

Reader's digest

DEC 2015/JAN 2016

Miraculous Christmas Stories

5 CLASSIC TALES ... 66

Forever Memory

From BBC.COM FUTURE ... 112

Outrageous Ways Charities Spend Your Donations

An [RD ORIGINAL](#) ... 96

A Case Against Time Management

From [QUARTZ](#) ... 39

Baby in the Stream

A [DRAMA IN REAL LIFE](#) ... 86

Everyday Heroes Helping the Homeless

An [RD ORIGINAL](#) ... 10

The Big One

From [THE NEW YORKER](#) ... 118

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE 78

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK 54

QUOTABLE QUOTES 148



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Contents

DECEMBER 2015 • JANUARY 2016

P. | 66

Cover Story

66 MIRACULOUS CHRISTMAS STORIES

Five classic tales of wonder, compassion, and joy to inspire you this season.

Drama in Real Life

86 BABY IN THE STREAM

When a neighbor pulls an unconscious toddler from an icy creek, the boy's family fears the worst. But one doctor won't give up hope.

DEREK BURNETT

Special Report

96 UNCHARITABLE!

A look at the shocking ways charities spend your donations and how to ensure your giving counts.

DEREK BURNETT

Stranger Who Changed My Life

106 THE CURIOUS WORLD OF MRS. REESE

The mom next door invited me over, and a new world beckoned. HEATHER SELLERS

Science

112 FOREVER MEMORY

What if our recollections could live on long after we were gone? Scientists are racing to make that eternity a reality.

SIMON PARKIN FROM BBC.COM FUTURE

National Interest

118 THE BIG ONE

A devastating earthquake in the Pacific Northwest is long overdue. Are we ready?

KATHRYN SCHULZ

FROM THE NEW YORKER

P. | **44**

6 Editor's Note 8 Letters

READER FAVORITES

- 23 100-Word True Stories
- 26 Points to Ponder
- 31 Faces of America
- 32 Life in These United States
- 54 All in a Day's Work
- 64 News from the World of Medicine
- 78 Laughter, the Best Medicine
- 92 That's Outrageous!
- 94 The Moth
- 104 Laugh Lines
- 110 Photo of Lasting Interest
- 132 Look Twice
- 143 Word Power
- 146 Humor in Uniform
- 148 Quotable Quotes

10 **Everyday Heroes** **Helping the Homeless**

Three stories of humanitarians with innovative solutions.

ALYSSA JUNG, BRANDON SPECKTOR,
BETH DREHER, AND
MICHELE WOJCIECHOWSKI

VOICES & VIEWS

17 **Department of Wit** **The Real 12 Days of Christmas**

It's not all true love and turtledoves.

COLIN NISSAN
FROM MCSWEENEY'S

20 **Words of Lasting Interest** **Pretty Girl**

Never give up on anything, least of all a dog.

RICK BRAGG FROM THE BOOK
MY SOUTHERN JOURNEY

24 **Finish This Sentence** **I'm Finally Ready to ...**

You Be the Judge

29 **The Case of the Ticket Mix-up**

Who should pay when an airline sends passengers to the wrong city?

VICKI GLEMBOCKI

ART OF LIVING

39 A Case Against the Clock

TONY CRABBE FROM QUARTZ

Food

42 What Your Holiday Eating Habits Say About You

KELSEY KLOSS

Home

44 How Bad Is It ...

KELSEY KLOSS

46 Build the Perfect Cozy Fire

KELSEY KLOSS

48 Master Your Holiday Mail

KELSEY KLOSS

Health

56 Classic Health Debates

SUNNY SEA GOLD

60 Festive Foods That Help You Lose

LIZ VACCARIELLO

FROM THE BOOK *STOP & DROP DIET*

62 The Season's Germiest Greetings

CAROLINE PRADERIO

FROM *PREVENTION*



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PROP STYLIST:
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MOTTAU,
SWAROVSKI
STAR ORNAMENT
COURTESY
SWAROVSKI.COM

ADDITIONAL
MEDIA IN OUR
TABLET
VERSIONS

P. | 39



WHO KNEW?

130 13 Things Credit Card Companies Know About You

MICHELLE CROUCH

134 5 Celebrities Who Spied on the Side

LINDA RODRIGUEZ MCROBBIE
FROM *MENTAL FLOSS*

138 7 Touchy-Feely Questions Answered by Science

BRANDON SPEKTOR

140 Why We Love Superstorms

MARIA KONNIKOVA
FROM THE *NEW YORKER*



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Editor's Note

Fantastic First Sentences



OPENERS ARE EVERYTHING. As Stephen King famously remarked, “An opening line should say: Listen. Come in here. You want to know about this.”

I’ve long collected the first lines that move me. Here are a few of my favorites from *Reader’s Digest* over the past year. (High five to anyone who can name the stories they start.)

- “When I was your age, I changed your diaper,” said the dark-haired boy to his father.
- Just how bad a mother am I?
- Long before I ever wanted to be a neuroscientist, I wanted to be a Broadway star.
- It’s a good time to be a pessimist.
- Before they threw him in chains, he was a gutsy kid with wandering feet.
- If you want to probe one of the great mysteries of the human mind, all you need is a duster and your feet.
- Even as I said it, I knew it was ridiculous and selfish.
- Once great wrongs are done, it’s rarely possible to undo them.
- Nobody knows who he is, and nobody knows who he was.

Reader Bill Butler wrote my winner for this issue: When his story arrived in my mailbox, I flagged it as one of five selections for “Miraculous Christmas Stories” on page 66. (Mr. Butler keeps good company there with James Michener.)

I’d love for next year’s feature to include more stories by readers. Has something miraculous happened to you? Send your incredible story (a maximum of 500 words, please) to miracles@rd.com. We will pay \$2 a word upon publication of your article, which we reserve the right to edit and fact-check (to the extent one can fact-check a miracle, that is).

Remember: Make that first sentence count.



I invite you to e-mail me at liz@rd.com and follow me at [facebook.com/lizvaccariello](https://www.facebook.com/lizvaccariello) and [lizvaccariello](https://www.instagram.com/lizvaccariello) on Instagram.

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That's something even cats find amazing.

Letters

COMMENTS ON THE OCTOBER ISSUE

The Kindness of Strangers

I have stopped watching the news because of all the bad this world has to offer, but this article made me realize there are still a lot of good people out there. I will keep this and read it from time to time as a reminder.

LESA TRENT, Gray, Tennessee

Can you make this feature a permanent addition? I think we could all use a little more inspiration in this day and age. Thank you, *RD*!

MICHELLE FOSTER, Nashport, Ohio

I hate your magazine. Your stories about everyday heroes and random acts of kindness always make my eyes leak. Keep up the good work—it's much better than listening to the news.

G. H., via e-mail

Why I Study Memory

I am sitting here with tears staining my face. I still wish I had heard the words "I love you" from



my parents. As an adult, I decided to tell my parents that I loved them, and all I got in return was "OK." I didn't realize how much this still hurts me until I read this story. I am proud to say that my children and I say those words

often and easily because we understand how

important they are—and

that is one of the best lessons I learned from my parents.

JUDY WOODWARD, Orem, Utah

Quotable Quotes

Since I was a child, my mom has always inspired me with wise sayings. At 86 years old, she's still around to share them with me.

We would like to thank you for this valuable page and the sweet connection it continues to make. You can quote me on that.

J. C., via e-mail

Alone. Injured. Almost Dead.

I read this story with mixed emotions. I've been a Boy Scout leader for more than 30 years. Mr. Hein

sounds like an expert hiker who is fully prepared to go into the wilderness. However, one of the most important lessons we teach is to buddy up. Never go hiking or exploring alone.

DUSTIN FULLER, *Worland, Wyoming*

Points to Ponder

The paragraph by Gretchen Carlson is one of the most profound thoughts I've read in a long time. It should be printed on postcards and sent to all politicians, pundits, and media personnel.

TOM SCHROEDER, *Indianapolis, Indiana*

As Our Military Sinks

It is laughable to read this article at a time when the whole country is under threat from numerous sources and our military is underfunded. This is the big concern—so-called climate change?

GAIL MOOTER, *Kennard, Nebraska*

I had no idea our bases were sinking into the ocean. If more people knew global warming was threatening our national security, we'd be more active in fighting it.

KATHLEEN CHOJNACKI,
West Newton, Pennsylvania

Freeing Alexander Hamilton (and the DC7)

I cried when I read this article. While I am happy these beagles will now be adopted, I pray for the day when animal experimentation is a thing of the past.

R. C., *via e-mail*

When Siblings Stop Speaking

While it's true you can't choose your family, you can choose to surround yourself with only people who love and support you. You don't have to please everyone. Family members shouldn't get a free pass.

RACHEL KOZAK, *Elgin, South Carolina*

CAN YOU TOP THIS?

Reader Staci Bailey wrote:

"My sister explained to my nephew how his voice would eventually change as he grew up. 'Cool!' said Tyler. 'I hope I get a German accent.'"

Do you have a hilarious story about your clan? If so, **you can win \$500!** Go to rd.com/funnyfamily for details.

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EVERYDAY HEROES



*"We want to
reach people
where they are,"
says Doniece
Sandoval.*

Helping the Homeless:

Three Innovators

“We reconnect people with their dignity”

Doniece Sandoval

 AN OLD BLUE BUS pulls up to a wellness center in downtown San Francisco, and a small crowd forms. Young and old, men and women are waiting to board for their turn to bathe. This city bus has been modified as a sanitation station with two private bathrooms, each including a shower, toilet, sink, and changing area. The brainchild of Doniece Sandoval, a former public relations executive, Lava Mae (a play on the Spanish for “wash me”) provides up to 500 showers a week for the thousands of homeless people who sleep on the streets in this city.

“We reconnect people with their dignity,” says Doniece.

Two years ago, Doniece overheard a homeless woman on a San Francisco sidewalk say that she’d never be clean. “That made me wonder what her opportunities were to actually get clean,” says Doniece. She learned that San Francisco had only eight public shower facilities.

“I thought, If you can put food on wheels, why not showers?” she says.

Doniece persuaded the city to give

her four decommissioned buses that she then had remodeled with \$75,000 she’d raised on a crowdfunding website. Each bus connects to a fire hydrant for water, which is heated by large batteries on board. Wastewater is drained into city sewers.

The first bus hit the road in July 2014; a second one rolled out in early 2015. Doniece plans to put the other two buses elsewhere in the Bay Area and imagines expanding the program internationally.

Those in need of a shower sign up for a 15-minute time slot at a local homeless shelter, and Lava Mae provides towels, shampoo, soap, and a new pair of socks.

“No matter how clean you try to stay on the street, you’re going to be grimy,” said Silas Borden, a military veteran who showers weekly on a Lava Mae bus in the Mission neighborhood. “And I want to wash it off.”

Says Doniece, “It’s a humbling experience to see people come off the bus so grateful for something that should be a natural human right.”

ALYSSA JUNG, WITH MICHELE WOJCIECHOWSKI

“They said it was bad karma” *Robert Lee*

AS AN ELEMENTARY school student in New York City, Robert Lee would stare in disbelief at his classmates throwing away half-eaten sandwiches after lunch. His Korean immigrant parents had taught him and his older brother not to waste food. “They said it was bad karma,” says Robert, 24.

While studying finance and accounting at New York University, Robert remembered this lesson and joined Two Birds One Stone, a food-rescue club on campus that delivered, five days a week, uneaten pasta, vegetables, and other leftovers from the dining hall to nearby homeless shelters.

When Robert and fellow club member Louisa Chen entered a college entrepreneurship contest, they proposed a slightly different idea for a food-rescue nonprofit group: Their program wouldn’t have a donation minimum (meaning they would gladly pick up one bag of leftover bagels or a single pot of soup), would operate seven days a week, and would be staffed entirely by volunteers.

Their idea won the competition. With the \$1,000 prize, they founded Rescuing Leftover Cuisine (RLC) in July 2013. In just the first few weeks, Robert’s team delivered a donation of enough spaghetti and meatballs

to feed 20 people in line at a New York City homeless shelter that had run out of food.

Robert, who had taken a job as an analyst at J.P. Morgan, devoted his spare time to creating a network of New York City restaurants, from mom-and-pop delis to large chains like Starbucks and Panera Bread, that agreed to donate food, and he enlisted volunteers to make food deliveries to homeless shelters. After RLC received national press attention, homeless shelters and soup kitchens in Portland, Oregon; Washington, DC; and other cities reached out to Robert for partnership advice. To date, RLC has distributed more than 250,000 pounds of food in 12 cities around the country.

Only a year into his finance job, Robert gave up his six-figure salary to focus on RLC. “I compared one hour of impact at J.P. Morgan to one hour at RLC, and the difference was just tremendous,” he says. He’s now the group’s only full-time employee.

“One shelter recently told us that our donations allow them to provide entire dinners for more than 300 people, three nights a week,” Robert says. “Things like that make me glad I quit my job.”

BRANDON SPEKTOR

*"This group
saves shelters
thousands of
dollars," says
Robert Lee.*





*"I want to give
people a chance
without judging
them," says
Veronika Scott.*

“Design to fill a need” *Veronika Scott*

WHEN VERONIKA SCOTT was a student at the College for Creative Studies in her native city of Detroit, Michigan, she received an assignment to “design to fill a need.” She dreamed up an idea for insulated overcoats that would double as sleeping bags, made 25 of them, and handed them out to people living in makeshift shelters on a run-down city playground. While her efforts were greeted mostly with enthusiasm from those braving Detroit’s brutal winters, one woman voiced dissent. “We don’t need coats; we need jobs,” she told Veronika. Then she had her second inspiration.

Veronika, now 26, found an expert to teach two homeless women to sew and hired them to assemble the coats. She paid them with donations she received through her blog. At first, the coats were constructed in a homeless shelter’s utility closet. “The top of the coat would hit one wall, and the bottom would be out the door,” says Veronika.

After graduating from college in 2012, she moved the shop into an old downtown warehouse for socially conscious businesses and founded the Empowerment Plan, a nonprofit organization. Clothing manufacturer Carhartt donated several old industrial sewing machines and reams of fabric and zippers. GM and other

companies chipped in operating funds and insulating material. To date, the Empowerment Plan has produced more than 10,000 coats and distributed them in 30 states, Canada, and elsewhere abroad.

The group employs about 20 people—mostly single mothers, some of whom have served time or worked as prostitutes—and pays them more than Michigan’s minimum wage. “We don’t require a GED or even previous employment,” Veronika says. “We’re looking for people who are motivated.” The Empowerment Plan provides free GED and financial-literacy classes and offers micro-loans to those who qualify. Nearly all the employees eventually move into permanent housing, and some go on to jobs in the auto industry and construction.

Veronika has refined the coat’s design by switching to an outer layer of lightweight polyethylene that resists air, wind, and water and an inner layer of synthetic fabric that stores body heat. Her latest innovation is to make the bottom of the sleeping bag removable.

Still, Veronika is less focused on the coats than on the workers who make them. “At the end of the day,” she says, “[the coat] is a vehicle for us to employ people.” **R**

BETH DREHER, WITH MICHELE WOJCIECHOWSKI



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VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

The Real 12 Days of Christmas

BY COLIN NISSAN
FROM MCSWEENEY'S



COLIN NISSAN
*is a writer
and voice
actor who
lives in
Brooklyn,
New York.*

DAY 1: On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree. Such a thoughtful gift; she knows how much I love fruit. She also knows my building's pretty strict about pets, so the bird threw me a little. But he is a cute little guy.

DAY 2: On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, two turtle doves. Wow, she's really into the avian theme this year. Um, thank you? I guess I'll just put them in the kitchen with the partridge and the pear tree, which suddenly seems a lot bigger than it did yesterday.

DAYS 3 & 4: On the third and fourth days of Christmas, she gave me three French hens and four calling birds. Funny, I don't remember telling her my dream was to one day ➡

open a chapter of the Audubon Society. You know what would have been nice? Some birdseed. I'm out of saltines, and things are starting to get weird in here.

DAY 5: On the fifth day of Christmas, she gave me five golden rings. See, now, that's a nice gift. A nice, practical gift. A little on the feminine side, but I'll take it.

DAY 6: Six geese a-laying. Hmm, that's so strange because I was just telling someone that I could use some MORE @#\$%*& BIRDS. Do you have any idea how much poop six geese generate in a single day? Literally pounds. And in case you're curious, all six of them have been a-laying since they got here. There are no fewer than 75 enormous eggs in my apartment right now. I just tried to make an omelet out of one of them and almost ralphed. Very gamy.

DAY 7: Guess what I signed for this morning when the UPS guy rang my doorbell. Seven swans a-swimming. True story. So ... no more baths for me, I guess. Thanks for that. These are terrible gifts! Terrible, confusing gifts. Oh, and guess what swans don't get along with. Geese, turtledoves,

French hens, calling birds, and partridges. Glad you did your homework there.

DAY 8: I'd like to give you the benefit of the doubt on this one in case you ordered these eight maids a-milking online and there was some

confusion, but just to clarify, there are eight middle-aged women wearing bonnets in my apartment right now. And they each brought a cow. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? They're all here, in my STUDIO apartment, and judging by the size of their suitcases, they aren't leaving anytime soon.

“
*Three French
hens and four
calling birds.
You know what
would have
been nice?
Some birdseed.*

DAY 9: Big day today. Not only did I receive the unexpected gift of nine ladies dancing, I also got a nice little note from my landlord. He covered all kinds of stuff, but in a nutshell, it was about excessive dancing, illegal livestock, unnatural amounts of bird feces, and me not living here anymore. Big day.

DAY 10: Ten lords a-bloody-leaping! Yes, they are. Ten leotarded jerks are literally jumping around my apartment screaming “Wheeeeeee!” every time their feet leave the ground! WHY?? Why are you doing this to

me? You're sick! I loved you so much, and you destroyed it. You destroyed everything. Tensions in here are escalating faster than I could have imagined. The maids and dancers appear to have laid territorial claims in opposite corners of the apartment. They are not the same civilized ladies who arrived here a short time ago. They bear a darkness now. One of them stole my golden rings, and I know just the one who did it. I'm waiting until nightfall, and I will reclaim them ... through any means necessary.

DAYS 11 & 12: These final days have come and gone in a bewildering fog. I remember drummers. Pipers. Lots

of them. I haven't slept or washed my body in quite some time. Food is scarce ... the fighting, fierce. I captured a lord today! Snatched him right out of the air. Now he doesn't leap anymore. I used his leotard as a net to trap one of the swans. She was delicious. Didn't even cook the old gal. Ha! I made everyone gather to watch—that's what you do when you want to send a message. A very important message! This is my castle! Do you all hear me? Do you see what I've done? What I am capable of?! No more eye contact with the king; do you understand? Or I will end you! I will end you all right here and now!!

Now, one of you fetch me a pear. The king needs something sweet. **R**

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FAMOUS QUOTES, UNABRIDGED

“A girl should be two things: classy and fabulous.
Oh, and shallow—really, really shallow.”

COCO CHANEL

“Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity;
and I'm not sure about the universe. But that
might just be me being stupid.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“If you're going through hell, keep going. But please stop
screaming; it's not good for morale.”

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Source: *A Load of Hooley* by Bob Odenkirk

Never give up on anything, least of all a dog

Pretty Girl

BY RICK BRAGG FROM THE BOOK *MY SOUTHERN JOURNEY*



RICK BRAGG is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author. His books include *Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story*.

HER NAME was perfect.

She came to them in the dead of night, in the cold. She was more than half dead, starved down to bones, her hair completely eaten away by mange. She had been run off from more than one yard when she finally crept into an empty doghouse in the trees beyond my mother's yard. At least she was out of the wind.

They found her, my mother and brother, in the daylight of the next day. They could not even tell, at first, she was a dog.

"And it broke my heart," my mother said.

They did not call the vet because she knew what the vet would do. The dog was too far gone to save; any fool could see that. My mama lives in the country and has to run off two wandering dogs a week, but this time, she said, "I just couldn't. She couldn't even get up." How do you run off a dog that cannot stand?

The broke-down dog had stumbled on two people who hate to give up on anything, even a month-old newspaper. They save batteries that have not had a spark of anything in them for a long, long time. My mother keeps pens that stopped writing in 1974. My point is, there is always a little use, a little good, a little life left in anything, and who are they to decide when something is done for good.

My brother Mark looked at her, at her tragic face, and named her.



ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY. COURTESY FOUNDMYANIMAL.COM (COLLAR AND LEASH)



"Hey, Pretty Girl," he said.

It was as if he could see beyond the ruin, or maybe into it. I don't know.

Her hips were bad, which was probably why she was discarded in the first place, and her teeth were worn down. Her eyes were clouded. But Mark and my mother fed her, gave her water, and bathed her in burned motor oil, the way my people have been curing the mange for generations. They got her looking less atrocious, and then they called the vet.

The vet found she had heartworm. She was walking dead, anyway, at her age. It was then I saw her, still a sack of bones. It would be a kindness, I told my mother, to put her down. She nodded her head.

A month later, I pulled into the driveway to see a beautiful white German shepherd standing watch at the front of the house. It was not a miracle; her ailments did not magically cease. But together, my mother

and brother had tended her and even let her live in the house. She ate people food and drank butter-milk out of an aluminum pie tin. She was supposed to last, at most, a few weeks or months. She lived three more years—decades, in dog years—following my brother to the garden

to watch for snakes and listen for thunder.

"I prayed for her," my mother said. "Some people say you ain't supposed to pray for a dog, but ..."

And then after the gift of years, Pretty Girl began to fail and died. She is buried in the mountain pasture.

The garden is already planted. Some things were planted according to science, according to soil and weather. And some things were planted according to lore, the shape of the moon, and more. That is fine with me. There are things we cannot explain, things beyond science, like how a man could name a ravaged and dying dog and have her rise inside that, somehow, to make it true. **R**

“
***I prayed for her.
Some people
say you
ain't supposed
to pray for
a dog, but ...***”

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WAGER OF THE BEAST?

The sum of all the numbers on a roulette wheel is 666.

