

JULY/AUGUST 2023

# Reader's Digest

AMERICA THE TASTY

★ THE ★  
**BEST SNACK**  
in Every State

How to Stop Our  
**DEADLY SPEEDING  
EPIDEMIC**

From **THE GUARDIAN**

13 Fun Facts About  
**FIREWORKS**

An **RD ORIGINAL**

**ALLIGATOR  
ATTACK**

A **DRAMA IN REAL LIFE**

Words of Advice

By **RD READERS**

Joint Pain, **GO AWAY**

By **PATRICIA PEARSON**



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# Reader's Digest

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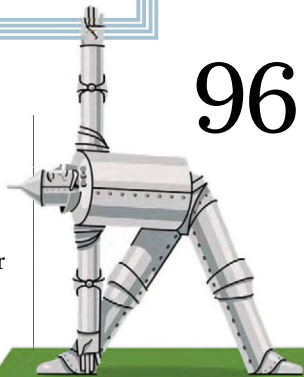
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**DEAR READER**

## Snack Attack

**M**Y MOM WAS the queen of snacks. Her philosophy on life was simple: If you had a bad day, you deserved a treat. If you had a good day, you deserved a treat. Basically, everyone deserves treats all the time. She kept our snack cabinet stocked and loved to bake, which explains why friends always wanted to hang out at my house. Mom took us to Dairy Queen so often they hired me, and I spent a summer making cones and sundaes. I like to think I could still make a Peanut Buster Parfait if called into duty.



*Jason Buhrmester,*  
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

Write to me at  
[letters@rd.com](mailto:letters@rd.com).

So it was a great pleasure for the *Reader's Digest* team to indulge our munchies this issue on a quest to find the best snacks across the country for our annual America the Tasty feature (page 42). We partnered with our sister publication *Taste of Home* to explore the best treats in every state, from healthy foods, like apples and cherries, to things we don't need to mention during our next physicals, like doughnuts and whoopie pies. I still keep a container of my favorite trail mix handy, but now there's a box of pecan pralines stashed in the kitchen.

It's not too late for you to help us with our next coast-to-coast search. This year, we partnered with Dollar General for our annual Nicest Places in America contest. Help us find the best places in this great country. Submit your story by opening the camera on your cellphone and pointing it at the black "scan me" box below or by visiting us at [rd.com/nicest](http://rd.com/nicest).

Grab a favorite snack and enter now. Just try not to get too much grease on your phone.



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## YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS A WORD.



### The Battle Against COVID-19 Filipino American Healthcare Workers on the Frontlines of the Pandemic Response

Delia Rarela-Barcelona, Ph.D.  
www.xlibris.com

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www.authorhouse.com

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### The Origin and Future of Mankind

Shaun Dowling  
www.authorhouse.co.uk

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Shaun Dowling describes in detail how the universe was formed, how our planet developed, when life appeared, and how it has evolved over time.



### If Knocked Down, Get Back Up Again

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Christine Sheetz  
www.xlibris.com

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Christine Sheetz's life had been beset by trials, tribulations, and medical challenges. In this autobiography, she shares her testimony of how God can turn tragedy into triumph.

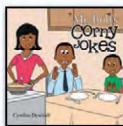


### Sometimes Things Just Happen

K. Arnold  
www.authorhouse.com

Paperback | E-book  
\$13.99 | \$3.99

Author K. Arnold explains why things happened, what it meant at the time and what it might mean in the future.



### Mr. Bob's Corny Jokes

Cynthia Dewindt  
www.xlibris.com

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\$16.99 | \$14.99 | \$3.99

Mr. Bob is a hardworking man who attempts to make his family laugh by telling corny jokes. His wife, Carol realizes that she wouldn't have it any other way.





## Cloudy with a Chance of Dogs

**W**HEN DUBLIN-BASED ARTIST Chris Judge looks to the sky, he sees much more than just amorphous clouds. He sees bears, dogs, rabbits and other fluffy friends. In 2020, Judge began sharing his “happy cloud art” on his Instagram account, A Daily Cloud. Using an app, he draws lines to transform clouds into whimsical characters that he shares with more than 430,000 followers. “There are certain times in the day when the sun hits the clouds and makes them look huge and three-dimensional,” he told *People*. “And after a rainstorm, clouds always seem to look incredible.” Judge accepts fan submissions, encouraging us all to look up lest we miss out on something amazing. **R**

A DAILY CLOUD





# The Art of Friendship

*A painter sees the people so many others ignore*

BY Sarah Chassé

IT ALL STARTED with a simple question: “Can I paint your portrait?”

In the summer of 2015, Brian Peterson and his wife, Vanessa, had just moved to Santa Ana, California. Outside the couple’s fourth-floor apartment, an unkempt homeless man was often yelling on the street corner, sometimes keeping them awake at night. Peterson, 28, would pass the guy on his way to his job as a car designer at Kia Motors, but they never spoke. What could they possibly have in common?

One day, Peterson was relaxing in his living room, reading the book *Love Does*, about the power of love in action, when his quiet was disturbed

by the homeless man. Inspired by the book’s compassionate message, Peterson made an unexpected decision: He was going to go outside and introduce himself.

In that first conversation, Peterson learned that the man’s name was Matt Faris. He’d moved to Southern California from Kentucky to pursue a career in music, but he soon fell on hard times and ended up living on the street for more than a decade.

“It was the weirdest thing to me,” Peterson recalled later on the podcast *Top Artist*. “I saw beauty on the face of a man who hadn’t shaved in probably a year, had overgrown fingernails, probably hadn’t had a shower



Brian Peterson with portraits of friends

in close to a year. But his story, the life inside of him, inspired me." And even though Peterson, a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art, hadn't picked up a paintbrush in about eight years, he found himself asking if he could paint Faris's portrait. Faris said yes.

Peterson's connection with Faris led him to form Faces of Santa Ana, a nonprofit organization focused on befriending and painting portraits of members of the community who are unhoused. Working from a black-and-

## PETERSON SELLS THE PAINTINGS AND PUTS PROCEEDS INTO "LOVE ACCOUNTS."

white photo of the subject taken with his phone, Peterson chooses colors inspired by the subject's personality and life story, creating a poignant portrait. He showed one man winning his battle with alcoholism, for example, by transitioning the colors from a somber blue to a brilliant scarlet.

Peterson sells the vibrant 30-by-40-inch canvas—signed by both subject and artist—for a few thousand dollars, splitting the proceeds and putting half into what he calls a "love account" for his model. He then helps people use the money to get back on their feet.

Many of Peterson's new friends use the donations to secure immediate

necessities—medical care, hotel rooms, food. But Peterson has learned not to make assumptions about what a person needs most. "I've made so many mistakes thinking I knew what people wanted," he says. "Then I realized: Why don't we just ask them?"

Faris used the funds from his portrait to record an album, fulfilling his musical dreams. Another subject, Kimberly Sondoval, had never been able to financially support her daughter. She asked, "Can I use the money to pay my daughter's rent?" When the check was delivered, "they both wept in my arms," Peterson recalls.

In the eight years since Faces of Santa Ana was established, Peterson, who now lives in Miami with his wife and children, has formed a new nonprofit called Faces of Mankind, a collective of artists who are creating portraits of people experiencing homelessness around the country.

Peterson has painted 41 of these portraits himself. But there's more to the finished products than the money they bring to someone down-and-out. He's discovered that the buyers tend to connect to the story of the person in the painting, finding similarities and often friendship with someone they might have otherwise overlooked or stereotyped.

"People often tell me, 'I was the one that would cross the street. But I see homeless people differently now,'" Peterson says. "I didn't know that would happen." **R**

## GLAD TO HEAR IT

3 STORIES TO  
*Make Your Day*



### A Porpoise-ful Life

When a dolphin was trapped in a creek in Clearwater, Florida, for three weeks, the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) decided to help it back to the open seas for its own safety. But that wouldn't be easy. The only way out was through a small opening under a bridge, a path the dolphin seemed loath to take. To help coax it out, 28 biologists from CMA and elsewhere entered the water to form a human chain. They slowly moved toward the lost dolphin while making loud noises. It worked. The dolphin, wanting nothing to do with the humans, escaped through the passage and out into Tampa Bay. CMA's Brittany Baldrice said in a statement that the idea wasn't to scare the dolphin, but rather to give it "the option to swim through the bridge on its own."

### Have a Seat

The sight of a woman sitting on the ground at a Denver bus stop spurred James Warren to concoct a solution: build benches so weary commuters could wait for their buses in dignity. Warren, 29, isn't a carpenter; he's a consultant for the Colorado Workforce Development Council. But using the "just wing it" method of bench building—and without waiting for the city's permission—he has crafted eight benches for local bus stops, all inscribed with the message Be Kind. The city is now on board, as are others who also want to build benches. "That's the idea," Warren told the *Washington Post*. "Let's just all help our neighbors."

### Returning a Name

About a million Jews who perished in the Holocaust have not been identified. Daniel Patt, a software engineer, is hoping that by using facial recognition technology, his new website will restore their names. Users upload a photo of a lost friend or relative for free to [numberstonames.org](http://numberstonames.org). The site analyzes the face, then, working with museums dedicated to the Holocaust, searches through hundreds of thousands of archival photos looking for a match. The site is an invaluable resource, Scott Miller, former chief curator of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, told the BBC. "We all know the figure—6 million Jews were killed. But every person has a name, every person has a face." **R**



Bella in the captain's chair

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**BEST PET PALS**

## Bella the Fisher Dog

NIPOMO, CA

**W**E DIDN'T KNOW if our rescue dog, Bella, would like the boat when she first joined us for a lake fishing trip. But she's adventurous for a Shih Tzu, so we strapped her into a canine life jacket and goggles to protect her eyes from the wind, and it turns out that she's a natural angler.

The moment the line is cast and the bait is in the water, Bella zones in on the pole, as any good angler should. When there's a bite, she wags her tail and yips as if she's coaching us while

we reel in the line. Once the catch is landed, Bella is the first to inspect it, eagerly sniffing as the fish flops across the deck. On occasion, she picks up a fish, but she is always gentle and drops it on command. Even when we release what we've caught, Bella leans over and stares at the water, tracking the fish until they're long out of sight.

At home, Bella loves to watch TV, especially shows with dogs, and comes running when we say "Puppies on TV!" She even checks behind the screen when one runs out of frame. It's hard to believe this extraordinary dog was returned to the shelter twice. **R**

—Nominated by JACQUELYN WARD

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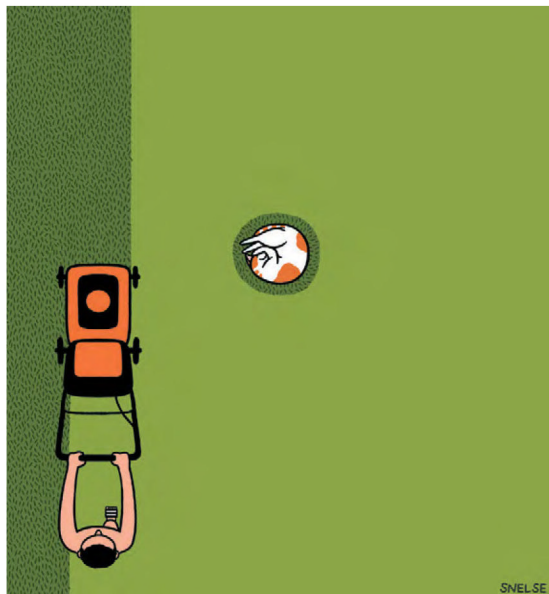
**LIFE**  
IN THESE  
*United States*

**My father** was a die-hard college football fan up until the end. And when the end came, he was in a hospital bed surrounded by his children. At one point, the doctor entered his room and gently came to the point: “Do you want us to resuscitate if your heart fails?”

My father shook his head. “No, no. Let me go, let me go.”

My sisters and I stood in silence, grasping the gravity of the situation. Then my dad spoke up again. “Unless Ohio State is on TV. Then bring me back.”

—RICK EICHHORN  
*Centerville, OH*



**After a day of hiking** in a majestic national forest, my son asked my grandson, “What was your favorite thing we saw today?”

My grandson replied, “The car after our hike.”

—KELLI BRADBURY  
*Roy, UT*

**“Every day** my TikTok algorithm feeds me dozens of anti-aging solutions. I’m 23.”  
—ELENA CAVENDER,  
*on Mashable*

**I was looking** through some old cassettes I’d found while cleaning out a closet when my

I love when my husband says  
“Correct me if I’m wrong,” like I would  
pass up that opportunity.

—[@MUMOFTW0](#)



8-year-old granddaughter picked one up.

“What is this?” she asked.

“It’s a cassette tape,” I said.

“What does it do?”

“It plays music.”

Looking puzzled, she examined it more closely, then asked, “Do you blow in it?”

—LYNN OLTMAN  
*Beatrice, NE*

**Lessons people** admit to learning embarrassingly late in life:

◆ I thought that “prima donna” was “pre-Madonna” and that it meant everything before the singer Madonna.

◆ While watching *Game of Thrones*, I asked my husband when dragons went extinct. He had to pause the show for that one.

◆ That you don’t have to stand in the shower while the water warms up.

◆ I thought Mick Jagger’s name was McJagger, and people just never said his first

name for some reason.

◆ That the saying is “nip it in the bud” and not, in fact, “nip it in the butt.”

—REDDIT.COM

**It finally happened:** Someone asked me where the library was

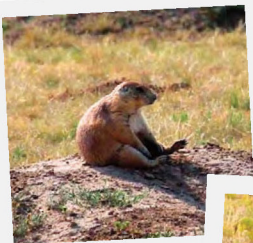
in Spanish. I’ve been training for this since high school.

**YOUR FUNNY STORY**

*about friends or family could be worth \$\$\$.* For details, go to page 2 or [RD.COM/SUBMIT](http://RD.COM/SUBMIT).

## HEY, IS THAT COUSIN MAURY?

The National Park Service Twitter account showcases wild animals that act more human than many humans.



**When you get** out of the shower and sit on the bed trying to get yourself pumped up to get dressed and start your day.



**Rare image** of a bison stepping on a Lego.



**Bangs?** Yay or Neigh?

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## Nice Buns!

*The humble hamburger can be a delicacy too*

BY *Renée S. Suen*

**A**S ONE OF the few foods you'll find at both fast-food drive-thrus and Michelin-starred restaurants, burgers clearly are king. And while Americans eat some 50 billion burgers each year, "burgernomics" are international: *The Economist* magazine uses its Big Mac index to compare the purchasing power of various nations' currencies based on the price



of the McDonald's staple, with the U.S. price serving as a baseline. (In 2022, when Big Macs cost \$5.81 on average here, the priciest Big Mac cost \$6.71 in Switzerland, while the cheapest cost \$1.76 in Venezuela.)

Though both the Roman and Mongol empires enjoyed early versions of what we call hamburger meat, it came to be associated with Hamburg, the German city that would ultimately give the dish its name, in the 18th and 19th centuries.

## THE FIRST BURGER CHAIN IN THE U.S. WAS NEITHER MCDONALD'S NOR BURGER KING.

---

By the mid-1800s, German immigrants had brought their chopped beefsteak dish with them to the New World. In 1837, New York's Delmonico's restaurant offered a Hamburg steak on its first menu. At 10 cents, it was one of the most expensive items, twice the cost of pork chops and roast beef.

Americans eventually called the dish "hamburger." It's not certain who first "invented" the sandwich as we know it today, but in 1885, both "Hamburger Charlie" Nagreen of Seymour, Wisconsin, and the Menches brothers of (fittingly) Hamburg, New York, served up ground-beef sandwiches at their local fairs.

Meanwhile, Louis' Lunch in New

Haven, Connecticut, claims to be the oldest burger joint in America, having served them since 1900. But what might surprise fast-food fans is that the first burger chain in the U.S. was neither McDonald's nor Burger King. That title goes to White Castle, founded in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921.

The hamburger's Germanic moniker came to be seen as unpatriotic during both world wars, so some restaurants opted to call it a "liberty sandwich" or "liberty steak" instead.

A big plus is that burgers can be eaten without utensils, although not everyone considers them a handheld food. Many people around the world prefer to tackle them with a fork and knife. Among them: the late Queen Elizabeth II. The German knife-maker Wüsthof even makes a special burger knife (similar to a steak knife, but with a wider tip for spreading condiments).

The perfect hamburger is subjective, of course. Medium well or medium rare? Deluxe or just by itself? Cheese? Pickle? Ketchup? Even the beef can be swapped for turkey, bison, squid (popular in Japan) or a portobello mushroom cap. In Australia, you can choose a fried-egg topper, or slices of pineapple, pumpkin or beet. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the Bicky burger features a deep-fried patty made with pork, chicken and horse meat.

With so many ways to enjoy a burger, it's no surprise, that, as the McDonald's sign reads, we've eaten "billions and billions" of them. **R**



13 THINGS



# Illuminating Facts About Fireworks

BY *Samantha Rideout*

**1** THE FIREWORKS that you'll see this Fourth of July were most likely made—where else?—in China. The country that makes 90% of the world's fireworks is also where they were invented. Most historians believe that the Chinese used

firecrackers as early as the second century B.C.

**2** AMERICANS AREN'T the only ones setting off sparklers this month. Canadians put on pyrotechnic displays every July 1 to celebrate their own national birthday, as the

French do on July 14 to mark the anniversary of their revolution. But the U.S. imports most of the world's fireworks, spending more than \$650 million on them per year. The Walt Disney Co. alone buys about \$50 million worth.

**3** A MIXTURE of gunpowder and other flammable compounds causes fireworks to explode across the sky in all those pretty colors and fun shapes. Copper, for instance, burns bright blue; strontium sparks deep red. Together, they produce purple. But the outlines fireworks form depend on the placement of these compounds inside their casing (known as the shell), as well as the shape of the shell itself. Crowd favorites include “comet,” which features a long trail of sparks; “peony,” a spherical burst; and “strobe,” which produces a blinking effect.

