

AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

**RD
TALKS**
OUR STORIES
AS PODCASTS

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Your
ACHES
AND
PAINS**

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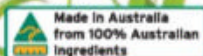
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Forging Better Lives

WE THRIVE ON CELEBRATING individuals who strive to brighten the lives and hearts of others – and that includes our animal companions. That's why we're particularly excited to bring you 'Finding Gobi' (Bonus Read, page 124), which tells the amazing story of how Dion Leonard was able to complete the gruelling seven-day Gobi Desert ultramarathon race – thanks in part to the support of a very determined homeless dog. Their friendship, set in the parched landscape of Central Mongolia, helped forge new beginnings for them both.

Our health focus this month is one of modern society's silent afflictions – chronic pain. In 'Conquer Your Everyday Aches and Pains' (page 38) we take a close look at the latest pain self-management strategies, all of which are expert-approved. We meet Andrew Lloyd Webber (I Remember, page 30), one of Britain's most successful musical-theatre composers. With hits such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Webber's career has spanned over five decades. And we also have a fresh new department, 'Tell Me Why' (page 112), that brings to light the facts behind some lighter issues, starting this month by explaining why backpacks have a common design feature – which few of us know about.

We hope you enjoy the July issue – and please, share your thoughts about the articles, as we love receiving your feedback.



LOUISE WATERSON
Editor-in-Chief



AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

Vol. 201
No. 1194
July 2021

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PUBLISHED UNDER LICENCE BY DIRECT PUBLISHING PTY LTD

● SUBSCRIPTION and CUSTOMER INQUIRIES ONLY

Online www.readersdigest.com.au
Phone 1300 300 030 Fax (02) 9004 4830
Email sales@readersdigest.com.au
Mail Reader's Digest Magazine, PO Box 6458,
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PRINTED BY OVATO LIMITED, 8 PRIDDLE ST, WARWICK FARM, NSW 2170, FOR DIRECT
PUBLISHING PTY LTD, 431 WARRINGAH ROAD, FRENCHS FOREST, NSW 2086. © 2021
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LETTERS

Reader's Comments And Opinions

Love Thy Neighbour

Karen Stiller's article, 'Next-Door Strangers' (April), must have struck a chord in the hearts of people everywhere. Her persistence and ingenuity in bringing good out of lockdown was inspiring. I would love to read the sequel describing the neighbours getting together over dinner.

EULALIE HOLMAN



Positive Perspective

As a hypochondriac, I usually avoid reading other people's experiences dealing with illness, especially the 'big C'. I came across the article 'My Shocking Diagnosis' (May) expecting to feel fear and anxiety. To my surprise, I found the story uplifting. The author's surrender to the unknown, yet dogged determination to live each day to the fullest, was inspiring.

Instead of wallowing in depression, he accepted that there may be no tomorrow but today is enough to live for.

JANINA BERNARDO

Those We Trust

What a marvellous cover photograph (May) of a little one airborne with Dad's trusty hands waiting to catch him. Who hasn't enjoyed that moment either as a child or a parent? It really spoke

Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

to the heart – as did all the other gorgeous photos in the photo feature ‘Trust in Pictures’. Thank you for making me smile.

HELEN YURETICH

Ahead of His Time

DeWitt Wallace! What a wonderful thing this man and his wife did in first publishing Reader’s Digest in 1922. It has certainly stood the test of time and the concise format has been, and continues to be, popular. It is full of articles and stories of interest, it never disappoints and it can be enjoyed relaxing at home or out and about.

ANNABELLE WALKER

Young at Heart

Though I’m old, after reading the highly interesting and useful article ‘Keep Your Heart Young’ (April),



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ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

I look like something the cat dragged in!

EVE LAVELLE

I hit the catnip too hard last night.

DEBRA HARVEY

I said that I need a laugh, not a bath.

KAY MCGUIRK

Darn Owl capsized the pea-green boat!

CARLA BLOCKSIDGE

I asked for a shower cap, not a showered cat!

KAREN MILLARD

Congratulations to this month’s winner, Debra Harvey.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, email editor@readersdigest.com.au or see details on page 8.

READER'S DIGEST

I felt like a young man. The latest tips offered will help, to a large extent, in the prevention of heart diseases and in maintaining a healthy heart. I express my 'heartfelt' thanks to Reader's Digest. **CHANDRAN BABURAJENDRAN**

Fuelling Creativity and Productivity

Jeffrey David's article 'Go Ahead, Do Nothing' (The Genius Section, April) points to the paradoxical truth that laziness, contrary to popular belief, can sometimes lead to discovery and innovation.

In this connection, I am reminded of a creative visualisation technique that focuses on deliberate practices of day-dreaming on a regular basis. We should allow a little space to our creative idleness rather than be swept by the 'pandemic of overwork'. **UJJWAL DUTTA**

Family History

I read with interest 'The Secret Child' (My Story, April) which reminded me of my family. My grandmother died in 1918 from the Spanish Flu leaving three young children. My father was only a baby. Employment prevented his father from caring for them, so he arranged for his sister to foster, and later adopt them. I regard them as my true grandparents. **EILEEN COMBER**



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Audiology clientele can't tell the difference between \$429 hearing aid and their "thousands-of-dollars" devices.

Found Hearing have released one of Australia's first low-cost digital hearing aids, which is now available and delivered directly to your front door. The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid was originally developed as a 'back-up' digital hearing aid for audiology clientele, whose current pair of hearing aids were either in for repair or servicing, or had been lost. Designed as a broad-prescription hearing aid, audiology clientele could simply pick up the *Jaspa 3* hearing aid across the counter, or have it sent directly to them, without the need for a hearing test or even an appointment.

The surprise came when the majority of those who used the *Jaspa 3* hearing aid were extremely reluctant to return it to the clinic, even after their more expensive hearing aids had been repaired and were ready to be collected.

The Found Hearing representative said,

"We found that because customers were able to select and control the sound to match their own hearing preferences, as well as select a program that suited their type of hearing loss, many customers were able to adjust the aid to how they like to uniquely hear sound. As a result, wearers of the *Jaspa 3* hearing aid were able to eradicate many of the bothering effects they had experienced with their regular more expensive hearing aids, such as tinniness, echo, and background noise. They were also able to adjust the volume to suit their individual preference."

Following initial feedback provided by clientele on the benefits of using the *Jaspa 3* compared to their expensive devices, the *Jaspa 3* aid was developed further, and now includes additional features that rival technology found in some of the most expensive hearing aids available.

The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid works off a fully digital microchip and incorporates wide dynamic range compression, feedback cancellation, automatic noise reduction and speech enhancement across 12 bands.

The Found Hearing representative said,

"We now have many customers who report better outcomes with their *Jaspa 3* aids than the hearing aids that they have spent thousands of dollars on."

The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid is suitable for mild to severe hearing loss and has a simple to use volume and program control on the device itself. The *Jaspa 3* offers access to 4 programs and 10 volume levels. It is a broad prescription device, meaning it will work for various types of hearing loss, from mild to severe loss, without the need for a hearing test or appointment. The style is a discreet 'behind-the-ear' open fit design, that the majority of hearing aid wearers are already accustomed to inserting and managing. It takes a standard 312 hearing aid battery.

The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid can be ordered online at www.foundhearing.com.au or over the phone on 1300 240 114.

The *Jaspa 3* is \$429 per aid, and includes Free Delivery anywhere in Australia. No hearing test or appointments are required and it comes with a 30-day money back guarantee.



MY STORY



Recollections of Russia

BY *Brian Dobbyn*

“**H**ow could they do that to those beautiful girls?” my great-aunt Mary suddenly said as we sat quietly chatting in The Admiral, her local pub in Islington, London. “Every day they used to play with my children – then they simply disappeared. A year later, we learned the whole family had been murdered.”

The burden of her disbelief still weighed heavily. I didn’t interrupt

the remarkable story that had been unfolding since we’d entered The Admiral an hour before.

It was 1951, and I’d recently come to London – the home of many relatives. A cousin suggested I look up our great-aunt. So, one evening I knocked on her door in a nondescript block of flats that sat in the middle of ruins. The area had been heavily bombed in the Blitz during Word War II.

Although I’d pictured a suburban

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

housewife in apron, curlers and head scarf, I was met by a well-groomed lady with blue-rinsed hair. "And who might you be, young man?"

I introduced myself. "How splendid!" she said, giving me a hug. "I don't think I've ever met anyone from Australia, never mind a great-nephew."

She ushered me in, bidding me to sit while she prepared a pot of tea. I had barely time to glance around the living room at the photos and ornaments before she returned and suggested we instead head to The Admiral. "Being Australian, you'll no doubt be more at home in a pub than here sipping tea," she added.

To open the conversation as we sat with our drinks, I mentioned how I had noticed many Russian objects and art in her flat. "Did you ever live there?" I asked.

"Oh yes," she replied. "For four of the most memorable years of my life."

Brian Dobbyn, now retired, lives in Brisbane. His career in journalism and media gave him the opportunity to work in London, Japan, Vienna, the Czech Republic and other Eastern European countries. He is currently writing two novels.

In 1913, while just a teenager, she'd travelled from her Leicester home to St Petersburg to be the governess to the children of an aristocratic family. The idea had come from a relative who was a Danish countess with Russian connections in high places.

Later, she wrote me a letter offering more details of her adventures during a tumultuous time in European history: "*I was only 16 when I first went to Russia.*

Being so young and English, everybody made a great fuss of me. Men especially were very helpful with customs and luggage.

"When my train arrived at Berlin, I found I had to wait two hours for

the connecting train. So an elderly gentleman in my compartment took me to lunch, then for a drive in an open carriage to see the city, back to the station for tea, saw me settled in a comfortable seat and asked the conductor to look after me.

"Just as the train was leaving, a young man handed me a lovely bouquet of roses through the window. I had never been warned about men's romantic gestures, so took all those attentions as a matter of course.

"I had a wonderful time without any unpleasant adventures. I only

IN 1913, WHILE JUST A TEENAGER, SHE'D TRAVELLED TO ST PETERSBURG TO BE A GOVERNESS

thought how wonderful it was to be grown up."

Her employer was a member of the imperial court of Tsar Nicholas II and her 'children' were permitted to play genteel games with the royal offspring - sisters Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, and brother Alexei. "I met their mother, the Tsarina, only once - a regal but rather strange lady," she said.

Her time at the Russian court ended violently with the October 1917 revolution. She escaped out of the country by bribing border guards with her jewellery.

Life back in London was in stark contrast to the privileged one she'd so recently enjoyed, especially when she was seconded to work long hours in a wartime government office.

Less than a year later, on July 17, 1918, the Tsar, the Tsarina and their five children were murdered by the Bolsheviks in the cellar of a country house in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg. "I was sick with grief when I heard," she told me. "Like losing one's own family."

My great-aunt died in the 1960s.

But I believe she would have gained some comfort knowing that, in 1991, the bodies of all but Maria and Alexei were exhumed, then ceremonially reburied in St Petersburg in 1998.

The remains of the two missing children were found in 2007 in a burned area near the house where they were murdered. In 2000 the Russian Orthodox Church canonised the family as martyrs.

As we were leaving the pub, one of the apron-and-curlers regulars prodded my aunt, pointed at me and asked, "Is 'e your son, love?"

"I wish he were," replied my great-aunt a trifle wistfully.

I learned later that after her return to

London she became engaged to a young soldier. He was killed on the Western Front. She never married.

The experience of meeting Mary inspired me to track down other unknown family members and to visit Russia, which I have done twice - to St Petersburg and Moscow. **R**



HER TIME AT THE RUSSIAN COURT ENDED VIOLENTLY WITH THE 1917 REVOLUTION

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SMART ANIMALS

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Wilber the Dishwasher

ALLAN TAYLOR

When working as a field geologist on a mapping project in southwest Tasmania, I was camped at the junction of two streams in the wilderness region of the Old River catchment.

My field assistant, Jim Maddox, helped establish this base camp on the river bank which was reached by crossing a fallen tree bridge. Each night, for several months, we cooked our meals on the camp fire. After a few days in residence we noticed that we were being watched by a wild animal which we named Wilber.

The animal came trotting across the tree bridge, and from the bushes it would watch us prepare our meals

in the evening. After eating we would put our plates on the ground at our feet. Provided we kept perfectly still, Wilber would creep towards us and lick our plates clean. What was Wilber? He was a native marsupial cat, or spotted quoll, also known as a tiger cat. He was about the size of a large domestic cat with a pointy nose and grey fur with large white spots and a thick tail.

We never got to pat Wilber like you would a domestic cat. If we moved towards him, he would rocket off into the bushes, only to return happily the

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next evening to lick our plates. We would then swill the plates in the stream. What a great dishwasher we had in Wilber!



Cobber's Hat Trick

BRONWYN HUDSON

The hot summer sun beamed down on my back as I panned for gold. It was 1996 and my first trip to gold country, the town of Sofala in New South Wales.

I sloshed the water round and round, as the old-time miner had instructed, looking for the unmistakable glint of gold in the bottom of the pan.

All of a sudden, a breeze caught my wide-brimmed straw hat, whisking it from my head and blowing it into the water where it tumbled and tumbled, careening downstream.

"My hat!" I cried. "My HAT!"

My long-haired collie, Cobber, was standing on the side of the bank. His

ears pricked up when he heard me call out. He spun round to see my dilemma and watched the crazy hat racing down the bubbling stream.

Down the bank side he ran, barking madly at the hat to stop. Then he dived deep into the water, paddled out quickly towards the hat, his long coat flowing behind him. The stream took the hat one way, he followed. Then it took it another way, and he followed again. Finally, he grasped the hat with his long pointy snout as I watched on in amazement.

He climbed out and shook himself off vigorously. Then he trotted back to me, sodden, and dropped the hat at my feet.

It was more than a game. I knew that he knew he'd done a good thing as he proudly watched on from where he sat on the smooth rocks. It might be a small thing but the image is forever etched in my mind.

I am embarrassed to say that my hat flew off another two times and each time Cobber retrieved it for me.

All in all the day was an eventful one – and I did find a few specks of gold!

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Avoiding Dental Problems

Ways to ensure your pets' teeth stay in good shape

BY *Dr Katrina Warren*



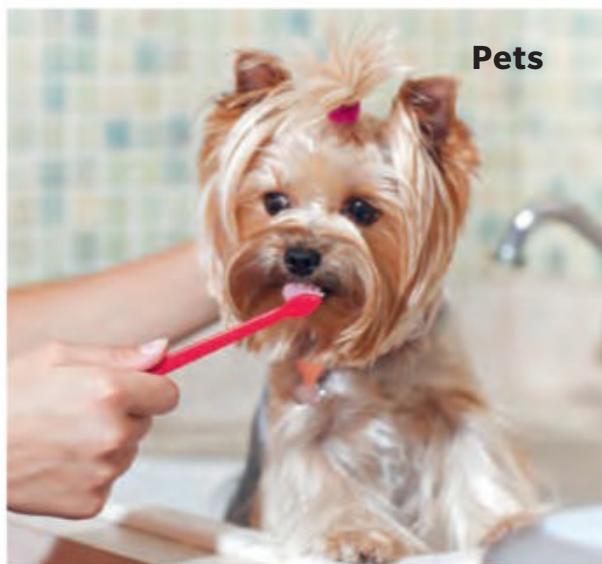
Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.

AS OUR PETS CAN'T TAKE CARE of their own teeth, it is important that owners understand their dental hygiene needs, says veterinarian Dr Katrina Warren.

DENTAL PROBLEMS ARE COMMON and it's alarming that a majority of pets show symptoms of dental or periodontal disease by three years of age. Adult dogs have 42 teeth, which is ten more than humans. Your dog's dental health is just as important as your own and it should be one of the things you take care of on a daily basis. It's a good idea to ask your vet to show you what healthy teeth and gums look like, so you can identify a problem.

BAD BREATH, tooth loss and pain can all be caused by poor dental care. Many pet owners aren't aware that bad teeth can also cause organ damage, which occurs when bacteria enters the bloodstream and spreads to the heart, kidneys and liver.

GUM DISEASE is quite common in pets and begins when food particles and saliva accumulate on the teeth, forming a soft plaque that later hardens to tartar. If the tartar is not removed, inflammation and pus can appear at the gum line allowing further build up of bacteria. This can lead to gingivitis and periodontal disease.



Brushing helps remove plaque and prevent tartar accumulation

SMALL DOG BREEDS, Persian cats and other flat-faced breeds are more likely to develop periodontal disease as their teeth are often overcrowded in their small mouths. Food is more easily caught between the teeth causing bacteria to build up.

RAW BONES and specialised dental products can encourage pets to chew, help rub off plaque, and spread protective saliva around the teeth. Raw chicken necks can be good for cats and small dogs, and raw lamb or beef bones for larger dogs. Not every dog or cat should have bones though, so if you're unsure speak with your vet to discuss your pet's needs. Never feed your pet cooked bones as they can splinter and get caught in the throat or gut.

BRUSHING your pet's teeth will help keep them clean. Special finger toothbrushes and flavoured

toothpastes are available. The key is to start brushing from puppyhood with just a gauze pad wrapped around your finger so that your pup gets used to this as part of a regular routine.

PROFESSIONAL DENTAL CHECKS by your vet may include an X-ray, thorough cleaning under anaesthesia and occasional tooth removal.

INTRODUCE YOUR PET TO TEETH BRUSHING

Begin slowly with brief initial sessions of up to a minute with lots of treats. Accustom your pet to the toothbrush by dipping it in chicken or beef stock or just use water.

Try brushing one or

two strokes on a few teeth, slowly increasing the amount of brushing as your pet becomes more comfortable.

Start at the front of the mouth as pets are generally more accepting of this.

Move to the upper and lower teeth in the back. Hold the toothbrush at an angle to the teeth and brush gently in a circular motion. Pay particular attention to where the teeth and gums meet.

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- Breathing exercise devices, such as WellO2 are beneficial not only for those experiencing ongoing respiratory concerns, but for individuals looking to engage in conscious breathing for everyday general wellness.

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1. Stay hydrated

- It might seem simple, but keeping well hydrated helps maintain the health of the mucosal lining in the lungs.

2. Slow relaxed breaths

- Deep breathing helps you to expand and allow your lungs to reach their full capacity.

3. Nasal Breathing

- Our nose is an important part of the respiratory system. It warms and humidifies the air we breathe and helps protect the airways from allergens, pollutants and pathogens.

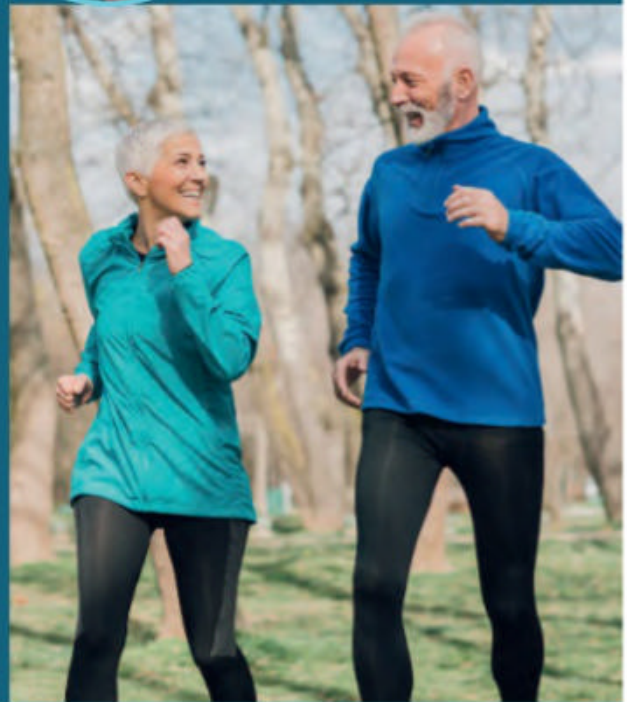
4. Sit straight, stand tall and breathe with the diaphragm

- Our lungs are soft structures, so making room for them to expand and contract as we breathe is incredibly important. Breathing patterns become abnormal with excessive use of the upper ribcage, which leads to insufficient use of the diaphragm while breathing.



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Beware of Winter Rays



Melanoma is a risk even in the winter months

BY *Vanessa Milne*

Globally, the prevalence of melanoma has been steadily rising for the past 50 years, with Australia recording the highest rate in the world with one person being diagnosed every 30 minutes. While some of the increase may be due to better detection, the steady increase has also been attributed to people spending more time outdoors during peak sunlight hours and holidaying in warmer climates during winter.

That rise is concerning, since

melanoma is the most dangerous kind of skin cancer. Non-melanoma types, like basal cell carcinoma, rarely spread to other parts of the body and are often resolved by localised surgery. Melanoma, on the other hand, is far more likely to spread and to be deadly; according to the Melanoma Institute of Australia, an estimated 1300 Australians die each year from melanoma. It is also the most common cancer among 15-39 year olds.

There are a few main risk factors

for melanomas, including how much cumulative sun exposure a person has had in his or her life – and how many sunburns. It's thought to develop when the sun's carcinogenic ultraviolet (UV) rays damage the cells that make the pigment in your skin. That's why people who have fair skin are at a higher risk of getting it, along with anyone with a family history of skin cancer.

Most of us know to cover up and apply sunscreen on hot, sunny days, but as autumn arrives, we tend to drop those habits.

Experts warn that's a mistake. Though there's less need for sun protection after summer ends, exposure to UV rays still adds up.

What precautions you should take to defend against melanoma during the cooler months depends on where you are in the world. That's because the further away you are from the equator, the weaker the sun's damaging rays are in winter; you would typically receive only a fraction of your annual UV exposure in the winter months, according to Professor Brian Diffey of the British Association of Dermatologists.

But no matter where you are and what your daily dose of UV rays is, it's a mistake to put your

sun-protection habits on ice. "It's important to wear sunscreen when there is a lot of glare from the snow," says Victoria Mar, director of the Victorian Melanoma Service at Alfred Hospital in Melbourne.

If you're tobogganing, skiing or skating, the ice and snow reflect up to 80 per cent of the sun's rays back at you, increasing your sun risk to summertime levels. And if you're outside during the day for an hour or more doing any activity, you should take precautions: wear a hat

and put on sunscreen.

"To make it simpler to remember, make sunscreen part of your morning routine before going out," advises Mar.

Finally, you should monitor your moles.

"Early detection of melanoma is vital

for successful treatment," says Professor Diffey. Warning signs are a mole that's changing size, shape or colour, or one that's asymmetrical – sometimes referred to as 'ugly duckling' moles.

If you have concerns, talk to your doctor. And in the meantime, practise healthy sun habits – even when it's cold outside.

IT'S A MISTAKE TO PUT YOUR SUN- PROTECTION HABITS ON ICE IN WINTER

For more information about skin cancer, go to www.cancer.org.au or call 13 11 20



5 Reasons for Itchy Scalp

And how to treat it

BY Lauren Cahn

DANDRUFF (*seborrhoeic dermatitis*) is caused by an overreaction the body has to normal yeast that lives on the skin, according to dermatologist Dr Jennifer Haley. Over-the-counter remedies include shampoos containing salicylic acid and antifungal agents while natural remedies for dandruff include tea tree oil.

ALLERGIC REACTION If you recently coloured your hair, it's possible that you're experiencing an allergy to the dye. "If the hair colour is temporary or semi-permanent it can be washed out," explains dermatologist Dr Joshua Zeichner, "but if it's a permanent dye, that presents a more challenging situation."

People can have a reaction to anything they put on their scalp – from shampoo to hair dye to



hair-smoothing keratin treatments. While your scalp is healing, choose only gentle formulations.

SUNBURN It's possible that your itchy scalp is nothing more than sunburn, suggests dermatologist Dr Tsippora Shainhouse. Get relief with a cool shower and some hydrocortisone cream.

DRY SCALP The winter months can come with dry air, whether cold outdoor air or heated indoor air. The dryness strips the scalp of its protective oils, according to Dr Shainhouse. If your head becomes itchy in winter, try a moisturising hair conditioner or a scalp and hair mask.

DIRT AND SWEAT "When you don't wash your hair often enough, natural oils, dirt and product residue build up on your roots and scalp, causing you to itch and scratch," says Dr Shainhouse. Scalp skin is similar to face skin and needs to be washed regularly.

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News From the

WORLD OF MEDICINE

BLOOD PRESSURE MEDS DON'T RAISE CANCER RISK

Scientists have long discussed the possibility that blood pressure drugs might affect cancer risk. After several news stories were published that focused only on the potential risk, some patients were hesitant about taking their medications. But the largest analysis to date should put their minds at ease: based on 31 trials involving a total of 260,000 people around the world, the 2020 University of Oxford review concluded that none of the classes of blood pressure drugs raises the risk of cancer. Meanwhile, there is good evidence that these prescriptions help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

HEALTHY DIET COUNTERS SOME ILL-EFFECTS OF OBESITY

People living with obesity don't need reminding that, as a group, they have a higher risk of life-threatening health issues. It's not that they don't realise this; it's that shedding extra kilograms and keeping

them off is far easier said than done. However, overweight people who eat healthily have a lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease compared to those with unhealthy diets, according to a new study. Swedish researchers measured how closely people kept to a Mediterranean-type diet rich in wholegrains, fish, fruits and vegetables, and found that those who ate a healthier diet were at lower risk of dying, regardless of their BMI. The authors suggest that we shift our focus onto healthy eating, but caution that being overweight still carries health risks.

DANCING HELPS SENIORS STAY ON THEIR FEET

Almost a third of people over 65 take a tumble each year. Dance activities such as the tango, folk dancing and swing reduce this risk by around 37 per cent, according to a new review. This is probably because dancing improves balance, mobility and lower-body strength.





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ANT BITE



A woman with type 1 diabetes shares her journey after a tiny sore led to years of serious medical challenges



AS TOLD TO Alyssa Sybertz BY Carla Urff

MEDICAL DRAMA



A single ant bite resulted in expensive medical bills, countless doctor visits and severe pain for Carla Urff

I'D BEEN BITTEN by ants before and it had never been a big deal; the bites healed and went away without any issues. But when I was bitten by an ant on the top of my left foot over 20 years ago, I had no idea at the time how much my life was about to change. This ant bite just wouldn't heal.

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was 11 years old. At the time it was incredibly surprising – my mother's family didn't have a history of diabetes and I didn't know my father's family. Little did I know

that when I connected with my father's family in my 20s, I would meet a whole host of people with all the same health woes as me.

I spent a month-and-a-half in the hospital getting regulated on insulin, but after that, my childhood continued like any other. I was able to stay active and healthy, avoiding any complications from my diabetes. Other than during my two pregnancies, at 24 and 26, I never had to take more than 30 units of insulin a day.

As I got older, I was constantly researching type 1 diabetes and

trying to do everything I could to stay healthy. I knew that foot problems could be an issue; I remember being told as a kid that my feet were very important and to make sure I checked them daily for sores and went barefoot as little as possible.

I did my best to follow that advice, wearing running shoes almost all the time. But living in a hot climate, there were times when I wanted to kick them off – and it was on one of those days that I got the unwelcome bite.

