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TERRY DOYLE

STYLING BY ELYSHA
LENKIN; HAIR BY PAUL
WARREN FOR JUDY
CASEY; MAKEUP BY
REBECCA ALEXANDER
FOR SEE MANAGEMENT;
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BRANDON SPEKTOR

Dear Readers

EDITOR
SPOTLIGHT:
Andrea Au
Levitt

ONE DAY DURING MY FIRST PREGNANCY, I spotted the words *advanced maternal age* scrawled across my medical records. Advanced maternal age? I knew I had waited longer than most of my friends to have kids. And I knew I hadn't been doing enough to help myself stay youthful. But I wasn't even close to 40!

Here's the funny thing: Once Alexa was born, I didn't worry about my age. Who can stop to think about getting older when you're busy playing Twister with "Flexi-Lexi" or saving her sister, Arya, from a pizza-stealing peacock at the zoo? In fact, when Alexa became aware of time and asked my age, I had to stop and calculate it. (Her reply: "Is that as old as the dinosaurs?")

It may be a cliché that kids keep you young, but it's true—and not just in the spiritual sense. Without my even noticing, my daughters have forced me to adopt many of the habits researchers have begun to associate with living longer, healthier, and happier. We've collected many of the best in this month's cover story, "Words to Live (Longer and Better) By" (p. 70). Avoid sleeping too much? Not a problem! Enjoy some sunshine? I do it every day.

Of course, you don't need to have preschoolers to reap the benefits. That's the beauty of our story. It's about ageless health, so it's for people at any stage of life. But my girls certainly help. They insist that I dance, sing, and draw with them, activities that improve cognitive functioning. And they love carrots, curry, and cheese, three dietary booster shots.

Most of all, they make me laugh. Did you know that laughing 100 times a day can yield the same vascular benefits as working out on an exercise bike for 15 minutes? Which means that my heart workout now sounds like this:

Alexa: Daddy, do you know how to juggle?

My husband: No—my version of juggling is dropping three balls on the floor.

Alexa: I almost know how to juggle. I only drop two balls on the floor.

Reading that, I bet you're feeling younger too. **R**



Andrea Au Levitt, senior editor
Write to us at letters@rd.com.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TERRY DOYLE

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Letters

COMMENTS ON THE MARCH ISSUE

“I Survived!”

I anxiously held my breath as I read these accounts. It’s nothing short of miraculous that these people lived to tell their stories. I’m so relieved they did and so grateful to have their experience and advice in hand should I ever have to face such horrific emergencies.

JESSICA ROSS, *Parker, Colorado*

After reading [about] the grizzly bear attack, I just had to make a comment. When you have to holler “Hey, bear” every 30 seconds because there are so many bears in the area, it could be a sign that maybe you should pick a safer place to hike.

GLENDIA CHIARA, *Cortland, New York*

Dear Readers

I’ve always found *RD* to provide equality in its articles. However, in writing about how a population will react to a life-threatening situation, Andy Simmons stated that “10 percent will become hysterical and scream like five-year-old girls.”



Oh, *please!* I know some fearless female five-year-olds, and I’m sure they would be happy to demonstrate their fearlessness for Mr. Simmons.

VALERIE STABENOW,
Winneconne, Wisconsin

FROM THE EDITOR:

You’re absolutely right. As a father, son, husband, and brother, I know how strong the women in my life are—as they reminded me the moment they read my note. —A. S.

Fatal Mistakes

After working for 47 years as an RN in an acute-care hospital, I retired and with relief said, “I made it! I didn’t cause any fatal mistakes.” Only then did I realize the tension I had felt all those years, even though I loved my work. Thanks for helping to make the public aware of the situation.

BONNIE BACH, *Peoria, Illinois*

As a pharmacy technician, I work every day with the constant fear and realization that I could make an error

that could kill or injure someone. The system is rife with opportunities for errors. Yet whom will the patient, my employer, the law, and even I blame? Me.

GERTRUDE SVOBODA, *via e-mail*

You Be the Judge

Ms. Jones turned a style choice into a lost job. She wasn't discriminated against for the dreadlocks any more than a white Hells Angels biker would be for tattoos and piercings.

CASSANDRA DIX, *Watkins Glen, New York*

When the Water Ran Cold

The grandfather's description of aging as a hot shower running cold was amazingly similar to my life. The warm shower of youth, the dropping water temperature as I aged, and now knowing that I'll never get the warm shower again. However, I just received a picture of my two-year-old great-grandson playing with the water gushing from a garden hose, and I know that the cycle will continue. My thanks for allowing me to remember my wonderful 81 years.

RICHARD STONE, *Palmyra, Pennsylvania*

Laughter, the Best Medicine

In your "Know Your \$10 Wordplays!" roundup, your definition of *mondegreen* (a misheard lyric) missed the best example of all: *mondegreen!* American writer Sylvia Wright coined the word in 1954, when she wrote about how in her youth she had misheard a lyric of the Scottish ballad "The Bonny Earl of Murray." She had heard "They have slain the Earl of Murray and lay'd him on the green" as "They have slain the Earl of Murray and Lady Mondegreen," and so was born this interesting word.

RICK SHABSIN, *Rochester, Minnesota*

Talk to Strangers!

I couldn't agree more that traveling alone, sans phone, is the best way. I've met some lovely people on solo trips, from a local in Sydney who showed me around the city to a sweet elderly man in a Vietnamese diner in Virginia. Another overlooked resource for information: police. I learned more about Brooklyn from a traffic cop than from our hotel concierge. Who knows a city better?

TERRY MACH, *Mentor, Ohio*

Send letters to letters@rd.com or Letters, Reader's Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media.

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EVERYDAY HEROES



AnnMarie Roberts is the last hope for
many a friendless beast

Animal House


BY ANDY SIMMONS

 **REMEMBER THE TV show *Green Acres*?** This story is a little like that, only with more animals and an even better ending.

“My wife of 24 years, AnnMarie Roberts, was raised in New York City, worked in the fashion industry, and never got her hands dirty,” wrote Keith Roberts in the magazine *Country Woman*. “Then, nine years ago, I wanted to move home to Florida and reconnect to my country roots, but how would I inspire the same feeling in, well, a city woman? I brought her a two-month-old potbellied pig.”

AnnMarie, then 46, was smitten. Soon she took in another potbellied

pig that had been abandoned. And thus began Sugarloaf Mountain Ranch, her animal sanctuary in central Florida. With the couple’s two children grown up, these creatures would now be AnnMarie’s babies.

The ranch now has 300 rescues, from alpacas to donkeys, each with its own story. “A gentleman had a litter of eight pigs, and all but one died,” says AnnMarie. “She weighed one pound and suffered seizures. For three weeks straight, I fed that baby every hour, day and night, barely sleeping. Now she’s fine. Another time, we rescued two roosters that had been shot—one has brain injuries. Many vets tell 

AnnMarie refuses to raise money by opening the sanctuary to public tours. Her animals, she says, "have gone through so much. I don't want to scare them."



me, 'Euthanize them—it's too much work.' I say if they can live, then I'm going to help them live."

AnnMarie gets five to ten requests a day to save animals and has to turn most down. "If she can't rescue the animal, she works with that person to find a solution," Keith says. "She's not only saving animals; she's giving their owners peace of mind."

"A woman called from her hospice bed," AnnMarie recalls. "Her pigs would be euthanized if she couldn't find a suitable home. 'I only have a few months, and I need to know that they'll be safe,' she said." So AnnMarie drove three hours and got them.


Soon after, AnnMarie received

a note from the woman's daughter. "Dear AnnMarie," she wrote. "My mom went peacefully, and I owe part of that to you. She agonized over Bailey and Smitten, but she went knowing that they are forever loved. Thank you for being Mom's angel."

Keith's income from his job in IT supports the farm, along with some donations. But AnnMarie is the main asset. "She is a ball of energy," Keith wrote. "A few times she's gone so fast, she's found herself in a tricky situation, like when she locked herself in the chicken pen. I found her sitting in the coop with ten chicks nestled in her lap." Which is exactly what you'd expect from a true mother hen. **R**

This Gravedigger Saves Lives

BY DAVID COOK FROM CHATTANOOGA TIMES FREE PRESS

 SATURDAY NIGHT had just turned into Sunday morning, and Tim Abernathy, 47, walked off the dance floor at the Menlo Barn Dance near Summerville, Georgia. He sat down in a folding chair to rest with his wife, Tina Abernathy, next to him. Then something felt wrong. His throat got tight, then tighter. He grabbed Tina's hand, then crashed to the floor.

"His eyes had rolled back," said Tina. "His lips had turned blue and were getting darker."

The band stopped playing. People started yelling, but nobody stepped forward to act. Someone finally did.

It was Johnny "Digger" Tucker. He swiped his fingers through Tim's mouth, thinking he could be choking. He started beating on Tim's chest. Then he began mouth-to-mouth. More pounding. More mouth-to-mouth. Then, finally, Tim drew a breath. The paramedics came, and Johnny quietly left.

"If Johnny hadn't been there, I



Johnny "Digger" Tucker learned the graveyard business from his father.

would be burying my husband," said Tina.

Folks say Johnny Tucker is the type of man you'd call at 2 a.m. The type whose handshake is his word. Maybe it's because he knows more than most how precious life is. Every day, he faces death.

Johnny is a gravedigger. Ever since he was a boy, he has been digging, just as his father did—not with a backhoe but by hand, with a shovel and a pick. He has dug the final resting places for about 20,000 people, each grave measuring three feet wide, eight feet long, four and a half feet deep, in hard, frozen ground or wet Georgia clay. He has his rules: no cussing, smoking, or radio playing during the grave digging. "I treat everybody as if it's my family I'm

burying," he said. He is so respected around Chattanooga that funeral directors arrange their schedules around his availability.

So maybe it's not surprising that Johnny often finds himself in a position to lend a hand. That night at the barn dance was actually his second death-defying feat. In the '90s, a car driving in front of him veered off the highway, crashing into a flooded, freezing creek. Johnny jumped out and pulled the driver to safety. "I don't want to see somebody leave this world," Johnny says, "if I know I could have saved them."

On top of that, Johnny has been fighting his own health battles for the past four years. "Non-small cell carcinoma," Johnny says. Cancer. He has weathered two years of chemotherapy. "He's as tough as they come," says his wife, Mary Tucker.

That's why the couple spends Saturday nights at the barn dance, living it up and, frequently, closing the place down. Johnny and Mary were actually on their way out the door that night when Tim Abernathy collapsed. But then the band started playing that old Vern Gosdin song "Chiseled in Stone," the one that goes, "You don't know about lonely 'til it's chiseled in stone."

"Our song," said Johnny to Mary.

They turned around for one more slow dance. Minutes later, the gravedigger had saved another life. **R**

CONTEST

Nicest Place IN America 2017

Do you know a locale where people believe in kindness and civility—
and one another? Please tell us all about it!

*A Fourth of
July parade
in Ojai,
California*



THE IDEA FOR OUR FIRST Nicest Place in America Contest was simple: At a time when half the country seems to be unhappy with the other half, why not honor the *best* of who we are? We all know places where neighbors help one another in good times and bad and where strangers always feel welcome. We thought, Let's go on a hunt for epicenters of community spirit—and celebrate them.

To get started, we asked our exclusive Inner Circle* of loyal *RD* readers for inspiration. Not surprisingly, many folks touted the virtues of small-town life. But we also got shout-outs to cities, such as San Diego, and specific communities, such as the campus of Virginia Tech. To which we say: Great! As we open the contest, we welcome submissions of cities and towns, workplaces and community centers—any place where people are devoted to making one another's day. We've included a few Inner Circle submissions here as a guide, but don't be shy. If you know a nice place, nominate it at rd.com/nicest. The winners will be announced online and on the cover of our November issue.

*Go to tmbinnercircle.com to see if you qualify.

Ojai, California

“Two years ago, hundreds of people came together to build a new play structure in downtown Ojai. Among the volunteers: my 82-year-old parents. Dad, along with a local Eagle Scout, helped assemble the benches. Fortunately, the entire city is just as community-oriented. When Mom needed radiation for breast cancer last year, her next-door neighbors made sure she and Dad had a homemade meal almost every night for seven weeks, and a mother-daughter duo brought them nine bags of groceries to stock their pantry. People in Ojai just naturally help one another out.” **VALERIE BROWN WESTERN**



Ojai's Libbey Bowl Park

Sevier County, Tennessee

“When a wildfire ripped through more than 15,000 acres this past December, the entire community came together to help those in need. Dolly Parton, one of the area’s most famous natives, created a fund to give \$1,000 a month for up to six months to each of the families affected by the fires. And celebrations in Sevier are just as inspiring. I’ve never seen a Veterans Day quite as well attended—hundreds of locals pile into a small town square. If people look as if they need seats after the chairs are filled, others will automatically get up for them.”

JIM WHEELER

Yuma, Arizona

“With miles of farmland and two military bases nearby, Yuma is as diverse a city as any. I think that’s what makes the community so strong and kind: We’ve got life-long residents, farmworkers from Mexico, and service members from everywhere. Our community stands up for its history (volunteers raised money to save the centuries-old Yuma Territorial Prison) as well as for its people (every fall, the hospital collects school supplies for students who can’t afford them). My husband and I have moved around a lot, but we’ve never seen a place where people are so willing to donate their time.”

MARGE GELDMACHER



Danville, Virginia

“One day I drove to the bank to cash a check so I could put gas in my car. It was sweltering hot, my son was tucked in the car seat, and the tank was close to empty. When it was my turn at the bank’s drive-through window, the car broke down. The man behind me tooted his horn, and I jumped out to tell him that I was so sorry but I had run out of gas. Instead of getting impatient, he waved another guy over, and they pushed me the rest of the way to the window. I cashed my check, and they pushed the car again, this time to a spot more out of the way. None of the other people in line honked or yelled. They drove patiently around us. I still remember that act of kindness more than 20 years later.”

BETTY WELLS



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Department of Wit

How I Grew Five Mothers

BY MARC PEYSER



MARC PEYSER is the executive editor of *Reader's Digest* and coauthor of the book *Hissing Cousins*.

WHEN I TELL MY CHILDREN a story about my mother, like how she used to share her cocktails with our golden retriever, or the time she tried to eat an entire pumpkin pie off the floor after I dropped it, or when I woke up in the middle of the night and caught her making a tooth fairy delivery in the nude, the kids always ask the same thing: Which mother are you talking about, Pop?

It's a fair question. After all, I've had five mothers.

Only one of them is my biological mother, of course. (She's the tooth fairy mom, and just for the record, she says she wasn't wearing any clothes because she remembered her job only after going to bed, which she did naked, or so I learned on that I-wish-I-could-unsee-it night.) I also have a mother-in-law, aka the pumpkin-pie eater. And thanks to my dad's can-do matrimonial motto—"If at first you don't ➤➤

succeed, tie, tie the knot again”—I’ve also been the recipient of three stepmothers. That’s four wives for dear old Dad. Somehow, when they leave him, they stay attached to me. You should see all the I HEART MOM tattoos I have on my biceps.

I’m not complaining, mind you.

With multiple moms, you get multiple birthday cards and holiday presents, not to mention a deep bench of low-cost babysitters. On the other hand, you also get a bumper crop of opinions on how to raise your kids, what you should and shouldn’t eat, and where you should spend your vacation. (The answer to the last one: at *her* house—not at one of the other mothers’s.)

Having this many moms has made me something of an expert on the species, and I mean *species* in the horticultural sense. As different as my mothers are, each one’s personality bears a strong resemblance to a houseplant. (What, you never noticed that about your mother?)

For instance, one of my moms is a total gardenia. She brightens any room and smells wonderful, but she also demands precise care. She needs lots of son (me) and requires immediate adjustments if her environment turns hostile. This explains

her weekly SOS calls when she forgets her Wi-Fi password as well as her short temper with waiters, other drivers, and her cable remote. I made the mistake of teaching her how to FaceTime on her iPhone so I could lend a virtual hand when possible. Bad idea. I am now the

frequent victim of the dreaded purse dial. Purse dialing is the mom equivalent of butt dialing, only she accidentally calls you when she’s rooting around for her wallet or a tissue, usually when she’s driving with her friends. It sounds like this:

“Snarfle rumble grbrrrrr

her terrible face-lift? No wonder she rumple frizzle clank sugar daddy. Of course jingle jangle play mah-jongg. Can you drive ...” It’s no use yelling, “MOM! MOM!! I CAN HEAR YOU!!” When I’m lucky, her phone battery succumbs to an untimely death.

With one high-maintenance mom/houseplant, it’s frankly a relief to have another who is a cactus. Sure, she pricks if I get too close—no gratuitous hugs here. She has also been known to forget my birthday. On the plus side, this mom hardly ever requires a drink (thank you, Alcoholics Anonymous) and can take any heat I throw at her. When one mother gets on my nerves (see gardenia,

“
***With this many
 moms, I’ve
 become an expert
 on the species,
 and I mean that
 horticulturally.***

above), it's the stoic cactus I vent to.

Helpful in an entirely different way is my maternal dieffenbachia. Dieffenbachias literally suck impurities out of the air (get a few the next time you paint the house). True to form, my dieffenbachia mom tidies up my kitchen and does the laundry without being asked. Like Mary Poppins, she's practically perfect in every way. In fact, she's almost too good. What's the point of having a mother if you can't carp about her a little?

Without a doubt, my most entertaining mother is my Venus flytrap. She's exotic—actually, she's a show-off from her head to her toes. She used to go to a special pedicurist who would paint cartoons on her big toenails—X-rated cartoons. She thought they were hilarious; my fifth-grade teacher thought otherwise. (She would have loved Mom's naked tooth fairy trick.) My flytrap mother is naturally a die-hard carnivore, and the more unhealthy the meat, the better. If the word *nitrate* isn't on the label, she won't look at it. The last time we went grocery shopping, she loaded up her cart with hot dogs and

cold cuts. When I suggested that the low-fat options in her chosen food groups would be marginally healthier, she barked, "Over my dead body!" Perhaps those preservatives will keep *her* fresh longer too.

Lastly, there's my aloe vera mother. She kisses boo-boos and makes them better, just like aloe gel can soothe a minor sunburn. *Fussy* isn't in her vocabulary—she's happy anywhere, indoors or out. She's the perfect mom to curl up with on the couch to watch an old movie, snug under the afghan she crocheted. She also makes a mean lasagna. Flytrap mom would kill for it, which is why I never divulge one mother's culinary gifts to the others. (Oops.)

I'm tempted to note that one anagram of *aloe vera* is *love area*, but that wouldn't be fair to my other mothers. They all create maternal love areas. Some may have unusual taste in food or nail decor, but they all love me despite my own peccadilloes. So thanks, Dad. You may have dubious taste in wives, but when it comes to moms, you sure know how to pick 'em. **R**



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Lincoln Logs were patented in 1920 by John Lloyd Wright—the son of architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Source: history.com





GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO

OF LASTING
INTEREST

Sky Driver

Whether or not you agree that the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus is “the greatest show on earth,” there’s no doubt it is an American icon. Ever since Ulysses Grant was president, Ringling Bros. has served up a movable feast of performing animals, human cannonballs, and one-of-a-kind spectacles, such as this motorcycle-and-trapeze tightrope act, shown here in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1979. After 146 years, however, the show won’t go on much longer: The circus will fold its big top once and for all this spring.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
NEIL LEIFER
FROM *SPORTS*
ILLUSTRATED

Finally the author, his mother, and her two sisters set off on a road trip into the past

The Roses of Fairhope

BY RICK BRAGG

FROM THE BOOK *MY SOUTHERN JOURNEY*



RICK BRAGG
is a Pulitzer
Prize-winning
journalist and
author.

