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APRIL 2022

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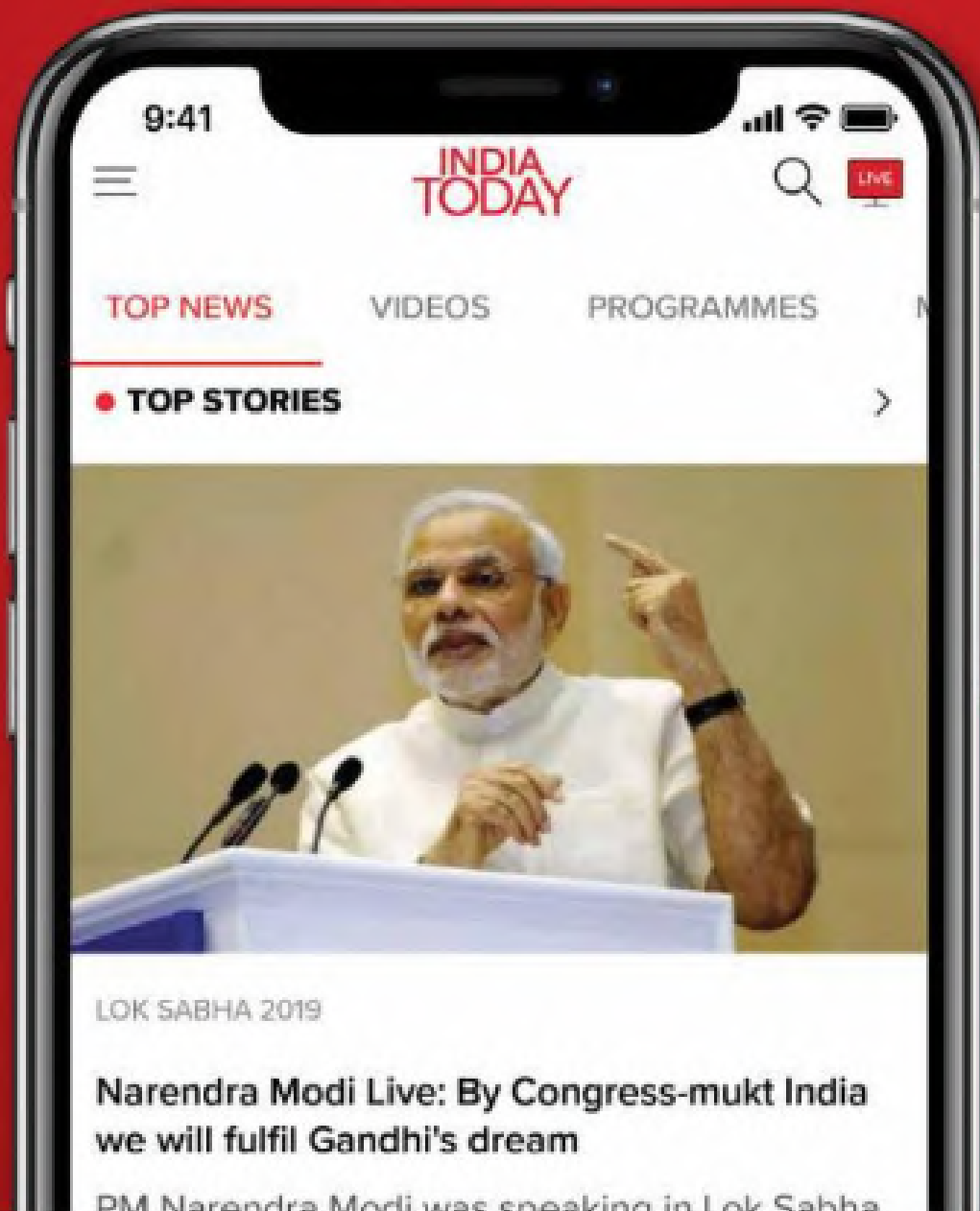
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Contents

Features

48

Anton, Friend of All the World

In a tribute to his most unforgettable character, a literary great tells the story of cheerful Anton, who never had a job—but was always busy.

BY STEFAN ZWEIG

56

Why God Saved Anna Hazare

The humble, remarkable origins of the man who became the people's champion against corruption and injustice in India.

BY MOHAN SIVANAND

64

String of Blue Beads

A lonely shopkeeper's discovery of the most precious gift to give or receive—love.

BY FULTON OURSLER

64



70

The Day Bombay Blew Up

A haunting account of the Bombay harbour explosion that occurred 78 years ago this month.

BY JOHN ENNIS

78

The Man Who Will Not Forget

The life and work of Simon Wiesenthal, who tracked down more than 1,000 Nazi war criminals.

BY JOSEPH BLANK

88

Amy's Choice

Four young siblings. No parents. Just one teenager determined to keep their family together.

BY RENA DICTOR LeBLANC

102

The Great Balloon Escape

Trapped under the iron rule of an oppressive regime, a family dares to ride the winds to freedom.

BY JÜRGEN PETSCHULL



16

- 10 **Over to You**
- 38 **Towards More Picturesque Speech**
- 87 **Notes from All Over**
- 97 **Lessons in English**
- 112 **Keep Up With the World**
- 113 **Word Power**
- 115 **Quiz**
- 116 **Quotable Quotes**

Conversations

WORDS OF LASTING INTEREST

- 16 **Lessons in Diplomacy, from Dag Hammarskjöld**
BY JHAN ROBBINS

PERSONAL GLIMPSES

- 20 **Mother Teresa, Charles de Gaulle, Ashutosh Mukherjee and Morarji Desai**

DEPARTMENT OF WIT

- 26 **When Mothers Get the Bug**
BY JOYCE LUBOLD

POINTS TO PONDER

- 30 **Winston Churchill, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Robert Young, Elizabeth Hardwick and Marie Dressier**

PHOTO OF LASTING INTEREST

- 32 **Sarla Thakral: The Sky was Her Limit**

BY SHREEVATSA NEVATIA

20



(TOP) ALAMY; (BOTTOM) ILLUSTRATION: SIDDHANT JUMDE



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Better Living

34 Love Your Enemies—It'll Drive 'Em Crazy

BY J. P. MCEVOY

HEALTH

40 Do You Have Frozen Shoulder?

BY LISA BENDALL

THE FOOD ON YOUR PLATE

42 Grapes: A Divine Fruit to Drink

BY KATE LOWENSTEIN AND DANIEL GRITZER

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF MEDICINE

46 All About Smart Bandages, Why Bake with Less Salt, How Toxic is Social Media and Can AI Rule Out Breast Cancer?

BY MARK WITTEN



42

NOTE TO OUR READERS

From time to time, you will see pages titled 'An Impact Feature' or 'Focus' in Reader's Digest. This is no different from an advertisement and the magazine's editorial staff is not involved in its creation in any way.

Timeless Humour

FROM ACROSS THE DECADES

12

Humour in Uniform

45

All in a Day's Work

54

As Kids See It

63

Campus Comedy

69

Virtual Hilarity

76

Life's Like That

98

Laughter, The Best Medicine

TOP: SOIFI/SHUTTERSTOCK

On the Cover

COVER ILLUSTRATION *by Siddhant Jumde*

The Day it Rained Fire and Gold in Bombay	70
Why God Saved Anna Hazare	56
The Extraordinary Life of a Nazi Hunter	78
A Miraculous Escape on a Hot-Air Balloon	102

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Reader's Digest

A Trusted Friend in a Complicated World



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The Promise of Deliverance

Extending the marriageable age of women by three years is not the panacea for their problems. The focus must be on creating social awareness about women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ensuring girls are not forced to drop out of school or college. The law confers adulthood at 18, accompanied by rights to vote, contract and marry. To realistically delay the marriage of girls from marginalized social groups, the state must guarantee quality education up to 18 years, adequate healthcare, nutrition, accessible schools with hygienic toilets, together with job skills and livelihoods. Else, the legal age of marriage will make little difference. Laws cannot be a shortcut in the path to social reform.

PRADEEP KUMAR, *Surat*

Pradeep Kumar gets this month's 'Write & Win' prize of ₹1,000. —EDs

I have to disagree with author's stand on the issue. The proposed bill on raising the minimum age for girls at marriage, has come to fruition after due deliberations of a 10-member task force. The committee surveyed girls in 16 universities, and over 70 per cent of these girls unequivocally favoured raising the legal age of marriage for women to 21. Unfortunately the author has chosen to look at the problem from the point of those parents who want to get rid of their daughters as early as possible! Raising the age of

marriage, I feel, will also strengthen the hand of law in dealing with POCSO cases.

MALLIKA GOPALAKRISHNAN, *Bengaluru*

Reader's Digest Changed My Life!

Since the age of 12, I have never missed an issue of *RD* (I am 67 now). I borrowed my first *RD* from the public library, then bought the next from a newsstand, which I continue to do even today. Like in several other families, reading the *Digest* was a habit passed on from one generation to another. My dad used to crack 'Word Power', often with a perfect score; it was a matter of prestige for him to solve it without aid. It is amazing *RD* has managed to hold the attention of readers, fighting off competition from multiple platforms. May this magazine see another 100 years!

DR NAYEEM ULLAH KHAN, *Bangalore*

**Unforgettable
DeWitt Wallace.**

It was exhilarating to read about the man—and the woman—who threw open the doors of the 'pocket university to readers of the world at large. It is incorrect to say that the skylark has vanished leaving its song to linger on. Actually, the skylark wings its way to the hearts of millions in the world every month to enthral, entice, inspire and enlighten.

AYYASSERI R. ARANMULA
Kerala

**The Quirks Of
Long-Term Love**

Patricia Pearson's article made us—a couple married for over 51 years—reflect on our past, present and future together. I love my wife Pramila—it took us a lot of time to convince our parents to approve of our union. We were finally married in 1971. We often find ourselves reminiscing the romantic times we had together: Secretly meeting near

Charminar during courtship or sitting at the Taj Mahal hotel at Koti, enjoying a single cup of ice-cream. Despite years of togetherness, we still get into arguments. But, these small fights only serve to add a little spice, not take away from our romance. We know deep in our hearts we will support each other till the call comes.

P. DINAKARA RAO,
Hyderabad

**Highlights from
100 years of
Reader's Digest**

Each of *RD's* milestones is amazing. What the 'little magazine' has achieved in 10 decades is like a fairy tale—23 editions in 41 countries, with so much packed in its pages by way of scientific knowledge, real life dramas, self-improvement advice, celebrity biographies, recognition of unsung heroes and entertainment. Every month the magazine fulfills the founder's mission "to widen one's

outlook, increase appreciation of things and people, enlarge one's capacity for enjoyable association with fellow men and lubricate the process of adjustment to the world". What astonishing foresight the great DeWitt Wallace had!

KRISHAN KALRA,
Gurugram

She finally said YES!

Who has not experienced juvenile love in school, also sometimes called infatuation, and nurtured this first love for rest of our lives? The story immediately took me back to my school days and though the protagonists in the story suffered personal tragedies and difficulties, their ultimate union warmed the cockles of one's heart!

ARVIND ARYA. *Mumbai*

Write in at editor.india@rd.com. The best letters discuss *RD* articles, offer criticism, share ideas. Do include your phone number and postal address.

Humour in Uniform

1960s

ONE OF THE BOYS in our navy training nit, after months of instruction, was a still a non-swimmer. As graduation drew near, the swimming instructor pulled him aside. "Son," he said, "if your ship ever gets torpedoed, jump over the side, go all the way to the bottom and run like hell for shore. That's the only way you'll even make it."

—RICHARD SIMS, JULY 1962

MY LATE HUSBAND Rear Admiral Coward, was stationed up the Yangtze river some years ago. He was then a commander, and for a particular ceremony he had to put on full dress uniform. I was in his room urging him on as time was running out. He had on his frock-coat uniform, complete with epaulettes, and his fancy hat. I saw a gold-green cord with tassels lying on his bunk and trying to help, asked, "Where does this go?"

"Will you put that damn thing down!" he bellowed. "It belongs to the curtain on my door."

—MRS J. G. COWARD, JANUARY 1966

1980s

AFTER A SKIRMISH during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, a captured Pakistani soldier was brought unconscious

to my army doctor husband. He examined the POW thoroughly but was unable to find any internal or external injuries and decided to keep him under observation. Just then. The enemy started shelling the Indian position, and everybody dived into nearby trenches. When the shelling stopped my husband rushed back to his post but the POW was gone. "My god," he shouted to this nursing assistant, "has he escaped?" "No sir, your patient should be returning any moment," the assistant replied. "He jumped into a trench too!"

—FEBRUARY 1986

2000s

Having spent several months at sea, my brother and his naval colleagues had been granted a short period of shore leave. My brother was so thrilled at the prospect of finally putting his feet on dry land that, as his ship came into port, he was running and jumping around the decks. Unfortunately, he failed to notice a low bulkhead and leapt into it, knocking himself out. He regained consciousness—but was in the ship's sick bay for several days. By then, the vessel was back at sea, with the port and shore leave far behind.

—CHRISTINE BURFORD, MAY 2006


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CONVERSATIONS

Words of Lasting Interest

MAY 1962

A Lesson in Diplomacy, from Dag Hammarskjöld

by Jhan Robbins

I T HAPPENED, really, in three acts. Maybe that's the way I should try to tell you about my experience, two years ago, with the late Dag Hammarskjöld, and my ancient jeep.

Act I

I was preparing an article about international negotiations, and had an appointment with the Secretary-General of the United Nations late one afternoon in his office on the 38th floor of the UN Secretariat building. Seasoned diplomatic reporters warned me that my quarry was shy, reticent and rather formal—a difficult subject.

To my surprise, he greeted me in shirtsleeves, smoking a pipe instead of his usual small cigar. As he rose to shake my hand, I saw that he was taller, thinner and blonder than he appeared on television.

He motioned me to a table at one end of the room, and we went quickly to the subject at hand. In answer to my questions, he spoke with force and conviction about the importance of the United Nations, what it had already accomplished and what he hoped for its future.

“Let us not make the mistake,” he said, “of undervaluing the mediation and conciliation that go on here among nations every day. In some small way injured pride is comforted, anger is harmlessly vented, conflict ends in compromise.” As our discussion drew to a close, the telephone rang. From the conversation I gathered that a man with whom Hammarskjöld had planned to have dinner had been taken ill. He looked disappointed. Amazed at my temerity, I blurted, “I’d be honoured if you’d have dinner with me.”



Swedish diplomat, Dag Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 to 1961, and is the only posthumous recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

I expected the Secretary-General to refuse. Instead, he said heartily, "Fine idea!"

As we walked down the hall, I told him that I lived in a Connecticut town 95 km from New York, that I had missed my train that morning and had driven to the city in our old red jeep.

"A red jeep!" he said. "Imagine!"

Racking my brain for a restaurant to suggest for dinner, I started to describe a small place I had recently discovered in uptown Manhattan where excellent Creole food was served. "Ah, Creole!" he exclaimed. "Shrimp and rice. Let's go there. I have dismissed my chauffeur, but we can ride in your red jeep."

"It's completely disreputable," I spluttered. "The side curtains are off, and it bucks in low gear and ..."

Hammarskjöld, with a twinkle in his pale blue eyes, put a hand on my shoulder. "Courage!" he said.

Act II

As we chugged uptown in rush hour traffic, a horn blasted sharply at me from behind. Then a taxi shot past me on the left and, suddenly, cut to the right across my bow. I leaned on my horn, jammed on the brakes, twisted my wheel to the right—and ran up on the sidewalk. Sideswiping a metal waste container, which clanged like Big

Ben, the jeep carrying the Secretary-General of the United Nations—and me—came to rest against a lamppost.

Incredibly, no damage was done.

The taxi came to a halt, and its driver started striding towards me. Before he reached me, I snapped at him, "Why didn't you signal? Couldn't you see you were cutting me off? What kind of a fool driver are you?"

The cabby bellowed, "What do you mean by all that blasted honking? What's the matter, you blind or something? Where's your brains?"

He demanded to see my licence. I showed it to him, and demanded to see his. He snorted, "These days they give licences to everybody. Even guys like you!" My embarrassment turned to rage. "You could have killed us all, you maniac!" I shouted.

Now both of us had retreated to extreme positions. I could see the cabby's muscles tensing. I planted my feet firmly on the pavement. A crowd had begun to gather. The taxi driver turned his back on me and began to talk to Hammarskjöld. "If I was you, I wouldn't ride with this guy," he said contemptuously. "He's just a country driver—him and that jeep shoulda stayed in the sticks where they belong."

I was about to make an indignant reply when Hammarskjöld said quietly, "It must be tough driving a cab all day every day in this town. I'm glad I don't have to do it—I couldn't stand it. I'm surprised there aren't *more* accidents!"

I could see that the cabdriver was

taken aback. Here was someone talking to him sympathetically. "Yeah," he said, "it *is* tough. If it isn't the other drivers, it's the snow or the rain or the cops or the trucks. You can't win. It's *always* tough driving in this town!"

I had been ready to continue the argument, but now, perhaps, I could back off a little, too. "It sure *is* tough," I said feelingly. "I'm glad I don't have to drive here more than a couple of times a month." Hammarskjöld murmured in my direction, "I'm sure *your* job has its hazards, too."

"I guess I was rattled, having you in the jeep, sir," I said. "Maybe I was a little careless." Hammarskjöld turned to the taxi driver. "My friend feels he may have been a little careless."

"Aw, maybe I *did* crowd him," the cabby admitted. "I suppose I should have realized he was an out-of-state driver. He probably don't understand New York signals."

I was about to tell him I had been born and brought up in New York City and had held a driver's licence there for 15 years. But it suddenly dawned on me that Dag Hammarskjöld, in order to calm down two near-belligerents in a minor traffic incident, was using the arbitration formula for international negotiations he had described to me earlier!

"The arbitrator must always keep three things in mind," he had said in his precise way. "One: Do not be dismayed if a situation seems irreconcilable. After all, if both sides aren't shouting

dangerous threats at each other, the arbitrator is not needed. The important first step is to establish sympathetic relations with both parties and to remain in contact while the initial sword-rattling goes on."

"Two: Try to persuade the angry parties to vent a sizable portion of their anger on some impersonal, abstract target. Different shades of meaning in language, the inescapable pressures of economics or even the psychological effect of climatic conditions can be used to 'air-condition' a serious quarrel."

"Three: Find some area of mutual concern that will draw both parties into a positive discussion. It may be utterly irrelevant to the problem at hand, but once you get them to say something like, 'There's a grain of truth in that,' there is an excellent chance that a harmonious solution may ultimately be reached."

"It's amazing," he had concluded, "but history shows that two countries which have been persuaded to retreat from the verge of war can often become good friends, even help one another."

Gradually, remembering these things, I stopped scowling. The cabby's bluster ebbed, too. "I guess we both got to watch out a little sharper," he said. I nodded. He retreated to his cab. Apologizing profusely to Hammarskjöld, I backed off the curb and we started uptown again.

Act III

About 10 blocks later the jeep's engine sputtered. I glanced at my gas gauge. The needle pointed to EMPTY.

"Boy, this is it!" I said miserably, forgetting diplomatic language. "I've really messed things up!"

I coasted to the curb, yanked on the hand-brake and suggested that we go to the restaurant by taxi. Just as I yelled, "Taxi!" a cab pulled up. It was the same driver with whom we'd had the run-in a few minutes earlier.

"You guys in trouble again?" he asked. "Out of gas," I said glumly.

"Hop in," he said. "There's a gas station up ahead."

Hammarskjöld elected to stay with the jeep. As we drove along, the cabby said, "That's a nice guy you got riding with you. A quiet fellow, but real nice."

At the gas station, he waited while I bought a canful of fuel, then drove me back to my stalled car. I reached for my wallet, but I saw that the metal lever on his meter was still up—the fare had not been registered.

"It's on me," he said. "Forget it!" Waving cheerfully, he drove away.

In the light of all that has happened since, I suppose that this ride with Dag Hammarskjöld may not have been world-shakingly significant. I find myself thinking about it surprisingly often, however. Maybe you will, too. **R**



FROM 1962



Personal Glimpses

BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF THE LIVES OF THE FAMOUS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SIDDHANT JUMDE



Lucius 'Lute' Pease, Pulitzer prize-winning cartoonist, once told me this story about **O. HENRY**.

Pease was talking to publisher Frank Munsey about a job when a messenger sent by O. Henry came in.

"Mr. Porter would like an advance

of \$50, Mr. Munsey," the messenger said.

"What? Again? I just gave him another one. What is it this time?"

"He didn't say," the messenger said.

"He owes me five stories now.

You go tell him: No advance unless I know what he wants it for."

The messenger left, but soon returned and handed Munsey an envelope. Munsey held it up to the light. It looked empty. He shook it. No sound.