Source: *Mental Floss*

Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

PERFECT DAY

We went looking for a wedding dress on Sunday. Laughing, we made for the door of a bridal shop. This would surely be the first of many stores before we found the perfect gown. Having witnessed other brides and their mothers, we vowed to be happy in these moments. Unexpectedly, my mind went back to the day we brought her home some 27 years ago. I said a silent thank-you to the young mother who, by letting her go, allowed her to be mine at this precious time. Two hours later, there she stood, in the dress of her dreams. My beautiful girl.

MARYBOB STRAUB, *Smyrna, Georgia*

SHATTERED

My elderly sister decided for the first time to stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve in New York City to watch the ball drop. The next morning, she reported that she was disappointed. When I asked her why, she said that on the news the day before, the reporters had talked about the crystals inside the ball and what



a piece would be worth if someone got ahold of one. But then the ball descended very slowly. She'd expected it to crash and that people would scramble for the pieces. She'd wanted to see that!

PAT GUTHRIE, *Pulaski, Virginia*

ALWAYS GROWING

Dad auctioned off his faithful red tractor, rented out the land, and retired from farming in 1982. He and Mom moved to town. But they reserved a small plot of land for a garden and returned each week of summer to tend it. Winter brought new challenges. Dad had his hips replaced, bypass and cataract surgeries, and a stroke. Yet each spring the garden was planted, watered, lovingly tended—the bounty shared with all. Now Dad is 93; his pale blue eyes dodge the sun as he gingerly plucks red tomatoes from the vine. “What will you remember about me?” he asks.

JULIE LISKA, *Seward, Nebraska*

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

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

I'm finally



Spokane Valley, WA

Read

War and Peace.

CINDY MCMAHON



Stayton, OR

Go back to school,

after 29 years!
(I'm sitting nervously in the hallway,
waiting for my first class to start!)

SHAWNETTE MCFEE SCOTT

Stop coloring my hair and

embrace my gray locks.

DEBBIE WAUFORD-APLIN

Fremont, CA



Ask her.

TIMOTHY IP

Follow my childhood
dream and

become a cartoonist.

JEFF MORAN

Build my tiny house!

JAN MCAFEE ROGAN

ready to...

Move out

of my parents' house.

JAMIE LYNN

Do my laundry.

MICHELE BONDI STINGLE

Become my mother...

CRISTINA
ALVARADO-PIERCE

Manchester, CT

Lafayette
Hill, PA

Akron, PA

Stanton,
MI

Troy, MO

St. Charles, MO

Oak Hill, OH

Accept that I will
probably never meet

Hugh Jackman.

REBECCA MILLEN

Forgive a friend,

and myself, for a rift that nearly
ended a 30-year friendship.

SHARON PARSONS

Wylie, TX

Tallahassee, FL

Publish

my first novel (I'm 16).

MARLEE HEAD

Go to
[facebook.com/
readersdigest](https://www.facebook.com/readersdigest)
for the chance to
finish the next
sentence.



Points to Ponder

MUSIC IS the supreme solace because it is so much more. It is the spiritual counterpoint to the world's cacophony, essential as a heartbeat.

JOYCE CAROL OATES,
creative writing professor and writer,
in her book *The Lost Landscape*

WE NEED TO restore faith in our own ability to effect change. If pictures move one to action—and I believe they can—then we need images and videos not just of suffering, not even just of triumph, but of effort, of people laboring mightily and repeatedly to pull the truck out of the ditch and the perhaps still-living bodies out of the rubble.

JULIE WITTES SCHLACK,
essayist, on wbur.org

I LEARNED the roots of any relationship [from working with dogs]—honesty, integrity, loyalty. It's hard to find a human to give you all three. But every dog, that's all they know. Humans are the only species that follows unstable pack leaders. Animals don't ... Why would they?

CESAR MILLAN,
dog whisperer, in Men's Journal

[SOCIAL MEDIA] feels like a protection racket. Your reputation will be murdered unless you join in this thing that is, in significant part, about murdering reputations. Why would I want to feed that machine?

JONATHAN FRANZEN,
novelist, in the Guardian (U.K.)



ON BAD MOVIES

Life is too short to dwell heavily on [lousy films and] their many sins. That's for another book that I won't be writing.

RICHARD SCHICKEL, movie critic, in his book *Keepers*

The right attitude can make watching truly terrible movies one of life's best and most entertaining pleasures.

JOHN WILSON, creator of the Razzie Awards, in his book *The Official Razzie Movie Guide*



Laughter is the best medicine. But it's more than that. It's an entire regime of antibiotics and steroids. Laughter brings the swelling down on our national psyche and then applies an antibiotic cream.

STEPHEN COLBERT,
late-night TV host,
in *Entertainment Weekly*

I HAVE A PROBLEM about pontificating about gravelly undertones and raspberry overtones ... Just order the bottle of wine you like.

ADAM RAPOPORT,
editor in chief of *Bon Appétit*, on NPR

MOST DISCUSSIONS of "having it all" center on balancing work and children, but that definition of "all" is incomplete ... Women also want to spend time on other aspects of their lives: art, politics, faith, experiencing the natural world. Left to pursue only two dimensions of our lives leaves other parts of who we are undercultivated.

LYNN PASQUERELLA,
president of Mount Holyoke College,
on huffingtonpost.com

TO RETURN FROM EUROPE to the United States, as I did recently, is to be struck by the crumbling infrastructure, the paucity of public spaces, the conspicuous waste (of food and energy above all), the dirtiness of cities and the acuteness of their poverty. It is also to be overwhelmed by the volume and vital clamor of American life, the challenging interaction, the bracing intermingling of Americans of all stripes, the strident individualism. Europe is more organized, America more alive. Europe purrs; even its hardship seems somehow muted. America revs. The differences can feel violent.

ROGER COHEN,
op-ed columnist, in the *New York Times*

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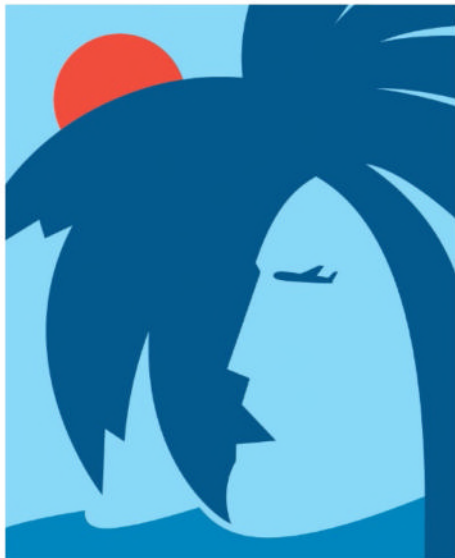


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Who should pay when an airline sends passengers to the wrong city?

The Case of The Ticket Mix-up

BY VICKI GLEMBOCKI

WASHINGTON, DC, dentist Eddy Gamson had always dreamed of visiting the Alhambra palace in Granada, Spain. When he signed up to attend a professional conference in Portugal in September 2013, he decided to head overseas early so he could fly to Spain for a few days.

He called British Airways (BA) directly to book the flights for him and his partner, Lowell Canaday, cashing in more than 376,000 frequent-flier points for first-class seats. Gamson says he specifically discussed flying to Spain and outlined their itinerary using airport codes. The ticket agent suggested the pair fly from Dulles to London's Heathrow and then to Gatwick because, the agent said,

there was a direct flight to Granada from that airport.

On September 8, Gamson and Canaday flew across the Atlantic and boarded their flight to Granada. However, 20 minutes into the flight, they noticed on the monitor that the plane was heading west, back over the ocean. They asked the flight attendant why they weren't heading south, toward Spain. "We're going to Grenada," the attendant told them. "In the West Indies."

Gamson checked his e-ticket. There was no country listed, no airport codes, and no flight durations. There was just one word: *Grenada*—with an *e* instead of an *a*. After much back and forth with BA, it took ➡➡

two days and three flights to get the couple back to Lisbon, leaving insufficient time to travel to Spain.

On September 22, Gamson sent a letter to BA customer service explaining that the airline had erroneously booked Gamson and Canaday on a flight to the wrong destination. He asked to be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses (extra flights, hotels, etc.), to be credited for the frequent-flier points they spent, and to be given two round-trip, first-class tickets from Dulles to Spain. BA instead offered to reimburse them for their hotel in Grenada and to give each man 150,000 frequent-flier points.

"I was beside myself," Gamson says.

On March 7, 2014, Gamson and Canaday represented themselves in a suit they filed in DC superior court against BA, claiming breach of contract and negligence and demanding \$34,000 in damages for "their ruined vacation trip, lost wages, and other associated expenses."

On March 28, the case was sent to federal court on BA's request. The airline argued that the Montreal Convention, a treaty that governs international air travel, protected the airline from certain claims that had been made. BA moved to have the case dismissed.

Should the airline pay for misrouting the couple? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

In his opinion, federal court judge James Boesberg wrote, "This case proves the truth of Mark Twain's aphorism that 'the difference between the right word and almost the right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.' Except here only a single letter is involved." He noted that the case was not about aviation law, as BA contended, and sent the case back to trial court. In July, BA filed a motion to dismiss the case, and in an oral order on August 22, 2014, Judge Jeanette Clark tossed it. "She basically said, 'I've flown before. I've looked at tickets. You're at fault,'" says Gamson. "We don't agree with her." Gamson hired an attorney and, in September 2014, filed a request to appeal. He's still waiting to find out if it's been granted. Last September, Gamson and Canaday flew to Spain—and "paid" for the flights with the points BA had given them. **R**

Agree? Disagree? Sound off at rd.com/judge.

FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER



Charlotte Richards

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

There are the people who got married here ten, 20, 50 years ago, and they return with their children and grandchildren to renew their vows. And then there are the people who get married in California on a Saturday night and come here on a Sunday to do it all over again. Because they just love it; they love what they felt, I guess. And it is a wonderful feeling.

Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



"Can you think of anyone the victim might have had a falling-out with?"

A TWITTER EXCHANGE between an angry customer and an apologetic Domino's Pizza:

Customer: Yoooo I ordered a Pizza & Came with no Toppings on it or anything, Its Just Bread

Domino's: We're sorry to hear about this!

Customer (minutes later): Never mind, I opened the pizza upside down :/

Source: Twitter

MY NIECE WAS DRAGGED into court by a neighbor who complained about her barking dogs. At one point, the judge asked the neighbor a question. The neighbor didn't reply. "Sir, are you going to answer me?"

The neighbor leaped to his feet. "Are you talking to me?" he asked. "Sorry; I can't hear a darn thing."

The case was dismissed.

HELEN REYNOLDS, Missoula, Montana

MY GREATEST ACTING performance is when I check the caller ID, then adopt an air of polite curiosity as I answer the phone “Hello?”

🐦@SETHMACFARLANE

THESE WORDS ARE so joining our vocabulary in 2016!

Chairedrobe (*n.*): piling clothes on a chair in place of a closet or dresser.

Epiphanot (*n.*): an idea that seems like an amazing insight to the conceiver but is in fact pointless, mundane, stupid, or incorrect.

Internet (*n.*): the cocoon of blankets and pillows you gather around yourself while spending long periods of time on the Internet.

Textpectation (*n.*): the anticipation felt when waiting for a response to a text.

Unkeyboardinated (*adj.*): when you're unable to type without repeatedly making mistakes. Source: viralthread.com

AFTER I-MESSAGING back and forth with my wife, I jokingly commanded Siri to pass along this message: “You need to get back to work now; you have a husband to support.”

Here's what Siri sent: “You need to get back to work now; you have a has-been to support.”

JOHN BROWN, *Jenks, Oklahoma*

FUNNY FAMILY CONTEST!

Send us hilarious anecdotes about your kids, parents, or siblings, and you could win \$500! Go to page 9 for details.

JUST WHAT I (NEVER) WANTED

Looking for that perfect holiday gift for someone you don't like? Give him or her one of these frustrating products, created by artist Katerina Kamprani.



Deliciously
HEART HEALTHY

While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.

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ART *of* LIVING

Why time management
doesn't make us happier
or more productive

A Case Against The Clock

BY TONY CRABBE FROM QUARTZ

IMAGINE YOUR LIFE without a constant sense that you're running behind. Imagine not wishing for more hours in the day. We haven't always been this obsessed with time. In fact, before the Industrial Revolution, clocks were largely irrelevant. People had jobs to do, and so they did them in the natural order, at the natural time. This worked for an agricultural society. However, the factories of the Industrial Revolution needed to coordinate hundreds of people to ➡



get them working at the same time. Businesses imposed clock time on their workforces.

Cast the clock forward 250 years. We don't need managers to impose time discipline upon us—we do it ourselves because we're so busy. We schedule and cram our time, squeezing all the efficiency we can out of each day. Time management, we believe, is the solution to our busyness: If we could organize our time better, we'd be less overwhelmed, happier, and more effective.

But we're wrong, and it's damaging our careers and the rest of our lives.

You Just Get Busier

Research shows that if you increase people's awareness of time—by placing a big clock in front of them—they do more stuff. (Think about how much work you get done on the day before vacation.) It makes sense that by getting more done, we'd feel more in control. More than that, it's one of the great fantasies of time management: If you get more organized, you will get on top.

However, that works only in a finite world. We haven't lived in that world for quite a while. In our infinite world, we will never be able to get on top of everything. When we complete more tasks, more take their place—send more e-mails, get more replies. If we do more as a result of better managing our time, we just become busier.

Your Attention Suffers

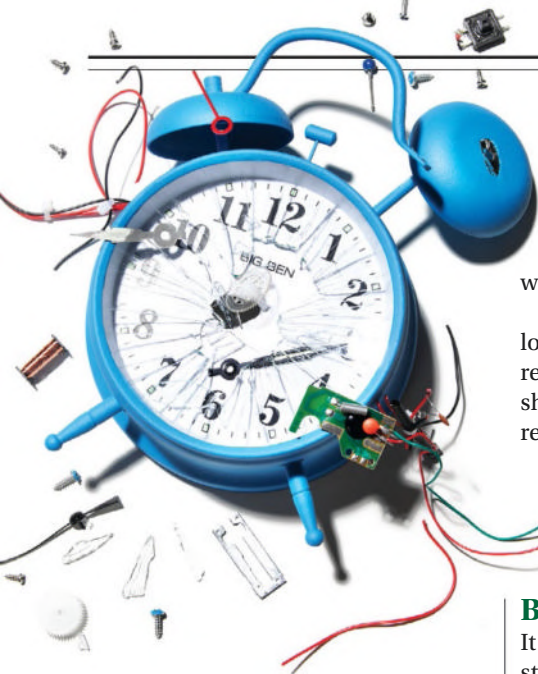
Our smartphones allow us to communicate in real time and juggle multiple to-dos, swatting away incoming demands like some supercharged task ninja, potent and efficient. As we seek to maximize our time, we slice and dice it into ever-smaller increments. But when we scatter our attention across a thousand mini activities, we prevent ourselves from engaging deeply or thinking properly.

Conversations with loved ones are disemboweled with frequent “productive” glances at the inbox; our ability to think is decimated by the distraction of the ping and the ring. We maintain a state of chaotic mental activity that is the opposite of the optimal psychological state of flow, where attention is allowed to sink into an activity without distraction, where we bring our thoughts, actions, and goals into perfect synchronicity. Flow doesn't happen in splinters of time but in great big lumps of attention.

Think about your past few weeks. All the moments you had of real insight or happiness came when you focused your attention, with reckless abandon, into the moment. In maximizing our time, we rob our moments of their color.

You're Less Effective

You may still think that you'd be willing to feel busier and less happy as long as you could be effective.



Effectiveness comes from two core factors: prioritization and achievement. When we prioritize well, we choose to do the right things, not just the obvious things. Yet a strong time awareness makes us prioritize the urgent and immediate rather than the important and strategic. Research by Microsoft, for example, suggests that 77 percent of U.K. workers feel they have had a productive day if they have emptied their inbox. It horrifies me to

see the number of blogs and books that focus on getting to an empty inbox or zero tasks, as if either achievement were worthwhile. No business or life was changed by an empty inbox.

Perceived time pressure also lowers our ability to achieve. Harvard researcher Teresa Amabile has shown that increased focus on time reduces our problem-solving abilities and our capacity to generate imaginative solutions. We don't think as well under the shadow of the clock.

Beyond Time Management

It is true: We will be able to do more stuff if we focus on managing our time, but we don't need more repetitive, synchronized activity as we did in the Industrial Revolution.

We need more thinking, creativity, and problem solving. Time management was a brilliant invention that helped to transform society 250 years ago. Now it's time for us to develop a different strategy—one that starts from the recognition that, in our overloaded world, the greatest shortage is not of time but of attention. **R**

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WHO PUT THE X IN XMAS?

Long story short—the Greeks. The popular greeting card abbreviation derives from the Greek word for *Christ*: *Xristos*.

Source: *Weird and Wonderful Christmas* by Joey Green



What Your Holiday Eating Habits Say About You

BY KELSEY KLOSS

IF YOU: Chomp off the head of the gingerbread man first

IT MEANS: You're a leader

Yes, someone actually "studied" this: If you munch on a gingerbread man's head first, you're a natural-born leader, according to an informal analysis by Alan Hirsch, MD, of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago. Start with the legs? You're sensitive. Bite on the left arm first, you're creative; go for the right, you may be pessimistic.

IF YOU: Bake spiced cookies

IT MEANS: You probably like to watch action movies

A *Food Quality and Preference* study found that people who enjoy action movies and exploration were about six times more likely to enjoy spicy treats than people with more "vanilla" preferences. Related research has found that while women who like spice are drawn to the sensation,

men may associate it with a tough-guy ability to withstand the burn.

IF YOU: Drink white wine

IT MEANS: You probably drink more

White wine drinkers pour 9.2 percent more vino into their glasses than do red wine drinkers, according to an Iowa State University and Cornell University study. This could be because clear wine gives the illusion that there is less in a glass.

IF YOU: Opt for tart cranberry sauce

IT MEANS: You may feel judgmental

Had a taste of a pucker-worthy food? You might be extra critical when your cousin nabs the last slice of pie. In a *Psychological Science* study, people given a bitter beverage to drink made harsher judgments on individuals in questionable moral situations—like a student stealing library books—than on those given a sweet beverage or water.

R

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Certain winter habits may leave you with chilly regret. Know what you can (and can't) get away with.

How Bad Is It ... BY KELSEY KLOSS

... to knock down icicles on your house?

■ **PRETTY BAD** Never whack icicles with excessive force; this could cause building damage at the bases. Tap formations with a broom, from a window if possible (never stand below icicles, which can injure you when they fall). If icicles don't dislodge, call a professional to remove them—the frozen mass can cause structures like gutters to collapse.

... to have poinsettias around children or pets?

■ **SOMEWHAT BAD** Despite its “poisonous” reputation, the plant is only mildly toxic. A 50-pound child would need to eat more than 500 poinsettia leaves to reach potentially toxic levels, and no deaths have been documented from consumption.

A child may get queasy or throw up after eating, say, five poinsettia leaves—but not much more will happen. (Plus, the leaves taste unpleasant, so it's unlikely many would be consumed.) The plants may cause drooling, vomiting, or diarrhea in cats and dogs, but medical treatment is rarely necessary unless symptoms are severe. To be safe, keep poinsettias out of the reach of pets and young children, but there's no need to banish your favorite holiday plant.

... to hang a few indoor holiday lights outdoors?

■ **PRETTY BAD** Many holiday lights manufactured today are intended for both indoor and outdoor use, but you may come across some that are location specific. Indoor lights aren't as resistant to moisture, which may

cause electrical shorts and damage in wet weather. Many products tested for safety in the United States are labeled with a *UL* tag (for Underwriters' Laboratories, a certification company that inspects such products). Indoor lights have a tag marked with a green *UL*. Outdoor lights are marked with a red *UL*.

... to pour warm water on a frozen windshield?

■ **PRETTY BAD** Nice try, but if the temperature outside is freezing, you'll only add another layer of ice to your windshield. Depending on the temperature difference between the air outside and the water, this trick could even crack the glass. Instead, spritz your windshield with a solution of one part water to two parts rubbing alcohol to melt ice immediately.

... to not idle your car before driving?

■ **NOT BAD AT ALL** Idling was necessary with older cars that used carburetors, devices that twisted open to move air and fuel into the engine. Cold air could affect the balance of air and fuel, causing the car to run smoky or seize up. Cars made from the late '90s on have electronic systems that use sensors to keep the air-to-fuel ratio balanced. Even in frigid temperatures, 30 seconds is all you need to get the oil circulating.

... to nap next to a space heater?

■ **PRETTY BAD** It may seem harmless to doze off, but the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that space heaters cause more than 25,000 residential fires every year. That's mostly owing to human error (like leaving a space heater too close to long drapes). If you want to fall asleep next to the heater, put the appliance on a timer so it will shut off automatically.

... to let pets drink from the Christmas tree stand?

■ **PRETTY BAD** That tree stand is probably filled with water that's far from fresh. Tree preservative, often made with fertilizer and fungicides, can cause vomiting or upset stomach in pets; bacteria can also multiply in the standing water. Snugly wrap a tree skirt around the trunk to make the water harder for your pet to get to. **R**

Sources: nfpa.org, christmastreeassociation.org, springfield-ma.gov, pittsburghpa.gov, *HGTV Magazine*, farmers.com, adamshomes.com, realsimple.com, doityourself.com, webmd.com, petpoisonhelpline.com, medicinenet.com, lifehacker.com, chemistry.about.com, wisebread.com, chicagotribune.com, energy.gov



Build the Perfect Cozy Fire

BY KELSEY KLOSS

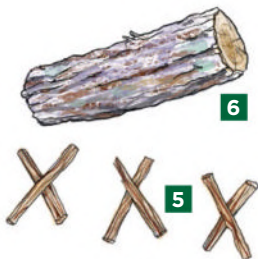
 **EVEN SEASONED** fire builders can make mistakes starting a crackling blaze. Follow these steps for a safer, more effective fire. Remember: Hire a pro annually to inspect the chimney for cleanliness and safety before you begin.