**4** ITALIANS WERE the first to mix in extra metals to create different colors, in the 1830s. Before that, not surprisingly, all fireworks were orange, the most common color of fire. The patterns are a result of much more recent technology. The first patch of sky to see

specific shapes was the one above Washington, D.C.: We welcomed our troops home from Operation Desert Storm in 1991 with fireworks that exploded into purple hearts and yellow bows.

**5** EVERY SUMMER, pyrotechnic artists gather in Montreal for the world’s largest fireworks competition, *L’International des Feux Loto-Québec*. Roughly 3 million spectators watch teams compete, with themed musical programs such as “Bells and Drums” (Mexico’s lively entry last year) or “A Tribute to Prince,” which featured shades in honor of the late musician known as The Purple One. There’s no cash prize, but winners take home trophies known as Jupiters—fittingly named for the Roman god of the sky and thunder.

**6** WE’RE USED TO seeing fireworks displays paired with music, starting with “Auld Lang Syne”

on New Year’s Day. But sometimes it’s the sparklers that inspire the tunes, such as George Frideric Handel’s joyous *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), composed to mark the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. Claude Debussy’s 1913 composition *Feux d’artifice* (“Fireworks”) uses the piano to evoke thrilling blasts with anticipatory pauses in between.

**7** FOR CENTURIES the only way to light firework fuses was by hand, but computer-controlled igniters came out in the 1980s. Automation means more precisely timed explosions, making the displays more synchronized and satisfying—not to mention safer.

**8** BUT THAT doesn’t mean things always go according to plan. In 2012, San Diego’s Fourth of July celebration went awry because of a computer glitch. A display that

was supposed to last 18 minutes got compressed into less than one minute. Spectators were bombarded with clamor and light as roughly 7,000 shells exploded at once.

**9** THE SINGLE biggest firework shell ever shot was part of a winter carnival display in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in 2020. Weighing a hefty 2,795 pounds, it rose more than half a mile before bursting, turning the night sky red. The amateur aficionado leading the project said his team had spent hundreds of hours building progressively bigger fireworks in the hopes of stealing the record, previously held by Dubai.

**10** THE POPS and whistles that some fireworks make is the craftsmanship of chemists, who add metal tubes or flakes that hiss and sizzle as they burn. Of course, most fireworks

go off with loud bangs, which many animals don't enjoy. New "quiet" fireworks that don't need as much energy to burst are already popular in Europe and are starting to catch on in North America—for instance, in Banff, Alberta, a town near a national park rich with wildlife.

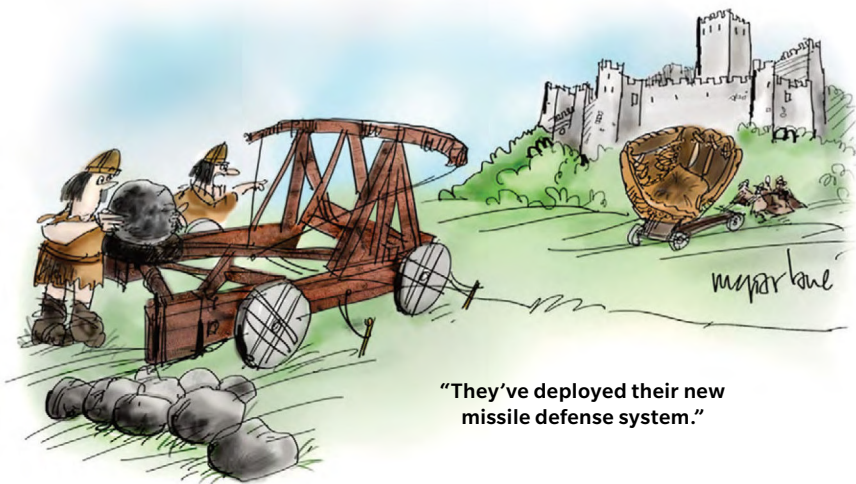
**11** MASSACHUSETTS is the only state that completely bans the sale and use of fireworks, even types you might consider tame such as sparklers and firecrackers. Most states do allow citizens to buy fireworks, but with obscure caveats. In Ohio, buyers must take them out of the state within 48 hours of purchase. And at many Florida fireworks stores, buyers promise to use them for agricultural purposes only, such as to scare away birds.

**12** AS YOU might imagine, setting off fireworks can release hazardous

substances into the air: potassium perchlorate, for example, a chemical that has been linked to thyroid problems. "Environmentally friendly" fireworks (which emit up to 65% less air pollution than regular ones) were developed at the request of the Walt Disney Co. after it received smoke complaints from neighbors of Disneyland. In 2004, the company patented a smokeless firework launcher.

**13** AN EVEN more eco-friendly alternative to traditional fireworks: using drones to trace flashy patterns in the sky. This technique was recently adopted for Fourth of July festivities in Incline Village, Nevada, and Parker, Colorado. With drones, there's also a much smaller risk of sparking wildfires. The eco-friendly fireworks industry is expected to grow almost 20% between now and 2027. **R**





"They've deployed their new missile defense system."

HUMOR *in*  
**UNIFORM**

**All patients** who come to our military dental office are addressed by their ranks, which tend to be abbreviated on our charts. That's caused some confusion for my assistant, who is a civilian. One day she grabbed a chart, saw that it read RADM Jones, and called for the next patient in the waiting room: "Radio-man Jones!"

The patient stood up,

walked to the exam door and politely corrected my assistant: "It's ... Rear Admiral, ma'am."

—JAMES MCGUIRE  
*Oro Valley, AZ*

**"I performed** for the troops in Guantanamo Bay. I signed autographs for people who've been gone from America for so long they didn't realize that I'm not famous."

—MIKE BIRBIGLIA,  
*comedian*

**Military-contracted** movers descended on our house to pack and move us to our next

duty station. They were moving so fast that we propped the door open with a brick and placed a trash can next to the door for last-minute garbage. A few days later, we arrived at our new home and began unpacking the boxes. The first items we found were the brick and the garbage can filled with rotting trash.

—C. MACRANDER, *from United Through Reading*

**YOUR FUNNY MILITARY** story could be worth \$\$\$\$. For details, go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](http://RD.COM/SUBMIT).

## WHERE, OH WHERE?

**A**ND ... ACTION! These fittingly larger-than-life cutouts of James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor as they appeared in their 1956 movie, *Giant*, are hard to miss along Highway 90. The flick lived up to its name in both its runtime (three hours) and its reach: It inspired an enormously popular 1980s TV show. Where is this? (*Answer on PAGE 111.*)

- A** Chipley, Florida
- B** Anniston, Alabama
- C** Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico
- D** Marfa, Texas





L. SCIBRANDT PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

ALL  
in a Day's  
**WORK**

**When a new** restaurant opened nearby, my wife and I made sure to get a table on opening night. It was our server's first time working at a restaurant and she was bubbling over with enthusiasm. Case in point: I asked, "What is the soup du jour?"

Beaming with the pride of one who has found her calling, she answered, "Oh, that's the soup of the day!"  
—DENNIS BYRNE  
*Haymarket, VA*

**Attorney on phone:**

Hi, sweetie. I'm going to come pick you up after school tomorrow to take you to your



**"The smarter we make the A.I., the less it wants to do our jobs."**

appointment ... Well, Mommy was going to, but she's too important to leave the office. And I'm not that important, so I can leave.

—OVERHEARDINTHEOFFICE.COM

**In 1983**, Freddy Heineken, the owner of the eponymous Heineken brewery,

was kidnapped and held for ransom for weeks. As awful as it was, Heineken never lost his sense of humor. After finally being released, he told a friend, "They tortured me. They made me drink Carlsberg."

—FORBES.COM

**As a single** mother, I found that getting the kids off to school and then driving 45 minutes to work was a struggle. Luckily, my boss was very forgiving. In fact,

**People who live alone should get one practice conversation before they have to speak out loud for the first time of the day.**

—[@NICCOLETHURMAN](#)

one day he greeted me with a cheerful smile, exclaiming, "Today's the earliest you've been late all week!"

—PAT SICHTKO

*Sterling Heights, MI*

**With seconds** to go and the score tied, I called a timeout and drew up a play on a small whiteboard for the high school basketball team I coached. "Got it?" I asked the players. They did. We put our hands in the middle and shouted our team cheer, and they ran back onto the floor. I had tremendous

confidence until one player turned back to me and asked, "Were we the X's or the O's?"

—STEVE WHITEMAN

*Vernonia, OR*

**These all-too-real** excerpts from medical transcripts beg the question: How does anyone get out of the hospital alive?

♦ "The baby was delivered, the cord clamped and cut, and handed to the pediatrician, who breathed and cried immediately."

♦ "Patient was present when suppository was inserted."

♦ "Bleeding began in the rectal area and continued all the way to Los Angeles."

♦ "The patient's past medical history has been remarkably insignificant, with only a 40-pound weight gain in the past three days."

♦ "Social history reveals this 1-year-old patient does not smoke or drink and is presently unemployed."

—NURSEBUFF.COM

**YOUR FUNNY WORK**  
story could be worth  
\$\$\$\$. For details,  
go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](http://RD.COM/SUBMIT).

## THIS JOB IS A JOKE!

Three comedians describe their earlier gigs

"I used to work at McDonald's making minimum wage. You know what that means when someone pays you minimum wage? You know what your boss was trying to say? 'Hey, if I could pay you less, I would, but it's against the law.'"

—CHRIS ROCK

"I got fired from my last job. It was fair. I had stopped working. When they fired me, they called me into HR and they were like, 'Michelle, it seems like you're just not doing your job.' And I was like, 'Yeah, but for like nine months. So, I think two of us haven't been doing our jobs.'"

—MICHELLE WOLF

"I called a temp agency once. They were like, 'Do you have any phone skills?' I was like, 'I called you, didn't I?'"

—ZACH GALIFIANAKIS



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# Enjoy a Safe-Skin Summer

*Take these tips on your  
next beach or boat trip*

—  
BY *Melissa Greer*

**W**HILE THE SUMMER sunshine feels good on bare skin, be careful not to go unprotected outdoors for too long. At least 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by age 70, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. It now accounts for 1 in every 3 cancers diagnosed worldwide, and more people in the United States are diagnosed with skin cancer each year than are diagnosed with all other cancers combined.

But how can that be, when we are

seeing more safe-sun campaigns and public education around skin cancer? It's mainly due to better detection and one more big health improvement: "The longer you live, the higher your chances are of eventually developing a skin cancer," says Deborah S. Sarnoff, a New York City dermatologist and president of the Skin Cancer Foundation. Fortunately, when caught early, skin cancer is highly treatable.

Skin cancer is grouped into two types: malignant melanoma and non-melanoma. The nonmelanoma type, which includes basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), is the most common. The main risk factor for both types is cumulative exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light, so as we age, skin cancer can appear—typically on the areas that are most often exposed to the sun.

"That includes the face, ears, scalp and neck," says Clare Tait, a dermatologist based in Perth, Australia, the country with the world's highest rate of melanoma, according to World Cancer Research Fund International.

Fair-skinned people with blue eyes and blond hair, and those who have a family history of melanoma or already have a lot of moles, are at higher risk. But people with darker skin can develop skin cancer too.

Melanoma accounts for just 1% of skin cancers, but it is by far the deadliest. The vast majority of cases are caused by UV exposure, and if you've had five or more sunburns, your risk is doubled. It

can also come from an inherited gene mutation. Melanoma usually shows up on the upper back, torso, lower legs, head or neck, but it can also occur on body parts that are rarely exposed to the sun, such as the soles of your feet or under your nails. This cancer is so dangerous because it can spread deeper into the skin or to other organs, making treatment more difficult.

But recent research brings good news: A clinical trial by the pharmaceutical companies Moderna and Merck has just shown a vaccine to be effective for late-stage melanoma. The results, announced in December 2022, showed

## **KEEP AN EYE ON ANY SKIN CHANGES AND DO A SKIN CHECK EVERY THREE MONTHS.**

that when used in combination with immunotherapy after surgery to remove the skin cancer, a personalized mRNA vaccine reduced the risk of recurrence or death in patients with stage 3 or stage 4 melanoma by 44% compared with immunotherapy and surgery alone. A larger trial is planned for this year.

For decades, mRNA vaccines have been studied for personalized cancer treatments. Many of us learned about them for the first time with COVID-19 vaccines. They work by providing a





section of genetic code—like instructions—that tells our cells how to make a specific spike protein that the immune system learns to attack.

“The vaccine essentially trains the body’s immune system to recognize and respond to mutations in the DNA specific to the patient’s tumor,” says Dr. Sarnoff. “It’s a great breakthrough,” she adds, because late-stage melanoma—when the cancer has spread to other organs—has too often been a death sentence. If a melanoma vaccine is approved, it could be another treatment option for late-stage cases, which are usually treated with chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy and targeted drug therapy.

“With early detection, melanoma that’s still limited to the epidermis is virtually 100% curable,” says Dr. Sarnoff, referring to the most superficial kind of melanoma that’s on the outer layer of the skin. This is why it’s important that you keep an eye on existing moles and any skin changes.

Aim to do a skin check every three months, says Anne Cust, a cancer epidemiologist and chair of Cancer Council Australia’s Skin Cancer Committee. Use a mirror and good light, she suggests.

“Consider taking photos of spots you are concerned about so that you can keep tabs on them,” she says. She also recommends that you buddy up with a partner who can check areas you can’t

see, such as your scalp, the back of your neck, and your lower back.

"Anything on your skin that's new, changing or unusual should be checked out," Dr. Sarnoff says. It's also a good idea to have an annual checkup with a dermatologist or family doctor.

---

## WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

### SIZE

Dermatologists recommend looking for moles that have an irregular border or variations in color, or are bigger than a pencil eraser. Watch for changes to any of your moles (any size) or freckles.

### NEW MOLES

Keep an eye out for new spots, freckles or moles, particularly if you're older than 25. It's common for adults to have anywhere from 10 to 40 moles; more than 50 is an increased risk factor for melanoma. Small bumps that are red, pink or pearly in color could be BCC, especially if you find them on places that get lots of sun exposure, such as your face, neck, scalp, hands and shoulders.

### ANYTHING THAT WON'T HEAL

"If you have a spot that's chronically itching, scabbing and keeps popping up at the same site, that's a red flag," says Dr. Sarnoff. Also pay close attention if you have an area that bleeds repeatedly for no apparent reason, as this could be a sign of BCC, says Dr. Tait.

If a sore or unusual spot hasn't healed itself in three to four weeks, get it checked out.

### PERSISTENT PIMPLES

"The life of a pimple is a few days up to a maximum of three weeks," says Dr. Sarnoff. If you have what looks like a pimple, but it isn't going away, it could be BCC or SCC.

### ANYTHING UNUSUAL

Healthy freckles and moles tend to look similar to other freckles and moles. "If something looks like it's an outlier, you should get it checked," says Dr. Sarnoff. It might be a bit bigger or darker than the others, or raised while the others are flat. When something looks off, trust your instincts and see a doctor.

KEEP AN EYE ON the clock too, and know when you should shield yourself from the sun's rays. "Sun protection is most important when the UV index reaches 3 or above," says Dr. Tait. In most northern states, that's typically between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during the summer. You can learn the daily UV index from the local weather report or most weather apps. Try to seek shade during those hours. Generously apply broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. And wear a hat, sunglasses, and clothing that covers you up.

Don't worry, you'll still get enough vitamin D. Most people get plenty just by spending a few minutes outdoors on most days. **R**

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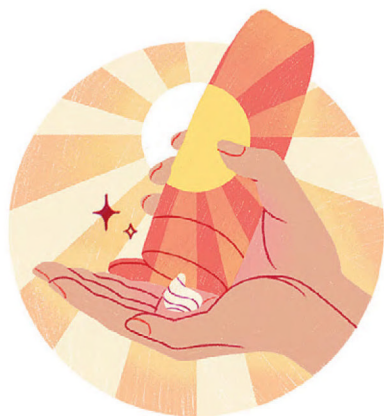
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## The Scoop on Sunscreen

BY *Melissa Greer*

**F**ORTUNATELY, THE DAYS of slathering on baby oil and baking in the sun to get a golden tan—or more likely an angry burn—are long over. Many sunscreens work by filtering the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays to keep them from reaching skin cells and causing the DNA damage that can lead to wrinkles and skin cancer. But in recent years, the safety of some of those filtering chemical ingredients, particularly oxybenzone, has been in question.

A 2019 study published in *JAMA* found evidence that oxybenzone is absorbed into the bloodstream, leading to concerns about whether it might affect hormone production, puberty,

fertility and thyroid function. Oxybenzone has also been detected in breast milk. Because of concerns about higher absorption in children, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises against sunscreen with oxybenzone for kids.

The Environmental Working Group, an activist organization that monitors chemical safety, has called for a ban, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration considers sunscreens with oxybenzone safe. It's permitted in Europe but at a lower percentage.

"The jury is still out," says Deborah S. Sarnoff, a New York dermatologist and president of the Skin Cancer Foundation. "Just because you're absorbing the chemical doesn't mean it's dangerous." More research is needed.

But oxybenzone is a risk to coral reefs. Hawaii and the U.S. Virgin Islands have banned the sale of sunscreens with oxybenzone (as well as another chemical, octinoxate). In a 2022 study published in *Science*, researchers found that sea anemones, when exposed to sunlight, metabolize oxybenzone in a way that damages and kills corals.

Some companies have phased out oxybenzone, and many big brands, including Aveeno and Coppertone, offer oxybenzone-free options. For anyone who is pregnant or breastfeeding, or simply looking to avoid these chemical filters, Dr. Sarnoff recommends mineral sunscreens, which contain physical barriers such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. **R**

# ZZZZZZZZ

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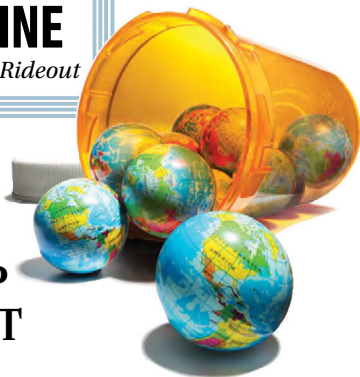
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News FROM THE

**WORLD OF  
MEDICINE**BY *Samantha Rideout***WAKE UP  
WITHOUT  
COFFEE?**

Do you blame your coffee habit on a biological incompatibility with mornings? It turns out that being an early riser isn't genetic, according to a recent study published in *Nature Communications*. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, found that lifestyle changes can help keep you from feeling sluggish in the morning. Ideally, you could sleep longer and later than you typically do, but if that's not possible, these healthy habits will help: Step up your exercise; people who worked out more than usual the previous day felt less groggy when they woke up. Also, eat complex carbs along with a bit of fat and protein for breakfast—such as an egg with lightly buttered whole wheat toast.