He ripped open one end, held the envelope with its open end pointed downwards and shook it again. A long blond hair slid out. O. Henry got the \$50.

DAVID STEINBERG, quoted in 'The Phoenix Nest',

Saturday Review, January 1965

Although astronauts seem glamorous to most earth-bound beings, Apollo 16 crewman **CHARLIE DUKE** reveals that fortune does not necessarily accompany fame: "Astronauts were paid according to their rank. We did, however, get a little extra, as space flight was considered TDY, or temporary duty. The per diem for TDY at that time was \$25. To claim credit, we had to fill out an itinerary. Mine read: Houston to Kennedy Space.

Centre to moon, moon to Pacific Ocean, Pacific Ocean to Houston. The moon trip lasted 11 days, so that was \$275 in extra money. However, as the government provided quarters and meals, that was deducted. I believe I made \$1.25 for each day on the trip."

WITH DOTTY DUKE in *Moonwalker* (Oliver Nelson),

January 1993

COMEDIAN DAVID BRENNER came from a poor but close family. When he



Known as a devout and serious person, **MOTHER TERESA** also has a good sense of humour. Once, during a news conference, she was asked if she objects to being photographed constantly.

"I have made a contract with God," the nun said, smiling. "Every time someone takes a photograph, a soul from purgatory must go to heaven."

As numerous cameras clicked in succession, she added. "So purgatory must be empty today."

MARY BETH MURPHY in *Milwaukee Sentinel*,
January 1986

graduated from high school, however, he was given an unforgettable gift. "Some of my friends got new clothes and a few rich kids even got new cars," he remembers. "My father reached into his pants pocket and took something out. I extended my hand, palm up, and he let my present drop into it—a nickel! "Dad said to me, 'Buy a newspaper with that. Read every word of it. Then turn to the classified section and get yourself a job. Get into

the world. It's all yours now."

"I always thought that was a great joke my father had played on me until a few years later when I was in the army, sitting in a foxhole, and thinking about my family and my life. It was then I realized that my friends had gotten only new cars, or only clothes. My father had given me the whole world. What greater gift!"

Soft Pretzels With Mustard (Arbor House),
January 1990

Here is a classic story about **SIR ASUTOSH MUKHERJEE**, the first Indian Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, who was popularly known as 'Royal Bengal Tiger' for his refusal to kowtow to the British.

Sir Asutosh was once asleep in a first-class compartment when an Englishman boarded the train at a wayside station and occupied the next berth. The sahib did not like the presence of the rotund 'native' and, to show his spite, picked up Sir Asutosh's sandals and threw them out of the running train. Some time later Sir Asutosh woke up and found his sandals missing.

Guessing what had happened, he picked up the jacket of the now snoring sahib and threw it out. Next morning the sahib asked Sir Asutosh if he had seen his jacket.

"Your coat," Sir Asutosh replied, "has gone to fetch my slippers."

NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTY in *The Sunday review, The Times of India*, January 1986

A charming incident illustrating the *haathi-mera-saathi* (my friend, the elephant) spirit was narrated to me by photographer **T. S. NAGARAJAN**. Early one morning he was busy taking photographs of worshippers at Brihadeshwara Temple, Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu) when the temple elephant seemed to run amok, trumpeting loudly and running full tilt along the corridors. The trumpeting was answered from different parts of the sanctuary as if another elephant was challenging it for a fight. The worshippers ran helter-skelter, climbed up walls and hid behind the pillars. All at once a little boy appeared from nowhere and the elephant calmed down. The *haathi* and *saathi* ambled away to the stable. Nagarajan asked the boy what had happened.

"We have this game of hide-and-peek every morning," answered 15-year-old mahout Raju. "I hide myself and imitate the trumpet call. The 20-year-old elephant Kamakshi starts looking for me. I go from one hiding place to another and repeat the call and Kamakshi tries to locate me. She must have this game of hide-and-peek every morning, otherwise she is very irritable for the rest of the day."

KHUSHWANT SINGH in *The Hindustan Times*,
January 1986

Harper's Magazine recently sent a questionnaire to a number of celebrated men asking: "During what activity, situation, moment or series of moments do you feel most masculine?" As an afterthought, they sent

ALBERT EINSTEIN had

been best man at the wedding of a young friend, and a few years later the couple brought their 18-month-old son to meet him.

The child took one look and burst into a screaming fit. The parents were speechless with embarrassment, but Einstein's eyes lighted up. He patted the boy on the head and crooned, "You're the first person in years who has told me what you really think of me."

ALAN W. RICHARDS IN TRENTON, N.J., *TIMES*,
FEBRUARY 1968



the same question to a number of prominent women. Playwright **LILLIAN HELLMAN**, thus queried, responded: "It makes me feel masculine to tell you that I do not answer questions like this without being paid for answering them."

October 1975

A salesman called on **STEINWAY & SONS** to show them a new piano key pin. "My company believes this aluminum pin is greatly superior to the pin you have been using," he said. Mr Steinway deliberated for some moments.

"Well, young man," he said at last, "we are an old firm, slow and cautious about making changes. But we will install your pins in one of our pianos and give them a trial."

The salesman was delighted. "That's good enough for me," he said. "How long a trial will you need?"

"Oh," said Mr. Steinway thoughtfully, "I'd say about 50 years."

DAN BENNETT in *Quote*, November 1958

When the evening spent in front of the television set has been a pleasant one for President **CHARLES DE GAULLE**, and nothing has gone wrong with the news commentary, he says "My television". If he is not satisfied with the commentator's tone, if he is bored or annoyed, he says, "The television". If he feels he or his regime has been made to look ridiculous, he summons the Minis-



Former Prime Minister **MORAJI DESAI**, after his graduation in 1917, applied to join the provincial civil service. Borrowing clothes from a friend (he did not have any good ones),

Desai appeared before the interview board which consisted of three government secretaries, all Englishmen. At the end of the interview he was asked, "Well, young man, how would you feel if you do not get this job?"

"Who knows, I may get something better," Desai replied promptly. Though the post went to someone else, the secretaries, who were impressed with Desai's answer, created an additional post just to accommodate him.

Indian Express, November 1988

ter of Information the next morning and greets him by saying, "I watched your television last night ..."

PIERRE VIANSSON-PONTE, *The King and his Court*, February 1966

MYTHS BUSTED REGARDING MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION OF KIDNEY STONES

Kidney stone disease is a common health disorder which affects about 10–12% of men and 5–6% of women in their lifetime. This causes lot of morbidity among the patients who are affected. Those who had experienced the pain of a kidney stone know that it's not a simple abdominal ache. The pain might be quite excruciating and in some cases will even require surgery.

There are lots of myths and hearsay surrounding the kidney stone management and its prevention. Here we debunk the myths one by one with facts.

Myth 1: Drinking milk will lead to formation of kidney stones

Fact: Even though calcium is the major component of most of the kidney stones, calcium consumption can actually prevent the formation of stones as calcium in diet actually binds to the oxalate and prevents its absorption from the gut. So milk taken along with food in fact prevents formation of stone.

Myth 2: Cranberry juice prevents kidney stone

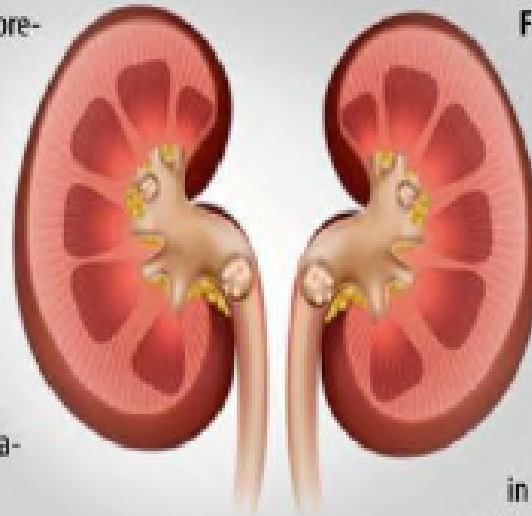
Fact: Cranberry juice and its extracts can prevent the formation of urinary tract infection. But cranberry is rich in oxalate and this can lead to formation of renal stones.

Dr. MOHAN KUMAR V
Consultant Urologist, Apollo Hospitals.
Email: drvmohankumar@gmail.com,
drmohankumar_v@apollohospitals.com



Myth 3: Banana stem juice prevents kidney stone

Fact: While banana stem juice can act as a diuretic and help in mechanical flushing of small stones which are blocking the tube, but there is no scientific evidence to prove that intake of banana stem juice prevents the formation of stones.



Fact: Gone are the days where stones were treated with open surgeries and patients would stay in the hospital for days.

Nowadays most of the stone surgeries are done via no hole or through a small hole. Most of the stones in the urinary tube can be managed by ureteroscopy and stones upto

2 cm in the kidney can be managed by a technique called retrograde intrarenal surgery(RIRS). These are no hole techniques.

Stones above 2 cm in the kidney can be managed by a technique called percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL). In this method the stones are removed by a small hole in the back. These minimally invasive procedures are possible due to the recent advancements in technology in the field of optics and laser.

Most of our patients can be treated on a day care basis without any requirement of hospital admission and patients usually go home on the same day of surgery and can resume their normal day to day activities the next day.

Myth 7: Stone is a one-time phenomenon. It will not recur

Fact: This is a very important misconception. The chances of stone recurrence is as high as 50 percent in 5 -10 years. So regular follow up and following the doctor's advice is extremely essential in prevention of formation of stones.

Myth 4: Beer flushes out the stones and prevents the formation of stone

Fact: Like banana stem juice beer also is a diuretic and may help in flushing a small stone but beer causes dehydration and acidification of urine. Dehydration and acid urine are known risk factors for stone formation. So drinking beer can in fact lead to stone formation. The only way to prevent formation of stone is adequate hydration and drinking good amount of water.

Myth 5: All stones will require surgery

Fact: Not all stones require surgery. The treatment depends on the location and the size of the stone and the symptom of the patient. If the kidney stone is as big as 7 to 8 mm it can be managed without surgery. Even stones in the tube can be managed with medicines and see if they pass. Usually stones up to 6 mm pass easily via the urinary tube. Only the stones which are bigger or the ones which have not passed with medicines will require surgery

Myth 6: Stone surgeries are painful and require lengthy hospital stay :



DEPARTMENT OF WIT

FEBRUARY 1967

WHEN MOTHERS GET THE BUG

*Mothers don't get sick very often.
But when they do, this is what happens*

BY Joyce Lubold

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES COMPOSITE



ave you ever had the 24-hour bug? You know, you have a fever, you ache and you have to stay in bed. Well, most people have had it sometime, and most people get over it in 24 hours. Most people, that is, except mothers. A mother can get over it in 12 hours or less!

Mother has just taken her temperature—and it's over 38°C. She's got the bug that's going around.

It's right after lunch. The older children are at school, and the baby is napping. There's no reason why Mother cannot go to bed. But first she has a few things to do. Mix the meat loaf for dinner. Leave a note for the cleaners. Find someone to serve coffee for her at the meeting tonight. Put in the next load of washing. Carry out the garbage.

At last ... she ... sinks ... into ... bed. *Ah-h-h-h!* Her aching legs soak up comfort from the cool sheets. Her burning eyes close. She's asleep!

Then, suddenly, the front door bangs open as the children burst home from school. "Mum! Mum! Where ARE you?" Mother tries to answer but their cries drown out her weak calls. Soon they find her—in bed.

"Didn't you even get up yet?" cries the younger girl.

"How am I going to get to Bill's?" asks the boy.

"What about dinner?

We've got to eat," says the older girl.

Mother understands. She knows that the children aren't used to a mother in bed. "I'm sick," she says. "I can't do *anything*. I'll just have to leave it all to you." She sighs. "Cook the potatoes ... take care of the baby ... set the table."

The children dash off like soldiers going into battle. For a time Mother is left to the quiet of her room and the ache in her pounding head.

Then Father comes home. He bounds into the bedroom, drops heavily on the side of the bed and reaches for her hand. He looks tired. Mother starts worrying about him. "It's nothing, darling—just this bug that's going around," she says. "I can get up and do dinner and—"

Father shakes his head. "You stay right there. Don't worry about a thing. The kids and I will take over. We'll get along fine without you."

Mother's room is quiet again. But it's also empty. Mother tosses and turns. The sheets are no longer cool. And they scratch. She lies still,

**"WHERE'S THE
BROOM? DON'T
DISTURB YOUR
MOTHER!
I SAID DON'T
DISTURB YOUR
MOTHER!"**



listening for family sounds. She feels left out. She feels terrible! But everybody else seems to feel great. In fact, there seems to be some sort of party going on. There are giggles from the children. And there are loud laughs from Father.

Suddenly there is a crash, followed by Father's voice. "Get the baby out of the way before he cuts himself! Where's the broom? Don't disturb your mother! I said DON'T DISTURB YOUR MOTHER!"

Now the house grows quiet. It is clear to Mother that the family is eating dinner while she lies there sick and alone. No one had thought to bring dinner to her. They've forgotten all about her. They're doing fine without her. There's no point in going on living.

Then there is another crash. The younger girl rushes in with the news. "They dropped your tray and the dog licked up all your dinner."

She dashes off. There is more noise until, finally, the children appear, beaming. They are proud of what they bring.



FROM 1967

There's a glass of water, spilled onto the tray. There's a plate with three beans, a cold boiled potato, a tiny slice of burned meat loaf.

"Can we stay with you while you eat?" the children ask. "Dad's kind of mad. And the kitchen is a mess. And nobody knows where the broom is. Is it all right if we stay with you?"

Suddenly Mother feels wonderful. As the children watch carefully, she eats her cold dinner. "Everything tastes so good," she tells them. She notices, without surprise, that her aches and pains are gone.

The older girl speaks up. "Gee, Mum, I sure wish you'd get better. It's just no fun when you're sick."

"Yeh," says the boy, "I hope you feel better tomorrow. We miss you."

Mother smiles. "I feel better already," she says.

SO YOU SEE HOW IT IS with mothers. Other people have the 24-hour bug for 24 hours. But not a mother. If she feels needed enough, she can get over it in 12 hours or less! **R**



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Points to Ponder



The human story does not always unfold like a mathematical calculation on the principle that two and two make four. Sometimes in life they make five or minus three; and sometimes the blackboard topples down in the middle of the sum and leaves the class in disorder and the pedagogue with a black eye.

WINSTON CHURCHILL, JANUARY 1966

Virtues and vices have frequently changed places as life moved on through the ages: Witch burning used to be a virtue, and lending money at interest a vice.

SIR JAMES JEANS, *Living Philosophies*, JANUARY 1935

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Prize winning poet once said, "I have on my table a violin string. It is free. I twist one end of it and it responds. It is free. But it is not free to do what a violin string is supposed to do—to produce music. So I take it, fix it in my violin and tighten it until it is taut. Only then is it free to be a violin string. By the same token we are free when our lives our uncommitted, but not to be what we are intended to be. Real freedom is not freedom from, but freedom for.

ROBERT YOUNG, *Renewing Your Faith Day to Day*,
JANUARY 1966

Some of you may have the courage to throw yourselves into a life of expressive protest against injustice. More power to you as long as you seek to build justice not simply to punish the unjust. The pleasure of harassing the oppressor is no substitute for the patience and the perseverance it takes to enlarge the capacities and the opportunities of others.

KINGMAN BREWSTER, *President of Yale University*,
addressing graduates, FEBRUARY 1966

So the scrawny princess married the homely prince and they lived happily ever after. That's not how the story goes, but it is often the way life goes. Few are beauties, male or female, and then not for long. I was struck by this in a supermarket. There was something familiar in all the faces and figures, a common denominator, a reassuring absence of stunning

good looks. "People," I thought, "aren't heroes and heroines. In real life they're character actors." As if in confirmation, a glass-door reflection showed me a gaunt old fellow in an out-of-date grey jacket, baggy maroon slacks and battered shoes. He was walking with slow care, and his effort at a pale smile seemed more like a wince of pain or fatigue. *Proves my point*, flashed my mind—and then I recognized myself.

RICHARD F. MERRIFIELD, *Monadnock Journal*,
Countryman Press, DECEMBER 1975

When you meet someone with good manners, you can't know immediately if you're meeting a good person. ... But you will know instantly that something is right about the person. The world is well supplied with rude people spouting high moral positions about human rights, but it is noticeably lacking in those who worry about the human being waiting in line behind them at the automated teller machine while they balance their checkbooks.

OWEN EDWARDS, *Town & Country*, JANUARY 1993

While it is well enough to leave footprints on the sands of time, it is even more important to make sure they point in a commendable direction.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL, JUNE 1982

Every woman has the right to feel beautiful, no matter how scrambled her features, or how indifferent her figure. She needs this inward assurance to give her serenity, poise and power. It is her birthright. To women between the ages of eight and eighty who want to grow in beauty, here's my advice: Forget what your looking glass tells you, but say to yourself a dozen times a day: "I am beloved." No woman who actually believes that she is precious in the eyes of another can walk ungracefully, or live without charm.

MARIE DRESSIER, *My Own Story*, JANUARY 1935

The greatest gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK, quoted by Darryl Pinckney
in *The Paris Review*, JANUARY 1990

A hundred years from now, I dare say, some dreamy collector will pay a cool thousand for an old milk bottle, and I wish I had the equivalent for what my hot-water bag will bring in 2034! Why we should be so beguiled by the antique is a riddle that perhaps only the interior decorator can solve.

CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER, JANUARY 1935



**PHOTO
OF LASTING
INTEREST**

The Sky Was Her Limit

Sarla Thakral wore a sari when strapping herself in the cockpit of a Gipsy Moth and flying solo for the first time. The year was 1936 and Thakral was only 21. Though her feat had no known precedent, it is hard to say just how concerned Thakral was with making history. Married at the age of 16, she had a four-year-old daughter to worry about, but Thakral, it seems clear, would much rather set an example for her child than hold herself back. Her husband P. D. Sharma, an airmail pilot, encouraged Thakral to clock a thousand hours of flying and get an 'A' license. Tragically, Sharma died in 1939, but Thakral was not one to let the news of his plane crash deter her. She still wanted her career in aviation. It was only when World War II made flying impossible did Thakral remarry and turn her energies to art instead. For Thakral, horizons—both literal and metaphoric—were always things she went beyond.

—SHREEVATSA NEVATIA





PHOTO: HISTORIC COLLECTION / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

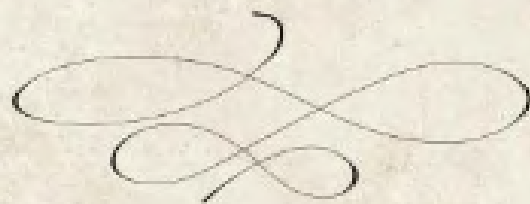


BETTER LIVING

DECEMBER 1957

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES—

It'll Drive 'Em Crazy



*Sometimes it's better to turn foes into friends—or, at least,
to neutralize them*

BY J. P. McEvoy

Well, maybe it won't drive 'em crazy, but it'll certainly discombobulate 'em. Anyway, you can waste a lot of energy being nasty to your enemies. A wise man said it years ago: "If you attend to your work and let your enemy alone, someone else will come along some day and fix him for you."

But suppose your enemy won't let you alone? What then? You can do what the man did who was walking the bounds of his new farm and met his neighbour. "Don't look now," said the neighbour, "but when you bought this piece of ground, you also bought a lawsuit with me. Your fence is three metres over on my land."

Now this is the classic opening for a feud that could go on for centuries and make generations of enemies. "Good fences make good neighbours," wrote poet Robert Frost, but more potent even than good fences are good boundary lines.

The new owner smiled: "I thought I'd find some friendly neighbour here, and I'm going to. And you're going to help me. Move the fence where you want it, and send me the bill. You'll be satisfied and I'll be happy."

The story goes that the fence was never moved, and the potential enemy was never the same. He went around talking to himself. He was in shock; after that he was a slightly

mystified but friendly neighbour.

There is an old saying, "There are no little enemies." Enemies may seem little and unimportant, but be careful. Don't give them cause to make a career of getting even with you. Be nice to that disagreeable paper-boy on the corner. Otherwise he will dedicate himself to working hard and getting rich so he can buy the building you're in and throw you out. Don't tell off that snooty golden receptionist who blocks you from getting in to the boss. One day she will marry the boss, sure as hell, if for no other reason than to get even with you.

There are all kinds of enemies, and one of the arts of living is to learn to tell them apart. But consider the common or garden-variety of enemy, the kind

*The tears
started again.
"We haven't got
any friends,"
Pat blubbered.
Peggy wailed,
"Nothing but
enemies"*

who never meant to be an enemy at all, and doesn't want to be an enemy, really. He's not mad at you; he's mad at the world, and you are wandering witlessly around on his lonely battlefield, stepping on land mines and getting into lines of fire not meant for you at all.

