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Reader's Digest

CANADA'S
MOST-READ
MAGAZINE

JUNE 2021

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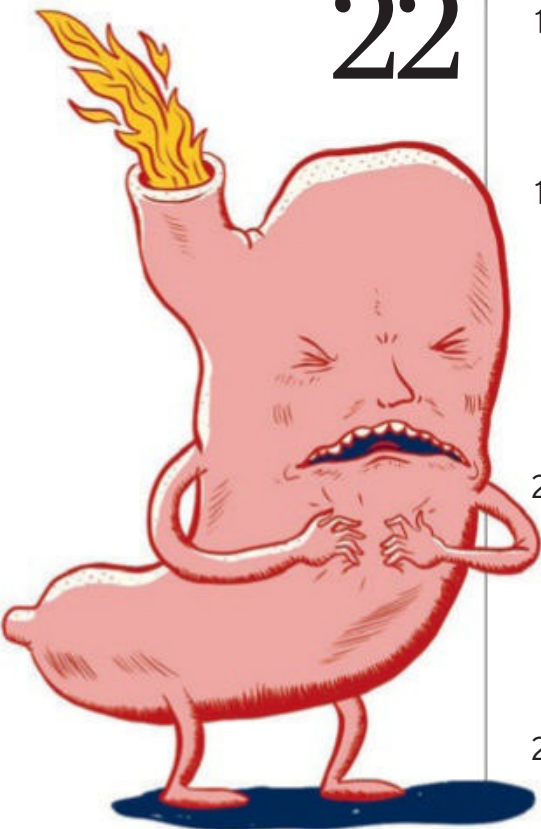
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Gone to the Dogs

We've always had a dog in the house. Our last one, Charlie, was a mystery mix and too clever for his own good. He'd open doorknobs with his mouth. He'd snatch bread off a counter if you blinked. One January, a neighbour called me at work to ask if I knew that Charlie had unlocked a second-floor window and was dancing on our icy porch roof, barking at the mailman.

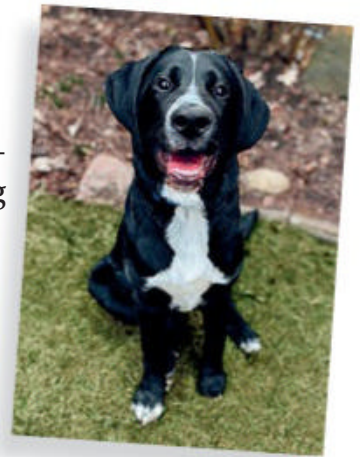
Charlie died in 2017, after 16 hijinks-filled years. By the end, he was so arthritic that he had trouble getting out of his bed, but he still made the effort to meet me at the door. It felt wrong to replace him.

The events of 2020 changed my mind. A new dog promised pure joy in a bleak time. Plus, several studies have shown that pets help us cope better with all kinds of stresses. The deciding factor: our kindergarten, unable to see his friends because of an abundance of COVID caution, declared he was ready for

a dog, any dog—just get him a dog already (please!).

But we weren't the only Canadians with this idea. Last year, the demand for pets of all kinds overwhelmed humane societies and rescue services, and if you wanted a dog from a breeder you had to get onto a long waiting list. We were about to give up when we heard about a litter of Labrador-Bernese pups on a dairy farm three hours north. Our new dog started off very wiggly and cute but grew very big very fast. We called him Ripley because he ripped everything in sight with his sharp puppy teeth. Nine months later, he's snatching bread off the counter and we couldn't be happier.

Did you adopt a pet during the pandemic? Please send me an email at mark@rd.ca and tell me all about your new housemate and how they changed your life. We'll include our favourite stories in an upcoming issue of *Reader's Digest*.



Mark

DANIEL EHRENWORTH

Reader's Digest

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Witten’s stories have appeared in *The Walrus*, *Toronto Life*, *Canadian Living* and *Today’s Parent*. His health and science reporting has received numerous industry accolades, including prizes from the Science Writers and Communicators of Canada and the Canadian Nurses Association. Check out his latest story, about overlooked dementia symptoms, on page 30.



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“Bearing Witness”

LeMoynes is an award-winning photographer who has documented conflicts and human rights issues in over 50 countries. His work has appeared in *Time*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Life* and *Maclean’s*, as well as UNICEF’s fundraising photo library. He’s currently working on a book about Port-au-Prince, Haiti. See his images of displaced-persons camps in the Congo on page 74.



OLIVIA STREN

Writer, Toronto

“Ping & Gaston”

Stren is a National Magazine Award-nominated freelance writer who has been published in *Elle*, *Toronto Star*, *Marie Claire Australia* and *Fashion* magazine. She specializes in style, culture, travel and personal essays about parenting. In her career, Stren has interviewed the likes of Jane Fonda, Oscar de la Renta and Martin Short, among others. Read her story on page 42.



JARETT SITTER

Illustrator, Calgary

“Fire in the Belly”

Sitter’s illustrations, which can best be described as absurdist and playful, have appeared in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. He has also provided cover illustrations for *The Believer*. A graduate of the University of Lethbridge, his animations have been featured at the Juno Awards as well as in Much Music Video Award-nominated music videos. See his drawing on page 22.

(WITTEN) WENDY TAMMINEN; (SITTER) MIKE TAN



LETTERS

HOME DELIVERY

I was delighted to see my old high school friend Liz MacInnis on the cover of the March 2021 issue. She deserves to be commended for her volunteer work at Red Cedar Café, a non-profit that prepares and delivers free food to people in need across Victoria. They help seniors, people with or recovering from COVID-19, those who've lost work recently and anyone else dealing with food insecurity.

— HEATHER MACDOUGALL, *Montreal*

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.

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CONTACT THE EDITORS Have something to say about an article in *Reader's Digest*? Send your letters to editors_canada@rd.ca

TURN DOWN THE VOLUME

"Shhhhh..." (March 2021) reminded me of when Highway 407 was being planned in the Whitevale area of Pickering, Ont., in the 1980s. Residents were concerned about traffic noise, so planners used quieter asphalt—not concrete—to surface a four-kilometre stretch of the highway, along with an earth berm to partially block out tire noise. I later asked one of the locals about the 407, and they told me they didn't notice any added noise at all!

— RON BROWNSBERGER,

Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ont.

FINAL MOMENTS

I was moved to tears by the line "I think he was waiting until you got back" in "Horse of a Different Colour" (October 2020). It made me think of my mom's passing several years ago. My wife and I made the drive from Edmonton to her nursing home in Prince George, B.C. Unfortunately my dad and sister couldn't get there in time. In fact, Mom faded away minutes before they arrived.

— DAVE BOWMAN, *Edmonton*

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*A mentorship program that helps
vulnerable youth succeed*

Group Effort

BY Raizel Robin

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIANNA ROYE

MUSTAFA EL AMIN knows about overcoming barriers—and how finding a good mentor can help. At age six, he fled Sudan as a refugee with his parents and four siblings. His family settled in London, Ont., in 1992. They struggled to make ends meet and his parents' marriage crumbled. El Amin's father returned to Sudan in 1996, and his mother did the same two years later. El Amin, then 14 years old, was left to fend for himself.

He bounced between an older brother's house and friends' homes, but nothing seemed to work out. He often ate at a local shelter. When he saw other kids making money selling

drugs—sometimes clearing \$20,000 a month—he decided to try it himself. In 2000, he was arrested and sentenced to a year in juvenile detention.

"I realized that for my whole childhood, I had been in survival mode," El Amin says. He wanted a different life. Upon release, he married his girlfriend. He had little guidance for how to move forward, but one thing was certain: he was never going back. He got jobs in construction and, in 2008, he and his wife had their first child, a daughter. His resolve to change strengthened. "I wasn't parented. I couldn't do that to my daughter," he says. "I couldn't not be there."



Mustafa El Amin
in one of the
Toronto spaces
he uses to hold
workshops for
aspiring artists
and musicians.

Around that time, he read *Midnight: A Gangster Love Story*, by Sister Souljah—a coming-of-age tale about a Sudanese refugee in Brooklyn. El Amin emailed the author, who became a mentor. Souljah helped El Amin see how homelessness, incarceration and war gave him strength.

“WE ASK YOUTH WHAT THEY WANT AND THEN CREATE A LIFE PLAN TO DO WHATEVER THEY DREAM.”



El Amin wanted to do the same for youth who face similar troubles. In 2014, he began working at Youth Action Network, eventually becoming managing director. Soon after, he launched MyStand, a Toronto non-profit for disadvantaged youth. It has since provided mentorship to 300 racialized youth in the Greater Toronto Area—a group often vulnerable to violence and incarceration.

MyStand invites young people to workshops on topics such as financial literacy, mental health and developing self-esteem. They're then paired with staff who once faced similar challenges—and overcame those barriers to build successful careers. In 2017, El Amin received a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation

that provided \$70,000 annually in seed money to help fund MyStand activities.

“We ask the youth in our programs, where are they at? Where do they want to go? Then we create a life plan,” says El Amin, “to do whatever they dream of. It could be going back to college, getting a job.” The next step is to build specific activities and schedules to make sure they can achieve the goals they've set. Some have gone on to work in the music and film industries. And when they encounter barriers like El Amin did as a teen—low self-esteem, feeling they don't belong—MyStand helps them find a healthy way through it.

Some of the first participants have become mentors themselves. Christopher Ambanza credits MyStand for helping him after he was released from the Toronto South Detention Centre in 2017. Through workshops and mentorship, he learned film editing skills. Ambanza now wants to tell the story of his neighbourhood, focusing on its strong sense of community and cultural history. In 2019, with El Amin's guidance, he received grants to produce his documentary. Today he mentors other youth interested in film.

To build on these successes, El Amin has big plans for MyStand, including hiring more staff, finding dedicated space out of which to run programs, and also one day expanding to Vancouver. As for his daughter, who is now 13, he says, “I've done right by her, and it feels so good to say that.” **R**



THE 2021 READER'S DIGEST TRUSTED BRAND™ AWARDS

Canadian consumers continue to be overloaded with competing product messages and choices. And during this unprecedented time, nearly half of Canadians (**44%**) say they trust products and services less today because of the pandemic¹. So, how do you determine what products and services you *can* trust?

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¹Reader's Digest Trusted Brand Study 2021

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SPECIAL FEATURE

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* 2019 IQVIA Study



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GOOD NEWS

FIVE REASONS TO SMILE

BY Ali Amad

Veena Sahajwalla
launched the world's first
e-waste microfactory.

A SOLUTION TO THE WORLD'S WASTE

AUSTRALIA According to the UN, humans throw out about 11.2 billion tonnes of trash every year. But Veena Sahajwalla, a materials scientist and engineer at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney, has devised a novel approach to tackle the world's garbage problem and revolutionize recycling: waste microfactories.

While most recycling plants refashion old materials into new versions of the same product, Sahajwalla's microfactories utilize thermal technology to "re-form" them into something completely different. Her first microfactory, launched in 2018, transforms discarded computer circuit boards into metal alloys such as copper and tin. Her

second, which has been operational since 2019, repurposes scrapped plastics into filaments for use in 3-D printers. Both sites are funded by UNSW and are housed within the university.

The microfactories, which are still in the development phase, range in size from 50 to 100 square metres, and are capable of operating with as few as two workers. "Recycling is normally seen as very much about large infrastructure and massive facilities," says Sahajwalla. "What I wanted to do was turn that notion on its head."

In January, she began testing a third microfactory—the first to be implemented in a commercial setting. Working in partnership with a local

recycling business, the microfactory turns used clothing and glass into building materials and tiles. Her efforts are already drawing plenty of interest from businesses in Australia.

Cranes Return From the Brink of Extinction

UNITED KINGDOM The common crane once used to live in England's wetlands, but in the 1600s overhunting and loss of natural habitat drove them to extinction in the U.K. Recent conservation efforts have helped the bird stage a remarkable comeback.

Also known as the Eurasian crane, the bird is a little over a metre tall, with grey plumage and a bare red crown. Over a five-year period starting in 2010, the Great Crane Project relocated 93 birds from Germany, where they had been thriving for the past 12 years, to southwest England. A 2020 survey revealed that these efforts have been an unmitigated success: the U.K.'s population now totals more than 200 cranes, including 64 breeding pairs that have produced 23 chicks.

With more than 160 species going extinct globally in the past decade alone, there's hope that the crane's return will inspire worldwide efforts to restore vanished animals back to the places they used to roam.



An Innovative Shelter for the Homeless

GERMANY This past winter, a fear of catching COVID-19 in shelters drove many of the country's homeless to sleep in the streets, where at least 20 people froze to death, the highest recorded number in 24 years. In January, to help tackle this problem, the southern German city of Ulm piloted sleeping pods in parks and other public areas to keep the city's homeless warm.

The windproof and waterproof prototypes, dubbed "Ulmer Nests," are made of wood. About 2.5 metres long and 1.4 metres high, they can fit two people each, lying side by side on a sleeping surface. The pods are also equipped with sensors for smoke and CO₂.

Homelessness has been on the rise in Germany in recent years, with an estimated 678,000 people without permanent housing. If the Ulmer Nests prove a success, a nationwide rollout could soon follow—and potentially save countless lives.

Protecting Seniors Against Anti-Asian Hate

UNITED STATES Five residents of California's Bay Area decided to take action after a series of pandemic-related racist physical assaults on

elderly Asian-Americans. One attack resulted in the death of an 84-year-old Thai immigrant.

In February, they founded Compassion in Oakland (CIO), a volunteer-run initiative that provides chaperones for seniors afraid of walking alone in the city's Chinatown area. "I wanted our elders to know that I see their fear and I stand with them," says co-founder Jess Owyong, a 37-year-old student counsellor who is of Chinese descent.

Chinatown residents can fill out a form on CIO's website or call or text a phone line to request a chaperone, whether it's to accompany them to a doctor's appointment or help them buy groceries. By March, more than 800 volunteers had already signed up as chaperones, and that number has increased even more following a notorious shooting in Atlanta this past spring, during which six women of Asian descent were killed.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

Lebanon's English-Teaching Sisters

In 2015, 19-year-old Spanish exchange student Janira Taibo met 13-year-old Salah, a Syrian Civil War refugee, on the streets of Beirut, Lebanon. The two struck up a friendship, and Taibo began teaching Salah English. That friendship was the inspiration for 26 Letters (the number of letters in the English alphabet), a Beirut school that offers free education in English, math and other subjects to 100 students between the ages of three and 21.

"We mainly work with Syrian refugees, but we accept students of all backgrounds and abilities," says Taibo. She runs the school with her twin sister, Tamar, two other Spanish co-founders and a team of 53 volunteer teachers and support staff that includes Salah, now 19.

Lebanon is in the middle of a Syrian refugee crisis: an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees currently reside there, with about 88 per cent living in extreme poverty.

For the sisters, there's much more that still needs to be done in a country that's also been ravaged by the pandemic. "Our aim is to help break the cycle of poverty our students' families are trapped in," says Taibo. "We've learned the importance of having a purpose, and we've found ours here."



COURTESY OF TAMAR TAIBO



Tamar Taibo (L) and Janira Taibo

ASK AN EXPERT

Can I Learn to Like Poetry?

*We quiz poet and professor
Sonnet L'Abbé*

BY Micah Toub

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN TAMAKI

Many of my friends say they don't understand poetry, and that's a sentiment I've shared at times. Why can it feel so daunting?

Our brains like it when we line up experiences into a beginning, a middle and an end. But that's just one way of using language to represent our experience. Poetry often maps the way a mind works associatively, moving from thought to thought, exploring feelings or moments. That's not true always—there are lots of narrative poems—but I think that's one of the reasons people say they don't like poetry.



That makes sense. What can I gain from digging in anyway?

One of the things that poets talk a lot about is “making it new.” A good poem makes you see something in a way you’ve never seen it before, and after you’ve read the poem, you can’t un-see it that way.

There’s a poem by the Canadian writer John Steffler, “That Night We

Were Ravenous,” where he almost hits a moose while driving and describes the animal as “a team of beavers trying to operate stilts.” That image really stayed with me. I first read it 20 years ago, and I thought, yes, totally, you are capturing the moose and its weird leggy movement.

Speaking of that “aha” moment, a study from 2017 found that people listening to a poem for the first time got goosebumps, even if they didn’t fully understand it.

Poems use repetition and sound and the vowel and breath on the ear. That can have the same impact on us as singing does. And mothers sing to their babies to calm them down, right?

Is it acceptable, then, for someone to connect with a poem in a musical way only?

If you find it pleasurable, then yes. There’s no one way to experience a poem.

Amanda Gorman’s reading of her poem “The Hill We Climb” at President Biden’s inauguration got people talking about race in America, and it made them feel hopeful. How has poetry been used to address social issues in Canada?


Shane Koyczan, who performed spoken word poetry at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, later had a video of his poem “To This Day,” about the experience of

being bullied, go viral. It really resonated with people, and it allowed people to speak more openly about their experiences with bullying.

A GOOD POEM MAKES YOU SEE SOMETHING IN A WAY YOU’VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.

And Dionne Brand has been a voice for the diasporic Black community for decades. She asks people to think about how language can either be used to help social justice come about or instead uphold the status quo. For example, in *No Language Is Neutral*, she wrote about Black lesbian desire in beautiful poems that also subtly exposed how the literary language of the era upheld sexist and homophobic norms.

Thanks. I’ll check those out. Any practical tips you can share as I begin?

Read slowly and read out loud. But also, when I read a new poem, I don’t worry if I don’t get it on the first read. Being with a poem is kind of like being with a good painting—you can take in a whole painting and look at it in a second, but to appreciate all the choices that were made, you have to spend some time with it. 

SONNET L’ABBÉ, A PROFESSOR AT VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY, PUBLISHED HER THIRD COLLECTION OF POETRY, *SONNET’S SHAKESPEARE*, IN 2019.