The bite not only didn't heal but kept getting worse. So I made an appointment with my GP, who just recommended that I keep an eye on it. After a few months and no clear improvements, I was referred to a podiatrist.

The podiatrist thought the colour in my foot was changing and referred me to a cardiologist – he suspected that my diabetes had prevented the bite from healing. It may also have been restricting blood flow to my foot. But the cardiologist didn't think urgent action was needed. He told me that I would probably end up being a candidate for angioplasty – a procedure that restores blood flow through an artery – in another five to ten years, but for the time being everything would be fine.

But everything wasn't fine. Just

two years later I was back in his office, being told that angioplasty was no longer an option and that I would need my leg amputated.

It turned out I had peripheral artery disease and cardiovascular disease – something else that ran in my father's family – and that the cardiovascular disease had progressed so rapidly there was nothing they could do: my body was making excess plaque too quickly. But I said no, amputation was not an option.

I was going to find another way.

BUT EVERYTHING WASN'T FINE. TWO YEARS LATER I WAS TOLD I WOULD NEED MY LEG AMPUTATED

AS I RESEARCHED MORE OPTIONS and different doctors, I suffered from nerve pain and discomfort, mostly at night.

It would keep me up for hours, hours during which my mind would return to my kids, who were ten and 12 at the time. I needed to fight this for them. But it got worse. The arteries continued to fill with plaque, and with no fresh blood flowing to my foot, it started to die. I eventually got gangrene in three of my toes.

I found an interventional cardiologist who agreed to perform a bypass and put an artificial artery in my leg. And it worked! The colour came back and I didn't lose a single toe.

The artificial artery lasted for eight healthy years until it failed. I went back to the same doctor, who

said we could try harvesting an artery from my right leg – but only nine months passed after that procedure before I started to develop gangrenous toes again.

SO WE BEGAN A ROUTINE of monthly appointments in which my doctor would go in, clean the plaque out of the arteries and place stents as needed. Once we had my leg in fairly good shape, my doctor said we needed to see how my heart was doing.

More stents and bypass surgeries followed. Difficulties arose; as a long-term diabetic, my arteries are the size of a small child's, which made these procedures challenging.

But I didn't want to have open heart surgery and I eventually flew to Chicago, where surgeons at Loyola University Medical Center performed bypass using the Da Vinci robot. That was back in 2012, and I

haven't needed a heart procedure since.

DIABETES ATTACKS EVERY ORGAN in the body. For some people it's the kidneys or the eyes; for me, it was my heart and my arteries. But I refused to be a person who sat back and let it take over my body and my life.

Today, at 59, I take medication to protect my heart and manage my cholesterol in addition to my insulin, and I stay active and busy.

On the weekends I work as a wedding organiser, and it's not uncommon to find me on a ladder draping flowers or strings of twinkly fairy lights. I eat lots of salads and vegetables and hardly any bread and I drink at least 1.5 litres of water a day.

It's been a long road living with type 1 diabetes, but I consider myself fortunate and I plan to continue to lead an active, healthy, and happy life. **R**



Hello to ¡Hola!

According to *The Independent*, an African grey pet parrot named Nigel flew off, leaving his British-born owner, Darren Chick, very distressed when after months he didn't return. Nigel had spoken with a perfect English accent and Mr Chick had totally given up on ever seeing his pet parrot again, when to his astonishment, he received a phone call four years later from a dog groomer in another part of California, asking if he'd lost a pet bird.

Mr Chick was delighted to be reunited with Nigel, who was very well, happy and in perfect condition... but who now only spoke Spanish. THE INDEPENDENT

I REMEMBER...

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER



The legendary composer of global musical phenomenons like Cats and The Phantom of the Opera looks back at a life spent in the theatre

BY Amanda Riley-Jones

...WE LIVED IN A RENTED FLAT When my parents met, Dad had close to zero income. He, Mum, my dear Granny Molly and Mimi, my mother's pet monkey, shacked up under one roof in a rented flat in London's South Kensington.

...MY FATHER WAS A MILD MAN My paternal grandfather was a keen amateur musician. As a child, Dad got music scholarships all over the shop. At an unprecedentedly youthful age he won a gong to the Royal College of Music. But for all his talent Dad





Left to right: Andrew with his brother Julian; his father and cat Perseus; on the cover of *Nursery World* magazine



wouldn't say boo to a goose. He was content in his academic roles such as Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music. Mum found his lack of ambition infuriating.

...MUM'S MONKEY DISLIKED ME

When Mum got pregnant, her pet monkey Mimi became horrendously distressed and violently attacked my mother's stomach with blood-curdling cries.

...TAKING OUR CAT FOR WALKS I owe [the musical] *Cats* not only to Mum's bedtime reading of T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, but also to my cat, Perseus – a wonderful square-faced, seal-pointed

Siamese boy. The family really shouldn't have had an animal like that in a flat. Such was Perseus's deafening meowing, that when I was around seven I asked if I could take him on a lead to Thurloe Square, the only bit of local greenery I knew. I became a regular spectacle walking Perseus like a dog.

...MY FIRST TIME ON A MAGAZINE COVER

Mum was an ace children's piano teacher and her lessons gave me a head start in the basics of music. When I was about four, Mum hired a photographer and thrust a violin and a bow upon my person. Mum's idea was that I would emerge on the international concert stage as some Yehudi

Menuhin-style violin-toting child prodigy. Her hopes didn't last long.

...FAMILY OUTINGS TO PANTOS AND MUSICALS We had an annual family Christmas outing to the London Palladium pantomime. The big names, big sets and contemporary pop songs captivated me. The Christmas holidays in 1958 brought me face-to-face with musicals for the first time. Over four weeks, I saw *My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story* plus the movies *Gigi* and *South Pacific* – which completely pulverised me. I remember the afternoon I saw it as vividly as the film's legendary colour filters. I wrote tons of dreadful musicals. Bored relatives and friends would gather for the latest offering with my brother and me on vocals, and me alternating as pianist and scene-shifter. It was a world where I was truly happy.

...DAD PLAYING ME 'SOME ENCHANTED EVENING' Before we went to the movie of *South Pacific*, Dad played me the tenor Mario Lanza's recording of 'Some Enchanted Evening'. Three times he played it, tears streaming from his eyes. When the record finally stopped, he looked me straight in the face. "Andrew", he said, "if you ever write anything half as good as this I shall be very, very proud."

...THE DAY MY SCHOOLBOY LIFE CHANGED I attended the junior department of Westminster School. At

the end of term concert I was slated to play some boring piano piece by Haydn, but I instead announced: "I'm going to play some tunes I have written that describe every master in the school." By the end boys were shouting, "Lloyd, Lloyd!" I was no longer the little school swot, I was Andrew.

...MEETING MY FUTURE COLLABORATOR When I was 17, I received a letter from a 22-year-old Tim Rice saying "Your agent told me you were looking for a 'with it' writer of lyrics for your songs." He came to our flat and brought a demo of a song he'd written. It was catchy, with Tim singing in a laid-back, folksy way accompanying himself on guitar. I diffidently broached that my real love was musicals. To my surprise, Tim said he'd been brought up on his parents' cast albums and he actually liked theatre songs. I really liked Tim. He had a laconic turn of phrase and a quick wit.

...THE BIGGEST DECISION OF MY LIFE Tim and I started writing together for *The Likes of Us*, a musical based on the story of philanthropist Dr Barnardo. Then, Tim started a job at EMI. He could easily have had a hit on his own. I agonised about leaving Oxford. Instead, I went to the Royal College of Music and, within a few years, Tim and I had produced *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*.



**Clockwise from left:
with his second wife
Sarah Brightman; with
current wife Madeleine
Gurdon; with musical
partner Tim Rice**

...MEETING MY FIRST WIFE I met Sarah Hugill on January 21, 1970 at a friend's birthday party. Sarah was just a slip of a 16-year-old schoolgirl. She offered to be my secretary. Falling in love didn't take long. Sarah and I had long presumed we'd get hitched as soon as she legally could. I had the cash to buy a smart BMW so, as an unofficial engagement present, I gave her my old Mini which she promptly drove into the back of a lorry.

...1971 WAS A RATHER EVENTFUL YEAR I got married; *Superstar* opened on Broadway and I met my hero, Richard Rodgers, in his Manhattan apartment, which I remember being crammed with Impressionist paintings.

...BECOMING A FATHER 1976 brought a moment of real joy. Sarah was pregnant. As she was diabetic, she had to be in hospital weeks before her due date. When our gorgeous healthy baby girl was born the following March, I was delighted. She was named Imogen after Sarah's grandmother. Her middle name is Annie after the musical. (The couple divorced in 1983.)

...FALLING FOR SARAH BRIGHTMAN When Sarah auditioned for *Cats* in 1981, it was how she looked and danced that grabbed me. So when I saw the children's opera *Nightingale* the next year, I was poleaxed that she also had a captivating soprano voice. After the show, I aimed for her

dressing room. She and Mike Moran, a keyboard player and producer/songwriter, were going back into town. Sarah suggested I join them. It was a split second decision that changed my life. When I'd started working on *Starlight Express* (1984), our relationship was sealed during a brief trip to northern Italy. We were driving to Portofino and the rain dictated an extremely long lunch. By the time we got to the hotel, I knew there was no alternative. I was in love and I proposed.

...SEEING DAD PLAY FOR THE LAST TIME In 1982, Mum and Dad came to New York to keep my mind off the opening night of *Cats*. I hate opening nights. I took Dad to Steinway's HQ where he toyed with a full-sized concert grand piano. Then Dad played the great Rachmaninov's 'D flat Paganini' variation. Here was this most reserved of men playing with a passion I'd never heard before in a New York public showroom. I didn't know it at the time but I would never hear him play again.

...BUYING THE PALACE THEATRE IN LONDON Buying such an important building as the Palace in London's Cambridge Circus was a huge respite from domestic drama. It was the first time a West End theatre had been owned by a working theatre artist. The first thing I did was remove the wallpaper. Underneath was solid Siena marble.

...MAKING A MUSICAL FOR HER MAJESTY In 1986 I got a call from Buckingham Palace and met with HRH Prince Edward. He wondered if I could compose something to celebrate the Queen's 60th birthday and also his father's 65th. I invited Tim to co-write and we agreed on a short musical featuring cricket and horse-racing. It played one night only in the Chapel Royal, Windsor Castle. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh made polite noises.

...CRYING AT MY OWN MUSIC *Phantom of the Opera* opened in London's West End in 1986. I vividly remember the song 'The Point of No Return' being full of sexual tension and how the audience gasped when Sarah ripped off Michael Crawford's mask. However cloying it sounds, I was crying during the last scene and, when Sarah kissed the pathetic Phantom to the orchestra playing 'Angel of Music', I was as wiped out as the audience. Never had I had more at stake. It wasn't just that *Phantom* meant so much to me as a composer. Casting Sarah had put my professional integrity on the line. The director Harold Prince ran up the aisle and clasped my hand, saying, "It's the best musical I have even seen."

...MEETING MY WIFE MADELEINE I met my wonderful wife Madeleine Gurdon in 1989 through mutual friends when my marriage to Sarah

READER'S DIGEST

had become rocky. Madeleine was a professional equestrian when I met her. She supported her horse-riding career by founding a successful country clothing business and has a mind like a razor. I have been blessed with an extremely happy 27-years-and-counting marriage and Madeleine has given me three more great children, Alastair, Billy and Bella.

...BEING IN A DARK PLACE Madeleine has stood by me like a rock through some grisly career moments and four missing years thanks to health problems. In 2014 I was in a pretty dark place and it's no secret that most people assumed that I wouldn't compose again. Then I decided to give up alcohol, sold my wine

cellar and went back to my roots with *School of Rock*, based on the Jack Black movie. I produced it myself as well as composing the score and it was my first Broadway show to go into profit since *Phantom of the Opera*.

...HOW LUCKY I AM Since my 70th birthday, I've been looking back at how lucky I've been. You're very lucky if you know what you want to do in life. I'm doubly lucky that I not only have made a living out of my passion but [it has been] a hugely rewarding one. I hope through the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and the restoration of my theatres that I'm able to give something back to the profession that has always been so good to me. **R**



Seafood Stories

Find this fish: The hunt is on for a tiny mullet recently seen swimming off Emily Bay in Norfolk Island after snorkeller Susan Prior spotted a gold ring around it. The expensive wedding band is thought to belong to a man who lost his wedding ring in December 2020 while swimming at the same spot. *DAILY MAIL*

New revelations from fossil records show that between 40 and 55 million years ago, sabre-toothed anchovies measuring up to a metre long once swam the ocean. Scientists used CT scanners to examine fossil samples collected in Belgium and Pakistan. Though the sabre-toothed anchovy is extinct, the species shares a number of features with the fish we know today. The scientific literature doesn't determine whether it would be as polarising an ingredient on a pizza, however. *RD*

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PHOTOS: VICKY LAM



BY *Lisa Bendall*



Accepting a life with pain isn't something that comes naturally to most of us. Since a car accident in 1986, Keith Meldrum has experienced severe discomfort in his abdomen, hip and back. The 50-year-old engineer used to try to push through it. "For a long time, I wanted to show myself and the world that I was not going to let my injury hold me back." But when he would overdo it, like playing sport, he'd often end up in the hospital.

Sixteen years ago, Meldrum's doctor referred him to a health care team who specialised in pain and self-management techniques. It was a turning point, he says. "I stopped fighting and started putting my energy into living the best life I could."

Globally, around one in ten people live with chronic pain, or pain that stays after a typical healing period of 12 to 16 weeks. But those agonies that everyone experiences at some point – a bad toothache or menstrual cramps – can be just as debilitating.

Now, when Meldrum feels pain flaring up, he'll pause and take the edge off it by performing deep, focused breathing to relax muscle tension and lower stress. "I can dial the worst of the pain back down," he says. This is just one of several methods he relies on to keep moving and stay healthy.

FOR GENERAL PAIN

Over-the-counter medications

Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin), which has been on the market since 1899, was the world's most popular painkiller by the mid-20th century. Acetaminophen (paracetamol) became available in 1950, and today it ranks as the most widely used medication. Both drugs work by changing the message of the chemical transmitters that travel up our spinal cord and tell our brain we're hurting. As they lead to the least harmful side effects of all painkillers and can help a range of aches, it's best to give them a try before turning to anything stronger – unless, of course, your doctor has advised you to avoid these products.

Ibuprofen, which is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), is chemically similar to aspirin but carries more serious risks, including kidney damage, high blood pressure and gastrointestinal bleeding. You should check with your doctor before using it, especially if you're over 65 or have certain medical conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure.

Be wary of combination products, like those that contain acetaminophen plus a muscle relaxant. The more ingredients a medication has, the greater the risk



Globally
10%
of the
population
live with
chronic pain

it could interact with something else you're already taking. "Read the labels and tell the pharmacist what you're also on," suggests Dr Tom Evans, a specialist in chronic pain.

FOR MORE EXTREME PAIN

Prescription drugs

Kennedy Aragon-Scriven, 22, badly hurt her tailbone as a teen while fooling around. The nerve pain that now radiates down her legs can make them feel like they're on fire, and a dose of aspirin doesn't put it out. "I spent a lot of time hoping that the next doctor I saw would give me the magic bullet," she says.

In addition to sticking to a stricter sleep schedule and using a special cushion for sitting, for the past year Aragon-Scriven has been getting help from gabapentin, which is part of a group of anticonvulsant drugs that also includes pregabalin. These are often used for pain that arises from damage to the nervous system – such as a severed nerve, chemotherapy side effects or shingles.

FOR INFLAMMATION

Cannabis

Medical cannabis has been earning more attention as a potential pain reliever, and legal access to medicinal

Worldwide
1.71
BILLION
people have
a musculo-
skeletal
condition



cannabis products is increasing throughout the world. There is a variety of cannabis products available that your GP can prescribe. Most are oral preparations (oils) or capsules. Most prescriptions are for chronic non-cancer pain, anxiety, cancer-related symptoms, epilepsy and other neurological disorders. However, research is still limited and many

doctors are cautious about prescribing cannabis.

FOR PAIN-RELATED STRESS

Cognitive-behaviour therapy

Since pain is highly unpleasant, the emotional impact of it can be just as distressing as the physical sensation. Strategies that work on controlling this response – cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) being a key one – can improve how we feel, says Douglas French, a psychologist specialising in pain management. "Pain and suffering are not the same thing. You can reduce suffering and learn to function better, despite pain."

For example, it can be helpful to be more aware of your negative self-talk. Stress and anxiety are proven to increase physical pain. Instead of berating yourself for being able to clean only half the kitchen floor, you

can be more compassionate: "This is the best I can do today without overdoing it."

An expert in CBT can help you change your thought patterns by learning to reinterpret these kinds of situations.

FOR ARTHRITIS AND SKIN SURFACE PAIN

Topical relief

For pain problems that are near the skin surface – like an arthritic joint in your big toe, a nerve injury in your fingertip or bad sunburn – medicated creams or gels (usually containing a topical anaesthetic or NSAID) may provide some relief. Heat or cold packs may soothe deeper musculoskeletal pain, as well. "Don't use high heat, because you don't want to burn the skin," cautions Dr Ashley Esdaile Minzatu, a pain specialist. "Same thing with too much cold – don't leave it on the skin more than 15 minutes or so."

"If I have a headache, I put ice on my neck and a hot cloth on my forehead," says Wendy Collum, 68. In addition to migraines that can strike multiple times a month and leave her incapacitated by head and face pain, Collum has fibromyalgia – a condition in which pain signals are ramped up by the nervous system. She applies a variety of pain management techniques.

A COMPLEMENTARY SOLUTION

Acupuncture

Acupuncture, derived from a 2500-year-old traditional Chinese practice, can treat a wide range of everyday conditions, including backaches and dental pain. Tiny needles are inserted through the skin to various depths and are thought to disrupt pain signals by stimulating the nerves. Evidence is mixed, although a 2017 analysis in *The Journal of Pain* found it does help certain individuals beyond the placebo effect. It usually takes a few sessions to see any effects, and as with many treatments, it's not easy to predict who will benefit from it.

FOR BACK AND JOINT PAIN


Injections

Spinal nerve blocks – injections of a long-lasting anaesthetic into vertebrae joints – can help with some types of back pain. But, like so many other treatments, it depends where the soreness is coming from. This won't relieve disc pain, for instance, but can help with pain in the facet joints connecting your vertebrae.


Dr Esdaile Minzatu often treats her chronic headache patients with nerve blocks in areas around the head. Another option is botulinum toxin, which can



14%
of all people
suffer from
migraines

A collection of aromatherapy supplies including two small dark glass bottles with black caps, a pair of long-handled tweezers, and a lit incense burner with a wisp of smoke rising from it. The items are arranged on a yellow surface.

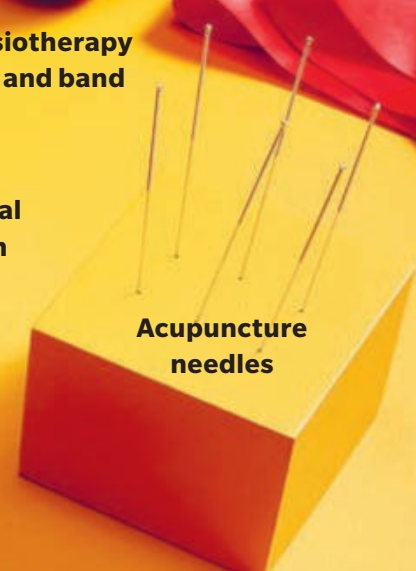
**Aromatherapy
oils and
incense**

A colorful striped ball with horizontal bands of red, yellow, green, and blue, and a red fabric band with several metal pins attached to it. The items are on a yellow background.

**Physiotherapy
ball and band**

A small, clear glass jar with a gold-colored lid, containing a thick, reddish-brown balm. The jar is open and sits on a yellow surface.

**Topical
balm**

A collection of several thin, silver acupuncture needles standing upright in a yellow rectangular box. The needles have different lengths and are arranged in a fan-like pattern.

**Acupuncture
needles**

A yellow rectangular box containing two square, white, textured TENS pads. Wires are attached to the pads and extend from the box. The box is on a yellow background.

**TENS
pads**

A white rectangular patch with a green border and a roll-on balm tube with a white cap and a green body. The patch is partially unrolled, and the balm tube is lying horizontally. The items are on a yellow background.

**Topical pain
relief patch and
roll-on balm**



READER'S DIGEST

prevent migraines by infiltrating the nerve endings and blocking their transmission of pain signals. Steroid injections into inflamed joints can sometimes help with arthritis pain. All of these treatments offer only temporary relief for most people, lasting anywhere from weeks to months, so they need to be repeated.

FOR BACK AND LIMB PAIN

Nerve stimulation

Spinal cord stimulation (SCS) can override your pain signals by sending electric impulses to the spinal cord through surgically implanted wires. It doesn't work for all pain, but it may help some kinds of back or limb pain. Meldrum wasn't sure what to expect when he first tried SCS in 2005, almost two decades after his car accident. "Within 24 hours, I noticed something was different," he recalls. His pain was still there, but muted.

There are risks to this kind of invasive procedure – a battery could leak, or you could develop an infection. Even if it works perfectly, the hardware doesn't last forever. Meldrum's technology wore out five years ago, and his surgeons haven't been able to replicate the effect, despite follow-up surgeries to move the electric leads. Meldrum has been approved for a more targeted form of stimulation,

Nearly
10%
of men and
18%
of women aged
over 60 have
symptomatic
osteoarthritis



that will be delivered directly to the nerve-root bundle.

A less invasive option, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), delivers a low-voltage electric current through the skin. TENS devices are widely sold for use at home or in a health care provider's office. Some studies suggest TENS can sometimes reduce the sensation of pain in certain disorders

like shoulder tendonitis, endometriosis and lower backache by interfering with the nerve signals. It's also used by some women in labour. But you shouldn't use it if you have a pacemaker or medical conditions like epilepsy or deep vein thrombosis, so it's best to talk to your GP before trying it.

FOR PAIN PREVENTION

Physical activity and physiotherapy

There are multiple ways that regular physical activity can ease your aches and pains. It improves your emotional wellbeing, triggers the release of endorphins, and boosts blood flow and nutrients to your joints and tissues. It also keeps you in shape.

If you're worried about aggravating your pain or putting pressure on your joints, try gentle walking or low-impact exercises like tai chi or aquatics.

Yoga can improve your balance and strength, but get expert guidance from a physiotherapist to make sure the positions don't cause you harm. "You can modify that movement instead of just pushing through it," says physiotherapist Melanie Klos. A physiotherapist can often suggest specific exercises to do at home that will help you heal or improve your mobility – if, for instance, you've had a recent sports injury or are recovering from surgery.

Meldrum used to deal with severe pain flare-ups by lying on the couch for days until they passed. "Now, I move, even if it's just to take the dog out for a long walk."

FOR PAIN-RELATED TENSION

Meditation and relaxation

A University of Utah research review found that mindfulness meditation was among the most effective mind-body therapies for reducing pain intensity. Relaxation practices like meditation can reduce tension in the body, calm the sympathetic nervous system and provide a greater sense of control. Specific techniques, such as focusing on breathing, progressively relaxing different muscles or visualising a peaceful place, may take some training.


While in hospital, Meldrum was given a recording with instructions for the breathing techniques on which he now relies. He was sceptical at first, saying "I almost left it there." But once he tried it, he was hooked. "My wife can tell when the pain is coming, and she will breathe with me and help me relax." For some people, music or essential oils can help with relaxation. What's important is finding what works for you.


FOR INJURIES AND SOFT-TISSUE PAIN

Massage

Therapeutic massage can lower pain by improving circulation and helping your body relax. It may also reduce the anxiety that aggravates pain. Some research suggests it can be effective for soft tissue injuries, back pain, headaches and fibromyalgia pain. Seek out a registered massage therapist who is specifically trained to address injuries.

"Massage is the one thing that has been consistently the most helpful over the last 20 years," says Collum. "Even if I only get relief for an hour or two."

Meldrum encourages self-management strategies. "Instead of focusing on the pain, focus on the things in your life that are meaningful to you. It makes it easier to get through the rough days." 



37%
of patients experience persistent pain in the first six months after cardiac surgery

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Seeing the Funny Side



Sister of Mine

I had to rethink where I ranked in my family's hierarchy when my sister and I found our dad holding court amid friends at a party.

"Oh, gentlemen," he said, pointing to my sister. "Let me introduce you to my daughter Terri. And this," he said, motioning to me, "is my daughter Terri's sister, Gayle."

SUBMITTED BY GAYLE SALTER

All Eating, All Dancing

I was talking to my partner about all the birds we were currently seeing

in the garden. "There's been an abundance of them lately," I said.

My eight year old, who I'd thought was in the other room, piped up, "I'd love to go to one of those."

"One of what?" I asked.

"A bun dance," she said. "A dance where you just eat buns. Yum!"

I thought about it and have to say I agree! SUBMITTED BY ESTHER NEWTON

True Romantic

My sister came across a movie poster online that showed a man passionately kissing a woman in the



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 - **Wi-Fi Fo Fum**
- **Mum, Click Here for Internet**
 - **Lord Voldemodem**
 - **Vladimir Computin**
 - **Click Here for Viruses**

pouring rain. “How come you’ve never kissed me like that?” she demanded of her husband.

He shrugged, saying, “We never get that much rain.”

SUBMITTED BY YEFIM M. BRODD

Holding Water

While realising that subtitles may not always give perfect renditions of what is said on television, I choked into my cup of tea at the one I saw today on the TV show *Bargain Hunt*.

In search of a brass item, the contestants were shown a very attractive ewer and basin set for a bathroom. It was certainly not as the subtitles said, a “urine basin”.

SUBMITTED BY MAGGIE COBBETT



THE GREAT TWEET OFF: JUNK FOOD EDITION

**The snackers of Twitter like treats
as much as tweets.**

Saw some idiot at the gym put a water bottle in the Pringles holder on the treadmill.

@MIKHANX

Doctor’s orders say 30 crunches a day. That’s an awful lot of chocolate, but I guess I can give it a shot.

@WX388

I’m afraid of being murdered only because they would record my stomach contents.

@ELUNATYK

If I eat healthy today, then I can have one piece of chocolate as a reward. If I eat unhealthy, I can have the whole bar.

@GIGGLEGIRLNOEL

Fries should be offered more often, like, “Yes, your mortgage was approved. Would you like fries with that?”

@SENTENCEREDUCED



I Am the
FOOD ON YOUR PLATE



Star Anise

Celestial Among Spices

BY *Diane Godley*

It is no vain boast that I, star anise, can do amazing things for your cooking.

Sweet, strong and liquorice in character with warm notes of clove, I am a deliciously potent spice and have been used in Chinese, Vietnamese,

Indian and Middle Eastern cuisines for centuries. Despite my sweet characteristics, I am traditionally used in savoury dishes, especially with braised meat. But you can also add me whole to soups, stews and curries for a warming boost of flavour. I am

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

an important ingredient in preparing Chinese master stock – and typically used in Cantonese and Fujian cuisines for poaching and braising meat.