Let me tell you about one of them. She was the dark-eyed daughter of our town barber: a small, stormy, economy-size Gina Lollobrigida seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Years ago, I brought my two little girls home from South America and put them in school down the road. They talked a very peculiar language that was neither English nor Spanish, and their classmates gave them a hard time. Especially 'Lolla,' who was older and the ringleader Terror of the Tiny Tots.

Pat and Peggy came home crying almost every day, so I decided to cheer them up. "Let's have a party," I said. Pat's and Peggy's tears dried magically. Right away they got creative: "Ice cream! Cake! Big, red balloons!"

"And friends?" I said. The tears started again.

"We haven't got any friends," Pat blubbered. Peggy wailed, "Nothing but enemies."

Then I had one of my rare inspirations. "Let's have an enemy party. Let's invite all your enemies—and we'll fill 'em up with ice cream and cake and give 'em red balloons to take home."

Little Pat and Peggy exchanged knowing looks, and one of them said with an eloquent Spanish gesture, "*Qué passa al Viejo?*" ("What goes with the Old One?")

Now, the angels who have the special job of watching over children's parties must have seen to it that the 'Enemy Party' was a mad, merry success, and the best time was had by the biggest enemy, little 'Lolla,' who rolled on the floor and shrieked with delight.

Pat and Peggy never came home crying from school anymore. Their biggest enemy had turned into their staunchest champion. Nobody dared lift a finger against them or little 'Lolla' would have broken it off, pronto.

One day 'Lolla's' father dropped in to see me. "I came to thank you for asking my little girl to the party," he said. Then he added, mystified, "Why did you do it?"

"Why not?" I told him.

"She's a solid little citizen, and she likes ice cream, cake and big, red balloons, just like any other little girl. Yes?"

"Oh, yes," he said. "But do you know something? Nobody ever asked her to a party before. Why?"

A good question. Are the 'Lollas' left out because they are enemies, or do they become enemies because they are left out? There are several schools of thought working on this, but the Great Teacher settled it long ago. "Love your enemies, pray for them that persecute you, do good to them that hate you ..." And it'll drive them crazy, because it works! **R**



FROM 1957

Picturesque Speech

TOWARDS MORE LIVELY LANGUAGE

1940s

JANUARY 1942

Restless as a chipmunk's tail

—IRVIN S. COBB

Elastic as memory

—REBECCA LOWRIE

Busy as a fiddler's elbow.

—HAROLD W. THOMPSON

Grass starched with frost, sand dunes,
hump backed by the wind.

—FAITH BALDWIN

Near the reef, a bell buoy talked to
itself in the dark.

—KARL DETZER



**The rain ceased
and a watery
sun sent pale
feelers toward the
forgotten earth.**

—A. J. CRONIN

JULY 1948

Proverb—a short
sentence based on
long experience.

—CERVANTES

APRIL 1949

Courtesy is the quality that keeps a
woman smiling when a departing

guest stands at the open screen door
and lets the flies in. —SYLVIA STRUM BREMER

There are two kinds of leaders in
the world—some are interested
in the fleece, others in the flock.

—O. A. BATTISTA

Some people speak from experience.
Others, from experience, don't speak.

—ERNEST YOUNG

1950s

NOVEMBER 1958

Videomatic

It was a dull, non-network show—
a sort of local anaesthetic.

—HERB STEIN IN *NEW YORK MORNING INQUIRER*

Television is called a medium
because so little of it is either rare
or well done.

—MRS. DEANE BINDER IN *THE CATHOLIC DIGEST*

1970s

APRIL 1976

A butterfly drop stitching its way
across a field.

—J. L. STRICKLAND

Kites anchored to earth by small boys.

—BONNIE MAY MALODY

1980s

SEPTEMBER 1980

Clothes Lines

High heels punctuating an exit.

—BONNIE MAY MALODY

A belt which has given up trying.

—B. J. CHUTE

Ties in a closet with their tongues hanging out.

—JIM BISHOP

MARCH 1982

Happiness is ...

... having a scratch for every itch

—OGDEN NASH

... squeezing one more brushful out of the toothpaste tube.

—JESSE W. SUGARMAN, QUOTED BY ALLISON SANDERS
IN HOUSTON CHRONICLE

JULY 1986

Ways and Means

You can always recognize an egotist by the gleam in his I.

—AMY GRIFFIN

It's easy to give up smoking. All you need are will power, determination and wet matches.

—F. F. W

The cause of indigestion is often a square meal in a round stomach!

—K. RAMAKRISHNA, MADRAS

1990s

MAY 1991

To Coin a Metaphor ...

She had a mania for orderliness; she

would have straightened shadows if she could have.

—CHARLES HIGHAM

A tiny acrobat of hope somersaulted in his chest.

—GAIL GODWIN

He could hear the creaking, heavy sound of doubt flapping its wings slowly overhead.

—WALT SCHMIDT IN LOS ANGELES PAR LABREA NEWS

MAY 1997

That's rich!

Late-model white Mercedes Benzes in the hotel parking lot were lined up in a long, shiny row like a mouthful of molars. —SUSAN ORLEAN IN COMDE NAST TRAVELER

Their house was so big that it was nine o'clock in the kitchen and eleven o'clock in the dining room.

—TAKI THEODORACOPULOS IN THE SPECTATOR



He was so rich that he had a chauffeured motor scooter.

—ISABEL ALLENDE

Word spread like red wine on a white tuxedo.

—BAXTER BLACK, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

Deft Definitions

Filing cabinet—a place where you can lose things systematically.

—T. HARRY THOMPSON

HEALTH

Do You Have Frozen Shoulder?

How to diagnose and treat the painful condition

BY Lisa Bendall



WHEN KATJA EDLER noticed tightness around her right shoulder in the summer of 2017, she assumed she'd been spending too much time at her desk. A 44-year-old book editor who lives in Ehningen, Germany, Edler was in Dubai for her husband's job and working from home. About three months later, her symptoms worsened: "I got up one morning in a lot of pain and couldn't lift my arm." Edler met with an orthopaedist, who took an X-ray and then identified the problem: She had frozen shoulder.

Also called adhesive capsulitis, the condition affects up to five per cent of people and occurs when the connec-

tive tissue surrounding the shoulder-joint capsule becomes inflamed. Over time, this tissue thickens and stiffens, causing pain and restricted movement. Eventually, even without treatment, the soft tissue will heal. But recovery can take one to three years—or more. "That's a long time to live with something so disabling," says Dr Amar Rangan, a shoulder surgeon at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough, UK.

Early treatment improves the symptoms faster, but identifying the condition can be a challenge, since symptoms mimic issues like arthritis and rotary cuff injuries. Another mystery is why it develops. It's more likely

PHOTO: ©GETTY IMAGES

if your shoulder has been immobile—because of a broken arm, or a stroke, say—or after a jarring fall. But in most cases, the problem seems to come out of nowhere. Women are four times more likely to have frozen shoulder and people with diabetes, thyroid disease, heart disease or autoimmune conditions are at higher risk.

“It’s surprisingly common in people in their 40s to 60s, and prevalent in people over the age of 60,” says Karen McCreesh, a physiotherapist and researcher in Limerick, Ireland. She says patients typically describe the discomfort as “burning” and often worse at night.

While it’s rare to have a recurrence in the same shoulder, about 10 to 15 per cent of patients will develop it on the other side, according to Rangan.

Steroid injections or medications like ibuprofen can reduce pain and inflammation, and physiotherapy is often effective for regaining range of motion. While the latter is less invasive and risky than surgical options, Rangan recently co-led a trial showing that both physiotherapy and surgery help significantly with recovery. His team is also conducting research into the inflammatory changes, in the hopes of treating the underlying cause.

A 2021 review of studies demonstrated that exercise helps with healing. It can involve the shoulder if the person can tolerate it, although whole-body exercise pays off, too.

“Some patients develop a big fear of movement,” says McCreesh, “but very painful exercise isn’t necessary to see benefits.” For example, exercising in a warm pool may feel more soothing.

Edler opted for physiotherapy, going to appointments for six months and doing prescribed exercises at home. “With each session, I regained some movement range and had less discomfort,” she says. Today, more

**WOMEN ARE FOUR
TIMES MORE LIKELY
TO HAVE FROZEN
SHOULDER AND
PEOPLE WITH
DIABETES, THYROID
DISEASE, HEART
DISEASE OR
AUTOIMMUNE
CONDITIONS ARE
AT HIGHER RISK.**

than four years after developing issues, she has 90 per cent function in her shoulder and is pain-free.

There remains no known way to prevent the condition, which is why an early diagnosis is so important. Rangan suggests “taking your shoulders through a range of movement every day to make sure they don’t tighten up. If you notice anything, seek help.” **R**



THE
**FOOD
ON YOUR
PLATE**

I Am Grapes ...
**A Divine Fruit
to Drink**

—
BY *Kate Lowenstein*
AND *Daniel Gritzer*

IN 2017, A single sentence reverberated through the Internet, skidding across social media and breathless blogs: ‘They did surgery on a grape.’ And they had! A video showed a tiny robot making delicate incisions in my thin purple skin before pulling back the translucent layer to reveal my juicy yellow-green flesh below.

The video was meant to demonstrate the surgical tool’s exacting abilities, but the sheer absurdity of the sentence ‘They did surgery on a grape’ caught on with millions, and I became a nonsensical Internet meme.

My popularity long predates my online fame, of course. After all—I also become wine! A resident of North America since before the Pilgrims, my native varieties (including the North American fox and scuppernong) were not great bases for wine, but clusters of me growing in Asia and Europe sure were. Early humans there learnt that given the right conditions, I fermented well—just harvest my bunches, crush them to a pulp and let the good times roll. (It wasn’t until later that modern microbiology explained that my skins—if they haven’t been peeled off by a mini robot—naturally carry the yeast necessary for fermentation.) The Romans then spread wine making to just about every land they conquered. Perhaps Julius Caesar should have said *veni, vidi, vini*.

Alas, this entire wine world was almost lost in the 1800s. The first warning signs started with a guy

named Thomas Jefferson. After working in Europe on a diplomatic mission, Jefferson took a keen interest in French wines and decided to see if he couldn't make good *vin* stateside at his Monticello estate. He planted European grapevines in his fields, then watched as they withered and died. Though he didn't know it, pests native to American soil had wreaked havoc on that European rootstock.

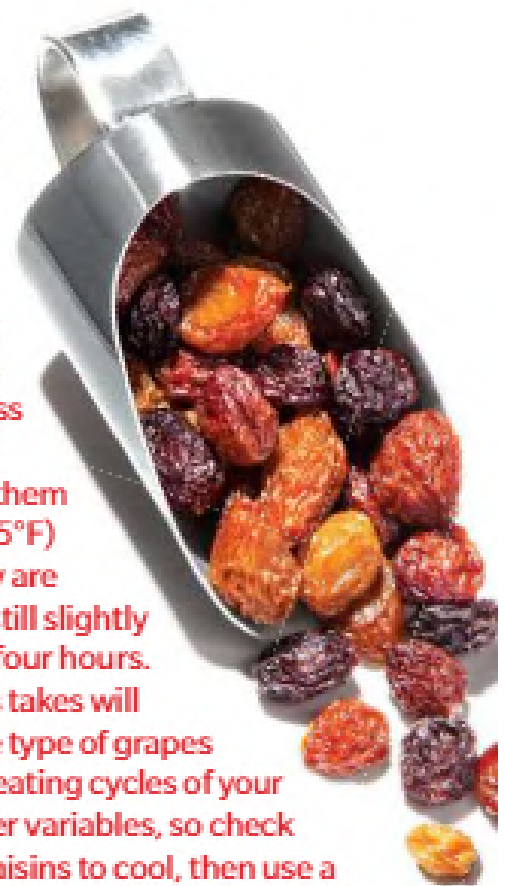
More disastrously, curious Europeans had shipped American grapevines to their shores to do their own experimenting. Those vines carried tiny aphidlike bugs called phylloxeras—likely the same culprits in Jefferson's failed wine-making venture. By the late 1800s, the pestilence Jefferson encountered had destroyed as much as 90 per cent of European vineyards, sending a centuries-old agricultural tradition to ruin.

The scientists who eventually figured out how to save Europe's wine industry added yet another twist to my cross-Atlantic story. Their solution was to graft Old World wine varieties on to—wait for it—aphid-resistant American rootstock. That's right: Almost all of the world's great European wine drunk today is grown on American roots.

As the Europeans were grappling with the loss of their wine grapes, a minister, physician and teetotaler in Vineland, New Jersey, Thomas Bramwell Welch, intolerant of the American penchant for booze, set

HOMEMADE RAISINS

Spray a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Scatter seedless grapes on the pan and cook them in a 107°C (225°F) oven until they are shriveled but still slightly plump, about four hours. (How long this takes will depend on the type of grapes you use, the heating cycles of your oven, and other variables, so check often.) Allow raisins to cool, then use a thin metal spatula to separate any stuck ones from the baking sheet.



out to *stop* my juice from fermenting into wine. As a physician, Dr Welch was aware of Louis Pasteur's work on pasteurization to render milk safe to drink. Dr Welch decided to try the same thing, but with my juice, which he heated to kill the yeast that would otherwise transform it into alcohol. With that, shelf-stable grape juice was born.

Known first as 'unfermented wine,' Dr Welch's product starred at the 1893 world's fair, and America—on the road to Prohibition as it was—was hooked. By 1913, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan served the stuff in lieu of alcohol at a formal (and I'm guessing wildly boring) diplomatic

event. Sober adults and kids alike had a sweet new beverage to love (and, as a consequence, a whole lot more cavities in their teeth; Dr Welch, who ironically was also a dentist, probably hadn't predicted that unfortunate side effect).

Though you may not be as gregarious afterwards, humans find me pure pleasure to eat too. Even my most conventional varieties, such as the green Thompson seedless and purple Flame seedless, can be happily popped by the handful into your mouth or set on a cheese board to tame a funky blue.

If health is your concern, you may want to seek the darker-skinned varieties: The deeper-hued pigments are the botanical world's most plentiful source of resveratrol, an antioxidant credited with anti-ageing properties (though, frankly, often overhyped ones).

Of course, I also come as a mass-produced dried snack, as generations of schoolchildren know. Anyone who lived through the '80s remembers those small red boxes of raisins (don't remind me about how I was the most disappointing

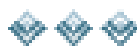
Halloween handout; I know, I know). You may also remember my great pop-culture moment: TV ads starring Claymation members of the popular California Raisins dancing to 'I Heard It Through the Grapevine.' The Raisins' recording of Marvin Gaye's hit landed on the Billboard Hot 100.

These days, the raisin industry is shriveling, and the number of acres of farmed Thompson seedless grapes, the variety grown for raisins, has halved in the past 19 years.

To combat the problem of those little red boxes disappearing, Sun-Maid, the company that owns about 40 per cent of the raisin market, recently hired new management, introduced a sour-raisin product, and launched an ad campaign tapping into the nostalgia of this classic snack.

And frankly? If I can't win in pop culture, ready-made meme that I am, I don't know what can. **R**

Kate Lowenstein is a health editor currently at Vice; Daniel Gritzer is the culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.



Sometimes Life Isn't a Bowl of Cherries

10-year-old: Mom, what's a metaphor?

Me: My life is a train wreck.

10-year-old: I know, Mom, but what is a metaphor?

—**🐦SARDONICTART**

ALL IN

A Day's Work

1960s

AS EDITOR of a small weekly newspaper, I was cleaning out my characteristically cluttered desk one day when I came across an announcement of a blessed event that had taken place a full two and a half months earlier. I extended belated congratulations to the parents via my weekly gossip column, along with a "glad we could get our felicitations in before the young lady starts kindergarten." The next week I received this note from the mother: Sorry sir, but you didn't make it. Kathy was born six years and two and a half months ago and will enter the second form this autumn. May I suggest you clean out your desk more often."

—C. M. M., APRIL 1966

1970s

OUR FIRM FREQUENTLY purchases advertising space in the local alternative (hippie) newspaper, and almost always we are confused when we receive our monthly bill.

Recently, our accountant decided to get to the bottom of the situation and called the paper's 'minister of

advertising.' "How can you send us three separate accounts for three different amounts, when we ran three identical ads?" he asked. "Our rates," replied the hip adman coolly, "vary with the changing of the moon."

—TONI TUCKER, NOVEMBER 1970

1980s

ACTRESS CONSTANCE Cummings once told this tale of a theatrical mishap. An actor in a Broadway play was supposed to shoot another dead. Three times the gun failed to go off. Disgusted, the actor kicked the other character with his boot. The victim, who had been waiting to be killed, clutched his throat and, ad-libbing, gasped, "Aha, the boot was poisoned!"

—P. R. AND T. P., AUGUST 1981

1990s

A COUPLE DINING at a restaurant both ordered steak. As the waitress placed their plates on the table, they noticed the strange way she was holding them. "You've got your thumbs on our steaks!" complained the wife. "You don't want me to drop them again, do you?" the waitress replied.

REG WELLARD, NOVEMBER 1998

News FROM THE
**WORLD OF
MEDICINE**



The Benefits of Baking with Less Salt

Globally, people consume an average of 10.1 grams of salt per day, twice the recommended maximum daily amount, and a rate that raises the risk for heart and kidney disease, as well as stroke. While much of that surplus comes from restaurant meals

and packaged foods, bread and other baked goods are often overlooked as a viable target for salt reduction. According to an American study out of the University of Illinois, reducing salt and increasing the amount of herbs and spices when you bake could take a big slice out of sodium intake without sacrificing taste and leavening ability. If you bake at home, the researchers suggest using only half the amount of salt called for in the recipe.

Social Media Can Be Toxic

Last year, a whistleblower from Facebook revealed that the social media giant knew from internal studies that one of its platforms, Instagram, made people feel worse about themselves, contributing to increased depression and anxiety. This was due to constantly evaluating oneself against others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, social comparisons are also bad for your physical health. According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, people who ranked their social status low in relation to others had higher blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and body mass index, which raised their risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Since social media makes comparing yourself to others easier than ever, researchers suggest joining supportive, inclusive social groups, whether online or off.

'Smart' Bandages Are on the Way

Usually, if you want to check if a wound is healing properly, you need to remove the bandage, which can be both painful and risky, giving pathogens a chance to attack. But now, Australian researchers at RMIT University in Melbourne have developed 'smart' wound dressings that detect biochemical changes in the skin. The dressings glow brightly under UV light if infection starts to set in. In wounds that had previously been infected, the absence of fluorescent light signaled that the infection has cleared. After more tests, the product will soon be made available to doctors around the world.

Dried Fruit Is Beneficial

Adults in the United States who consumed dried fruit had a lower body mass index and blood pressure than those who didn't, according to research published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. Dried fruits are a good source of fibre and potassium, but not all options are created equal. Your best bets include prunes, apricots, mangoes, and figs—just make sure to check the ingredient label for added sugars.

AI Helps Rule Out Breast Cancer

Early detection of breast cancer through mammograms helps save lives. Unfortunately, cancer screening is about four times more likely to miss detecting cancers in women with extremely dense breasts, who have twice the risk of developing breast cancer as the average woman. Now, a Dutch study published in the journal *Radiology* has shown that, for patients with extremely dense breasts and no detectable lumps, an AI-based screening tool currently being tested is able to quickly and accurately rule out cancer for 40 per cent of patients. (The tool—which uses an automated triaging method based on deep learning—was trained on data from seven hospitals and tested on data from an eighth.) This will significantly reduce radiologists' workload and allow them to focus on complex, less definitive cases. **R**

—BY MARK WITTEN



OCTOBER 1939

ANTON, FRIEND OF ALL THE WORLD

*In a tribute to his most unforgettable character,
a literary great tells the story of cheerful Anton,
who never had a job—but was always busy*

BY Stefan Zweig

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



I should be ungrateful indeed had I forgotten the person who showed me two of the most difficult things on earth: how, by means of an inner freedom, a man can free himself from the strongest power in this world, the power of money; and how a man can live among his fellow human beings without making a single enemy.

I came to know this unique individual in a very simple way. One afternoon, in the little town where I then lived, I was taking my spaniel for a walk, when the dog began to behave strangely. He rolled frenziedly on the ground, rubbed himself against every tree, whimpered and growled incessantly.

While I was wondering what was the matter with him, I became aware that someone was walking by my side—a man of about 30, poorly dressed, collarless and hatless. A beggar, I thought, and was about to put my hand in my pocket. But the stranger smiled tranquilly at me out of clear blue eyes as though we were old friends. “He’s got a tick, poor chap,” he said, pointing to my dog. “Come along, we’ll have it out.”