**Help for  
Hot Flashes**

Hot flashes affect roughly 80% of women in menopause and can be a huge drag on mood, sleep, concentration and overall quality of life. Fortunately, there is a new option: a class of drugs called NK3R antagonists that show promise for women who don't want to use hormone replacement therapy to ease their hot flashes and the other symptoms that can come with them—sweating, heart palpitations and fatigue. The drugs work on the brain's hypothalamus, thanks to a new understanding of how this part of the brain can trigger hot flashes. One medication slashed the number of hot flashes by 72% and reduced their severity by 38% in a four-week trial in London. Another drug, called elinzanetant, is undergoing a large-scale trial, with results expected in January.

## LEGAL NOTICE

# **WAS YOUR PROPERTY SOLD BY A MICHIGAN COUNTY DUE TO NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES? YOU COULD RECEIVE CASH FROM THAT SALE.**

**DON'T WAIT — YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM BY AUGUST 7, 2023**

### **WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?**

A proposed Settlement in a class action lawsuit called *Wayside Church v. Van Buren County*, Case No. 1:14-cv-01274, pending in the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan. This class action lawsuit alleges that many counties in Michigan violated the rights of property owners or heirs by failing to pay to the former owners or other interest holders the proceeds from the sale of the tax-foreclosed properties that exceeded the unpaid taxes, fees, and other costs associated with those properties. These claims have become known as “surplus-proceeds claims.”

### **WHO IS INCLUDED?**

You are included as a Class Member if you owned, inherited, or held an interest in property foreclosed on and sold by some Michigan Counties between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2020 by that County. (Common examples of interests in real property include ownership, mortgage interests, and other types of liens.) If the original owner or interest holder is deceased or no longer exists, then heirs or successors are included as Class Members.

Almost all counties in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and the western half of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula are participating in this Settlement. For a full list of Counties, visit [www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com](http://www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com).

### **WHAT DOES THE SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?**

Each Class Member who submits a valid claim will usually receive 80% of the surplus proceeds from the sale of the property less the amount the court awards to cover attorney fees. If more than one valid claim is made for surplus proceeds from a property, the total amount available to pay claims connected with that property will be 80% of the surplus proceeds less the court-awarded attorney fees. **The deadline to submit a Claim is August 7, 2023.**

### **WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?**

- **File a Claim:** You must complete and submit a Claim to qualify for a payment under the Settlement. You may file your Claim online or download a claim form at [www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com](http://www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com). If you submit by U.S. mail, claim forms should be sent to *Wayside Church v. Van Buren County*, c/o Kroll Settlement Administration, P.O. Box 225391, New York, NY 10150-5391. **Claims must be submitted by August 7, 2023.**
- **Opt Out:** If you do not want to be bound by the Settlement, you must exclude yourself by **July 22, 2023**.
- **Object:** You may submit an objection and explain why you do not like the Settlement. You may still participate in the Settlement by filing a Claim. **Objections must be submitted by July 22, 2023.**
- **Do Nothing:** If you do nothing, you will not receive money, but you will be legally bound by decisions of the Court and will give up any right to sue for the claims resolved by this Settlement.

For instructions on how to file a Claim, opt out, or object: visit [www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com](http://www.TaxForeclosureSettlement.com) or call 1-833-709-0093.

### **WHEN IS THE FAIRNESS HEARING?**

The Court will hold a hearing on **November 8, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.** at **174 Federal Building, 410 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007** to hear any objections, determine if the Settlement is fair, and to consider attorney fees of 20% of each Settlement Payment. The motion for attorney fees will be posted to the settlement website after it is filed. Class Members may attend the Hearing, but they aren’t required to.

*This is only a summary.* If you have questions or want more information about this lawsuit, the Settlement, and your rights under the Settlement, visit [TaxForeclosureSettlement.com](http://TaxForeclosureSettlement.com), call 1-833-709-0093, or write to: *Wayside Church v. Van Buren County*, c/o Kroll Settlement Administration, P.O. Box 225391, New York, NY 10150-5391.

**TaxForeclosureSettlement.com**

**1-833-709-0093**

## Intense Exercise Reduces Cancer Risk

High-intensity aerobic exercise, such as sprinting or rowing, makes the body less hospitable to cancerous tumors, according to research from Tel Aviv University. The results show that exerting yourself reprograms your internal organs to consume more glucose, the most important source of energy for cells. Then, if a cancer develops, it might not be able to compete for the glucose it would need to spread. In fact, people with an intense-workout habit are 73% less likely to develop highly

metastatic cancer (the kind that spreads far from the original tumor), compared to inactive people. “Intense” exercise means hitting roughly 80% to 85% of your maximum pulse rate, even if only for a minute or two at a time.

## Stop Counting Glasses of Water

We've all heard that we need to drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. That adds up to half a gallon, a reasonable goal, especially because you can get a lot of that water from food. But really, says a new study published in *Science*, your needs depend greatly

on who you are, what you do and where you live. To demonstrate this, researchers tracked the water passing through the bodies of 5,604 people in 23 countries. Daily averages mostly ranged from about 4 cups to 1½ gallons. Researchers looked at age, body size, physical activity levels, altitude and air temperature, and determined that different people need different amounts of water. Most people will stay hydrated if they drink water with each meal; before, during and after exercise; and any other time they feel thirsty. **R**





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# LAUGHTER

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"It's the landlord."

**The company** I worked for gave its long-term employees a beautiful grandfather clock when they retired. Maybe I didn't work there long enough or perhaps well enough; for two years after I retired, they just called me once a week

to tell me what time it was.

—Submitted by  
CHARLES E. LAKE  
Richardson, TX

**"I don't want to die** before my parents die, especially my mother, because I don't want

her to get the chance to pick out what I'm going to wear for eternity."

—JON STEWART,  
comedian

**No one knew Sue** had a dental implant until it came out in conversation.

—Submitted by  
LOUIS GARCIA, DDS  
San Antonio, TX

**A small-town rabbi,** curious why people eat pork, wants to try some,

Establish dominance in your marriage by watching all seven seasons of *Gilmore Girls* under your husband's Netflix profile.

—[@ANAPPLEHAT](#)

but there is nowhere he can go and not be seen. So he travels to a distant town, enters a restaurant and orders the first pork item on the menu. Twenty minutes later, the president of his congregation walks in just as his dish arrives: a whole roast pig with an apple in its mouth. The congregation president is shocked. But the rabbi quickly recovers.

“What a fancy place,” he says. “Just look at how they serve the apple I ordered.”

—TIMES-UNION (ALBANY, NY)

**What do you get** when you cross an elephant and a bumblebee?

A ton of honey.

—Submitted by  
SEBASTIAN VALE  
*Idyllwild, CA*

“**The bagpipe** occupies the strangest rung on the musical ladder: shaped like an octopus in plaid pants, sounding to some like a goose with its foot caught in an escalator, and played during history’s

most lopsided battles—by the losing side.”

—JOSH SHAFFER, *in the News & Observer, Raleigh, NC*

**For years, three** violin makers coexisted on the same block in Cremona, Italy. Then one day, the Amati family put a sign in their shop window saying: “We make the best violins in Italy.” The Guarneri family soon put a sign

in their window proclaiming: “We make the best violins in the world.” Finally, the Stradivarius family responded with this sign: “We make the best violins on the block.”

—FIDDLERSOFTHEGENESEEE.ORG

**GOT A FUNNY JOKE?**

*It could be worth \$\$\$.*

*For details, go to  
RD.COM/SUBMIT.*

## WHO YOU CALLIN' JINGLE BRAINS!

English used to be such a colorful language, with words and phrases that painted a portrait. Some of those gems are collected in *A Pocket Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, originally published in 1785 and re-released by Chronicle Books (edited by Steve Mockus).

◆ **Break-teeth words:**

Words that are difficult to pronounce

◆ **Church work:**

Any work that advances slowly

◆ **Corned:** Drunk

◆ **Duke of limbs:** A tall, awkward, ill-made fellow

◆ **Foreman of the jury:**

One who talks too much

◆ **Grumbletonian:**

A discontented person

◆ **Jingle brains:** A wild, thoughtless fellow

◆ **Lazy**

**man's load:**

Someone who carries more than he can safely hold so he doesn't have to make a second trip

◆ **Marriage**

**music:** Crying children

◆ **Milk the pi-**

**geon:** To attempt the impossible





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SNACK**  
IN  
**EVERY  
STATE**

*Sweet or salty? Yes, please!*



BY *Emily Goodman and Emily Tyra*

WITH *TASTE OF HOME*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *K. Synold*



**ALABAMA**

**Golden Flake fried pork skins**

Even rival Alabama and Auburn sports fans found common ground over their love of Golden Flake potato chips. Although Utz bought the brand in 2016, Golden Flake fried pork skins (also called chicharrones) are still sold under that beloved name and come in some of the same flavors, including crowd favorite Sweet Heat Barbecue.



**CALIFORNIA**

**Guacamole**

**ALASKA**

**Smoked salmon spread**

Folks in the Last Frontier take pride in their fresh-caught salmon, which many Alaskans whip into a spread with cream cheese, herbs, lemon juice and horseradish.

**ARIZONA**

**Cactus candy**

Made at the Cactus Candy Co. in Phoenix since 1942, these pink gumdrop squares are flavored with the bright juice of the prickly pear cactus, which tastes of watermelon, bubble gum and lemon.

**ARKANSAS**

**Cheese dip**

What some call queso is cheese dip here, and both fancy and no-frills versions of the magic melty cheese are embraced all over Arkansas, which hosts an annual World Cheese Dip Championship in Little Rock each fall.

**CALIFORNIA**

**Guacamole**

In a state practically synonymous with avocado, it's no wonder the guac is so good. Golden Staters mash up the green stuff with just a sprinkle of salt, a splash of citrus and perhaps a pinch of onion.

**COLORADO**

**Green chili fries**

Order chili cheese fries in Colorado, and your spuds will come not with the run-of-the-mill beef chili on top, but instead with chili verde—a rich and subtle pork stew made with green chile peppers—plus a mountain of melted cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese.

**CONNECTICUT**

**Apizza**

Slices of New Haven-style apizza (yes, *apizza*)—crispy, coal-fired and light on the cheese—abound at Connecticut's popular pizzerias, several of which use "Apizza" in their names. The term is an endearing imitation of *pizza* said with a thick Neapolitan accent, a direct contrast to the pie's signature thin crust.

**DELAWARE****Slippery dumplings**

Unlike traditional dumplings, these Delmarvalous ones are rectangular—and swimming in so much chicken gravy they'll slide all over your plate.

**FLORIDA****Chifles plantain chips**

The potassium-rich crisps first took off in Tampa in 1963 and now do so regularly aboard JetBlue. The airline known for its unlimited snacks started passing out Chifles (pronounced 'chief-less) to hungry passengers last year.

**HAWAII****Spam musubi**

A symphony of savory and sweet in a three-bite treat: pan-fried Spam (the canned lunch meat is beloved across the islands), teriyaki sauce and sticky white rice wrapped up with seaweed.

**IDAHO****Finger steaks**

Mylo Bybee created finger-length fried steaks and made them famous when he opened Mylo's Torch Lounge in Boise in the late 1950s. Most folks enjoy these breaded delicacies by the basketful with cocktail sauce.

**GEORGIA****Pecan pralines**

While the original French recipe calls for almonds, authentic Georgia pralines are made with pecans. The state ranks first in pecan production, and bakers pack the nuts into these caramelized clusters with the consistency of fudge.



## ILLINOIS

### Popcorn

Cracker Jack is beloved at ballparks, but Garrett popped corn is even more popular across Illinois—especially the caramel and cheddar mix.

## INDIANA

### Corn dog

Synonymous with summer nights in the Hoosier state, these battered-up, deep-fried hot dogs on sticks are also the namesake of Indiana's newest pre-professional baseball team: The Lake County Corn Dogs.



**ILLINOIS**  
Popcorn

## IOWA

### Walking taco

Skip the tortilla and shake your taco fillings into a bag of crushed Doritos or Fritos, and you've got a taco you can take with you. Whether this originated at the Iowa State Fair is up for debate. Hawkeyes' affinity for it is not.

## KANSAS

### Fried chicken

It falls off the bone at famed chicken houses Stroud's, Chicken Annie's and Chicken Mary's. Smart Kansans fry up enough to leave leftovers to munch on the next day.

## KENTUCKY

### Bourbon balls

In 1936, candymaker Ruth Booe overheard someone say that the two best tastes in the world were Kentucky bourbon and her chocolate. So she whipped up a melt-in-your-mouth combination of both. Customers even gave Booe their sugar rations during World War II so she could keep making batches of the boozy truffles.

## LOUISIANA

### Zapp's potato chips

"Zapp's are an iconic Louisiana snack food," says Laura Herbage, a Community Cook at our sister publication *Taste of Home*. Her favorite flavors: Spicy Crawtator (crawfish), Voodoo (vinegar, BBQ seasoning and jalapeno), and Cajun Dill (dill pickle) Gator-Tators.





## MAINE

### Whoopie pie

At least three other states lay claim to the invention of this cake/cookie hybrid. But Labadie's Bakery in Lewiston seems to have sold them first. Now the official state treat, a Maine whoopie pie is a hearty handful. The joy of discovering one in your lunchbox would make anyone exclaim, "Whoopie!"



## MARYLAND

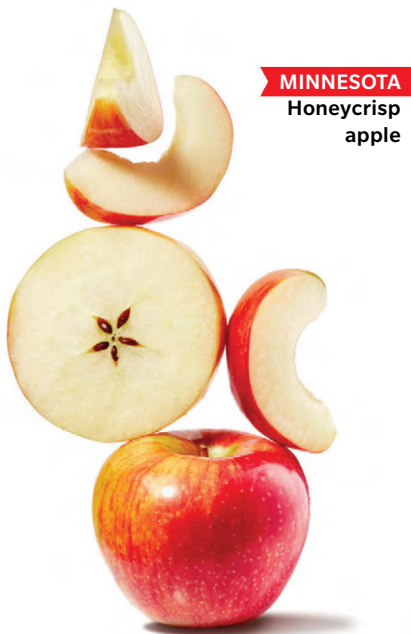
### Crab fries

These taters come topped with Old Bay seasoning, a sweet and spicy blend that goes on just about everything in Maryland: seafood, popcorn, even Bloody Marys. Some crabby consumers take crab fries a step further and add actual crabmeat and melted cheese to the mix.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Fried clams

More than 150 craveworthy clam shacks dot the Bay State. Top favorite Woodman's of Essex claims to be the birthplace of fried clams, having made the first briny batch back in 1916.



**MINNESOTA**  
Honeycrisp  
apple

## MICHIGAN

### Better Made potato chips

In 1930, the Detroit company's co-founders set out to make a better chip, hence the name. Of Motor City's more than 20 original potato chip companies, only Better Made is still around.

## MINNESOTA

### Honeycrisp apple

Horticulturists at the University of Minnesota planted the original Honeycrisp seedling—a cross of Macoun and Honeygold apples—in 1962, with hopes of developing a winter-hardy tree that bore juicier, crunchier fruit. Consumers took their first bites of the lip-smacking, explosively crisp apple in 1992 and were instantly smitten.

## MISSISSIPPI

### Cheese straws

Before they had fridges, southern cooks would knead cheese into their leftover biscuit dough and bake it in strips. Mississippians kept churning out the crisps after kitchen technology caught up, including the Yerber family of Yazoo City, who founded the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory.

## MONTANA

### Jerky

Ranchers and outdoor-adventure seekers in Big Sky Country have long counted on seasoned strips of cured beef, elk or bison meat as the ultimate pack-along energy boost.



## MISSOURI

### Toasted ravioli

Strictly speaking, these pillows of pasta are fried, not toasted. But menus in Missouri were never the same after a not-entirely-sober St. Louis chef dropped ravioli in the fryer and thought to salvage them with a sprinkle of Parmesan.



## NEBRASKA

### Runza

These stuffed bread bundles have German-Russian roots. Brimming with seasoned ground beef, cabbage and onions, the savory parcels are so beloved in Nebraska that we've named them the state sandwich and signature dish in previous years. The runza's snack status was a shoo-in, too, considering that many fans call them the original Hot Pockets.

## NEVADA

### Shrimp cocktail

Landlocked, schmandlocked: Nevada goes through 60,000 pounds of shrimp

a day, much of which hangs from the edges of martini glasses full of cocktail sauce. The Golden Gate Casino in Las Vegas served the first glassful in 1959 for only 50 cents. These days you'll find them all over the state—just not for that price.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Port City pretzels

These popular pretzels come in four flavors: Cinnamon Sugar, Feisty Hot!, Tangy Mustard 'N Honey and Tasty Ranch Dill. The company, based in Portsmouth, is women-owned, and the majority of its employees are disabled.

## NEW JERSEY

### Saltwater taffy

Boardwalk strollers know that stretching the colorful stripes of Atlantic City's first (and most popular) souvenir is almost as fun as eating it. Almost.

## NEW MEXICO

### Biscochitos

Stacks of these fragrant shortbread cookies are holiday favorites, but they pair perfectly with a warm beverage any time of year. The lard in the recipe gives them a flaky texture, while notes of anise and cinnamon (plus a nip of rum or brandy) constitute their signature flavor.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Krispy Kreme doughnuts

Tar Heels take a detour when they see the hot light come on, indicating that a fresh batch of original glazed Krispy Kreme doughnuts is ready to devour.

