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# Reader's Digest

We've Got  
**GOOD  
NEWS**  
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CANADA'S  
MOST-READ  
MAGAZINE

APRIL 2021

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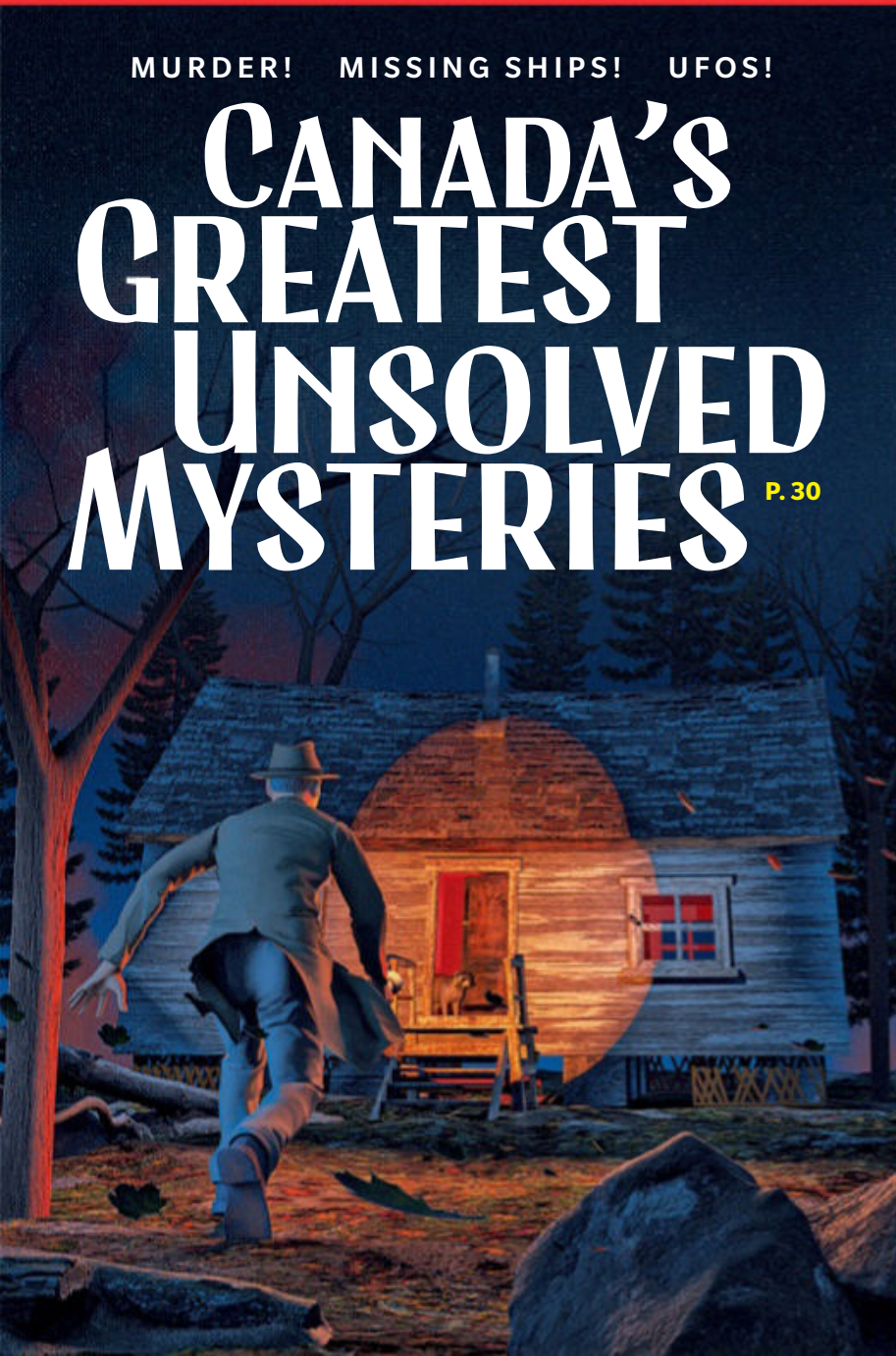
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## Bolton's Naturals Pure, Topical Magnesium Liquid, Gel, Balm and Spray

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# ASK FOR THE GOOD STUFF

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Canadian beef  
that makes  
the grade.



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*\* Marbling is the small flecks of white fat throughout the meat. The amount of marbling influences juiciness, texture and flavour.*

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# GET YOUR GAME ON!



LET'S MAKE  
A DEAL

FAMILY  
FEUD

the  
PRICE  
is  
RIGHT

# game<sup>tv</sup>

WEEKDAYS STARTING AT 5PM ET

CHECK YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS







EDITOR'S LETTER

# The Good in Everyone

They say bad news arrives in threes. But what about good news? Starting on page 14 of this issue, we're introducing a new regular item: a series of stories that we're calling Good News.

The timing feels right. With the year Canada just had, we could all use some proof that people still care for strangers, that we're making progress to prevent environmental catastrophes, that some new technologies are actually improving our daily lives—and that hope isn't a lost cause. This



month, we were cheered up by stories of libraries that thrive once they cancel late fees, of the surprising factors behind the decline of commercial whaling, of how Britain is now discovering that green energy is more affordable than carbons, and of a Muslim community in France banding together to protect their town's cathedral.

In every issue, we'll honour a person—an everyday hero—who has done something exceptional and kind. Read all about Salam Alhariri, and how she's providing accurate COVID-19 information to disadvantaged Jordanians, on page 16.

Do you have some good news to share? Email me at [mark@rd.ca](mailto:mark@rd.ca) and tell us about what's making you smile.

We'll try to include as many of your stories as we can in upcoming issues, because it's good to celebrate the goodness in all of us.

# Reader's Digest

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# CONTRIBUTORS



**STACEY MAY FOWLES**

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**“A Bunny  
Called Easter”**

Fowles is an award-winning journalist, essayist and author of four books. She has contributed to the *National Post*, *Elle Canada*, *Toronto Life* and *The Walrus*. Her most recent book, *Baseball Life Advice: Loving the Game That Saved Me*, became a national bestseller and was included in *The Globe and Mail's* “100 Best Books of 2017.” Check out her story on page 74.



**NICOLE XU**

Illustrator, Portland, Oregon

**“Are We Still Friends?”**

Born in Shanghai and raised in Vancouver, Xu is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. Her illustrations have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Hazlitt*. Xu's debut picture book, *All of a Sudden and Forever: Help and Healing After the Oklahoma City Bombing*, was published last year. See her latest work on page 80.



**TAVIS COBURN**

Illustrator, Toronto

**“Canada's Greatest  
Unsolved Mysteries”**

Coburn is an award-winning illustrator whose work has appeared in *Popular Science*, *Fortune*, *Scientific American* and *The New Yorker*. A graduate of Pasadena's Art Center College of Design, Coburn finds inspiration in classical illustration, science fiction and pop culture from the past and present. Find his drawings for this issue's cover story on page 30.



**JOHN SEMLEY**

Writer, Toronto

**“Dr. Feelgood”**

Semley's stories have appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, *The New Republic* and *The New York Times Magazine*. Recently, he has covered the so-called psychedelic renaissance. Semley is the author of two books and also writes for *Highly Legal*, a podcast about cannabis in Canada. Read his latest story, about how magic mushrooms are changing the lives of people with terminal cancer, on page 86.

(FOWLES) N. MAXWELL LANDER

## LETTERS

### FAMILY AFFAIR

“Black Watch, Advance!” (September 2020) really hit home. My uncle, Peter Munro, was in the Black Watch and is buried with other fallen soldiers in the Bretteville-sur-Laize cemetery in France. He lied about his birthdate when he enlisted in 1939 at the age of 18, and was 23 years old when he died. Thank you for shining a light on this little-known battle in Normandy.

—DON MUNRO, *West Kelowna, B.C.*

### LIFELONG READER

When I was growing up in Hong Kong, I discovered the Chinese edition of *Reader’s Digest* at my friend’s house. When I later moved to Ontario in 1974, I continued subscribing—to the Canadian version. I’m 72 years old now and still find your magazine a joy to read. It helped me improve my English very quickly!

—KATIE CHEN, *Oakville, Ont.*



### FOOD RESCUE

The profile of Jagger Gordon and the Feed It Forward program in Toronto, “Hunger Gains” (December 2020), is a great story of success during these trying times. I myself have just retired from the board of Second Harvest, a charity that also redistributes food to those in need. Initially we focused on the Greater Toronto Area, and then expanded across the country. Reading Gordon’s story made me proud of the work we have done at Second Harvest.

—JERRY BENIUK, *Mississauga, Ont.*

### CONTRIBUTE

Send us your funny jokes and anecdotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader’s Digest*, we’ll send you \$50. To submit, visit [rd.ca/joke](http://rd.ca/joke).

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*How a Montreal chef created a safer workplace*

# Table Stakes



BY Emily Landau

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOMINIQUE LAFOND

**E** MMA CARDARELLI'S first restaurant job was in the kitchen of a lodge in the Rockies. The year was 2000, and she was 22 years old. Although she quickly decided that she loved being a cook, she wasn't a fan of everything else that came with working in a restaurant: earning less than minimum wage, having to choose between showing up sick or losing your job, and the rampant misogyny and bullying. She wasn't alone. One 2014 report found that 90 per cent of female restaurant employees had experienced sexual harassment on the job.

Cardarelli is warm, friendly and unsentimental about the challenges she's faced in her career. Even as she rose through the ranks at renowned restaurants in London and Montreal, she had to endure sexual innuendo and rebuff advances from her male co-workers. Once, when she severely burned her hand with hot oil, her boss wouldn't allow her to leave her shift to get medical help.

She decided there had to be a better way to run a restaurant. Along with a sommelier friend named Ryan Gray, she opened two Montreal spots, Nora



**Emma Cardarelli has banned disrespectful customers.**

Gray in 2011 and Elena in 2018. They became as famous for their progressive ethos as they are for Cardarelli's hand-made pastas. She and Gray created a supportive working environment, even going so far as to ban customers who harassed staff. This no-tolerance policy may sound basic to seasoned desk jockeys, but it was a notable change in Cardarelli's world.

## SHE'S PROVIDED A MODEL FOR RESTAURANTS TO SURVIVE THE PANDEMIC.



Another of Cardarelli's radical-to-restaurants initiatives was to provide benefit packages to her staff. To cover the extra cost, she and Gray raised menu prices and accepted that they'd each make a little less for themselves. It was a boon for the employees but also a way for her to keep the team mentally and physically healthy. Salaried staff also get paid sick days.

One employee, Eleonore Schreiber, a 29-year-old server at Elena, sees Cardarelli's investment in her staff as proof that restaurant work is respectable and something she could make into a career. "It's amazing that I can go to the dentist without having to spend my salary on it," Schreiber says. "I'm also

on my feet all the time, and then my body hurts. Now I get to go to the physio and have people take care of me."

By the power of her example, Cardarelli is helping professionalize a notoriously haphazard industry and is showing other restaurateurs how they, too, can treat their staff like employees instead of drudges. She's also provided a model for how restaurants can weather challenges like the closures and restrictions of the pandemic. During normal times, she has 10 employees at Nora Gray and 35 at Elena, but throughout the pandemic, even though both restaurants have done a brisk business in take-out pizza and pasta, half of the staff have had to go on furlough. The company has built enough goodwill that Cardarelli is confident they'll be back when indoor dining starts up again; she even plans to expand once the pandemic is over.

The remaining staff, meanwhile, have received a healthy pandemic pay bump, since they're not getting as many tips as they otherwise would; kitchen staff at Nora Gray and Elena already earned about 10 to 15 per cent more than the staff at other restaurants. The enlightened culture and much-needed benefits keep Cardarelli's staff productive, strong and, most importantly, around: many of her most loyal employees have families and mortgages, and they need jobs that help them take care of those obligations. "If you want to hire adults, you have to treat them like adults," she says. **R**

## LIFE'S LIKE THAT

### Health-Conscious DIY



— [@DOCTOROBVIOUS](#)

### Travel Plans

My husband purchased a world map, gave me a dart and said, “Throw this, and wherever it lands, that’s where I’m taking you when the pandemic ends.” It turns out that we’re spending two weeks behind the fridge.

— SUZIE VINNICK, *musician*

**Sometimes when** I ask my boyfriend to take a

photo of me, he does this completely insane thing and takes exactly *one* photo.

— GINNY HOGAN, *comedian*

### Retail Therapy

**Me:** I’m sad and directionless.

**My brain:** Buy stuff.

**Me:** No! Listen, I need a purpose.

**My brain:** Did you say a purchase?

— [@PANT\\_LEG](#)

**One thing no one ever talks about:** how much time you debate whether you should keep a cardboard box because it’s, like, a really good box.

— [@MADAMEANTHRO](#)

**Them:** What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

**Me:** My bladder, mostly.

— [@LHLODDER](#)

### Homebody

It’s going to be so embarrassing when the pandemic ends and I still want to cancel plans and stay home.

— MORGAN PARKER, *author*

### Feline Friend

Cats show their love by stepping on you in the exact place that you’re hurting.

— MARA WILSON, *actress*

---


**Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 9 or [rd.ca/joke](http://rd.ca/joke) for details.**



# GOOD NEWS

FIVE REASONS TO SMILE

BY Jason McBride



Whale watching has become increasingly popular in Iceland.

## AN END TO COMMERCIAL WHALING

**ICELAND** Humans have hunted whales for thousands of years, with the animal's meat, blubber and baleen a source of food, oil and construction material. In 1986, with some species on the brink of extinction, the International Whaling Commission issued a moratorium on commercial whaling. Iceland, Norway and Japan, citing scientific research needs, never stopped.

In 2020, for the second year in a row, Iceland's two remaining whaling companies decided to skip the summer hunt, with one of them, IP-Utgerd, announcing that it was stopping the practice forever. The companies' reasons for

ditching whaling are largely economic. In 2017, the Icelandic government expanded one existing whale sanctuary and added another, forcing whalers to travel farther offshore in search of their catch. Consumer demand for whale meat in Iceland, meanwhile, has steadily declined.

The country has also found a far less lethal way to make money off the wondrous sea creatures: whale watching. Between 2012 and 2016, the number of tourists going on whale expeditions grew by up to 34 per cent annually.

This shift, which has been praised by environmentalists like Árni Finnsson

REMIZOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

of the Iceland Nature Conservation Association, dovetails with a growing awareness of the relationship between climate change and marine life. “In Iceland, the ocean is considered grey and dangerous,” Finnsson says. “But I think we’re coming to an understanding that we have to protect it better than we have been.”

## Removing Barriers to Library Access

**UNITED STATES** Library fines for books returned past their due date may be small, but they can add up. The Chicago Public Library system typically collects between \$800,000 and \$900,000 in overdue fees in a year. In 2019, however, the city’s mayor took the unusual step of eliminating charges for books returned late and discovered something surprising: a spike in both overdue books returned and returning patrons. About 11,000 library users who had their debt cancelled ended up renewing or

### Chicago’s Harold Washington Library



NEJDET DUZEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

replacing their library cards. Even more books—a seven per cent increase over the previous year—were checked out.

The abolition of late fees is spreading north of the border, too. Last October, the Ottawa Public Library board eliminated fees and the Toronto system will phase them out by 2022.

## Protecting a Cathedral to End Islamophobia

**FRANCE** Last November, in the southern French town of Lodève, 50 members of its Muslim community stood guard outside the town’s cathedral during the All Saints holiday weekend. The gathering was led by Elyazid Benferhat, a 36-year-old who works for the French oil company Total and also coaches a local soccer team. He was dismayed by recent Islamic terrorist attacks in the country—a month earlier, a teacher had been beheaded in Paris, and three people were murdered in a knife attack at the Notre-Dame basilica in Nice. The ensuing Islamophobia also troubled him. Protecting the cathedral, even if just symbolically, served as a gesture of religious solidarity and was welcomed enthusiastically by parishioners. “Our movement is the fruit of spontaneous civic initiative,” Benferhat said. “Its goal is to change the situation in France and around the world, and put an end to the constant persecution of the Muslim population.”

## Curbing Carbon Emissions— on the Cheap

**UNITED KINGDOM** With recent wildfires in Australia and Brazil, the climate crisis is rapidly accelerating. But curbing carbon emissions, which contribute to climate change, could be easier—and cheaper—than previously estimated.

Last November, Chris Stark, the chief executive of the United Kingdom's Climate Change Committee, said that,

thanks to the plummeting price of renewable energy, the cost of moving to a low-carbon economy was “surprisingly low.” In fact, moving to zero-carbon will actually boost the overall economy: clean energy infrastructure construction generates twice as many jobs as fossil fuel projects, for instance. The falling price of renewable energy is the result of a variety of factors, including improved technologies and more experienced developers.

### ACTS OF KINDNESS

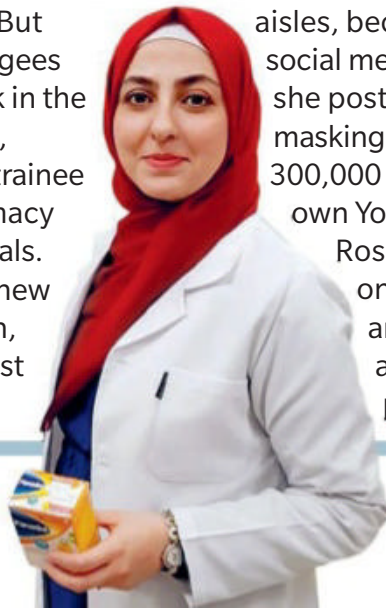
## Jordan's Volunteer COVID-19 Hero

In 2012, at the start of the Syrian Civil War, Salam Alhariri was an 18-year-old chemistry student at the University of Damascus. Forced to flee to Jordan with her mother and two younger siblings, Alhariri later secured the prestigious DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship to study pharmacy at the University of Jordan.

Four years later, she graduated near the top of her class. But under Jordanian law, refugees are not permitted to work in the medical field. So, in 2018, Alhariri took a volunteer trainee position at a small pharmacy in Amman that serves locals. Her role took on a whole new urgency when, last March, Jordan began to see its first cases of COVID-19.

Alhariri, now 26 years old, was concerned that available information about the pandemic was too complex for her customers, fellow refugees and family back in Syria. Her plan: dispense trustworthy advice and tips about the coronavirus—how to properly remove PPE and wash hands effectively, for example.