He addressed me with the ‘*Du*’ which in German is employed only among people who are on intimate terms; but there was such warm friendliness in his gaze that I took no offense at his familiarity. I followed him to a park bench and sat down beside him. He called the dog with a shrill whistle.

And, strange to say, my Kaspar, who was usually wary of strangers, responded at once, and, at a sign, put his head on the man’s knee. Searching the dog’s coat with long, sensitive fingers, the stranger finally uttered a satisfied “Aha!” and began what must have been a painful operation, for Kaspar whimpered several times. Yet he made no effort to wriggle free. Suddenly the man released him. “Here it is,” he laughed, triumphantly holding something in the air. “Now run along, doggie.” As the dog scurried off, the stranger rose with a nod and a “*Gri-iss Gott*,” [God bless] and walked on. His departure was so sudden that it did not occur to me until later that I should have given him something for his trouble, or at least should have thanked him. But there was the same finality and self-possession about his going as his coming.

At home, still pondering the man’s odd behaviour, I reported the adventure to our old cook. “Oh, that was Anton,” she remarked. “He’s got an eye for everything.” I asked what was his trade, what he did for a living. “Nothing,” she said, as if astonished by my question. “What does he want with a trade?”

“Well,” I said, “everyone has to have something to live on.”

“Not Anton,” she said. “Everyone is glad to give him whatever he wants. He doesn’t care about money, he doesn’t need it.” Well, this was odd. I knew that in our little town, as in every

other town in the world, every crust of bread and every glass of beer, every night's lodging and every coat had to be paid for. How came this spare little fellow with the threadbare trousers to get around this law, and yet remain utterly carefree and happy?

I resolved to investigate his technique, and soon discovered that our cook had been right: this fellow Anton had no kind of settled job. He just wandered about the town all day long—apparently aimlessly, but with watchful eyes that observed everything. He would stop the driver of a cart and show him that his horse was imperfectly harnessed. He would notice the rotting wood in a fence, and call on the owner to suggest that it ought to be painted. Usually he'd be asked to do the job—for everybody knew that there was no cupidity in his suggestions, but only sincere friendliness.

How many jobs have I not since then seen him putting his hand to! Once I found him sitting in a shoe maker's shop mending shoes, once acting as an extra waiter at a party, once taking some children out for a walk. I discovered that everyone turned to Anton in an emergency; on one occasion I saw him selling apples among the market women, and I learned that the owner of the

stall was in childbed and had let him take her place.

Of course, there are plenty of handy men in every town, ready to pick up any odd job. The unique thing about Anton was that, regardless of how hard he had worked, he firmly refused to accept more money than he needed for that day. When things went well, he accepted no payment whatever. "I'll come to you later if I need anything," he would say.

I soon became aware that this odd, ragged, friendly fellow had discovered for himself a new system. He had faith in the decency of human beings; instead of depositing money in a savings bank, he preferred to accumulate moral obligations with his fellow townspeople; he invested his

little all in invisible credits—and even the most cynical could not escape feeling indebted to one who did things for them as a favour, without thought of fixed compensation.

One had only to watch Anton walking down the street to realize in what special esteem people held him. Everyone greeted him cordially, everyone shook him by the hand. And this simple carefree man in the shabby coat walked through the town like a landowner inspecting his estates, with a genial and friendly air. He could

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enter any door, sit down at any table; everything was his to command. Never have I understood so well the power wielded by one who has mastered the secret of taking no thought for the morrow, and of genuinely trusting in God.

I must frankly admit that it annoyed me at first, after the episode with Kaspar, to have Anton pass me with merely a casual greeting, as though I were more or less a stranger. Evidently he did not wish to presume on that little service. Yet I felt excluded by this polite indifference from a large and friendly community. And so the next time something was out of order in the house—water was dripping from a gutter—I suggested to my cook that she send for Anton.

"You can't send for him; he never stays long enough in one place," she replied. "But I'll get word to him." Thus I learnt that this strange individual had no home. Yet no one was easier to get in touch with; a sort of wireless telephone connected him with the whole town. It was sufficient to tell the first person you met in the street, "I want Anton," and the word would pass along, until someone ran across him. Indeed, that very afternoon he turned up. He looked at everything

with shrewd eyes, pointing out, as he walked through the garden, that here a bush wanted trimming, there a young tree needed transplanting.

Finally he inspected the gutter and set to work forthwith. Two hours later he reported that the job was finished, and departed—again before I could thank him. But this time at least I had told the cook to pay him well. I asked her if he had been satisfied.

"Of course, he's always satisfied," she said. "I wanted to give him six shillings, but he would take only two. That would see him through for today and tomorrow. But if the Herr Doktor, he said, ever had an old winter coat to spare ..."

I find it hard to describe the pleasure it gave me to be able to

offer to this man—the first person I had ever known who took less than was given him, something he was eager to have. I ran after him. "Anton, Anton," I called down the hill. "I have a coat for you."

Once more I encountered that serene, tranquil light in his eyes. He was not in the least surprised that I should run after him. It was natural to him that someone who had a coat that was not needed should offer it to another who badly wanted one. I got the cook to fetch all my available

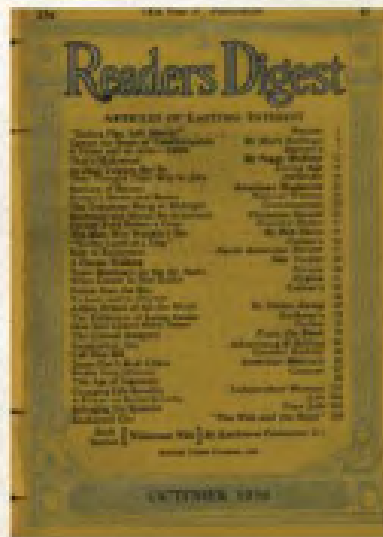
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old clothes. He scrutinized the pile, picked up a coat, tried it on and then said quietly, "Yes, this will do me." He said it with the air of a gentleman who has decided to take one of the articles brought out for his inspection in a shop. Then he glanced at the other things. "You can give those shoes to Fritz in the Salslergrasse, he needs a pair; and the shirts to Josef in the Square, he can patch them for himself. If you like I'll take them along for you." This in the magnanimous tone of one volunteering to do a favour; I felt I ought to thank him for distributing my belongings among people who were complete strangers to me. As he tied the things in a bundle, he added, "Yes, you're a good fellow. Nice of you to give all these things away." And he vanished.

Strange, no enthusiastic review of any of my books had ever delighted me so much as this naive praise. In later years I have often thought of this

Anton, and always with gratitude, for few people have given me so much spiritual help. Frequently when I have been worrying about stupid little money matters I have called to mind this man who lived calmly and confidently for the day, because he wanted no more than was enough for that one day. And always I have thought: "If everyone were to learn this secret of mutual trust and confidence, there would be no police, no courts of law, no prisons and no money. Would not our whole complicated economic system be remedied if everyone lived like this one man, who gave as much of himself as he could, yet took only what he needed?"

For some years I've heard nothing of Anton. But there are few people about whom I feel less anxiety: I know that God will never leave this man in the lurch and, what's more, men will not, either. **R**



FROM 1939

Cartoon Quips

NOVEMBER 1958

Chairman of the board to other members: "Of course, it's only a suggestion, gentlemen, but let's not forget who's making it."

— SATURDAY EVENING POST

As Kids See it

1960s

“HOW MUCH DOES the Earth weigh?” asked a seven-year-old boy in class. The teacher, not knowing the answer, resorted to the bets of education techniques: “That’s a very interesting question. Let’s see who can find the answer by tomorrow.” That night she made a beeline for the local library and after a considerable effort, she arrived at the answer.

The next day she asked the class if anyone had been able to find out how much the earth weighs. No one had. The teacher filled with pride announced the results of her research. The class pondered the answer briefly. Then the same small boy raised his hand and asked, “Is that with or without people?”

—D. R. K., FEBRUARY 1966.

1970s

SCAVENGING THE BEACH after a crowded holiday weekend is always an exciting adventure for my three youngsters. We live on a cliff overlooking a small cove, and after one such weekend my two boys burst into the kitchen with grins from ear to ear. “Look what I found, Mum!” shouted John, holding up one wet swim fin.

“I found a volleyball!” shrieked my 10-year-old. My six-year-old daughter was late, and came in quietly.

“And what did you find, dear?” I encouraged. “A ring? A bracelet?”

“No, Mummy,” she smiled as another girl followed her in. “I found a friend.”

—MRS B. NEWMAN, NOVEMBER 1970

AT THE DINNER TABLE one evening our teenage daughter was telling us about a film she had seen at school.

“It was on mental and emotional health,” she said. “And can you tell us,” I asked teasingly, “the exact difference between ‘mental’ and ‘emotional’ health?” “Well,” she replied, “the way I see it, mental health is how you feel about geometry; emotional health is how you feel about the boy who sits next to you in geometry.”

—GUTHRIE JANSSEN, NOVEMBER 1970

1980s

MY SCHOOL ENGLISH students were separating run-on sentences into shorter ones. A sentence to be revised was: “My little brother’s favourite movie is *Return of the Jedi* and he pretends our dog is an Ewok and he tries to save our house from Darth Vader.”

A student condensed this to: "My little brother has a problem with reality."

—PAULINE DELAMARTER, JULY 1988

WE HAD TAKEN OUR daughter to the local club where a couple of chefs were demonstrating their skill. As the Chinese chef cooked noodles using chopsticks, my wide-eyed daughter exclaimed, "Look, Mummy, he's knitting his dinner!"

—VINOO CHERIAN, MADRAS, JULY 1986

SOME OF THE children I examine as an optometrist need glasses but will do almost anything to avoid wearing them. Other youngsters, who do not need glasses, plead with me to prescribe them. One nine-year-old patient wanted to wear glasses very much. When I asked her to read the bottom row of letters on the chart, she said, "All right, I can see the O and the P and the T, but not the N and the Z."

—R. KINKADE, SEPTEMBER 1986

1990s

AFTER HAVING HER frisky four-year-old under her feet all morning, a mother suggested, "Why don't you go over and see how old Mrs Smith is, dear?" Off went the child, but she was back within minutes. "Mum," she said, "Mrs Smith said it's none of your business how old she is."

—FRIENDS OF ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL
NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER 1998

2000s

WHEN MY SON was in ninth grade, we reluctantly agreed to let him move into the basement. Then I realized how convenient it was to get him to the breakfast table. Before, I used to stand at the bottom of the staircase and scream his name. Now all I had to do was flick the basement light on and off and he was here.

One morning I flicked the switch and nothing happened. I did it several more times.

"I'm on my way," my son called up. "You didn't have to yell."

—CAROL CHRISTIAN, AUGUST 2000

I HAD BEEN TEACHING my seventh graders about World War II, and a test question was, "What was the largest amphibious assault of all time?" Expecting to see 'the D-Day invasion' as the answer, I found instead on one paper, 'Moses and the plague of frogs.'

—STEVE CALLAHAN, MARCH 2002

AFTER RETIRING, I took up substitute teaching. One day, I asked my fourth graders to guess my favourite sport. It happens to be pickleball, which might explain why they weren't having any luck. So I offered this hint: "It starts with the letter P"

They threw out pool, poker, Ping-Pong—none of them correct. Then one boy insisted he had the answer: "Pole dancing!"

NANCY REGAN, APRIL 2017



NOVEMBER 1986

WHY GOD SAVED ANNA HAZARE

The humble, yet remarkable, origins of the man who became the people's champion against corruption and injustice in India

BY Mohan Sivanand

Kemkharan, September 1965. An Indian military convoy rumbles towards the fighting zone. Suddenly, two Pakistani Sabre jets dropped out of the sky and scream in to attack. As bombs begin exploding around him, Kishan Baburao Hazare, driving a truckful of soldiers, speeds up. But when a splinter grazes his forehead, he ducks below the dashboard and jams on the brakes with his hands. The windscreen shatters and bullets riddle the man next to Hazare. The 25-year-old driver tumbles out of his truck and prays fervently as the two Sabers strafe the convoy again. When they finally disappear, dozens of jawans lie dead. Of the few survivors, only Hazare escapes serious injury. "You saved me, God," Hazare says over and over again. "But why?"

Recently, at the village of Ralegaon Shindi, I discovered why God saved Baburao Hazare 11 years ago. Ralegaon Shindi wasn't very different from hundreds of other villages in this arid part of Maharashtra's Ahmadnagar district. With water available only during the monsoons, its farmers could barely grow one crop a year, and 70 per cent of the village's 315 families lived in abject poverty. Indeed, Ralegaon Shindi's most distinctive feature was its 40 illicit distilleries that made the village a popular haunt for drunks and gamblers. Thefts and brawls were commonplace.

Since he returned to Ralegaon Shindi in 1975, Hazare has spearheaded a movement that has changed all this forever. Today, Ralegaon Shindi is brisk and prosperous, signs of rural modernity abound. Its fields are heavy with grain. There's a bank, a boarding school,

biogas plants. Some of its farmers drive around on mopeds.

Even more remarkable is the social transformation that Hazare has wrought. No one drinks in Ralegaon Shindi, only a handful smoke. There hasn't been a crime here in nine years. Even the practice of 'untouchability' has weakened, thanks to Hazare, says the former collector of Ahmannagar, Rajiv Agarwal. Scores of other villages here and in neighbouring districts look to Ralegaon for inspiration.

It's hard to believe that Hazare could be responsible for all this. He's a short, thin, mild-looking fellow, the kind of person you wouldn't look at twice. Nor is his background the stuff from which leaders are supposed to be made. The son of a poor farmer, Hazare never got beyond the seventh class in school. As a young man, his fiery temper constantly got him

into trouble: once he had the Bombay police after him when he beat up a cop who had been harassing hawkers.

He was known as a troublemaker in the army, too. Soon after he enlisted, he discovered that a senior officer was embezzling mess funds. He publicly questioned the officer and was posted to far-off Nefa [now, Arunachal Pradesh] as a punishment.

COMPLETE CHANGE

The story of Hazare's transformation began in 1964 at a Delhi railway station bookstall after he bought a book on Swami Vivekananda. Enthralled by the great sage's life and by his dictum that the noblest thing a man can do is work for the good of others, Hazare avidly began reading religious texts and biographies of social reformers, and after his escape from the Sabar jets at Khemkharan, Hazare became a vegetarian, gave up cigarettes and liquor and vowed to remain a bachelor, devoting himself to public service.

A worthy cause, he realized, lay right in front of him. The upliftment of his own village, Ralegaon Shindi. During his annual visits home, Hazare had been appalled by its steady deterioration. Even the village temple had become badly run down. *If I could rebuild the temple*, Hazare said to

himself, *more people might think of God and lead better lives*. But he didn't have the money. Nor could he leave the army just yet—to qualify for a pension, he had to serve for several years more.

Finally, in August 1975, Hazare returned to Ralegaon after retiring from the army. His service benefits amounted to ₹20,000, and he planned to spend the money rebuilding the village temple. He hired carpenters and Masons and helped them lay bricks and lug wood. Few people paid him attention at first,

but as the temple neared completion, the villages began changing. Some offered to donate wood. Many volunteered their labour. "This taught me one thing," Hazare says. "If people are convinced that you are not selfish, they are on your side."

BORN LEADER

Among those who joined Hazare were a few young men. They called him *anna* (big brother) and listened with fascination to his dream of transforming their village. Gradually, poor youth joined the group, and Hazare suggested they form a Tarun Mandal (youth club). One night, a few Tarun Mandal members rushed to the temple with the news that some drunks from a neighbouring village had beaten up Gulab Bhalekar, a 40-year-old Ralegaon farmer, because he had not saluted them. Anna seized the opportunity to

"IF PEOPLE ARE CONVINCED THAT YOU ARE NOT SELFISH, THEY ARE ON YOUR SIDE," SAYS HAZARE.

call a village meeting, at which he lashed out against drinking, illicit distilling and gambling. "I'm warning all distillers here," he said. "Shut up shop."

Some distillers, fearing Anna and his boys, readily complied. Others had their liquor dens smashed up. But Hazare was not content with simply putting an end to the liquor distilling. "You can drink elsewhere," he told villagers. "But if anyone here is found drunk, he'd better watch out."

He soon proved as good as his word. A few days later, when three men returned to Ralegaon drunk after a binge in a nearby village, Hazare had them tied to the temple pillars and personally flogged them with his army belt. Even today, Hazare is unfazed by criticism of such behaviour. "Rural India is a harsh society," he says. "If you want change, it's sometimes necessary to be tough." Indeed, no one I met in Ralegaon holds Hazare's harshness against him. "I was a miserable drunk nine years ago," says 44-year-old Haribhau Mapari, a Ralegaon farmer. "But after being thrashed, I have not touched a drop of liquor. Anna saved me."

Though drink had blighted the lives of Ralegaon Shindi residents, Hazare soon realized that a far more important reason for the villager's misery was lack of work. In

fact, because many of the villagers had worked for the bootleggers, shutting down the distilleries had, ironically, made several families even poorer. As he wondered what could be done, Hazare chanced upon a newspaper article about a state government scheme that provided manual labour jobs on public works and projects. He and the Tarun Mandal boys quickly rounded up about 200 villagers who needed work and got jobs for all of them.

PERSISTENT PAYS

This taught Hazare another important lesson. The government runs a number of rural development schemes, but because they are poorly publicized, illiterate villagers rarely get to hear about them. By finding out what schemes existed and studying them carefully, Hazare could help villagers take advantage of them. Accordingly, Hazare decided to find out as much as he could about the development projects. He haunted government offices, talked

to every bureaucrat he could, read several newspapers, and built up files on government development schemes. "He was extraordinarily persistent," recalls M. D. Sukhatame, executive engineer in Ahmadnagar's irrigation Department. "I remember him at one meeting, sitting on the floor,

"RURAL INDIA IS A HARSH SOCIETY," HAZARE SAYS. "IT'S SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO BE TOUGH."

listening intently to a technical discussion on water management."

Since Ralegaon suffered from acute water scarcity, Hazare was especially interested in irrigation techniques. Reading about a successful water conservation project near Purandhar, about 100 km away, Anna studied their system and got engineers to draw up plans for a similar facility at Ralegaon and by persuading villagers to do much of the work themselves, he got the facilities built at the lowest possible cost. "Building the

temple had taught villagers the benefits of working together," says Hazare. "Since then, *shramdan* (self-help) has been our way of life." Today, 41 per cent of Ralegaon Shindi house farmland is irrigated, agricultural incomes have increased five-fold, and only 30 per cent of the population

still lives below the poverty line. Not only have living standards risen, dozens of villagers are now free of debt. "Four years ago," farmer Nana Auti told me proudly, "I was able to pay back ₹40,000 in debts that I had accumulated over the years. Since then, I've also built a new house."

Ralegaon's self-help efforts are not always looked upon kindly. Once, after the villagers decided they wanted a high school and constructed a 10-room building themselves, the government refused to provide money for running it. Anna

soon discovered the reason. A powerful local politician, annoyed because he received no votes in Ralegaon in a recent election, was taking revenge.

TOTAL DEDICATION

Hazare, however, was undeterred. He hired 10 teachers, offered them free food and housing in lieu of wages, and got the school going. Then he systematically began to lobby officials both at district headquarters in Ahmednagar and at the state secretariat in Bombay,

350 km away. To keep expenses down during his Bombay trips, Hazare slept on newspapers spread out on bus-station floors, and bathed in the sea. But for one year, despite 20 visits to Bombay and innumerable more to Ahmednagar, nothing happened. "Finally," Hazare says, "I decided I'd had enough."

**FOR ONE YEAR
NOTHING
HAPPENED.
"FINALLY,"
HAZARE SAYS,
"I DECIDED I'D
HAD ENOUGH."**

He descended on a Ahmednagar's Zilla Parishad office one morning with 250 villagers and announced that they are all going on a hunger strike. Within hours, officials in Bombay sent an assurance that the money would be made available.

Today, the school is run on military lines. "That's where I learnt some discipline," says Hazare. Students have to jog and exercise daily and take extra courses in English, which, insists Hazare, who knows very little of the language itself, is essential to understand modern science.

Campus Comedy

1960s

IN EXPLAINING a genetics problem, our lecturer wrote 'fruit fly' on the blackboard as one of the materials we would be using. Ripples of laughter brought this error to his attention, whereupon he changed the spelling to read 'friut fly', which engendered more laughter. "Oh bother!" he said, rubbing out once again and writing with precision: '*Drosophila melanogaster*'.

—R. V., MARCH 1966

1980s

MY TWO ROOMMATES were delighted when I purchased a pet parrot and moved him into our dormitory quarters. They were equally enthusiastic about taking turns teaching the bird how to talk. Over and over again, we repeated the words, "Hello, Baby. Want a kiss?"

This had gone on for about an hour one day when a note was slipped under our door.

