

Reader's digest

**MOST
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&
MOST
READ**

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**LOL Dumb
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**“I Survived
a Stroke”**

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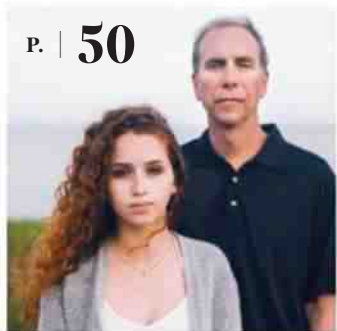
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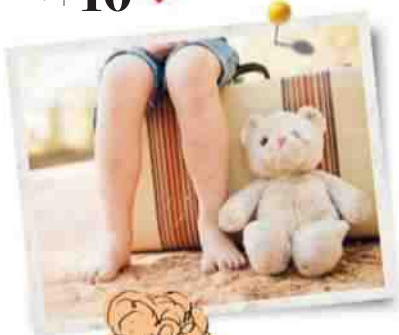
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Editor's Note

Savouring Slumber

SLEEP. IF ONLY WE COULD GET ENOUGH. Most nights I drift off to sleep without any problems, then wake around 3am. My sleep cycle is committed to this routine, which then sees me lie awake for around 40 minutes before it almost magically turns into the start of the day. It's not an uncommon problem. This month's cover feature, 'Sleep Better Every Night' (page 34), offers some great ideas on how to train yourself to sleep better for a peaceful night's rest.

For those of us who haven't experienced a debilitating illness, it's tricky to imagine how vulnerable it can make a person feel. This month's Bonus Read, 'I Survived a Stroke' (page 124) is a very personal and revealing first-person story of one man's rehabilitation back to recovery following a sudden stroke. What stands out most is the commitment Ron Smith witnesses among the team of medical and rehabilitation staff who refuse any suggestions of him quitting – "What I heard was a chorus of voices raised in a song of healing," he says. According to the World Health Organization, stroke is the leading cause of disability worldwide. For Ron, a successful recovery involved a journey of repairing and rebuilding but also establishing a new approach to thinking about himself.

We hope you enjoy the selection of stories in this month's issue,



LOUISE WATERSON
Group Editor



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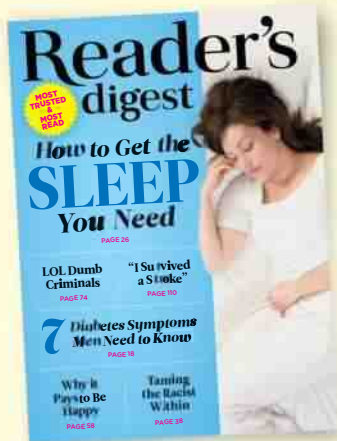
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Letters

READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

The Right Stuff

The article in April's issue 'The Prisoner and The Guard' is an amazing and inspiring story. It proves that a little push in the right direction and support from the right people can help to change the course of life for hardened criminals.

I think this story should be shared with all inmates to encourage them, if they so wish, to turn around their lives.

N. KHAN



Eye Opener

The article 'Long-term Vision' (April) was particularly useful and important to me because I recently faced serious issues with my eyes and am now under regular review with my ophthalmologist.

You presented some common eye diseases and useful tips on how to reduce risks as one gets older and avoid them in an easy-to-understand way. I urge all your readers to develop and practise good eye care habits.

JUN JIE NG

All-round Good Read

I have been subscribing to Reader's Digest for 20 years, and the April issue was extraordinary. I felt the tension described by Howard Bull in 'Minutes from Disaster' (My Story) and admire Darren Davis for his life-changing care of John McAvoy in 'The Prisoner and the Guard'. 'Can't Anyone Hear Me?' brought attention to the medical condition referred to as 'locked-in syndrome' and 'Partisan Promise' teaches us to care for things that seem unimportant.

ANDRAS SETYORINI

LET US KNOW If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

Don't Get Me Wrong

'Famous Quotes That Everyone Gets Wrong' (April) reminded me of the phrase "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing". We pseudo-intellectuals have been using these famous quotes wrongly to add weight to our logic. It's better to learn these quotes correctly, and win arguments in a true learned way. **AHMED MUMTAZ**

New Rules

Having not read Reader's Digest for a while, I picked it up again this month and after reading 'A Lifetime of Tales' by Fiona Hicks (May), I was hooked! It's helped me get my life back on track. As famous writer Jeffery Archer says, "There are a hundred reasons not to get up at six and write. I have to be disciplined." This is a rule I will live by. **AIMEN SHAHID**

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN

The best letter published each month will win a Pilot Capless fountain pen, valued at over \$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month's winner, T. Pillai.



Bona-Fido News

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

"Ooh, I qualify for this one".
Positions Vacant: Lab technician.

CHRISTINA TREGEA

Man's Best Friend Are Now Cats?
This Is So Fake News!

PHILLIP KENNEDY

Read or Digest? **ZORAYDA LAUSAN**

This human language is too 'ruff'
for me to decipher. **ALLISON LEE**

Congratulations to this month's winner, Christina Tregea.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, see the details on page 8.

Satisfaction Guaranteed

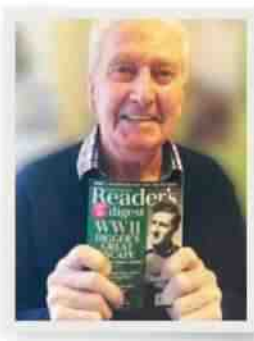
I am one for my own company and 'A Year in the Book Room' (May) really moved me. Books have become my great companions over the years. Lately, I have indulged in covering my books and found it to have therapeutic effects. Nothing pleases me more than seeing my books protected.

THYAGHESAN PILLAI

Finger-Licking Good

I found your recent article 'Watch Your Table Manners' (May) on table etiquette from around the world really interesting. I'm from Pakistan and licking one's fingers after a meal shows that the food was delicious, however it's considered bad manners to leave unfinished food on the plate.

KANITA SHAH



Ernest 'Ern' Brough with the April issue in which he appears on the cover. Ern is one of Australia's last remaining WWII veterans, and his story of escaping a German POW camp moved many readers.

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FOR DIGITAL EXTRAS AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFO, SEE PAGE 13

Anecdotes and jokes

Send in your real-life laugh for Life's Like That or All in a Day's Work. Got a joke? Send it in for Laughter Is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Share antics of unique pets or wildlife in up to 300 words.

Kindness of Strangers/ Reminiscence

Share tales of generosity or an event from your past that made a huge impact in 100-500 words.

My Story

Do you have an inspiring or life-changing tale to tell? Submissions must be true, unpublished, original and 800-1000 words - see website for more information.

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Insomnia has no blanket solution

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Leaving Home

Sometimes, life as a big sister just doesn't seem fair

BY TERRY WOLFISCH COLE

Terry Wolfisch Cole, 52, is a mother, writer and story teller. She enjoys baking, yoga and playing mahjong.

ONE HOT DAY I WAS PLAYING with the kids next door, and I found out that in other people's houses, the older kids had later bedtimes. I was five years old, and my sister Lisa was two years younger.

I go to my mother with my new-found information, and I advocate for policy change. I am denied.

This big-sister thing is not what it's cracked up to be. Every time we do something that we're not supposed to

do, I get into more trouble. It seems everybody's always paying attention to her – she's little, she's cute. And we have to go to bed at the same time, I've had it!

So, I go to my room, and I take my white vinyl Partridge Family sleepover suitcase, and I put it on the bed, and I start to pack. Into the suitcase go Nancy Drew and Amelia Bedelia – I was an early reader – and some Barbies, and by the time I'm done, there is no room left for clothes.

But I'm leaving forever, so I know I'm going to need a wardrobe. And I put on two pairs of underwear first, because you've got to change, right? A pair of pants, a pair of shorts, a T-shirt, a hoodie, a raincoat, and over it all a crocheted poncho with fringes. And I go downstairs. My mother is in the kitchen. She looks up and asks if I'm running away. I told her yes.

She's not nearly as upset by this as I feel she should be.

She looks at me and says, "Are you going to Grandma Sylvia's?" which is the only other place I know. It's not even two kilometres away. I can't believe she can figure this out. She's like some kind of witch!

I don't answer her. I go out the front door and down the driveway. Now,

remember, it's the 1970s and they have not yet invented suitcases with wheels, and mine is full of books.

So, with every step, I'm dragging my suitcase. I go down the driveway, with every step, I'm sweating and dragging and sweating and dragging. I'm so intent on my mission that I don't realise that my mother is about 20 metres behind me, following and waving concerned citizens away.

Finally, I get to number 73, Grandma's apartment building. I go up the stairs, and before I even knock, the door opens.

My grandma tells me she's very happy to see me, but I'm certainly not living there forever. And I realise my mother has called ahead and I have been betrayed.

My grandma says, "Do you want a drink as long as you're here?"

She goes to get me some juice, and I'm standing in her living

room taking off my layers, and my mother comes sweeping in. And she sits down in my grandfather's wingback chair, and she pats her lap. She says, "Come here." I don't want to because I am righteously peeved, but I'm hot and I'm five, and I get on my mother's lap. She pushes my hair back behind my ear, and she says, "Sweetheart, what is it? Why have you left? Why have you run away?"

“
**Every time we do
 something we
 are not supposed
 to do, I get into
 more trouble ...
 she's little,
 she's cute**”

And it all comes tumbling out: "It's not fair and all the time with Lisa, I get into trouble and she doesn't ... and we should not have the same bedtime!"

And my mother, who has always known me better than I know myself, takes my hot, red little face in her hands, and she says to me, "Sweetheart, I don't want you to be so miserable." She says, "You came first. If it's that hard for you living with Lisa, tomorrow morning I will call the orphanage and we'll send her away."

I can read. I know what an orphanage is. I start to cry, and I beg her, "Don't send my sister away to an orphanage!" My mother reluctantly agrees that we'll all go home and give it another try.

***I can read.
I know what an
orphanage is.
I start to cry and
I beg her,
"Don't send my
sister away"***

That night, my mother feeds us scrambled eggs for dinner, and she gives us a bath and puts us both to bed at the same time, as she will for many years to come.

And in those years to come, Lisa and I will grow to be two halves of the same whole, through adventures

and concerts and boyfriends and divorces and death and everything. But once in a while, we'll have a fight. And to this day, if I turn over my shoulder and say, "Mum, Lisa's being mean to me!" my mother always answers in the same way. She says, "You had your chance."

Do you have a tale to tell? We'll pay cash for any original and unpublished story we print. See page 8 for details on how to contribute.

PRICKLES WITH A PAUNCH

Ten overweight hedgehogs have had to go on strict diet and exercise regimes. After too much snacking on food left out for pets, the prickly creatures struggled to curl up into a ball to fend off predators. Animal-lovers who found them waddling around the streets of Tel Aviv, Israel, brought them into Ramat Gan Zoo. One adult male was almost double the average weight for a hedgehog his age. He has since lost 120 grams after staff monitored his diet and left him to run around an enclosure. REUTERS

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Friends and good manners will carry you where money won't go.

MARGARET WALKER



We help you get motivated

#QuotableQuotes and #PointstoPonder to get you through the day



One Mother to Another

Empty rooms are even more keenly felt when a phone goes missing

EMMA MONTGOMERY

Emma Montgomery lives five hours south-west of Brisbane on the family beef and grain property. Originally from Somerset, England, she met her husband Bill in the UK and made her way to the 'land of plenty' for an adventure.

STRESS LEVELS WERE RIDING HIGH in our house during the last week of January this year. But above all, a sadness enveloped the empty rooms of our farm house west of Goondiwindi, Queensland, and I physically ached to have my daughters in its fold again. But our hand was forced by the distance of this vast land, as four days earlier we had left our two eldest girls, Georgie, 13, and Annabel, 11, at a boarding school over 500 kilometres away. Thank goodness we still had our youngest, nine-year-old Lily, at home for a couple more years.

It was Australia Day and we had spent the afternoon celebrating with friends. When we arrived home, the message bank on my mobile phone was flashing. Annabel's concerned voice greeted us: "Hi Mum and Dad, you'll never guess what - I've lost my phone!" After just four days at school her main means of communication between us - a very 'old' phone - had been lost 'while doing cartwheels' at an Australia Day





celebration. We kicked ourselves for not having installed the Find My Phone app and realised the chances of finding the phone were slim.

At six the next morning, my mobile beeped loudly. When I replayed the message a kind voice announced that she thought she had something that belonged to my daughter and could I please call her back.

Annabel had written my number on the inside of her phone's case – good thinking! Sure enough, this wonderful angel, Joy, had been manning a charity stand at the Australia Day celebrations and, when packing up, had found a little pink case under the table. “I’ll take it to

work while you see if anyone can pop in and pick it up,” she kindly offered after I explained that my daughter was at boarding school and I lived a six-hour drive away.

After contacting the school and people I know who live near it, I was out of luck – no one was able to go and pick up the phone, not surprisingly as it was nearly an hour away.

Later that day I decided to ask our angel to post the phone to my daughter. But when I sent her a text to ask if this would be OK, she replied: “We will take it tonight as we’re going to drive down there.” To my utter surprise, this wonderful couple, who had already spent a busy day at work and a late night manning their charity stand, were making a two-hour round trip on a Saturday night, especially to return a phone to a complete stranger.

I gave them directions and they delivered the phone into the hands of my daughter at her boarding house. The only word of an explanation was: “I’ve got four children of my own, I know how a mother worries.”

After what had been such a distressing week, it was a wonderful reminder of the good in the world and how the actions of one person can mean the world to another.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

Smart Animals

Animals touch our hearts and warm our souls



CAT BURGLAR

AVRILL DOVER

When I was a child in the late 1940s, we had a much-loved but eccentric ginger cat called Freckles. Freckles was an enthusiastic hunter, but he did not hunt for rats, mice or birds like other cats. His quarry was entirely different – and perhaps he considered it more useful to humans.

After a successful hunt, our young cat would arrive home uttering that distinctive hunting cry that cats give voice to when they are bringing home a trophy. He would enter triumphantly, bearing in his mouth a rolled-up pair of socks, which he would proudly lay at our feet. Sometimes he would bring home other things – a pullover, a child's shorts or singlet, and once, with

difficulty, dragging it by one sleeve, a grey woollen jumper.

We decided he must be jumping through people's open laundry baskets. I was given the embarrassing job of going from house to house asking, "Does this belong to you?" Our cat brought it home."

Freckles gained quite a reputation in the neighbourhood, and children would sometimes come to our door enquiring about mislaid articles: "I can't find my hat/swimsuit/schoolbag. Has your cat taken it?"

I couldn't help wondering if some

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.

enterprising child ever used Freckles as an excuse for undone homework, telling the teacher, "The neighbour's cat stole it!"

A few years later, we moved to another suburb. Perhaps the people there were more security conscious and there was a shortage of open windows, but whatever the reason, Freckles grew to a contented old age without ever again indulging in his strange pastime.

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

LYNETTE TURNER

In March 2009, my husband, Eddie, and I went to the RSPCA in Lonsdale, South Australia, to look for a suitable dog to adopt. We stopped at one kennel and a gorgeous red dog came up to the door and stared at us with the most beautiful intelligent eyes.

She picked us.

Cody is a Staffordshire-Labrador cross with a gentle soul and was 14 months old when we adopted her. She adored our elderly British Shorthair cat, Cougar, and it took no time for them to become best friends.

At mealtimes Cody would always leave a small amount of food in her bowl for Cougar and Cougar would always leave some for Cody. When Cougar developed kidney disease, Cody looked after her.

Just before Cougar passed away, she curled up on her favourite blanket with Cody next to her, paws placed gently on Cougar, never leaving her

side. Cody would try to encourage Cougar to stand by lifting her head up with her nose. Sadly, Cougar passed away later that night.

The next morning, I went out to the backyard to dig a grave and Cody helped me dig it with her paws. After I laid Cougar in the grave the house phone rang and I ran inside to answer to it. Returning to the grave, I discovered that Cody had completely buried Cougar. She sat by the graveside and howled and cried for several minutes before I walked her back inside the house. Cody was devastated and missed her best friend for a very long time.

Cody still loves cats and has since helped to raise three orphaned kittens.



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THE DIGEST

7 Diabetes Symptoms Every Man Must Know

Warning signs men should not ignore

BY JESSICA MIGALA AND KATHY BUCHANAN

YOU'RE SO THIRSTY Excessive thirst is common with type 2 diabetes - in fact, you may feel that no amount of water can quench your thirst. That's due to rising blood glucose levels: excess sugar builds up in your bloodstream forcing your kidneys to work harder to filter and absorb it; if they can't keep up, they ramp up urine production. You'll pass urine more, which can potentially lead to dehydration, so you'll want to drink more.

If you notice that you're running to the bathroom all day or are excessively thirsty (or dealing with a dry mouth), talk to your doctor.

SHAVING NICKS DON'T HEAL QUICKLY
A tiny cut may seem to

linger forever. "When your sugars are on their way up, it may take longer for a cut to heal," says Sydney endocrinologist Jane Holmes-Walker. "You may also notice more shaving bumps and white heads in the hair follicles in your beard. The sebaceous oil glands in your face are also vulnerable to low-grade infections when you have type 2 diabetes."

YOUR HANDS AND FEET ARE NUMB AND TINGLY A more

advanced complication is nerve damage, a condition called peripheral diabetic neuropathy. You may feel tingling or pins and needles in your feet, pain or numbness, or a sensation that feels like you are walking on cotton wool for some or



stones for others. Holmes-Walker says that it presents in a 'stocking - glove' pattern. "It happens first where your socks go on, and it may occur in your fingertips much later," she says.

THE TIP OF YOUR PENIS IS RED AND SWOLLEN Among the many warning signs of type 2 diabetes are erectile dysfunction and a condition

called balanitis. "This is most commonly due to an excess of candida, a normal resident on the skin which increases with high blood glucose levels," says Holmes-Walker. If you experience swelling of the foreskin and tip of the penis, any pain or discharge, see your doctor. They will instruct you on the best way to keep the area clean and may recommend an anti-fungal or antibiotic cream depending on the source of the problem.

YOUR MOOD IS LOW Of all the problems triggered by diabetes, mood disorders are notorious. An Australian study found one in four people with type 2 diabetes experience depression and one in six experience anxiety. Blood glucose balance is important for maintaining a stable mood. In a 2016 US study, diabetes was associated with increased odds of

depression in older men. The longer the person had been diagnosed with diabetes, the more likely they were to suffer from depression.

YOU'RE SEEING 'FLOATERS'

Although diabetes can damage eyes, it's usually not until diabetes is more advanced that you start experiencing symptoms. Over time, high blood

glucose damages blood vessels in the retina, causing them to bleed and leading to diabetic retinopathy. You may notice black floating spots dotting your field of vision, and you may also have blurred vision.

Among the problems triggered by diabetes, mood disorders are notorious

It's important to have a dilated eye exam as diabetes is a leading cause of preventable blindness.

YOUR GUMS ARE BLEEDING

Holmes-Walker says people with diabetes are three times more likely to develop periodontitis – an infection that damages gums and can lead to tooth loss – than those without diabetes. Red, swollen and bleeding gums are common signs of the condition. It's important to see a dentist to get this under control, since the infection also works the other way – gum problems can increase blood glucose and lead to diabetes.

More Salt Than You Thought

Eight surprising foods that can increase your thirst

BY LISA MARIE CONKLIN

COTTAGE CHEESE These creamy curds have at least 400 mg of sodium per half cup. For a tasty substitute, try Greek yoghurt, which has more protein, calcium, vitamin D, probiotics as well as much less salt.

INSTANT OATS Just add water for a nutritious bowl of goodness, right? Not necessarily. Instant oats pack in as much as 200 mg per serving compared to zero salt in plain oats.

SPORTS DRINKS Even after a very sweaty gym session you won't need to reach for a sports drink, which are created for elite athletes. Water will quench your thirst and keep you within your daily sodium limit.

CANNED VEGIES "Fresh or frozen veg is a better option," says dietitian Asvini Mashru. "But if you want to stick to cans, look for 'no salt added' or 'reduced-sodium' varieties." If full-salt is your only option, drain and rinse thoroughly in cold water.

BISCUITS "Just because a product is sweet doesn't mean it's not high in sodium," dietitian Alysha Coughler says. She also cautions watching for high-sodium 'healthy' versions.

PASTA SAUCE Typical pasta sauce can put a big dent in your sodium budget. Look for lower sodium varieties or add in some herbs and spices and you won't miss the salt.

BREAD Some shop-bought breads have double, triple or even quadruple the salt of homemade versions. "Some have 325 mg of sodium per slice," says dietitian Bobby Maknoon. Also be mindful of portions. "Most people eat two slices at a time but often the serving size is just one slice."

SALAD DRESSING "Sugar and fat get the blame but some dressings have 200 mg of sodium per serving," says Maknoon. 'Low-fat' and 'light' varieties usually have extra sodium to compensate for lower fat content.

Why You Feel Like You're Falling

Most people have experienced this sensation when going to sleep at some point in their lives

BY SAM BENSON SMITH

YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE difficulty getting to sleep each night. But even when you have managed to start drifting off, something inexplicable brings you back to consciousness: an ineffable sensation of falling.

That feeling goes by several names: a hypnic jerk, hypnagogic jerk, sleep start, or sleep twitch. According to Sleep.org, they're incredibly common; 70 per cent of people have experienced the sensation at some point. Although usually harmless, their origins are still a bit cloudy.

Certain factors play a role in the likelihood of experiencing hypnic jerk. People who are consuming a lot of caffeine, undergoing significant emotional stress, experiencing sleep deprivation, or taking part in demanding physical activities in the evening are more likely to experience it. There is also evidence pointing to a link between the common

depression and anxiety medication escitalopram and an increased risk of experiencing hypnic jerks.

Beyond the risk factors, sleep experts have some theories about how the jerks start. Clinical psychologist Michael Breus specialises in sleep disorders and believes that the jerks can be the result of one of two things. Your brain, as it begins to fall asleep, may misconstrue the meaning of your muscle relaxation, attributing the sensation to falling. To protect you from hurting yourself on impact, your muscles tense up. The other theory is that as your nervous system shifts into sleep mode, and the twitches are needed for your muscles' transition from an active state to a dormant state.

The jerks shouldn't really be a cause for concern unless they begin to really cut into your sleep schedule. If that's the case, go see a doctor.





Life Begins on Board

Step aboard your luxury floating hotel and sail away for an experience of a lifetime

1 RISE AND SHINE

Everyone wakes up on a cruise to find themselves floating blissfully somewhere between vast seas and even vaster skies.

While you slumbered, your floating hotel travelled through the night. Come morning, just outside your window is a completely new world and destination waiting for you to discover. What a way to start your day!

2 BREAKFAST CLUB

Early risers can catch sunrise from the deck with a steaming cup of coffee and warm French pastries before heading to breakfast, while later risers can take in the views and the fresh sea air before heading downstairs to breakfast. Cruise restaurants offer banquets fit for a king. Choose from fresh fruit, omelettes, pancakes and, of course, a traditional full English breakfast.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

3 EASE INTO YOUR DAY

Energise your morning with a gentle yoga class, stretching your body and relaxing your mind on the top deck, or doing a few laps of the pool. For something a little more invigorating, hit the gym. If that sounds like too much action, simply spend your morning lounging by the pool or getting lost in a book, perhaps engrossing yourself in the history, culture and legends of your next port of call.

4 PORT ACTION

If it's a port day, you might want to head out straight after breakfast to fit in all the sights. Maybe you have a tour lined up to see the local attractions; a boat trip to view a coral reef; or a sightseeing tour from high up above a rainforest canopy.

From tropical island paradises of the South Pacific to the majestic ice-scapes of Scandinavia and Alaska and the bustling Mediterranean, where you can take a nostalgic trip back in history and visit ancient monuments and ruins, the world is your oyster as far as cruise travel is concerned.

You can also choose to whittle the afternoon away in a quaint restaurant and watch the world go by.



Not to be missed: Happy Hour at sunset

5 ME TIME

If you spent the previous day exploring on land, a day on board allows you to unwind and soak in the delights of ship life, such as a day of spa treatments and pampering, sunbathing by the pool, or simply afternoon tea on deck.

For a bit more excitement, try the surfing and skydiving simulators. Or if you want to learn something, take a cookery class, or learn to dance the tango. Whatever your poison, what is not to be missed is watching the sun going down from the deck with a glass of Happy Hour bubbles in hand.

6 MAKE A NIGHT OF IT

An array of Broadway shows, cabaret spectaculars and concerts are on offer after dark. And if you want to party like it's 1999, head to the nightclubs and chic lounges where everyone's party can carry on late into the night.