When ground, I give desserts, baked fruit, muffins, cakes and biscuits a pop of sweet-liquorice spiciness. But a word of warning, when ground, a little of me goes a long way, so if you've never used me before, start by sprinkling a small amount into your recipes.

Originating from southern China and northern Vietnam, today I am also grown in India, Japan and the Philippines. It has been reported that I was first traded between China and India on the Silk Road during the Han Dynasty in 130 BCE, but I must admit, my memory doesn't stretch back that far. I am also told I was highly prized in Biblical times as an offering or to pay tithes and taxes.

It wasn't until the 1500s, when I was brought to London from the Philippines, that Westerners got their first whiff of me. One sniff and they were sold on my value. They distilled me to extract my essential oil which they used to flavour spirits, such as ouzo, sambuca and absinthe. They also added me to confectionery to give sweets like black jelly beans, humbugs and aniseed wheels their liquorice tang.

I GIVE DESSERTS AND BISCUITS A POP OF SWEET- LIQUORICE SPICINESS

Grown on the *Illicium verum* tree, an evergreen related to the magnolia family, it takes six years before my tree bears fruit. But once it starts producing, the tree can generate fruit for up to 100 years.

Heavenly in taste and appearance, my star form usually has eight points – although I can have as few as five or as many as ten – and I grow to about three centimetres. I am picked before

I'm ripe and dried in the sun until I turn a lovely dark brown colour. Once dried, I am used whole in cooking or my seeds and pod are ground into a powder. I am one of the key ingredients in Chinese five spice and

Indian garam masala and am also prized to give perfumes, soaps, toothpastes, mouthwashes and skin creams their aromatic scent and flavour.

But all these uses are as insignificant as a speck of stardust in the cosmos when compared to how I am used most by you humans. Around 90 per cent of the world's star anise crop is used to extract my shikimic acid, which is used to make medicine – oseltamivir (Tamiflu) to be precise, an antiviral medication used to treat and prevent influenza A and influenza B.

My medicinal benefits don't stop there either. With antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties,

READER'S DIGEST

I am used to heal wounds and treat fungal conditions. And my oil is used in massage oil to relieve rheumatism and lower back pain. I also have a sedative effect and can help people with sleep disorders. And I'm made into tea to help ease coughs and soothe sore throats as well as aid digestion and treat indigestion associated with abdominal pain.

In fact, I am a superstar in the spice world, far superior to my doppelgänger, Japanese star anise. Although similar in appearance, don't be fooled by its trickery. It has poisonous leaves and fruit and has earned the nickname 'mad herb' in China. Really, it has but one purpose, and that is for burning as incense. In fact, it is called a funeral herb in its country of birth. **R**

VIETNAMESE PHO SOUP

- In a saucepan, place 2L beef stock; 500ml water; 2 thick slices of ginger; 2 garlic cloves, chopped; 3 whole star anise; 2 cinnamon quills; 5 whole cloves; 2 tsp sugar; and 1/3 cup fish sauce.
- Bring to boil, then reduce heat.
- Simmer, covered, for 20 minutes.
- Scoop out the solids with a slotted spoon.
- Meanwhile cook 375g rice or egg noodles according to the packet instructions.
- Divide noodles in bowls. Top with

very finely sliced beef eye fillet.

- Pour over hot soup (this will cook the meat), and top with bean sprouts, slices of lime, chopped spring onions, chilli, coriander and mint.



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**EVERYDAY
MIRACLES**



Putting a Ring Back on It

BY *Betty Jean Ankrum*

It was July 2014. We were building a smaller house and getting ready to move when my husband became very ill. He had to spend nine weeks in assisted living, leaving me to do everything in our new home. By night fall, I felt as if I was moving in slow motion.

One such evening, as I reached for some lotion for my aged hands, I noticed that my bluebird diamond wedding ring – which I had worn for more than half a century – was missing.

My finger was naked.

I was devastated. I looked in every drawer, every cupboard, and in the car. No luck. My family told me to retrace my steps. That would be a task, for that day I had closed a bank account, taken my car in to get fixed, and gone for an eye exam (only to find out I needed cataract surgery).

I sat, feeling numb. My mind wandered back in time to when I had caught my first glimpse of the man I married. I was five years old. There wasn't any kindergarten in those days, and my mother often

ILLUSTRATION: GEL JAMLANG

encouraged me to tag along with my dad. That particular day, he was going into the nearby town on farm business. As we drove down in our ute, we came upon a large herd of Angus cattle being driven along the side of the road. They were being moved to water and pasture, the man in charge told my dad as we passed them.

I was looking at the youngest rider. He seemed to be about nine years old. I waved to him, but he just tended to the cattle. Perhaps he was shy.

Next my memory travelled to my final year in high school. The most exciting thing to do in those days was to dress up and walk the streets of our small town with my classmates. It was on such a day that a black hardtop

car went by nice and slow. A passenger yelled, "Girls, do you want to ride around with us?" I could hardly believe it: among the people in the car was the boy who hadn't responded to my wave 13 years before! But he wasn't ignoring me now.

So, our love affair began. He offered the ring a few months later. The diamond was small, but my future husband chose it for its perfection and shine.

The daydream passed.

My daughter Jan called. "I'm

coming this weekend to see you and Dad. You should shop for a new ring." She was determined. "Where do you want to go?" she asked.

"A pawn shop," I said. I told her there was one close by.

At the shop, we found five jewellery cases to look through. This would be an exercise in patience. We picked out three rings from the first case. One was too big, another too small, and the third too expensive. So we continued to the next case, and this time I chose two more rings. I picked

up the first. As I slipped it on my finger, I shouted, "Here's my lost ring! My bluebird diamond! See how it just fits."

Everyone in the shop turned to the young man helping us. He got a magnifying glass out and said,

"It is a bluebird." I wanted to know how my ring had ended up there, so the police had to get involved. Weeks later, I got a call from an officer who told me that a girl had found it in the carpark of a nearby shopping mall.

I'm still in awe that I found my ring. *How did I know to go to that pawn shop? Was it intuition? The work of angels? Just curiosity? I'm not sure I'll ever know. But I did learn that sometimes things are gone for a while before they reappear to be claimed. Just like my man. And just like my ring.* **R**

I WAS DEVASTATED. I LOOKED IN EVERY DRAWER, EVERY CUPBOARD, AND IN THE CAR





SEE THE WORLD...

Turn the page »

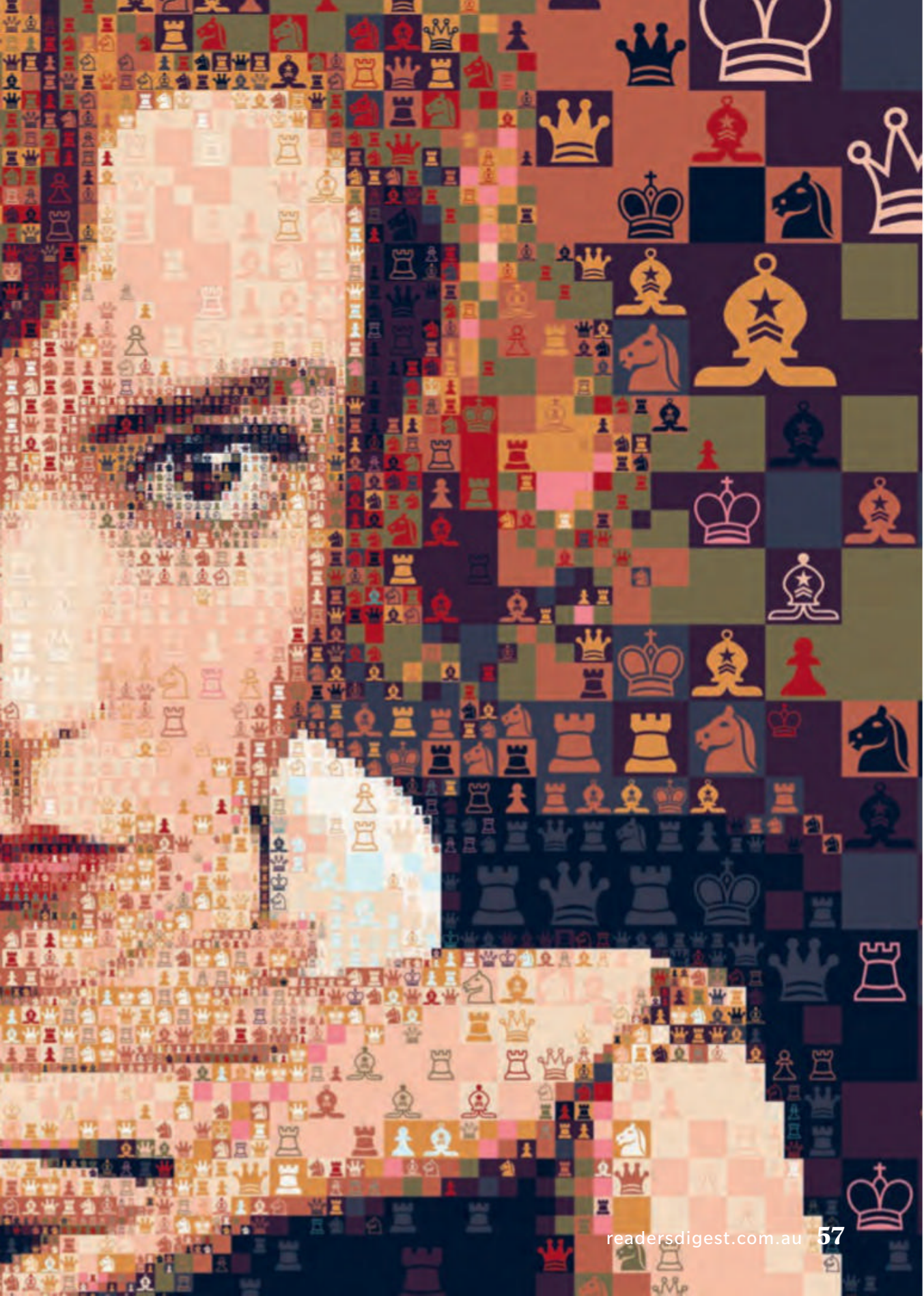
...DIFFERENTLY

Greek graphic designer Charis Tsevis, like many of us, fell in love with the hit Netflix TV series *The Queen's Gambit*, which explored the world of chess champions through the eyes of the fascinating and complex lead character Beth Harmon (Anya Taylor-Joy).

In Beth's honour, Tsevis created a series of striking mosaic portraits, using dozens of chess symbols in a muted colour palette borrowed from the series, the pixelated effect cleverly reminiscent of a chessboard.

"What I love about mosaics is that they are built on a very basic, but powerful concept," he explains. "You create something from something else ... the more meaningful the bond between the whole and the part, the more successful a mosaic can be."

PHOTOS: CHARIS TSEVIS



LAUGHTER

The Best Medicine



Egg-streme Measures

A wife was making a breakfast of fried eggs for her husband. Suddenly, her husband burst into the kitchen. “Careful,” he said. “CAREFUL! Put in some more butter! Oh my gosh! You’re cooking too many at once. TOO MANY! Turn them! TURN THEM NOW!

“We need more butter. Oh my gosh! WHERE are we going to get MORE BUTTER? They’re going to STICK! Careful. CAREFUL! I said be CAREFUL! You NEVER listen to me

when you’re cooking! Never! Turn them! Hurry up! Are you CRAZY? Have you LOST your mind?

“Don’t forget to salt them. You know you always forget to salt them. Use the salt. USE THE SALT! THE SALT!”

The wife stared at him. “What in the world is wrong with you? You think I don’t know how to fry a couple of eggs?”

The husband calmly replied, “I just wanted to show you what it feels like when I’m driving.” FROM THE INTERNET

Grammatically Speaking

Q: Why is nostalgia like grammar?

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

Time to Celebrate

When my wife turned 32, I warned her not to get her hopes up and expect much of a fuss. "After all," I said, "we're only going to be celebrating it for half a minute."

When she asked what in the world I was talking about, I pointed out, "This is your thirty-*second* birthday."

RD.COM

False Advertising

I went down to the 24-hour supermarket. When I got there, the guy was locking the front door.

I said, "Hey, the sign says you're open 24 hours."

He said, "Yeah, but not in a row."

STEVEN WRIGHT, COMEDIAN

Reluctant Teacher

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

CALEB HEARON, COMEDIAN

THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR ...

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Knock, knock.
Who's there?
A little old lady.
A little old lady who?
I had no idea you could yodel!

@KNOCKKNOCKJOKES

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Nobel.
Nobel who?
No bell. That's why I knocked.

LAUGHFACTORY.COM

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Candice.
Candice who?
Candice door open, or am I stuck out here?

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
A broken pencil.
A broken pencil who?
Never mind. It's pointless.

RD.COM



Fantastico!

Top Folk Remedies From Around the World

We asked Reader's Digest editors around the world to share their popular home health treatments. Here are the ones that check out with scientific research

1 PORTUGAL

Garlic for Warts, Corns and Calluses

In Portugal, garlic isn't just for flavouring food. Many people use it to get rid of corns and calluses – the thickening and hardening of skin at pressure points on the hands and feet – and also warts – the small growths caused by the human papillomavirus, or HPV, that can occur anywhere on the body. In fact, research from 2005 published in the *International Journal of Dermatology* showed that all warts treated with garlic extract disappeared within two weeks, and corns disappeared for 80 per cent of subjects after three weeks. Garlic capsules could also provide some overall antibiotic protection.

Evidence It Works: The main component of garlic, allicin, is said to have topical antibacterial effects. But be careful not to allow raw garlic to touch healthy skin for prolonged periods, as it can cause burning and irritation.

2 FRANCE

Vinegar to Aid Digestion

French folklore has it that during a plague in the 17th century, a gang of four thieves would rob corpses yet never catch the plague themselves. Supposedly, rubbing a concoction of vinegar and herbs (including garlic, rosemary, sage, cinnamon, mint, camphor and more) on their heads and hands protected

them. Today, the French *vinaigre des quatre voleurs* ('four thieves' vinegar) has many uses, including as a type 2 diabetes treatment and an appetite suppressant.

Evidence It Works: Though more research is needed, studies have shown that vinegar can affect blood sugar levels by delaying the rate at which the stomach empties, which reduces the blood sugar spike after a meal. But if you have type 2 diabetes, talk to your doctor first, as the vinegar could drop your blood sugar too low.

Vinegar may also prevent over-eating. A small Swedish study found that individuals who consumed vinegar with a meal reported feeling more satiated than those who didn't. However, it's best not to drink vinegar straight, as its acidity could damage tooth enamel. Instead, add one or two tablespoons to water or tea.

3 GERMANY

Marigolds for Inflammation

Not only do Germans use marigolds (called calendula) as a topical treatment for insect bites, acne and dry skin, but they also have their own recipes for balms. Popular formulas include combining the flowers with warm pork fat, petroleum jelly, beeswax or olive oil and allowing the mixture to steep for a day or more.

Evidence It Works: High levels of antioxidants in the dried petals help prevent infection and reduce cell



damage caused by free radicals. For people with venous leg ulcers who were treated with either calendula ointment or saline solution dressings, the marigold-infused treatment helped ulcers heal faster. Laboratory and animal research have shown that the flowers contain anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial components and that they heal wounds by helping form new blood vessels and tissue.

4 NETHERLANDS

Liquorice for Sore Throat

Liquorice-based pastilles called *dropjes* are as Dutch as wooden shoes, but while few farmers still wear clogs, everybody eats dropjes, especially in the winter. They come in all shades of brown and black and can be sweet or salty.

Evidence It Works: A 2013 randomised double-blind study of 236 people by the Medical University of Vienna found that patients who gargled with a liquorice solution before being intubated for surgery had fewer sore throats afterwards.

5 FINLAND

Sauna for Circulation

Saunas are a way of life in Finland. In a country of 5.5 million people, there are an estimated 3.2

million saunas. Last year, UNESCO added Finnish saunas to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage markers. Not bad for a 65°C (and higher) room designed to make you sweat.

Evidence It Works: Finnish research published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* in 2015 showed that sitting in a sauna two to three times a week lowers the risk of dying from any cause by 24 per cent. Another study showed that 15 minutes a day in a sauna five days a week may help ease mild depression.

Sauna newbies should start with five or ten minutes; 20 minutes is the maximum. If you have heart disease or high or low blood pressure, speak to your doctor about whether a sauna is safe.

6 SLOVENIA

Saint-John's-Wort to Soothe Skin

Saint-John's-wort is a plant with yellow flowers that's native to Europe and other parts of the world. Slovenes mix it with olive oil to treat sunburn, insect bites and bruises.

Evidence It Works: A 2010 Iranian randomised double-blind clinical trial of 144 women published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* showed that those who had undergone caesarean sections and applied a Saint-John's-wort ointment three times a day for 16 days had improved wound

healing and less pain and scarring than those in the placebo and control groups. Animal studies out of Turkey in the past few years have shown that the plant heals wounds and burns; rats treated topically with Saint-John's-wort four times a day experienced more rapid healing than those that weren't.

7 SPAIN

Olive Oil to Soften Earwax

Spain produces more olive oil than any country in the world. Among its non-culinary uses, the Spanish (and others) warm it and use it to dissolve earwax.

Evidence It Works: A University of Southampton review of 26 clinical trials found that earwax softeners, including olive oil, are effective, and that side effects are rare. Nevertheless, it's recommended that you check with your doctor before attempting self-treatment of ear issues.

8 BRAZIL

Marcela for Coughs

Marcela (*Achyrocline satureioides*) is a plant in the daisy family. Brazilians steep it to make a bitter tea to alleviate coughs.

Evidence It Works: A 2014 review of several studies published in the *Brazilian Journal of Pharmacognosy* found that marcela appears to be anti-spasmodic and helps relieve coughs.

9&10 MEXICO

Arnica for Bruising; Aloe Vera for Burns

Arnica, from the sunflower family, is sometimes called a mountain daisy and is a popular anti-inflammatory in Mexico for treating bruises, sprains, rheumatism and varicose veins. For burns, Mexicans have long turned to aloe, or *sábila* in Spanish, which grows in the wild there.

Evidence It Works: A 2013 review of 174 people with hand arthritis found that arnica gel improved pain and function in the hand as effectively as ibuprofen gel. As arnica can be poisonous, it should not be taken by mouth.

A review of four studies from Asia published in the journal *Burns* concluded that the gel inside aloe leaves can accelerate healing of minor burns several days faster than conventional medication.

11 MALAYSIA

Papaya for Digestive Health

Tropical papayas are very popular in Southeast Asia – and so popular in Malaysia that they are an unofficial national fruit. The fruit is also prized as a go-to to help digestion, for everything from an upset stomach to constipation to food poisoning.

Evidence It Works: A study from Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria published in the *Journal of Medicinal Food* found that papaya fights intestinal parasites. When researchers gave a papaya seed preparation to children who tested positive for intestinal parasites, it was shown to have antimicrobial activity and treated parasitic infections without harmful side effects.

A double-blind placebo-controlled trial, published in the journal *Neuroendocrinology Letters* in 2013, showed that volunteers with digestive complaints such as bloating and constipation had significant improvements after ingesting a papaya pulp supplement. The fruit is also rich in vitamin C and high in water and fibre content, which regulates bowel activity.

12 NEW ZEALAND

Manuka Honey for Almost Anything

For centuries, New Zealand's Maori community has relied on the leaves and bark from the manuka tree for its antibacterial and wound-healing properties. Today, Kiwis use manuka honey to boost their immune systems and for more specific ailments such as sore throats and general inflammation. Manuka's curative properties have become so highly touted that there's a thriving industry for fake manuka honey. The

13 AUSTRALIA

Eucalyptus Oil to Clear Sinuses

If you've ever walked past a eucalyptus tree on a rainy day, you'll have noticed that the tree gives off a distinctive, almost medicinal scent. The oil of this Australian native was first used to alleviate nasal congestion and other mild respiratory ailments.

Every Aussie household knows how to treat a cold; just add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to steaming hot water and inhale the fumes. Eucalyptus oil is also a common ingredient in over-the-counter cough drops.

Evidence It Works: In a randomised double-blind trial of 152 people published in the *Laryngoscope* in 2009, German researchers found that the main component of eucalyptus oil – 1,8-cineole, or eucalyptol – was effective and safe for treating sinusitis, helping clear mucus and nasal blockages. A South Korean study published in 2016 found that essential oils, including 1,8-cineole, alleviated symptoms of respiratory disease and inflammation. Of 54 people aged 20 to 60, those who inhaled the oils for five minutes twice daily over seven days also had better sleep versus those who inhaled a placebo.

Don't ingest eucalyptus oil though, and avoid applying it directly to your skin; if it's undiluted, it could cause irritation. **R**



genuine product is labelled UMF for Unique Manuka Factor.

Evidence It Works: Research at Cardiff University showed that components of manuka honey can stimulate immune cells, increasing our ability to fight bacteria and viruses. It's especially effective against a strain of *Streptococcus*. Other studies have shown that its antimutagenic, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory qualities may improve dental health.

How a global disaster paved the way for inventors to ‘reinvent the wheel’ into the much-loved vehicle we call

The Bicycle

BY Zoë Meunier

Over 200 years ago, a terrible and little-known disaster struck our planet, when Indonesia’s Mount Tambora issued the most powerful volcanic eruption in recorded human history. The 160-213 cubic kilometres of volcanic ash Mt Tambora spewed into the atmosphere dispersed around the world, lowering global temperatures so much that 1816 was known as the Year Without a Summer. These extreme weather conditions drastically affected crops around the globe and in Germany, horses were slaughtered for food. With

the main source of transport in short supply, German inventor Baron Karl von Drais put on his thinking cap.

By 1817, he had devised the *Laufmaschine* (running machine) – aka the ‘Draisine’, ‘hobby-horse’ or ‘Dandy Horse’. Today, we call it a ‘balance bike’, and few people over the age of four would be seen dead on one. While not the first two-wheeled device ever made, Drais’s wooden contraption had the helpful benefit of steering, which saw it become popular across Europe and other inventors racing to improve on the design.

It was Scottish blacksmith Kirkpatrick Macmillan who is credited for inventing the first ‘true’ bicycle,



READER'S DIGEST

ridden with both feet off the ground. His worked in a crank style, whereby the rider oscillated pedals attached to a lever which would rotate the rocker fixed on the rear wheel. Sadly for Macmillan, not a single, solitary product was sold. Seems oscillating one's feet wasn't a patch on the revolutions that were to come.

Beginning in the 1860s, French inventors Pierre Lallement, Pierre and Ernest Michaux and the Olivier brothers developed prototypes with pedals attached to the front wheel. These wooden machines were named *velocipedes*, and while they took off, their nickname of 'boneshakers' might give some indication as to the design flaw riders were saddled with – a smooth experience, they were not. Although, sure, cobblestones had a lot to answer for, too.

Advances in metallurgy – as well as the need for speed – spawned the first all-metal velocipede, also the first to officially be called a bicycle. The pedals

were still attached to the front wheel, but inventors Eugène Meyer and James Starley twigged that the larger the front wheel, the further (and faster) one could go in a single revolution, which led to contraptions with a front wheel practically as big as the rider.

Dubbed 'penny-farthings' (as the respective difference in size of the wheels was much like that of those two British coin sizes), they were also known as 'ordinaries' even though they looked and behaved anything but.

While these high-wheel bicycles improved several aspects of riding (more comfortable higher speeds, a lighter frame and, with their solid rubber tyres, a much smoother ride), they also added several disadvantages.

Firstly, with a saddle that was 1.2m high, mounting the contraption was no picnic. Suffice to say it involved a step, a leap and a prayer. Uphill riding carried a substantial risk of being pitched backwards, and as for downhill

ON YER BIKE!
Pedal power over the years



1817
Draisine



1858
Velocipede



1870s
Penny Farthing



1880
Safety Bicycle

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

riding, the prospect of a 'header' – pitching over the handlebars head-first – was not only typical, but could be deadly. Firstly, because of the great height and secondly, you could be travelling at up to 60-70km/h. Did we mention that penny-farthings had no brakes?

No wonder riders of these machines were known as 'scorchers' for tearing up the roads and paths, striking terror into the hearts of pedestrians and horse riders and inspiring Banjo Paterson's classic Australian children's poem 'Mulga Bill's Bicycle'.

Penny-farthings' reign of terror finally came to an end in 1885, when Englishman John Kemp Starley (James Starley's nephew) perfected a 'safety bicycle' design that featured equal-sized wheels and a chain drive. New developments in brakes and tyres followed shortly, setting the wheels in motion for what would become the bicycles of today.

By the 1890s, Europe and the United States were in the midst of a

bike frenzy. Astonishingly, this was also the era when the first e-bikes, or battery-powered bicycles, were first introduced. As cycling grew in popularity, so did its competitive nature. In 1903, 60 enthusiastic riders entered the first Tour de France, with only 21 finishing. The competitors' bicycles featured wooden wheel rims, big balloon tyres and two gears, which the rider would have to stop and remove the rear wheel to shift.

Future Tour riders would no doubt be grateful to French publisher of *La Cycliste*, Paul de Vivie, who, in 1906, designed the first bike with a functional rear derailleur, which gave riders four different gears. De Vivie did not take out a patent, and hardly made any money from an invention that would change cycling forever.

The rise of the automobile inevitably saw a dip in the popularity of cycling, with the first kids' bikes developed in 1920 in an attempt to revitalise the market. Kids' love of cycling would also spawn another iconic bike:



1890s
Electric Bike



1970s
BMX



2020s
Hi-Tech

the BMX. Starting in the early 1970s when kids began racing each other on dirt tracks to emulate their motocross heroes, BMX (ie bicycle motocross) took off. In the way of good fads everywhere, by the early 1980s, everyone wanted a BMX bike. While this mass demand soon waned (like good fads everywhere), BMX still maintains an impressive niche today, being added as an official Olympic sport for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

As those '80s BMX riders got older, they embraced a new off-road vehicle – the ATB or mountain bike, which really clicked into gear in the 1990s. These tough terrain bikes featured a suspension fork and straight, wide handlebars to improve balance and comfort, large knobby tyres, more durable wheels and powerful brakes and lower gear-ratios for climbing steep grades. Despite this, they have kept hospital emergency departments in business over the years.

Meanwhile, the standard racing or riding bike continues to evolve, with manufacturers vying to deliver the sleekest, most aerodynamic, lightest – and most expensive – bike on the


market. Steel made way for aluminium, then titanium joined the party, before bicycle aficionados began worshipping at the altar of the hallowed carbon fibre.

Almost as important as the bikes themselves, are today's high-tech accessories – bicycle helmets with built-

in airbags and signal lights, hydration packs for hands-free drinking, lycra shorts with multiple panels and anatomically specific padding. A far cry from the early days of professional racing, when desperate riders would stuff a steak inside their shorts for a bit of blessed relief. Sometimes, progress is a very good thing.

Hardcore cyclists and MAMILS (mid-

dle-aged men in lycra) aside, bikes are now more accessible than ever. More cycleways are being built the world over to encourage bicycle use and its eco-friendly credentials, while the global COVID-19 pandemic and its lockdowns has sent bike sales surging worldwide. And the e-bike is also powering its way to ever-greater popularity, with the market up by 23 per cent year on year in 2020.