Soon, she was spreading her message far beyond the pharmacy's aisles, becoming an unlikely social media star. On Facebook, she posted a video on proper masking that, over a week, drew 300,000 viewers; she has her own YouTube channel (named Rose Health, after her one-year-old daughter); and on Instagram, she answers questions posed by followers. 



COURTESY OF SALAM ALHARIRI

READER'S DIGEST

# Best Health



## Bright Ideas for Healthy Living

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- Tasty, low-stress recipes
- Easy fitness routines
- Beauty tips and tricks
- Exclusively for Canadians!

[besthealthmag.ca/newsletter](http://besthealthmag.ca/newsletter)

ASK AN EXPERT

# Why Are Horoscopes So Popular Now?

*We ask astrologist  
Jessica Lanyadoo*

BY Courtney Shea

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN TAMAKI

**Astrology became more trendy than ever in the last few years, and particularly during the pandemic. Why is that?**

People tend to turn to astrology during periods of instability, and the last few years have definitely been that—political unrest, the climate crisis and now fears around health and economic well-being. When times get tough, people want to feel like they're part of something bigger than just the day-to-day grind. Some people may turn to religion or places of worship to find that meaning, and others turn to astrology.



**It's true, the future feels more uncertain than ever. Any chance you can tell us what's coming?**

People tend to misunderstand that part of what I do. I'm not like a fortune teller. I am able to interpret what could happen for an individual in the future, based on existing patterns and data, but I would rather give tools than predictions.

### **Okay, so can you break down how it all works, exactly?**

Astrology is the study of the positioning of the different celestial bodies—planets, the sun, the moon—and how their relationship to each other has an effect on personality and human behaviour. I use *The American Ephemeris for the 21st Century*, a book that contains thousands of data points—such as position and movement of those celestial bodies over time—which I can then interpret. On a recent episode of my podcast, I looked at a Virgo’s birth chart to help that listener unpack the reasons why they had compulsive thoughts and irritations at work. There is a lot of focus on astrology as a window into the future, but it’s also a coping system for the present—the foundation upon which our future lives and grows.

### **Saturn and Uranus are “squaring to each other” this year. What does that mean?**

In astrology, squares generally indicate tension or discord, so it’s not great news. Saturn is related to hierarchies, governments and structures, so it might mean more political instability in the United States and around the world.

### **Do people in positions of power look to the stars for guidance?**

They do. Ronald Reagan had an astrologer whom he consulted throughout

his presidency. At the time, it was a closely guarded secret. Stigma still exists, and it’s often not something a person in a position of power would share readily. But overall, there is less stigma now. People used to think it was just this New Age hippie thing, but for the last 20 years, I’ve had clients who are tech leaders, doctors and lawyers—all of whom are interested in discussing every detail of their birth chart.

## **I’VE HAD CLIENTS WHO ARE TECH LEADERS, DOCTORS AND LAWYERS.**

---

**For people who just want to dip a toe into astrology, how can they get the most out of the type of horoscope that appears in the newspaper?**

The main thing is to take it into the context of your life. So let’s say your horoscope says this is not a good month for buying or selling, but you’ve just made an offer on a new house. Don’t try to get out of the sale, just be extra cautious: double-check all the paperwork, assume as little risk as possible. Or if you meet someone who seems great, but their sign doesn’t match up with yours, don’t break up with them. The idea is that a horoscope can provide guidance, but it’s not a reason to abandon common sense. **R**

## POINTS TO PONDER



Basketball  
is where  
I discovered  
my true self.

–Fitriya Mohamed,  
founder of Toronto's  
Muslim Women's  
Summer Basketball Team

I'M DOOMED TO  
NOT GET MUCH  
MONETARY  
REWARD. AND  
THAT'S OK. THAT'S  
NOT THE POINT.

–Punk rock musician and  
Order of Canada member  
Art Bergmann, WHEN ASKED  
IF HE HAS ANY REGRETS

***A lot of people want to be the best,  
and we are simply not the best.***

–Feigang Fei, owner of Montreal restaurant Aunt Dai,  
WHICH HAS BECOME FAMOUS FOR ITS HONEST MENU DESCRIPTIONS

I WOULD NEVER  
WANT TO BE  
YOUNG AGAIN,  
EVER. THERE'S  
NOTHING  
ABOUT IT THAT'S  
APPEALING TO  
ME. MAYBE  
MY BOOBS.

–Jann Arden

I want to live  
in a place  
where everyone  
understands  
that I belong.

–Jesse Lipscombe,  
founder of the anti-racism  
#MakeItAwkward  
campaign



Cree is my native tongue.  
And it's the funniest language  
on the face of the earth.

–Playwright Tomson Highway, EXPLAINING WHY  
HE OFTEN WRITES IN HIS FIRST LANGUAGE



**CANADA HAS BUILT  
A LOT OF ITS IMAGE  
AROUND BEING  
PEACEFUL AND  
INCLUSIVE. IT'S HARD  
TO CHIP AWAY AT  
THAT NARRATIVE  
AND HELP PEOPLE  
TO RECOGNIZE THE  
RACISM THAT'S  
ACTUALLY RIGHT IN  
FRONT OF THEM.**

–Poet Cicely Belle Blain



**YOUR NEVER-  
ACCEPTABLE VIEWS  
WILL NEVER BECOME  
ACCEPTABLE.**

–Conservative strategist Ken  
Boessenkool, ON WHY CANADIAN  
POLITICIANS SHOULD NO LONGER TOLERATE  
DONALD TRUMP SUPPORTERS IN THEIR CIRCLES

*The nature of hatred is not  
something that can be neatly  
contained in a boundary. It's  
more like a flame, a fire. And  
it's very easy to spread.*

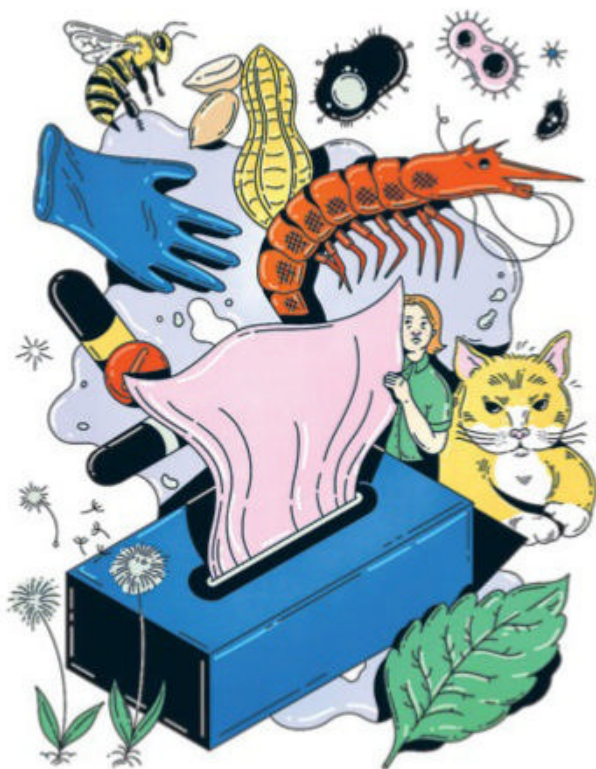
–NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, EXPLAINING  
WHY THE PROUD BOYS, A FAR-RIGHT  
ORGANIZATION, SHOULD BE DESIGNATED  
A TERRORIST GROUP

There is no room for  
political ideology in our  
fight against COVID-19.

–Ontario Premier Doug Ford, ON BOOTING  
MPP ROMAN BABER FROM THE PC CAUCUS FOR  
SPEAKING AGAINST LOCKDOWN MEASURES



## HEALTH



# Nothing to Sneeze At

*Adult-onset allergies are on the rise. Here are some theories why.*

BY Viviane Fairbank

ILLUSTRATION BY KATHLEEN FU

**T**HE WORLD IS full of allergens from food, bugs, pollen, latex, drugs, mould and animals—for a start. Many of us assume that our susceptibility to them develops only during childhood, so if you're allergy-free in your 20s, you're in the clear. But researchers are discovering that it's possible for adults of all ages to acquire allergies—even if they've never had one before.

In 2019, for the very first systematic study of allergies in adulthood, the Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research (CFAAR) surveyed approximately 40,000 people across the United States and found that one in 10 were food-allergic. Half of those people, the survey revealed, developed at least one of their allergies after the age of 18.

"We were very surprised by the results," says Ruchi Gupta, CFAAR's director. Her team had long suspected, based on anecdotal evidence, that rates of adult-onset food allergies were rising, but they didn't expect the number to be so high.

While CFAAR's study primarily looked at food allergies, it also provides insight into other types since people with one type tend to have others. That's because our bodies react in a similar way to them all: after exposure to a benign substance that the immune system mistakenly sees as harmful, antibodies cause cells to release chemicals such as histamine, which triggers inflammation. This is

the body's way of protecting itself from potentially dangerous substances. But as a side effect, histamine brings on hives, watery eyes, nasal congestion and, for some severe cases, a drop in blood pressure, leading to anaphylactic shock.

While scientists don't know for sure what causes new allergies to form in adults, Gupta's team has identified some likely triggers. Exposure to a new environment could introduce new allergens to your system—which is why someone who just moved to Seattle, where alder trees are common, might develop a new allergy to alder pollen, for example. People experiencing a hit to the immune system (such as a viral illness) or going through hormonal changes (such as in puberty or menopause) may also be at higher risk of developing new allergies, since their body's defence systems may already be weakened.

Unfortunately, it's not always easy to discern which allergy you have or whether you really have one. According to Gupta, people can easily mistake food poisoning and food intolerance for allergies. To identify a real one, doctors might conduct a blood test, a pinprick test (which inserts a small amount of an allergen into the skin) or an "oral food challenge," where a patient is supervised by a doctor while they consume a particular food.

There's no one-size-fits-all treatment for allergies, but antihistamine

medication serves as a helpful over-the-counter treatment for mild symptoms. To address environmental allergies, doctors can prescribe a regular series of injections that gradually expose and habituate the immune system to larger doses of the allergen. New treatments, such as oral immunotherapy (which is the same basic idea but through ingestion), are an option for food allergies.

**11%**  
OF ADULTS HAVE  
SOME FORM OF  
FOOD ALLERGY.

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Gupta's research is at an early stage, and it's still unclear whether adult-onset allergies eventually resolve or persist for life. That's why the best strategy may be preventative, says Christopher Warren, a researcher at CFAAR: to avoid developing allergies, a good bet is to expose ourselves to allergens regularly, so our body is acquainted with the substances. Children and adults should be eating a healthy, diverse diet that includes the most typical allergens, such as shellfish, milk and peanuts. As for environmental allergies, as long as we are reasonably safe, one of the best things we can do is to keep playing in the dirt. **R**

NEWS FROM THE  
**WORLD OF  
 MEDICINE**

BY Samantha Rideout



## DEEP SLEEP MAY DEFEND AGAINST ALZHEIMER'S

Each day, as your brain cells consume energy, they create waste products. These include beta-amyloid, a compound that's found in abnormal levels in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease. Scientists believe that a healthy brain cleans out this unneeded substance during the deep, dreamless part of the sleep cycle known as "slow-wave sleep." In a six-year California study, seniors who experienced less slow-wave sleep tended to accumulate more beta-amyloid. This suggests you could reduce your Alzheimer's risk by practising good sleep habits and by seeking treatment for sleep disorders such as chronic insomnia or sleep apnea.

## When Pain or Weakness Lingers After COVID-19

After surviving COVID-19, some people are left with pain, numbness or weakness in their hands, feet, arms or legs. While some of the causes of these nerve-damage symptoms are known—including inflammation from the body's immune response and hematomas caused by blood thinners used for COVID-19 treatment—GPs may be at a loss as to what to do about them. A new *Radiology* review proposes a good first step: a high-resolution ultrasound or a magnetic resonance neurography. A damaged nerve in one place can trigger symptoms elsewhere, but these imaging tests can pinpoint the exact location and nature of the injury. Depending on what they reveal, treatments might include pain medications, physical therapy, immunotherapy or surgery.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/FOTOPLANNER

## Stress-Related Dental Problems on the Rise

If you wake up with a headache or sore jaw, you might be grinding your teeth in the night—and you're not alone. Stress often triggers this problem, and a survey conducted last spring in Israel and Poland found that the COVID-19 pandemic is making the issue more widespread. In fact, during Israel's first lockdown, the rate of people who suspected they were grinding jumped from 10 to 36 per cent. To prevent tooth damage, a dentist can make you a bite guard to wear at night. And to reduce the stress at the root of this habit, many activities can help: a workout, meditation, deep-breathing exercises, watching a funny show or simply indulging in a leisure activity that you enjoy.



## Older People at Risk From STIs

It's not only high schoolers who need sex education. In a survey of Europeans aged over 45, two-thirds of respondents said they never used protection against sexually transmitted infections, and more than half had never been tested for STIs they could be carrying. Shame and stigma were cited as among the biggest barriers stopping them from accessing sexual health-care services. Over the long term, certain untreated STIs can lead to chronic pelvic pain, cardiovascular damage or an increased risk of cancer. So even if this topic makes you feel uncomfortable, it's a good idea to openly discuss it with your doctor.

## Better Management for Type-1 Diabetes

Instead of repeatedly pricking their fingers, some people with type-1 diabetes are relying on continuous glucose monitors (CGMs). With the help of a tiny sensor inserted under the skin, a CGM measures your blood-sugar level continuously and can alert you via a handheld monitor whenever it isn't within the right range. In a Swedish study, switching to a CGM helped patients to lower their average blood sugar—without dipping *too* low more often. Most participants also found CGMs more comfortable than the alternative. Although the devices are widely available in Sweden, this isn't true everywhere in Europe and North America. With any luck, this study might help to change that by justifying more support for CGMs under public and private health-insurance plans.

## **Can Online Doctor Ratings Be Trusted?**

Online ratings make it easier to choose which phone, car or dishwasher to buy, but are they equally useful when it comes to picking a doctor—or learning about the one you have? Not always, according to a University of Texas at Dallas study focused on chronic-disease care.

When a patient has a curable problem—strep throat treated with antibiotics, for example—they'll clearly know whether or not their medical care was successful, and may be more likely to give a satisfactory assessment online. But when it comes to lifelong diseases like diabetes, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)—which aren't cured but rather managed—the signs that a doctor is doing a good job are less obvious.

As you'd expect, then, when the researchers investigated how patients with COPD fared with various doctors over a period of 10 years, these doctors' star ratings on websites didn't line up very well with more objective ways of measuring the quality of their care, such as the rate of patients who developed complications or needed to visit an emergency room.

Some of the qualitative information written in textual online reviews might be reliable—observations about a doctor's friendliness or the cleanliness of their office, for example. These things matter, too. But when it comes to medical outcomes for chronic diseases, you can't depend too much upon what you see on the web.



## **Grow a Little Happiness at Home**

Fresh air, mild exercise, a pretty environment, delicious and nutritious home-grown veggies: there's a lot to enjoy about tending a garden. In fact, in a study of urban and suburban Americans, home gardening brought the same boost to emotional well-being as walking or cycling.

## **Keeping Bones Strong Without Meat**

In theory, you can get the nutrients you need without eating meat or dairy. Yet, a British study found a significantly increased risk of hip fractures in vegetarians, pescatarians and especially vegans. Protein and calcium, which are both essential to bone health, are found in certain plant-based foods such as beans, lentils, broccoli and cabbage, so be sure to include them in your meals. **R**

## MEDICAL MYSTERY

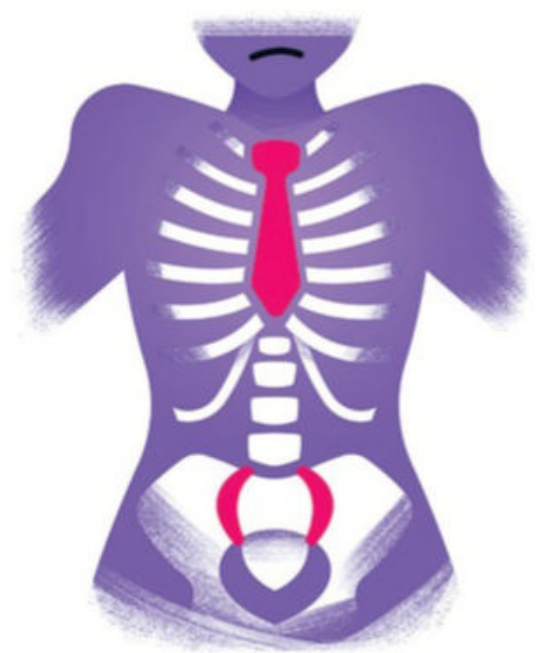
# Down to the Bone

*When a woman suffers back and chest pain, doctors suspect an infection—until they see the MRI*

BY Lisa Bendall

ILLUSTRATION BY VICTOR WONG

**A**MBER\*, A 27-YEAR-OLD ESL tutor, is adventurous and loves to travel, but COVID-19 put all her plans on hold. She spent most of last summer at her home in Phoenix, Ariz., with her two kittens. In early July, her lower back started to hurt—a return, Amber thought, of a chronic problem she'd dealt with years before. Then she



started feeling pain in the front of her chest that flared up whenever she moved. She was also sweating in her sleep, waking up soaked in the middle of the night. She initially blamed it on the Arizona climate. But as the weeks went by, her discomfort worsened.

In August, Amber found a hard, swollen lump in the upper area of her sternum, or breastbone. When she asked her physician friends about it, their responses were carefully neutral. “I knew that meant it could be something bad,” she says. Worried it was a tumour, she finally made an appointment with her doctor. A chest X-ray revealed signs of inflammation in her

\*IDENTIFYING DETAILS HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

sternum, and blood work showed high inflammatory markers. An injury or infection could cause these test results; so could the cancer Amber feared. Her doctor scheduled an MRI for a better picture of what was going on.

While Amber waited two weeks for the MRI appointment, the soreness made breathing difficult. Simple tasks became almost impossible. "Leaning over to tie my shoes caused pain in my chest and back," she says. "It was immobilizing me." She steeled herself for the news that she had some kind of malignant mass, but the MRI instead showed that something, likely bacteria, was eating away at the bone in a sternum joint. Amber was at risk of sepsis, a life-threatening reaction to an untreated bacterial infection.