Expert Downsizing Tips

Moving to a smaller home involves careful planning

BY VANESSA MILNE

BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR

BUDGET “The biggest misperception is that people equate downsizing with paying less,” says real estate expert Barb Sukkau, adding that a lot of new townhouses and apartments are quite pricey. “If you need your house to provide a nest egg, consider other ways you can make your budget work, such as looking for a home in a less expensive location.”

BUY A PLACE YOUR FUTURE SELF WILL THANK YOU FOR

Even if you’re purchasing at 60, think of what your body will be able to manage at 80. That might mean searching for a residence that doesn’t have stairs or scoping out locations that have handy amenities within walking distance.

DON'T GET CAUGHT BY UNEXPECTED

COSTS Even if you make money off the sale of your home, moving will take a bite out of your profits. Closing costs – which

include things such as real estate agent fees, advertising fees, and legal costs – range from 1.5 to 5 per cent of the selling price. If you’re buying an apartment, factor in monthly maintenance fees and keep a small reserve for unforeseen expenses.

START WITH THE END IN MIND

Sukkau says a surprising number of people buy a place that fits their furniture, rather than the other way around. “I’ll have couples say, ‘Oh, this bedroom won’t fit my king-sized bedroom suite,’” explains Sukkau. Buy the place that’s right for your lifestyle – even if it means selling your stuff or renting a storage locker to house heirlooms.

GET ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WHAT'S AHEAD

Think about how your new house will help you live the lifestyle you want. “It is emotional, but it’s also exciting. Think of it as a new adventure,” says Sukkau.



Why Dogs Freak Out During Storms

BY LAUREN CAHN



AS THE RAIN starts to pound on the windows, you may find Rover hiding under a low piece of furniture, such as a bed, or in the corner of a dark room. Holistic pet therapist Sally Morgan tells Reader's Digest it's not unusual for a dog in the throes of a thunderstorm freak-out to attempt to become grounded – literally and figuratively – by seeking the lowest place in the house or someplace adjacent to the house's plumbing.

But why? As you might suspect, noise is a reason, but it's only part of the equation. "Thunderstorms can be a trigger for dogs with noise phobia," says veterinarian Kelly Ryan. "It is an irrational, intense fear of a noise or sound that poses no real threat. If your dog has a noise phobia, you will probably see it with other loud noises, such as fireworks." Noise phobias can start at any age and worsen over time if left untreated.

Another factor is static electricity. During a thunderstorm, static electricity in the clouds builds up, eventually bursting into lightning. Dogs can sense this static electricity, and often even before the storm reaches our own neighbourhood, says dog breeder Lazhar Ichir. "Specialists now understand that static electricity is felt by dogs through their fur, generating an unpleasant tingling sensation," he says.

It could be helpful to gently lead Rover to the bathroom and into the bathtub as the porcelain may actually help block static electricity. At the same time, try not to give him too much positive reinforcement. Although it's a natural human response to pat your best friend and tell him it's going to be OK, he may perceive that you're telling him his freaking out is something you'd like to see him do again.



COVER STORY



SLEEP BETTER

Every Night

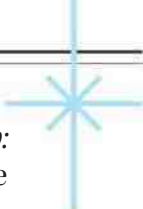
*Top Secrets to
Superior Slumber*

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT


PHOTOGRAPH BY RAINA + WILSON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEEANDRA CIANCI







Few things are as coveted as good sleep: studies show that it adds years to your life and, over time, increases happiness as much as winning the lottery. Drawing upon recent scientific research, these tips will help guarantee you wakeful days and blissful nights.



HOW TO PRESCRIBE YOURSELF SLEEP

Convenient or not, it's a biological fact: adults need to sleep between seven and nine hours each night. A colossal 66 per cent of us fail to do so on a regular basis. It's not just a matter of feeling tired the next day; over the long run, sleep deprivation can contribute to depression, obesity, diabetes, stroke and heart attacks, and increase your risk of Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

"The silent sleep-loss epidemic is the greatest public health challenge we face in the 21st century in developed nations," argues Dr Matthew Walker of the University of California, Berkeley, in his recent book, *Why We Sleep*. "Scientists like me have even started lobbying doctors to start 'prescribing' sleep."

Walker's top tip for a successful 'prescription' is sticking to a schedule. The body naturally thrives on a regular sleep-wake rhythm, and a set bedtime will remove some of the temptation to spend your time in other ways.

He also recommends avoiding, if at all possible, medicines that could 'conflict' with the sleep prescription, such as certain heart, blood pressure or asthma medications, plus some remedies for colds, coughs and allergies. There are alternatives available for many of these drugs, so if they're costing you shut-eye, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

HOW TO SLEEP AWAY FROM HOME

If you've ever tossed and turned in a hotel room, you may have experience with 'night-watch brain'.

Cerebral imaging has revealed that, similarly to dolphins, pigeons and other animals, humans rest one half of the brain less than the other when we're in an unfamiliar setting. This adaptation would have been advantageous for our ancestors, who were at risk of predators in the wild, but it's far less useful for today's traveller. You can minimise it by staying at the same hotel for as long as you remain in a city and by booking similar rooms from the same chain wherever you go.

HOW TO FOSTER YOUR DREAMS

Scientists used to think that dreaming happened only during REM (rapid eye movement), the last stage of the sleep cycle. We now know that earlier stages can bring wisps of dreams as well, but REM is the time of the most detailed, active and emotional ones.

Sleep deprivation is understood to be dangerous, but REM deprivation is also an issue, claims a 2017 review published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. People with fewer dreams are more subject to mood dysregulation (recurrent

temper outbursts or persistent extreme irritability), pain sensitivity, Parkinson's disease, anxiety, dementia and delusions; ironically, dreaming helps you maintain your sense of waking reality.

Dreams are threatened by alcohol, which helps you nod off faster but then disrupts REM. Benzodiazepines (used as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medication) "significantly repress REM/dreaming", the review says. Another common culprit: alarm clocks. They are often necessary, but try to wake up naturally whenever possible in order to avoid interrupting sleep cycles.

How to Lie Down

Which sleeping position is best? Whatever you find comfortable at any given moment, because comfort promotes slumber. Ergonomically speaking, it's good to mix things up: over the long run, lying the same way every night could lead to aches and pains. If you suffer from...



Back or neck pain

Experiment until you find a way to minimise your discomfort. You can use pillows for support.

Heartburn Elevate your head by approximately 15 centimetres to stop food from backing up into your oesophagus.

Obstructive sleep

apnoea Avoid lying on your back, so gravity won't be working against your airways.



HOW TO ACCOMMODATE A FURRY FRIEND

Should you let Spot into your room at night? Mayo Clinic researchers tackled this question by putting accelerometers on volunteers and their dogs for one week. Most of the pooches spent some time playing or moving around while their owners dozed. Even so, they didn't affect the humans' sleep much – so long as they weren't allowed up on the bed. A blanket or a pet bed on the floor would be a good compromise if you'd like to enjoy a comforting canine presence without being disturbed.

HOW TO IDENTIFY OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA

One of the most common sleep disorders is also a potentially serious one. In obstructive sleep apnoea, the muscles in the back of the throat relax too much during slumber, blocking breathing. This causes drops in blood-oxygen levels that, if left untreated, can strain the cardiovascular system and raise the risk of heart problems over time.

Sufferers will automatically wake long enough to reopen their airways, but they may not remember their episodes come morning. It's their partners who flag the disorder after noticing snoring, guttural sounds or gasping, says Dr Michael Gelb, a specialist in breathing-related sleep disorders. People who sleep alone can use an app, such as SnoreLab and SnoreReport to record and track snoring. Otherwise, Gelb says, warning signs also include “waking unrefreshed, moodiness, difficulty concentrating, daytime sleepiness and memory problems”.

How to Know if You're Oversleeping

9+
HOURS

More isn't always better: regularly sleeping more than nine hours at a time is associated with headaches, back pain, obesity and diabetes. These risks may be due to underlying causes (depression, alcohol abuse and narcolepsy, for example) rather than oversleeping itself. But either way, it's worth telling your GP.

Sleep-deprivation symptoms aren't definitive proof that you have sleep apnoea. Nor, for that matter, is snoring, but both are worth investigating. "The diagnosis is ultimately confirmed through a home sleep test or polysomnogram," says Gelb. "You can organise this through your medical practitioner."

HOW TO SHARE A BED

When it comes to sleeping, there are pros and cons to having a bed-mate. Given the common realities of snoring, rolling over and hogging the blankets, tucking in alone will generally garner better results when one's sleep quality is measured with objective criteria, such as the amount of slow-wave sleep, a non-REM stage that is key to memory consolidation.

Conversely, people tend to be more subjectively satisfied with their shut-eye when they cuddle up next to a loving partner - it releases oxytocin, a feel-good hormone that reduces stress and promotes pair bonding. Here are two ways to reap the benefits while minimising the downsides:

- Make sure your mattress is large enough for two, and if your partner's movements are an issue, opt for memory foam; you'll be less likely to feel every toss and turn.
- Work on your partnership. Bad sleep is linked with poor relationship satisfaction and vice versa. It's an equation that can be tackled from either side.

SURPRISING PERKS OF ADEQUATE SHUT-EYE

Getting enough sleep isn't only about avoiding negative consequences. Science has also uncovered loads of encouraging benefits to achieving the recommended average of eight hours per night. Recent evidence suggests that it leads to:

- *Enhanced ability to read facial expressions*
- *Better immune-system functioning*
- *Fewer cravings for sweet treats*
- *Lessened chronic pain*
- *More measured approach to risk-taking*
- *Less inflammation*



A smartphone screen with a light blue background and a crescent moon icon in the top left corner. The text on the screen is white and blue, discussing the effects of blue light on sleep.

How to See the Light (and Still Drift Off)

The blue part of the light spectrum boosts mood and energy during daytime but can throw off your circadian clock in the hours leading up to bedtime. Most of us are getting more blue-light exposure than ever because of smartphones, laptops and LED light, which are bluer than their less energy-efficient predecessors. You could cut down on late-day screen time, but if that's not realistic, try wearing amber-tinted glasses in the evening, as a recent Columbia University Medical Center study of insomnia sufferers suggests.

HOW TO ADAPT TO THE EFFECTS OF AGEING

■ *How does ageing affect our slumber?*

You can't expect to sleep as well at 65 as you did at 20. You'll sleep for a shorter time and less deeply. And you'll become more sensitive to interference; for instance, stress or noise that wouldn't have roused you when you were younger. As such, you'll need to take better care of your rest.

■ *Do these changes have an impact on people during their waking life?*

Definitely. Just because something is normal doesn't mean it won't have consequences. The decline in sleep quality has the ability to affect memory and overall health.

■ *Are scientists currently working on any treatments to help improve sleep in the elderly?*

Yes, but they're all in the early stages. For instance, to promote a deeper sleep, researchers are experimenting

with transcranial direct current stimulation. But we can't yet say for sure that it works.

■ *Could sleeping pills help?*

There aren't any pharmaceuticals that can increase sleep – and especially not deep sleep – without having negative consequences the next day.

■ *Is it OK for tired seniors to have a nap during the day?*

Yes, so long as that doesn't lead to insomnia at night. Keep in mind that with age comes an increased chance of various sleep disorders. If you're excessively tired all day, that's not among the normal, expected changes. It would certainly warrant a visit to the doctor.

Dr Julie Carrier, director of the Canadian Sleep and Circadian Network



HOW TO AVOID HIDDEN CAFFEINE

Although it's one of the most famous sleep disruptors, caffeine can still sneak up on you. "It's tasteless, so you don't necessarily know how much you're getting," explains Dr Neil Stanley, a member of the European Sleep Research Society. "And it can stick around in your body and affect you for hours if you're sensitive to it." Lesser-known caffeine sources

include chocolate, cola soft drinks, some vitamin waters and decaf coffee, which simply contains less of the stimulant than a regular cup.

HOW TO TAP INTO THE POWER OF NOISE

White noise has been proven to mask environmental sounds that disturb slumber. Sleep scientists are now interested in pink noise, which resembles the white variety except that the lower frequencies are louder than the higher ones. There's evidence that it can enhance slow-wave sleep. In a 2017 study, seniors did better at a recall test after spending a night with pink noise synced up to their slow-wave brain activity. If you'd like to conduct your own experiment, you can download a pink noise app. **R**

How to Eat Yourself Sleepy

Popular belief has it that the amino acid tryptophan (of turkey fame) makes you drowsy. The body needs it to build serotonin, a relaxing neurotransmitter, and melatonin, a sleep-regulating hormone. However, it doesn't trigger changes on its own. To prod your body towards dreamland, combine foods that contain tryptophan with carbohydrate-rich foods. Carbs help tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier and induce sleepiness.



TRYPTOPHAN

CARBS

Willing HEARTS



Willing Hearts founder Tony Tay receiving the 2017 Ramon Magsaysay Award

For businessman and founder of Willing Hearts, Tony Tay, binding a community starts with a nourishing meal

BY LAM LYE CHING

Just before Tony Tay's mother passed away in 2003, she gave him her well-worn commercial kitchen and cooking utensils. "You never know when you will need them," she told him. The assorted pots, pans and ladles were as familiar to Tony as were her special dishes – she used them countless times when cooking for family occasions and large gatherings. *What am I going to do with all this?* he thought.

Not long afterwards, while at his mother's funeral, a nun attending the ceremony asked Tony for help with collecting bread from a bakery and delivering it to the church's orphanage. He didn't hesitate – here was a chance to give back for the charity shown to him over 55 years earlier.

Tony was only five when, in 1947, his mother was forced to place him in a Catholic children's home for five years after his father abandoned the family. At the time, Singapore was struggling to recover from the

Asia-Pacific War. With four children to feed, no education and jobs hard to find, his mother fought to make ends meet. With a low-paying job as a housekeeper with the British army, she had to work at several jobs to keep food on the table. In the children's home, she knew, Tony wouldn't go hungry.

By age ten, Tony often accompanied his mother as she walked from church to church, and temple to temple, kneeling and praying for food. Dinners comprised of whatever food there was – cauliflower stems, bacon offcuts, and whatever leftovers she could get from her employers. "We had the hardest life," recalls Tony. As he got older, Tony found a job working for the then British-owned grocery store Cold Storage. "In those days, you either slogged or joined the gangsters."

He eventually found success in the insurance and printing business, married and raised a family. He was looking forward to spending more



Willing Hearts serves up to 7000 meals a day to disadvantaged households

time with his family and grandchildren when he eventually retired.

“Distributing the bread reminded me of the times when I had to queue for food and nobody asked why,” he says. “The temple just gave the food to us.”

Soon after, another nun asked Tony to distribute unsold vegetables from a wholesaler to the poor. While distributing the vegetables with his wife, an elderly man in a rented government flat approached them and asked for food. He was living by himself and could not cook. The couple began making and delivering a home-cooked meal to the man every day.

Over time, the number of meals Tony was cooking in his kitchen at home grew and two friends decided to pitch in and help. But as the number of meals grew, so did the rubbish and complaints from his neighbours. “A policeman, a Land Transport

Agency officer, and the National Environment Agency were even called,” says his daughter Anne. “The house was filling up with volunteers to help cook, prepare and deliver the food. We were like strangers in our own home.”

Then one day, they ran out of rice needed to make the 1000 meals needed for the next day. “We’ll pray about it,” Tony remembers saying to his worried family. It worked – before day’s end, a rice merchant had given them an excess shipment he needed to offload. Soon after, the family’s entire house – the living room, kitchen and bedrooms – was filled with sacks of rice.

ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, Singapore is a high-income economy. But local economist Yeoh Lam Keong estimates that there are between 110,000–140,000 households living in

poverty. These include the working poor and the unemployed – people who face a daily challenge of buying food. Some estimates show Singapore has about 20 to 35 per cent of households living in relative poverty, unable to access basic daily needs.

Within two years the high number of meals Tony and his small team cooked each day forced them to move operations to a larger kitchen. After briefly occupying church premises and an industrial complex, the meal centre moved to a government-managed community hub in Eunos, east of Singapore. Willing Hearts, a non-profit organisation, was born. Today, Willing Hearts serves around 7000 meals a day, has ten full-time staff, and is dependent on donors and volunteers for rent, electricity, food and labour.

Every day Tony faces the challenge of getting enough volunteers to help with food preparation, cooking and delivering – often without knowing what ingredients will be donated for the meals. “We once had so much peanut butter that we did not know what to do,” he recalls. “I thought for a moment, then cooked the Malay dish of *Mee Siam* (thin rice noodles with gravy).”

Tony arrives at the Willing Hearts kitchen at 3am to cook and co-ordinate. About 200 volunteers gather round rectangle tables to cut, peel and wash vegetables and other ingredients, while another group of

volunteers deliver the cooked lunches to 40 collection points, all within walking distance of beneficiaries. The day ends in the evening after collecting donated ingredients and vegetables for preparation the following day.

Like the elderly man who asked him for the first meal, Tony never asks why people are taking his food. “We do not judge,” he says.

At 71, Tony has no plans to stop. Instead, he intends to increase the number of meal deliveries to feed more people.

“More people are coming in asking for help, especially stroke patients and the disabled and we have to move forward,” he says.

What keeps him going?

“The smile on people’s faces when they see the food,” Tony says. “Food in the stomach is the most basic thing. I can’t take care of all their problems but at least when there is food in the stomach, thoughts of other things can change; it binds people and communities. In Singapore, we call it the *kampong* spirit (Malay-village community spirit).” **R**

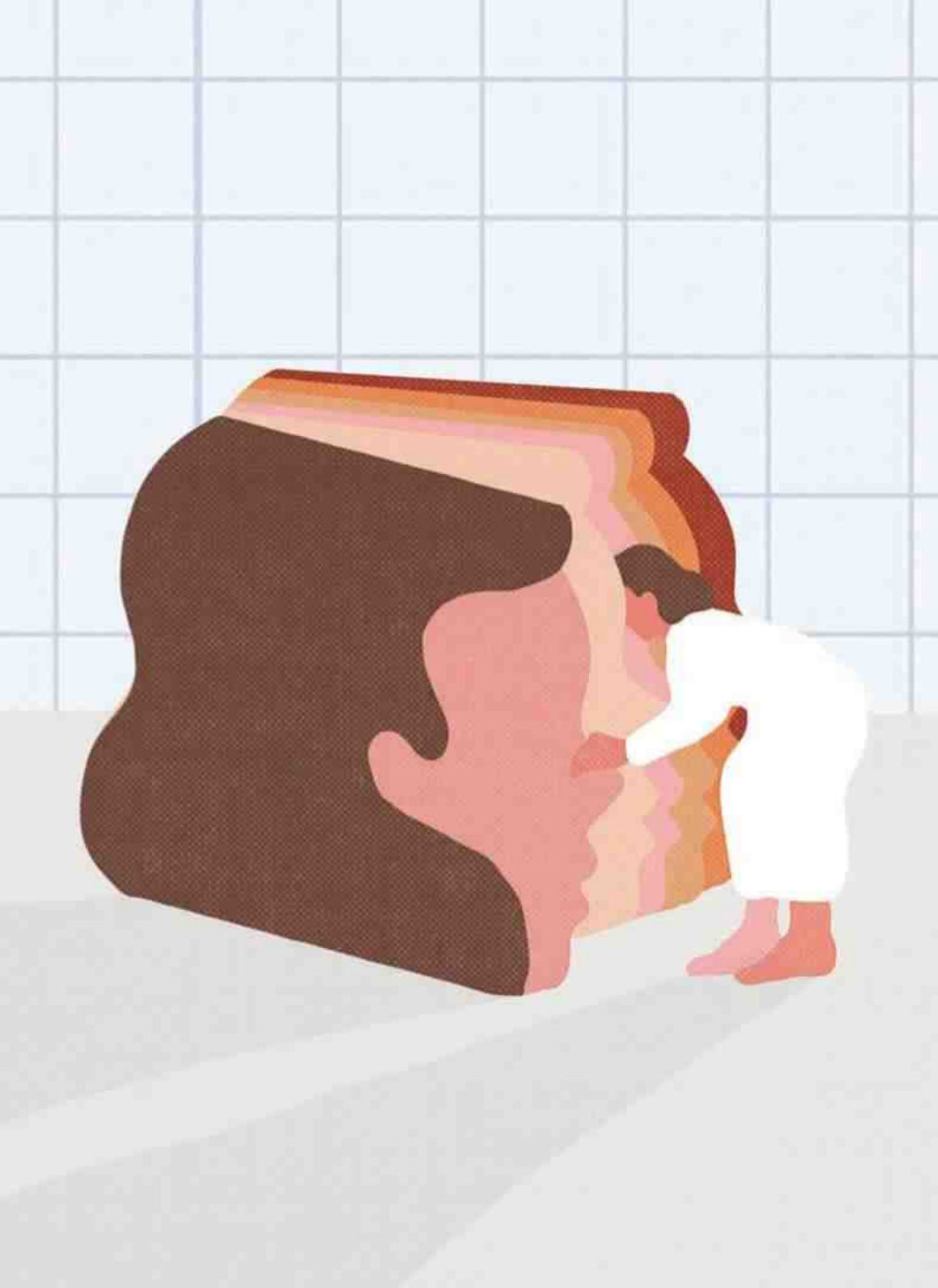
In 2013, Tony received the Singapore President’s Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award, and last year the Philippines’ Ramon Magsaysay Award, which recognises transformative leadership in individuals in Asia. Willing Hearts is the only secular charity in Singapore to offer delivered meals to the poor, including halal food for Muslims.

According to psychologists,
we are all prejudiced.
So what can we do about it?

Battling BIAS

BY KATHERINE LAIDLAW
ILLUSTRATION BY KA YOUNG LEE

SUSAN LUCAS WAS SURPRISED TO REALISE she had so many racial biases. Two years ago, the registered psychotherapist was listening to an interview on the radio with an author and activist who posited that everybody is racist – even if they don't realise it. "When I started to think about it, I recognised that, deep down, I do have some fears of, and aversions to, people of colour," says the 63-year-old.



Using the skills of her trade, Lucas got to work examining why she felt that way and finding ways to address it.

Society is facing something like a reckoning recently, as the news cycle is dominated by harrowing accounts of racism, sexism and homophobia across the arts, politics and many other fields. The Challenging Racism Project 2015-16 National Survey conducted by Western Sydney University, found that 61.1 per cent of people from a LOTE (language other than English) background experienced everyday racisms, compared with 33.7 per cent of non-LOTE people. The most common setting for these experiences was on public transport, with 75.5 per cent of Asian respondents experiencing race-based discrimination on buses or trains as well as on the street.

Every individual has an obligation to address the prejudices that live within them. Here are some tips for unravelling yours.

RECOGNISE AND REDIRECT

Is everyone really racist, as the activist on the radio claims? According to myriad psychologists, the answer is yes. Thanks to something known as implicit bias, research has shown that it's possible for you to dislike the idea of prejudice and still act in prejudiced ways. Consider the neighbourhoods you choose to live or socialise in, where you send your kids to school or whom you befriend. You

may dismiss these as simple preferences, but beneath those decisions are often conscious, or subconscious, negative associations about other groups – prejudices that, in the bigger picture, reinforce inequalities.

One way to counteract implicit bias is to increase your exposure to positive media focused on the group that you're making less-than-kind judgments about. A 2013 study run by UCLA's Social and Identity Lab revealed that watching a clip of *The Joy Luck Club*, a movie about Chinese immigrants to the US, induced empa-



“IT’S HUMAN NATURE TO SAY, ‘OH, THAT’S JUST HOW I WORK,’”
SAYS SOCIAL WORKER AND FAMILY THERAPIST JOE RICH

thy in its viewers and made them less biased towards Asian-Americans.

And while some people may want to claim that they don't see stereotypes at all, a more realistic strategy is to accept that they exist but challenge them by coming up with examples of people within a specific group who defy these labels. Ultimately, implicit bias functions like a habit – once you become aware of it, you can take steps to break it.

ACCEPT, THEN PUSH AGAINST, YOUR LIMITATIONS

Confronting one's own prejudice at home is often more fraught than doing so anywhere else. Social worker and family therapist Joe Rich says that neutralising your feelings is more productive than beating yourself up about them. He poses the hypothetical, but common, scenario of a teenage son coming out to a mother who, due to ingrained stereotypes, is made uncomfortable by the admission. No matter how much she would like to, she can't overcome those negative feelings in order to genuinely celebrate his self-discovery. Rich suggests it's not a parent's job to fully grasp their teen's choices. "In relationships, we think that understanding leads to change, but it's acceptance that leads to change," he says, adding that the attempt to live and let live is enough to begin the process of being more open-minded.