WE HAD THREATENED to do it for years. We would pack a car with cold chicken and flip-flops and drive south like we used to, till the Alabama foothills faded into souvenir shops, shrimp shacks, and that first ragged palm. They had taken me there, when men still whistled at them and WALLACE stickers papered the bumpers of cars. How could I not take them now?

But we never got out of the driveway, somehow. My aunt Edna's heart was failing. Aunt Juanita had to care for my homebound uncle, and my mother, Margaret, did not leave home unless blown from it by tornadoes or TNT. So I was stunned a few years ago when my 72-year-old mother told me to come get them. I found the three oldest sisters in the yard, suitcases in their hands. Aunt Jo, the youngest sister, stayed home to watch the livestock.

Edna barbecued 250-some-odd chicken thighs and made two gallons of potato salad for the two-day trip from Jacksonville, Alabama. They packed pork and beans, raw onions, corn bread, a jar of iced tea, a hard-frozen Clorox jug of water, and not one cell phone.

As we drove, they talked of childhood, dirt roads where the dark closed in like a lid on a box, and a daddy who chased the bad things away the second he walked in. By the time we



hit Montgomery, they had ridden a horse named Bob, poked a dead chicken named Mrs. Rearden, and fished beside a little man named Jessie Clines. They were remembering their mama and a groundhog

that lived under the floorboards as we drove across Mobile Bay.

I wanted them to see the sunset from the Fairhope pier, and as we rolled down the bluff, I heard them go quiet. But the sunset was just a light

to see by. It was the roses. They were blooming in a circle the size of a baseball infield, more than 2,000 of them, with names like Derby horses or un-realized dreams—Mr. Lincoln, Strike It Rich, Touch of Class, Crimson Glory, Lasting Love. My mother, who never even liked roses much, said, “Oh, Lord.” Juanita, tough and tiny, made of whalebone and hell, looked about to cry.

Their big sister stepped from the car as if in a trance. I had not known how sick Edna was. Her steps were unsure, halting, as she moved into the garden. The sisters moved close, in case she fell.

Aunt Edna had sewn soldiers’ clothes at the Army base, raised five girls, buried a husband, worked a red-clay garden, pieced a thousand quilts, loved on great-grandchildren, and caught more crappie than any

man I have ever known. I believed she was eternal, like the red-clay bank where she built her solid red-brick house.

“So purty,” she said again and again. She lingered in the rose garden a long time, till the sun vanished over the western shore. She saw the Fairhope roses six times on this trip. The last time, because she was tired, we sat in the car.

A year later, I spoke at her funeral. I surprised myself, blubbered like an old fool. For the first time in a long time, it mattered what

came out of my head, but the words crashed together inside my skull and I lost the fine things I wanted to say and stood stupidly in front of people who loved her.

Her daughters just hugged me, one by one, and thanked me for the roses. **R**

“

***Edna barbecued
250 chicken
thighs and made
two gallons of
potato salad for
the two-day trip.***

EXCERPTED FROM *MY SOUTHERN JOURNEY: TRUE STORIES FROM THE HEART OF THE SOUTH* BY RICK BRAGG.
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LIFE ADVICE FROM MUSICIANS

To achieve great things, two things are needed:
a plan and not quite enough time.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Do it again on the next verse, and people think you meant it.

CHET ATKINS

1. Under the coffee table. 2. In the basket. 3. To the right of the vase.
BONUS: Find the five cat-shaped objects.



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Everyday Hero

I had tears in my eyes thinking of the joy Alex Yawor must bring to families by pairing portraits of their loved ones lost in wartime. It reminds me of the I see as

Everyday Heroes

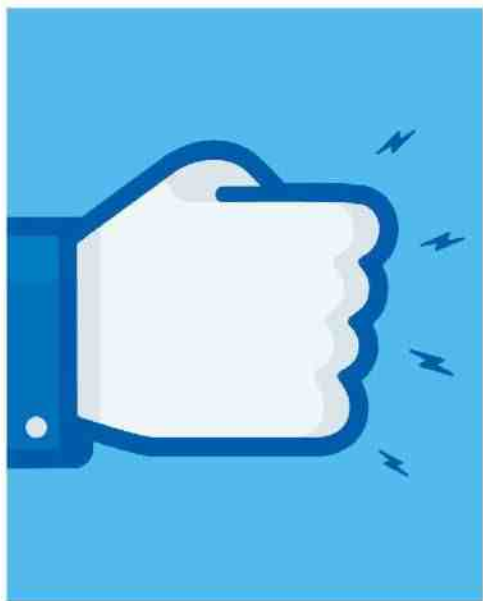
I had tears in my eyes thinking of the joy that Alex Yawor must bring to families by painting

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Do rude comments about a high school student qualify as hate speech?

The Case Of the Facebook Bully

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI

IN DECEMBER 2011, Dillion Price's mother found him crying in his bedroom. For three months, students in his class at Southern Alamance High School in North Carolina had been posting nasty comments and pictures of him on Facebook. His mom took the posts, some describing Price performing sexual acts in very crude language, to the county sheriff's office.

Soon after, a county detective, David Sykes, began to investigate. He created a fake Facebook profile to keep tabs on Price's account and monitored it for two months. When

he came across posts he considered to be cyberbullying, he took screenshots of them and added the users' names to a list, which he took with him to the high school on the morning of February 7, 2012.

It was on that day that Robert Bishop was pulled out of class to meet with Sykes in the assistant principal's office. The sophomore was shown the screenshots of Price's Facebook page, highlighting posts on which Bishop had commented, "This is excessively homoerotic in nature" and "I never got to slap him down before Christmas break." Bishop admitted he'd ➤➤

written the comments. Two days later, Sykes led the 16-year-old out of school in handcuffs. He was charged under the state's new anti-cyberbullying law, which makes it illegal to post on the Internet "private, personal, or sexual information pertaining to a minor ... [w]ith the intent to intimidate or torment" him or her.

The district court found Bishop guilty, but he appealed, arguing that the cyberbullying statute was unconstitutional because the First Amendment protects free speech, including on the Internet. Superior court judge Wayne Abernathy disagreed and, in February 2014, ordered Bishop to serve 48 months of probation and to stay off social media for a year. Bishop appealed again, but in June 2015, the state court of appeals

also upheld the sentence, arguing that the statute punished "conduct," not "speech." Bishop wasn't convicted because of what he wrote, the court said, but because he posted comments "to intimidate or torment Dillion."

Bishop appealed one more time, to the Supreme Court of North Carolina. The state's attorney, Kimberly Callahan, argued that the statute prohibits "the act of using the Internet as a weapon to inflict fear or emotional distress" on a minor: "Harassing or intimidating conduct is not protected by the First Amendment." Bishop's lawyer continued to argue that hurtful speech can't be "criminalized."

Does North Carolina's anti-cyberbullying law illegally restrict free speech? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

Yes, said the state's supreme court. Despite the three rulings to the contrary, the court overturned the state's anti-cyberbullying law and declared Bishop not guilty. The statute, the court argued, was too broad. It made it illegal to post "any information about any specific minor if done with the requisite intent," even if the student didn't "suffer injury as a result." Though Price may have felt threatened by the nasty posts, he wasn't actually threatened, which would have counted as "injury." As Justice Robin Hudson explained: "The protection of minors' mental well-being may be a compelling governmental interest, but it is hardly clear that teenagers require protection via the criminal law from online annoyance." The bottom line in North Carolina? Mean and insulting comments, like those posted by Bishop, are perfectly legal.

R

Points to Ponder

WHY DOES ANYONE GO on spring vacation? It seems odd to fly to a tropical destination at the very moment one of the great astonishments of life on Earth is taking place right at home. When friends tell me their spring-vacation plans, they mention “escape.” Really? You want to escape spring? That’s like fleeing paradise.

GEORGE BALL,
chairman and CEO of Burpee,
in the *Wall Street Journal*

GRACE IS MY FAVORITE church word. A state of being ... Something you can obtain. Perfection is out of reach. But grace—grace you can reach for.

ELIZABETH SCOTT,
author, in her book *Living Dead Girl*

WHEN I LOOK AT THE INTERNET, I feel the same as when I’m walking through Coney Island. It’s like carnival barkers, and they all sit out there and go, “Come on in here and see a three-legged man!” So you walk in, and it’s a guy with a crutch.

JON STEWART,
former host of The Daily Show, in *New York*



If you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.

DOLLY PARTON,
musician and actress, in a tweet

WORKING IN THE HOSPITAL teaches you that there are only two kinds of people in the world: the sick and the not sick. If you are not sick, shut up and help.

HOPE JAHREN,
geobiologist, in her book, *Lab Girl*

Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

IN EMERGENCY, BREAK GLASS

Somehow, while I was washing dishes, my hand got wedged in a long, narrow glass. I added more detergent. Nothing. I added oil. Still stuck. Finally, I called the fire department's non-emergency hotline for tips to free my hand. "We'll probably have to cut the glass," the fireman explained. I lived in a small town where excitement was rare. Soon 27 bored volunteer first responders descended upon my tiny apartment. They pulled straws over who would get to use their new cutting device. At last, I was free—and also likely the talk of the town.

KATHLEEN GEMMELL,
New Milford, Connecticut

DOUBLE DUTY

My twin brother and I worked as Morderlies on the same hospital floor. I prepared patients for surgery in one wing, and he received them in recovery in another. One day, a surgeon passed our table during break and stopped dead in his tracks. "That explains it!" he said. "I couldn't for



the life of me see how I could walk out of one room where this guy was loading a patient, then walk down the hall and find him unloading one! Someone needed a raise!" As fate would have it, our paychecks remained the same.

DALE DEATON, *Quinter, Kansas*

DON'T TELL PAPA

After having a brand-new car for all of one day, I came home from shopping with a fender bender. I told my three-year-old granddaughter, Landree, not to tell Papa. Soon, here comes Papa—he had clearly looked in the garage. Not saying anything, he went back downstairs to his man cave. I asked Landree if she had told Papa on me. "No, I didn't, Gigi!" she said emphatically. "Well, what did you tell him?" I asked. "I told him three times, 'Whatever you do, DON'T look in the garage, Papa!'" she said.

DIANNE KREICK, *Lincoln, Nebraska*

To read more 100-word stories and to submit your own, go to rd.com/stories. If your story is selected for publication in the magazine, we'll pay you \$100.

“When I was young,
zip & tang was
all the craze”



OLD - IS - NEW

Miracle Whip is bringing back your favorite gold standard recipe
made with real eggs, oil, and spices for that one of a kind taste.



FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My loved ones

Friday Harbor, WA

A people person.

I can talk to a stranger as easily
as a close friend.

NANCY HAYES-NOREAU

**A bull in a
china shop.**

I was an active child. Every
week, I knocked over
something—or someone.

DALE HARDY

**Embarrassingly
goofy,**

but my children secretly
enjoy this side of me.

DEB KOEPLIN

Parker, CO

Nagging.

Trying to get teenagers to do
chores is almost impossible!

KAROL HOLTZ

**Incredibly dense
sometimes.**

PAUL MCKELVEY

Cedar Park, TX

would describe me as ...

Catlike.

I get just as excited as my kitten does when we see birds and chipmunks from the window.

MARGARET STOOKSBERRY

A boy

dressed in an adult male's body.

RICH MARCELLO

A good egg—

strong on the outside, but breaks easily and a real softy on the inside.

LORRIE GAUDET LANGTON

Spontaneous.

It drives my daughter crazy when I leave the house without an itinerary.

BILLIE CLECKLER

Young.


I'm 67, and my husband, who is eight years my junior, calls me his little girl.

KAREN HARDY

Persistent.

I am 58 and still going to school to finish a PhD.

TERESA SPITZER

 *Go to facebook.com/readersdigest or join our Inner Circle Community at tmbinnercircle.com for the chance to finish the next sentence.*

IS YOUR BLADDER ALWAYS DISRUPTING YOUR DAY?

Ask your doctor about Myrbetriq® (mirabegron), the first and only overactive bladder (OAB) treatment in its class. Myrbetriq treats OAB symptoms of urgency, frequency, and leakage in adults.

In clinical trials, those taking Myrbetriq made fewer trips to the bathroom and had fewer leaks than those not taking Myrbetriq. Your results may vary.



You may be able to get your first prescription at no cost with Momentum.* Visit Myrbetriq.com.

USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder (OAB) with symptoms of urgency, frequency, and leakage.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Myrbetriq is not for everyone. Do not use Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any ingredients in Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.

Please see additional Important Safety Information on next page.

*Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply.



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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

Myrbetriq may cause allergic reactions that may be serious. If you experience swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue, with or without difficulty breathing, stop taking Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril™ and Mellaril-S™), flecainide (Tambacor®), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®). Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection, constipation, diarrhea, dizziness, and headache.

For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional and see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) on the following pages.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

 **Myrbetriq®**
(mirabegron)
extended-release tablets
25 mg, 50 mg



Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for **adults** used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called **overactive bladder**:

- urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

Who should not use Myrbetriq?

Do not use Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any of the ingredients in Myrbetriq. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in Myrbetriq.

What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you:

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take Myrbetriq or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-S™)
- flecainide (Tambocor®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)

How should I take Myrbetriq?

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not crush or chew the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.

- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.
- **angioedema.** Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

The **most common side effects** of Myrbetriq include:

- increased blood pressure
- common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)
- urinary tract infection
- constipation
- diarrhea
- dizziness
- headache

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store Myrbetriq?

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

Where can I go for more information?

This is a summary of the most important information about Myrbetriq. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit www.Myrbetriq.com or call (800) 727-7003.

What are the ingredients in Myrbetriq?

Active ingredient: mirabegron

Inactive ingredients: polyethylene oxide, polyethylene glycol, hydroxypropyl cellulose, butylated hydroxytoluene, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, yellow ferric oxide and red ferric oxide (25 mg Myrbetriq tablet only).

Rx Only

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 **Myrbetriq®**
(mirabegron)
extended release tablets
25 mg, 50 mg

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Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



"He's an indoor cat."

OUR FRIEND and her four-year-old son were standing in line at a fast-food restaurant when in walked a man covered in tattoos. The boy turned to him and said, "Looks like somebody got into the markers."

KENDALL J. BARROWES, *Spanish Fork, Utah*

ONE OF MY BIGGEST FEARS is that I'll marry into a family that runs 5Ks on holidays.

@XNATATA (NATALIA SKRODZKI)

I TEXTED MY HUSBAND to tell him that I'd be out of touch for a bit since I planned to color my hair. Thanks to autocorrect, here's what he read: "After I finish my cup of coffee, I am going to die. You may not be able to reach me while I'm in the midst of that."

KRISTINE BINACO, *Fair Haven, New Jersey*

DURING MY ANNUAL CHECKUP, the technician took blood from my right

arm. When she was done, she began taking blood from my left arm.

“Excuse me, were you not able to get what you need from my right arm?” I asked.

“Oh no, we got plenty,” said the nurse in charge. “The tech is a trainee and needs the practice.”

RAYMOND BREAU, Palm Bay, Florida

HAVING A BAD DAY? It could be worse:

■ Today I finished a 700-page book for my law exam. It was the wrong book.

■ Today I went to a McDonald’s drive-through in just a shirt and underwear, thinking I wouldn’t be seeing anyone. I got into a car crash.

■ Today I broke my nose by falling on the cast I have on my arm.

■ Today at a rock concert, a bunch of guys accidentally knocked down a porta-potty while moshing. I was inside that porta-potty.

Source: fmylife.com

MY SISTER TRIED ON my brother’s new eyeglasses and asked how she looked.

“Very astute,” I replied.

Annoyed, she shot back, “I think I look intelligent!”

SUSAN SHAFER, Salt Lake City, Utah

JUST SAW LUKE PERRY on the cover of the AARP magazine, in case they ask for my cause of death.

🐦 @GOLDENGATEBLOND (SHAUNA)



CHECK!

Dining out tonight? Choose your restaurant carefully. These are real reviews from Zagat.

- “‘Breaking bread’ should not mean you have to use the side of the table.”
- “I thought I was looking at an oil painting when suddenly it moved. It was my waitress.”
- “The only way the tables could be closer together would be to stack them.”
- “The duck was tired, tough, and took 90 minutes to arrive. It must have had a long flight.”
- “Primary attraction was the small wildlife wandering across the table.”
- “The chef keeps renaming and relocating the restaurant like it’s a member of the Federal Witness Protection Program.”
- “The waiter repeatedly called my aging parents ‘coach’ and ‘darling.’”
- “Overpriced and undergod.”

Got a funny story about friends or family? It could be worth \$\$\$\$. For details, see page 7 or go to rd.com/submit.



“Bye, bye, frequent heartburn.”

BECKY LONDON, ACTUAL PRILLOSEC OTC USER



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FOR **10** STRAIGHT YEARS AND
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ONE PILL EACH MORNING. 24 HOURS. ZERO HEARTBURN*

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ART *of* LIVING

When You're Away, The Cats And Dogs Will Play

BY ELIZABETH HAMES

🌀 PET OWNERS may wish they could cuddle with their furry companions all day, but someone's got to work to bring home the kibble. These tips should help keep your four-legged charges happy while they're alone, which will make coming home to them all the sweeter. ➡➡



Sweat So They Slumber

Most cats and some dogs are happy to sleep all day, but puppies and some energetic breeds (such as border collies and huskies) were born to run. Help your pooch burn off nervous energy with a 30- to 60-minute walk before you leave.

Chat Them Up

While you're at work, you can supervise your furry friend via an indoor security camera. You can also video chat over Skype (seriously!) by setting up an account for your pet, enabling the auto-answer feature, and leaving your home computer on.

Play Mind Games

Even the most docile pet can gnaw out of boredom or separation anxiety. Put biscuits in a Kong or other feeding toy that a dog needs to chew, bang, or spin just the right way to access the treats. Indoor cats will enjoy toys that tap into their wild instincts, such as a noisy crinkle ball.

Contain, Don't Crate

Nature calls for young dogs every half hour, but resist cooping your canine up in a crate, which can lead to behavior problems from lack of exercise and socialization. Instead, keep him or her in a small area, such as a laundry room, with access to food, water, toys, and a corner covered with newspapers.

Find a Room with a View

Arrange a perch where your dog or cat can look out the window. If you have an enclosed yard where it's safe for your furry friends to roam, install a pet door to allow them to go out as they please.

Track Their Steps

GPS collars, which text you if your pet leaves a designated safe zone, are especially important for animals that have access to the outdoors. Most also function as activity trackers, so you can tell how much exercise your dog is getting during the day. **R**



RULES OF THE ROAD TRIP

It doesn't matter how old you get; buying snacks for a road trip should always look like an unsupervised nine-year-old was given \$100.

@LISAXY424 (BANANAFANAFOFISA)

The whole purpose of travel is to return home and discover what your house actually smells like.

