store. Throughout the summer, Harold called

the Jeffersons every week. Sometimes he even dropped by with groceries.

And then, on August 3, the district court judge, in an unexpected display of leniency, sentenced Joshua to three years of probation—no jail time. As soon as he heard, Harold called Joshua's father, Melvin Jefferson. "I honestly believe Joshua won't squander this opportunity," says Harold. "He made a huge mistake, and he's learned from it."

Harold, who survived a nearly fatal widow-maker heart attack last year, is a big believer in second chances. That job he offered Joshua? It's his when he wants it. "Fear keeps people from making the right moves—they worry about looking like a fool," he says. "I don't worry anymore. We all need to make the world a nicer place."

The Nicest Places by the Numbers

1,183

total nominations were made in response to our call for entries in May.

229

places landed on our short list and were vetted by our team of reporters.

50

Nicest Places, one in each state, earned our honors.

666,933

"claps" were received on rd.com from Americans supporting their favorites among the 50 state honorees.

To select our Nicest Place in America, RD editors counted the claps for each place, polled our advisory members, and then made this year's pick: Buchanan, Michigan.



YARDLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Victory Gardens

BY Jen Babakhan

YARDLEY HAS A long history as a community that cares. Back in the days of the Underground Railroad, at least five places in this Delaware River town housed runaway slaves. For the past four decades, a good portion of the altruism has been centered at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, whose members meet in the 19th-century parish house every month to fix meals for elderly and shut-in residents across the Philadelphia region.

Barbara Taeffner Kulp enjoyed this generosity twice. "When I broke both my legs, St. Andrew's fed my husband and myself in such abundance that with great thanks I had to say stop," she says. "My husband—jokingly, I hope—asked me to break my legs every month because he loved the food." When he passed away, the cards and calls were "unending," Kulp says. They helped her know she was never alone.

The coronavirus ended the congregation's proud 37-year streak of making meals together, but it didn't break their spirit of giving—far from it. Instead, church members took to cooking in their homes. Soon, volunteers were serving up 1,000 meals and 400 containers of soup each week—almost



Parishioners at St. Andrew's have found new ways to stay connected.

ten times more food than before the pandemic. And many ingredients in those meals were homegrown. In the spring, St. Andrew's provided seedlings—tomatoes, beans, basil, and more—to Yardley residents to plant at home. The gardeners then brought their bounty back to the church to share with area food banks.

"Forty percent of America's produce in World War II came from victory gardens in backyards and at churches," says St. Andrew's rector, Rev. Hilary Greer. "I thought, What if we did that here?" To which the people of Yardley said "Amen."

The Nicest Place in Every Other State



To read the stirring stories of our honorees, click around the interactive map at rd.com/nicest2020.

- **Alabama** *Owens Cross Roads*
- **Alaska** *Anchorage*
- **Arizona** *East Gershon Lane, Tucson*
- **Arkansas** *Sardis*
- **Colorado** *Struggle of Love Foundation, Denver*
- **Connecticut** *Bloomfield*
- **Delaware** *Edgemoor Terrace, Wilmington*
- **Florida** *Pine Hills*
- **Georgia** *The Dream Center, Augusta*
- **Hawaii** *Kamiloiki Valley, Oahu*
- **Idaho** *Meridian*
- **Illinois** *Collinsville*
- **Indiana** *Doorsteps of Central Indiana*
- **Iowa** *Iowa City*
- **Kansas** *Olathe*
- **Kentucky** *Signature Health Care Nursing Facility, Elizabethtown*
- **Maine** *The Cedars, Portland*
- **Massachusetts** *Springfield*
- **Minnesota** *Victoria's Ristorante and Wine Bar, Rochester*
- **Mississippi** *Florence Gardens, Gulfport*
- **Missouri** *Thousand Oaks, Parkville*
- **Montana** *Ronan*
- **Nebraska** *South 32nd Place, Lincoln*
- **Nevada** *Sparks*
- **New Hampshire** *Temple*
- **New Jersey** *Jefferson Washington Township Hospital, Turnersville*
- **New Mexico** *Bueno Para Todos Farm, Villanueva*
- **New York** *Riverdale*
- **North Carolina** *Dirtbag Ales Brewery, Hope Mills*
- **North Dakota** *Minot*
- **Ohio** *Clintonville, Columbus*
- **Oklahoma** *Colefax Hill, Tulsa*
- **Oregon** *Hillsboro*
- **Rhode Island** *Belmont Market, Wakefield*
- **South Dakota** *Iroquois School District*
- **Tennessee** *Nashville*
- **Texas** *Highland Village*
- **Utah** *Backyards of Saratoga Springs*
- **Vermont** *Telehealth Access for Seniors, Barre*
- **Virginia** *Virtual Tip Jar, Hampton Roads*
- **Washington** *Bellden Café, Bellevue*
- **West Virginia** *Huntington*
- **Wisconsin** *Sassy Cow Creamery, Columbus*
- **Wyoming** *Casper*

HUMOR *in*
UNIFORM

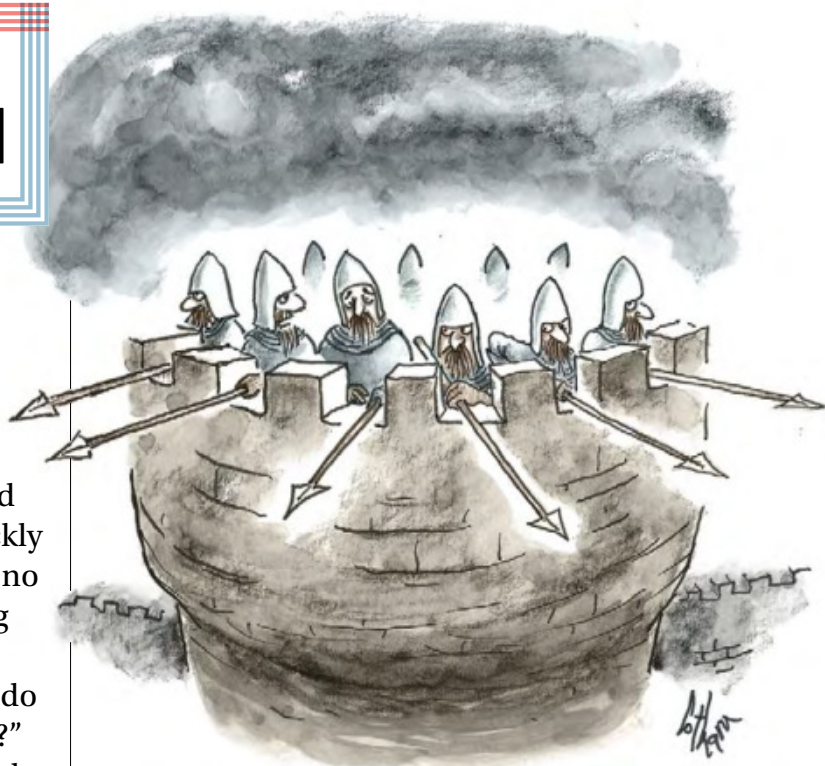
While serving in South Korea, I was assigned guard duty. The ensign issued me a gun and a whistle, but I quickly realized there were no bullets. Brandishing the empty weapon, I asked, "What do I do if I run into trouble?"

The ensign replied, "That's what the whistle's for."

—GORDON STANLEY
Schaumburg, Illinois

During basic training, our drill sergeant often led us in a game of Simon Says to help teach us the marching commands. "I bet you can't get me out," a private insisted.

Challenge accepted, the drill sergeant went through the commands, sometimes



"Oh, stop it. You know perfectly well that before every battle the enemy shouts things at us that we may find offensive."

beginning with "Simon says" and sometimes not. The private was as good as he claimed and stayed in the game until the sergeant commanded, "Simon says, jump up!" The private leaped into the air and landed again.

"You're out!" the sergeant shouted.

"Simon said jump up, but not down!"

—THOMAS WEBER
DeKalb, Illinois

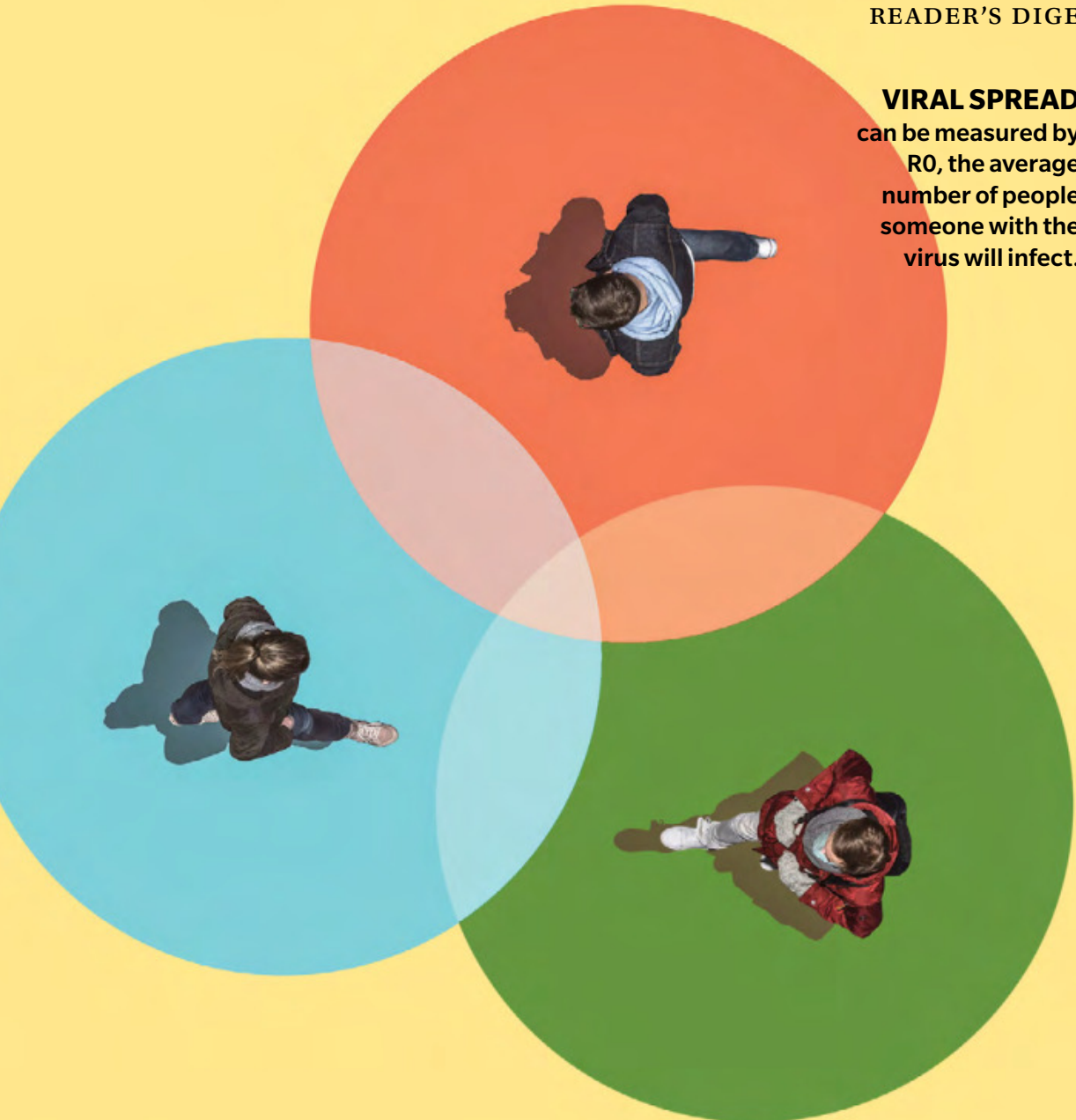
GOT A FUNNY STORY about the military or your military family? It could be worth \$\$\$\$. For details, see page 4 or go to RD.COM/SUBMIT.



Virus Facts You Need to Know

We're inundated with news about COVID-19 and other viruses, but how much do you really know about how they work and whom they target?