## NORTH DAKOTA

### Chippers

For those who can't decide between sweet and savory, North Dakota has just the thing: potato chips covered in chocolate. Carol Widman's Candy Co., which claims to have invented the treat, uses Red River Valley chips, another state staple.



## NEW YORK

### Buffalo wings

Though state officials designated yogurt as the official snack, New Yorkers know that Buffalo wings (or just "wings" if you're in Buffalo) are far more fun. Most come with blue cheese dressing and celery sticks on the side, but the Buffalo sauce steals the show. It's a heavenly combination of hot sauce and more butter than any aficionado would care to admit.



**OHIO****Buckeyes**

This hand-rolled ball of peanut butter and chocolate is at every holiday gathering, church potluck or tailgate, says *Taste of Home* Community Cook Kristyne McDougle Walter. Leaving a small portion of the peanut butter balls uncoated when you dip them in smooth chocolate makes them resemble their namesake nut all the more.

**OKLAHOMA****Fried okra**

The top snack for Sooners gets fried in bacon drippings and Crisco, but an oven-baked version that uses canola oil cooking spray instead is A-OK with the American Heart Association.

**OREGON****Hazelnuts**

A handful of hazelnuts tastes great in a trail mix. And since 99% of the country's commercial crop comes from Oregon, there are plenty of handfuls here to go around. But hazelnuts are even more heavenly when churned into ice cream. Portland-based Salt and Straw and the nationally known Tillamook brands offer flavors with Oregon-grown hazelnuts.

**PENNSYLVANIA****Soft pretzels**

Pennsylvanians prefer their pretzels big, soft and topped with mustard. "A true Pennsylvania Dutch snack," says *Taste of Home* Community Cook Susan

Bickta, though today they're mostly made in Philadelphia, where there's a vendor on virtually every corner and the knots look more like figure eights.

**NEW JERSEY**  
Saltwater taffy**RHODE ISLAND****Calamari**

Outside the Ocean State, calamari is commonly confused with octopus, but not by anyone who speaks Italian. (*Calamaro* means squid.) Here, calamari comes deep-fried, sauteed in garlic butter and paired with hot peppers.

**SOUTH CAROLINA****Boiled peanuts**

The Palmetto State's peanuts are unlike any other, and not even all that nutty. When boiled, they become beanlike in taste and texture. Southerners swear by them.

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

### **Chislic**

Cubes of fried lamb or mutton come hot on a skewer or toothpick and sprinkled with garlic salt and hot sauce, with saltine crackers on the side. The state's official "nosh" as of 2018, chislic has sizzled since long before South Dakota became a state.

## **TENNESSEE**

### **Goo Goo Cluster**

Some say the "Goo" in Goo Goo Clusters (chocolate candy filled with

marshmallow nougat, caramel and roasted peanuts) is an acronym for Nashville's Grand Ole Opry. In fact, it was baby talk by the son of inventor Howell Campbell Sr. that gave life to its name, as well as its slogan: "It's so good, people will ask for it from birth."

## **TEXAS**

### **Tortilla chips and salsa**

The power couple just celebrated 20 years of being the official state snack of Texas. Whether hot with jalapenos or tangy with tomatillos, salsa flows as freely here as baskets of warm chips to the table.

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

### **Pepperoni roll**



## **UTAH**

### **Fries with fry sauce**

Made famous by local burger chain Arctic Circle, this zippy pink dip, a mix of mayo and ketchup, sometimes with spices, garlic and even pickle brine, is ubiquitous with fries across Utah.

## **VERMONT**

### **Maple sugar on snow**

Drizzle hot maple syrup over freshly crushed ice (using snow is the old-school way), then twirl the sticky syrup onto a wooden pop stick. Serve it Vermont-style with a plump cake doughnut and a pickle on the side: Locals say the sour balances the sweet.

## **VIRGINIA**

### **Ham biscuits**

Whether it's a cocktail-hour hors d'oeuvre or a nibble from the country



## WISCONSIN

### Fried cheese curds

Also called squeaky cheese (because that's the noise they make as you eat them), cheese curds transform into crispy, gooey decadence when beer-battered and deep-fried. *Taste of Home* editor Lara Eucalano says these golden nuggets, often dunked in ranch, are Wisconsinites' go-to at a brewery or while rooting for the Brewers or Bucks.



store, these hand-sized ham sandwiches (with a dab of mustard, if you'd like) are a Commonwealth craving.

## WASHINGTON

### Rainier cherries

A cross between the Bing and Van varieties, Rainier cherries have some of the highest sugar levels of sweet cherries. If you miss their short growing season, you can always snag a bag of dried ones from Chukar Cherries.


## WEST VIRGINIA

### Pepperoni rolls

What began as a practical, easily packable coal miners' lunch has become an anytime Mountain State munch: pepperoni baked into bread dough.

## WYOMING

### Sunflower seeds

Sunflowers flourish in Wyoming, and their seeds are fun to spit while you ride through the Cowboy State. 

# IT'S A WIN-WIN

Celebrating the personal victories of  
other people can bring on more of our own

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BY *Juli Fraga*

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

**W**hen Eugenie George first heard that her friend passed a financial counseling exam, her heart sank. She'd failed the same test weeks earlier, and she needed the credential to advance her career.

"My inner child got upset," recalls George, a financial writer and educator from Philadelphia. But then, instead of stewing, she called her friend. "I told her I failed and admitted I was jealous," she says. George knew that being upfront would defuse her envy, but she was surprised when it shifted

her attitude so she could share her friend's happiness and experience her own, in turn.

"I congratulated her and told her she inspired me," she says.

Finding pleasure in another person's good fortune is what social scientists call *freudenfreude*, a term (inspired by *freude*, the German word for "joy") that describes the bliss we feel when someone else succeeds, even if it doesn't directly involve us.

*Freudenfreude* is like social glue, says Catherine Chambliss, a professor of psychology at Ursinus College





in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. It makes relationships “more intimate and enjoyable.”

Erika Weisz, an empathy researcher at Harvard University, says the feeling closely resembles positive empathy—the ability to experience someone else’s positive emotions. A study in 2021 examined positive empathy’s role in daily life and found that it propelled kind acts, such as helping others. Sharing in someone else’s joy

***IT'S LIKE SHARING DESSERT:  
BOTH PARTIES ENJOY THE  
SWEETNESS OF THE MOMENT.***



can also foster resilience, improve life satisfaction and help people cooperate during a conflict.

While the benefits of freudenfreude are plentiful, it doesn’t always come easily. In zero-sum situations, your loss might really sting, making freudenfreude feel out of reach. If you were raised in a family that paired winning with self-worth, Chambliss says, you might misread someone else’s victory as your own shortcoming. And factors such as mental health and overall well-being can also affect your ability to participate in someone else’s joy. Still, indulging in freudenfreude is worthwhile—and there are ways to encourage the feeling.

**TO BETTER UNDERSTAND** freudenfreude, it can be helpful to demystify its better-known counterpart, schadenfreude: the pleasure we feel when witnessing someone’s misfortune.

In a 2012 study, Chambliss and her colleagues examined instances of freudenfreude and schadenfreude among college students, some of whom were experiencing mild depression. Freudenfreude scores were higher, and schadenfreude scores were lower, among those who were not depressed. The mildly depressed college students, however, had a harder time adopting a joy-sharing mindset.

“When you’re feeling down, it’s natural to puncture positive news with negativity,” Chambliss explains.

Even when people aren’t experiencing mental distress, moments of schadenfreude—when a movie villain gets his comeuppance, for example, or a nemesis faces scrutiny—can be comforting and serve a purpose.

“Schadenfreude is one way we try to cope with jealousy and vulnerability,” says clinical psychologist Emily Anhalt, co-founder of Coa, a mental health app. It’s an “ego protector” that shields people from pain and reinforces social bonds within a group, as when joy erupts among sports fans after their rival team faces a humiliating loss.

Indulging in too much schadenfreude, however, can backfire. One study found that schadenfreude on



social media can ice out empathy, making people less compassionate toward those who differ from them. Other research suggests that delighting in the mishaps of others can actually lower people's self-esteem, especially when they compare themselves to high achievers.

### **Is it possible to experience more freudenfreude?**

"Empathy isn't always an automatic reflex," Weisz says. "It's often a motivated process." To help people strengthen joy-sharing muscles, Chambliss and her colleagues developed a program called Freudenfreude Enhancement Training (FET),

featuring two exercises. They found that depressed college students who used the practices for two weeks had an easier time expressing freudenfreude, which enhanced their relationships and improved their mood.

If you're interested in enjoying more freudenfreude, try the tips below, culled from FET and advice from other expert sources.

### **Show active interest in someone else's happiness.**

One way to summon good feelings for others is to ask questions. Chambliss and her colleagues call this practice *shoy*, or sharing joy. To start, invite the bearer of good news to discuss the



experience. Even if your heart isn't in it, research conducted by Sonja Lyubomirsky, a psychology professor at the University of California Riverside who studies happiness, suggests that happiness can flourish when you make a heartfelt effort to engage with a positive activity. So when you speak with your friend, make eye contact and listen attentively. This should motivate you to keep going and make you feel as if your efforts will pay off with freudenfreude.

### **View individual success as a communal effort.**

"When we feel happy for others, their joy becomes our joy," says psychologist

Marisa Franco, author of the book *Platonic: How the Science of Attachment Can Help You Make—and Keep—Friends*. To that end, freudenfreude encourages us to look at success as a community achievement.

"No one gets to the top alone, and when we elevate others, we're often carried up with them," Anhalt says.

Jean Grae, an artist and self-identified "multipotentialite," supports friends and colleagues by adopting this mindset. When someone gets a new opportunity or reaches a milestone, she makes sure to celebrate. Grae says she's especially moved when anyone considered "other" succeeds. "It's truly

inspirational," she says, "because it lifts us all up and makes us shine."

### **Share credit for your successes with others.**

Because emotions are contagious, showing appreciation can increase freudenfreude for the gratitude giver and the recipient. In this way, you can think of freudenfreude as something you can spread when you're experiencing personal joy.

To do this, try an FET exercise called bragitude, which involves expressing gratitude when someone else's success or support leads to your own. Start by sharing your win, then tell the other person how you appreciate the help. Be specific. If your friend's accountant advised you to squirrel away more money, for instance, you might say: "My savings are growing. Thanks for recommending your great accountant."

Practicing bragitude is like sharing dessert: Both parties enjoy the sweetness of the moment, which enhances freudenfreude for them both.

### **Turn into a joy spectator.**

"Too often, we think of joy passively," Franco says. "We see it as something that comes to us, instead of something we can generate." But you don't need to wait for someone else's good news to exercise freudenfreude.

Cultivate joy by inviting others to share their victories. You might ask: "What was the bright spot of your day?" or "I could use some good news. What's the best thing that happened to you this week?" Asking about other people's wins turns you into a joy spectator, giving you a chance to witness them at their best.

Experiencing more freudenfreude doesn't mean you'll never root against a villain again, but being able to reach for happiness is inherently beneficial.

"As delicious as it is to delight in our enemy's defeats," Chambliss says, "celebrating our friends' successes—big and small—helps us all triumph in the end." **R**

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## **Diverging Digits**

Counting on our fingers is such a natural thing to do that you might assume it's the same everywhere. But while you probably start counting with your index finger and end with your thumb, in many parts of Europe, they start counting with the thumb and finish with the pinkie. In Iran, they begin with the pinkie, whereas in Japan they start with the fingers extended in an open palm, drawing them in to make a closed fist.

BBC.COM



NATIONAL INTEREST

# IT HAPPENED

An illustration in a stylized, painterly style. A large, dark blue foot wearing a matching shoe is stepping down from the top of the frame onto a city street. The street is depicted with orange and red tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the background, there are tall buildings with many windows, some of which are lit up. Several small figures of people are visible on the street, some walking and some standing. The overall mood is one of a sudden, impactful event in a busy urban environment.

# SO FAST!

BY *Tamara Dean*  
FROM THE GUARDIAN

**I WAS RUN OVER BY AN SUV. HERE'S WHAT IT FELT LIKE.**



## I HEARD A WOMAN SAY, “SHE WAS HIT BY A CAR.”

I thought: *It sounds as if she's talking about me, but that can't be right.*

I couldn't see. I didn't know where I was. But I wasn't worried. I sensed that I was surrounded by purposeful strangers and that my partner, David, was by my side. Abruptly, I grunted and

twisted. A nurse thrust a bedpan toward me. I dismissed the bedpan, leaned right and vomited blood over the bedrail. Still, I wasn't alarmed or in pain—yet. I was only perplexed.

The last thing I remembered was leaving a grocery store and thinking,





*These bags are heavy.* That had been three hours earlier. Given the police report, doctors' notes and conversations I've had with eyewitnesses since that time in the hospital, I've gathered some of the details from the time I lost.

On a Thursday afternoon back in May 2021, I was walking across University Avenue in Minneapolis when a black SUV turned left from an intersecting street.

"He was going fast," an eyewitness told me later. "He ran you right over."

I asked people, even in the hospital, when my mind was muddled: Did I have right of way? Yes. Was I wearing headphones? No one knew. Why did the driver hit me? No one could say. And the SUV driver couldn't be questioned because, after stopping briefly, he had fled.

My left eye was purple, swollen closed and bulging. My skull was fractured in three places. A long, ragged gash that started at my left temple was stapled closed. I was in a neck brace

because of a cracked vertebra. My right foot was sprained and my left shoulder was broken and torn. Bruises covered my limbs and face. But most concerning were my traumatic brain injuries, which doctors initially called severe. On my first night in the ICU, my brain was still swelling.

**PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES** on American streets have surged in the past decade. In 2021, 7,485 pedestrians were killed by vehicles. That's an increase of more than 65% since 2011. Even during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, when fewer people were driving, more pedestrians were hit and more died as a result. Researchers speculate that drivers took advantage of empty streets and flouted traffic rules.

Another factor is the increasing popularity of SUVs, pickups and vans, collectively known as light truck vehicles (LTVs). These kinds of vehicles are up to three times more dangerous than passenger cars in collisions with pedestrians. Part of the increased danger comes from their taller front ends, which strike above the navel—a human body's center of gravity—increasing the odds of pitching pedestrians forward and driving over them. Another factor is the positioning and thickness of the pillars that frame the windshield, which reduce visibility and impair the driver's view of pedestrians, especially when turning. Finally, these vehicles are more lethal because of their overwhelming mass.

As the sales and popularity of LTVs grow, so do the pedestrian fatalities they cause. But in any accident, however distracted or inexperienced the driver, and whatever size the vehicle, speed is the critical factor. On average, 10% of pedestrians hit by vehicles traveling 23 mph will die, but 90% of those hit at 58 mph will.

Coincidentally, in the spring when I was hit, researchers from the University of Minnesota's HumanFIRST (Human Factors Interdisciplinary Research in Safety and Transportation) Laboratory, which focuses on driver behavior, initiated a pedestrian safety study. Twice a week, at 16 intersections in Minneapolis

## ***I REMEMBER HEARING A WOMAN SAY, "I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WASH THE BLOOD OUT OF HER HAIR."***

and 16 in its twin city, St. Paul, subjects stepped into crosswalks while researchers standing nearby marked whether a car stopped for them. As the study progressed, the city posted signs on main thoroughfares that identified the percentage of drivers who had stopped for pedestrians that week.

Nichole Morris, director of the HumanFIRST lab, told me that publicizing the study's results in real time was an attempt to influence drivers to be safer. Traffic behavior is hyperlocal—it

varies from city to city, even from neighborhood to neighborhood—and contagious. Knowing that most of your fellow motorists are stopping at pedestrian crossings makes you more likely to do the same.

Early on, only 18% of Minneapolis drivers stopped for Morris's researchers to cross. She didn't post that statistic. It wouldn't have had a positive impact on people's driving. "Because all we're saying is: 'The vast majority of your neighbors are not stopping for pedestrians. If you don't, you're like everybody else.'"

In St. Paul, however, 44% of drivers stopped for pedestrians when the study began. The difference between the cities' rates could be explained by inadequate pedestrian crossing markings in Minneapolis, where many crosswalks lack painted lines or signs; greater awareness among St. Paul drivers that stopping at crossings is mandatory; and better police enforcement of pedestrian crossing laws in St. Paul.

Not one of the HumanFIRST investigators was hit while testing drivers, although some had close calls. And it wasn't unusual for motorists to shout profanities.

Like the internet, says Morris, the road "affords a lot of anonymity and allows people to do things that they would never do in a one-on-one interaction. It's scary, because people are terrible on the internet when they have that anonymity. Yet we have somebody in a 2-ton vehicle with the power to



## BUILD TOWNS FOR PEOPLE, *NOT* CARS

Most cities and towns are built for cars, not pedestrians. This leads to car vs. pedestrian collisions, a battle the ambler almost always loses. According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials and [smatstraffic.com](http://smatstraffic.com), traffic-calming measures would reduce such accidents. Some they suggest:

Whether in town or in residential areas, provide sidewalks (1). “Any town that doesn’t have sidewalks,” anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “doesn’t love

its children.” And while you’re at it, plant trees (2) to provide walkers a living fence to protect them from traffic.

Replace traffic lights with roundabouts (3), which slow traffic while keeping it moving. They also reduce traffic accidents by 90% since cars don’t have to cross busy intersections.

Force drivers to slow down by narrowing the lanes (4) and adding speed humps, rounded, raised areas of pavement (5), and chicanes, which are sidewalk extensions

that create a zigzag pattern on the road (6).

Make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street with bulb-outs, or horizontal extensions of the sidewalk (7), and median strips, the small islands that separate opposing lanes of traffic (8), both of which reduce the time pedestrians need to cross the street.