@BAZECRAZE (ALEX BAZE)



DOGS WON'T QUIT AND NEITHER WILL FRONTLINE® GOLD

The latest innovation in FRONTLINE flea and tick protection. FRONTLINE Gold's triple action formula makes it relentless at killing fleas and ticks. With an easy-to-use applicator, it delivers powerful protection that keeps working just as hard for up to 30 days.¹ Available at your vet. Learn more at FRONTLINE.com/Gold



GO FOR THE GOLD



1. Data on file at Merial. ©FRONTLINE is a registered trademark of Merial. ©2017 Merial Inc., Duluth, GA. All rights reserved. Merial is now part of Boehringer Ingelheim. FrontlineGold_2016Print (07/2016)

Avoid paying overage fees
with these easy tricks

Conserve Your Cell Data (and Your Money)

BY MORGAN CUTOLO

Limit the Updates

Apps are very thoughtful: They are constantly refreshing themselves to give you the most recent information available. But all that updating uses data, so if you don't need up-to-the-second weather reports or stock quotes, turn auto-refresh off for select apps. **IOS:** Go to Settings > General > Background App Refresh. **ANDROID*:** Go to Settings > Data Usage. Scroll down to the appropriate app and choose Restrict App Background Data.

Always Search with Wi-Fi


Your phone may automatically use your cellular data when the Wi-Fi signal is weak—a handy feature, but not necessarily one you want to use all the time. You can stop your phone from making that switch. **IOS:** To disable, go to Settings > Cellular. Then turn off Wi-Fi Assist. **ANDROID*:** Unlike on the iPhone, this setting is



not turned on automatically. If the Wi-Fi signal is poor, you will be notified that you can turn it on. When you want to turn it off again, from the home screen, go to Settings > Wi-Fi > Advanced > Auto Network Switch/

Smart Network Switch.

Disable Data-Sucking Apps

Another way to put your phone on a data diet: Turn off cellular data for any apps you don't use often so they'll update only when you are connected to Wi-Fi. For streaming services such as Spotify, Netflix, and Pandora, download the music or show before you're away from Wi-Fi. **IOS:** Go to Settings > Cellular. Then under Use Cellular Data For, switch relevant apps to off. **ANDROID*:** Go to Settings > Data Usage. Scroll down to see apps sorted by how much data they use, and disable the ones that are high. 



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GOOD TO THE LAST DROP

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ROAST

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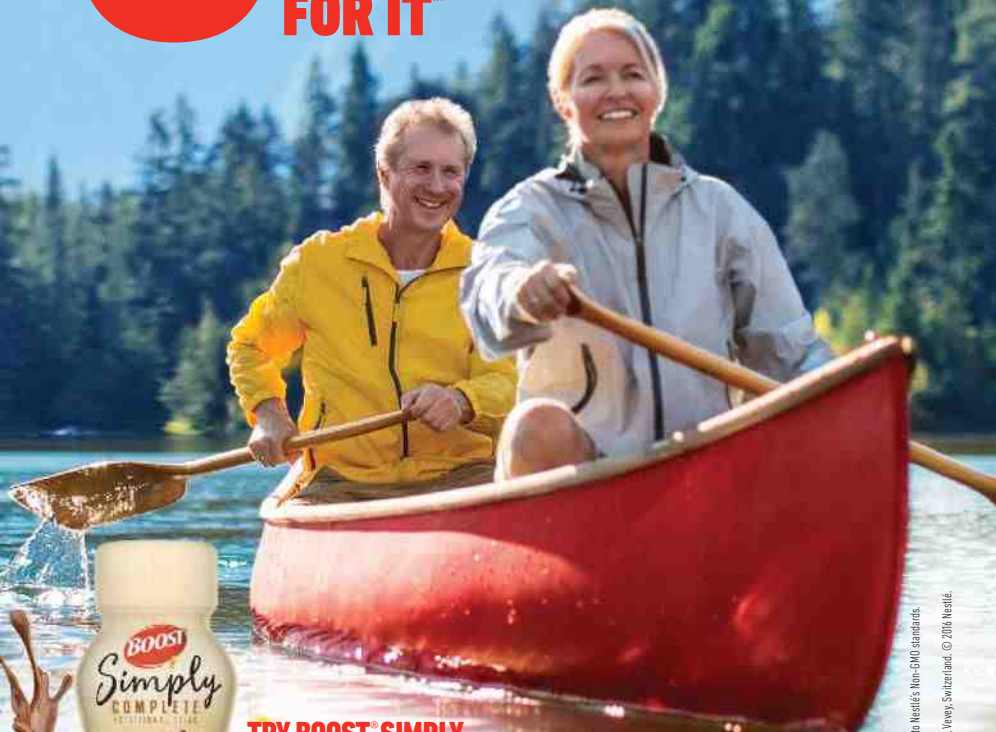
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When the heat is on at work, these tips can help

Office De-stress Ideas

BY DEBRA L. GORDON AND DAVID L. KATZ, MD,
FROM THE BOOK *STEALTH HEALTH*

Schedule Worry Time

Close your office door or go to an empty conference room and focus on what is stressing you. Divide a sheet of paper into three columns: My Worry, Why It Worries Me, Worst Thing That Could Happen. Once you confront the worst thing that could possibly happen—and realize that it's highly unlikely it ever *will*

happen—you can get back to work with your worry load lightened.

Keep a Vacation File

This could be a physical or electronic file that you fill with pictures of places you'd like to visit. When you're feeling stressed, sneak a peek. It will remind you of one reason you're working and open a virtual escape route.

Loosen Up with This Exercise

Stand against a wall, and then slide down it as if you were sitting in a chair. Stay there for as long as you can without looking down. (Don't worry if it's for only a few seconds.) Breathe deeply (in through your nose, out through your mouth), and focus on one peaceful thought (waves crashing on the shore, a glass of wine by a roaring fire—or your boss leaving on an extended vacation). Press your feet into the ground as you hold this position and picture the stress oozing out of your body. After you stand up, shake out your arms and legs and return to work refreshed.

Rub a Drop of Lavender Oil On Your Inner Wrist

The aroma of lavender is a known relaxant. Close your eyes, hold your wrist up to your nose, and sniff deeply. You can even try picturing yourself in a field of lavender, the purple stalks waving in the breeze—in Provence.

Take Control of Your E-mail

A survey by Canadian researchers found that many workers spend more than an hour a day on e-mail.

To cope, use the rule of three: If you've gone back and forth three times on a topic with a coworker and you're still confused or have questions, pick up the phone.

Deal Directly with Difficult Workplace Relationships

“Toxic” people can be annoying—and draining. After a negative encounter, try this direct, honest, and disarming approach: “I am finding our interactions stressful because of [blank] and am feeling bad about [blank]. I would like our working relationship to improve. What

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suggestions do you have for me?” Even if you feel that the other person is the one who should change, by asking for his or her suggestions, you avoid putting that person on the defensive. If your colleague is even a little bit reasonable, this might make him or her admit, “Well, I suppose there are some changes I could make too.”

Read a Poem Out Loud

The cadence, words, and images will soothe your soul. Not into poetry? If you're religious, try reading a psalm or another sacred writing. If you love music, listen to a few of your favorite songs.

Draw

Seriously. Grab a pencil and sketch the stress triggers around you, doodle something peaceful or funny—such as a caricature of the office villain—or reap the calming benefits of an adult coloring book. Using another part of your brain and focusing on something outside the chaos can provide a much-needed break.


Make True Work Friends

Studies find that if you believe your supervisor and coworkers care about you, your blood pressure will be lower during the day and will surge less in those sometimes stressful work moments.

Eat Peppermint Chocolate

Treat yourself now and again to some peppermint chocolate—preferably dark chocolate. The chocolate itself is stress relieving, the peppermint provides a burst of minty energy, and the tiny sugar rush might be just enough to get you over the hump.

Examine Your Real Feelings

If you love what you do, work stress will be far less damaging than if you don't. But if you hate your job, it's time to explore other options. Spend a few minutes each evening rewriting your résumé, researching other job options, or making a list of potential new employers. The feeling of empowerment can help you handle the stress at your current job. 

Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I'm winning the battle for **Bladder Control.**



Frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom, embarrassing leaks and the inconvenience of constantly searching for rest rooms in public – for years, I struggled with bladder control problems.

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When I first saw the ad for BetterWOMAN, I was skeptical. So many products claim they can set you free from leaks, frequency and worry, only to deliver disappointment. When I finally tried BetterWOMAN, I found that it actually works! It changed my life. Even my friends have noticed that I'm a new person. And because it's all natural, I can enjoy the results without the worry of dangerous side effects. Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I finally fought bladder control problems and I won!



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“I’ve Come to Clean Your Shoes”

What does someone who has suffered a sudden trauma and grief most need?



BY MADGE HARRAH FROM THE BOOK *ON CHILDREN AND DEATH*

STILL IN SHOCK, I stumbled about the house trying to decide what to put into the suitcases. Earlier that evening, I’d received a call from my hometown in Missouri telling me that my brother, his wife, her sister, and both the sister’s children had been killed in a car crash. “Come as

soon as you can,” begged my mother.

That’s what I wanted to do—to leave at once, to hurry to my parents. But my husband, Larry, and I were in the midst of packing all our belongings to move from Ohio to New Mexico. Our house was in total confusion. Some of the clothes that Larry and I and our two young children, Eric and Meghan, would need were already taped up in cartons. Which ones? Stunned by grief, I couldn’t remember. Other clothes lay unwashed in a pile on the laundry-room floor. Supper dishes still sat on the kitchen table. Toys were strewn everywhere.

While Larry made plane reservations for the following morning, I wandered about the house, aimlessly picking things up and putting them down. I couldn't focus. Again and again, the words I'd heard on the phone echoed through my head: "Bill is gone—Marilyn too. June—and both the children ..."

It was as though the message had muffled my brain with cotton. Whenever Larry spoke, he sounded far away. As I moved through the house, I ran into doors and tripped over chairs.

Larry made arrangements for us to leave by seven o'clock the next morning. Then he phoned a few friends to tell them what had happened. Occasionally, someone asked to speak to me. "If there's anything I can do, let me know," that person would offer kindly.

"Thank you very much," I'd reply. But I didn't know what to ask for. I couldn't concentrate.

I sat in a chair, staring into space, while Larry called Donna King, the woman with whom I taught a nursery class at church each Sunday. Donna and I were casual friends, but we didn't see each other often. She and Emerson, her thin, quiet husband, were kept busy during the week by their own "nursery"—six children ranging in age from two to

fifteen. I was glad Larry had thought to warn her that she'd have the nursery class alone the coming Sunday.

While I sat there, Meghan darted by, clutching a ball. Eric chased after her. They should be in bed, I thought. I followed them into the living room. My legs dragged. My hands felt gloved with lead. I sank down on the couch in a stupor.

When the doorbell rang, I rose slowly and crept across the room. I opened the door to see Emerson King standing on the porch.

"I've come to clean your shoes," he said.

Confused, I asked him to repeat.

"Donna had to stay with the baby," he said, "but we want to help you. I remember when my father died, it took me hours to get the children's shoes cleaned and shined for the funeral. So that's what I've come to do for you. Give me your shoes—not just your good shoes, but all your shoes."

I hadn't even thought about shoes until he mentioned them. Now I remembered that Eric had left the sidewalk to wade through the mud in his good shoes after church the previous Sunday. Not to be outdone by her brother, Meghan had kicked rocks, scuffing the toes of her shoes. When we'd returned, I'd tossed them into the laundry room to clean later.

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While Emerson spread newspapers on the kitchen floor, I gathered Larry's dress and everyday shoes, my heels, my flats, the children's dirty dress shoes, and their sneakers with the food spots. Emerson found a pan and filled it with soapy water. He got an old knife out of a drawer and retrieved a sponge from under the sink. Larry had to rummage through several cartons, but at last he located the shoe polish.

Emerson settled himself on the floor and got to work. Watching him concentrate intently on one task helped me pull my own thoughts into order.

Laundry first, I told myself. As the washer chugged, Larry and I bathed the children and put them to bed.

While we cleared the supper dishes, Emerson continued to work, saying nothing. I thought of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Our Lord had knelt, serving his friends, even as this man now knelt, serving us. The love in the act released my tears at last, healing rain to wash the fog from my mind. I could move. I could think. I could get on with the business of living.

One by one, the jobs fell into place. I went into the laundry room to put a

load of wash into the dryer, returning to the kitchen to find that Emerson had left. In a line against one wall stood all our shoes, gleaming, spotless. Later, when I started to pack, I saw that Emerson had even scrubbed the soles. I could put the shoes directly into the suitcases.



*Jesus had
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We got to bed late and rose very early, but by the time we left for the airport, all the jobs had been done. Ahead lay grim, sad days, but the comfort of Christ's presence, symbolized by the image of a quiet man kneeling on my kitchen floor with a pan of water, would sustain me.

Now whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I no longer call with the vague offer, "If there's anything I can do ..." Instead I try to think of one specific task that suits that person's need—such as washing the family car, taking the dog to the boarding kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says to me, "How did you know I needed that done?" I reply, "It's because a man once cleaned my shoes." R

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When we forage on the edges of our town's sprawl, my family discovers not only incredible edibles but also timeless joy

Where the Wild Things Are In the Suburbs

BY ELIZABETH BASTOS
FROM THE *WASHINGTON POST*

I LIVE in a landscape of strip malls. In these increasingly ever-present and very American places, it's challenging to feel connected to the land.

I wanted dirt for my children. Soil. Connection. Madre Tierra. Ecology.

I'm not crunchy. I don't wear a nut bag around my neck; I don't wear hemp shoes. I'm a classic

Bobbi-Brown-lip-gloss- and cardigan-wearing suburban mom.

But I grew up spending summers at my grandparents' farm, on the eastern shore of Maryland. I used to pick wild blackberries, catch a dinner of blue crabs, and run between the rows of the tall corn plants. I knew what wild garlic looked like; when the figs on the fig trees were ready ➤



THE TASTE OF APPLES AND STRAWBERRIES.
THE GREATEST COMBINATION SINCE
"HECK" MET "YEAH."



to eat, I ate them. I delicately picked flowers from the honeysuckle vine and sucked the nectar out. I've taught my kids to do the same. "It's so sweet, Mom," they tell me.

But instead of teaching my kids about that landscape, I decided to instill in them a love of the land where they live. Suburbia is not as obviously lovable as tidewater country, but I was determined to practice PBL—place-based learning. That's a thing in education. I looked it up.

So we went to the abandoned parking lot near the dead mall and foraged for dandelion greens, which make a delicious bitter spring salad.

We dug with sticks in the wheel ruts of the road being paved for a Wegmans grocery store. My ten-year-old found a hunk of feldspar. That inspired him to start a rock collection. "This is cool, Mom," he said. "Feldspar." My maternal heart grew an inch.


It wasn't a stretch to capitalize on my children's instincts to explore their world and to eat from it. They inherited both from early man. So I've been teaching them to forage, the way my mother taught me and her mother taught her, all the way back to my ancestral people, the old-country mushroom hunters of Alsace.

In the fall, I took my kids to stands of chestnut trees and showed them how to wrest the edible nuts from their prickly husks. We came home with full bags, and I made sweet chestnut puree, which we ate with a big spoon, like a homemade Nutella. I felt that I had taught them some big

lesson about the earth. The beauty of it. That it, rather than Target, sustains them. That they should have appreciation for all the parts of the living soil.

Recently the goal has been to find wild chives, which grow along roadsides. And to try the berries of the dogwood trees; I read in my wild-

edibles field guide that they taste like mango. We're waiting for the mulberry seeds dropped by birds to take root in the interstices of the asphalt and overwhelm the abandoned parking lot at the mall, because I have a good recipe for mulberry ice cream, passed down by my grandmother.

It has been revolutionary to be outside, in the suburbs. We have embraced simply walking, observing, feeling the dirt under our feet, and occasionally bringing home something we harvested with our own hands. Those spring chives made a great garnish, and the kids beamed with pride of place. 

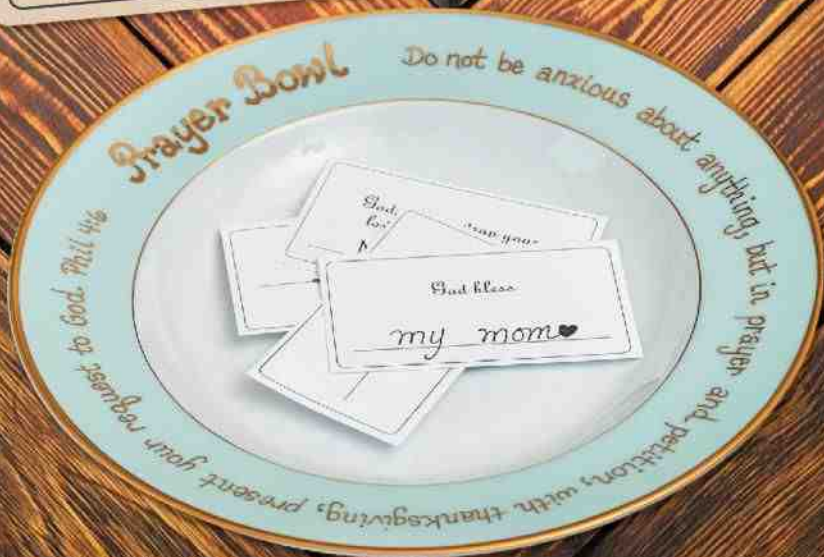
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Want to collect ingredients for a dandelion salad? Check out your local parking lot.

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The Gift of Prayer

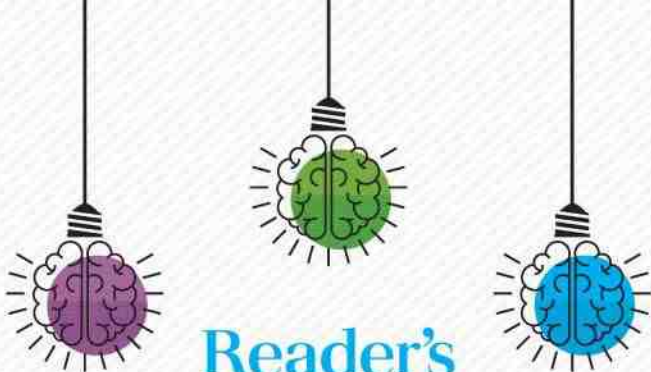
A few years ago, I was extremely sick. One day a woman named Angie, whom I never met before, told me that she had prayed for me daily for over a year. She went on to say that she kept a prayer bowl, and each day, she'd ask the Lord's blessing on the people who were in need at that time.

Shortly after, PrayerBowls were born.
Karen, Founder, PrayerBowls



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World of Medicine

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

Yo-Yo Dieting May Be Hard on the Heart

A study of 158,063 postmenopausal women found that repeatedly losing and regaining weight raised the risk of sudden cardiac death more than threefold among the subjects who started at a “normal” weight (which usually means a body mass index between 18.5 and 24.9). Wild fluctuations in blood sugar, blood pressure, and other cardiovascular factors might explain the added strain on the circulatory system. No surprise on the takeaway: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that most women stick with 1,600 to 2,400 calories per day, depending on weight and activity level.

Dangers of Drowsy Driving

Drivers who are running on less than five hours of sleep are just as dangerous as drunk drivers, statistically speaking, according to a study by the American Automobile Association



(AAA). Almost as scary: Driving when you’ve missed only an hour or two of sleep the night before nearly doubles your crash risk. AAA notes that long trips call for extra precautions against drowsiness, such as avoiding heavy foods beforehand and scheduling lots of breaks.

Mental Health Can Affect Cancer Treatment

Clinically depressed patients may not respond as well to chemotherapy as nondepressed people do, and a Chinese study found a possible explanation. Depression sufferers had lower levels of a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) in their blood. This protein seems to boost the number of tumor cells killed. The researchers’ next goal is to see whether antidepressants help people with low BDNF fight cancer better. With or without a depression medication, cancer patients are advised to look after their emotional well-being—for example, by seeing a counselor or reducing stress.