BY *Charlotte Hilton Andersen*



VIRAL SPREAD
can be measured by R_0 , the average number of people someone with the virus will infect.

There's a long-standing argument in scientific circles over how to classify viruses. They're not inanimate, because they multiply, have genes, and evolve. Yet they're not "alive," as they don't have cells, can't convert food into energy, and can't survive on their own. Viruses are biological zombies. They have one mission: to find a host

and use it to replicate. They reproduce by hijacking the host's cells, eventually causing them to burst and die. That's why viruses that infect humans nearly always cause illness. Fortunately, just as we know a great deal about how viruses do their damage, so do we know how to fend them off. These facts are a good place to start.



VIRUSES
and other
microorganisms
are in raindrops
and snowflakes.

1 There are many more viruses than you think

We often think of just a few viruses—influenza, HIV, and now coronaviruses—but they are the most plentiful microbes on the planet. There are about 320,000 types that infect mammals, but just 219 are known to infect humans, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

2 They are even in the rain

The next time you dance in the rain or catch snowflakes on your tongue, you might want to consider the fact that it's literally raining

viruses. Viruses and other microorganisms get swept up into the atmosphere in small particles from soil and sea spray, returning to the earth via rain, snow, and sandstorms, according to a study published in *Nature*. Luckily, most of them aren't infectious.

3 Figuring out how contagious they are is both an art and a science

One way to measure viral spread is R_0 (pronounced "r naught"), which is the average of how many people may be infected by a single person with the virus. If the R_0 is 4, then each infected

person could spread the disease to about four others. The ideal R_0 is less than 1, which means the virus is dying out in a population. But calculating R_0 is far from straightforward, as it is based on biological, sociobehavioral, and environmental factors that can change rapidly.

4 You can get some viruses more than once

There's a popular myth that once you've had a virus, you're immune to it, but that's not always the case, says Kathleen Dass, MD, an allergist and immunologist with Michigan Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Center in Oak Park. When you get a virus, your body builds up antibodies to fight it. Those antibodies stay in your system, helping you ward off future infections. (This is also how vaccines work.) However, not everyone makes enough antibodies, and they can wear off over time, which is why you need booster shots of some vaccines. In addition, viruses can mutate, making your antibodies ineffective against a new strain.

5 Viruses and bacteria may be hard to tell apart

It's often difficult to tell based on symptoms whether an illness is caused by a virus or bacteria, but lab tests can confirm the culprit. Unlike viruses, bacteria are single-celled organisms that can live and reproduce on their own.

6 You can be contagious without ever showing symptoms

Some viruses, including those that cause herpes, COVID-19, and AIDS, can be spread via asymptomatic people (they never had signs of the illness) and presymptomatic people (they don't have symptoms yet), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Some people may even be "superspreaders," infecting dozens to hundreds of other people without even realizing it. Take precautions to prevent spreading viruses even when you don't feel sick.

7 You can be sued for knowingly spreading some viruses

While it's unlikely anyone will take you to court for spreading the flu around the office (but please, stay home when you feel ill), you could be sued if you were to knowingly infect someone with an incurable virus, such as HIV or herpes. For instance, the singer Usher has been sued by sexual partners for not disclosing his herpes status. Similarly, actor Charlie Sheen has been sued twice for exposing women to HIV without telling them.

8 If you're very overweight, you need to be extra cautious

Obese people are contagious with the flu virus 42 percent longer than those who aren't obese, according to research in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. Because obesity is linked to many health problems, it

may affect your immune system. Extra weight may make the flu shot less effective too.

9 **The flu can trigger heart attacks**

The influenza virus doesn't just irritate your chest and sinuses—it also causes widespread inflammation throughout your body. That can increase the risk of developing blood clots that can trigger a heart attack, according to a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

10 **Cold air can make it easier to get sick**

“Going out into the cold won't make you sick on its own,” says Saralyn Mark, MD, president and CEO of SolaMed Solutions in Washington, DC. “But if you are in the cold often, your body adapts by allowing your mucous membranes to dry up. When that mucus dries up, it can't protect you, and a virus can get in.”

11 **Nail-biting is a no-no**

Your fingers pick up germs easily, and chewing on them gives viruses a one-way ticket into your body. Cut your nails to keep them short and try to keep your fingers away from your nose and mouth.

12 **Staying up late can slow your recovery**

A study published in 2019 in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*

found that a good night's sleep can boost the effectiveness of specialized immune cells called T cells. Sleep as much as possible when you're sick to give your body a chance to recover.

13 **Cold showers aren't a fever cure**

You may have been told by a parent or grandparent that an ice bath or a cold shower is a good way to lower a fever quickly, but cold water can cause shock and may end up spiking your temperature higher, says Patricia Whitley-Williams, MD, a professor and the chair of the department of pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Lukewarm water is best to help break a fever, she says.

14 **Secondhand smoke increases your risk of getting sick**

You already know that tobacco smoke—whether you're the smoker or not—damages your lungs. That goes double when you're sick because smoke weakens immunity and can make congestion and coughing worse.

15 **COVID-19 isn't a super-deadly plague**

People hear the word *pandemic* and automatically think mass deaths, but most people who develop COVID-19 will recover, stresses Len Horovitz, MD, a pulmonary specialist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. “Most people will get better at home



WASHING HANDS

with soap and water is really the best defense.

on their own, but you can be in for a long course of illness that lasts several weeks,” he says. If you have chest pain, shortness of breath, or severe dehydration, go to the hospital.

16 Vitamin D might help

The relationship between COVID-19 and vitamin D isn't entirely clear, but a recent analysis of preliminary research, published in *Nutrients*, found that having low levels of vitamin D is linked with more severe symptoms; increasing vitamin D levels may provide some protection by reducing your risk of getting infected with or dying from the coronavirus or the flu.

17 Yes, you should wear a mask

The CDC recently urged all Americans to wear cloth face coverings when in public to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but they can help lower the spread of other viruses as well. Wearing a mask doesn't completely prevent you from getting sick, but if everyone wore them in public places, the rate of infections and community spread could be cut significantly, says Dr. Horovitz.

18 “COVID toes” are a thing

While it mainly produces respiratory symptoms, the virus that causes COVID-19 has been found



VITAMIN D
may help protect
against COVID-19
and the flu.

to be capable of attacking most anywhere in your body, including your toes, explains Matthew G. Heinz, MD, a hospitalist and internist at Tucson Medical Center in Arizona. This symptom looks a lot like chilblains, which is redness, swelling, and itching of the toes (or fingers) in cold weather.

19 **Loss of taste or smell is an early warning sign**

Another unusual warning sign of COVID-19 is losing your sense of taste and smell, says Dr. Heinz. For some people with mild cases, this may be the only symptom, and it's more likely to appear in younger people, he says. It's not clear what causes it, but

the disease provokes a profound inflammatory response throughout the body that could somehow impede the functioning of the senses.

20 **COVID-19 can hurt your brain**

A review of scientific literature published in June in the *Annals of Neurology* found that about half of hospitalized COVID-19 patients experienced neurological symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, strokes, and seizures. Researchers speculate that this may be due to increased inflammation, lack of oxygen, an autoimmune reaction, or a clotting disorder triggered by the virus.

21 Herpes simplex virus might cause Alzheimer's disease

Could a pesky little cold sore be responsible for destroying a person's memory? Research over the past 20 years suggests a link between the herpes simplex virus (HSV-1), which causes cold sores, and Alzheimer's disease. A Taiwanese study found that people with HSV infections had almost three times the risk of developing dementia later in life as those who were virus-free. Those who then took antiviral medication to treat their herpes cut their dementia risk by 90 percent.

22 Celiac disease might be caused by a virus

This autoimmune bowel condition affects an estimated 1 in 100 people worldwide, reports the Celiac Disease Foundation. New research published in *Science* suggests that it may be partly caused by the immune system's response to a common virus called a reovirus.

23 Shingles could raise the risk for stroke and heart attack

A severe case of shingles, a disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (the same one that causes chicken pox), can raise your risk for stroke, heart attack, and death. A meta-analysis of more than 20 years of research published in *PLOS One* found that even one case of shingles is associated with

24-36 VIRUSES CAN LINGER IN MANY PLACES

Viruses are tenacious and can survive for quite a long time on surfaces outside the human body. Exactly how long they remain infectious depends on the type of surface and the environmental conditions; in a lab environment, the COVID-19 virus stayed active for two to three days on plastic and metal surfaces and for 24 hours on cardboard and paper, according to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Among the objects in your home that can harbor viruses:

- ◆ phones
- ◆ railings
- ◆ remotes
- ◆ keyboards
- ◆ faucets
- ◆ door and cabinet handles
- ◆ sheets, pillowcases, and blankets

In public places, be certain to clean your hands after touching:

- ◆ faucets
- ◆ door and escalator handles
- ◆ ATM and other keypads
- ◆ gas-pump handles
- ◆ weights at the gym
- ◆ utensils at buffets and salad bars

a significantly increased risk of brain and heart events.

37 Ebola and Zika viruses can be transmitted sexually

You know that if you want to avoid sexually transmitted viruses such as herpes and HIV, you need to use protection when you have sex. But many other viruses can be transmitted through semen and/or vaginal fluids. In 2018, researchers discovered that the Zika virus could be transmitted sexually. A separate study found traces of the deadly Ebola virus in the semen of people who had recovered from it—up to two years after they were sick.

38 Zika virus might kill brain cancer

Not all virus side effects are bad. While the Zika virus can have devastating effects on fetal brains, its ability to target brain tissue may one day help it treat glioblastoma, a common type of brain cancer.

39 Rabies is the most deadly virus

Nearly 100 percent of people who get infected with the rabies virus will die from it, making it the most lethal known virus. To date, only 14 people have survived the disease after showing symptoms. The disease is also nearly 100 percent preventable with a vaccine, according to the CDC.

If you get the vaccine before any exposure, it can prevent an infection, but it also works if you get the shots soon after being exposed. As most cases are caused by being bitten by an infected animal, it's important to see your doctor after any animal bite, no matter how small.

40 If you can't touch your chin to your chest, call your doc

A stiff, sore neck is one of the first signs of viral meningitis, a serious illness that may follow exposure to many common viruses, including enteroviruses and those that cause herpes, influenza, and measles. If you have cold- or flulike symptoms that progress to a severe headache, light sensitivity, lethargy, and a neck so stiff you can't easily bend it forward, call your doc stat.

41 You can get rid of one virus with duct tape

Warts aren't caused by cuddling with toads but rather by an infection with the human papillomavirus. The unsightly bumps are usually benign and will go away eventually on their own. One home remedy that may speed up the healing time is covering them with duct tape, according to a study published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. In fact, researchers found that duct tape therapy was significantly more effective than cryotherapy for the treatment of common warts.



COLD AIR
can make
it easier to
get sick.

42 **Avoid the sun if you are prone to cold sores**
Once you've had a herpes infection, the virus lies dormant in nerve cells in your skin and may re-emerge as another cold sore in the same place as before, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Recurrence often is triggered by sun exposure.

43 **There is no cure for the flu and other viruses**
Sad, but true. "The best 'treatment' is prevention through vaccines and lifestyle changes," says

Dr. Dass. "However, antiviral medications, such as oseltamivir [Tamiflu], can help you feel better faster, and they can make your symptoms less severe," she says.

44 **Don't ask for antibiotics for your viral infection**
Antibiotics kill bacteria, but they don't work on viruses at all. Still, many doctors report feeling pressured to prescribe antibiotics by patients who insist on them despite having a viral infection, such as the flu, according to a study published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*.

In fact, the researchers found that so many people are convinced that antibiotics will help their viral symptoms that up to one third of all antibiotic prescriptions are unnecessary.

45 Soap and water really are the best defense

“Wash your hands” is practically a mantra these days, and for good reason. A drop of soap diluted in water literally pries apart the virus, causing the protein-wrapped particles to rupture and become useless. Make sure to wash for a minimum of 20 seconds and dry your hands on a clean towel. In public restrooms, avoid air dryers, which blow contaminants all over the place.