Changing any behavioural pattern is a gradual, difficult process. "It's human nature to say, 'Oh, that's just how I work,'" Rich says. "Don't do that. Challenge it. Ask where it came from and how it affects your life."

Seeking support online, in chat rooms where others are grappling with, or are closer to overcoming, similar feelings can help. Many organisations offer online courses on bias. And Harvard University's implicit association test (implicit.

harvard.edu) can act as an assessment of what kinds of prejudice – including those related to race, sexual orientation, gender and mental illness – you need to confront.

SET UP SYSTEMS FOR CHANGE

Most of us know that limiting prejudice offers moral benefits, but research also shows that there's a business case to be made for it. Three years ago, a report from consulting firm McKinsey and Co. found ethnically diverse companies financially



"IN RELATIONSHIPS, WE THINK UNDERSTANDING LEADS TO CHANGE, BUT **IT'S ACCEPTANCE THAT LEADS TO CHANGE,**" RICH SAYS

outperform more homogenous ones by 35 per cent. A study conducted last year by Forbes suggests diverse teams make better business decisions up to 87 per cent of the time. As a result of surveys like these, many companies have expressed a desire to create such groups but aren't quite sure where, or how, to start.

Organisations can limit the influence of prejudice by tweaking hiring practices, says Elizabeth Hirsh, an

associate professor of sociology at the University of British Columbia. Reviewing resumes with names omitted limits gender and racial bias, she suggests. And conducting interviews as a team – the most balanced group possible – is crucial. “One committee



“PEOPLE IN
WORKPLACES ARE
NOW RECOGNISING
THAT **BIAS IS A
SYSTEMIC, EMBEDDED
PROBLEM,**” HIRSH SAYS

member could be tasked with watching for diversity and inclusion,” Hirsh suggests. She says this makes bringing up the topic less awkward.

Applying similar strategies to other institutions – schools, private

clubs and neighbourhood associations – can go a long way to developing a more equal society. One youth-focused programme in the US, called Anytown, demonstrates the impact of discrimination by letting teenage students see what it’s like to have a physical disability for a day – navigating the world with a blindfold or wearing mittens to limit the use of their hands. More broadly, school boards can incorporate a variety of cultural activities into their curriculum and ensure the parents’ committee has an ethnic makeup that reflects the students it serves.

“People in workplaces are now recognising that bias is a systemic, embedded problem,” Hirsh says. “That’s where there’s some hope for the future.” Although she’s right that the problem of prejudice isn’t necessarily the struggle of an individual alone, each of us can nonetheless play a part by addressing it in ourselves. **R**

ONE JUMP AHEAD

It’s not hard to teach a dog to do tricks, and sometimes even a cat. But spiders? Scientists at the University of Manchester recently trained a spider to jump on command from one platform to another. They wanted to study the mechanics of a spider to help engineers develop tiny jumping micro-robots. Motivating regal jumping spiders, however, was no easy task, and only one of the spiders – named Kim – really caught on to the idea of a take-off and landing platform. **BOINGBOING.NET**

Life's Like That

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE

JULY
1956

From the Archives

This touching anecdote from over 60 years ago makes you wonder if you'd get the same service today.

My friend glowed as she showed me the gift bought by her husband for her 39th birthday.

"Isn't it pretty?" she asked as she held it up against her.

My surprise at her exuberance over a plain grey sweater must have shown in my eyes, for she said, "But wait till you see the real present!" and, handing me a little note, explained, "This was tucked in the box."

The note read: "I thought you'd like to know when I showed your husband a lovely jewelled sweater, he said, 'No, my wife's too pretty for that. I'll take the plain one. That will let her real beauty show.'" The note was signed: "The Salesgirl".

SUBMITTED BY MRS HOWARD MILLER



AT CROSS PURPOSES

While camping this year, my family frequently visited a small chain store in a nearby town to buy groceries. One evening I realised we'd failed to note what time the store opened, so when I saw a teenage staffer on her way out, I stopped her and asked quickly, "What are your hours?"

Her reply: "Right now, six to nine

because I'm at school. But next month it will be full time."

SUBMITTED BY DARLENE QUERY

ON THE FACE OF IT

While visiting our daughter, who'd just had a baby, we met a man in the lift on the way to the maternity ward holding a pink ceramic boot filled with some imitation flowers and

a chocolate selection. My wife smiled and said, "That's lovely." And then added, "Does she look like you?"

He stared at us and retorted, "I certainly hope not. I'm the courier."

SUBMITTED BY PAUL AINSWORTH

A MOTHER'S LOVE

Feeling that I'd had a very productive day, I called my mother to brag.

"What's it like having an awesome daughter?" I asked her.

"I don't know," she replied. "Why don't you ask your grandmother?"

SUBMITTED BY SHERIE MUELLER



F

A WAY WITH WORDS

My seven-year-old came home from school telling me that his teacher had told off one of his classmates for using the "f-word."

"I didn't even know what the f-word was when I was seven," I said.

"Me too, Mummy. I thought it was FROG. My second guess was FART," he said matter-of-factly.

I felt a strange warm glow.

SUBMITTED BY NICKY TORODE



The Great Tweet-off: Dieting Edition

It can be a struggle to diet, but there's a funny side to be found as these tweets reveal.

"I hate when I try to order a salad and my mouth says, 'I'll have a double Quarter Pounder with Cheese.'" @JIMGAFFIGAN

"I've finally decided to do something about my weight. Lie."

@FUNNYONELINERS

"Every time I start a diet, I hear the Mission Impossible theme song in my head." @LOVENLUNCHMEAT

"Entered what I ate today into my new fitness app and it just sent an ambulance to my house."

@KRUNKEDROBOT

"I thought we were friends, but I see you weigh less than me now."

@ELIZASOUL80



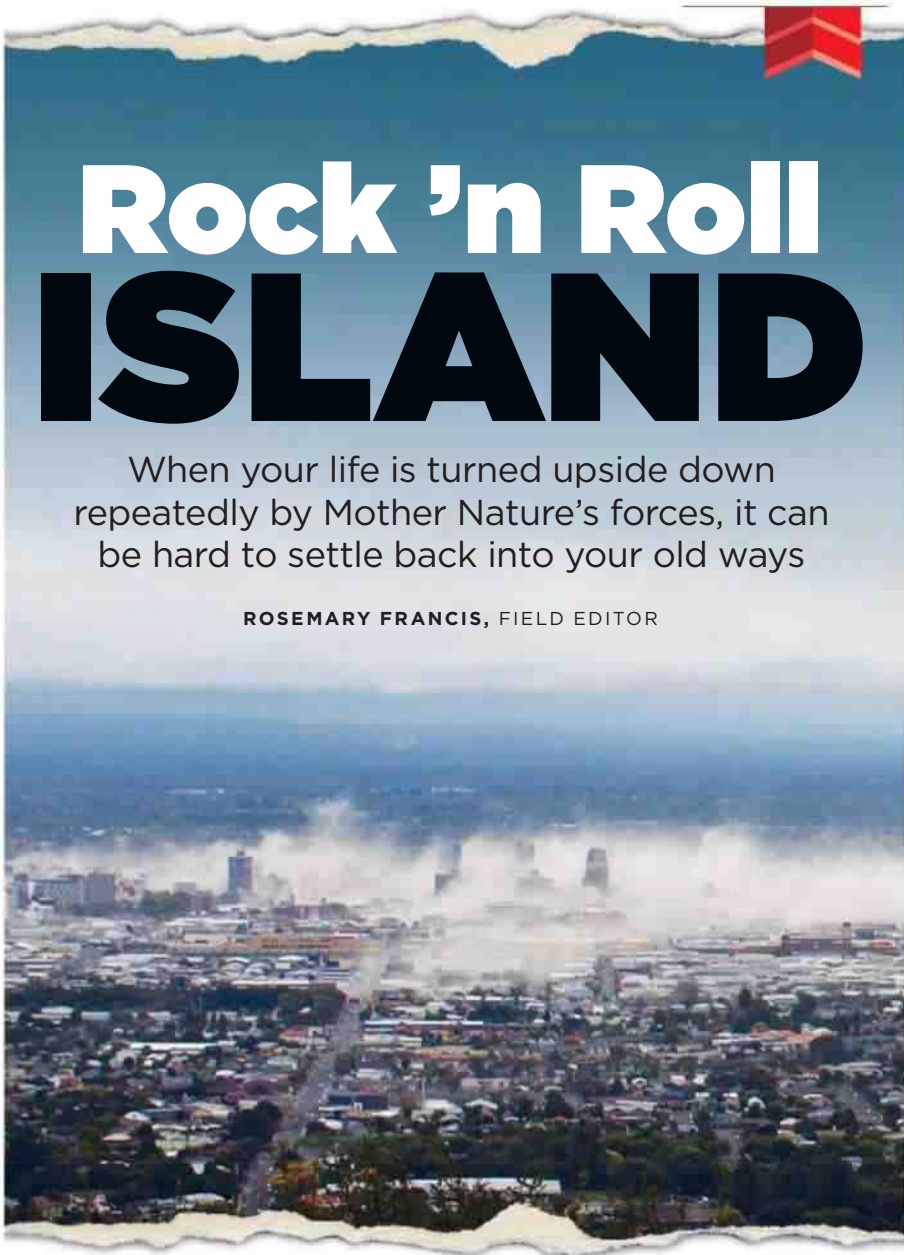
FIRST PERSON

Rock 'n Roll ISLAND

When your life is turned upside down repeatedly by Mother Nature's forces, it can be hard to settle back into your old ways

ROSEMARY FRANCIS, FIELD EDITOR

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



HISTORY

is dated BC and AD. In Canterbury, New Zealand, our time is dated Pre-Quake and Post-Quake. Such was the massive affect those moments of terror, and their aftermath had on us seven years ago.

The Christchurch I grew up in featured sturdy Gothic Revival buildings, which I loved. The cathedral in the square; St Johns, where we were married; my Teachers Training College and old University where I studied, all seemed immoveable. My father had a shop in New Regent Street, in the city centre, one of rows of quaint Edwardian and Victorian buildings. Between these old familiar buildings were glass and concrete blocks of commerce.

Then came the pre-dawn tremor of September 4, 2010. Our quiet world rocked in a prolonged shuddering from a 7.1 quake. Power was cut, and liquefaction bubbled up all over the east. Walls were mangled, chimneys toppled, and drains flooded. My city was utterly broken.

On our North Canterbury farm, my husband, Geoff, and I struggled out of our lurching bed, knelt with our arms wrapped around our dogs, listening to the smashing of crockery



Christchurch and the nearby luxury homes of Redcliffs after the 7.1 quake of February 2011

and glass bottles, mirrors and framed pictures. It felt like an eternity before our world quietened.

Geoff was weak with leukaemia, despite the destruction all around, his treatment had to continue so I had to drive him to Christchurch Hospital for frequent blood transfusions. After the quake these became nightmare journeys, with gushing pipes, broken roads, dangling powerlines, liquefaction, detours and impossible parking.

Almost everything was in short supply as trade routes were damaged. Petrol at our rural garage was rationed to just 3.7 litres per customer, with queues forming before 7am for the precious liquid. My bank closed due to quake damage, so retrieving money was another challenge.



The hospital basement flooded, and over-worked nurses pushed beds together so patients could comfort each other during the frequent swaying of aftershocks.

Just eight weeks later, on October 28, I cradled Geoff though his death-rattle and in his dying moment another quake jolt occurred. The quake destruction broke his heart and he gave up the fight. Even his funeral happened between aftershocks.

I cleaned up the mess of each shock, with cracks in walls, and water and power outages. We had a well with an electric pump and I lugged many buckets of water from a storage tank to the paddocks for my llamas and sheep, as frequent aftershocks continued. I was pouring boiling water when one quake

hit, and scalded my stomach as the house lurched.

The aftershocks continued for over a year. Then on February 22, 2011, I was in a supermarket when a shallow 6.3 quake shattered our lives. A loud rumble and vibration led to a

mighty boom; I thought the train had jumped its tracks and slammed into the building. I was thrown several metres onto the floor, and my laden trolley left the ground and lurched metres sideways. Continuous shaking sent cascades of tinned and

bottled goods bouncing off me and smashing onto the floor. I curled up, covering my head until the juddering and screaming ceased. Battered and bruised, I struggled to rise from a mess of shattered glass, oil, and sauces until a staff member helped me to my feet.

“

**The quake
destruction
utterly broke his
heart and he gave
up the fight**



***187 people died and 12,000 were injured in the
6.3 magnitude quake in 2011***

Another big quake rocked the building as the store manager ordered an immediate evacuation. Tills were left open, goods abandoned as we rushed outdoors.

I headed for home, but my electronic gates were inoperable as power was out. So I climbed a tree and dropped into the llama paddock, rushing indoors to comfort my dogs and cats. From my transistor radio I listened to dreadful news of the unfolding chaos as choppers whirred overhead, and the dust of a century of broken masonry was thick in the air. More cracks appeared in my walls, and landslides of books and breakages were in every room. I was unable to get in touch with family, but I was one of the 'lucky' ones. That day, 187 people died in Christchurch, and over 12,000 were injured. Many lost their homes and businesses, schools and

workplaces. Seven years later, Cantabrians are still struggling to come to terms with their losses.

My children persuaded me to move north to Blenheim, where my son, Nick, and his family live. I found new homes for my large animals and poultry, sold our home of seven years and moved north, with three Labradors, three cats, six white doves; and a trailer load of pot plants. Like many who had survived the horrors of the quakes, I was diagnosed with PTS disorder; and was hoping to find a peaceful refuge away from seismic activity.

But, sadly, Mother Earth had different plans. The Marlborough region sits on another fault; lying at the boundary of the Kermadec Trench and Alpine fault. My new-found peace was again shattered with the Seddon quake, which occurred on

August 16, 2013. At 6.6 magnitude it caused land slips that blocked roads, and damaged buildings.

But life continued, with occasional reminders that we live in the shaky isles. One aftershock happened when I was showering; the door jumped its track and jammed. I was stuck for some time, until another shock to dislodged it so I could escape. I now 'speed-shower', and sleep in a tracksuit, with sturdy shoes and torch nearby. Then on November 14, 2016, just after midnight, our region was racked by a 7.8 magnitude quake, changing the area in dramatic

ways. The force shunted parts of our island five metres closer to the North Island. A tangled skein of 21 faults, one of them previously unknown, had ruptured across two active domains. In two long minutes, the quake travelled 180 kilometres, causing 12 metres of horizontal displacement. Parts of the east coast around Kaikoura rose over two metres, exposing water-dwelling puaa and crayfish. Water was sucked

back in the dreaded tsunami warning; at Goose Bay, the tsunami tide run-up reached seven metres.

An hour after this drama, I was cleaning up breakages when my son drove up with his wife and two frightened children in the car. They were heading for higher ground as tsunami clarions sounded. He urged

me to also leave but I chose to stay with my traumatised animals. It was a long, dark and terrifying night, but eventually, it passed.

Everyone who has lived through such tumultuous events has a unique story. Mine is a tumble of grief and

loss of my husband, home, farm, treasures, and destruction of my safe places.

The aftershocks continue and in the 18 months up to May, 2018, there have been 22,552 aftershocks. Those of us who live here, accept that we are between grinding tectonic plates, so we need to adjust to the restless earth, learning to work with Nature, not fight against her. **R**

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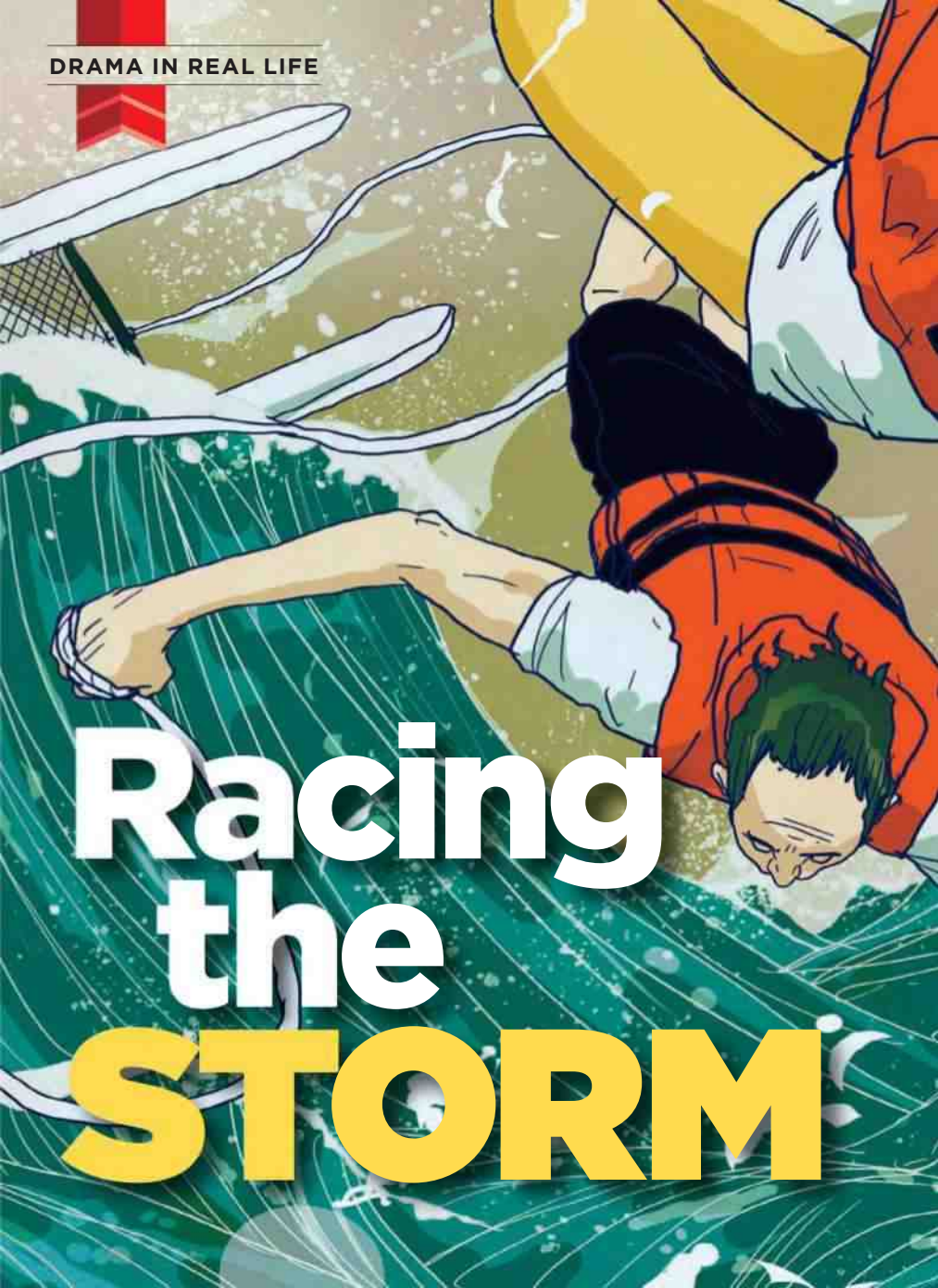
The force shunted parts of our island five metres closer to the North Island

* * *

HEAR, HERE

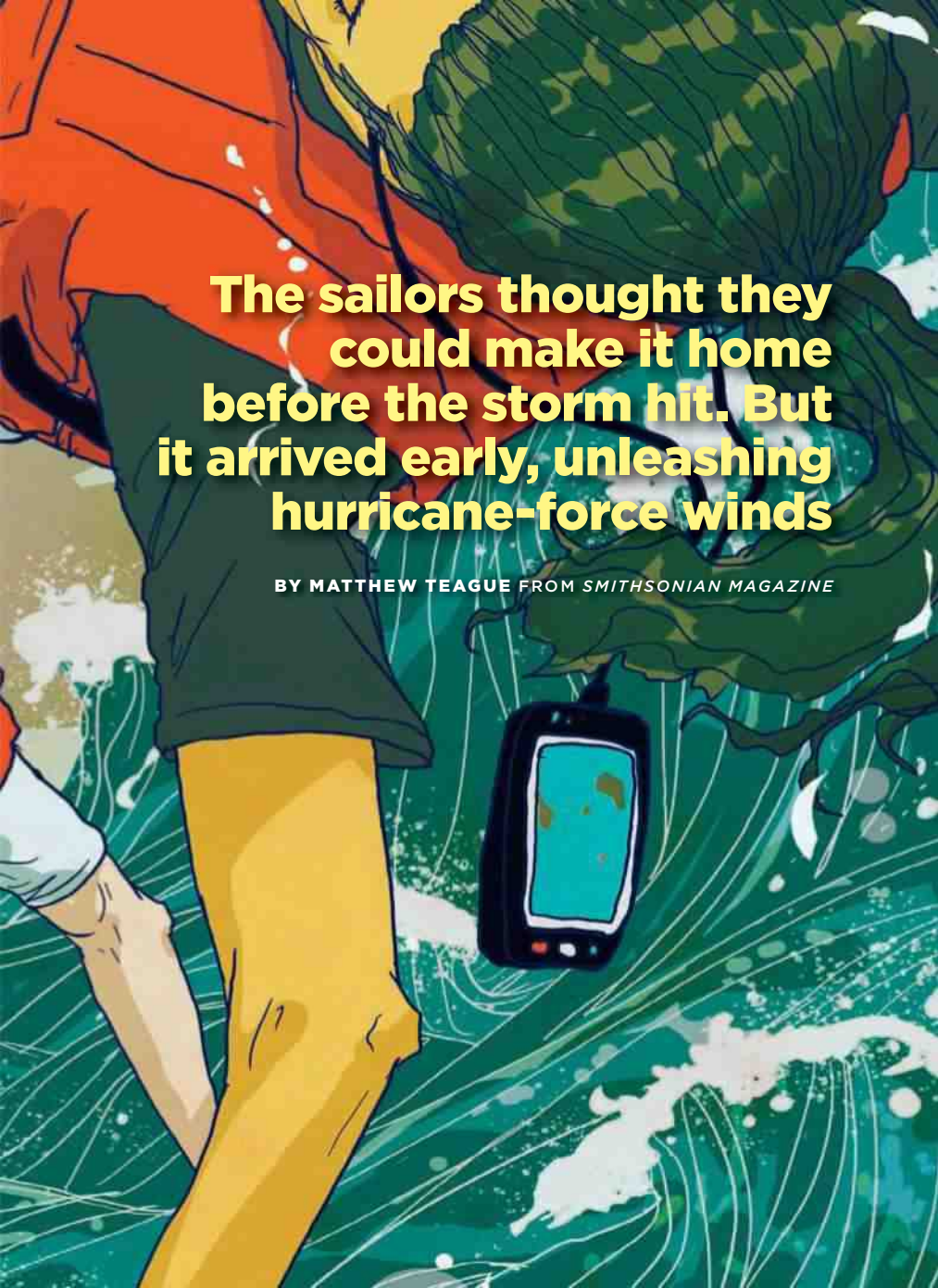
One of the simplest paths to change is for the less powerful to speak as much as they listen and for the more powerful to listen as much as they speak.

GLORIA STEINEM



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

Racing the **STORM**



**The sailors thought they
could make it home
before the storm hit. But
it arrived early, unleashing
hurricane-force winds**

BY MATTHEW TEAGUE FROM SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE



On this April morning, yachts traced gentle circles on Alabama's Mobile Bay, preparing for the Dauphin Island Regatta. On board the *Kyla*, a lightweight 4.8-metre catamaran, Ron Gaston and Hana Blalack made an unusual crew. He was tall and lanky, 50 years old, with decades of sailing experience. She was 15, tiny, pale and redheaded, and had never stepped on a sailing boat. But Hana trusted Ron, who was like a father to her. And Ron's daughter, Sarah, was like a sister.

One day each spring, sailors gather in central Mobile Bay and sprint about 33 kilometres south to Dauphin Island. On this morning of April 25, 2015, there were other boats like Ron's, Hobie Cats that could be pulled by hand onto a beach. There were also sleek, purpose-built race boats with oversized masts and great oceangoing vessels with plush cabins. All told, 125 boats with 475 sailors and guests had signed up for the regatta.

At 7.44am, as sailors began to gather on the bay for a 9.30 start, the website of the Fairhope Yacht Club, which was hosting the regatta that year, posted a message about the race: "Cancelled due to inclement weather."

But at 8.10am, the yacht club insisted the regatta was on. Gary Garner, then commodore of the yacht club, said the cancellation was an error, the result of a garbled message. The confusion delayed the start by an hour.