Seems there's no better time to get on your bike. 



*More cycleways are
being built the world
over to encourage
bicycle use*

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Sylvia Ross



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PHOTO FEATURE

Hollywood's Dream Couples

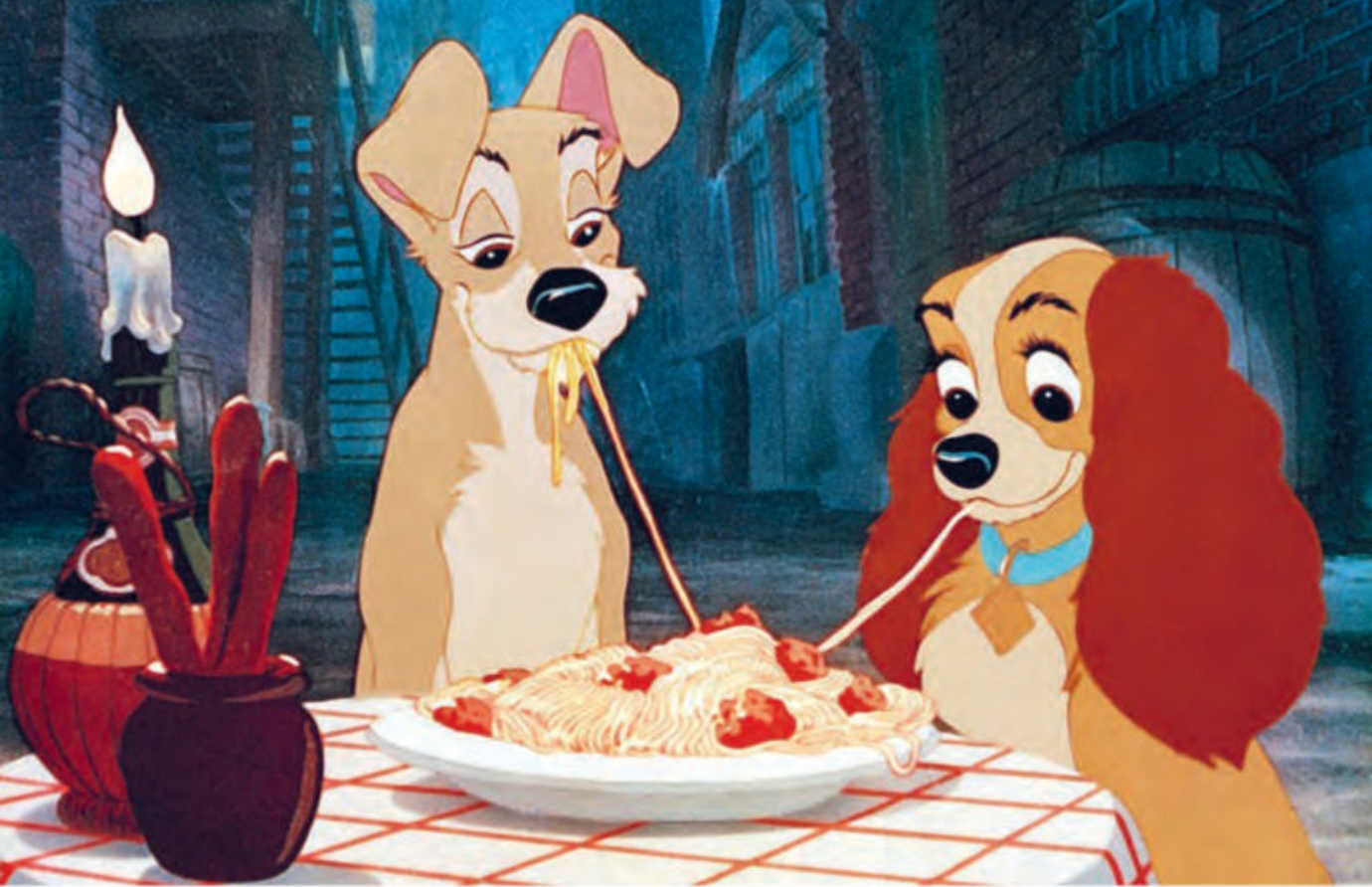


*Some of the world's
most compelling love
stories have played
out on screen*

BY *Cornelia Kumfert*

Young, wild, a free spirit and with no desire to marry, as Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Audrey Hepburn revolutionised the '60s' image of women. Fragile yet feisty, she stole the heart of her film partner George Peppard, while also writing film and fashion history. Her performance as an independent socialite earned her an Oscar nomination. Her flirtatious – but never overly revealing – wardrobe made her a style icon for entire generations.





▲ **Candlelight, music**, a couple in love and a plate of spaghetti – that’s all it took to capture one of the most romantic scenes in film history. What makes it so special? The titular characters in *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) are cartoon dogs. The scene featuring the two animals eating the same piece of pasta and shyly kissing each other at the end still enchants everyone to this day.

◀ **Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet** are the star-crossed lovers Jack and Rose, who took centre stage in one of the most successful motion-picture blockbusters of all time. *Titanic* (1997) raked in more than two billion dollars at the box office, making the production costs of \$200 million seem almost a bargain.

Hollywood's Dream Couples



▲ **Dirty Dancing** made Jennifer Grey and Patrick Swayze Hollywood's dream couple in 1987. Side-by-side, they danced their way into the hearts of film-goers, but actually the on-screen lovers didn't get on well off-camera. Watching the film though, you would never know. The two harmonised so well that several improvised scenes made it onto the silver screen. You can see one of them in our photo.

◀ **In 1944, at the tender age of 19,** Lauren Bacall met Humphrey Bogart on the set of *To Have and Have Not*. This was the beginning of a passionate love affair – both on and off-screen. The two leading actors fell head-over-heels for each other during filming. Married a year later, they remained a happy couple until Bogart's death in 1957.



PHOTOS: (ABOVE) PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA;
(RIGHT) ARCHIVIO GBB/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

READER'S DIGEST

▼ **Constance Wu and Henry Golding** wowed cinema-goers in *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), a rags-to-riches tale with a twist. In this wildly popular romantic comedy, economics professor Rachel Chu travels with her boyfriend Nick Young to a wedding in Singapore, and to meet his extended family. The natural chemistry between the pair was perfectly suited to a plot of social differences versus true love.

► **Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal** launched a whole series of romantic comedies with *When Harry Met Sally* in 1989. One unforgettable scene is when Meg Ryan fakes an orgasm in a crowded restaurant and the lady at the next table says to the waiter: "I'll have what she's having".

► **Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers** popularised tap dancing in films such as *Swing Time*. The dream couple of the toe-tapping film almost never came to be, though. In the early 1930s, a casting agent reported Astaire had minimal talent, noting on his screen test: "Can't sing. Can't act. Can dance a little".

► **Although officially separated** since 2015, Kermit and Miss Piggy are still one of Hollywood's dream couples. The frog and the temperamental diva are an integral part of *The Muppets*. Their TV shows, feature films and animal attraction have been making viewers laugh for more than 40 years.







**The red seaweed
Asparagopsis taxiformis
is a likely game-changer for
beef and dairy producers**

The Seaweed Riddle

An organic feed supplement that almost eliminates the greenhouse gases created by cattle is creating a long chain of wins

BY Diane Godley

Some 15 years ago, in the picturesque Canadian province of Prince Edward Island, Joe Dorgan – an organic farmer from the aptly named Seacow Pond on the northern tip of the island – split his dairy cows across two paddocks. One herd was located to a paddock with beach frontage. Over time, he noticed that the cows by the ocean were in better shape than their sisters; they

READER'S DIGEST

were producing more milk, had fewer udder infections and were highly reproductive. They seemed to be all-round happier cows. The only difference he could see between the two herds was the happier ones had access to the beach and were eating seaweed.

So, Dorgan dragged seaweed across the road for his other cattle to discover if it would make a difference. Before long they were catching up with their seaside chums. Realising he was onto something big, he sold his farm to start a new enterprise; selling seaweed-based feed to local farmers.

Dorgan soon found out that although he could feed his own cattle seaweed, and could even give it away, before he could sell it commercially,

he needed approval from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. And, to get their tick of approval, he needed data. So, he approached two agriculture scientists at Dalhousie University, in nearby Nova Scotia. Their

focus was on animal nutrition and alternative feed additives to enhance productivity and environmental sustainability.

One of the scientists, Rob Kinley, was also researching ways to reduce greenhouse emissions in livestock

by tinkering with their diet.

For cattle to digest grass, they need microbes in their guts to help break down the cellulose. And it is these microbes that release copious amounts of global-warming methane. On average, one cow emits the

same amount of greenhouse gas as one car. And with 15 per cent of global greenhouse gases made up from methane from livestock, it has been Kinley's mission for the past 15 years to find ways to slash those emissions.

Kinley took his research to the lab and started measuring emissions from the seaweed-eating cows.

ONE COW EMITS THE SAME AMOUNT OF GREEN- HOUSE GAS AS ONE CAR

Lasers are used to measure the amount of methane by cattle released in the field



What he discovered was an 18 per cent reduction in methane emissions compared with non-seaweed eating cattle. “Even though it was only 15 years ago, at that time that was a big deal,” says Kinley.

It was a lightbulb moment, and a global search for the right seaweed began.

At this time, Kinley was en route to Australia via the Netherlands, where he was working with probiotics and feed inoculations. In Australia, he contacted colleagues at the CSIRO and James Cook University who specialised in seaweed and livestock, and they began screening seaweeds off the coast of Queensland. But they weren’t just randomly choosing seaweeds.

“We knew what the chemistry of the seaweeds needed to be, and we knew what potential impacts certain things could do in the rumen of cattle, so we selected the seaweed based on their bioactive contents and chemistries,” says Kinley.

Taking their top seaweed candidates, they started reducing the level of kelp in the cattle feed until it got to about five per cent. “We virtually lost the effect of nearly all of them, except for one,” says Kinley. That one was the red seaweed *Asparagopsis*



Research scientist Rob Kinley holding red seaweed after it has been freeze dried

taxiformis. Results were so dramatic, Kinley thought the lab equipment was faulty. Retesting confirmed that supplementation as low as just one per cent of the total feed mix, yielded around 80 per cent reduction in methane.

But with escalating global greenhouse gas emissions and increased pressure to manage climate change, Kinley powered on to try to achieve even better results. By the time he and his co-authors published the feedlot study ‘Mitigating the Carbon Footprint and Improving Productivity of Ruminant Livestock Agriculture using a Red Seaweed’ in 2020, they had the seaweed supplementation down to 0.2 per cent and were getting “almost complete elimination of methane,” says Kinley.



A cow in the research centre enjoying her seaweed-supplemented feed

If just ten per cent of the world's farmers used the seaweed additive, it would have the equivalent effect of taking 100 million cars off the road, giving governments that are inflexible on climate policy no reason to leave agriculture out of their zero 2050 emissions targets.

Methane emissions stay in the atmosphere for around nine years, a shorter period than carbon dioxide (CO₂), however it has a global warming potential 86 times greater when averaged over 20 years.

"Cattle eat grass and turn it into food products or return it back as CO₂," says Kinley, "which is sequestered into the plants they eat and the cycle goes on and on." By removing these methane emissions, which are

28 or 30 times more potent than CO₂, then cattle can become carbon negative. This reverses the process, seeing emissions pulled out of the air as opposed to being released into it.

So, what happens to the energy that would otherwise be lost in methane? The animal uses it. Hydrogen is the bi-product of reducing methane emissions in livestock. The microbes in the rumen use the excess hydrogen to grow fatty acids, that in turn

increase the production of the animal, such as more milk or meat.

In beef cattle, the end result could be that they grow faster, produce the same amount of product for less feed, produce more product for the same amount of feed, or the ultimate, more product for less feed, says Kinley.

SUPER WEED

The potential for the seaweed supplement to reduce the world's greenhouse gas footprint is massive, and Future Feed, the company commercialising the CSIRO-developed, award-winning product, hopes that cattle will be feeding on it by the year's end.

But firstly, it needs large amounts of the seaweed to be cultivated, a new

industry and secondary benefit of the super weed. When Future Feed was awarded the Food Planet prize from a pool of more than 600 entries late last year, judges noted the product's positive social impacts.

Future Feed is already working with several industry growers, including First Nations groups in South Australia, to propagate the seaweed at scale. But start-ups are springing up all over the planet, with more advanced farms in Tasmania, South Australia, New Zealand and South-east Asia.

Others are dipping their toes in the water, says Kinley, and with many aquaculture businesses decimated from disease, such as oyster and mussel farms, others are looking to make the switch to growing seaweed as they already have the infrastructure in place.

So, will livestock farmers be open to the new feed supplement?

Initially, Future Feed will only be able to reach animals in feedlots. In Australia, that's around a million head of cattle at any time. And when you take into consideration that dairy cows eat around three times as much as beef cattle, "That's a lot of emissions," says Kinley.

But Future Feed is researching

how it can also get to grazing cattle, starting with animals that are located close to barns and see their handlers on a daily basis - "not the cattle living on paddocks the size of small countries," says Kinley.


However, it looks promising that the supplement may start rolling out to feedlot cattle by the end of the year. And as the micronutrients in the seaweed would be replacing some of the expensive additives traditionally put into the feed to provide a balanced diet, it should reduce the cost. As Kinley says, with efficiencies in processing, the price will drop further as time goes by.

As time goes by, the price will drop further as time goes by.

WIN-WIN

Another environmental benefit of growing seaweed is that it cleans ocean water. Seaweed, like all photosynthetic plants, "gobbles up"

CO₂, which is responsible for the proliferation of ocean acidity that softens calcium-based shells and corals. It is found in high nutrient runoff from agricultural lands and can cause algal blooms that can be toxic to humans, livestock and fish. Therefore, growing seaweed at scale will act as a biofilter and turn detrimental pollution into clean ocean water.

"It's a long chain of win with this," says Kinley. 

BY REMOVING METHANE EMISSIONS, CATTLE CAN BECOME CARBON NEGATIVE

When I
FORGAVE
My Bully



I thought she was out of my life forever – then she married my cousin

BY *Marianne Allen* AS TOLD TO *Charlotte Hilton Andersen*

My ordeal with being bullied started when I was just in primary school. I was a chubby, awkward kid and to make matters worse, I hit my growth spurt sooner than most. My body became a constant target for ridicule and my classmates took every opportunity to make fun of me for it. They called me “fat butt”, “frog eyes”, “donkey girl”, “heifer” and accused me constantly of stealing or lying. Teachers ignored the bullying and my pleas for help. They told me to just wait it out, that “kids will be kids” and we’d “grow out of it”. My small town made it hard for that to happen and the popular kids not only remembered every misstep but reminded me of them endlessly.

In high school, the bullying only intensified when Sherry moved in, joined the gang of popular kids, and soon became one of my main tormentors. The teasing over my weight never stopped, they just added other things on. Rumours spread that I was a lesbian and that I slept with all the boys. Apparently, they didn’t understand how those two things

might be mutually exclusive. As the years passed, they added that I was a drug addict. They told everyone I was always high and their evidence was because I was friendly to everyone, even people who didn’t like me. Because only someone high on drugs would be kind to everyone?

Relentless Bullying

These kids did more than spread just vile and untrue rumours or mock me – it went far beyond that. Throughout my tween and teen years, I was rarely invited to anything and ostracised if I did attend something. I was physically assaulted a number of times on the bus and if I fought back, I was the one who got in trouble. I was excluded from groups in my neighbourhood.

Sherry’s cruelty was particularly painful because she was dating my cousin. So not only did I have to deal with her taunts and insults at school but she was at all my family events. I tried many times to tell adults and ask for help but no one wanted to admit that their child might be a bully or that there was a problem. I felt like

there was nowhere I could go to escape from it.

One of the group's most persistent themes was to tell me that I was a loser and they wanted to make sure that I knew that everyone hated me as much as they did. I remember one particularly painful day on the school bus. I was sitting near that group and I wanted so badly to fit in. I made a comment, trying to join in the conversation. Sherry immediately turned to me and hissed, "Um, why would you think you can talk to us? Don't sit near us, don't walk by us, and definitely don't talk to us ever again."

The most painful part was that my own friends would stand by watching me get bullied and not do anything to help. They would be my friends in private but once we were around the popular kids, they acted like they didn't know me. Now, as an adult, I recognise it was probably because they were scared of becoming the target of the bullying themselves, but at the time it just felt like one more betrayal. In my darker moments, I wondered if Sherry was right. *What if everyone really did hate me? Would I ever have true friends who loved me for me and who would stick up for me?*

Thankfully the answer was a resounding yes. In 1998 I graduated

from high school, left town, and went to university. After a rocky first year, I found my place and my tribe. I met a group of amazing people who became (and still are) some of my closest friends. I don't hold grudges and decided then to forgive my former bullies. Intentionally letting those hard feelings go helped me to move on and leave the pain of my past in my past.

Sherry and my cousin had continued to date on and off after high school but because I'd moved away, I almost never saw her. Then, in 2005, seven years after we'd graduated from

high school, I got a shock when my cousin proposed to Sherry and I realised my bully was going to become a permanent part of my family.

I wasn't invited to the wedding, but I wasn't surprised. We

didn't exactly keep in touch after high school. Why would we? But, when I heard they had married, I was happy for them; they had been high school sweethearts, after all. I had worked hard to let go of the past, including her bullying. It helped that I was now married myself and was focused on enjoying my new family.

Surprising Change

In 2010, five years after they were married, Sherry reached out to me through social media. I was surprised

I REALISED MY BULLY WAS GOING TO BECOME A PERMANENT PART OF MY FAMILY

to see a message from her in my inbox and, at first, I was nervous to open it, wondering if the cruelty was going to start all over again. She asked to meet up the next time I was in town. I was wary but I'd seen how much my cousin had changed for the better over the years and thought perhaps she had as well. Plus, I was curious why she would take the risk to contact me now.

We met up at a park to have lunch. After some small talk, she brought up the bullying, saying how sorry she was. "Oh, it's OK," I quickly replied.

"No, it's not OK," she answered. "I was really awful to you. I've thought about what we did to you for years and have regretted it ever since. You were always so kind and all you wanted was to be friends with me and I was absolutely horrible. You didn't deserve that and I'm so sorry."

Thirty years after she first began bullying me, Sherry and I finally had a heartfelt talk about those terrible years. I found out that she'd had a really difficult childhood too, just in a different way. She had been abused by her stepfather and had a bad relationship with her mother, so she had no support at home. She took drugs and, during a break from dating my cousin, became a teen mum. She had harboured a lot of anger and pain, which she took out on me, leaking like acid and burning us both. It wasn't



Marianne Allen made peace with her bully and is happier for it

an excuse but it was an explanation. I could understand where she was coming from and I was sorry she went through that. She said sorry again and then asked if we could be friends now.

I'm a firm believer that people deserve the opportunity to change – both ourselves and others. Sherry could have stayed stuck in her anger and cruelty but she chose the path of growth and reconciliation, even though the change felt scary. Similarly, the years of bullying could have made me a hard, bitter person, but I chose not to let it change me in that way. Instead, it's made me someone who can truly empathise and have more compassion for others.

We had both overcome pain to become better people. I hugged her. I'd already forgiven her years ago and this was the final healing we both needed. Since then she has become one of my best friends. Everything we both went through to get to this place together was worth it. **R**

Role Reversal

Talking to Your Ageing Parents



A handful of strategies to get ageing parents to open up about how they're really doing, and how you can provide the care they need

BY Michelle Seitzer

CLINGING TIGHTLY to our independence: we've all done it for years. We're well-versed in refusing help, unwilling to accept the notion that we just might need it. As your parents age and struggle with health and mobility issues, you find yourself worrying about them and wanting to help. But remember... they're not likely to accept your offer with open arms.

Here are a few ideas for talking to your parents about your concerns in a respectful, non-patronising way.

1 *Recognise and respect the significance of this life shift.*

When you've done things your way for decades, it's hard to hear the words, "you need help" or "let me help you" – especially from your children. Bear this difficult reality in mind, even when your concerns about your mother and father are burning on the tip of your tongue. Preface conversations with "I can't imagine how hard this is" or "I have no idea what this is like."

2 *Let them bring it up.*

If they don't mention their declining health (and they probably won't), ask questions that require specific answers, like "What did you have for dinner last night?" or "What did you get in the mail today?" These will help you gauge their ability to get in and out of the house and keep up with important daily tasks. A vague "How are you doing?" will get you both nowhere.

3 *They're still your parents.*

As you enter this new stage of life together – and no matter how dependent they become – remember this truth. Most parents would do almost anything if it meant they wouldn't be a burden to their children, no matter how genuine your concern, no matter how many times you say, truthfully, "We'd love to have you move in, Dad" or "I would be honoured to care for you, Mum."



4 *Give them time.*

Unless they're in a life-threatening situation, your parents will probably be able to manage on their own for a while. They may struggle, they may even experience a minor fall here or there, but decisions about care and where, when and how to receive it should never be rushed or taken lightly. Let them sort it out first; don't pressure them with an ultimatum.

5 *Talk to their friends.*

Don't do it in a gossipy way. Seek out their neighbours and friends and ask them how they feel your parents are doing. If they give a positive report, perhaps you should re-evaluate your concerns.

6 *Ask how you can help.*

Don't be condescending or bossy, or demand change without hearing their side of the story. Yes, you may need to be direct and assertive, particularly in situations where one or both of your parents is vulnerable and the need is urgent, but you can still express the need for action in a caring, compassionate way. Offer to talk through options together. Get a sense of how they see the situation and fill in the gaps accordingly. It may take some trial and error to find the arrangements that work best for you and your loved ones. **R**



Sausage DNA Discovery Hits Legal Snag

German police have solved a nine-year-old burglary after DNA found on a half-eaten sausage matched that of a man detained in France on an unrelated crime. Police in the western town of Schwelm said the snack belonged to the victim, and the 30-year-old suspect appeared to have helped himself to a bite during the March 2012 break-in. The suspect will probably escape punishment as the statute of limitations on the burglary has expired. It was not clear what type of sausage – known in Germany as *wurst* – the burglar had nibbled, though police said it was a hard variety. SKY NEWS

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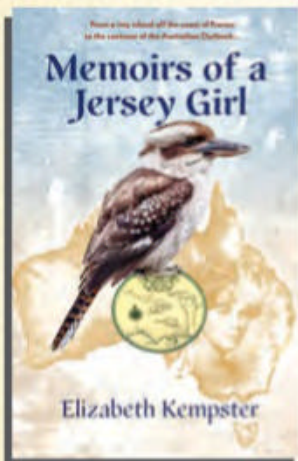


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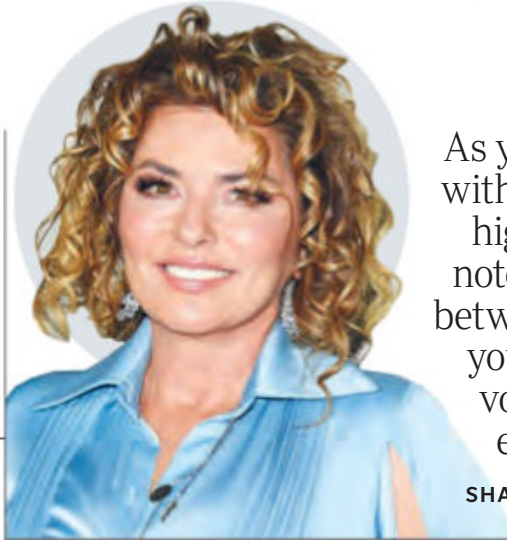
QUOTABLE QUOTES

WAITING FOR 'SOME DAY' IS POINTLESS.

AURORA BROWNE, ACTRESS,
ON HOW 2020 TAUGHT HER
TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT

WHEN YOU HAVE A
CHRONIC ILLNESS
YOUR INSTINCT IS
TO ISOLATE AND
MAKE YOUR WORLD
AS SMALL
AS POSSIBLE,
BUT A DOG WILL
OPEN YOU UP.

MICHAEL J. FOX,
TALKING ABOUT HIS
PARKINSON'S DISEASE



As you experiment
with your voice — a
high note, a low
note — it's a dance
between your heart,
your mind, your
voice and your
experiences.

SHANIA TWAIN, SINGER

*We either
make ourselves
miserable or we
make ourselves
strong. The
amount of work
is the same.*

CARLOS CASTANEDA,
ANTHROPOLOGIST

Those who cannot
feel the littleness of
great things in
themselves are apt to
overlook the
greatness of little
things in others.

OKAKURA KAKUZŌ,
JAPANESE SCHOLAR



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?

MARY WALSH, ACTRESS AND
COMEDIAN

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TRUE CRIME



How They Caught Their
STALKER



ILLUSTRATIONS: RYAN GARCIA

An elusive hacker humiliated high school girls from a small town. Then they teamed up with a determined detective to set a digital trap

BY *Stephanie Clifford*

FROM **WIRED**

B

elmont, in the US state of New Hampshire, is an old mill town surrounded by lakes and forests. Home to 7200 people, a hardware store and a hairdressing salon are about all Main Street has to offer. At the police station, a donation box is stuffed with coins and banknotes to support Vito, the station's police dog. "We don't have a lot of people who are rolling in dough," says 42-year-old Raechel Moulton, who for years was the town's only detective.

Moulton grew up about 30 kilometres away. A bold kid, she would stride up to uniformed police officers to ask them about the things on their belts. When she was ten, an officer came to her school to run a drug-awareness course. That's when she decided she was going to be a cop.

In high school, Moulton completed work experience with the police, during which she was assigned to ride along in a patrol car with a male officer. He told her that women shouldn't become cops.

That cemented her ambition. In 2005, she joined the Belmont police force. "This job picks you," she said,

sitting straight-backed in the police station, her brown hair pulled back in a tight bun.

Crime in Belmont leans towards opioids, thefts and burglaries. But before long, Moulton was fielding complaints from parents and counsellors at Belmont High School about teens sending nude photos, often to people they were dating.

Channelling the officer who inspired her as a ten year old, Moulton offered workshops at the high school about safe online behaviour. She warned students that a nude photo might get sent around to unintended viewers or uploaded online. The results weren't all she hoped for. "One girl told me, 'What I got from your class is, as long as my head isn't in the picture, it's OK,'" Moulton says.

In 2012, after Moulton had been promoted to detective, a student walked into the police station and said that someone she hadn't met and knew only as Seth Williams had been texting and hounding her for naked photos. When she wouldn't send any, he broke into her phone account – she wasn't sure how – and found some nude photos. Then he copied and sent them to her friends.

Hoping it would make Seth stop pestering her, the girl gave in and sent him an explicit photo. But he didn't stop.

A few weeks later, another Belmont High girl showed up at the station. A guy was harassing her, too.



The stalker would disappear for a while, but he always came back

Then more girls came in. Some were ashamed, some were in tears, and some were accompanied by furious parents. Moulton had an epidemic on her hands.