1 ASHES Save the ash bed from your last fire: Two inches of ash insulates fireplaces and creates a hotter fire. Keep one inch clear between the ash and metal grate.

2 GRATE Use a metal grate or andirons to raise logs off the ground so air can fuel the fire from below.

3 STARTER LOGS

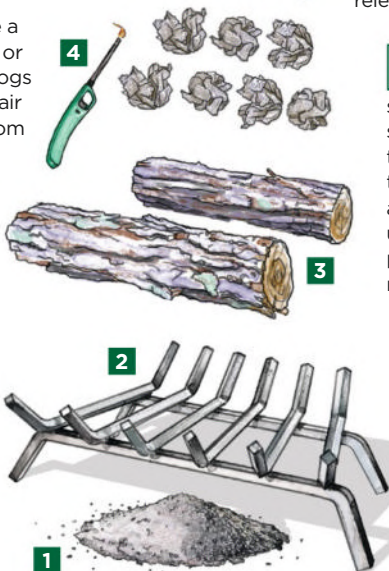
Lay two dried logs (look for gray logs with loose bark) parallel on each end of the grate. If you're purchasing wood from a store, look for *seasoned*, *ready to burn*, or *kiln-dried* on the label.



4 NEWSPAPER Stuff seven grapefruit-size balls of newspaper between the two logs. You'll light this to start the fire. Add dried orange peels for an inviting scent. Never burn wrapping paper or boxes; they can damage your fireplace and release harmful chemicals.

5 STICKS Crisscross kindling, like thin sticks of wood, across the starter logs for air circulation. The flames will spread through the kindling first and then to the logs. Never use driftwood or wood with paint or varnish (it may release toxic chemicals).

6 EXTRA LOGS Add another log every ten to 20 minutes for the first hour, but don't get too aggressive in building the fire. You should always be able to see the top of the flame in the fireplace.





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Master Your Holiday Mail

BY KELSEY KLOSS

■ **SEND BOOKS ON THE CHEAP** Gifting a good read? Mail educational items such as books and DVDs through the USPS Media Mail, starting at \$2.72—typically the cheapest shipping option.

■ **GET A MONTH OF SERVICE UP FRONT** Websites like shoprunner.com and amazon.com/prime offer memberships with free two-day shipping. Sign up for a 30-day trial, then decide if you want to keep the membership after the holidays.

■ **“INSURE” EXPENSIVE GIFTS** To ship costly goods through FedEx, consider paying the 90-cent charge (per \$100 of value) to declare their worth. FedEx doesn't

offer insurance but will pay the declared amount if an item is lost or damaged. UPS covers packages valued up to \$100 and has similar pricing to declare the value of more-expensive goods.

■ **SHOP THE DOLLAR STORE** Need shipping supplies? Dollar stores sell a range of inexpensive bubble mailers, envelopes, packaging tape, and mailing labels for far less than the post office or a shipping center.

■ **DON'T MISS “FREE SHIPPING DAY”** Hundreds of retailers offer to send at no cost gifts purchased online on December 18, 2015. Check freeshippingday.com for a list of participating vendors. **R**

Sources: Lauren Greutman, a frugal-living expert and founder of iamthatlady.com, a consumer savings website; freeshippingday.com; fedex.com; usps.com; ups.com





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*\$300 CREDIT: Ltd time offers. \$100 switcher bill credit + \$200 trade-in credit per elig. line. New lines only. May not be combinable w/other offers. Select locations. AT&T NextSM: Must buy phone via installment agmt w/qual postpaid wireless svc (voice & data). Excludes Lifeline, Residential Wireless & select discounted plans. If wireless service canceled device balance is due. May req. down pmt. Tax due at sale. Limit on no. of financed devices per acct. See att.com/next for details. Switcher Bill Credit: Req's porting elig. number (excludes Cricket) & buying elig. phone in same transaction. Must be active & in good standing for 45 days. Trade-in: Must be in good working condition w/min. \$10 buyback value & meet AT&T Buyback program requirements. At att.com, to complete trade-in & get credit you are emailed promo code (valid for min. 30 days) after smartphone ships. Trade-in Credit: Get instant credit or promo card. Private label AT&T Promotion Card ("Card") issued by MetaBank[®] or CenterState Bank of Florida NA, via license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. At att.com, get Card in ~3 weeks after elig. trade-in & condition validation. Credit & Card (valid for min. 90 days) may be used only toward purch. of AT&T products & svc in AT&T owned retail stores, at att.com, or to pay wireless bill. At participating dealers get credit (w/add'l terms & conditions) for use only at specified dealer. GENERAL TERMS: Activ./Upgrade Fee: \$15/line. Deposit: May apply per line. Return/Restock: If return w/in 14 days, up to \$35 fee. Wireless Svc Terms: Subject to Wireless Customer Agmt. Other fees, monthly charges, overage charges, & restr's apply. Pricing & offers subject to change & may be modified, discontinued, or terminated at any time w/out notice. Puerto Rico: \$300 Credit ends 10/31/2015. Svc not avail. everywhere. See participating store to learn more.

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← RESTROOMS

Is your **BLADDER** calling the shots?



Talk to your doctor about Myrbetriq® (mirabegron), approved by the FDA to treat overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms of:



Urgency



Frequency



Leakage

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

TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR OAB SYMPTOMS STARTS WITH TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR.

Visit [Myrbetriq.com](https://www.myrbetriq.com) for doctor discussion tips. Ask your doctor if Myrbetriq may be right for you, and see if you can get your first prescription at no cost.*

*Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply.



IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Myrbetriq is not for everyone. Do not use Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any ingredients in Myrbetriq.

Please see additional Important Safety Information on next page.

USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

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

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

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

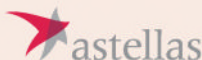
Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril™ and Mellaril-S™), flecainide (Tambocor®), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®). Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines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

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. In clinical studies, the most common side effects seen with Myrbetriq included increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection and headache.

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

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

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



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

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

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

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

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

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

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

Who should not use Myrbetriq?

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

What is overactive bladder?

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

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you:

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

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

Tell your doctor if you take:

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

How should I take Myrbetriq?

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

What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

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

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

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

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

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

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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

How should I store Myrbetriq?

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

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

General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

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

Where can I go for more information?

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

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

What are the ingredients in Myrbetriq?

Active ingredient: mirabegron

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

Rx Only

PRODUCT OF JAPAN OR IRELAND – See bottle label or blister package for origin

Manufactured by:

Astellas Pharma Technologies, Inc.
Norman, Oklahoma 73072

Marketed and Distributed by:

Astellas Pharma US, Inc.
Northbrook, Illinois 60062

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

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Revised: July 2015

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ALL IN

A Day's Work



"We were looking for suitable human DNA to help save our species from extinction, but we got sidetracked by your huge selection of seasonal coffees."

SCENE: A conversation with my friend's father, who knows I do Web design.

Father: I have a business idea. How hard is it to make a Facebook?

Me: Oh, very easy.

Friend: He doesn't mean to make a Facebook profile. He means to remake all of Facebook.

Me: Oh. Very hard.

Father: Oh, OK.

From clientsfromhell.net

WHILE I WAS WORKING as a store Santa, a boy asked me for an electric train set. "If you get your train," I told him, "your dad is going to want to play with it too. Is that all right?"

The boy became very quiet. So, moving the conversation along, I asked, "What else would you like Santa to bring you?"

He promptly replied, "Another train."

From guy-sports.com

GILDING THE LILY is a job seeker's birthright. Here are a few doozies, where the applicant claimed ...

- ... to be a former CEO of the company to which he was applying.
- ... to be fluent in two languages—one of which was pig Latin.
- ... to be a Nobel Prize winner.
- ... to have worked in a jail when he was really in there serving time.
- ... he was fired "on accident."

From careerbuilder.com

WHILE ON PATROL, I arrested a burglar who'd injured himself running from a home. He told me he'd broken in and unhooked the phone before searching for valuables. But he'd panicked when he heard a woman's

voice. I entered the house and heard the same voice: "If you'd like to make a call, please hang up and try your call again."

WILSON HSIA, Temple City, California

MOST OF OUR MUSIC store customers have a story about their old vinyl collection. Once, a man asked how much a record cost. My coworker quoted him the price, then added, "But there's a surcharge if we have to listen to how your mother made you throw out all your old vinyl records."

LINDA NEUKRUG, Walnut Creek, California

Anything funny happen to you at work lately? It could be worth \$100. For details, see page 9 or go to rd.com/submit.

EMINEM WANTS WHAT?!

Match the bizarre dressing-room demands to the celebrity who allegedly made them:

1. A used-chewing-gum attendant (a person whose sole job is to dispose of the star's gum)
2. Toilet bowl filled with rose petals
3. A square melon (evidently very popular in Asia)
4. Every item must be covered in plastic wrap until this star removes said plastic wrap
5. Brand-new toilet seats in the bathroom
6. A koi pond



A.
Madonna



B.
Eminem



C.
Barbra Streisand



D.
Axl Rose



E.
Mariah Carey



F.
Prince

Source: stars.topix.com



Low carb vs. low fat. Treadmill vs. elliptical.
Sugar vs. artificial sweetener. Here, the final word
on the best choices for your health.

Classic Health Debates

BY SUNNY SEA GOLD

What's healthier in your coffee—sugar or artificial sweeteners? Winner: Sugar.

Go ahead and opt for the real stuff. Not because artificial sweeteners aren't safe (they are, confirms the FDA), but the premise that we should eat "real foods" in moderation is persuasive. Whereas your body knows how to deal with sugar

(i.e., you burn it for energy and, if you eat too much of it, store the rest as fat), emerging animal research suggests that, on the other hand, a habit of artificial sweeteners may interfere with metabolism and blood sugar regulation, possibly even contributing to weight gain and glucose intolerance. (One possible exception: People with

PROP STYLIST: SARAH GUIDO-LAAKSO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES

diabetes, who must closely monitor their blood sugar levels, should talk to their doctor about the healthiest choices for them.)

But more important than how you sweeten your java is your overall intake of sugar or artificial sweeteners, says Elisa Zied, RDN, a former spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the author of *Younger Next Week*.

The World Health Organization says adults should limit sugar intake to about six teaspoons total each day (one can of soda can have about ten teaspoons). While FDA recommended limits for sweeteners vary, Zied advises using no more than a couple of packets a day.

Which provides a superior workout—treadmill or elliptical? Winner: Treadmill.

You can raise your heart rate and burn calories on any piece of cardio equipment, but every time your foot comes down on that treadmill belt, you get the bonus of building bone strength too, says Jessica Matthews, senior adviser for health and fitness education for the American Council on Exercise. Unlike the elliptical, only weight-bearing exercises—such as walking, jogging, jumping rope, and weight training—help to preserve bone density.

Most exercisers also simply like the treadmill more than the elliptical, found a recent study published in the

journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, which is a helpful factor if they're trying to stick to an exercise program. That said, folks with arthritis or who are overweight may find the lower-impact elliptical to be more comfortable for their joints, says Matthews.

Which diet is more effective for weight loss—low fat or low carb? Winner: Low carb.

Researchers have been bickering over this diet dilemma for decades, but last year, a randomized study funded by the National Institutes of Health firmly tipped the scales in favor of low-carbohydrate diets.

At the end of 12 months, low-carb eaters lost more weight than did low-fat dieters (about eight pounds more). But a low-carb diet doesn't mean no carb, points out Melina Jampolis, MD, president of the National Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists.

Low carbers in the NIH study, for example, took in about 30 percent of their calories from carbohydrates—about 110 grams of carbs a day for a 1,500-calorie diet. That equates roughly to a cup of oatmeal with half a cup of blueberries and a teaspoon of brown sugar, a small apple, a cup of low-fat Greek yogurt with half a cup of high-fiber cereal, and one piece of whole wheat bread, as well as a lot of veggies and protein. Plenty of wiggle room for pasta lovers.



Which is better when you're tired—exercise or an extra hour of sleep? Winner: Exercise.

Both sleep and exercise are essential to your health, but tacking on an extra hour after a full night's sleep is not going to be as beneficial as a morning sweat session.

A single workout can reduce depressive symptoms and lower blood pressure for hours, even in people without hypertension, studies have found. What's more, workouts can be energizing. A 2006 review of studies by scientists at the University of Georgia found a strong link between physical activity and a reduction in fatigue. Randomized-controlled experiments done by the same researchers in 2008 and 2010 confirmed: Working out doesn't zap energy—it builds it.

Which is the better germ fighter—soap or hand sanitizer? Winner: Soap.

While soap doesn't kill microbes, as the alcohol in some sanitizers can, washing with suds and water makes for cleaner hands, according to the infectious-disease experts at the CDC. Multiple studies have found that the combo of running water, lathering with soap, and friction from rubbing hands for 20 seconds removes the highest number of certain sickness-causing bacteria and viruses. No need to use warm or hot water—it doesn't seem to help clear any more germs than cool water does and may actually dry out your hands more. When you can't get to soap and water, a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol is a decent second choice, says the CDC.

Which is healthier for your feet—wedge heels or ballet flats? Winner: Wedge heels.

Both allow for even distribution of your body weight, since there's ample contact between the sole of the shoe and the floor (versus, say, stiletto heels). But more support can put wedges on top, says Michele Summers Colon, DPM, a podiatrist and shoe designer in El Monte, California. "Very flat flats are the worst shoes you can wear," says Summers Colon. "There is no support for the mid-foot, so the ankle tends to roll inward, causing ankle, calf, and even knee soreness."

Which toothbrush works better—electric or manual? Winner: Electric.

Studies have seesawed, but finally a Cochrane review of 56 studies confirmed in 2014 that powered brushes remove 11 to 21 percent more plaque than do manual ones and reduce other symptoms of gum disease better. Another helpful feature of many electric brushes? The timer. "Patients often don't realize how little time they spend cleaning their teeth," says Ricardo Vidal Gonzalez, DDS, of the Mayo Clinic. "Most dentists agree that proper brushing takes at least two minutes and recommend that to their patients, but many people brush less than a minute."

Good brushing is one of the most

critical ways to promote not only good oral health but systemic health as well, Dr. Gonzalez adds. "An infection in the mouth can negatively affect the cardiovascular system, diabetic patients, and the health of pregnant women."

While most generally healthy people can keep their mouths in shape by brushing with a regular toothbrush twice a day, he says, those with gum disease or issues like arthritis, which can make regular brushing tough, will probably get more benefit from an electric.

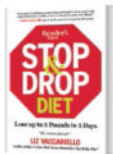
Which is preferable for good digestion—yogurt or a probiotic supplement? Winner: Yogurt and other fermented foods.

"Food is always the best way to get your nutrients," says Gerard Mullin, MD, director of Integrative GI Nutrition Services at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore and author of *The Gut Balance Revolution*. The synergistic effects of all the components in whole foods can't be duplicated in a supplement. When you're shopping for probiotic-containing foods such as kimchi, miso, sauerkraut, kefir, yogurt, and kombucha, look for *live and active cultures* on labels. If you can't stand the taste of foods that contain probiotics, ask your doctor to recommend a high-quality supplement, says Dr. Mullin. **R**

Festive Foods That Help You Lose

BY LIZ VACCARIELLO

 **GOOD NEWS, FOLKS:** A *New England Journal of Medicine* study found that average weight gain over the holidays is less than a pound. Still, when you're trying to lose, every ounce matters. With the right choices, you can eat your favorite party foods and still shed weight. Follow my guide (right) to the best and worst picks for alcohol, dip, and chips to have your fill and save calories. Another tip? After one helping, shift your focus from the food to reconnecting with friends and family. You'll find that's the best holiday treat. 



On the *Stop & Drop Diet*, you stop eating the unhealthy versions of the foods you love so you can drop up to five pounds in five days. Learn more about the book's meal

plans and 21-day course, in which author Liz Vaccariello is your personal coach, at stopanddropdiet.com/book.

RED WINE

✗ Stop Drinking 6 ounces
Australian or Chilean red wine
(alcohol by volume, or ABV:
13.5 to 16 percent)

✓ Start Drinking 6 ounces
European red wine
(ABV: 11 to 13.5 percent)

Drop: 25 calories

Tip: Low ABV equates
to fewer calories.



VEGGIE DIP

✗ Stop Eating 2 tablespoons
Marzetti Spinach Veggie Dip

✓ Start Eating 2 tablespoons
Marzetti Otria Garden Herb
Ranch Greek Yogurt Dip

Drop: 50 calories, 7 grams fat

Tip: Greek yogurt
dips are low in
calories but high
in filling protein.



CHIPS

✗ Stop Eating 21 Crunchy Cheetos

✓ Start Eating 34 Cheetos
Oven Baked Crunchy Cheese
Flavored Snack

Drop: 20 calories, 5 grams fat

Tip: Check whether
your favorite party
chips have a baked
version—and eat more
for fewer calories.



~~Un~~Certainty



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The Season's Germiest Greetings

BY CAROLINE PRADERIO FROM PREVENTION

ARE YOUR salutations making you sick? We wondered after a *JAMA* editorial called out handshakes as a major germ spreader. Rob Danoff, DO, a family physician in Philadelphia, ranks the healthiness of your hellos.



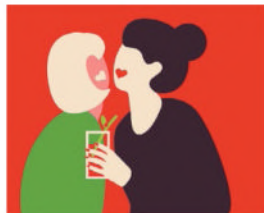
WORST: Handshake

Your palm = a germ hot spot. Extended contact is a no-go in cold-and-flu season. But if you must, wash up afterward ASAP.



BAD: High Five

It's a hit-and-run handshake: same germmy contact point but only about half the bacteria transfer because of the speed.



OK: Cheek Kiss

Generally safe if neither greeter is coughing or sneezing. (Stand under the mistletoe at your own risk.)



GOOD: Hug

Turn your head away and go gentle—hugs that force breath out of the lungs lead to airborne pathogens.



BETTER: Fist Bump

Bug transfer is far lower than with a standard shake. (Bonus: capturing Grandma's first fist bump on camera.)



BEST: Smile and Wave

Yeah, this could be perceived as a little rude. But isn't keeping everyone healthy the kindest regards of all? **R**

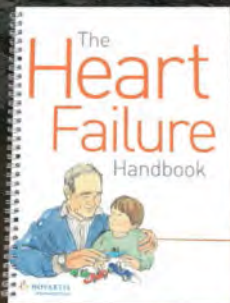
**WITH
HEART FAILURE,
DANGER IS ALWAYS
ON THE RISE.**



Fortunately, knowledge can help you do something about it.

Heart Failure (HF) means your heart isn't pumping the way it should and it worsens over time. About 50% of people die within 5 years of getting diagnosed. It's important to know how to recognize HF symptoms like difficulty breathing and swelling.

Talk to your doctor about managing HF and your treatment options. You can also sign up for a free "Heart Failure Handbook" to learn more. Call 1-844-PUMP4HF or go to KeepitPumping.com today.



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HFS-1321574



NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY KELSEY KLOSS

What Actually Causes Rosacea

Don't just blame your family tree for that red, thick, pimply skin. Your habits play a big role too. In a University Hospitals Case Medical Center study, 275 pairs of twins took lifestyle and medical surveys and underwent skin screenings. Genetics contributed to 46 percent of rosacea risk, while the rest was due to environmental factors such as sun exposure and alcohol. Talk to your doctor about which risks you can reduce; lowering alcohol intake, for example, might be a first step in making a big difference.

Sadness Really Does Turn The World Gray

In a *Psychological Science* study, 127 participants watched either a sad film or a comedy skit and then indicated the color of patches that had been desaturated to more neutral shades. Sad people had a difficult time discerning shades on the blue-yellow axis. Related research has linked perception of these colors to dopamine, the brain's feel-good neurotransmitter that is low when you're feeling down.

Car Sickness Breakthrough

British researchers tested a device that delivers a mild electrical current to the scalp (it feels like a brief tingle) on 20 volunteers who sat in a spinning chair designed to induce motion sickness. Those who received the current before taking a second ride took longer to get sick than before. The current



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY

dampens responses in the brain region that processes motion signals. A device might be developed for use in boats and cars in as little as five years.

Hangover Cure That's A Myth

Sorry, but a jug of water won't help you after too many cocktails. In a Dutch and Canadian study, researchers surveyed 826 Dutch students on methods of relieving hangovers. More than half drank water before sleeping or during the next-day recovery. Water can prevent dry mouth, but the study found it didn't lessen the severity of hangover symptoms.

Surprising Perk of Sarcasm

A caustic coworker could improve your creativity. Participants solved problems after hearing sarcastic phrases, like an insincere "I am sorry," in a study in the journal *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. They were three times more creative than a group hearing sincere messages. Sarcasm forces the brain to think abstractly, boosting innovation.

Diet That Protects Against Breast Cancer

More than 4,000 women followed the Mediterranean diet supplemented with olive oil, the diet with nuts, or a low-fat diet in a new *JAMA: Internal Medicine* study. In five years, women on the Mediterranean diet with olive oil had a 68 percent lower risk of

breast cancer than those on the low-fat diet. The nut group had an insignificantly lower risk. Women with the lowest risk ate about four tablespoons of olive oil per day.