POINTS TO PONDER



As you get older, you become much more all right with yourself—and it is yourself that you're spending all that time with, isn't it?

—Actor and comedian Mary Walsh

I feel like we're sitting ducks—especially Asian women.

—Amy Go, president of the Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice, IN RESPONSE TO ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE IN CANADA AND THE U.S.

Culture is what makes us human beings. It's the thing that sustains us when we're restricted to the essentials and we're isolated.

—Trumpeter Suresh Singaratnam



HOME MEANS SAFE. IT MEANS LOVE. BUT RIGHT NOW I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING IN SYRIA LIKE I FIND HERE IN CANADA.

—Syrian Reham Abazid, WHO CAME TO SAINT JOHN, N.B., WITH HER FAMILY IN 2016 AS A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REFUGEE

It's hard to build, plan and design for experiences in cities that you haven't had in your own life.

—Leslie Kern, author of *Feminist City: A Field Guide*, ARGUING WHY CITY PLANNING NEEDS TO BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE

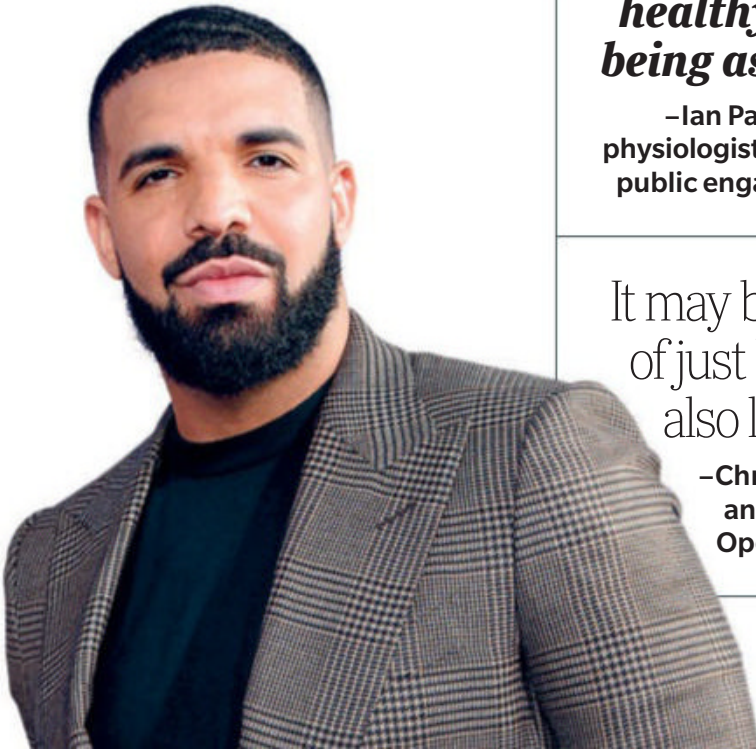
In Ontario, there is no response and no sense of urgency.

–Dr. Gillian Kolla, SPEAKING TO THE 59 PER CENT INCREASE IN OPIOID-RELATED DEATHS IN THE PROVINCE IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF 2020



I THINK WE SHOULD STOP ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE SHOCKED EVERY YEAR BY THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN IMPACTFUL MUSIC AND THESE AWARDS.

–Drake, IN RESPONSE TO THE LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE 2021 GRAMMY NOMINATIONS



THERE WAS NO PARTY HERE.

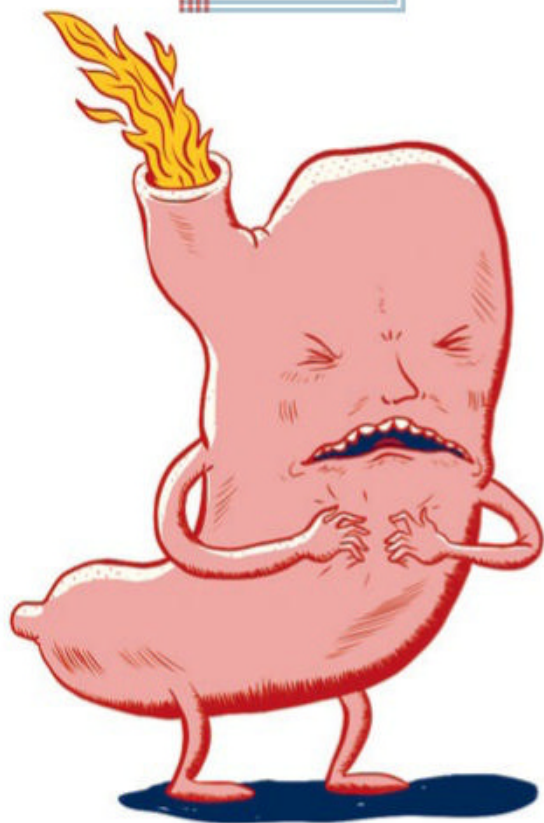
–Vancouver’s Mohammad Movassaghi, WHO HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH BREAKING REGULATIONS AGAINST LARGE GATHERINGS DURING THE PANDEMIC

This is a tough time. Stop looking at the scale. Start trying to be as healthy as you can while being as happy as you can.

–Ian Patton, registered exercise physiologist and director of advocacy and public engagement for Obesity Canada

It may be time that, instead of just living on earth, we also live on the moon.

–Chris Hadfield, astronaut and chairperson of the Open Lunar Foundation



Fire in the Belly

More stress brings more heartburn, but there are easy ways to beat it

BY Viviane Fairbank

ILLUSTRATION BY JARETT SITTER

MORE THAN A year into the pandemic, many people have grown used to a new lockdown lifestyle: staying home, exercising less and eating more—all while experiencing greater levels of stress and anxiety.

“All of this contributes to worsening gut function,” says Christopher Andrews, the lead physician at the Calgary Gut Motility Centre, adding that heartburn is on the rise. Some experts have even given the trend a name—“pandemic stomach”—and last December there was a temporary shortage of antacid medication in the United States.

Heartburn, a fiery sensation in the chest or upper belly, is the painful effect of the stomach’s acid and digestive enzymes creeping into the esophagus. When you swallow food or liquid, your esophageal sphincter, the muscle around the bottom of your esophagus, relaxes to allow the contents to move down, then closes to prevent backup. But if that muscle weakens or is unable to close completely, stomach acid might rise, causing irritation.

Diet is the most common culprit: acidic foods such as grapefruits, hot sauce or coffee increase the amount of acid in your stomach, while chocolate, alcohol and high-fat foods, such as cheese or avocados, stimulate the release of hormones that loosen the sphincter. Spicy food can also increase uncomfortable sensations in the gut.

Heartburn occurs in bodies of all sizes, ages, ethnicities and genders, but researchers have found that overweight people are more at risk. According to a major 2006 study, overweight and obese participants were two to three times more likely to experience frequent heartburn than those with a healthy weight. This may be because of the increased pressure on the gut, Andrews says, which can push stomach acid up. Changes in diet, such as the recent tendency of people to lean on carbs and comfort food in lockdown, can also lead to more bloating and gas in the digestive tract—again putting a squeeze on the gut.


LIFESTYLE CHANGES CAN REDUCE HEARTBURN SYMPTOMS BY

40%

Stress and anxiety are factors because the sympathetic nervous system—which triggers the body’s “fight or flight” response—also interacts with the enteric nervous system, which regulates digestion. In fact, during life-threatening situations, a person’s digestion might slow down or even completely stop. At the same time, stress can leave the nerves in the gut overly sensitive.

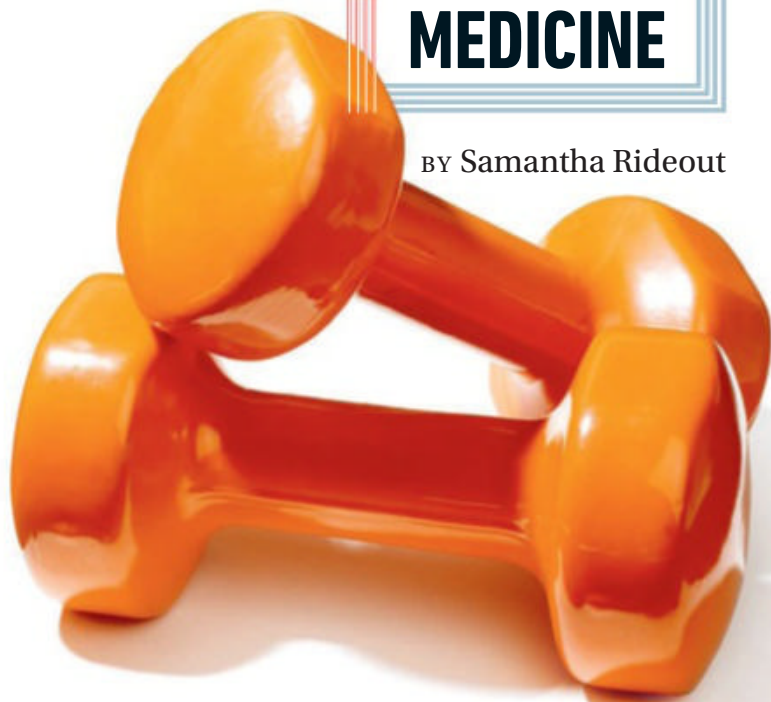
Occasional heartburn isn’t a problem, but experiences of frequent indigestion should push you to prioritize a healthier lifestyle. According to a recent study of 9,000 heartburn patients, following a five-step health plan—maintaining a sensible body weight, eating well, exercising, not smoking and limiting coffee, tea and carbonated beverages—can decrease symptoms by 40 per cent. Andrews also tells his patients to avoid eating close to bedtime: “If you lie down when your stomach is full, it’s much easier for things to come up.”

Over-the-counter antihistamines can help by blocking the release of stomach acid, while antacid medications can temporarily relieve pain in the esophagus. But if you experience heartburn more than three times a week over a long period of time, you should visit a doctor. Frequent acid contact might scar your esophagus—and, if left untreated, increases your risk of esophageal cancer. You should also consult a doctor if, in combination with heartburn, you experience difficulty swallowing, vomiting, weight loss or anemia. A physician can prescribe stronger medication or may recommend esophageal surgery to repair or replace your damaged sphincter.

Though heartburn is currently on the rise, Andrews believes the uptick is short-term. “Once life comes back to normal, I’m optimistic about things getting better,” he says. 

NEWS FROM THE
**WORLD OF
 MEDICINE**

BY Samantha Rideout



STRENGTH TRAINING BENEFITS EVERYONE

On average, people lose three to eight per cent of their muscle mass during every decade after their 30s—but strength training can slow this decline. In fact, according to a *Sports Medicine* review, all seniors—regardless of their sex—have a lot to gain from resistance exercises, whether they're pumping iron or simply doing squats, push-ups and sit-ups. While men tend to build more muscle from these activities, both women and men progress similarly when you look at gains relative to body size. Fighting off age-related muscle loss isn't the only perk: resistance training can improve stamina, balance, flexibility and bone density, which can translate into a lower risk of falls.

The Best Shoes for Knee Osteoarthritis

If you suffer from osteoarthritis in one or both of your knees, you've probably heard conflicting advice about what kind of footwear will help you feel and function as well as possible. Some experts recommend stable, supportive shoes with cushioning, while others believe that flat, flexible, barefoot-style shoes are better at decreasing symptoms. When Australian scientists recently put both options to the test, users reported more pain reduction and fewer adverse events—such as knee swelling and sore ankles—when they wore shoes that are more stiff and supportive. Although the right shoes won't solve those issues on their own, together with exercise, weight management and medication, they can help make it easier to live with osteoarthritis.



COVID-19 Vaccinations Are Safe if You Have Allergies

Although it's possible to have an allergic reaction to a vaccine, the likelihood is extremely low—around one in a million. This means that COVID-19 shots are safe even for the great majority of people who are allergic to a certain food or something in their environment. If you're still worried, guidelines from a Harvard-led team of allergists suggest you stick around for the recommended 15 minutes after you receive your vaccine (30 if you have a history of anaphylaxis). That way, if you start to react severely, the staff will be able to administer an EpiPen. These are supposed to be on-site already, but you should bring your own if you've had anaphylaxis before, just to be sure.

Dyslexia Brings Challenges—But Also Strengths

There might be more to dyslexia than difficulties with reading, suggests a California study. Participating children watched emotionally evocative videos, such as a baby laughing or a woman who was about to vomit. The kids with dyslexia showed stronger reactions, as measured by signs such as their facial expressions and breathing rate. It's possible that because their brains work differently, many children with dyslexia experience their emotions more intensely. While this can contribute to sharp social skills, kids with dyslexia may also need extra support when it comes to processing strong negative feelings, in order to avoid depression and anxiety.



A New Plant-Based Insect Repellent

Keeping mosquitoes and ticks at bay is about more than avoiding itchy bites: these bugs sometimes transmit serious infections such as West Nile virus, Lyme disease and tropical diseases like Zika and malaria. If you're hesitant about using synthetic insect repellents such as DEET, you could instead try nootkatone, a compound found in grapefruit skin and Alaskan yellow cedar trees. Nootkatone is already used around the world as a food flavouring and a fragrance. The American Environmental Protection Agency registered it last summer as an insect repellent, paving the way for new products to hit shelves as early as next year. Unlike other plant-based repellents such as citronella, nootkatone's effects don't wear off quickly; instead, they last up to several hours.

Why Seniors Are More Vulnerable to Summer Heat

Seniors are at higher risk for heat-related illnesses than younger folks, and a new Canadian study has highlighted a fascinating reason why: they sweat more when they're running low on body fluids.

When it's hot out and you're being active, you start perspiring, which helps your body regulate its temperature downward. It also makes you lose fluid, which in turn increases the concentration of sodium in your blood. When this concentration gets high (when the body gets dehydrated, in other words) a younger adult will stop sweating as much, begin to feel overheated and thirsty—and likely reach for a glass of water. But older adults' bodies tend to be less responsive to dehydration. For them, a lot of sweating—and fluid loss—may continue, and they won't necessarily feel uncomfortably thirsty. This ability to keep pushing yourself may sound like a superpower, but it's actually a reason to be extra careful: it puts you at a higher risk of heat exhaustion, heat stroke and heat stress-related cardiovascular problems.

As a result, older people may need reminders to drink water while being active during a heat wave. It'd be prudent, for example, to set a recurring alarm on your watch or smartphone in those situations.

Also, since you can't necessarily rely on your thirst, you could watch for other signs of dehydration, including infrequent urination, dark-coloured urine, fatigue, confusion and dizziness.



The Danger of Skipping Mammograms

If you've missed a routine breast-screening appointment because of the pandemic, schedule one sooner rather than later. In a study of Swedish women, those who'd attended their last two mammograms before a breast cancer diagnosis were 29 per cent less likely to die, compared to those who'd only made it to one of them.

Afternoon Naps Are Mind Boosters

In China, taking a daily nap is considered part of a healthy lifestyle. A new study of Chinese seniors backs that idea up: those who habitually took an afternoon snooze lasting two hours or less showed significantly better cognitive performance, as measured by skills such as orientation, language and memory. 

MEDICAL MYSTERY

Something in the Air

If it wasn't bed bugs or allergies, why was she waking up with her eyes swollen shut?

BY Lisa Bendall

ILLUSTRATION BY VICTOR WONG

IN 2016, JANICE BRISCO, a Thornhill, Ont. funeral-home worker in her mid-60s, started finding the occasional bump on her face. They often appeared at bedtime as a single rose-coloured welt, about the size of an insect bite, or a small cluster. By morning, the bumps were usually swollen, red and itchy, and would take a few days to settle down. “I was wondering, do I have bedbugs?” she says. “What in the world is it?”



Although Brisco washed her bedding and mattress cover on a hot cycle, she continued to get outbreaks. They weren't frequent, only about every other month, but they gradually intensified. Soon Brisco was having episodes in which her entire face was red and swollen. At the end of 2017, the reaction was more severe than ever: her face turned deep purplish-red, her skin drew painfully tight, and her eyelids, hit the hardest, swelled so that her eyes almost closed.

“My husband said I looked like Rocky after a big fight!” she says. “It hurt, and it was quite scary, because I could hardly see.” She booked an emergency appointment with her family doctor,

who was alarmed by her condition. He recommended an antihistamine for a suspected allergic reaction and referred her to an allergist for testing. It was two or three days before her skin started to clear up again.

In January 2018, Brisco saw the allergist, who conducted skin prick testing, in which tiny amounts of allergens are scratched into the skin. She had minor reactions to a few substances, like cats and ragweed, but nothing that would account for her attacks. "I was back to square one, not knowing what it was," she says.

Shortly after, at a routine appointment with her dermatologist, Brisco mentioned the episodes and shared some photos. Intrigued, the doctor suggested Brisco see Dr. Sandy Skotnicki, a dermatologist in the department of medicine at the University of Toronto. Skotnicki specializes in contact dermatitis, a skin reaction from touching an allergen or irritant—as opposed to an allergy to something eaten or inhaled, which is what the skin prick testing had looked for.

When Brisco finally made it to the top of Skotnicki's waiting list that August, the doctor was immediately certain the cause was something coming into contact with her skin. "Janice had these dramatic, explosive photos with incredible swelling and weeping," she recalls. Often, contact dermatitis occurs when something is applied to the skin, such as face cream, especially

when people apply these products regularly. Brisco's reactions, being intermittent, didn't fit. Brisco couldn't think of anything she used only sporadically. But without answers, she risked steadily worsening reactions, as her immune system learned over time to build an ever-stronger response.

THE REACTIONS ONLY GET WORSE AS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM RAMPS UP ITS RESPONSE.