"My grandpa died from sepsis, so I knew it was scary," she says. Her doctor recommended going to the ER at the local Mayo Clinic for IV antibiotics and a bone biopsy to confirm the infection.

After looking at Amber's CT scan, internist Dr. Umesh Sharma expected to see a patient with a badly infected breastbone. He was less certain after he examined her. "Typically, when you have infection in any joint or skin, it gets red, hot, swollen and painful," he says. "It was painful, but didn't have the red-hotness. That made us ask, is there something we're missing?"

Sharma was hesitant to treat for infection if he wasn't completely sold on the diagnosis. Biopsies involve

extracting infected tissue with a needle to verify the infection and identify the type of bacteria—and intravenous antibiotics can last six to eight weeks. Sharma consulted with orthopaedic physicians at the Mayo Clinic. They felt that since the lump wasn't deep, a biopsy, if needed, could be handled by the interventional radiology department, where doctors perform procedures while taking images.

**JUST LEANING OVER  
TO TIE HER SHOES  
CAUSED AMBER PAIN.  
"IT WAS IMMOBILIZING  
ME," SHE SAYS.**

For Amber, the experience of being the subject of a diagnostic puzzle was unnerving, but she appreciated her doctor's openness. "Being in the loop was calming," she says. "Dr. Sharma wanted to make sure I knew what was going on."

When a radiologist reviewed Amber's MRI and CT scans, a few oddities stood out. The patterns of bone destruction weren't typical of infection—some areas looked thickened—and there weren't any breaks in the skin where bacteria could have entered the body. Plus, the location of the problem was a clue: It was typical of a rare condition called SAPHO syndrome (SAPHO stands for synovitis, acne, pustulosis,

hyperostosis and osteitis), which often causes chronic inflammation and pain in the chest, although it doesn't normally worsen this quickly.

After the radiologist shared his theory, Sharma postponed the biopsy to run more tests, including for fungal infection, cancer, even tuberculosis. Although there was now a strong possibility Amber had SAPHO syndrome, he didn't want to fall into the same trap of focusing on one diagnosis. He also turned to the rheumatology team for a different perspective. They suggested scanning other bones in Amber's body. If she did have an inflammatory condition like SAPHO, it would likely be more widespread.


The new scans proved to be a game-changer. Amber had inflammation and bone erosion in her sacroiliac joints, located between her pelvis and the base of her spine. Finally, there was evidence they weren't dealing with a localized infection.

In fact, the site of these bone changes pointed to a different condition—ankylosing spondylitis (AS), a form of arthritis that can fuse and stiffen joints. AS is known for attacking the sacroiliac joints and can affect the breastbone as well. AS isn't usually discovered until young

adulthood—perhaps because one of the earliest symptoms, low back pain, is easily dismissed. The cause of AS isn't fully understood, but a specific gene is known to be a factor. If left untreated, the disease can permanently reduce mobility.

About one in 1,000 people are diagnosed with AS worldwide, making it more common than SAPHO. But since initial tests focused only on Amber's chest, it hadn't been on the radar. "Hindsight is 20/20 when you have all the information," says Sharma.

He ordered a genetic test for AS, and Amber was discharged a couple of days later. In two weeks, the test came back positive; Amber started a drug to slow the disease's progression. Although AS can't be cured, she will likely lead a normal life as long as she continues treatment and physical therapy.

The diagnosis has changed Amber's day-to-day outlook, she says. "I'm a little more in the moment now, more present, and not taking things for granted." She's also grateful she avoided the invasive biopsy and weeks of the wrong treatment. "We could have gone down a rabbit hole, and we don't know what the adverse effects of that could have been." 



## **Ties That Bind**

**Love is blind;  
friendship closes its eyes.**

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE



COVER STORY



READER'S DIGEST

# CANADA'S GREATEST UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

CAN YOU CRACK THESE  
SPOOKY DISAPPEARANCES,  
PARANORMAL SIGHTINGS AND  
PUZZLING WHODUNITS?



BY Luc Rinaldi AND Courtney Shea

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TAVIS COBURN

## THE MISSING THEATRE MAGNATE

On December 1, 1919, Ambrose Small, a Toronto theatre owner, sold the bulk of his empire to a Montreal company for \$1.7 million. The sale itself was not suspicious: given the growing popularity of moving pictures, Small had decided to divest himself before it was too late. The next day, he and his wife, Theresa, together deposited the money. On the street they parted ways, Small promising to be home by dinner. But he never arrived. Small had a reputation for carousing, and Theresa waited two weeks to report his absence.

Today, the potential killers sound

like players in a murder-mystery game: wife Theresa, a fixture in Toronto society; Small's money-grubbing sisters with no other source of income; the disgruntled secretary; and at least one mistress. There was even the possibility of a gangster hit, given Small's substantial gambling habit.

But if suspects were plenty, the investigation was clumsy at best. "This was a different era of policing," says Katie Daubs, author of *The Missing Millionaire: The True Story of Ambrose Small and the City Obsessed with Finding Him*. "At that time, police mostly patrolled the streets and successfully solved crimes by being present when they happened."

A series of private investigators tried their luck at cracking the case. So did



clairvoyants and cryptographers. Theories multiplied, and the tabloids made a meal of every false lead (including a deathbed confession from Theresa, later deemed a forgery). Ultimately, neither Small nor a culprit was ever found, and in 1960 the Toronto Police officially closed the case.

## THE EMPTY MONEY PIT

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In 1795, three teenagers discovered an odd hole in the ground on an island off the south shore of Nova Scotia. The area was rumoured to be a pit stop for pirates, so the boys began digging, hoping to unearth buried treasure. Instead, they struck layer after layer of buried timber. Though the trio never found any booty, they did discover a cryptic stone slate inscribed with unfamiliar symbols—a cipher that, at least in their interpretation, promised a huge payday.

Thus began the saga of the Oak Island money pit, which has beguiled countless explorers and excavators—including John Wayne and Franklin D. Roosevelt—over the past 225 years, even bankrupting some. Falls, explosions, suffocation and other accidents have claimed the lives of six

men who tried to find the island's prize. So far, explorers have spent millions on the search and found not a penny.

## THE PACIFIST ASSASSINATION

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At a little past 1 a.m. on October 28, 1924, a train travelling the Kettle Valley Railway in B.C. lit up the sky with a giant fireball. Nine people were killed in the explosion, including the presumed assassination target, Peter Verigin, spiritual leader of the Doukhobor people, a Russian religious sect. Since immigrating to Canada at the turn of the century, the group had faced resentment for their strict pacifism and com-

munist ideals. There was an outcry when the government granted the Doukhobors a religious exemption from World War I.

By the time of his death, Verigin had built an extensive list of enemies. Potential suspects included a Doukhobor splinter group, the federal government, the American Ku Klux Klan and even Verigin's own son, Peter II, who assumed his father's leadership role. Despite a \$2,000 reward, no charges were ever laid, and questions remain to this day, including whether it



### THE WRECKED PLANE

In 1959, John Diefenbaker, citing high costs, axed development of the Avro Arrow jet, even destroying prototypes and blueprints. In 2011, an intact Arrow ejection seat was discovered in the U.K., reigniting rumours that one plane survived and was smuggled out.

was an assassination at all. It's true that Verigin was a contentious character, but some experts believe a leaky gas line or hastily packed dynamite in the suitcase of a local miner may have been responsible for the *kaplow!*

## THE YEAR OF THE UFO

In 1967, Canada was visited by multiple UFOs—or so people claimed. The convincing sightings prompted investigations by intelligence agencies and discussions in the House of Commons.

Rational minds might dismiss the reports as a product of the times. Anxious about the Cold War and excited by

the Apollo era, Canadians were gazing skyward more than ever before. “It was the perfect storm for unusual things to be reported,” says science writer Chris Rutkowski, the author of several books about UFO sightings. “Any type of intrusion—people seeing things that shouldn't be flying in Canadian airspace—was certainly of interest.”

Here are three of that year's most mystifying close encounters.

**FALCON LAKE, MANITOBA** In May 1967, an amateur geologist named Stefan Michalak went prospecting in the wilderness east of Winnipeg and encountered a silver, saucer-shaped craft about 10 metres wide and four metres high, grounded in the forest. As



he approached, he heard the whir of engines coming from an open door. When he touched the vessel, it burned the fingertips of his gloves and shot out a burst of compressed air, scorching his shirt, cap and skin before quickly rotating and zooming away. Michalak was initially treated for burns and, later, for recurring blackouts. The RCMP discovered a barren 15-foot circle containing radioactive soil where he reported seeing the UFO.

**KANANASKIS, ALBERTA** Out for a hike with two friends in July, journalist and novelist Warren Smith spotted a shiny disc swiftly rising and falling overhead. He took two photos before the object disappeared in the distance and then mailed them to the Department of National Defence. After both Canadian and American intelligence studied the pictures, they concluded he'd indeed seen two unidentified flying objects, about 15 metres in diameter and three metres tall. The agencies added in an official report, "If the story and photographs are a hoax, then it is a well-prepared one."

**SHAG HARBOUR, NOVA SCOTIA** Late one October evening, at least 11 witnesses in this tiny town—including RCMP officers, sailors and pilots flying nearby—all reported seeing a large object

with four flashing lights hovering above, and then crashing into, the harbour. Upon investigation, authorities found sulphurous yellow foam on the surface of the water. But countless diving expeditions, including one as recent as 2018, have turned up no wreckage or evidence of anything unusual.

## THE SILENT CASTAWAY

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In 1863, a young boy stumbled upon a legless man in his 20s on the beach of Sandy Cove, Nova Scotia, and ran home to get help. Asked to share his identity, the mystery castaway grumbled something that sounded like Jerome. The name stuck, especially in the absence of any other communication or clues about a native language.

For almost 50 years, Jerome relied on a government stipend and the goodwill of strangers, passing from house to house. He eventually settled in the village of Meteghan, where one host family reportedly charged admission to anyone who wished to come and gawk at the mysterious local legend.

If Jerome knew his own origin story, he never revealed it. Many Maritimers have theories: he was a



### THE OUTLAW'S GOLD

There are persistent rumours that the American outlaw Jesse James fled to Ontario after robbing a Wells Fargo train in 1870, assumed a fake identity and buried his loot in the hills of the small township named Mulmur.

Despite much searching, however, no treasure has ever been found.

sailor who got the boot after a failed mutiny attempt, an heir to a fortune, a prisoner of pirates or maybe (likely?) the victim of a terrible head injury. He died over 100 years ago, sharing his expiration date with the sinking of the *Titanic*. So far only one event inspired a movie.

## THE SKYLIGHT CAPER

In the early hours of Labour Day 1972, three men met under the cover of darkness outside the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. They pulled black ski masks over their faces and prepared to commence the largest art heist in Canadian history.

To begin, one man climbed a tree and jumped onto the museum's roof, where he lowered a ladder to his co-conspirators. They proceeded to a skylight that was under repair—one of the panes of glass had been replaced by a plastic sheet—and slid down a 15-metre rope into the gallery.

Once inside, the thieves overpowered three night guards and left them bound and gagged in the museum's lecture hall. They then stalked the halls in search of their loot: 18 canvases, including Rembrandt's *Landscape With Cottages* (worth roughly \$20 million today)

and 39 pieces of jewellery, including an 18th-century gold watch.

The robbers were in and out within 30 minutes, but the search for the pieces they pilfered continues to this day. Two items—a pendant and a Brueghel painting—were ransomed to police in the months following the heist, but the rest remain at large, as do the burglars. No suspects were named, and no charges were ever laid.

## THE ILL-FATED LOVERS

In August 1993, Kimberley Lockyer, 29, and Dale Worthman, 30, vanished. The young couple told no one where they went, because by every indication they intended to return. Their car was

still parked outside their basement apartment in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, Newfoundland. Inside, fresh bread sat in the toaster and the fridge was fully stocked. They'd left behind wallets, IDs and cash.

Police interviewed friends, family, taxi companies and airlines, but no one knew a thing. Tips trickled in from the public, but they were dead ends, too. Years passed, and the case grew cold. If Lockyer and Worthman were alive, they were gone.

Then, in July 2006, Worth-



### THE ARTIST WHODUNIT

Tom Thomson was last seen alive on July 8, 1917, as he set off to fish Canoe Lake in Algonquin Provincial Park. His body surfaced over a week later, with a bruise on his head and fishing line wrapped around his ankle. Nobody knows whether it was an accident, suicide or murder.

man's friend, Joey Oliver, went to the police. Racked by a guilty conscience, he claimed he had lured the couple into the woods outside St. John's that long-ago summer at the behest of his accomplice, Shannon Murrin. Oliver believed that Murrin simply wanted to shake Worthman down for a drug debt, but the situation took a grim turn: according to Oliver, Murrin shot both Worthman and Lockyer.

Following Oliver's directions, police found two bodies in a single grave. Oliver pleaded guilty to manslaughter and was sentenced to 15 years, but maintained he wasn't the killer. While the Crown believed he hadn't pulled the trigger, it couldn't corroborate his claim that Murrin did. For his part,

Murrin denied any involvement in the killings. He insisted that Oliver tried to frame him because he was an easy target—he had been previously charged, but acquitted, of another murder.

So who really killed Dale Worthman and Kimberley Lockyer? Unless one of these men changes their story, we may never know.

## THE GHOST SHIP OF THE GREAT LAKES

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The French explorer René-Robert Cavelier has many claims to fame: he claimed the state of Louisiana for King Louis XIV, and he was one of the first Europeans to traverse the Mississippi





and Ohio rivers. His most mysterious legacy, however, is *Le Griffon*, the ship he lost on the Great Lakes.

In 1679, Cavalier sailed *Le Griffon* from Niagara Falls to an island near modern-day Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he traded with its Indigenous inhabitants. Eager to explore the area, he disembarked and ordered his crew to return to Niagara with a load of furs. It was the last time Cavalier—or anyone—saw *Le Griffon*.

Since then, many historians have put forward their own theories to explain the ship's disappearance: the crew made off with their wares; a local tribe captured and burned *Le Griffon*; or, the boat was wrecked on Manitoulin Island. None of those hypotheses have satisfied modern myth busters, and the search for *Le Griffon* continues.

## THE REDPATH MANSION MURDERS

In June 1901, gunshots rang out from behind the doors of Redpath Manor, home to Montreal's famous family of sugar barons. Minutes later, the blood-soaked bodies of Ada Maria, 59, and her 26-year-old son, Clifford, were discovered by her other son, Peter. The



## THE CONFEDERATION ASSASSINATION

Father of Confederation Thomas D'Arcy McGee was shot dead on April 7, 1868. The presumed assassin, Patrick James Whelan, was later hanged but maintained his innocence, saying he knew who pulled the trigger but didn't want to go down as a snitch.

coroner and a family physician determined that Clifford accidentally fired during a seizure and then turned the gun on himself. The official account is plausible, if it's true that Clifford had epilepsy—no record of him having the condition exists prior to this event.

Over a century later, mystery shrouds the two Redpath family deaths. Police were never called, and both bodies were buried within 48 hours. Rumours spread about other potential suspects, including Ada Maria's daughter, Amy, who likely

stood to inherit a chunk of the family fortune. Today, researchers suspect the coroner's account was devised to protect the wealthy family's privacy, not reveal the truth.

## THE TOONIE TRUCK HEIST

The Canadian two-dollar coin debuted in February 1996. Five months later, three million dollars' worth of the newly minted currency was stolen from CN's Turcot Yard in Montreal. The biggest coin theft in Canadian history ran smoothly (and in broad daylight!) as thieves drove a truck containing 1.5 million toonies out an emergency

exit. The abandoned vehicle was later located, but the money was gone. Authorities would not say whether it was an inside job. There were many similar trucks on the lot that day, which, along with the fact that the coins were unmarked, made apprehending the guilty party or parties unlikely. Still, Montreal's police chief put out a nationwide alert for anyone making major purchases with a whole lot of pocket change.

## THE VANISHED VILLAGE

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On a frigid November day in 1930, a fur trapper named Joe Labelle arrived at a tiny town on the shore of Anjikuni Lake, in modern-day Nunavut. Having visited before, Labelle knew the village to be a lively community of tents and huts—a great place to trade or spend the night. Except on this particular

day, the settlement was deserted.

As Labelle tiptoed through the vacant village, he noticed strange signs. A meal had been abandoned in mid-preparation. Food, clothes and weapons had all been left behind. Most disturbingly, several sled dogs had starved to death and were lying beside graves that had been emptied.

An RCMP investigation concluded that the approximately 30 Inuit inhabitants had departed eight weeks before Labelle arrived. Officers had no idea where the Inuit went or what happened to them. Some theories blame a Wendigo—an antlered, human-eating monster—rumoured to lurk nearby, while others entertain the idea of an alien abduction. Meanwhile, skeptics suggest the story is a hoax, arguing that the first official record of the event—an article in a Manitoba newspaper—was an early example of “fake news,” bur-nished by decades of retelling. **R**



### Head in the Sky

**A cloud does not know why it moves in just  
such a direction and at such a speed. It feels an impulsion—  
this is the place to go now.**

RICHARD BACH

**Life would be dull if we had to look up at  
cloudless monotony day after day.**

GAVIN PRETOR-PINNEY

**Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or  
usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.**

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

AS KIDS SEE IT



“Daddy, it’s time for you to face your fears and stop avoiding my math lesson.”

**My son was just two** when my daughter was born. For the first six months of her life, we were constantly greeting her with “Hi, sweet girl” or “Hi, my precious baby.”

My daughter is now 18 months old and no matter how much we correct him, my son is

convinced her name is Hi. He’ll say, “Mom, Hi is awake. Hi is hungry.” Or my absolute favourite, “Hello, Hi.”

— REDDIT.COM

**While I was lying next to** my four-year-old, he looked into my eyes, parted my hair to the side and said, “Mommy,

I can’t rub the lines out of your face.”

— @MUMINBITS

**After my five-year-old** got a new haircut, he told his classmate: “A robber came in the middle of the night, took my hair and made it into a wig!”

— RIVKA JAKUBOVIC, *Toronto*

I remember talking to my eight-year-old son about growing up. He said, “Dad, I want to be just like you.” Before I could complete my huge grin, he added, “But richer.”

—MOHAMMED QUADRI,  
*Markham*

**Dubious claims my toddler made this week:**

- ◆ He invented the “thumbs up.”
- ◆ Only “some” lizards can read.
- ◆ He forgot how to eat carrots.
- ◆ His daycare allows swords.