A false start cost another half-hour, and the boats were still circling at 10.45am when the National Weather Service (NWS) in Mobile issued a dire prediction: "Thunderstorms will move in from the west this afternoon and across the marine area. Some of the thunderstorms may be strong or severe."

Only eight boats withdrew. As Garner would later say, "It's no big deal for us to see a weather report that says scattered thunderstorms, or even scattered severe thunderstorms. If you want to race sailing boats, and race long-distance, you're going to get into storms."

On board the *Razr*, a 7.3-metre boat, 17-year-old Lennard Luiten, his father and three friends scrutinised incoming weather reports: the storm appeared likely to arrive at 4.15pm, which should give them time to cross the finish line and return to home port before the front arrived.

Lennard felt thrilled as the moment approached. He and his father,

Robert, had bought the *Razr* as a half-sunk lost cause, and spent a year rebuilding it. Now the five crew members smiled at each other. For the first time, they agreed, they had the boat 'tuned' just right. They timed their start with precision and led the field for the first half-hour.

The small catamarans were among the fastest boats, though, and the *Kyla* hurtled Hana and Ron forwards. On the open water Hana felt herself relax. She and Ron passed an 11-metre sailboat called the *Wind Nuts*, captained by Ron's friend Scott Godbold. "Hey!" Ron called out, waving.

Godbold and his wife, Hope, had come to watch their son Matthew race and to help out if anyone had trouble. He waved back.

MOBILE BAY IS ABOUT 48 kilometres long and half as wide. A deep shipping channel runs up its centre, but much of the bay is so shallow an adult could stand on its muddy bottom. On the northwestern shore stands the city of Mobile, dotted with shining high-rises. The mouth of the bay is guarded by Dauphin Island



The regatta was in Mobile Bay, on the Alabama coast

and Fort Morgan peninsula. Between them a gap of just under five kilometres of open water leads into the vast Gulf of Mexico.

During the first half of the race, Hana and Ron chased his brother, Shane Gaston, who sailed on an identical catamaran. Conditions were ideal, with high winds but smooth water. About 2pm, as they arrived at the finish line, Hana looked back. Ron's brother was a minute behind them.

"Hey, we won!" she said.

Typically, once crews finish the race they pull into harbour at Dauphin Island for a trophy ceremony and a night's rest. But the Gaston

brothers decided to sail home, assuming they'd beat the storm; others made the same choice. The brothers headed north along the bay's western shore.

Shortly before 3pm, Ron and Hana watched as storm clouds rolled towards them from the west. "We may get some rain," he said, with characteristic understatement.

By now the storm, which had first come alive in Texas, had crossed three states to reach the edge of Mobile Bay. At the NWS office in Mobile,

everything was white. We couldn't see land. We couldn't even see the bridge."

Farther north, the Gaston brothers were getting closer to the Buccaneer Yacht Club, on the bay's western shore.

Lightning crackled. "Don't touch anything metal," Ron told Hana. They huddled on their boat's trampoline – the fabric deck between the two hulls.

Just over three kilometres behind, Shane, along with Shane's son Con-



As the boat blew away, Ron faced a decision that seemed surreal: he could let go of the boat, or Hana

meteorologists watched it advance on radar. Jason Beaman, the meteorologist in charge of coordinating the office's warnings, noted the unusual way the storm, rather than blow itself out quickly, kept gaining in strength. "It was an engine, like a machine that keeps running," he said.

UNDER THE DAUPHIN Island Bridge, a nearly five-kilometre span that links the island to the mainland, 17-year-old Sarah Gaston struggled to control a small boat with her sailing partner, Jim Gates, a 74-year-old family friend, as wind and rain came over the bay.

"We just were looking for any land at that point," Sarah said later. "But

nor, disappeared behind a curtain of rain.

Within moments the rain caught up with the *Kyla*. It came so fast, and so dense, that the world seemed reduced to a small grey room, with no horizon, no sky, no shore.

Then, without warning, the winds rose to 117 kilometres per hour – hurricane strength. Ron and Hana never had a moment to let down their sails.

The front of the *Kyla* rose up from the water, stood for an instant on its tail, then flipped sideways. The bay was only two metres deep at that spot, so the mast jabbed into the mud and snapped in two.

Hana flew off, hitting her head on

the boom, a horizontal spar attached to the mast. Ron landed between her and the boat, and grabbed her with one hand and a rope attached to the boat with the other.

The vertical trampoline caught the wind like a sail. As the boat blew away, it pulled Ron through the water, away from Hana, stretching his arms. He faced a decision that seemed surreal: he could let go of the boat, or Hana.

He let go of the boat. Hana and Ron both wore life jackets, but two-and-a-half-metre swells crashed on them, threatening to separate or drown them.

The two wrapped their arms around each other, and Hana tucked her head against Ron's chest to find a pocket of air free from the piercing rain.

In the chaos, Ron thought, for a moment, of his daughter. But as he and Hana rolled under the waves, his mind went blank and grey as the seascape.

Sarah and Jim's boat had also bucked them into the water.

The mast snapped, sending the sails loose. "Jim!" Sarah cried out, trying to shift the sails. Finally, they found each other, and dragged themselves back into the wreckage of their boat.

ABOUT 48 KILOMETRES NORTH, a Coast Guard ensign named Phillip McNamara stood his first-ever shift as duty officer. As the storm bore down on Mobile Bay, distress calls came in from sailors in the water, people stranded on sandbars, frantic

witnesses on land. Several times he rang his superior, Commander Chris Cederholm, for advice about how to respond.

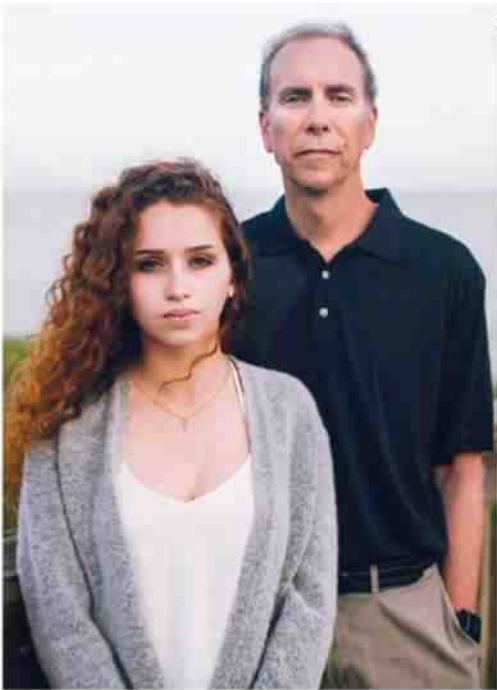
"By the third call it was clear something big was happening," Cederholm said recently. When he arrived at the station, he triggered a "Mass Rescue Operation" protocol, summoning a response from air, land and sea.

As authorities scrambled to grasp the scale of the storm, hundreds of sailors on the bay struggled to survive it. The wind flipped the Luitens' Razr, slinging the crew - Lennard, his father, 71-year-old Jimmie Brown, and teenage friends Adam Clark and Jacob Pouncey - into the water.

Brown struggled in a raincoat. Lennard swam around the boat, searching for his dad, whom he found with Jacob. After 20 minutes or so, two-and-a-half-metre waves threatened to drown them, and Lennard struck out for the shore to find help.

Normally, a storm's hard edge blows past in two or three minutes; this storm continued for 45 minutes.

A DOZEN COAST GUARD ships responded, along with several planes, helicopters and a team who prowled the coastline on all-terrain vehicles. People on horses searched the bay's clay banks for survivors. At the Coast Guard outpost on Dauphin Island, Scott Bannon, a major with Alabama's Marine Resources Division, made call after call to the families and friends of



Hana Blalack and Ron Gaston were in the water for more than two hours

boat owners and captains, trying to work out how many people might be missing.

Near the Dauphin Island Bridge, a Coast Guard rescue boat picked up Sarah Gaston and Jim Gates. She had suffered a leg injury and hypothermia, and as her rescuers pulled her onto their deck, she went into shock.

Ron and Hana were closer to the middle of the bay, where the likelihood of rescue was frighteningly low. "All you can really see above water is someone's head," Bannon explained later. "You can easily pass within a

few feet and never see someone in the water."

Ron and Hana had now been in the water for two hours. They tried to swim for shore, but the waves and current locked them in place. To stave off the horror of their predicament, Hana made jokes. "I don't think we're going to make it home for dinner," she said.

"Look," Ron said, pulling a phone from his pocket. At the same moment, Hana pulled out a GPS unit that she had tucked into her life preserver.

Hana called emergency services. A dispatcher answered: "What is your emergency and location?"

"I'm in Mobile Bay," Hana said.

"The bay area?"

"No, ma'am. I'm in the bay. I'm in the water."

Using the phone and GPS, and watching the blue lights of a patrol boat, she guided rescuers to their location.

As an officer pulled her from the water and onto the deck, Hana asked, "This boat isn't going to capsize too, is it?"

SHANE AND CONNOR Gaston had also gone overboard. Three times the wind flipped their boat before it eventually broke the mast. They used the small jib sail to fight their way towards the western shore. Once

on land, they knocked on someone's door, borrowed a phone, and called the Coast Guard to report that they'd survived.

As the sun started to set that evening, Scott and Hope Godbold sailed into the Coast Guard's Dauphin Island station with three survivors.

"It was amazing," said Bannon. The odds against finding even one person in more than 1000 square kilometres of choppy sea were outrageous.

After leaving Hope and the survivors at the station, Godbold was joined by his father, Kenny, and together they continued the search. Scott had in mind a teenager he knew: Lennard Luiten, who remained missing. Lennard's father had been found alive, as had his friend Jacob. But two other *Razr* crew members – Adam Clark and Jimmie Brown – had not survived.

By this point Lennard would have been in the water, without a life jacket, for six hours. Night had come, and the men knew the chances of finding the boy were vanishingly

remote. Scott eased his boat into the bay, listening for any sound in the darkness.

Finally, a voice drifted over the water: "Help!"

Hours earlier, the current had swept Lennard towards the sea. He swam towards an oil platform, but the waves worked against him, and he watched the platform move slowly from his south to his north. There was nothing but sea and darkness, and still he hoped: *Maybe his hand would find a crab trap. Maybe a buoy.*

Now Kenny shined a torch into his face, and Scott said, "Is that you, Lennard?"

TEN VESSELS SANK or were destroyed by the storm, and 40 people were rescued from the water. A half-dozen sailors died. It was one of the worst recreational sailing disasters in American history.

Working with the Coast Guard, which is investigating the disaster, regatta organisers have adopted more stringent safety measures. **R**

FROM SMITHSONIAN (JULY 2017). © 2017 BY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. SMITHSONIANMAG.COM

MARRYING FOR LOVE

Karen Cooper was ready to go out on a limb to save her beloved, so she got married – to a tree. Specifically, a giant ficus that's shaded a park in Fort Myers, Florida, for more than a century. The tree became the centre of a controversy when authorities began discussing cutting it down. **NBC**

You'll get more out of life if
you go through it with a smile

WHY IT PAYS TO BE

Happy

BY LISA FIELDS

A MAJOR HEALTH SCARE was just what Kaye Newton, then 48, needed to kickstart her transformation into a happier person. Before her illness, Newton, an author, was a self-described hypochondriac, always worrying about what pitfalls might be lurking in her future. But once she faced actual adversity, she learned how to change her perspective.



“Surgery helped me realise that worrying about my health doesn’t protect me from illness or prepare me for an operation,” Newton says. “I worry less now. I’m happier, and I consciously pay more attention to what is going on right now.”

The longer you live, the more likely you are to become a happier person. Countless research studies have shown that over a person’s lifespan, happiness inhabits a U-shaped curve: we’re happiest during childhood and old age. In early adulthood, happiness levels steadily decrease, bottoming out in our mid-40s. By age 50, our happiness levels are on the rise again.



LEARNING TO PUT **life events in perspective** CAN HELP YOU BECOME HAPPIER AS YOU AGE

The happiness curve dip is understandable, given the stress and life changes that take place during our 20s, 30s and 40s: Working long hours. Establishing a career. Getting married. Raising small children. Socking away money for the future.

But what about the boost on the happiness curve? After living life for

45 or 50 years, the experience that we’ve gained helps us to put things in perspective.

“By the time we have lived six decades or more, most have seen that life has as many downs as ups,” says sociology professor Lisa F. Carver. “The optimism of youth, which can think success in life is inevitable, is replaced by the reality that things aren’t always good. However, there is also the understanding that good can come from bad.”

Learning to put life events in perspective can help you become happier as you age. And it pays to be happy. You’ll see benefits in your relationships, work, health, attitude and other aspects of your life.

HAPPINESS & RELATIONSHIPS

Do you have friends or relatives in whom you can confide? If you do, you’re automatically happier than people who have no one to turn to for advice or companionship.

“Satisfaction with relationships is the strongest predictor of happiness we have,” says Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Denmark. “It comes up in happiness data all the time.”

Research shows that people who are married or who live with their partners tend to be happier than unattached people, simply because they’re less likely to be lonely.

“People who have someone to count

on in times of trouble are happier than people who don't," says happiness researcher John Helliwell. "People who are married are more likely to have someone to count on than someone who isn't married."

Helliwell's research has found that marriage gives a long-term boost to happiness, and the midlife dip towards unhappiness isn't as pronounced among married people. The happiest people of all consider their spouses to be their best friends. Helliwell's research is the first to examine the intersection of marriage and friendship and its effects on happiness.

"Calling your spouse your best friend is another way of saying 'I've got a happy marriage,'" Helliwell says. "They are happy being married."

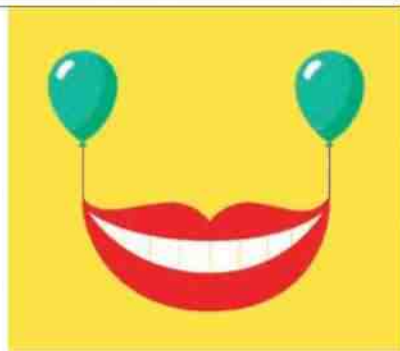
Carol Gee has been married to the same man for 44 years.

"I realise I am actually happy and not just staying in the relationship because we have invested so much time together," Gee says. "I don't believe in not being happy."

HAPPINESS & WORK

Researchers have studied job traits that lead to happiness and greater life satisfaction. Most people prefer a good work-life balance above all else.

"Variety and learning new things are important, but not as important as work-life balance," says economist and happiness researcher Jan-Emmanuel De Neve. "If you feel your job



is preventing you from giving time to your family or partner, or if you worry about work problems when you're not working, that has a massive effect on wellbeing."

Retirement, as expected, enhances happiness in most adults. "This is due to two things," De Neve says. "One is related to being able to do more, because the work-life balance shifts more to life. There's more time for leisure. People also start adapting their expectations, which may have been overly high when you started out. You accept the outcome of your life."

HAPPINESS & HEALTH

Live long enough and you'll likely experience illness or disability. But with the right attitude, these setbacks won't affect your happiness levels.

"We have learned from our study participants that ageing with illness and loss are challenges that brought new insights and appreciation of life," Carver says.

Researchers in Italy found that people who have a positive perception of



ageing are happier than those with a negative perception of ageing.

“The positive perception of ageing is not always correlated with having good health,” says geriatric specialist Ligia Dominguez at the University of Palermo, one of the study authors. “In our everyday clinical practice, we witness touching examples of this human ability – called resilience – in the guise of many older persons who independently, or with family and/or social support, maintain a good quality of life and declare feeling well, in spite of their health ailments.”

HAPPINESS & SELF-CARE

Optimism and resilience can help you be happy into old age.

“The mechanism for the association between optimism and successful ageing may well be that optimistic older adults have the ability to cope with the curve balls of life,” Carver says. “They are resilient. They express life satisfaction despite upset plans and losses, because they have adapted their expectations and have accepted

that events that may be considered negative can have positive outcomes.”

Life has taken Maggie Georgopoulos, 46, on a winding path through a number of jobs and continents, but she’s found happiness in the life that she’s created.

“My happiness comes from within me,” Georgopoulos says. “Because I have created a path to the life that I would like to live, I am OK when things go wrong because I can see the good that will eventually come.”

HAPPINESS POINTERS FOR LIFE

If you’re hoping to remain happy until your final days, researchers recommend the following:

- **Adjust your attitude** You may not be able to control what happens to you, but you can control how you react. “It is possible to develop the habit of seeing the positive side of things,” Dominguez says. “Many people complain of not being happy, but they also do nothing to change it.”

Learning to be more optimistic is a good first step.

“Start by recognising negative thoughts, and question them,” Dominguez says. “For example: Is the situation really as bad as I think? Is there another way to approach it?”

- **Interact differently with your spouse** After decades together, many husbands and wives become so familiar with one another, they’re not as kind to each other as they should

be. This can lead to tension and unhappiness in a marriage, which affects daily happiness levels.

"It's not fair to treat your spouse as toughly as you treat yourself," Helliwell says. "Ask yourself: Is this the sort of behaviour that I would use on a friend? If you treat your spouse the way you treat your friend, it should



"OPTIMISTIC OLDER ADULTS HAVE THE ABILITY **to cope with the curve balls** OF LIFE," SAYS LISA CARVER. "THEY ARE RESILIENT"

involve less taking for granted and an increase of the positivity."

- **Focus on what you have** If you're less mobile than you were, be thankful that you still have your wits about you, when so many others suffer from dementia and memory loss.

"That is an excellent example of a positive and optimistic person who

appreciates what she has instead of concentrating on what she does not have," Dominguez says. "Being grateful is part of cultivating a positive attitude. Looking for the small pleasures of daily life, focusing on the positive aspects at that moment, without concentrating on the shadows of the past or bad thoughts that may upset the moment."

- **Give back** After you retire, you'll find more purpose in life and have more reasons to connect with others on a regular basis if you volunteer in your community.

"It's beneficial to get more involved," Wiking says, "especially if you're at the stage when you're leaving your work behind, so all of your identity isn't attached to your profession."

Find a cause or an organisation that's meaningful to you, then find out how you can help.

"I think people see volunteer work as good for other people, but we overlook the benefit we get out of it ourselves," Wiking says. "It's a way to make and meet new friends. It also, perhaps, helps people become more grateful for what they have, because some sorts of charity work expose you to how the other half lives." **R**



BRANCHING OUT

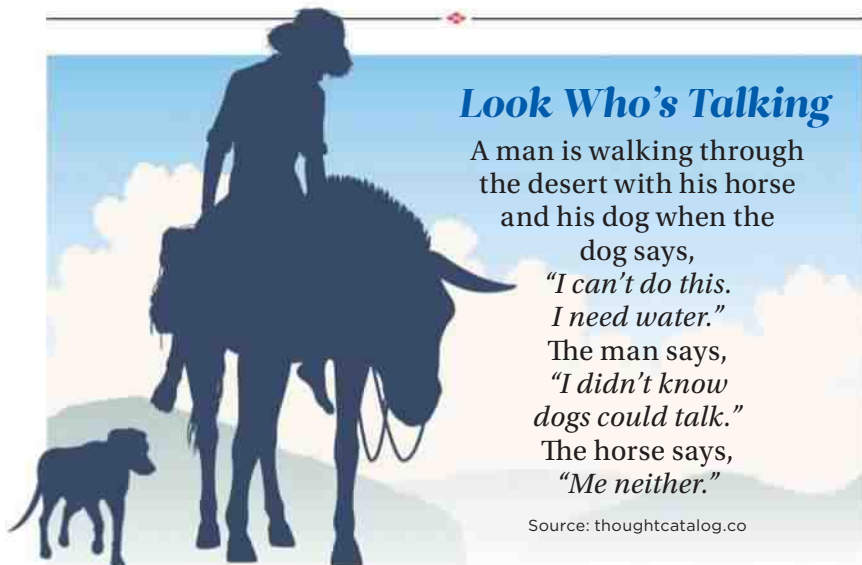
There are more trees on Earth than stars in the Milky Way (three trillion and 100 billion respectively).

FROM 1,423 Q.I. FACTS TO BOWL YOU OVER



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



Look Who's Talking

A man is walking through the desert with his horse and his dog when the dog says,
"I can't do this. I need water."
The man says,
"I didn't know dogs could talk."
The horse says,
"Me neither."

Source: thoughtcatalog.co

TESTING THE WATER

Teacher: Donald, what's the chemical formula for water?

Donald: HIJKLMNO.

Teacher: What on earth are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said that it's H to O.

SUBMITTED BY HEIDI CLARK

MONEY WELL SPENT

Last night I blew \$5000 on a reincarnation seminar. I figured, What the hell, you only live once.

COMEDIAN RONNIE SHAKES

LIGHT ON

What's the difference between a hippo and a Zippo?

One is really heavy and the other is a little lighter. Source: buzzfeed.com

GAME FOR IT

A man went to visit a friend at his house and was amazed to find him playing chess with his dog. He watched the game in astonishment.

"I can hardly believe my eyes!" he exclaimed. "That's the smartest dog I've ever seen."

"Nah, he's not so smart,"

the friend replied. "I've beaten him three games out of five."

Source: unijokes.com

THE SINGLE LIFE

I've been single for such a long time now, that when somebody asks, "Who are you with?", I just automatically reply, "Vodafone."

COMEDIAN MIRANDA HART

MOPPING UP

I got into a fight one time with a really big guy, and he said, "I'm going to mop the floor with your face."

I said, "You'll be sorry."

He said, "Oh, yeah? Why?"

I said, "Well, you won't be able to get into the corners very well."

Seen online

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

Last night I went to a karaoke bar that didn't play any 1970s music. At first, I was afraid. Oh, I was petrified.

COMEDIAN STEWART FRANCIS



CARTOON: STEVE JONES

Well Worth Seeing

Q: *Why did the cat fall into the well?*

A: *It couldn't see that well.*

Source: reddit.com



A LESSON LEARNT!

A bank robber pulls out a gun, points it at the bank teller and says, "Give me all the money or you're geography!"

The puzzled teller replies, "Don't you mean history?"

The robber says, "Don't change the subject!"

Seen at facebook.com

BAD FOR BUSINESS

If she sells seashells by the seashore, then I think she needs a better business model.

COMEDIAN HARRISON SLATER

GONE MISSING!

There was a story in the newspapers recently about a family who left their three year old in a corn maze overnight by accident.

Like all parents, whenever I hear these kinds of things it always give me... ideas.

Seen online

When a novice diver swam with some of the ocean's most feared predators, he came away with a new appreciation for them

BY GLENN HODGES
FROM *NATIONAL*
GEOGRAPHIC



A diver keeps a close watch on a tiger shark in the Bahamas

ADVENTURE



*Swimming
with*
Sharks

I saw *Jaws* the year it came out, 1975. I was nine, and I still remember how the theatre erupted when Brody finally killed the monster shark. I loved the movie, and that night I dreamed of a shark swimming up through the toilet and coming after me down the hall.

So when I got this assignment, I decided to do what I'd never wanted to do: swim with sharks. I would go to a place in the Bahamas known as Tiger Beach, where I'd dive with tiger sharks, the species responsible for more recorded attacks on humans than any shark except the great white. Most people who got wind of this plan thought I was either very brave or very stupid.

But I just wanted to puncture an illusion. The people who know sharks intimately tend to be the least afraid of them, and no one gets closer to sharks than divers. The divers who run operations at Tiger Beach give them nicknames and light up when they talk about their personality quirks. In their eyes these sharks aren't man-eaters. (In 2017 there were just five fatalities from shark attacks worldwide.)

But tiger sharks are not relevant just because of how many people they bite. As apex predators, they act as a crucial balancing force in ocean ecosystems, constraining the behaviour of other animals. As such, they are essential to the health of sea

grass ecosystems, habitat to marine wildlife.

Furthermore, their role in ocean ecosystems is likely to increase if the planet and its oceans continue to warm. Tiger sharks love warm water, they eat almost anything, and they have large litters of pups, making tigers one of the hardiest shark species. They are also among the largest: mature females can exceed 5.5 metres and weigh more than 540 kilograms. Only great whites and a few other shark species are larger.

TIGER BEACH IS NOT actually a beach. It's a shallow bank about 40 kilometres from Grand Bahama Island, a patchwork of sand, sea grass, and coral reef that began attracting divers about a decade ago. It's prime habitat for tiger sharks and has ideal conditions for viewing them. The water is six to 13.5 metres deep and usually crystal clear. You strap on weights, sink to the bottom and watch the sharks go by.

On the boat ride to the site, our dive operators, Vincent and Debra Canabal, started tossing bloody chunks of fish overboard. Almost immediately the water filled with Caribbean reef sharks and lemon sharks. At last Vincent spotted a huge dark silhouette. "Tiger!" he yelled, pointing.