46 Disinfect your house regularly—but not with antibacterial wipes

Just as antibiotics don't cure viral infections, antibacterial cleaners are ineffective against viruses, the CDC cautions. Worse, using antibacterial products can build antibiotic resistance. Instead, use hydrogen peroxide, ammonia, or another EPA-registered disinfectant product to clean items that may be contaminated with viruses, including the coronavirus. (See items 24–36 for more on that.)

47 Exercise can help you ward off the flu

Don't skip that regular workout: “Regular exercise, which can

EXERCISE
can help ward
off the flu, but
don't overdo it.



include taking brisk walks, has been shown to improve your immune system, thus decreasing your likelihood of developing a cold or the flu,” Dr. Dass says. But don’t overdo it. “If you’re training for a long marathon, that can have the opposite effect and hurt your immune system,” she says.

48 Get a flu shot every year One of the best ways to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot every year. (Some children may need two vaccines in one season.) There are over 200 strains of flu viruses, and they can mutate, which is why a new formula is created every season, says Jeremy Blais, PharmD, a pharmacist in Providence, Rhode Island, and a director at CVS Health. If you’re hesitant because of an egg allergy, there are two egg-free vaccines available—Flucelvax and Flublok.

49 Drink green tea According to a meta-analysis published in *Molecules*, green tea may be an immune

booster, helping fight both cold and influenza viruses. Researchers found that drinking green tea regularly not only helps you recover from a cold but may also help prevent recurring infections—and could make you less likely to get one in the first place.

50 Don’t count on herd immunity You may have read that you can skip getting vaccinated if you live in a place where most people have had the disease or the vaccine, allowing you to take advantage of herd immunity. “But effective herd immunity requires that more than 90 percent of the population be vaccinated against a disease,” says Tish Davidson, medical writer and author of *Vaccines: History, Science, and Issues* and *The Vaccine Debate*. “The exact percentage depends on the contagiousness of the disease, and the flu is very contagious. With the current low flu vaccination rate, people should not count on herd immunity to protect them. It won’t.” **R**



On the Flip Side

In several Romance languages, the word for roller coaster literally translates to “Russian mountains,” probably because the ride came from Russia to France in the 19th century. Funnily enough, the Russian phrase translates to “American slides,” perhaps because of the popularity of the ride in the United States. And the Croatian word translates to “train of death”—which means you might not want to ride one there.

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BY *Steven Leckart*

FROM **CHICAGO**, PUBLISHED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH **EPIC MAGAZINE**

The Bank Robber on the Bicycle

*Tom Justice chased Olympic gold on his bike.
Then he used it as a getaway vehicle.*

JOLEEN ZUBEK (MONEY)





THE MAN IN the baseball cap and sunglasses waited for the teller to notice him. The morning of May 26, 2000, was quiet inside the LaSalle Bank in Highland Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

“May I help you?” said the young woman behind the counter. The man reached to the back of his khakis as if to fish out a wallet. Instead, he presented her with an index card. The teller’s smile wilted as she stared at the words: “THIS IS A ROBBERY. PUT ALL OF YOUR MONEY IN THE BAG.”

The robber, a slender man wearing a blue oxford shirt, returned the card to his pocket. “Nice and easy,” he said coolly, handing over a plastic shopping bag. While the teller anxiously transferred bundles of cash, the man gently pressed his palms together as if he were about to whisper “Namaste.”

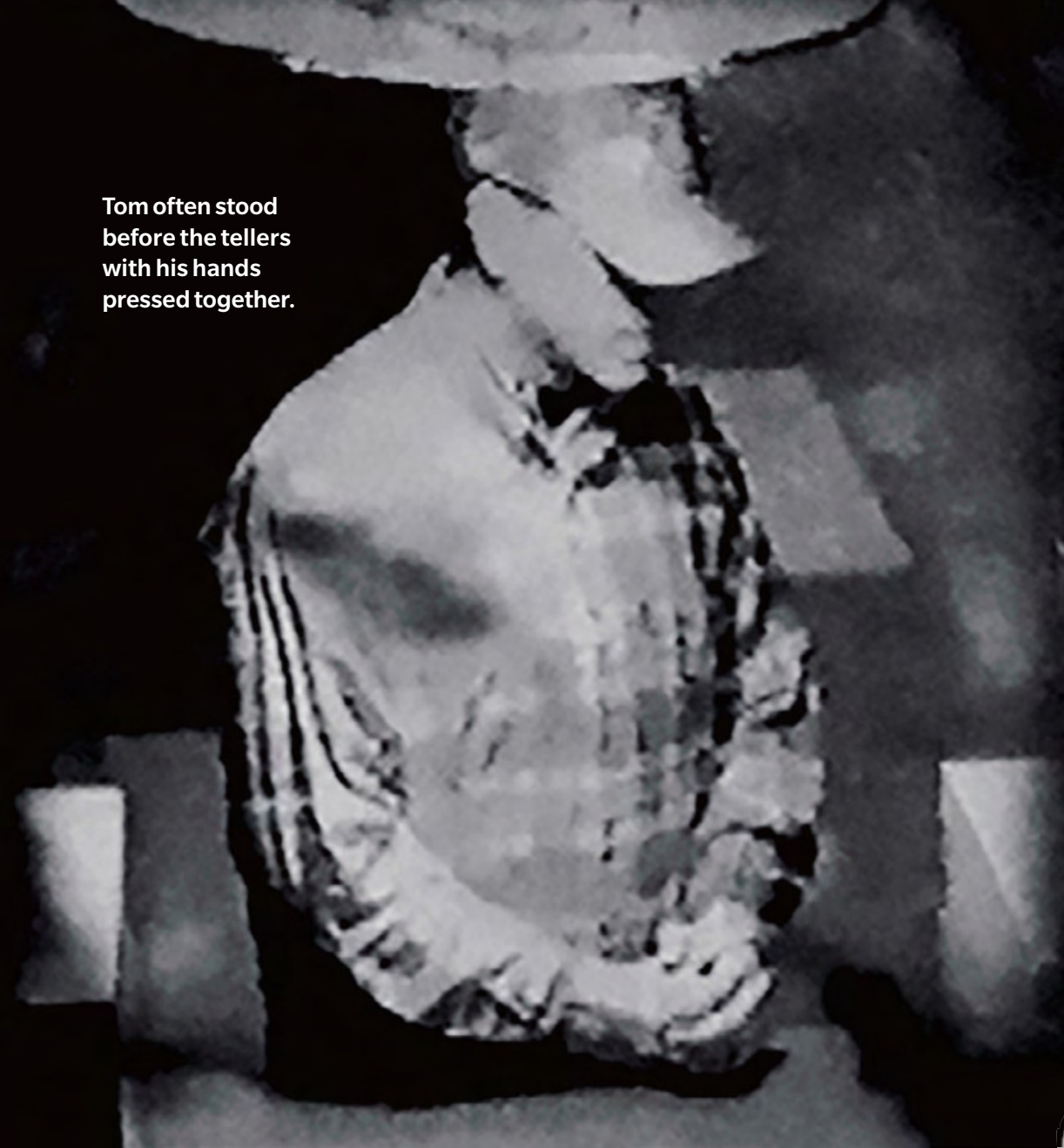
“Thank you,” he said, and walked out the front door.

Less than two minutes later, he emerged from an underground parking lot carrying a bicycle on one shoulder and a messenger bag over the other and wearing a red, white, and blue spandex bodysuit. He climbed onto the bike and began to ride leisurely.

He cruised up to a trash can. After fishing two crisp \$20 bills out of the plastic bag, he held it upside down over the can. Several bundles of cash—\$4,009 in all—tumbled into the trash. The man returned the empty sack to his messenger bag and pedaled away.

SEATED IN THE BLEACHERS, 13-year-old Tom Justice watched in awe as the cyclists careened around the outdoor track of the Ed Rudolph Velodrome, outside Chicago. Every time the pack whirled by, it cut the air, unleashing a concentrated whoosh.

Before that summer of 1983, Tom



Tom often stood
before the tellers
with his hands
pressed together.

had never seen a bicycle race, let alone a velodrome. But from the moment he entered the stadium, he was transfixed.

He returned a week later with his maroon Schwinn. As the stadium lights buzzed, a dozen suburban kids gathered on the track. Everyone was wearing T-shirts and gym shorts except for Tom, who stood out in the

professional-grade jersey and padded cycling shorts his father had just bought him.

Tom won the 12-to-14-year-old heat handily. Straddling his bike, his chest still heaving, he felt a surge of adrenaline. He had finally found something at which he excelled. His father, Jay Justice, a Navy veteran with an



Tom's fascination with bikes started early. He had this one when he was four.

abundance of athleticism, was thrilled.

By Tom's junior year at Libertyville High School, his identity hinged on cycling. In 1987, just four years after his first velodrome victory, Tom was selected to attend the Olympic training camp in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In the school's 1988 yearbook, one page asked, "What will your friends be doing in ten years?" Tom Justice's caption read: "On the cover of a Wheaties box, with his bike."

But after high school, Tom's commitment to cycling—and everything else—lapsed. Instead of training, he broke into empty houses to smoke cigarettes and chug beers with his buddies.

Somehow Tom still harbored grandiose expectations. And since nothing else ever clicked for him the way cycling had, after graduating from college, he moved to Los Angeles to train alongside the U.S. Olympic team. He

did little to distinguish himself. The other sprinters could tell he lacked discipline. "Tom's fast, but he doesn't train right," one noted. "He needs to apply himself." He soon washed out, returned to Chicago, and found a job as a social worker. Helping people was a welcome distraction from his own issues. But after a while, it felt like a pointless slog.

As Tom's Olympic dream slipped away, he fantasized about identities he could substitute for the thrilling instant gratification of cycling. He made a list, and then wandered from interview to interview, growing increasingly unhappy with his mundane life.

Late one night in 1998, Tom revisited the list he'd added to over the years. Under "helicopter pilot" and "lock picker," he'd scrawled two letters: "B.R."

Bank robber.

Several notorious American bank robbers had spent time in Chicago.

That history added to the allure for Tom. At a wig shop in the same neighborhood where gangster John Dillinger hid out, Tom considered his options. Ultimately, he settled on black braids with short bangs that made him look like “Super Freak” singer Rick James.

On October 23, 1998, Tom entered his parents’ garage, grabbed his messenger bag and Fuji AX-500, and pedaled toward downtown Libertyville. He coasted up to a tree-lined fence between two houses and slid on a pair of khakis and a blue oxford button-down over his cycling spandex. He slipped on his wig and dark over-size sunglasses reminiscent of Jackie O’s and then continued on foot to the American National Bank branch.

When Tom approached the teller, she perked up immediately. Halloween had apparently come early this year. Then the love child of Rick James and Jackie O handed her an index card but wouldn’t let go of it. As an awkward tug-of-war ensued, the teller leaned in and read the message. Tom slid his plastic bag across the counter, and she loaded it up with cash.

Tom strode outside, bag in hand. His heartbeat surged. His legs tingled. Two minutes later, he was beside his bike, feverishly stripping down. He shoved his disguise and the money into his messenger bag.

Then he casually cycled back to his parents’ house. He parked his bike in the garage and tiptoed into the basement. Kneeling on the shag carpet,

he looked at the money and began to weep. It had been a long time since Tom had felt this alive—or this important.

FOR MONTHS, that \$5,580 he’d stolen sat in a gym bag inside the closet of his old room at his parents’ house. Tom assumed the bills were traceable, so he kept only two \$20s as souvenirs. Late one night, he tossed the remaining cash into a few dumpsters.

Nearly one year after his first robbery, Tom committed his second. This time, he discarded the bills in alleys where he knew homeless people

TOM’S HEARTBEAT SURGED. IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE HE’D FELT THIS ALIVE.



would find them. Robbing banks and giving away the money were intoxicating. Tom saw himself as both mischievous and righteous.

But that feeling faded. Tom’s real life seemed mediocre and unfulfilling. He wrestled with depression and brooded over the realization that at 29, his window of opportunity to become a world-class cyclist had nearly passed. If he wanted to pursue his Olympic dream, he had to do it now.