Lower the speed limit (9) in town from 30 mph to 25 mph. A person is 70% more likely to die if they’re struck by a vehicle traveling at 30 mph compared to 25 mph.

harm others. There's something like toxic individualism that makes drivers think, *This road is mine and it's for me, and you need to stay the hell out of the way.*"

**I REMEMBER** only odd moments from my first two days in the hospital—trying to pry off the neck brace, hearing a woman say, "I'm going to wash the blood out of her hair," and having the tube that was suctioning blood from my stomach pulled out through my nose. I don't remember feeling pain then. Certainly, I wasn't aware that I might have become a pedestrian fatality. But hospital staff must have recognized that possibility. The CT scans of my brain revealed, among other injuries, an acute subdural hematoma. Between 50% and 90% of these hematomas are fatal, and only 20% to 30% of patients

## **TWO DOZEN PEOPLE HAD STOPPED TO HELP ME. AS A GROUP, THEY ASSUMED I WOULDN'T SURVIVE.**

who survive them recover full or partial brain function. In my mind, though, I was fine.

When the nurse called David on the second morning after I was hit and held the phone to my head, I told him I was ready to come home. I insisted that we



would take our planned trip to visit family in Michigan the following week. This episode later helped me realize how readily the brain fools itself.

Brain injuries are known for changing personalities, usually in the direction of rage, anxiety and volatility. Mine had the opposite effect. After five nights in the hospital, I came home dreamy, peaceful and accepting. Why, I wondered, had I ever worried about anything? This wasn't painkiller-induced bliss. Along with blurred vision and vertigo, the feeling lasted for months.

In this state of mind, I felt no bitterness toward the driver who hit me. I was curious about him. Eyewitnesses said he was short and very agitated. He drove off when I was still on the pavement, blood pooling under my head. Police never found him because the



license plate number wasn't registered to the vehicle he was driving.

Secretly, I began referring to the driver as "my guy." I might never know him, but we would always be connected by the moment his vehicle and my body collided. I wondered how it was affecting him.

When I called eyewitnesses to thank them, they told me how they were affected. One said that after hearing my voicemail message, she ran into the lobby of the bank where she worked and shouted: "That girl who got hit is alive!" Another repeated breathlessly that his heart had soared when he listened to my message. He was the one who had called 911 and advised the men kneeling beside me that if I was still breathing and had a pulse (I was and I did), they shouldn't perform CPR.

He told me that the bystander effect, in which people pass an accident and refuse to get involved, hadn't proved true in my case. Two dozen people had stopped to help. As a group, they assumed I wouldn't survive. Some told me they had searched the news for my name under "pedestrian fatalities." Maybe the driver had done the same. I imagined the accident would weigh on him.

Studies show that the more fault drivers believe they bear for hitting a pedestrian, the more likely they are to leave the scene. Younger male drivers are more apt to flee. So are those who are intoxicated or lack a valid license. Other factors include the age of the victim (children and elderly people are less likely to be abandoned), time of day (more drivers flee in darkness), and

the number of people who witness the accident (drivers might stay if several others saw it happen). In the U.S., drivers flee fatal crashes with pedestrians about 20% of the time, a rate at least three times higher than in other countries where such statistics are kept.

**“WHAT MONTH IS IT? Where are you? Who’s the president?”** In the hospital, I was quizzed several times a day. Sometimes I got things wrong. I said it was April. I said I was at a different hospital. I was asked to draw clocks, solve mazes, count by sevens, list animals, fruits or all the words I could think of that begin with the letter P. On the fourth day, the neurosurgeon called my progress good.

“In a few months,” he told David, “this will be nothing but a bad memory.”

Weeks after my release, nurses who had treated me in the ICU were amazed by how healthy I looked. One squealed:

“I didn’t recognize you! I’m the one who washed the blood out of your hair.”

Even so, I had what the doctors called “deficits.” Nerve and inner-ear damage had disrupted my sense of balance. I had to perform nauseating physical therapy exercises such as standing one-legged on pillows and shaking my head while focusing on a straw I held in front of me. I was exhausted. I forgot things. I couldn’t concentrate, couldn’t absorb complex ideas. My eyes wouldn’t focus. Combined, my physical and cognitive impairments meant I couldn’t drive.

Truthfully, I had no interest in driving. I also became a nervous passenger. When David and I drove to Michigan in the summer after I was hit, I clutched the passenger door handle, winced and yelped through Chicago traffic.

Eventually, long after doctors gave me the OK, I did return to driving, though



In 2020, 6,519 pedestrians were killed in the U.S. Speeding drivers were a major cause. While Florida boasts the least number of fatalities caused by lead-foots, these states had the most:

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. South Carolina | 6. New Mexico |
| 2. Colorado       | 7. Montana    |
| 3. Hawaii         | 8. Illinois   |
| 4. Missouri       | 9. Texas      |
| 5. Pennsylvania   | 10. New York  |

—Forbes Advisor

as a changed driver. Before the crash, I had too often broken speed limits. After the crash, I was attentive and anxious behind the wheel. Part of my anxiety was because of my worsened vision and persistent shoulder pain. I became a less confident driver. I was more afraid of hitting someone than being hit again. Morris, too, finds driving stressful. Witnessing life-threatening behavior every day, she says, “wears on my soul.”

**THE HUMANFIRST** researchers who stepped into crosswalks had tactics for getting drivers to give way: Stay aware of your surroundings; cross only at designated crossings; step into the crosswalk assertively to make your intentions clear; wear bright-colored clothing when walking at night; make eye contact with drivers. Morris adds that she puts her arm out straight, like a crossing guard, rather than waving at cars to get them to stop.

“I’m very aggressive in letting people know that I’m trying to cross and that I want them to stop,” Morris says, “and I get really high compliance.”

I resumed walking to libraries, cafes and grocery stores. I crossed busy streets using all the recommended tactics. I didn’t listen to music or podcasts. I tried to lock eyes with everyone behind a steering wheel. I stepped boldly into crosswalks. I held my arm out like a crossing guard to alert drivers to stop if I thought they might not.

Then one afternoon, David and I were walking home after buying coffees

to go. Standing in a raised median between four lanes of traffic, we scanned for cars, then stepped confidently into the street. Suddenly, a silver SUV was upon us, speeding through the end of a left turn. It blazed past, its driver’s side door missing the cup in my hands by inches. I screamed. But the driver, a young woman who appeared to be singing, didn’t see or hear me. David and I clutched each other and

**“THE EASIEST WAY  
TO REDUCE TRAFFIC  
DEATHS IS TO MAKE IT  
IMPOSSIBLE TO SPEED.”**

hurried to the opposite curb. I was shaking, hyperventilating. This time, I was infuriated. But the silver SUV was gone before I thought to record its license plate number. The driver would never know that she had almost run over two people.

That evening, lying under a blanket on the couch, I felt weighted with defeat. I thought, *There’s nothing pedestrians can do to ensure their safety on streets.* Walkers are at the mercy of motorists. The only way to keep pedestrians safe is to drive more safely and design safer streets.

I asked Morris how she would design a street for optimal safety. On a notepad, she sketched an intersection. She drew

bump-outs, or bulges that extend curbs where pedestrians cross to make people more visible to motorists, and medians between directions of traffic to create pedestrian refuges. She drew crosswalk markings and “stop for pedestrians” signs. She described how road “diets”—for example, reducing four lanes to two—could help by simply offering fewer opportunities for collisions. (See graphic on page 73.)

In the Twin Cities pedestrian safety study, she and her team had added signs, markings and temporary bump-outs to crosswalks. By the study’s conclusion in October 2021, Minneapolis drivers had stopped for pedestrians 48% of the time and St. Paul drivers 68%—increases she found encouraging.

Turning back to her notepad, Morris drew the path of a careless driver circumventing her safeguards to hit a pedestrian. She said: “If I could snap

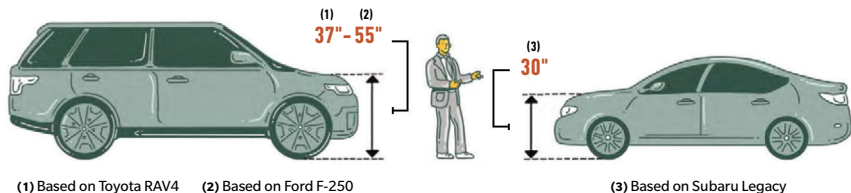
my fingers and make anything happen, my first wish wouldn’t be to do anything with the roads. It would be to do something to the vehicles.” Technology that can sense and stop drunk drivers would make a big difference. But, she added, “The quickest, easiest thing we could do to reduce traffic deaths of all types is to make it physically impossible to speed.”

The European Union is moving in that direction. In July 2022, a feature called intelligent speed assistance (ISA) became mandatory for all auto models introduced to the EU market, and it will be required in new vehicles sold in Europe beginning in 2024. ISA isn’t foolproof. It allows drivers



## SUVs VS. PEDESTRIANS

*USA Today* reports that SUVs, pickups and minivans are more likely than sedans to hit pedestrians because these “light-truck” vehicles have wide pillars to reinforce the roofs, resulting in blind spots. Second, the hoods are higher off the ground, obstructing the driver’s view. And when a light truck hits a pedestrian, not only can its heft cause catastrophic injury, the height of the hood pitches the pedestrian forward—not up—where they are more likely to be run over.



KATHLEEN FU (LEFT)





to choose the warnings and speed limitations they'll experience. Automatic deceleration is optional. Still, ISA can influence drivers to be safer. And as Morris noted, it's highly unlikely that Americans will ever allow the government to prevent them from speeding.

**MOST LIKELY**, my driver was going less than 25 mph when he hit me. Otherwise, I would have been more severely injured or killed. Pedestrian fatality rates rise quickly for vehicles traveling over 30 mph.

I could find out how fast he was driving. A traffic camera recorded the collision. I could file a request to get a copy of the video. Watching it, I would see how we collided, how my groceries scattered, and whether I held out my

right hand as if to stop his vehicle, if that's why the ends of my fingernails were torn off, the back of my hand purple, the nerves around my knuckles deadened. The video would show me hitting the pavement, the SUV passing over me, bystanders turning to help, the driver stepping out of his car. Then, at least from a distance, I could finally meet the man I think about every day because of my shoulder pain, nerve damage, blurred vision and dizzy spells.

But I won't request the video. I have to leave some questions unanswered. I'm grateful not only for my brain's remarkable healing, but also for keeping my lost hours lost to me, for sparing me the full terror of my experience. **R**

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Always read *Reader's Digest!*

# Words of ADVICE

BY *Reader's Digest* Readers

## Clear a Path to the Door

My grandmother told me to “clear a path to the door every night before bed.” It makes for a smooth escape if there’s ever a fire in the night. But “clearing a path to the door” came, in time, to mean so much more. I learned I’ll be much happier tomorrow if I tidy all the clutter tonight. And it’s a good habit when getting involved with new people or activities. Trying mountain climbing or whitewater rafting becomes possible when I know I have a safe exit plan if it becomes too risky. That “clear path” is always a wise plan.

—GLYNDA HAMILTON *Vancouver, WA*

## Bring the Ball

My family moved to a small Virginia football town when I was in fourth grade. I loved football, but I had three strikes against me. I was the “new kid,”

from “up north” and—gasp—“a girl.” When I came home from school dejected that nobody would let me play, my mother said, “If you want to play football, you bring the ball.” By next season, if you wanted me on your team, you had to take my little brothers too. I never forgot the lesson. I’ve been “bringing the ball” ever since.

—JACQUELINE TRAVERS  
*Woodbine, MD*

## Know When to Go

I was on a four-day float trip down the Colorado River with a large, fun group. At the end, when I said I didn’t want to get off the river, another woman said to me, “It’s always best to leave while you’re still having fun.” It changed my outlook that day, and I’ve applied it to many other circumstances since.

—MAREN HIRSCHI *Cedar City, UT*

### Silence Your Inner Critic

While learning to paint landscapes with my boyfriend, I complained that I couldn't turn off the critic in my head. He told me, "When that happens to me, I say 'Be quiet, I'm painting here. I'll talk to you later.'" It worked for me that day, and later in graduate school while I was writing papers. His advice made me a more confident person.

—KATE JOHNSON *Conway, SC*

### Curb Your Appetite

"Don't have a champagne appetite on a beer pocketbook." That was my dad's mantra. He had been well-to-do early in life but hadn't changed his spending when he wasn't any longer. Fortunately, I have a beer appetite.

—MIKE FLEISCHMANN *Fort Collins, CO*

### Don't Impress, Express

My choir was stressed before a big competition. Right before our turn to sing, our choir director said, "We are not here to impress; we are here to express." It made all the difference.

—SHAWN MECHAM *Sandy, UT*

### Create a Home That You Love

"Fill your home with things you love, not things you think other people will love." That was something my mom always said. My home is full of flowers, rabbits, birds, nature, lovely fabrics and elegant glassware. Others tell me it's beautiful,



comfortable and welcoming. But everything in it brings me joy, and that's what matters.

—BECCA BRASFIELD *Burns, TN*

### Give a Gift to a Giver

A co-worker gave me a Christmas gift and I felt bad because I hadn't gotten one for her. She said, "Every time you receive a gift, you allow someone to be a giver." She made me feel so good and I never forgot that.

—CATHY BECK *Mesa, AZ*



### Let It Be the Squirrel

I was 16 with a new driver's license. I asked my dad if I could take the car for the afternoon. As he handed me the keys, he said, "Angela, if it's you or the squirrel, let it be the squirrel." I realized my dad knew how softhearted I was. I thought I'd hidden it well.

—ANGELA CONTI *Turners Falls, MA*

### See the Work

My mom was a woman of few words, but one phrase of hers that stuck was "see the work," which meant see what needs to be done without being told. If toys are left out, put them away. If dishes are being washed, grab a towel and dry. If litter is strewn along the road, pick it up as you walk. I've shared "see the work" with countless students, and our halls are always clean and the chairs stacked by the end of the day. Simple advice from a quiet woman.

—WENDY BAURES *Fountain City, WI*

## Don't Be Too Quick to Judge

My Mississippian mother used to tell me, “You can’t tell the depth of the well by the length of the handle on the pump.” I think this must be the Mississippi version of “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

—SARAH JANE GARNER *Tuscaloosa, AL*

## Keep It Sweet

My dad used to say, “Make your words soft and sweet. Some day you might have to eat them.” Thirty years later, I still hear his voice encouraging me to be patient.

—PATTIE WEINER  
*West Springfield, MA*



## Keep Moving Forward

Several years ago, I heard actress Doris Roberts give a speech in which she said, “Look back, but don’t stare.” She had many words of wisdom that night, but that stuck with me and never left.

—LIZ HORMEL *Fremont, CA*

## Make Time to Do It Right

“If you don’t have time to do it right the first time, how are you going to

find time to do it over?” Advice from my 91-year-old dad that I’ve shared with my daughter and granddaughter.

—SHARON PRICE *Mobile, AL*

## Habits Are like Cobwebs

Succinct advice from my grandfather: “Habits are like cobwebs that turn into cables. They can hold you up or hold you down.”

—KIRK GOEBEL *Albuquerque, NM*

## Get Your Spouse a Drink

On planes, they always tell you to secure your own oxygen mask before helping others. That advice doesn’t always apply to marriage. Years ago, I heard a wedding officiant say, “When you’re thirsty, get your spouse a drink.” I took it to heart and make every effort to acknowledge my husband’s needs. After 20 years of marriage, he’s gotten even better at it than I have. Marriage isn’t 50-50. When both partners give 100 percent and put one another’s needs before their own, the outcome is far greater than happily ever after.

—S.H. *American Fork, UT* 

## SHARE YOUR HOLIDAY MIRACLE STORY

The magic of the holiday season is undeniable, whatever and however you choose to celebrate. So it’s no surprise that so many incredible things occur during that time of year. If you’ve experienced something special around the holidays that seemed nothing short of divine intervention, please see terms and share your story at [rd.com/holidaymiracle](https://rd.com/holidaymiracle). We’re looking for miracle stories for our December 2023/January 2024 issue of *Reader’s Digest*, and yours might provide just the inspiration we need.





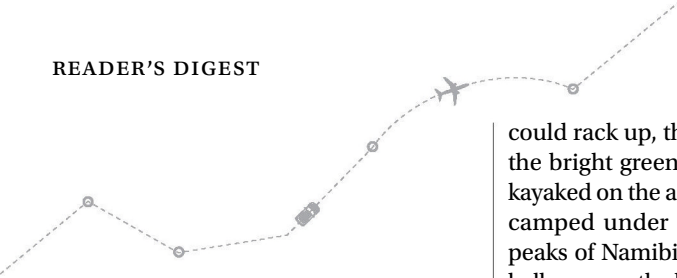
# VISION QUEST

A rare genetic condition is robbing these kids of their eyesight. So their family traveled around the world to give them a chance to see it all.

BY *Lisa Fitterman*



Mia, Colin, Léo and  
Laurent Pelletier, in  
Damaraland, Namibia



**H**is mouth open in both wonder and horror, Laurent Pelletier stares at the carnivorous armored bush cricket that has landed in front of him on the picnic table. He is camping with his family near Fish River Canyon in Namibia, in southwest Africa. The insect, yellow and light green, has a collar of spikes and six spindly legs planted in a boxer's stance. It's as big as the 5-year-old's hand.

"Can we eat it?" he asks his mom, Edith Lemay.

"I don't think so," she says, laughing.

"Then can I take it as a traveling companion?"

"No, but you'll meet many more."

And Laurent did, over and over again during the first few months of a yearlong trip through Africa, Asia and the Middle East with his mother; his father, Sébastien Pelletier; and his three older siblings, Mia, 12, Léo, 10, and Colin, 7. Bush crickets, ground crickets, baby crickets, crickets whose chirping lulled them to sleep at night—the creatures became talismans, lucky charms on the family's journey around the world.

Far from their home in Boucherville, Quebec, looking to imprint as many once-in-a-lifetime memories as they

could rack up, they rode horses across the bright green steppes of Mongolia, kayaked on the azure sea off Cambodia, camped under the soaring brick-red peaks of Namibia and flew in a hot air balloon over the brown, lunar-like landscape in Turkey.

The memories really matter because unless science makes a breakthrough soon, three of the four siblings—Mia, Colin and Laurent—will become blind, likely in adulthood. The children have been diagnosed with a disease that has no effective treatment and no specific timeline as it gradually robs them of their sight.

**THE DIAGNOSES** came after a four-year search for the reason that Mia couldn't see at night. As a toddler, she banged into walls and furniture that her mom and dad could make out once their eyes adjusted to the dark.