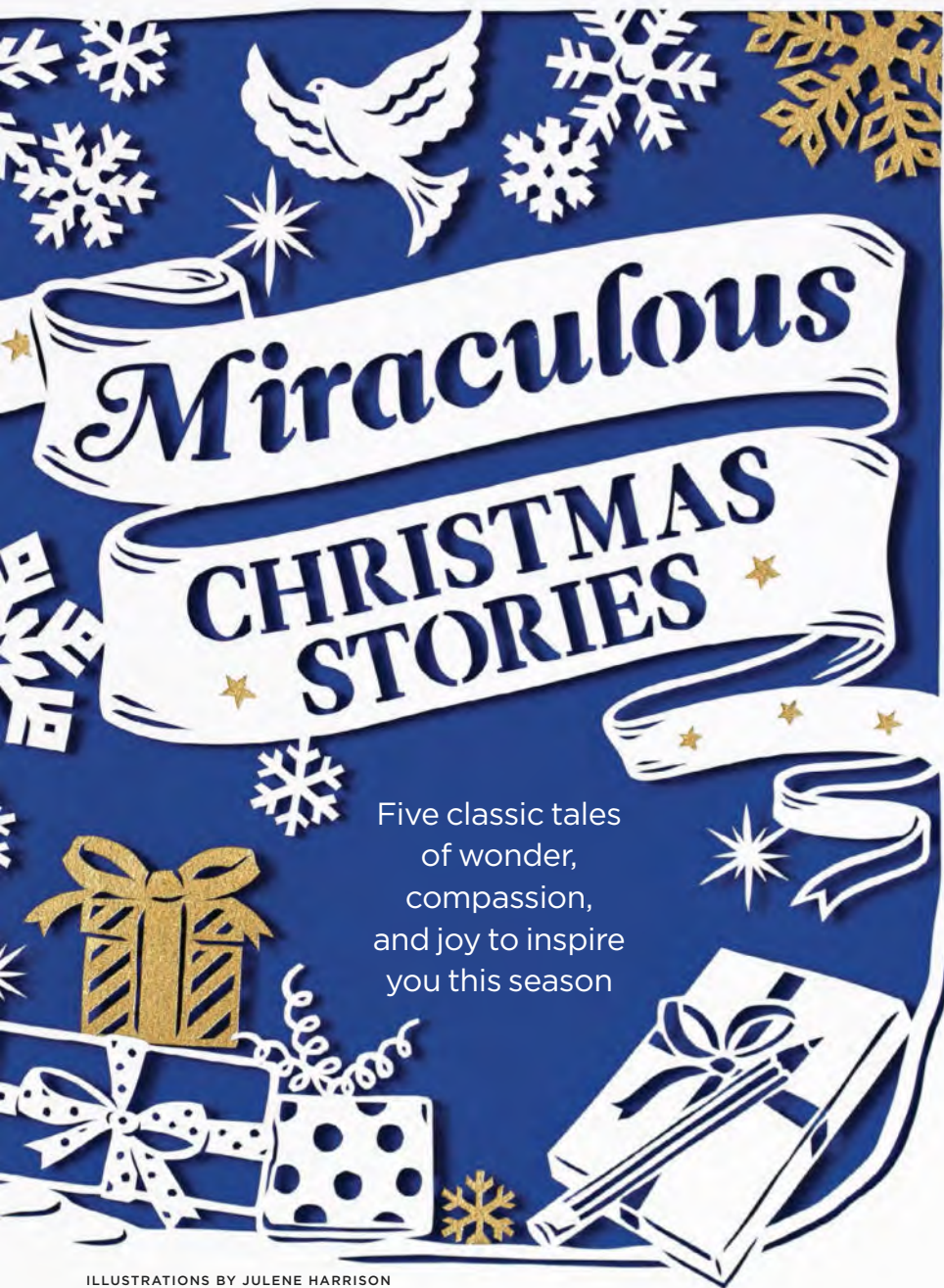
Dizziness After Standing May Signal Bigger Issues

If you often experience dizziness after standing, it's a good idea to tell your doctor. Harvard researchers studied 165 people with orthostatic hypotension (OH), a drop within three minutes of standing, or delayed OH (DOH), a drop after three minutes—both of which can cause dizziness. Those with OH had a death rate of 64 percent over ten years; DOH patients had a death rate of 29 percent. (Only 9 percent of a control group died over the time period.) Patients were likelier than healthy adults to have a number of underlying health conditions, such as Parkinson's disease or diabetes, that might play a role in dizziness.

A Clear Reason for Children To Get Outside

In a new *JAMA* study, nearly 2,000 first graders were divided into two groups. One group maintained a normal schedule, while the other spent an extra 40 minutes outside each school day. Children who spent more time outdoors were 23 percent less likely to become nearsighted. Bright light may affect eye development in a way that inhibits nearsightedness. **R**





The Christmas Present

BY JAMES MICHENER



When I was a boy of nine in the little town of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, I used to mow the lawn of Mrs. Long, an elderly lady who lived across from the Presbyterian Church. She paid me very little for the chore, for she had not much money. But she did promise me, "When Christmas comes, I shall have a present for you." I spent much time wondering what it would be. The boys I played with had baseball gloves and bicycles and ice skates, and I was so eager to acquire any one of these that I convinced myself that my benefactor intended choosing from among them.

"It would hardly be a baseball glove," I reasoned with myself. "A woman like Mrs. Long wouldn't know much about baseball." Since she was a frail little person, I also ruled out the bicycle, for how could she handle such a contraption?

On my last Saturday at work, Mrs. Long said, "Now remember, because you've been a good boy all summer, at Christmas I'll have a present waiting. You come to the door and collect it." These words clinched it. Since she was going to have the present in her house, and since she herself would

be handling it, unquestionably she was giving me a pair of ice skates.

I became so convinced of this that I

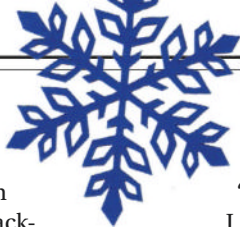
could imagine myself upon the skates. As the cold days of November arrived and ice began to form on the ponds, I began to try my luck on the ice that would be sustaining me and my skates through the winter.

"Get away from that ice!" a man shouted. "It's not strong enough yet." But soon it would be.

As Christmas approached, it was with difficulty that I restrained myself from reporting to Mrs. Long and demanding my present. Our family agreed that the first of December was too early for me to do this. "She may not have it wrapped yet," someone argued, and this made sense.

On the 21st of December, a serious cold snap froze all the ponds so that boys who already had ice skates were

*Published
in Reader's
Digest
in 1967.*



able to use them, and my longing to possess mine, even though I could not open the package for a few days, became overpowering. On December 22 I could restrain myself no longer. I marched down the street, presented myself at the door of the house whose lawn I had tended all summer, and said, "I've come for my present, Mrs. Long."

"I've been waiting for you," she said, leading me into her parlor, its windows heavy with purple velvet. She sat me in a chair, disappeared to another room, and in a moment stood before me holding a package which under no conceivable circumstances could hold a baseball glove or a bicycle or even a pair of skates. I was painfully disappointed but so far as I can recall did not show it, because during the week, my advisers at home had warned repeatedly, "Whatever she has for you, take it graciously and say thank you."

What she had was an ordinary parcel about nine inches wide, a foot long, and no more than a quarter of an inch thick. As Mrs. Long held it in her frail hands, curiosity replaced my initial disappointment, and when I lifted it from her, the extreme lightness of the gift quite captivated me. It

weighed almost nothing.

"What is it?" I asked.

"You'll see on Christmas Day."

I shook it. Nothing rattled, but I thought I did catch a sound of some sort—a quiet, muffled sound that was somehow familiar but unidentifiable. "What is it?" I asked again.

"A kind of magic," Mrs. Long said, and that was all.

Her words were enough to set my mind dancing with new possibilities, so that by the time I reached home, I had convinced myself that I held

some great wonder.

"She gave me a magician's set. I'll turn pitchers of milk into rabbits."

How long the passage to Christmas was! There were other presents of normal dimension and weight. But Mrs. Long's box dominated all, for it had to do with magic.

On Christmas morning, before the sun was

up, I had this box on my knees, tearing at the reused colored string that bound it. Soon the wrapping paper was off and in my lap lay a flat box with its top hinged about halfway down.

With great excitement I opened the hinged lid to find inside a shimmering pile of ten flimsy sheets of black paper, each labeled in iridescent letters, *Carbon Paper Regal Premium*. Of the four words I knew only the second,


On Christmas morning, I had this box on my knees, tearing at the string that bound it.



and what it signified in this context I could not guess.

"Is it magic?" I asked.

Aunt Laura, who taught school, had the presence of mind to say, "It really is!" And she took two pieces of white paper, placed between them one of the black sheets from the box, and, with a hard pencil, wrote my name on the upper sheet. Then, removing it and the Carbon Paper Regal Premium, she handed me the second sheet, which her pencil had in no way touched.

There was my name! It was clean, and very dark, and well formed and as beautiful as Christmas Day itself.

I was enthralled! This was indeed magic of the greatest dimension. That a pencil could write on one piece of paper and mysteriously record on another was a miracle which was so gratifying to my childish mind that I can honestly say that in that one moment, in the dark of Christmas morning, I understood as much about printing and the duplication of words and the fundamental mystery of disseminating ideas as I have learned in the remaining half-century of my life.

I wrote and wrote, using up whole tablets until I had ground off the last shred of blackness from the ten sheets

of carbon paper. It was the most enchanting Christmas present a boy like me could have had, infinitely more significant than a baseball glove or a pair of skates. It was exactly the present I needed, and it reached me at precisely that Christmas when I was best able to comprehend it.

I have received some pretty thundering Christmas presents since then but none that ever came close to the magnificence of this one. The average present merely gratifies a temporary yearning, as the ice skates would have done; the great present illuminates all the years of life that remain.

It was not until some years later that I realized that the ten sheets of Carbon Paper Regal Premium which Mrs. Long gave me had cost her nothing. She had used them for her purposes and would normally have thrown them away, except that she had had the ingenuity to guess that a boy might profit from a present totally outside the realm of his ordinary experience.

I hope this year some boys and girls will receive, from thoughtful adults who really love them, gifts that will jolt them out of all they have known till now. It is such gifts and such experiences—usually costing little or nothing—that transform a life and lend it an impetus that may continue for decades.





Yes, Virginia ...

Dear Editor, I am 8 years old.

Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so."

Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa

Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

*From
The Sun
(New York);
published
in Reader's
Digest
in 1933.*

The Phantom of the Woods

BY DORIS CHENEY WHITEHOUSE



It was late when I got off duty. I didn't even stop at the nurses' barracks to change my uniform, but went directly out into the woods that surrounded the neuropsychiatric wing of the big Army hospital. The leaves under my feet were thick and dry, and as I waded through them I was aware of the tangy smell of autumn. The keys to Ward 8, worn on a long rope around my waist, jingled as I walked.

Anthony D. Nardo* was a young GI, a victim of combat fatigue. Diagnosis: agitated depression, manic-depressive type. I was a cadet nurse, sound of mind, on loan from a civilian hospital. And yet, that very afternoon, standing together on the sun porch of Ward 8, Tony and I had shared an incredible vision. The thing we had seen was somewhere in these woods. I had to find out what it really was, to prove to him that it was only an illusion and thereby end its threat to his recovery.

I thought about the day that Tony had been admitted, three months before. I saw him as he was then, bound to a canvas stretcher, his tousled hair ebony-black. I had watched as a medical corpsman removed his straps and led him into a room where he was to be confined for seven weeks. Beneath gray pajama sleeves, white

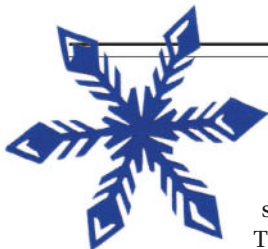
bandages encircled both his wrists.

His face was angular and elongated, and in it I saw a quality of tenderness. Something within me had stirred with an answering tenderness, so that during the days that followed, I favored him over all the others.

Tony had been evacuated from his post in the South Pacific, where on a certain morning he had removed the double-edged blade from a razor and slashed the arteries in both his wrists. All through the early days of his stay on Ward 8, the pale hands tore at their restraints in a desperate effort to rip apart the sutures. For seven weeks he did not speak or even lift his eyes.

In time, the wounds began to heal, and the tortured hands relaxed. Slowly the spirit found its way out of the darkness. I watched him as he moved about the ward, straight and sure. I saw him ministering to the needs of his fellow patients with

*Published
in Reader's
Digest
in 1960.*



the wisdom of one who knew the demons that possessed them.

Tony was almost well. Even our skeptical chief nurse, Lt. Barbara Rankin, was forced to concede it. But then, without warning, on this day in late October, a phantom thing had threatened to destroy him.

The day had begun like any other. I reported for duty at 7 a.m. At noon, I went to lunch. Lieutenant Rankin was waiting for me in her office when I got back. "You'd better go and have a look at your protégé," she said.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing much." Her voice was granite. "He just got a little excited when he saw the Virgin Mary standing in the woods, that's all!"

I turned and ran to Ward 8. I found him kneeling, his forehead pressed against the wire screen which surrounded the sun porch. His eyes were fixed on a spot somewhere out in the woods. He was praying softly.

My voice came out harsh and shaky. "What are you doing, Tony?" I said. "Get up!"

"But you don't understand," Tony said. "I can see the Virgin standing there!" Then he looked up at me. "Is there a statue out there?" he asked.

"No, Tony. I know those woods. There's nothing out there. Now, please get up!"

He turned from me and looked out again



into the woods. For a long time I stood above him, wishing that I could take the dark head in my hands and soothe away the dreadful danger. But one does not do such a thing, especially when one is a student nurse.

Instead, my eyes wandered absently out over the woods, while a dreaded word rose up and pushed against my throat: *hallucination*. Now he must indeed be judged insane.

But as I gazed, my eyes were drawn to something white—and there in the distance among the trees I saw the figure of the Virgin!

I must have cried aloud because Tony turned his head and looked at me. "Ah, you see her too!"

"Yes, I see her too ..."

The rest of the afternoon passed slowly, but at last I was off duty and free to search for the strange Madonna. I felt relief in the knowledge that I had only to find the logical source of the illusion to prove that Tony was not hallucinating.

It was getting dark and cold. I folded my arms against my body underneath my cape, shivering. And then I saw it, just ahead of me.

A white birch stump, tall and slender, had been carved by the hand of time and weather into an abstract image of the Madonna. Even at this close range, the delicate curve of head and shoulder, the graceful draping of the mantle, were clearly visible in the polished bark.

I rushed back to the ward. Tony

was sitting on a wooden bench, staring out into the woods. He spoke without looking up.

"Did you find what you were looking for?"

Suddenly I was afraid. Tony seemed prepared for a simple answer, logical and conclusive. But I knew that I had stumbled upon something inscrutable, a thing that transcended reason, and I was afraid that Tony was not well enough to cope with such a mystery. "It was nothing—just a white birch stump," I whispered.

I should have known that it would not end there.



Late in November, Tony was transferred to a ward where he was free to come and go about the hospital grounds. Seeing him grow stronger day by day, I began to believe that I had been wise in keeping silent about what I had really seen. So I held the lovely secret in my heart, hoarding it—I'm sure the other nurses wondered why I walked alone in the barren woods so often.

It was a week before Christmas. My training period was over, and I was being reassigned. I said goodbye to Tony and learned that he had been given leave to go home for the holidays. Then I went to my room and

began to pack. Suddenly I saw that a light snow was falling, just beginning to adhere to the branches of the trees. I got my coat and went outside.

The wind was cold on my face, and I blinked my eyes against it. My heart was beating very fast, and I began to run. And then, within a few yards of my destination, I stopped.

There, on a glistening blanket of snow, clad in a heavy coat of olive drab, a solitary figure knelt, the white flakes falling like weightless feathers on his bare head. He knelt at the feet of the woodland Madonna, which was clothed in a new whiteness.

When he finished his prayer, I did a thing that one does not do when one is a student nurse. I moved to the place where he knelt and stood behind him, taking the dark head in my hands. I brushed away the snow that had collected in his hair.

"You'll catch your death of cold," I said.

He looked up at me, and I could see that he had been expecting me.

"Miracles come in many sizes," he said.

Then he stood and turned to face me, smiling. And in his smile were all wisdom and all tenderness—and I knew that he was well.

**Names have been changed.*



Pennies from Heaven

BY JULIE BAIN



y dad loved pennies, especially those with the elegant stalk of wheat curving around each side of the ONE CENT on the back. Those were the pennies he grew up with in Iowa during the Depression, and Lord knows he didn't have many.

When I was a kid, Dad and I would go for long walks together. He was an athletic six-foot-four, and I had to trot to keep up with him. Sometimes we'd spy coins along the way—a penny here, a dime there. Whenever I picked up a penny, he'd ask, "Is it a wheat?" It always thrilled him when we found one of those special coins produced from 1909 to 1958, the year of my birth. On one of these walks, he told me he often dreamed of finding coins. I was amazed. "I always have that dream too!" I told him. It was our secret connection.

Dad died in 2002. By then, I was living in New York City, which can be exciting, or cold and heartless. One gray winter day, not long after his death, I was walking down Fifth Avenue, feeling bereft, and I glanced up and found myself in front of the First Presbyterian Church, one of

the oldest churches in Manhattan. When I was a child, Dad had been a Presbyterian deacon, but I hadn't

attended in a long time. I decided to go.

Sunday morning, I was greeted warmly and ushered to a seat in the soaring old sanctuary. I opened the program and saw that the first hymn was "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Dad's favorite, one we'd sung at his funeral. When the organ and choir began, I burst into tears.

After the service, I walked out the front doors, shook the pastor's hand, stepped onto the sidewalk—and there was a penny. I stooped to pick it up and turned it over, and sure enough, it was a wheat. A 1944, a year my father was serving on a ship in the South Pacific.

That started it. Suddenly wheat pennies began turning up on the sidewalks of New York everywhere. I got most of the important years: his birth year, my mom's birth year, the year his mother died, the year he graduated from college, the war years, the year he met my mom, the year they got married, the year my sister was born. But alas, no 1958 wheat penny—my year, the last year they were made.

Meanwhile I attended church

*Published
in Reader's
Digest
in 2007.*

pretty regularly, and along toward Christmas a year later, I decided I ought to join. The next Sunday, after the service, I was walking up Fifth Avenue and spotted a penny in the middle of an intersection. Oh, no way, I thought. It was a busy street; cabs were speeding by—should I risk it? I just had to get it.

A wheat! But the penny was worn,

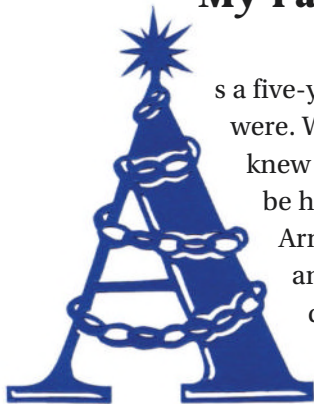
and I couldn't read the date. When I got home, I took out my magnifying glass and tilted the copper surface to the light. There was my birthday.

As a journalist, I'm in a profession where skepticism is a necessary and honest virtue. But I found 21 wheat pennies on the streets of Manhattan in the year after my father died, and I don't think that's a coincidence.



My Favorite Christmas

BY BILL BUTLER



s a five-year-old, I didn't know how poor we were. We had just moved to Manhattan and knew no one in that city. My father would not be home that Christmas Eve; he was in the Army serving overseas. My mother, in her 20s, and I worked all afternoon making tree decorations. The kitchen table was crowded with stars, globes, and animals made of shiny paper.

There was at least a dozen feet of a chain made of colored paper loops. We were going to get the Christmas tree later in the evening, when the prices for them usually dropped.

Just after sunset, we bundled up against the chilly Manhattan night

and walked four blocks to a parking lot where they sold Christmas trees.

"How much is your cheapest tree?" my mother asked the man standing at the lot entrance.

He held his gloved hands over the fire in a steel barrel. His brown skin

glowed in the flickering. "Thirty dollars, miss."

Her smile disappeared. "Nothing for less?"

The man picked up a small tree branch and dropped it into the fire. "I just work here, miss. I can't change the price."

The sudden melancholy in my mother's face made me sad.

The man looked down at me for what felt like a long time; it probably was only moments. He pointed at a mound of branches, the size of a car, in the corner of the lot. "See that pile of cuttings? Behind it is a tree that we can't sell. You can have it for free."

"Thank you," my mother said. She nudged my shoulder.

"Thank you, sir," I said.

We hurried to the back of the mound. There it was, a scrawny thing just a little taller than me, leaning against the wire fence. It had few branches—almost a ghost of a tree.

My mother shouted to the man, "Can we take some of these branches, also?"

He waved his arm. "Take it all if you want to, miss."

I hauled the tree, and she carried a bundle of branches. We set the tree in the corner of the living room, away from the radiator. I couldn't imagine

how we could hang many decorations on a sparse tree.

She was smiling again.

"Go to sleep now. Santa will decorate the tree for us."

I woke at dawn and rushed into the living room. To my amazement, the tree had filled out. I couldn't even see the trunk anymore. And it had a beautiful natural shape. The decorations glistened in the morning light. The chain of blue, red, white, and green paper draped gracefully around the tree. I almost didn't notice the presents wrapped in shiny paper under it.

Days later, curiosity made me examine the tree closely. Christmas evening, my mother had used wire from clothes hangers to somehow fix discarded branches to the almost nude tree trunk. She had carefully trimmed it with scissors to get its perfect shape.

A few weeks later, my father returned from overseas. When I told him about the tree, something happened that I didn't understand at the time. Tears filled the eyes of that burly soldier.

Since then, I have seen many wonderful holidays. That Christmas remains as my favorite. **R**

Bill Butler
is a
Reader's
Digest
reader.



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



"Simmons ... party of one?"

I'VE GIVEN UP social media for the New Year and am trying to make friends outside Facebook while applying the same principles. Every day, I walk down the street and tell passersby what I've eaten, how I feel, what I did the night before, and what I will do tomorrow. Then I give them pictures of my family, my dog, and me gardening. I also listen to their conversations and tell them I love

them. And it works. I already have three people following me—two police officers and a psychiatrist.

*Submitted by NANCY L. CLARK,
Points, West Virginia*

I THINK A LOT OF the conflict that happened in the Wild West could've been avoided had architects in those days just made their towns big enough for everyone.

Seen on reddit.com

HOW CAN YOU EVER be late for anything in London? They have a huge clock right in the middle of the town.

JIMMY KIMMEL

MARY GOES to the post office to buy 50 stamps for her Hanukkah cards. "What denomination?" asks the postal clerk.

Mary thinks a second before replying, "Give me six Orthodox, 12 Conservative, and 32 Reform."

HONESTLY, OFFICER, I wouldn't have pulled over had I known you were just going to criticize me.