Inactivity and Dementia Risk

Yet another reason to get off the couch: People who don't exercise regularly are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's as those who exercise three or more times per week—the same dementia risk faced by carriers of the apolipoprotein E (APOE) e4 gene, according to a Canadian study of 1,646 older adults. Unfortunately, physical activity doesn't seem to have the same protective effect for APOE e4 carriers as it does for noncarriers, but together with a healthy lifestyle, exercise can help them slow the progress of their symptoms.

New Drug Attacks Root Cause of Multiple Sclerosis

More than two million people worldwide have multiple sclerosis, a disease in which the immune system attacks the central nervous system, including the brain. Ocrelizumab, a new medication that has just completed its FDA trials, takes aim directly at the misbehaving immune system, resulting in fewer relapses and fewer signs of new brain damage compared with the current standard treatment. It's also the first drug shown to slow down primary progressive multiple sclerosis, one of the disease's two forms. However, it may make patients more vulnerable to herpes viruses.

Heartburn Drugs Linked to Childhood Asthma

Many pregnant women are all too familiar with acid reflux, which can be caused by hormonal changes as well as the growing womb pressing against the stomach. However, while H2 blockers (such as Pepcid and Zantac) or proton pump inhibitors (such as Nexium and Prilosec) will relieve the burn, they might also affect the fetus's immune system in a way that could lead to asthma and allergies. A review of eight previous studies found that rates of doctor visits for asthma symptoms were one third higher among kids whose moms had taken these pills during pregnancy. The link isn't conclusive, but to be safe, mothers-to-be may prefer to rely on antacids (such as Rolaids and Tums) instead.

Hypertension Limit Raised For Healthy Seniors

Not long ago, a systolic blood pressure reading higher than 140 mm Hg would likely land you on medication. Now if you're over 60 and otherwise in good health, your doctor may not prescribe anything unless it pushes past 150 mm Hg. New guidelines from the American College of Physicians and the American Academy of Family Physicians say that below that limit, drug therapy for hypertension isn't worth the side effects and potential complications—unless you carry a higher-than-average risk of developing high blood pressure. **R**

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ALL IN

A Day's Work



"No, I don't need a home equity loan, but I AM curious to know how you were able to reach me on my stethoscope."

MY FRIEND, a county public health nurse, was reviewing a student's medical records when she noticed something: The girl and her mother shared the same first name.

"Doesn't that ever get confusing?" my friend asked.

"Oh no," the girl said. "I just call her Mom."

BETH NELSON, *Clear Lake, Wisconsin*

OVERHEARD ON THE JOB

Boss to line worker: I need you to do such and such.

Line worker: You didn't say the *p* word.

Boss: Paycheck.

Source: thechive.com

OUR UTILITY CUSTOMERS often don't understand the intricacies of their bills. Recently, a man called asking how much he owed.

“Actually,” I said, “you have a credit for \$98.70.”

“So that means that I am ahead on my bill?” he asked.

“That’s right!”

After a pause, he asked, “And when is that due?”

TIFFANY JEW, *St. Louis, Missouri*

THE FIRST OF THE MONTH has come and gone. Here are responses tenants gave their landlords after not paying the rent on time:

■ “I didn’t pay the rent because I’m saving up to move.”

■ “Oh, come on. You’re gonna harass me on Valentine’s Day?”

■ “My last landlord had no problem with me paying late. This seems to be a real big issue with you.”

■ “Well, if I wasn’t late with the rent, you’d never come to see me.”

■ “I’m getting real tired of paying this rent every month. You’ll just have to wait.”

Source: the Landlord Protection Agency (thelpa.com)

I’D RECENTLY WRITTEN an academic book, which my six-year-old son asked to see. I handed him a copy, and he carefully examined the pages. When he was done, he closed the book and, looking perplexed, asked, “Dad, do you understand any of this?” **TANNI HAAS**, *New York, New York*

Anything funny happen to you at work lately? It could be worth \$\$\$.

For details, see page 7 or go to rd.com/submit.



BOOK NOOK KOOKS

Jerry Seinfeld once said, “A bookstore is one of the only pieces of physical evidence we have that people are still thinking.” These bookstore employees might disagree.

A customer said she was looking for a book. She couldn’t remember the title, author, or plot. “But,” she said, “the cover is red.”

Submitted by **JULIA SCHORR**, via Facebook

I was at the information desk when a customer said, “Hi, you have a phone call for me?”

“I beg your pardon?” I said.

“Over the intercom—I heard it! You said, ‘Mike, you have a phone call on line one!’”

“Sir, that’s our store manager’s name. We were letting him know he had a phone call.”

The customer walked away very disappointed. Source: notalwaysright.com

We received a letter from a woman who wanted us to know that she had placed her father’s ashes in various nooks and crannies throughout our poetry room. She said it was her father’s favorite place in the world and she was comforted by knowing he was there.

From *Footnotes from the World’s Greatest Bookstores* by Bob Eckstein

A French study showed that listening to relaxing music before surgery was more effective at reducing anxiety than a sedative medication.

There's an old saying: "It's not about adding years to your life but adding life to your years." So how *can* you feel—and look—younger at any age? Read on for the experts' top findings.

Words
To Live
(Longer & Better)
By

BY ANDREA AU LEVITT

HAND LETTERING BY JOEL HOLLAND

Grip. According to a 25-year study of more than 6,000 men age 45 through 68, grip strength was the best predictor of how well they'd avoid being incapacitated later in life. The weakest-gripping men suffered twice the disabilities those with hands of steel did. In a separate study of nearly 140,000 men and women, poor grip strength correlated with a higher incidence of death, especially from cardiovascular disease.

Surf. In a small study of people age 55 to 76, those who carried out a series of Web searches showed increased activity in regions of the brain that control reading, language, memory, and visual ability. Regular Web surfers showed a significant boost in the areas that deal with decision making and complex reasoning.

Breakfast. Harvard University scientists tracked more than

367,000 older adults for an average of 14 years and found that those who ate the most cereal fiber had a 19 percent lower risk of death from any cause than those who ate the least. Most notably, people who ate the most cereal fiber were 34 percent less likely to die from diabetes. Cereal fiber is found in cereal, whole-wheat bread, barley, and bran.

Read. Researchers in Britain asked participants who were feeling stressed to engage in various activities, including reading, listening to music, having a cup of tea or coffee, and taking a walk. Reading reduced stress levels and heart rates by 68 percent, the most significant effect of any item on the list. (The least effective: video games.)

Adapt. One lesson of *Hamlet*: Learn to weather “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” if you want to

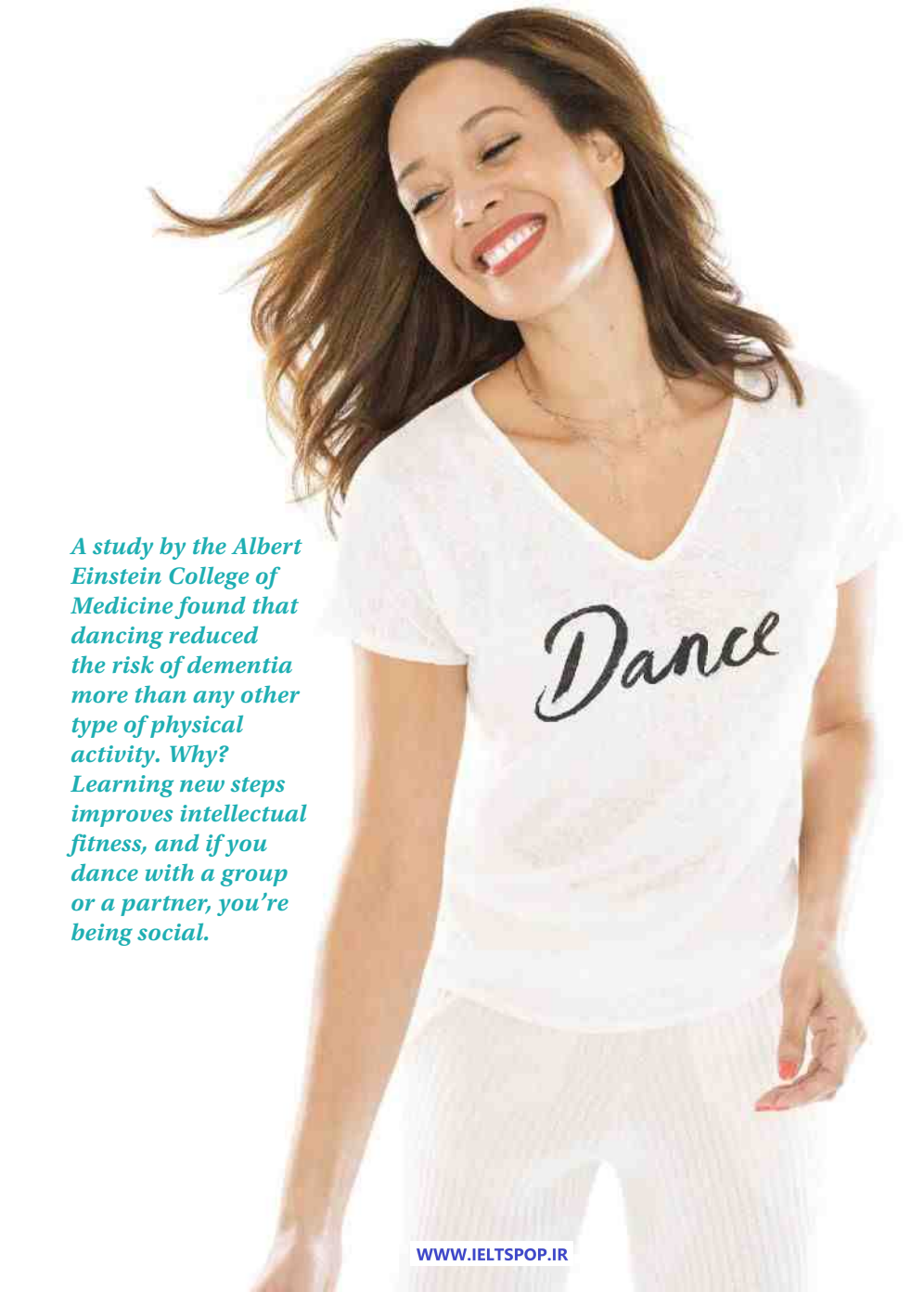
live to a ripe old age. A Harvard study came to the same conclusion: Less than 2 percent of men who were observed exhibiting “psychological hardiness”—mental resilience in the face of stress, anxiety, and depression—died before they were 53. In the less resilient group, 37 percent died by that age.

Socialize. Lonely people have a 14 percent greater risk of dying than the average person, twice the death risk associated with obesity. A University of North Carolina study specifically found that social isolation increases hypertension even more than diabetes does. Related research links loneliness to a weakened immune system and higher risk of heart attack, stroke, and depression.

Onions. Older women who ate onions every day had a 5 percent greater bone density than those who ate

When you want dessert, take a bite or two of the good stuff. Susan B. Roberts, coauthor of a Tufts University study on cravings, finds that people who manage their weight best happily succumb at times.



A woman with long, wavy brown hair is smiling and looking down and to the left. She is wearing a white V-neck t-shirt with the word "Dance" written in a black, cursive font across the chest. She is also wearing white, ribbed leggings. The background is plain white.

A study by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine found that dancing reduced the risk of dementia more than any other type of physical activity. Why? Learning new steps improves intellectual fitness, and if you dance with a group or a partner, you're being social.

them once a month or less, according to researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina. They also decreased their risk of a hip fracture by more than 20 percent.

Belt. It may sound illogical, but if you have a less-than-flat tummy, your best tactic is to have a belt cut across it—not too high (looks old), not too low (sloppy), but smack through the middle. “It creates a shorter torso and a longer leg line,” explains Stacy London, who cohosted TLC’s show *What Not to Wear*, “which makes you look taller and leaner.”

Memories. Loyola University researchers discovered that recalling good memories for just 20 minutes a day can make people feel more cheerful than they did the week before, reported *Psychology Today*. “There’s a magic and mystery in positive

events,” psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky, PhD, told the magazine.

Posterior. Staying trim and fit is key to a long and healthy life. But an Oxford University review found that people with bigger butts (the proverbial pear shape) generally had lower levels of cholesterol and blood sugar and may be less likely to develop diabetes or heart disease than those who carried their extra weight around the stomach (apple shape). More research needs to be done to prove a protective effect, but scientists have observed that fat on the lower body secretes fewer inflammatory substances than abdominal fat does.

Howl. With laughter, that is. Michael Miller, MD, wrote in his book *Heal Your Heart* that when he and his colleagues asked 20 people to watch a clip from *Saving Private Ryan*, *Kingpin*, *Shallow*

Hal, or *There’s Something About Mary*, they found that participants’ blood vessels narrowed by up to 50 percent during the stress-inducing clips, while vessel dilation in people who watched a funny clip increased 22 percent. “After just 15 minutes of laughing, volunteers got the same vascular benefit as they would from spending 15 to 30 minutes at the gym or taking a daily statin,” wrote Dr. Miller.

Apricot. The fruit can benefit your skin; its essential oil, produced inside the kernel, is rich in gamma-linolenic acid, which encourages regeneration of skin cells. The light, nongreasy oil is also chock-full of vitamins A and E, making it a great skin hydrator. You can find it at health food stores or online.

Jog. A *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* study found that running just five to

ten minutes every day reduces the risk of death from heart disease by 50 percent and overall mortality risk by 29 percent. Even participants who ran slower than six miles per hour once or twice a week benefited.

Cheese. According to a 2012 study from the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 55 grams of cheese a day (about two slices) reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by about 12 percent, compared with eating no cheese. Researchers speculate that the probiotic bacteria in cheese and yogurt may lower cholesterol and produce certain vitamins that shield against diabetes. Keep to the recommended portion, as cheese can be high in fat.

De-powder. Face powders can settle into your wrinkles and cling to facial down (aka “peach fuzz”), making you look older.

Autumn. To uncover the secrets of living to 100, researchers from the University of Chicago compiled data on more than 1,500 centenarians born between 1880 and 1895 and compared their backgrounds with those of nearly 12,000 of their siblings and spouses. They found that if you’re born in September, October, or November, you have an above-average chance of living an extra-long life, perhaps because milder autumn weather places less stress on babies and causes fewer seasonal infections.

Meditate. Experts from the UCLA Brain Mapping Center found in a small study that the brains of people who meditate had larger volumes of gray matter—the area responsible for memory, emotions, seeing, hearing, speech, impulse control, and decision making.

Beer. It’s good for your hair. Before you shower, mix three tablespoons of flat beer at room temperature with half a cup of warm water. After you shampoo, rub in the beer solution, let it sit for a couple of minutes, and then rinse with cool water. This will pump up the volume in your locks, which tend to get flatter as you age.

Shop. In a ten-year study of 2,000 people over age 65 in Taiwan, researchers found that men who shopped daily had a 28 percent lower risk of dying early than those who shopped less often; among women, the risk reduction was 23 percent. Healthier people may be more likely to go to the store in the first place, but shopping every day could help you live longer by increasing your social contact, physical fitness, and mental agility.

Turns out carrots are not the best food for your vision. The nutrients in eggs—lutein, vitamin E, and omega-3s—are especially good for your eyes and may help prevent age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, and other chronic diseases.





Walking barefoot reduces the load on knee joints by 12 percent compared with walking in comfortable shoes, and it may also minimize pain and disability from osteoarthritis. That's the finding of a study from Rush University Medical Center of 75 people with osteoarthritis. A later study found that "mobility shoes," which are flat and flexible to mimic bare feet, reduced the load even more (by 18 percent) when worn for six months or more.

Longhand.

Researchers from Princeton University and the University of California, Los Angeles, conducted a series of studies to demonstrate the differences between students who wrote out their notes and those who typed them. Both did well, though long-hand note takers had a stronger grasp of the overall concepts of the lectures and were able to remember and understand them after a week had passed.

Rub. Massages feel good, obviously, but the increased blood flow associated with regular gentle kneading might also keep your face looking healthy and radiant. Skin-care expert Kimara Ahnert told *Women's Health* that massage plumps slack skin, encourages lymphatic drainage (moving toxins out of cells so nutrients can travel in), and adds vitality to a dull complexion.

Tofu. In a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, researchers measured blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids in a group of 2,692 healthy older American adults in 1992, then followed them through 2008. People with the highest omega-3 levels had decreased their risk of dying by 27 percent—and decreased their risk of dying from heart disease by 35 percent—compared with the group with the lowest levels. Eating 250 milligrams of omega-3s each day can add 2.2 years to the lives of adults age 65 and older, researchers say. You'll get more than enough by eating one six-ounce fillet of cod or a two-ounce serving of raw firm tofu.

Move. In Australia's largest ongoing study of healthy aging, researchers analyzed the daily routines of more than 230,000 people. They found that sleeping

too much (more than nine hours per night), sitting too much (more than seven hours a day), and not working out enough (less than 150 minutes a week) correlates to quadrupling the risk of dying prematurely.

Northerners.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, southerners tend to have the shortest life spans of all Americans. The average healthy life expectancy (defined as years in which you are in good or excellent health) was 76 years in Mississippi, Kentucky, and Alabama; in Connecticut and Minnesota, it was 81.

Host. Throwing a party—deciding whom to invite, what to serve, and who should sit next to whom—forces your brain to make complex social decisions and strengthens your social contacts, both of which reduce your risk of developing

dementia, writes Kenneth S. Kosik, MD, in his book *Outsmarting Alzheimer's*.

Carrots. In a small study recently published in *Behavioral Ecology*, Caucasian men who took a supplement of beta-carotene, the substance that makes carrots orange, were rated by women as looking more healthy and attractive than men who had not.

Sunshine. Low vitamin D levels have been associated with osteoporosis, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer. And it gets worse: According to new research, adults who don't get enough of the "sunshine vitamin" are 26 percent more likely to die early. A 12-year study of 13,000 men and women didn't finger any one cause of death, "because vitamin D's impact on health is so widespread," says

researcher Michal Melamed, MD, an assistant professor of medicine, epidemiology, and population health at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. In addition to drinking fortified milk, she suggests getting 10 to 15 minutes of midday sunshine (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) several days a week.

Color. "Wearing darker shades tends to read more conservative and has more of a polished feel, which is not bad," says Dina Scherer, a wardrobe stylist and the owner of Modnitsa Styling. "But it can age you because it takes away from your approachability." Brighter shades make you seem more open and fun, which in turn makes you look younger. Wearing brightly colored accessories such as scarves, necklaces, and broaches near your face is a particularly good way to

highlight your features, Scherer says.

Dig. Hand strength, flexibility, and coordination are essential for everyday tasks such as opening jars and carrying packages. And gardening is the perfect way to hone those fine motor skills and muscles, according to a small study published in *HortScience*, and it may even help offset some of the strain caused by repetitive motions such as typing or phone swiping, especially if you alternate gardening tasks.

Quieter. Raising your voice a lot may lead to polyps, bumps on your vocal cords that can make you sound old and hoarse. Instead of yelling, move closer.

Zest. Want to look younger? Vitamin C in general seems to be associated with fewer wrinkles, according to a study from the United

A four-year study found that seniors who had taken up painting, drawing, or sculpting during middle age and continued into their old age were 73 percent less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment than were those who did not participate in artistic activities. These pastimes encourage you to focus your attention.



Kingdom. Hydration, of course, also keeps skin healthier. So lemon water, which combines both, is the perfect recipe for great skin, says Erin Palinski-Wade, RD, CDE.