He told his girlfriend, Laura, he was moving to Southern California to train for the Olympic trials. He had retained

his classification as a Category 1 cyclist, so he would automatically qualify for the trials.

When he arrived in California, Tom looked in the mirror and told himself, "I'm not going to rob any more banks."

"HOW'S IT GOING?" asked Laura, calling from Chicago.

"Well!" replied Tom. His skin was tan from his time at the San Diego Outdoor Velodrome. Every morning, he worked through the Olympic strength-training regimen to build muscle mass. His already explosive dead start was getting deadlier. As the weeks passed in early 2000, Tom rounded into the best shape of his life.

But the monotony of training was setting in. The day after Valentine's Day, he hit a bank in Encinitas. On February 29, one in Solana Beach. The next day, another in Encinitas. Two weeks later, one in San Diego. On March 24, Tom robbed two banks, nabbing his biggest score yet: \$10,274.

Then one morning, an intense pain surged through Tom's lower back. He'd thrown it out overtraining. It would take weeks before he could pedal without waking up in agony the day after. His plan to race in the Olympic trials was over.

Soon after he returned to Chicago, Laura dumped him. He moved into an apartment with George, a 230-pound Greek hulk who worked nights.

"What do you do?" asked Tom.

"I'm a cop," said George.

Once his lower back recovered, Tom robbed the LaSalle Bank in Highland Park—the heist in which he dumped his \$4,009 haul in a trash can. The next week, he hit three banks in three days. George had no clue his roommate had just knocked over his 13th bank.

In the summer of 2001, Tom joined a club cycling team run by Higher Gear, a bike shop not far from the LaSalle Bank. One day, the shop's manager mentioned to Tom that a local rider was selling a used Steelman. Steelman bicycles are exceptional. Tom, whose own bike had recently been stolen, was looking for a replacement. As soon as he saw the Steelman, he was torn. It was painted a garish Day-Glo

HE BOLTED IN A DEAD START AS HELLACIOUS AS ANY HE HAD EVER MUSTERED.



orange. But he knew that a used Steelman didn't just magically appear every day, so he bought it.

By this point, Tom had stopped giving away the cash from his robberies. He was becoming dependent on drugs. He had no job, but he had pockets full of cash and cocaine. As he increased dosages, his post-high depression deepened.

Tom started attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings. When it was his turn to share, he talked about



As a teenager, Tom qualified to compete in the Olympic trials as a track cyclist.

merely experimenting with drugs. He was in denial. “This is gonna be my last meeting,” he announced after just six weeks. He said he was moving back to California. He was planning to apply to grad school there. Everybody in the room wished him luck.

“TWO-ELEVEN IN PROGRESS.” The voice crackled through the radio in Officer Greg Thompson’s squad car. Someone had just robbed a Union Bank in Walnut Creek, California. It was March 7, 2002, a drizzly day. Thompson was passing a parking garage when a bicyclist shot out of the driveway and flew behind the cruiser. Thompson squinted into his side mirror. The cyclist looked like every other weekend warrior, except for one detail: the messenger bag draped over his shoulder.

An 18-year police veteran, Thompson taught new recruits to thrive on

instinct. This was one of those moments. But before he could flash his lights, the cyclist pulled over, hopped off his bike, and started fidgeting with his back wheel. Thompson parked a few feet ahead and walked back to the cyclist. Tom pretended to adjust his brakes before climbing onto the bike and clicking his left foot into the pedal.

“Do you mind if I take a look in your bag?” Thompson asked.

“Yeah, no problem. I just have to unclip,” replied Tom. “These pedals are actually counterbalanced, so I need to click into both in order to get out at the same time.”

There’s no such thing as counterbalanced pedals. But Thompson didn’t know that. He watched as the cyclist lifted his right foot, clicked down into the pedal, and—*whoosh!*—bolted into the street in a dead start as hellacious as any Tom had ever mustered on a velodrome.

A few blocks away, Officer Sean Dexter was sitting in a squad car when he spotted a cyclist on an orange bike charging through traffic toward a red light. Dexter pulled into the intersection, but the cyclist didn’t stop.

Tom swerved around the police car, crossed two lanes, and hopped the curb. Darting through a parking lot, he headed toward a tall fence bordering a thicket of 15-foot-high bamboo.

Dexter reached for his radio, but before he could even open his mouth, another cop hopped on the channel. “A guy on a bicycle just ran from me!”



"I've got him right here!" Dexter shouted into the radio.

Dexter got out of his car and paced toward the fence. He slowly cracked the gate and peered into the jumbled mess of vegetation. A creek flowed 30 feet below, amid fallen tree branches, dry brush, and piles of wet leaves.

Sirens blared as officers secured the perimeter. While Dexter and Thompson walked the upper banks, police dogs combed the creek. After about 15 minutes, a detective spotted something in the leaves: an orange bicycle. Then a German shepherd from the K-9 unit led them to a pair of cycling shoes hidden under a concrete retaining wall beneath a bridge.

As the sky grew bleaker, the search was called off. They had one good clue, though: the orange bicycle.

Tom was lying facedown in a cold, damp dirt tunnel. Hours earlier, as the orange Steelman tumbled through the brush, Tom had slid down the embankment, crashing violently through the leaves. He trudged 50 feet upstream and took cover underneath a bridge, where he discovered a two-foot-wide hole at the water's edge. He crawled in headfirst and squirmed 11 feet to the narrow tunnel's end. Panting in the dark, he heard sirens, then faint voices and the jingling of a dog's tags. Tom assumed that was the end. But then—a miracle. The cops gave up the search.

It was dark when Tom emerged. He had parked his 1983 Mercedes-Benz about two miles away. He found it and

drove to his apartment in Oakland.

"Is everything OK?" asked Tom's roommate at the time, Marty.

"Yeah, just a rough couple of days," Tom replied.

A six-foot-five opera singer, Marty wasn't looking for a new friend, but he'd found one in Tom. Marty knew Tom was snorting cocaine, but he was unaware of his other vices.

"What's going on?" asked Marty.

"I can't say," Tom said.

"Tom, you can tell me anything."

Eventually, Tom reluctantly told Marty everything.

"What are you gonna do?" Marty asked.

"I need to buy a ticket home," Tom said. He wanted to see his parents before the cops found him.

ALTHOUGH HE DIDN'T know anything about bikes, Officer Dexter had a hunch that the orange 12-speed was special. He walked it from the station to a nearby bike shop. A guy behind the counter said the frame was custom-made by a man named Steelman. Dexter called the company and spoke to Steelman's wife, who handled the bookkeeping. She told Dexter that the serial number he had might be for a 1996 orange bicycle sold at a shop called Higher Gear in Chicago.

Dexter called Higher Gear, but the guy who answered said they didn't keep records that far back.

Meanwhile, the FBI was doing its own investigating.



Left: Tom while he was living with a cop—and robbing banks. Right: the Steelman bike.

A month later, the manager of a bicycle shop in Chicago called the Walnut Creek police. In 1996, he'd assembled the orange bike. He knew the original owner and the guy who'd bought it secondhand.

TOM AND HIS father sat in the kitchen. It was less than a week since Tom had confessed to Marty.

"How's that job of yours?" Jay asked his son. "What's your plan for the future?" As far as he knew, Tom was working as a bike messenger.

"I'm gonna apply to some new grad school programs," Tom replied.

Jay nodded. *Sounds familiar.*

Tom headed out the door. "See you guys later," he called, and he climbed into his car.

When the first police car appeared behind him, Tom didn't think much of it. Then there were three more. Red lights were now flashing. Tom pulled over and glanced back. Five cops were aiming their guns at him.

As the handcuffs tightened around his wrists, Tom wanted to cry, not out of despair or fear but out of a much heavier sense of something he wasn't expecting: relief. After four years, his self-destructive cross-country loop was finally coming to an end.

In the interrogation room, an FBI agent placed a photograph on the table. It was a security-cam shot of Tom. The orange Steelman had led them right to him. Riding an average bicycle, Tom might never have been caught.

He gave a full confession. In all, he had robbed 26 banks and stolen \$129,338. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 11 years.

After being released, Tom returned to cycling at his local velodrome. He also eventually found a job at a doughnut shop. Little do the cops know that the 49-year-old handing them their chocolate glazed is one of the most prodigious bank robbers in history. **R**

CHICAGO (JANUARY 29, 2019) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EPIC MAGAZINE. © 2019 BY VOX MEDIA, LLC.

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE



THE DOGS OF WAR

BY *Jason Daly* | FROM **TRULY*ADVENTUROUS**



Caesar and his handler, Rufus Mayo, far right, pause with other handlers and dogs during the fighting.

It's 1943, the Battle of Bougainville. The Americans attacking this South Pacific island are outnumbered and outgunned. Their best hope lies with specially trained soldiers named Jack, Andy, and Caesar. Two problems: The trio has never seen combat, and they're canines.

THE

soldiers filed off the beach and into the twilight world of the jungle. The enemy lay concealed ahead, they could be sure. They followed an unlikely leader: a black-and-tan Doberman named Andy who betrayed no sense of the danger of the situation. Some of the men bristled at the arrangement.

This was to save them all from enemy fire? The canine was a ruined show dog. To make matters worse, the platoon's backup was a German shepherd who months before had been roaming the streets of the Bronx with the three boys who owned him.

As they moved up the trail, they heard gunfire and artillery in the distance as the rest of the Second Marine Raider Battalion fought to secure the shoreline. It was 1943; the assault on Bougainville, a speck of land in the South Pacific, had just begun. Allied forces needed to capture a safe zone large enough to build an airfield for an eventual attack on the nearby island of New Britain, the final Japanese stronghold in the region.

From there, the Allies would hop from island to island until they were within bombing range of Japan itself.

The campaign in the Pacific depended on Bougainville. For the Marines marching blindly into the dense, enemy-occupied jungle, the future depended on dogs who were never supposed to have been part of the war in the first place.

Alene Erlanger was a 46-year-old New Jersey socialite with a love for show poodles when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Days after the attack, she invited her friend Roland Kilbon, a journalist who covered the dog world, to lunch. "Other countries have used dogs in their armies for years and ours have not," she told him. "Just think what dogs can do guarding forts, munitions plants, and such." She envisioned dog fanciers around the country as drill sergeants, grooming a new kind of warrior for a new war.

Kilbon agreed, and the two created Dogs for Defense, an organization that would train dogs for the military. One problem: The military wanted nothing to do with animals. Over the years, jeeps had replaced horses, trucks had taken the place of pack mules, and radios had made carrier pigeons obsolete.

Then, in June 1942, in the dead of night, four German saboteurs laden with explosives landed on Long Island, New York. Four more surfaced on a Florida beach. The FBI tracked down



Scout and messenger dogs patrolling a captured trail on Bougainville with Marines

all eight, but the incidents showed how vulnerable munitions factories and other high-value operations were. Facing a shortage of men due to the war, Uncle Sam reluctantly realized the country needed dogs to patrol 3,700 miles of coastline. Erlanger went to work.

Soon, people from around the country—including actress Greer Garson and crooner Rudy Vallee—were enlisting their dogs for the war

effort. Brothers Max, Morris, and Irving Glazer of New York City owned Caesar, a purebred German shepherd. Caesar was smart. The brothers could buy a parcel at the butcher shop and tell him to “take it to Mom.” The dog would carry the package through the city blocks and to the door of the Glazers’ fourth-floor walk-up without trying to eat the contents—even steak.

When the war broke out, the Glazer sons headed into the military, leaving

Dogs participated in World War I, as this poster shows, but by World War II they had been phased out of the military.

Caesar in their mother's care. With the boys away, the dog grew morose. He needed purpose. So, after consulting with her sons, Mrs. Glazer signed the shepherd up for the war effort. He soon shipped out to an Army camp for training.

On Long Island, Joseph Verhaeghe was making his own painful decision. As a teenager during World War I, he had watched his infant sister be killed when the Germans invaded Belgium. As a grown man, he moved to the United States, married, and had a son named Bobby. Then war broke out again. When he learned of Dogs for Defense, he decided to enlist Jack, the family's Belgian sheepdog, a slinky relative of the German shepherd. Jack was a good boy with an ornery streak who gulped down the ice cream of neighborhood children when they weren't looking. Verhaeghe hesitated to send the dog off until 11-year-old Bobby tearfully announced, "Pop, if Jack can save lives, I want him to go in."