🐦@BRIDGER_W (BRIDGER WINEGAR)

DEAR CHARLIE,

We've been neighbors for six tumultuous years. When you borrowed my snowblower, you returned it in pieces. When I was sick, you blasted Metallica. And when your dog decorated my lawn, you laughed. I could go on, but I'm not one to hold grudges. So I am writing this letter to tell you that your house is on fire.

Cordially, Harry

Submitted by EDWARD PHILLIPS,
Boynton Beach, Florida

MY FRIENDS TELL ME that cooking is easy, but it's not easier than not cooking.

Comedian MARIA BAMFORD

I'M DRIVING WITH THIS GUY, and he runs right through a Stop sign. So I say, "Hey, that was a Stop sign." And

he says, "I drive like my brother!" A few blocks later, he plows right through a red light. I say, "You just ran a red light." And he says, "I drive like my brother!" So now we're coming up on a green light, and he slows down. I'm confused, so I say, "It's green; why are you slowing down?" He says, "My brother might be coming."

HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU,

Facebook, but the entire Internet is already a Dislike button.

🐦@JOSHGROBAN

BIFOCALS ARE God's way of saying, "Keep your chin up."

Comedian MATT WOHLFARTH

HOW NOT TO ANSWER TEST QUESTIONS

Are you childish? ☐ Yes ☒ No	Are you drunk? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Are you paranoid? ☐ Yes ☒ No, WHY?	Are you stupid? ☐ Yes ☒ No

How do you answer "Send us your gag, and we may publish it and give you \$\$\$"? Here's how: OK! See page 9 for details.



When a neighbor pulls an unconscious toddler from an icy creek, the boy's family fears the worst. But one doctor won't give up hope.

Baby IN THE Stream

BY DEREK BURNETT

*Gardell Martin,
age two, beside the
creek that nearly
took his life*

I T'S THE FIRST warm day of spring, and the March sun pours over the ridge that borders Doyle and Rose Martin's rural property outside Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania. Yesterday it rained all day, melting the better part of the long winter's snow, and what the rain left behind, the sun is taking care of today. Water seeps and trickles down the surrounding slopes, swelling the normally humble creeks until they nearly jump their banks. The stream that runs through the Martins' yard is usually ankle deep and lethargic, but today it is so spring-riled that it courses angrily beneath the footbridge at startling speed, up to a man's waist and frigid.

The Martin boys will not squander such a lovely afternoon. After the school bus drops them off, they barge outside to ride bikes, gathering sticks to build a fire. They are what people in some circles call free-range kids; the Martins have eight in all [their youngest boy born just this April], and in keeping with their own upbringings, Doyle and Rose expect their children to learn independence and responsibility, the older ones looking after the younger. Today, Gary, 11, and Greg, seven, are playing with little Gardell, who is not yet two. Doyle, a trucker, is out on the road. Rose is working in the kitchen, where she can frequently check on the boys through the window.

Suddenly Greg bursts through the door, his face streaked with tears. "I can't find Gardell!" he screams. "He was just with me!"

Rose and her two eldest, Gloria and Grace, charge outside, hollering Gardell's name. Just to make sure, they check the two outbuildings, but everybody is thinking about that raging

stream. Rose dials 911, and the girls call their father. The property echoes with the family's frantic shouts for Gardell, as mother and children scramble along the banks of the brook, sickened by the speed of that icy gray water.

RANDALL BEACHEL IS washing dishes at his kitchen sink when he looks idly out the window and sees Grace and Gary Martin running alongside the stream where it exits their property. Something's wrong. Grace is barefoot, no jacket. They're yelling. He steps outside. "What's wrong?" he calls to Gary.

"We can't find my little brother!"

Randall's heart sinks. He runs back inside, tells his wife, Melissa, what's going on, and pulls on his shoes. Together they rush outside and down the road to where the stream passes through pastureland some eighth of a mile downstream of the Martin place. Randall holds the strands of electric fence wire, ignoring the shocks, as

Melissa climbs through. When they reach the brook, Melissa goes downstream and Randall begins following the brook back toward the Martins, scanning the water's surface. After a moment, he sees a tiny pair of navy-blue boots partially obscured by brush. A step or two farther, and he sees the whole picture: the little boy, still clad in a hooded snowsuit, hanging bizarrely on his side in the middle of that rushing stream, his face turned away from the current.

Randall plunges into the brook, gasping involuntarily—the water temperature is around 35 degrees—loses his footing, and blunders into a deep hole. Recovers himself. Pulls the limp little body off what turns out to be a grassy underwater knoll. Staggers back to dry land, hollering, “I found him!” even as he turns the kid over to see if he can drain the water from his mouth and lungs. An ambulance is coming up the road. Randall raises an arm, and it stops.

A paramedic comes racing across the field, and Randall hands the little boy off and stands watching as the rescuer rushes back toward the ambulance, performing CPR as he goes. When Randall reaches the road, the ambulance staff have torn off Gardell's clothes. One of the paramedics has placed a mask onto the little boy's face and is hand-pumping air into his lungs; the other is rhythmically compressing the tiny chest to force blood through

the body. That's all Randall sees before the vehicle turns around and speeds toward town. As for Rose, she never gets so much as a glimpse of her son.

They're taking him to Evangelical Community Hospital in nearby Lewisburg, she learns. Within minutes, her sister and brother-in-law arrive at the house, and together they speed



The CPR has gone on for more than an hour. “If he survives, it will be a miracle,” says a paramedic.

toward the hospital. As they rush into the emergency room 15 minutes later, Rose is told they're transporting him by Life Flight to a trauma center. Through the windows of the waiting area she can see the chopper on the heliport, its interior illuminated, medical workers hunched over what must be Gardell's body. Her brother-in-law is an EMT, and he can tell that they're still doing CPR in there—after all this time!—but he says nothing to Rose.

Mike Leshner, the paramedic who first carried Gardell to the ambulance, heads back to the station. The CPR has gone on for more than an hour; typically rescuers give up after less than half that time. “If he survives,” Leshner remarks, “it will be a miracle.”

A moment later, the aircraft lifts off. Rose watches through the window, tears stinging her eyes; she has missed her little one again.

DR. FRANK MAFFEI is preparing for his evening rounds in the pediatric intensive care unit at Geisinger Medical Center's Janet Weis Children's Hospital in Danville, some 15 miles from Lewisburg. He gets a call from the ER downstairs: toddler on his way via Life Flight, full cardiac arrest. Worse: CPR ongoing for more than an hour, to no avail. Not promising.

Still, Dr. Maffei and his colleagues leap into action. Upon Gardell's arrival, they run a breathing tube down the boy's throat, and four residents line up on his left side to continue CPR: two minutes of chest compressions, move to the back of the line. It's critical to get Gardell warmed up, so even as the limp little body jiggles and jolts under the force of the chest compressions, other doctors and nurses carefully insert an IV and two catheters to send warm fluids into his body, which is at only 77 degrees.

A resident turns to Dr. Maffei. "At what point are we going to stop?"

"We'll stop if we warm him to 90 degrees and he's still unresponsive," Dr. Maffei says.

"What about a pH?"

The resident is referring to the acidity of the blood, which spikes when a person stops breathing; a pH lower than 6.8 is considered incompatible with life.

Dr. Maffei hears himself answer, "6.5." It's an outrageous threshold. A few minutes later, the pH comes back

at 6.54. No heartbeat, no breathing, and a low pH: The boy is dead.

Dr. Maffei has been doing this work for 25 years. Objectively, he knows that it's all over. Yet he can't shake some strange, subjective notion that Gardell is still in there. "Keep going," he says.

Now it's after 8 p.m., and Gardell remains unresponsive. The doctors move him to the operating room and prepare to put him on a heart bypass machine. They've gotten his temperature up to 83 degrees, but the machine will allow them to warm his blood externally and recirculate it, speeding the process. A surgeon stands scrubbed and ready to cut into the little boy's chest.

"Let's just do one more pulse check," Dr. Maffei says, laying his fingertips against Gardell's femoral artery. To his amazement, there is a pulse. His colleague Dr. Rich Lambert checks the brachial artery—there is a strong pulse there. Excited, they stand in the OR, monitoring Gardell's pulse for more than an hour, then transfer him to pediatric intensive care.

Dr. Maffei steps out into the waiting area to meet Rose. "Gardell's alive," he says. "However, we have to understand that he's alive after essentially being dead for an hour and 41 minutes." He needs to manage her expectations: Gardell's oxygen-starved brain will probably be forever damaged. It's anyone's guess as to when—or whether—he will wake up and what function he'll have when he does.

NOW IT'S THE wee hours of the morning. Doyle Martin has gotten in from the highways, and he and Rose are sitting over Gardell's bed. "Gardell," Doyle says as he always does when he reaches home, "I came back from trucking to play with you. Do you want to play?"

And to the eternal astonishment of all, the boy opens his eyes and turns his head toward his father—the boy who, eight hours ago, was dead.

Gardell stays in the hospital two more days, under light sedation. He's kept at a cool 90 degrees to prevent his brain tissue from swelling. He begins opening his eyes more frequently, obviously aware of his surroundings. The breathing tube is removed. He's weaned off the sedation. On the fourth day, a Sunday, he returns home. Within a week, he's playing with his siblings. "You would never know anything happened," Rose says.

SO HOW DID a little boy who, by every objective measure, was dead for nearly two hours come back to life unscathed? To the Martins and many others, Gardell's survival was simply a miracle. Rose points out that his pulse returned just as local church groups were meeting to pray on his behalf.

Physiologically, the key to Gardell's survival was the fact that he nearly drowned in ice water. "Hypothermia imparts a degree of protection from the detrimental effects of low blood



*"I never felt hopeless," says Dr. Maffei.
"I thought, We've got a shot to save him."*

flow and low oxygen," Dr. Maffei says. The severe cold stopped Gardell's heart, but it also saved his brain, just as you might put an amputated finger on ice until you can reattach it. At a higher temperature, Gardell's brain cells would surely have died for lack of oxygen; as it was, they could wait—at least for an hour and 41 minutes. But no one involved in the rescue has ever seen such an extreme case.

Randall Beachel, the neighbor who pulled Gardell from the stream, sometimes looks over at the Martin place and chuckles at the sight of the towheaded youngster kicking dirt around in the garden or chasing his brothers. It's simple to him too. "It's truly a miracle," he says. "Truly a miracle."

R

That's Outrageous!

THE 7 FUNNY SINS

LUST: When their pet tortoise, Boris, escaped through a fence, the frantic owners searched YouTube for tortoise pornography. The mating noise is loud and startling, reports the *Week UK*. It's also evidently quite seductive, since Boris lumbered home soon after hearing the videos play.

Source: theweek.co.uk

GREED: A North Carolina college student was arrested for using counterfeit money. What gave her away was the signature on the bill. It's supposed to be the name of the secretary of the Treasury. Instead, it was signed "Moe Money."

Source: myfox8.com

ANGER: A Miami Beach thief snatched a necklace from a tourist and took off. He was arrested when he returned to berate the victim over his "fake" jewelry.

Source: nbcmiami.com

SLOTH: Don't be that lazy person who never rereads her texts. When a British woman texted a baker to make a cake for her daughter's 21st birthday, she requested a "wee



blond figure" on top. Thanks to auto-correct, the figure adorning the cake was a wee *blind* girl.

Source: telegraph.co.uk

PRIDE: A thief on the lam was arrested

soon after liking a copy of his Wanted poster on a Crime Stoppers Facebook page.

Source: *Great Falls Tribune* (Montana)

ENVY: Pro tip—covet only those things you know how to use. After spotting the car of their dreams, two Houston teens pointed a gun at the owner and made him hand over the keys. One problem—the car had a manual transmission, and neither teen knew how to drive a stick, which made it a lot easier for the cops to catch them.

Source: Associated Press

GLUTTONY: A burglar broke into a house in Petaluma, California. He might have gotten away with it except for the fact that he stopped to heat up some Tater Tots. That's not all. When the homeowner returned, she found him snoozing on the couch.

Source: Associated Press

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The Moth

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A GAME GUY

BY MORAN CERF

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

A few years ago, I was involved in a massive scheme to win an Israeli quiz show similar to *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, only I never wanted to be on the show. I was walking down the street when a friend called and said, "Dude, you've got to run home. You're going to be on the radio in 20 minutes. Explanations later." As I walked, he explained that

he'd won the show the week before and wasn't allowed to go on again. So he'd played this week using my name.

Now I'm going to be on the radio competing with ten other people to win the show. Not to worry—he's planning to help me. With one phone, I listen to the radio show, and on another phone, I have my friend telling me what to say. I am just echoing the answers: "Who won the 1998 World Cup?" "France." "France." "What's the largest country in Africa?" "Algeria."

SARAH STACKE/COURTESY THE MOTH

"Algeria." And so on as we advance to the final round, where I get the question "Who has sold the most albums?" I know the answer, so I shout it.

As it turns out, Britney Spears is not the one.

A SALTY JOKE

BY KATHLEEN MILLER
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

In the fourth grade, I am accepted into the advanced and gifted program, and I am convinced life is going to be all Doogie Howser and Harvard from now on. As the only girl, I spend most of my year trying to win the approval of a dozen boys who think that an XX chromosome always indicates a terminal diagnosis of stupid with cooties.

Trying to be cool, I play a practical joke, slipping the leftovers from a salt rock crystal experiment into four milks at lunch. The boys really enjoy the disgusted looks on the faces of the drinkers as they recoil, and I am in. An hour later, I am in the principal's office.

He informs me that there are four boys in the hospital having their stomachs pumped. They are near death. There could be manslaughter charges. Little do I know, the boys have momentary tummy aches and go back to class. The principal is trying to teach me a lesson.

Then my mother arrives, meets with the principal, calls him out on his total BS, and takes me out for ice cream and to see the *The Aristocats*.

HIPPIE HIPPIE SHAKE

BY NESHAMA FRANKLIN
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

I'm standing on a stage, almost stark naked. They start to laugh. This is not a bad dream; this is real life. It's 1969, and I am about to do the hippie dance of love in a San Francisco nightclub so the tourists can have that "wild experience" in a safe place with drinks in hand.

I had two toddlers at home and far from a showgirl's body: short legs, wide hips, wide hair. And my partner, the dance teacher who came up with this gig, looked more like a grumpy botanist than a hippie. But for four glorious weeks, I got paid for what I loved to do: improvising with an ironic twist, hence the laughs.

Now, to look at me, you might not think "naked hippie dance of love." These days, I'm a librarian. When you see an old lady with frizzy gray hair, you have no idea what she's been up to. I believe this is the manifesto. I believe we are like Russian nesting dolls; everything we've done is still inside us. Twist off the top and there it is. **R**

THE MOTH

Reader's Digest has partnered with the Moth on storytelling events in 19 cities, with the best stories appearing in a special issue of RD next summer. To get tickets to a show near you or subscribe to the Moth's critically acclaimed podcast, visit themoth.org.



OUTRAGEOUS WHAT SOME CHARITIES DO WITH YOUR DONATIONS AND HOW TO ENSURE YOUR GIVING COUNTS

UNCHARITABLE!

BY DEREK BURNETT

AMERICANS ARE A GIVING PEOPLE. Last year, we donated more than \$358 billion to charity. The overwhelming majority of American charities are responsible, efficient, and passionate about their missions. But sometimes, our donations are wasted through poor management or, worse, fraud.

When that happens, everybody loses: The needy are deprived of funds that otherwise would have helped them, the government misses out on money that should have been taxed, legitimate charities are bypassed, and donors become hesitant to give.

Most of the charities mentioned in this article have not preyed on the kindness of the charitable. But to a one, their actions have raised real questions about how some organizations operate. Here are four practices that need changing.

MONEY MUGGED: CANCER FUND OF AMERICA

Until recently, you might have received a telemarketing call on behalf of the Knoxville, Tennessee-based Cancer Fund of America (or one of its three affiliates: Cancer Support Services, the Breast Cancer Society, and Children's Cancer Fund of America), boasting of the organization's work "in the forefront of the fight against cancer." The charity provided "direct aid," the pitch continued, to people "anywhere in the United States" suffering from "over 240 types of cancer." Its charter includes driving cancer victims to chemo appointments, paying for their groceries, and providing pain medication to suffering children.

So you wouldn't know, then, had you donated money to the group, that only 3 percent of your gift would have gone to "direct aid," according to the Federal Trade Commission. And, according to a fraud case filed by the FTC and law enforcement partners from all 50 states, none of that direct aid consisted of driving people to chemo or doling out pain meds.

Instead, Cancer Fund of America distributed "gift boxes" filled with Little Debbie's snack cakes, hotel-size shampoo samples, and batteries. The only drugs the charities distributed were those they received as gifts in kind, which were shipped to developing countries and were often not

cancer meds; in fact, some were inappropriate for cancer patients, according to the complaint.

What happened to the other 97 percent of the donations? According to the FTC, much of the money was spent on the charity's staff—principally the founder, James T. Reynolds Sr., and his extended family and friends. A trip to Disney World (with a paid babysitter in tow). A trip to Vegas. College tuition for several employees. Ten cars. Dues for a dating website. A luxury cruise. Apart from the perks, more than twice the amount that was spent on children with cancer went to pay the salaries of Reynolds's children, in-laws, fellow churchgoers, and friends, who were hired without regard to their qualifications, says the FTC. Reynolds's son, for example, received nearly \$371,000 in 2010 as CEO of the spin-off group Breast Cancer Services.

According to the FTC's complaint, the groups "operated as personal fiefdoms characterized by rampant nepotism, flagrant conflicts of interest, and excessive insider compensation, with none of the financial and governance controls that any bona fide charity would have adopted." The fraud allegations pertain to the activities of the defendants from 2008 to 2012—a four-year run in which they raised \$187 million from unsuspecting donors. How did they get away with it for so long?

Tracy Thorleifson, the FTC's lead attorney on the case, points out that the federal government's hands are



tied when it comes to charities fraud. "There is no federal law that prohibits a charity from lying to consumers to get money," she says. Cracking down on fraud is generally left up to the states and their patchwork of laws.

Because it lacks jurisdiction over charities, the FTC sought to prove that Cancer Fund of America and its affiliates were not charities at all but rather corporations whose real purpose was to enrich their leaders. In June, without admitting wrongdoing, two of Cancer Fund of America's affiliates agreed to a settlement in which the

organizations would be shuttered and their executives would pay restitution. (Reynolds declined to comment on the case, and litigation pertaining to Cancer Fund of America itself, and Reynolds personally, continues.) But that might not be the last we hear of the Reynolds clan. "They could set up shop again tomorrow," says Sandra Miniutti, CFO of the watchdog organization Charity Navigator. "It's pretty scary."

In 2011, Reynolds's estranged wife's daughter-in-law, Julia Connatser, who once worked for Cancer Fund of America, founded her own non-profit, called the Ameri-

can Association for Cancer Support. It was not named in the FTC's suit but is reportedly under investigation by the state of Tennessee. As of now, it has not been accused of wrongdoing and is operating freely in Knoxville.

MONEY ON MUTE: THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Even the best nonprofits can fail the public by not being up-front about how they've spent donors' money.

When a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, killing some

100,000 people and leaving more than a million homeless, Americans were quick to open their wallets, many reaching for their favorite charity, the American Red Cross, in the same way they'd reach for Coca-Cola when they wanted a soda. After the acute phase of the disaster, other groups whose coffers were full began turning away money, but the Red Cross continued fund-raising aggressively, ultimately pulling in \$488 million worth of donations, more than any other organization. A year after the disaster, as part of its Haiti relief, the charity announced that it expected to spend \$100 million on "construction of permanent homes and community development projects."

Four years later, NPR and ProPublica made this stunning accusation: Despite having spent nearly half a billion dollars, the American Red Cross had built a grand total of six new homes in Haiti. The Red Cross has since explained that those six homes were a modest pilot project and that when faced with the on-the-ground realities—a cholera outbreak, the nation's confounding land-title system, corruption, security issues—the group had changed its plans. But by now, donors and the public were demanding details about exactly what had gone on in Haiti—and the American Red Cross was not satisfying the clamor.

Instead of opening its books, the charity has disclosed its spending only

GIVING WISELY

1. Be proactive. Identify the causes you care most about, then do research to find the best charities carrying out that type of work. This keeps you on the offensive rather than in a defensive "point of sale" posture in the face of heart-tugging pitches.

2. Give a few large gifts instead of many small ones. Don't be guilt-tripped into giving to every worthy cause. Developing your own "portfolio" of charities gives you more sway within the organizations and makes you more inclined to give carefully.

3. Never give over the phone in cold-call situations. Instead, if you're interested, keep your donations out of the hands of telemarketers by donating via the group's website or mailing a check.

4. Perform due diligence. Look into the group's finances, and once you give, follow up to find out how the money was spent.

5. Take advantage of these watchdog groups. Before making a donation, check out the charity at these websites: Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org), Charity Watch (charitywatch.org), and the National Association of State Charity Officials (nasconet.org).

in broad categories, without getting down to the specifics (a spokesperson told *Reader's Digest* that it hasn't provided a more granular breakdown because of lack of public appetite for such detail).

Much of the group's spending on shelter in Haiti was on projects carried out by distributing funds to nearly 50 partner aid groups (including Habitat for Humanity and Save the Children), each of which took a cut for administrative costs. As ProPublica and NPR reported, in one case, the American Red Cross forwarded \$6 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) to subsidize rent for people who had been living in tents. IFRC took out 26 percent for "administration," and on top of that, the American Red Cross took its standard 9 percent for "program management." In another case, the American Red Cross took a full 24 percent for costs incurred while managing another group's efforts.

So was all this money well spent? Misspent? Who knows? Under tough questioning from Sen. Charles Grassley, the organization has reportedly offered some specifics about its Haiti programs but requested that its testimony not be made public, citing contractual obligations with its partner organizations. Grassley has complied with the request but noted, "It's hard to see how disclosing the dollar amounts given from the Red Cross to the individual organizations and how those organizations spent the money

would harm anyone." Still unknown is how much money the Red Cross transferred to other organizations, how much was budgeted to each project, and the number of people those projects assisted.