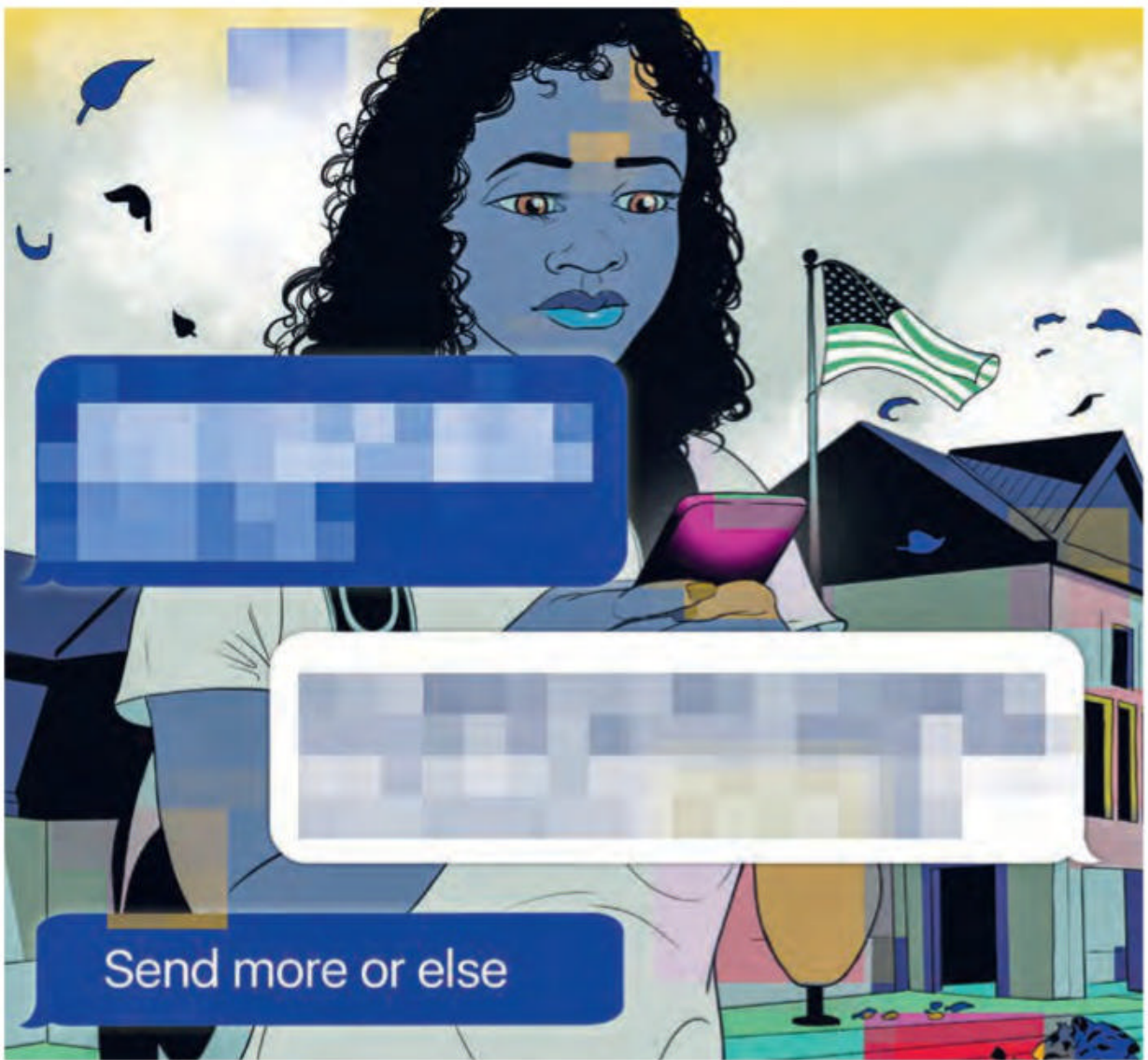
IN 2011, MAY WAS 16 and in her second year at Belmont High when her family moved to a nearby town and she enrolled in a new school. “I wasn’t that popular, I guess you could say,” May said.

So when she got a Facebook friend request from someone named Seth Williams, whose profile photo was cute, she accepted it. They exchanged numbers, and he began

texting. He said nice things and seemed to want to get to know her. He’d ask about her favourite ice cream flavour and her pets. When he asked for photos of her body, she hesitated. “I still was like, no guy shows me this attention,” she said. “He actually seems like a nice guy. Maybe it’ll be OK.”

May sent him a photo she thought was fun, of her rear in jeans, plastered with handprints from her freshly painted room.

He wanted more. She sent him a picture with her in underwear, then one of her bare bottom. When he demanded a full nude, she told him,



The dozens of victims had all attended Belmont High

“No. That’s where I draw the line.”

“No picture, no Facebook,” he replied. When May tried logging in to her accounts, she couldn’t access them: he’d hacked her Facebook account and her email and changed the passwords. She begged him to return the accounts; he refused. She blocked him on her phone; he texted from a different number. She changed her number; he still found her. “He always came back,” she said. “Always.”

One night in the September of 2012, a text pinged on her phone. It was Seth, again demanding photos. This time, the text included nude photos of other girls. May recognised a friend from her Belmont days. She called the friend, who urged her to talk to her mother and go to Detective Moulton in Belmont.

“I remember taking in a deep breath and going up the stairs. I sat on my mother’s bed, and I said, ‘I

have something that I need to tell you, and I don't know how,'" May says. The next day, May and her mother went to the Belmont police station.

May met with Moulton, who was spending more and more time on the mystery. Seth had sent nude photos to other girls, too, and with their help, Moulton was able to track down a dozen or so victims and see a commonality: they all had, at some point, attended Belmont High. She knew some of the girls were really suffering. One began sleeping in the same bed as her mother. Several feared Seth would attack them. One girl cried herself to sleep. Another routinely called her mother at work, sobbing, terrified about being alone. They battled depression, anxiety and nausea.

Moulton talked to the state's computer-crimes unit and was told that there weren't any known perpetrators who followed Seth's script. She took over one girl's phone to try to elicit information from Seth, suggesting they meet up at a teen hangout nicknamed the Arches. He didn't seem to recognise the name, and she wondered whether he was a local.

In response to a subpoena, the messaging service TextFree sent

information that identified Seth's phone. With that, Moulton was able to subpoena the phone's registration and billing information. The results pointed to Ryan Vallee, a 19-year-old graduate of Belmont High, class of 2012.

Moulton needed more evidence to know it was Vallee for sure. But she told a few of the girls that he was a suspect, hoping it might ease their fears. "They really had a sense of this big huge brute of a person," Moulton

said. "When they found out who it was, some of them were like, 'Really?'"

If they could place him at all, classmates remembered Vallee as quiet and awkward. One girl had sat with him at lunch occasionally. She'd even told him about her online stalker. Vallee offered his help to unmask

'Seth'. May knew Vallee from the school bus and had made a point of being friendly towards him. *What did I do for him to feel that I deserved this?* she wondered.

As Moulton tried to gather more information, she was staring down another problem. Even if she could find the proof to arrest Vallee, the most she could charge him with was harassment, a misdemeanour carrying a sentence of less than a year. "For a

**ONE GIRL
CRIED HERSELF
TO SLEEP.
ANOTHER
ROUTINELY
CALLED HER
MUM AT WORK,
SOBBING**

couple of those girls, it became their lives for a year and a half," she says. "I didn't think the laws of this state were enough for that kind of fear."

So Moulton reached out to federal law enforcement.

In October 2013, federal authorities learned that one of the victims was close to suicide and charged Vallee with extortion. But under a tight time frame, they dismissed the case, opting instead to gather more evidence with the goal of arresting him again on stronger charges.

Five months later they took over the case, and a new expert came on board: Mona Sedky, a lawyer in the Department of Justice who specialised in computer crimes and corporate hacking. A few years earlier, she had been enlisted to help with a case against a man who had threatened to spread naked images of a young mother online. The man pleaded guilty, but soon after his sentencing, the victim killed herself. Then Sedky learned that someone in her own extended family had experienced something similar at age 14. "I can't unring that bell for her, but I can help make sure that other women don't have that happen to them," she says.

Since then, Sedky has worked on

about a dozen 'sextortion' cases. While sextortion isn't a federal crime in the US, prosecutors can charge people with computer fraud and abuse. Most states outlaw non-consensual sharing of sexual images, but generally these carry far lighter sentences than the federal laws Sedky relies on.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT Matthew O'Neill reached out to Sedky for help with the Vallee case. In the US, the Secret Service investigates comput-

er crimes and identity theft. Sedky jumped in, issuing subpoenas to Amazon, Skype, Pinger, Yahoo, Google, AOL, Facebook and others. She unearthed the trail all internet users leave: log-in IP addresses, time and date stamps, and registration information. Investigators then went back further, to the in-

ternet providers, to find subscriber and location information.

With these details in hand, O'Neill and other agents mapped the locations where Seth had logged in. They all had some plausible link to Vallee: a restaurant near his mother's house, an air-conditioning business belonging to his mother's ex-boyfriend. A random person's wi-fi turned out to belong to his sister's neighbour. These were crucial bits of

**WHEN SETH
WAS MAKING
FRIENDLY
CHATTER
WITH THE
GIRLS, HE WAS
COLLECTING
CLUES**

circumstantial evidence, and investigators needed as many of them as possible.

“In these cyber cases, you have to defeat the SODDI defence,” O’Neill says – that is, “Some other dude did it.” By studying the exchanges, O’Neill cracked one way that Seth accessed his victims’ accounts. When Seth was making friendly chatter with the girls – such as asking May her favourite ice cream flavour and the names of her pets – he was really collecting clues that he then used to answer the security questions on their accounts.

Finally, in 2016, federal prosecutors had enough evidence to charge Vallee with interstate threats, aggravated identity theft, and computer fraud and abuse. The indictment listed ten Jane Doe victims – the women that had been persuaded to come forward.

Vallee was released on bail and ordered not to use the internet. Though the evidence was strong, Sedky was worried; she knew from experience that putting vulnerable victims on the stand could be enormously distressing, “so there were incentives for us to try to get him to plead guilty to avoid a trial.” But Vallee was adamant that it wasn’t him – that some other dude did it.

AFTER GRADUATING from Belmont High in 2011, Mackenzie moved to North Carolina. Her mother had

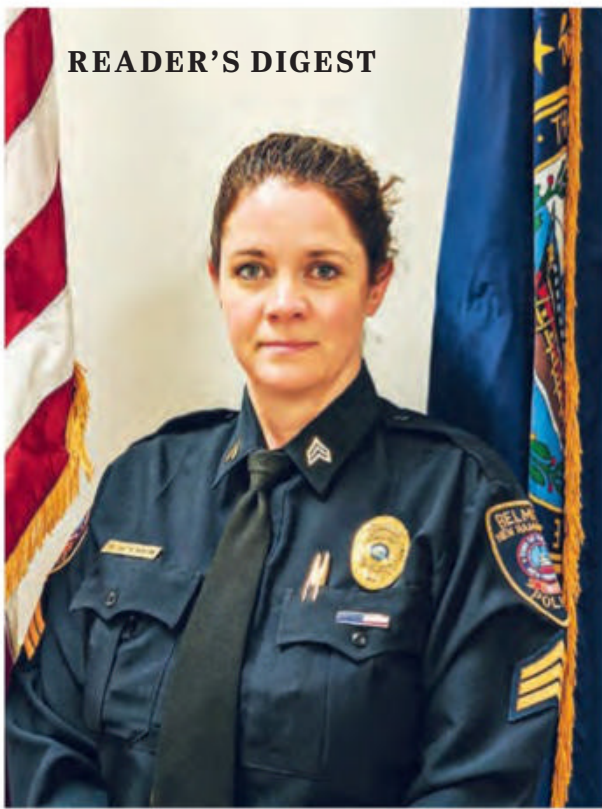


Mackenzie was determined not to cower. “I’ll fight back,” she wrote

banned her from social media in high school, so she “went a little crazy,” she says. When Seth contacted her, she responded. But then Seth took over several of her accounts and demanded a photo of her breasts.

“I won’t send one. I’ll fight back,” Mackenzie wrote back to him.

Mackenzie, who says she was a victim of abuse when she was younger, was determined not to cower. She printed out her exchanges with Seth and took them to the police. “The policewoman told me, ‘Honestly, we don’t really have the technology to be able to deal with something like this, and there’s a very low probability that anything will come from this,’” Mackenzie recalls.



Detective Raechel Moulton decided to become a police officer at the age of ten

A year later, in 2013, Seth started using a Belmont girl's hacked Facebook page to harass Mackenzie further. Mackenzie messaged the girl, who told her about Detective Moulton. Mackenzie passed along dates and screenshots, adding to the thick case file.

When the trial team called Mackenzie, she told them that Seth had stopped bothering her for a bit but that in recent months he'd contacted her again, using the same hacked Facebook page of the Belmont girl, identified in court papers as M.M.

This information was critical: it meant Vallee was back online, breaking the terms of his bail. If agents could catch him with whatever

device he was using, they would have his browsing and messaging history. With evidence that strong, they could circumvent Vallee's 'some other dude' defence.

The government got an order that required Facebook to deliver daily reports of IP addresses and log-in times for the M.M. Facebook page. Meanwhile, O'Neill took over Mackenzie's Facebook account. Copying the instant-messaging vernacular he'd learned from his teenage daughters, O'Neill posed as Mackenzie on Facebook Messenger. He alternately flirted, challenged, and acted mad at 'Seth' who, the Facebook reports showed, accessed the app with a mobile phone. The investigators were determined to get it.

ON A WINDY MARCH MORNING, Secret Service agents in black SUVs pulled up outside Vallee's mother's house and his sister's apartment. They figured Vallee was staying at one of them. O'Neill, acting as Mackenzie, once again used Facebook Messenger to connect with the hacker of M.M.'s Facebook page.

Just after O'Neill signed off, Vallee left his sister's apartment. The Secret Service agents followed. When he stopped at a traffic light, the officers jumped out of their SUVs, guns raised. Vallee took off, weaving through traffic. The Secret Service and local police tailed him until he hit a dead end. As he got out of the

car, a police officer yelled at him to get on the ground. In the car was a backpack. Inside the backpack was a phone.

Five months later, Vallee pleaded guilty to 31 counts, including aggravated identity theft, computer hacking and cyberstalking.

ON FEBRUARY 6, 2017, Ryan Vallee sat in a federal court for sentencing. Sedky told the judge about the emotional devastation Vallee had wrought. She called his acts a “remote sexual assault” and argued that Vallee should go to prison for eight years – the higher end of federal sentencing guidelines.

Investigators had identified 23 victims and suspected there were even more. Most declined to speak at the hearing. “I can only guess they were just as ashamed as I was,” May says. But she decided to attend, as did Mackenzie and a third victim. Sitting behind Vallee in the courtroom,

Mackenzie studied him. He was wearing glasses, his eyes cast down. He looked, she says, “quirky and small, and someone who I probably wouldn’t have been as afraid of if I had actually known who he was.” But when she got up to make her statement, she tried to avoid looking his way. It wasn’t Ryan Vallee she’d feared, she told the judge, trying not to cry, but Seth, who was “everywhere, all the time.”

Judge Paul Barbadoro asked Vallee whether he had anything to say. He shook his head and said, “No.”

The judge sentenced Vallee to the eight years in prison that prosecutors had requested.

“It should send a message to other people out there that you can’t do this,” Assistant Attorney Arnie Huftalen said. “This is real crime. It really hurts people, and it creates injuries that will last for a lifetime.” **R**

FROM WIRED (JULY/AUGUST 2019), © 2019
BY STEPHANIE CLIFFORD, WIRED.COM.



A Set of Nine

A woman from Mali, one of the world’s poorest nations, will be featured in the Guinness Book of World Records after giving birth to nine babies – or nonuplets. The mother, 25-year-old Halima Cisse, gave birth to the five girls and four boys in a private hospital in Casablanca, Morocco, in May. The previous record was held by an American woman who had eight babies born at one time in 2009. The nine new babies weighed between 500 grams and one kilogram, and were wriggling their hands and feet in incubators in the neonatal ward shortly after their birth. AP

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Humour on the Job



Reflecting on the Future

During a job interview, the interviewer asked, "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

"Um, I think we'll still be using mirrors in five years," I replied.

REDDIT.COM

Im-peck-able Logic

One day I was reading the story of *Chicken Little* to my class. I came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tries to warn a farmer. I read, "... and so, Chicken

Little went up to the farmer and said, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!"

I paused, then asked the class, "And what do you think that farmer said?"

One little boy raised his hand and retorted, "I think he may have said, 'Good grief! A talking chicken!'"

SUBMITTED BY ANNA HAMMETT

Demanding Customers

Our teenage granddaughter was thrilled when she landed her first real job waiting on tables in a fancy

restaurant. But after one shift, the excitement seemed to have waned.

"How do you like being a waiter?" I asked.

She shrugged, "It would be OK if people wouldn't keep asking for stuff." **SUBMITTED BY CHARLES FINLON**

Capital Gain

Everything I know about the stock market is from accidentally googling two or three letters when I meant to type in a full website.

ASHLEY HAMILTON, PODCAST HOST

Works for Me

Inbox: I hope this email finds you well.

Me: It doesn't. What do you want?
@STEPH_I_WILL

Colleague: Do you ever think about work at home?

Me: I don't think about work at work.
@XPLODINGUNICORN

Recruiter (calling me at work):

Are you able to talk?

Me: Since the age of two.
@KENWGRAHAM

Slowdown Showdown

Client: Why is this taking so long?

Me: It's a big job. I can be done by tomorrow morning.

Client: What if I help while watching you do it?

Me: Then it'll take until the end of the week.
CLIENTSFROMHELL.NET

OFF THE JOB

Some people don't manage to hold down jobs for long.

As a teenager, I worked at a bowling alley. Within an hour of starting, a new girl was fired on the spot for dropping a ball on the foot of a complaining patron.

JEFF_THE_NURSE

I work in construction.

We had two new employees who were friends. The boss told one to take a coffee order and come back. He took everyone's money and said he needed his friend to go with him to help carry because it was a big order.

They never came back.

DENDAD1218

A guy slept through two meetings on his first day. During the second meeting, he started snoring.

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ALL FROM REDDIT.COM



RICH, RICHER AND SUPER-RICH!

*Step inside the world of extreme wealth
through the ages with these 11 questions*

BY *Doris Kochanek*





QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1 Does wealth make you happy? Not necessarily. According to Greek legend, King Midas asked the god Dionysus to grant him a wish. His request was granted but the King quickly came to regret this good luck. What had Midas wished for?

- a.** That everything he touched would turn to gold
- b.** That he would find precious stones in soil where crops grew
- c.** That rain would turn to silver
- d.** That he'd live forever

2 The New Testament of the Bible warns three times that it is easier for what to happen than for a rich man to be granted entry into the kingdom of God?

- a.** The sun to rise in the west
- b.** For a camel to pass through the eye of a needle
- c.** For Pontius Pilate to find his conscience
- d.** To find a needle in a haystack

3 As the last Emperor of Russia, Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918), enjoyed immense wealth. Regardless of this, what posthumous honour did the Russian Orthodox Church bestow on him?

- a.** Bishophood
- b.** Sainthood
- c.** The title 'Defender of the Faith'
- d.** A cathedral named after him

4 In the Middle Ages, several European banking families enjoyed unparalleled wealth and political influence. Among these families was the House of Medici from Florence, who controlled power across Europe. How did they wrangle this control?

- a.** A Medici became Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire
- b.** A Medici became the Duke of Venice
- c.** Two Medici women became French Queens
- d.** Two Medici men became popes

READER'S DIGEST

5 The wealth inherited from his great-grandfather could not save John Jacob Astor IV when the *Titanic* sank, but it did give him a place in the family grave. What made it possible to identify John Jacob's body, which was recovered several days after the accident?

- a.** The Astor family crest was on his life jacket
- b.** His initials were embroidered on his clothing
- c.** Over \$10,000 in cash was found tucked into the pockets of his trousers
- d.** He had written his name on his arm in ink

6 Today, only billionaires make it onto the world's rich list. The very first list was published by *Forbes* magazine in 1982 and



included 400 Americans. How many of these 400 people were billionaires?

- a.** None
- b.** 20
- c.** 13
- d.** 62

7 In terms of net worth, Elon Musk made some serious ground in 2020. First, he out-paced Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, before passing Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft. Which company did Musk co-found that has resulted in his vast personal fortune?

- a.** Alibaba
- b.** Google
- c.** Tesla
- d.** Amazon

8 In January 2021, the top three richest women in the world, in descending order, were Françoise Bettencourt Meyers (US\$73.6 billion), Alice Walton (US\$61.8 billion) and Mackenzie (Bezos) Scott (US\$53 billion). What was the main source of the wealth of these three women?

- a.** Divorce
- b.** Inheritance
- c.** Self-made
- d.** a and b

9 Trading real estate, inventing new technologies, developing natural resources – there are many ways to get rich. The Roman



**QUEEN
ELIZABETH II**

- a.** The UK Premier League football club Chelsea FC
- b.** The longest yacht in the world at the time
- c.** His own satellite
- d.** A Swiss mountain range

11 Queen Elizabeth II, on the other hand, who has considerable wealth not only as a head of state but also privately, is said to be very frugal. What did she have her steward ask all employees to do in 2011?

- a.** Avoid walking on the carpets in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle
- b.** Switch off all unnecessary lights and lamps
- c.** Use tea bags a second time
- d.** Serve only toast with marmalade for breakfast



general and politician Marcus Crassus probably came up with one of the most inventive get-rich schemes around 40 BCE. Where did the Ancient Romans invest their start-up capital acquired in the slave trade?

- a.** Setting up a fire brigade
- b.** Building the Colosseum
- c.** Setting up food stalls
- d.** Opening private schools

10 Status symbols cost money. What did the Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich buy for an estimated 350 million euros in 2010?

>> Turn to page 110 for quiz answers

ANSWERS TO RICH QUIZ

1 a. Not content with his life's spoils, King Midas wished everything he touched would turn to gold. Once he had this ability, he soon realised it was a curse. It ruined his life and threatened to see him starve and die of thirst.

2 b. The 'eye of the needle' camel metaphor appears in three of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Each verse states that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

3 b. In 2000, the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia canonised Tsar Nicholas II and his family, who were killed by the Bolsheviks in July 1918, allegedly at the express command of Vladimir Lenin. As head of one of Europe's wealthiest monarchies, Nicholas has since been regarded as the richest saint.

4 d. During the Middle Ages, two sons of the powerful Medici family became popes, Pope Leo X (1513-1521) and Pope Clement VII (1523-1534). Pope Leo XI (1605) was also a Medici, but he died after just 27 days.

5 b. The body of John Jacob Astor IV was identified by the initials embroidered on his clothes – as well as a gold pocket watch – and was buried next to his mother in Trinity Cemetery in New York.

6 c. To qualify for the first *Forbes* 400 Richest Americans list, individuals needed a net worth of US\$75 million, a far cry from the fortunes of the

13 billionaires who topped the list. The richest? The honour went to shipbuilder Daniel Keith Ludwig.

7 c. On the stock market, Tesla, the electric car manufacturer founded by Musk, is worth more than any other motor vehicle company – even though Tesla only delivered around 500,000 cars in 2020. Volkswagen sold more vehicles in just one month.

8 d. Most female billionaires have inherited or gained their fortunes from divorce. Chinese pharmaceutical executive Zhong Huijuan is an exception. Ranked ninth richest woman in the world with a net worth of US\$14.6 billion, the 59 year old is the world's richest self-made billionaire woman.

9 a. Marcus Crassus established a fire department. Fires often broke out in the densely built Rome of his time. When they did, Crassus was said to rush over and demand a fee for his fire-fighter to extinguish the flames. Homeowners who did not pay were not helped.

10 b. Roman Abramovitsch paid an estimated 350 million euros (US\$420 million) in 2010 for a yacht to be built by the Blohm + Voss shipyard. After a renovation five years later, the *Eclipse* is now expected to be worth nearly a billion euros. In comparison, he paid just 165 million euros for Chelsea FC in 2003.

11 b. The employees of the royal house were asked to turn off any unnecessary, glowing lamps.



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TELL ME WHY...

Backpacks Have Those Diamond Patches

BY *Lauren Rearick*

We've all seen it, perhaps without even registering it – the diamond-shaped patch on backpacks that seems, at best, someone's strange idea of a design feature. But it turns out that the patch is actually very useful for staying organised.

The slotted patch, which is typically found on the front of backpacks, is called a 'lash tab' or 'pig snout', and is made to hold your spare gear on cords, according to today.com. For hikers and backpackers, that might mean hanging items that you often reach for, such as a torch or canteen, and for employees toting a backpack to the office, it might mean stringing headphones or electronic chargers through the slot for easy access.

Lash tabs once appeared only on backpacks created for adventures in the great outdoors, but in recent years it's become a staple on a variety of backpack styles. The blog [Carryology](http://Carryology.com) reports that lash tabs were once a "leather patch that let

you pass a bit of webbing through it to fasten items to your pack." Since then, the tabs have been adapted using many different styles and materials. And today's backpacks now feature lash tabs that can be vertical, horizontal, or feature four-way slots.



If your backpack comes without the tabs and now you don't know how you'll live without them, you'll be relieved to learn that the vintage styling of lash tabs has become so popular that you can now purchase your own and affix them to your favourite backpack.

No matter where you need to take your backpack, lash tabs are made to save you the hassle of digging through layers of gear for some of your most important items.

The tab can also prove useful for travellers, as you can even thread the laces of shoes through the tab to let them hang off your pack, giving you extra space in your checked luggage or carry-on.





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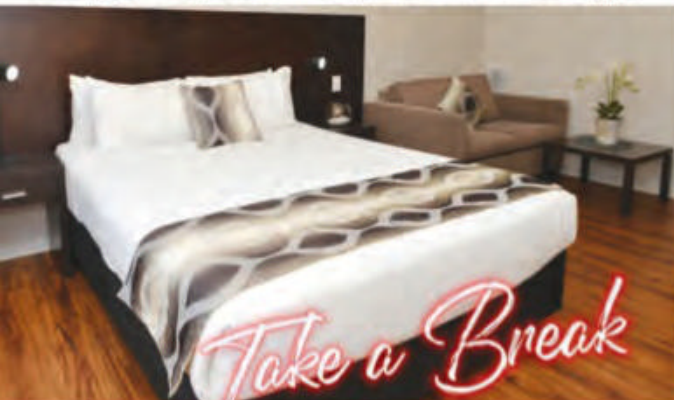
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A Helping Hand

A doctor extols the generosity of the general public

BY *Dr Max Pemberton*

“**W**hy would you do something like this?” I asked as the volunteer patient put her blouse back on. She looked at me, surprised. “I mean, I’m very grateful,” I added hastily. “We’re all very grateful but it can’t be very nice having dozens of stressed medical students examining you.” She shook her head and I helped her get off the bed.

“It’s my way of saying thank you,” she replied and sat back on the bed. “This hospital saved my life. I owe them. You’ve heard what I went through – if it wasn’t for this place, I wouldn’t be here now.”