Sing. A U.S. study of 166 older adults revealed that those who joined a choir were in better health, used less

medication, were less lonely, and had fewer falls after a year than a similar group of non-singers. This could be due to the effect that singing has on breathing as well as the emotional benefits of creating harmony with a group. Another small study out of Sweden found that when choir members sang in

unison, their heart rates slowed down and eventually synchronized, which may have long-term benefits for both cardiovascular and mental health.

Plump. According to an attention-grabbing CDC report that pooled data on nearly three million people from all over

Secrets of “Superagers”

YOU MIGHT CALL THEM SUPERHEROES of the over-60 set. A superager is someone between the ages of 60 and 80 who has the memory of someone 20 to 30 years younger. Even more remarkable, superagers aren't as rare as you might think. In a recent Harvard Medical School study, nearly half of the older adults tested performed as well as or better than 18- to 32-year-olds. The key is to keep brain tissue in parts of the cortex from thinning. After all, the brain is a muscle too.

The question, then, is how to find the right mental workout. The answer: It isn't easy. In fact, the authors of the Harvard study say that forcing yourself to push through unpleasant and difficult situations is exactly what it takes to pump up your brain. Learning a new language or playing challenging foes in bridge can work. The key is to leave your brain feeling exhausted. A sudoku or a run-of-the-mill crossword won't cut it. “You must expend enough effort that you feel some yuck,” writes Lisa Feldman Barrett, one of the study's authors. “Do it till it hurts, and then a bit more.”

Extreme focus on physical tasks can turn back the clock as well, but again, you've got to feel the pain. One superager example: French amateur cyclist Robert Marchand, who set a world record in one-hour cycling—in the over-100 division. Now 105, Marchand appears to be getting fitter as he ages, according to a study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*.

the world, while extreme obesity shortened lives, people who were just overweight (having a body mass index between 25 and 30) were actually less likely to die early than those who were at a normal weight. This doesn't mean that being overweight is healthy, but if you have normal blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, slimming down may not confer a huge health advantage.

Gloss. Dab Vaseline or lip gloss on the middle of your lower lip. This gives the appearance of a fuller mouth, which makes you look younger. Avoid dark lipstick colors, which make lips look smaller.

Lateral. Snoozing on your side seems to be associated with a lower risk of neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. A group of scientists led by researchers at Stony


Brook University observed that when rats slept on their sides, a pathway that removes waste chemicals from the brain worked more efficiently. Research on humans is needed.

Ankles. Even if you're too self-conscious to show your whole calf, don't hide your ankles. "As we age, we're consumed with how many parts of our body we feel like we have to cover up, but a few don't need to be covered," Lauren Rothman, a fashion stylist and the author of *Style Bible*, says. "Elongating the leg with a cropped pant is flattering and sexy, and the ankle doesn't tend to show age."

Spice. A study of 1,000 adults age 60 to 93 in Singapore found that those who ate curry at least twice a year scored better on cognitive tests than people who ate it once a year or less.

Turmeric, the yellow spice used in most curries, contains the plant chemical curcumin, which has anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and cholesterol-lowering properties.

Homework.

Psychologist Howard S. Friedman, coauthor of a landmark study that followed 1,500 boys and girls for as long as eight decades, observed, "The key personality predictor of a long life was one that we never expected: conscientiousness. It wasn't always the cheerful kids who went on to have the longest lives—it was the ones who did their homework, whose parents would say, 'She has a good head on her shoulders.' They developed healthy patterns and maintained them. People who weren't dependable as kids but became more responsible as adults did well too." 



Wilma

Diagnosed with polycythemia vera (PV).

**TROUBLE
CONCENTRATING**

**BONE
PAIN**

DIZZINESS

**PV STATE OF
MINE**

Understanding your **PV STATE OF MINE**

Polycythemia vera, or PV, is a rare blood cancer in which the body makes too many red blood cells. The body may also have too many white blood cells and platelets (blood clotting cells) in your blood, but having too many red blood cells is thought to cause many of the problems associated with PV. PV is a chronic, progressive disease. That means it doesn't go away and that it may get worse over time. It's important to understand your PV and work with your Healthcare Professional in managing your condition.

As you work with your Healthcare Professional to understand and assess your condition, it is helpful to know your **PV STATE OF MINE**. Be aware of your blood counts, how you feel, and how PV affects your daily life. Be sure to mention any symptoms you have, even if you are not sure the symptoms are related to your PV. Talking to your Healthcare Professional about your symptoms helps you both understand how PV is affecting you, and monitor how your PV is changing over time.

“I THINK THE MOST STRESSFUL THING IS THE UNKNOWN.”

“I kept having dizzy spells and confusion with my words, unable to make complete sentences. I thought I was just overworked, but a month later, after bloodwork and other tests, I was diagnosed with PV. As the disease progressed, I started experiencing bone pain. The bone pain was the final straw. I knew I needed to talk to my doctor.”

It's important to regularly evaluate your PV

Knowing your **PV STATE OF MINE** may help you recognize when something isn't right with your PV. Take an active role in talking to your Healthcare Professional. Register at PVStateOfMine.com for free resources that can help you get that conversation started.

Know your **PV STATE OF MINE**. Be sure to tell your Healthcare Professional if you experience any of the following symptoms:

Common PV symptoms

- Tiredness or fatigue
- Itching, especially after a warm shower
- Sweating (at night or during the day)
- Headaches or dizziness
- Bone pain or muscle aches
- Concentration problems

Symptoms related to enlarged spleen in PV

- Pain or discomfort under your left ribs
- Feeling full when you haven't eaten or have eaten very little



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



"He always gives me such a nice wave."

A RESTAURANT POSTS a sign that says "We'll give you \$500 if we fail to fill your order." A cocky customer decides to put the policy to the test by ordering elephant ears on rye. The waitress takes his order to the kitchen. Seconds later, the owner storms out of the kitchen, goes to the customer's table, and slams down five hundred-dollar bills.

"You got me," he tells the customer.

"But I want you to know that this is the first time we've been out of rye bread."

Source: rantnroll.com

YIN ...

I wanna make a jigsaw puzzle that's 40,000 pieces. And when you finish, it says, "Go outside."

Comedian **DEMETRI MARTIN**

... AND YANG

Outdoors: What you must pass

through in order to get from your apartment into a taxicab.

Humorist **FRAN LEBOWITZ**

EVERY TEN YEARS, the monks in the monastery are allowed to break their vow of silence to speak two words. Ten years go by, and it's one monk's first chance. He thinks long and hard before telling the head monk, "Food bad." Ten years later, it's his turn to speak again. This time he says, "Bed

hard." A decade later, it's the big day again. The man gives the head monk a long stare and says, "I quit."

"Well, I'm not surprised," the head monk says. "You've been complain- ing ever since you got here."

Submitted by **RONALD W. KETCHIE**,
Merrimack, New Hampshire

Your funny joke, list, or quote might be worth \$\$\$. For details, see page 7 or go to rd.com/submit.



WHEN YOR WRKING AT HOM WIT YOU CILD SITTTTNG ON YOURR LLAP, MEMEMBER THESE 5555 TIPS

SAVE, SAVE, SAV

This i salways a good rule of tumb, kids or no kiss. Make sire you re alwyas pussing save ever few mints. Theer's nothing wores than find that youve loist all off your wirk!

REEMOVE TOYS FRIM TH KEYBORD

Espilly trains be- casue they willlllll rolll themmmm overrrrrrrrrrr the keeboard,

STIC TO YOU SCHEDULE

EvEn a smell amount

of toime devoted toooooo wrking is beetter thans nit workin atall. You wold be serpised how much wrok yuo cane got dine with just a few minutes devotee to work. Remember, you cant do this!

USE POSITIVE REONFORCEMENT


Have a treat readdyfro yourr chlid, and you'lllll find that their're mihgt bee more opene to larning thre best ways to beehivewehn your're workong. May

be a fruit scrollup or some MM&'s or a hjklf.. ;phfjdsioa;hasdjfg hkj//////////oh no////////kl/hgjkg

BE PROUD OR YOURSELF

Being a wrocking parent is hard! So remem ber too be proudf off yourself for the= hard work you do every die. You're a rock stair! So, Give yorself a pet on the black, an keep up the goof work.

BY MAGGIE SMITH,
from mcsweeneys.net



He wanted an adventure.
Thanks to his confused GPS, he got one.

WHERE THE @#\$% AM I?

BY DAVID KUSHNER FROM *OUTSIDE*

BEFORE NOEL SANTILLAN became famous for getting lost in Iceland, he was just another guy from New Jersey looking for adventure, armed with the modern traveler's two essentials: a dream and, more important, a GPS unit.



On a frigid, pitch-black February morning in 2016, the 28-year-old Sam's Club marketing manager was driving away from Keflavík International Airport in a rented Nissan hatchback toward a hotel in Reykjavík, about 40 minutes away. He was excited that his one-week journey was beginning but groggy from the five-hour red-eye flight. As a pink sun rose over the ocean and illuminated the snow-covered lava rocks along the shore, Santillan dutifully followed the commands of the GPS that came with the car, a calm female voice directing him to an address on Laugarvegur Road—a left here, a right there.

But after stopping on a desolate gravel road next to a sign for a gas station, Santillan got the feeling that the voice might be steering him wrong. He'd already been driving for nearly an hour, yet the ETA on the GPS put his arrival time at around 5:20 p.m., eight hours later. He reentered his destination and got the same result. Though he sensed that something was off, he decided to trust the machine.

The farther he drove, the fewer cars he saw. The roads became icier. Sleeplessness fogged his brain, and his empty stomach churned. The only stations he could find on the radio were airing strange talk shows in

Icelandic. He hadn't set up his phone for international use, so that was no help. At around 2 p.m., as his tires skidded along a narrow mountain road that skirted a steep cliff, he knew that the device had failed him.

He was lost and—despite the insistence of his GPS—nowhere near his hotel. There were no other drivers on the road, and there was little else to do but follow the line on the screen to its mysterious end. "I knew I was going to get somewhere," he says. "I didn't know where else to go."

The directions ended at a small blue house in a tiny town. A pretty blue-eyed blond woman

answered his knock. She smiled as he stammered about his hotel and handed her his reservation.

No, she told him, this wasn't his hotel, and he wasn't in Reykjavík. That city was 225 miles south. He was in Siglufjörður, a fishing village of 1,300 people on the northern coast. The woman, whose name happened to be Sirry—pronounced just like the Apple bot that offers users directions through life—quickly figured out what had happened. The address on Expedia (and his reservation printout) was wrong. The hotel was on Laugavegur, but Expedia had accidentally spelled the street name with an extra *r*—Laugarvegur.

Santillan
sensed
something
was off
but decided
to trust
the machine.

Santillan checked in to a local hotel to get a good night's sleep, with the plan of driving to Reykjavík the next day. When he told his story to the woman at the front desk, she chuckled. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't laugh at this," she said, "but it's funny."

The next morning, when he went to check out, the joke became even grander. "Some reporters want to talk with you," said the hotel receptionist.

Sirry had posted his absurd story on her Facebook page, and it had quickly been shared around. A Facebook friend of hers, the editor of an Icelandic travel site, wrote a blog post on the "extraordinary and funny incident." Soon his misadventure had attracted the interest of TV and radio journalists.

They weren't the only ones who wanted to talk with Santillan. "Everybody in the town knew about me," he says. Some Siglufjörðhurians came to the hotel to welcome him and take pictures. One offered him a tour of the village's pride and joy, the Icelandic Herring Era Museum. The chef at Santillan's hotel prepared the local beef stew for him, on the house.



Enjoying all the hospitality, Santillan decided to spend an extra night. The following day, he went on TV, explaining to a reporter that he'd always found GPS to be so reliable in the past. By the time he made it to Reykjavík that evening, he had become a full-blown sensation in the national media, which dubbed him the Lost Tourist. *DV*, an Icelandic tabloid, marveled that despite all the warning signs, the American had "decided to trust the [GPS]." Before long, his experience made international news, with coverage in the *Daily Mail*, on the BBC, and in the *New York Times*. The manager of the hotel in Reykjavík had seen reports on Santillan's odyssey and, to make up for the traveler's hard time, offered him a free stay and a meal at the fish restaurant next door.



Tiny Siglufjörður is rarely mistaken for Reykjavík—except by the occasional GPS.

Out in the streets, which were full of revelers celebrating the annual Winter Lights Festival, Icelanders corralled the Lost Tourist for selfies and plied him with shots of the local poison, Brennivín, an unsweetened schnapps. As a band played a rock song outside, Santillan kept hearing people shouting his name. Some guys dragged him up a stairway to a strip club, where one of the dancers also knew his name. The whole thing seemed surreal. “I just felt like, This isn’t happening to me,” he says.

Still, he was going to ride it out as long as he could. After the marketing manager of the country’s most famous getaway, the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa, wrote him offering a free visit, Santillan headed there the next day. The address came preloaded in his rental car’s GPS, since it was

the one place everyone wanted to go.

As Santillan drove out under the winter sky, he marveled at how far he had come. Not long ago, he’d been just another working stiff on his couch in New Jersey. Now he was a rock star. He pictured himself resting in the cobalt blue waters, breathing in the steam. But half an hour later, when his GPS told him he had arrived, he got a sinking feeling. Looking out the window, he saw no signs of a geothermal spa, just a small lone building in what seemed like the middle of nowhere. The Lost Tourist was lost again.

For whatever reason, the GPS had led him not to the Blue Lagoon but to some convention center off an empty road. As he stepped into the building, he was recognized. The fact that Santillan was lost again made him all the more credible. After patiently posing

for a bunch of pictures, he succumbed to an old-fashioned way of getting to where he was going: following the directions given to him by another human being.

And so, with the GPS turned off, he drove on—a right here, a left there—looking for landmarks along the way. Before long, he was soaking in a steamy bath, white volcanic mud smeared on his face. By then he'd already vowed to return to Iceland. Maybe, he thought,

I'll even live here at some point.

Until he returns, he has something to remember his misadventure by: an Icelandic GPS. The rental agency presented it to him when he returned his Nissan. It's a reminder of his time as the Lost Tourist, a nickname he considers a badge of honor. "I like it," he says, "because that's how you find interesting things. If you don't lose yourself, you're never going to find yourself." **R**

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RECALCULATING!

Our readers share their funniest GPS-inspired snafus.

■ We were in Chattanooga when the GPS told us to turn right on Milliliter King. The street was ML King. **JESSICA MICHELLE BARNES, Bastrop, Louisiana**

■ I was driving to a hotel to give a presentation. The GPS directed me to exit the freeway and drive for miles on a road that went from paved to dirt. Eventually I came to a high fence topped with barbed wire and a gate with an armed guard. "I'm guessing that this is not a hotel," I said to the guard. Shaking his head slowly, he said, "Not unless you're a guest of the state."

RHONDA GILBERT, Detroit, Michigan

■ I was driving down south in an unfamiliar area when my GPS told me to make a right turn. I was on a bridge. **ANN CAPPELLO, Hadley, New York**

■ I used my new navigation app to help me find my way to a writers' conference. After a long drive, I parked my car and, first things first, immediately headed for the crowded restroom. I found a stall and settled in. That's when a loud, clear voice from my phone announced, "You've arrived at your destination!"

ANITA MORRISON, Monroe, Washington

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We asked our Facebook friends for their most absurd childhood misconceptions. The undeniable upshot?

Kids Think The Craziest Things!



WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I BELIEVED ...

... nuns did not have feet and floated when they went around because they were so sacred and heavenly. But then I went to a Catholic high school during the 1980s, when miniskirts became a fad, and nuns' habits became shorter. Even then, I still stared at their feet and expected them to glide around.

ABEGAIL MASLOG, *Mindanao, Philippines*

... babies did the backstroke in the mothers' stomachs. I suspect my mom tried to explain amniotic fluid, and I pictured it like a tiny swimming pool.

KITTY HARRISON, *South Portland, Maine*

... if I rubbed my fingers endlessly on my daddy's steering wheel, I could get rid of my fingerprints. This was important, as I was planning to grow up to be a cattle rustler and horse thief.

KARINA M. OISHEI, *Clarence, New York*

... if you swung too high on the swings, you would poke a hole in the sky with your foot.

SYLVIA ALDRICH, *Windsor Locks, Connecticut*

... when my dad played gospel music on the stereo, the people singing lived inside the speakers. I thought that the different groups just took turns singing while others sat in small chairs and waited until their album was put on the turntable. I often wondered where they slept, how they used the potty, what they ate, and how they could stand to live in the dark all the time. I desperately wanted to pry the speaker open and look inside.

MELISSA YINGST, *Manchester, Kentucky*

... the walls in our house creaked at night because the room was shrinking. That's what my dad told me when I asked him. I worried every time I heard creaking after that.

CLAIRE LAZOS, *Castroville, Texas*

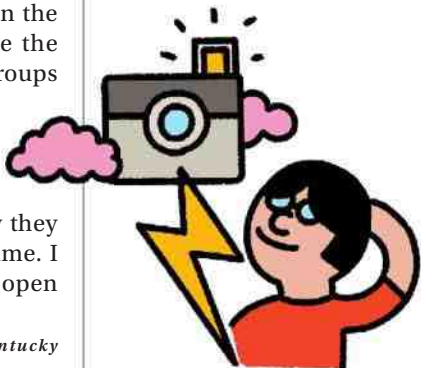
... the only tongue was the one in my mouth. So when my mother was teaching me to tie my shoes and she told me to "pull my tongue out," I started crying.

LYN LONG, *Bloomington, Indiana*



... my uncle Fred went to the planet Mars for work every day. I pictured a spaceship and everything. Then I found out that there is a Mars, Pennsylvania.

BARBARA MARTIN TAYLOR,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



... flashes of lightning came from a huge camera in the sky. I had asked some adults, and they said that whenever flashes of lightning occur, we must look our best because someone is taking our pictures.

JIEM JAYNO,
Mindanao, Philippines

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I BELIEVED ...

... spaghetti grew on trees. I was about five years old and saw a TV commercial with spaghetti growing on trees. People would pick it off and put it in a basket. I decided it would be a good idea to bury my favorite sneakers so I could grow a sneaker tree. I went to our little garden in the backyard and buried my sneakers. Every day, I would water my sneakers, wondering when my tree was going to grow. I envisioned all the sneakers I would have. I'd give them to my family members and friends, and I'd donate them to the church. Come Saturday, I wanted to go outside to play, but I didn't have sneakers. My father asked where they were, and I told him the story. I found out three things that day: TV lies, sneakers don't grow on trees, and being punished for wasting a good pair of sneakers isn't fun.

KIMBERLY MCCUE CAPASSO, *Howell, New Jersey*

... people who told me I could "be anything I wanted," so I thought I could grow up and be a cat.

BECKY MILLER MCGOWN, *Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio*

... if you flicked the lights on and off, you could start a fire.

MELISSA ALONGI FERDINANDSEN, *Fresno, California*

... if I ate peas or beans, they would grow into trees in my stomach and through my mouth. Side effects of reading "Jack and the Beanstalk."

SHIVIKA RAINA, *Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

... instead of an Easter bunny, there was an Easter pig. I went to school and told my class. I will never forgive my dad for telling me that.

STACY GEORGE-KESER, *Tonawanda, New York*



... school buses ate the little kids that got on them. I was never there when they were dropped off. My mom had to ride with me on my first day of school.

PATRICIA GREIG KING,
Sturgis, Michigan



... the nuclear plant near where we grew up was a cloud machine. It had a constant billow of smoke above it, and that's what my mother told me. I thought it was awesome.