"One of the things with charities that you hope for is transparency," says Eileen Heisman, CEO of the National Philanthropic Trust. "I think the Red Cross is basically a good organization, but in this particular situation, it very much looks like they need to answer more questions."

MONEY MORASS: COMMUNITY CHARITY ADVANCEMENT

Operating costs are an expensive fact of life for charities. But some try to hide the real price.

Community Charity Advancement, a Pompano Beach, Florida-based charity, says its mission is "to provide health-care services, products, and related assistance to those in need in the U.S. and Central and South America and to provide support to breast cancer research; also assisting victims who have lost their homes to fire." (It does business under several names to accommodate such versatility.) Its 2013 tax filing shows that a staggering 91 percent of its spending went to overhead—administrative and fund-raising costs—and that a meager 9 percent went to its actual programs, according to Charity Watch.

But at least Community Charity Advancement is open about how inefficient it is. Other groups are more subtle. Accounting rules allow them to bundle certain fund-raising expenses in with program costs—if the fund-raising efforts can be somehow construed as supporting their missions.

“It can get kind of funny,” says Daniel Borochoff, president of Charity Watch. A charity might “say the fund-raising that interrupted your dinner is a program service because they ask you to pray for people who are suffering in the Sudan, or ask you to fly a flag and show you’re patriotic. Then they can magically turn the cost of that solicitation call into a program service.”

Such techniques can have a major impact on how effectual charities appear to be. The Police Protective Fund claims to spend 48 percent of its expenses on its mission (“to promote officer safety through education”). But according to Charity Watch, when you move the joint fund-raising and program costs into the overhead category, you see that only 7 percent goes to that cost. The rest is operating cost.

Overhead alone is not a sufficient basis on which to evaluate a charity. A number of oversight groups point out that for a charity to be effective, it must invest in its people and its infrastructure—after all, nonprofits compete for executive talent against the private sector, and no one believes that a choice to work for a nonprofit should be a vow of poverty. Instead,

judge groups by how much work they get done: Did they feed 10,000 homeless people last year? Did they counsel 500 pregnant teens?

But even the “overhead myth” busters concede there are reasonable limits to how much it should cost to operate a charity. “For organizations that deliver services, whether those services are provided by a for-profit or a nonprofit, the norm for overhead is 25 to 35 percent,” says Tim Delaney, president of the National Council of Nonprofits.

MONEY TO THE MIDDLEMAN: OPTIMAL MEDICAL FOUNDATION

When a nonprofit fund-raising caller interrupts your dinner, even though he or she may speak of “our mission” and “our work,” there’s a strong chance that that person has never even met anyone from the charity he or she is asking you to give to. In fact, the person you’re talking to most likely works for a decidedly for-profit enterprise: a third-party fund-raising firm that skims a hefty cut off every dollar raised for the charity that hired it. Thousands of charities use third-party solicitors, and their commissions can be so exorbitant—from 65 to 95 cents of every dollar raised—that they leave very little for the nonprofits to apply to their actual work.

Take the Association for Firefighters and Paramedics, which paid a fund-raising firm nearly 90 cents for every

dollar it raised in 2012. Or Optimal Medical Foundation, which also does business as the Association for Breast Cancer Research and the Childhood Disease Research Foundation. According to an investigation by the *Tampa Bay Times* and the Center for Investigative Reporting, the Michigan-based group raised \$7.8 million from 2003 to 2012 through solicitors—and paid the third-party solicitors who raised it \$7.6 million over the same period. As a result, only 3 percent of funds went toward the organization's stated mission of supporting research into cancer and childhood diseases. Even the National Rifle Association of America paid a fund-raising firm called InfoCision \$59 for every \$100 it raised on its behalf in 2013, according to New York State's attorney general.

Third-party fund-raising is perfectly legal, and many legitimate charities use it simply because it's cheaper than having full-time fund-raisers on staff. Still, most of us would be reluctant to give if we knew that the lion's share of our donation was being diverted to a for-profit business. For that matter, the charity itself would rather have

you donate directly instead of having the telemarketer siphon off the bulk of it. "That cost," concedes Michael Gamboa, president of the Association for Firefighters and Paramedics, "is a difficult thing to deal with."

States can require telemarketers to disclose that they work for a third party—but not all states do. And some telemarketers will lie. Unfortunately, the only way to know how big a cut the third party gets is to dig up the nonprofit's records—something few of us are going to do. But that point is largely academic anyway. "More of the money is going to the telemarketing firm than to the charity itself," says Charity Navigator's Miniutti. What more do you need to know?

GIVING TO CHARITY should not be fraught with such pitfalls. Still, it would be irresponsible to stop donating just because some groups are corrupt or inept. As Delaney of the National Council of Nonprofits says, legitimate charities are "the first responders for our nation's most challenging and critical social ills."

So give ... but carefully.

R



THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM

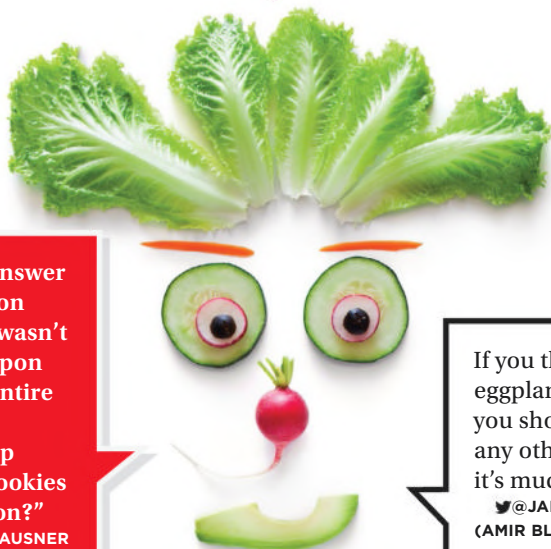
When I turned two, I was really anxious because
I'd doubled my age in a year.

I thought, If this keeps up, by the time I'm six, I'll be 90.

STEVEN WRIGHT

Laugh Lines

WHAT A MOUTHFUL!



Clif Bars answer the question "What if it wasn't frowned upon to eat an entire sleeve of mushed-up oatmeal cookies before noon?"

🐦@JULIEKLAUSNER

If you think eggplant is good, you should try any other food; it's much better.

🐦@JAKEANDAMIR
(AMIR BLUMENFELD)

Triscuit is the perfect combination of cracker and doormat.

🐦@1CARPARADE
(JASON GELLES)

The closest I've been to a diet this year is erasing food searches from my browser history.

🐦@PAULYPELIGROSO

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

JIM GAFFIGAN

Sick of having to go to two different huts to buy pizza and sunglasses. 🐦@LEEMANISH

GETTY IMAGES

Should you be included in the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water notification database?

If you lived or worked at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in 1987 or before, the U.S. Marine Corps wants to hear from you.

The Marine Corps is committed to finding and encouraging all service members, their families, and civilian employees who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune in 1987 or before to be included in the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water notification database.

A Federal public health agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), is studying whether past exposure to chemicals in the drinking water at Camp Lejeune may have caused adverse health effects. Best estimates from ATSDR's water modeling efforts indicate that some of the base's water was affected by chemicals as early as 1953 until as late as 1987. Registered individuals will be notified of results from the latest independent scientific studies as they are finalized.

Information regarding study results and health care legislation can be found by visiting the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water website, [**www.marines.mil/clwater**](http://www.marines.mil/clwater).

Already registered? Visit the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water website for additional information or to update your contact information.

To register, or if you have any additional questions or concerns, please visit www.marines.mil/clwater or call toll free at 877-261-9782 Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.





I GREW UP IN A TROUBLED HOME in the 1970s, on the outskirts of downtown Orlando, Florida. Our subdivision was one of many that backed up to a dwindling orange grove. One remnant farm, an island of pastureland with horses, a few cattle, and an enormous garden, remained among the sea of tract houses. The home was an early-1900s Arts and Crafts three-story with a great porch, complete with a swing. I loved that storybook house.



The mom next door
invited me over, and
a new world beckoned

THE CURIOUS WORLD OF Mrs. Reese

BY HEATHER SELLERS

It was nothing like the one I lived in with my mother, a dark place with strict rules about befriending others. As in: Don't. Never, ever talk to anyone, my mother said. She suffered from profound depression and paranoid delusions. Just getting through the day was a war for my mother.

Who lives on that utopian plot of

land next door? I wondered. Sometimes I glimpsed the father on a horse with a lasso. Sometimes I saw the two boys—dark curly hair—running around the land, chased by two border collies. I never saw the mother, but the whole operation looked like heaven, and I yearned to join that family.

One day, in sixth grade, a petite, raven-haired woman wearing ruby-red lipstick, gold eye shadow, and thick mascara was introduced to our class: Mrs. Reese. Mrs. Reese explained that she was starting Spanish Club. She invited anyone interested in learning Spanish language and culture to stay after school.

I could not take my eyes off her tortoiseshell bracelets, her sparkling aquamarine rings.

The bell rang, and to my shock, no one went up to Mrs. Reese. I was under a strict order to go straight home. But that day, I lingered. I finally asked Mrs. Reese when the club started.

"We could begin right now if you like," she said.

She smiled with her eyes, as though we were in on a secret. I felt beautiful. I felt fluent in Spanish, fluent in everything. We met right there in the hallway, and that day she taught me this question: *¿Dónde está su casa?* That's when I learned that Mrs. Reese lived in the mansion with the kids and the collies. The house of my dreams was her house. That day, I learned how to answer questions about my age, my favorite food (*¡helado!*), and the names of every *perro* I had known. And I learned, Do you want to come over tomorrow after school for cooking lessons?

Sí, sí, sí. What is another word for yes?

But my mother had been definitive. Never. We could not mix with the neighbors.

I harangued my mother all summer and into fall, well after Spanish Club had dissolved. *I have been invited to that house.*

You have to let me go. I spoke as though my life depended on it. It did. I wept at night sometimes, so worried that Mrs. Reese and her cowboy husband and those two beautiful boys with the black curly hair would move away before I could get my cooking lesson. Before I could get inside.

At some point, I managed to wear my mother

down, and one Saturday afternoon, I got on my bike and rode out to the little farm. Fuchsia bougainvillea ran rampant around the porch. There was a great bronze hand, a door knocker. Mrs. Reese opened the door grandly and ushered me in.

We had tea on her red velvet sofa. She painted my toenails crimson. She showed me how to water the African violets that lived in clusters in nearly every room. The details of that afternoon are etched in my mind: We made guacamole and then a garlicky picadillo. I carefully wrote out the recipes on white paper, making

“YOU SMELL
DIFFERENT,”
SHE SAID,
EYEING ME
SUSPICIOUSLY.
I AM
DIFFERENT. I’M
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT.

notes as she explained the steps. *You can't have too much garlic.* We spoke in Spanish. In Spanish, my voice was loud, romantic, assertive. This is the real me! I remember thinking.

Mr. Reese pulled onto the property in a gigantic blue Ford truck and went straight to the barn. Ty, who was in my class at school, came in from playing outside. Mrs. Reese put one hand on top of his head—those gorgeous black curls, those wild blue eyes. She put her other hand, all those sparkling rings—on my back. She pressed us toward each other. *Mi novia, mi novio.* It was alarming. And thrilling.

Ty ran up to the attic—three flights. Mrs. Reese encouraged me to follow. She nodded, serious, vibrant, as though saying, Step into your life. But it wasn't quite right. I did not want to kiss a boy; I wanted to bake *dulces*.

When I got home, I announced to my mother that we had to get the ingredients for picadillo immediately. "You smell different," she said, eyeing me suspiciously. I am

different. I am completely different.

She said no. "You know I can't have garlic in the house." She hated the smell. I felt hurt, proud, disloyal, and brilliant, all at once, when I told my mother, "Mrs. Reese doubles the garlic." My toenails, secret jewels, sparkled in my sneakers.

I knew I'd always have garlic in my house. I knew I'd paint my nails the deepest, bloodiest red, first chance I got. I knew I'd learn to dance, become fluent in Spanish.

For Christmas, Ty gave me a silver necklace from their family trip to Colombia, slipping it to me at school.

My mother never permitted me another visit to Mrs. Reese's house, and I saw her only occasionally from a distance, hanging laundry on the line or sweeping their cavernous front porch. But four decades and countless moves later, I still have the necklace: a little silver man, carved with strange symbols, a talisman from the life she showed me, proof of a possible future. **R**



BEING GROAN-UPS

So much of being an adult is bringing a bottle of wine someone brought to your house to someone else's house.

✉ @EAXFORD (EMILY AXFORD)

Hey, empty-nest parents: If you want your kid to call you, just change your Netflix password.

✉ @CRAYDRIENNE (ADRIENNE AIRHART)





PHOTO

OF LASTING
INTEREST

Photograph by Zsíros István Chosen by Omid Safi,

*director of the Duke Islamic Studies
Center and onbeing.org columnist*

Among images of Syrian refugees in a makeshift camp inside a Budapest train station, “it was the black-and-white photo that grabbed my heart. A moment of affection, tenderness, and love, in the midst of months of chaos. In their love, their tenderness, and their hope, there is hope for all of us.”

What if our recollections could live on long after we were gone? Scientists are racing to make that eternity a reality.

FOREVER *Memory*

BY SIMON PARKIN FROM BBC.COM FUTURE

A FEW MONTHS BEFORE SHE DIED, my grandmother made a decision. Bobby, as her friends called her, was a farmer's wife who not only survived World War II but also found in it justification for her natural hoarding talent. So she kept old envelopes and bits of cardboard cereal boxes for note taking and lists. She kept frayed blankets and musty blouses in case she needed material to mend. She was also a meticulous chronicler. She kept albums of photographs of her family members. She kept the love letters my late grandfather sent her while he traveled the world with the Merchant Navy.

Yet in the months leading up to her death, the emphasis shifted from hoarding to sharing. Every time I visited, my car would fill with stuff: unopened cartons of orange juice, balls of fraying wool, damp antique books. The memories, too, began to move out. She sent faded photos to her family and friends, as well as letters detailing some of her experiences.



On the afternoon of April 9, she posted a letter to one of her late husband's friends. In the envelope, she enclosed snapshots of my grandfather and his friend playing as children. "You must have them," she wrote. It was a demand but also a plea, perhaps, that these things not be forgotten when, a few hours later, she slipped away in her favorite armchair.

SAVING YOUR MIND

The hope that we will be remembered after we are gone is both elemental and universal. Poet Carl Sandburg captured this feeling in his 1916 poem "Troths":

*Yellow dust on a bumblebee's wing,
Grey lights in a woman's asking eyes,
Red ruins in the changing sunset
embers:
I take you and pile high the memories.
Death will break her claws on some
I keep.*

Since the first paintings were scratched on cave walls, humans have sought to confound the final vanishing of memory. Oral history, diary, memoir, photography, film, and poetry: They're all tools in our arsenal in the war against time's whitewash. Today, we bank our memories onto Internet servers. There's the Facebook time line that records our life events, the Instagram account on which we store our likeness, the Gmail inbox that documents our conversations, and the YouTube channel that broadcasts how we move, talk, or sing. We

collect and curate our memories more thoroughly than ever before.

We save what we believe to be important, but what if some essential context to our words or photographs is lost? How much better it would be to save everything: everything we know and all that we remember, the love affairs and heartbreaks, the moments of victory and of shame, the lies we told and the truths we learned. If you could save your mind like a computer's hard drive, would you? It's a question some hope to pose to us soon. Engineers are now working on technology that will be able to create wholesale copies of our minds and memories that live on after we are burned or buried. If they succeed, it promises to have profound, and perhaps unsettling, consequences for the way we live, whom we love, and how we die.

San Franciscan Aaron Sunshine's grandmother also passed away recently. "One thing that struck me is how little of her is left," the 30-year-old tells me. "It's just a few possessions. I have an old shirt of hers that I wear around the house. There's her property, but that's just faceless money. It has no more personality than any other dollar bill."

Her death inspired Sunshine to sign up with Eternime, a Web service that strives to preserve a person's memories after death. It works like this: While you're alive, you grant the service access to your Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail accounts, uploaded

photos, geo-location history, and even Google Glass recordings of things that you have seen. The data are collected and analyzed before being transferred to an artificial-intelligence avatar that tries to emulate your looks and personality. The avatar learns more as you interact with it, with the aim of better reflecting you after you're gone.

"It's about creating an interactive legacy," says Marius Ursache, one of Eternime's cocreators. "Your great-grandchildren will use it instead of

a search engine or time line to access information about you—from photos of family events to your thoughts on certain topics to songs you wrote but never published."

Sunshine says a service like Eternime "could change our relationship with death, creating truer memories in the place of the vague stories we have today." The technology is in its infancy now. But even after it exists, the company could go under someday, and the people it homes would die a second death.

As my own grandmother grew older, some of her memories retained their vivid quality; others became confused, the specifics shifting in each retelling. Eternime and other services counter the fallibility of memory; they offer a way to fix the details of a life. But as anyone who has a Facebook profile

As anyone who has a Facebook profile knows, recording one's life is a selective process.

knows, the act of recording one's life is a selective process. Details can be tweaked, emphases can be altered, and relationships can be erased.

What if, rather than picking and choosing what we want to capture

in digital form, it were possible to record the contents of a mind in their entirety? The effort would require three breakthroughs. Scientists must first discover how to preserve, non-destructively, someone's brain upon death. Then the content of the pre-

served brain must be analyzed and captured. Finally, that capture must be re-created on a simulated human brain on which a backup of a human's memories could "run."

ARE WE OUR MEMORIES?

Research in this area is ongoing. The BRAIN Initiative is working to record brain activity from millions of neurons, while the Human Brain Project in Europe tries to build integrated models from this activity.

Anders Sandberg, a researcher from the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University, wrote a paper in 2008 titled "Whole Brain Emulation: A Roadmap," in which he describes similar projects as stepping-stones toward emulating the human brain. Progress has been slow but steady, he says.

Creating a digital record of a human's memories is a different sort of challenge. "Memories are not neatly stored like files on a computer to create a searchable index," Sandberg says. "Memory consists of networks of associations that are activated when we remember. A brain emulation would require a copy of them all."

Beyond all the discussions about how we could save our minds, is that something any of us truly wants? Humans long to preserve their memories because they remind us of who we are. If our memories are lost, we cease to know who we were and what it all meant. But at the same time, we tweak and alter our memories to create the narrative of our lives. To record them with equal weight might not be useful, either to us or to those who follow us.

Could the true worth of the endeavor rest in the reassuring knowledge for a person that he or she won't be lost without trace? Through our descendants, we reach for a way to live on beyond our passing. All parents take part in a grand relay race through time, passing the gene baton on and on through the centuries. Our physical traits—those eyes, this temperament—

endure in some diluted or altered form. So, too, perhaps, do our metaphysical attributes ("What will survive of us is love," as Philip Larkin put it in his 1956 poem "An Arundel Tomb").

I ask Sunshine why he wants his life to be recorded. "To be honest, I'm not sure," he says. "The truly beautiful things in my life are too ephemeral to be preserved in any meaningful way. A part of me wants to build monuments to myself. But another part of me wants to disappear completely." That might be true of us all: We desire to be remembered, but only the parts of us that we want to be remembered.

Despite my grandmother's careful distribution, many photographs remained in her house. These unknown faces meant a great deal to her in life, but in a curious way, they have become a burden to those of us left behind.

My father asked my grandmother's vicar what he should do with the pictures; to just throw them away seemed disrespectful. His advice was simple. Take each photograph. Look at it carefully. In that moment, you honor the person in it. Then you may discard it and be free. **R**

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WRITE AND WRONG

I'm a writer. I write checks. Mostly fiction.

WENDY LIEBMAN

There is something **TERRIBLY WRONG** with the Home Security Industry

Hi. Maybe you've been broken into before, or maybe you haven't. But if you ever decide to protect your home against unfortunate events like that, you're in for a shock. We don't want to scare you off of protecting your home, because honestly, it's really important that you do it. But we feel responsible for sharing these facts with you: Most alarm companies take advantage of people who want to feel safe. They offer you a "free" outdated alarm, but then require you to sign a long-term contract full of nasty fine print. It's pretty sickening really...but this isn't going to be all bad news. There is a better way to protect your home—get a SimpliSafe home security system. Our founder, a Harvard engineer, studied the alarm industry and found all kinds of problems with it. He designed SimpliSafe to fix them, so you can be safe, without having to spend a fortune or sign any contracts. SimpliSafe is wireless, you can order it online, and it's easy to install yourself—anyone can do it. It fits any home, apartment, or business. And it's more affordable, more reliable, and stronger than just about anything else out there.

Most companies say "trust us" and then ask you to sign on the dotted line. We're asking you to let us prove that a SimpliSafe home security system is the smarter choice. Try SimpliSafe for 60 days. We think you'll love it. But if you don't, that's okay too. Return it to us for a full refund, no questions asked.

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—Dave Ramsey, financial expert & New
York Times bestselling author

NATIONAL INTEREST





The Big One

It's past due. Are we ready?

BY KATHRYN SCHULZ FROM THE *NEW YORKER*

WHEN THE 2011 EARTHQUAKE and tsunami struck Tohoku, Japan, Chris Goldfinger was 200 miles away, in the city of Kashiwa, at an international meeting on seismology. As the shaking started, everyone in the room began to laugh. Earthquakes are common in Japan—that one was the third of the week—and the participants were, after all, at a seismology conference. Then everyone in the room checked the time.

SEISMOLOGISTS know that how long an earthquake lasts is a decent proxy for its magnitude. The 1989 earthquake in Loma Prieta, California, which killed 63 people and caused six billion dollars' worth of damage, lasted about 15 seconds and had a magnitude of 6.9. A 30-second earthquake generally has a magnitude in the mid-sevens. A minute-long quake is in the high sevens, a two-minute quake has entered the eights, and a three-minute quake is in the high eights. By four minutes, an earthquake has hit magnitude 9.0.

The earthquake was not particularly strong. Then it ticked past the 60-second mark, making it longer than the others that week. The shaking intensified. At a minute and a half, everyone in the room got up and went outside.