—[@HENPECKEDHAL](#)

**My seven-year-old** drew a self-portrait, gifted it to herself and hung it up on her wall. From now on, I’m making her my life coach.

—[@GFISHANDNUGGETS](#)

I told my six-year-old that I’m 38 and she started crying. When I asked why, she said, “I’m just sad because old people die.” I’m both touched that she

When asked by a friend at daycare why she has two moms, my four-year-old answered that her dad was eaten by a shark.

—[@BAKEKATER](#)

loves me so much and depressed that she thinks my life expectancy is that of a farmer in the 17th century.

—CLINT EDWARDS, *writer*

**My six-year-old:** I figured out the password to the tablet and bypassed the parental controls to download all my shows.

**Also my six-year-old:** Help! I put both my legs in the same pant hole and now I’m stuck!

—[@NOT\\_THENANNY](#)

**A brief history of my 11-year-old’s attitude toward wearing shorts:**

**School in winter:** Shorts

**Bedtime:** Shorts

**Camping:** Shorts

**Walking the dog on a wet and windy day:** Shorts

**Expedition to the North Pole:** Shorts

**Voyage to the moon:** Shorts

—[@THREETIMEDADDY](#)

**While I was** repairing my six-year-old granddaughter’s dresser, I heard the following exchange between her and her friend:

**My granddaughter:**

That’s my grandma. She’s our fix-it-up person. Do you have a grandma?

**Her friend:** No, I have a nanna.

**My granddaughter:**

Well, you should really get a grandma.

—PATRICIA POWER, *Oshawa*

**Kindergarten teacher on Zoom:** What’s your favourite pie?

**My kid, panicking:** I don’t know, I haven’t had a chance to try them all yet!

—BETH REVIS, *writer*

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IF YOU FAIL  
A MENTAL  
CAPACITY TEST,  
YOUR PROVINCE  
CAN SELL YOUR  
HOME, MANAGE  
YOUR MONEY  
AND LOCK YOU  
IN LONG-TERM  
CARE. BUT WHAT  
IF THE TEST WAS  
WRONG?

# THE TAKEN

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BY Sharon J. Riley FROM *THE WALRUS*

# M

**MURIEL SHAW** had always said the only way she'd leave home was "feet first." For Shaw, a retired British Columbia Institute of Technology clerk in her 80s, home was a double-wide trailer in Coquitlam. Shaw was living an independent life and had endured a series of challenges, including the loss of her partner, Mel, in 1996 and breast cancer when she was in her 60s. At the end of 2010, Shaw didn't seem herself: she was anxious and confused. Chris Jarvis, her youngest son, said she was "just acting strange." The family took her to the hospital.

After Shaw was admitted, hospital staff decided to give her a capacity assessment: a common evaluation administered to people who seem disoriented. The goal is to determine whether a person has the ability to understand information and foresee the consequences of their actions or decisions. And, though doctors often

give these assessments, the responses lead to a legal outcome rather than a medical diagnosis. If the assessor determines that a person is incapable of making some or all of their own decisions, a "certificate of incapability" can then be issued. These certificates have different names depending on the province, but they all have more or less the same result: from that moment on, some or all of a person's autonomy may be taken away for good.

Being deemed incapable means that a person's life decisions—what they spend their money on, what health care they receive, where they call home—may be delegated to another party. In some cases, that proxy is a family member; in others, it is the provincial public-guardian system, whose staff may meet with the person rarely, if ever. The system is designed to protect against elder abuse and errors in judgment; it is an attempt to safeguard some of society's most vulnerable, but it risks doing so at the cost of their liberties.

After her capacity assessment, Shaw was deemed incapable. (Jarvis told me that she was showing symptoms consistent with early-stage dementia.) The people around her immediately began trying to work out who would make decisions on her behalf. She had three children, and they had different ideas about what would be best for her. Jarvis said that social workers and hospital staff determined there was no suitable place for Shaw to live among her

family, and though she wanted to remain at home, her new care workers wouldn't allow it.

Shaw was moved to a long-term care facility. She started writing in a journal there, in June 2011. She seemed to want to make the best of her situation, and on the first page, she put down a rosy title for her project: "New Beginning!" But her entries outlined a growing list of concerns: "My small room lets me see outside, food is available, etc., but I am still very sad and lonely," she wrote. "Wish I could be home rather than in the hospital (or whatever this place is called!)" While Shaw was getting acclimatized

Shaw is not alone in spending her older years deemed incapable and living under the oversight of the PGT. In Alberta and B.C. respectively, public guardians reported 7,832 and 7,904 adult clients from 2017 to 2018. The public guardian in Ontario managed the finances of approximately 12,500 people in 2019, about half of whom were seniors. Billions of dollars—savings accounts, assets, pensions—are managed by public guardians across the country.

In recent years, auditors general and ombudspersons have raised concerns about the inner workings of the closely

## SOME SENIORS FIND THAT, ONCE DECLARED INCAPABLE BY THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN SYSTEM, THEY CAN'T CHALLENGE THE DECISION.

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to her new living situation, Jarvis and his siblings argued over how their mother's money was being managed. To settle the matter, Jarvis asked B.C.'s Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) to become involved. The B.C. PGT is a government-designated corporation that steps in when there isn't a family member or close friend available to take responsibility for a person deemed incapable. "If we'd had family harmony and money, this would not have happened," Jarvis said. "It wasn't ideal, but what was the alternative?"

entwined capacity-assessment and public-guardian systems. Some seniors find that, once declared incapable, they are unable to challenge the decision. There has been case after case of mismanaged finances and contested spending. In Ontario, the auditor general found that over \$1 million of assets managed by the PGT was lost between 2015 and 2018 because of staff mistakes. In one instance, a packet containing \$645 worth of jewellery was found in a PGT office, and employees had no idea which client it belonged



to. Errors like this are not confined to one province: reviewers in P.E.I., B.C., Alberta and New Brunswick have all stated that their public trustees may not be properly protecting or administering their clients' finances.

It can seem like a great deal of attention is paid to other institutions that house vulnerable segments of the population, such as children in daycares. But there's no future in aging; there is next to no potential that a senior might one day cure cancer or be the next prime minister. Reform in eldercare may be desperately needed, but it hasn't been forthcoming.

Some assessors may use what's known as a Mini-Mental Status Examination. In this evaluation, seniors are asked the month and the season. They are asked to spell "world" backward and forward and given a time limit. They are asked what province they're in, to repeat the phrase "no ifs, ands or buts" and to fold a piece of paper in half and put it on their lap or the floor. Other assessors may use the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, in which the subject is asked to draw a clock face and to name as many words that begin with the letter f as they can in one minute. Other patients may be assessed on a

## TO MEASURE MENTAL CAPACITY, SENIORS ARE ASKED TO SPELL "WORLD" BACKWARD AND FORWARD AND GIVEN A TIME LIMIT.



**DETERMINING MENTAL CAPACITY** can be a puzzle. To test for a fever, medical staff can take a person's temperature; for diabetes, they can do a blood test. Capacity, on the other hand, has no standard unit of measurement. Sometimes the practice may seem more like an art than a science.

In Canada, depending on the province or territory, capacity assessments can be administered by a doctor or a nurse, a social worker or a psychologist, an occupational therapist or, in rare cases, a member of the clergy.

geriatric-depression scale, where they are asked if they feel "pretty worthless" or if it's "wonderful to be alive."

Being on the receiving end of these questions can be rattling—and not answering to the assessor's satisfaction can influence whether a person goes home at the end of the meeting. Experts have raised concerns about the efficacy of these tools and caution that assessors may be relying too heavily on them. Laura Tamblyn Watts, president and CEO of the seniors' advocacy group CanAge, says

that capacity should be thought of as more like a dial: “People are more and less capable of doing some things and not others.”

As she explains, many of us experience some level of uncertainty in our day-to-day lives; we all get confused and ask ourselves questions. Did I pay that bill already? Did I turn off the oven before I left home? But determining when exactly these sorts of questions become a sign that some greater function has been lost is far from straightforward. Even those with dementia don’t fully lose their faculties overnight.

psychosis. These drugs can increase fatigue and confusion and are known in the industry as “chemical restraints.”

How a person performs on a capacity assessment can be influenced by whether they’ve recently experienced a traumatic event, whether they trust their assessor or whether they are hard of hearing. Some advocates for seniors argue that people may even be found incapable without being properly assessed by a doctor at all.

Ruth Adria, a retired registered nurse in Edmonton, says that she believes this was the case when a woman she knew—I’ll call her Martha—was

## WITH A PERSON’S RIGHTS ON THE LINE, THE QUALITY OF CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS DESERVES MORE SCRUTINY.



Capacity often comes in fits and spurts and can be influenced by health and environment. Problems with sleep or blood sugar can temporarily affect a person’s state of mind. Seniors with dementia may experience a phenomenon known as sundowning, a decline in function that occurs later in the day.

And then there are the medications. According to the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, in 2018, one in five people in long-term care were administered antipsychotic drugs despite not having any diagnosis of

deemed incapable over 10 years ago. As Adria tells it, Martha was 85 and lived alone in her bungalow. She kept busy, filling her days with errands, tending to her backyard garden and regularly stocking her basement with jars of homemade preserves. Martha had grown up an orphan in Europe and knew how to look out for herself.

Then, one day, she hurt her foot and was admitted to her local hospital. While Martha was there, health care workers raised concerns about the cleanliness and safety of her living

conditions. Martha never went home again. She lost control of her finances and was placed in a nursing home. According to documents that Adria saved, Martha's bank account was billed \$2,000 per month for her new room—a shared space in which only a curtain separated her from other residents. Martha's house was emptied, her preserves thrown away.

Throughout the ordeal, Martha maintained that she was being unfairly “locked up,” according to a letter she wrote to her doctor that Adria kept. Martha knew what was happening; she complained that she wasn't allowed

certificate of incapability. As it stands, many written assessments are vague, with little information about how conclusions were reached.

In 2018, Ontario's auditor general found that outside experts identified concerns in almost half of the assessors they evaluated. They cited a “lack of understanding of relevant legislation; asking subjects questions that lacked sufficient depth; not explaining why they found the subject incapable; and not meeting any of the requirements for completing an assessment.” The auditor concluded, “There is risk that the public guardian is assuming

## “THE BIGGEST INDIGNITY FACED BY MANY OLDER PEOPLE IS LOSING THE RIGHT TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY IN THEIR OWN HOME.”

to attend Mass, that her only exercise was “walking the corridor aimlessly,” and she argued she would be better off at home. “I want my freedom!” she wrote. “I want out of this place!” She never did get out.

With so many complicating factors that can influence capacity, and with a person's rights on the line, the quality of assessments deserves more scrutiny. Adria now advocates for capacity assessments to be recorded and transcribed so families can have access to the basis of their family member's

authority for managing the finances of people who are, in fact, capable of doing it themselves.”

**A PERSON'S OPTIONS** for challenging a certificate of incapability depend on what province they call home. The most-referenced example of a gold standard, Ontario's Consent and Capacity Board, was created in 1996 but remains a rarity in Canada—a similar body exists only in the Yukon.

If a person objects to a capacity decision in Ontario, the board will convene

within seven days. Application forms are available online, or a person can call a toll-free number for help. There is no cost for a hearing. Importantly, the board's panel will go to the person challenging the decision.

One troubling Ontario case involved a 95-year-old widow who lived alone and was prone to falls. In 2014, a nurse she had never met before conducted a 40-minute interview and, as part of the questioning, asked what would happen to her if she stayed at home. The 95-year-old responded, "I guess I will just live till I die"—an accurate, if blunt, statement. The nurse deemed

B.C., the Office of the Seniors Advocate surveyed nursing-home residents and found that nearly half don't want to be there. About the same number say they don't have any close friends in the facility.

"The biggest indignity faced by many older people is losing the right to live independently in their home," says Marshall Swadron, a lawyer who often represents clients who've been evaluated as incapable.

"Some people are very proud of their homes, their independence, their ability to decide who comes in and who doesn't—all of which you lose when

## SENIOR ADVOCATES ARE PUSHING FOR A SUPPORTIVE MODEL THAT DOESN'T STRIP A PERSON OF THE ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS.



the woman incapable of deciding where she should live. The Consent and Capacity Board later found the opposite to be true. According to Ontario's auditor general, the board has come to a different conclusion than the original assessor in 80 per cent of the cases it has heard concerning people's ability to manage their own finances.

It's projected that the population of people over 80 is set to double by 2036. As part of their care, many seniors will be pushed toward nursing homes, regardless of their own preferences. In

you're in any kind of institutional setting," he adds.

The system that's been created to protect seniors can also work to support them—to see them as individuals with their own preferences and desires. Samir Sinha, the director of geriatrics for Toronto's Sinai Health System and the University Health Network, tells me a story about Josephine, a patient he got to know well. Josephine was blind and bedridden, and doctors wanted to place her in a nursing home—a decision she vehemently opposed. Some

assessors may have seen Josephine as a woman incapable of deciding what was in her best interest. But, in this case, she kept her autonomy. Josephine stayed in her apartment and received government-funded visits from caregivers. She would lie in bed for most of the day and listen to her radio. To some, it may have appeared to be an awful way to live. To Josephine, it was the best life possible.

Advocate Laura Tamblyn Watts points to examples like this as evidence that a more supportive model is possible, one that doesn't strip a person of their decision-making ability. "We always want to make sure that we are only removing the civil rights of the person to the smallest degree possible," she says. Lately, some advocates have been promoting a "supported decision-making model" where seniors receive help understanding the consequences of their decisions and come to solutions alongside a team. The process is collaborative; it doesn't rely on someone making decisions on the senior's behalf.

**THE END OF ALL** of our stories is the same: we die. But how we spend our final years matters. I first met Jarvis long

after his mother was admitted to long-term care. Shaw's "new beginning" was over, and her health had continued to wane. She was on multiple medications, and her mind was often swarmed with fleeting thoughts that, like fireflies, dimmed and flitted away. Her notebook was long forgotten.

Jarvis regretted that the PGT had ever become involved in his family's affairs. He felt that, rather than relieving the stress that age and illness brought to both his mother and his family, the PGT had made her decline all the more painful. He'd planted sunflowers in a window box in his mother's nursing home. He planned to use them at her funeral.

Muriel Shaw died in January 2019. I met with Jarvis a few weeks afterward, at his home in Coquitlam. Her funeral had yet to be arranged, and her family members were trying to find a way to gather. I asked about the flowers in the window, and Jarvis told me they wouldn't be making it to her funeral after all. "I let the sunflowers die," he said. It was near the end of the season, he concluded. And besides, they didn't get the care and attention they needed. **R**

© 2020, SHARON J. RILEY. FROM "WHEN IS A SENIOR NO LONGER CAPABLE OF MAKING THEIR OWN DECISIONS?" THE WALRUS (APRIL 2020), THEWALRUS.CA



## Priorities, Priorities

All I really need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt.

LUCY VAN PELT IN PEANUTS



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# A Place of LOVE

For many years,  
I felt lost in the  
kitchen. But with  
help from some  
family favourites,  
I found my place.



BY Namugenyi Kiwanuka  
FROM *CHATELAINE*

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABELLA FASSLER

FOR A MAN RAISED in a patriarchal culture, my father loved to cook for his family. We lived in Uganda and, later, in Kenya for about two years as refugees. Since we didn't have an indoor kitchen, he would light a fire outside of our home. He'd cook *sukuma wiki*, a dish of collard greens, onions and tomatoes, and serve it with *ugali*, a porridge made of cornmeal and water. We ate this in the refugee camp, and it remains one of my favourite meals.

My mother left our family when I was five—war has the power to come between a mother and her children. I never met my father's mother, or *jaaja* in the Luganda language. But if my dad's cooking took after that of my *jaaja*, she was phenomenal.





My father didn't cook often—we ate once a day and other family or community members would feed us. But when he did, it was worth the wait. If he started making dinner at 4 p.m., you wouldn't expect to eat until at least 10 p.m. He liked to take his time, cutting ingredients into pieces so tiny that the onion was practically puréed. He also loved his *pili pili* peppers: tiny red and green chilies he would munch on at every meal. The smell of his cooking would overpower our home, including the one in London, Ont., where we moved to in the mid-1980s, when I was 10 years old.

With his friends, my father was the life of the party—he would host get-togethers that would go into the early hours of the morning. I washed dishes, enthralled with the loudness of the adults and how happy they all seemed. Looking back, that joy was what freedom felt like. Their dancing revealed a vulnerability that wasn't afforded to them during the war. When my father was cooking, he was happy. But if he wasn't, he could be unpredictable. I often felt like he resented my presence.

**I LEFT HOME WHEN** I was 16, and from then on, I lived on my own in London before moving to Toronto. I really only knew how to make pancakes and scrambled eggs because in our family, I was responsible for making breakfast on weekends. My father would say that his mom taught him how to

cook because she didn't want him to rely on anyone to take care of him. But he never passed on the same knowledge to me.

The woman who sponsored us to come to Canada, whom I've since called granny, turned the kitchen into a place of love. When we left refugee housing, she moved us next door to her house, and we lived there for about three years. On Sundays, she would make potato stew, cheesecake and lemon meringue pie. We would listen to Louis Armstrong and watch movies in her basement. She knew me better than I knew myself.

## BEING IN THE KITCHEN MADE ME MISS MY GRANNY AND REMINDED ME OF THE LOSS OF MY MOTHER.

From my mid-teens to early 20s, I lived on a steady diet of ramen noodles and pasta with canned sauces. Cooking at that time in my life was perfunctory; cleaning the toilet brought me more joy. Being in the kitchen made me miss my granny and reminded me of the loss of my mother, who is still alive.

Unlike many things in my life, not knowing how to cook wasn't something I could gloss over or joke away. So I avoided thinking about it. It was

only when I had kids in my 30s that I realized I had to learn.

I'd listen to a friend tell me in detail how she made puréed baby food from scratch, while I fed the jarred stuff to my toddler. I watched in awe as another friend baked cookies for parent-teacher nights. I'm a resourceful person, but not knowing how to cook for my kids made me feel stuck and guilty.

The time I spent in the kitchen only clarified what I lacked. Should the pot be hot when I add the onions? Should the butter be room temperature? Should I use baking powder or baking soda? The absence of family recipes, secrets passed down the line, was a reminder that elders are missing from my life.