BILLIE TURNER,
Mexico, New York

... the spiderwebs in the basement were “heat” webs. My mom told me that. Webs caused by the heat were probably less scary to me as a little kid. I believed this until I was 25 and married. My now ex-wife said of our new place, “The basement has a lot of spiderwebs.” I said, “Maybe they are heat webs,” but as I said it, it occurred to me that my whole life was a lie.

JIM MOORE, *Winnipeg, Manitoba*

... all dogs were male and all cats were female.

MERCY LANGILLE, *Dartmouth, Nova Scotia*

... my parents drugged us on Christmas Eve. I could stay up any other night, but they gave us hot chocolate after midnight Mass every year, and I couldn't stay awake. So I assumed they put sleeping medicine in it. They didn't, but I was convinced! I drank it each year, too; I never thought to just not drink it.

BECKY FLETCHER, *Neenah, Wisconsin*

... my mom had eyes in the back of her head. She could always see what we were doing in the back seat of the car. I also believed that there was a troll under the bridge we had to cross to get to our campsite, and he would come out and get you if you missed curfew.

DIANE JACK, *Oxford, Maine*

... Barbie's hair grew just like ours. So I pretended to be a hairdresser and cut my Barbie doll's hair.

PAULA PESTAÑO, *Cebu, Philippines*

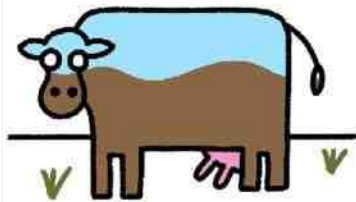
... that to be a father you had to be really smart, because my father was brilliant and I thought all other fathers must be too.

JULIE LEONARD, *Quincy, Massachusetts*



... Life Savers candy kept you alive. My great-grandma gave me a tiny roll of them and told me if you lose your Life Savers, you die. When she died that summer, I told everyone it was because she lost her Life Savers.

ANITA MULLINS,
Milton, Georgia



... white cows gave white milk, and brown cows gave chocolate milk. When I was about four or five, my older brother convinced me, and I believed that for years. I think of it now and still laugh.

STACY VISKOCIL STROUD,
Waseca, Minnesota

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I BELIEVED ...

... my parents when they told me that I owned all the cabooses in the world, as evidenced by the fact that caboose engineers always waved to me when I waved to them. Later, when I told my kindergarten teacher that I owned all the cabooses in the world, she told me that simply was not true. I went home pretty mad that day. Trust had been broken.

PAULA HERRICK SHOFKOM, *Endicott, New York*

... football players have their massive shoulders from birth on.

MANUELA REINHOLZ, *Kiel, Germany*

... I was a robot, after noticing the sparks of static electricity from my pj's one night. I thought I was shorting out. I didn't tell anyone for fear of being thought of as a human imposter; I thought my family would give me away.

TRACI WASHER, *Belvidere, New Jersey*

... if I put my finger in my belly button, I would go as flat as a pancake. I was in ninth grade when I finally got the nerve to try it.

CINDY BAIR YEARSIN, *Cleveland, Ohio*

... the little black seeds in strawberries were ant eggs, and if I ate one straight from the vine (we grew our own), the ants would grow inside me.

LORI HOUSTON, *Gainesville, Georgia*

... if I prayed into the light beam of a flashlight while looking at the stars, my prayers would reach God and people in heaven faster.

NUNA KATCHATAG, *Elim, Alaska*

... if I inhaled the helium from a balloon, I'd float away.

DEBRA FURPHY, *Aberdeen, New Jersey*



... all teachers lived at school and slept in the classrooms at night. And that they didn't go to the bathroom, EVER!

NADIA CAVAGLIERE,
Farmingdale, New York



... the reason dogs smell other dogs' butts because years ago there was a big dogfight and they all lost their respective butts. According to my dad, they were always smelling butts in the hope that they would be able to find their own.

PAULA JOHNSTON,
Cass City, Michigan

... people who lived in the past lived in a world that was black-and-white. I even asked my mom how she had a favorite color other than black or white back then, when she had no rainbow colors to choose from.

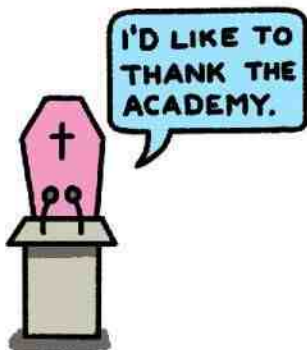
MARIANNE J. BARING, *Rizal Province, Philippines*

... asparagus was made from dinosaurs or was a type of dinosaur. My grandfather ran a Sinclair service station, and it used a dinosaur in its advertising. Somehow with the green color and my being served an asparagus casserole, it all jumbled together.

LAVERNE CASH, *Kingston, Tennessee*

... eating a watermelon seed would make a watermelon grow in my tummy.

MICHELLE BRADBURY, *Andrews, North Carolina*



... actors dying in movies meant they died in real life too. I imagined they shot all their other movies before dying finally in their final one.

ZARRIN HAIDER, *Calcutta, India*

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How a Veteran Sees Life

BY J. MARK JACKSON FROM THE *WASHINGTON POST*

I was a soldier, and I went to war. By and by, I became known as a veteran. My civilian career progressed, my family grew, and the Army drifted into the gray mist of memory. But the experience of military service leaves an indelible imprint on the psyche and soul of each soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine.

What is it like, on a day-to-day basis, to be a veteran? To this Army veteran, it means all the following and more.

■ Being surprised by how much Fourth of July fireworks sound like a mortar attack ...

■ ... and how much a nail gun sounds startlingly like the bark of an AK-47 when heard in the distance.

■ Turning to Advil as the narcotic of choice for a bad back and creaky bones, each earned like an invisible Purple Heart.

■ Watching the evening news and feeling guilty for not being beside the soldiers fighting in the story ...

■ ... but being grateful the country doesn't still require my service, because it was always sweltering hot and I could no longer keep up physically. This is a poignant realization for any former soldier.

■ Waking up desperately searching for my rifle while my wife softly says, "It's all right; it's all right. You are home."

■ Finding a lump in my throat and tears welling in my eyes when I see images of a crying mother or wife holding a flag folded into a triangle.

■ Having a mother say, "Thank you for your service. Because you served, my son did not have to." *Really?*

■ Finding the term *hero* applied too liberally. Audie Murphy (the most decorated combat soldier in World War II) was a hero. We were soldiers.

■ Wondering, when I forget how I filed my tax return the previous year, if I am suffering from a case of undiagnosed traumatic brain injury or if I just forgot.

■ Wondering, when I miss words in a conversation, whether it's hearing loss from the close rattle of a .50-caliber machine gun or I was just not paying attention.

■ Experiencing a faint gag reflex when Girl Scouts try to sell me cookies, though I loved them for sending countless boxes of cookies to the theater of war. It's not their fault I made a pig of myself on their generosity.

■ Feeling positive about the next strong and dedicated generation of future veterans to whom

we handed the baton of service.

■ Having a cracking, faltering voice when speaking of wartime events that trigger strong emotions, no matter how many times I speak of them.

■ Forever being identified as a "military person" based solely on an upright posture and a shoulders-back gait.

■ Buying a red paper poppy whenever I see another veteran selling them, and calling him "brother" when the exchange is made.

■ Being unable to throw those paper poppies away, ever. They seem somehow too sacred to desecrate.

*I buy a red
paper poppy
whenever I see
another veteran
selling them
and call him
"brother."*



YOU CAN HELP A VET TODAY

There are countless ways to show support for veterans, starting with the easiest of all: opening your checkbook. These organizations would be delighted with any contribution, but they specialize in helping donors provide more hands-on support.

HIRE. Looking for a few good workers? Post an open position at uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes. In 2015, this U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation program matched 29,200 job seekers with 6,200 companies, which resulted in 3,600 job offers.

MENTOR. The nonprofit American Corporate Partners matches professionals with vets who need advice on their résumés, interview prep, and career options. The ideal coach has eight-plus years of experience and can spend a few hours a month chatting on the phone. Apply at acp-usa.org.

VOLUNTEER. Got a free hour? The Give an Hour volunteer network (giveanhour.org) can help you spend that time on a variety of vet-centered philanthropies, from sharing your expertise as a mental health counselor to planning a jewelry party to raise money. Another worthy organization: Operation Gratitude (operationgratitude.com), which organizes volunteers to assemble care packages and write thank-you letters to veterans.

ORGANIZE. The group Hope for the Warriors (hopeforthewarriors.org) outlines virtual volunteer opportunities that benefit veterans, service members, and military families. For instance, you can gather friends and family to make care packages for caregivers, collect school supplies for military children, or create your own fund-raiser.

SHARE. Donate clothes and household items to veterans and their families via Vietnam Veterans of America (vva.org), Paralyzed Veterans of America (pva.org), or the Purple Heart Foundation (purpleheartfoundation.org), which also takes donations of unwanted cars.

DOG SIT. Puppies Behind Bars (puppiesbehindbars.com) teaches inmates to train service dogs for vets, and the organization needs volunteers to host the animals on weekends and transport them from the prisons (located in New York and New Jersey) to vets.

GIVE. If you do want to donate money, make sure it's being spent wisely. Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org) verifies that nonprofits are fulfilling their stated missions and spending their donations on the work rather than on administrative fees. Search for *veterans* to locate military organizations.

- Feeling a surge of engulfing pride, like a warm shiver, when the American flag passes or during the singing of the national anthem.
- Surviving a hostile staff meeting by saying to myself, “It has all been easy since ...” and filling in the blank with the battle of my choice.
- Feeling slightly self-conscious at my child’s school on Veterans Day, but also feeling important and honored.
- Maintaining a slightly obsessive fetish with how a bed is made, with emphasis on the corners.
- Perpetual promptness. No event is too unimportant not to arrive early.
- Having a wave of emotion crash down while my son raises his right hand and swears the same oath I did a generation before.
- Desiring to be treated like everyone else—unless I’m waiting in a long line at an airport or praying for an upgrade to first class on a flight. Then I prefer to be treated as special.
- Sitting slack-jawed in amazement when I realize my family’s dinner was purchased by a table of teenage girls sitting across the restaurant. Thank you!
- No longer feeling compelled to prove my mettle—that urge was settled and sated while wearing a uniform.
- Critiquing any marching organiza-

tion during a parade and resisting the urge to cry out “Left, left, left, right-ta, left!” if it is out of step.

- Gladly deferring saber rattling to those who never had to do it.
- Grasping the knowledge that peace is eminently more precious than any state of war, regardless of the

*I know that
peace is
eminently more
precious than
any state of war,
regardless of the
justification.*

justification. Veterans know the cost of peace firsthand, and that cost has a first name, a last name, a middle initial, and parents.

- Remembering something that Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. said of his Civil War service: “In our youth our hearts

were touched with fire.” I would add devotion, exhilaration, camaraderie, and fear. Our service in the armed forces determined who we were and continues to define who we are moving into the future. My father said about events in his life, “I wouldn’t give a penny to do it again, but I wouldn’t take a million dollars for the experience.” Would most veterans say the same about their service? I believe so; I know I do. Further, and more important, I consider it my honor to have served our country. R

J. Mark Jackson served in the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 101st Airborne Division in the war in Afghanistan.

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Laugh Lines

MOTHER, MAY I?

Moms are just cops who love you.

🐦@SENDERBLOCK23

Things a mother should know: how to comfort a son without exactly saying Daddy was wrong.

KATHARINE WHITEHORN

Did you know, when kids go to bed, you can hear yourself think again? I sound fabulous.

🐦@PAIGEKELLERMAN

My four-year-old just shut the bathroom door on me while I was inside and told me I was in jail. So I locked the door. I love this game.

🐦@KATEWHINEHALL (KATE HALL)

My husband brought the kids to a baseball game, so I woke them up at 2 a.m. to feed them candy. No way I'm losing the "favorite parent" battle. 🐦@CARBOSLY



The three-year-old insisted on helping me put all the laundry away. It's taken us only six hours and ten minutes, and apparently pants go in the fridge now.

🐦@OUTSMARTEDMOMMY

(JENNIFER LIZZA)

If you're lucky, you'll find one person who brightens your day, lends an ear, and inspires you. *RD* readers share stories of their best buds.

This Is What *Friends* Are For





I grew up in a family that didn't show affection. I knew I was loved, but it was rarely expressed, either in words or with a hug. Then, at the age of 40, I met Judy. I quickly noticed how often she told her kids she loved them and how she hugged everyone hello and goodbye. As with any habit, I picked it up, and the more I did so, the easier it became for me. **Now I never fail to hug friends or family members,** and it has completely changed how I relate to them. It's an awesome feeling! Oh, I love you, Judy!

BETTY PLOUGH, *Traverse City, Michigan*

Five months after my husband, my two-year-old daughter, and I moved 2,000 miles from home, I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl with severely clubbed feet. This marked the beginning of a long series of doctor appointments. Taking care of two young children, one of whom required constant medical attention, meant that I was always tired and behind on my household chores.

One day, we came home from yet another doctor's visit to find the front door ajar. I cautiously proceeded into the house, only to find **the floors spotless, the dishes cleaned and dried, and the dirty laundry washed and folded.** Upstairs, the beds were made, and there were even flowers in a vase beside my bed. It turns out that my friend Joy was driving by my home and noticed my car was gone, so she took the opportunity to help me out. I learned an important lesson that day about compassion. And this friendship was sealed for life!

JUDITH HEICKSEN, *Santa, Idaho*

My fiancé walked out on me three days before our wedding. Now every year on the anniversary of the day I would have been married, **my best friend texts me a hilarious (and completely inappropriate) picture,** reminding me I dodged a bullet. His humor makes a hard day better.

JASON WOODS, via Twitter

Because we are all over the country, my three closest friends (Miranda, Rachel, and Johlandi) and I keep in touch via group texting. **We share daily struggles, complaints, triumphs, and, most of all, laughs.** These special ladies respond nonjudgmentally to whatever I tell them, allowing me to be as vulnerable as I please. Conversely, it's a blessing to help them through their difficult times. Having such receptive friends has taught me that life is more fun and meaningful when I share myself with others.

LAUREN YOUNG, *Rockingham, Virginia*

After my wife of 44 years died, I didn't feel the urge to socialize. But that didn't stop my friend Tony from inviting me to join a group of guys who got together every Thursday for dinner. I told him I wasn't ready. He called again the next week, and again I said no. **He kept calling every week, and finally I said, "OK, I'll go.** Anything to keep you from calling me every week." It has now been six years since my wife died, and thanks to Tony, I have been going to dinner every week with the gang we've dubbed ROMEO—Retired Old Men Eating Out.

DAVID FENWICK, *Ocean Township, New Jersey*

In my senior year of high school, my mother passed away. Dad, who lived in Seattle, wanted me to live with him. But my friend Joy invited me to stay with her and her father until I graduated.

Joy's mother had passed away a few years earlier, so Joy understood my terrible loss and depression.

Because of her generosity, I was able to complete my last year of high school with all my friends, affording me a bit of normalcy.

LORRAINE MORROW,

Bonney Lake, Washington

One night after teaching

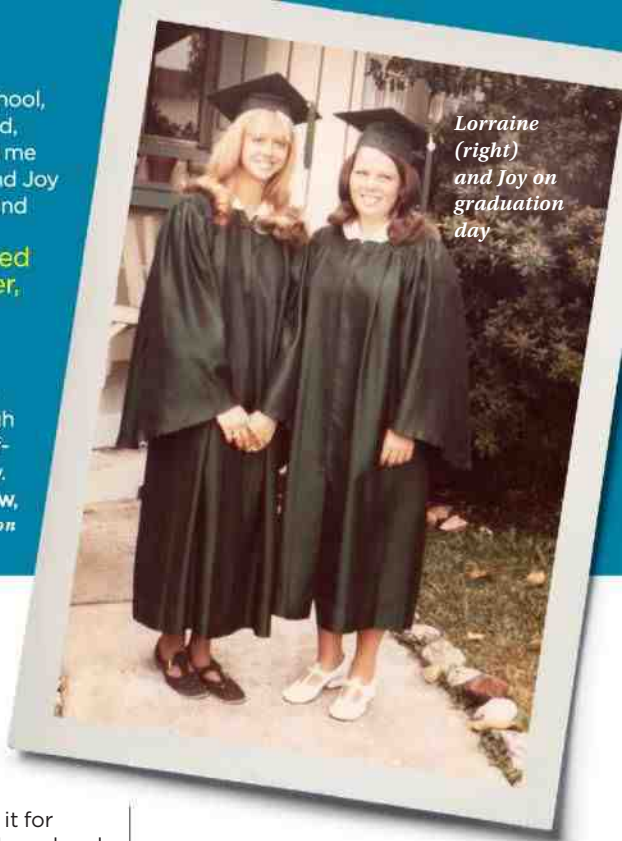
a late class, I found a sticky note on the window of my car. It read “**You are beautiful inside and out**” and featured a little heart. I never did find out which one of my friends left it for me, but it is still on my dashboard and means more than anything to me.

JENNIE BERGLUND, *Burnsville, Minnesota*

After seven years of teaching, I was let go before the school year ended. I was devastated. Making matters worse, some of the other teachers stopped talking to me. **But one coworker stood by me, going so far as to ask the principal to let me work with her** till the end of the school year. He reluctantly agreed. Continuing to work gave me back my dignity. I'm now at another job, where I am happy and confident.

BETH KLEMENTOVIC, *Exton, Pennsylvania*

COURTESY LORRAINE MORROW



Lorraine (right) and Joy on graduation day

Today is my birthday, and **I know my friend Linda is making me a cake.** Sometimes when you're an adult, no one thinks to do that for you.

TAMARA CASTELLARI, *Parachute, Colorado*

My best friend and I are both trying to lose weight, so we text each other every day to check in. **He encourages me to work out when I don't want to or to put down the ice cream.** It really helps me stay on track.

RICK NELSON, via Twitter

When I was pregnant, I felt—and acted—as if I had PMS for the entire



*Meghan
(right) with
her BFE,
Melissa Doyle*

I came down with a horrible stomach bug when my husband was out of town. **My best friend showed up with saltines,** Sprite, essential oils, and—the best part—her Netflix password.
MEGHAN SIMECEK, Friendswood, Texas

soon I started taking her to the library, doctors, and the store.

At the rest home, if Ruth's breakfast tray was ready, I'd pick it up. I knew how she liked her grits, with just a bit of butter and salt, and that she

really, really liked orange juice and always got two glasses. After a bit, it would be time to go. She'd give me a kiss and tell me to "come back!"

I am ashamed to admit that at one time, both my grandmothers were in convalescent homes and I rarely visited them. I cannot change the person I was, but I can try to be a better person today. Ruth is no longer with us, but I wish to God that I could "come back" and visit with her again.

JANET ALDEN, Inman, South Carolina

Lisa comes over, and we do each other's nails while we lie in bed watching TV like high school girls.

SHANNON HAGEN, Minneapolis, Minnesota

When I was nine, I had a friend with the unusual name of Westa Joy. I can still picture her wild, naturally curly hair; her porcelain skin; and her sparkling hazel eyes. I, on the other hand, was overweight and shy. We used to walk laughing and holding hands down a sandy dirt road in southeastern New Mexico. **She would tell**

nine months. **My best friend, Laura, told me she was calling me every other day** to make sure someone was still speaking to me. That is true friendship.

GAIL BUA, Nutley, New Jersey

Whenever I visited Ruth at the rest home, I'd always greet her with, "Good morning, sweetie." She, in turn, would say, "Heeeyyyyyy! I've been missing you." **For as long as I knew Ruth, she greeted me with "I've been missing you,"** even if I'd just seen her that morning. And when I'd leave, it was always, "Come back!"