It was March. There was a chill in the air and snow flurries but no snow on the ground. Nor, from the feel of it, was there ground on the ground. The earth snapped and popped and rippled. It was, Goldfinger thought, like driving through rocky terrain in a vehicle with no shocks, if both the vehicle and the terrain were also on a raft in high seas. The quake passed the two-minute mark. The flagpole atop the building that he and his colleagues had just vacated was whipping through an arc of 40 degrees. The building itself was base-isolated,

a seismic-safety technology in which the body of a structure rests on movable bearings rather than directly on its foundation. Goldfinger lurched over to take a look. The base was lurching, too, back and forth a foot at a time, digging a trench in the yard. His watch swept past the three-minute mark and kept going.

For decades, seismologists had believed that Japan could not experience an earthquake stronger than magnitude 8.4. In 2005, however, at a conference in Hokudan, a Japanese geologist named Yasutaka Ikeda had argued that the nation should expect a magnitude 9.0 in the near future—with catastrophic consequences because Japan's famous earthquake and tsunami preparedness was based on incorrect science. Now, Goldfinger realized as the shaking hit the four-minute mark, the planet was proving the Japanese Cassandra right.

For a moment, that was pretty cool: a real-time revolution in earthquake science. Almost immediately, though, it became extremely uncool because Goldfinger and every other seismologist in Kashiwa knew what was coming. One of them pulled out a cell phone and started streaming videos from the Japanese broadcasting station NHK, shot by helicopters that had flown out to sea soon after the shaking started. Thirty minutes after Goldfinger first stepped outside, he watched the tsunami roll in, in real time, on a two-inch screen.



When the next full-margin rupture happens, the Pacific Northwest will suffer the worst disaster in the history of North America.

In the end, the magnitude-9.0 Tohoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami killed more than 18,000 people, devastated northeast Japan, triggered the meltdown at the Fukushima power plant, and cost an estimated \$220 billion. The shaking earlier in the week turned out to be the foreshocks of the largest earthquake in the nation's recorded history. But for Chris Goldfinger, a paleoseismologist at Oregon State University and one of the world's leading experts on a little-known fault line, the main quake was itself a kind of foreshock: a preview of another earthquake still to come.

The Coming Quake

MOST PEOPLE in the United States know just one fault line by name: the San Andreas, which runs nearly the length of California and is perpetually rumored to be on the verge of unleashing "the big one." That rumor is misleading, no matter what the San Andreas ever does. Every fault line has an upper limit to its potency, determined by its length and width and by how far it can slip. For the San Andreas, that upper limit is roughly an 8.2—a powerful earthquake but, because the Richter scale is logarithmic, only 6 percent as strong as the 2011 event in Japan.

Just north of the San Andreas, however, lies another fault line. Known as the Cascadia subduction zone, it runs for 700 miles off the coast of the Pacific Northwest, beginning near Cape Mendocino, California, continuing along Oregon and Washington, and terminating around Vancouver Island, Canada. The *Cascadia* part of its name comes from the Cascade Range, a chain of volcanic mountains that follows the same course a hundred or so miles inland. The *subduction zone* part refers to a region of the planet where one tectonic plate is sliding underneath (subducting) another. Tectonic plates are those slabs of mantle and crust that, in their epochs-long drift, rearrange the earth's continents and oceans.

Take your hands and hold them palms down, middle fingertips touching. Your right hand represents the North American tectonic plate, which bears on its back our entire continent. Your left hand represents an oceanic plate called Juan de Fuca, 90,000 square miles in size. The place where they meet is the Cascadia subduction zone. Now slide your left hand under your right one. That is what the Juan de Fuca plate is doing: slipping steadily beneath North America. When you try it, your right



After a 9.2 quake and tsunami, “our operating assumption is that everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast,” says a FEMA official.

hand will slide up your left arm, as if you were pushing up your sleeve. That is what North America is not doing. It is stuck, wedged tight against the surface of the other plate.

Curl your right knuckles up so that they point toward the ceiling. Under pressure from Juan de Fuca, the stuck edge of North America is bulging upward and compressing eastward, at the rate of, respectively, three to four millimeters and 30 to 40 millimeters a year. It can do so for quite some time. But it cannot do so indefinitely. There is a backstop—the craton, that ancient unbudgeable mass at the center of the continent—and, sooner or later, North America will rebound like a spring. If only the southern part of the Cascadia subduction zone gives way—your first two fingers, say—the magnitude of the resulting quake will be somewhere from 8.0 to 8.6. That’s the big one. If the entire zone gives way at once, an event that seismologists call a full-margin rupture, the magnitude will be somewhere from 8.7 to 9.2. That’s the very big one.

Flick your right fingers outward, forcefully, so that your hand flattens back down again. When the next very big earthquake hits, the northwest edge of the continent, from California to Canada and the continental shelf to

the Cascades, will drop by as much as six feet and rebound 30 to 100 feet to the west. Some of that shift will take place beneath the ocean, displacing a colossal quantity of seawater. The water will surge upward into a huge hill, then promptly collapse. One side will rush west, toward Japan. The other side will rush east, in a 700-mile liquid wall that will reach the Northwest coast, on average, 15 minutes after the earthquake begins. By the time the shaking has ceased and the tsunami has receded, the region will be unrecognizable. Kenneth Murphy, who directs FEMA’s Region X, the division responsible for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska, says, “Our operating assumption is that everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast.”

In the Pacific Northwest, the area of impact will cover some 140,000 square miles, including Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, Eugene, Salem, Olympia, and some seven million people. When the next full-margin rupture happens, that region will suffer the worst natural disaster in the history of North America. Roughly 3,000 people died in San Francisco’s 1906 earthquake. Almost 2,000 died in Hurricane Katrina. FEMA projects that nearly 13,000 people will die in the Cascadia earthquake and tsunami. Another

27,000 will be injured, and the agency expects it will need to provide shelter for a million displaced people and food and water for another 2.5 million. "This is one time that I'm hoping all the science is wrong, and it won't happen for another thousand years," Murphy says.

In fact, the science is robust, and one of the chief scientists behind it is Chris Goldfinger. Thanks to work done by him and his colleagues, we now know that the odds of the big Cascadia earthquake's happening in the next 50 years are roughly one in three. The odds of the very big one are roughly one in ten. Even those numbers do not fully reflect the danger—or, more to the point, how unprepared the Pacific Northwest is to face it. Forty-five years ago, no one even knew the Cascadia subduction zone existed, and its discovery stands as one of the greatest scientific detective stories of our time.

Reading the Trees

ALMOST ALL THE world's most powerful earthquakes occur in the Ring of Fire, the volcanically and seismically volatile swath of the Pacific that runs from New Zealand up through Indonesia and Japan, across the ocean to Alaska, and down the west coast of the Americas to Chile. The Ring of Fire, it turns out, is really a ring of subduction zones. Nearly all the earthquakes in the region are caused by continental plates getting

stuck on oceanic plates—as North America is stuck on Juan de Fuca—and then getting abruptly unstuck. And nearly all the volcanoes are caused by the oceanic plates sliding deep beneath the continental ones.

The Pacific Northwest sits squarely within the Ring of Fire. Off its coast, an oceanic plate is slipping beneath a continental one. Inland, the Cascade volcanoes mark the line where, far below, the Juan de Fuca plate is heating up and melting everything above it. In other words, the Cascadia subduction zone has, as Goldfinger put it, "all the right anatomical parts." Yet not once in recorded history has it caused a major earthquake—or any quake to speak of. By contrast, other subduction zones produce major earthquakes occasionally and minor ones all the time. The question facing geologists was whether the Cascadia subduction zone had ever broken its eerie silence.

In the late 1980s, Brian Atwater, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, and postgraduate student David Yamaguchi found the answer—and a major clue in the Cascadia puzzle. Their discovery is best illustrated in a place called the ghost forest, a grove of western red cedars on the banks of the Copalis River, near the Washington coast. The cedars are spread out across a salt marsh on a northern bend in the river, long dead but still standing. Leafless, branchless, barkless, they are reduced to their trunks and worn to a smooth silver gray.



A view of two earthquake-induced phenomena: The 2011 tsunami in Japan was triggered by a 9.0 earthquake; Washington's ghost forest resulted from a 1700 rupture.

It had long been assumed that they died slowly, as the sea level around them gradually rose. But by 1987, Atwater, who had found in soil layers evidence of sudden land subsidence along the Washington coast, suspected that that was backward—that the trees had died quickly when the ground beneath them plummeted. To find out, he teamed up with Yamaguchi, a specialist in dendrochronology, the study of growth-ring patterns in trees. Yamaguchi took samples of the cedars and found that they had died simultaneously: In tree after tree, the final rings dated to the summer of 1699. Since trees do not grow in the winter, he and Atwater concluded that sometime from August 1699 to May 1700, an earthquake had caused the land to drop and killed the cedars. That time frame predated the written history of the Pacific Northwest—and so, by rights, the detective story should have ended there.

But it did not. If you travel 5,000 miles due west from the ghost forest, you reach the northeast coast of Japan. That coast is vulnerable to tsunamis, and the Japanese have kept track of them since at least AD 599. One incident has long stood out for its strangeness. On the eighth day of the 12th month of the 12th year of the Genroku era, a 600-mile-long wave struck the coast, leveling homes, breaching a castle moat, and causing an accident at sea. The Japanese understood that tsunamis were the result of earthquakes, yet no one felt the ground shake before the Genroku event. When scientists began studying it, they called it an orphan tsunami.

Finally, in a 1996 article in *Nature*, a seismologist named Kenji Satake and three colleagues, drawing on the work of Atwater and Yamaguchi, matched that orphan to its parent. At approximately nine at night on January 26, 1700, a magnitude-9.0 earthquake

struck the Pacific Northwest, causing sudden land subsidence and, out in the ocean, lifting up a wave half the length of a continent. It took roughly 15 minutes for the eastern half of that wave to strike the Northwest coast. It took ten hours for the other half to cross the ocean. It reached Japan on January 27, 1700: by the local calendar, the eighth day of the 12th month of the 12th year of Genroku. Once scientists had reconstructed the 1700 earthquake, certain previously overlooked accounts also came to seem like clues.

The reconstruction of the Cascadia earthquake of 1700 is one of those rare natural puzzles whose pieces fit together as tectonic plates do not: perfectly. It is wonderful science. It was wonderful for science. And it was terrible news for the millions of inhabitants of the Pacific Northwest. As Goldfinger put it, "In the late '80s and early '90s, the paradigm shifted to 'uh-oh.'"

When the Dogs Bark

GOLDFINGER TOLD ME this in his lab at Oregon State. Inside the lab is a walk-in freezer. Inside the freezer are floor-to-ceiling racks filled with cryptically labeled tubes, four inches in diameter and five feet long. Each tube contains a core sample of the seafloor. During subduction-zone earthquakes, torrents of land rush off the continental slope, leaving a permanent deposit on the bottom of the ocean. By counting the number and the size of deposits in each

sample, then comparing their extent and consistency along the length of the Cascadia subduction zone, Goldfinger and his colleagues were able to determine how much of the zone has ruptured, how often, and how drastically.

Thanks to that work, we now know that the Pacific Northwest has experienced 41 subduction-zone earthquakes in the past 10,000 years. If you divide 10,000 by 41, you get about 243, which is Cascadia's recurrence interval: the average amount of time that elapses between earthquakes. That time span is dangerous both because it is too long—long enough for us to unwittingly build an entire civilization on top of our continent's worst fault line—and because it is not long enough. Counting from the earthquake of 1700, we are now 315 years into a 243-year cycle.

It is possible to quibble with that number. Recurrence intervals are averages, and averages are tricky: Ten is the average of nine and 11 but also of 18 and two. It is not possible, however, to dispute the scale of the problem. The devastation in Japan in 2011 was the result of a discrepancy between what the best science predicted and what the region was prepared to withstand. The same will hold true in the Pacific Northwest—but here the discrepancy is enormous.

The first sign that an epic Cascadia earthquake has begun will be a compressional wave, radiating outward from the fault line. Compressional



Among natural disasters, tsunamis are close to unsurvivable. The only likely way to outlive one is not to be there when it happens.

waves are fast-moving, high-frequency waves, audible to dogs and certain other animals but experienced by humans only as a sudden jolt. They are not very harmful, but they are potentially very useful, since they travel fast enough to be detected by sensors 30 to 90 seconds ahead of other seismic waves. That is enough time for earthquake early-warning systems, such as those in use throughout Japan, to automatically perform a variety of lifesaving functions: shutting down railways and power plants and triggering alarms so that the public can take cover. The Pacific Northwest has no early-warning system. When the Cascadia earthquake begins, there will be, instead, a cacophony of barking dogs and a long, suspended, what-was-that moment before the surface waves arrive. Surface waves are slower, lower-frequency waves that move the ground both up and down and side to side: the shaking, starting in earnest.

Soon after that shaking begins, the electrical grid will fail, probably everywhere west of the Cascades and possibly well beyond. In theory, those who are at home should be safest; it is easy and relatively inexpensive to seismically safeguard a private dwelling. But most people in the Pacific Northwest have not done so. Anything

indoors and unsecured will lurch across the floor or come crashing down. Refrigerators will walk out of kitchens, unplugging themselves and toppling over. Water heaters will fall and smash interior gas lines. Houses that are not bolted to their foundations will slide off—or, rather, they will stay put, obeying inertia, while the foundations jolt westward.

Other, larger structures will also start to fail. Ian Madin, who directs the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), estimates that 75 percent of all structures in the state are not designed to withstand a major Cascadia quake. FEMA calculates that, across the region, something on the order of a million buildings—more than 3,000 of them schools—will collapse or be compromised in the earthquake. So will half of all highway bridges, 15 of the 17 bridges spanning Portland's two rivers, and two thirds of railways and airports; also, one third of all fire stations, half of all police stations, and two thirds of all hospitals.

The shaking from the Cascadia quake will set off landslides throughout the region—up to 30,000 of them in Seattle alone, the city's emergency-management office estimates. It will also induce a process called liquefac-

tion, whereby seemingly solid ground starts behaving like a liquid, to the detriment of anything on top of it. Fifteen percent of Seattle is built on liquefiable land, including 17 day-care centers and the homes of some 34,500 people. So is Oregon's critical energy-infrastructure hub, a six-mile stretch of Portland through which flows 90 percent of the state's liquid fuel and that houses everything from electrical substations to natural gas terminals. The sloshing, sliding, and shaking will trigger fires, flooding, pipe failures, dam breaches, and hazardous-material spills. Four to six minutes after the dogs start barking, the shaking will subside. For another few minutes, the region, upended, will continue to fall apart on its own. Then the wave will arrive, and the real destruction will begin.

Among natural disasters, tsunamis may be the closest to being unsurvivable. The only likely way to outlive one is not to be there when it happens: to steer clear of the vulnerable area or get yourself to high ground as fast as possible. For the 71,000 people who live in Cascadia's inundation zone, that will mean evacuating in the narrow window after one disaster ends and before another begins. They will be notified to do so only by the earthquake itself—"a vibrate-alert system," Kevin Cupples, the city planner for the town of Seaside, Oregon, jokes. Depending on location, they will have ten to 30 minutes to get out. That timeline does not allow for finding a flashlight,

hesitating amid the ruins of a home, searching for loved ones. "When that tsunami is coming, you run," says Jay Wilson, chair of the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC). "You protect yourself, you don't turn around, you don't go back to save anybody. You run for your life."

What Can We Do?

THE TIME TO SAVE people from a tsunami is before it happens, but the region has not yet taken serious steps toward doing so. Hotels and businesses are not required to post evacuation routes or to provide employees with evacuation training. These lax safety policies guarantee that many people inside the inundation zone will not get out. Twenty-two percent of Oregon's coastal population is 65 or older. Twenty-nine percent of the state's population is disabled, and that figure rises in many coastal counties. "We can't save them," Kevin Cupples says. "I'm not going to sugarcoat it and say, 'Oh, yeah, we'll go around and check on the elderly.' No. We won't."

Those who cannot get out of the inundation zone under their own power will quickly be overtaken by a greater one. A grown man is knocked over by ankle-deep water moving at 6.7 miles an hour. The tsunami will be moving more than twice that fast. Its height will vary with the contours of the coast, from 20 feet to more than a hundred feet. It will look like the whole

ocean, elevated, overtaking land. Nor will it be made only of water—not once it reaches the shore. It will be a five-story deluge of pickup trucks and door frames and cinder blocks and fishing boats and utility poles and everything else that once constituted the coastal towns of the Pacific Northwest.

The inundation zone in a full-margin rupture will be scoured of structures from California to Canada. The earthquake will have wreaked its worst havoc west of the Cascades but caused damage as far away as Sacramento, California. FEMA expects to coordinate search-and-rescue operations across 100,000 miles and in the waters off 453 miles of coastline.

OSSPAC estimates that in the I-5 corridor, it will take one to three months after the earthquake to restore electricity, a month to a year to restore drinking water and sewer service, six months to a year to restore major highways, and 18 months to restore health-care facilities. On the coast, those numbers go up. Whoever stays there will spend three to six months without electricity, one to three years without drinking water and sewage systems, and three or more years without hospitals. How much all of this will cost is anyone's guess. But whatever the ultimate figure, the economy of the Pacific Northwest will collapse.

On the face of it, earthquakes seem to present us with problems of space: the way we live along fault lines, in brick buildings, in homes made

valuable by their proximity to the sea. But, covertly, they also present us with problems of time. The earth is 4.5 billion years old, but we are a young species, with an average individual allotment of threescore years and ten. The brevity of our lives breeds a kind of ignorance of or an indifference to those planetary gears, which turn more slowly than our own.

This problem is bidirectional. The Cascadia subduction zone remained hidden from us for so long because we could not see deeply enough into the past. It poses a danger to us today because we have not thought deeply enough about the future. Where we stumble is in conjuring up grim futures in a way that helps to avert them.

The School in the Zone

THE LAST PERSON I met with in the Pacific Northwest was Doug Dougherty, the superintendent of schools for Seaside, which lies almost entirely within the tsunami inundation zone. Of the four schools that he oversees, with a total student population of 1,600, one is relatively safe. The others sit five to 15 feet above sea level. When the tsunami comes, they will be as much as 45 feet below it.

In 2009, Dougherty told me, he found land for sale outside the inundation zone and proposed building a new K-12 campus there. Four years later, to foot the \$128 million bill, the district put up a bond measure. The measure failed by 62 percent.

Dougherty tried seeking help from Oregon's congressional delegation but came up empty. The state makes money available for seismic upgrades, but buildings within the inundation zone cannot apply. At present, all Dougherty can do is make sure that his students know how to evacuate.

Some of them, however, will not be able to do so. At an elementary school in the community of Gearhart, the children will be trapped. "They can't make it out from that school," Dougherty said. "They have no place to go." On one side lies the ocean; on the other, a wide, roadless bog. When the tsunami comes, the only place to go in Gearhart is a small ridge just

behind the school. At its tallest, it is 45 feet high—lower than the expected wave in a full-margin earthquake. For now, the route to the ridge is marked by signs that say *Temporary Tsunami Assembly Area*. I asked Dougherty about the state's long-range plan. "There is no long-range plan," he said.

Dougherty's office is deep inside the inundation zone, a few blocks from the beach. Eighty miles farther out, 10,000 feet below the surface of the sea, the hand of a geological clock is somewhere in its slow sweep. All across the region, seismologists are looking at their watches, wondering how long we have, and what we will do, before geological time catches up to our own. **R**

COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR. ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORKER (JUNE 20, 2015), NEWYORKER.COM.

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WHO ? KNEW

13 Things Credit Card Companies Know About You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH



1 You're having marital problems. Most credit card companies comb through cardholder data for signs of financial trouble, and we may use that to lower your credit. A Federal Trade Commission suit against CompuCredit, which marketed the Visa Aspire card, accused the company of lowering available credit to customers who used cards for marriage counseling, bars, or pawnshops.

2 You don't have the best manners. If you call even one time and get angry or use profanity, we may put a note on your account that you are

a "verbally abusive" caller. Every time you call in after that, the customer-service rep will be on guard.

3 What you did last summer—and the summer before that. We track your favorite places to visit. We also know your top ATMs and when you normally log in to your mobile app. Paying attention to those things is one of the ways we catch fraud.

4 Whether you take good care of your home. One study found that people who buy carbon monoxide monitors and pads for chair bottoms

rarely miss payments. If you protect your things, you may also want to protect your credit score.

5 Where you are at this very moment. If you've enabled location-based services in your card's app, we can follow your movements around town and send coupons for nearby merchandise. With new tracking technology, we hope to soon follow you inside a store to record how long you spend in each aisle.

6 You're the boss. If a responsible customer asks for a lower interest rate, there's a good chance we will say yes. A Synergistics survey found that 78 percent of cardholders who asked for a lower rate received one.

7 You're a small-business owner. We *love* small-business owners. They tend to make a lot of purchases and rack up charges on their cards. Sometimes we buy lists of new limited liability companies and corporations so we can send them business credit card offers.

8 You're due for a shopping trip at Target. We work with marketers to create special offers for you based on your purchases. If you were a regular shopper at Target but haven't been back in a while, a digital coupon from Target may pop up in your bank's mobile app—or from a competitor trying to lure you away.

9 Whether you're worth hanging on to. When you call customer service, the reps at some companies see a green or red indicator on their screen based on your risk score. That tells them whether to try to keep you as a customer.

10 What your signature looks like. If you're not sure a charge is legitimate, most credit card companies can send you a copy of the receipt.

11 You're clueless about your card's benefits. Many cards offer perks such as rental-car insurance, trip-cancellation insurance, and even a personal concierge—but you probably don't know about them if you haven't read the fine print.

12 You talk too much. To build rapport with customers, we often train customer-service reps to stay on the phone as long as the customers want. Some lonely ones stay on the line for more than an hour.