He jumped in with a crate of mackerel to begin feeding the shark on the seafloor – in part to occupy it while the rest of us entered the water, and



With jaws and teeth designed to crush and shear hard objects such as turtle shells, a tiger shark can afford to bite first and worry about edibility later

in part to make sure it wasn't too hungry when we did. All of this was OK with me until I reached the bottom and immediately had to fend off the first tiger shark I'd ever laid eyes on, all 360 kilograms of it.

The way Debra described it later, this was just 'Sophie' being curious and friendly. "She *looved* you," Debra said, because of all the attention Sophie paid me during the dive. At the time I wasn't sure.

But after watching how Vincent and Debra handled them over the next week's dives – caressing them after feeding them a fish, steering them gently away when it was time for them to move on – it became easy to see the sharks in a very benign light. Not once did they make a sudden or aggressive move towards anyone; they moved slowly and

deliberately, swimming in large loops and then coming on a glide path to the feeding box. I felt surprisingly safe in their presence.

Most of the tiger sharks at Tiger Beach are habituated to divers, used to being fed. But even the ones that aren't familiar with the routine generally are not dangerous to divers. Tiger sharks are ambush predators, relying on stealth and surprise to catch their prey.

At Tiger Beach you're not blindly paddling or swimming at the surface, like most attack victims. You're down at the sharks' level, presenting yourself as something other than prey, and reasonably safe.

However, there are videos of near misses at Tiger Beach – in one a tiger goes after a diver's leg and in 2014 a diver simply disappeared.

Our group even had a scare when an angelfish wandered into our midst and the reef sharks and lemon sharks went into a frenzy, chasing it as it hid between people's legs. Everyone thought someone was going to be bitten in the melee, and there were three 450-kilogram tiger sharks milling around that might suddenly have taken an interest in a wounded diver.

We were back in the water the next day, but it was the kind of fluke that reminds you that sharks are wild and inherently unpredictable. And according to scientists who study them, tigers are especially unpredictable.

I FLEW TO OAHU to meet Carl Meyer at the University of Hawaii to discuss his research on the recent spike in tiger shark attacks in Hawaii - which have jumped from an average of just over four a year from 2000 to 2011 to more than ten a year in 2012, 2013 and 2016. Meyer and his team have tagged hundreds of tiger sharks with satellite tags and acoustic tracking devices. He says they're just beginning to understand them.

"Tiger sharks can show up any time of day or night, and they may be there one day and back the next day, or gone for three years," he says.

At least some of this unpredictability is likely caused by the sharks'



A newborn pup has the striped markings along its metre-long body that give the tiger shark its name. The markings fade as the shark grows

hunting habits, he says. Tiger sharks rely on surprise to catch their prey. "If you're predictable, your prey is going to adapt to that predictability. It makes sense to suddenly appear in an area and not be there very long."

The uptick in attacks in the autumn might also be due to having more sharks around the islands at that time of year. That's when tiger sharks come in to give birth, Meyer points out. Female tiger sharks make a huge energy investment when they ovulate. Their eggs are the size of baseballs, and they can have 80 pups in a litter. That might mean that female sharks reach the island hungry and needing to replace energy reserves after giving birth.

Another possible theory involves a proliferation of sea turtles. After decades of intense exploitation, green sea turtles received protection in 1978. They're now common off

Hawaii's shores and are a familiar food for tiger sharks. With wide jaws and heavy, angled teeth, tiger sharks are able to crush and slice through an adult turtle's shell in a way most sharks can't. So if more turtles are sharing the water with more people, more shark bites might be the result.

The relationship between tiger sharks and sea turtles could have broad implications for the health of ocean ecosystems around the globe.

On a remote part of Australia's western coast called Shark Bay, a research team led by Mike Heithaus of Florida International University has documented how tiger sharks prevent sea turtles and dugongs (sea cows) from overgrazing the sea grass beds that anchor the ecosystem. It's not just by eating the animals, they discovered. The presence of the sharks changes the turtles' and dugongs' habits, forcing them to graze more judiciously to lessen their risk.

In the Bahamas, which designated its waters a shark sanctuary in 2011, the marine ecosystems are relatively healthy. But the adjacent western Atlantic has much weaker shark protections and appears to be suffering the consequences.

"I do work in Florida and the Bahamas, and it's night and day," says Neil Hammerschlag, a marine ecologist at the University of Miami. "We see massive differences in the size and

numbers of the sharks. They're doing well in the Bahamas, but we almost never catch them off Florida. They're just 80 kilometres apart," he added. Florida prohibited the killing of tiger sharks in its waters in 2012, but it's the only state on the United States' eastern seaboard to have done so.

JAWS ISN'T RESPONSIBLE for most of the threats tiger sharks face – coastal development, marine pollution, longline fishing, the popularity of shark fin soup – but it did create a cultural attitude that has had a long shelf life. After *Jaws*, people didn't just become paranoid about sharks; they became callous, even vengeful. Shark-fishing tournaments sprouted on the eastern seaboard of the United States, and dozens continue, celebrating the spectacle of 'monster sharks' hanging on the docks.

In summer 2015, as I was planning my dive at Tiger Beach, news broke that a 360-kilogram tiger shark had been caught off the South Carolina coast. *USA Today* called the shark "monstrous" and described the fishermen as "brave". When I got home from Hawaii, I looked at the story again. Seeing the picture of the gutted, deflated shark, I thought about how it was once the same size as Sophie, and those weren't at all the words that came to mind – for either the shark or the men who killed it. **R**

All in a Day's Work

HUMOUR ON THE JOB

What a Bloomer!

A colleague received some flowers accompanied by a card that simply said, "No".

She spent the entire morning trying to figure out what her husband had meant by this cryptic message. Eventually she gave up and called him.

"When I was on the phone to the florist," he told her, "she asked me if I had a message and I said, 'No'."

SUBMITTED BY GINETTE HUGHES



MUM'S THE WORD

My very attractive 20-year-old PA came into my office, sat on the edge of my desk and asked if it was true that my girlfriend and I had split up.

When I confirmed it, she smiled and asked if I was ready to start seeing anyone else.

As a 38-year-old male, my ego was doing somersaults, but I questioned whether a relationship would be appropriate and I let her down gently by saying that it was too soon for me to be involved with someone again.

She smiled and said, "That's a pity - you'd be just right for my mum."

SUBMITTED BY ROB LLOYD

PARK AT YOUR OWN RISK

There is a lot of competition for parking at the local dental office, hence the sign: "Dental office parking only. Violators will be extracted."

SUBMITTED BY HELEN MCNAIR

FOWL PLAY

While teaching at a veterinary college, I ordered books for our

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

library. One was George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. When I went to take it out, I found that the librarian had placed it in the section for dairy and poultry. **SUBMITTED BY JACOB CHERAN**

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

As a Brit working in the US during the early 1990s, I met several Americans who "just loved" my accent.

I was particularly tickled by one young woman who complimented me - when I informed her that I came from Scotland - with, "Wow, your English is really good!"

SUBMITTED BY MARY MCPHAIL

NO ILL FEELING

After a week off with 'man flu', I returned to work.

On my first day back, one girl complained that she was unwell.

"Oh dear," I said. "I hope it's nothing I've given you."

"So do I," she replied. "It's morning sickness!"

SUBMITTED BY GORDON WALLACE



Bone Up

Some tourists in the Museum of Natural History are marvelling at dinosaur bones. One of them asks the guard, "Can you tell me how old the bones are?"

The guard replies, "They're 65,000,011 years old."

"That's an awfully exact number," says the tourist.

"How do you know their age so precisely?"

"Well," the guard answers, "they were 65 million years old when I started working here, and that was 11 years ago."

Source: reddit.com



Clean Up the Act

My husband left a note for the office cleaner because he'd noticed the firm's trophy cupboard was getting quite dusty. The note read, "Check out the trophies."

The next day he found it still very dusty with a note added from the cleaner, "Yes, they're lovely trophies!"

SUBMITTED BY ABIGAIL GEORGE

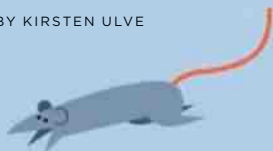
HUMOUR



Jewellery, gadgets,
cigarettes – and suitcases –
all attracted the attention
of our latest round of the

World's Dumbest Criminals

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KIRSTEN ULVE





While on a working holiday in the US back in 2009, two lads from Byron Bay in northern NSW, decided to rob a bank in Vail, Colorado, with BB guns – while still wearing the name tags from the job the pair worked at. They were regulars at the bank and probably the only ones with broad Australian accents. After making off with \$US132,000, suspicions arose when

they attempted to buy one-way airfares to Mexico with the stolen cash. They were caught and spent time in jail. Their actions made world headlines, but didn't seem to deter subsequent dumb criminals.

Vanity Did Him In

THINKING NO ONE was looking, a 26-year-old bearded thief took a pair of headphones off the shelf in an electronics store, went into a dressing room – out of sight, or so he thought



– and put them into his pocket. So far so good: if only he hadn't given into vanity! As he was leaving the dressing room, he looked in the mirror and, unbelievably, became concerned with how dishevelled his beard was. Grabbing an electric shaver off a nearby shelf, he quickly trimmed his beard. Sadly for the thief, the shop assistants in the Vantaa, Finland, store had noticed his strange behaviour, and he was pulled

aside when he tried to go through the checkout. The headphones were discovered in his pocket. The man was then charged with shoplifting and property crime.

Very Sneaky

SUITCASES belonging to passengers on buses going to Beauvais Airport outside of Paris were being pilfered. Police were baffled. When and how could a thief get into the luggage compartment of the bus, steal from suitcases, and then get out again, without being seen?

Then, an observant driver noticed a passenger with a backpack and an enormous suitcase, with something inside that was moving! He alerted the authorities. Police stopped the man as he arrived at the airport and found his rucksack contained laptops, money and valuables. His suitcase contained a “curled up individual”.

The scam became clear. Once in the luggage compartment, the thief hiding in the suitcase would sneak out, steal whatever he could find, load up the backpack, and get back into the suitcase before arriving at the airport. The thief and his accomplice were respectively sentenced to eight and 12 months in jail.

Smoke and Mirrors

LOOKING TO SWIPE some cigarettes, three crooks smashed their way through the glass doors of a rural



And the Dumbest Excuses...

THE ISSUE:

Over 40,000 cases of confiscated wine were illegally consumed in police stations in the Indian state of Bihar.

THE EXCUSE:

Police insisted that rats had bitten through the tops of confiscated wine bottles and had drunk the booty.

Source: rt.com

THE ISSUE:

A man was pulled over for driving 16 kilometres per hour over the speed limit in Australia.

THE EXCUSE:

"The wind was pushing me."

Source: metro.co.uk

THE ISSUE:

A Canadian woman was pulled over for driving nearly double the speed limit.

THE EXCUSE:

She told the officer she was speeding in order to make it to her nearby cottage in time for sunset. It was 8.20 in the morning.

Source: CTV News

THE ISSUE:

A university student was arrested on charges of shoplifting.

THE EXCUSE:

It was a homework assignment – she was researching a term paper on kleptomania.

Source: Associated Press

supermarket in Giessenburg, Holland. Heading straight for the cashier's counter, one of the men jumped over it to steal cigarettes from the shelves behind. Unfortunately for them, they had tripped the store's security system, and they got more "smoke" than they had bargained on: the store's security smoke machine had been activated. Knowing that police had been alerted, they fled, empty-handed.

Clear Directions

AFTER RAIDING a jewellery store of bracelets and rings, the thieves could have made good their getaway had they not made a series of silly mistakes. First, when police in Leicester,



England, found the getaway car, they discovered the crooks' GPS system showing police where the thieves were headed. Even dumber, however, one of the men had left their address in the car. The three young thieves were jailed for a total of 21 years.

Go Directly to Jail

IT WAS LATE ONE AUTUMN evening when police on patrol in Flensburg, Germany, saw a young man acting oddly. The officers approached the man and, checking his name with police files, found that he was wanted on three separate arrest warrants. Rather than hang around and await his fate, the 24-year-old ran away as fast as he could, jumped into a nearby car, and told the driver to "put his foot down". The young man had climbed into an unmarked police vehicle – and not too much later, found himself in jail.

Better Than Free

LAST YEAR, an undetermined number of misguided thieves broke into a shop after hours in Zeist, Holland, and ran off with a television set. Clearly, they did not know that they had entered a "give-away store" – part of a recycling project – where

everything is free. On top of that, the television they had stolen was broken! They have been caught.

Unlucky Friday

IT WAS FRIDAY THE 13TH when two masked men decided to rob a jewellery store outside the Swedish capital of Stockholm. But it wasn't their day. Clearly amateurs, the men filled a big bag with stolen goods, but when they returned to their scooter – their getaway vehicle – not only did it not start right away, the big bag of loot was too unwieldy to carry. The two were arrested just metres from the store.

Foiled By Greed

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED if you could lift a bag containing 20,000 cigarettes – give or take a few? Well... after loading up with around 1000 packets of cigarettes, three crooks were unable to get their booty up and over or around the tobacco counter, out of the shop, and away: it was just too heavy. So, not surprisingly, when police arrived at the supermarket in the Midlands of England, the men fled empty-handed. The men were sentenced to a total of 14 years in jail. **R**

THREATS PARENTS DISH OUT

"We will leave non-sequitur, embarrassing comments on your social media posts."

"We hope you have twins." MCSWEENYS.NET



PHOTO: GIULIO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES

Featuring a religious leader, a style icon and a pair of star-crossed lovers, we present famous ...

Balcony SCENES

BY CORNELIA KUMFERT

◀ **No balcony** in the world has borne more Popes than the Vatican's Loggia delle Benedizioni. Every new Pope since the 17th century has appeared before the public on the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica. The Pope also gives his 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing from here at Christmas and Easter, giving the balcony its name, which means 'Loggia of the Blessings'.



▲ **The cast iron balconies** of New Orleans were nearly lost for good in the early 20th century. Plans to beautify the city included the removal of the verandahs, which had mostly been made by local craftsmen. Fortunately, this idea didn't find favour with everyone, and many of the balconies were allowed to stay. They remain an intrinsic part of the US city's image to this day.

▶ **Miss Piggy** and Kermit the Frog may be *The Muppet Show's* best-known characters, but don't forget Statler and Waldorf, the two curmudgeonly old men who call out acerbically humorous remarks from the puppet world's most famous balcony.



▶ **The balcony** of the Ambassador Hotel in New York sprang to prominence when Marilyn Monroe, then 28, was photographed there. Keen to take her career to new heights, the future style icon wanted the world to see her as more than the 'dumb blonde' of her earlier movies.







▲ **A tender kiss** that captured the public's imagination. Kate Middleton and Prince William tied the knot in 2011. Like William's parents Prince Charles and Princess Diana before them, the newlyweds appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace post wedding service.



◀ **One of the most** romantic balconies is actually a sarcophagus! In the early 20th century, the people of Verona, Italy, were so tired of having to tell the flocks of tourists that the balcony in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* didn't exist that they cobbled one together from an old coffin.

◀ **If you want to admire** the royal box of Milan's La Scala from the inside, you will either need to book a guided tour of the famous opera house or hope for an invitation from the Italian president. The opulent theatre balcony is reserved for leading lights from the world of politics and foreign dignitaries.



Painter Wolfgang Beltracchi stands in front of his painting Gruppenbild der blauen Reiter (group picture of the blue riders); Nicholas Eastaugh (inset)

TRUE CRIME



Art forgers make millions conning art lovers with faked paintings. But one art detective is on their case

THE *Art* DETECTIVE

BY PETER WOOLRICH

As art forger Wolfgang Beltracchi and his wife Helene drank champagne on a Caribbean island, they had no idea that a forensic art investigator was honing the skills that would put them in prison. Investigator Nicholas Eastaugh wasn't on their tails yet – but he soon would be.

Unaware that time was running out, the Beltracchis continued flitting between their European homes and lazing on their yacht; ill-gotten gains from what would prove to be the biggest art forgery case of the 21st century. Their luxury lifestyle was afforded by Wolfgang's ability to reproduce classic paintings worth more than US\$40 million.

The Beltracchis, whose gang included Helene's sister, Jeanette Spurzem, and friend Otto Schulte-Kellinghaus, pulled off an elaborate scam that duped auction houses, museums and private collectors alike for more than 20 years.

It's believed that Wolfgang, now a well preserved 71-year-old with shoulder-length grey hair, began his criminal career in the 1980s. It wasn't until he married Helene in 1993 that the operation became truly sophisticated, by which time physicist conservator and art historian Nicholas Eastaugh was emerging as a leading art detective.

While the gang scoured provincial French auctions for appropriately aged canvasses Wolfgang could use, Eastaugh was busy using his expertise to expose other less ambitious fraudsters.

Wolfgang took just a few days to copy an Old Master or Picasso, but found the biggest money to be made

was in imitating 20th-century Modernists. One of

his greatest successes was called *The Forest* (2), purportedly by Max Ernst, which was wrongly authenticated by a renowned art historian at the Beltracchi's villa in the south of

France. It sold for US\$2.3

million and in 2006 was loaned to the Max Ernst Museum in Germany. Firmly believed to be genuine, a French publishing tycoon then purchased it for US\$7 million.

RATHER THAN COPY existing paintings, Wolfgang's *modus operandi* was to create supposedly unseen or lost works by relatively unknown





Left: Wolfgang and Helene Beltracchi at a screening of the film Beltracchi - The Art of Forgery; (above) his infamous Max Ernst forgery, The Forest (2), which sold to a publishing tycoon for a cool US\$7 million

PHOTO: PETER HORREE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

artists. He scraped the top layers off a suitably dated painting, retaining the 'ground' used to coat the canvas, and got his brushes out. "You have to respect the hard work he put in," says Eastaugh. "Although he's not a scientist, in his own way Beltracchi was innovative and experimental. He built a special oven and cooked his paintings until he got the cracking in the paint surface that comes with age."

To further convince buyers, the Beltracchis concocted an elaborate backstory that Helene had inherited

the artworks from her grandparents, who they claimed were inter-war-year collectors. When questions started to be asked, Wolfgang mocked up sepia photographs with Helene dressed in period clothes pretending to be her grandmother. In the background hung Wolfgang's reproductions, which she claimed proved the pictures' provenance.

They said the grandparents did business with the renowned German Jewish collector, Alfred Flechtheim. It worked because like all successful cons, the art world wanted it to be

true. It also helped that Flechtheim's life had been cut short when he had fled the Nazis in 1933, only to catch his leg on a nail and die of blood poisoning upon reaching London.

What the gang didn't know, however, was that as their operation became ever more sophisticated, so too did Eastaugh's ability to catch them. His knowledge of historical art techniques was now second to none, bolstered by scientific advances, and he had set-up his own business, Art Analysis & Research. Eastaugh's laboratories are as technologically equipped as the National Gallery in London and he has an impressive roster of worldwide clients who

want their prospective art purchases verified.

"We can test with ultraviolet fluorescence, chemical analysis and ultra-high resolution digital imaging," he explains. "We're able to take such an extremely small sample using very fine eye surgery scalpels, that you shouldn't be able to see where we've been."

Beltracchi tried to stay ahead by keeping himself informed about scientific advances and submitting samples of the paints he was using for chemical analysis. "If a test report highlighted any materials that could have only been available after the work was supposed to have been



A woman in the Moritzburg Art Museum in Germany looks at a forgery by Wolfgang Beltracchi, which was created in the style of artist Heinrich Campendonk

PHOTO: GERAINT LEWIS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

produced, Beltracchi removed it from his palette," says Eastaugh.

But the art detective didn't rely solely on science. His speciality was pigmentation and he's amassed 3000 vials of brightly coloured powders from nearly every chapter of art history – whites and yellows from Pompeii, blues from ancient China and Japanese glass pigments – which he keeps in an office drawer. Each helps him understand how artists worked in nearly every historical period, and consequently how to spot a modern fake. Red pigment, for example, used to be so expensive that painters boiled cast-off garments to extract the dye and bits of fibre can still be found in their work today.

According to Professor Martin Kemp, an emeritus professor at Oxford University and leading expert on Leonardo da Vinci, "Art forgery is a huge issue. It's a cat and mouse game that the forgers are finding more difficult to stay ahead of, but they'll always find a way into the latest art market hotspot. The Russian art scene, for example, is a bit like the Wild West at the moment."

THE BEGINNING OF THE END for the Beltracchis came when Wolfgang copied a painting by German expressionist Heinrich Campendonk, who died in 1957. His fake *Red*



Left: renowned German Jewish collector Alfred Flechtheim; (below) Martin Kemp, professor of the history of art at Oxford



Picture with Horses sold for a record US\$3.6 million in 2006, but issues were soon raised about its supporting documentation. In 2007 it was sent to a German art institute for analysis, which failed to reach a conclusion about its authenticity.

Eastaugh was itching to get his hands on the alleged Campendonk and in 2008 it arrived at his offices near Tower Bridge, London. Analytical tools at his disposal included X-rays, electron microscopes and

Famous Fakers

Some of the world's most prodigious and eccentric art forgers come from the UK. Together they've conned the art world out of millions. Here are a few of the more audacious...



JOHN MYATT (above with a Van Gogh replication) pulled the “biggest art fraud of the 20th century” off by faking more than 200 works by the famed Swiss abstract sculptor and painter Giacometti, along with other modernists, using a lubricant and emulsion paint. The 72-year-old Staffordshire artist duped leading auction houses and critics for nearly a decade until his arrest in 1995. He was sentenced to a year in prison, where he was nicknamed Picasso, for conspiracy to defraud. After his release, he became an artist in his own right. More than 100 of his fakes are said to still be in circulation.

SHAUN GREENHALGH, assisted by his octogenarian parents and

brother, copied works by LS Lowry, Paul Gauguin and Barbara Hepworth, among others, on the Bolton council estate where he was raised. The 56-year-old bore a grudge after being rejected by a number of galleries. Despite having no formal training, he fooled the art world, including the British Museum, for 17 years and was sentenced to four years and eight months in prison. Greenhalgh was released in 2010 and now has his own art website.

TOM KEATING said he forged Old Masters, including Renoir and Rembrandt, in protest against an art establishment that grew rich at the expense of the artists themselves. The Londoner discredited experts, while making a tidy profit, by adding a layer of glycerine to his copies. If they were ever cleaned the chemical dissolved the paint above, destroying the work. Keating, who was 66 when he died, claimed to have more than 2000 forgeries in circulation by 100 different artists. Charges against him were dropped due to ill health, though his condition improved soon after.

ultraviolet lights, but it was his extensive knowledge of pigmentation that brought the Beltracchis down.

Using an electron magniscope, he discovered that the master forger had made a rookie error by using two historically inappropriate colours, the most damning of which was a titanium dioxide white; a pigment which wasn't widely available in 1914 when the painting was dated. "White titanium wasn't introduced until after 1916," says Eastaugh. "The difference was only two years but there was no getting away from it. I knew I had him."

Beltracchi's scheme began to unravel and the couple was arrested by armed German police in August 2010, and went to court the following year. The case was cut short after nine days of the expected two month-long trial when German prosecutors made a plea-bargain deal with the

gang. Wolfgang admitted 14 forgeries worth US\$40 million and was jailed for six years. His wife Helene, 53, got four years, her 54-year-old sister a 21-month suspended sentence and Shulte-Kellinghaus, 67, five years. They were also ordered to pay millions of dollars in compensation.

Eastaugh, who has since analysed eight more Beltracchis and grown to recognise his style, remains on the lookout for more of the fraudster's paintings, which are undoubtedly still hanging in art galleries and museums around the

world. "We're joined at the hip now," Eastaugh says with a smile.

SINCE HIS RELEASE from prison in 2015, Beltracchi has staged many solo exhibitions and is regarded as a fine artist in his own right. Now his own signature appears on his work. **R**



Nicolaus Eastaugh examines a painting

YOWIE COUNTRY

With alleged sightings of yowies - mythological, ape-like creatures found in the Australian outback dating back to the late 1800s, Kilcoy, a small Queensland community, recently revamped the tourist drawcard with a new fibreglass statue to the lumbering beastie. Locals hope to attract hunters and fans of Australia's version of Bigfoot. WWW.ABC.NET.AU



SEE
THE WORLD ...

Turn the page 







... DIFFERENTLY

For many Japanese, the annual 'Golden Week' is the most welcome time of the year. It is then that inside of just seven days locals enjoy four national holidays.