Skotnicki decided to conduct patch testing. Flat, square packets, less than a centimetre in size and each holding a pad soaked with a tiny amount of a specific substance, are taped to a patient's back for 48 hours and then removed. After another 48 hours, the patient is examined for reactions. Dozens of substances can be tested at once, but since there are several thousand potential skin allergens, the dermatologist must decide which sets (called "trays") to use. Skotnicki has special trays for hairdressers, mechanics and other occupations; she asks about hobbies like painting and stamp collecting. "With contact dermatitis, you're kind of like a detective," she says.

She started Brisco with the standard tray of 85 substances, including

cosmetic ingredients and clothing dyes. “My whole back, shoulder to shoulder, down almost to my waist, was covered with little white square patches,” says Brisco. Aside from the itchy adhesive tape, she couldn’t tell what was happening under the patches for the first two days. But after these were removed, while Brisco waited for her follow-up appointment, she saw in the mirror that some squares of skin were obviously inflamed.


When Brisco came in for her exam, Skotnicki noted where her skin had become an angry red and covered in a rash. Brisco tested positive to lavender and lemongrass, and was most highly allergic to ylang-ylang, a tropical fragrant tree whose extract has gained popularity as a beauty-product ingredient. The substances Brisco had reacted to are found in shampoos and perfumes, but they had something else in common: they’re sold as essential oils. At a recent conference, Skotnicki had learned about a rising incidence of allergic patients who used diffusers, which disperse essential-oil particles into the air to benefit mood or mental function. Now, she questioned Brisco.

“I was diffusing daily,” Brisco says, who’d started using an array of essential oils a couple of years before the

bumps first appeared. The oils had been recommended by a neighbour, and Brisco quickly became a fan, using different kinds for different reasons. She used citrus oils like lime or grapefruit as mood boosters, and she found peppermint invigorating. And then, on occasion, she’d used the offending lavender to help with sleep, or blends that included ylang-ylang as a pick-me-up.

Of course, when essential oils are launched into the air, they come into contact with skin. “The eyelids are so thin, they get allergic reactions first,” says Skotnicki. If Brisco had continued using the oils, the reactions would have become more extreme over time, and the itchy rashes would have spread to other areas, like her ears and neck, and become debilitating. Around two to four per cent of the population is allergic to chemicals in their day-to-day products, often without knowing it, says Skotnicki. “They suffer for a long time.”

Armed with her diagnosis, Brisco can now safely avoid the essential oils she’s allergic to, and she’s careful not to get too close to her diffuser. She also uses fragrance-free beauty and cleaning products.

It’s been a lesson for Skotnicki, too. “After Janice, I’ve asked every patient about essential oil diffusers!” 



Do Your Part

There are no passengers on spaceship Earth. We are all crew.

MARSHALL McLUHAN



COVER STORY



DEMENTIA



WARNING

SIGNS

A guide to
13 symptoms
you should
never ignore

BY Mark Witten



STEPHEN CHOW KNEW something was off when he started making more typos and spelling errors in his work emails. This was in 2010, and Chow, 51 at the time and living in Scarborough, was an IT specialist for Ontario's Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

He tried to ignore the mistakes at first, but the situation became more obvious when attempts to punch in his password kept failing. He found it gradually harder to focus and perform simple, familiar tasks, such as calculating numbers or putting his signature on a document. "Everything was all messed up, and I didn't know what to do about it," he says. Not wanting his wife, Eva, and two adult sons to worry, he kept it a secret from them, hoping he could just muddle through.

Instead, over the next several years, more alarming symptoms appeared. As Chow made the daily 90-minute drive to and from work, he had trouble seeing the centre line on the road, as well as the cars beside him. In early 2014, his patchy vision almost killed him

when he couldn't clearly discern the road's edge and slid into the ditch during a snowstorm. He was unharmed, but his anxiety mounted, and he decided to talk to his family doctor.

When Chow described his difficulties with typing and driving—both related to motor skills—his physician initially referred him to a specialist in Parkinson's disease. That condition was ruled out because he didn't have hand or leg tremors. In May of 2014, Chow got an appointment with Dr. Carmela Tartaglia, a cognitive neurologist specializing in early-onset dementia at Toronto Western Hospital.

Tartaglia suspected Chow's symptoms were visual-spatial processing problems, a warning sign of Alzheimer's disease—and she noted one subtle but telltale clue. "Stephen's writing difficulties became more apparent in Cantonese," she says. "It's his first language, and Cantonese is a more visual language than English."

Weeks later, an MRI showed a shrinkage of cortical tissue in the back of his brain—the region involved in processing what and how we see—and biomarkers identified in his cerebrospinal fluid 18 months later finally confirmed, six years after Chow first noticed his symptoms, that he had early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

CHOW IS ONE OF about 700,000 Canadians living with dementia. Although the rate of people who develop dementia

has been declining for decades due to healthier lifestyles, the total number is still projected to double over the next 15 years because of the aging population. Each year, more than 75,000 Canadians are diagnosed with some form of dementia. Around 10 per cent are under the age of 65.

Early detection of dementia is important so that the person diagnosed, and their family members, can take steps to slow and mitigate the effects of the disease through lifestyle changes. Ideally, that would mean seeing a family doctor, undergoing specialized testing and receiving a formal diagnosis within six months or a year after noticing symptoms. But according to an Australian study, on average, it took two years for people to make an initial visit to a doctor and over three years for a firm diagnosis.

People often associate dementia with memory loss, but in many cases this is not the first sign. In fact, dementia can affect many different areas of the brain, and scientists now understand that symptoms differ based on where in the brain changes occur. With this knowledge, doctors now use advanced tools, such as brain scans and protein biomarkers, to make earlier, more specific dementia diagnoses.

But getting to that stage requires noticing that something is wrong—and letting somebody know.

“The first time I knew Steve had a problem was when he called me from Dr. Tartaglia’s office,” says Eva. Once the diagnosis was made, she realized there had been indications. She just wasn’t aware of what to look for.

Here are 13 signs that you should be assessed for dementia:

1. YOUR PERSONALITY CHANGES

Inappropriate behaviour is an early symptom of damage to the brain’s frontal lobes, which regulate our social judgment.

“People with this dysfunction might undress in public, talk about people’s private parts or say “That person is stupid,”” explains Dr. Robin Hsiung, neurologist and associate professor at the UBC Hospital Clinic for Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders. “They lose social graces and forget that what they’re saying or doing isn’t right.”

These symptoms are often seen in frontotemporal dementia (FTD), but also when Alzheimer’s or vascular dementia affect the frontal lobes. If

700,000  Number of Canadians living with dementia

they're not recognized, they can be particularly unsettling.

"The worst symptoms for families to deal with are when there is a personality shift and the person becomes increasingly agitated or even paranoid and suspicious," says Carrie Bourassa, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan's college of medicine who specializes in dementia and aging in Indigenous populations.

Unusual behaviour can sometimes be confused with psychiatric conditions, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, and brain imaging can help rule out or support a diagnosis of dementia.

2. YOU SEE THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE

Recurring visual hallucinations may be an early symptom of Lewy body or Parkinson's disease dementia, although people with Alzheimer's disease can experience them, too. These can be as simple as seeing flashing lights or as elaborate as encountering animals and people that aren't real.

"Sometimes the hallucinations are quite frightening, like seeing a wolf or a bear trying to break through the window," says Hsiung. "Other times they're

more positive, like a grandmother who looks out the window and sees her grandchildren playing in the playground, but no one is there."

Researchers believe that visual hallucinations may be caused by damage to the brain's visual-processing system, in combination with the disease's disruption of the sleep cycle—so that the visions might actually be dreams breaking into waking consciousness.

3. YOU STRUGGLE WITH VOCABULARY

Word-finding difficulties are a common early sign of dementia. You might have trouble finding the right words during conversations or when naming objects, sometimes substituting the wrong word. People affected in this way pause while speaking, use filler words and frequently rely on "it" or "they" instead of specific names for things. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that these word-finding problems increased significantly in the span of just two years for people developing dementia.

Language can, in fact, be affected before memory problems emerge. An Arizona State University study analyzed

10%

 Rate of people diagnosed with dementia who are under the age of 65



Stephen and Eva
Chow at their
Toronto home.

former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's press conferences and found speech changes more than a decade before he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

To assess whether your word-finding challenges are related to a shrinkage in the language areas of your brain, pay attention to when and how often this happens. It could simply be a result of being tired or stressed—and can be caused by anxiety, depression, stroke and delirium, as well.

4. YOUR VISION IS PATCHY

Problems with spatial awareness can be caused by cataracts or glaucoma, but they're also an early sign of dementia. This was the case with Chow, whose first Alzheimer's symptoms were caused by a shrinkage of the area of the brain crucial to his ability to accurately perceive the world three-dimensionally.

"A patient with posterior cortical atrophy may see the world in a patchy visual field," explains Hsiung. "If the person is focusing in front while driving, he can't see things off to the side. And if he's changing lanes, he can't see other cars beside him." Meanwhile, when Chow made mistakes typing, he was having trouble seeing the whole keyboard.

Tartaglia notes that visual-spatial processing problems are especially prevalent as an early sign of Lewy body dementia, which can affect a similar area of the brain.

5. YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO KEEP FOCUSED

In addition to visual-spatial processing issues, Chow also had trouble with concentration due to shrinkage in his frontal lobe. "That made writing, reading and driving difficult and affected his ability to do high-level tasks as an IT specialist," says Tartaglia.

Beyond Alzheimer's, any other kind of dementia can affect this area of the brain—but note that an inability to focus can also be caused by anxiety, depression and side effects to medication.

6. YOU FORGET WHERE YOU'VE PUT THINGS

It's not unusual to occasionally forget where you stashed your keys. But if you find that you're doing this regularly, leaving the stove burner on or frequently forgetting recent events and conversations, this could be a warning sign. Commonly, says Hsiung, people

80%

 Percentage of dementia cases that are diagnosed as Alzheimer's disease



Dementia, but What Kind?

Rather than one specific disease, dementia describes a group of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. There are more than a dozen types of dementia, including rare conditions and others that may develop from other brain disorders, like Parkinson's disease or Huntington's disease.

Here are the five most diagnosed forms of dementia:

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia, accounting for up to 80 per cent of all diagnoses. Generally, Alzheimer's affects most areas of the brain as it progresses and can therefore involve

changes in memory, language, problem solving, mood and behaviour.

Vascular dementia, the second-most-common type, happens when there is a blockage to the brain's blood supply, which causes brain cells to be deprived of oxygen and die. Strokes, transient ischemic attacks and blood-vessel disease are common causes of vascular dementia and can affect different brain areas.

Lewy body dementia is caused by abnormal deposits of a protein called alpha-synuclein inside the brain's nerve cells. This protein, which destroys brain cells, is also found in people with Parkinson's disease. Areas of the brain involved in thinking, movement and visual processing are most affected.

Frontotemporal dementia mainly affects the frontal and temporal brain areas and accounts for about 20 per cent of cases of early-onset dementia. Changes in personality and behaviour are more apparent in the early stage, while memory decline often doesn't occur until later.

Mixed dementia occurs when a person has at least two different types of dementia, most often Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Studies reveal it's much more common than previously thought.

with this type of memory loss will ask loved ones the same questions over and over again.

“Families can help a lot in recognizing these early symptoms, because if the person’s memory is poor, they won’t remember the problems they have in remembering,” he says.

This sign is one that often points to Alzheimer’s disease. In this type of dementia, the hippocampus—the brain area involved in forming, storing and retrieving memories—may be affected first. In fact, short-term memory loss is the most common symptom among people with Alzheimer’s disease, whereas it’s less often an early sign in vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia, and rarely in FTD.

Medications and depression can also affect memory, so it’s important to check with your doctor, who might recommend a screening test, such as the Montreal Cognitive Assessment—30 questions which quickly identify abnormal brain function.

7. YOU’RE SUDDENLY BAD WITH MONEY

A pattern of uncharacteristically poor financial decisions should set off alarm

bells. “When you have frontal-lobe damage, you lose judgment and can make rash, impulsive financial decisions,” says Tartaglia. “A frugal person starts giving away more money or buying things they don’t need—like a furnace from a door-to-door salesperson.” She’s seen patients who did significant damage to their families’ finances, as well as CEOs of companies who lost millions because nobody noticed the signs.

A combination of declining decision-making skills and memory can also lead to financial lapses. A 2020 *JAMA Internal Medicine* study found that people with dementia started missing bill payments up to six years before they were diagnosed.

8. YOU’RE EMOTIONALLY FLAT


According to a University of Cambridge study, a lack of interest or motivation can predict the onset of dementia many years before other cognitive symptoms do, especially in people with FTD, who may be diagnosed as early as age 45.

Hsiung cautions, however, that apathy can sometimes be confused with depression, as the difference between

10.4

 Estimated population, in millions, of Canadian seniors in 2037

45

 Age at which frontotemporal disorder can be diagnosed, often following personality changes

them is subtle; a psychiatric assessment is often required to tell them apart.

“In both, a person may sit on the sofa all day long,” he says, explaining that the key difference is how much their mood ranges. If someone becomes tearful when they hear a sad story, this could be depression, but it’s apathy if the person shows no emotional response. If it’s the latter, Hsiung says, it could be the beginning of Alzheimer’s disease, FTD or vascular dementia.

9. YOU’RE NOT MOVING AS WELL AS USUAL

Difficulties with movement and performing physical activities in the right sequence can be an early sign of damage to the parietal lobe, which is related to motor skills—and this is one of the signs that Eva thinks she overlooked in her husband. Three years before his diagnosis, the couple began to participate in dragon-boat racing. Chow had always been a well-coordinated athlete and handyman, but during training he struggled to learn the basic stroke technique. “The coach kept telling him, ‘This is the way you do it.’ Steve didn’t get it very well, and he was upset with the coach,” says Eva.

Motor problems are also common with Lewy body dementia, but other neurodegenerative conditions, such as Parkinson’s and multiple sclerosis, should be considered, as well.

10. YOU’VE BECOME INSENSITIVE

According to a 2016 Neuroscience Research Australia report, loss of empathy is a core symptom in some people diagnosed with FTD. It’s related to loss of grey matter in the social brain. These patients are unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others, and they lose both the ability to understand other people’s emotions and to share in their feelings.

“You may not care about your family anymore,” says Tartaglia. “Or a family member is crying, but you don’t recognize they are sad.”

11. YOU NO LONGER GRASP CONCEPTS YOU ONCE DID

Problems with tasks that require abstract thinking, such as understanding numbers or reading a house plan—especially if that was a strength before—are an early symptom that can be

caused by damage in the frontal and parietal lobes. For Chow, this appeared early at work in his inability to make simple calculations, but it also impeded his long-held role as the manager of his family's finances. After his diagnosis, Eva took over those duties.

12. YOU'RE MORE ANXIOUS

Mood changes, such as depression and anxiety, can be early signs of dementia that start well before people begin to experience memory loss, according to a 2015 *Neurology* study. Tartaglia notes that, especially with Lewy body dementia, non-anxious people can become anxious much of the time. They may exhibit persistent worry, fear or agitation, commonly triggered by going outside the home or being separated from a family member.

13. YOU GET LOST MORE OFTEN

Losing navigational skills, and the ability to create a mental map of your environment, can be one of the earliest dementia symptoms. In fact, in 2019, University of Cambridge researchers

developed a virtual-reality navigation test that has proven to be better at identifying early Alzheimer's disease than FDA-approved neuropsychological tests currently considered to be a gold standard for early diagnosis.

"We built a running track in our backyard so Steve could jog safely every day without getting lost," says Eva.

ONCE CHOW WAS properly diagnosed, his anxiety about his symptoms decreased and he became calmer. "Eva is the model caregiver because she wants to do what's best for Stephen and encourages him to do things," says Tartaglia. This has included joining Alzheimer Society of Toronto programs and support groups for people with early-onset dementia, practising daily meditation and getting regular aerobic exercise.

But perhaps most importantly, with Eva's encouragement, Chow began to share his dementia diagnosis with the people in his life. "I felt better after I told my family and friends," he says. "They were very supportive, and it took a load off my shoulders. I learned that you should tell people what you're noticing sooner rather than later and not keep it to yourself." **R**



Always New

To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be
always in no-man's-land, to experience each moment as completely fresh.
To live is to be willing to die over and over again.

PEMA CHODRON, *WHEN THINGS FALL APART*

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Nature's Bloopers

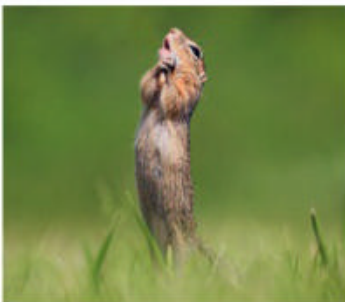
The Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards recognize nature's silliest moments, captured for posterity. We wrote equally silly captions for these recent finalists.



"Talk to the hand, sweetheart."



"Can you believe what he's wearing?"



"I've got to be me!"

I just sat on a whoopee cushion and it broke. Maybe it's time to get a treadmill.

— STEVE PATTERSON, *comedian*

Multitasking Skills

I used to check my phone twice while watching a movie. Now I check the movie twice while on my phone.

— [@DANADONLY](#)

Masks are the new kid socks: they multiply all over your house and you can never find one when you urgently need it.

— MEENA HARRIS, *lawyer*

Fear of Missing Out

2019: Jealous of vacation photos
2021: Jealous of vaccination photos

— GIULIA ROZZI, *comedian*

Technical Difficulties

Because of the pandemic, our church switched to doing

services on Zoom.

Naturally, some of us had difficulty figuring out how it works. One day during mass, an exasperated parishioner said, "It's just like a seance: 'Susan, are you there? Susan, can you hear me?'"

— MARGOT GRANT, *Gibsons, B.C.*

Any time I see a couple jogging together, I try to figure out which one of them is unhappy about it.

— [@LIZHACKETT](#)

I love contactless delivery! They just throw the slop at my door and I run out like a little pig.

— [@ACECHHH](#)

Netflix: We know exactly what movie you're talking about, but we don't have it.

— [@GIFTEDASIA](#)

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.