In 2013, when Mia was 3, the family began a frustrating series of visits to doctors, none of whom had an answer for her lack of night vision. In 2015, as a last resort, a pediatric ophthalmologist enrolled the family in a research project in which their entire genome was mapped out. After two interminable years, the mapping was completed.

At the ophthalmologist's office, the specialist gave it to them straight: Mia had retinitis pigmentosa, a mutation called PDE6B. She had inherited the gene from both parents, though neither had the condition nor knew they were carriers.



RP, as it is known, is a catchall term for a group of about 50 inherited genetic mutations that affect the retina, tissue at the back of the eye that interprets images in black and white, and technicolor. The cells at its edges, called rods, crucial for peripheral and night vision, die first. As the disease progresses over years, the cells in the middle, called cones, used for seeing in color and for everyday activities like reading, writing and driving, die off too.

“Right now,” the doctor continued, “there is no cure.”

Awash with emotion, Edith stood up, excused herself and walked to the nearest bathroom, where she locked herself in a stall. Unwilling to lose it in front of Mia, who wouldn’t understand, she sat there alone and cried.

While it was tempting to seek a



The family in Walvis Bay, Namibia

second opinion, Edith and Sébastien knew that genetic mapping did not lie: The results were definitive, irreversible and life-changing.

Later, tests would show that Colin and Laurent had PDE6B too. Only Léo dodged the mutation.

“Everything we hope for our children, for their future, for what they could become, has to change,” Edith said to her husband one evening. “How will they cope?”

They vacillated over explaining to 7-year-old Mia what her condition meant. Should they let her be a kid, innocent and unaware, for as long as possible? A few weeks later, it just came out, part of a conversation about disabilities in general while having lunch at their kitchen table.

“You know the problem with your eyes?” Edith asked Mia. “You’re probably going to be blind when you’re an adult.” The revelation was more abrupt than Edith had hoped, but at least it was done. Edith held her breath as she waited for Mia to respond.

“Oh, that’s not fun,” the girl said before changing the subject.

Later that week, Mia announced that she would need to start keeping her bedroom especially neat, with everything in its place.

“In the future, I’ll need to know where things are,” she said.

Edith and Sébastien watched as Mia continued, unprompted, to feel her way around the house with her eyes closed to see what it was like to navigate



without sight, up the stairs and down, through the kitchen, living room and basement, memorizing shapes with her fingertips.

"She's finding solutions on her own," they told each other. "We need to follow her lead."

And so the idea of a yearlong trip was born, one that would show the kids the world, in person and at close range, from windswept vistas to waterfalls and warthogs. A trip that would show life in all its grandeur and gritty detail—while the kids could still see it.

When Edith and Sébastien first broached the idea in the spring of 2020, the kids didn't understand. A whole year away from home, from school, their grandparents and friends?

"It was too hard to imagine," says Léo. "We'd gone away for a week or two at a time. But a year? I didn't think it was real."

For the next two years, Edith and Sébastien worked—she in health logistics and he for a financial startup—and saved money. They researched places to visit and asked their children what they wanted to do on their big trip. Mia wanted to ride a horse. Colin wanted to sleep overnight on a train. Laurent thought it would be fun to drink juice while riding a camel. Léo wanted to tour Pokémon attractions in Japan.

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**Clockwise from top left: Riding camels in the Gobi Desert in Mongolia; Mia at a spice farm in Zanzibar; exploring a pond near Lake Phayao in Thailand**

**IN EARLY 2022**, they were ready. Edith and Sébastien quit their jobs, rented out their home for the next year and packed everything they thought they might need for a year on the go. Because the kids would miss more than nine months of school, the plan was that they would study French and math a few times a week. The rest of the time, they'd be learning from the world around them—the best teacher of all. Traveling with four children wouldn't

## THEY PLAYED WITH CHILDREN IN BOTSWANA AND DANCED WITH MAASAI TRIBESMEN.



be cheap, but they'd save money by camping and staying in hostels, guesthouses and even a Mongolian yurt made from goatskins.

On Monday, March 21, they flew from Montreal to Windhoek, Namibia, with no set itinerary save for a meandering initial trip from the southwest coast of Africa to the east, through Namibia, Botswana and Tanzania. Once there, they would make plans on the fly.

"How we adults see the world and how kids see the world is so different, and we had to respect that," says Edith. "That was clear from the start. It would have to be less about temples and



Laurent walking  
a baby elephant  
in Chiang Mai,  
Thailand

museums and more about whatever caught their eye.”

Over the months, that world constantly revealed itself, sometimes in a cacophony, sometimes in a whisper. There was the shouting of hawkers selling bananas at each stop of the 24-hour train ride through Tanzania and the near-cathedral silence of Namibia's 900-year-old Dead Vlei, or “dead marsh.” Once a marsh, it's now bone dry, with sand dunes rising 1,300 feet and trees that resemble black skeletons against a cloudless sky.

The kids played patty-cake with uniformed schoolchildren in Botswana and danced with Maasai tribesmen in Tanzania, where the family stayed on a banana farm. In Borneo, they went parasailing over the South China Sea. In Thailand, Mia touched an elephant at a sanctuary, calling out in surprise at how rough it felt. In northern Cambodia, Colin, who had always been more withdrawn than his siblings, mugged like a miniature pirate while brandishing the wooden sword a guide had carved for him on the spot from a piece of mahogany they'd found while hiking.

Each day, Edith and Sébastien watched their kids change, physically and emotionally. Mia grew taller and, on the cusp of adolescence, needed more independence. Léo and Colin became more confident and outgoing: unafraid to engage with strangers, kick around a soccer ball with locals and try new food—even red ants in



Hot air ballooning in Cappadocia, Turkey

Laos gathered from under a tree. The verdict? “They taste like lemons.”

The family grew more tightknit and protective of each other, which helped when they faced situations that were difficult to explain. One example came when they drove past villages in Cambodia that were the sites of massacres, infamously known as the “killing fields” during the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s. Their guide told of how he was abandoned as an infant in the nearby forest, likely hidden by his parents to protect him. In response, Edith and Sébastien held their children close, to make them feel safe.

Other times, the goal was fun and adventure, plain and simple, as when the family went up in a hot air balloon on July 1 to celebrate Laurent's fifth birthday. Or the visit in January to the Tad Fane waterfall in Laos, when the



family buckled into a zip line and whipped across the gorge nearly 1,000 feet below.

Rarely did they talk about why they were abroad in the first place, with one exception: While traveling along a dusty Mongolian highway last summer, Laurent asked: “What does it mean to be blind? How will I cross the street? Will my wife be blind? Will I be able to drive a car?”

“It’s like when you have your eyes closed,” Edith said. “It won’t happen overnight, but slowly, over years.” Being blind, she told him, didn’t mean the end of the world. Rather, the world

**Clockwise from top left: Hiking in Turkey; Laurent in a temple in Laos; Léo and Colin playing chess in Namibia**

would be different. Nothing would prevent them from doing most things, including skiing, swimming or even becoming scientists who worked on cures for RP. Laurent nodded, then went back to making up games to pass the time.

By the time the trip began to wind down in early 2023, the family had traveled 52,000 miles and visited 18 countries. The kids were very aware that they had learned about the world and

themselves too, each expressing their experience in their own way.

"There's a lot of suffering, a lot of poverty, but lots of good and interesting things too," said Colin. "Kids are kids everywhere, just like us. But maybe with their own customs and traditions."

Léo's take was a bit less philosophical. "I am not fond of durian," he says, wrinkling his nose at the thought of the spiky fruit he tasted in Indonesia that smells like rotten eggs, old onions and raw sewage combined.

Mia said simply, "This has been a magic year we'll remember for the rest of our lives."

**RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA**, which affects between 1 in 3,000 and 1 in 4,000 people globally, was once considered untreatable. But over the past 20 years, science has seen considerable breakthroughs. There is not yet a cure for PDE6B, the mutation the Pelletier kids have. But thanks to genetic research, a surgical injection behind the retina can now reverse the effects of another mutation, RPE65. This, says Robert Koenekoop, a pediatric ophthalmologist in Montreal, has given science a

clear road map for developing treatments for other forms of RP.

Until then, science has managed to temporarily slow the progress of RP in many cases by injecting antioxidants such as vitamin A and omega-3 fatty acids at regular intervals. And, in 2022, two different studies reported that acupuncture can improve vision, maybe through increasing the blood flow to the retina.

Dr. Koenekoop says many of his patients who get acupuncture report that they can see better, even at night.

"That lasts for a few months and then they do the acupuncture again," he says. "This is the most exciting time we've had in terms of advances for treatment of RP. The chances of kids like these three getting help are good."

Edith and Sébastien know there is hope. But they downplay the possibility because they want their kids to lead full lives, whether they're blind or not. The trip has reinforced what Mia showed them all those years ago when she wandered the house with her eyes closed. They will find their way and be happy.

"Today, my vision is good and I'm going to make the most of it," says Mia. **R**



## The Show Must (Not) Go On

Earlier this year, a U.K. production of the movie-turned-musical *The Bodyguard* had to be stopped mid-performance. The reason:

Disruptive theatergoers wouldn't stop singing along to the Whitney Houston hit "I Will Always Love You."

AVCLUB.COM



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

# The Deadly Swamp

*Losing his arm to an alligator was just  
the start of a hiker's three-day ordeal*

---

BY *Derek Burnett*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Mark Smith*





**T**he stars burn brilliant over Lake Manatee as the man backstrokes through the dark water. He's exhausted and frustrated by his lack of progress, but he believes he can swim all night if he must. Then a bristling intuition creeps upon him and he sits up in the water and peers to his left. Just 2 feet away lurks the unmistakable shape of an alligator's snout, the slitted eye yellowy in the starlight. The man whirls onto his stomach and flings out his hands to swim, but the gator strikes, seizing his right forearm in its teeth. The predator twists its powerful body, snapping the man's arm back at the elbow. For a moment the man's world goes black, as if lightning has struck inside his head. Then, still firmly holding its prey, the reptile dives, looking to drown its victim in the silent midnight depths of the lake.

**THE WAY ERIC MERDA** saw it, the past two weeks had been one long, crazy battle with God. The 43-year-old father of seven had always had his struggles—addiction, street fights, run-ins with the law—but things had recently become clear. For one thing, he'd come to accept that his relationship with the mother of five of his children was over. For another, he'd begun to realize he was running with a dangerous crowd. Intelligent, creative and spiritual, a self-described weirdo, Merda knew he'd been on the wrong track. God was telling him to clean up his act and live up to his gifts.

So he'd been on a sort of ascetic quest. By day, he'd toil beneath the Florida sun in and around his home base of Bradenton, installing and repairing sprinkler systems as he'd done for 25 years. By evening, he'd wander and explore. For the first time, he had no woman or children to come home

to. He spent much of his surplus time on Siesta Key Beach, where he gave himself daring challenges: How far out into the ocean can I go at night? How long can I float faceup with my head tipped back so far that my eyes stay in the saltwater? For a while now, there had been a thin line between embracing life and courting death. Which was it going to be?

Sometimes he slept unsheltered on the sand of Siesta Key. One morning he awoke to see litter scattered along the beach, and felt God telling him that he ought to clean it up. He began collecting trash. It felt good, so he made a habit of picking up litter wherever he saw it, not just on the beach. It became a kind of compulsion.

On Monday, July 18, 2022, he had a job up in the rural portions of Manatee County. He was finished by late afternoon. Time to explore. Near an intersection of two country



byways, he spotted a dirt road with a sign that read Lake Manatee Fish Camp. He nosed his old white work van down into the area, past a little country store and some folks pitching horseshoes, and followed the road. It ended at a boat ramp onto Lake Manatee, a man-made reservoir covering about 4 square miles, ringed by wild swampland. Trash lay strewn along the roadside. Merda jumped out of his van, leaving his phone and keys inside, and started collecting the garbage into piles.

After a while, a thought occurred to him—*I've been working all day. Nobody's forcing me to pick up trash. I'm going to see what's in these woods.*

With the abandon of a schoolboy, he ran off into the trees. Before long, he encountered a seemingly impenetrable thicket of brush, thorns and vines. Seemingly impenetrable: a nice challenge. He charged into it and did battle for many long minutes. It was exhausting, but he pushed on. When at last he emerged into a grove of scrawny orange trees, he was sweaty, cut up, and tired. He had no idea where he was in relation to the lake. He'd been pushing through the thicket for hours, and now all he wanted was to get back to his van and go home.

He spent another couple of hours wandering among the orange trees, which were laid out in an endless grid.

No sign of civilization. The lake and his van certainly weren't out here in an orange grove, so he reentered the woods and soon found himself mucking around in swamp water. There seemed no way out of this bog. He labored for hours as the sun sank. Tall, thick grasses and thorns clogged his way; mud and water filled his boots. His feet hurt so badly that he took his boots off and carried them—but

## THE ALLIGATOR SANK ITS TEETH INTO HIS ARM AND DRAGGED HIM UNDERWATER.

---

the twigs and brambles lacerated his soles, so he stopped and pulled the boots back on. He tried to navigate by the sun but kept losing it. Each time he picked out a landmark or chose a beeline course, he became hopelessly lost again after just a few minutes.

Darkness was falling when at last he reemerged onto the shore of the lake. There across the water stood the boat launch, now empty, and a little high-way bridge, less than a quarter-mile away as the crow flies—or as the duck swims. He was beaten, sore and thirsty. Reenter the swamp? Out of the question. Who knew where he'd end up? He'd have to swim for it across the lake.

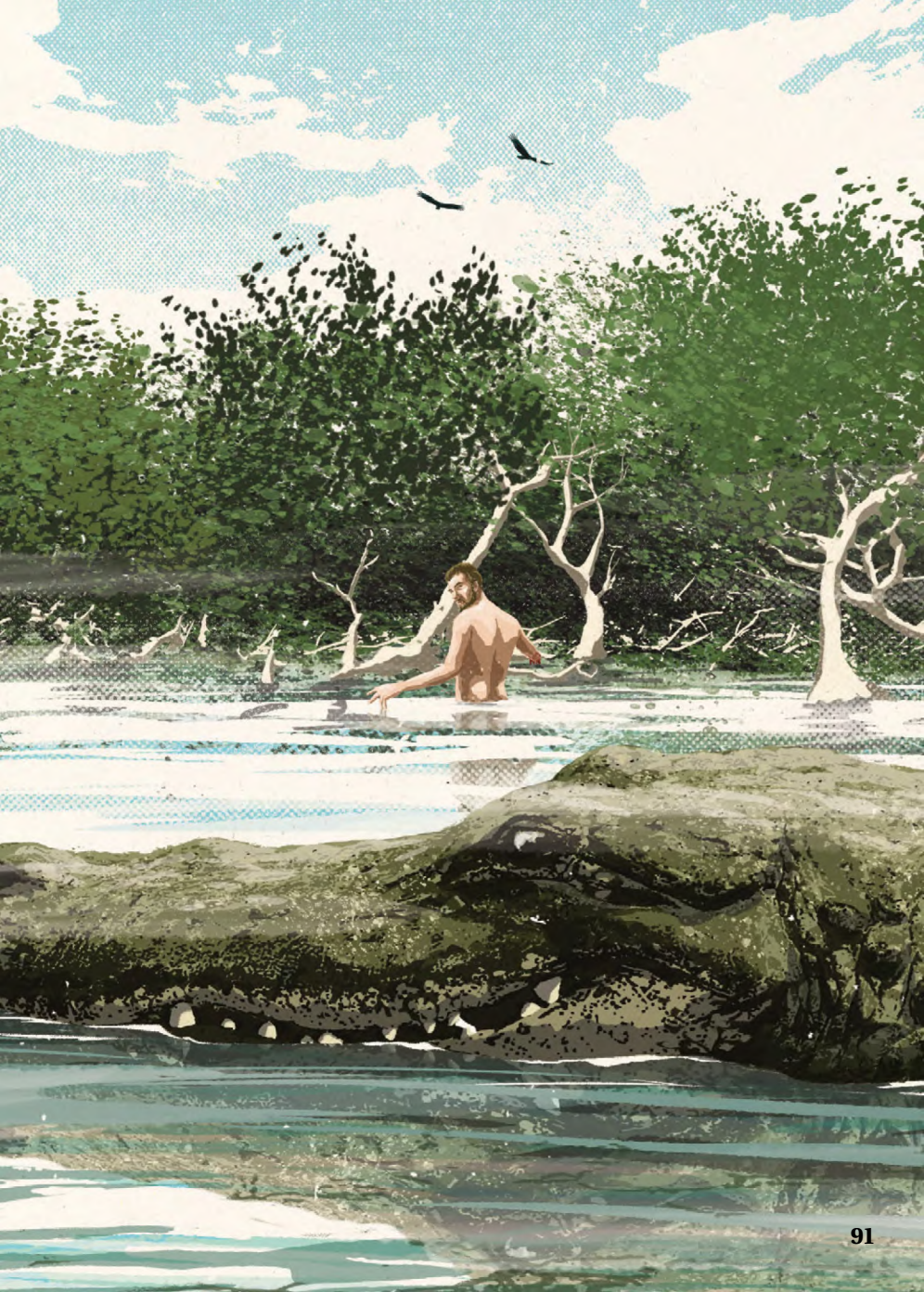
The water was surprisingly cold,

especially as it deepened. He started out paddling strongly for the opposite bank, drinking lake water to quench his awful thirst. After a few minutes he realized he'd never make it with his clothes on. He shed every stitch, letting his work duds sink to the bottom of the dark lake.

He swam on, but some strange current prevented his progress. He was a good swimmer, yet he somehow kept diverging from his goal. He'd point himself at the boat launch, swim a few strokes, lift his head and find that he was way off course. It was maddening, but he refused to surrender to emotion. In a fistfight, the guy who comes into it panicking, with no self-control, he's the one who gets whooped. The sun disappeared and the stars came out, and still he struggled, alternating between a backstroke and a crawl.