This means that during the beginning of May there is hardly a spot left in the country that is not packed full of holidaymakers. As seen here near Matsumoto, in the heart of the Japanese Alps, hundreds of sojourners are enjoying their springtime despite camping in the snow.

PHOTOS: PICTURE ALLIANCE/KYODO

Quotable Quotes



**You can make waves
or be a wave rider.
You can never do
both at the same time.**

MARK MOTONAGA, *designer*

**MAKE A BUCKET LIST;
DO EVERYTHING ON
THAT BUCKET LIST; MAKE
ANOTHER BUCKET LIST.**

KATE HUDSON, *actor*



**Success is a lousy teacher.
It seduces smart people into thinking
they can't lose.** **BILL GATES**, *business leader*

**WHEN I SAY “MY
HUSBAND”, I FEEL
LIKE I’M DOING
THE IMPRESSION
OF A MARRIED
PERSON.**

JAMIE LEE, *comedian*



**If you have three
people in your life
that you can trust,
you can consider
yourself the
luckiest person in
the whole world.**

SELENA GOMEZ, *singer*

**MAN’S MOST VALUABLE TRAIT IS A JUDICIOUS
SENSE OF WHAT NOT TO BELIEVE.**

EURIPIDES, *playwright*

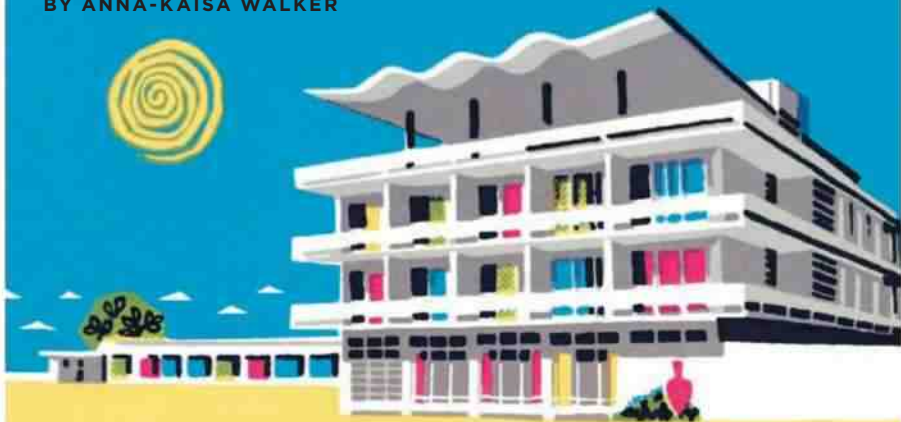


**The best thing about teaching is that
it matters, the hardest thing about
teaching is that it matters every day!**

EDDY WOO, *maths teacher and Australia’s
2018 Local Hero winner*

What ALL- INCLUSIVE RESORTS Won't Tell You

BY ANNA-KAISA WALKER



1 To find out if a price is fair, compare the all-inclusive fee to the standard room rate minus the package. Some resorts budget \$150 a day per person – or more – for food and drinks under the all-inclusive deal. Ask yourself if you will eat that much.

2 Resorts are rarely all-inclusive. Depending on the destination and package, you might get dinged for airport transportation and wi-fi access or have to pay for premium menu items like steak or choice liquor.



3 Renovation plans aren't usually mentioned in resorts' marketing materials, so confirm with your travel agent (or risk dealing with noise and dust). "We'll usually get a notification about construction upon booking," says Flight Centre travel agent Megan Vonhone. If you aren't using an agent, contact the resort directly.

4 Beware of photo editing. Scrolling through the endless images of pristine beaches and plush rooms online, you'd be forgiven for thinking every resort offers five-star accommodations at one-star prices. "Travel agents often have personal experience with these properties, so we can give you the lowdown," says Vonhone. Check sites like TripAdvisor for untouched photos from real guests.

5 International corporations manage most resorts offering all-inclusives, and this can mean they rarely benefit the host country economically. Find resorts that have been granted Green Globe certification, which requires a commitment to social, economic and environmental responsibility.

6 When it comes to discounts for travelling at "off-peak" times of the year, remember that there's a clear reason why rates are much lower during, say, the tropical wet season. While travel insurance can cover the cost of a trip cancellation or interruption caused by a natural disaster, in cases where your holiday is simply rained out, you can forget about getting a refund.

7 Tip well, even if your package says gratuities are included in the cost of your stay. Resort employees in some countries usually depend on tips to make ends meet; unless the hotel forbids it, carry a roll of cash bills and hand them out to staff who keep you feeling pampered.

8 Keep food-borne illness at bay by avoiding drinks with ice cubes and steering clear of lukewarm offerings that have been left out for hours at buffets. Traveller's diarrhoea strikes one in four sun-seekers, so it's best to keep anti-diarrhoeal medication on hand.

9 Resorts can be a petri dish for germs. Outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease and gastroenteritis do happen. Check online reviews for information about the resort's cleanliness.

10 Buy some health care peace of mind by opting for enhanced

24-hour medical travel insurance, which covers the cost of a doctor's visit to your hotel room. Some resorts have in-house doctors, but beware of overcharging.

11 Make sure you bring all necessities, especially sunscreen – you'll need lots, and prices at the hotel shop can be double or triple what you'd pay at home.

12 You might be tempted to save some money by researching and booking day excursions privately ahead of time, but it's best to wait until you arrive, and then speak with the concierge desk. Their local knowledge is invaluable.

13 Luxury resorts and cheaper resorts often share the same stretch of beach. If you're mainly visiting for the sun and sand and don't care for fancy amenities, you'll find better value with the budget option. **R**



GROWING OBSESSION

Ezzeya Daraghmeh, an 82-year-old Palestinian woman began collecting her hair cuttings when she was 15. "I hate to throw it away. When I comb my hair or wash it I keep the hair that falls off." Today, she has the piles of different shades of black, brown, grey and white coloured locks stuffed in a mattress and three large pillows.

"All this hair came from my head," she says. REUTERS



TRAVEL

BORD RIS



Now halfway through a massive 30-year development

EAUX ING

*The Water Mirror
at the Place
de la Bourse*

project, the 'sleeping beauty' is waking up

BY PAUL ROBERT

A **T A TABLE ON A SMALL TERRACE** overlooking the Garonne River, I've just finished a classic southern French dish of scallops and shellfish. The restaurant seems to be one of the last on the block to cater to more locals than tourists. I sip from a glass of cognac with my coffee and wait for the moment when the bright sky reaches that post-sunset shade of dark blue that is perfect for evening photography. As it nears, I finish my glass and walk 200 metres to join a throng of photographers on the boulevard, across from the Place de la Bourse.

We gather at the edge of the *Miroir d'Eau* ('water mirror'). It is a shallow pool the size of a sports field that goes through an eternal 15-minute cycle of filling with about two centimetres of water, then emptying out. I place my camera on a small tripod and wait.

After a few minutes, the water has drained away, leaving a field of flat,

wet, slabs of granite to create a perfect reflection of the magnificent 18th-century buildings framing this elegant square. At precisely that moment, the floodlights at the foot of the building facades switch on, creating an image of instant beauty that is received with a mix of "wows" and "oohs" and the clicking of cameras.

It's the ultimate iconic image of the city of Bordeaux. The whole thing lasts a minute or two, then it's gone. The sky turns black, and the tiny holes between the water mirror's tiles start spewing a thin vapour of droplets at the beginning of its next 'fill' cycle.

SATISFIED, I PACK UP my camera and cross the street to reacquaint myself with the Old City, which I last visited ten years ago, before the Water Mirror was built. I have fond memories of its limestone buildings and laid-back atmosphere. Although Bordeaux is some 2000 years old, the entire Old City, with some exceptions, is



made up of these limestone buildings - the result of a radical city modernisation around 1750 directed by the Marquis de Tourny, at the time the king's governor, whose name graces a square and some shops.

I pass the imposing structures along the Quai Richelieu and stroll the narrow streets behind it, which are lined with restaurants, wine bars and shops. This contrast is what I always liked so much about Bordeaux, the capital of the south-western region of Nouvelle-Aquitaine. The architecture of the Grand Théâtre, the museums and the town hall underlines the fact that the word 'grandeur' is truly French.

At the same time, its narrow streets breathe a provincial - even parochial - air that many major European cities lost decades ago.

But the city known in France as *La Belle Endormie* ('the sleeping beauty') is waking up. A massive restoration and development project is well underway. Bordeaux is now more than

halfway through implementing the plan, which will continue until 2030.

One of the most visible features of this massive undertaking is at the waterfront, along the crescent-shaped curve in the Garonne River that gave this Atlantic port its old name - Port of the Moon. Once occupied by derelict warehouses and car parks, the riverside Quai Richelieu now boasts a new tramline, bicycle lanes and a wide boulevard. The quay is the scene of a daily parade of strollers, runners, cyclists and playing children.

A newly opened high-speed train hub sits at the centre of a huge modern building project called Bordeaux Euratlantique, which is designed to spearhead a new economic and population boom pushing the current 750,000 inhabitants to more than a million.

The careful restoration of the Old City has already led to the city being recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. But will Bordeaux lose its Old World charm in the process?



“That’s a very important issue,” says Bordeaux’s deputy mayor Stephan Delaux when I pose the question to him the next morning.

“We have a group here in town hall that acts as a sounding board in discussions on how we can maintain the spirit of Bordeaux,” he says. Then he points out the window overlooking the square with the massive limestone St André Cathedral, which is being restored, and says, “But have you looked at the splendid view out my window? When Alain Juppé started in 1995, this square had five traffic lanes, full of trucks.

“Now there is a tram, the traffic is pushed to one side, and the square is for pedestrians. This is how we approach all aspects of the project.”

Juppé is the driving force behind the plan for the revival of Bordeaux. His name is on the lips of everybody I speak with. The former French prime minister and mayor since 1995 may well go down in history as the prince who kissed the sleeping beauty back to life. And his name will undoubtedly be attached to one of the *grands œuvres*, the huge structural works that will be finished after his retirement.

THAT AFTERNOON I meet Veronique Baggio, a city guide who takes me on

a two-hour walk to show me what is new and what is restored. When I was here last, much of Tourny’s Bordeaux was covered with soot. “The property owners were told to clean the facades,” she explains. “That was an expensive operation, but worth it. Now you can see the mascarons.”

Last time I had barely noticed the intricately carved limestone heads on the keystones over the porches and windows. This was never a town that invited you to look up. But there they are: some 3000 fascinating portraits found throughout the city.



This mascarone with puffed-out cheeks may represent the wind

Baggio tells me the portraits were probably local people, but also mythological figures. Some also symbolise products that were sold here.

Wine is represented, of course, and wheat, but also people. Baggio explains that Bordelais traders in the 18th and 19th centuries took part in the European slave

trade from Africa to the Americas. She tells me about a permanent exhibition dedicated to the slave trade in the municipal Aquitaine Museum.

At the museum I meet former director François Hubert, author of the book that accompanies the exhibition. Mayor Juppé wrote the preface, in which he calls the exhibition “a crucial step in the remembrance process



The Rue de Fessets, a pedestrian zone in the Old City, has an Old World charm

the City of Bordeaux has embarked on.” It is to Juppé’s credit again that coming to terms with the city’s past has become an integral part of the plans for the future of Bordeaux.

Hubert leads me through rooms filled with ship models, paintings and the paraphernalia of suppression. We are surrounded by a group of 12 year olds, brought here to learn this dark history. More than 11 million enslaved Africans were traded like cattle by the British, French, Dutch and others. “For too long we have hidden behind the notion that slavery was an American issue,” says Hubert. “It was not. It was very European.”

The exhibition lends a degree of honesty to the way Bordeaux wants to present itself. But there is still a long way to go. Since I met Veronique Baggio, I have asked several other locals about the slave trade and found

that the subject is as sensitive here as it is in my own hometown, Amsterdam. We don’t like to be reminded of the crimes of our forefathers.

A popular myth among locals has it that the Bordeaux traders were forced by law to ship slaves to America, as a result of a deal between the king and the Americans. It is an excuse that places responsibility with the regime that was overthrown in the French Revolution. Hubert laughs out loud when I tell him this: “There was no such contract. Absolutely not.”

AS I LEAVE the museum I am just in time for my reservation at Racines, a small restaurant nearby, owned and run by Scottish chef Daniel Gallacher. He left Scotland to work with and learn from France’s most famous chefs. Racines is his first restaurant. “I don’t have a Michelin star yet,” he

tells me, “but we do have a Bib Gourmand.” For *tout* Bordeaux that is a good omen of stars to come.

“I want a star of course,” says Galacher after serving me an elegant, modern lunch. “It would allow me to work with more exclusive ingredients. But right now, it is also challenging to serve surprising menus using more common ingredients.”

After lunch I board the modern Line B tram to be taken a couple of stops north, where I get off and rent a V3 public bicycle from a docking station on the river bank. V3 stations are found on squares around the city. I head off through the Chartrons area, a former working-class neighbourhood that has gone through a process of rapid gentrification in the wake of the restoration of the city centre. In the narrow streets, I pass antique shops, curio shops and small, single-storey worker’s houses called *échoppe* that sell for record prices.

Through a shop window, my eye is drawn towards a clockmaker, bent over his workbench, peering through a jeweller’s magnifying glass at an antique brass clock. I ask him if I may look around. Master clockmaker Peter Peschel looks up and smiles. “Of course,” he says.

Peschel tells me he opened his shop 12 years ago. With so many antique shops around, he is perfectly situated. We find common ground in our love for craftsmanship when he recognises the classic, handmade lens on my

camera. He’s pleasantly surprised at how it blends with digital technology.

Back on my bicycle, I head to the edge of the Old City, to the futuristic vertical lift bridge named after former mayor Jacques Chaban-Delmas. This is the former docks district where Bordeaux is now rapidly building modern housing projects and luxury apartment buildings.

The eye-catcher, besides the bridge, is the Cité du Vin. Opened in 2016, this international wine museum is housed in a building shaped to symbolise the swirl of wine in a glass.

Bordeaux, whose name is synonymous with wine, has placed itself above the market with its Cité du Vin and its biennial international wine festival. People come to the Cité du Vin for wine-tasting workshops, wine-themed special exhibitions and the splendidly designed multimedia presentations about wine from around the globe. Not least, the spectacular round shop in the heart of the building displays wines from around the world. Many of these can be tasted at the top floor bar.

ON THE LAST DAY of my visit, I decide to check out a more folksy part of the city that I fondly remembered. I walk south on the Rue Sainte-Catherine shopping street. The Apple Store, Galeries Lafayette and luxury brand shops gradually make way for T-shirt shops, fast-food eateries and tattoo parlours. At the end of the

street, I turn towards the flea market around the Basilica of St Michel, where standard French gives way to West African dialects and Arabic.

This is no longer the polished and shiny city of the tourist brochures, but a typical lively and colourful southern French city. Men in djellabas and women in high heels share the footpaths. But I see early signs of gentrification. Young professionals are beginning to make their mark here, as I saw in Chartrons. Outside a corner café, children play on a small playground as their young parents enjoy their lattes, some bent over their laptops.

But I am pleased to see that the Marché des Capucins food market still offers its splendid mix of North African herbs, tropical fruits and French specialties, and that French, Arabic and African dealers still



The round shop in the heart of the Cité du Vin displays wines from around the world

peddle everything from second-hand shoes to antiques in the St Michel flea market. As I watch two women haggling with an old man over some second-hand clothes, it strikes me that this scene could well disappear from Bordeaux as gentrification intensifies and real estate prices rise.

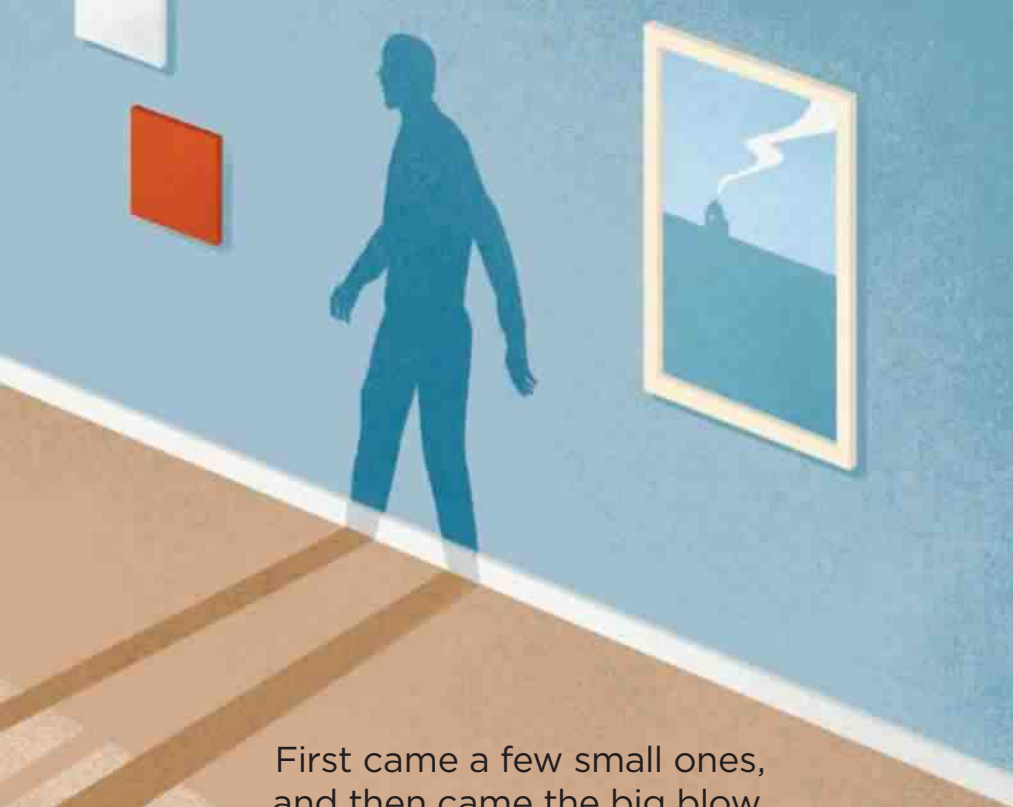
That would be a tremendous loss for them and for the city. I'll just have to come back in ten years to check. **R**

HITTING THE BOTTLE

The world's most expensive vodka bottle was found empty on a Danish construction site after thieves failed to realise it was the diamond-encrusted container – not its contents – that was worth nearly \$2 million. The bottle of Russo-Baltique, decorated with three kilograms of gold, three kilograms of silver and a diamond-encrusted cap, was stolen from a bar in Copenhagen. The bottle had been a loan from a Russian businessman to bar owner Brian Ingberg, who has 1200 different vodka bottles in his venue. *DAILY MAIL*

BONUS READ





First came a few small ones,
and then came the big blow.
But I'm very lucky

I Survived a **STROKE**

BY RON SMITH

FROM THE BOOK *THE DEFIANT MIND: LIVING INSIDE A STROKE*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREA DE SANTIS

WWW.IELTSPOP.IR

NO ONE WANTS TO BELIEVE THAT, IN A MATTER OF hours, they could be laid low by a stroke, lying in bed, barely able to move or talk. But it happened to Ron Smith. Here he describes the devastating attack, and his long and unpredictable road to recovery.

I stood in the doorway of the bathroom of our home in Vancouver Island, Canada, watching my wife Pat prepare to go out to lunch with friends. As I leaned against the door jamb, and took in an eyeful of the woman I have loved for close to half a century, saying goodbye and telling her to have fun, I felt a bit odd. Not nauseated or faint, simply odd, inside myself. Perhaps a bit weak. Nothing out of the ordinary that a brief lie down wouldn't cure.

So I bid my wife *au revoir* and sprawled out on the bed. I drifted to sleep. When I awoke, two hours had passed. I staggered to my feet and thought, *I've got to get some work done*. I made my way to my study, sat down at my computer, and noticed my right hand was sluggish. My fingers were moving in slow motion.

I paused. This was definitely strange. I had developed the habit of searching the Web for the peculiar things happening to my body as I got older. So without thinking – and I'm not sure why I did this – I typed “stroke” into Google. I can't say why I typed “stroke” and not “flu” or “Lyme disease” or “heart attack”.

I found the common symptoms for

stroke: sudden numbness or confusion, trouble seeing or walking, dizziness or severe headache. I also found several tests. Can you raise your arms? Can you smile? Can you make up and repeat a complete sentence?

I lifted my arms above my head. I smiled.

So I told myself, you're not having a stroke.

I figured I had done my research and, still feeling tired, went back to bed. I had the flu, that was it, although the image of my uncooperative hand still nagged at the back of my mind. And I still felt odd ... perhaps a little light-headed, or dizzy.

About 4pm Pat came home. “You're still in bed!” she remarked.

“Yes,” I admitted.

“Are you still feeling poorly?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think we should head into emergency?”

“No,” I insisted. “I've probably got the flu. I'd be wasting their time.”

Another hour passed and I still felt ‘odd’ and a bit nervous that my symptoms persisted. Finally Pat insisted we head for the hospital. She dropped me off while she went to park the car.

I weaved my way into reception, my

legs feeling quite feeble, almost wobbly. Pat joined me, and after checking in, we took seats in the waiting room.

Shortly after a man called my name and gestured towards an examining room. *At last*, I thought.

The doctor asked for a detailed account of what had been happening to me. He performed a number of tests. He asked me to touch my nose, and then follow his finger with my eyes. He told me to count backwards by sevens. He had me squeeze his two



THE LIGHT STARTED
TO DISAPPEAR.
**SOON THERE WOULD
BE NO LIGHT.** THERE
WOULD BE ABSENCE -
OF EVERYTHING

fingers with each hand. He tested my reflexes.

I passed every test, so I thought what I'd been experiencing was just some temporary malfunction of the wiring. I was perfectly healthy.

"I'd like to keep you in for observation," he said.

My jaw dropped. "You've got to be kidding," I exclaimed. "Didn't I just pass your tests?"

"No. I wouldn't kid about this. And yes, you did pass all the tests."

I stared at him, dumbfounded.

He would tell me later that even

though I had passed all the tests, there was something in my account that set off alarm bells. "You might be having what we call a stuttering stroke (progressive stroke)," he explained. "It happens over several hours, perhaps even several days. You've likely had a number of mini-strokes since this morning. If that's the case, the likelihood of being struck by a larger stroke is very probable."

I looked around the room, then finally made eye contact. "OK," I said.

We stepped out of the examination room, and the doctor talked to Pat. She nodded as he explained his diagnosis. Then he told us to take a seat. Someone would be along as soon as they had a free bed.

Pat sat beside me working on a crossword puzzle, while I fussed and squirmed in my seat. I remember trying to find a comfortable way to sit, something I suddenly found extremely hard to do.

Then it happened.

The light started to disappear. Close in on itself. Into a tunnel.

Soon there would be no light. There would be an absence. Of everything. Of everyone. Of Pat. "I'm dying," I said. I was terrified.

Diagnosis Confirmed

I could hear Pat calling for help as I slowly slid to the floor. Then the room filled with intense white light. I was surrounded by people who hoisted

me onto a stretcher and whisked me into a treatment room where they inserted an IV and attached me to monitoring machines. I could hear beeps and beeps, and people assuring me I was in good hands.

“What is happening to me?” I asked. My voice sounded like an old phonograph record spinning too slowly. The words seemed heavy and thick. I saw Pat standing in a corner, fear in her eyes.

The next thing I knew my clothes were being removed. My pants came off. My arms rose above my head and my shirt slipped off.

“Aren’t you a lucky man,” a nurse told me. “You’ve got five women undressing you.”

I laughed and agreed, but it was dawning on me that my movements were no longer voluntary. The lights dimmed. Pat kissed me on the forehead and departed. I was alone.

I remember nothing else about that night, except a vague recollection of being shunted back and forth through a fluorescent glare, never conscious of where I was going. I had been sedated, which was a good thing, or I may have plummeted into the black hole that engulfed me. I curled up, thinking the prenatal position offered me the most reliable protection against free fall.

When Pat returned in the morning she told me the doctors had confirmed the diagnosis – I had suffered a stroke. How severe it had been, no

one knew yet. It would be another 36 hours before I was told what I never, ever thought possible: that I might be paralysed on one side of my body. Soon I was to learn that not only could I not move, but when I went to form words, my tongue was heavy, and my vocal cords twisted. My words were strangled.

As I lay there, the confusion was overpowering. Everything seemed so



IT’S UNSETTLING
TO HAVE **YOUR**
CHILDREN SEE YOU
SO VULNERABLE.

FOR A MOMENT I FELT
DESPERATE, AND
ALMOST ASHAMED

vague. So alien. Nothing made sense, no matter how hard I tried to slot a sight or sound into a compartment of my brain.