Ping & Gaston

Fostering a pair of ducklings brought new joy to our home—until I discovered what awaited them back at the farm

BY Olivia Stren

Over the past year, I've found myself justifying all manner of what you might call non-essential purchases in the name of lockdown.

I ordered a hand-knit cotton sweater from Spain and throw cushions from Sweden, but the most delightful and, um, let's say, unusual thing I "added to cart" was a pair of Pekin ducklings.

This happened last June, when my husband, Joaquin, my five-year-old son, Leo, and I were in month three of lockdown. By then, I had long shuttered the charade that was our home school, and there were no summer camps and no play dates. If there *was* a playdate, I was the playmate—and I was exhausted. Even our two cats seemed increasingly oppressed by our constant presence, pining for Precedented Times, when the house was their private hotel and humans would only occasionally pop in, like housekeeping.

So there I was scrolling Instagram, retreating into the seeming perfection of other people's lives, when I spotted a friend's photo of two tiny golden ducklings in her living room. I messaged her immediately. She explained that she was fostering the babies for a farm in rural southern Ontario. You can adopt the newborns and parent them as long as you like—typically, the farm explains on its website, the usual foster lasts a few weeks, until the ducklings waddle from their downy infancy

into their more obstreperous, feathered teenaged fowl-hood. This program helps fund the farm and, I told myself, generously provides us with what we'd been lacking: joy, spontaneity and fellowship.

"WE'RE GETTING ducklings!" I proudly announced. Joaquin replied with something along the lines of "What?"

I explained that, for \$165, the farm would bring us everything we needed—"chick Gatorade," a heat lamp, food and bedding (a bale of pine shavings) and also an activity for Leo.

"Okay. When do we get them?" he said gamely, at which point, I smugly concluded that I had married wisely. "You never really know a man until you've divorced him," said Zsa Zsa Gabor. Yes, or until you've adopted livestock together in a pandemic.

About 10 days later, on a sunny June morning, a man from the farm arrived at our downtown Toronto doorstep. In what will remain the best delivery moment of my life, he handed over a shoebox housing a pair of newborn chicks.

Leo and I held them in our hands, each one a tiny, almost weightless parcel of silky gold. Their webbed feet, clementine-orange, felt soft and satiny against our palms, and their glossy little beaks were unexpectedly warm. Leo immediately cast himself as their father, and they accepted the role happily, waddling at his heels and slipping

on our hardwood floors, like Bambi on an ice rink. He decided to call one of the ducklings Gaston, after his favourite cartoon character, and I named the other one Ping, after the Chinese duck hero from one of my favourite childhood books.

Leo kissed Ping and Gaston on their beaks and they nipped at his lips, which he concluded meant they loved him. He then decided that they must need a bath after a long trip from the country. He filled a Tupperware bin with water, which filled me with a surge of relief. (It was an activity! Without an iPad!). So much of parenting, especially pandemic parenting, comes down to guilt management. And our new family members delivered me from mine. When Leo lowered them into the bin, they took to water like, well, ducks. Afterwards, we swaddled them to keep them warm.

If the pandemic had plunged us all into chaos, at least this kind had a madcap charm. The messiness was, also, literal, of course. For the ducks, the world is not so much a stage as it is a toilet—you can't house-train a duck the way you can a dog. I had read that as a foster duck parent, you can fashion tiny diapers. One surely *could* do such a thing, but I did not. And while Leo was happy to share love and Cheerios, he swiftly made

himself scarce when it came to the dirty work.

"It's okay, Mummy, I'll let you clean that mess," he'd so generously offer. At this point, while serving as parent, cook, playmate, cleaner and head butler to Leo, I also had duck husbandry to add to the list.

AFTER A FEW WEEKS, the ducklings at least tripled in size, and the fairy tale took a turn. As much as we loved Ping and Gaston, they'd become an armful, and I began to think it was time to return them. It was only then, however, that I realized that I didn't know what would happen to them back at the farm. When



Leo with his ducklings on the day they arrived.

I called to find out, the woman on the phone, annoyed by this line of inquiry, tersely suggested that I refer to the last page in my “duckling manual”—a beak-orange folder that had arrived with our pets. In fine print, I read to my horror that they’d likely serve as a “wonderful supper” at a wedding or a banquet. We had been fostering these animals, hadn’t we, not fattening them for a meal?

We couldn’t keep them, but I also couldn’t drive them back to their demise. And this is how I found myself launching a sort of duck-adoption agency, frantically emailing and calling animal sanctuaries in hopes of finding them a safe home. Meanwhile, the ducks flirted with adolescence, awkwardly sprouting snowy feathers. (Ping, the taller of the two, looked like he might take up smoking.)

After about a week and a half, I was losing hope. Then I received an email from a lovely woman who lives on a hobby farm in Port Perry. She was looking for more ducklings. She was vegan. She was perfect!

We chauffeured Ping and Gaston to their new home, and as we crunched over the gravel road, I felt as if we were slipping into the pages of a Beatrix

Potter book. Bunnies hopped around sunlit grasses; a wooden swing hung from an old tree; miniature horses were enjoying a gambol about the pasture; and grown-up ducks promenaded about, their plumage white and plump as summer clouds. If the owner had offered to adopt me, too, I would have happily moved in. We left our ducks and headed home, feeling the sadness of empty nesters (forgive the pun).

The duck’s home farm never followed up with me or attempted to get them back. But a couple of months later, the adoptive parents got in touch to send me a photograph of Ping and Gaston. They were adults. In their snowy splendour, they were strolling about with six other ducks.

“They have a great duck life!” she wrote, “free to roam and be with their friends.” They somehow found what the pandemic has taken from us all—freedom and the comfort of community. I felt a certain swell of maternal pride, nostalgic for their golden babyhood and for the duck days of the pandemic summer. Finding them this country house of dreams was the best thing I did in 2020. Also, maybe the only thing. **R**



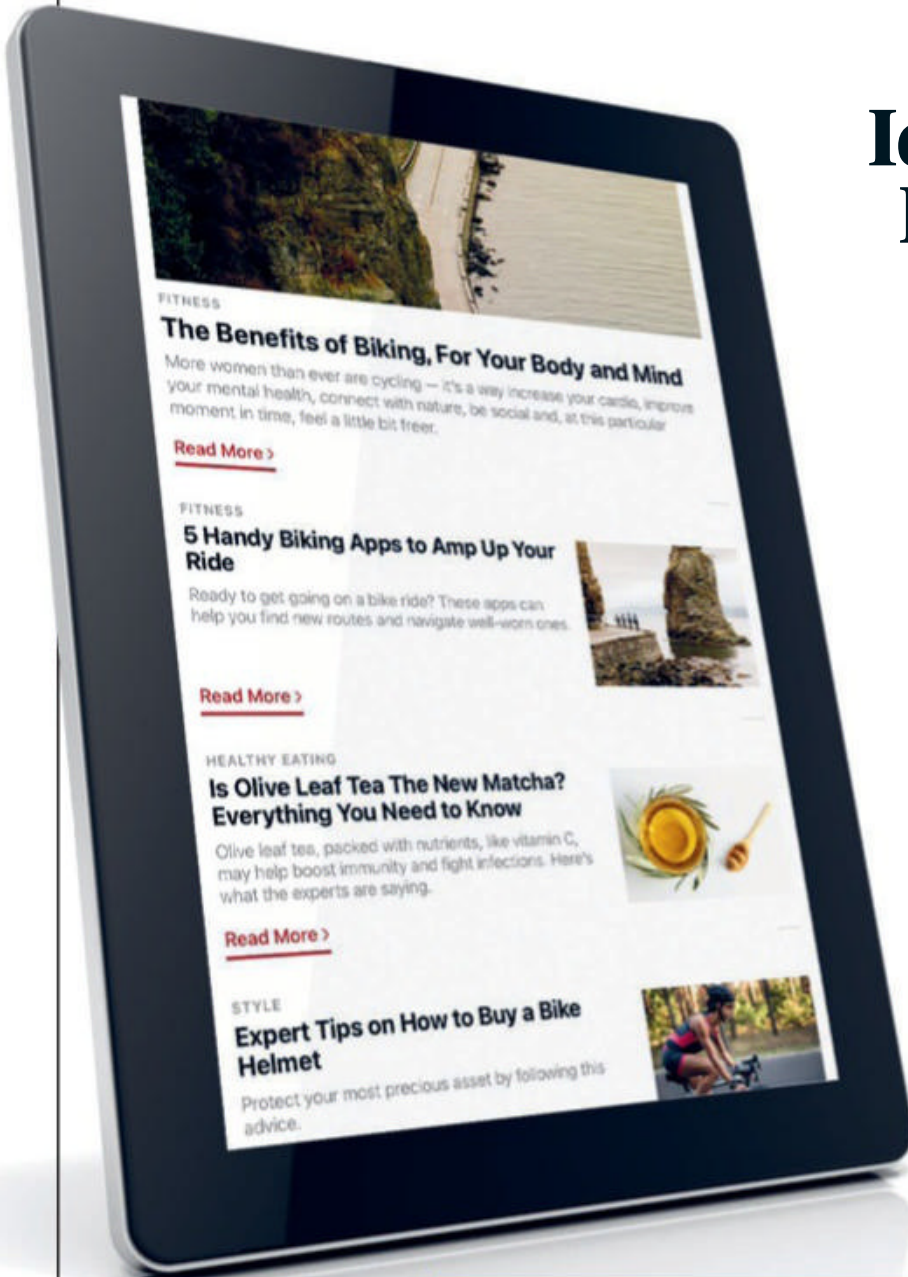
Sunny Words

Summer afternoon—summer afternoon;
to me those have always been the two most beautiful
words in the English language.

HENRY JAMES

READER'S DIGEST

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DRAMA IN REAL LIFE



Two friends dove into the
dark underwater tunnel.
Only one came out.

LAST BREATH

BY Christopher Matthews

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FEDERICO GASTALDI







THE HANDSOME nine-metre-long cabin cruiser bobbed at anchor in the crystal-blue water of the Adriatic, about 150 metres off the southern Italian coast.

“You’ll see, it’s an incredible sight,” Antonio Giovine was telling his German friend Horst Hartmann. The day before, Antonio had gone scuba diving off the small coastal village of Polignano a Mare, where they were vacationing. In an underwater passage in the reef, he had found a cave where fresh water mixed with salt water, creating strange optical effects.

On board the boat with Antonio and Horst was a group of relatives and friends, including Luciano, Antonio’s brother and the owner of the boat. Horst, a cheerful airport employee from Frankfurt, Germany, and Antonio, both 27 years old, had been friends

for years and often spent holidays together. Both shared a passion for scuba diving. Antonio was self-taught, while Horst had completed a diploma course back home.

Luciano and Antonio had double air tanks, holding around 100 minutes of breathing time. Horst and a German friend had only one tank, or about 50 minutes of air. But since they would dive no deeper than nine metres, it was more than enough to take a quick look at the cave and get back to the boat. Horst was bringing his underwater camera and a flashlight. It was 3:30 on a beautiful August afternoon.

“Okay, let’s go!” Antonio shouted, flipping backward over the side. With Antonio in the lead, the four divers moved parallel to the reef for almost half an hour, while Antonio searched for a gap. He was about to give up when he found it and signalled the others to follow. By this point, they’d been underwater for 45 minutes. Horst and his friend were already using their emergency air supplies.

Antonio pointed to the tunnel as if to ask, “Are you going in?” Horst’s friend shook his head and motioned he was going back to the boat. Luciano would go with him. But Horst nodded enthusiastically. Antonio hesitated but decided there was no problem. The cave was only a few yards inside the tunnel. It would take his friend little time to reach it, shoot a couple of pictures and resurface.

Antonio remained below and watched Horst approach the cave entrance and switch on his flashlight. Then, with a thumbs-up sign to his friend, he slid into the inky darkness.

As the minutes went by, Antonio started to feel a hard ball of tension in his stomach. Horst is sure taking his time, he thought. What on earth is he doing? Has he forgotten he is on reserve?

Then: Maybe something's wrong!

Kicking out with his fins, Antonio started into the hole. Just then he caught a glimmer of light ahead. It grew stronger. It was Horst.

Thank God, Antonio started to think but stopped in mid-thought. Horst was only three or four yards away, but the flashlight beam was dancing erratically. There is something wrong!

Before he knew it, Horst was on Antonio, grabbing for his air hose, trying to pry it from his mouth. Instinctively Antonio tried to pull away. Then he realized Horst wanted to share his air. It's called buddy breathing—one mouthpiece is passed between two divers, one exhaling while the other breathes in. He must be out of air, Antonio thought. He opened his mouth to release the hose, but Horst, in his panic, knocked Antonio's mask off. Unable to see or breathe, his lungs almost bursting, Antonio turned to his last resort: sucking the air directly from his reserve tank.

On the verge of blacking out, Antonio wriggled out of his backpack harness and opened the tap on the tank.

A jet of air geysered out. He tried to inhale it but coughed on a mixture of air and water. The regulator's outlet valve must have gotten fouled.

Antonio pulled on his air hose, and it came back. He inserted the mouthpiece but immediately started coughing again. He couldn't last much longer. Where is Horst? He prayed his friend had made a breath-held dash for the surface.

ANTONIO SUCKED AT HIS MOUTHPIECE BUT THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT. LEGS THRASHING, HE MADE FOR THE EXIT.

Paddling through the muddy water, his backpack clutched to his chest, Antonio found Horst's flashlight, lying on the bottom, and picked it up. Ahead, the tunnel floor sloped gently upward. It had to be the way out. His legs thrashing, Antonio made for the exit. He would see daylight at any moment.

The tunnel began climbing almost vertically. Antonio sucked hard on the mouthpiece, but there was nothing left. He dropped the useless tanks and swam for the exit with his last strength.

Antonio's head broke the surface, and he gulped huge breaths of air into his burning lungs. But where was the bright blue summer sky? Looking up, he saw



only solid rock. The space around his head was not much larger than an upside-down wash basin. He'd taken a wrong turn and emerged in a tiny air pocket in the reef. Without air tanks, he was trapped. He could only wait for death. He started to scream and went on screaming until he had no voice left.

AS THE MINUTES PASSED and Antonio and Horst failed to surface, Luciano knew he had to get help. He swam to the boat and used his cellphone to call the nearest rescue squad, the fire brigade in Taranto, some 65 kilometres away.

Shortly after 6:30 p.m., Taranto's head diver, 52-year-old Cataldo Paladino, entered the tunnel. Eight metres inside, his flashlight caught a dark shape floating against the roof of the

passageway. It was Horst. He was dead. Cataldo used all his strength to push and pull the body out of the tunnel. He knew that two men had entered the reef, and his years of experience told him the other diver, lost even further in the maze, must be dead, too. He considered going back in but decided against it because of the incoming dark, the muddy water and the lack of help. Too risky.

Nico Fumai, chief frogman with the Bari Fire Brigade, was at home on his way to bed at 11:30 p.m. when the phone rang.

It was headquarters calling: "Did you hear what happened out at Polignano?" the duty officer asked.

Yes, Nico answered, he'd heard about it on the radio link.

“We need your help,” the officer told him.

“No problem,” he replied.

He called his three other diveteam members. “Rendezvous tomorrow morning at 5:30 a.m.,” he told them.

At his kitchen table, Nico, a muscular 45-year-old veteran diver, began planning the next morning’s operations. The thought that now entered his mind struck him with the force of a falling brick. Who said there’s another corpse in the tunnel? That guy may be alive!

He called his team again. “Rendezvous an hour earlier, at 4:30 a.m.”

By 6:41 a.m. on Sunday, Nico’s team was positioned outside the tunnel on board a six-metre inflatable dinghy. Nico was suited up and ready to dive. He had connected two air hoses to his twin tanks so two people could breathe off them. His deputy would stay at the cave entrance and pay out the lifeline tied to his waist. As always before a dive, Nico prayed. Then he went overboard.

ANTONIO “DREAMED” he was drowning. Then he forced himself awake to find he was gagging: his throat was full of water. His head must have slipped underwater when he dozed off. He couldn’t feel his limbs anymore. The cold was taking over his body. I’m dying, he thought. He was too tired to feel scared. Dying was like turning off a computer, he decided. You switch it off and the screen goes blank. No reason to be frightened.

Nico turned on his flashlight and entered the tunnel. Four metres, five. A fork ahead. He caught his breath. From a hole in the rock to the right, a huge, shining black eye stared at him. A conger eel. He tugged the rope twice to let his deputy know that everything was okay and, keeping his gaze fixed on the eel, cautiously advanced down the first right fork.

There was something glinting on the tunnel floor ahead: a diver’s mask. I’m on the right track, Nico thought, pocketing the mask. Then he found Horst’s camera caught under a ledge. Getting closer.

DANGLING BETWEEN TWO ROCKS WAS A PAIR OF PALE LEGS WEARING BLACK FINS. AND ONE WAS MOVING!

The tunnel started climbing. He should be more than 18 metres into the reef, he judged. The walls around him now widened and he found himself inside a narrow chamber.

What his flashlight beam showed next stunned Nico. Dangling between two massive rocks above him was a pair of pale legs wearing black fins. And one of the legs was moving! When Nico reached out to touch it, a hand came down and closed around his left wrist.

Nico knew the young man must be kept from panicking. He gently passed the mouthpiece of his reserve regulator up over his head, through the surface of the water to where Antonio's face must be. He heard him take a couple of breaths before handing the air hose back down. Antonio is trying to buddy breathe with me, Nico realized. How incredible that, after 17 hours in this hole, he is still lucid!

Nico had to show Antonio that he could keep the hose. He took the mouthpiece out of his own mouth and, holding this and the reserve, passed them both up. This time Antonio kept one hose and handed back the other.

Pulling on Antonio's arm, Nico coaxed him underwater. Now he saw the young man's face: pale, boyish features with a stubbly beard and flowing, shoulder-length hair. Antonio shook his head, his eyes wide with terror, and retreated back to the surface.