Meanwhile, a prim Doberman named Andreas von Wiede-Hurst—aka Andy—was about to join the war



effort as well. Andy had impeccable bone structure, but his penchant for scrapping with other dogs led to a mangled ear, which kept him off the show-dog circuit. When the Marines began looking for dog recruits, Andy's owners knew he was exactly what they were seeking—a strong, athletic, level-headed animal with an eight-foot leap.

All dogs went through a two-week basic training, where they learned commonplace commands like sit, stay, and come, as well as how to ride

in the back of trucks on bumpy roads. They were also exposed to the sound of gunfire until they didn't flinch. The majority became sentry dogs and were taught to growl or alert at the approach of strangers.

Two more select classes of dogs trained for combat duty. Over 13 weeks, messenger dogs were drilled until they would run between two handlers, dodging all obstacles in their path to get their communication from one trainer to the other. They would be especially important in fighting in the South Pacific, as the best walkie-talkies of the day had a reception range of just a quarter of a mile and experienced interference in the dense jungle.

The animals with the keenest noses and most stable temperaments became scout dogs. They were trained not to bark when they sensed danger but rather to raise their hackles or lift their tails.

In June 1943, a Liberty ship left San Diego carrying thousands of Marines to the South Pacific, including the 24 dogs and 48 handlers of the 1st War Dog Platoon. Gordon Wortman

and Paul Castracane handled Jack, the Verhaeghes' sheepdog. "Jack is really a second Rin Tin Tin. Boy, is he coming swell!" Wortman wrote to his parents. "However, I think that the officers here have too big ideas for Jack and me to carry out." Rufus Mayo, an Alabaman who had raised hunting dogs, and Johnny Kleeman, a 17-year-old from Philadelphia, handled Caesar, the Glazer boys' shepherd. And Andy, the strapping Doberman, found a brave handler in Robert Lansley, a redhead nicknamed Daredevil for his eagerness to participate in combat.

For the three-week journey, the handlers and canines lived in their own segregated village of dog huts and peeing posts placed on deck. Most days, they endured catcalls from veteran Marine Raiders. "Everyone looked on us as a curiosity and wondered what we were supposed to do," said Clyde Henderson, who was in charge of the platoon. "We weren't too sure ourselves." Some of the handlers were worried. Would the animals panic and forget their training under heavy fire, as some critics thought? Would they be so shell-shocked they couldn't work?

The Best of Our Best

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On the morning of November 1, 1943, around 14,000 Allied troops attacked Bougainville, which was defended by 45,000 seasoned Japanese forces. Dogs and men huddled aboard three Higgins landing craft. Mortar shells rained down on them, almost capsizing one of the boats. They rushed onto the beach, dodging enemy fire on the way to the tree line.

Hours after landing, Andy the scout dog and Caesar the messenger dog were called up for their first assignments. The Marines needed to control

their youth, but the bewilderment in their eyes gave it away. The faint tick-tick-tick of the Japanese machine guns continued somewhere in the distance.

The Doberman seemed happy to follow the thin dirt track into the unknown, but about 400 yards up the trail, Andy halted. He turned his head slowly to the left, then to the right, signaling some disturbance. Lansley made a gesture for M Company to halt. The Marines squatted down, fingers on the triggers of their rifles, their hearts in their throats. They waited. Silence.

JACK BOLTED OUT OF CAMP. AUTOMATIC FIRE KICKED UP THE DIRT AT HIS HEELS.

the area surrounding the two main trails running through Bougainville: the Piva and Numa-Numa. Japanese soldiers riddled the dense forest surrounding them. Pillboxes with crisscrossing machine guns dotted the trails, and snipers in trees waited patiently for Marine patrols to make it into their gunsights. The Japanese were experts at camouflage, and the inexperienced Americans' vision would be obscured by dense vegetation and smoke from artillery and guns. The dogs would be their eyes and ears.

Andy led a patrol of 250 Marines into the steamy jungle. Robert Lansley looked at the men behind him. Really, they were kids, most about 20 years old. Some sported mustaches to hide

Finally Andy relaxed. It was probably just a wild boar, Lansley told the commander. The commander's confidence in the dog, already suspect, seemed shaken. M Company pushed on.

Another 150 yards up the trail, Andy stopped again. He perked up his good ear and let out a low growl, pointing his muzzle slightly to the right. Lansley squatted down and patted the dog. He could feel the tension in Andy's muscles. "Well, this is it," Lansley told his fellow Marines. "There's a sniper back there, about 75 yards."

The patrol leader sent Lansley and another soldier forward, while Andy stayed back. In the distance, they saw what Andy had sensed: two camouflaged machine gun nests manned by



Jack, shown here with a handler, was commended for “outstanding performance against the enemy.”

the enemy. They unleashed a spray of gunfire, which was returned. M Company men hit the ground as shrapnel flew overhead. The air filled with smoke and dust and the rumble of machine guns—the Americans’ clack-clack-clack and the Japanese’s tick-tick-tick. When he lost what little visibility he had, Lansley tossed two grenades toward the Japanese. Their explosions rocked the earth. Silence fell. Dazed, the Marines continued forward, past the gutted machine gun nests.

While Andy scouted out snipers, Caesar became the fastest means of communication between the Marines. Rufus Mayo would attach messages about the company’s progress to Caesar’s collar and send him back

to Kleeman. Despite Mayo’s advancing, Caesar always found him again. When the Marines recovered written plans from a dead Japanese officer, it was Caesar who raced with them to camp. He made nine runs the second day, with sniper fire trailing him each time.

When night fell, the Marines hunkered down in place. At dawn, Mayo was bolted awake by Caesar’s growling. Japanese soldiers

had infiltrated the camp—and two of them were now heading toward Mayo. Caesar leaped out of the foxhole to intercept them. Mayo called for his companion and then watched the dog falter, skitter sideways, and fall.

In the confusion, with Japanese attacking and Americans fighting them off, Mayo lost track of Caesar. After the gunfire ceased, he found a trail of blood leading into the jungle. Where the red line ended, he found Caesar bleeding out in the bushes and barely conscious. Mayo dropped to the ground and hugged the dog gently, just like the Glazer boys must have when he was a pup.

Three Marines jury-rigged a stretcher and carried Caesar to the

regimental first aid station, where a surgeon removed a slug from his hip. The other bullet, in his shoulder, was too close to his heart to chance taking out. The lead would stay, but the doctor believed the gutsy dog would pull through. Caesar remained in sick bay recovering, with once skeptical raiders sneaking him their C-rations while the nurses weren't looking.

Jack, the Belgian sheepdog, replaced Caesar. A few days later, Jack and his handler Gordon Wortman were working a roadblock with E Company when the Japanese attacked. Wortman took a round to the leg, and a bullet cut through the loose skin on Jack's back. The Marine lay there in agony. Jack, gushing blood, leaned against his handler, whimpering in pain. As the Japanese tightened the noose, the commanding officer said to Wortman, "Your dog is the only one we can send for help. Can he make it?"

Wortman looked at his wounded dog, pain clouding Jack's normally intelligent eyes. "I think so." Wortman tucked a request for aid in Jack's collar pouch. He stroked the dog and whispered, "We're depending on you, old boy. Report to Paul!" Jack warily rose to his feet and looked at Wortman. Then he turned his head toward the path and bolted out of camp. Automatic fire kicked up the dirt at Jack's heels as the dog zagged into the underbrush.

It was a long dash through the jungle before the bedraggled dog, caked in blood and mud, appeared near



With the war ending a few months earlier, this lucky dog was going home.

headquarters at the feet of Paul Castracane. The Marine fished the message out of Jack's collar pouch, ran it to battalion command, and then returned to carry Jack to the first aid tent. Soon, reinforcements fought their way up the trail and stopped the Japanese assault. Wortman and other casualties were carried out on stretchers.

In all, 423 Marines died capturing Bougainville, yet no patrol with a dog on point had lost a man. The survivors of Bougainville, including Caesar and Jack, continued island-hopping, serving in Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

When the war finally ended in September 1945, the Marine Corps had to decide what to do with the 559 dogs remaining in its service. An order went out to euthanize the animals. The men who fought alongside them wouldn't hear of it. After being inundated with protests, the Marines agreed to de-train the dogs and return them to their owners.

The war dogs were going home. **R**

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LAUGH LINES

It's funny they call them "unidentified flying objects." I could identify them right away. Those are UFOs.

—[@dlicj](#)

Astronomer discovering an asteroid coming to destroy Earth: *This will make me famous but not for long.*

—[@brendohare](#)

If aliens ever attack, we will probably be fine unless they realize how easily we are influenced by traffic cones.

—[@seanforhire](#)

The person who named the Sea of Tranquility on the moon had to be a Realtor.

—[@RachelNoise](#)



People who study meteors are called weatherologists.

—[@gabrielroth](#)

In Your Space

My review of our solar system: 1 star.

—[@ianabramson](#)



THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS

SECRETS

THAT ARE HARM

RESEARCHING OUR DOCTORS. RECYCLING.

RIGHT THINGS. SO WHY ARE THESE COMPANIES



AND LIES ING YOUR LIFE

FURTHERING OUR EDUCATION. WE'RE DOING ALL THE
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SO MANY OF US?

BY ANDY SIMMONS



1 THE RECYCLING MYTH

Think you know where your old plastic ends up?

Once a week, you dutifully set out your bin full of recyclables for collection. You're happy to do your part for the environment because plastic, which is derived from fossil fuels, contributes to pollution and climate change. And while it has its good points—plastic is both lightweight and durable, saving fuel in transport—the best thing about it is that it's easily recycled. Now, about that ...

In fact, over the past four decades, less than 10 percent of all plastic in the United States has been recycled. Some items are reused more than others. We repurpose about 30 percent of used water, soda, shampoo, and bleach bottles. But that still leaves 70 percent piling up in dumps, or worse. China, the biggest market for our old plastic, stopped importing it altogether in 2018. While consumers may well be ignorant of this fact, the plastics industry is not. NPR, working with the PBS series *Frontline*, recently dug up reports sent to industry executives that called recycling plastic “costly ... difficult ... infeasible.” And this was way back in the 1970s and '80s! “There was never an enthusiastic belief that recycling was ultimately going to work in a

significant way,” Lew Freeman, former vice president of the industry's lobbying group, the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI), now the Plastics Industry Association, told NPR and *Frontline*.

Though not much has changed since those reports were written, the plastics industry continues to shovel millions of dollars into promoting recycling via ads and education. Why? Public relations. “If the public thinks the recycling is working, then they're not going to be as concerned about the environment,” says Larry Thomas, another former SPI executive.

Communities have to do something with all that unrecycled plastic. That often means burning it with the rest of the trash. “About six times more post-consumer plastic waste is burned in the United States than is domestically recycled,” reports the Plastic Pollution Coalition, while the Center for International Environmental Law points out that producing and incinerating plastics will add more than 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere annually, “an amount equal to the emissions from 189 500-megawatt coal power plants.”

That's probably not what you're thinking when you haul your bottles to the curb.



ONLY 69 LARGE CORPORATIONS RETURNED FEDERAL DOLLARS AFTER A PUBLIC OUTCRY.

2. CORPORATE WELFARE

Some companies profited off a pandemic.

You're a small-business owner forced to shut down for a time during the COVID-19 pandemic. You're worried about your employees. If you lay them off, how will they live? But then you hear that Washington has approved the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). It's designed to provide an incentive for small businesses to keep paying their workers' salaries by lending the owners money—which they don't need to pay back if the bulk is put toward payroll and other costs. Perfect!

At 12:01 a.m. on April 3, the very first minute of the program, you apply for a loan online and wait for the check to come. And then you wait a bit more. Until 13 days later, when you discover that the \$349 billion emergency funding is completely tapped

out. Not only that, but only a measly 5 percent of small businesses that applied actually received loans.