When my son was around two, I realized I had to feed him solids. I took to Google in search of "easy" recipes and also sought out inspiration on Instagram. I looked for reassurance that with time and patience, I could do it. There have been failures—I once baked chocolate chip cookies so hard they chipped my daughter's tooth—but I keep trying. And in learning to be comfortable with what I don't know, I'm realizing that the things that make me feel as though I can't cook don't have to be true forever.

**ONCE MY KIDS WERE** ready for full meals, I tried to recreate my father's stewed chicken, one of his favourites.

The dish includes minced onions, tomatoes, salt and curry served with white rice and a salad of tomatoes, onions, lemon juice and cilantro. I would fry the chicken separately first and then add the rest of it into one pot with water. That handful of ingredients connects me to a simpler story of family, one that I imagine was the same for my father when his mother, my *jaaja*, was still alive.

And then last year, the pandemic lockdown pushed me into the kitchen not just out of necessity but also curiosity. What began as an activity to pass time with my kids, like trying out different recipes and making vanilla cupcakes, has become a slow peeling away of the conviction that I can't learn to cook.

One afternoon, I surprised myself when I made a loaf of bread. Yes, I used the wrong type of yeast and the dough rose to an incredible height, but it baked into a crispy exterior with an inside as soft as any bread I'd bought from a bakery. And then I finally made a batch of cookies that didn't hurt my daughter's teeth.

Standing in my kitchen can be daunting, but I remind myself that those feelings are just a beginning, a place to create cooking traditions of my own that I can pass on to my children. As I stand at the stove, I know the story doesn't end with me. 

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# WHY AM I SO TIRED?

If you feel  
pooped all day,  
the solution  
isn't always  
more sleep

BY Vanessa Milne

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

**CAROL HEFFERNAN**, a 43-year-old marketing writer from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, regularly felt worn out from her busy life of working, shuttling her two kids to elementary school and play dates, and taking care of housework. But when COVID-19 hit last March and the kids were suddenly at home all day, learning remotely, she noticed that her run-of-the-mill weariness quickly turned into full-on exhaustion.

“All the extra responsibility and the mental load—it just added up,” she says. “I felt grumpy and tired—and it wasn’t due to lack of sleep.”

Heffernan didn't have any time in the day to exercise off her stress. She was short on energy, and she started becoming short with her kids. "After I put them to bed at 8 p.m., I would just crash on the couch," she says.

If there's one thing many of us have in common, it's that we're tired. In fact, lethargy is so pervasive that it's one of the issues people ask their doctors about the most. Doctors even have a name for it: "tired all the time," or TATT for short. The solution isn't always as simple as getting more sleep; nearly a quarter of people who get seven or more hours of rest a night report they still wake up feeling tired most days of the week.

Here are eight reasons your energy is low—and what you can do to bring it back:

## BECAUSE YOU'RE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ON THE COUCH

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When you're feeling sluggish, it can be tempting to plop down and binge-watch TV. But doing something active will actually give you more energy, not consume the little that you have. In fact, researchers at the University of Georgia found that just 10 minutes of low- or moderate-intensity exercise gave study participants a noticeable energy boost.

Starting a regular exercise routine is even more beneficial. In another recent study, people who committed

to an exercise regimen—working out for 20 minutes, three times a week—boosted their energy levels by 20 per cent in six weeks. "When we don't work out regularly, our muscles can become weakened, so when we do use these muscle groups in everyday activity, we're more tired," explains Dr. Yufang Lin, an integrative-medicine physician at the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Integrative and Lifestyle Medicine.

Exercise also works its magic at the cellular level: the mitochondria—the parts of your cells that provide energy to your muscles—actually grow more powerful and numerous after aerobic exercise, providing a continuous source of increased energy.

## BECAUSE YOU'RE PUSHING YOURSELF TOO HARD

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People who feel overcommitted—whether from volunteering for one too many causes or shouldering too much at work or at home—often try to squeeze in more tasks so they can get everything on their to-do list crossed off. But it might be wiser to take a break.

"When it comes to optimizing energy over the long haul, it's about getting into a rhythm of periods of exertion and rest," says Dane Jensen, CEO of Third Factor, an organization that helps companies' employees perform better under pressure. "In fact, to stay energized over the course of the day,

you need a 15- to 20-minute break every 90 minutes.”

Not all downtime is equal: a 2016 study looked at office workers in South Korea and found that those who looked at their smartphones during breaks were significantly less recharged than those who went for a walk or chatted with friends. Jensen suggests choosing breaks that balance out what’s taxing you. If you’ve been working at a computer, take a walk outside. If you’ve been doing spring cleaning, sit down and call a friend.

## THE PILE-UP OF GLOBAL CRISES IS HAVING AN EFFECT ON PEOPLE’S MENTAL HEALTH—AND ENERGY LEVELS.



For more inspiration, Jensen suggests considering four categories of breaks, based on how they can benefit you: physical (walking or stretching); cognitive (crossword puzzles or Sudoku); emotional (phoning a loved one); and spiritual (walking in the woods or practising a religion).

“It’s just not enough to say, okay, I’m going to take a break every once in a while,” he explains. “You want to do it intentionally and spend that time on something that’s actually going to give you energy.”

## BECAUSE YOU’RE ANXIOUS

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Anxiety is draining. When you’re distressed, your body is on high alert and produces adrenalin. Your muscles might tighten up, and your brain shifts into overdrive to try to work through all possible scenarios. That all takes energy—and will leave you feeling tired.

And right now, the pile-up of global crises—political instability and the pandemic being the most notable—is having a measurable effect on many people’s mental health. One study published in the *British Journal of Psychology* found that participants who watched a negative news bulletin were more likely than those who watched a neutral or positive one to feel anxious or sad—and to then feel worse about their personal problems, too.

One antidote to all the bad news is cultivating your friendships. Scientists have long known that socializing decreases the risk of developing mental-health issues like depression, and avoiding loneliness also lowers stress-hormone levels in your body. One study from researchers at Arizona State University found that university students who had spent more time socializing had lower cortisol levels the next day—and they slept better, as well.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong, director of the Division of Community Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, says that his research has demonstrated that nurturing relationships is a mood booster.

"Maintaining social contacts is one of the ways to maintain your mental health," he says. "It doesn't necessarily have to be face to face—it can be via social media, telephone call or video conference."

All that said, if you think you might have clinical levels of anxiety—for example, if you're having panic attacks or completely avoiding doing everyday tasks—speak to your health-care provider about talk therapy or medication.

## BECAUSE YOU'RE LOW ON VITAMINS

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Fatigue is often connected to not having enough of two key nutrients, says the Cleveland Clinic's Lin: iron and B vitamins. When you don't get enough iron in your diet, it can lead to iron-deficiency anemia, which means your body doesn't produce enough healthy red blood cells.

"When there are not enough red blood cells around, less oxygen gets carried to the cells to allow them to generate energy, which causes fatigue," says Lin. People with anemia might also experience shortness of breath, dizziness and cold hands and feet.

Having a B-vitamin deficiency, especially B12, also affects energy levels, since vitamin B12 is another key to creating enough red blood cells. Since iron and vitamin B are commonly absorbed from red meat and shellfish, people who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet

are at more risk. But anemia can also occur during pregnancy or stem from gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers or Crohn's disease. These and other less common vitamin and mineral deficiencies can all be identified with a blood test and treated with supplements and a change in diet.

## IF YOU'RE DRAGGING YOURSELF THROUGH EVERYDAY TASKS, YOU MIGHT HAVE SLIPPED INTO DEPRESSION.

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However, Lin warns that supplements and drinks that are advertised as energy enhancers can be dangerous. "A lot of those 'energy' supplements are laced with caffeine, ginseng or other stimulants at a high dose," she says. Lin also cautions that they can cause serious side effects, like heart palpitations, insomnia and anxiety.

## BECAUSE YOU'RE DEPRESSED

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If you're feeling excessively fatigued—dragging yourself through the normal tasks of daily living, or are unable to complete them—it could be a sign that you've slipped into depression.

Some people are genetically predisposed to the condition, and others



## **60-SECOND FIXES: BOOST YOUR ENERGY IN A MINUTE OR LESS**

### **1. Pour some peppermint tea**

According to a study published in the *North American Journal of Psychology*, sniffing peppermint helped reduce fatigue while driving. And researchers have also found that those who drink peppermint tea are more alert and complete mental tasks faster.

### **2. Open the blinds**

Exposing yourself to natural sunlight, especially right when you wake up in the morning, can help suppress

melatonin, the chemical in your body that makes you sleepy.

### **3. Take a few deep breaths**

When you're stressed, it's natural to breathe a little bit shallower, which can decrease the amount of oxygen that reaches your cells. To counteract that, try breathing in through your nose for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds, then slowly exhaling for four seconds.

### **4. Chew a piece of sugar-free gum**

Though it's not exactly clear why, numerous studies have shown that chewing gum increases alertness. Even before science confirmed it, during the First World War, American soldiers were issued gum to help them focus.

### **5. Sing along to a song**

Listening to music can increase levels of happy chemicals like serotonin and oxytocin—and belting out lyrics makes you breathe deeper and take in more oxygen, boosting your energy.

develop it as a result of difficult circumstances; rates of depression in the United States, for example, tripled after the coronavirus arrived, rising from eight per cent to 28 per cent.

“It's expected that so much fear and uncertainty will increase people's levels of stress, anxiety and depression,” says Agyapong. “With how long the

pandemic is going on, it's becoming pathological for a lot of people.”

Other symptoms of depression include loss of appetite and irritability. If you're feeling tired all the time and suspect depression might be to blame, ask your doctor for a mental-health screening. Talk therapy can help, as can antidepressants.



## BECAUSE YOU'RE EATING AN UNBALANCED DIET

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We often think about how our diet affects our weight, but what you eat has a large effect on your energy levels, too. When your body digests food, it turns it into glucose, which is then sent by way of your blood to all of your muscles and organs, including your brain. Our blood sugar naturally fluctuates during this process, and when it's low, we can feel sluggish.

## SLEEP APNEA, A CAUSE OF CHRONIC FATIGUE, IS ON THE RISE, LIKELY BECAUSE OF GROWING RATES OF OBESITY.

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A simple way to keep your blood sugar consistent is to eat regularly. "If you go more than several hours without a meal or snack, that's probably too long of a stretch," says Cara Harbstreet, a Kansas City-based registered dietitian.

Another common error, Harbstreet says, is eating too many simple carbohydrates—juice, candy bars or white bread. Those can lead to an increase in blood sugar, prompting your body to produce insulin, which then makes your blood sugar drop. "You get an energy spike and then you come crashing down and eat more of the same

kinds of foods," she explains. "And that cycle can repeat indefinitely."

Instead, reach for complex carbs—like whole grains and non-starchy vegetables—which are more slowly digested than simple carbs, giving you a steady stream of energy. To make sure you're getting enough nutrients to fuel your body, Harbstreet recommends trying to get three food groups at every meal and at least two at snacks.

## BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT BREATHING WELL AT NIGHT

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Before going to the effort of changing your lifestyle to deal with fatigue, it's important to make sure it's not a symptom of a more serious, undiagnosed condition. If you've been unusually tired for more than a month, ask your doctor if an underlying problem could be behind it.

One common culprit is sleep apnea, a condition that causes breathing to start and stop throughout the night. Sleep apnea affects more than 20 per cent of Americans—and those numbers are on the rise, likely because of growing rates of obesity.

Since sleep apnea causes sufferers to rouse multiple times a night to keep breathing—often without knowing it—they don't get enough deep sleep. The condition, which often comes with daytime exhaustion and nighttime snoring, can also lead to other issues, including cardiovascular disease and

diabetes. If diagnosed, sleep apnea can be treated with a machine that pushes pressurized air into your nose or mouth during the night to make sure your airways stay open.


## BECAUSE YOUR THYROID IS STRAINED

Another underlying problem to watch out for is hypothyroidism, which affects about five per cent of the population and almost always includes tiredness as a symptom. The condition is caused when your thyroid, a butterfly-shaped gland inside your neck, produces too few hormones.

“Thyroid hormones control your metabolism, which is like the engine in your car,” says Lin. “When your engine runs too low, the car drives too slowly.” Along with fatigue, hypothyroidism may also result in weight gain, slow movement and speech, and sensitivity to cold. The condition is most common in women over 60 and can

be treated by taking a medication that contains either natural or synthetic thyroid chemicals

**A FEW WEEKS AFTER** her fatigue set in, Heffernan knew she needed to do something to feel better. Finally, one day she decided to drop everything and go for a walk—something she hadn’t done since the pandemic began. “I just wanted to be by myself,” she says. “I needed a break.” When she returned, she felt recharged and decided to make a habit of it.

Now, every afternoon, she leaves her kids and husband at home, puts on an uplifting podcast and goes for a 45-minute stroll through her neighbourhood. “The walks really feed me, spiritually, emotionally and physically,” she says. “I have something to look forward to every afternoon. I’m in a better mood. And after putting the kids to bed, I have the energy to stay up, talk to my husband and have some more time for myself.” 



### Hitting the Road

**Most runners run not because they want to live longer, but because they want to live life to the fullest.**

HARUKI MURAKAMI, AUTHOR

**There is an expression among even the most advanced runners that getting your shoes on is the hardest part of any workout.**

KATHRINE SWITZER, ICONIC MARATHONER



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

# OUT OF BOUNDS

MARK GAYOWSKI TOOK AN UNMARKED SKI TRAIL INTO A DEEP RAVINE. EVERY ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE ONLY LEFT HIM MORE LOST.

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BY Brett Popplewell  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARI MEDIG



Gayowski has skied  
B.C.'s Red Mountain  
since he was a kid.

**M**ark Gayowski was determined to squeeze as much fun as he could out of the last days of the year. Shortly after 9 a.m. on December 30, 2019, the 34-year-old Rossland, B.C., carpenter said goodbye to his roommate and headed to nearby Red Mountain, one of North America's oldest ski resorts. He planned to ski all morning, followed by an afternoon watching the latest *Star Wars* movie with a friend.

Gayowski had spent his youth at the ski resort; its three peaks towered over the town. He knew the 119 ski runs as well as anyone. But it was the challenge of the routes that weren't marked on the trail maps that appealed to him the most.

By 10 a.m. he'd clicked into his skis and pushed off for the first run of the day. For two hours, he cut tracks all over the mountainside. Then he got on the lift for one last ride up the mountain.

The chairlift hummed as it ferried him to the resort's easterly peak. Gayowski pulled out his phone and called his mother, Cindy Reich.

Reich, a 56-year-old retired figure-skating coach, lived in Rossland with Gayowski's stepfather, Raymond. She and her son spoke nearly every day. He told her how he'd spotted what looked like untouched powder in the unkempt bush that ran down the far side of the

2,048-metre-high mountain. He planned to follow it for a few minutes, then return to a run lower down and glide back to the parking lot.

She listened, then wandered to a whiteboard in her kitchen and pulled out a marker. She'd suffered a concussion in a bike crash four years earlier and hadn't trusted her memory ever since. Following her mother's instinct, she wrote the name of the trail and peak on the whiteboard: "Left of Unknown Legend, Kirkup side." She asked him to call or text her when he finished the run.

"I will," he replied. Then he put his phone back in his pocket, slipped on his gloves, got off the chair and began gliding along the left side of a steep trail for experienced skiers, looking for the ideal point to dip into the trees.

He found his spot alongside fresh ski tracks next to an out-of-bounds sign. He ducked under the rope barrier, lowered his goggles and snaked his way through the alders and pines, dodging cliffs and boulders and descending deeper and deeper into a ravine. It took a while for him to realize that he may overshoot his planned exit. Then the snow beneath his skis grew thin and the brush thicker. Soon there was no way for him to ski around the logs and downed branches that boxed him in.

Gayowski slid to a stop and took a look around. He'd lost the fresh ski tracks he'd started with almost as soon as he'd gone into the bush. He'd veered so far off-course that he was now stuck



Shortly after he left the main trail, Gayowski realized he'd overshot his exit.

1,500 metres into a ravine, with no easily discernible exit. He pulled out his phone and found that it had no service. He clicked out of his skis and looked back up the mountain. The climb was too daunting.

He could feel the weather starting to change as he slowly made his way down deeper into the ravine. The winds were picking up, and clouds gathered overhead. Then the snow began to fall. He didn't yet realize how much trouble he was in.

## GAYOWSKI WORE A THIN JACKET. HE KNEW HE HAD TO KEEP MOVING OR RISK HYPOTHERMIA.



**REICH WONDERED** why her son hadn't texted or called to let her know he'd finished his run. She credited it to forgetfulness, but as the hours passed and he failed to reply to her half-dozen texts, she began to worry. She called him but got his voicemail. She knew he'd been planning to meet a friend that afternoon for a movie, so she reassured herself that he'd turned the phone off and was just sitting in a theatre. At 5:00 p.m., when she still couldn't reach him, she drove to her son's apartment to make sure he'd made it off the mountain.

Gayowski's roommate was perplexed when Reich knocked on the door—he'd received a call from Gayowski's friend earlier that afternoon, when he didn't show up at the theatre to catch the movie. It wasn't like Gayowski to just disappear unannounced. Outside, it was -3 C and already dark. Reich looked toward the mountain, began to panic and called her husband. They agreed it was time to call 911.

While they waited for the search and rescue teams to arrive, Raymond and a group of Gayowski's friends raced around the base of the mountain on their snowmobiles, looking for him. But it was too dark, and the snowfall was too heavy—they gave up and planned to return the next morning.

Mike Hudson, a 41-year-old heavy-equipment operator and a volunteer search-and-rescue manager in the neighbouring village of Fruitvale, was just starting to unwind for the evening when his phone started to buzz. It was a call from the Emergency Coordination Centre in Victoria, asking if he could lead a mission to find a missing skier. The missing man's mother had passed along information about where he'd planned to ski. The case was urgent: a metre of snow would fall on the area over the next 48 hours.

Early on the morning of December 31, he arrived at the mountain with a unit command centre—an eight-metre cargo trailer complete with multiple work terminals to log radio transmissions,

Clockwise: skiers go missing on the mountain each year; Mike Hudson in his rescue command centre; skiers are warned about dangers; a rescuer searching for Gayowski.





document clues and co-ordinate the movements of rescuers. The terminals connected to a larger screen used primarily for viewing topographical maps.