Nico understood. Antonio wouldn't submerge unless he could see where he was going. Luckily there was the mask he'd found. He handed it up. Antonio put it on and returned under the surface.

Slipping the guide rope into Antonio's hand, Nico pushed him headfirst into the tunnel. Antonio didn't have enough strength to swim, so Nico had to keep pushing him from behind, checking at the same time that he was still breathing. The guide rope stayed taut, as, outside the tunnel, his deputy


picked up the slack. They made agonizingly slow progress. Linked to the same tanks, they had to move like Siamese twins. Finally they came to the eel, which surveyed them from its den. Seconds later they were out in the blue-grey light of the open sea.

"He's alive! He's alive!" Nico screamed as they broke the surface. "Get some warm clothes."

The frogmen lifted Antonio's limp body from the water and radioed for an ambulance. As they waited, the men rubbed and massaged Antonio. "You can't die now," Nico told him. "You've got to live."

At the closest hospital, Antonio was treated for exposure, exhaustion and an edema caused by nearly drowning. Doctors said he would not have survived more than another hour in the cave—hypothermia would have stopped his heart.

When Nico finally climbed back into his van to head home, he doubled over, sobbing. He felt he had taken part in a miracle. Somehow an unseen hand that had guided Antonio to a tiny air pocket had guided him there, too. Where he should have found death, he had met life.

On September 13, 1992, Nico Fumai and his men were awarded the prestigious international "Captain Courageous" prize for bravery at sea. 

THIS ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE JUNE 1994 EDITION OF READER'S DIGEST.

LAUGHTER

THE BEST MEDICINE

Taste Test

I wonder what the trial-and-error process was like for the first people who ever ate mushrooms: “This one tastes like beef, this one killed Brian immediately, and this one makes you see God for a week.”

—[@GOULCHER](#)

My dad constantly tells me I’ll never amount to anything because I always procrastinate.

I’ll show him. Just you wait.

—[REDDIT.COM](#)

Game, Set, Match

The depressing thing about tennis is that no matter how much I play, I’ll never be as good as a wall. I played a wall once. They’re relentless.

— MITCH HEDBERG,
comedian

Plot Points

I’m sick of characters in movies and TV shows taking off their glasses when things get real. That’s when you want your glasses the most!

—[@SHUTUPMIKEGINN](#)

Over lunch at a fast-food restaurant, I was telling my friend about a teenager who had rear-ended my car. The teen blamed me for the accident.

“She called me every dirty name in the book,” I said.

Just then, I looked over to the next table, where two nine-year-old boys had been paying close attention to my story.

One said to the other, “There’s a book?”

—[GCFL.NET](#)

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or [rd.ca/joke](#) for details.

THE BEST JOKE I EVER TOLD

By **Andrea Jin**

My family and I are from China, and I’m the only one who speaks English. We drew straws for it and I lost.

Andrea Jin is a Vancouver-based comedian. Her comedy album, [Grandma’s Girl](#), is out now.





10 LIFE- SAVING INNOVATIONS COMING TO A HOSPITAL NEAR YOU

How health-care workers
and institutions are
revolutionizing surgery,
patient care, cancer
treatment—and more

BY Lauren McGill

ILLUSTRATION BY MYRIAM WARES

+ THE TRAUMA ROOM BLACK BOX

Emergency-room doctors are not so different from the rest of us: they learn best from their own mistakes. But memories aren't perfect—especially in high-stress situations—and the speed and complexity of what happens in a trauma room can make it hard to recall exact details. To remedy that, the trauma team at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto decided to take a cue from the aviation industry. They installed a black box in their trauma room, allowing them to later pinpoint an exact time when things went right—or started to fall apart.

**EACH TEST SHOWED
THE DRONE ARRIVED
SEVEN CRUCIAL
MINUTES EARLIER
THAN THE AMBULANCE.**

“This is about reimagining trauma resuscitation so we can get factual feedback on performance,” says Dr. Chris Hicks, trauma physician who helped lead the project. The black box can record everything that happens using 360-degree cameras, wall-mounted microphones and connections to the patient's vital signs. Once the team finishes working on a patient, doctors can review everything that happened—arming themselves with the

skill and knowledge to work on the next trauma patient and, hopefully, save another life.

+ THE RISE OF TELEHEALTH

Virtual health care has steadily gained traction in Canada since 2015, when Toronto emergency-room physician Brett Belchetz founded Maple, the country's first national telemedicine platform. Three years later, Canadians completed over one million telehealth consultations—a 500 per cent jump in less than a decade. Unsurprisingly, the pandemic has further increased remote visits. In 2020, Maple added more than a million new patients and its consultation volumes tripled.

The platform is now open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and offers patients access to a doctor in two minutes or less. Patients can see a doctor either by video, instant message or phone call, depending on their needs—whether it's an on-screen check-in with a family doctor or a virtual visit with a specialist. Such convenience raises the question: why would anybody want to return to the pre-pandemic system of crowded, boring waiting rooms? Luckily, now many of us won't have to.

“Around 50 to 70 per cent of medical issues can be treated virtually, without a hands-on physical exam,” says Belchetz. Even better news: the pandemic has prompted some provincial governments, like B.C.'s, to cover the



Toronto General oncologists use a robot arm for surgery.

platform's costs (it operates as a private, fee-based service). This new frontier of health-care delivery also promises to alleviate hospital staffing shortages and a lack of doctors in rural areas long after the COVID-19 pandemic.

+ THE ROBOT THAT PERFORMS MASTECTOMIES

Robot-assisted surgery offers patients the hope of smaller incisions, faster recovery and less noticeable scars. In November 2019, Toronto General Hospital received a new robot surgeon—a robotic arm that specializes in mastectomies, a first in Canada. And in February 2020, Dr. Tulin Cil, the hospital's chair of breast surgery oncology, and her team became the first doctors to successfully perform a robot-assisted nipple-sparing mastectomy.

The use of the robotic arm assists in visualizing deeper into the breast,

using a lens and a screen, and dissecting cancerous tissue from its healthy counterpart—enabling a patient to keep their nipple. (In typical mastectomies, the nipple is not spared at all.) The healing process is also faster with the nipple kept intact, allowing a patient to undergo immediate breast reconstruction and gain a more natural post-op appearance—a game changer for the one in eight Canadians who will experience breast cancer in their lifetime.

+ THE APP THAT MANAGES YOUR CANCER CARE

When Laurie Hendren was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014, she assumed she'd have fast, up-to-date access to her test results and treatment plans. But she quickly discovered that this wasn't the case: the process for viewing our own medical info is both



A drone is prepped for a life-saving delivery.

challenging and time-consuming, involving several forms, a trek to the hospital's medical records office and a wait of up to 30 days.

As a computer scientist, Hendren saw a better way: an app. She worked with doctors at McGill University Health Centre, where she was receiving treatment, to develop and launch Opal in 2019. The free app is customized for cancer patients and provides swift access to medical data, lab results, medical notes and treatment plans.

"This project was unique because it was led by Laurie," says radiation oncologist Dr. Tarek Hijal. "The ideas came from her, and she vetted every step. Her insights are what made the end result so powerful."

Sadly, Hendren died shortly after Opal's launch, but her app is now used throughout the entire MUHC Cancer Centre, and plans are underway to bring it to hospitals across the country.

+ THE DRONE THAT DELIVERS EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Canada's vast terrain makes it difficult—and in some cases impossible—to send urgent medicine and supplies to its most remote areas. InDro Robotics, a drone company based in Salt Spring Island, B.C., is set to change that. In August 2019, InDro pilots flew a drone carrying Narcan, an EpiPen and a prescription medication from London Drugs in Duncan, B.C., to three locations on Salt Spring Island. It was the first successful drone delivery of emergency medications over the Pacific Ocean. The 37-kilometre flight took only 11 minutes—saving enough time to make a critical difference.

The next month, the company partnered with Michael Nolan, chief of the Renfrew County paramedic service in rural Ontario, which serves an area of 7,250 square kilometres of densely

forested, sparsely populated rural terrain. Nolan's idea was to test how fast the drones could deliver a defibrillator. Several test flights were conducted, and each time, the drone arrived seven life-saving minutes earlier than the ambulance. Renfrew paramedics have since acquired a small fleet of drones, which they now use almost every day in their emergency services.

Thanks to these successes, the Canadian Transport Agency granted InDro Robotics the first commercial drone licence in the country in November 2020. Currently, the company is working on increasing their flight distance to 200 kilometres—potentially saving even more lives.

✚ THE COMFORTABLE HOSPITAL BED

More than a quarter of Canadian patients develop pressure ulcers, or bedsores, from remaining in one position for too long during hospital stays. These wounds are tricky to treat and can increase the risk of sepsis and even death.

To combat this, four Ontario hospitals have tested swapping out their regular beds for ones that use artificial intelligence to gently move a person lying on them. The Swedish-made Aibly bed, for example, predicts a patient's movements and then uses adjustable longitudinal motion springs to redistribute their weight, significantly reducing the risk of sores.

These brainy beds can also help prevent falls: if an at-risk patient starts climbing out, sensors rearrange the bed into a bowl shape, providing extra seconds for a nurse or caregiver to arrive. The beds also monitor vital signs and will alert staff if a patient's heart rate spikes or drops. Patients can expect to snuggle into a smart bed in the future as more hospitals make the switch.

✚ THE VIRTUAL CARE ASSISTANT

Joyce Dingwell has lived at St. Joseph's Continuing Care in Cornwall, Ont., for five years. As a small subacute care hospital, the facility rehabilitates patients who have experienced strokes and hip fractures, while also looking after long-term patients with conditions such as multiple sclerosis and ALS. At 82, Dingwell's vision loss meant she relied on staff for everything from turning on the radio to phoning a friend. But what if, staff wondered, there was a simple fix to give her more independence?

In 2019, with the rise of voice-activated devices as their inspiration, staff headed to a nearby electronics store and bought a Google Home. The smart speaker connects to Google Assistant, which lets Dingwell use her voice to text, call, check her calendar, control her music, set timers, hear the weather, get the latest news and more. "It's been so easy to figure out," she says.

Buoyed by their success, staff next installed kits in the rooms of Liz Mullin

and Scott MacIntyre, both of whom have MS. The first thing Mullin did was something she hadn't done by herself in years: turn on her TV and change the channel. MacIntyre uses the device to control his

room fan, lamp and television—all without calling the nurses for help. The staff now hopes to use what they've learned to help other long-term care facilities and hospitals set up voice-activated devices for their residents.

➤ THE VR GOGGLES THAT IMPROVE BRAIN SURGERY

For Canadians living with Parkinson's disease, deep brain stimulation (DBS) can provide an entire decade of additional independent living. With DBS, a neurosurgeon places electrodes in a certain area of the brain, allowing it to receive impulses that remove or reduce tremors. The electrodes are controlled by a small generator placed in the patient's chest. There's only one hitch: for it to be effective, the placement must be precise, and each electrode is no thicker than a human hair. That can be difficult for even the most experienced surgeon to manage.

To help get it right, Dr. Adam Sachs, a neurosurgeon at the Ottawa Hospital, decided to try another up-and-coming medical innovation: 3-D virtual-reality



Neurosurgeon Dr. Adam Sachs uses virtual reality wands to manipulate a 3-D image of the brain.

tech. Usually, a neurosurgeon uses generic brain maps for DBS. But with a VR headset, Sachs can view and manipulate 3-D MRIs and CT scans of a patient's own brain. This drastically improves precision and, thus, chances of success—like a fingerprint, our brains are unique to us, and even the smallest variances can make a big difference. While this approach is still under development, 3-D tech will likely be used in the future in every surgery imaginable.

➤ THE HEALING POWERS OF ART

Medical research has repeatedly shown that nature has powerful healing effects. One 2010 study, published in the *Health Environments Research & Design Journal* and conducted inside a simulated hospital patient room, found that seeing art and nature can relieve stress and pain by lowering both blood pressure and sensory pain

responses. Unfortunately, most older hospitals have limited window views and few accessible outdoor spaces, making it difficult for patients to get those added healing benefits. That's why some Canadian hospitals have decided to get creative.

In 2020, Kemptville District Hospital teamed up with a local photography club in Ontario to bring the therapeutic powers of nature into its hallways. Together, nurses and artists chose 20 large-scale nature images of recognizable regional landmarks. Next, they printed the soothing images on easily sanitized canvas and hung them in accessible hallways, where patients using wheelchairs or walkers pass by.


After the photos were installed, one elderly patient who was making slow progress toward recovery told staff she finally felt energized—she wanted to get out of the hospital so she could revisit the local landmarks herself.

+ THE DOCTORS WHO LISTEN

Traditionally, doctors learn about disease through textbooks and lectures—but rarely from patients themselves. Dr. Lynn Ashdown experienced this firsthand after an accident in 2014 left her paralyzed. In an instant, she went

from being a doctor to being a patient and saw a stark contrast between her textbook knowledge and her actual experience. She decided to share her story to help other doctors bridge the physician-patient disconnect and, in turn, offer more informed care.

Since 2018, Ashdown has spoken at over 20 medical conferences and to thousands of health-care professionals, urging them to put patients' experiences first. Today, she's helping other patients learn how to improve their side of the conversation. Together with the Ottawa Hospital, Ashdown helped create a two-day storytelling workshop, teaching patients how to better voice their experiences of illness and disease. The first was held in October 2019, with 10 patients, and the program has continued online during the pandemic. She says many doctors have realized that care is too often done *to* the patient, not *with* them—and that needs to change.

Ashdown hopes to expand her workshop to other hospitals and, with it, the idea that doctors must listen to their patients more. "Sharing patient stories can give doctors a different view that would not otherwise be accessible to them," she says. "It increases compassion and contributes to patient-centred care." 



Antique Appreciation

One should never be the oldest thing in one's house.

PATSY CLINE

AS KIDS SEE IT



“Are you sure I’m not allergic to broccoli and Brussels sprouts? Maybe you should check again.”

My four-year-old brother was sitting on my mother’s lap as they looked at pregnancy photos from his baby album. Turning the page, she tenderly explained, “This is when I went to the hospital, and then...”

My brother, quick to showcase his medical

knowledge, interrupted: “And then the doctor pulled me out of your mouth!”

— CORINNE A. GIESBRECHT, *Winnipeg*

I can’t imagine learning on Zoom and seeing the inside of a teacher’s house. When I was a kid, I didn’t know

teachers had first names and thought they slept in the school.

— ANDREW SCHIAVONE, *comedian*

Me: No TV until you eat your lunch.

My four-year-old: That’s not the attitude I want to hear.

— [@ANNADOESNTWANT2](#)

One day, my seven-year-old was staring at my face.

Me: What is it, sweetie?

My seven-year-old: Is my nose weird, too?

—[@THISONESAYZ](#)

When I was a kid, I helped wash my dad's car. When I saw a spot that wouldn't disappear with the sponge, I grabbed sandpaper. My dad never let me wash the car again.

—REDDIT.COM

While working from home, I had 15 minutes between calls and went to play with my kid. She handed me a stuffed animal to watch, said she had a meeting and left.

—[@NOTMYTHIRDRODEO](#)

My four-year-old neighbour is thrilled to learn that I walk the same dog every day.

Kid: This looks like the same dog as last time.

Me: It is.

Kid: Dad, it's the same dog as last time!

—MOLLY PRIDY, *writer*

My daughter turned five today. She's currently having a meltdown because, according to her, she "still looks four."

—[@AOTAKEO](#)

There is no stronger acting performance than a kid who pretended to fall asleep in the car so they could be carried into the house by their parents.

—[@DADMANN_WALKING](#)

At the mall, my four-year-old son, Rudy, and I ran into an old high school teacher of mine, who greeted us happily. My son asked who that person was, and I explained. A puzzled Rudy then asked, "Mom, how can he still be alive?"

—ANA DIAZ, *Guelph, Ont.*

When I got my first dog, I was seven and he was one—or seven in dog years. I remember crying when he turned two because I didn't think a 14-year-old dog would want to hang out with me.

—[@TREV97](#)


Years ago I took my little girl to the park. We stopped at the pond where children fed the ducks. One kid noticed my daughter watching and offered some of his bread cubes. "Thank you," my daughter said, then ate them.

—[@WYVERNANDSTAR](#)

One morning our three-year-old son climbed into bed with us. He wanted his dad to read *Little Red Riding Hood* to him, but his dad wasn't awake yet and had already read him the story the night before. Our son pouted and said, "Dad, it's your responsibility."

—DARLENE WILLIAMS, *Winnipeg*

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.



WITHIN ITS FRAGILE pastry shell and its sticky filling of butter, sugar, syrup and egg, the butter tart holds Canada's memories of long weekends, country bakeries, recipes handed down through generations—and an eternal debate over raisins.

Though it is made from pantry staples, the alchemy of a butter tart's ingredients makes for something all its own. And its simplicity means you'll usually have what you need on hand to whip up a dozen. Plus, they freeze well (some say they taste even better frozen, especially on a hot summer day).

But why do butter tarts and Canada seem so inseparable?

For me, it's the memory of eating oozing tarts on a cottage deck in the midday sun, followed by a dive into the lake to wash off all the sticky residue. Often, it was too hot to bake our own, so my family and I would drive into town and wait in line for butter tarts at the local café, sometimes sharing one on the car ride home.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BUTTER TART, FROM ITS FASCINATING ORIGINS TO ITS CROWNING AS CANADA'S MOST FAMOUS DESSERT

NATIONAL TREASURE

BY Emma Waverman
FROM *COTTAGE LIFE*

PHOTOGRAPH BY LIAM MOGAN



Whatever your own experience, the butter tart is firmly tied to our Canadian identity. People become lifelong devotees to the tart, pledging undying loyalty to their local bakery or their mother's version.