So who got the checks? Let's see: Ruth's Chris Steak House, Shake Shack, AutoNation ... As it turns out, 440 loans bypassed small businesses and went to large publicly traded corporations, many of which had the wherewithal to raise capital without a helping hand from the feds.

While those 440 loans accounted for only 1.5 percent of the 25,000 loans granted, many were for large sums—for example, AutoNation was given \$77 million. Individual loans of over \$2 million each sucked up a quarter of the total pool of money. A second round of loans was more stringent. Still, loans for \$2 million-plus made up 16 percent of the total sum.

"It's outrageous," Amanda Ballantyne of Main Street Alliance, an advocacy



group for small businesses, told the *New York Times*. Countless small-business owners “have laid off all their staff and will go bankrupt because of the problems with the way the PPP was designed.”

So how did this mess happen? To get the money to applicants quickly, the government had the Small Business Administration guarantee the loans, but banks distributed them. The banks decided which companies got funding, and they often favored their best customers. According to NPR, the average PPP loan at large banks was over \$90,000. At small banks, it was \$58,000. As a result, Escalade Sports, which makes Ping-Pong tables, basketball hoops, and the like, got \$5.6 million even with a “\$50 million credit line from JPMorgan Chase” and after reporting it saw “rising demand for its products, with so

many Americans cooped up in their homes,” says the *New York Times*.

A similar program saw the Department of Health and Human Services disburse billions to distressed hospitals. Among the “distressed” hospitals was Ascension Health, which operates 150 hospitals nationwide. It received \$211 million ... even though it operates its own venture capital fund.

Hospitals that serve a greater proportion of wealthier, privately insured patients got twice as much relief as those focused on low-income patients with Medicaid or no coverage at all. In other words, the hospitals that needed the money most got the least. That includes St. Claire HealthCare, the largest rural hospital system in eastern Kentucky. The \$3 million the hospital received in April barely covered two weeks of payroll, chief executive Donald H. Lloyd II told the *Times*.

ARE GETTING CRUSHED."

— ZACK COOPER, YALE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The loan, he said, "is just a Band-Aid."

Taxpayer outrage triggered a game of corporate mea culpa, resulting in 69 large companies returning the loans. As of September 1, of the \$1,390,298,467 doled out to publicly traded companies, \$436,477,630 had been returned, according to factsquared.com, a data analysis website. The first was Shake Shack, which sent back its \$10 million check, followed by AutoNation, Ashford Hospitality Trust (\$45.9 million), and Ruth's Hospitality Group, owners of Ruth's Chris (\$20 million).

Still, most companies kept the money, citing the uncertain economy. Which is just wrong, treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin said on CNBC. Even though eventually most of the small businesses that applied for PPP loans ended up receiving them, "The purpose of this program was not social welfare for big business."

3. SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLING

The real pain comes after the operation.

You're about to have minor surgery, so of course you do your homework. Nowadays that means you not only make sure that your surgeon and hospital have good track records; you make sure that they both take your insurance too.

You wake up from the procedure to

discover that everything went great—except that the hospital-assigned anesthesiologist who put you under is not in your insurance network and you are stuck paying his bill in full.

Welcome to the Surprise Medical Bill. Actually, *surprise* might not be the right word, given that about 20 percent of all surgical patients will receive one. For them, the "surprise" can soar to around \$14,000 in out-of-network costs. No wonder 137 million Americans are mired in medical debt. The infuriating factor here is that the majority of those folks (about 63 percent) had health insurance when treatment began. Isn't this why we have health insurance—to pay the bills?

Studies from Yale and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* have found that the surprise bills come typically from anesthesiologists and surgical assistants, specialists that patients rarely select personally. They are brought in by the surgeons or the hospital—the very ones who should know who or what is covered by a patient's insurance. A Yale study found that up to 12.3 percent of cases involving a pathologist, an anesthesiologist, an assistant surgeon, and a radiologist were billed out of network. In contrast, orthopedists performing knee replacements—a service for which

a patient can choose an in-network physician ahead of time—billed out of network less than 1 percent of the time.

“The ability to bill out of network allows specialists to negotiate inflated in-network rates, which are passed on to consumers in the form of higher insurance premiums,” Zack Cooper, an associate professor at the Yale School of Public Health, told *Yale News*.

How much more? According to the journal *Health Affairs*, in-network rates for assistant surgeons were 176 percent of the Medicare-negotiated fee; for anesthesiologists it was 367 percent. The out-of-network rates: 802 percent of the Medicare rate for anesthesiologists and 2,652 percent for assistant surgeons.

Last year, Congress proposed legislation allowing patients receiving care at in-network hospitals to pay only the in-network cost, even if an individual doctor is out of network. Patient advocates are eager to see it approved. After all, it's a clear matter of fairness. “You don't pick these people. You don't know them,” Karen Pollitz, a senior fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation, told the *Atlantic*. “You learn their name when the bill comes.”

4. FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES

An education on scams.

You decide to enroll in a private for-profit college. The school is not as cheap as a public university, but its job-specific programs and flexible schedule suit your work hours.

Besides, the impressive job-placement rate it boasts makes you optimistic that you might just find that higher-paying job. Then you graduate, and you discover that you may have been cheated.

According to the Century Foundation, a public-policy research institution, 98 percent of all fraud complaints against colleges are brought against for-profit schools. Among them is Career Education Corporation (now called Perdoceo Education Corporation), which operates Colorado Technical University and American InterContinental University. In 2019, the company agreed to cancel \$493.7 million in student debt for nearly 180,000 former students. *Forbes* said investigations by states' attorneys general and the U.S. Senate found that Career Education deceived students about the total costs of enrollment; misled students about the transferability of credits; and failed to disclose that certain programs lacked the necessary accreditation.

The scandals didn't start with Career Education. In 2016, the largest for-profit educator, ITT Tech, was forced to close after it was learned that the school had lured students with exaggerated graduation and job-placement figures. Dream Center Education Holdings shut 41 campuses under the names the Art Institutes and Argosy University after improperly withholding millions in financial aid from students, including veterans on the GI Bill.

At least these schools had teachers. Reagan National University in Sioux

Falls, South Dakota, was accredited to teach in 2017, yet as of this past February, it had no students, no faculty, and no classrooms, according to a joint report in *USA Today* and the *Argus Leader*. What it does have is a link

to the University of Northern Virginia, a suspected “visa mill” (a school that functions primarily to let foreign students enter the United States).

It doesn’t get much better for students should they actually graduate. As *U.S. News & World Report* points out, “degrees conferred by for-profit colleges often do not produce the earning power graduates hope to achieve” nor “the same educational quality they may expect at nonprofit colleges.” As such, students have difficulty finding jobs, let alone high-paying ones, which leads to trouble paying off loans. The National Bureau of Economic Research found that while only 6.7 percent of all college students were enrolled in a for-profit school, they made up 39 percent of college students

who defaulted on their federal loans.

It’s no wonder that among the more than 1,230 campuses that closed over the past five years, 88 percent were operated by for-profit colleges. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, roughly 450,000 displaced for-profit college students, many of whom are working adults living paycheck to paycheck, had their hopes to attain the American dream derailed.

“One class left,” read a quote in the *Chronicle* from Lisa La More’s Facebook page after the Art Institute of California’s San Diego campus shut down recently. “Less than three weeks from my BS in Graphic and Web. Six years of my life *wasted*. I am 48 years old, with teenage kids. What am I supposed to do now?” **R**



**FOR-PROFIT SCHOOLS RESULT
IN MORE LOAN DEFAULTS AND
WORSE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.**



It's What's Inside That Counts

Ten out of one woman is a Russian nesting doll.

 @MEGANAMRAM

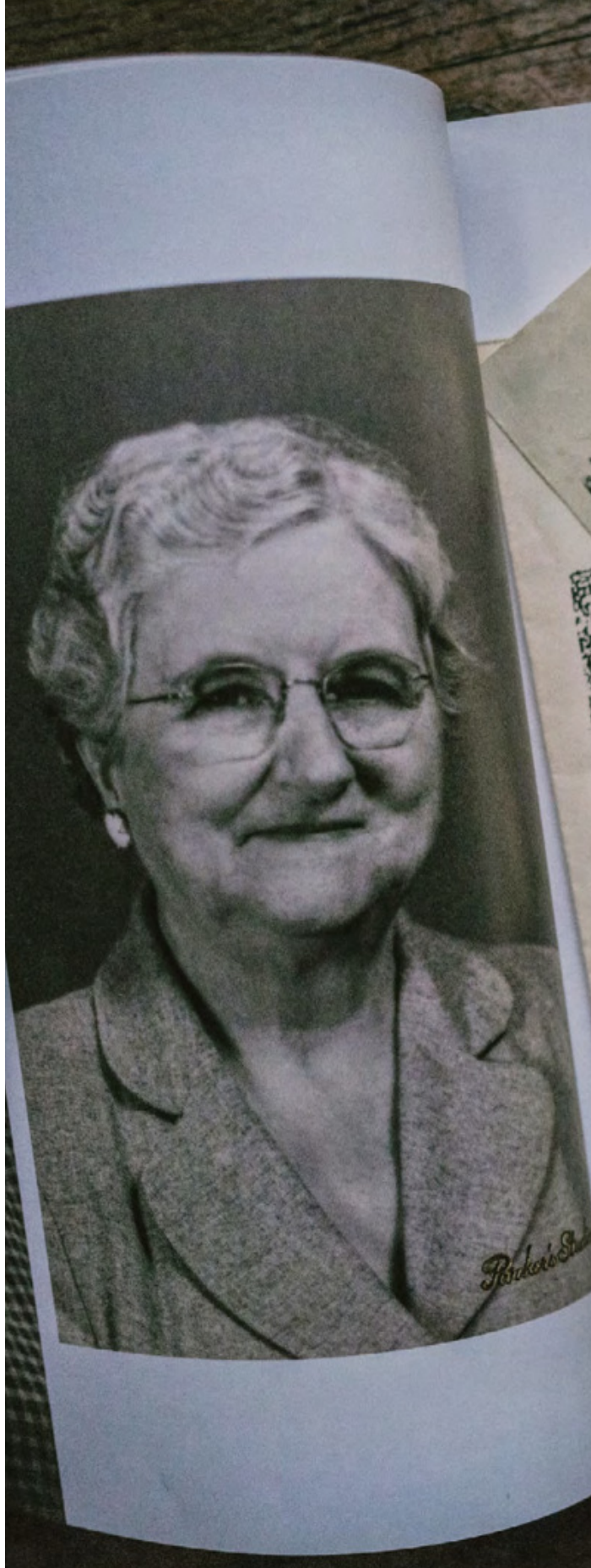
Why We Should Rest on the Sabbath

*From Mother Ollie,
I learned that taking
time for yourself
is a divine rite too*

BY Margaret Renkl

ADAPTED FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

My great-grandmother was a lifelong Baptist. Mother Ollie, as we called her, attended Mass at my family's Catholic church in Birmingham, too, but she never drifted from her quiet adherence to the King James ways of her youth.





Clopton Methodist Church

nd to CHAP. 19. people, lest they break through
 ash & Lev. 15. 3. many of them perish.
 22 And let the priests also
 which come near to the LORD
 sanctify themselves, lest they
 break forth upon them.
 23 And Moses said unto the
 LORD, The people cannot come
 to mount Si-nai: for thou
 hast said us, saying, Set bound-
 ary round about the mount, and sanctify
 it. The LORD said unto him,
 Thou shalt say unto him,
 Stand up, thou, and thou
 shalt say unto the priests,
 Stand up, and sanctify
 yourselves, lest ye break
 forth upon the LORD, lest he
 smite you.
 So Moses went down unto
 the people, and spake unto them.
 20
 CHAPTER 20
 The ten commandments. 21
 Idolatry forbidden. 24 Direc-
 tions concerning the altar.
 AND God spake all these
 words, saying,
 1 I am the LORD thy God,
 which have brought thee out of
 the land of Egypt, out of the
 house of bondage.
 2 Thou shalt have no other
 gods before me.
 3 Thou shalt not make unto
 thee any graven image, or any
 likeness of any thing that is in
 heaven above, or that is in the
 earth beneath, or that is in the
 water under the earth:
 4 Thou shalt not bow down
 thyself to them, nor serve them:
 for I the LORD thy God am a
 jealous God, visiting the in-
 iquity of the fathers upon the
 children unto the third and
 fourth generation of them that
 hate me:
 5 Thou shalt shew mercy unto
 thousands of them that love me,
 and keep my commandments.
 6 Thou shalt not take the name
 of the LORD thy God in vain;
 for the LORD will not hold him
 guiltless that taketh his name
 in vain.
 7 Remember the sabbath day:
 to keep it holy.
 8 Six days hath thou labour-
 ed, and do all thy work:

CHAPTER 20.
 1 Deut. 5, 22.
 2 Deut. 5, 6.
 3 Deut. 5, 10.
 4 Ex. 13, 4.
 5 Ex. 13, 4.
 6 Ex. 13, 4.
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 100 Ex. 13, 4.