In the afternoon of the second day a woman came into my room and said I had been assigned to a bed on the fourth floor. Pat packed my belongings, and the porter rolled me up to the acute-care ward, past people shuffling along in nightgowns and patients in wheelchairs.

As soon as I had been transferred from the stretcher to the bed, a curtain was whipped around its track and I was partitioned off from the rest

of the room. A nurse told me, "If you need assistance, just press the buzzer on the pillow. Someone will come."

I don't know what kind of magician she figured I was. I couldn't reach the button, and even if I could, I lacked the strength to press it.

Pat stood at the end of the bed, shoulders hunched, trying to console me. "Nicole will be here tomorrow," she said. "She'll drop off Flora at school and catch the 10.30 ferry."

Nicole was our daughter, an archaeologist who lived with her partner Iain and their daughter, Flora.

I yearned to close my eyes and sleep. I could see Pat was anxious to get home, facing a rainy commute in rush hour. But I think she feared she would be abandoning me.

Finally I said, "Go. Please. I need to sleep."

As she kissed me, my head lolled to one side and I watched her through my eyelashes. She looked so, so tired. Then she was gone.

I Started to Cry

My sleep was interrupted by people taking my blood pressure, my pulse, my blood. I was made to sit up and swallow several pills. When Pat arrived mid-morning of the next day, I woke up torn between panic and a huge sense of relief. Panic because the stark reality of what was happening was finally beginning to sink in, and relief because my most reliable connection to the outside world was

seated at my elbow. She would protect me. I was certain of that.

Later, I saw a face peek around the curtain. Nicole. I wanted to leap out of bed and embrace her, but all I could do was lie there like a beached whale. It's unsettling to have your children see you so vulnerable, and for a moment I felt desperate. Almost ashamed.

I had always presumed my daughter saw me as a figure of strength, as someone who would protect her. I had a sense of having let her down. Of disappointing her.

She leaned over and kissed me. "Oh, Dad," she said. "I'm so sorry."

"Me too," I said, sounding like I was chewing on a mouthful of rubber bands.

Although I was thrilled to see her, I remember the precise time of Nicole's arrival because I was so famished. I hadn't eaten for two days. It was just past noon and it appeared as though they had forgotten me again. I asked Nicole if she would fetch the nurse. I wanted to know why they were starving me.

Meanwhile, I turned to Pat. "Have I ever told you about that time in Paris when I passed out from hunger?" I couldn't get over the sound of my own voice; I was mangling words as they stumbled off my tongue.

"Yes," she said, "several times."

"Then I won't tell you again," I tried to joke. "I don't want to repeat myself. You might think I've lost my mind."

As she took out a sudoku, I recalled the last time I was this hungry was during a trip I took to Europe. I closed my eyes and searched through my reel of images. I was amazed at how much I remembered of living cheaply in London and Paris.

“So your daughter tells me you think we are starving you?” This was not a voice from my memory, but a young nurse leaning over me.

“I’m hungry,” I said. “Even a bowl of gruel would be nice.”

She took my pulse. “We’re not al-



I WAS BEGINNING
TO FEEL AS THOUGH
**I WAS NO LONGER
A PART OF THIS WORLD,**
A FEELING THAT
WOULD ONLY INTENSIFY

lowed to give you anything to eat. Not until the Swallow Lady has been to see you.”

I stared up at her. “Swallow Lady. Who’s that?”

“The speech therapist. She’ll be by tomorrow to give you some tests to see if your swallow mechanism is working. We don’t want you choking on your food.”

“I can swallow,” I said. “I’ve swallowed a bucket-load of pills in the last two days.”

“Yes, but that’s different,” she replied. I’m afraid you’ll have to continue taking nourishment from the IV.”

As the nurse disappeared beyond the curtain, I muttered, “Swallow Lady. What’s next?”

Nicole sat on the edge of the bed, with a look of concern. She took my hand and squeezed it. What Nicole saw when she looked at me must have been scary – my incomprehensible speech, my general confusion, my mood swings. I was like an incomplete sketch of myself. I was beginning to feel as though I was no longer a part of this world, and over the next few weeks this disengagement intensified.

Pat stood up and announced she was going for a walk. I was happy she wanted to take some time for herself. Besides, this would give me an opportunity to be with Nicole.

“You keep kicking me,” Nicole said and smiled. “Are you hinting that I should leave?”

“No, of course not,” I said. “They’re spasms. I can’t help it.”

I was suddenly afraid she might go. I struggled to find a way to let her know how grateful I was that she had come to visit. Then she smiled again. “Just teasing. Did you say spasms?”

I realised I needed to speak more clearly. “Yes, like cramps,” I said slowly. “They hurt, like someone is jabbing me with a knife.”

“Can they do something?”



I could hear the strain in her voice. Her face, so young, became a map of apprehension.

“I don’t know. I think they’ve given me a muscle relaxant, but it’s not working.” Without warning, I started to cry – as if something within me had suddenly broken down or a spring that held things together had sprung. I lost control, and no matter how hard I tried I couldn’t stop the tears.

The Swallow Test

Shortly after Pat returned from her walk, a rehabilitation doctor appeared at the end of my bed. At first, he told me, they thought my stroke was fairly mild. Nothing had showed up on the CT scan. But a second scan had

revealed that I’d had an ischaemic stroke – an obstruction in a blood vessel – on the left side of my brain, causing paralysis of my right extremities.

“What caused it?” I asked.

“We don’t know. I’d guess hypertension. Your blood pressure was very high. But you have other conditions that could have been contributing factors.”

I started to replay feelings of guilt. Risk factors for stroke include high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, sleep apnoea and being overweight. I qualified on all fronts. I had indulged a host of bad habits for far too long.

“The good news,” the doctor said, “is that a bed has become available

in rehab. You'll be put on a six-to-eight week intensive rehab course, followed by eight weeks as an outpatient. You need to be willing to work hard. What do you think?"

"Yes, I can do it," I answered, although at the moment my body suggested otherwise. "Count me in."

But first I had to pass the swallow test. I longed to meet the Swallow Lady since I was so hungry. When the smell of hot food wafted along the



I WAS LEARNING THAT
**MEMORIES HELP YOU
 FIND YOURSELF,**
 TO RECONNECT WITH
 THE PERSON YOU ARE
 LOSING TO THE STROKE

hallway, all I could think about was my empty stomach. When had I ever been this hungry?

Again, I recalled my trip to Europe and the day in Paris when I paced in front of an eatery, staring through the window at the food. I hadn't had a decent meal in three weeks.

Later that same day, I collapsed from hunger. A woman kneeled down beside me. "Are you OK?" she asked. I was scared. I was famished but had no money for food; and I was exhausted and ashamed, with no place to go. The woman helped me up. She

brought me to her small hotel and arranged for the proprietor to give me a room and feed me for two days.

And now, as I lay in bed, my memory reminded me of the generosity and caring nature that sustains hope at the core of human consciousness. And I was learning that memories help you find yourself, help you reconnect with the person you're losing.

The next morning Pat and Nicole were both there when a man and two women arrived to take me for a walk. "The faster we get you up, the better we can assess your needs," the man explained.

My right side didn't appear to be working, but nevertheless, with one swift movement they had me perched on the side of the bed. "We'll walk as far as Nicole, OK?"

I stood, slightly stooped, looking across the room at my daughter. I shuffled, my left foot lifting, my right foot dragging behind. Each step seemed like a gigantic task. I almost lost heart halfway across the room, but I refused to give in.

I walked a distance of only six metres, but Nicole seemed excited and applauded my performance. "Oh, Dad," she said. "You did it. I'm so proud of you!"

I felt drained of energy. But Pat reassured me, "Well done, dear. These are the first steps to full recovery."

"Congratulations," the therapists chimed in. "You're ready for therapy."

Back in bed, I slept. Then a woman

quietly entered the room. She carried a notebook and pen, and a bag that contained saltine crackers, some apple sauce and a box of juice. The Swallow Lady. "Are you ready for the tests?" she asked. "They are really quite simple."

"Yes," I said, ready to show her I could swallow.

She leaned over the bed and placed her fingers gently on my throat. "Try swallowing for me."

What could be easier? But my mouth was dry and my throat constricted. I couldn't swallow. The harder I tried, the more my throat tightened up.

"Relax," she said. "Try moistening your mouth."

I managed to work up some saliva. Then my chin pushed forward, my neck stretched and I swallowed.

"Good," she said. "Well done. Everything appears to be working properly." She scribbled in her notebook, then passed a cracker to my good hand. "Now, try eating this cracker, but do it slowly, in little pieces."

Immediately, I took a good-sized bite. The cracker stuck to the roof of my mouth. I couldn't chew, and only managed to spit it out.

"Nibble," she said. "Tiny bits."

I felt like a fool. How could I not swallow? But I did as she suggested, taking a tiny bit of cracker, and then swallowed.

"Good, now try this. Sip slowly."

She poured a small amount of apple juice in a paper cup and I drank it, forcing myself to concentrate on each stage of swallowing.

The therapist smiled. "You've done well. You've passed the test. For the first few weeks your food will be minced or pureed. But you must eat and drink slowly and carefully. This is only one of the many things you're going to have to relearn how to do."

Relearn. That word would become



ALONE WITH MY
THOUGHTS, **I WAS**
TERRIFIED. I DRIFTED
IN AND OUT OF SLEEP,
AND THROUGHOUT
THE NIGHT, I WEPT

a mantra of my therapist community. I was about to learn that restoring what has been damaged is a very complicated process.

"Will I Recover?"

My first night in the rehab ward was terrifying. Alone with my thoughts, I no longer felt like I belonged to the human race. My brain kept taking tours into my distant past. I drifted in and out of sleep, and throughout the night, I wept.

Yet memories, I was convinced, were the one touchstone I shared

with my old self. They worked like a metaphor to help establish my new claim on ‘being’. A part of my brain was damaged, but other parts seemed to be working overtime to compensate for what I had lost.

And thankfully, Pat would not let me feel sorry for myself. Nor were the staff tolerant of any signs



I LIFTED MY
PARALYSED ARM AND
SWUNG IT IN A CIRCLE.
**I HAD MOVEMENT
FOR THE FIRST TIME**
SINCE MY STROKE

of quitting. As I travelled through the halls in my wheelchair in the weeks to come, what I heard was a chorus of voices raised in a song of healing. Rarely did I hear anger or annoyance escape anyone’s lips but my own.

That first day I had an appointment in the gym. “Do you know the way?” a nurse asked me. I then realised they expected me to wheel myself to the gym. *Good luck*, I thought. I couldn’t go in a straight line. My right arm hung lifeless in my lap, and when I pulled with my left hand, I did doughnuts.

“Drag your left foot along the ground as you push,” a nurse

advised. When I tried, I managed a few metres before I veered right and smashed into the wall. “Perseverance,” she called out to me.

I repeated the lurching motion, once again smashing into the wall, then continued down the hall, swerving to my right, almost colliding with an elderly woman. Then, to my surprise, I bolted forward in a straight line towards the gym. “I’m assuming you’re going to the gym,” Pat said from behind me.

“Yes, is that you?” I asked. “Thank you. They expect too much of me.”

“They want you to do as much as you possibly can yourself.”

As we entered the gym a woman approached us. “Hi, I’m Deena, one of your physiotherapists.”

I fancied her the second I noticed the light in her brown eyes. Over the next hour she introduced me to the equipment. First we worked on getting me into a standing position, then she told me what I could safely use – mostly the stationary bike and the weights and pulleys.

“Two things,” Deena said. “Always remember to apply the brakes when you leave your chair. Otherwise you could end up on your bottom. And repetition. Repetition is what retrains the brain. And builds up muscle memory.”

“Will I recover?” I murmured.

“All in good time.” She paused. “Recovery is very slow after a stroke. You need to be patient.”



Gains and Losses

The goal of ‘mirror therapy’ is to fool the brain. A mirror was placed by my right shoulder, my right arm behind the mirror. Then with my good hand I performed several simple exercises, staring in the mirror as hard as I could.

I drummed my fingers, formed a fist, flexed the fingers of my left hand. I did this slowly so my brain took in the movement, pausing then repeating, for about a half hour. I stared at the mirror. I knew that registering the movement in my brain was critical.

What I saw, of course, was the reverse image. I thought I was looking at my right hand doing the movements. Not my left hand. My brain was being fooled.

Or was it? I wasn’t sure. My right

arm still lay on the table behind the mirror. But I was determined to embrace this little deception. I think these exercises helped forge new pathways between the hemispheres of my brain.

One day, after a few weeks, Nicole was sitting opposite me when she jumped to her feet and shouted that my damaged hand had mimicked the movement of my good hand. At first I didn’t believe her, but then I lifted my paralysed arm and much to my amazement flung it in a circle, hitting the mirror, which went sliding across the table.

I let out a whoop. I had movement in my arm for the first time since the day of the stroke!

By using mirror therapy in combination with meditation – where I focused on my hand and attempted



Ron and his wife, Pat, who was his anchor throughout his recovery from his stroke

to travel in my brain down my arm to the tips of my fingers – I was hopeful that I would recover use of my body.

Gradually, I regained movement on my damaged side. I was able to stand on my own. I started to climb the stairs in the gym, hanging onto the railing. I could pedal the stationary bike for 15 minutes. And I was now able to transfer myself to the toilet without assistance.

Sure, I sometimes became morose, feeling naked and raw and tearful. But I had taken a vow: to remain positive and happy. And recover.

Then one morning, the week before Christmas, five weeks after my stroke, the rehabilitation doctor came to see me. “Would you like to

go home for Christmas?” he asked. “Then if things work out, you’d return in the New Year as an outpatient for three months.”

I was both elated and a bit scared at the prospect. “Who’ll take care of me?” I asked.

“Pat. Your wife? You do remember her, don’t you?” he said and then smiled. “We think you’re ready. Pat’s keen to give the idea a go. We’ll supply all your medications and requisitions for the aids you need – wheelchair, walker, anything to make your home more comfortable.”

OK, I thought, *being home was a good choice*. As the doctor turned to leave, he smiled and said, “Merry Christmas”.

I spent most of Christmas Day sleeping. I crawled out of bed, transferred to my wheelchair and joined Pat for breakfast.

Within an hour I was back in bed.

Nicole, Iain and Flora arrived on Boxing Day. As soon as she saw me, my granddaughter frowned. What happened to Poppa? She was intrigued by my wheelchair. And fearful.

"They're my legs," I told her, "until Poppa gets better."

The sorrow I felt at that moment choked me, and if my lips had parted, the whole neighbourhood would have sworn they'd heard a lone wolf cry in the wilderness.

As they were leaving the next day, Flora said, "Poppa, please get better."

A year would pass before she felt confident enough to approach me and wrap her arms around my legs. What a moment that was to treasure. By then I was walking with a cane.

Meanwhile, my weeks of outpatient therapy were monotonous, but the benefits were immeasurable. I pedalled a stationary bike, did leg lifts, did squats and arm pulls. I was finally able to pronounce a word without

confusing the vowels and consonants.

My emotional control was still quite fragile. I would weep when I saw scenes of poverty on TV. Silly jokes could give me unstoppable giggles.

I'VE LEARNED THAT there is nothing smooth or predictable about stroke recovery, but also no limit. The old notion that there is a limited window in which to achieve rehabilitation is simply false, whether it be six months, a year, two years. So like most stroke survivors, I expect full recovery. But full recovery doesn't necessarily mean a total return to the person we used to be, identical in every respect. Full recovery in this sense rarely happens. With the passing of time, even in the normal world, people change.

So it's unlikely I'll return to be the person I once was, physically, mentally, or spiritually. I have both lost and gained things that define who I am as a person. But with the advances in treatment and therapy, I believe I can continue to repair and rebuild, and find a place for myself in my re-configured world where I will feel both valuable and valued. **R**

FROM THE DEFIANT MIND: LIVING INSIDE A STROKE
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WHERE WOULD YOU RATHER LIVE?

From Giggleswick to Dull the UK has many rather odd place names. Places on the map include Ha-Ha Road, Nether Wallop, Donkey Town or Curry Mallet. Or why not spend the night in Great Snoring? BRILLIANTMAPS.COM

It's red, unsightly, uncomfortable and a mystery. Here's how to tell a patch of psoriasis from a bout of eczema

What's that Rash?

BY VANESSA MILNE ILLUSTRATION BY PETE RYAN

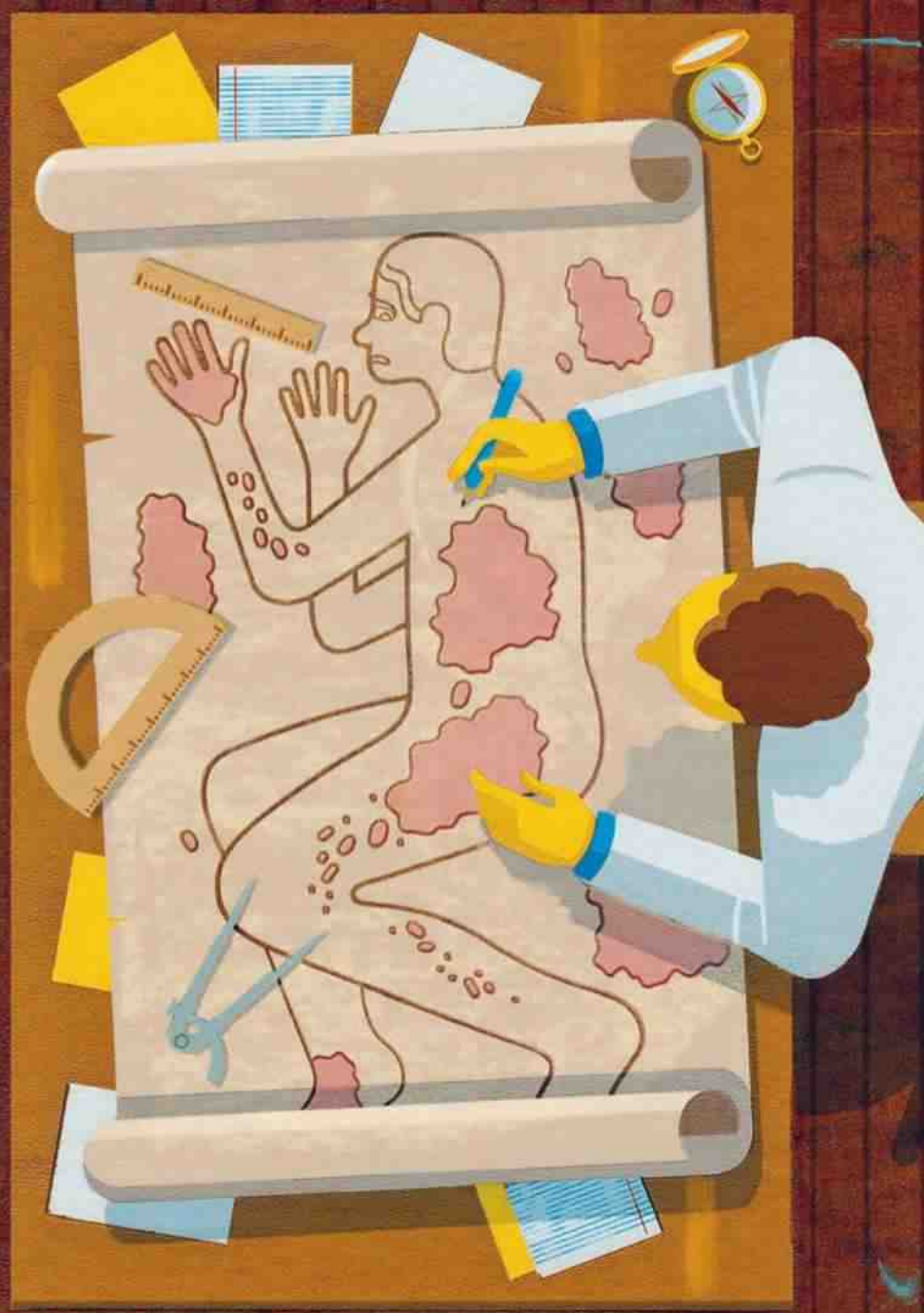
SHAM DHANJI HAS SENSITIVE SKIN. So when she developed a small, painful rash on her thigh, she didn't think too much about it.

A few weeks later, Dhanji noticed a bump in her groin, near the hip. She panicked. "I was emotional, feeling run down, had a random rash and now this lump. I burst into tears, I thought I had cancer," she says.

At the hospital the next day, a nurse immediately diagnosed Dhanji with

something she never would have guessed: shingles. "You *had* shingles," the nurse clarified. "This is the end of it." The bump, she explained, was an inflamed lymph node, which often follows the condition's telltale blistering rash.

Luckily, Dhanji's outbreak cleared up without complications. But the next time you find yourself facing your own mystery rash, check this rundown of six common ones.



Psoriasis

WHAT IT'S LIKE Psoriasis consists of red, scaly plaques that can be itchy and painful. It is often found on the scalp, as well as the outside of the elbows and knees, and usually starts between age ten and 30. "It's a stubborn disease so people have it their whole lives," says dermatologist Paul Cohen.

WHAT CAUSES IT This rash is the result of the immune system attacking the skin's cells and creating new ones too quickly, which then build up into the plaques. There's no one single cause, but the condition runs in families. Stress, obesity, smoking and having many infections (particularly strep throat) increase your risk.

HOW TO TREAT IT The first step is topical steroids, used for a week or two at a time. For ongoing treatment, people use a synthetic form of vitamin D, medicated shampoos and retinoids. Exposure to sunlight also helps, as does moisturising well. More serious cases can use oral medications that suppress the immune system, and phototherapy done in a doctor's surgery with a special light.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG Serious cases can involve the joints, a condition called psoriatic arthritis. Also, psoriasis increases your chances of having some other diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and autoimmune conditions such as Crohn's disease – all of which are, like psoriasis, linked to inflammation.

Hives

WHAT IT'S LIKE Hives are itchy, raised welts that often have a red ring around them. They disappear after about a day, only to show up later in a different location. They come in two forms: acute, which lasts six weeks or less, and chronic.

WHAT CAUSES IT Hives are often the result of the body releasing histamine as part of an allergic reaction to drugs, food or some other irritant. They can also appear after a viral illness, as a side effect of your immune system revving up to battle the disease. "There are a number of potential triggers," says dermatologist Katie Belezny. In most cases, she adds, the specific origin is never determined.

HOW TO TREAT IT Over-the-counter antihistamines are the first line of defence. If that doesn't work, ask a doctor if you should use a stronger antihistamine or oral prednisone, an anti-inflammatory medication.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG Rarely, people suffer from ongoing outbreaks of hives almost daily for six weeks or more, a condition called chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU). Its treatment is the same as for regular hives, but in some cases, it can also be a sign of thyroid disease or cancer.

Eczema

WHAT IT'S LIKE Eczema presents as patches of red, scaly skin that are extremely itchy, especially at

night. These rashes often appear on the inside of your elbows and knees. If it's more serious, the skin might blister or look thickened and white.

WHAT CAUSES IT Eczema is the result of having a weakened skin barrier, which can lead to inflammation and an overreaction from your immune system. Most people are born with it, and your genes are partly to blame. "You're more predisposed to eczema if you have a family history of asthma, hay fever or the condition itself," says dermatologist Lisa Kellett. Some research also suggests that it might be a reaction to pollution, or to not being exposed to enough germs in childhood.

HOW TO TREAT IT Apply a thick, hypoallergenic moisturiser to affected areas immediately after a bath or shower and at night. More serious flare-ups will need topical prescription steroid creams or non-steroid immunosuppressant creams. Those with stubborn eczema might also try phototherapy, which uses UVB light to help calm your immune system and reduce itchiness.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG Rarely, what looks like eczema is actually skin cancer. "The difference with skin cancer is that it doesn't go away if you use a steroid," says Kellett.

Contact Dermatitis

WHAT IT'S LIKE Contact dermatitis is a variation of eczema, and it looks similar – red, itchy patches on

your skin. But unlike that chronic condition, this rash is a reaction to something specific and appears only where the offending object has made direct contact.

WHAT CAUSES IT Common culprits are poison ivy, face cream, jewellery or fragrances. You can also develop a new intolerance to something you've used for a long time, such as your regular antibiotic ointment. If the cause is not clear, your dermatologist can do a patch test, putting small amounts of suspected substances on your skin to see if you react.

HOW TO TREAT IT It can be treated with topical steroids, or a stronger oral one, to calm down your immune system and stop the reaction.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG Like eczema, the red and scaly presentation of contact dermatitis could be confused for skin cancer, which is another reason to visit your doctor if you're not sure what caused it.