An anonymous and perplexed individual had written: "We don't know who you have in there, but why don't you give up? He's obviously not interested!"

—CAROLINE OWINGS, MARCH 1982

1990s

IN 20 YEARS of college teaching, I have seen every imaginable excuse for missing exams. My favourite is a note I received after a pair of doctors opened a practice near our Louisiana Tech University campus at Ruston. No sooner had Dr Allen Herbert and Dr Temple Douglas opened the Herbert Douglas Clinic than a student gave me a letter verifying that he had been too ill to take my exam. It was signed Dr Herbert Douglas.

—ROBERT K. TOBUREN, MARCH 1991

MAP READING WAS our topic in one earth science class at Old Dominion University. The teacher explained latitude, longitude, degrees and minutes, then asked, "Suppose I asked you to meet me for lunch at 23 degrees, four minutes north latitude and 45 degrees, 15 minute east longitude ... ?" After a confused silence, a voice volunteered, "I guess you'd be eating alone."

—SANDRA WADSWORTH, DECEMBER 1991

"I JUST DO not understand my parents," said a downcast university student. "I told them I needed money to buy a chair and they sent me the chair."

—OCTOBER 1998



DECEMBER 1951

A STRING OF BLUE BEADS

*The most precious gift to give
or receive is love*

—
BY *Fulton Oursler*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES COMPOSITE

Pete Richards was the loneliest man in town on the day Jean Grace opened his door. You may have seen something in the newspapers about the incident at the time it happened, although neither his name nor hers was published, nor was the full story told as I tell it here.

Pete's shop had come down to him from his grandfather. The little front window was strewn with a disarray of old-fashioned things: bracelets and lockets worn a century ago, gold rings and silver boxes, images of jade and ivory, porcelain figurines.

On this winter's afternoon a child was standing there, her forehead against the glass, earnest and enormous eyes studying each discarded treasure, as if she were looking for something quite special. Finally she straightened up with a satisfied air and entered the store.

The shadowy interior of Pete Richards' establishment was even more cluttered than his show window. Shelves were stacked with jewel caskets, duelling pistols, clocks and lamps and the floor was heaped with andirons and mandolins and things hard to find a name for.

Behind the counter stood Pete himself, a man not more than 30, but with hair already turning grey. There was a bleak air about him as he looked at the small customer who flattened her ungloved hands on the counter.

"Mister," she began, "would you please let me look at that string of blue

beads in the window?" Pete parted the draperies and lifted out a necklace. The turquoise stones gleamed brightly against the pallor of his palm as he spread the ornament before her.

"They're just perfect," said the child, entirely to herself. "Will you wrap them up pretty for me, please?"

Pete studied her with a stony air. "Are you buying these for someone?"

"They're for my big sister. She takes care of me. You see, this will be the first Christmas since mother died. I've been looking for the most wonderful present for my sister."

"How much money do you have?" asked Pete warily.

She had been busily untying the knots in a handkerchief and now she poured out a handful of pennies on the counter.

"I emptied my bank," she explained simply.

Pete Richards looked at her thoughtfully. Then he carefully drew back the necklace. The price tag was visible to him but not her. How could he tell her? The trusting look of her blue eyes smote him like the pain of an old wound.

"Just a minute," he said, and

turned towards the back of the store. Over his shoulder he called, "What's your name?" He was very busy about something.

"Jean Grace."

When Pete turned to where Jean Grace waited, a package lay in his hand, wrapped in scarlet paper and tied with a bow of green ribbon. "There you are," he said shortly. "Don't lose it on the way home."

She smiled happily at him over her shoulder as she ran out of the door. Through the window he watched her go, while desolation flooded his thoughts.

Something about Jean Grace and her string of beads had stirred him to depths of a grief that would not stay buried. The child's hair was wheat yellow, her eyes sea blue, and once upon a time, not long before, Pete had been in love with a girl with hair of that same yellow and eyes just as blue. And the turquoise necklace was to have been hers.

But there had come a rainy night—a truck skidding on a slippery road—and the life was crushed out of his dream.

Since then Pete Richards had lived too much with his grief in solitude. He was politely attentive to customers, but after business hours his world seemed irrevocably empty. He was

trying to forget in a self-pitying haze that deepened day by day.

The blue eyes of Jean Grace jolted him into acute remembrance of what he had lost. The pain of it made him recoil from the exuberance of holiday shoppers.

During the next 10 days trade was brisk; chattering women swarmed in, fingering trinkets, trying to bargain. When the last customer had gone, late

on Christmas Eve, he sighed with relief. It was over for another year. But for Pete Richards the night was not quite over.

The door opened and a young woman hurried in. With an inexplicable start, he realized that she looked familiar, yet he could not remember when or where he had seen

her before. Her hair was golden yellow and her large eyes were blue. Without speaking, she drew from her purse a package loosely unwrapped in its red paper, a bow of green ribbon with it. Presently the string of blue beads lay gleaming again before him.

"Did this come from your shop?" she asked. Pete raised his eyes to hers and answered softly, "Yes, it did."

"Are the stones real?"

"Yes. But not the finest quality."

"Can you remember who it was you sold it to?"

**THE TURQUOISE
STONES
GLEAMED
BRIGHTLY
AGAINST
THE PALLOR
OF HIS PALM**

"She was a small girl. Her name was Jean. She bought them for her older sister's Christmas present."

"How much are they worth?"

"The price," he told her solemnly, "is always a confidential matter between the seller and the customer."

"But Jean has never had more than a few pennies of spending money. How could she pay for them?"

Pete was folding the gay paper back into its creases, rewrapping the little package just as neatly as before.

"She paid the biggest price anyone can ever pay," he said. "She gave all she had."

There was a silence then that filled the little curio shop.

In some far-away steeple, a bell

began to ring. The sound of the distant chiming, the little package lying on the counter, the question in the eyes of the girl and the strange feeling of renewal struggling unreasonably in the heart of the man, all had come to be because of the love of a child.

"But why did you do it?"

He held out the gift in his hand.

"It's already Christmas morning," he said. "And it's my misfortune that I

have no one to give anything to. Will you let me see you home and wish you a Merry Christmas at your door?"

And so, to the sound of many bells and in the midst of happy people, Pete Richards and a girl whose name he had yet to learn walked out into the beginning of the great day that brings hope into the world for us all. **R**



FROM 1951



Quick Quips

One blustery weekend I was strolling with my little boy on the beach. We were scaling shells into the onshore wind and watching them curve back to us. I don't know why this was fun. But on that morning scaling shells seemed like the best of all possible things to do. After a while, I looked at my watch. It was lunchtime. We left the beach reluctantly. Only after we sat down to eat did I wonder why I had stopped the game. What was so important about noon? Why must we be hypnotized by the clock? My boy and I went back to the beach after lunch but the mood was gone. The shells and the wind did nothing for us now but blow sand in our eyes.

—MAX GUNTHER, FEBRUARY 1966

Virtual Hilarity

1990s

LAST SPRING I was phoned about a 25th high school reunion in Virginia. I told the caller that although the name was correct, I was not the man she was looking for, adding that I had just attended my 50th college reunion. Later, surfing the Net, I found someone in Virginia with the same name. I emailed him, explaining that I had been mistakenly contacted about what might be his 25th high-school reunion. He emailed back: "I'm not the right guy either. I'm in fifth grade."

—DAVID M. SANGER, OCTOBER 1998

IF WINDOWS 98 featured haiku error messages:

- Three things are certain:
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

—DAVID DIXON

- This site has been moved.
We'd tell you where, but then
we'd have to delete you.

—CHARLES MATTHEWS

- Printer not ready.
Could be a fatal error.
Have a pen handy?

—PAT DAVIS (WWW.SALONMAGAZINE.COM)

OCTOBER 1998

2000s

LOOKING UP websites on infertility, I found an address that sounded interesting. I clicked on the link and was taken to a site that said, "This page is still under construction." I looked closer and saw in smaller print: "Check back in nine months and see what we've accomplished." I bookmarked the address and went back several months later. Posted was a full page picture of a beautiful baby girl.

—RUTH GILL, FEBRUARY 2001

MY EMAIL TO MY college library where I work bounced back to me with this warning: "The recipient server is experiencing problems with email and the internet due to an electrical outage there. If you should need help contacting someone there, please telephone them. Also please remember that with the electrical outage, they do not have telephone service."

—MARGARET DAVIS, MAY 2006

BEFORE MY HUSBAND went for surgery on a ruptured disk, I wrote a message on his back. As the nurses moved his gown, they read: "A:\Error reading drive A. Remove disk."

—TERRY GALLEGOS, AUGUST 2008



APRIL 1985

The Day *Bombay* **BLEW** **UP**

*Seventy-eight years ago this month
occurred a great explosion in
Bombay harbour that killed hundreds
and imperilled the city*

BY *John Ennis*

Friday, 14 April 1944, was a pleasant spring day in Bombay, then a vital supply base for the planned invasion of Japan. The harbour was jammed with ships of every Allied flag. Western and Asian troops thronged the city buying coloured silk, sarees, ivory elephants and incense sticks for souvenirs. In the dockside district, people were carrying on their everyday activities.

At 12:30 by the clock in the harbour tower, the dock workers stopped for lunch. On a Norwegian merchant ship, the *Belray*, Able Seaman Roy Hayward, going below, noticed what looked like a whisper of smoke coming from a ventilator of the *Fort Stikine*. This was a 7,200-tonne cargo vessel, which lay in the adjoining dock. She had left Liverpool seven weeks earlier, loaded with ammunition and explosives, airplanes, stores and £2 million worth of gold bars intended to help stabilize the rupee.

At 1:30 p.m. The dock workers returned to the *Fort Stikine*. As they entered Number Two hold, they saw smoke coming from the port side nearest the quay. The stevedores scrambled up from the hold shouting, "Fire!"

Men from a Bombay fire-brigade pump on the quay promptly ran with their hoses to the ship. Not until their section leader was on board, however, did he remember that, for a fire in a ship carrying explosives, his instructions were to send an immediate Number Two alarm, which would call out a large force.

With orders to dial 290, his sub-leader struggled back down the gangway, now crowded with dock workers pushing to get ashore, and dashed to a telephone. But the telephone had no dial. Confused, he ran 160 metres along the dockside, broke the glass of a fire alarm and rang the bell. Thus the fire brigade control room received only a normal call for two pumps. The hands of the harbour clock tower stood at 2:16 p.m.

The *Fort Stikine* was a 120-metre floating bomb—a bomb with the fuse lit. The aeroplanes in her cargo, most of the stores and some of the ammunition and explosives had been unloaded at Karachi. There she had taken on 8,700 bales of cotton and quantities of lubricating oil, timber, sulphur, fish, manure and resin. The cargo turned out to be a treacherous mixture. Oil, cotton, timber, sulphur and resin burn freely. Fish stinks.

CONFLICTING ADVICE

Because of the stink, the master of the *Fort Stikine*, Captain A. J. Naismith, told the dockers at Bombay to unload the fish first. When the fire broke out among the cotton bales, they still had 170 cubic metres of timber on top of them. Above the timber from the 'tween decks to the deck, the upper part of Number Two hold was packed with explosives. Below the cotton lay a thick layer of ammunition.

Eight minutes after receiving the alarm, the fire station officer arrived with two pumps. He sent an immediate call to the control room. Eight more pumps and an emergency tender turned out. At

2:35 p.m., Norman Coombs, chief of the Bombay fire brigade, arrived. Dressed in a suit, he had had no time to change into a uniform.

In the meantime, Captain B. T. Oberst, an ordnance officer, rushed on board and secured a plan of the ship stowage. Then he hurried to Captain Naismith: "You have enough explosives here to blow up the whole of the docks," he said. "The only way out is to scuttle the ship."

Coombs joined Oberst in his plea for scuttling, but Colonel J. R. Sadler, general manager of the docks, disagreed. He told Naismith that the only safe action was to take the ship out to sea: there was only a metre between her keel and the harbour bed, a distance so short that the water would not cover even the lower part of Number Two hold.

Captain Naismith, confused by conflicting advice, made no decision except to try to get in touch with Lloyd's surveyor.

SHATTERING EXPLOSION

For nearly an hour, the firemen poured water into the burning ship. During this time, most of the dockside workers were unconcernedly about their jobs. The *Fort Stikine* did not display the red flag indicating that she carried explosives. She sounded no warning blasts at any time. A sailor on the *Japalanda*, which

lay astern of the *Fort Stikine*, grew so bored watching the firefighting that he went below to read.

But at last one onlooker saw trouble ahead. Abel Seaman Roy Hayward, on the *Belray* had fought fires in the London blitz. He saw the flames from the *Fort Stikine* turn a yellow-brown colour, and a phrase from his old fire-service drill book leapt to his mind. "Yellow-brown fire—explosives!" He shouted to his

comrades, "Down!" and fell on his face in *Belray's* gunpit.

Suddenly, a huge blaze rode up from the *Fort Stikine*, a flaring Roman candle reaching beyond the top of the mast. A moment later came a shattering explosion.

JOURNEY OF MERCY

All over Bombay, buildings shook, win-

dows were smashed, debris and blazing cotton fell in a rain of fire over sheds and ships. Of the firemen scrambling from the *Fort Stikine*, 66 were killed outright and 83 injured. The blast created a tidal wave which hurled the 5,000 tonne, 120-metre-long *Japalanda* from her berth and lifted her bow some 18 metres into the air to come to rest on the roof of a dockside shed.

The explosion played capricious tricks. White-hot metal, flung haphazard into the town, picked out victims at

**ALL OVER BOMBAY,
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AND SHIPS.**



The memorial outside Mumbai Fire Brigade Headquarters honours the firefighters who died in the 1944 Bombay harbour explosion.

random. Captain Sydney Kielly, strolling with the friend, was cut in half by a piece of metal plate. His friend was unhurt.

On the dock, C. W. Stevens, a marine surveyor, was talking with Captain Naismith and Chief Officer Henderson of the *Fort Stikine*. Stevens was flung along the quayside. After the blast swept over him, he stood up to find himself blackened and naked. Nobody saw Naismith and Henderson again. Nearly a kilometre and a half from the docks, D. C. Motiwala was sitting on his third-floor

verandah. A bar of gold crashed through the roof and lay on the verandah floor.

Meanwhile, on the *Belray*, Able Seaman Hayward made his way from the gunpit to the boat deck strewn with the injured and dying. He picked up a man who had lost a leg, carried him down the gangway and went back for others. Time after time he made his awful journey of mercy, placing the injured on the ground between two intact walls where they would be relatively safe from the continual bursts of ammunition.

FRIGHTFUL TOLL

The last man was an Indian seaman who had lost both his legs. Hayward picked him up and carried him towards a small car on the quay. He had just reached the car when, from the red glow inside the pall of smoke that hit the *Fort Stikine*, there came a second roar, far greater than the first.

Hayward bundled the man underneath the car, then pushed under as far as he could himself, lying there until the hail of fragments ended. Then he put the man into the car and saw him off to hospital. Whereas the first explosion had burst sideways, losing some of its shock in the water and the quay-side sheds, the second bore straight up, bringing flaming metal, timbers and cotton to a height of 1,000 meters. At the top of its trajectory, the mass mushroomed and fell over an area in a 90-metre radius.

When the dust cleared, Norman Coombs, the fire-brigade chief, saw that the harbour was ringed with fires.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Leaving the docks to the military, he ordered the remnant of his forces into the residential district where houses were now beginning to burn.

RESCUE EFFORTS

The human toll of the second blast was frightful. In two hours, St. George's Hospital took in 231 victims and treated 140 more in the casualty department. The chief operating nurse at the hospital took on some of the surgical work herself to help the busy doctors. After the injured came the dead. By Sunday morning, the hospital mortuary was packed to the ceiling with corpses. Hundreds of bodies were never recovered.

The work of rescue, fire-fighting and salvage went on for days. In a city where communal tensions ran high, (only a few weeks earlier, Bombay had been the scene of bitter rioting), men of all nations joined in the common effort.

British and Indian soldiers, RAF men and Allied servicemen moved 39,398 cases of ammunition weighing up to 52 kilos each from Alexandra Dock. A party of nurses set up a first-aid post. They worked all night with only the flames to give them light. Red Cross girls parked a mobile canteen between blazing warehouses. With ammunition exploding around them every few minutes, they stayed until every fireman and

rescue worker had had a drink.

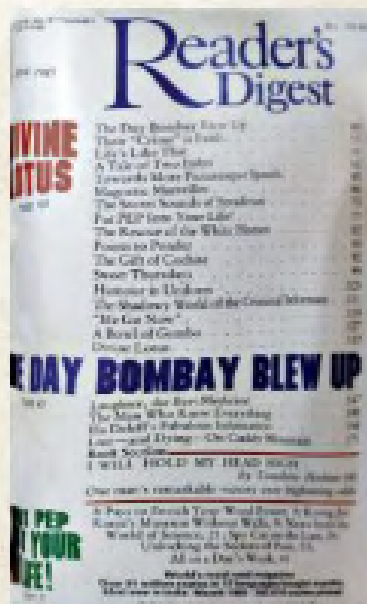
By the light of searchlights from the cruiser, HMS Sussex, soldiers, sailors and harbour officials moved 16 ships from Alexander Dock into the open sea. Seven of the ships contained cargoes of explosives. Men with no previous experience handled the tugs. This delicate operation took 19 hours, but the amateur pilots did not lose a single ship.

When the damage was added up, it

was found that all 27 ships in the two docks were sunk, burnt out or badly damaged. Three swing bridges over the entrances to the docks were blown partly from their seatings. The entrance to Victoria Dock was fouled by a 500-tonne ship sunk inside and a 300-tonne waterboat sunk outside, and the gateway itself was blocked by a mound of tangled masts and rigging. All the dock buildings

were gaunt heaps of rubble. Some 6,000 Indian and 2,000 British servicemen worked night and day for six months moving a million tonnes of debris to get the harbour working again.

What caused the disaster? A commission of inquiry appointed soon after the explosion concluded that the fire was an accident that has most probably been caused by someone smoking in *Fort Stikine's* Number Two hold. 14 April is now observed in India as Fire Services Day. **R**



FROM 1985

Life's Like That

1950s

I WAS WAITING in the college laundry for my clothes where a rather grim lipped student had just asked to see the manager. "May I examine your equipment?" he inquired.

The manager seemed delighted to show his washers, driers and mangles and gave a thorough demonstration. "What is your particular interest?" he asked.

"Well, I'm a first-year engineering student," the youth replied. "I just couldn't imagine what a machine that pulls buttons off my shirts and blows them through my socks would look like!"

ROBERT A. HARRIS, NOVEMBER 1953

1960's

REFUSING A COCKTAIL at a dinner party, a young mother explained, "I don't believe in drinking in front of the children, and when they aren't around, who needs it?"

MRS DALE R. ENSINGER, JANUARY 1965

SIX YEAR OLD Margaret, upon returning from a neighbourhood trick-or-treat tour with an older brother, seemed puzzled and a bit disappointed. When asked why, she an-

swered, "They all gave us treats but no one showed us any tricks!"

MRS H. T. LUNDQUIST, OCTOBER 1967

A YOUNG NUN who had not seen her twin brother, a bomber pilot on duty in Vietnam, for over two years, prayed each day for his safe return. Recently Sister X was told that a visitor awaited her in the reception room. As she descended a stairway, her brother stepped out into the lobby. With a scream of surprise and delight, she rushed forward and embraced him with something more than ordinary fervour.

At that moment, three older nuns crossed the lobby. There was no pause in their progress, no impairment of poise, just a slight raising of eyebrows. But as they proceeded down a corridor, there was this sotto voce comment by one of them: "She must know him."

REV. RUFUS ESSER, OCTOBER 1967

1970s

THE CHILDREN of the head of a prominent family decided to give him a book of their family's history. The biographer they hired for the job was warned of one problem—Uncle Willie, the black sheep, who had gone to the electric chair for murder.

The biographer promised to handle the situation: "I'll just say that Uncle Willie occupied a chair of applied electronics at one of our leading government institutions. He was attached to his position by the strongest of ties. His death came as a true shock."

WHITNEY N. SEYMOUR, QUOTED BY
LEONARD LYONS, NOVEMBER 1970

LAST SUMMER, my children and I spent part of our vacation with my sister and her family. There were nine children, ranging in age from eight to 17. We planned cookouts, trips to the lake, hikes, roller-skating parties—anything we could think of to absorb all that energy and avoid trouble. After a week, I was beginning to congratulate my sister and myself on our endurance and steady nerves, when I heard myself saying, "Beverly, you look awfully tired. Why don't you lie down for a while? I'll sit here and yell."