But where did the butter tart come from? And is it still a butter tart if you add bacon? Here's the surprisingly controversial story of this sweet little treat.

CONTROVERSY #1

THE INVENTION OF THE BUTTER TART

The exact origin of the iconic tart is unknown. Some credit the *filles du roi*: the young French women who settled in New France between 1663 and 1673 to marry voyageurs. They combined their knowledge of pastry with the ingredients on hand and, according to the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, created butter tarts.

Others look to settlers from the "border counties" between Scotland and England, who arrived in Canada in the 1800s toting Ecclefechan tarts, also called border tarts. Food writer Elizabeth Baird believes the treat, filled with dried fruit and made in a pie tin, evolved into the butter tart. Further proof? Immigrants from the same region also settled in Georgia, home to pecan pie.

However, culinary historian Liz Driver, author of *Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825-1949*, suggests that

perhaps homemakers who had dairy, eggs, flour, lard and brown sugar put them together into a humble tart to feed farmhands, family and visitors year-round. This, she says, explains the butter tart's similarities to Quebec's sugar pie (which contains whipping cream); the butter tart is a parallel invention born of necessity and similar circumstances. "Why is it," she asks, "that Canadians can't just accept that we made something ourselves?"

CONTROVERSY #2

NATIONAL DESSERT STATUS

Does the butter tart deserve icon status in our broad and diverse country? If nostalgia and history are reason enough, then the answer is yes. In 2019, Canada Post even put the butter tart on a limited-edition stamp. (It did not, sadly, taste like a butter tart.)

If that's not enough, then also consider age and geographic supremacy: butter tarts date to at least the early 1900s and are popular from Newfoundland to B.C. But what about Nanaimo bars, a latecomer to the handheld dessert scene, having originated in the 1950s? Well, a 2018 voting bracket created by *Daybreak North*, a CBC radio show in B.C., still crowned butter tarts the champion holiday treat over Nanaimo bars.

Okay, so they're nationally revered, but are they a Canadian icon? South of

the border, Americans have largely remained unaware of our beloved tart—their loss. In classic Canuck fashion, many Canadians find it more reason to propel the tart to icon status.

CONTROVERSY #3

TOURS, TRAILS AND TENSION

Across the country, tens of thousands of Canadians have taken part in festivals and tours that celebrate the not-so-humble butter tart. It seems every small bakery, especially in rural Ontario, sells them—some displaying ribbons and awards from taste-offs and festivals. The largest festival is Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival, which has been running since 2013 in Midland. (In its inaugural year, the festival sold out of 10,000 tarts by 11 a.m.) Before the pandemic, more than 65,000 people came for one butter tart-filled day in June every year. (The festival will recommence in 2022.)

In 2006, bakeries and businesses in Wellington County, Ont., launched Canada's first self-guided tourist trail dedicated to these treats. In 2011, the Kawarthas Northumberland tourism board started a butter tart tour of more than 50 stops through the Kawartha Lakes district, Northumberland County, and Peterborough, Ont. The Wellington trail team was not pleased and sent a cease-and-desist letter to the new tour. Things calmed down after the two

sides met over butter tarts (yes, really) and decided to co-exist.


CONTROVERSY #4

THE PERFECT BUTTER TART

RAISINS OR NO RAISINS? Our passion over the addition of dried fruit has become an ongoing conversation among Canadians. Perhaps it's what keeps our country together: we love to bicker over something so small and so sweet.

NUTS VS. NO NUTS: While some (including me) feel that walnuts or pecans take the tart into pie territory, others prefer a little crunch.

OTHER ADD-INS: Formerly restricted to raisins, currants and nuts, fillings have started to reflect our country's diverse cuisines. For creative bakers the tarts are a canvas to experiment with flavours such as cardamom, Nutella, ginger and miso. Some tarts definitely push the classic recipe—there are versions filled with cheese-cake or that taste like poutine. Bacon is becoming a popular add-in and bolsters the case for eating butter tarts at breakfast.

RUNNY OR FIRM? Do you like them so gooey that you'll need a swim after, or firm enough to eat one-handed while doing chores? Until you find your favourite, maybe you'll just have to keep testing them all. 

© 2020, EMMA WAVERMAN. FROM "THE SURPRISINGLY CONTROVERSIAL STORY OF THE BUTTER TART," COTTAGE LIFE (JULY 6, 2020), COTTAGELIFE.COM

THE POWER OF NO

Why it's okay to
turn down favours

BY Leah Rumack

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLY JAYE REEVES

KAREN CHAPELLE, a 50-year-old metal-work artist in Toronto, has always had trouble saying no when people ask her for favours. Usually, she'll respond with a knee-jerk yes—and just as often find herself regretting it.

“It’s a natural thing for me to want to help people,” says Chapelle. “It’s a good feeling to be useful and needed.” The problem, she adds, is that she has



unintentionally trained everyone in her life to expect a yes to their requests, no matter what they are.

Chapelle knows her “okaying” to favours, whether requested by co-workers, friends or her family, often at the expense of her own finances, time or mental health, isn't good for her. But it's been a hard habit to break.

Many of us get sucked into saying yes—even when we'd really rather not—to avoid conflict, because we feel sorry for others, or because we even feel ashamed when we put ourselves first. If you have difficulty figuring out when, or how, to say no, here are some tips for breaking the cycle of what one psychologist calls “the disease to please.”

PRIORITIZE YOUR TIME

Learning how to take better care of yourself often goes hand in hand with learning that you're allowed to put your own needs and wants first, and that doing so doesn't make you a jerk. In fact, consistently putting yourself last is likely to leave you drained and annoyed—a sure path to jerky behaviour.

Dr. Susan Newman is an American social psychologist and the author of *The Book of No: 365 Ways to Say It and Mean It—and Stop People-Pleasing Forever*. Newman's book argues that always being there for others (to your own detriment) doesn't necessarily make you a nicer person; it just makes you miserable.

To turn down favours without guilt—or with less guilt, anyway—Newman says to remember that saying yes in the moment means you'll have to say no to somebody or something else later on. View it, she says, as a time management issue as opposed to a good-person-o'meter.

“A lot of us tend to think we can always fit one more thing in,” she says. “But the more you say yes to someone, the more you're going to be targeted.” Always being the go-to person can be flattering at first, she adds, until you realize you have no time left for yourself.

Newman says it can be useful to make a list of the people whom you want to help, and decide in advance what your general boundaries are when it comes to demands on your time. Do you exercise every day at 3? Do you need to be in bed by 9? Do you have a standing lunch date every Saturday? Keep these things in mind when you're considering adding to your load the parent council fundraiser.

If you don't want to completely turn someone down, Newman suggests putting specific limits on the scope of the ask instead—and sticking to it. “Keeping in mind your own needs isn't self-ish,” she says, “it's self-preservation.”

LISTEN TO YOUR GUT

How can you tell if the favour that's being asked of you is one you're going to resent doing later? Oh, you'll know. As the bestselling author Sarah Knight

put it in her 2019 self-help book *F*ck No!: How to Stop Saying Yes When You Can't, You Shouldn't, or You Just Don't Want To*, any time she felt saying yes was a bad idea, a little warning voice piped up in her head. She had to learn to stop stifling it. In time, the more she truthfully said no to things she didn't want to do, the more she was able to get in tune with herself and give other things an enthusiastic yes.

"If it's something you really want to do, you don't tense up when you're asked," explains Newman, "and you're happy to do it because it's for someone you trust will likely reciprocate at some point down the road." While favours aren't a scoresheet that need to be perfectly balanced, she adds, nobody wants to feel like they're at the mercy of a "user" or a "taker"—that person who is always asking for something and rarely plans on giving anything back.

Newman says it's always prudent to be wary of classic taker tactics, such as flattery ("Oh, but you have to make the baby shower cake because you're the best at it!"); playing on your sympathies ("I've just been so busy with my sick iguana, I haven't been able to work enough hours to pay rent"); or pressuring you for an immediate answer so you don't have time to consider your options.

SAY THE WORD

OK, so you've made your chosen people lists, you've figured out your

personal boundaries, and you've decided that no, your neighbour cannot borrow your lawn mower again. But how do you actually say no without damaging your relationships or stressing yourself out?

"Avoid lengthy explanations," counsels Newman. "As soon as you say, 'Oh, I can't because I have to walk my mother-in-law's dog,' you're leaving wiggle room for them to debate with you." It's sufficient to simply say, "No, I can't do it."

If that kind of bluntness makes you uncomfortable, Newman suggests keeping at the ready phrases like "Maybe next time" and "Thanks for asking, but I'm overloaded right now." Most importantly, she says, don't waste time worrying that the person you've refused is sitting around thinking about what a pill you are. They're probably not thinking about you at all and have already moved on to their next target.

Chapelle jokes that she's spent "many, many" hours in therapy learning how to say no to favours, but it still doesn't come easily to her. She's working on being able to say no sometimes and not feel terrible for doing so. Often she still does feel guilty, but she's learning to live with it. Her new attitude has come with some valuable lessons: "When you never say no, people take advantage of you, and if you start doing favours for the wrong person, you can get into a lot of trouble." **R**



A temporary camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's province of Ituri.



SOCIETY

BEARING WITNESS



In his latest assignment for UNICEF, photographer Roger LeMoyne captures the resilience and determination of people displaced by ethnic conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

BY Gary Stephen Ross

Today,

everybody's a photographer. Millions of images are uploaded to the Internet each day, mainly to Facebook and Instagram. We have pretty sunsets, staged food and smiling selfies to last an eternity. "Great photo!" friends enthuse online.

But a great photo is more than just a captured moment. As Roger LeMoyné's work shows us, a great photo serves as a portal to another time and place, opening eyes and hearts by sensitively bearing witness. It speaks of, and to, the world.

LeMoyné is a 66-year-old Montrealer. He studied cinema at Concordia University and, in 1985, took a self-financed trip to Papua New Guinea. He sold photos from that trip to *Destination*, a travel magazine of the day. A few years later, in Manhattan, he walked into a UNICEF office on a whim. There, his portfolio earned him his first commission, to shoot in Niger. He has since worked in 40-odd countries, recording poverty, migration and human-rights abuses.

Last fall, UNICEF sent LeMoyné to document the humanitarian crisis in

the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The DRC is the second-largest country in Africa, and its eastern provinces are home to a vast catastrophe. Ethnic hatred, resource disputes and lack of lawful governance have led to the slaughter of untold thousands of innocents and the displacement of 4.68 million as of last November.

The intimate empathy of LeMoyné's photos makes it easy to forget that he begins each assignment as a stranger to his subjects. Does he have a special gift for self-effacement, a chameleon-like way of blending in?

"The people in these photos can't isolate themselves with walls and doors, the way people in the West do," he says. "In a refugee camp, lives are more porous, more open. And people in extreme poverty have bigger things to worry about than a guy with a camera."

At day's end, LeMoyné returns to a guest house and dinner. He's keenly aware of his own good fortune, but other emotions complicate his gratitude: frustration, anger, humility and awe in the face of the human capacity to endure.

"The world's inequality wasn't lost on me as a young person," he says, "but with all our advances, it's stunning that we still haven't addressed the core issues—nutrition, security, clean water. It staggers the mind that during the three decades since I started this work, the world has become not a better place, but an even more unfair one." **R**

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A mother registering her children for school in a camp in Mweso.





Clockwise from top left: A Congolese soldier pushes a motorbike laden with produce; a boy carrying firewood for cooking fires; Roger LeMoyne (right) with his UNICEF driver, Michel Uytterhaegen; children greeting visitors in a camp in Bunia, Ituri Province; a view of a camp on the outskirts of Fataki, Ituri Province; nurse Ange Amani provides a lesson on nutrition at a health station run by UNICEF NGO partner Heal Africa in Kizimba, North Kivu.





Clockwise from top: Thousands of people live at a church in Drodro, using it as a sanctuary from the violence that has driven them from their villages; five-year-old Sifa Havugimana waits for her turn to be monitored for malnutrition; a youth adjusts his COVID-19 mask in front of murals depicting demobilization of children associated with armed groups.



WORD PLAY



“Waiter! There’s a dangling participle in my alphabet soup!”

Q: Why is nostalgia like grammar?

A: We find the present tense and the past perfect.

—UPJOKE.COM

Q: What’s the difference between a cat and a comma?

A: One has claws at the end of the paws. The other is a pause at the end of a clause.

—[@ANDREW_MASON1](#)

Mind Your Language

I just noticed a typo in a text I sent two days ago and now I have to move to a new city and change my name.

—JOSH GONDELMAN, *writer*

Red Flags

Q: Why should you never date an apostrophe?

A: They’re too possessive.

—[@WHATTHEFOOLE](#)

I handed her the flowers.
“You shouldn’t of!” she said.

I took them back.
“Have,” I whispered.

—[@ISCOFF](#)

I used to love correcting people’s grammar, until I realized that I loved having friends more.

—MARA WILSON, *actress*

Trick Question

Q: Which word becomes shorter after you add two letters to it?

A: Short.

—ABIGAIL OGLE, *newscaster*

People found guilty of not using punctuation deserve the longest sentence possible.

—[@SIXTHFORMPOET](#)

I’ve been reading the thesaurus lately, because a mind is a terrible thing to *garbage*.

—[@DINOKITTEN](#)

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.

My mom's 80th birthday tattoo is
just the latest example of her wild,
newfound independence

GOLDEN YEARS

BY Mark Angus Hamlin FROM *THE GLOBE AND MAIL*

ILLUSTRATION BY GENEVIEVE ASHLEY

WHEN YOUR MOTHER enters her ninth decade, you make a point of being a little extra vigilant for any signs of decline—memory loss, bouts of repetition, a general acceleration of age-related deterioration.

Thankfully, my mother has been blessed with good health, and although she now needs to take someone's arm while walking slowly up and down the

hill to the family cottage in Gatineau, her mental faculties seem to have remained largely intact. But when she got inked after turning 80 last September, I had to wonder.

To celebrate Mom's landmark birthday, we were planning a large party, but then, of course, everything had to be cancelled because of COVID-19. After all, her entire social circle is high



risk, composed as it is of septuagenarian and octogenarian friends from her book (wine) club, her garden (wine) club and her church.

Instead, we arranged a small outdoor family lunch on the deck at the lake.

My mother looks just like many grandmothers. She is short, plump and white-haired. She's rosy-cheeked and jolly, and when she laughs her eyes almost seem to disappear behind those chubby cheeks. She comes from an old, traditional Catholic family in Ottawa, where she currently lives. She was a career civil servant, first in England and then in Canada. In short, she didn't do crazy stuff.

That all changed a few years ago. She began to surprise my older brother and me with bouts of what she described as "independence." At the time, we merely saw them as examples of irresponsibility and possibly age-related questionable judgment.

In early 2015, the year she turned 75, she informed us she'd booked a seven-night trip to Turkey. Alone. Because she had never been. Of course, that was absurd. There was no way my brother and I could allow that. A vulnerable, little old lady wandering the streets of Istanbul on her own, not speaking a word of Turkish, with no knowledge of the laws and customs of the land—it was out of the question!

She paid no attention to us. Off she went. When she returned, she told us it had been a wonderful success. As it

turns out, she had barely spent any time alone, after hiring a taxi driver to show her around Istanbul for a few days. He took her to all the sites—the souks, mosques and restaurants. He introduced her to a rug vendor, "a lovely fellow," and she bought some rugs. The vendor had taken her address details and promised to ship them to Canada. They would be arriving in three or four weeks. My mother beamed as she told this story. The rug vendor and my mother apparently struck up quite a friendship and she had told him to please drop by if he were ever in Canada.

SHE'D BOOKED A SEVEN-NIGHT TRIP TO TURKEY. ALONE. BECAUSE SHE HAD NEVER BEEN.

We couldn't believe how naive she had been and duly sat her down to explain that she had been duped. The vendor had her money (and plenty of it, as she had declined to haggle). She neither had nor would she be receiving any rugs. And, of course, she had no possible recourse.

Well, we were wrong.

To our great shock, her rugs did arrive some weeks later, along with a lovely note from Mustafa. To our even

greater surprise, the following year Mustafa himself arrived in Canada. He called our mother to inform her he was in Ottawa.

“I invited him over and he came by for a cup of tea. They drink a lot of tea in Turkey,” my mother told my horrified brother and me.

She hardly knew this man! But again, she paid us little attention and told us to stop being silly.

At 77, she did a similar thing while on a Caribbean cruise with her younger sister. Upon disembarking in Cuba, she wandered off on her own, flagged down a motorcycle rickshaw and had the driver “show her around the island” for several hours. Of course, she neglected to inform her sister of her plans (“she would have worried”), causing my aunt to spend the entire afternoon searching for our mother. My aunt didn’t find her until Mom returned just before the ship was due to depart. She had been sampling a local drink with “some very nice Cubans” at a bar “somewhere off in the forest, just a shack of a place, really.”

Still, her 80th birthday was when she really outdid herself. Sitting on the cottage deck for a physically distanced, outdoor birthday lunch with her siblings and children, Mom informed us that she had decided the time had come to get a tattoo. Her first. It would be her 80th birthday present to herself. She had been thinking about it for some time, apparently, and her mind was made up.


My brother and I eyed each other. Was she joking? Recent history would say no. What the heck does Mom know about tattoos? She goes to church, not to tattoo parlours. And really, an 80-year-old woman going to a tattoo parlour during a pandemic? It seemed so absurd we really didn’t believe it.

Six days later, she had a very tasteful butterfly on the outside of her left ankle.

My brother and I wondered: Is she not thinking straight? And if so, is it because she’s getting on a bit? But while my brother and I worried about her, Mom showed us that she was still sound of mind. In fact, maybe she’s thinking straighter than most of us.

Her streak of independence seems to be thoughtfully based on a realization that life is to be lived, and when there’s relatively little of it left, it needs to be lived, well, now. It reminded me of the line from *The Shawshank Redemption*: “Get busy living or get busy dying.”