And that's when he saw the alligator. Before he could swim a stroke, before he could save himself, before he could let out a scream, the creature struck like a snake. It sank its teeth into Merda's forearm, breaking it at the elbow, and dragged him underwater.

Merda went into fight mode. He flung his other arm around the gator's middle, clutching at its heaving belly as he kicked his feet to keep from going to the bottom. Man and beast resurfaced and Merda gulped air—but just as quickly the gator yanked him under again. The third time, the alligator did what alligators



do: It barrel-rolled its entire body in a vicious *coup de grâce*, and Merda felt the flesh of his arm tearing away as the limb was severed. The creature disappeared into the darkness, carrying Merda's forearm with it.

No pain yet, only terror. His one thought was to get out of the water. He swam furiously, paddling with the stump, and came to rest at the lake's edge not far from where he had entered. He paused for a time, heaving, in the partially submerged grasses. Nearby stood an enormous tree on drier ground. He dragged himself over to it and stood screaming for help across the desolate lake.

Then he realized, *I'm the only one who can get myself out of this. Just like I'm the only one who can fix every other part of my life.* He posted up next to the trunk of the tree and waited for dawn.

When the pain arrived, it was exquisite.

**IN THE MORNING**, he spotted two airplanes. Each time, he climbed up the tree and waved and hollered, which did him no good. He was stark naked in the wilderness, bereft of his right forearm and with nothing to use for a signal. Again, he started pushing through the tall grasses and immediately became lost anew, wandering in circles. He decided the best course was to reenter the water and wade the lake's edge, following its quarter-mile curve until it reached the boat launch.

But that proved nearly impossible too. Submerged logs, tallgrasses, saw grasses, overhanging brush and sudden drop-offs stymied his progress. He howled in pain when he blundered into a stick that poked into the exposed

## HUNGRY, THIRSTY AND IN AGONY, HE STRETCHED OUT AND SLEPT.

---

muscle of his right arm. Chest-deep in the murky water, he looked behind him, and there, 100 feet away, stared the bumpy eyes of the alligator—or anyway an alligator—silently following him. He moved to shallower water and the gator eyes sank beneath the surface. All through the long day, as he struggled along, the creature dogged him. Maddeningly, thanks to the meandering shoreline, the boat launch appeared farther away than ever.

As night fell, he happened upon a concrete structure at the lake's edge, no doubt part of the reservoir system. Hungry, thirsty and in agony, he haltingly climbed onto it, stretched out and slept. He awoke in darkness with the horrifying awareness that he was only a couple of feet above the swamp water with his left arm dangling off the structure like a second proffered morsel. That was enough. He wanted

out of the swamp. He wanted dry land.

Up till then, Merda had been ambivalent about life and death. Now he could hear God telling him, "All right. After this, I don't want to hear any more. If you choose to die, you choose to die. If you choose to live, then good luck to you, because it's not going to be easy." He'd always figured his concept of God would get him kicked out of most churches: By his philosophy, since we're all made in God's image, God is part of each of us, and each of us is part of God. Thus, to have faith in God is to have faith in oneself, and to quarrel with God is to quarrel with oneself. And he was done quarreling with himself.

In the dark, he blundered his way through an eternity of 10-foot-tall grasses whose roots lay beneath knee-deep water. Disoriented again. The sun dawned on a new day, his third out here, and before long the Florida heat set the swamp-land to broiling. Green horseflies swarmed his injury where the naked muscle twitched and the bare bone gleamed. The land was so soggy that even when he wasn't standing in water, he could scoop up

the earth with his good hand and a little puddle of filthy drinking water would fill the depression he'd made. He nibbled at some tiny purple flowers growing throughout the swamplands.

He began to fade, utterly spent and bloodied. But he'd made his decision. He'd chosen life, even if it meant the pain and frustration of endless struggle. Whenever his fatigue overwhelmed him, he pushed over the tallgrasses to make a mat on which to sleep.

His quest was dry land, and at





last he found it—only to discover it overwhelmingly choked with thorny vines. It was either the swamp or this endless wall of thorns—no getting around it, over it or under it. He must push through. *It's just a little pain*, he told himself. *You aren't even going to remember it once it's gone.* So he dragged himself into the bramble, crab-walking at times, getting sliced and punctured, pausing periodically to psych himself up for more pain.

**IN LATE AFTERNOON**, he came across a brown quart beer bottle lying in the mud like a signal from civilization.

He knew now that he was saved. How far can somebody throw a beer bottle—40 feet? That meant just 40 feet to the road. You can go another 40 feet. He did, and when he exited the thorns he found that he was staggering alongside the road near the turnaround spot for the boat launch. On the other side of a wire fence, a man stood beside a red car.

"Hey! Hey!" Merda yelled.

The man goggled at the stranger, naked save for the blood and mud that covered his body. "What are you doing back there?" he said.

"A gator got me!" Merda answered,



waving his stump. "You got any water?"

"Holy ... ! I don't have any water, but I'll get you some, for sure."

The fence was the final obstacle between him and civilization. Merda had had enough. He lay down in the weeds on the swamp side of the divider and waited for the EMTs, who would cut the fence wire and carry him over to the helicopter that would whisk him away to the rest of his life.

**MERDA SPENT NEARLY** three weeks in a Sarasota hospital. His wound had become

infected in the swamp, so surgeons removed considerably more than the alligator had taken, leaving him with only about 6 inches of arm past the shoulder. It's incredible that he didn't bleed to death—but, by some miracle, he says, the wound barely bled.

He ate like a machine in the hospital, and sent a buddy out for one entree not on the kitchen's menu: gator bites.

On his release, he tried to return to work. "I can still dig a hole," he says. "But it's with one hand, very slowly."

It wasn't practical to take up his old trade. So now he's casting about for some way to make a living while sharing the things he's learned. Consult? Teach? Write a children's book? Take up public speaking? Try to become a comedian?

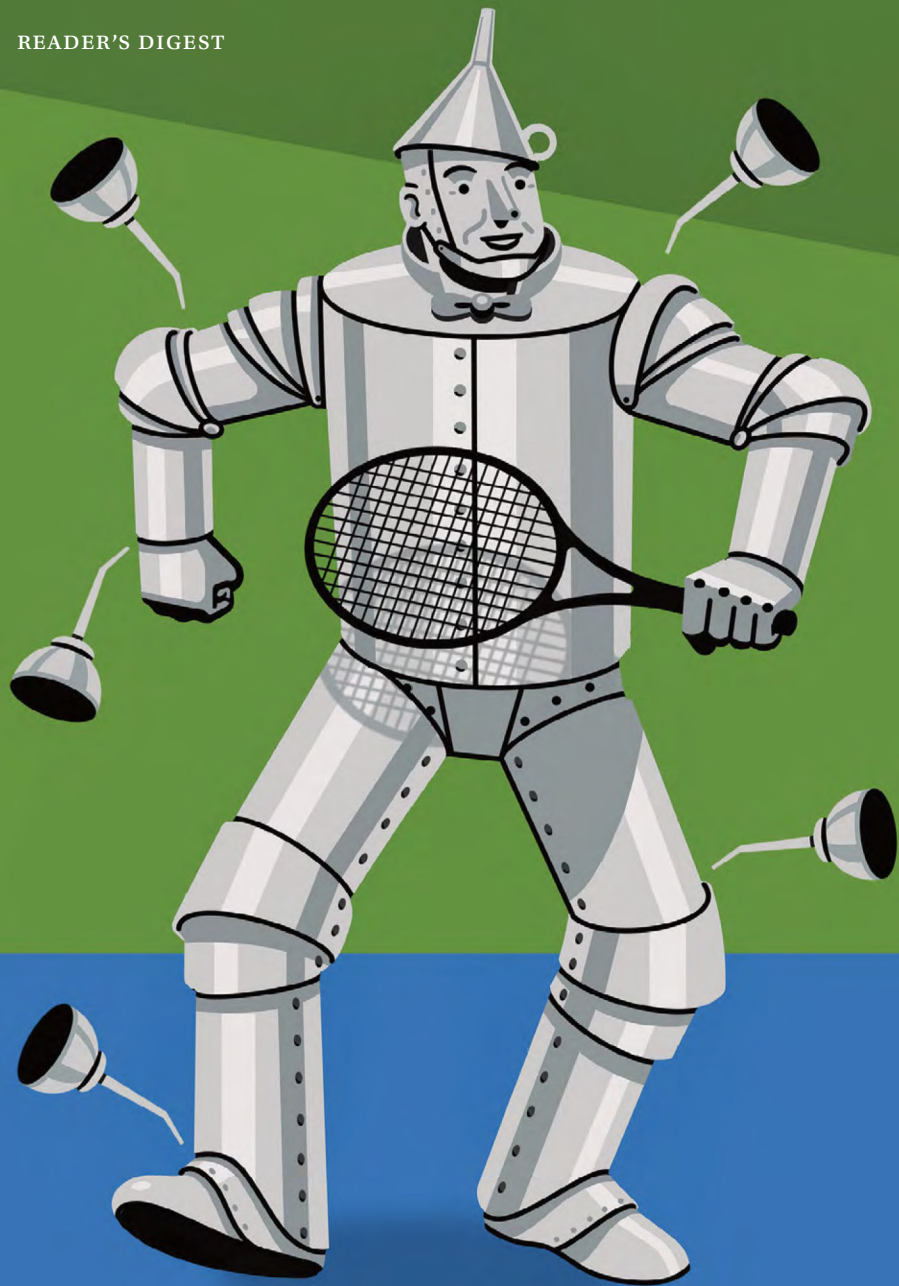
He says he wants to inspire people to think, *If a skinny little dude from Sarasota, Florida, can fight a gator and walk out of the swamp, why am I afraid to open my own business, go to college or get a contractor's license?*

The road ahead won't be easy. But then again, that was part of the deal with God. Sometimes he feels at a loss, as if his dreams sound too ambitious, too ridiculous. But, Merda says with the wisdom of a man who has done battle with the divine, "It sounded pretty ridiculous that I was going to make it out of that swamp alive too." **R**

### A Real Head-Scratcher

Scientists recently discovered the oldest written sentence in the world's first alphabet—and it describes an issue that still plagues us today. The message, carved into a tiny ivory comb, reads, "May this tusk root out the lice of the hair and the beard."

SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE



# GAME ON!

Research offers new hope for  
beating pesky joint pain

BY Patricia Pearson

**YOU MIGHT BE IN YOGA CLASS** when you first feel it. When did downward dog get so hard on the wrists? Or it could be at your weekly tennis game that you notice your knees screaming at you whenever you pivot. Chances are, it's arthritis, which isn't just an old-people problem: It usually kicks in between the ages of 40 and 60.

By far the most common type of arthritis is osteoarthritis. Typically, it strikes after decades of physical activity gradually wear down cartilage. That's the rubbery, frictionless tissue that serves as a shock absorber between bones, making it more comfortable to move our skeletons around. After years of wear and tear, or an injury such as a fracture or dislocation, that cushion can harden and fray like a dried-out rubber band, causing the entire joint to become inflamed and painful. In fact, the word *arthritis* comes from the Greek *arthro*, which means "joint," and

*itis*, which means "inflammation."

Among Americans ages 50 to 80, 70% report joint pain, according to a national survey done in 2022 at the University of Michigan. Nearly half of those with joint pain had osteoarthritis, or OA, the survey found, while 11% had rheumatoid arthritis, which is an autoimmune disease.

Women are more likely to suffer from OA than men, for reasons that remain unclear. The World Health Organization estimates that 528 million people worldwide have OA, and that number is projected to increase over the next decade as the population ages.

The joints that bear the brunt of OA are most often the knees, knuckles, base of the thumb, lower back and hips. OA sufferers might notice swelling or even feel a grating sensation in their joints, and some people experience aching that's deep enough to wake them up at night. Stiffness is common,

particularly in the morning, and things like opening a jar or bending down aren't as easy as they used to be.

### HOW CAN YOU EASE THE PAIN?

Maintaining a healthy body weight helps, since it means less load on your joints. Keeping extra weight off also minimizes your risk of getting OA in the first place. As for treatment, doctors often suggest exercise to help ward off stiffness and keep muscles supple around the joints. If you're not already active, low-impact options including walking, biking and swimming are good ways to start moving more.

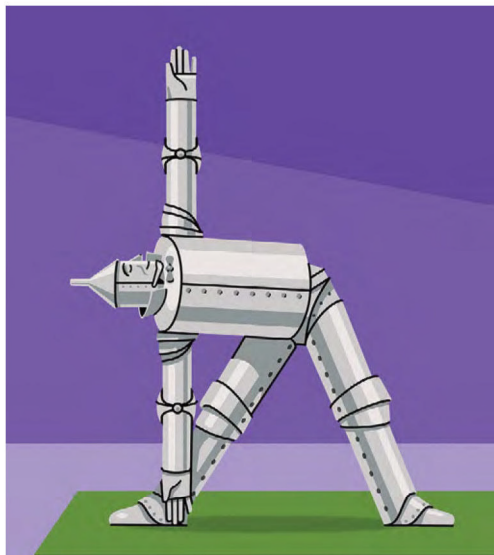
Doing yoga might bring relief, too, according to the Arthritis Foundation. Experts there also recommend physical therapy, where you can learn movements to improve your mobility and get stronger, which means better support for your joints. Unfortunately, most people find that these things don't completely eliminate the pain, but they can help if symptoms aren't too severe.

Medical treatments are also a mixed bag. Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen and naproxen, relieve pain and stiffness but can irritate your stomach, so they aren't a long-term solution. Doctors might prescribe an oral corticosteroid such as prednisone, but it can cause side effects including weight gain, mood swings and high blood pressure, so it should be used only briefly. For some, corticosteroid injections can offer temporary relief, but two recent studies—one from

the University of California, San Francisco, and the other from Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Chicago—show the injections might actually make OA worse.

Doctors may also recommend hyaluronic acid, which they inject into the joint to act as a viscous fluid replacement for the cartilage, like oil in a car engine. While the injection may temporarily relieve pain and even slow down progression of the disease, according to a landmark study published in the *British Medical Journal* last year, most patients find it doesn't help in the long term.

Another injectable treatment with mixed success is platelet-rich plasma (PRP), in which your own blood is removed, enriched with platelets and then reinjected. Some athletes, notably



Tiger Woods, have tried it for sports injuries such as torn tendons, but according to the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, more research is needed to find out how to make PRP work better.

So far, the only truly effective treatment is a complete joint replacement. Millions of people end up opting for surgery to replace knees, hips, even knuckles. But the catch is that the new joints last only 15 to 20 years, so many doctors typically don't recommend surgery for anyone under age 60.

Ben Bebenroth, a chef and former Marine based in Cleveland, Ohio, finally found relief after he had knee-replacement surgery. His OA started back when he was 15, after he injured his left knee in a snowboarding accident. For a long time, he self-medicated with booze and over-the-counter painkillers so he could keep up with his busy lifestyle.

"I dealt with my pain that way for 25 years," says Bebenroth, now 45.

Aside from exercising and keeping his weight in check, he tried hyaluronic acid injections and steroid injections, and had three arthroscopic, or "keyhole," surgeries, which are sometimes recommended after injury. Nothing worked. Finally, at the unusually young age of 40, he underwent a total knee replacement.

He says he knows it's inevitable that he'll develop some degree of arthritis in his right knee—that's what happens if one joint takes the brunt of wear and tear when the injured one is favored.

But in the meantime the surgery has allowed him to return to the hiking and snowboarding he loves.

He also avoids sugar and alcohol and focuses on eating nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory foods including turmeric and ginger from his organic farm, where he grows ingredients that he uses at his restaurant. An anti-inflammatory diet—featuring many of the same foods in the Mediterranean diet, such as fish, nuts, beans, lean meats and lots of leafy vegetables—is well established as being joint friendly.

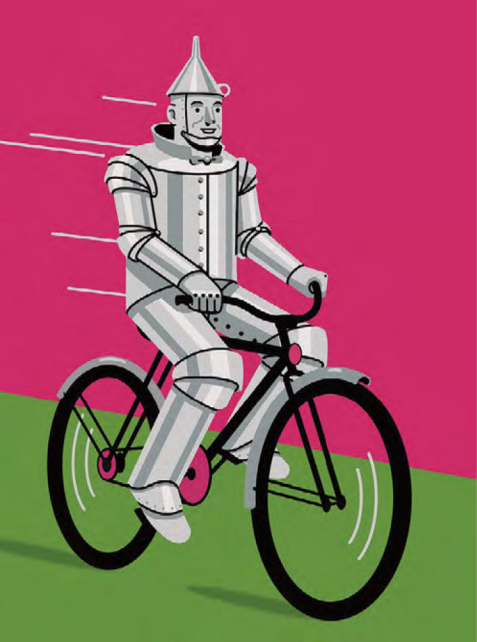
"Diet has been critical for me," Bebenroth says. "The fewer inflammatory foods I eat, the better I feel." He adds that meditation, stretching and movement have also helped.

## NEW STUDIES SEEK NEW SOLUTIONS

Given how many people suffer from OA, a lot of researchers are working on solutions—and are at last finding some. At Duke University, for example, researchers are planning to launch a clinical trial this year for a new synthetic knee gel made of water-absorbing polymers that simulates cartilage.

And researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine are finding real promise in stem cells derived from our own bodies. In 2018, researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine managed to isolate skeletal stem cells in adult humans. This has huge implications for our potential ability to regenerate joint cartilage.

"We thought for some time that skel-



etal stem cells existed, but we weren't sure," says Charles Chan, assistant professor of surgery at Stanford. "We used a technique called FACS, which is sort of like a jelly bean sorter. It allows us to separate cell types based on the protein on their surface. There were around 100 types."

To understand which was which, the researchers transplanted the cells into mice to observe what they differentiated into. Some turned into bone. Chan and his colleagues then discovered that they could foster the growth of new cartilage by sending these cells new instructions. In their experiments, they created a microfracture by drilling a tiny hole in the bone.

"This provokes skeletal stem cells to gush up in a blood clot," he says. "Left on its own, this would turn into scar tis-

sue, or what we call fibrocartilage. It acts like a Band-Aid, holding everything in place. But it's not as bouncy or slippery as regenerated cartilage."