I looked down at the woman’s medical history, which I had written down in my notebook. She had first been diagnosed with breast cancer 15 years ago. The tumour was removed and

she received radiotherapy. Seven years ago the cancer had returned and she had undergone a mastectomy and later, reconstructive work. This was during my medical school finals and a bell sounded.

I said goodbye and made my way to the interview room where I would then present my findings from the examination to a panel of consultants.

It still seemed surprising to me that someone who had been through so much would be willing to subject themselves to the humiliation of baring her body to complete strangers, let alone the tedium of having to repeat her medical history time and time again. Yet over the course of her treatment she had become a regular at the hospital and felt indebted to the medical staff that had helped her.

Her way of repaying the debt she felt she owed the hospital's medical staff was by volunteering to be a patient for medical school finals. She and the other volunteers received nothing for this selfless act except the gratitude of the consultants and medical students and a cup of tea and a few biscuits. Yet these sessions form a vital part of medical education in assessing the clinical skills of medical students and

would be impossible without people like this woman volunteering to be interviewed and examined.

Looking back, I now realise that throughout my entire medical education, I was on the receiving end of generosity from members of the public who were essential to my training.

It's easy to forget that behind each

**“YOU’VE HEARD
WHAT I WENT
THROUGH. IF IT
WASN’T FOR
THIS PLACE,
I WOULDN’T BE
HERE NOW”**

doctor is a legion of people who have contributed to them being able to stand there with a stethoscope around their neck. These people are the unsung heroes of medicine without whom we would not have a medical workforce. It's not just those who vol-

unteer at exam time. There are those that donate their bodies for dissection and the families that sanction this. There are the people who are living with chronic illnesses who come into tutorials to share their experiences. There are the people in clinics who allow medical students to perform procedures on them. Often what these people have to endure is undignified or tiring or uncomfortable and yet they receive no public acknowledgment for their remarkable altruism. While doctors might help people, they wouldn't be in a position to do so if people hadn't helped them first. **R**



TRAVEL

Home of the **FJORDS**

*Western Norway is brimming
with cliffside vistas and fresh air*

BY *Margo Pfeiff* FROM **CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC**



**The view of
Geiranger-fjord,
which is some
100 kilometres long,
on the Geiranger-
Trollstigen National
Tourist Route**

“Seventeen, eighteen... nineteen!” My friend Michel and I are counting the waterfalls we can see while soaking in a steaming wood-fired outdoor hot tub. The falls plummet down sheer fjord walls on either side of the lush, narrow green valley where we are staying in an 18th-century farmhouse boutique hotel.

“We’re all about ‘slow travel’ here,” says Tone Rønning Vike, co-owner with her husband of 29/2 Aurland, a retreat that specialises in hiking, and trout and salmon fly fishing – it’s on a famed fly-fishing river. The farm itself has roots back to the Viking age, and there are three houses dating to the 18th century. One building is on the site of an old goat barn; another is a historic fisherman’s cabin. After a sauna, we dine in front of a blazing

fire in the converted smokehouse on a local meal that begins with Jerusalem artichoke soup and smoked moose. Then we bed down to the sound of waterfalls and sheep bells.

Travelling slowly with frequent detours off the main tourism path is the goal on this, our first trip to Norway. Over nine days, we want to explore the Western Fjords, a labyrinth of deep blue, glacier-carved fjords (fjord is a Norwegian word) that snake inland amid towering snow-capped mountains. Outdoor activities and Norway’s unique architecture, culture and cuisine are our top priorities. Our loose itinerary ends each day at remarkable accommodations – timber lodges, manors and old coaching inns transformed into romantic lodgings or contemporary outposts hidden in forests, all run by passionate locals.

A wood-fired hot tub with a waterfall backdrop at the 29/2 Aurland boutique hotel



We land in Bergen, Norway’s second-biggest city, on the southwest coast, and are already counting waterfalls on our way in from the airport as we drive among a stream of electric cars. Bergen is on track to be the first major city in the world to pass 20 per cent electric cars. With a population of 284,000, Bergen has a charming, small-town feel, with its colourful medieval wharf area called Bryggen – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – lining one side of Vågen Harbour. On the other side, a lively



The colourful wharf area in the city of Bergen, gateway to fjord country

fish market showcases Norway's fresh offerings as the world's second-biggest seafood exporter.

Bergen is the gateway to fjord country. We wind our way easily out of the city, noting the absence of billboards and garish commercial signs, which are banned. We pass the small town of Dale, birthplace of Norway's famed knitted sweaters. It begins to rain enthusiastically, sending new waterfalls tumbling down steep cliffs – some right onto the roadside. Sheep graze bright-green fields alongside ornate farmhouses. Moss and grasses sprout from the roofs of roadside bus shelters, old cabins and post-boxes. We meander through countless tunnels.

In 1994, in a move ahead of its time, the Norwegian government designated 18 National Scenic

Routes throughout the country to entice travellers away from busy tourist areas and to bring attention and commerce to beautiful, little-visited towns and landscapes. To make the remote routes even more appealing, they launched nationwide architectural, landscaping and art competitions, with the winning entries placed along these wilderness roads. By the time the 30-year project draws to a close in 2023, there will be a remarkable collection of 250 viewpoints, visitors' centres, walkways, picnic areas and rest pavilions, some well above the Arctic Circle.

Our first detour is onto the Hardanger National Scenic Route, where we get a glimpse of an ultra-chic toilet block with a floor-to-ceiling glass wall overlooking spectacular



Skjervsfossen waterfall. Soon we are alongside one of the octopus arms of Sognefjord, Norway's deepest (1308 metres) and longest (204 kilometres) fjord. Its wildest and narrowest arm, Nærøyfjord, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the gateway is the village of Flåm. There, we sip a cold pale ale at the Viking-inspired Ægir craft brewery.

WHILE NORWAY has certainly been less touristed than many European countries, visitor numbers increased in the years after Disney's 2013 animated blockbuster *Frozen*, which is set on a Norwegian-like fjord. In 2019, Flåm's roughly 300 residents saw nearly 300,000 visitors from 160 cruise ships. It was numbers like this that inspired journalist Tone Rønning Vike and her husband to convert his family's farm into 29/2 Aurland. Just a few kilometres from

busy Flåm, it's a solitary getaway. Tone often hikes with guests to the biggest local waterfall. She serves potatoes from Norway's only school of organic agriculture, which is nearby, goat cheese from local farmers, and reindeer meat and mountain trout from indigenous Sami hunters and fishermen.

The following morning, we zigzag up the steep Aurlandsfjellet National Scenic Route, where farms are perched on the narrowest mountain ledges. Reaching the stunning Stegastein viewing platform, we literally walk out over the edge of the dramatic, narrow fjord.

The route then plunges into the world's longest road tunnel, 24.5 kilometres long. At the halfway point, a funky-coloured lighting display is a much-anticipated attraction to keep drivers awake. Norway has an astonishing 1250 tunnels, said to be third



highest in the world after China and Japan. We pop out of the mountain at the charming old-world town of Lærdal, whose

nearby Borgund Stave Church was built in 1180 CD. Stave churches are medieval wooden Christian church buildings that were once common in northwestern Europe; most of the surviving stave churches are in Norway.

Winding deeper and deeper into the fjords, we drive a roller-coaster network of roads built in the 1980s and '90s when Norway's economy boomed, reaching the village of Mundal, which, until 1986, was accessible only by boat. An unpretentious little farming town, its 280 residents are greatly outnumbered by a whopping 150,000 used books, which are stacked in old ferry waiting areas, sheds, grocery stores, cafés and on outdoor bookshelves.

The Stegastein viewing platform allows you to stand right over the edge of Aurlandsfjord

They even fill a vintage phone booth.

Dinner that night at the 14-room Fjærland Fjordstove Hotel is divine – lo-

cal duck, smoked trout, cider and a neighbour's plum dessert wine, which we sip overlooking the fjord waters and the icy blue tongue of the Jostedal Glacier, mainland Europe's biggest.

The following day finds us in Loen, where we whiz up the small town's new Skylift cable car, watching climbing enthusiasts tackle the fixed-route Via Ferrata alongside. We hike around the summit, taking in spectacular views up and down a tangle of fjords. Rain swoops down one while sun shines upon another. Rainbows constantly bloom and fade.

That night in the family-owned Hotel Alexandra we dine on their famed dinner buffet, a decadent expanse including cod, langoustine

READER'S DIGEST

and monkfish, local lamb and reindeer roasts. With a high standard of living, Norway is an expensive country to visit. Alcohol is particularly costly, especially in restaurants, but over and over again we are told by Norwegians that they are happy to pay the high tax rates to cover free university, childcare and maternity and paternity leaves. "Drink more," one fellow tells us, laughing, "you're paying for my retirement."

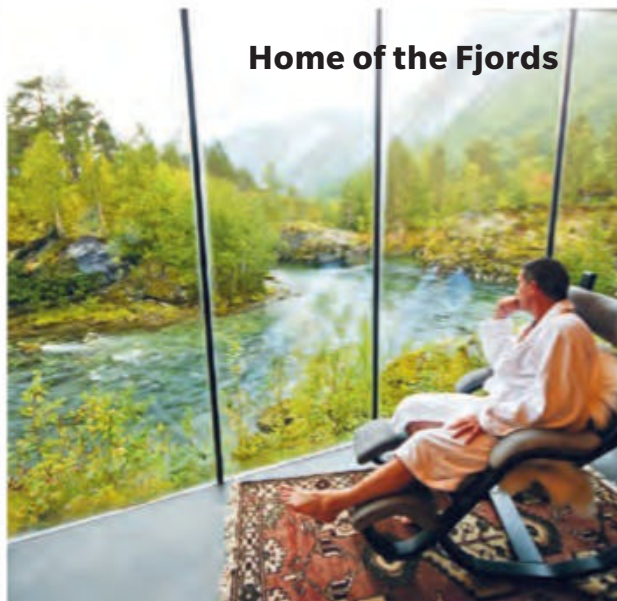
THE NEXT DAY we drive from autumn straight into mid-winter on the 104-kilometre Geiranger-Trollstigen National Scenic Route, one of the country's most beautiful and another

UNESCO World Heritage Site. Suddenly we are in the Arctic picking wild blueberries on tundra amid sheer bluffs and ankle-deep snow where traces of stone bridges from the original road remain. We stop to take in the views, including at the modern glass Ørnesvingen waterfall viewpoint, as the route zigzags down towards the village of Geiranger.

We frequently hop on brief ferry rides across inlets, including one to reach the second part of this National Scenic Route, the Trollstigen - 'Trolls Ladder'. It's a marvellously serpentine mountain road with a chic, angular visitors' centre at the summit, blending stylishly with the sheer rock

The serpentine Trollstigen route has 11 dizzying hairpin turns





Left: Medieval churches like the Borgund Stave Church, built in 1180 CE, were once a common sight. Right: Soaking up the view at the Juvet Landscape Hotel in Valdøl

walls. Glass balcony viewpoints create the feeling that you're hanging over the fjord looking down on the 11 dizzying hairpin turns that will take us down towards the next fjord and towns.

After all that cliff-side adrenaline it is a relief to pull in to the tranquil green landscape of Burtigarden Farm and the Juvet Landscape Hotel, which would be one of the trip's highlights. The main building is a historic farmhouse, but the owner hands us a key to one of seven ultra-modern, minimalist pine-and-glass cubes on stilts: small, simple wooden cabins tucked amid the woods and overlooking a bend in the Valdøl River. They are designed to blend in with the surrounding nature reserve. The ceiling-to-floor glass windows look onto lush forest, making it hard to tell whether we are inside or out. Along with

its grass-roofed spa, the Juvet was the setting for the 2014 British science-fiction film *Ex Machina*. In contrast to the contemporary lodgings, dinner is served in a restored 1914 barn.

We end up back on Norway's west coast in the Art Nouveau town of Ålesund, a major fishing centre, where the fjords meet the sea. Our hotel, the Brosundet, has incorporated the original wooden beams from its days as a salt-cod warehouse into luxury lodgings.

Norway is an easy country to traverse independently by car, and locals are eager to ensure visitors have a great experience. Besides, who wouldn't want to spend time in a place that routinely ranks high on the United Nations' World Happiness Reports? **R**

FROM CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC (JANUARY 22, 2020),
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FIN



BONUS READ

D I N G G O B I



How two outsiders found their way into each other's hearts

BY *Dion Leonard with Craig Borlase*

FROM THE BOOK **FINDING GOBI**

JUST like the start line of any race, everyone was doing their own thing to cope with the nerves. I tried to distract myself by looking at the other 100 or so competitors. It was June 2016 and I was in northwestern China to run a race: 250 kilometres over the course of a week across freezing peaks and then the scorching Gobi Desert. I'd be attempting about one marathon a day for four days, and two on day five.

Only three days earlier I'd kissed my wife, Lucja, goodbye in Edinburgh – she was also an ultramarathoner but couldn't get the time off for this race – and after the long trip, I was exhausted, which isn't how I wanted to feel this close to my biggest race. It's hard to think of a more brutal test of mental and physical toughness; ultramarathon runners go through agony, shedding sometimes even ten per cent of our body weight during these races. But finishing is one of life's most rewarding experiences.

I was 41, and had started doing ultramarathons three years earlier. I'd run the fabled Marathon des Sables in Morocco twice, running with 1300 others through the Sahara in 51.66°C-temperatures. The first time, I placed 108th; the next, I was 32nd. But at my most recent race, in Cambodia, I'd finished with my hamstrings in agony. I felt I may never compete again. But I'd recovered enough for the Gobi race.

The thought of never competing again made me feel queasy – and this

time, I wanted to reach the podium. Because I didn't like being an outsider. Not since I was a kid in Australia and life changed forever.

It was a sunny day in 1984 in my rural hometown in Queensland, just one day after my ninth birthday. That morning, I'd finally perfected my somersault on our outdoor trampoline, and after lunch Dad and I went out with our cricket bats. He taught me how to hold the bat and hit a ball so hard it sailed beyond our property's boundary.

That evening, Mum left for an aerobics class, Dad watched cricket on TV, and I went to bed. Sometime later, I awoke to, "Dion!"

I got up to see what Dad wanted. His breathing sounded wrong. "Go get your grandmother, Dion."

Nan lived in an apartment attached to the house. As soon as she saw Dad, she called an ambulance. "Garry, you're having an asthma attack," she told him in a voice I'd never

heard. “Keep calm, Garry. Stay with me.” When the paramedics wheeled Dad out, he was still struggling to breathe, his head shaking.

I’d never see him again.

At the funeral, I broke from Mum’s hand and draped myself around Dad’s coffin, sobbing, until someone peeled me away.

It was as if Mum became a child again after Dad died, crying constantly while Nan took care of me and my little sister, Christie. Then one evening, when Mum and I were in the kitchen, she said out of the blue, “Garry wasn’t your dad.”

I have no memory of what I replied, maybe because of the shock. What I know is that while everything had changed in one ambulance ride, it took only four words to rip my heart apart.

I was ashamed of the truth about myself. My hometown was a small place with traditional values, and it seemed all my friends came from perfect families. I didn’t want to be different, so I started attending church alone on Sundays. Sometimes the sermons made me feel better about myself. But the way people looked at me, whispering, as I hovered near the cakes table afterwards made it clear that I didn’t belong.

One Saturday when I went to a friend’s house, his mum told me he couldn’t come out. “You’re a bad influence, Dion,” she told me from behind the door. “We don’t want you coming around.” I walked away devastated. I didn’t swear or act out at school; I was polite, kind. But I was becoming aware of my place in life: on the outside.

As the years passed, my mother spent days in her bedroom, leaving me to make the meals. My little sister Christie and I couldn’t do anything right. If we left crumbs around or I didn’t do my gardening chores right, my mother would scream, “You’re useless!” I’d yell back, and soon we’d be swearing at each other. Mum never apologised. Neither

STILL ONLY A BOY, I WAS AWARE OF MY PLACE IN LIFE: ON THE OUTSIDE



did I.

By the time I was 15, I’d had enough. I said I was moving out, but Mum didn’t seem to care. A friend and I rented a room in a hostel filled with drifters and drunks. I was still at school and working at a petrol station to pay rent; I managed to keep up with my schoolwork, but my teachers showed no sign of caring.

I became an annoying loudmouth, riling the teachers and getting thrown out of class.

But when I hit my 20s, life got a lot better, and I met Lucja. I first tried running when I was 26 and we were living in New Zealand. At the time, Lucja was managing an eco-hotel and I was working for a wine exporter. Both jobs came with perks such as crates of wine and great meals out. People told me I was a big lad, and they were right. At 1.8 metres tall, I weighed 108 kilos, heavier than I'd ever been. I didn't exercise, occasionally smoked, and had created a dent in the sofa where I watched sport on TV.

Then Lucja made some new friends who loved running and fitness, and she got onto a health kick. When I realised it wasn't just a phase, I panicked: the fitter she became, the greater my risk of losing her. Why would she stay with a fat bloke like me?

So I started running, too, and got a lot healthier. For the first couple of years I ran three to six kilometres at a time, but then I impulsively bet a runner friend that I could beat him in a half marathon. He was so confident he'd win that the familiar fear from my youth – of not belonging – returned. I trained hard, won the bet, and haven't looked back. In fact, my need to prove myself only became stronger.

At the start line of the Gobi Desert race, I did a final check that my backpack's straps were snug across my chest. We carry everything we need for the entire week: I bring only a sleeping bag, the clothes I'm wearing, and the minimum food I need, 8000 kilojoules a day. I'd be eating rehydrated meals, jerky, nuts and energy gels, and I wouldn't be changing or showering.

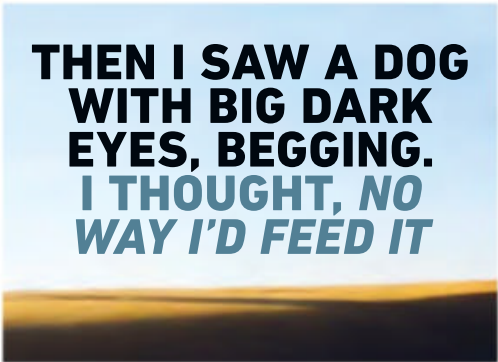
I should have been feeling confident; my training had prepared me well. But as always happens at the start line, I began thinking the other

runners were fitter, stronger. I struggled to ignore that familiar voice: *Who am I to think I can do this?*

The horn sounded and a crush of people surged down the middle, wanting to take

the lead. I'd put myself wide. I didn't want to trip, and I could maybe get ahead before the course narrowed and dropped into a canyon. My plan worked and soon I was behind a favourite to win, Tommy Chen of Taiwan. The rocks were slippery from the dew, and I struggled to keep my footing. A twisted ankle would mean a whole lot of pain or, worse yet, a 'Did Not Finish'.

Halfway through the day, I saw a dune towering ahead. It was steep,



**THEN I SAW A DOG
WITH BIG DARK
EYES, BEGGING.
I THOUGHT, NO
WAY I'D FEED IT**

and easily 100 metres high. The sand gave way with the slightest pressure, falling like weak clay, and I had to use my hands on it for extra grip. Tommy and I weren't running up it; we were scrambling.

Up top, we ran along its narrow peak stretching almost 1.6 kilometres. "Look at this view!" Tommy shouted. "Isn't it magnificent?" I said nothing. I'm scared of heights and had to move cautiously.

Tommy was surprised when I overtook him on the descent. We ran side by side for a while until a Romanian runner, Julian, caught up. The three of us traded the lead from time to time, and we ran across muddy fields, over bridges and past villages that belonged in another century. I became hopeful that this race might not be my last after all. I was flying.

Back in my yurt that afternoon, I laid down and thought about my performance. I was happy with third place, and there was only a minute or two between me, Tommy, and Julian. I ate some jerky and dozed in my sleeping bag, waking an hour later when my tentmates returned from their runs.

"Whoa! Dion's back already!" said an American named Richard Henson. I smiled, and congratulated them on the first stage.

"Are you here to win?" asked another.



Dion and Lucja on their wedding day

"Well, I'm not here for fun," I replied.

Richard laughed. "We got that impression. You're not exactly sociable, are you?"

I laughed too. I liked this guy. "Yeah, it's just how I get through these races."

At 6.30pm I wandered outside carrying my bag of dehydrated chilli. At the fire where water was boiling, I made up the meal. Everyone was sitting around chatting, but all the seats were taken, so I crouched on a rock and ate. After scooping the last traces from the bag, I got up to head back to the yurt and turn in.

That's when I saw a dog. Sandy coloured with big dark eyes and a funny-looking moustache and beard, it was walking among the chairs, getting up on its hind legs and charming



Dion feels that, in many ways, by finding Gobi he has found more of himself

runners into parting with their precious food. *Clever dog*, I thought. *There's no way I'd feed it.*

Just before 8 o'clock the next morning, I shivered in the cold as I took my place on the starting line. The ground was wet, and the Tian Shan mountains ahead were covered in dark clouds. We were already at an altitude of 2000 metres, and today would take us up to 3000. I focused only on the challenge ahead; I couldn't afford not to. Then my concentration was broken by laughter and a little cheering behind me.

"It's the dog! How cute!"

I looked down and saw the dog from last night. It was standing by my

feet, its tail wagging, staring at the bright yellow gaiters I wore to keep sand out.

Then it did the strangest thing. It slowly looked up, its dark eyes taking in my legs first, then my yellow-shirted torso, and finally my face. It looked right into my eyes, and I couldn't look away.

"You're cute," I said softly, "but you'd better be fast if you're not planning to get trodden on."

I looked about; someone had to get it out of our way. "Does anyone know whose dog this is?" I asked as the countdown began. None of the locals or staff noticed.

Nine, eight, seven....

I looked down. The dog was still sniffing my gaiters. "You'd better get away, little doggie." Five, four....

"Go on," I said, nudging it. But it only took a playful bite of the gaiter, jumped back, then dove in for another sniff.

The race began, and as I set off, the little dog came with me. The gaiters game was even more fun now that they moved, and the dog danced around my feet as if it were the best fun ever. But the last thing I wanted was to trip over the pooch and cause injury to it or myself. I had to stay focused on keeping pace, so I was thankful when, next time I glanced down, the dog wasn't there.

The forest fell away as the path climbed into the mountains. I kept concentrating on a short stride and quick feet.

Then I saw something move out of the corner of my eye. I forced myself to look down for a fraction of a second. It was the dog again. It wasn't interested in my gaiters now; it seemed happy just trotting beside me. *Weird*, I thought. *What's it doing here?* I liked dogs. Lucja and I had had a Saint Bernard named Curtly, but after he'd died, we didn't get another; neither of us wanted to go through that kind of pain again. But my only concern with this one was that it would trip me or make me lose focus.

I pressed on and attacked the incline. Zeng, the Chinese runner in the lead, had pulled away from me a little, but I couldn't hear anyone behind me. It was just me and the dog, side by side, tearing into the switchbacks.

When the path was interrupted by a large culvert, I leapt over the fast-flowing water without breaking stride. The dog stayed behind, barking and whimpering. But I didn't look back. I never do. The dog probably belonged to someone back near the camp. It had had a good workout, conned some runners out of food, and now it was

time to head home. I kept my head in the race and pushed on.

Suddenly there was a flash of brown, and the dog was back. *Determined little thing*, I thought.

Soon the track became even steeper and the temperature dropped. The air numbed my face and fingers, and the altitude made my breathing tight and my head a little dizzy. Every step became a battle.

When a checkpoint finally came into view, volunteers and organisers called out the usual encouragement. But this time, they shouted a little

louder. "There's that dog again!" I'd almost forgotten the little dog at my side. While I'd been struggling uphill, it had kept pace, skipping along as if running 750 metres into

**THE DOG
COULDN'T CROSS
THE CULVERT. BUT
I DIDN'T LOOK
BACK. I NEVER DO**



the sky was the most natural thing in the world.

At checkpoints, runners refill their bottles and medics ensure we're OK. But this time the dog got far more attention, and volunteers took photos. When I headed out, I expected the dog would stay there in favour of a better meal ticket. But it joined me again.

If the run up the mountain had been tough, the 1.5 kilometre descent on a path of rocks and loose stones was its own unique sort of

pain. It was brutal on the joints, and I struggled to hit anything close to my maximum pace. Tommy glided past me, followed by Julian. I was annoyed with myself for giving too much on the ascent, but finally the path flattened and I picked up my pace. I wouldn't catch Tommy, Zeng or Julian that day, but felt good to still be on pace for third overall.

People were cheering for the brown mutt and I as we crossed the finish line side by side. I could swear it was playing to the crowd by wagging its tail faster. "That dog, man!" said Tommy. "It's been following you all day!"

Someone found a small bucket and gave it some water, but I stepped back, wanting to get away from the crowds. When the dog finished

drinking, it looked up, locked eyes on my yellow gaiters, and trotted over. It seemed determined to follow me.

As soon as I sat down in the tent, the dog curled up beside me – and I started thinking about germs and diseases. It's crucial during these races to keep as clean as possible because without any access to showers or sinks, it's easy to get sick from anything you touch.

I had a few hours before my 6.30 meal, so I pulled out some nuts and jerky. The dog's stare into my eyes

was unbreakable. With a piece of meat midway to my mouth, it struck me that I hadn't seen it eat all day. "Here you go," I said, tossing it half the jerky. I didn't want its mouth on my fingers. The dog chewed, swallowed, spun around a few times, and lay down. Within seconds it was snoring, deeply asleep. Then I was, too.

I woke later to my tentmates cooing like kids. "Ah, how cute is that?" "Isn't that the dog from last night? Did you hear she followed him all day?"

She. I hadn't even considered if the

dog was male or female. I opened my eyes, and she was staring deeper into my eyes than I would have thought possible.

"Yeah," I said to the guys. "She stuck with me all

day. She's got a good little motor."

Some of them fed her, and she gently accepted, as if on her best behaviour. I told them I'd guessed she belonged to someone at the last camp.

"I don't think so," said Richard. "Some of the others said she joined them on the dune yesterday."

I was staggered. She'd run almost 15 kilometres in two days on those little legs. "You know what you've got to do now, don't you?" said Richard.

"What?" I asked.

"You've got to give her a name."

**JUST BY
BEING THERE,
DETERMINED, GOBI
MADE ME WANT
TO KEEP GOING**



The next morning, I stopped running just a few kilometres in, cursing my stupidity. I'd put on a jacket as it had been cold, but suddenly the sun came out. As I stood packing the jacket, Tommy, Julian, and two others passed. Then one more runner approached, and I smiled.

"Hey Gobi," I said, using the name I'd given her the night before. "You've changed your mind?"

She had spent the night curled up at my side, but once I got to the start line, she'd disappeared among the crowd. I'd been too focused on the weather to worry about her. But there was Gobi, looking up at me as I fastened my bag. She was ready to go. So was I.

Sometime later we reached a fast-moving river at least 45 metres wide. Julian had already traversed it, and I waded right in.

The water reached my knees, and there were slippery rocks underfoot. One misstep and my race could be over.

I was so focused I didn't consider Gobi. I guess I assumed she'd find her way across, like yesterday. But with every step I took, her barking and whining became more desperate. I was quarter way across when I did what I had never done before in a race. I turned around.