Then word came down from the top of the mountain. There had been a positive sighting of what were believed to be Gayowski's initial tracks heading out of bounds, more or less where he had told his mother he planned to ski. They were disappearing fast beneath the falling snow.

**DURING HIS FIRST 12 HOURS** in the ravine, Gayowski wandered deeper, reaching a creek that he assumed would ultimately take him to a roadway. His phone battery died, and he'd abandoned his bulky skis three hours into the ordeal. He was willing to let his skis

spend eternity on the side of the ravine if it meant he could get out alive.

He'd travelled roughly four kilometres on foot but wasn't sure how far he was from civilization. The ruggedness of the forest around the creek's shoreline forced him to cross the stream in order to keep moving forward. He had to wade shin deep through the water. The temperature still hovered around -3 C, and his feet and legs were soaked.

Gayowski was hardened to the cold, having spent eight years building pipelines on the frozen tracts of northern Alberta. But he'd dressed lightly that day in a Gore-Tex jacket. He knew he had to keep moving or he'd risk hypothermia. He was parched from exertion but also knew he couldn't consume snow to rehydrate, as it



After his ordeal, Gayowski began training to join a search-and-rescue team.

would just lower his core temperature even further.

By 2 a.m. on December 31, after he'd followed the creek for what felt like forever, Gayowski gave up any hope of finding his way out of the ravine by pushing forward. He decided that the only way to get out was to turn around, retrace his steps, and head back up the ravine toward the peak.

All through the rest of the night he climbed. When daylight broke, he saw that the falling snow was starting to fill in the tracks he'd been following. He quickened his pace, but it didn't matter. By mid-morning they'd disappeared. He was so disoriented that he was no longer sure if he was really making progress up the steep incline.


He threw away his soaking gloves. His fingers were pruned, his hands numb. He pulled them inside his coat for warmth. By late afternoon, his legs were beginning to give out on him, his feet raw and blistering after more than 30 hours of hard trekking in ski boots.

Gayowski's mind had been playing tricks on him for hours, filling his head with visions and sounds of salvation—a building, a person, a shadow. It was never anything more than a tree or a boulder. Exhausted and defeated, he pulled off his jacket, lay down in the snow and waited for his breathing to slow and his body to freeze.

**HUDSON HAD DISPATCHED** two teams of four rescuers into the ravine at 7 a.m.

on the morning of December 31, while Gayowski was still trying to find his way back up the ravine. One team had descended from the top of the mountain, trying to mimic Gayowski's initial trajectory, while the second team moved in on snowshoes and trail skis from the mountain's base, navigating their way along the creek.

## GAYOWSKI WOKE UP. IT WAS NEW YEAR'S DAY. HE WAS STILL LOST, BUT GRATEFUL TO BE ALIVE.



Hudson had started the day feeling optimistic because he had a general sense of where Gayowski was. But as the hours slipped by, it became clear that none of his rescuers were going to be able to penetrate deep enough into the ravine to actually locate him.

As daylight began to fade, the chances of Gayowski's surviving a second night alone on the mountain were grim. Hudson looked over to Gayowski's mother and stepfather, who had joined him at the command centre that afternoon. He told them what they didn't want to hear: that the day's search was coming to an end. The conditions were just too difficult to navigate.

Cindy and Raymond nodded silently; they could see how hard Hudson's team

had been working to try to locate their son. They exited the command centre, made their way through a crowd of skiers at the base of the hill and started for home.

Hudson looked at weather patterns for the coming day. He could see that the storm should be gone by morning. But he also knew that by morning there would only be around a 30 per cent chance that Gayowski would still be alive.

**IT WAS THOUGHTS** of not wanting to leave his parents broken-hearted that led Gayowski to open his eyes, brush the snow from his body and pull his jacket back over his torso.

The darkness was setting in again. He needed to keep moving. He had no idea how far he'd climbed or how much further there was to go, so he gave up and, thinking it'd be easier than more climbing, began to once again head back down into the ravine.

For another eight hours, he descended in the dark and arrived back at the creek, where the snow was wet and thick. New Year's Eve came and went. By 2 a.m. he was completely depleted. He hunkered down under a thick tree, pulled his arms inside the body of his jacket and tucked his head beneath his collar to warm himself with his breath. Then he lay on a log and tried to sleep.

At daybreak, Hudson returned to the command centre to prepare his teams

for another push. This time, a group of three would follow a ridgeline until they were about midway up the mountain and then veer right into the ravine. All the while, another group waited on the gravel road near the creek's exit beside a campfire, just in case Gayowski came close enough to smell or see the smoke. Gayowski's friends continued to run their snowmobiles back and forth along the road, hoping he might hear them and find his way out.

Gayowski's parents sat at home on a couch next to the phone, feelings of helplessness gave way to hopelessness. His mother had spent much of the night updating Gayowski's sister, Ayla, who had been on vacation in Mexico and was catching an early flight home.

The phone rang. No news. It was only a member of Hudson's team asking Reich to describe specific details about her son's appearance—tattoos, scars, missing teeth. It wasn't until she hung up the phone and processed the call that she understood why they might need to know.

**SUNLIGHT FILTERED** through the trees in the ravine. Gayowski poked his head out from inside his jacket and looked up into the sky. It was New Year's Day. While he was still lost, he was grateful to be alive. He sat upright on the log and wiggled his toes inside his ski boots. His feet and legs ached. He looked around and took stock of his surroundings.

For the next four hours, he struggled to move forward through knee-deep snow. He had to wrap his hands around his thighs and use them to lift his legs. At some point, he stopped and screamed out in anger. It took a few moments for him to realize that the shouts coming back in his direction weren't just an echo. Then he saw three figures on skis in the distance, closing in fast. He wanted to run toward them, but it was taking almost all of his energy just to stand. He could hear them yelling out his name. He was in tears by the time they reached him.

**THE PHONE RANG.** Reich picked up, listened to the words coming out of the receiver and shouted to her husband. "They found him!"

She braced herself and asked: "Is he alive?"

Minutes later, she was back at the mountain, flanked by Raymond and Ayla, listening to a radio crackling with her son's location as the rescue team made their way to a small clearing where a helicopter could touch down. It felt like

forever before they heard the helicopter cutting through the sky over their own heads. They stepped outside and ran toward it, catching Gayowski moments after he stepped out on his own two feet.

For the next three days, his family kept vigil by his hospital bed. He'd suffered tissue damage to his feet and muscle fatigue. He convalesced at his mother's home for two more weeks.

A year later, he realizes that he may have died alone in the snow if he hadn't thought to call his mother from the ski lift. And if he hadn't kept himself moving, climbing up and down the mountain, he would certainly have died of the cold. His skis are still out there. "I know where they are," he says. "But I'm not going back for them."

If ever he ventures back into that ravine, it will be as a rescuer himself. Before the pandemic hit, he attended meetings to join a search-and-rescue squad. He plans to complete the training once he's able, so that the next time someone is lost and alone in the bush, he's part of the team that sets out to save them. **R**



## Morning Perk

**I'd rather take coffee than compliments right now.**

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, *LITTLE WOMEN*

**If it wasn't for coffee, I'd have no discernible personality at all.**

DAVID LETTERMAN

**Sleep: a poor substitute for caffeine!**

WALLACE SHAWN



The lost pet who showed up on our lawn was a welcome distraction from my wishes for a baby.



# A BUNNY CALLED EASTER

BY Stacey May Fowles

**B**y the spring of 2017, my husband, Spencer, and I had been trying to conceive for over three years. Diagnosed with a condition infuriatingly called “unexplained infertility,” we had hovered hopefully over dozens of pregnancy tests only to see them come back negative. I was near-constantly consumed by the painful disappointment of not having a baby—that is, until Easter weekend of 2017, when a rabbit showed up on our front lawn.

My neighbour spotted the impossibly fluffy creature first, finding him nestled in the grass while she was walking down our street in Toronto's west end. She scooped the bunny up, wrapped him in a worn bath towel and, along with a comically large chunk of carrot, placed him in a clear plastic bin. She then carried him up my steps and knocked on my door.

“Is this your rabbit?” she asked.

I had to laugh. He was not my rabbit. However, covered with pristine white fur freckled with pale grey spots and marred with only a small nick on one of his ears—probably from a prowling outdoor cat—he was very likely *someone's* rabbit.

My neighbour was going away that weekend, and since the bunny decided to take up residence on my lawn, I felt a genuine sense of responsibility for

him. With three rescued animals—a dog and two cats—already calling my house home, it was predictable I'd volunteer to take care of this particular stranger, at least for a few days.

**DURING THAT FIRST** weekend the bunny stayed with us, we tried our best to spread the word that we'd found him. Given how adorable he was, surely a family was out there missing him, a family who would see our “FOUND RABBIT” tweets or come across the posters we affixed to lampposts throughout the neighbourhood.

In the meantime, we named the rabbit Easter and gave him his own bedroom. We moved our dog's old crate from the basement into our spare room—the one I'd planned to turn into a nursery—and filled the crate with soft blankets and a specialty hay I found at the local pet store. I sat the bunny on my lap and fed him lettuce, spinach and kale. I peeled bananas and watched him nibble away at them. Sometimes I would let him bounce around on my bed while I read books or watched TV. Other times I would cradle him like a baby and stroke his tiny head while his tiny pink nose twitched.

At the time the bunny showed up, I was in my late 30s and I knew my chances of conceiving were decreasing. I had already seen multiple specialists and had been subject to invasive medical questions, tests and procedures. I also knew that the process,

and the despair of not being able to have a baby, was taking its toll on my mental health.


I often tell people that the experience of infertility is like a grief over something you've lost but had never known—a grief that won't end until you finally give up the hope of ever knowing it. It's a kind of mourning that people simply can't understand unless they've experienced it. And while friends and family did their best to comfort us, as the years passed, it became easier to carry those feelings alone than to continually attempt to explain them.

partner with an allergy, an impending trip, a fear of too much responsibility.

I learned a lot about rabbits during the time our visitor stayed with us. I learned that this bunny was indeed domestic—a Rex, to be specific; a plush, velvety breed that originated in France in 1919. I learned that it's very common for rabbits to be abandoned, especially around Easter, when they're procured for amusement and then simply "let go."

And, lastly, I learned that rabbits live in groups, and that the instinctual thumping they do with their back legs is a way to warn the rest of the warren

## THE EXPERIENCE OF INFERTILITY IS LIKE A GRIEF OVER SOMETHING YOU'VE LOST BUT HAD NEVER KNOWN.



How many times—and how many months—can you miss a hypothetical child, a child that you cannot have, before that longing destroys you? How long before you have to move on, if you even can?

A FEW WEEKS AFTER we'd taken Easter in, no one had responded to our post-ings, but lots of people had come to visit, each wanting an opportunity to hold the rabbit in their arms and scratch him between his ears. Several people even offered to adopt him, but each had to back out at the last moment—a

of danger. I discovered this first-hand because, despite how safe and comforting I tried to make this rabbit's world, how badly I wanted him to stay, the three other pets in my household terrified him.

After delaying his departure as long as we could, we finally contacted a nearby animal rescue about finding Easter a forever home.

A few days later, on a Saturday morning in May, after his month with us, we passed our bunny to a pair of women who would arrange an adoption. We struggled as we said goodbye and



scratched between those upright ears a final time.

It's funny how you develop a quick affection for things that were never really yours, how you fall in love with ideas and lives you may have lived. As much as I wanted to keep the rabbit, as much as it hurt to fold up the crate and sweep the hay from the bedroom, it also felt good to have taken Easter in, to have given him a safe home until a better one came along. If anything, our surprise house guest had given me a break from the thoughts that I couldn't shake, a reprieve from yearning, a place to put my attention and care.

And within a week of letting him go and saying goodbye, I was pregnant.

**MY DAUGHTER TURNED** three this year and sleeps in the same room in which the rabbit lived during the spring she was conceived. Sometimes when she wakes up in the middle of the night I lift

her from her bed and hold her body tight to mine, still feeling that ache I had for all those years without her. It's as if the grief I carried with me for so long still lingers, like I am still healing that open wound that left me so vulnerable, still missing her even though she's right here in my arms.

Though the grief of infertility remains, so does the hope I refused to let go of through all of those disappointing, painful months without her. It turns out that my unending faith did not cause my grief but instead helped me endure it. It's what kept me looking to the future, believing that things could and would get better—no matter what that future ended up looking like.

I'm not sure I believe in magic, omens or even good-luck charms, but when I hold my daughter close to me in the middle of the night, I think of the rabbit we took in that spring, and I know I still believe in hope. **R**



### **Readers on Reading**

**Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them.**

LEMONY SNICKET

**Let's be reasonable and add an eighth day to the week that is devoted exclusively to reading.**

LENA DUNHAM

**Books are good company, in sad times and happy times, for books are people—people who have managed to stay alive by hiding between the covers of a book.**

E. B. WHITE

## LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE

### Reluctant Teacher

One thing I've noticed about grumpy old men in TV shows and films: they *will* mentor you if you're annoying enough.

—CALEB HEARON, *comedian*

### Hard Times

I'm already so annoyed that my future grandkids are going to be interviewing me for book reports on the COVID-19 pandemic, expecting me to be

profound, and I'll have to admit that I spent the whole time sending friends TikTok videos against their will, eating cake and crying.

—EMMA LORD, *author*

**Two cows are standing in a field.**

One says, "Hey, did you hear about that outbreak of mad cow disease? It makes cows go completely insane!"

The other replies, "No. Good thing I'm a helicopter."

—REDDIT.COM

### Seeing Clearly

I just had my eyeglass prescription changed after six years. Have you ever waited that long? Then you put on your new lenses and you're like, "Man, I could've been seeing things!"

—BRIAN REGAN, *comedian*

## THE BEST JOKE I EVER TOLD

By Cathy Boyd

**I remember when this face used to stop traffic. I was a school crossing guard at the time.**

*Cathy Boyd is a Toronto-based comedian. Her comedy album, *Wise Tracks*, was released last June.*



**Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 9 or [rd.ca/joke](http://rd.ca/joke) for details.**



# Are We Still Friends?

How to have  
a difficult  
conversation  
without losing  
your cool

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BY Christina Palassio

ILLUSTRATION BY NICOLE XU

TEN YEARS AGO, a very pregnant Carly Stasko and her husband, Trevor, were living in Toronto and preparing to welcome their first child. Then, about a month before her due date, Stasko received an email from her mother-in-law, Lynnette Norris. Stasko had planned a home birth, but Norris

had concerns about its safety. “Are you open to a discussion?” she asked.

At the time, the two women were still building their relationship, and while they got along, they had some differences in their world views. “I thought, this issue is either going to be a wedge,” says Stasko, now 43, “or it’s

going to be something that brings us together.” Stasko agreed to the call.

In the end, the conversation didn't change either woman's opinion, but a respectful approach allowed each to feel heard and valued. And by the time Stasko had a successful home birth shortly after, the issue no longer felt so divisive. Today, Stasko and Norris say that first big discussion helped them build a foundation of trust and avoid a legacy of resentment. “It's like a dance,” says Stasko. “We learned how not to step on each other's toes and how not to stay wallflowers.”

Many challenging conversations don't go as well as this one. It can be intimidating to broach difficult topics with people we care about. Fears about how the other person will respond or about damaging a relationship can keep important conversations out of reach. But don't despair. If there's someone in your life you're truly interested in having constructive dialogue with, there are a few approaches that can help.

## Preparation Is Key

To start important conversations on the right foot, ask yourself what you want to achieve—and what's realistic. When we feel strongly about something, we often decide we're going to change someone's mind. But is it really possible? Having a chance to talk about an issue that matters to you, or to learn more about someone's position, might be more realistic goals.

Next, set boundaries for the conversation, commit to respecting them and then enter into the conversation with goodwill. Jackie Shawcross is a volunteer mediator with Community Mediation Calgary Society, an organization with a 28-year history of helping neighbours who feel like they're stuck in disagreements. She defines goodwill as a true intention to have a conversation or resolve a conflict. “It's important to remember that it isn't about resolving conflict the way you want,” she says. “It's about being willing to compromise to find a solution.”

**“IT'S NOT ABOUT RESOLVING THE CONFLICT THE WAY YOU WANT. IT'S ABOUT COMPROMISE.”**

Shawcross has worked with people to resolve issues related to parking and barking dogs, as well as situations where neighbours' opposing values made it hard for them to peacefully coexist. As a mediator, she helps to identify the assumptions and biases that are getting in the way of moving forward. An ideal outcome is one in which a person shifts from saying “You're a horrible neighbour” to understanding where that person is coming from and what motivates them.

To do that, she adds, it's vital that people agree on the best way to talk about the issue at hand. In both her mediation work and her personal relationships, Shawcross uses what she calls the CHAT method: check in, have an agenda, arrange a time to talk, and talk.

## Be Curious

Too often we bring defensiveness or aggression to important conversations instead of genuine curiosity. "When we're talking about an issue that's emotionally, ideologically or politically charged, we tend to instinctively approach it as if we're soldiers on a battlefield, where our motivation is to defend our pre-existing beliefs or what we want to be true," says Julia Galef, author of *The Scout Mindset: Why Some People See Things Clearly and Others Don't*.

To stoke your curiosity, she says, think like a scout. Unlike the soldier, the scout's goal isn't to attack or defend. Instead, it's to see the landscape as clearly and factually as possible.

In her book, Galef gives people examples of how to reframe judgment and defensiveness as curiosity about another person's perspective. For starters, ask genuine questions and listen to the answers instead of formulating your rebuttal. Follow by being open to learning new information that might shift your perspective or help you discover why someone believes what they believe.