Mother Ollie's mementos are reminders of a simpler, slower time.

After church every Sunday, she went straight back to her room. On other days, she was always busy—shelling peas or snapping beans, crocheting or quilting or sewing. Her foot-pedal Singer was in daily use until a few weeks before her death in 1982, but she never sewed on Sunday.

When I went looking for her help with a tatting project one Sunday afternoon, I found out why. Tatting is a kind of lace made of tiny knots tied in very fine string. The trick is to tie the right kind of knot without tangling the string into the wrong kind, but I had made so many of the wrong knots that I couldn't even figure out how to unpick the tangle and start again. I found her sitting in a chair, her Bible in her lap. The book was very old, with edges so worn they curved inward toward the pages, as soft as a puppy. I knocked on the open door. "Mother Ollie, can you help me with this?"

"Not today, honey," she said. "The Lord tells us not to work on the Sabbath." And handwork, by definition, is work.

I don't know anyone who takes Sunday off anymore. If we aren't doing professional work, we're doing the housework that won't get done once Monday comes. But it's not as though the world stopped on Sunday back in Alabama either. The crops—and the weeds—in my grandfather's fields continued to grow, whatever the day. My grandmother, a teacher, still had

papers to grade and lessons to plan. The peas in the basket on the back porch would not shell themselves. Nevertheless, my people put work aside on Sunday to nap on a daybed or sit on the porch and rock. They didn't ask themselves, as I do, whether they could "afford" to rest. God obliged them to rest, and so they did.

*WHAT IF RESTING,
ALL BY ITSELF,
IS THE REAL ACT
OF HOLINESS?*



Today, there are many people for whom this kind of Sabbath is not an option. People who work double shifts—or double jobs—truly can't afford to rest. On the other hand, I *could* reorganize my life if I tried. I could focus on priorities, spend less time on things that matter little to me and make more time for those that matter most. Yet somehow I have reached the age of 57 without feeling any obligation to sit still.

That changed one day after I returned home from a recent book tour. I love meeting book people with all my heart, but by the end of the tour, all my body was in revolt.

I sat on the sofa with my laptop, planning to get started on the 90 million e-mails that had piled up in my absence, but instead I fell asleep. I tried the wing chair next to the sofa

with no better results. When I found myself looking at the one clear spot on my desk as a good place to lay my head, I gave up and went back to bed, rousing myself barely in time for supper. Then I slept 11 hours more.

Nothing in the fourth commandment identifies which day of the week should be the Sabbath. It doesn't even mention the need to attend church. Its chief requirement is to rest. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," reads Mother Ollie's Bible. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."

Reading those verses again made me wonder: What if resting, all by itself, is the real act of holiness? What if honoring the gift of our only life in this gorgeous world means taking time every week to slow down? To sleep? To breathe? The world has never needed us more than it needs us now, but we can't be of much use to it if we remain in a perpetual state of exhaustion and despair.

The next day, I didn't even try to work. I took a walk around Radnor Lake in Nashville, where I live, the best possible way to celebrate a day of rest. The temperatures had finally dropped, the rains finally came, and Middle Tennessee was serving up one fine October day after another.

At Radnor, the beautyberries were gleaming in all their purple ripeness, and the asters and the snakeroots were still in bloom. Behind its mother, a fawn was foraging, its springtime spots just beginning to fade. A great blue heron was standing on a downed tree at the edge of the water, preening each damp, curling feather and sorting it into place. A fallen log just off the trail boasted a glorious crop of chicken of the woods, and the seedpods of the redbud trees were ripe and ready to burst. At the lake's edge, the sound of a lone cricket rose up from the skein of vegetation next to one of the overlooks. Its song was as beautiful and as heart-lifting as any hymn. **R**

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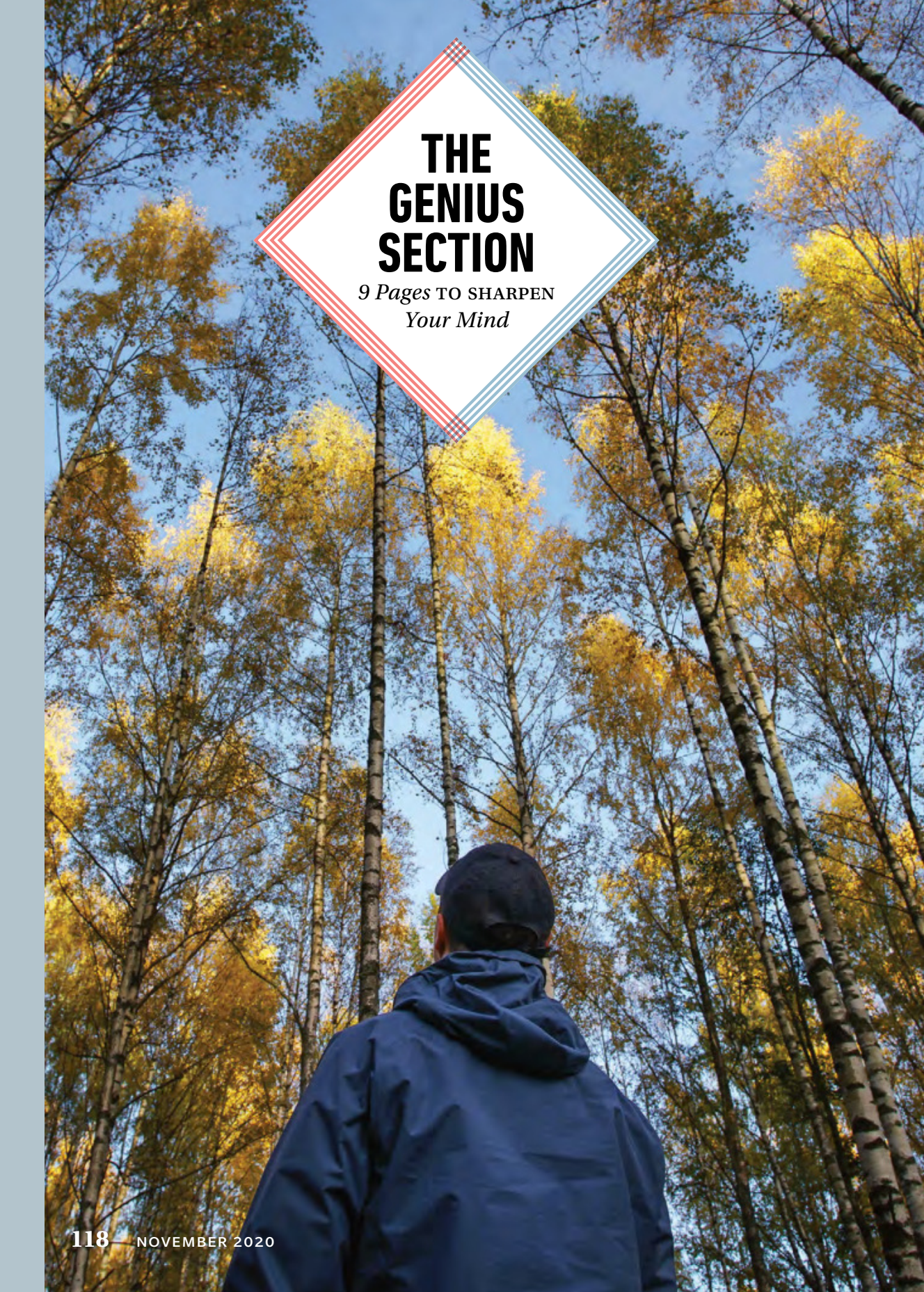
Turkey Day Blues

If you're ever feeling down on yourself, just remember how in 2018, when I hosted Thanksgiving for my family, I told them to park in the wrong spot and every single person's car got towed.

 @DXXNYA

My signature party dish is "The One I Realized I Totally Forgot to Put Out After the Guests Were Gone."

 @COPYMAMA



THE GENIUS SECTION

9 Pages TO SHARPEN
Your Mind

YOUR BRAIN WAS MADE FOR WALKING

Creative inspiration is only a short stroll away

BY Jeffrey Davis

FROM **PSYCHOLOGY TODAY**

IF A PRESIDENT, a legendary philosopher, and one of the best-selling authors of all time credited the same secret for their success, would you try to follow it too? What if the secret was something you already knew how to do? In fact, you probably do it every day. Here's what Friedrich Nietzsche wrote: "It is only ideas gained from walking that have any worth." Thomas Jefferson: "Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far." And Charles Dickens made his point with uncharacteristic brevity: "If I could not walk far and fast, I think I should just explode and perish."

Are you still sitting there reading this? Get walking! It's not just these three great minds who made a case for it as a prime creativity booster. Researchers have traced numerous connections between walking and

generating ideas. A Stanford University study found that participants were 81 percent more creative when walking as opposed to sitting. According to the study, walking outside—versus on a treadmill—produces the most novel and highest-quality analogies in participants who walked and then sat down to do creative work. Another famous-person example: As part of his daily writing routine, Kurt Vonnegut would take a midmorning break from his office to walk and then swim before eventually returning to work. I would argue that this habit wasn't just a habit but an intentional, necessary element of his creative process.

The movement aspect of walking is obviously key. You've probably heard the phrase *Exercise your creativity*, which refers to the brain as muscle. Our creative mindset is triggered

by physical movement, which is exactly why walking—with your dog, a friend, or alone—feeds creative thinking.

But the scenery is almost as important as the sweat. The National Human Activity Pattern Survey reveals that Americans spend 87 percent of their time indoors. Being inside, you're more prone to stagnation, the antithesis of energy. Without energy, you can't wonder or create. Disrupting your routine with a walk can be a catalyst for garnering fresh insights into problems or projects. Just by going outside, you are stepping out of your habitual surroundings and your comfort zone, which is necessary if you want to open your mind to new possibilities. You can walk through a tree-filled neighborhood. You can walk through a park and observe people sauntering or birds singing. Even when you walk down a busy street, you can't help but get distracted by the sweet cinnamon smells wafting from a food cart or the child pointing to a building you hadn't even noticed before.

Our brains work harder to process in different environments, so walking outside fosters our ability to glean new

ideas, to take in new sights, sounds, smells, and flavors. *Shinrin-yoku*, or “forest bathing,” is a common form of relaxation and medicine in Japan. It was developed in 1982, and recent studies demonstrate that being in the forest and walking among the trees lowers your stress levels. The effects are so powerful that *shinrin-yoku* is now a government-endorsed policy in Japan. But you don't have to live near a forest to receive the psychological benefits. Research has shown that immersion in nature, and the corresponding disconnection from multimedia and technology, increased performance on a creative problem-solving task by a full 50 percent in a group of hikers.

So instead of setting a fitness goal, why not set a creativity goal that starts with walking? Engage more closely with your surroundings for the next four weeks. Turn off your phone and give yourself the chance to be present in the world, to hear conversations and natural sounds, to notice the way people move, the way the sun reflects in a puddle. Walk not just for exercise. Walk for wonder. **R**

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in the house for something you forgot.