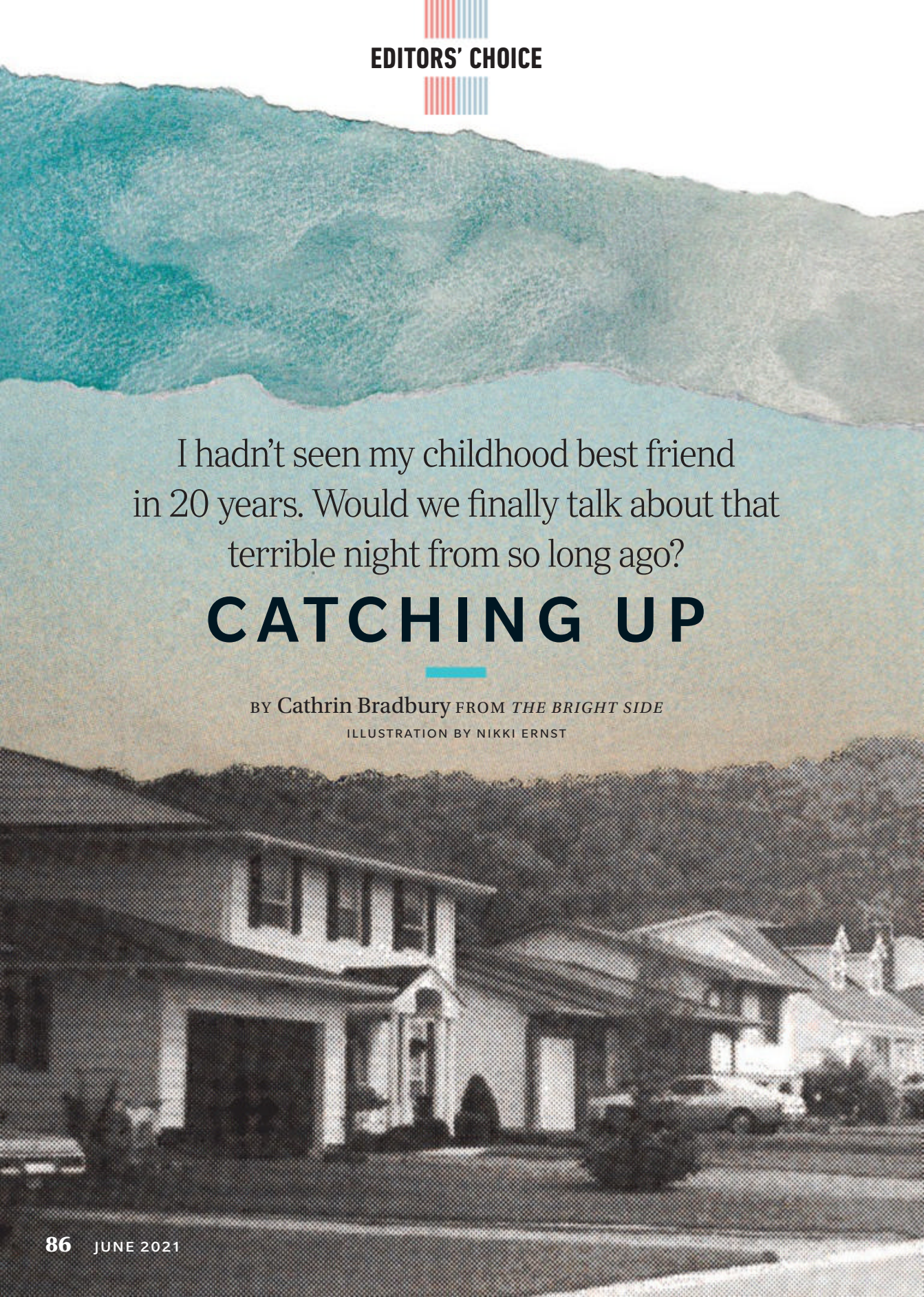
Like most of us during the pandemic, she has spent lots of time away from many of the people she loves. The tattoo was her way of flipping 2020 the bird. And we couldn’t be prouder of her.

I don’t think Mom knows what her next big “thing” is. She’s a little old lady who sits in her apartment in Ottawa, but she won’t sit still much longer. Sure, she’s prone to folly, though maybe that’s what we need right now. Some pointless, wonderful folly. 

© 2021, MARK ANGUS HAMLIN. FROM “A TATTOO FOR TURNING 80?,” *THE GLOBE AND MAIL* (JANUARY 5, 2021), THEGLOBEANDMAIL.COM



EDITORS' CHOICE



I hadn't seen my childhood best friend
in 20 years. Would we finally talk about that
terrible night from so long ago?

CATCHING UP

BY Cathrin Bradbury FROM *THE BRIGHT SIDE*

ILLUSTRATION BY NIKKI ERNST



*Hello Meryl. This is my best
60th birthday present.
Long time no see. xx Cathrin*

I tapped my note to Meryl the same night she sent me a birthday text. It was our first communication, I should mention, in 20 years. We'd met as schoolgirls when we were six and were each other's first friend. It wasn't that we'd meant to drift apart—it was just life, really—but after so many years the silence between us had become too deep to breach. This birthday text was momentous, in other words. Let's call it Stage One of the reunification.

The temperature outside my Toronto house had nosedived to -18 C. It was the kind of night when Meryl and I, at

12 or 13, might have gone out for an epic winter adventure, leaping over the ice hills that rimmed the shore of Lake Ontario. Newly 60, that sounded like at least one broken hip. Meryl wrote back within minutes, and we were off.

I thought about the first time I saw Meryl across a paved schoolyard in Grimsby, Ont., our hometown. (I've changed Meryl's name, at her request, for this story.) She was dark-eyed and watchful, like me, and it was like recognizing something important in myself. Meryl, in her first text back, suggested we meet in the real world,

but that felt a bit hasty. Sometimes I didn't think about Meryl at all, sometimes I thought about her a lot, but the one constant was that she was safely situated in the past. This one-text-away Meryl was very present, and I proceeded with caution.

As we texted back and forth over the next few days, Meryl was the first to relax into randomness, describing a bird or tree outside the window of her home, or remembering some old boyfriend or other. We lingered on the soft pillow of nostalgia but didn't smother ourselves with it.

memories made my version of things less dubious. It had been a long time, if ever, since I'd felt that I was a reliable keeper of the past.

We caught up on our adult lives, too, as we texted back and forth. She still worked as a florist, as she had when we'd last spoken. And she'd stayed in the same Ontario town she'd moved to when she married, and raised her three daughters there. *Still in the same house, it is now yellow.*

Our moms were a steady topic. They were both 91 and both living. Or, to put it another way, they were both 91 and

I CALLED FROM UNDER MY COVERS, AND SHE ANSWERED UNDER HERS. WE PICKED UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF—WE UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER.



The memory-syncing part was cool and mysterious. When Meryl mentioned the Tea Room on top of the Grimsby escarpment, a rickety stick building suddenly appeared in my mind. *It was made of logs*, wrote Meryl, and the Tea Room stopped wobbling. Giving it shape together made our memories, if not free of falsehood—we both tilted toward the positive—then at least real. The magnificent magnolia tree at Livingston and Main needed no prompting: *Big! Bold! Pink!* But more satisfying than putting Grimsby back together again was that Meryl's

both dying. My mom had just lost the part of her mind that would have remembered our childhood, while Vivian was in her right mind but couldn't talk properly after a recent stroke affected her speech. Our mothers' connection to each other, separate from Meryl and me, was mostly invisible to us growing up, but it was a subterranean current in our lives. Meryl was the first person I texted when my mom collapsed, and after she died, I remembered that I hadn't asked about Meryl's father, Clayton, a handsome, broad-shouldered man with a head of

thick black hair. *Clay died 12 years ago*, wrote Meryl.

On March 15 at 7 p.m., 11 days after Mom's funeral, Meryl and I had the Phone Call. Our first phone call, I'll mention again, in 20 years. I was nervous enough to think of texting that I was sick, or tired, or sad—at least two of which were true. I called Meryl from under my covers, and she answered from under her covers, and we picked up where we'd left off. Neither of us finished our sentences, instead letting our thoughts dangle dementedly. "I just think ... Here's what I'd say about that ... My strong feeling there is..." Our conversation would have been

train that gets you in at 5 on Friday ... Is it a GO train or a real train?—which was when I realized how old we'd become. Of course, I lost her at Union Station. *Where are you?!? ... I am here!! ... Where is here??* Cue 15 more texts until I saw Meryl across the chaos of the station's endless renovation. Her head leaned left like the first time I saw her. We laughed as we hugged and mostly stared at each other on the subway until we got to my house.

After a night in Toronto, our plan was to return to our childhood hometown. The next morning, we took the bus to Grimsby, about two hours away. The sun was high and bright but gave

WE EXCHANGED AT LEAST 15 TEXTS ABOUT THE TIME OF HER ARRIVAL. I REALIZED HOW OLD WE'D BECOME.

mind-numbingly inane to anyone else, but we understood each other. We'd grown up in the same place, we saw things the same way, we didn't need to explain ourselves.

That Meryl and I were moving irrevocably toward the Meeting filled me with unease. We chose the weekend of April 25, when she was to arrive by train at Union Station early on a Friday evening. There were at least 15 texts about the time of this arrival—*Meryl, I woke up thinking you should get the*

no heat. We walked past the giant pink magnolia tree, now severely pruned, and bought flowers to put on Meryl's father's grave, which was on the escarpment. We walked the path to the top, and just as we called out our houses—"there, there"—like we did when we were kids, two red-tailed hawks circled overhead, their tails turning golden in the sunshine. They cocked their heads to look at us, as if we were the unexpected ones. Meryl took the hawks as a sign, I wasn't sure of what.



The author at age 6 (left) and attending Expo 68 at age 12.

We made our way to Clay's grave, where we put our flowers on the stone Vivian had designed; it would soon be hers as well. Meryl lingered under the struggling sun, and I stayed a little ways back until she was ready to leave.

BACK IN TORONTO that evening, we had dinner at a midtown bistro, and finally got to the hard conversation, about the night when Meryl tried to kill herself. "I can't believe Vivian is 91," I said. I'd asked for seats at the bar because I thought it would be more intimate to be side by side, but I saw my mistake right away. To Meryl, with people on either side and a bartender hustling in front, the bar felt like a decision against

intimacy. "I think of Vivian as more my own age," I said. "Of course that's not right, but you know what I mean."

"I can't wait to tell her you said that. She liked being one of us."

I poked at my arugula salad. "I'm sorry I didn't know Clay died, Meryl."

I wiped the smudge of lipstick off my wine glass with my napkin and wondered not for the first time how people didn't leave crumbs or smudges, a talent I couldn't master. Meryl's place and glass were both pristine, like her memory. Even when I thought I knew something, like the right direction to take in traffic (so, so rare) or the turn of a story from the past, I mostly kept it to myself. There were other ways to

get at the truth. Also, I didn't care about being right the way some people did, that was the simple fact.

"When I saw the hawks today, I kind of thought it was your mom and my dad, protecting us."

"I love that," I said, but really I was having a hard time concentrating. It hadn't been a plan, exactly, to talk about that long-ago night, but after 24 hours of conversation, it had begun to seem pathologically evasive not to. Forty-five years had passed, enough time perhaps to finally broach the subject.

"So I guess there are a couple of things we haven't talked about this weekend. Like that night?"

could I have forgotten that? I racked my brain for a new subject.

Meryl looked at me calmly. I was beginning to suspect that I was the panicker, not she. "No, I want to," she said after a while. "I mean, I never have, but I want to now."

We both paused then, and I thought about the part of the story I knew. It would have been a couple of years after the creek-bed climb. Meryl was 14, and she took enough pills to die. Vivian rushed her to the hospital, barely in time to save her life.

"Things weren't great at home in that time, you'll recall," Meryl said finally. She looked me straight in the face

WE'D FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE THING THAT WAS NEVER DISCUSSED. WE'D SAID IT OUT LOUD. THAT WAS PLENTY.

Meryl didn't change the subject so much as make her way toward it, ahead of us in the distance. "Remember the time we climbed the mountain by the creek bed? We would have been 12 or so. I remember that."

"I think so." I saw the faintest sparkle of a creek as I dabbed my finger at a lingering crumb. "We don't have to talk about that night."

Talking about difficult things was not who we were, Meryl and me. Not talking was what bound us, even. How

and waited. "Yeah," I said, although I didn't really recall, or perhaps only faintly. We'd finally acknowledged the thing we'd never discussed. We'd said out loud that it had happened, and that was enough. That was plenty.

"You weren't depressed or anything," I said.

Meryl kept looking at me, until she seemed to make a decision to leave it there. "I often think if my mom hadn't come to my room and asked me if I wanted pizza, I'd be dead now. I often

wonder about that.” She looked down at her lap, then up again at me. “And your mother was very kind in that time. She tried to help me, after. She took me to see a priest and told me I could talk to her anytime.”

“I remember being mortified that she took you to a priest, of all things.” I rolled my eyes, which made me wobble slightly on my bar stool.

“I think maybe I’m more religious than you are now.” Meryl let me absorb this new idea of her before she continued her story. “Your mom taking me to a priest was an act of concern. There wasn’t therapy or anything remotely like that. It was a private, shameful

she felt kind of funny. “Cool,” I’d said, and went back to watching *Star Trek* or whatever was on TV. But as we talked on our shaky bar stools, what happened after that call took on more shape.

“I’m pretty sure my mom told your mom, and that’s why Vivian went into your room.” My words seemed to ring out, although I was speaking quietly.

“No, that’s not how it happened,” Meryl said, and I might have left it there because she’d been right about everything else. “It was dinnertime. My mom thought I was hungry.” Meryl smoothed her napkin on her lap and spoke again without looking up. “How would your mom even have known?”

MY HEART WAS POUNDING. I WAS GETTING IN THE WAY OF HOW MERYL REMEMBERED THAT NIGHT, BUT MY WORDS CAME TOO FAST.

event. Even now, it’s a shameful event. No one, not even you and me, Cathrin—we never talked about it.” It wasn’t exactly an accusation.

I skated over the fact that it had taken me almost five decades to mention that night and instead went back to what I knew: that Meryl had called me and told me she’d taken pills from the medicine cabinet. I thought she was trying to get high, our steady preoccupation once we became teenagers, and asked her if it felt good. She said it did, but also that

My heart was pounding. I was getting in the way of how Meryl remembered that night, but my words were too fast for me. “She knew because when I hung up the phone, I told her,” I said, and I knew that it was true. Even though, at 15, I’d made hiding things from Mom a defining purpose of my teenage life, I must have understood that Meryl’s life, and in a way mine too, depended on my telling Mom, because what might life have been if my best friend had died that

night—on my watch? Not great, was my guess. Now, sitting side by side with Meryl, I wasn't only sure that my memory of that night was accurate, I cared that it was.

"If that's true, then it was your mother who saved my life," Meryl said. She looked directly at me. "If that's true, then it was you who saved my life."

"Well, you called me, so I guess you saved your own life."

We both took time to settle after that. I became so lost in my thoughts that when I looked at Meryl again, I was surprised to see her still sitting beside me. She looked like she'd wandered a long way too.

"I'm proud of myself, how I rallied," Meryl said. It was a statement, for both of us. "It took longer than people realized." All weekend I'd been carrying around the idea that I needed to take care of Meryl, and in that moment, I let it go. She didn't need looking after by anyone.

Back at my house, we put on our mothers' pyjamas, as we'd agreed we would. We were both wearing our mothers' clothes a lot at this point. I wore Mom's red and black silk muumu with its massive flapping arms. This muumuu had been her sister Mary's, and Mom never washed it because it smelled of Mary and now I

I'D BEEN CARRYING AROUND THE IDEA THAT I NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF MERYL. SHE DIDN'T NEED LOOKING AFTER BY ANYONE.

"It wasn't a condition, you know," she said. "It was an episode. That's how I think of it."

"Yes, I get that."

"I don't talk about it because I don't want to be defined by it. I'm not defined by it."

"I think that's true," I said. "It was an incident, not a lifelong affliction." Incident, episode, that night, that time, before, after—we were careful with our words. The other words felt too violent, and further from the truth.

didn't wash it because it smelled of Mom. That's 30 years of smell on one muumuu. Meryl came out of my spare bedroom in her mother's leopard-print silk pyjamas.

"Very Vivian," I said.

"Very Vivian," she said. Meryl liked to repeat my words; it was her empathy.

The next day, she left Toronto with a simple, factual question she could take to her mother about the sequence of events that night. They hadn't talked about it either, so it wasn't a small thing

when Meryl sat with Vivian and asked her, “Mom, did you come to my room that night because Mrs. Bradbury had called you?” *And my mom locked eyes with me, her eyes wide and so much pain in them, and she didn’t have the words, but she nodded yes.* Meryl wrote this to me right away. *To have this talk finally when she could no longer talk. It was strange, Cathrin. It was sad. It was huge.*

I read the note from Meryl in my kitchen and started to cry, my tears plopping onto the round white table. It sounds dramatic to say that, because getting the details right about that long-past night was simple enough. Mom, Vivian and I would have done anything to save Meryl, so it didn’t matter who told whom. But knowing that it was all four of us, and that Vivian and Meryl had been able finally to nod that truth to each other? And knowing for sure that I hadn’t gone back to my *Star Trek* show. Beside the

ordinariness was this hugeness, like Meryl said.

Six weeks after Meryl’s visit, Vivian died, and it was remarkable how that midtown bistro conversation happened when it did, exactly between the deaths of our mothers. It changed things for Meryl and me after that—if only we could have told our moms. Meryl would have asked Vivian to forgive her and told her how glad she was to have lived that night. And I’d have told Mom that I finally understood she had been my ally in important and even life-saving ways. My idea of her changed, but not only that, a new idea of myself began to take hold, a more reliable, less rickety one, like the Tea Room on the escarpment. I noticed something begin to grow in myself. A voice, maybe. **R**

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Greatest Weakness

Cell phones are so convenient that they’re an inconvenience.