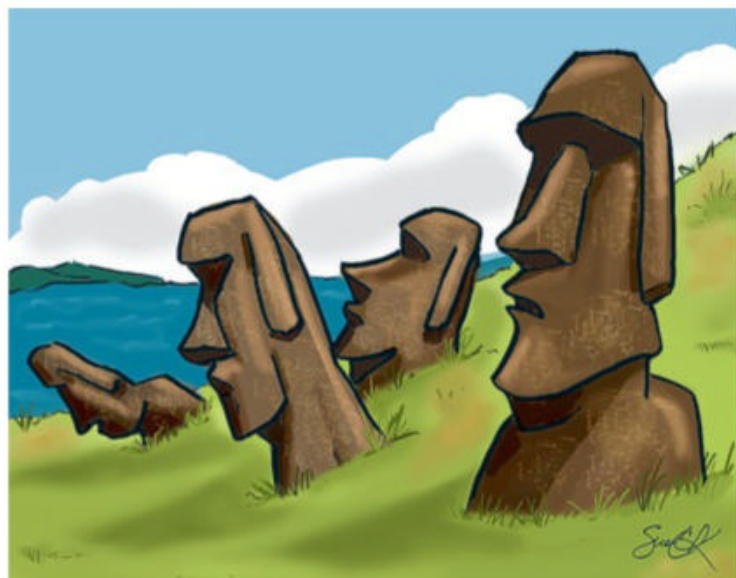
## Reset and Move On

Even the best-planned conversations can go sideways. If you're in a conversation that's becoming more aggressive or polarized, reset. One technique Galef uses is to visualize herself and the person she's talking to as two explorers standing shoulder to shoulder, looking out at the same landscape. This mental exercise helps her to remind herself that she is trying to work with the other person to understand the issue.

If your conversation is being derailed by someone spouting a barrage of half-truths or falsehoods, try serving up what linguist George Lakoff calls a "truth sandwich"—the act of using fact to counter falsehood. To do so, begin your response with a factual statement and cite your source and why you trust it. Then indicate the falsehood that's been shared and what is factually false about it. Then go back to your truthful statement and try to continue the conversation from there.

It's not an easy task, but it may help you keep the conversation focused and stop it from devolving into a personal attack. Still, sometimes, no matter how hard you try, a civil conversation just isn't in the cards. Difficult talks can be emotionally and even physically draining. If you're speaking with someone who isn't showing goodwill or isn't listening, it may be time to move on and protect yourself so you have the energy to have the discussions that will really make a difference. **R**

**BLAST FROM THE PAST**



“Heads-up, the tourists are coming.”

**Oh, Canada!**

Canadian history is about being the birthplace of Maurice Richard *and* Joni Mitchell, and the fact that, yes, in 1969 a Calgarian invented the only known cure for the hangover: the bloody Caesar.

— RICK MERCER

**Q:** How did the Vikings send secret messages?

**A:** Norse code!

— [@WELOVEHISTORY](#)

**From Toronto to Thunder Bay,** there's nothing. From Thunder Bay to Winnipeg, there's even less. I saw no animals! I believe that Canada's ancestors in the East Coast killed every animal in sight in order to put on enough fur to make it to the West Coast.

— LEWIS BLACK, *comedian*

**Q:** Why did KGB officers always operate in groups of three?

**A:** One was responsible for reading, one for writing and the other to keep an eye on the two dangerous intellectuals.

— REDDIT.COM

**Romantic Gesture**

Do you think Edward VIII ever really got over abdicating the throne to marry Wallis Simpson? Every time he had to empty the trash, he'd probably go, “When I was the King of England, I never had to empty the trash!”

— JIM GAFFIGAN, *comedian*

**Trojan general:** “We are at war with Greece and must not drop our guard at any time.”

**Trojan soldier:** “Sir, the enemy has given us a giant wooden horse.”

**Trojan general:** “Great, bring it in!”

— [@NICKELDOODLE](#)

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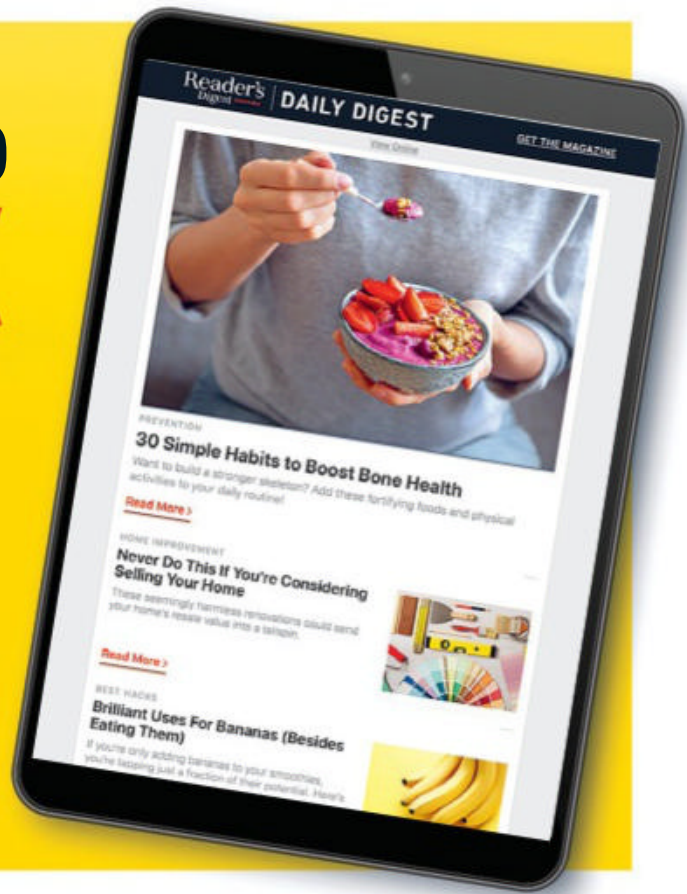
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**Psychotherapist  
Bruce Tobin is leading  
experiments with  
psychedelic therapy  
in Canada.**



EDITORS' CHOICE

POWERFUL HALLUCINOGENS

are the next medical frontier.

Believers claim they cure pain,  
depression, obesity, addictions and  
headaches—for a start.

DR . FEELGOOD

---

BY John Semley

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIK WEST



In February of 2018, Laurie Brooks, a 51-year-old nurse in Abbotsford, B.C., learned she had colon cancer. Next came radiation, chemotherapy and a surgery that removed an eight-centimetre-long tumour. But at her one-year surgery follow-up, her oncologist found that the cancer had metastasized. She had anywhere between six months and a year to live.

Brooks and her husband, Glenn, who runs a home-renovation business, have four kids in their 20s. After the check-up news, she couldn't sleep and cried constantly. She became withdrawn and felt anger at both the situation and at herself. At times she was gripped by an

unshakable feeling that she had personally done something wrong. She feared having to inform her kids, for the second time, that their mother was dying. Soon she found that she couldn't move her left arm—a psychosomatic side effect of her emotional

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distress. “I didn’t deal with any of the emotional stuff,” she says. “I just shoved that down inside while I got through the physical challenges of cancer.”

Then a family friend suggested a way she could find a measure of peace and deal with all that emotional stuff: take magic mushrooms.

In the last few years, an underground network of Canadian psychotherapists and medical practitioners, inspired by successful clinical trials, has helped patients gain access to psychedelics such as magic mushrooms, the gnarled fungi containing

may be her final months living “authentically,” finding the self that was so often lost in her identification as a wife and mother and cancer patient.

Lying in a comfy bed and flanked by the therapist and a close friend, Laurie took three grams of magic mushrooms—a high dose guaranteed to send her on a trip. She’d prepared a mantra to guide her through the psychedelic experience. “Trust, be open and let go,” she told herself.

Before long, her mind opened into a realm of kaleidoscopic colours that she first found entertaining and then

## MANY PATIENTS ONLY NEED TO EXPERIENCE A MAGIC MUSHROOM TRIP ONCE TO FEEL THE TREATMENT WAS A SUCCESS.



the naturally occurring chemical psilocybin. Many of those patients are terminally ill or are suffering from chronic depression or anxiety. They believe that psychedelics alleviate their suffering and help them get more in touch with their emotions. Psychedelics have been called the new cannabis—at least in Canada.

Brooks contacted a B.C. therapist who has helped other cancer patients experience magic-mushroom trips. Although she had never dabbled in mind-expanding drugs before, and was nervous, she wanted to spend what

just a bit annoying. She next found herself pitched into a cold darkness. As she wrote in the notes she compiled post-trip, “It was like I was floating around in space but there weren’t any stars. It was just pitch black.”

At one point during her trip, while her hallucinations were peaking, Laurie visualized herself as a prisoner. “I saw myself in jail, with shackles on my wrists, and the shackles fell off, and the jail door slid open.” Brooks was free.

As the hallucinations subsided and she settled back into our shared, everyday reality, she realized she could

move her left arm again. She swung it in wide circles.

In the recreational culture of psychedelics, users often talk about the “after-glow.” It’s a feeling of clarity or emotional well-being that persists after the drugs themselves have worn off. It’s like the opposite of a hangover. The sun seems warmer. You notice dew on each blade of grass glistening anew. Many patients only need to experience a magic-mushroom trip once to feel like the treatment was a success.

A year after her trip, Brooks was still glowing. “Everybody looks at me and

mescaline and a few configurations of dimethyltryptamine, or DMT—are psychologically powerful and spiritually potent. At the same time, they pose no real risk of addiction. Medical researchers believe that these drugs function by affecting the serotonin, a neurotransmitter that affects everything from mood to memory. The ceremonial and prehistorical use of these compounds has much to do with them being readily available in nature. That includes the bulbous and prickly peyote cactus, to DMT-containing “pink carpet” perennials native to South

## BASED ON THE SUCCESS OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC STUDIES, THE THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF PSYCHEDELICS SEEMS LIMITLESS.



says, ‘You don’t look sick at all!’” she reflects. “I don’t have all the fear and anxiety anymore.”

**BEFORE PSYCHEDELICS** like magic mushrooms gained notoriety in the 1960s as the preferred drugs of the Woodstock generation, ancient and Indigenous cultures prized them for millennia for the experiences they produced. Psychedelics induced states of consciousness with deep mystical and spiritual dimensions.

So-called “classical psychedelics”—a category that includes psilocybin, LSD,

Africa, to the formidable *Psilocybe azurescens* mushrooms that peek up from the fertile soil of Oregon’s Columbia River Delta. LSD, meanwhile, is a chemical derivative of ergot, itself a fungal growth common on rye plants.

Scientists are now reassessing psychedelics as a promising therapeutic. In 2006, a team at Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins University led by neuropharmacologist Roland Griffiths demonstrated that psilocybin stimulated spiritual and deeply emotional experiences (comparable to the birth of a child or the death of a parent) in 30 volunteers.

The resulting paper gave scientific heft to what generations of recreational users already knew: that psychedelics could facilitate profound (or “mystical-type”) experiences and lead to a shift in a user’s perception of themselves and their place in the world.

The therapeutic potential of such a revelation seemed limitless. Subsequent Hopkins research revealed that psilocybin could produce “substantial and sustained decreases in depression and anxiety in patients with life-threatening cancer.”

This research spurred a psychedelic renaissance: a period of renewed clinical and recreational interest in these compounds. Writer Michael Pollan, prompted both by the Hopkins research and a nagging sense of emptiness in his own life, experimented with a range of psychedelics, which he wrote about in his 2018 bestseller *How to Change Your Mind*.

In the first episode of her Netflix series *The Goop Lab*, actor and wellness guru Gwyneth Paltrow dispatched her staff to a magic-mushroom ceremony at a Jamaican beach resort. And in late 2019, Canadian businessman Kevin O’Leary announced his investment in MindMed, a start-up using psychedelics to treat addiction. It’s one of



Laurie Brooks claims magic mushrooms helped with her anxiety.

several Canadian businesses trying to capitalize on the hype.

**CANADA HAS LONG PLAYED** a central role in psychedelics research. The field of psychedelic therapy was pioneered at Weyburn Mental Hospital in the 1950s, under Dr. Humphry Osmond and Dr. Abram Hoffer. It was Osmond who, in a correspondence with novelist and mind-expansion aficionado Aldous Huxley, coined the word *psychedelic*, meaning, roughly, “mind-manifesting.”

In their earliest medical applications, psychedelics like psilocybin and LSD were used to induce states of temporary psychosis—in order to observe and understand those states.

These applications were not always well-intentioned, or even consensual.



In the 1950s and '60s, Montreal's Allan Memorial Institute was the site of countless psychedelic trials that were overseen by Scottish psychiatrist Ewen Cameron, funded by the CIA and partially underwritten by the Canadian government as a means of exploring the potential of mind control.

In one case, the wife of a Manitoba MP sought Cameron's help in treating postpartum depression, only to be unwittingly dosed with LSD and subjected to brainwashing tapes. (A group of these victims sued the CIA in the 1980s and won.)

of healing, and that healing is more likely to occur.

Much of the '60s-era panic around these substances centred on "bad trips," in which a powerful drug produced a state of mental frenzy resembling psychosis. In one famous 1969 case, Saskatchewan-born radio host Art Linkletter's 20-year-old daughter, Diane, jumped out a window—a death her dad attributed to LSD.

The association of psychedelics with the '60s counterculture had a blowback effect on serious-minded clinical research. Erika Dyck, Canada Research

## THE ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHEDELICS WITH '60S COUNTERCULTURE HAMPERED SERIOUS-MINDED CLINICAL RESEARCH.



Osmond and Hoffer's work led to the idea that these potent hallucinogens could also be powerful therapeutic tools. Clinicians analyzed the effects of psychedelic drugs in treating everything from alcoholism to schizophrenia and arrived at a crucial conclusion: that a positive psychedelic experience, one that facilitated a profound and lasting change in the patient, relied significantly on a positive mental outlook and an encouraging environment. Treat patients like they're mad and they'll behave accordingly. Treat them like they're sick, in need

Chair in the History of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, notes in her book *Psychedelic Psychiatry* how, as mind expansion moved from the clinic to the campus, "Medical authorities promoting psychedelic psychiatry were perceived as indirectly endorsing a cultural revolution."

In 1968, LSD was added to Canada's Narcotic Control Act, rendering both recreational and medical use illegal. In 1974, psilocybin was outlawed. Both LSD and psilocybin are now listed under Schedule III of Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

# A Quick History of Magic Mushrooms

## 9000 B.C.

Indigenous people in North Africa leave rock paintings that suggest they consumed mushrooms containing psychotropics.

## 16th Century

Spanish missionaries witness magic mushroom ceremonies in the New World.

## 1950s

Enthnobotanist R. Gordon Wasson writes about participating in a Mexican shaman ritual—his *Life* editor coins the term “magic mushrooms.”

## 1950s

Psychologist Timothy Leary, inspired by Wasson’s research, becomes a leading proponent of the study of hallucinogens.

## 1950s and 1960s

Medical researchers in Saskatchewan

and Quebec—supported by the federal government and, in some cases, the CIA—conduct experiments with psychedelics to treat everything from alcoholism to schizophrenia.

## 1970s

The government, responding to panic about mind-altering drugs and the counter-culture, outlaws psychedelics, including magic mushrooms.

## 2019

Scientists at Johns Hopkins University revive research into magic mushrooms as a treatment for PTSD, addictions and other ailments.

## 2020

The Canadian government permits researchers to study the effects of magic mushrooms on terminally ill patients.



**MORE THAN ANYONE**, Dr. Bruce Tobin is responsible for legitimizing psychedelics therapy in Canada today. He's worked as a private psychotherapist for the last 35 years and is a former professor of child and youth care at the University of Victoria. He's 73 years old, lanky and friendly, with a white beard and a wide smile framed by a messy mop of hair.

Tobin was drawn to the field by the results of studies and clinical trials, especially those at Johns Hopkins. He struck up an informal alliance—a friendship, really—with some of the

focused on granting compassionate access to specific patients suffering from intractable end-of-life anxiety. Tobin was ready to take the case to the Supreme Court, and failing that, practise a little civil disobedience himself by joining the ranks of on-the-sly psychedelic therapists.

Then, to his surprise, the government approved the first batch of his patient applications last August. "My sense is that, initially, Health Canada hoped that by more or less ignoring my application, I'd go away," Tobin says, speaking from his home just north of

## THESE THERAPIES POSE A THREAT TO BIG PHARMA, POTENTIALLY SAVING PATIENTS FROM A LIFETIME OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.



top researchers at the university. In January 2017, he filed a class-action exemption application with Health Canada for access to psilocybin for people who met specific criteria, in order to provide therapeutic treatments. He founded TheraPsil—a non-profit with five employees—in the fall of 2019 while waiting for that application's results.

After that first application was denied, Tobin and his staff focused on bulking up scientific, evidence-based arguments for psilocybin. Then, they reapplied with individual applications

Victoria, in North Saanich. "I'm not going away."

Tobin's mission is personal. In his career, he's watched as various pharmaceutical cure-alls passed in and out of fashion. He also saw his own mother struggle with depression and anxiety—pharmaceuticals only numbed or exacerbated the root causes of her pain. He calls psilocybin an "existential threat" to Big Pharma and daily regimens of prescription drugs. The treatment is safe, relatively inexpensive (versus a lifetime of pricey prescription drug renewals), the outcomes are better, and,

in many cases, it need only be undertaken once. New studies from Johns Hopkins show that patients who took the treatment four years ago are still reporting the positive effects—the benefits of a long, long afterglow.

Tobin recommends psilocybin should only be taken after establishing a rapport between the patient and the therapist. “This isn’t an easy process, where you simply take a pill and the heavens open and you’ll have transcendent, mystical experiences,” he says. “In many sessions there is difficult emotional work to be done.”

be carried over into waking life when the drug’s effect subsides.

The power of the experience is further attributed to its ability to stir these feelings in a relatively compact session. Psychedelic enthusiasts describe the experience as being like years of therapy condensed into six or eight hours. Tobin is quick to dismiss such hyperbole, but he admits there is a measure of truth in such proclamations. “The effect of the medicine,” he explains, “makes it such that a person is able to process a lot more material than is normally accessible to them in

## PSYCHEDELIC ENTHUSIASTS CLAIM THE EXPERIENCE IS LIKE YEARS OF THERAPY CONDENSED INTO SIX HOURS.



Like any therapy, these sessions hinge on confronting repressed, buried or otherwise uncomfortable feelings. The hallucinations, in many cases, function as metaphorical min-movies. Imagine being confronted by some terrifying monster, then defeating it. Or think of Laurie Brooks busting herself out of the prison of her own inhibitions.

While fanciful and conjured in the mind, such experiences feel deeply real to the patient. And with proper therapeutic guidance (often termed “integration”), these profound lessons can

any ordinary state of consciousness.”

The exemptions granted by Health Canada allow select patients to possess and consume psilocybin. As with cannabis—which began its route to medical decriminalization and, eventually, legality, with a similar exemption—these end-of-life therapy applications are the thin end of the wedge.