Gobi was running up and down the bank, looking at me as I made my way back. Would this lose me a

place on the podium? I tucked her under my left arm and waded back into the cold water. She was much lighter than I imagined. Using only my right arm for balance, I edged forward. I slipped more than once, one time going down hard on my left side, getting Gobi wet. But she didn't wriggle. She stayed calm, letting me do my job and keep her safe. There was a moment when her face was level with mine that I swore she gave me a look of genuine love and gratitude.

I put her down on the bank and she scrambled up it, shook herself off and stared at me. "You're ready, aren't you, girl?" I said, unable to stop smiling. "Let's go, then."

That's when I looked up and saw an old guy on a donkey. He was watching us, expressionless. *What must this look like?* I wondered.

I was behind the leaders but pushed to catch up. Whenever I started to tire, I only needed to glance at Gobi. Just by being there, and being determined, Gobi made me want to keep going.

Later, a couple of kilometres from the finish, I made a series of sprints to catch up to Tommy and Julian. My lungs burned, but Gobi thought it was great fun, pushing me hard - and we passed the leaders.

I crossed the line first, Gobi on my heels. The sound of the finishing drum couldn't drown out the cheers from organisers and volunteers.

Days four and five were going to be gruelling sessions on the black, hard-packed Gobi Desert under a cruel sun. I decided this would be too much for Gobi, so she'd travel to the next camp in a volunteer's car. I made sure that person was going to keep her cool and hydrated, but I felt a shiver of worry.

Gobi had attached herself so clearly to me; would she be OK with strangers? Or would she set off on another adventure?

Day four was brutally hot, with temperatures in the 38-degree range. I stayed in front for a long time, but that meant I had to navigate the route and suck up the vicious headwind. I missed Gobi biting at my gaiters to speed me up. My legs felt like concrete and my head drifted into familiar thoughts. *Maybe I'm all washed up. Maybe coming here has been one big mistake.*

By the time Tommy, Julian, Zeng and another runner overtook me, I was past caring. In the final kilometre, all I wanted was for this whole thing to be over. I could imagine Lucja telling me to sleep on it, that I'd feel better after some rest and food, but another voice was telling me to give up running completely.

Then I turned the final bend and saw Gobi sitting on a rock at the finish line, scanning the horizon. For a moment she stayed motionless, and I wondered whether she'd recognise me. Suddenly she leapt from the rock,

a blur of brown fur tearing towards me, little tongue flapping.

For the first time that day, I smiled.

In the tent, with Gobi curled up at my side, I drifted in and out of sleep. I was missing Lucja. I relied on her in so many ways at races. Whenever I became frustrated, she'd take the sting out. One of my favourite memories of running with her is our first Marathon des Sables. On day one, I'd almost quit. But as I neared the end of the final day, I was happy I'd place near the top 100. Then, just before the finish, I spotted Lucja, shielding her eyes from the sun as she looked in my direction.

"What are you doing here?" I asked when I reached her. She should have reached this point an hour ago.

"I wanted to finish with you," she replied. We crossed the finish line hand in hand. She could have placed much higher, but she chose to wait for me.

I needed Lucja. But today had taught me something else. I'd missed Gobi, and would miss her again the next day. She was a great distraction during hours of running, and she inspired me. She didn't know anything about running technique or race strategy; she was a fighter who refused to give up. After only two days of running with Gobi at my side, I realised I enjoyed watching her little legs power through.

So while day five, almost two marathons long, was even hotter – we'd moved onto the Gobi's black sand and temperatures soared to 51.66°C – I

kept the lead. When I really struggled, I pulled my secret weapon from my bag: an iPod. I'd saved it for a moment when I needed a boost, and my rocket fuel was Johnny Cash. When that baritone filled my ears with lyrics about outsiders and the kind of men everyone writes off, my spirits lifted. He was singing just to me, calling me to push harder, to prove the doubters wrong.

I was utterly depleted as I neared the finish, and there was Gobi, just like the day before. She dashed out to run the last 60 metres with me and we crossed the finish line together.

I was on a high. My overall second-place podium position was all but secure; the final day would be a symbolic 9.6 kilometres, followed by a celebration feast. I had proved to myself that my running career still had some life.

"What are you going to do about that little one?" one of the runners asked later, pointing at Gobi.

It was a good question, one I'd been asking myself. Did Gobi have an owner on the edge of the desert? Everyone I asked thought it was more likely she was one of China's countless strays. I didn't want to leave her to fend for herself, but there was more: Gobi had picked me, out of so many others. From the time she

started nibbling at my gaiters, she had hardly ever chosen to leave my side. She had trusted me to help her, and given everything she had to keep up. How could I leave her behind?

"You know what?" I replied. "I'm going to find a way to bring her home."

I hadn't spoken to Lucja for a week, and when I finally got to call her I was a little nervous. How would I tell her I wanted to bring home a stray dog from China?

But before I could say much more than hello, Lucja asked, "How's Gobi?"

I was stunned. "You know about Gobi?"

"Yeah! Some of the runners mentioned her in their blogs. Pretty little thing, isn't she?"

"She is. I wanted to talk to you..."

"You're bringing her home? As soon as I heard about her, I knew you'd want to." But it wasn't quite as easy as we'd hoped.

I left Gobi at the home of a trusted volunteer in the regional capital, Ürümqi. Back home, I returned to work, and Lucja and I researched the steps for bringing a dog to the UK. Gobi would have to be quarantined for four months at Heathrow Airport. But first, as we learned from a helpful woman named Kiki from WorldCare

GOBI HAD TRUSTED ME TO HELP HER. HOW COULD I LEAVE HER BEHIND?



Pet Transport (a Beijing pet-moving service), Gobi would need a rabies test in Ürümqi followed by a 30-day wait in that city. Then she could fly to the UK for her quarantine – but only from Shanghai or Beijing. To fly to either of those cities, she must be accompanied by the person who would be taking her out of China.

Could we really bring Gobi home? The total cost could be several thousand dollars. So we decided to create a crowd-funding page, setting the limit at \$6,500. Two days later, the *Daily Mirror* got in touch, and 24 hours after they published, “Heartwarming bond between ultramarathon man and the stray dog he refuses to leave behind,” we’d surpassed our target. Worldwide media coverage followed, and we had enough funds to bring Gobi home.

There was only one problem: she had gone missing.

Gobi had somehow gotten out of the volunteer’s home days earlier. Lucja and I agreed: if Gobi had a chance of being found, I’d have to return to Ürümqi. My employers at the whisky distiller where I’m a business manager were very supportive. I felt desperate, but my desire to find Gobi was as strong as any I’d ever had.

When I landed in Ürümqi, I met the

search committee that Kiki had organised, led by a dog-loving woman named Lu Xin. They’d been putting up posters and knocking on doors. I was blown away by the kindness of strangers who had jumped in to help. But I couldn’t see how we’d ever find Gobi in this city of more than four million. We’d have to knock on thousands of doors at countless apartment blocks. And she’d been gone several days; if Gobi had decided to head for the mountains in the distance – if she made it through the dangerous traffic first – she could be long gone.

It seemed impossible.

It was late when I got back to the hotel after my first full day searching with the team. I was jet-lagged and had not eaten since breakfast so

I ordered room service, took a drink from the minibar, and tried calling Lucja. No reply.

When Lucja called back, a surge of sadness flowed out of me, like water down a drain. All I could do was cry.

When at last I caught my breath, Lucja told me she’d talked with Kiki, and they’d agreed we needed local media coverage. She had arranged a TV interview for the next day.

“Maybe it’ll kick things off, like the *Daily Mirror* did,” she said.

“I hope so,” I said quietly. “But she

**IN THIS CITY
OF FOUR MILLION,
I DIDN'T SEE
HOW WE'D EVER
FIND GOBI**



could be a hundred kilometres away.”

“Sleep on it,” she said. “It’ll all look different in the morning.”

The TV reporter wanted to know why a guy living in Scotland would come all the way here to search for a dog, and he knew the search was being led by locals. The coverage worked; the next day we had more volunteers, and interview requests from across China. One sent a crew to follow me for a live broadcast of the search.

We needed the coverage to help convince locals to care about a little dog, and we did get more tips, though so far all were dead ends.

On the fourth day, I was excited when Richard, my tentmate from the race, arrived. His work took him around China, so he offered to help search. I didn’t know it at the time, but Lucja had asked Richard to look after me. She knew I was stressed and not eating properly. We went for a much-needed run; I’d had my eye on the mountains and Richard helped me hand out posters in villages there.

Still, I despaired as we searched Ürümqi’s streets daily. I couldn’t stop doubting our chances, and feeling the pain of knowing I was losing Gobi. We’d followed up on some 30 tips, going to see dogs that were nothing like her, dashing my hopes each time.

On day 14 of Gobi being missing we got yet another tip. Someone who

had seen our poster spotted a stray they thought was Gobi and had taken it home. They texted a photo, but it was blurry, and the dog had a deep scar on its head. I was doubtful, but we went to check it out.

We drove to a gated community and parked. I stepped into the house, and suddenly a streak of sandy brown shot across the room and jumped up at my knees. “It’s her!” I shouted, picking the dog up and thinking that I’d slipped into a dream. She was making the excited, whimpering, yapping sound she’d made when we were reunited at the finish line. “This is Gobi!” She burrowed into my lap like a puppy.

I rang Lucja. “We bloody well found her!” I said the moment she picked up. Both of us didn’t say much for a while. We were too busy crying.

I couldn’t risk leaving Gobi alone in China again. Also, she must have been hit by a car: in addition to the gash on her head, she had a painful dislocated hip and needed an operation. So Lucja and I decided I’d stay. I’d be with Gobi during the 30 days following the rabies shot, and then my little dog and I could do a three-month quarantine together in China and avoid her going through four months of that alone in the UK. I feared my employers would think I’d lost the plot, but they were again fully supportive, refusing my offer to resign.

“I guess this is where we start our



**Gobi's first run on the beach
in her new home in Edinburgh, Scotland**

new life together," I told Gobi when it was decided. She stared back at me, big eyes locked on mine, just like during the race. I was convinced she was telling me that whatever the next adventure was, she was all in.

We relocated to Beijing, where I rented a small apartment. The rabies test came back negative, and then Gobi had her hip operation. She was up and about just days later. We spent lots of time outside, walking along the canal on nice days. Gobi and I soon learned that the best street-food stalls served *jianbing*, a crepe with egg inside. We couldn't get enough of those. We even found a cafe where the staff didn't mind us sitting at an outdoor table; for a city that generally doesn't allow dogs in taxis or buses, and has only allowed guide dogs on

subways since 2015, this was a major score.

Gobi seemed happier than ever, holding her head high, eyes bright. It was impossible to tell she'd recently been a stray. Sometimes I'd slip out to the gym or supermarket, but Gobi didn't like being left alone. Whenever I returned, she'd spin and sprint and yelp with pure excitement. I'd pick her up, and a deep calm would fall over her, just like at the river crossing.

Life in Beijing got tougher in November: that's when the pollution worsened. The apartment was a furnace, but I

dared not open the windows and let dirty air in. We couldn't go for walks. The end of December couldn't come soon enough. Finally, though, after four months of waiting in China, we could go home.

“Wow!” says Lucja as the three of us charge up Arthur's Seat, the steep grassy mountain dominating Edinburgh's skyline. “Look at her energy!”

It's the day after Gobi and I arrived home and my 42nd birthday, and the three of us are on our first run together. Gobi turns around, tongue out, eyes bright, chest puffed. She and Lucja had bonded the moment they met, and it's as if she understands exactly what Lucja had just said.

“You haven't seen anything yet,”

I say, pushing the pace to loosen the strain on Gobi's leash. "She was like this in the Tian Shan mountains."

Gobi is a true climber, and with every step we take, she's more alive. Soon her tail is wagging so fast it blurs, her body bouncing with joy.

This little dog has changed me in ways I think I'm only just beginning to understand. To be trusted so much by a living creature, and to be on the receiving end of that kind of love and devotion is a powerful thing.

Love. Devotion. Attention. Affection. Those all disappeared from my

life for a whole decade when I was growing up. Now I was getting the chance to treat someone vulnerable in the way I wanted to be treated back then. In many ways, by finding Gobi, I've found more of myself.

Gobi turns again, pulling on the leash, and I swear she's grinning. *Come on! Let's go!*

Lucja and I look at each other and laugh as we run, enjoying the moment we've longed for: to be together. **R**

FROM THE BOOK *FINDING GOBI* BY DION LEONARD WITH CRAIG BORLASE. © 2017 DION LEONARD. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THOMAS NELSON.

Puzzle Answers

From pages 150-152

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Youth sleuth, eerie theory, Brazilian pavilion, sorority authority, rejuvenation repudiation



MIND THE GAPS

11. Eleven squares are missing, but only ten octagons are, so one paving stone must be cut.

SIX SUDOKU

1

3	4	5	2	1	6
2	1	6	3	5	4
6	5	1	4	2	3
4	3	2	1	6	5
1	6	4	5	3	2
5	2	3	6	4	1

2

1	3	5	4	2	6
4	2	6	1	3	5
6	5	2	3	4	1
3	1	4	6	5	2
5	6	3	2	1	4
2	4	1	5	6	3

3

3	1	2	6	5	4
6	4	5	3	2	1
5	2	1	4	6	3
4	3	6	2	1	5
2	5	3	1	4	6
1	6	4	5	3	2

4

6	1	2	3	5	4
5	3	4	6	2	1
4	2	1	5	6	3
3	6	5	4	1	2
2	5	3	1	4	6
1	4	6	2	3	5

5

1	3	4	6	2	5
5	2	6	4	1	3
6	1	3	2	5	4
4	5	2	1	3	6
2	4	5	3	6	1
3	6	1	5	4	2

6

5	6	1	4	3	2
2	3	4	5	1	6
4	1	2	6	5	3
6	5	3	1	2	4
3	4	5	2	6	1
1	2	6	3	4	5



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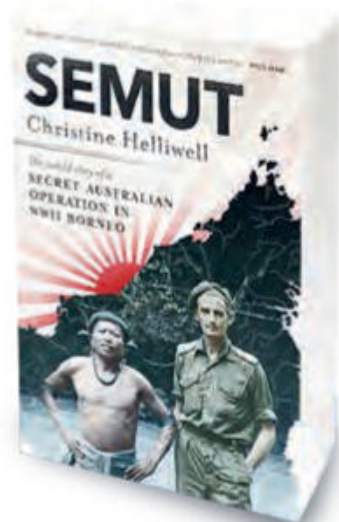
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COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY



Semut: Secret Australian Operations in WWII Borneo

Christine Helliwell

PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

If you like secret WWII missions, then this book is for you. A handful of young Allied operatives are parachuted into the remote jungle of Japanese-occupied Borneo to recruit the island's indigenous Dayak people. None of the operatives speak the Dayak language or know anything about the culture, other than they were once head-hunters. What could go wrong? Helliwell captures vividly the terrors of the jungle environment in this never-before-told story.

Our Home in Myanmar: Four Years in Yangon

Jessica Mudditt

When Australian journalist Jessica Mudditt arrived in Yangon (formerly known as Rangoon) in 2012, the military junta was just beginning to relax its ironclad grip on power. But the atmosphere always felt precarious, and life was riddled with chaos and confusion as much as wonder and excitement. From covering speeches by Aung San Suu Kyi, to getting close to cobras and scaling thousand-year-old temples, Mudditt was entranced by the country she called home for four years.



Climate Aotearoa

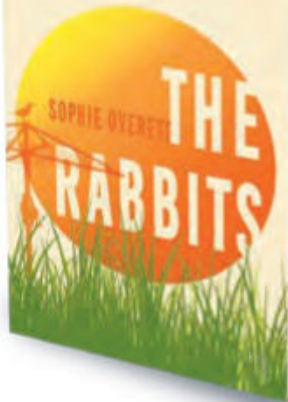
Edited by Helen Clark

ALLEN & UNWIN

With an introduction from former Prime Minister Helen Clark, and contributions from a range of climate scientists and commentators, *Climate Aotearoa* outlines the climate situation in New Zealand and around the world as it is today, and how it will affect our future day-to-day living. But it's not all doom and gloom; the authors claim that action will make a difference and suggest small changes we can make for maximum impact, and what we should be asking of our governments and business communities.



Fiction

**The Rabbits****Sophie Overett**

PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

If you like a touch of fantasy with your realism, you'll love this novel. Delia is struggling to raise her three children after her husband leaves. Despite everything, they are managing, until 16-year-old Charlie pulls a disappearing act that he's unable to reverse. This multigenerational story is full of family secrets, mild superpowers, loneliness, strange connections and a dose of magical realism. It will immerse you in the blood, sweat and tears of the Rabbits. Completely captivating.

Love Objects**Emily Maguire**

ALLEN & UNWIN

Nic and her niece, Lena, meet for lunch every Sunday. When an accident leads to Lena discovering her aunt's carefully hidden hoarding disorder, she is propelled into an emotional excavation of the past as she tries to get the house in order for Nic's return. All the while Lena faces her own very modern personal crisis. This is a beautifully written story that unravels the mysteries of how we tie our possessions to our identities and what it means to love people when they can no longer put their best face forward. *S.Dunn*

**Civilisations****Laurent Binet**

VINTAGE

In this alternative history, which is both literary fun and thought-provoking, the fearsome Viking queen Freydis discovers America, Christopher Columbus never makes it back to Spain, and the wily Inca king Atahualpa sails to Portugal. Atahualpa quickly takes to heart the alcoholic *vinho* made by monks and the lessons of acquiring power outlined in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. By playing feuding rulers off against each other, he ascends to a great position. That is, until the Aztec army invades France. *M.Egan*



Movies



Space Jam: A New Legacy

Missing your old Looney Tunes cartoons? Miss them no longer. *Space Jam: A New Legacy* is the long-awaited sequel to the 1996 *Space Jam* movie starring NBA superstar Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny. This latest version stars another NBA star, LeBron James, who teams up with Bugs in this animated/live-action production. LeBron and his son are trapped in a digital space by a rogue AI. To get home, he must lead the notoriously undisciplined Looney Tunes gang to victory in a game of basketball against the Goon Squad, the AI's digitised champions of the court.



In the Heights

From the creator of the musical *Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and the director of *Crazy Rich Asians*, Jon M. Chu, this movie is a must-see-on-the-big-screen for fans of either of these productions. Pumped with infectious hip-hop and salsa music, *In the Heights* is a refreshing, high-energy flick that captures Miranda's memories of growing up in New York's Washington Heights as the son of migrants. As in *Hamilton*, the cast is a mix of races that reflect the real America, not the white-washed Hollywood version, and the story is an unabashed celebration of community and what it means to dream outside the box.



Podcasts

**Fatal Affair**

Mark Mangelsdorf is a successful businessman. Melinda Harmon is a suburban housewife with a devoted husband. When David Harmon is murdered in a brutal crime of rage, suspicions fall on the pair, but lead nowhere. Twenty years later, police start investigating again.

**We Can Do Hard Things with Glennon Doyle**

Just launched is this new podcast by Glennon Doyle, author of the bestseller *Untamed* and, for many, the 'patron saint' of female empowerment. Here she explores the joy and peace we can discover when we stop striving to always please others and start trusting the voice deep within us.

**Seriously ...**

This collection of audio documentaries from the team at BBC Radio 4 covers a vast, unpredictable and always engaging series of topics. History, crime, science, technology – you name it, *Seriously ...* will cover it. It is updated weekly with an archive dating back to 2015.

**Digitalbook**

Powered by Amazon, www.digitalbook.io offers a wide range of free audio titles and genres. Classics such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* are available to download, as are science fiction, young adult and horror sections.



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THE GENIUS SECTION

*Sharpen Your
Mind*



Active Hands, CALM MINDS

*How crafts like knitting
can help us deal with
stress and more*

BY *Donyale Harrison*

The cliché of a knitter is a white-haired lady, possibly also solving murders if you're an Agatha Christie fan. But I grew up with stories of young RAF pilots wielding needles as they waited for their next mission in the 1940s.

'Lap crafts', like knitting, embroidery and beadwork, were the cornerstone of early occupational therapy. Wartime pilots crashed a lot and these crafts helped to rebuild dexterity in wounded limbs, while also helping to settle wounded minds.

Today, I'm one of millions who employ these same techniques, especially with knitting and crochet. Deb McDonald and Janine Smith run Skein Sisters, a yarn and knitting/crochet supply store in Sydney, and see this in both their customers and themselves.

"I think making is intrinsically entwined with our mental health," says Janine. "I know that if I haven't knitted for a few days for whatever reason, I really miss it. It's just like meditation."

Research supports Janine's hunch. Physiotherapist Betsan Corkhill and occupational therapist Jill Riley were part of a team from Cardiff University who surveyed over 3500 knitters and found that the more frequently people knitted, the calmer and happier they felt.

Describing their findings in *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, they wrote, "Bilateral, coordinated movements engage more brain ca-

capacity than unilateral ones and appear to facilitate a meditative-like state more readily...".

Or, as Deb puts it, "That rhythm of making stitch after stitch is like deep breathing. It's a flow where you don't have to stress about it, you've just got that rhythm happening. It allows your mind to wander and sort out all the problems you've got. You can think about what's happened in your day and put things aside with a much calmer sense of being."

'Flow' is a concept first named by Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who wrote in *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience*,

"The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times ... The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

SHAUNA RICHARDSON spent 18 straight months in a state of flow when she crocheted three 7.6 metre-long lions for the UK's Cultural Olympiad in 2012. To complete such a mammoth task, using nearly 60 kilometres of wool, she says, "it was necessary to zone everything out and sustain a state of mind driven by rhythm and process."

But smaller projects will also get

you there. Even a simple knitting or crochet pattern requires attentiveness to make sure each stitch is made correctly. And if there's not enough challenge in the simple, you can add more, from colour changes to textured stitches to highly intricate patterns, even 3D models of the human brain.

"Sometimes what you need is just that mindless repetition of a simple stitch," says Deb. "At other times, your brain is craving the complexity of a very tricky pattern or being able to tackle a problem like changing a pattern to something else. Maybe you can't solve other problems in your life, but you can solve a knitting or crochet problem!"

While this may be a less dramatic expression of flow than an Olympic athlete's performance, the experience is similar. As Janine puts it, "Certainly the joy that comes with mastering a tricky stitch or the challenging bit of a pattern is every bit as good as crossing the finish line first."

Professor Csikszentmihalyi also describes the opposite to flow. He points out that although people are healthier and grow to be older than in previous generations, they often end up feeling that "instead of being filled with happiness, their years were spent in anxiety and boredom."

He puts this down to the conditions of modern life, where many of

SCIENTISTS ARE STILL UNRAVELLING HOW KNITTING HELPS OLDER BRAINS



Crochet artist Shauna Richardson with a large-scale lion that she made from wool

us feel cut off from satisfying work. The Cardiff research team found that even though most of the people who replied to their survey were employed in everyday jobs, those who knitted three or more times a week felt significantly more able to organise their thoughts (72%) and forget their problems (73%).

The 67 per cent of knitters who didn't report having a medical condition generally described feeling calmer and in a better mood after knitting. But a whopping 81 per cent of the respondents who also suffered from depression "perceived that knitting made them feel happier". For respondents who suffered chronic pain, 88 per cent said that knitting gave them a sense of accomplishment and a means of coping with their pain.

Interestingly, more than half of the survey participants said that knitting encouraged them to try new skills, some wholly different, like making

beer or building furniture. Because knitting is so accessible – at heart it's two sticks and one stitch – it helps people to build confidence in their abilities. If you make a mistake, you can just pull it all out and start again. The mix of structured knitting patterns and infinite options in how you follow them, or

ignore them, adds further opportunities for creativity and success.

ALL OF THESE FACTORS are likely to contribute to why knitting, along with other crafts, has been shown in large-scale studies in Minnesota, USA, and Gironde, France, to decrease the risk of cognitive impairment in older people and perhaps even lower the risk of dementia.

While scientists are still unravelling exactly how knitting helps protect older brains, there's agreement that the craft's social aspect is yet another plus, whether meet-ups in pubs or yarn shops, or on virtual sites like Ravelry.com. Social knitters also often work together on large-scale projects, like the knitted poppies for the centenary of World War I, or for charities.

"It all comes from a place of joy in making," says Janine. "And that's a really important part of coping, particularly in this past year." **R**



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“I suddenly realised I didn’t have tinnitus anymore!”

*Kelvin Fleming,
panel beater*



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Now there is a home-based treatment which comes from new research on the ear and brain. It uses high frequency stimulation, through music, to re-build and organise brain connections. The result, for most listeners, is relief or reduction of tinnitus and related conditions.

Benefits can also include better sleep, clearer hearing, better memory, relief of dizziness and vertigo and a general feeling that the brain is sharper and communication is easier.

For a free DVD and information pack call the Sound Therapy national enquiry line on 1300 55 77 96.

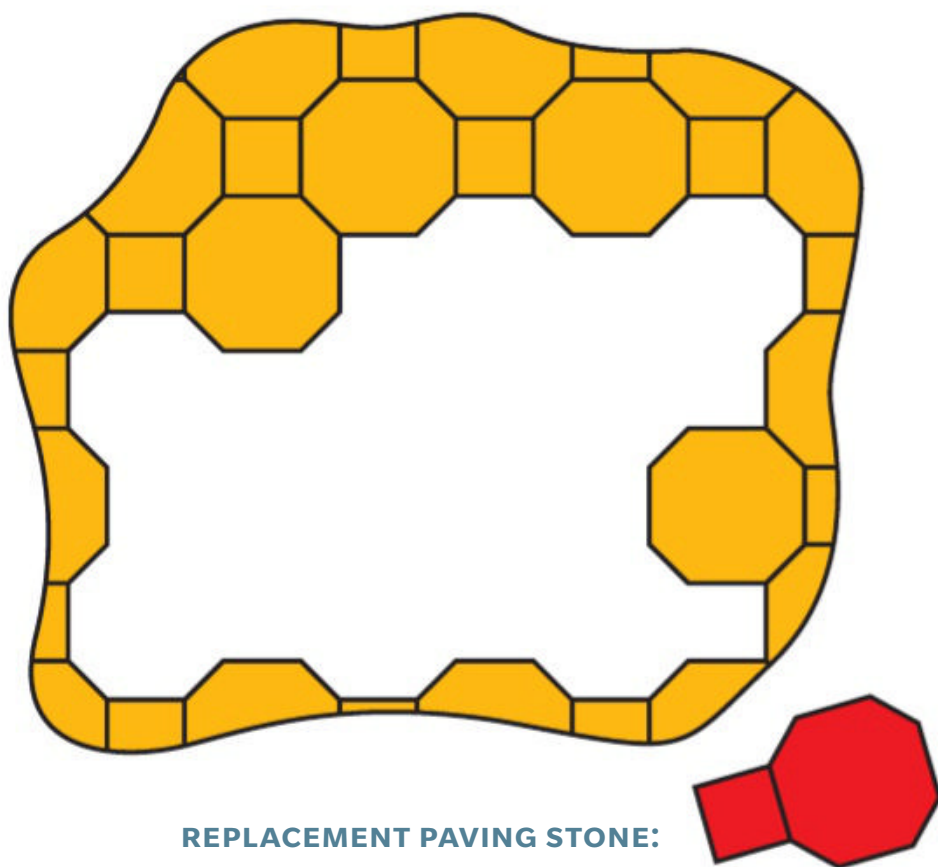
PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 139.