BETTY V. MARTINEZ, JULY 1972

DURING SPRING vacation I took my three small children to a department store in Austin, Texas, to buy shoes. There was much wiggling, complaining and roaming the aisles before each was fitted with two pairs. As I started to write out the check, I said to the patient young clerk, "Since we're from out of town, I suppose you'll need some kind of identification." He looked at me and the children,

smiled wearily and said, "Oh, no, ma'am. I feel like I've known you all, all my life."

MRS SHANNON L. DOSS, APRIL 1976

1990's

ON HER LUNCH HOUR, my daughter, Brenda, picked me up at work to drive me home. Before dropping me off, she had to stop at the courthouse to take care of a small matter. When we arrived, there were no available parking spaces, so Brenda quickly turned into the parking lot of the funeral home across the street. "You can't park here," I protested.

"Sure I can," Brenda replied. "You just sit here and cry while I run my errand."

JEANETTE BARTON, FEBRUARY 1990

SINCE MY PARENTS are as much in love today as when they were first married 40 years ago, it was no surprise to watch them glide romantically across the dance floor at my brother's wedding. I got mist-eyed as Dad steered Mom energetically around the ballroom, and it was particularly touching when he waved away anyone who attempted to cut in. "Mom," I said during the band's first break, "it's great to see that Dad still worships the ground you walk on. He danced every dance with you!"

"Oh, no, dear," she stated matter-of-factly. "He just missed his fitness class today and was trying to sustain his target heart rate for 30 minutes."

ANN DEL VECCHIO, FEBRUARY 1990

FEBRUARY 1973

The Man Who Will Not FORGET



Believing passionately that justice should know 'no limits in time or distance', Simon Wiesenthal has ferreted out more than 1,000 Nazi war criminals

BY *Joseph Blank*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES COMPOSITE



As the chief judge recapitulated the defendant's crimes, the two outwardly most impassive listeners in the crowded courtroom in Düsseldorf, West Germany, were the accused, former *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Franz Stangl, and Simon Wiesenthal, a private citizen who had tracked Stangl for 20 years and was responsible for bringing him to justice.

At the opening of the trial, seven months previously, the prosecutor had declared, "Stangl is the highest-ranking official of a death camp that West Germany had ever been able to try."

In his two-and-half-hour review on that cold 22 December 1970, the judge said, "The defendant, as commandant of the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland, supervised the murder of at least 4,00,000 men, women and children." The judge's words gave new life to an ugly piece of history that many people wanted to forget. Stangl, who had defended himself with, "I only did my duty", stood at attention to hear his sentence: life imprisonment.

Wiesenthal, a bulky man of 100 kilograms with grey, thinning hair, a grey moustache and bright, alert eyes, strode quickly from the courtroom. (All his movements give an impression of power, of urgency, as if there isn't ever enough time for him to do what he wants to do.) In the corridor he stopped by a waste-paper bin, opened his wallet and extracted a picture of Stangl that was tucked between photographs of his wife and daughter. He had kept it as a

constant reminder of Stangl's innocent victims. Now, silently, Wiesenthal tore up the picture.

He felt no elation: "Stangl's sentence meant nothing to me. It was purely symbolic. No punishment could be equated with the enormity of the crime. The important thing was that guilt had been established, and justice done."

DEBT TO THE DEAD

Starting the trip back to his three-room documentation centre in Vienna, Wiesenthal had already forgotten the trial. He still had more than 300 active cases of wanted mass murderers in various stages of investigation. His files contained thousands of other names that might never get any attention.

"It's a job I'll never finish," he reflected recently. "I'm now 64. I'll just go on with the work, one way or another, until I stop breathing."

Since May 1945, when he was freed from the Mauthausen, Austria, concentration camp by the Allied Forces, Wiesenthal has been gathering

evidence against the men and women responsible for the Nazi extermination of six million Jews and several million Gentiles during World War II. He has located more than 1,000 of these criminals, an achievement that makes him unique as a sleuth. And he has done this—except for a year immediately after the war when he worked for US war-crimes investigators—as a private citizen, without any legal authority, financed only by small contributions from individuals across the world and his earnings from lectures and writing.

Wiesenthal works basically alone. In the beginning he had a staff of 30 volunteers and poorly paid part-time assistants. Gradually, these men and women left for the peace of normal careers and family life. Even today, however, a message from Wiesenthal will set a nun in Australia, a rabbi in South Africa or a lawyer in New York on the track of a wanted man.

Simon Wiesenthal never wanted to give his life to this grimmest of all detective work. Before the war he was a young, successful architect in Lwów, Poland. After he and his wife were reunited in late 1945—each had believed the other was dead—they talked about their lives.

Wiesenthal was initially motivated by revenge, but he soon realised that his passion was destructive and futile.

"Everybody in our families has been killed," Wiesenthal told his wife. "I can't go back to my profession. How can I build houses until I've done what I can to see that people are safe in them? I can't forget the millions who were murdered. I am alive. Being alive puts a debt on me. Justice must be done."

Wiesenthal was initially motivated by revenge, but he soon realized that his passion was destructive and futile. He tried to explain it to a Jewish partisan leader who wanted his files "so that we can exterminate them as they exterminated us."

"No, no," Wiesenthal replied. "We will not be like them. We will

use the law. If you kill them, the world will never learn what they did. There must be an accounting. There must be testimony in court, a record for history."

Though Wiesenthal expostulates passionately against every such call for eye-for-an-eye vengeance, when a death-camp survivor weeps over horrors he has witnessed, Wiesenthal weeps too, and that man's or woman's experience becomes part of his experience. "At times," he says, "it is hard for me to separate in my mind what happened to me and what happened to others."

This soul-deep empathy has sustained him in his lonely work, but it has also driven him to illness and terrible insomnia. At night, scenes of Nazi atrocities used to kaleidoscope endlessly through his mind. Visiting a doctor, he was told, "I can't do anything for you. You need distraction from your work. A hobby."

Wiesenthal had always been idly interested in the stamps on his mail that came from scores of countries. So, he took up stamp collecting—he's now an expert philatelist—and learnt to lose himself in the art and history of stamps. It was a hobby that was to prove inadvertently instrumental in locating Adolf Eichmann, who directed Hitler's whole campaign to annihilate the Jews.

COLD TRAIL

Wiesenthal's patient search for this criminal began in 1946. Although Eichmann's personal dossiers had been destroyed on the eve of Germany's defeat—there were no fingerprints, no photographs—sleuthing unearthed Mrs Eichmann, living under her maiden name, and her three children.

Neighbours understood that she had divorced Eichmann. Wiesenthal didn't believe it. She was rigidly

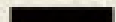
suspicious of all strangers, and to him this wariness meant that she was in some kind of contact with her husband. Then, in 1948, he learnt that she had requested the courts to declare her husband officially dead. To support her claim she presented an affidavit from Karl Lukas of the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Agriculture, who swore that he had seen Eichmann dead in Prague on 30 April 1945.

"I was sure that Eichmann had plotted this move," Wiesenthal recalls. "If he were declared legally dead, all governments would quit their search for him and he would be free."

Wiesenthal and a few of his part-time volunteers leapt into action. Within two weeks they had proof that Lukas was married to one of Mrs Eichmann's sisters; they also produced sworn statements from an SS officer and other witnesses who had seen Eichmann alive after 30 April. The court promptly threw out Mrs Eichmann's petition. Eichmann remained 'wanted'.

Although two pre-war photographs of Eichmann turned up, the hunt was at a dead-end. Then, at Easter 1952, Wiesenthal lost his only 'contact' with his quarry: Mrs Eichmann and her children had vanished. She had

*He never can
anticipate the
course of a
pursuit, or how
he will find the
break that
cracks a case.*



been issued a passport under her maiden name. "Eichmann felt safe enough to have his family join him," Wiesenthal figured.

HONOURABLE NEMESIS

One evening, 18 months later Wiesenthal was discussing stamps with a fellow collector. "A beautiful stamp just came from Argentina on a letter from an old acquaintance of mine," the man mentioned. "He's a former Wehrmacht officer now training Argentine troops. Talks about meeting people from Germany." Then he read the letter aloud. Wiesenthal was stunned by the words: "... this awful swine Eichmann who ordered the Jews about. He lives near Buenos Aires ..."

The Eichmann case was alive! The very next day, Wiesenthal sent this information, together with copies of the old photographs, to the Jewish World Congress in New York and the Israeli consulate in Vienna.

In late 1959, the Israeli government wrote and told him that it had located Mrs Eichmann and her three children living with a German named Ricardo Klement in Buenos Aires. Two Israeli agents visited Wiesenthal to review the history of the case. "Klement has to be Eichmann," Wiesenthal told them. "There's no other reason why Mrs Eichmann would leave her home here and sneak away with the children to Buenos Aires."

"We must be certain. We can't make

a mistake in identification. We need a picture more recent than those old shots you sent us."

A few months later, Wiesenthal read that Eichmann's father had died, and he recalled the early years of his search when he would frequently pursue tips about Eichmann's presence—only to have the man always turn out to be Otto, one of Eichmann's four brothers. The resemblance between the two must have been striking.

Wiesenthal found the Eichmann family burial plot in Linz, Austria, and carefully examined the terrain for 100 metres around it. Then he travelled to Vienna, where he hired two photographers and told them, "I need pictures of everybody attending this funeral. But you must not be seen." He sketched possible hiding places for them.

Five hours after the ceremony, Wiesenthal studied blown-up images of the brothers' faces. They very strongly resembled one another—and the pre-war photographs of Eichmann.

Later, armed with a magnifying glass, he pointed out to Israeli agents the similar head and facial characteristics. "Let your imagination age Eichmann in accordance with the way his brothers look today, especially this one, Otto," Wiesenthal instructed the agents. "What you see in your mind's eye is probably a very good likeness of this Ricardo Klement."

On 23 May 1960, Eichmann was arraigned in Israel. From Jerusalem, Wiesenthal received a telegram: "Congratulations on your excellent work." Tried and convicted, Eichmann was hanged on 31 May 1962.

SPURS TO THE HUNT

Wiesenthal never can anticipate the course of a pursuit, or how he will find the break that cracks a case. His only lead on Anton Fehringer, a sadistic guard in the Plaszow concentration camp in Poland, was that he reportedly came from northern Austria. While checking wartime newspapers for information in a library one day, Wiesenthal overheard two genealogical experts discussing family trees. A few days later the conversation popped into his consciousness, and he sought out a genealogist to ask, "Is there any particular place in upper Austria where there is a cluster of families by the name of Fehringer?"

Within 48 hours the expert reported, "Several Fehringer families live in the Krems Valley between Kirchdorf and Micheldorf."

When an aide found an Anton Fehringer living in Kirchdorf, Wiesenthal instructed a photographer, "Go to Kirchdorf. Pretend you're a tourist. Take lots of pictures, but get me a photograph of this Anton Fehringer." The man turned out to be *the* Fehringer. He was later convicted.

On several occasions, Wiesenthal has been spurred by a note, a phone

call or a casual street meeting. This kind of happenstance produced the Hermine Braunsteiner case. Wiesenthal was in a restaurant in Tel Aviv in April 1964 when a woman recognized him. In considerable agitation, she blurted out, "I was at the Majdanek concentration camp in Poland. There was a guard there named Hermine Braunsteiner who used a vicious dog and a lead-weighted whip on women prisoners. She must be made to answer for her crimes."

Braunsteiner was a name new to him, and he held little hope of finding out anything about her. But legal records showed that 15 years earlier Braunsteiner had been tried and sentenced to three years in prison for torturing female inmates at the Ravensbrück concentration camp in Germany. She had been acquitted, however, of charges involving her service at Majdanek, a death camp where more than 1,00,000 perished.

Wiesenthal then called on his worldwide network of friends. He obtained incriminating statements about Braunsteiner's actions at Majdanek from survivors in Poland, Israel and Yugoslavia. He picked up her trail at the prison where she was released, and 'followed' her through Austria to Germany, where she had met and married an American construction worker. In 1963 she had obtained US citizenship, and was now in New York.

Knowing that she could never have acquired citizenship without denying

that she had been 'convicted of a crime', Wiesenthal informed the US government, which is now trying to deport her as an undesirable alien.

As has happened frequently in Austria and Germany, many neighbours are sympathetic to the accused, saying "She's a quiet person who never bothers anybody." Her husband exclaimed in resentment, "Didn't you ever hear the expression, 'Let the dead rest'?"

A MATTER OF MORALITY

For Wiesenthal, the dead can never rest until justice is done. And neither can he. That's why he keeps scratching for information about Martin

Bormann, Hitler's chief adviser, who, Wiesenthal is convinced, escaped to South America. That's why Franz Stangl was finally convicted after a 20-year chase.

Stangl had been arrested at the end of the war, but escaped and vanished with his wife and three daughters. No break came until 22 February 1964, when a shabby, shuffling, middle-aged man appeared at Wiesenthal's office. He said, "I was a rank-and-filer with the Gestapo during the war. I read an article in the paper about you the other day, and you said that Franz

Stangl was wanted for war crimes. I know where he is. You'll have to pay for the information."

They finally agreed on \$6,000 if the information led to an arrest.

The tip—that Stangl worked at the Volkswagen plant in São Paulo, Brazil—proved correct. He was leading a pleasant, inconspicuous life in São Paulo

and owned a house, two cars and several guns. A relative had informed him of the newspaper story mentioning his name—the same article that had brought in the Gestapo man. Stangl wasn't worried. What could a powerless private citizen, sitting in an office some 10,000 kilometres away, do to him? Besides, Brazil

had never been cooperative in efforts to track down Nazis. He was safe.

Locating Stangl, verifying his identity and finally having him imprisoned in West Germany took Wiesenthal three years of patient, cautious, skilful undercover work. "Secrecy was all-important," Wiesenthal explained. "Obtain the cooperation of Brazil, but limit knowledge of our plans to the smallest possible number of people. In the past, deliberate bureaucratic leaks had enabled wanted men to escape."

The plan worked. And when

"Didn't you ever hear the expression, 'Let the dead rest'?" For Wiesenthal, the dead can never rest until justice is done. And neither can he.

Wiesenthal was informed of the arrest by telegram, he felt the excitement of triumph, not for any personal achievement but “for the fact that the capture proved that justice knows no limits in time or distance.”

Subsequently, the justice departments of both West Germany and Austria prevailed on Brazil to extradite Stangl.

Each arrest or trial greatly increases his usually heavy load of mail. Some of it is vaguely addressed: ‘Simon Wiesenthal, Office of Humanity, Vienna’ or ‘The dirty Jew, Wiesenthal, Austria’. There are cheques, congratulations, new information, pleas to find certain war criminals and, always, threats.

The latter make him wary, but never frighten him. In fact, they bolster his dedication. “Threats

indicate to me that criminals at large know they are being sought,” he reflects. “I simply have a moral obligation to keep after these men. They must know that they are still held accountable, and none of them at this moment knows whether or not justice is just a step behind him.” **R**



FROM 1973

Editor's Note: Simon Wiesenthal died in his sleep at age 96 in Vienna in September 2005 and was buried in Herzliya, Israel. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles is named in his honour. Former

concentration guard Hermine Braunsteiner was extradited to Germany and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1981. She was released on health grounds in 1996 before her death three years later.

Whodunnit?

NOVEMBER 1970

We are the proud owners of a huge Saint Bernard dog. My father, who is in the restaurant business, often brings home large beef bones for the dog to chew on. In fact, our backyard is strewn with these bones. One day, over the back fence, our neighbour was showing hi elderly father our Saint Bernard. "Will he bite?" asked the older man. Told that he would not, the father asked suspiciously, "Well, then, whose remains are those in the yard?".

—Contributed by Kathleen Sturdivant

Notes from All Over

1930s

IN MADRID A BEAUTY contest has just been staged that ought to be a model for all the world to follow; for make-up was ruled out, and the contestants were forced to wash their faces with soap and water in the presence of the judges.

—NOVEMBER 1932

WALT DISNEY'S MICKEY MOUSE

has become a world citizen. In France he is known as Michel Souris; in Germany, Michael Maus; Japan, Miki Kuchi; Spain, Miguel Ratonocito, also Miguel Pericote; Greece, Mikel Mus; Italy, Michele Jopolino.

—ARTHUR MANN IN *HARPER'S*, JULY 1934

AMONG THE THOUSANDS of war souvenirs in London's Imperial War Museum, one of unusual interest is the 'little cupboard from Le Cateau'. For almost four years an English soldier hid in this cupboard in a house occupied by German soldiers, his food being brought to him secretly by the Frenchwoman who lived there.

—AUGUST 1934

IN SOME Latin-American countries,

movie theatres ring a 'lovers' warning bell' a minute before the house lights are turned on. Indeed, a Havana theatre temporarily lost its licence because the projectionist had suddenly turned on the lights when a film broke—to the embarrassment of a famous citizen.

—NOVEMBER 1937

1940s

SIDEWALKS in Louisburg, North Carolina, are divided into sections with stripes: two outside lanes for loafing, the inside one for walking. A local authority states that the plan is working satisfactorily.

—JANUARY 1940

1960s

IN FRANCE, the Catholic Church has branded driving faults as sins which must be confessed by the faithful. Speeding, illegal passing and drunken driving should be included in the confessional among 'sins of pride'. Excess pride, a spokesman for the French bishop explained, is often responsible for speeding.

—TWIN FALLS, *TIMES NEWS*,
OCTOBER 1965



SEPTMBER 2000

Amy's Choice

*Four young
siblings.
No parent
at home.
And just
one teenager*

BY *Rena Dictor LeBlanc*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Cornelia Li*



It was nearly midnight by the time 19-year-old Amy Waldroop returned to her cramped Los Angeles apartment, and she was exhausted. After a full day's work at a florist shop, she had put in another six hours waiting tables before heading home.

Pushing the key into the lock, she quietly opened the door so as not to wake her younger siblings. She stepped into the front room—and froze. The apartment was a shambles: plates of half-eaten food were scattered in front of the TV; toys littered the floor; clothes, shoes and homework were strewn everywhere.

Amy's eyes welled with tears.

This is just way too much for me, she thought. Her worst fears began to race through her mind. Soon she was sobbing. Would the court tell her she couldn't care for her family anymore? Would the kids go through the torture once more of being split up and sent away? She was so young, almost a child herself, and yet Amy knew everything depended on her. Everything. At that moment, she wondered if she would ever find the strength to see it through.

AMY WALDROOP HAD been born dead. Physicians fought and saved this smaller twin of a drug-addicted mother, and she'd had to fight for everything in life ever since.

From earliest childhood, Amy took care of her younger siblings. First it was her sister Amanda, four years younger. Then, when Amy was 10, along came Adam, followed by Joseph and finally Anthony. With a mother so often high—if not gone altogether—it frequently fell to Amy to feed and change the babies, lull them to sleep when they cried and care for them when they were sick.

Once, when the children all came down with chickenpox, Amy ended up at the drugstore asking the clerk what to do. Handed some anti-itch lotion, the 10-year-old stared at the instructions on the bottle, unable to make sense of them. Back home she bundled

her siblings into the shower and afterward spread the lotion on them with bunched-up toilet paper. They healed.

Jan, their mother, only added to the family chaos by careering in and out of her children's lives. Sometimes they lived in apartments, sometimes in shelters or drug-infested motels.

At school—when the kids attended—they kept mostly to themselves, not wanting classmates to know how they were living. But it inevitably showed. Amy and her twin Jessica, for instance, went without meals at school because Jan sometimes failed to sign them up for the lunch programmes. They would sit hungry and desolate in the schoolyard as the

came knocking, and the young girl's nightmare unfolded. Amy and Jessica were to be taken to a juvenile detention centre.

Meanwhile, Amy watched, distraught, as her other siblings were trundled out to waiting cars, bound for separate foster homes. Looking into their anguished faces, she could only manage to say, "I'm so sorry ... I'm so sorry ..."

The kids, lonely and depressed, spent six months apart from each other until they were sent to live with their maternal grandmother. Although Jan was forbidden to stay with her children, Amy's grandmother took pity on her daughter and allowed her

AMY WATCHED, DISTRAUGHT, AS HER SIBLINGS WERE TAKEN TO SEPARATE FOSTER HOMES.

other kids gobbled their sandwiches.

Meals at home were a different challenge: When Jan was around, the twins were expected to cook. Once, a boyfriend of Jan's became enraged because Amy did not have dinner promptly on the table. He grabbed the child by the hair and threw her against the refrigerator.

The girl suffered other violence and finally told her social worker. The woman was stunned. "My God, why didn't you tell me before?" she asked.

"I thought we'd be taken away," Amy replied.

Two weeks later social workers

to re-enter the children's lives, plunging them back into chaos. At 14, Jessica left home for good.

Meanwhile, all the children were falling further and further behind in school. As a ninth-grader, Amy could read only at a fourth-grade level. With envy she watched the kids who dressed well and excelled in class, and wished she could somehow enter their world. And leave hers behind forever.