Other research companies in Canada are already squeezing through the door Tobin cracked open, seeking exemptions to study the effects of psychedelics in treating everything from obesity to cluster headaches to

treatment-resistant depression. Health Canada has recently granted further exemptions to clinical researchers and biotechnology companies, plus 17 licences to psilocybin producers that supply clinics and researchers. Therapists are also seeking exemptions to take the drug in their training, in order to gain a more robust understanding of the psychedelic experience they hope to one day administer.

“The science is swiftly moving,” says Tobin. “The therapeutic merits of psilocybin don’t just pertain to end-of-life issues.”

Canadian since 1974 to legally consume magic mushrooms.

Hartle, a 52 year-old father of two who works as an IT technician, was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer in 2016. Treatments put the cancer in remission for a couple years, but it returned in the summer of 2019, along with emotional distress, anxiety and crippling panic attacks.

The chemotherapy also led to neuropathy, a form of nerve damage that can cause numbness and weakness in the extremities. Researching *Hericium erinaceus*, a stringy mushroom used in some Eastern medicine practices to

## CANADA RECENTLY GRANTED 17 LICENCES TO PSILOCYBIN PRODUCERS THAT SUPPLY CLINICS AND RESEARCHERS.



Tobin believes his scientific credibility helped his application in the eyes of the government. And it’s the continued provability of psilocybin’s benefits that seems likely to shape its expanded legal framework. For now, however, psychedelics are primarily used for one noble end: easing the fear of death in people with terminal diagnoses.

ON AUGUST 12, 2020, in Saskatoon, about a four-hour drive from the now-demolished Weyburn Mental Hospital, Thomas Hartle became the first

treat nerve damage, Hartle stumbled across the Johns Hopkins research on psilocybin and end-of-life distress. His interest was piqued, though he remained a little incredulous. “My experience with psychedelics was strictly through books and the media,” he explains. “To me, psychedelics were a party drug that people used in the ’60s.”

Hartle’s exploratory googling also led him to TheraPsil. Last spring, he reached out, and they added him to their exemption applications. After a few lengthy phone calls and some


introductory screening, Tobin flew to Saskatoon to spend some time with Hartle and his family and build the sort of trusting relationship that is integral to the success of any therapeutic process. While Hartle tripped behind an eye mask, safely ensconced in his bed and listening to calming music, Tobin kept watch, making sure everything was going smoothly and offering words of encouragement.

“Less is kind of more,” Tobin explains. “We don’t want to put ourselves into the picture. The more invisible I become, the better, so the patient can focus exclusively on their inner experience.”

I spoke to Hartle a few weeks after the trip, and just a day after he began a new round of chemotherapy. He remained irrepressibly chipper. Before Hartle’s psilocybin trip, Tobin administered a Hamilton assessment—a scale that rates anxiety. A score of 25 to 30 would mean moderate to severe anxiety. Hartle ranked 36. During the treatment, Tobin asked him to rate his anxiety again. Hartle reported a zero.

No anxiety. The day after the trip, he scored a mere six points: mild anxiety, verging on nonexistence.

Hartle hasn’t suffered a panic attack since the treatment. He has become more open with people around him and even learned to view his chemo treatments with grace. “To be fair,” he confesses, “everything about chemotherapy does kind of suck. But as opposed to dwelling on it, I have just experienced it and let it go.”

It’s too soon to speculate on how the rush of investors will shape the next phase of this psychedelic renaissance. What’s becoming clear, through all the hype and hallucinatory reveries, is that for patients suffering from acute anxiety and end-of-life distress, psilocybin offers serious, long-lasting relief, making those last days more livable. For patients like Brooks and Hartle, there are still bad days. But, as Hartle himself puts it, in what could stand as a tag line for a whole new wave in psychiatric medicines, “The bad days are better.” 



## Word of Mouth

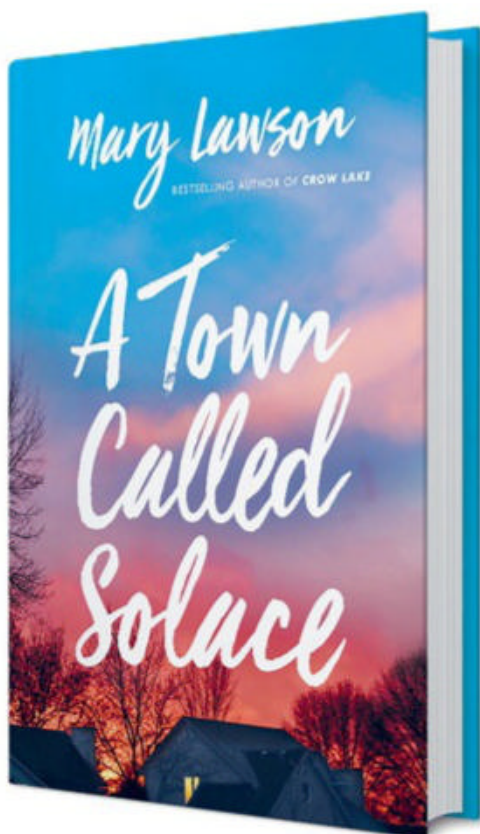
**The first thing I remember tasting and then wanting to taste again is the greyish-pink fuzz my grandmother skimmed from a spitting kettle of strawberry jam.**

M.F.K. FISHER

**There might not be a sauce more polarizing than mayonnaise, but I fall firmly in the camp of the devoted.**

SAMIN NOSRAT

READER'S DIGEST  
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BY Emily Landau

**A TOWN CALLED SOLACE**

by Mary Lawson

(\$32, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE)

**WHO WROTE IT:** There was a time when it seemed like everyone was talking about *Crow Lake*, Mary Lawson's best-selling 2003 novel about four kids in a northern Ontario farming town and their struggles after their parents die in a car crash. Her novels hit the sweet spot between suspense and atmosphere, and her characters tend to be vulnerable yet hardened by the ruggedness of the Canadian landscape. Her new book, her fourth, is her first in almost eight years. It's a pandemic present to her eager fan base, which includes Anne Tyler, the superstar American author and writer of similarly humane small-town stories.

**WHAT IT'S ABOUT:** The book is set in 1972 in rural northern Ontario, where residents of a remote town huddle together for social connection as much as for tools and groceries. Clara, a plucky eight-year-old latchkey kid, is plagued by worries about her 16-year-old runaway sister Rose, whose disappearance creates an atmosphere of

hypervigilance and mistrust in the town. One day, Clara spots a stranger in his 30s through her neighbour's window. It turns out that Clara's neighbour, Mrs. Orchard, has died and left her estate to this man, Liam Kane, who spent part of his childhood living with her and her late husband. Liam and Clara spend weeks circling around each other, each one grieving the absence of someone they didn't really know, as the truths behind Rose's disappearance and Mrs. Orchard's death-bed wishes gradually come to light. In the end, it's a book about the juncture between youth and adulthood: Clara is forced to rapidly grow up, while Liam unearths a web of childhood secrets he's long since forgotten.

**WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT:** Lawson combines the thrills of a mystery with a coming-of-age story. Surprise revelations arrive in sizes big and small: Liam peeling back his memories, Mrs. Orchard's one-sided monologue to her dead husband, the heartbreak that leads one character to do something otherwise unthinkable. At the centre is Clara, a great child heroine in the tradition of Harper Lee's Scout Finch—a real kid who's suspicious and loving and impulsive, determined to make sense of very grown-up problems. Her relationship with Mrs. Orchard's cat, Moses, is particularly touching (if anyone asks, just say you've been chopping onions). **R**

# Reader's Digest

## ACTS OF KINDNESS AWARDS 2021

Do you know a fellow Canadian who has helped a stranger, made a neighbour smile or gone out of their way to support their community?



Share their incredible acts of kindness with us at [rd.ca/kindness](https://rd.ca/kindness) and we'll feature the most inspiring and heartwarming stories in an upcoming issue of *Reader's Digest Canada*.





BY Samantha Rideout

- 1. Which common cloud type most resembles a fluffy white cotton ball?
- 2. What Canadian-born media personality is a household name in China but is virtually unknown in his homeland?
- 3. The leopard seal is an apex predator on which continent?
- 4. What was the first human-made object to orbit the earth?
- 5. With a 74-game winning streak, who is the most decorated *Jeopardy* champion?
- 6. Heart attacks are more common during spring, compared to other seasons. True or false?

- 7. In Western art, what is a memento mori?
- 8. In which country were robotic wolves with flashing red eyes recently deployed to scare off bears?
- 9. What Spanish building did Frank Gehry design using software first made for the aerospace industry?
- 10. A factory in the U.S. sells around 80,000 washboards each year to customers who use them for decorating, washing clothes or what other purpose?
- 11. Which form of arthritis most commonly affects the large joint of the big toe?

12. Which one of these technologies is the newest: the compass, irrigation or gunpowder?

13. What beloved children's book characters were created by Finland's Tove Jansson?

14. Initially, many European scientists didn't believe this animal was real because it seemed to be part mammal, part reptile. What is it?



15. Rhubarb's stems are delicious and nutritious, but which part of this plant is toxic for humans?

**Answers:** 1. Cumulus. 2. Mark Rowswell, known in China as Dashan. 3. Antarctica. 4. The Soviet satellite *Sputnik 1*. 5. Ken Jennings. 6. False: they're more common during winter and summer. 7. A symbol or artwork intended to remind the viewer of their mortality. 8. Japan. 9. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. 10. Making music. 11. Gout. 12. The compass, which dates as early as the 11th century. 13. The Moomins. 14. The platypus. 15. The leaves.

SHUTTERSTOCK/DIANA TALIUN

## WORD POWER

Any leaks in your vocabulary? Set sail with this quiz of ocean terms and find out.

BY Rob Lutes

**1. aphotic—**

**A:** without buoyancy.

**B:** relating to an ocean zone lacking light for photosynthesis.

**C:** dispersed throughout shallow waters.

**2. seagirt—**

**A:** surrounded by the sea.

**B:** in flight above the ocean. **C:** powered by tidal energy.

**3. atoll—**

**A:** ring-shaped coral region. **B:** raised deep-water plateau.

**C:** strong ocean breeze.

**4. tsunami—**

**A:** flightless seabird.

**B:** tidal wave. **C:** area of warm tropical water.

**5. breaker—**

**A:** severe ocean storm.

**B:** shipwreck. **C:** wave crashing into foam at the shore.

**6. foreshore—**

**A:** shore area covered and uncovered by the tide.

**B:** ocean mooring.

**C:** exclamation at land sighting.

**7. benthic—**

**A:** relating to extreme water turbulence. **B:** free of living organisms.

**C:** occurring in ocean depths.

**8. floe—**

**A:** zone of nutrient-rich water. **B:** strong current.

**C:** sheet of ice floating on the sea.

**9. welter—**

**A:** rise and fall with the waves. **B:** sink. **C:** erode.

**10. reef—**

**A:** ridge near the surface of the water. **B:** crude wooden watercraft.

**C:** strong current hazardous to swimmers.

**11. salinity—**

**A:** cloudiness. **B:** saltiness. **C:** acidity.

**12. nekton—**

**A:** seaweed. **B:** cold water at ocean floor.

**C:** animals that move freely in the ocean.

**13. flotsam—**

**A:** shipwreck debris on the ocean surface. **B:** narrow sandbars formed by ebb tide. **C:** large waves caused by earth tremors.

**14. whelm—**

**A:** engulf. **B:** raise from seabed. **C:** make seaworthy.

**15. tidal bore—**

**A:** edge of a tide that pushes up a river.

**B:** underwater cavern excavated by tides.

**C:** tedium induced by watching the tide.

## WORD POWER ANSWERS

**1. aphotic—B:** relating to an ocean zone lacking light for photosynthesis, as, Once at sea, Rupa gazed down and dreamed of exploring the *aphotic* darkness below.

**2. seagirt—A:** surrounded by the sea, as, Despite its historic connections to Europe, England was always a *seagirt* nation, set apart from the continent.

**3. atoll—A:** ring-shaped coral region, as, Far from desolate, the remote *atoll* was lush with tropical plant life.

**4. tsunami—B:** tidal wave, as, Abigail's dive shop was obliterated by the *tsunami*.

**5. breaker—C:** wave crashing into foam at the shore, as, While the adults relaxed on the beach, the kids frolicked in the *breakers*.

**6. foreshore—A:** shore area covered and uncovered by the tide, as, Antoine searched the *foreshore* for hermit crabs.

**7. benthic—C:** occurring in ocean depths, as, Many *benthic* organisms are seldom seen by humans.

**8. floe—C:** sheet of ice floating on the sea, as, Gabriel carefully guided his vessel past the large *floe* on the starboard side.

**9. welter—A:** rise and fall with the waves, as, Niamh watched the raft *welter* in the choppy seas.

**10. reef—A:** ridge near the surface of the water, as, Fred's boat was just one of many that were wrecked on the *reef*.

**11. salinity—B:** saltiness, as, The study revealed that higher ocean *salinity* is linked to a lower freezing temperature.

**12. nekton—C:** animals that move freely in the

ocean, as, Ocean animal life can be broadly divided into plankton, the drifters, and *nekton*, the swimmers.

**13. flotsam—A:** shipwreck debris on the ocean surface, as, Malene walked along the shore collecting *flotsam* left by the tide.

**14. overwhelm—A:** engulf, as, The enormous waves threatened to *overwhelm* Dyson's lifeboat.

**15. tidal bore—A:** edge of a tide that pushes up a river, as, A group gathered to watch the *tidal bore* race upriver against the current.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 104





BY Jeff Widderich

			8	1		4		
		4				2	5	
						3	9	
	3		2					
	1		3		5		4	
				9	4		3	
	6	5						
	7	9				8		
		2		6	7			

### To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

- ◆ every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- ◆ each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

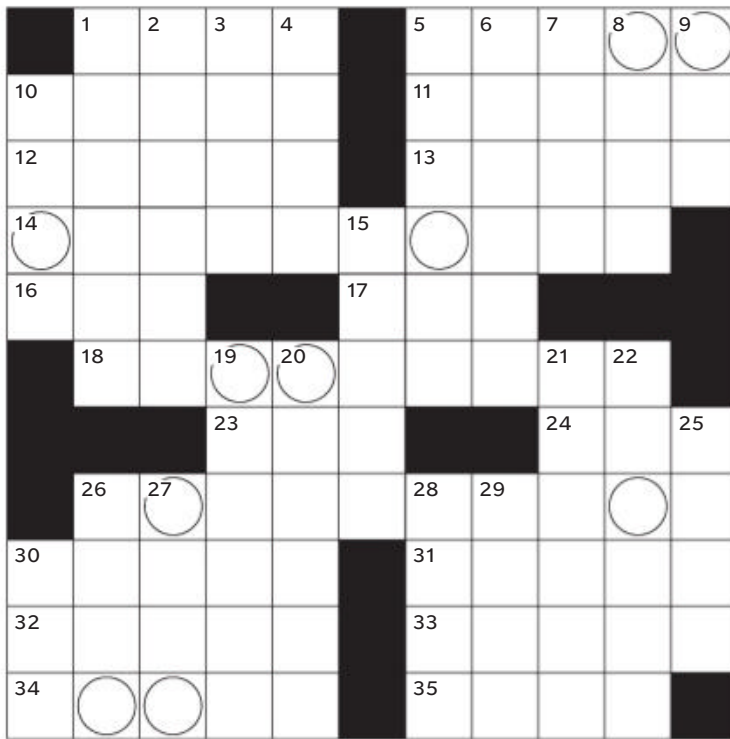
### SOLUTION

3	1	5	7	6	9	2	4	8
4	6	8	3	2	5	6	7	1
9	2	7	4	8	1	5	6	3
7	3	7	4	1	6	8	5	2
2	4	7	6	5	8	3	1	9
5	8	1	9	7	2	6	3	4
8	9	3	6	5	4	1	2	7
1	5	2	9	3	7	4	8	6
6	7	4	2	1	8	3	9	5



# Where It's At

BY Barbara Olson



**ACROSS**

- 1 End of Oktober?
- 5 Halton Region tannery town
- 10 Popeye's rival for Olive Oyl
- 11 Second in an "edgy" horror franchise
- 12 Sacha Baron Cohen mockumentary role

- 13 "You can't make \_\_\_ purse out of..."
- 14 Château Frontenac locale
- 16 Part of TSX: Abbr.
- 17 Solo role for Harrison Ford?
- 18 "The Paris of the Prairies," per Gord Downie
- 23 Suffix with Caesar
- 24 Hack (off)

- 26 Home to St. Francis Xavier University
- 30 Market surpluses
- 31 Astronaut \_\_\_ Saint-Jacques
- 32 "Beloved" French name
- 33 \_\_\_ fixes (obsessive thoughts)
- 34 Farming town famous for its corn
- 35 Totem Forest painter Emily

**DOWN**

- 1 Blatantly ignores, as a rule
- 2 Archimedes's bathtub cry
- 3 Attempt, casually
- 4 Overhead luggage item
- 5 Nervous \_\_\_ (feline simile)
- 6 Vegas stake house?
- 7 Utter airhead
- 8 Hair type, on shampoo bottles
- 9 Suffix with "beat" or "neat"
- 10 Patio cookouts, for short
- 15 *The National* anchor Andrew
- 19 Loveseat look-alike
- 20 German-sounding roll
- 21 Dickens book with a Twist?
- 22 More liable to pry
- 25 Masters' followers
- 26 Et \_\_\_ (Latin for "and others")
- 27 Reacting to Novocaine
- 28 Like poems titled by "To..."
- 29 Diddly-squat
- 30 Old-time gangster gun

For answers, turn to PAGE 102



# The 2021 Reader's Digest Trusted Brand™ Awards!

For the past 13 years, Reader's Digest Canada has conducted an annual Trusted Brand™ Study to uncover which brands Canadians trust most. In 2021, more than 4,000 votes were tallied to identify the winning brands across 33 product categories such as consumer packaged goods, insurance companies and Canadian retailers

We are pleased to showcase the following 2021 Trusted Brand™ winners!



Food Delivery Service



Your Pet, Our Passion.  
Pet Food



Sensitive/Dry Skin Lotion



Arthritis Pain Reliever  
Cold Symptom Reliever  
Headache Pain Reliever  
Pediatric Fever & Pain Reliever



Interior Paint  
Exterior Paint  
Exterior Stain

Curious to find out what other brands came out on top? Visit [trustedbrands.rd.ca](https://trustedbrands.rd.ca) for the full list of winners.