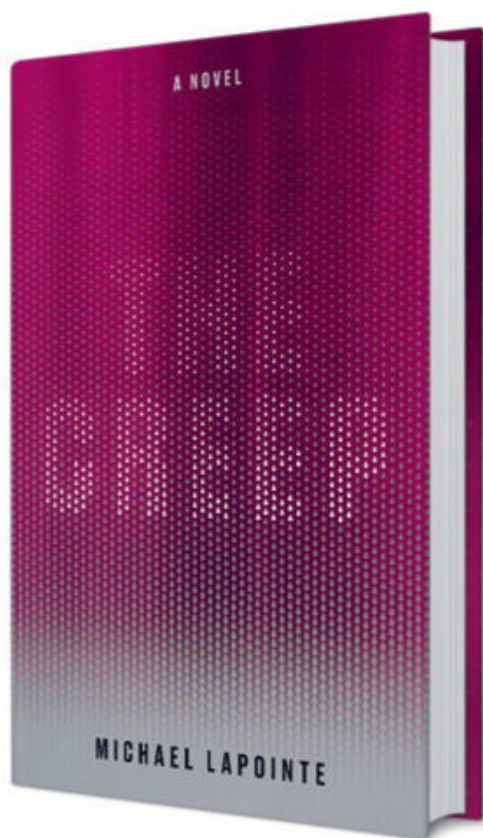
HARUKI MURAKAMI, NOVELIST

**Do I want to be on the subway looking
at these people, or do I want to be in my phone
looking at my people?**

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF, MEDIA THEORIST

**You cannot endow even the best machine with initiative.
The jolliest steamroller will not plant flowers.**

WALTER LIPPMANN, JOURNALIST



*Every month,
we recommend a new
must-read book. Here's
what you need to know.*

BY Emily Landau

THE CREEP

by Michael LaPointe

\$23, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

WHO WROTE IT: When Canadian writer Michael LaPointe was a kid, he'd keep himself busy by writing pulpy mini-novels based on TV shows and movies. Years later, as a freelance journalist reporting for a magazine about a vicious feud over an infamous pearl, he found himself travelling to remote cities to interview people suspected of hiring contract killers. Electrified and terrified by those experiences, he picked up his childhood pastime, infusing *The Creep*—his debut thriller—with all the heart-pounding doom and anxiety he'd experienced as a crime reporter.

WHAT IT'S ABOUT: In the paranoid months after 9/11, Whitney Chase, a hard-drinking magazine journalist, is on staff at the *Harper's*-esque magazine *The Bystander*. But she has a secret: in her previous jobs, she fabricated stories, embellished details and invented characters. She's always tempted to fall back on bad habits. But now Whitney

has stumbled upon the story of a lifetime. Rubicon, a flashy biotech arm of a sprawling conglomerate, has devised a formula to produce synthetic blood for transfusions, potentially saving thousands of lives. It seems too good to be true—and it is. Soon, Whitney is unravelling a nefarious global conspiracy and learning the gruesome truth about this liquid concoction. All the while, a vengeful magazine fact-checker lurks on the periphery, threatening to uncover Whitney's own history of professional misconduct.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT: Like all high-velocity thrillers, this one is loaded with grisly twists and outlandish scenarios. But it also taps into the fears that linger in all of our newsfeeds: the unchecked power of corporations, the reliability of our news media, the murky ethics of biotech innovations. Whitney, meanwhile, is a great addition to the pantheon of charmingly unlikable characters, those enigmas who skate the line between lovable and deplorable. She's droll and canny, with a hard-shelled knack for self-preservation, yet she's always locked in a desperate battle against her own worst instincts. The novel builds as much tension around her seemingly inevitable relapse as it does around the macabre blood experiments at Rubicon. It's eerie, sharp and a little zany—the perfect escapist read for a rainy cottage weekend. **R**

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BRAINTEASERS

1 to 25

Moderately difficult Move the numbers from the outer ring onto the board. Each number must be placed in one of the five cells that lie in the direction indicated by its chevron. The numbers must snake together vertically, horizontally or diagonally so they link in sequence from 1 to 25. (For example, 2 must be adjacent to both 1 and 3.) There's only one solution. Can you find it?

21	14	19	23	4	8	22
24			1			20
3						18
17						9
13						5
6						12
25	15	16	11	2	7	10

Mathematical

Difficult Each letter in the grid stands for one of the whole numbers from 1 through 9. No two of them represent the same number. With the help of the clues, can you figure out which letter stands for what?

- $B \times F =$ the two-digit number AB
- $B + J = G$
- $D \times D =$ the two-digit number BC
- One of the rows contains only odd numbers.

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	J

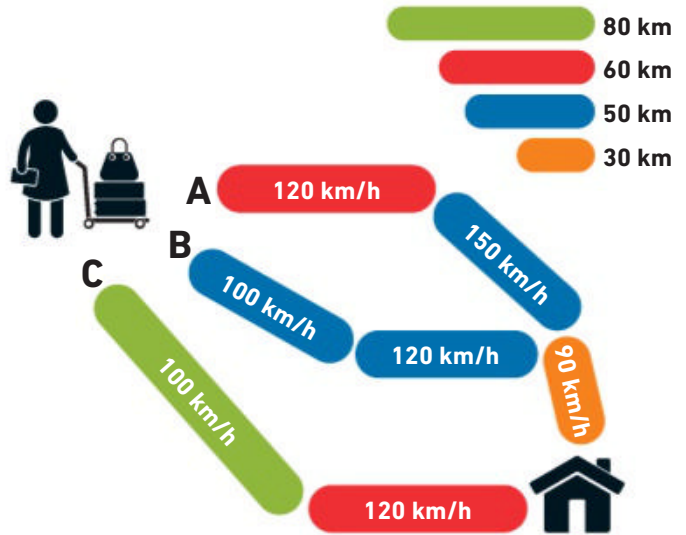
Favourite Things

Easy Amar, Oriana, Rosa and Brodie each have a different favourite activity from among the following: rock climbing, kayaking, cooking lessons and zip-lining. Can you figure out who likes what, based on the following clues?

- Amar's favourite activity isn't rock climbing.
- Oriana is afraid of heights.
- Rosa can't do her favourite activity without a harness.
- Brodie likes to keep his feet on solid ground at all times.

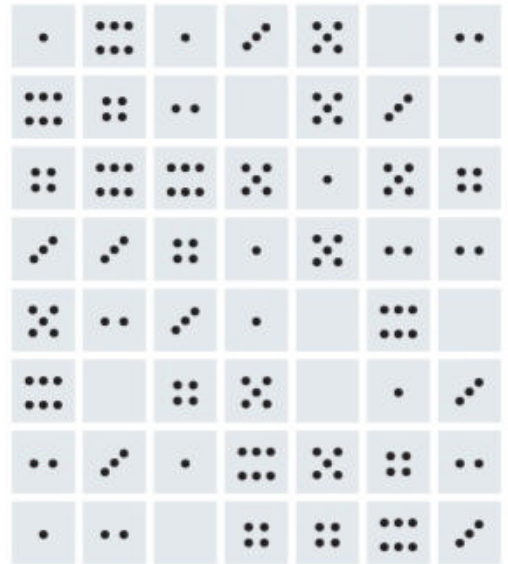
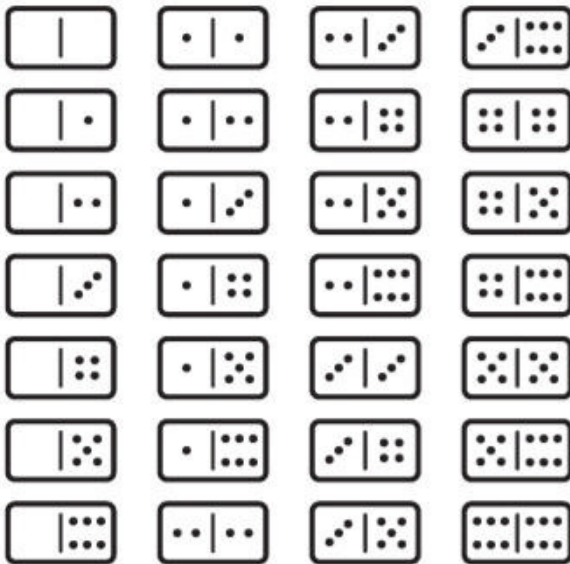
Trains

Moderately difficult This map shows Luisa, her destination and three train routes she can take to get there. Each segment of track has a different speed limit, indicated by the speeds shown. The distances of each segment are indicated by their colours and the legend to the right. Presuming that each train always goes at the top permitted speed and doesn't stop anywhere along the way, which route (A, B or C) is the fastest?



Dominoes

Easy A standard double-six set of 28 dominoes has been arranged in a rectangle. Can you draw in the lines to show the placement of the dominoes? We've listed the 28 dominoes so you can cross them off as you find them.





BY Beth Shillibeer

- 1. Prince William's Earthshot Prize promises one million pounds for solutions to what kind of global problem?
- 2. Tunnels, road closures and human-assisted crossings aid the migration of what animals in Europe and Canada?
- 3. What was distinctive about baseball pitcher Jackie Mitchell, who struck out Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig during a 1931 exhibition game?
- 4. What fiction genre addresses the effects of climate change?
- 5. What European country plans to house all of its residents by 2027?

- 6. Which *Star Trek* actor stormed the beach at Normandy during World War II as part of the Canadian infantry?
- 7. What British screen legend reads bedtime stories on her new podcast for families?
- 8. Velocipede, penny farthing, gravel, randonneur and folding are all types of what?
- 9. Which centenarian was featured on the cover of *Guinness World Records 2021* after breaking two records in 2020 and passing away earlier this year?
- 10. Astronauts have compared what attribute of outer space to hot metal, seared steak and raspberries?

11. The proposed Jane Goodall Act seeks to ban all imports of what animal product into Canada?

12. According to legend, Pharaoh Pepi II had servants cover themselves in what substance in order to lure flies away from him?

13. At 4,528 metres, Mount Kirkpatrick is the highest peak of which mountain chain?

14. Rubik's Cubes, magic squares and logic puzzles are examples of what branch of mathematics?



15. In efforts to create bespoke products, some beauty companies are collecting DNA from clients to map the microbiome of what organ?

Answers: 1. Environmental issues. 2. Toads and frogs. 3. She was a 17-year-old girl. 4. Cli-fi. 5. Finland. 6. James Doohan (Scotty). 7. Julie Andrews. 8. Bicycle. 9. Captain Tom Moore. 10. Its smell. 11. Elephant ivory and trophies. 12. Honey. 13. Transantarctic Mountains, Antarctica. 14. Recreational maths. 15. The skin.

WORD POWER

The human brain is amazingly complex. Make some new connections in yours with this cerebral quiz.

BY Samantha Rideout

1. neurodiversity— range of **A:** differences in brain function. **B:** brain-cell types. **C:** opinions.

2. hemisphere— **A:** shape of the brain. **B:** one half of the cerebrum. **C:** helmet used to record brain activity.

3. glymphatic system— system that **A:** clears waste from the brain and spinal cord. **B:** regulates brain temperature. **C:** carries signals between the brain and body.

4. oxytocin— **A:** medication for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. **B:** hormone and neurotransmitter involved in social bonding. **C:** technique for inducing calm.

5. neuroethics— **A:** study of ethical issues in neuroscience. **B:** forms required for neurosurgery. **C:** ethics of artificial intelligence.

6. lesion— **A:** neuron connection. **B:** moment of disorientation. **C:** damaged body region.

7. genome— **A:** gene that affects the risk of stroke. **B:** gene-naming system. **C:** complete set of genes in an organism.

8. fissures— **A:** grooves on the brain. **B:** thought habits. **C:** automatic activities such as blinking.

9. frontal lobes— brain area involved in **A:** orientation. **B:** self-control. **C:** colour perception.

10. melatonin—

A: colour of brain tissues. **B:** brain-freeze sensation. **C:** hormone that helps regulate sleep cycles.

11. endorphins—

A: effects of loneliness on the mind. **B:** pain-relieving peptides. **C:** medical brain images.

12. amygdala—

A: almond-shaped brain region involved in emotion. **B:** herb preventing cognitive decline. **C:** animal without a brain.

13. meninges—

A: people of exceptional intelligence. **B:** standardized cognitive tests. **C:** membranes that cushion the brain.

14. psychoactive—

A: affecting the mind. **B:** fully alert. **C:** using most of the brain.

15. proprioception—

A: awareness of others' feelings. **B:** perception of the body's position and movement. **C:** hallucination brought on by sleep deprivation.

WORD POWER ANSWERS

1. neurodiversity—

A: range of differences in brain function; as, Autism is part of humanity's natural *neurodiversity*.

2. hemisphere—**B:**

one half of the cerebrum; as, Despite popular belief, people don't tend to use one brain *hemisphere* more than another.

3. glymphatic system—

A: system that clears waste from the brain and spinal cord; as, The *glymphatic system* operates mainly during sleep.

4. oxytocin—**B:**

hormone and neurotransmitter involved in social bonding; as, *Oxytocin* is popularly called "the cuddle chemical."

5. neuroethics—**A:**

study of ethical issues in neuroscience; as, The uses of brain-stimulation tools are a hot topic in *neuroethics*.

6. lesion—C:**** damaged body region; as, Studying

people with *lesions* in the brain helps scientists learn how its different parts function.

7. genome—**C:**

complete set of genes in an organism; as, At least a third of the genes in the human *genome* are expressed primarily in the brain.

8. fissures—**A:**

grooves on the brain; as, *Fissures* allow humans to fit a large cerebral cortex into a relatively small skull.

9. frontal lobes—

B: brain area involved in self-control; as, The *frontal lobes* are found right behind the forehead.

10. melatonin—**C:**

hormone that helps regulate sleep cycles; as, The brain produces *melatonin* in response to darkness.

11. endorphins—

B: pain-relieving peptides; as, Produced naturally by the body, *endorphins* interact with the same brain receptors as opioid drugs.

12. amygdala—

A: almond-shaped brain region involved in

emotion; as, *Amygdala* damage can affect the ability to feel afraid.

13. meninges—**C:**

membranes that cushion the brain; as, Childhood vaccines help protect the *meninges* from life-threatening infections.

14. psychoactive—

A: affecting the mind; as, Mantreh didn't enjoy the *psychoactive* effects of cannabis.

15. proprioception—

B: perception of the body's position and movement; as, *Proprioception* lets you sense where your limbs are, even when your eyes are closed.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 104

A	L	I	B	I		T	O	U	T	
P	E	N	I	N		R	O	S	A	
P	A	D	O	F	P	A	P	E	R	
					U	C	P		L	T
				M	A	N	S	P	R	E
I	T	A	L					A	S	N
C	R	I	B	N	O	T	E	S		
S	I	L		A	B	E				
	F	O	S	S	I	L	D	I	G	S
	L	U	S	T		L	O	A	T	H
	E	T	S	Y		Y	O	N	G	E

BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 98

1 to 25

21	14	19	23	4	8	22
24	20	19	1	24	25	20
3	18	21	23	2	3	18
17	17	16	22	4	9	9
13	15	13	5	10	8	5
6	14	12	11	6	7	12
25	15	16	11	2	7	10

Mathematical

2	4	9
7	8	6
5	3	1

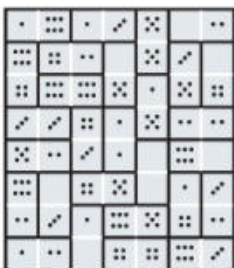
Favourite Things

Amar likes to zip-line,
Oriana likes to kayak,
Rosa likes rock climbing
and Brodie enjoys cooking lessons.

Trains

Route A, which will take
70 minutes.

Dominoes



BY Jeff Widderich

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

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



Four Quarters

BY Barbara Olson

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	
10						11				
12					13					
				14				15		16
		17	18				19			
20	21						22			
23				24	25	26				
27				28						
	29		30				31	32	33	34
	35					36				
	37					38				

ACROSS

- 1 Crime cover story?
- 6 Extol the virtues of
- 10 With ___ hand (poised to sign)
- 11 Noted bus rider Parks
- 12 Dwelling liable to tear in the wind and get soggy in the rain?
- 14 Jason Kenney's grp.
- 15 Smartphone network std.

- 17 Guy's dwelling?
- 20 Slanted writing: Abbr.
- 22 Come ___ surprise (be expected)
- 23 Thoughts jotted about one's dwelling?
- 27 Part of RSVP
- 28 "Honest" US prez
- 29 Really, really old dwelling?
- 35 ___ for life (joie de vivre)
- 36 Very reluctant (to)

- 37 Knick-knack website
- 38 Major Toronto artery

DOWN

- 1 TikTok or Trello
- 2 Grassland
- 3 Like Jody Wilson-Raybould, politically: Abbr.
- 4 About-the-author bit
- 5 For kicks and giggles
- 6 Andrews role Maria von ___
- 7 Alley-___
- 8 Like a chocolate teapot, it is said
- 9 Tam pattern, often
- 13 Mac rivals
- 16 Tokyo, before 1868
- 17 Send off, as Christmas cards
- 18 Neighbour of Greece: Abbr.
- 19 Canadian funnywoman Lara
- 20 Suffix with "robot" and "hero"
- 21 Boozy, gooey sponge cake
- 24 "So gross!"
- 25 ___-Wan Kenobi
- 26 Brit's "boob tube"
- 30 Deflating sound?
- 31 "Yabba dabba ___!"
- 32 Newsman Hanomansing
- 33 Texter's "ta ta"
- 34 Ship's pronoun

For answers, turn to PAGE 102



LAUGH MORE. LIVE HEALTHIER. SPEND LESS.

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