Ruth was my first friend in South Carolina. Our house was built on her property. I went over and introduced myself one day and told her that I'm out every morning and if she liked, I could bring her newspaper to her door. She said, "Well, I suppose that would be all right." It wasn't long after that I started bringing her the afternoon mail and cookies too. And

me the plot of the latest Nancy Drew book she was reading.

I had never read a book, and I didn't want to. Reading was much too difficult for me because I was dyslexic. But thanks to Westa's storytelling, I eventually bought all the Nancy Drew books. Thank you, my dear childhood friend, for giving me the joy of reading.

ESSIE BOWDEN,

North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Dawn, my friend and coworker at the public defender's office, would bring me some of her dinner from the night before and leave it in the fridge at work when I was in the middle of a long trial. This way, I wouldn't have to worry about feeding myself on late nights.

ADRIANNE MCMAHON, *Faribault, Minnesota*

If she knows I'm having a rough day, my friend will show up and take my kids for the day. By just showing up instead of calling, Stacy knows I can't tell her not to come.

COURTNEY CLEMENTS, *Nampa, Idaho*

I met Mary Lou 14 years ago, while tending the grave of my 34-year-old son Kevin just weeks after he passed. Mary Lou was visiting her son Gary. She smiled, and soon we were sharing our stories—not only about our sons but about life in general. On my next visit with Kevin, I saw a piece of paper sticking out from under a rock—an inspirational note from Mary Lou. I wrote her back and put my note under the same rock. A week later, I returned to find another note from Mary Lou. We went back and forth like this for

years. Today, we still see each other, but usually over a hot fudge sundae. We talk and laugh and rarely feel the need to discuss our deep pain. That's why we are friends for life.

PATRICIA COLER-DARK, *Concord, California*

Shannon, my best friend of over 26 years, and I text each other every morning with “Good morning, beautiful!” or “Hello, gorgeous!” That way, we both start the day with a smile.

KATRINA LA FORCE, *Petaluma, California*


When I was four, my mother had her hands full with six children. Luckily, there was our neighbor Berla. Berla, 48, had no children, so I had her full attention. She taught me simple things, like how to care for my teeth, as well as big things, like a love of long walks. She also taught me to play cribbage, which came with these words of advice: “There is a perfect strategy for every hand dealt.” That concept has impacted every aspect of my life.

LINDA SEALOCK, *Reno, Nevada*

My best friend in college taught me spontaneity. One day Christie persuaded me to run around campus dressed in battle armor and wielding a cardboard sword, all while laughing maniacally. People stared at us, but we had too much fun to care.

CAROLINE SAMUELS, *Logan, Utah*

I was having a horrible day dealing with job and divorce stress, and my friend Anna brought me ice cream. Just having her show up to listen to me whine was exactly what I needed.

TRACY CLARK, *Lakeville, Minnesota* 



WHAT IT'S LIKE

WORKING EVERY DAY AT 35,000 FEET

A pilot's reflections
on life in the sky



BY MARK VANHOENACKER

FROM THE BOOK *SKYFARING:
A JOURNEY WITH A PILOT*

I'VE BEEN ASLEEP in a small, windowless room so dark, it's as if I'm below the waterline of a ship. I'm alone, in a blue sleeping bag and blue pajamas that I unwrapped on Christmas morning several years ago and many thousands of miles from here. My head is near the wall. Through the wall comes the sound of steady rushing, the sense of numberless particles slipping past, as water rounds a stone in a stream but faster and more smoothly. There is a gentle swell to the room, a rhythm of rolling. The wall is curved; it rises and bends up over the narrow bed. I am in the hull of a 747.

When someone I've just met learns that I'm a pilot, he or she often asks where I fly and which of these cities I love best. But three questions come up most often. Is flying something I have always wanted to do? Have I ever seen anything "up there" that I cannot explain? And do I remember my first flight? I like these questions. They suggest that even now, when many of us so regularly leave one place on the earth and cross the high blue to another, we are not nearly as accustomed to flying as we think.

MARTIN DEJAJA/GETTY IMAGES



ACHIME SOUNDS in the darkness of the 747's bunk. My break is over. I feel for the switch that turns on a pale-yellow beam. I change into my uniform, which has been hanging on a peg for something like 2,000 miles. I open the door that leads to the cockpit.

As my eyes adjust to the brightness, I look forward through the cockpit windows. At this moment, it's the light itself, rather than what it falls upon, that is the essential feature of the earth. What the light falls upon is the Sea of Japan and the snowcapped peaks of the island nation we are approaching from far across this water. The blueness of the sea is as perfect as the sky it reflects. It is as if we were slowly descending over the surface of a blue star, as if all other blues were to be mined or diluted from this one.

As I fasten my seat belt, I remember how we started the engines yesterday in London. How a hush fell in the cockpit as the airflow for the air-conditioning was diverted; how the enormous techno-petals of the fans spun faster and faster, until fuel and fire were added and each engine woke with a low rumble that grew to a smooth and unmistakable roar.

I remember the aircraft that lifted off ahead of us into the London rain. As that aircraft taxied, its engines launched rippling gales that raced visibly over the wet runway, as if from some greatly sped-up video recording

of the windswept surface of a pond.

I remember our own takeoff roll, an experience that repetition hasn't dulled: the unfurling carpet of guiding lights that say *here*, the voice of the controller that says *now*. With speed comes the transition, the gathering sense that the wheels matter less and the mechanisms that work on the air—the control surfaces on the wings and the tail—more. We feel the airplane's dawning life in the air clearly through the controls, and with each passing second, the jet's presence on the ground becomes more incidental to how we direct its motion.

On every takeoff, there is a speed known as V1. Before this speed, we have enough room left ahead of us on the runway to stop the takeoff. After this speed, we may not. Thus committed to flight, we continued along the ground, gathering still more speed. As the lights of the runway started to alternate red and white to indicate its approaching end, I lifted the nose.

As if we had only pulled out of a driveway, I turned right, toward Tokyo. Below, London grew bigger before it became smaller. We followed London's river as far as the North Sea. Then the sea turned, and Denmark, Sweden, and Finland passed beneath us, and night fell. Now, after ten hours of flying, I'm in the new day's blue northwest of Japan, waiting for Tokyo to rise as simply as the morning.

I settle myself into my sheepskin-covered seat and my particular



**AT THIS MOMENT, IT IS
THE LIGHT ITSELF THAT IS
THE ESSENTIAL FEATURE
OF THE EARTH.**

position above the planet. I blink in the sun, check the distance of my hands and feet from the controls, put on a headset, and adjust the microphone. I say good morning to my colleagues, and they update me on the hours I was absent. I check the computers, the fuel gauges. Small, steady green digits show our expected landing time in Tokyo, about an hour from now. Another display shows the remaining nautical miles of flight, a number that drops about one mile every seven seconds.



I AM OCCASIONALLY asked if I don't find it boring to be in the cockpit for so many hours. The truth is, I have never been bored. I've sometimes been tired, and often

I've wished I were heading home rather than moving away. But I've never had the sense that there was any more enjoyable way to spend my working life, that below me existed some other kind of time for which I would trade my hours in the sky.

When I was a child, I used to assemble model airplanes and hang them in my bedroom, under a ceiling scattered with glow-in-the-dark stars, until the day skies were hardly less busy than Heathrow's and at night the outlines of the dark jets crossed against the indoor constellations. I looked forward to my family's occasional airplane trips with an enthusiasm that rarely had much to do with wherever we were going. I spent most of my time at Disney

World awaiting the moment we would board again the magical vessel that had taken us there.

Most pilots love their work and have wanted to do it for as long as they can remember. Many began training as soon as they could, often in the military. But I've been surprised at how many of my fellow trainees had traveled quite far down another path—they were medical students, pharmacists, engineers, who, like me, a former historian and management consultant, had decided to return to their first love.

Some pilots enjoy the hand-to-eye mechanics that are related to movement in three dimensions. Others have a natural affinity for machines, and airplanes are engineered nobility, lying well beyond most cars, boats, and motorcycles on the continuum of our shiny creations.

Many pilots, I think, are especially drawn to the freedom of flight. A jet is detached, physically remote, and separate for a certain number of miles and hours. Such solitude is all but absent from the world now, and so—paradoxically, for in the cockpit we could hardly be better encased in technology—flight feels increasingly old-fashioned. When I was thirteen and got my first portable cassette

player and headphones and began to choose music for myself, I asked my brother if pilots were allowed to listen to music while they flew. He answered that he wasn't sure, but he thought not. He was right. But as passengers, we are all given these increasingly rare quiet hours in which there is nowhere we have to go and nothing we have

to do, hours in which we are alone with our thoughts and music and the moving picture of our journeys.

Then, too, there is the perennial yearning for height that many of us share. High places have gravity. They pull us up. We climb mountains. We build skyscrapers and visit their observation decks. We ask for

an upper floor in a hotel. We ponder photographs taken from high above our homes, our towns, our planet.



PERHAPS EVOLUTION alone explains the attraction of altitude. Here is the big picture, the lay of our land, what approaches our cave or castle. But I think our love of height cannot be entirely explained by its many practical uses. In so many realms, we seek evidence of interconnection, of parts that form a whole. Flight is the cartographic, planetary equivalent of hearing a song covered



THERE IS THE
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by a singer you love or meeting for the first time a relative whose features or mannerisms are already familiar. Airplanes raise us above the patterns of streets, forests, suburbs, schools, and rivers. The ordinary things we thought we knew become new or more beautiful, and the visible relationships between them on the land, particularly at night, hint at the circuitry of more or less everything.

Many travelers leave home not just to see new places but also to see the whole of the place they have left from the various kinds of distance—cultural, physical, linguistic—that travel opens for them. Occasionally I fly to a city in which one of the attendants on my flight lives or was born, and he or she is invariably eager to join us in the cockpit for takeoff or landing, to watch how the loved place leaves the cockpit windows or comes to fill them again.

I love flying, for all these reasons.

But to me, the joy of airliners is the particular quality of their motion over the world. When I run through the woods, over the ground, the branches are close, loud, fast. I am what's moving. I love to fly because I love to watch the world go by. The journey, of course, is not quite the destination. Not even for pilots.

Still, we are lucky to live in an age in which many of us, on our busy way to wherever we are going, are given these hours in the high country, when lightness is lent to us, where the volume of our home is opened and a handful of our oldest words—*journey*, *road*, *wing*, *water*; *earth* and *air*, *sky* and *night* and *city*—are made new. From airplanes, we occasionally look up and are briefly held by the stars or the firmament of blue. But mostly we look down, caught by the sudden gravity of what we've left, and by thoughts of reunion, drifting like clouds over the half-bright world. **R**

EXCERPT FROM *SKYFARING: A JOURNEY WITH A PILOT* BY MARK VANHOENACKER. COPYRIGHT © 2015 BY MARK VANHOENACKER. PUBLISHED BY VINTAGE BOOKS, A DIVISION OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE LLC.



SURPRISING SINGULARS AND PLURALS

- The plural of *beef* is *beeves*.
- One strand of spaghetti is a spaghetto.
 - The plural of *opus* is *opera*.
- One piece of confetti is a confetto.
 - The plural of *sphinx* is *sphinges*.

For more, visit rd.com/words.

That's Outrageous!

BY THE NUMBERS

585: The price in dollars for a pair of Distressed Superstar Sneakers—brand-new leather and suede sneakers that are sold pre-ripped, scuffed, and in disrepair. Bonus:

The laces come knotted up, and the soles are held in place with duct tape.

Source: footwearnews.com

785: The number of years between the 1232 canonization of Saint Anthony of Padua and the day a great-grandmother in Brazil learned that the Anthony statue she had been praying to was, in fact, an action figure version of Elrond, a half-elven character from *The Lord of the Rings*.

Source: buzzfeed.com

110.6: The new unofficial world record, in decibels, for the loudest burp. To put Australian Neville Sharp's feat in perspective, a roaring chain saw averages 105 decibels. A proudly gassy Sharp said, "The phone hasn't stopped all morning. A Melbourne radio station is playing my burps!"

Source: abc.net.au



10: The length (in hours) of a movie submitted to the British board of censors. The film was payback by an independent filmmaker tired of having to present his films to the

board—for a fee—before they could be released to the public. His epic was titled *Paint Drying* and consisted of one unedited shot of white paint drying on a wall.

Source: Washington Post

17: The number of letters in Mary Woothtakewahbitty's last name. Which may be why the Oklahoman went to court to have it legally changed to Smith.

Source: Anadarko Daily News

5: The number of parking tickets that piled up on the windshield of a car in Fort Lauderdale before anyone noticed that the driver was still inside—dead. The 62-year-old man had passed away from natural causes at least three days before being discovered. A bit of good news: The city dismissed the \$160 in parking fines "due to extenuating circumstances."

Source: sun-sentinel.com

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BULGER, JAMES J., JR.

Record Form No. 23
Rev. Oct., 1940

Robbery of FD
20 Years B
56 A



First told at a show by the Moth, the live storytelling group,
at the Music Hall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

THE KILLER NEXT DOOR

He gave me gifts and liked to chat. He said his name was Charlie. But when the FBI showed up and told me that my elderly neighbor was actually a notorious killer, I joined the plot to capture him.

BY JOSH BOND

FROM THE BOOK *ALL THESE WONDERS*

I MANAGED A HOTEL in Santa Monica for about seven years, as well as the apartment building where I lived, which was across the street. Super-easy commute. It's particularly great when you live in LA.

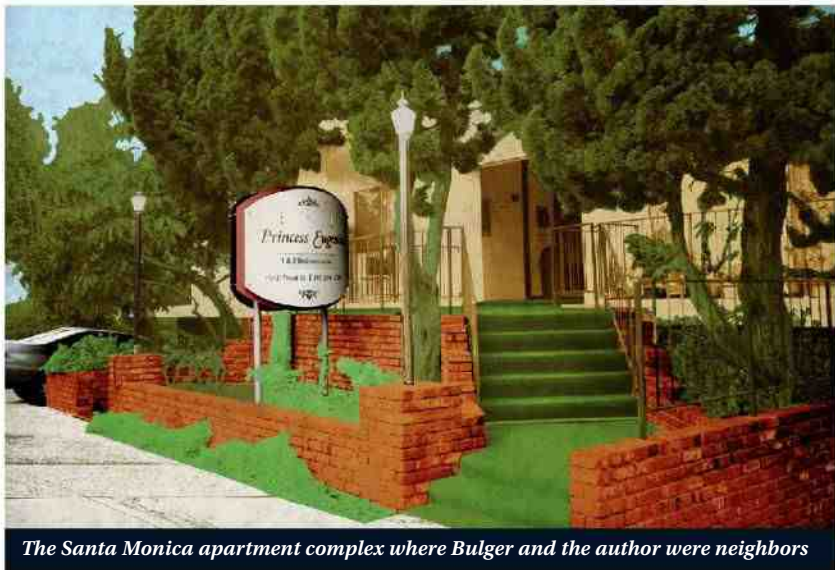
You meet a lot of interesting people when you manage a building. For example, there was a retired couple who lived in the unit next to mine—the Gaskos. The first time I met the husband, I was in my apartment playing guitar and trying to write a song.

There's a knock on the door, and I open it to find a man in his seventies holding a black case. He tells me that he heard me playing music, and he liked it, which was good, and he

thought I could use this black Stetson cowboy hat.

Really nice gesture. I thank him, and he says his name is Charlie.

So fast-forward four years, and I'm taking a nap on my couch. I'd been working for two weeks straight, no days off, on call every night. But this particular Wednesday, I was taking off work early and I was going to see this band, My Morning Jacket, in Hollywood. I was meeting a friend. All planned out.



The Santa Monica apartment complex where Bulger and the author were neighbors

ALL SOURCE PHOTOS: COURTESY MICHAEL ESSLINGER

At 2 p.m. the phone rings, and it's my coworker calling from the office—with the FBI.

Before I know it, I'm on the phone with an FBI agent, and he says, "I need to talk to you about a tenant in your apartment building."

I'm on my couch, so I say, "Can we do this tomorrow?"

He says no. "Where are you? Come here now."

So I get to my office, and I take a seat, and there's a large man wearing a dark T-shirt and jeans. He closes the door and throws a manila folder down on the desk. He opens it and points to a sheet of paper. Across the top is *WANTED*, and underneath is a photo of a man and a woman, with the names *Catherine Greig* and *James J. "Whitey" Bulger*.

The officer asks if these people live in the apartment next to mine. And at first glance, I know the woman is my neighbor, Carol Gasko. Yes, I know these guys. These are my neighbors.

And while I've never heard the name Catherine Greig, the name Whitey Bulger is very familiar. I had heard it many times when I was at Boston University. But I didn't really know anything about him. He was a Jimmy Hoffa-type guy to me, like, "Oh, this guy's missing. He's never gonna

be found." It was almost like a joke.

So I'm standing there, and the FBI agent says, "What do you think?"

I say, "What does my face tell you?"

He says, "I need percentages."

I say, "Ninety-nine point five, a hundred percent."

So he gets on his cell phone, and while this is happening, it feels like

I'm in a movie after an explosion where the sound just disappears and you're trying to process something that you're not familiar with. You don't know what's going on, and you don't know what's about to happen.

This is an old man who bought me a bike light one time because he was worried about

me riding my bike at night without one. And now I'm discovering he's a notorious fugitive.

Another agent, this one in a Hawaiian shirt, quickly appears. The agent in the dark T-shirt says, "We need the spare keys to his apartment. I don't want to have to bust the door down."

I say, "OK, here are the keys."

The agent in the Hawaiian shirt leaves, and then the other agent says, "Look, this guy's pretty high on the Most Wanted list. We could use your help apprehending him."

My first response is, "I just gave you

“Look, this guy's pretty high on the Most Wanted list. We could use your help apprehending him.”

the keys to his apartment and told you he lives there. So I'm not really sure what else I can do."

He says, "Well, we can't just go to his apartment. We have to make sure he's in there. If it's just her, it doesn't really work for us. So why don't you go knock on the door and see if he's there?"

In the previous months, Carol had been telling people in the building, "Charlie has dementia; he has heart problems." They'd put notes on their door during the day that said, "Don't knock on the door." I knew from talking to him over the years that he slept during the day.

I explain this to the agent, and without skipping a beat, he says, "Well, what are you doing tonight?"

I say, "I'm going to a concert."

He says, "You might want to cancel those plans."

So I call my buddy and tell him, "Look, I don't think I'm going to make the show tonight, and I can't tell you why."

As the original shock is dissipating, I realize I'm going to be with these guys until they have Charlie in cuffs. Then things really kick in. One agent places himself at a window that has a good view of the Gaskos' balcony across the street. The other agent wants to go over to my apartment. I

tell him to go through an alley and some side streets so he doesn't walk in front of the apartment building in clear view of Charlie and Carol. I walk through the front entrance and let him in from the back.

The FBI agent says, "They just closed their blinds. Did you tip 'em off?"

"I've been with you the whole time.

No, of course not."

We get to my apartment, and I draw him a floor plan of the Gaskos' place. He's throwing ideas around about how to get this guy out of his apartment.

My living room wall shares a wall with Charlie's bedroom, so I'm like, "Uh, you know this guy can hear everything we're say-

ing? Like, he's repeated conversations I've had at night with my friends, asking me why we don't curse or fight as much as he and his friends did in his younger days."

We go into my bedroom, and he comes up with an idea. We're going to break into his storage locker in the garage. We go down to the garage, and the FBI agent goes to get his car; he has some bolt cutters in there.