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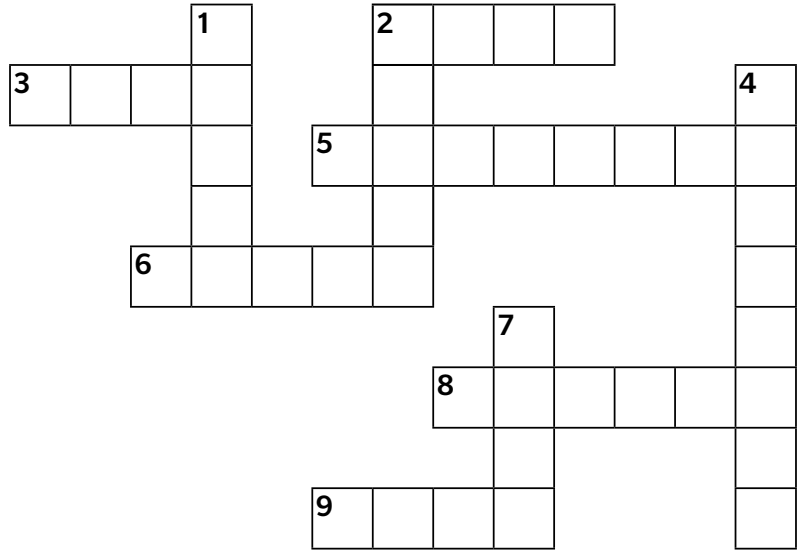
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BRAIN GAMES



Quick Crossword

EASY In honor of Turkey Day, put these parts of the bird in the grid.

- | | |
|-------|----------|
| TAIL | SNOOD |
| BEAK | CROWN |
| SPUR | WATTLE |
| KEEL | CARUNCLE |
| BEARD | FEATHERS |

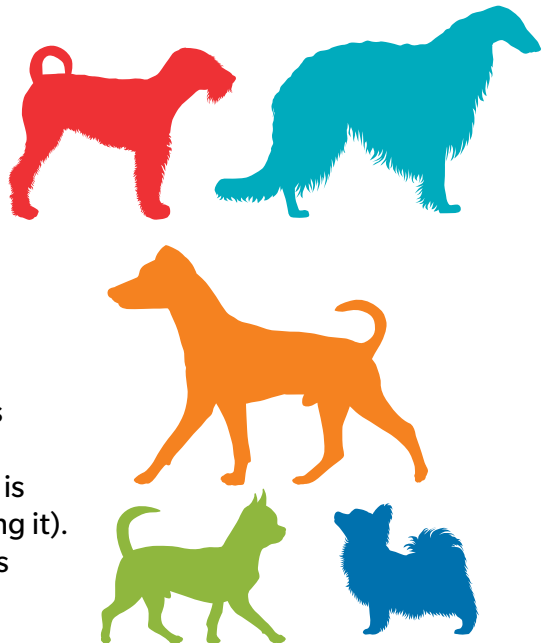
The Good Life

MEDIUM Each of five neighborhood dogs is enjoying one of the following activities. Based on the clues, can you figure out what each pooch is doing?

- | Dogs | Activities |
|--------|------------------------|
| Saber | Getting ears scratched |
| Ginger | Playing catch |
| Nutmeg | Taking a nap |
| Pepper | Burying a chew toy |
| Bear | Going for a walk |

Clues:

- ◆ Pepper is either playing catch or burying a chew toy.
- ◆ Neither Ginger nor Saber nor Bear is on a walk.
- ◆ One of the dogs named after a spice is getting her ears scratched (and loving it).
- ◆ A dog who is not named for a spice is playing catch.
- ◆ Bear is getting some exercise.



Hidden Hues

EASY The names of six different colors are hidden between consecutive words in the silly story below. Can you find them all? Example: **Much art reuses** themes and motifs from previous eras. (chartreuse)

Sure, it's fancy and all, but my brother's car lets out a strange noise when you start it. I find I go too hard on him sometimes, but he did waste a lot of money customizing the exterior, only to leave the generic rims on it and forgo all routine maintenance.



Cryptic Equations

MEDIUM Each letter (A–G) has one of the seven values listed below. No two letters have the same value. Match each letter to a number to make the equations work.

2 4 5 6 7 8 11

$$B + E = G$$

$$G - D = C$$

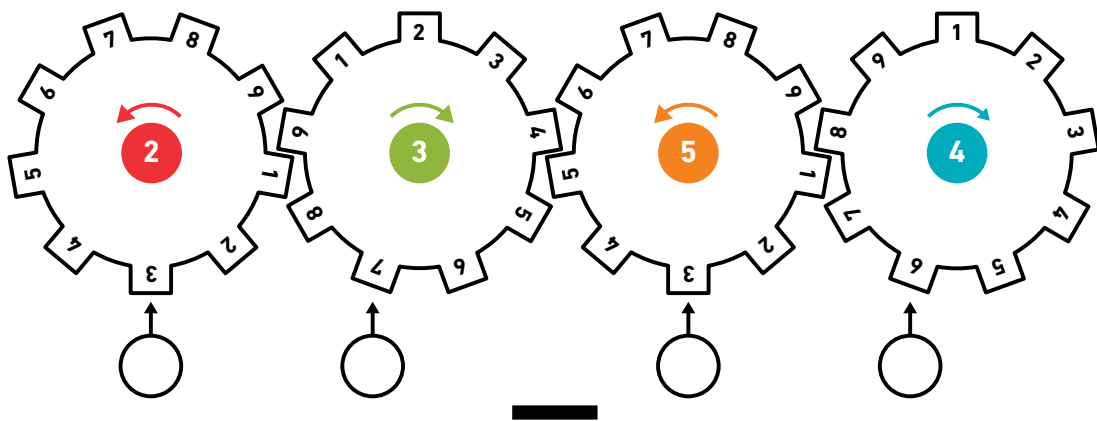
$$F \div A = D$$

$$C - B = A$$

For more Brain Games, go to RD.COM /CROSSWORDS.

Cogs

DIFFICULT These four cogs are going to help you crack a safe. Naturally, when you turn one cog, the other three move as well. Imagine you turn all four the number of notches specified in the center of each cog in the direction indicated. The teeth that are then positioned next to the circles reveal a four-digit safe combination. What is it?



For answers, turn to **PAGE 127**.

JEFF WIDDERICH (COGS). MARCEL DANESI (CRYPTIC EQUATIONS). EMILY GOODMAN (HIDDEN HUES). NOUN PROJECT (CAR)



WORD POWER

November is a bibliophile's dream: The National Book Award winners will be announced, and it's National Novel Writing Month (aka NaNoWriMo—no kidding). Test your literacy with these book-related words, then flip to page 126 for answers.

BY *Emily Cox* AND *Henry Rathvon*

1. abridged *adj.*

(uh-'brijd)

- A** adapted.
- B** shortened.
- C** translated.

2. riffle *v.*

('rih-full)

- A** skim.
- B** brainstorm.
- C** copy from.

3. saga *n.*

('sah-guh)

- A** beach read.
- B** memoir.
- C** heroic tale.

4. prosaic *adj.*

(pro-'zay-ik)

- A** uplifting.
- B** dull.
- C** overly wordy.

5. omnibus *n.*

('ahm-nih-bus)

- A** road atlas.
- B** collection.
- C** paperback.

6. scrivener *n.*

('skrih-vuh-ner)

- A** critic.
- B** writer.
- C** bookbinder.

7. stanza *n.*

('stan-zuh)

- A** romance.
- B** library shelf.
- C** poem part.

8. lexicon *n.*

('leks-ih-kahn)

- A** dictionary.
- B** villain.
- C** twisty plot.

9. hyperbole *n.*

(hi-'per-buh-lee)

- A** overstatement.
- B** understatement.
- C** nonsense word.

10. elegy *n.*

('el-uh-jee)

- A** scientific paper.
- B** mournful poem.
- C** beautiful quotation.

11. tome *n.*

(tohm)

- A** horror story.
- B** poetry slam.
- C** large book.

12. vignette *n.*

(vin-'yet)

- A** comedic play.
- B** short scene.
- C** reading glasses.

13. analogy *n.*

(uh-'nal-uh-jee)

- A** travel blog.
- B** symbolism.
- C** comparison.

14. epigraph *n.*

('eh-puh-graf)

- A** opening quotation.
- B** illustrated guide.
- C** words said for the dead.

15. synopsis *n.*

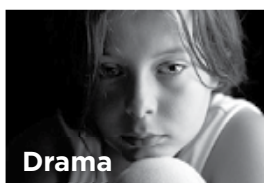
(suh-'nop-suss)

- A** Greek drama.
- B** brief summary.
- C** cast of characters.

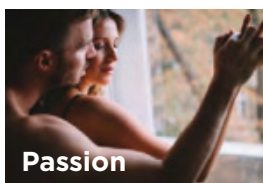
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When a Book Is a Bouquet

A collection of poems, essays, or stories is an *anthology*, from the Greek *anthos* (flower) and *logia* (collection), perhaps referring to the gathering of flowery verses into one volume. If you want to feel fancy—and even more floral—you can also call such a book a *florilegium* (from the Latin *florilegus*, meaning “culling flowers”).



Word Power ANSWERS

1. abridged (B)

shortened. Peter read an abridged version of *War and Peace* right before his book club meeting.

2. riffle (A) skim.

Work has been so busy, I've barely had time to riffle through my inbox.

3. saga (C) heroic tale.

The latest Avengers saga was a box office smash.

4. prosaic (B) dull. In her weekly newspaper column, Mina can make even the most prosaic subjects feel profound.

5. omnibus (B) collection.

Priya settled into an armchair with an omnibus of medieval poetry.

6. scrivener (B) writer.

An amateur scrivener since middle school,

Tim published his first bestseller in his fifties.

7. stanza (C) poem part.

“What does the imagery in the second stanza tell us?” the professor asked the class.

8. lexicon (A) dictionary.

Armed with a bilingual lexicon and a pot of coffee, Ginny spent all night cramming for her French final.

9. hyperbole (A)

overstatement. Since you're my only sibling, I can say without hyperbole that you're the best brother I've ever had!

10. elegy (B) mournful

poem. Billy composed an elegy for Lee—his dearly departed goldfish.

11. tome (C) large book.

I can't believe you're using my antique Tolkien tome as a doorstop.

12. vignette (B)

short scene. The novel's central mystery is revealed through a series of seemingly unrelated vignettes.

13. analogy (C)

comparison. As a long-time football coach, my dad often uses the sport as an analogy for life.

14. epigraph (A)

opening quotation. The book's epigraph comes from a Stevie Wonder song.

15. synopsis (B) brief

summary. Here's a synopsis of *Moby Dick*: It's about a whale.

Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: scribbler

10–12: wordsmith

13–15: laureate

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

See page 122.

Quick Crossword

ACROSS

2. BEAK
3. SPUR
5. CARUNCLE
6. SNOOD
8. WATTLE
9. KEEL

DOWN

1. CROWN
2. BEARD
4. FEATHERS
7. TAIL

The Good Life

Saber is taking a nap, Ginger is getting her ears scratched, Nutmeg is going for a walk, Pepper is burying a chew toy, and Bear is playing catch.

Hidden Hues

cyan (fancy **and**), scarlet (brother's **car lets**), indigo (**find I go**), teal (**waste a lot**), crimson (generic **rims on**), tan (**it and**)

Cryptic Equations

A = 2, B = 5, C = 7, D = 4,
E = 6, F = 8, G = 11

Cogs

8, 2, 8, 1

MAKE
US
LAUGH!



Caption Contest

What's your clever description for this picture? Submit your funniest line at RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST. Winners will appear in a future Photo Finish (PAGE 128).

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PHOTO FINISH
YOUR *Funniest* CAPTIONS



Winner

This month's installment of "Who Wore It Best?"

—SARAH SUMSION *Mapleton, Utah*

Runners-Up

"How many times do I have to go over this, Karen? It's kick, kick, twirl!"

—BEN IRVIN *Fort Collins, Colorado*

"OK, one more time: When I say give me a *p*, I don't mean that."

—ELLA VELTHOEN *Modesto, California*

To enter an upcoming caption contest, see the photo on PAGE 127.



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