WALKING ACROSS THE school grounds one day, Amy spotted a table littered with university brochures. She browsed through

pictures of spacious campuses and happy kids—all of it looking impossibly glamorous and unachievable.

But a guidance counselor soon gave her unexpected hope. Amy could attend university, she was told, and for free. It would take a scholarship, though, and for that she'd need much better grades. Amy immediately signed up for summer school. During her final two years of high school, she diligently attended classes, then went to work after school from 3:30 to 11:30, returned to her grandmother's place and ploughed through homework till the early hours of the morning.

Amy was summoned to the Vill Park High School. A social worker was waiting for her.

"We know your mother has been staying with you," the social worker said, "and that Joseph pricked his finger on a drug needle." Amy braced herself, knowing what was coming next. "We're going to have to put you guys in foster care."

"No! Don't split us up!" the girl blurted. "Can't you just leave it the way it is?"

The social worker shook his head. Amy's voice then rose like the howl of a lioness protecting her cubs: "Why can't

"WHY CAN'T I TAKE THEM?" AMY BEGGED. "I CARE FOR THEM ALL THE TIME ANYWAY."

Amy's resolve was strengthened further during these tough months by a boy she met at school, Jerry Robinson*. For the first time in her life, Amy felt that someone really listened to her, and truly cared. Their friendship turned to love, and Amy had no doubt that the two would marry and have children together.

But during this time, unknown to the social workers, Jan had come to live in her mother's house, throwing the family into fresh tumult. Amy's grandmother couldn't turn her daughter out of her home, even when Jan was high on drugs. One afternoon

I take them? I take care of them all the time anyway."

The social worker hesitated, then said, "Maybe. Once you're 18, you could apply to become their relative caretaker. Then you'd be their foster mother until we find a home where all of you can be together."

"I'll do it," Amy said. She hadn't a clue what was involved, but that mattered little. She would just forge ahead, a day at a time, as she had all her life.

And, somehow, she would make things turn out right.

AMY SOON REALIZED the full price of her commitment. One afternoon she came walking home

*Name has been changed to protect privacy.



from school, clutching a sheet of paper. It was a letter from the University of California, Los Angeles, inviting her to come see the lush campus. It was what she'd longed for, a place where no one would know about her awful background, where she could study to become someone special—a nurse, perhaps, or maybe even a lawyer.

Yet the letter only ripped Amy apart inside. The entire walk home she kept imagining herself at this prestigious university, kept picturing a life free of the worries and duties she'd always known.

Then, as she turned a corner, she saw her brothers playing outside her grandmother's house, running, laughing. Adam ... Joseph ... Anthony. She'd

fed them, held them when they were scared, read them stories, sung them songs. Her dreams for herself, she realized, were no match for the love etched in her soul. She crumpled the letter up and threw it away.

ONE MONTH LATER, after tediously filing piles of paperwork, Amy sat before a judge in family court. "You're so young," the judge said to her. "Are you sure you want this responsibility?"

"There's no other way to keep my family together," Amy replied simply. The judge's ultimate decision was a remarkable victory for an 18-year-old girl: Amy was named guardian of her siblings for a six-month trial period.

Meanwhile, instead of going to her

high-school graduation dance, Amy had searched for a place to live. Finally she found a run-down one-bedroom unit. The salary from her two jobs—as a florist-shop clerk and as a waitress—along with her savings and foster-care payments from the state of California enabled her to pay the first month's rent and security deposit.

Her siblings didn't make her task any easier in the months ahead. The boys sometimes ditched school and would curse at Amy when they were angry. And she had more than a few face-offs with Amanda.

"You're not my mom!" the 14-year-

birth-control pills, she became pregnant with Jerry's child. The timing was horrible, but there was no way she'd consider either an abortion or giving up the baby for adoption. Her love would enfold this child just as it had the others. And so another little boy, Donavin, entered Amy's life when she was 19.

The strain of things built up remorselessly. Finally it reached a breaking point that late night when Amy returned from work to an apartment in shambles. She had left the boys in the care of Amanda, who had fallen asleep in Amy's bed.

IF AMY WERE TO ADOPT THE BOYS, THEY WOULD BECOME LIKE ANY OTHER FAMILY.

old would shout at Amy when things grew particularly tense.

One day Adam rebelled at doing his reading assignment for school, hurling his book across the room. Only after some coaxing did he tell Amy what was really going on. "Every kid in the class can read," Adam said, bursting into tears, "and I can't." Remembering her own shame about reading, Amy began taking all the kids to the library. And for many weeks afterward she set aside special time to tutor each of them separately. Adam took pride in the way his reading skills improved.

As always, though, a fresh obstacle appeared—one that came as a huge shock to Amy. Despite taking

Shaken, Amy felt overwhelmed once more by the enormousness of all she had taken on. But she knew she had no choice: She could never let her siblings be ripped away from one another again. To make it as a family, she'd just have to get them to work together.

"All of you, get in here right now!" she yelled, trembling with frustration.

The three boys stumbled into the room. "How could you do this?" she asked, her words coming in a torrent. "You know they're checking up on us."

Within a few minutes, the wave of anger ebbed. "Guys," she said more gently, "all we have is each other. If you want to stay together past six months, we've got to show we're responsible.

"We've got to keep this place neat."

"And you need to watch your tongues. Also, don't eat all the food as soon as I buy it, or there won't be any next week. And you have to be bleeding before you can miss school." Startled, the kids agreed to begin pulling their weight.

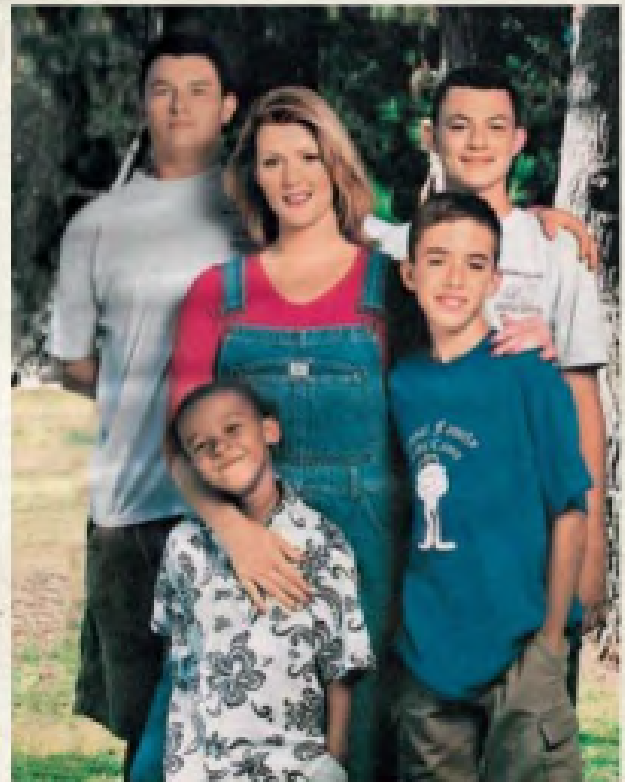
Unfortunately, Jerry soon asked that Amy choose between a life with him and their child, or continuing to care for her siblings. She chose—and their relationship ended.

If anything, Amy grew more tenacious with every setback. And her efforts were rewarded when the court allowed her to continue as guardian. To the boys, this was an enormous comfort. But Amy's relationship with her younger sister continued to sour. At 15, Amanda finally went to live with an aunt.

Now left with Donavin and the three boys, Amy dangled a prize before them: "If we save enough for a deposit, we'll get a house of our own," she said. "And we'll even get a dog." Nothing could have been more tantalizing to them.

Amy's relief at remaining the kids' guardian was undermined by the pressure she always felt to measure up. The boys were still dependents of the court. Social workers still looked regularly over her shoulder and asked the boys humiliating questions: "Does she feed you well? Does she ever try to harm you?" There was no way she could be sure her siblings would never be taken away again.

Or so she assumed, until the day



Amy, with her brothers Adam, Joseph and Anthony, and her son Donavin.

a visiting social worker dropped a bombshell. "We'd like to get the boys out of foster care and adopted into homes," she said.

Sensing that the family was about to be split apart yet again, Amy replied, "Fine, then. Call it adoption if you want, but they're not going anywhere."

To her surprise, the social worker took her terse remark seriously. She explained that if Amy were to adopt the boys, they would become like any other family. They'd be free to live their lives without constant monitoring.

That night at dinner Amy told the boys about the idea.

"Cool!" Joseph said. And with playful

exuberance he threw a piece of corn at Adam. His brother flicked it back, and pretty soon corn was flying. Amy rolled her eyes. They didn't have far to go to be like any other family.

Once she began struggling with the rules and paperwork for adoption, Amy felt intimidated and often lost. At last, in a hearing in March 1999, the family appeared before Judge Gail Andler, who terminated the parental rights of Jan, the father of Adam and Joseph and the father of Anthony. This was a major step towards full adoption. The judge's eyes filled as she addressed Amy. "I'm very proud of you," she said.

"Not many family members would do what you're doing, especially for this many children."

Judge Andler then turned to the three boys. "The next time I see you, you'll be heading for adoption. How do you feel about that?"

"And we won't ever have to leave the family?" Joseph asked.

The judge shook her head. "The plan is for you to be a family forever."

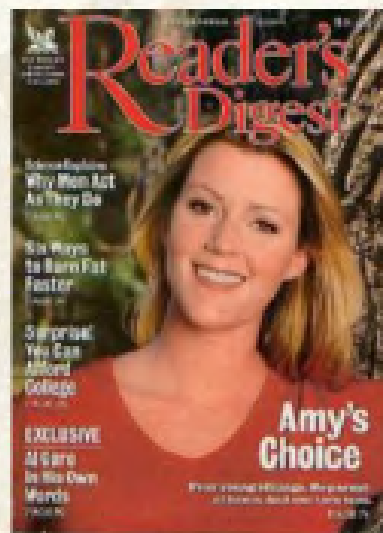
The final step came in November 1999. Amy's siblings sat on either side of her in Judge Andler's court as the young woman signed three separate papers—one for each of the boys. As the proceedings ended, Amy thanked everyone. "No," Judge

Andler responded, "thank you. You saved three kids."

ON A LAZY spring day, in a modest Los Angeles neighbourhood, Amy stood in front of a neatly kept one-storey house. She watched


her brothers playing basketball, and heard the playful bark of their dog, Tahoe. The young woman had made good on her promise: They had rented a home, a real home, and the boys had gotten their dog. Above all, Amy relished knowing that her family was now a world away from the mean streets they had once known. As

if on cue, she heard the tinkling music of an approaching ice-cream truck. And, like any mother, she went to round up her kids.




FROM 2000

*After this story was originally published in September 2000, hundreds of readers sent donations to help Amy's fledgling family stay on its feet. She went on to successfully raise her brothers, and her son. In 2004, a movie version of Amy's story, called Gracie's Choice: A Story of Love, debuted on US television. For many years Amy worked as an investigator at a law firm that handled foster care cases, abused children and adoptions. She is now married and works at a high-tech firm in California. **R***



Lessons in English



BY *Alexander Woolcott*


NOVEMBER 1939

TWO OR THREE years ago, a youngish and brilliant maestro of the theatre was manifesting all the distressing symptoms of one about to be delivered of a premature autobiography. Catching me on my way to Chicago, he pressed on me the rough draft of his opening chapters and, himself stopping off between trains two days later to collect his manuscript, he asked for my opinion.

There was time only for me to tell him that I had ventured to underscore his every use of the word 'very' where, if it had been left out, the sentence would have been all the stronger. In many instances he must have agreed with me for, en route to California, he weeded out 18. I know the number because the roguish spendthrift sent them all to me.

His telegram from Albuquerque read as follows: "I am very, very grateful to you."

The excessive use of 'very' does impart to any text an accent of girlish gush. Some fanatics insist there never was a sentence which would not have been the better for its omission and anyone would agree that a neophyte writer might do worse than swear off using 'very' for a year. Such a regimen is close kin to cutting out sweets and the Spartan who undertakes it will find it almost as painful at first. The motto over his desk should read: "Reach for the *mot juste* [The exact, appropriate word] instead of a 'very!'"

For total abstinence in this matter often compels the practitioner to think (in order to say) precisely what he means. Sometimes words owe their vogue to the fact that they can be airily tossed about by a writer too lazy to do either. 

The "Town Crier" of his time, Alexander Woolcott was an American literary critic, author, actor and radio personality known for his sharp, incisive commentary and acerbic wit.

Laughter

1970s

AFTER GIVING WHAT he considered a stirring, fact-filled campaign speech, the candidate looked out at his audience and confidently asked, "Now, are there any questions?"

"Yes," came a voice from the rear. "Who else is running?"

JOSEPH C. SALAK IN *CURRENT COMEDY*,
NOVEMBER 1970

AFTER A WEALTHY Texas oilman had cashed a huge personal check, it came back from the bank stamped 'Insufficient Funds.' Beneath these words appeared the handwritten notation: Not you—us.

GOOD LIVING, NOVEMBER 1970

A WOMAN, bragging about how her husband plays handball and tennis, swims and indulges in all forms of exercise, inquired if her friend's husband did likewise. "You could say so," the second woman replied. "Just last week he was out seven nights running."

GEORGE BERGMAN IN *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*, OCTOBER 1975

A YOUNG mother was looking at a toy for her child. "Isn't this awfully

complicated?" she asked the salesman. "That, madam," replied the salesman, "is an educational toy designed to prepare the child for life in today's world. Anyway he puts it together is wrong."

GENE BROWN IN *NEWSTIMES*,
DECEMBER 1975

THE POLICE OFFICER asked the bank teller, who had been robbed for the third time by the same man, if he had noticed anything special about the robber.

"Yes," replied the teller. "He was better dressed each time."

FRANCES BENSON IN *CAPPER'S WEEKLY*,
MARCH 1977

USED CAR DEALER: "We stand behind every car we sell." Prospective buyer: "Yes, but will you help push?"

CLARENCE W. LANCASTER, JULY 1978

THE WOMAN was telling her troubles to the judge in domestic relations court.

"The only time my husband ever brought a ray of sunshine into my life," she said, "was when he came home at dawn, slammed

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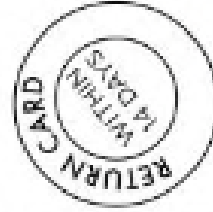
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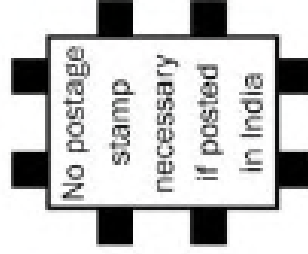
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the door and the Venetian blind fell off the window."

MODERN MATURITY, MARCH 1977

1980s

DIETER to friend: "This morning I telephoned to sign up for an exercise class and the instructor told me to wear loose clothing. I said, 'If I had any loose clothing, I wouldn't need the class.'"

ORBEN'S CURRENT COMEDY, JUNE 1982

QUESTION: What did the robot say when somebody pulled his plug?
Answer: AC come, AC go.

JOHN WILLIS IN BOYS' LIFE, JUNE 1982

1990s

"WHAT POSSIBLE EXCUSE can you give for acquitting this defendant?" the judge shouted at the jury
"Insanity, Your Honor," replied the foreman.
"All 12 of you?"

MARTHA J. BOCKMAN IN MODERN MATURITY, FEBRUARY 1990

THE CHIEF executive officer of an electronics company called in his public relations director. "Listen, Wilson. Someone is trying to buy us out. It's your job to get the price of our stock up so it'll be too expensive for them. I don't care how you do it, just do it!"

The next day the price of the stock rose five points and then,

the day after, another eight points. The CEO was delighted. "How did you do it, Wilson?" he asked.

"I started a rumour Wall Street obviously liked."

"What was that?"

"I told them you were resigning."

JOHN PIZZUTO, THE GREAT WALL STREET JOKE BOOK (LONG SHADOW), FEBRUARY 1990

AND THEN THERE was the duck that walked into a drugstore and asked for a tube of lip balm. When asked to pay, the duck replied, "Just put it on my bill."

TORONTO SUN, JANUARY 1993

MY HUSBAND, a professor of medicine, has had several books published. When he finished writing his latest book, I stopped at the supermarket to pick up some ice cream and champagne. "Celebrating something?" asked the clerk as she bagged my items.

"Yes," I replied. "My husband just finished a book." The clerk paused a moment. "Slow reader?"

BARBARA YOUNG, JANUARY 1993

A RANCHER asked a veterinarian for some free advice. "I have a horse", he said, "that walks normally sometimes and limps sometimes. What shall I do?"

The veterinarian replied, "The next time he walks normally, sell him".

AL SCHOCK, JOKES FOR ALL OCCASIONS, JANUARY 1993



MARCH 1980



THE GREAT BALLOON ESCAPE

A family dares to ride the winds to freedom

BY *Jürgen Petschull*

CONDENSED FROM *Der Stern*



WHEREVER PEOPLE ARE CAGED, some will always make a break for freedom. Over the years thousands risked death and imprisonment to flee the oppressive conditions of communist East Germany. They climbed the hated Berlin Wall, tunnelled beneath border barriers and dived underwater at night to swim to asylum in the West. Many of them never made it. Some paid the ultimate penalty and died in the minefields or strung out on the wires of the 'death strip' along the border. But still they tried. This is the remarkable story of two East German families, who, 10 years before the Wall would come down, built a hot-air balloon—and dared to ride the wind to freedom.

SETTLED AMONG CORNFIELDS and green valleys with pine forests marching towards the horizon, the towns of Pössneck and Naila seemed identical in the 1970s. Geographically they were only 64 kilometres apart. Yet politically their inhabitants were not even on the same planet.

Naila was in West Germany, and its 9,700 residents were free. But Pössneck, with 20,000 people, was in East Germany. Television aeri-als on the rooftops of houses there faced toward Naila; it was through TV that people in Pössneck were constantly reminded of how much better off people were on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

On 7 March 1978, in his home on the outskirts of Pössneck, 35-year-old electrical engineer Peter Strelzyk

sat with his friend Günter Wetzel, a 22-year-old bricklayer and truck driver.

For years the men—each married with two kids—had been trying to come up with a way to escape with their families to the West. They couldn't walk over the border because of the 'death strip' of electronically controlled machine guns set up to kill escapees, and swimming across even a small river was too dangerous because of the many watch-towers, not to mention the mined river banks. Until now, neither had thought of another way: by air.

"I have it!" Peter suddenly shouted, leaping up and slapping his friend on the back. "We'll go by balloon".

Günter looked at him in amazement. "And where do we find a balloon?"

"We don't," said Strelzyk. "We build our own."

First Failure

WHY NOT? IT WAS SUCH a crazy, impossible way to freedom that nobody—not even the police—would think that anyone would attempt it. The next morning Peter and Günter began combing the bookshops and libraries in Pössneck. But they could find nothing on ballooning techniques. So they settled for a book called *The Technology of Gas Fitting* and a physics encyclopaedia.

The next day they drove to the nearby small city of Gera. In the cooperative store they spotted a big roll of brown cotton fabric. The salesperson looked at them oddly when they asked to buy 800 metres of it, so they told her they were making tents for an East German youth camp.

The two of them lugged the material to the fourth floor of the Wetzels' house. Günter and his wife, Petra, blacked out the attic's windows. Next, Günter cut the cloth into long triangles and began the massive job of stitching the panels together on a 40-year-old, pedal-powered sewing machine.

Within two weeks a balloon about 15 metres in diameter and 20 metres tall began to take shape. Then Günter and Peter built a little platform in a makeshift workshop in the Strelzyks' house, and a month later the balloon was ready for a test. The two men drove to a secluded clearing 24 kilometres north of the West German border. But when they tried to inflate the balloon, the air escaped through the cotton and the fabric lay limp on the grass; they

had bought the wrong material.

Bitterly disappointed, they took the balloon home and cut it up into small pieces, meticulously burning each one in the boiler of the Strelzyks' central heating system.

Crash Landing

DURING THE NEXT several months the men tested various types of fabric for air and heat resistance, and finally settled on a thick taffeta. This time, to avoid arousing suspicion, they drove to Leipzig to make their major cloth purchase. When buying the 800 metres of taffeta, they told the salesperson that they belonged to a sailing club.

Stitching the taffeta together went more quickly than their initial attempt with the cotton. But one night Peter's wife, Doris, almost let slip their secret. Visitors were at the Strelzyk home and together they watched a film on West German television about hot-air balloons. During the programme, Doris unthinkingly boasted: "We have a balloon in the attic that's 500 cubic metres bigger than that." Her husband almost fainted. Beads of sweat ran down his neck. Fortunately, the guests did not catch on.