I'm suddenly pumped up. I'm involved in something. It's like a movie. I'm having fun, almost, at this point. The adrenaline is helping me forget about my relationship with these

“
This is the
same man who
bought me a
Christmas
present every
year for the
four years
I'd lived there.



Though Whitey landed in prison many times throughout his life, he was on the FBI's Most Wanted list for 16 years before being arrested for the final time, in 2011.

people over the years. I mean, this is the same man who bought me a Christmas present every year for the four years I'd lived there.

Once the lock is broken, we go back to my apartment, and the agent's telling me, "OK, this is what's gonna happen. I'm gonna go down, we're gonna get everything set, I'm gonna call you, and you knock on his door and bring him down."

And I'm like, "No. I'm going to go across to my office to call him, and I'm going to tell him to meet me there. Then you guys take care of your business."

I'm in my office, and I'm thinking about this guy, my neighbor, who looked after an old woman on the first floor. Who one year, when I didn't write a thank-you note for a Christmas present he gave me, gave me a box of stationery.

I'm thinking, What did this guy actually *do*?

So I go to Wikipedia, and I'm reading

about murders and extortion and gambling.

I get to the bottom, and in one of his last public sightings with one of his Mafia buddies, there's a quote from him: "When I go down, I'm going out with guns blazing."

I start to rethink my involvement in the day's events.

Conveniently, my phone rings, and it's the FBI, and they say, "Make the call."

I start to waver: "Look, man, I just read something about this guy ... and I don't know about this."

He says, "No, no, no—he'll never know. He'll never know." Which is obviously not true. But I am this close to getting to my concert, so I say, "All right, I'll make the call."

I call the Gaskos, and there is no answer. I am relieved. I am so happy that they didn't answer the phone. I call the agent back, and I say, "Hey, man, sorry. They didn't answer. Going to have to do something else."



Whitey has been depicted in several films and TV shows, including Black Mass (in which he was played by Johnny Depp, right) and The Departed (Jack Nicholson).

He says, "Are you sure you don't want to knock on the door?"

And I'm like, "Look, man, curtains closed, guns blazing. What if he comes to the door with a gun?"

He says, "Just be like, 'Hey, man, what's going on?'"

I'm thinking to myself, Uh, he will shoot me before I finish that one statement.

I tell him I'm not going to do that. But while this is going on, Carol calls back. And so I get on the phone and I explain to her that the storage

unit's been broken into. Either I can call the police or Charlie can meet me in the garage and we'll look at it.

So she discusses this with him, and she says, "He'll be down in five minutes."

"All right, great." I hang up and call the FBI. "He's on his way. Do your thing."

Then I walk outside, and Carol walks out on her balcony, which is directly across the street. She looks at me, and then she quickly looks down to the garage, and then she looks back

at me. I don't know if she knows, but she looks worried.

She walks back in, and then I get a call from the FBI, and they say, "We got him. Go to your concert."

So I go back across the street to my apartment to change clothes, and the adrenaline—the rush—just hits me. I go downstairs, and as soon as I open the door to the garage, it's like a slow-motion shot—there are two SUVs and a half-dozen FBI agents. And my neighbor, Charlie Gasko, is standing there in cuffs, surrounded by agents, laughing and telling stories.

He almost looks relieved. I see Carol standing a few feet away, also in cuffs. And the magnitude of everything that has happened starts to sink in.

She looks at me, and she says, "Hi, Josh," and I can't speak.

I just meekly wave, and walk to my car, and get on the highway, and call my brother, and say, "You'll never guess what happened to me today."

"What?"

"I helped the FBI arrest the most wanted man in the country."

So a couple of months later, my family's a little worried about me, and my friends are taking bets on how

much longer I have to live. I get home one day, and there's a letter in the mail from the Plymouth Correctional Facility. I open it, and I see the same familiar cursive writing and the same "shoot the breeze" dialogue tone that I knew from four years living next to Charlie Gasko.

But in this letter, he's reintroducing himself as Jim Bulger.

And so I write him back, and I say, "Look, you know I had something to do with the day of the arrest, and my family's a little worried. So, uh, you know, just a little note of 'everything's good' would be nice."

He writes back and says, "Look, they had me with or without

your help. No worries."

So that made my mom feel better, definitely.

New neighbors eventually moved in, and they seemed like nice people.

But what do I know?



After his capture, Bulger was tried in Boston and convicted on charges related to 11 murders and other crimes. He was sentenced to two life terms and is currently in federal prison in Florida.

R

“
My family's
a little worried
about me, and
my friends
are taking
bets on how
much longer
I have to live.”

WHO ? KNEW

13 Home Security Secrets You Should Know

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 The single most important component of a home security system is the alarm company's sign in your front yard. In survey after survey, burglars say they avoid homes with alarms, so let thieves know your home is secured (even if it isn't).

2 Another sign worth posting: *BEWARE OF DOG*. Burglars hate dogs, not only because they bite but also because they bark, attracting attention. True, Spot can't call the cops, but he can persuade a crook to move on.

3 Professional systems can cost upward of \$600 for installation

alone, but they have perks. Many allow you to arm or disarm them from a key chain or phone. Some are also connected to smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

4 If you do sign up with an alarm company, know this: Service contracts can be hard to cancel. Many companies have three-year contracts, and some force you to pay for the full term even if you terminate early.



Certain contracts even have auto-renew clauses that require you to cancel at a very specific time or you're stuck for another three years.

5 For about \$150, you can buy and install an off-the-shelf home security system yourself. Most are wireless, easy to set up, and require no special mounting hardware. Some even offer professional monitoring, if you don't mind a monthly fee.

6 Most burglars ring the doorbell before they try to break in to make sure no one is home. Catch them by mounting a motion-activated wireless security camera by your front door for as little as \$100. Set it up to alert you on your phone anytime someone steps onto your porch.

7 When you go out of town, create the illusion that you're home by putting your lights on timers or getting LED bulbs you can control remotely. For about \$20, you can buy a TV simulator that mimics the light of the real thing but uses a lot less power.

8 Because more than 80 percent of all burglar-alarm calls nationwide are false alarms, some police departments won't even show up if there isn't video or eyewitness evidence. If you're not paying for professional monitoring, deputize a reliable neighbor to double-check any alarms at your house when you're away.

9 One more reason to enlist your neighbors? Even when police do decide to respond, it can take them 30 to 45 minutes to arrive at your home. A crook can be in and out of there in ten minutes ...

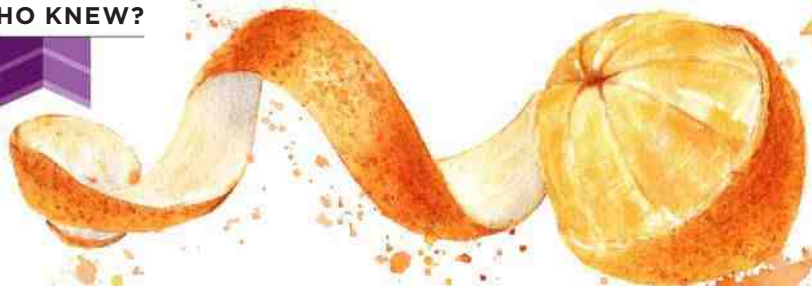
10 ... or less, if your doors have clear glass panels. Burglars love them because they make it that much easier to smash, grab, and run—and because they show off your steal-worthy possessions. If you've got glass, get it frosted or keep it covered (your windows too).

11 Another thing crooks love? The five-foot fence around your backyard. A U.S. Department of Justice study noted that intruders are more likely to target homes with high fences and walls to conceal them.

12 Do yourself a favor and turn your alarm on even if you're headed out for a quick errand. One study found that 41 percent of alarm-equipped homes were burglarized when the alarms weren't armed.

13 Finally, lock your doors even when you're home. You'd be shocked by how many thieves sneak in through an open garage or front door while the owner is out back. **R**

Sources: An anonymous home security system installer in Louisville, Kentucky; Chad Laurans, CEO of SimpliSafe; David DeMille, a security expert with asecurelife.com; Tim Downes, a police sergeant who specializes in burglaries in Clearwater, Florida; and Joseph Kuhns, PhD, a professor of criminal justice at UNC Charlotte who has surveyed convicted burglars



Why There's No Clean Way to Peel An Orange

BY BRANDON SPEKTOR

WHICH ACCELERATES faster: a rocket blasting off the launchpad at Cape Canaveral or citrus oil squirting out of a NASA janitor's orange as he peels his afternoon snack?

The answer, according to high-speed footage shot by researchers at the University of Central Florida, is the oil (unlike juice, fruit oils live primarily in seeds or rinds). By analyzing oranges being squeezed close-up, the team found that the fruit is capable of ejecting oil at up to 23 miles per hour over one millimeter, accelerating from a full stop to top speed 1,000 times faster than a launching space shuttle. And it's all thanks to those countless little pockmarks that dot your orange.

Those tiny dimples on citrus fruits are oil glands, where the essential orange, lemon, and lime oils that inevitably get sprayed all over your hands are synthesized. Thousands of them lie beneath the surface of the rind.

When you peel a citrus fruit, the rind bends, compressing the oil glands and building pressure like Bubble Wrap does beneath a jabbing finger. When the glands burst, jets of oil blast out of the rind at more than ten meters per second—faster than a flying bumblebee or a falling raindrop.

Researchers hope that a greater understanding of how these erupting oil glands achieve such swift acceleration could inspire new medical technology, such as emergency asthma inhalers loaded with exploding pouches of medicine. So take heart the next time you're cursing the citrus oil on your hands: That fruit might save a life—once scientists learn to make medicine travel at the speed of lime. **R**

Watch the incredible high-speed footage at rd.com/orange.

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Six Idiotic Idioms—and What’s Wrong with Them

BY BRANDON SPECKTOR



“No Use Crying Over Spilled Milk”

THE FLAW: Crying helps people recover from disappointment.

True, it’s dangerous to dwell on the past, but holding back those spilled-milk tears could hurt even more. A survey of more than 5,000 weepers in the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* suggests that a good cry can provide resolution after pain—respondents who tried to suppress their sobs only felt worse. Or, to put it in more lactose-tolerant terms, “Sometimes we *should* cry over spilled milk,” writes Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, a philosophy professor at the University of Haifa in Israel. “Otherwise, how will we learn to value milk, and how will we avoid spilling it again?”

“Pure As the Driven Snow”

THE FLAW: Driven snow is toxic.

“Driven” snow has been blown into drifts and remained untrodden-upon by human heels. Sounds pure, but according to Canadian researchers, fresh white snow is a magnet for car-exhaust pollution, absorbing enough toxins while “driven” to become a health hazard if you were to drink enough of it. (Keep this in mind, “yellow snow” jokesters.)

“You Catch More Flies with Honey than with Vinegar”

THE FLAW: Vinegar is a fly magnet.

If you’ve ever endured a fruit fly invasion in your home, a bowl of vinegar was likely your first line of defense. Per researchers from Northwestern

University, “Adult flies forage for microbes on overripe fruit, relying on their sense of smell to detect the acetic acid (the chemical that gives vinegar its pungent aroma) that accumulates as the fruit ferments.” The hungrier a fly gets, the quicker it succumbs to vinegar’s dubious charms.

“Low Man on the Totem Pole”

THE FLAW: The opposite of a chump, the low man is often the most admired. Vertical order on totem poles rarely denotes importance. One thing the “low man” almost always earns, though, is love from the carver and hence the viewer. “Most carvers begin from the bottom of the pole, moving gradually to the top,” writes Pat Kramer, author of *Totem Poles*. “Bottom figures are carefully detailed because observers see these figures close-up.”

“Money Can’t Buy Happiness”

THE FLAW: Yes, it can. Permanent happiness is fleeting no matter what your bank account looks like, but

research shows money does, in fact, give you short-term bursts of joy—if you spend wisely. Experiences such as concerts or vacations have been shown to bring greater happiness than purchasing stuff does. Most important, people who spend money on others are measurably happier than those who spend on themselves. So do yourself a favor: Buy happiness for someone else.

“Pick the Low-Hanging Fruit First”

THE FLAW: Lower fruit is often the last to ripen. “Fruit that is high up, exposed to the sun, ripens the fastest,” says Gennaro Fazio, a plant breeder and geneticist for the USDA-ARS Plant Genetic Resources Unit. “You want to pick the low-hanging fruit last, so it has more time to develop.” What’s more, starting at the top makes the whole job easier, says apple-picking veteran Henry Rueda: When pickers harvest from top to bottom, the sacks of fruit they carry around their necks and shoulders grow heavier as they move downward, working with gravity, not against it. **R**



WORLDS APART

Brazil’s Milton Corrêa stadium in Macapá was built such that the midfield line runs exactly down the equator. Each team playing thus defends one hemisphere of the earth.

Source: zmescience.com

REMINISCE

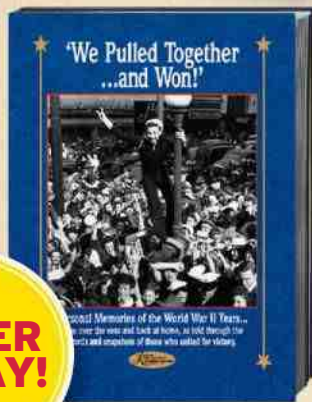
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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

When it came to ingeniously descriptive language, Charles Dickens was lummy (aka first-rate). Bryan Kozlowski compiles the most colorful terms in his book What the Dickens?! You might need some logic to guess the definitions. Turn the page for answers and the words' literary sources.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. sawbones ('saw-bohnz) *n.*—

A: doctor. B: magician.

C: old nag.

2. catawampus (kat-uh-'wom-puhs)

adj.—A: fierce. B: syrupy.

C: deep and dark.

3. jog-trotty ('jahg-trah-tee) *adj.*—

A: monotonous. B: nervous.

C: backward.

4. spoony ('spoo-nee) *adj.*—

A: spacious. B: pun-filled.

C: lovey-dovey.

5. rantipole ('ran-tih-pohl) *n.*—

A: battering ram. B: fishing rod.

C: ill-behaved person.

6. gum-tickler ('guh-m-tihk-ler) *n.*—

A: funny remark. B: strong drink.

C: wishbone.

7. stomachic (stuh-'ma-kihk) *n.*—

A: winter coat. B: tummy medicine.

C: windup toy.

8. sassigassity (sass-ih-'gass-ih-tee)

n.—A: fancy clothes. B: cheeky

attitude. C: gust of hot wind.

9. comfoozled (kuhm-'foo-zuhld)

adj.—A: on fire. B: pampered.

C: exhausted.

10. mud lark ('muhd lark) *n.*—

A: scavenging child. B: court judge.

C: ancient scribe.

11. plenipotentiary (pleh-nuh-puh-

'tehn-shuh-ree) *n.*—A: housewife.

B: diplomatic agent. C: bank vault.

12. toadeater ('tohd-ee-ter) *n.*—

A: fawning person. B: habitual liar.

C: gourmet.

13. slangular ('slang-yuh-luhr)

adj.—A: oblique. B: using street talk.

C: tight around the neck.

14. marplot ('mahr-plot) *n.*—

A: flower garden. B: meddler.

C: fruit jam.

15. heeltap ('heel-tap) *n.*—

A: Irish dance step. B: scoundrel.

C: sip of liquor left in a glass.

 To play an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad, download the Reader's Digest app.

Answers

1. sawbones—[A] doctor. Captain Kirk pulled strings to get his friend McCoy hired as the ship's *sawbones*. (Used in *The Pickwick Papers*)

2. catawampus—[A] fierce. The *catawampus* storm engulfed the tiny village. (*Martin Chuzzlewit*)

3. jog-trotty—[A] monotonous. Will Lauren ever quit that *jog-trotty* data-entry job? (*Bleak House*)

4. spoony—[C] lovey-dovey. Those *spoony* newlyweds just won't stop canoodling! (*David Copperfield*)

5. rantipole—[C] ill-behaved person. A gang of *rantipoles* vandalized the historic building. (*Great Expectations*)

6. gum-tickler—[B] strong drink. Ty downed a few *gum-ticklers* to forget his troubles. (*Our Mutual Friend*)

7. stomachic—[B] tummy medicine. This new organic *stomachic* may be just the thing for your indigestion. (*David Copperfield*)

8. sassigassity—[B] cheeky attitude. No more of your *sassigassity*, young lady! ("A Christmas Tree")

9. comfoozled—[C] exhausted. We were all completely *comfoozled* after the 10K race. (*The Pickwick Papers*)

10. mud lark—[A] scavenging child. Some *mud lark* just snatched my piece of birthday cake! (*Our Mutual Friend*)

11. plenipotentiary—[B] diplomatic agent. Which of those muckety-mucks is the head *plenipotentiary* around here? (*Great Expectations*)

12. toadeater—[A] fawning person. You *toadeaters* will never disagree with your coach! (*Dombey and Son*)

13. slangular—[B] using street talk. Lady Clara was shocked by the *slangular* chatter at high tea. (*Bleak House*)

14. marplot—[B] meddler. The con men were exposed when a *marplot* snitched on them. (*Our Mutual Friend*)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some Dickens characters have made their way into the lexicon: A *scrooge* is a miser (from stingy Ebenezer Scrooge), and *Pecksniffian* means "hypocritical" (from insincere Seth Pecksniff). It's a coincidence that *dickens*, a euphemism for the devil, is in the dictionary. But *Dickensian*, which refers to living in decrepit conditions, owes its place to his Victorian tales.

15. heeltap—[C] sip of liquor left in a glass. "I must go," said James Bond, downing the *heeltap* of his martini. (*The Pickwick Papers*)

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: ugsome
10-12: gas and gaiters
13-15: lummy

Humor in Uniform



In the early days of flight, each dirigible pilot was responsible for inflating his own blimp.

PROOF THAT THE QUIP IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

■ After invading Greece, Philip II of Macedonia sent a threatening message to the Spartans: “You are advised to submit without delay, for if I bring my army on your land, I will destroy your farms, slay your people, and raze your city.” The Spartans replied with one word: “If”

■ The hostess apologized to the Duke of Wellington, the hero of Waterloo, for the rude behavior of French officers who had turned their backs on

him when he entered the party. His reply? “I have seen their backs before.”

■ Prior to World War I, German emperor Wilhelm II bragged to Dutch queen Wilhelmina that his guardsmen were seven feet tall. The queen, reading the threat between the lines, answered, “But when we open our dikes, the waters are ten feet deep.”

Sources: historyhustle.com, bartleby.com

Send us your funniest military anecdote or news story—it might be worth \$\$\$! For details, go to rd.com/submit.

Quotable Quotes



**HURRY UP.
YOU'RE
DYING.**

MEGYN KELLY,
news anchor

If everything happens accord-
ing to plan, it's a business
plan, not an adventure.

BERTRAND PICCARD,
*the first pilot to circle the earth
in a solar-powered plane*

God never slams a door in
your face without opening a
box of Girl Scout cookies.

ELIZABETH GILBERT, *writer*

The more you complain about your problems,
the more problems you will have to complain
about. **ZIG ZIGLAR,** *author
and motivational speaker*



**BEING A PARENT DILUTES
YOUR NARCISSISM.**

ETHAN HAWKE, *actor*



I'm in the middle of my
life, and I just don't have
enough years left to
spend a large proportion
of them inside an
iPhone. **ZADIE SMITH,** *author*

**TALK TO A MAN
ABOUT HIMSELF
AND HE WILL
LISTEN FOR
HOURS.**

BENJAMIN DISRAELI,
*19th-century British
prime minister*

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