Mind the Gaps **Difficult**

Your patio has been damaged and needs to be repaved. What is the smallest number of replacement paving stones you need to fix it?

Note: Paving stones may be cut if necessary.



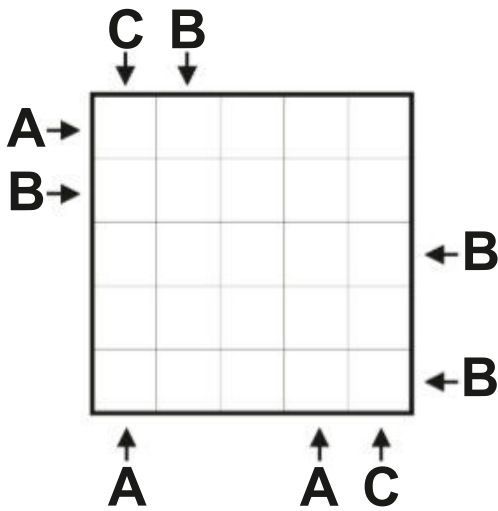
REPLACEMENT PAVING STONE:

DARREN RIGBY (MIND THE GAPS). EMILY GOODMAN (DOUBLE TROUBLE)

Double Trouble Medium

Rephrase each item below as a pair of rhyming words. Hint: Each item's number is also the number of syllables in each word in the answer.

1. A child detective
2. A hypothesis that gives you the creeps
3. A building with open sides in Rio
4. An established expert on sisterhood
5. A refusal to accept the restoration of vigour

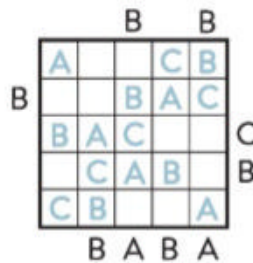


ABC

How to play:

Enter in each row and column the letters A, B and C in such a way that no row or column contains the same letter twice. The letters outside the grid indicate what letter is encountered first from the direction of the arrow.

EXAMPLE:



BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



"Write, Erase, Rewrite"

SIX SUDOKU

1

	4		2	1	
					4
	5			2	3
					5
1		4		3	
	2				

How to play
Insert the numbers 1 to 6 just once in each
a) row,
b) column,
c) bold outlined area and
d) white or grey rectangle.

2

	3		4		
	2	6			
	5				1
3					2
	6				
		1	5		

3

		2			
			3		1
5					
		3		4	
	6				2

EXAMPLE:

1	2	6	5	3	4
3	5	4	1	2	6
6	4	2	3	5	1
5	1	3	6	4	2
2	3	1	4	6	5
4	6	5	2	1	3

4

					4
5					
		1			
	6			1	
			1		
					3

5

				2	
5		6			
					1
3					

Beware!
The bold outlined areas are no longer 2x3!

6

5					
				1	
4					
				2	
		6		4	

'Your Opinion Counts'

Earn up to \$200 this year* just for telling us what you think.

To participate please text **'My Opinion Counts'** to
0455morgan or **0455 667 426** or
email myopinioncounts@roymorgan.com



* For every full calendar month we receive data from your devices you will receive a \$10 E-Gift Card and then additional gift cards for further survey participation.



ROY
MORGAN

TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

1. How many islands are there in the Philippines archipelago?

a. 352. b. 7641. c. 9058. **2 points**

2. What type of wine was sent to the International Space Station for a year, to see how it would age?

2 points

3. Vikings might have helped which animals spread across the globe, by bringing them on ships to control rodents?

4. In which of the following countries would you not find a pyramid that's more than 2000 years old: Sudan, Mexico, Madagascar or Italy?

5. Which Australian band sang the global hit song 'Down Under' released in 1980?

6. Approximately three quarters of the world's smartphones run on which operating system?

7. An estimated 18 to 35 per cent of humans

experience photic sneezing, which is what?

8. Which company owns or has a majority share in Bugatti, Lamborghini, Audi, Porsche and Ducati?

9. In early 2021, what genre of traditional folk music was trending on the youthful social-media platform TikTok?

10. What is the Earth's only permanent natural satellite?

11. Which country's national broadcaster popularised the concept of 'slow TV'?

12. Before there was an internet, a Soviet mathematician proposed a nationwide network of civilian computers. True or false?

13. What mythical beast is the national animal of Scotland?



14. There are now over 30 Godzilla movies. In which decade was the original released?

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. 7641. 2. Red wine (Bordeaux). 3. Cats. 4. Madagascar. 5. Men at Work. 6. Android. 7. Sneezing in response to bright light. 8. Volkswagen. 9. Sea shanties. 10. The Moon. 11. Norway. 12. True, but the proposal was rejected. 13. The unicorn. 14. The 1950s.

WORD POWER

Full Circle

We're throwing you a curveball this month with a vocabulary round-up of a circular nature. Give this quiz a whirl, and then take a spin to the next page for answers

BY *Emily Cox* AND *Henry Rathvon*

- 1. rouleau** – A: roll of coins.
B: mushroom cap. C: crystal ball used by fortune tellers.
- 2. ellipse** – A: crater. B: oval.
C: revolution.
- 3. gyre** – A: spiral motion.
B: ring of fire. C: pirouette.
- 4. rotund** – A: curled. B: plump.
C: rotating.
- 5. circuitous** – A: winding.
B: surrounded. C: eclipsed.
- 6. bobbin** – A: life preserver carried aboard ships.
B: spare tyre. C: spindle for thread.
- 7. aureole** – A: pearl. B: plant seed.
C: halo.
- 8. cupola** – A: bald spot.
B: espresso mug made from glass.
C: roof dome.

- 9. roundelay** – A: traffic circle.
B: song with a refrain.
C: barber pole.
- 10. chapati** – A: flatbread.
B: eye patch worn by pirates.
C: tasselled belt.
- 11. globular** – A: convenient for rounding up numbers.
B: curving inwards.
C: globe-shaped; spherical.
- 12. maelstrom** – A: eye of a hurricane. B: water cycle.
C: whirlpool.
- 13. aperture** – A: orbit. B: hole.
C: wine cork.
- 14. ovate** – A: coiled. B: wearing a crown. C: egg-shaped.
- 15. oculus** – A: gun barrel.
B: spinal disc. C: round window.

Answers

1. rouleau – (A) roll of coins.

Anand organises his spare change into rouleaus, but he always forgets to take them to the bank.

2. ellipse – (B) oval.

I'm drawing your face as a greenish ellipse – no offence.

3. gyre – (A) spiral motion.

In a widening gyre, the drone rose over the field.

4. rotund – (B) plump.

"Rover is getting a bit rotund – how many treats do you feed him?" the veterinarian asked.

5. circuitous – (A) winding.

The hikers followed the circuitous trail through the forest.

6. bobbin – (C) spindle for thread.

My great-grandmother's vintage sewing machine is in perfect condition, but it's missing the bobbin.

7. aureole – (C) halo.

The sun shone behind Diana, making her blonde hair look like a glowing aureole.

8. cupola – (C) roof dome.

A white marble cupola tops the mosque's towering minaret.

9. roundelay – (B) song with a refrain. The singer-songwriter's new album is full of soothing, folk-inspired roundelays.

10. chapati – (A) flatbread.

Dad whipped up vegetable curry and fresh-baked chapati for dinner.

11. globular – (C) globe-shaped; spherical. Galaxies are often surrounded by dense clumps of stars called globular clusters.

12. maelstrom – (C) whirlpool.

The small fishing boat was nearly pulled into the powerful maelstrom.

13. aperture – (B) hole.

The wily fox slipped into the henhouse through an aperture in the wall.

14. ovate – (C) egg-shaped.

Before his fall, Humpty Dumpty had maintained an ovate physique.

15. oculus – (C) round window.

The stained glass in the chapel's oculus dates to the 1920s.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

5-8: Fair

9-11: Good

12-15: Word Power Wizard

On your entire order! – Quote code **RM17S** when ordering

Only
\$2
Postage

Handy Portable Vacuum Cleaner

– perfect for home, office and car

Compact, light and powerful, this rechargeable vacuum cleaner makes it easy to keep your keyboard, car dashboard, blinds and other awkward corners free from dust, crumbs and hair. You can even choose the 'blow' function to drive out hidden dirt! It's also easy to empty and clean by simply twisting the cylinder open. The nozzles, brush and a USB cable for charging the built-in battery all fit neatly in the carry bag supplied.

Portable Vacuum Cleaner

• PTVC \$59 or
\$29.50 x 2 mths

*Interchangeable heads, storage bag
and charging cord included*



*So many uses
around the home
or in the car*



*Makes cleaning
up crumbs
effortless!*



Fun Footprint Doormat – thick, absorbent and hard-wearing

Brighten up any doorway with this eye-catching mat. Two stylised footprints are surrounded by colourful, realistic-looking pebbles, all finished with smart brown borders. It measures 75 x 45 cm and the flocked rubber surface scrapes off mud and dirt as it absorbs excess moisture. The slip-resistant backing is environmentally friendly recycled rubber and you can simply hose the mat to keep it looking fresh and clean.

Happy Feet Doormat

• HAPF \$29.95

*Happy feet doormat is the
perfect way to welcome your guests!*



*Slip-resistant
backing*

Attractive pebble design

3-in-1 Space Saver

– ottoman that's a filing cabinet, handy seat and clever storage!

This ottoman is a great alternative to office-style furniture if you need to store and organise Foolscap files. You could also find it useful for bedding, out-of-season clothes, magazines or other clutter you'd like to tidy away. Strongly made from plywood with a wooden frame, it measures a practical 51H x 63W x 47D cm and moves easily on castors. With its generous foam cushioning and attractive linen finish it also makes a handy stool. Minor assembly required. *Files and props not included.*



Close the lid for an attractive seat

Perfect for:

- Files
- Magazines
- Clothes
- Accessories
- Linen
- Toys

File Storage Ottoman

• FSOTT
\$149 or
\$37.25 x
4 mths

Clever way to organise files and keep clutter out of sight!

Superb protection for your home



Features Super Bright LED lights

Porch, patio, driveway, shed - so many uses!

Solar Motion Detector LED Spotlight

– deters burglars, lights your way

Any prowler exposed by a sudden flare of light will make a hasty exit – especially when the spotlight looks like a CCTV camera. Activated when anyone comes within 5 metres of the infrared motion detector, it will also light your way, then shut off automatically. Weather-resistant with super bright LEDs, it's easy to install, and the 8.5 x 14 cm solar panel provides overnight power. Easy to adjust, so you can point the light in any direction.

Solar Motion Spotlight

• SMSPOT \$29.95

SAVE \$10

Buy two for \$49.90
or \$24.95 x 2 mths



Advanced Motion Detection - up to 5 metres away

▼ Learn To Crochet Top-Down Beanies

Create eight beanies, crocheting from the top down using a handy measuring template. Every beanie begins the crown the same way and increases until it measures the dimensions of the beanie you want. Make stylish, modern and wearable designs for everyone in the family. 24 pages. • **65808 \$15.95**



Lina & Lilo ►

A trio of adorable dolls to knit. Sufficient yarn is included to make all the clothing pictured and the shoes and hair. Your **Knitting** kits include a 30 cm fabric doll with embroidered face, Bererege de France yarn and knitting pattern.

A. 66016 Lina Parisienne

B. 66017 Lina Citadine

C. 66018 Lilo Parisien

\$69.95 each or buy two \$125.90 or \$31.48 x 4 months



▲ Flowers

A classic floral rug design, easy to make. Your **Latch Hook** kit includes design hand-painted in colour on 4.5-mesh canvas, pre-cut acrylic yarn, latch hook tool and instructions. 75 x 45 cm.

• **65980 \$139 or \$34.75 x 4 months**



Only \$2 Postage on your entire order! Quote code RM17S when ordering

Ultra-Light Breathable Trainers – feels like walking on air!

Cool
breathable
mesh!



Comfortable
and fashionable
anytime

Fashion and practicality have come together to create these remarkable trainers. They look fantastic, in grey polyester mesh trimmed with pale peach. And the mesh also holds the secret to their incredible comfort. It not only helps to make the whole shoe incredibly light, it allows air to circulate so your feet stay blissfully cool. Finished with white, slip-resistant soles they're perfect for both exercise and casual wear.

**Ultralight
Breathable
Trainers**
• LBTRN
**\$69 or \$23 x
3 mths**



Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10

Gabbeni

Compact Leather Zip Phone Bag

Perfect for a night out, this 19H x 9W x 3Dcm leather bag with adjustable strap features a compartment for your phone, a zipped accordion-style card section as well as a zipped section for cash.

Compact Leather Zip Phone Bag

• PHONH \$29.95ea

Taupe

Carry all your
essentials!



Black

Handy zippered
card section



Red



Perfect for quick jobs around the home



Complete with neat carry case



Recharges easily via USB

Cordless Screwdriver Set - charges in just 2 hours!

Perfect for DIY jobs around the home, this compact 16D x 15W x 6D cm screwdriver comes with a range of 40 practical heads, sockets and bits. It charges completely in 2 hours – simply plug the USB cord supplied into your PC or phone charger and you'll be ready to handle most household jobs. There's a guide light to help you see clearly as you work, and everything fits neatly into a hard carry case.

Cordless Screw Driver Set • SDSET
\$39.95 40-Piece Set

GREAT FEATURES

- 40 Heads & Sockets & Drill
- Hard Carry Case
- USB Cord Supplied

\$2
Postage
 on your entire order!

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM17S** when ordering

THE DRY (2020)

1 DVD

Federal Agent Aaron Falk (Eric Bana) returns to his home town to attend the funeral of his childhood friend, Luke, who allegedly killed his wife and child before taking his own life. When Falk reluctantly agrees to stay and investigate the crime, he opens up a decade old wound – the death of 17-year-old Ellie Deacon. Could these two crimes be connected? 1 DVD, 112 mins. **SUBTITLES**

• MTHEDR RRP \$34.95 Price \$24.95

WYCLIFFE
 THE COMPLETE COLLECTION (1994)

Based on the novels by W.J. Burley, this highly acclaimed detective series follows the exploits of the extremely meticulous and very clever Detective Superintendent Charles Wycliffe (Jack Shepherd). Set amid the windswept beauty of Cornwall, Wycliffe leads an investigative team charged with solving the most serious and challenging cases. Includes Series 1-5. 10 DVDs, 32 hrs. • **MWYCO**

\$89 or \$22.25 x 4 mths

10 DVDs



Spa-Style Towel Warmer

– a touch of luxury every day

Imagine the sheer pleasure of wrapping yourself in a warm and cosy towel every time you step out of the bath or shower. This attractive warmer will thoroughly heat two oversized towels, bathrobes or even a blanket yet, at just 30 cm in diameter and 52 cm tall, it's compact enough for any bathroom. Mains powered, it has four timer settings and simple, two-button operation – it's the easy way to enjoy salon-style luxury and comfort.

Compact to fit in any bathroom

Freestanding and stylish in any space

Towel Warmer • TWLMA \$189 or \$47.25 x 4 mths



Imagine the luxury of a warm towel or robe after a shower!

- Simple to use
- 2 button operation
- 4 timer settings

Interchangeable Doormat – change the design whenever you want!

Now your doormat can change with the seasons and your mood. The five exclusive print Innovations designs feature Christmas and Easter greetings along with colourful images of koalas, parrots, and poppies with a pretty butterfly. Simply pop your choice into the 80 x 50 cm PVC frame. Finished with a slip-resistant backing, there's even a decorative aluminium badge that says 'Welcome' all year round.

Simply pop in the insert of your choice

Choose the perfect welcome!



6 piece Set

5 exclusive designs included

Interchangeable Doormat
• INTMT \$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths



Supplied blank

Poppies

Christmas

Koalas

Easter

Parrots

Compact Kitchen Cooking Station – It even makes coffee!

Fry, grill, bake, roast – this incredible Cook Station can prepare the food you love in all kinds of different ways. Imagine starting the day by cooking bacon, eggs and sausages as you make toast or heat your croissant! You can also make four cups of coffee at any time. And, incredibly, it measures just 45L x 18D x 20H cm so it's perfect for small kitchens or your caravan. It's also very easy to clean.

Multi Kitchen Set

• MKITC \$99 or
\$24.75 x 4 mths



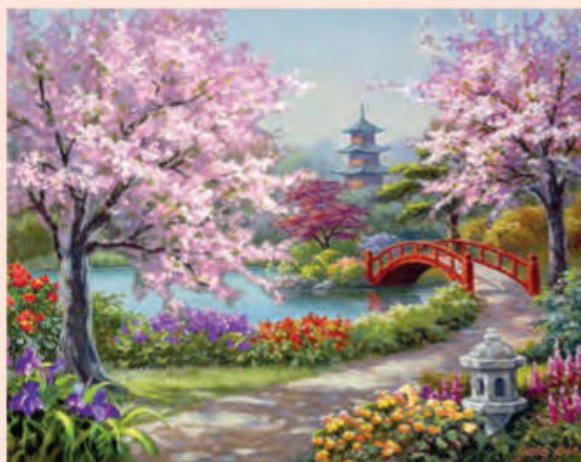
*Perfect in a kitchen
or caravan!*

3-In-1
Toaster, Frypan
& Coffee Maker

Great Features: • 4 Cup Coffee Maker • Multi-Function Toaster • Non-Stick Griddle with lid

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM17S when ordering

\$2
Postage
on your entire
order!



◀ Japanese Garden Diamond Mosaic

Discover the amazing craft of diamond painting and create this dazzling design in no time. It's easy, relaxing and super fast. Your Diamond Painting kit includes colour printed fabric with an adhesive finish, and acrylic facets sorted by colour, tool, wax and tray. 48 x 38 cm.

• 65856 \$99.00 or \$24.75 x 4 months

The Police House Puzzle ▶

The perfect pursuit for a quiet evening or the opportunity to bring the family together in a shared project, a jigsaw puzzle is a great way to relax and unwind. This nostalgic jigsaw puzzle from Holdson features 500 larger pieces and measures 68 x 49 cm. • 64977 \$29.95





No bending required.
Pick, prune and water your garden easily!

Perfect for flowers, herbs or vegetables

SAVE \$10
Buy two for \$128
 or \$32 x 4 mths

Roomy Raised Planter – great for veggies, herbs and plants. **No bending!**

You can tend this raised polyester planter without kneeling or bending so it's ideal for growing herbs, salad leaves and other vegetables as well as your favourite flowers. It holds up to 30 litres of potting mix yet, at 79H x 65W x 40W cm, it's perfect for balconies and other small spaces. There are holes for good drainage and the foldable steel frame helps to keep weeds and pests at bay.

Props not included.



Foldable steel frame

Raised Planter Stand • RPSTD
\$69 or \$17.25 x 4 mths

A beautiful way to display flowers!

Soft, Comfy Slippers

– easy to slip on and off

Everyone needs a pair of cosy, comfortable slippers to step into on a chilly morning and relax into at the end of the day. These fit the bill perfectly. The plush lining surrounds your feet with warmth while the tough PVC outer sole is slip-resistant for security. As easy to take on and off as they are to wear, they're made from washable polyester with a pretty ribbon bow trim. Navy or Brown.



Navy

Soft Plush Slippers • SFPS
\$19.95 each



Warm and cosy slippers finished with a pretty bow

Brown

Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10



Brown

Patchwork Leather Bag Set – three practical pieces

Very stylish genuine leather bags trimmed with PVC, and feature statement braided panels. The 34 x 23 cm handbag has zipped compartments inside and out, plus one with an easy-access touch fastener. The 19 x 11 cm wallet has space for cash and cards while the 16 x 9.5 cm purse is perfect for keys and coins. Fully lined with polyester, they make a fashionable and practical set. Choose Black or Brown. *Leather patchwork is unique to each bag and may differ slightly from photograph.*

Patchwork Bag Set

Brown • PTCBS

Black • PTCBU

\$39.95 each

set of 3

Fashionable
and practical
bag set



Black



Perfect for everyday use

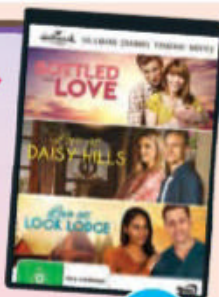
Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM17S when ordering

\$2
Postage
on your entire
order!

Hallmark Movies Collection 10

Bottled with Love (2019):

After being stood up, Abbey opens her heart in a letter, places it in a bottle and tosses it out to sea. Months later, a handsome man reaches out.



3
DVDs

Love at Daisy Hills (2020): Jo's family's store is losing profit and her father calls in a favour with her ex-boyfriend. Will sparks fly once again?

Love at Look Lodge (2020): Lily helps workaholic Noah to plan his estranged sister's wedding. They soon discover what really matters in life and fall in love. 3 DVDs, 254 mins.

• MHALMK \$34.95



Doris Day

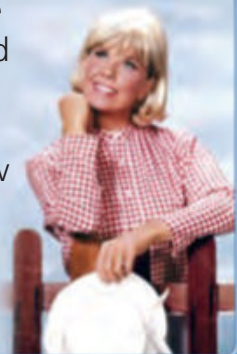
COLLECTION

Relive some of Doris Day's most memorable performances with this deluxe film collection. Includes: The Thrill of It All (1963), Ballad of Josie (1967), Midnight Lace (1960), Lover Come Back (1961), It Happened to Jane (1959), Young at Heart (1954), Send Me No Flowers (1964), Pillow Talk (1959). 8 DVDs, 820 mins.



8
DVDs

• MDORIT \$69.95
or \$23.32 x 3 mths



Easy Yoghurt Maker Set – fresh, healthy, delicious, saves money, too!

You'll be amazed how easy it is to make plain yoghurt just the way you like it. Simply mix milk with a little store-bought natural yoghurt or starter, pour it into the glass jars and pop them into this 23 cm diameter yoghurt maker. Set the timer and, when complete, pop them into the fridge to finish setting. Eat it plain straight from the jar, or add your favourite flavourings, fruit or cereal, or use it in savoury recipes. Delicious!

Easily make plain yoghurt, then add your own topping

Yoghurt Maker Set • YOGHT
\$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths



Delicious homemade yoghurt! Simply top the plain yoghurt with fruit, honey, nuts or cereal



7 glass containers for making individual servings of yoghurt

Neat and compact to fit into a bag



Hold up to 36 cards securely



Roomy RFID Leather Wallet – it holds 36 cards plus notes and phone!

Have you gathered a collection of plastic cards for credit, debit, stores, travel, membership and identification? Then this is the wallet for you! You can organise as many as 36 in easy-to-find sleeves and a special, protective lining also keeps them safe from information-stealing scanners. Sleek and stylish in leather and measuring 11H x 20W x 3D cm, it also holds bank notes and most phones. It zips closed for added security.

36 Credit Card RFID Wallet
• CCRDW \$22.95



Recliner



Armchair



2-Seater



3-Seater

- Armchair Cover - fits back width 60-110 cm
- 2-Seater Cover - fits back width 120-160 cm
- 3-Seater Cover - fits back width 170-220 cm
- Recliner Cover - fits most standard recliners

Cream Stretch Covers • ISCVB

Armchair	\$99
2-Seater	\$139
3-Seater	\$169
Recliner	\$119

4 mths payment terms available

Italian Made Stretch-To-Fit Sofa Covers – a new look for your sofas

The fabric used to craft these beautiful covers is a 50-50 mix of cotton and polyester which can stretch in two directions. That means it will cling to every curve of your sofas and chairs, creating the look of professional upholstery. The fabulous, flowing design in contemporary shades of beige will look good with any colour scheme. Easy to remove, wash and dry - your furniture will always look its best.

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM17S when ordering



Multi-Purpose Craft Desk ▶

An elegant, compact and versatile desk you can use for sewing and all kinds of crafts. Made of chipboard with a bright white finish, this adaptable table will fit in all corners of your home and its four sturdy casters make it tremendously mobile. It features three shelves 60 cm wide, including one that slides out to hold a keyboard, plus an additional narrow shelf to the side, ideal for storing a sewing machine. The desktop is 81 cm wide and 47 cm deep, and the desk stands 75 cm high.

- 64604 \$119.00 or \$29.75 x 4 months Usually \$199.00



Slide-out Shelf



Machine Storage

Only \$119 Save \$80!



Flame-Effect Mini Fireplace Heater – an eye-catching focal point in any room

Gazing into flickering flames is very relaxing – and, as this heater creates a very realistic glowing log effect, you don't need the trouble and expense of an open fire. A compact 36H x 32W x 17D cm, it has two heat settings or you can enjoy the flame effect alone. Mains powered, the glow is created by 3 LEDs so there are no bulbs to replace.

Mini Fireplace Heater MFPHT
• \$149 or \$37.25 x 4 mths

watts

GREAT FEATURES:

- 900W or 1800W
- 2 heat settings.
- Flame effect can be used independently of heat source.
- Flaming log effect

Keep warm with this unique heater!

VIDEO ONLINE

Realistic glowing logs and flame effect



Safer than an open fire



Features:

- Remote control
- Adjustable temperature
- Auto 60 minute shut off

Keep warm on your commute or when you're travelling

Warms up quickly when plugged into 12 volt power

Comfort Travel Pad

– soothing warmth in the car

If you love the feel of a little extra heat across your lap, this pad will help you travel in blissful comfort. A handy 43 x 43 cm and made from soft polar fleece, it plugs into a car's 12 volt power outlet and heats quickly to a maximum of 70°C. You can control the temperature degree by degree with a remote control and it will switch off automatically after an hour. Enjoy your trip!

Comfort Travel Pad

• COMTP
\$29.95





Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

A LEGACY OF HOPE

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse is a comprehensive cancer centre treating both public and private patients. When Professor Chris O'Brien AO was diagnosed with brain cancer, he used his diagnosis to advocate for his vision of bringing together all elements of cancer care in one place.

Today, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse is the leading referral centre in Australia for rare and complex cancers. We offer every type of treatment and service that people with cancer need under one roof. Our clinicians are world-leaders in cancer research, determined to find better ways to treat patients, improve outcomes and deliver uncompromising, patient-centred care.



Professor Chris O'Brien AO
3 Jan 1952 - 4 Jun 2009

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse is not only Chris' legacy, but the legacy of our community of gift in Will supporters. As a not-for-profit hospital, our model of care relies on our generous supporters, who enable major breakthroughs in world-first cancer research and further advance our standards of specialised and holistic care.

By leaving a gift in your Will to Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, you leave a legacy of hope for people with cancer and their families, both now and into the future.

To find out more about how you can make an impact, please contact Rebecca Scott for a confidential discussion on 02 8514 0988 or Rebecca.Scott@lh.org.au.

Does your optometrist give you an OCT advanced 3D eye scan at no extra cost?

We do



Book an eye test online

Specsavers