Meanwhile, however, Günter was having second thoughts. One night after a long talk with the Strelzyks, he decided he and his family would not attempt the balloon escape. His wife had become doubtful that it would ever work, and besides, Günter knew that the balloon would have a

better chance of flying with just the four Strelzyks aboard.

Peter continued to work on the balloon. After several tests with a burner, he accidentally discovered an effective system. By using propane gas in liquid form, he found that he could produce a durable, efficient flame. In June 1979, the homemade balloon was finally ready for liftoff. Now all they needed was the right weather.

On Tuesday, 3 July, the weather vane on top of the town hall swung its black arm to point south—towards the West

into the undergrowth and hid in a clump of bushes while Peter reconnoitered the area. He spotted, almost 200 metres away, two wire fences more than three metres high with a strip of ploughed land between them. It was the dreaded death strip—and they were on the wrong side!

At any moment they expected to see soldiers and snarling dogs crashing through the undergrowth. But the forest was silent. Huddling against one another, trembling with cold and fear, they hid until dawn.

PETER PACED THE LIVING ROOM, WHICH NOW SEEMED TO BE A PRISON CELL.

German border. That night at 11:30 the Strelzyks drove 19 kilometres until they reached a lonely spot about 10 kilometres north of the death strip along the East-West border. It took only five minutes to inflate the balloon. "Come on, come on, let's go!" shouted Peter. And the balloon lifted into the sky with the Strelzyk family perched on its tiny platform. It was now 2 a.m.

For 34 minutes the balloon was airborne. Then it happened. Thick fog enveloped them, and within seconds the added weight from the water on the balloon cover was sending it plummeting towards the earth. They came down in the middle of a small pine wood. The trees shredded the balloon but softened their landing.

Doris and the children crawled

At first light, the four began to pick their way out of the area. The ground alongside the border was covered with coils of wire, each only a few meters from the next, each leading to alarm devices that were connected to the nearest watch tower. Backs bent, constantly casting glances in all directions, the four would-be refugees worked their way farther back into East Germany.

Eight hours after starting their abortive flight they finally reached the clearing where they had left their car. It was undisturbed, and they drove back to Pössneck without incident. No agents from the state security service were waiting at their house. There was only their black-and-white cat Purzel, who emerged from the garden purring with joy to rub against Peter's



soiled trouser legs. Though it was still morning, they were all exhausted and decided to go to bed. But Peter was unable to sleep. He paced the floor in the living room, which now seemed to be a prison cell. Then he sat down in his gold lounge chair and burst into tears.

“We’ll Come”

LATER THAT MONTH Peter Strelzyk went to see Günter Wetzels, the first such visit for some time. Günter had been expecting Peter to call. A friend had told him that a balloon had been found near Lobenstein, close to the border, and that the state security agents were looking everywhere for the balloonists.

The two men sat in the living room

for a while, then Günter asked directly: “Were you the ones in the balloon near Lobenstein?”

“Yes,” replied Peter.

“A fine mess!” said Günter.

Peter told him what had happened. “It can be done, Günter, with the new gas system,” he said. “But we can’t do it without you. Please come with us.”

A week later, Günter gave his reply: “We’ll come.”

For the third time within 17 months, the Strelzyks and Wetzels started to build an escape balloon. The task was more difficult than ever before. The balloon had to be both larger and stronger, and consequently, more air had to be heated. Moreover, since the discovery of the last balloon near the

border, the men feared that all shops selling fabric in the southern part of East Germany had been warned to report anyone asking for more than a few metres of closely woven, air-resistant cloth. Even so, during the next few weeks the families covered more than 3,800 kilometres by car and visited almost 100 towns and villages trying to purchase nylon rope, taffeta and other items. Günter joined his partner for the first few shopping trips, then withdrew to the Strelzyks' cellar and started to

"Well, that's it," Peter said, as he put the newspaper down with trembling hands. "They are hunting us properly now."

From then on Günter Wetzel scarcely left his seat at the sewing machine. 20-hour working days were common. Withdrawing their entire savings, Peter, Doris and Petra continued their search of the shops for suitable fabric. In Magdeburg they acquired 20 metres of nylon rope, in Halle a bumper crop of 150 metres of nylon material. Their

SEARCHLIGHTS PROBED THE SKY. "THEY'RE LOOKING FOR US!" PETRA WETZEL CRIED.

sew the meagre bits of multicoloured material together.

On 14 August, Peter Strelzyk drove home tired and irritable. Doris greeted him and murmured, "I've put the newspaper in the living room cupboard. You had better look at page two ..."

He saw a small photo showing a barometer, a clock, a pocket knife and a pair of pliers. The headline stated: "The People's Police Request Your Help." Peter read on in increasing panic. "After being used in a serious crime, the articles illustrated here were abandoned by the criminals." The detailed description of the objects was followed by an appeal: "Any readers able to provide information on persons formerly in possession of these articles should contact the People's Police."

stockpile grew, in all the colours of the rainbow. On 14 September, in a Jena department store, they managed to purchase the final 30 metres of material. Inflated, their balloon would have a diameter of 19 metres and a height of 25 metres—about the same size and shape as an eight-story building! They had patched together one of the largest hot-air balloons ever built in Europe.

Meanwhile, Peter Strelzyk had constructed a larger burner system and built a platform, adding a clothes line that served as a safety rail. The floor, which was to support the eight escapees, was sheet metal less than a millimetre thick. Petra Wetzel was terrified when she saw this light-weight floor panel: "We will burst through it and fall out!" To reassure her, Peter put blocks beneath the panel's corners and had

the four adults and 15-year-old Frank Strelzyk climb aboard and jump up and down. The metal vibrated—but supported them. At long last the third balloon was ready to take to the air.

Night Flight

ON SATURDAY, 15 September 1979, an afternoon thunderstorm burst over the surrounding forests. Later the cloud cover broke up. It became a cold night with a star-filled sky and a floating moon. The wind was blowing in the direction of the West German border. Tonight was the night.

The two families left Pössneck shortly before midnight and drove to a wooded clearing in Thuringia. Slowly the blower pumped cold air into the slack balloon skin that lay like a deflated dinosaur on the grass. Then Günter, and Doris and Frank Strelzyk, held the neck of the balloon open while Peter turned the flame thrower full on. Helped by the blower, a 15-metre-long tongue of orange flame darted into the skin, singeing Peter's hair.

At the edge of the clearing Petra Wetzel and the three small children watched apprehensively. After 15 minutes the balloon towered above them. Ropes from the balloon mouth were stretched taut to the rickety gondola. Günter ignited the burner standing with the four propane bottles, and Peter gave it a 30-second burst with the flame thrower. But it was too much. Heated by two flames, the balloon strained skywards.

Peter Strelzyk screamed across the clearing. "Get in! Quick, quick! We're off!" They clambered aboard. Suddenly, the fabric at the neck of the balloon caught fire as the strong wind tilted the craft dangerously.

They knew from their reading what happens when a balloon skin burns. The vast hot-air pressure drives the balloon upwards, sometimes for hundreds of metres; only when the skin is burned completely does the gondola—and its occupants—plunge to earth. Günter quickly put out the flame with a fire extinguisher, and he and Frank whipped out their knives and cut two ropes. A third anchor stake was catapulted out of the ground, injuring Frank Strelzyk and two-year-old Andreas Wetzel. Günter then cut the last connecting rope. At once the platform righted itself, and the flame again pointed safely upwards. Its red glow lit up the faces of the eight fugitives as the 750-kilogram balloon lifted skywards. The platform was quiet, the only sound the hiss of the gas jet as the balloon drifted on the wind.

A Toast to Freedom

SOME 2,000 METRES beneath them lay the landmines, the ferocious dogs, the barbed-wire-topped wall of the death strip. Then fingers of light suddenly stabbed upwards through the darkness as communist border guards probed the night with searchlights. Petra Wetzel cried, "Damn, they're looking for us!"



Following their hot-air balloon escape from East Germany, the Wetzel and Strelzyk families pose with West German border guards.

Beams from three searchlights merged into one thick finger of light groping up towards them. For several heart-stopping moments the balloon was almost caught in the beams. To leave the probing white lights behind, Peter turned up the burner flame and the craft climbed to the bitter cold of 2,600 metres.

Petra Wetzel knelt down on the metal floor and gathered the shivering Andreas in her arms as she waited for the tracer bullets that would surely rip into the belly of the balloon and end all their lives. She softly sang a lullaby: *“There’s a small teddy bear strolling from toy land and his fur is cuddly soft. At once call all the children ...”* But though she knew the song by heart, she couldn’t remember any more of the words.

Twenty-three minutes into the

flight the gas burner nearly stopped. Peter and Günter frantically tried to produce a larger flame, but failed. The 44 kilograms of propane gas had been all been used, and the balloon was now descending. Though it was dark there was a moon, and as the ground came ever closer, they were able to pick out details in the hills, woods, and farms below them. Then with a shudder the balloon hit, bending a young acacia tree and then landing with a spine-jarring crash. The 28-minute flight was over—and the families still did not know for certain whether they were safe.

“Come, we’ll walk in the direction of the moon,” said Günter. And together they scuttled along the edge of a newly harvested cornfield until they reached the cover of a thicket. Leaving the women and children hiding in the bushes, Peter and Günter reached

a barn. Inside was a wagon with the farmer's name on it—something unknown in the East.

At that moment, a Naila police patrol car, alerted by reports from local residents of a flying saucer, pulled up.

"Are we in the West?" Peter shouted.

"Yes," answered the police. Peter and Günter threw their arms around the officers, shouting, "We've done it! We've done it!"

Günter lit a red flare as an all-clear signal, and the men's wives and children ran across the corn stubble to embrace them. Then Frank Strelzyk, tears streaming down his face, went back to the balloon and picked up the bottle of sparkling wine his mother had smuggled aboard.

At the Naila police station, with its flower-filled boxes and its cheerful policemen, they raised their glasses. The toast was poignant in its simplicity: "To freedom."

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AS DAS HIMMELFAHRTSKOMMANDO, IN STERN (40/1979), REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF PICTURE PRESS

The Wetzel and Strelzyk families fell out shortly after their successful escape. Why? Peter Strelzyk gave the initial media interviews while Günter Wetzel recovered in hospital from a leg injury he suffered during the landing. According to Wetzel, Strelzyk took sole credit in the media for the escape idea and construction of the balloon. After reaching freedom, Wetzel and his family settled in Hof, a town not far from where the balloon came down. They stayed there for some 40 years, where Wetzel worked as a master mechanic. He has since retired.

Peter Strelzyk opened an electrical shop in Bad Kissingen, some 120 kilometres from where the families landed. With

the reunification of Germany in 1989, the Strelzyks returned to their old home in Pössneck. Peter Strelzyk died there in 2017, at the age of 74.

In 1982, *Night Crossing*, a Disney film depicting the escape, was released; and in 2018 in Germany, nearly 40 years after the feat, the German-language film *Ballon* came to cinemas.



FROM 1980

How's That Again?

DECEMBER 1987

Announcement in a church bulletin: 'Peacemaking meeting scheduled for today cancelled due to a conflict.'

SOUTH SALEM CHURCH BULLETIN

Keep Up With the World

1960s

THROUGH CENTURIES of eventful history and war, the people of Finland have preserved their Finnish language, while Swedish is the official second language. When a new post office was built in Helsinki, the city argued whether its sign should read *Posti* (Finnish) or *Post* (Swedish). A peacemaker suggested that, since roughly 10 times more Finns speak Finnish than Swedish, the sign should read *Posti* but in neon lights timed to turn out the 'i' once every 10 seconds.

—NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN,
APRIL 1966

1980s

WORKERS AT A CAR assembly plant in Melbourne, Australia, walked off the job in protest when one of them was thrown to the floor by a colleague. The culprit was a robot in the spray-painting section. Management agreed to keep the robots away until they had been fitted with fail-safe devices.

—THE AGE, AUGUST 1988

FOR JUST \$3,900 you, too, can go into orbit! The only catch is, you've got to be dead first. The Celestis Group of Melbourne, Florida, will pack your condensed ashes in a lipstick-size capsule with 10,300 other astro-urns,

and rocket you into space. Your loved ones will be able to see you whizzing around 3,500 km overhead, because the satellite mausoleum will be gold-plated and visible through a telescope. The first space-hearse launch has been scheduled for early 1987.

—LIFE, OCTOBER 1986

1990s

RUSSIA'S TUMULTUOUS transition to a market economy has left an indelible image: the super-rich careering in their Jeeps past grandmothers trying to sell sausages. But the crucial change may be the surprising number of Russians who, despite high inflation and a weak currency, are working harder, earning more and living better. They buy consumer goods and bolster Russia's political stability. With millions of people still seeking their economic place in the new Russia, the middle class is hard to define in numbers or makeup. About 20 per cent—a population larger than Australia's—may qualify. And while many still look ahead with trepidation, and surveys show that most believe the country is undermined by crime and corruption, they hope their own lives will be stable.

—STEVE LIESMAN IN THE WALL STREET
JOURNAL, OCTOBER 1995



IT PAYS TO ENRICH YOUR

Word Power

OUR COLUMN FROM DECEMBER 1975

BY PETER FUNK



The English poet William Cowper thought of word-lovers as huntsmen "... who chase a panting syllable through time and space, start it at home and hunt it in the dark; To Gaul, to Greece and into Noah's ark." In the test below, you need not range quite that far back into antiquity. Yet each of these words, if chased to its origin, will prove to have sprung from the name or a characteristic of a person, animal or place—real or imaginary. Check the word or phrase you believe is nearest in meaning to the key word. Answers are on page 114.

- 1. tawdry** (taw'dry)—
A: dilatory. B: offensive.
C: sandy-coloured. D: gaudily cheap.
- 2. amazon** (am'azon)—
A: mythological god. B: wild animal.
C: tall, strong woman. D: skeptic.
- 3. Pollyanna** (polean'a)—one who is:
A: old-fashioned. B: cranky.
C: invincibly optimistic.
D: extremely cautious.
- 4. draconian** (drako'nean)—
A: orderly. B: frightening.
C: harsh. D: benign.
- 5. Machiavellian** (makeavel'ean)—
A: wicked. B: practical.
C: straightforward. D: crafty.
- 6. boycott** (boy'kot)—A: to accuse
of wrongdoing. B: withdraw from.
C: refuse to deal with. D: keep silence.
- 7. meandering** (mean'dering)—
A: complaining. B: murmuring.
C: cascading. D: winding or turning.
- 8. chauvinism** (sho'vinizm)—
A: extreme partiality. B: conceit.
C: fair mindedness. D: piety.
- 9. forum** (for'um)—A: recess.
B: place of public discussion.
C: dispersion. D: small chamber.
- 10. babel** (ba'b'l)—A: weightlifting
device. B: confusion of voices.
C: clear message. D: small gem.
- 11. hackneyed** (hak'ned)—
A: fragmented. B: trite.
C: unfashionable. D: compelling.
- 12. protean** (pro'tean)—
A: nutritious. B: fascinating.
C: changeable. D: deceitful.
- 13. spartan** (spar't'n)—
A: austere. B: hardheaded.
C: energetic. D: forbidding.
- 14. panacea** (panase'a)—
A: uproar. B: praise. C: cureall.
D: overall view.
- 15. crestfallen**, (krest'fawlen)—
A: jubilant. B: impecunious.
C: dejected. D: fearful.

Word Power ANSWERS

1. tawdry—D: Anything tawdry is cheap and gaudy. Lace neckpieces, named after St. Audrey, were sold at an annual medieval fair. In time, the quality of lace became inferior and the saint's name was shortened .

2. amazon—C: Any tall, strong woman. In Greek mythology the Amazons were a race of female warriors.

3. Pollyanna—C: One who is invincibly optimistic. After Pollyanna, young heroine of a novel by Eleanor H. Porter.

4. draconian—C: Harsh; rigorous; severe; as, draconian punishment. After Draco, a strict Greek lawgiver in the 7th century B.C., who prescribed death for almost every offense.

5. Machiavellian—D: Crafty; deceitful; politically unscrupulous; as, Machiavellian schemes. From Niccolò Machiavelli, 16th-century Italian diplomat .

6. boycott—C: To unite in refusing to have anything to do with the products or services of a person or group. From Captain Charles Boycott, an Irish land agent ostracized by tenants when he raised rents .

7. meandering—D: Winding or turning; as, a meandering stream. From Maiandros, an ancient Greek river famous for its winding course .

8. chauvinism—A: Extreme

partiality; blind patriotism.

From Nicolas Chauvin, a soldier who worshiped Napoleon as a hero without fault .

9. forum—B: Place of gathering for public discussion. After the market place in Roman cities that were used for judicial and public business .

10. babel—B: Confusion of voices, sounds, languages. From the city and tower of Babel in the Bible (Genesis 11:49).

11. hackneyed—B: Trite; stale; as, a hackneyed slogan. Named for the workaday riding horses from Hackney, a London borough .

12. protean—C: Changeable; assuming different forms; as, a protean actor. From Proteus, Greek sea god who was always changing form .

13. spartan—A: Austere; as, a spartan existence. From the extreme plainness of Sparta, a Greek city-state.

14. panacea—C: cure-all; remedy for all ills and difficulties. Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, named one of his daughters Panacea (the all healing); hence our word today.

15. crestfallen—C: Dejected; dispirited; downcast. From a rooster's crest, which literally droops when he loses a fight.

Vocabulary Ratings

12–15 correct: Exceptional

9–11 correct: Excellent

6–8 correct: Good

Quiz

How Well Do You Know The Mahabharata?

OUR COLUMN FROM DECEMBER 1985

BY V. Gangadhar

1. Using the 10 names given below, form five famous Mahabharata couples:

- Pandu • Uttara • Satyawati • Arjuna
- Abhimanyu • Madri • Shantanu
- Gandhari • Subhadra • Dhritarashtra

2. Match the prominent personalities with the statements about them:

- a.** Ekalavya, **b.** Shakuni, **c.** Draupadi, **d.** Shalya, **e.** Urvashi, **f.** Shikhandi

- I.** He was Karna's charioteer on the day Karna was killed in battle
II. Frustrated in love, she cursed the great Pandava hero to lose his manhood
III. He offered his thumb as *dakshina* to his guru
IV. A skilled gambler, he defeated Yudhishtira at dice
V. Bheeshma would not fight him because he had been a woman
VI. At her *swayamvara*, the suitors had to bend and string a mighty bow, and shoot

down a revolving target on the ceiling.

3. The Pandava princes and Draupadi spent the last year of their exile in disguise at the Court of King Virata. Match each person with their occupation at the court:

- I.** cook **II.** cowherd **III.** maid
IV. companion to the king **V.** stablehand
VI. music and dance teacher

- a.** Yudhishtira **b.** Bheema **c.** Arjuna
d. Nakula **e.** Sahadeva **f.** Draupadi

4. Match the heroes with the people they killed in the Great War:

- a.** Dhrishtadyumna **b.** Bheema
c. Karna **d.** Arjuna **e.** Sahadeva
I. Ghatotkacha **II.** Jayadratha
III. Shakuni **IV.** Drona **V.** Duhshasana

5. Arjuna's bow was called ... (chose one):

- a.** Kodanda **b.** Panchajanya
c. Gandiva **d.** Devadatta

3. a-IV; b-I; c-VI; d-V; e-II; f-III
Two marks for each correct answer
4. a-IV; b-V; c-I; d-II; e-III
One mark for each correct match
5. Gandiva, 'Panchajanya' and 'Devadatta'
were Krishna's and Arjuna's conches while
'Kodanda' was Rama's bow. Two marks
if you got it right.

Answers:
1. Pandu—Madri, Abhimanyu—Uttara,
Shantanu—Satyawati, Arjuna—Subhadra,
Dhritarashtra—Gandhari
Give yourself one mark for each couple
you got right
2. a-III; b-IV; c-VI; d-I; e-II; f-V
Two marks for each correct answer

Quotable Quotes



Suspect each moment, for it is a thief, tiptoeing away with more than it brings.

JOHN UPDIKE, A MONTH OF SUNDAYS (KNOPF), July 1978

It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, December 1975

Most ignorance is vincible ignorance. We don't know, because we don't want to know.

ALDOUS HUXLEY, Jan 1966

The trouble with putting armour on is that, while it protects you from pain, it also protects you from pleasure.

CELESTE HOLM, ACTOR, May 1974



If you risk nothing, then you risk everything.

GEENA DAVIS, QUOTED BY KEVIN SESSUMS IN VANITY FAIR, Jan 1993



The best mind altering drug is the truth.

LILY TOMLIN, July 2005



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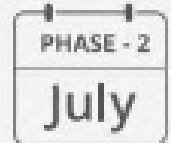
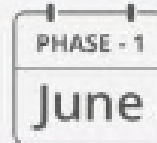
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