Rosacea

WHAT IT'S LIKE As rosacea is a dilation of the blood vessels in your cheeks and nose, it often presents as red, sensitive skin in those places. Another form of the condition also includes bumps that resemble acne. For some people, the skin on their nose thickens, making it seem larger.

WHAT CAUSES IT We don't know what brings rosacea on, but you're more likely to have it if others in your family do, too. You're also prone to

acquire the condition if you have sun-damaged skin. "Rosacea usually begins around the age of 35 and gets worse with time," says Kellett. People often find their flare-ups come after eating or drinking specific things.

HOW TO TREAT IT For many, preventing activation of rosacea is as simple as avoiding triggers – but that can be a serious test of willpower. "Those are often the good things in life," says Beleznyay, citing coffee, spicy foods and alcohol as common aggravators. Some women find that makeup is enough to cover up the cosmetic impact of the condition, while others use prescription creams or laser or light therapy to reduce redness. For those whose rosacea includes bumps, topical creams or oral antibiotics often get rid of them.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG Rarely, what looks like rosacea can be confused for the butterfly rash that's a symptom of lupus, a serious autoimmune disease. The butterfly rash is named as such because of the shape it makes on the nose and both cheeks.

Shingles

WHAT IT'S LIKE Shingles often starts out as a tingly, numb or bruised feeling in a small area, most commonly on the abdomen. A few days later, a painful rash with blisters appears over those places. As the condition follows the path of a nerve, the rash eventually presents as a stripe that lasts from two to six weeks.

WHAT CAUSES IT: This one's easy: chicken pox. Even once you have fully recovered from that virus, your body never totally beats it; it simply lies dormant in your nerve cells, where, decades later, it can re-erupt as shingles. You're more likely to get them if you're immunocompromised or over 50. Although some people choose to get the vaccine for shingles at that age, it will remain effective when the body becomes more vulnerable overall.

HOW TO TREAT IT: If you suspect you have shingles, see your doctor immediately. "You have to go right away because studies show that people do much better if the antiviral pills are started within 72 hours of the rash onset," says Cohen. Additionally, sufferers are often given medication, like a local anaesthetic or codeine, to help control the pain.

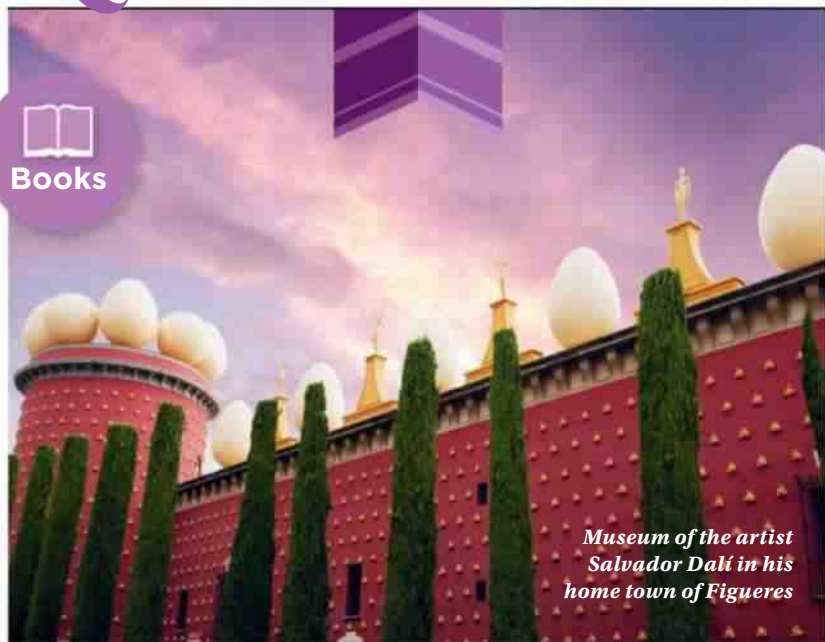
POSSIBLE RED FLAG: The real worry is that for some people, if it is not contained quickly, the virus can lead to longer-term pain lasting over three months and in some cases over a year. If the rash appears on the face, it can even cause blindness.

ALTHOUGH DHANJI WAS fortunate not to suffer complications from her untreated shingles, she still learned an important lesson: "Even if you're super busy, sometimes you have to take that break to get checked out," she says. "It's so important to know what you're dealing with." **R**

RD Recommends



Books



Museum of the artist Salvador Dali in his home town of Figueres

Amazing Architecture

(LONELY PLANET)

It's not unusual to plan an overseas adventure around a single visit to see a landmark building. Think the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Bath's Georgian terraces or Spain's Dali Museum – each one drives tourists from all over the world. This tidy collection of 120 classic, quirky and contemporary architectural places of interest is packed with facts, maps and photos to help wrestle you out of the armchair and towards your next holiday booking.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



COMPILED BY LOUISE WATERSON, VICTORIA POLZOT AND MELANIE EGAN



Secret Gardens

Matthew Cantwell

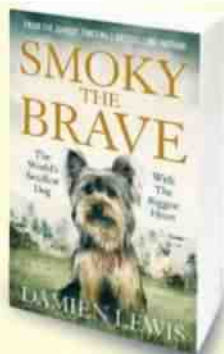
(NEW HOLLAND)

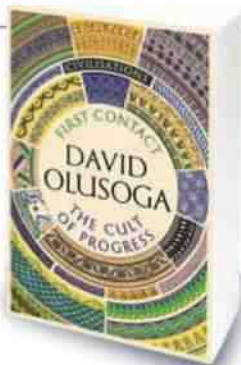
Having a green space at home has been proven to improve not only your outlook, but also your sense of wellbeing. This selection of beautiful, exotic, yet entirely achievable garden design ideas will set you on the path to the garden shop. Creating a special place where you and your family and friends can play, relax and forge memories is a truly satisfying thing to do. Written by the Australian award-winning garden designer, Matthew Cantwell, this collection showcases some of his favourite projects.

Smoky the Brave

by Damien Lewis (HACHETTE)

This is the true story of Smoky, a Yorkshire terrier, who was found in February 1944, hiding in the war-ravaged jungles of Papua New Guinea. His rescuer, Bill Wynne, a crewman with the US 5th Air Force's 26th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron, kept the tiny dog in his tent at night and at his feet during combat missions. In return, Smoky proved her devotion by saving Bill's life on numerous occasions. Smoky was posthumously awarded the PDSA's Certificate for Animal Bravery or Devotion medal in 2011.





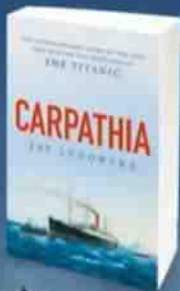
Civilisations: Encounters and the Cult of Progress

David Olusoga
(ALLEN & UNWIN)

Visitors to the British Museum have long marvelled at its collection of alluring artefacts and treasures from around the world, many of which were brought back from the 'New World' during an era of global discovery. It's in this museum where British historian and film-maker David Olusoga begins this portrayal of Western European civilisation's many journeys of discovering of the wonders of foreign lands. *Civilisations* tells the story of how Western society came to import the wonders of the ancient worlds and cultures and somehow make them their own. If you're a fan of Olusoga's BBC series, you won't be disappointed.

Carpathia Jay Ludowyke (HACHETTE AUSTRALIA)

History books can be dry and uninviting, but not so *Carpathia*. Jay Ludowyke retells with careful attention to detail, the events of the night of 1912, when the transatlantic passenger steamship operated by RMS Cunard Line rescued the survivors of its rival White Star Line's RMS *Titanic*. Seven years after the dramatic and heroic rescue, the *Carpathia* was torpedoed by a German submarine in Irish waters during World War I. This book examines the search for the *Carpathia's* wreck on the bottom of the North Atlantic sea floor, over 150 metres below the surface. The perfect winter's day read.





Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again (Musical)

It's been ten years since Donna (Meryl Streep) and Sam (Pierce Brosnan) were left to live happily ever after on the Greek island of Kalokairi but with Sophie (Amanda Seyfried) now expecting a baby, audiences are invited back to see what's happened since and to find out what brought them to the island in the first place. Lily

James (*Cinderella*) joins the cast as a young Donna and through flashbacks, the story of her youth is told. Sophie hears of the fun times her mother had with her best friends, Rosie and Tanya, when they were part of a girl band named 'Donna and the Dynamos' and discovers how her mother met each of her three 'dads'.

Original cast members Christine Baranski, Julie Walters, Colin Firth and Stellan Skarsgård reprise their roles as Tanya, Rosie, Harry and Bill respectively. Dominic Cooper returns as Sky and Cher joins the cast as Grandma Ruby Sheridan. Set against more of Abba's familiar hits, director Ol Parker delivers a musical well worth the wait.

Eddie (Drama)

Edie Moore (Sheila Hancock) is a bitter woman in her 80s. As the long-time carer of her husband George, she was trapped in a loveless marriage. Following George's death, Edie feels regret for her wasted years. While Edie tries to convince her daughter Nancy that she can still manage on her own, Nancy makes plans to move her to a retirement home. Edie feels as though it is the beginning of the end for her and that she will die with all the regrets of her past intact. Then she comes across an old backpack and with it, the memories of her father and a promised trip to the Scottish Highlands they never took. So, feeling newly inspired, Edie dusts off her camping gear and heads for the mountains - alone.



Mary Shelley

(Biography, Drama, Romance)

When rebellious teenager Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (Elle Fanning) meets romantic poet Percy Shelley (Douglas Booth) the attraction is instant. Both feel trapped in polite society, where their progressive ideas are beyond the boundaries of the 19th century. Mary and Percy elope, taking Mary's half-sister, Claire (Bel Powley), along with them. Added to this scandal are the whispers of Percy's philandering ways that follow them around Europe. During a visit to the home of their friend, Lord Byron (Tom Sturridge), tension continues to grow and so, on a stormy night, Byron, to distract Mary from Percy's infidelities, suggests that his houseguests write a ghost story. Mary pours all the pain and betrayal she feels into creating *Frankenstein* and the resulting story is incredible.



Back to Burgundy

(Comedy, Drama, French)

After ten years spent abroad, Jean (Pio Marmaï), returns home to the family vineyard in his native Burgundy when he hears of his father's ailing health. There he is welcomed by his strong-willed sister, Juliette (Ana Giradot), who took over the reins of the vineyard when their father first became ill, and brother Jérémie (François Civil), the youngest of the three, who has recently married into one of the region's most prestigious wine-making families.

Shortly before the annual harvest, their father passes away, leaving the three siblings with the estate and a hefty inheritance tax. As four seasons and two harvests go by, Jean, Juliette and Jérémie learn to reinvent their relationship and trust each other as they work to preserve the land that ties them together.

Early Man

DVD (Animation, Adventure, Comedy)

From four-time Academy Award-winning director Nick Park (*Wallace and Gromit*) comes *Early Man*, a prehistoric comedy. Set at the dawn of time when prehistoric creatures roamed the earth, courageous caveman Dug (Eddie Redmayne) and his sidekick Hognob (Nick Park) together with their new friend Goona (Maisie Williams) face a grave threat to their simple existence. Their mighty enemy, Lord Nooth (Tom Hiddleston), plans to take over their land, transform it into a giant mine, and force Dug and his clan to dig for precious metals. Not prepared to give up without a fight, Dug unites his Stone-Age tribe against Lord Nooth and his Bronze-Age tribe to save their home.





Podcasts



Myths and Legends

From King Arthur and his knights to Robin Hood, Aladdin, dragons, princesses or Thor, Odin and Hercules, this show brings you fairy stories and the folklore that has shaped our world. Some of the characters featured might be familiar, others brand new, but it's always worth a listen.



Artcurious

If you've always wanted to silence pretentious art viewers at a gallery with a pithy insightful comment, here's your chance. Art history is fun with this podcast that explores the unexpected and the slightly odd. Did the CIA covertly support modern art? Who is the real Banksy? Did Van Gogh kill himself?



In the Dark

Narrated by Madeline Baran, *In the Dark* features true-crime art viewers at a gallery with a pithy insightful comment, here's your chance. Art history is fun with this podcast that explores the unexpected and the slightly odd. Did the CIA covertly support modern art? Who is the real Banksy? Did Van Gogh kill himself?

HOW TO GET PODCASTS TO LISTEN ON THE WEB: Google the website for 'Myths and Legends', for example, and click on the links. **TO DOWNLOAD:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your phone or tablet and simply search by title.

Puzzle Answers *See page 140*

A-TO-K FIT-IN



TANGO TIME

Monday: Pat and Armida.

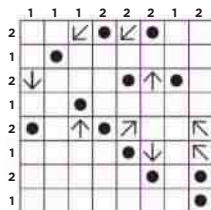
Tuesday: Wes and Ines.

Wednesday: Samantha and Ella.

Thursday: Victor and Filomena.

Friday: Romeo and Carl.

HIDDEN TREASURE



SLIDERS Slide the second-last column up two positions so the top row in the yellow box reads $13 + 4 = 17$. The other two correct statements will then be $47 \geq 14 \times 3$ and $18 = 26 - 8$.

My Discoveries



Sri Lanka



*Harvesting the
world famous
Ceylon tea*

Five Reasons We Love Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island paradise full of amazing sights and experiences - and they are all crammed into a space smaller than Tasmania, which means less time travelling from site to site, writes **Tatyana Leonov**.

1 HISTORY

There aren't many countries in the world where you can find as many UNESCO World Heritage sites packed into such a small space as Sri Lanka. The island nation currently claims eight UNESCO marvels, including the ancient city of Sigiriya - with its Lion's Rock, a 180-metre granite fortress that dominates the jungle from all sides and its exquisite

frescos - and the sacred city of Kandy - home to the famous pilgrimage site, the Temple of the Tooth Relic, believed to house Buddha's tooth. Of course, there are hundreds of other historical and cultural sites for the curious traveller, including majestic fortresses from the colonial era, ancient temples and ruins.

2 WILDLIFE

Sri Lanka is considered to be one of the best wildlife-watching countries in South Asia. Leopards, Asian elephants and sloth bears as well as abundant birdlife can be easily observed on safari in their natural habitats. Of the more than 20 national

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

parks in Sri Lanka, Yala National Park is one of the best and is recognised as having one of the highest leopard densities in the world. It is also home to 43 other exotic mammal species.

3 NATURE

Secluded powdery sandy beaches, tropical rainforests, grass-carpeted plains and soaring mountains that pierce the clouds are some of the many diverse and spectacular landscapes Sri Lanka has to offer. Whether you simply want to kick back and soak up the sunshine, or head out for an active adventure, the panoramas that surround you will astound.

4 PEOPLE

The locals love welcoming visitors with their big smiles and hospitable nature. They are relaxed, laidback and genuinely happy to share their world with those interested in learning about it.



*Koneswaram
Temple*



Leopards and other exotic wildlife can be observed in their natural habitat

5 TEA

Sri Lankan tea is renowned around the world. The British introduced tea to the island (known as Ceylon at the time) in 1824 and since then the tea-scene has burgeoned. Tea connoisseurs can enjoy a cuppa while relaxing in a street-side cafe, join a tea-tasting appreciation class, visit a historical tea estate, or learn about the history of Ceylon tea at the Ceylon Tea Museum.

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News Worth Sharing



Norway to Fly Electric Planes

Two years ago Norway saw the launch of the world's first electric ferry, and now it has its sights set on the skies as companies and regulators look towards a future of battery-powered air travel.

According to Dag Falk-Petersen, CEO of airport operators Avinor, by 2040 all of Norway's short-haul flights will be electric. "When we have reached our goal, air travel will no longer be a problem for the climate," he says.

Avinor is set to buy its first electric

plane this summer, and plans to launch a tender offer to test a commercial route with a 19-seat electric plane from 2025.

Last year, aerospace company Airbus announced plans to develop a hybrid-electric airliner, with a demonstration model scheduled for completion by 2020.

And UK-based low-cost airline easyJet has announced that it is working on plans for all-electric short-haul planes to be launched within a decade.

COMPILED BY TIM HULSE



WOMEN THINK DIFFERENTLY AND THAT DIVERSITY IS INVALUABLE TO TECHNOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT.

Professor Michelle Simmons,
Quantum physicist
and 2018 Australian of the Year

How to Talk to Dogs

You know that slightly ridiculous high-pitched voice we use when we're speaking to dogs? It turns out that they actually love it. Researchers at York University in England say 'dog-speak' not only helps improve attention from our canine friends but also strengthens the bond between owner and pet.



Going Back to School

I can't explain to children who have come to Germany as refugees why it is that they are suddenly here," says Basel Alsayed (pictured). "But I think I know how they feel."

A former teacher in Damascus, Alsayed left Syria to avoid being conscripted into the war, and ended up near Berlin. Having taken an 18-month refugee teacher-training course at Potsdam University, he now teaches at a primary school, where a third of the pupils are similarly displaced, hailing from countries such as Bosnia, Ghana and Syria.

"I was thrown in at the deep end," says Alsayed, who had to master the language during his course. Suddenly, I was having to do my own homework instead of handing it out."

"He translates when there are language problems with parents and steps in when other teachers are ill," says head teacher Gerald Schneider.

And, according to the Bertelsmann Foundation, Germany needs more teachers like him.

TEST YOUR MENTAL PROWESS

Puzzles

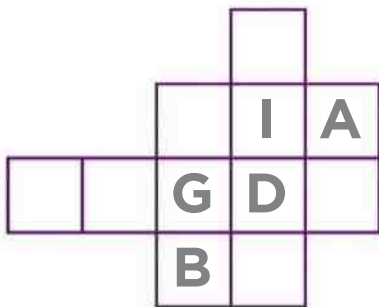
Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 135.

BY MARCEL DANESI

A-TO-K FIT-IN

(MODERATELY DIFFICULT)

Insert the letters A to K, one per square, so that no two consecutive letters in alphabetical order touch, not even at a corner. Five letters have been placed to get you started.

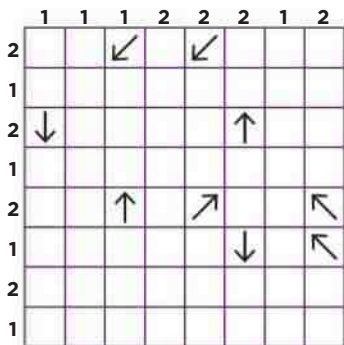


TANGO TIME (EASY)

Five pairs of dance partners went tango dancing last week, each pair on a different evening from Monday to Friday. Tango requires one person to lead and the other to follow. The leaders' names are Pat, Romeo, Samantha, Victor and Wes. The followers' names are Armida, Carl, Ella, Filomena and Ines.

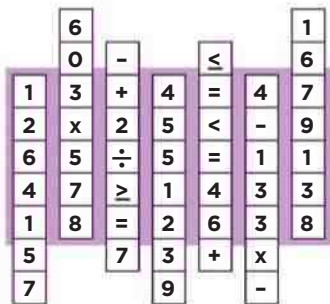
1. Armida danced on Monday, but not with Wes.
2. Samantha danced on Wednesday.
3. Romeo danced on Friday, but not with Ines.
4. Victor and Filomena danced together the day after Ella went out dancing.

Can you identify each pair of dance partners and the day they danced?



HIDDEN TREASURE (MODERATELY DIFFICULT)

Locate 12 treasures in the empty cells of this grid. The numbers outside the grid indicate the number of treasures in each row or column. Each arrow points directly toward one or more of the treasures. An arrow may be immediately next to a treasure it points to, or it may be further away. Not every treasure will necessarily have an arrow pointing to it.



SLIDERS (DIFFICULT)

Slide one of the columns up or down any number of positions to make three of the five rows in the purple box form correct mathematical statements.

BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



JUICE UP



TEST YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Trivia

1. In 2014, Thailand banned a three-finger salute that protesters had borrowed from what best-selling book and blockbuster movie? **2 points**

2. Which tiny mountain country declared war on Germany in 1914, even though its army consisted of just 10 part-time soldiers? **1 point**

3. The word “evolution” does not appear in the original text of what 1859 masterpiece of science? **2 points**

4. What Mongolian conqueror’s final resting place is unknown, even though over 28,000 volunteers scoured satellite images for signs of his tomb? **1 point**

5. Which country’s Northern Territory actually contains its geographic centre? **1 point**

6. What thundering Norse god rode in a chariot pulled by magic goats? **1 point**

7. This stomach-churning disease is deadly and

contagious, yet most cases can be cured with oral rehydration salts. What is it? **2 points**

8. Which African nation lost its coastline when Eritrea gained independence in 1993? **2 points**

9. Who’s the most valuable actress of all time, as measured by adding up the box-office earnings of all the movies in which she’s appeared? **1 point**

10. In 1812, Napoleon invaded which country, only to be turned back by winter weather? **1 point**

11. Which country called the 2014 film *The Interview* “an act of war”? **1 point**



14. In which country did *Indiana Jones* find the lost *Ark of the Covenant*? **1 point**

12. In which year did Singapore become a member of the United Nations? **2 points**

13. Which country has the highest proportion of solo households? **2 points**

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. *The Hunger Games*. 2. Andorra. 3. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. 4. Genghis Khan. 5. Australia. 6. Thor. 7. Cholera. 8. Ethiopia. 9. Scarlett Johansson. 10. Russia. 11. North Korea. 12. 1965. 13. Denmark. 14. Egypt. 15. Denmark. 16. 47 per cent of households consist of one person.

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Number Crunching

We're counting on you to figure out these useful words about numbers, amounts and measurements.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. fourscore *adj.* – A: 40.
B: 4000. C: 80.

2. tabulate *v.* – A: rank by weight and height. B: count or arrange systematically. C: indent a column.

3. copious *adj.* – A: plentiful.
B: scanty. C: carefully reproduced.

4. watt *n.* – A: unit of power. B: unit of energy. C: unit of pressure.

5. aggregate *adj.* – A: increasing exponentially. B: amounting to a whole. C: left over as a fraction.

6. googol *n.* – A: negative number.
B: value of pi.
C: 1 followed by 100 noughts.

7. paucity *n.* – A: overabundance.
B: shortage. C: average.

8. myriad *adj.* – A: very heavy.

B: immeasurably small. C: countless.

9. troika *n.* – A: numbered wheel.
B: group of three. C: old calculator.

10. calibrate *v.* – A: adjust according to a standard. B: divide into equal parts. C: gain heat.

11. manifold *adj.* – A: numerous and varied. B: dwindling. C: doubled.

12. quota *n.* – A: estimated profit.
B: bottom line of a financial statement. C: preset percentage.

13. brace *n.* – A: pair.
B: trio. C: quartet.

14. ream *n.* – A: quantity of paper.
B: grouping of 12.
C: unit of dry volume.

15. cubed *adj.* – A: tripled. B: cut into thirds. C: multiplied by itself twice.

Answers

1. fourscore – [C] 80. That's the strangest thing I've heard in all my fourscore years.

2. tabulate – [B] count or arrange systematically. The committee has tabulated the votes – and determined that it's a tie!

3. copious – [A] plentiful. Harriet's notes from the history lecture are copious but completely illegible.

4. watt – [A] unit of power.

Do you know how many watts your electrical appliances use each day?

5. aggregate – [B] amounting to a whole. Analysts are expecting the aggregate demand for electric cars to skyrocket.

6. googol – [C]

The number one followed by 100 noughts. We all agreed that Emile's chances of dating Jacqueline are about one in a googol.

7. paucity – [B] shortage. Given the paucity of witnesses, the detective released the murder suspect.

8. myriad – [C] countless.

The darkening sky gradually revealed a myriad of stars.

9. troika – [B] group of three.

We left the organisation of the staff party to the capable troika of Jane, Sam and Cara.

10. calibrate – [A] adjust according to a standard. The post office calibrates its scales each morning before opening for business.

11. manifold – [A] numerous and varied. There are manifold reasons why Cory's time machine experiment failed.

12. quota – [C] preset percentage.

Each fruit-picker was expected to meet a quota of six full baskets of apples a day.

13. brace – [A] pair. We just adopted a brace of puppies, so it's kind of crazy around our house.

14. ream – [A] quantity

of paper. Steve loaded a fresh ream into the printer.

15. cubed – [C] multiplied by itself twice. Three cubed is 27.

THAT NAME IS DEEP

When the young US writer Samuel Clemens worked as a Mississippi riverboat pilot, he surely saw crewmen 'sounding' the river – measuring its depth – with the call "mark twain!" This meant they had measured two fathoms; a single fathom was six feet; 'twain' means 'two'. Clemens first used the byline Mark Twain in 1863 as a newspaper reporter.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

7-10: Fair

11-12: Good

13-15: Word Power Wizard

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