What if, the team wondered, they somehow changed the chemical signaling that was telling the cells what to do?

"We thought maybe we could interrupt the cells as they developed into cartilage on their way to becoming bone—coax them to finish their work at the cartilage stage," says Chan. (The chemicals the team used have been approved by the FDA for other applications, such as Avastin for breast cancer.)

It worked. The result of their experiment in laboratory mice, and then in human joint tissue infused into mice, "is that you get a nice piece of cartilage," Chan says. "It's durable. And the subjects receive dramatic improvements in their pain and their movement."

The team is now raising funds for human clinical trials, where they plan to start with osteoarthritis in patients' thumbs and fingers. If all goes well, they may be able to bring a new injectable medication to market that doesn't just ease symptoms but actually cures the disease.

Meanwhile, the Melbourne Stem Cell Research Centre in Australia has conducted a number of trials on the use of another type of stem cell—called adipose-derived cells, which come from fat—to treat OA.

Similar experiments are taking place in Italy and Ireland. The idea is to work with our mesenchymal stem cells

(MSCs), which are important for making and repairing cartilage and bone. These stem cells seem to have multiple positive effects in the body, including calming inflammation and reducing nerve pain.

To get the cells, patients “undergo a mini-liposuction,” says Julien Freitag, a Melbourne-based musculoskeletal specialist. Then, the fat tissue is transferred to an accredited laboratory, where the MSCs are expanded and then injected into the patient’s joint. Six months later, the person gets a second injection.

It remains somewhat unclear exactly how MSCs weave their healing magic, says Dr. Freitag. But, he adds, “Our clinical research conducted over the last nine years has been incredibly promis-

ing.” That research, which includes a randomized controlled trial and real-world data collected from actual cases, shows pain reduction and improvements in joint function.

“We are seeing significant benefit to patients, whether they have mild, moderate or severe osteoarthritis,” he says.

Given that other research centers are also deep into treatment research, it’s likely that a government-approved breakthrough therapy for osteoarthritis should emerge within the next 10 to 15 years. If the advances continue to prove as safe as they have been in research so far, millions of armchair athletes will soon be able to get back out onto the field—or just enjoy everyday life more. **R**

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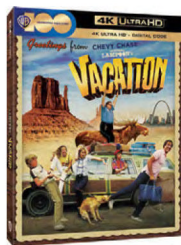


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The RD  
**LIST**

READ, WATCH, LISTEN



## Flamin' Hot

Directed by Eva Longoria

**A HIGHLY PROCESSED SNACK** has yielded a film with actual nutritional value. Directed by Eva Longoria in her feature debut, this lively, inspirational comedy focuses on the man who channeled his Mexican American heritage to create Frito-Lay's mega-popular snack. Richard Montañez (Jesse Garcia) is toiling away cleaning machines at a Frito-Lay plant when the idea strikes: Add chili seasoning to appeal to Latinos. Montañez pitches the CEO (Tony

Shalhoub), and the perfectly concocted spicy product catches on like wildfire, with Montañez becoming a marketing honcho in the process. While his Flamin' Hot story is hotly contested by Frito-Lay, which maintains the snack was created by junior marketing employee Lynne Greenfeld in 1989, there's no disputing that the onetime janitor used his gumption and perseverance to rise through company ranks. (*In theaters June 9*) —Mara Reinstein

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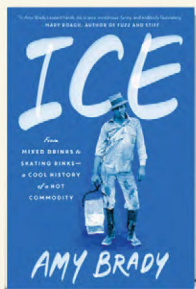


# Prehistoric Planet

*Produced by Jon Favreau*

***Prehistoric Planet* has all the makings** of a top-notch nature docuseries: splendid narration by Sir David Attenborough and a climactic score by Hans Zimmer. But you won't see footage of elusive snow leopards and giant salamanders—just tarchia, tyrannosauruses, brontosauruses and beyond. The team behind *Planet Earth* joins forces with the visual effects artists behind *The Lion King* (2019) and *The Jungle Book* (2016) for a second season of the groundbreaking series documenting the leviathans that ruled the land, seas and skies. You'll meet new old friends such as isisauruses, long-necked herbivores at home in active volcano terrain, and hatzegopteryx, gravity-defying giraffe-sized creatures that fly. (*Streaming on Apple TV+ May 22*) —*Caroline Fanning*





## Ice: A Cool History of a Hot Commodity

By Amy Brady

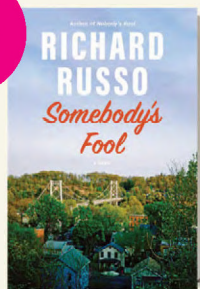
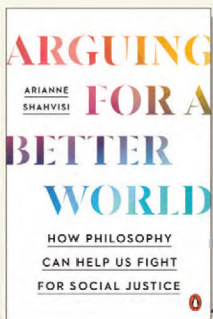
It's hard to fathom that something so world changing just pops out of your fridge—crushed or cubed—at your selection and leisure. But environmentalist and historian Amy Brady fathoms it for you. She explores the impact of ice past (in 1805, Boston “Ice King” Fred-eric Tudor created demand by showing bartenders the allure of cocktails “on the rocks”) and future (fridges, freezers and air conditioners account for 10% of carbon dioxide emissions, but methane hydrates, or “flammable ice,” have potential as a cleaner, cooling energy source). If you can't make it to the beach or pool this summer, chill out with a sweltering read that'll help you think cool thoughts. —CF

## Arguing for a Better World

By Arianne Shahvisi

Each chapter in Arianne Shahvisi's book begins with a question (“Has ‘Political Correctness’ Gone Too Far?,” “Who Is Canceling Whom?”) before the philosopher digs in—not to settle the matter but to help equip readers to defend their own positions. All too often, we have strong, hair-trigger responses to such topics but conversationally fumble while trying to make our point. If we truly hope to participate in the political and moral quandaries of our time, Shahvisi argues, we need to be able to articulate our beliefs and values, and also *why* we believe them. Let her be your backup at your next meeting of the minds.

—Jessica MacLeish



## Somebody's Fool

By Richard Russo

Return to the quirky Adirondack town that writer Richard Russo concocted 30 years ago in his colorful North Bath trilogy. *Nobody's Fool* (1993) introduced fun-loving, bull-in-a-China-shop and sometimes-handyman Donald “Sully” Sullivan and a setting as eccentric and as full of life as he is. *Everybody's Fool* (2016) sees Sully's foe, police officer Doug Raymer, through his own equally bizarre trials 10 years later. Now, in *Somebody's Fool*, Sully's son, Peter, takes the spotlight, grappling with his deceased father's legacy in addition to—you guessed it—the high jinks native to North Bath and the author's writing. Readers new to Russo, see how quickly you'll want to travel back through the trilogy—and time. —CF

**QUOTABLE QUOTES**

**The minute you start seeing your obstacles as things that are made for you, to give you what you need, then life starts to get fun. You start surfing on top of your problems instead of living underneath them.**

—Ashton Kutcher, ACTOR AND INVESTOR, ON *RUNNING WILD WITH BEAR GRYLLS: THE CHALLENGE*



Growing wealth is not interesting to me. What's interesting is working with people, listening to them and helping to solve problems.

—Laurene Powell Jobs, BUSINESSWOMAN, IN *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

**Being enthusiastic is worth 25 IQ points.**

—Kevin Kelly, EDITOR, IN THE BOOK *EXCELLENT ADVICE FOR LIVING*

**I have been so blessed. My tough times would be a dream to someone else.**

—Geno Smith, NFL QUARTERBACK, IN *THE SEATTLE TIMES*

JAMES DEVANEY/GETTY IMAGES (KUTCHER). MIKE PONT/GETTY IMAGES (IMAN). JANE GERSHOVICH/GETTY IMAGES (SMITH)



**My mother always says: "Know your worth. Otherwise someone else will tell you what it is."**

—Iman, MODEL, IN *BRITISH VOGUE*



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SHARPEN YOUR MIND

**Fact or Fiction?**

**MEDIUM** Determine whether each statement is fact or fiction. To reveal the solution to the bonus question at the bottom, write the letters indicated by your responses in the corresponding numbered blanks. Turn the page upside down for the answers.

**1.** The Eiffel Tower gets taller in the summer.



FACT: **S**    FICTION: **M**

**2.** Movie trailers first ran after the featured film, not before.



FACT: **T**    FICTION: **A**

**3.** Shaving causes hair to grow back thicker.

FACT: **N**    FICTION: **R**

**4.** You're more likely to be injured by a champagne cork than you are by a shark.



FACT: **O**    FICTION: **G**

**5.** Fidget spinners first came out in 2017.

FACT: **A**    FICTION: **N**

**6.** Every U.S. state has at least one natural lake.

FACT: **N**    FICTION: **T**

**7.** Mark Twain had no formal education beyond primary school.

FACT: **I**    FICTION: **E**

**8.** Pickleball will be included in the 2024 Summer Olympics.

FACT: **S**    FICTION: **U**

**9.** Lifeguard Ronald Reagan saved dozens of people from drowning.



FACT: **M**    FICTION: **E**

**BONUS QUESTION** Which element causes fireworks to emit a deep red color when they're set off? (Need help? Turn to "13 Things" on page 20.)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9

**Answers:** 1. Fact; it expands a few centimeters because of the heat. 2. Fact; hence the name. 3. Fiction. 4. Fact. 5. Fiction; they debuted in 1993. 6. Fiction; Maryland doesn't. 7. Fact. 8. Fact. 9. Fact; though fans hope it will be by 2030. **Bonus question:** Strontium. local's joke that some women faked their distress to be rescued by the handsome lifeguard.

## Key Digits

**MEDIUM** You're facing a locked door with seven keyholes. You also have seven keys, each engraved with a different number: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9. Can you match each key with the correct keyhole using the following clues?

- ◆ The keys for figure A form a two-digit perfect square (that is, a number that is the result of multiplying a number by itself, such as  $25 = 5 \times 5$ ).
- ◆ The keys for figure B form a two-digit perfect cube (that is, a number that is the result of multiplying a number by itself twice, such as  $64 = 4 \times 4 \times 4$ ).
- ◆ The keys for figure C form a two-digit multiple of 8.
- ◆ The key for figure D is more than 4.



A



B



C



D

## On the Run

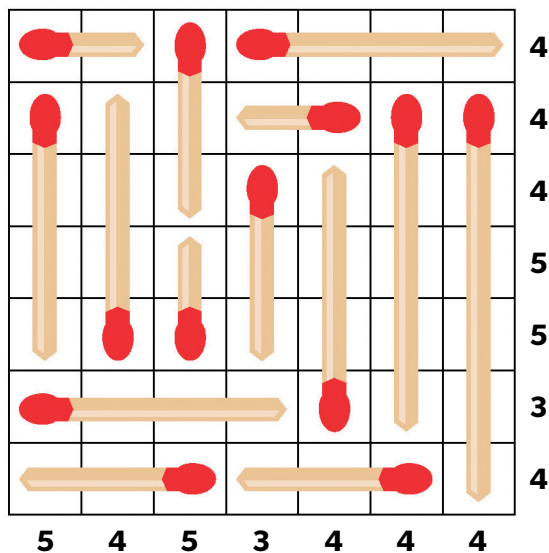
**MEDIUM** The Baffi family—Jon and his children Stella, Isla and Kona—ran in a charity fun race, each starting at a different time. Using the following clues, put the runners in order of age, starting place and finishing order.

- ◆ Although the eldest and youngest were the first to start, they didn't win.
- ◆ Stella said she wouldn't have finished last if her shoelaces hadn't broken.
- ◆ Isla, who started last, joked that Stella really lost because she was too old to beat her.
- ◆ The youngest, Kona, started and finished in the same place. He said he would have won if he had started first instead of Jon.



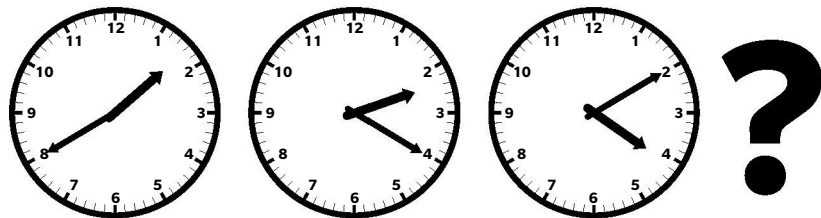
### Match Play

**DIFFICULT** This grid contains matches of different sizes, any of which may be unburned, partially burned, or completely burned. Matches burn from the head (the red rounded end) to the tail, without skipping segments. The numbers outside the grid indicate the number of burned segments in the corresponding row or column. Can you shade in the burned segments to “match” the numbers?



### Time Will Tell

**EASY** The times on the clocks below follow a particular pattern. Based on this pattern, what time should be on the next clock?



For more Brain Games, go to [RD.COM/BRAINGAMES](http://RD.COM/BRAINGAMES).

For answers, turn to **PAGE 111**.


**WORD POWER**

**Roll up your sleeves!** It's time to get your hands dirty and grow your vocabulary with these words rooted in the field of agriculture. Weed out the false definitions, then plow on to the next page to harvest the answers. It'll be fun—you can bet the farm on it.

BY *Samantha Rideout*

**1. apiary n.**

('ay-pee-air-ee)

- A apple-cider press
- B place to store crops
- C collection of beehives

**2. freshen v.**

('fre-shuhn)

- A delay ripening
- B thaw after freezing
- C begin to lactate

**3. hydroponic adj.**

(high-druh-'pahn-ik)

- A grown without soil
- B overwatered
- C capable of swimming

**4. farrow n.**

('fair-oh)

- A half an acre
- B unenclosed pasture
- C litter of pigs

**5. haycock n.**

('hay-kahk)

- A fully mature rooster
- B seeding machine
- C cone-shaped hay pile

**6. lime v.**

(lym)

- A harvest produce
- B reduce soil's acidity
- C wilt before sprouting

**7. viticulture n.**

('vih-tuh-kuhl-chr)

- A organic farming
- B cultivation of grapes
- C growing plants in water

**8. pannage n.**

('pan-ij)

- A irrigating with pipes
- B feeding pigs in a forest
- C abandoning farmland

**9. fallow adj.**

('fa-loh)

- A uncultivated
- B drained
- C composted

**10. dibble v.**

('dib-l)

- A sprinkle water lightly
- B make holes in soil
- C grow with pesticides

**11. ovine adj.**

('oh-vyn)

- A with hooves
- B egg-producing
- C relating to sheep

**12. fodder n.**

('fah-dr)

- A coarse animal food
- B nitrogen-rich manure
- C tractor fuel

**13. tom n.**

(tahm)

- A scarecrow
- B adult male turkey
- C oversized mouse

**14. hardy adj.**

('har-dee)

- A tolerant of cold
- B difficult to grow
- C having many seeds

**15. flerd n.**

(flerd)

- A mixed group of animals
- B compost heap
- C inedible animal parts



## Beyond *Moo* and *Baa*

Not all farm animal calls make it into nursery rhymes. For instance, a cow's *moo* can be more formally described as a *low*, and a donkey's *hee-haw* as a *bray*. Goats *bleat*, bulls *bellow* and elks *bugle*, while llamas and alpacas *hum*. Only male turkeys *gobble*, but both sexes *yelp* to keep track of each other and *putt* when they're alarmed. Horses *whinny* in greeting and *nicker* in quiet, happy tones.

### Word Power ANSWERS

#### 1. apiary (C)

*collection of beehives*

The apiary was next to an orchard, giving the bees easy access to flowers.

#### 2. freshen (C)

*begin to lactate*

New cow mom Daisy freshened quickly after the birth of her calf.

#### 3. hydroponic (A)

*grown without soil*

Hydroponic lettuce absorbs its nutrients from a liquid mixture.

#### 4. farrow (C) litter of pigs

A new farrow in the pigpen delighted the farmer's grandkids.

#### 5. haycock (C)

*cone-shaped hay pile*

The field was dotted with haycocks drying in the sun.

#### 6. lime (B)

*reduce soil's acidity*

Iris limed her land by spreading wood ashes on it.

#### 7. viticulture (B)

*cultivation of grapes*

Hoping to make his own wine, Radi started learning about viticulture.

#### 8. pannage (B)

*feeding pigs in a forest*

England's New Forest allows pannage so that pigs can fill up on acorns.

#### 9. fallow (A) uncultivated

Letting land lie fallow can replenish its nutrients and improve its fertility.

#### 10. dibble (B)

*make holes in soil*

Zach dibbled the field, then planted seedlings in each hole.

#### 11. ovine (C)

*relating to sheep*

The sheep grazing in the

backyard was an "ovine lawn mower," Mel joked.

#### 12. fodder (A)

*coarse animal food*

Cornstalks make for great winter fodder.

#### 13. tom (B)

*adult male turkey*

A tom's courtship behavior includes gobbling and strutting.

#### 14. hardy (A)

*tolerant of cold*

Cabbages are hardy enough to survive a bit of frost.

#### 15. flerd (A)

*mixed group of animals*

Hal had his flock of sheep and herd of cattle pasture together as a flerd.

### Vocabulary Ratings

**9 & BELOW:**

Subsistence farming

**10-12:** Average yield

**13-15:** Bumper crop





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## ANSWERS

### WHERE, OH WHERE?

(page 24)

D. Marfa, Texas. The hit TV show that the movie *Giant* inspired was *Dallas*.

### BRAIN GAMES

(pages 107-108)

#### Key Digits

Figure A: 49; B: 27;

C: 16; D: 5.

#### On the Run

Age (youngest to oldest):

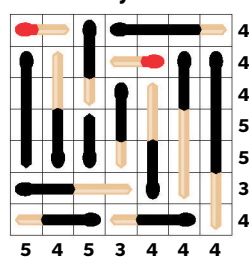
Kona, Isla, Stella, Jon.

Starting order (first to last): Jon, Kona, Stella, Isla.

Finish order (first to last):

Isla, Kona, Jon, Stella.

### Match Play



### Time Will Tell

It should read 8:05.

With each successive step, the hour hand’s value doubles and the minute hand’s value halves.

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