13 You're about to cancel. We analyze data to flag you if you haven't been using your card or there are other signs you might close your account. We may send you a promotion in an attempt to keep you. **R**

Sources: Bill McCracken, CEO of Synergistics Research Corporation, a financial research company; Bert Ely, a banking consultant based in Alexandria, Virginia; David Wallace, global financial services marketing manager at SAS, a data analytics firm; Paul Stephens, director of policy and advocacy for the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse; a former credit card customer-service manager; a credit card customer-service representative; a senior fraud consultant; nytimes.com

LOOK
TWICE ...





... What do you see?

- A)** The roof of a cathedral,
B) a Middle Eastern mosaic, or
C) 170,000 calories?

Answer: C. In his *Pits and Pyramids* series, photographer Sam Kaplan turns treats into temples, as with this sugary shrine of more than 1,300 cookies glued to foam-core platforms. "I think prop stylist Michelle Longo and I bought every box of Lorna Doones in a 20-block radius," Kaplan says.



5 Celebrities Who Spied On the Side

BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ MCROBBIE

FROM MENTAL FLOSS

Harry Houdini

THE MAGICIAN WHO SPIED HIS WAY TO STARDOM

At the start of his career in the late 19th century, Harry Houdini gained notoriety by waltzing into police stations and demanding that officers lock him up. It was a great publicity stunt. Every time he ditched the cuffs, he made headlines—and eventually

caught the eye of American and British intelligence agencies. According to a 2006 biography, both the Secret Service and Scotland Yard used Houdini to gather sensitive information for them during his tours across Europe and Russia.

In return for his services, the book claims, Houdini asked for one thing: publicity. Scotland Yard superinten-

dent William Melville, who notes Houdini's cooperation in his diary, helped him set up escape stunts in front of London theater managers.

Lucky Luciano

THE MOBSTER WITH THE HEART OF A PATRIOT

As head of the Genovese crime family, Charles "Lucky" Luciano smoothed out the Mafia's rough edges and turned families of thugs into well-oiled organized-crime machines. He also ended up working for U.S. intelligence.

In 1936, Luciano was sentenced to 30 to 50 years in prison. But in 1942, the government discovered it needed his help. A French ocean liner, the *Normandie*, was being converted into a troop ship when it suddenly caught fire and sank. Officials suspected sabotage, since many of the dockworkers were under the Mafia's thumb, but they needed an in, and Luciano was the key.

Soon any supposed sabotage on the docks ended. In exchange, Luciano enjoyed preferential treatment for the rest of his time in prison.

Luciano continued to help American forces for the remainder of World War II, using his Mafia contacts in Sicily to expose Nazi battle plans. After he served only ten years in prison, his sentence was commuted, and he was deported to his birthplace of Italy. Before he died there in 1962, he told two biographers

that he'd had his own men set fire to the *Normandie* in a plot to force his release. But as the *New York Times* noted, Luciano was "known to exaggerate his own cleverness."

Julia Child

THE CHEF WITH A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE

Julia Child wasn't always into French cooking. As she famously recounted in her autobiography, *My Life in France*, it wasn't until she lived in Paris in her mid-30s that she learned what good food tasted like.

How did Child keep busy before that? By performing equally inventive work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the U.S. government's precursor to the CIA. Child joined the spy outfit in 1942 after discovering that the Women's Army Corps had a height limit; at six feet two inches, she was too tall to serve. Luckily, the OSS was a perfect fit. One of Child's first assignments was to help cook up a shark repellent to protect underwater explosives from being set off by curious creatures. By all accounts, she excelled at her work. Following a stint in the OSS lab, Child went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and then to China, where she worked as chief of the OSS Registry. As such, she enjoyed top security clearance and even a little danger. (The CIA remains mum about exactly what she did.)

Working at the OSS also turned out to be a recipe for love. Julia fell for

another OSS officer, Paul Cushing Child. After the two got hitched in 1946, Julia quit her job, while Paul continued to work for the government. Within two years, he was transferred to the U.S. Information Agency in France, where Julia took up cooking to occupy her time. The rest is culinary history.

Robert Baden-Powell

THE BOY SCOUT WITH A MERIT BADGE IN SNEAKINESS

“Be Prepared” figures into the codes of both spies and Boy Scouts, so you may not be surprised to learn that the Scouts were founded by an illustrious British agent, Lord Robert Baden-Powell.

In 1899, Baden-Powell made a name for himself during the Second Boer War in South Africa when he faced a 217-day siege by a Boer army of 8,000 men. Wholly outnumbered, he used props, cunning, and deception to defend the territory of Mafeking. He ordered his men to plant fake mines on the edge of town and pretend to avoid barbed wire to throw off the enemy. Because he was short on troops, he enlisted all the young boys in town as guards. Somehow, he managed to protect the territory until reinforcements finally arrived.

The story made Baden-Powell a hero in England, and in 1907, he used his new fame to kick-start the scouting movement. Soon he was helping

set up Boy Scout troops across the globe. All the while, it's rumored that Baden-Powell remained active in the military, spying wherever he toured.

Roald Dahl

THE LADIES' MAN WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH WRITING

Long before he wrote *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Roald Dahl was a fighter pilot for the British Royal Air Force during World War II. But after sustaining several injuries in a 1940 crash, Dahl was transferred to a desk job at the British embassy in Washington, DC. He quickly charmed his way into high society and became so popular among DC ladies that British intelligence came up with a new role for him: seducing powerful women and using them to promote Britain's interests in America.

It wasn't all fun and games. Clare Booth Luce, a prominent U.S. representative married to *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce, was so frisky in the bedroom that Dahl begged to be let off the case. In the end, however, his work with the ladies paid off. Dahl not only rallied support for Britain at a time when many Americans didn't want the country to enter the war, but he also managed to pass valuable stolen documents to the British government. While penning propaganda and war stories in American papers, Dahl discovered something else: his own talent for writing. **R**

Notice: Medical Alert

Dear Reader,

Medical related emergencies are on the rise. More seniors are seeking an independent lifestyle and better quality-of-life. **Over 1 in 3 people over the age of 64 will fall this year.** Nearly half will not be able to get up without support.

Medical expenses can escalate when a person is not given timely support. You can prevent a medical catastrophe with our 24 hour emergency response system. Our solution is highly recommended by doctors, healthcare professionals, and hospitals.

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Sincerely,



Jim Nelson
President

7 Touchy-Feely Questions Answered by Science

BY BRANDON SPECKTOR

1 WHY DO OUR FINGERS AND TOES PRUNE UP WHEN WE SWIM?

To better handle wet objects. Researchers at Newcastle University found that subjects with pruney fingers could transfer wet marbles between two containers significantly quicker than subjects without. On the other hand, pruney fingers added no advantage to transferring dry marbles.



with them at all). These ghostly vibrations are merely hallucinations based on prior experience, in which the same areas of the brain's sensory centers are activated as when we feel a true vibration. Similar to when you're "pretend" tickled, the brain tricks itself into a

feeling based on expectation.

2 WHY DO WE GET PHANTOM PHONE VIBRATIONS?

Because we're expecting a call. In a study at an academic medical center in Massachusetts, 68 percent of mobile phone users reported feeling vibrations from time to time even though their phones weren't actually vibrating (or, in some cases,

3 WHY DO ATHLETES FIST BUMP SO MUCH?

Because touch makes a team stronger. In a UC Berkeley study of NBA teams during the 2008–2009 season, researchers saw that players and teams who engaged in celebratory touches (fist bumps, high tens, etc.) after successful shots early in the season performed noticeably better later in the season. To put it bluntly:

Winning teams spend more time touching than losing teams.

4 CAN TOUCH HELP YOU LAND A JOB?

Yes—and you don't even need to be in the same room as your interviewer to take advantage. In one study, passersby were asked to rate a single job applicant by reading a résumé attached either to a light clipboard (about the weight of a soup can) or a heavy one (about the weight of a laptop computer). Subjects rated Mr. Heavy Clipboard considerably better and more interested in the job than Mr. Flimsy, despite the identical résumés.

5 WHY DOES SCRATCHING AN ITCH FEEL SO GOOD?

Because even pain is preferable to an itch. One theory is that wherever we scratch, it creates a slight pain sensation in our brains that competes with the itch sensation, thereby reducing it. The more we scratch, the more the itch is overshadowed.

6 OK, BUT WHY IS SCRATCHING SO CONTAGIOUS?

It's probably part of our disease-fighting instinct. If you notice someone near you scratching, your brain intuitively wonders whether you are being exposed to the same unpleasant insect, bacteria, etc., that that person is. It's adaptive for you to feel a sympathy itch (whether or not there's anything dangerous there) and scratch away.

7 CAN HUMAN CONTACT LITERALLY SAVE YOUR LIFE?

In a way, yes. Touch may be the first sense we develop in utero, and it remains important throughout our lives. Studies show that prolonged touch deprivation in infants (for example, babies in understaffed orphanages or preemies in incubator isolation) can result in stunted growth and poor immune systems right away, plus significantly higher rates of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes in adulthood. **R**

Source: *Touch: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind*
by David J. Linden



RIDDLE ME THIS ...

QUESTION: The man who made it doesn't want it.
The man who bought it doesn't need it.
The man who needs it doesn't know it. What is it?

ANSWER: A coffin.



Why We Love Superstorms

BY MARIA KONNIKOVA FROM THE NEW YORKER

WEATHER IS a famously boring conversation starter—until you drop a name like Sandy, Katrina, Juno, or Irene. Even without a hurricane or “snowmageddon” on the horizon, weather reports on channels like CNN garner high viewer ratings. Sometimes, the Weather Channel itself beats the rest of the competition. But why are people so fascinated by storms, even when they’re nowhere near them? When the weather turns bad, why can’t we look away, even after we’ve gotten the information we need to get through it?

We may be addicted to the danger. Humans didn’t evolve to be safe, risk-minimizing citizens; because our early experiences involved constantly

perilous conditions, we developed a certain baseline expectation of risk. Even if you stayed inside your camp or your cave, the world was full of unpredictable, potentially dangerous things. And actively taking risks could be rewarded; that might have been the only way to get food. In the modern environment, we aren’t exposed to natural risks in the same way. But the underlying neural mechanisms haven’t gone anywhere.

Some people innately seek out high-risk situations. They run extreme races, BASE jump, or invest in volatile stocks. Most of us, though, enjoy a certain thrill without losing our heads. We like roller coasters. We’ll ski the black-diamond trail but

may not go off piste. It's a phenomenon that the sociologist Stephen Lyng calls edgework. We feel like we're living on the edge, but we know that there's a safety net.

Edgework is precisely what extreme weather is. A winter storm—or any storm, really—approximates this thrill. It's powerful and even dangerous. But safely ensconced inside and in front of our computer screens, we don't think it will really hurt us. The power might go out, but then we would be able to share a picture of a car buried in a snowdrift. And then, soon, it will be over. You will have had the thrill, and you might have gained control over it by capturing a moment of “danger,” but in all, it seems a relatively minor risk. We satisfy our inner risk seeker without going into dangerous territory.

As for the people on the West Coast who followed the winter storm Juno

last year as avidly as any New Yorker or Bostonian, risk can well be experienced vicariously. We stay glued to forecasts of gloom and doom for the same reason we watch the latest X Games. They capture our attention and emotion. The media know this all too well—hence the Blizzardmobile

and endless calls for photos of the storm.

There is one major exception: those who have suffered an extreme weather calamity in the past. We learn differently from description than from experience. If you were in a record-breaking storm in the past and

nothing bad happened, you will likely dismiss the current danger. But if you experienced a major loss—the destruction of a house, say, or a multi-week-long loss of power—you likely won't do much rubbernecking this time. Unlike everyone else, you realize the danger probably isn't worth the Instagrammed snow scene. **R**

“
We stay glued to forecasts of gloom and doom for the same reason we watch the latest X Games.

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The names and addresses of the publisher, editor-in-chief, and managing editor are: Publisher, Kirsten Marchioli; Editor-in-Chief, Liz Vaccariello; and Managing Editor, Kerrie Keegan, of 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

The owner is Trusted Media Brands, Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, and the names and addresses of Bondholders, Mortgages and other Security Holders owning one percent or more of the total amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities are RDA Holding Co., 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Annual subscription price: \$24.95.

Average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months, and of the single issue nearest to filing date, respectively, are as follows: Total number of copies printed (net press run) 3,457,850—3,485,793; paid distribution—sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales 173,372—170,263; paid mail subscriptions 2,430,091—2,398,665; total paid distribution 2,603,463—2,568,928; free or nominal rate distribution 405,363—459,881; total distribution 3,008,826—3,028,809; copies not distributed 449,024—456,984; percent paid: 86.53%—84.82%. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

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Word Power

What makes a word beautiful? Is it a melodious sound? An exotic meaning? For whatever reason, the words below appeal to our sense of beauty—though their meanings may not all be pellucid (a pretty word for “clear”). Answers on next page.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. **lavalier** (lah-vuh-'leyr) *n.*—A: magma outflow. B: pendant on a chain. C: rider with a lance.
2. **flan** ('flan) *n.*—A: pizzazz. B: custard dessert. C: mirror reflection.
3. **panoply** ('pa-nuh-plee) *n.*—A: impressive array. B: bouquet. C: folded paper art.
4. **gambol** ('gam-buhl) *v.*—A: stake money on a horse. B: frolic about. C: sing in rounds.
5. **chalice** ('cha-luhs) *n.*—A: goblet. B: ankle bracelet. C: glass lamp.
6. **languorous** ('lan-guh-ruhs) *adj.*—A: of the tongue. B: in the tropics. C: lackadaisical or listless.
7. **pastiche** (pas-'teesh) *n.*—A: thumbnail sketch. B: fabric softener. C: artistic imitation.
8. **opulent** ('ahp-u-lehnt) *adj.*—A: right on time. B: pertaining to vision. C: luxurious.
9. **penumbra** (peh-'nuhm-bruh) *n.*—A: something that covers or

shrouds. B: drowsiness. C: goose-feather quill.

10. **tendril** ('ten-druhl) *n.*—A: wooden flute. B: spiraling plant sprout. C: clay oven.
11. **imbroglio** (im-'brohl-yoh) *n.*—A: complicated mix-up. B: Asian palace. C: oil-painting style.
12. **dalliance** ('dal-lee-ents) *n.*—A: frivolous or amorous play. B: flourish on a trumpet. C: blinding light.
13. **mellifluous** (meh-'lih-fluh-wuhs) *adj.*—A: having broad stripes. B: milky white. C: sweet sounding.
14. **diaphanous** (diy-'a-fuh-nuhs) *adj.*—A: marked by a fine texture. B: having two wings. C: romantic.
15. **recherché** (ruh-she-'shay) *adj.*—A: elegant or rare. B: well practiced. C: silent.

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

Answers

1. lavalier—[B] pendant on a chain. The *lavalier* around the princess's neck caught the eye of her suitor.

2. flan—[B] custard dessert. We went from one Mexican restaurant to another, searching for the perfect *flan*.

3. panoply—[A] impressive array. Eli was mesmerized by the *panoply* of dinosaur fossils at the museum.

4. gambol—[B] frolic about. In their downtime, North Pole elves are known to *gambol* in the snow.

5. chalice—[A] goblet. One *chalice* contains deadly poison; the other, an all-healing elixir—now choose!

6. languorous—[C] lackadaisical or listless. The winter chill made Sara long for the *languorous* hours of her summer at the lake house.

7. pastiche—[C] artistic imitation. You call his work a *pastiche*; I call it a knockoff.

8. opulent—[C] luxurious. During her first visit, Sally was overcome by the *opulent* entrance of Tiffany's.

9. penumbra—[A] something that covers or shrouds.

Upon his first steps into the ancient chamber, the explorer fell under a *penumbra* of fear.

10. tendril—[B] spiraling plant sprout. The alien pod wrapped its *tendrils* around the captain's ankle.

11. imbroglia—[A] complicated mix-up. For my tastes, too many films these days are based around a much-expected *imbroglio*.

12. dalliance—[A] frivolous or amorous play. The couple's early *dalliance* was marked by subtle flirting and letter writing.

13. mellifluous—[C] sweet sounding. Nothing is so *mellifluous* as the jingle of a bell on our Christmas tree.

14. diaphanous—[A] marked by a fine texture. My wife wore a *diaphanous* veil on our wedding day.

15. recherché—[A] elegant or rare. Alison wondered if her grandmother's bejeweled shoes were too *recherché* for the office party.

CELLAR DOOR

Among others, the fantasy writer J. R. R. Tolkien maintained that the loveliest combination of sounds—with the *r*'s and *l*'s that people find lyrical—is the phrase *cellar door*. Try repeating it aloud. It ends with an open o sound, which Edgar Allan Poe called the “most sonorous” of the vowels (*sonorous* meaning “full sounding”).

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Fair

10–12: Lovely

13–15: Pulchritudinous

If You Bought or Leased a New Motor Vehicle, or Bought Certain Replacement Parts for a Motor Vehicle Since 2000

You Could Get Money From Settlements Totaling Approximately \$54 Million

Two Defendants and their affiliates (“Settling Defendants”) have agreed to Settlements resolving claims that they fixed the price of certain motor vehicle components. This may have caused individuals and businesses to pay more for new motor vehicles and certain replacement parts. The Settling Defendants deny any claims of wrongdoing.

Am I included?

You may be included if, from 2000 to 2015, you: (1) bought or leased an eligible new vehicle in the U.S. (not for resale), or (2) indirectly paid for an eligible motor vehicle replacement part. Indirectly means you bought the replacement part from someone other than the manufacturer of the part. Eligible new motor vehicles are automobiles, light trucks, vans, mini-vans, and sport utility vehicles. Visit the website, www.AutoPartsClass.com or call 1-877-940-5043 for a full list of Settling Defendants and time periods.

What do the Settlements provide?

The Settlements provide money for consumers in 30 states and the District of Columbia as well as non-monetary relief, including cooperation, and an agreement by Settling Defendants not to engage in certain conduct for a period of 24 months.

The 30 states are: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

How can I get a payment?

No money will be distributed yet. Class Counsel will pursue the lawsuits against the Non-Settling Defendants. All funds received in this case will be distributed at the conclusion of the lawsuits or as ordered by the Court. You will need to file a valid claim to receive a payment. Notice about the claims process will be provided at a later date.

If you want to receive notice about the claims process or future settlements, you should register at www.AutoPartsClass.com.

What are my rights?

Even if you do nothing, you will be bound by the Court’s decisions concerning these Settlements. If you want to keep your right to sue the Settling Defendants regarding a particular component part, you must exclude yourself from that Settlement Class by **March 28, 2016**. If you stay in a Settlement Class, you may object to one or more of the Settlements by **March 28, 2016**.

The Court will hold a hearing on **May 4, 2016** to consider whether to approve the Settlements and approve Class Counsel’s request that up to \$2 million be set aside for future litigation costs and expenses. Class Counsel will also request at the hearing, or at a later date, attorneys’ fees of up to one-third of the Settlement funds, plus reimbursement of costs and expenses. You or your own lawyer may appear and speak at the hearing at your own expense.

If the cases are not dismissed or settled, Class Counsel will have to prove their claims against the Non-Settling Defendants at trial. Trial has not been set yet.

For More Information or to Register: 1-877-940-5043 www.AutoPartsClass.com

Humor in Uniform

UNTRUE MILITARY FACTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Last Tuesday, 2,200 years after Hannibal defeated the Romans at the Battle of Canae, the last holdouts finally turned in their spears and returned home.



A recent Navy decree states that all troublemakers will be kicked off ships and forced to walk to their battle.



World War I saw medical advances on the front lines when Germany hired an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist, as well as a proctologist.

DURING ORIENTATION at Fort Sill, in Oklahoma, our first sergeant stated that if anyone lost his locker key to see him, as he kept a master key in his office. Sure enough, a few weeks later, I lost my key. I walked into the orderly's room and asked Sarge if I could borrow his master key.

"Why, certainly, young man," he said, as he reached under his desk and handed me a large pair of bolt cutters. **JOHN DANNAR**, Pasadena, Texas

AFTER MY NIECE returned from her second tour in Iraq, I remarked how beautiful her complexion looked. "What do you use on your face to keep it so smooth?" I asked.

"Nothing," she said. "I've been sandblasted."
WANDA KALTREIDER,
Wrightsville, Pennsylvania

Send us your funniest military anecdote or news story—it might be worth \$100! For details, see page 9 or rd.com/submit.

FROM LEFT: GRANT FAINT/GETTY IMAGES; PETRIFFED COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; CENTRAL PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

Chicago Doctor Invents

Affordable Hearing Aid

Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer's disease. **He didn't understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, and cell phones had fallen.**

- Designed by a Board-Certified ENT Doctor
- Doctor-Recommended, Audiologist-Tested
- Free USA Shipping
- FDA-Registered
- Save Up To 90%
- ★★★★★ Rated Hearing Aid Online—Thousands of Satisfied Customers
- Batteries Included! Comes Ready To Use
- 100% Money Back Guarantee!



Superb Performance From Affordable Hearing Aid

The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. **The result is the MDHearingAid PRO, well under \$200 each when buying a pair. Order for a 45-Day Risk-Free Trial.**

Tested By Leading Doctors And Audiologists

The MDHearingAid PRO has been rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who have unanimously agreed that the **sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.**

DOCTORS AND PATIENTS AGREE: "BEST QUALITY SOUND" "LOWEST AFFORDABLE PRICE"

"I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years... Their sound quality rivals that of my \$3,000 custom pair of Phonak® Xtra digital ITE."—Gerald L.

"I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid PRO in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids."

—Dr. May, ENT Physician

For the Lowest Price Call Today
800-873-0680

Phone Lines Open 24 Hours EVERY DAY

MDHearingAid® >>> PRO

Use Offer Code CF96 to get
FREE Batteries for a Full Year!
FREE USA Shipping



Quotable Quotes



YOU HAVE TO BE GOING TO A PRETTY AWFUL PLACE IF GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN.

MISS PIGGY, *ham*

It's never too late to have a happy childhood.

TOM ROBBINS, *novelist*

GOD GAVE US MEMORY SO THAT WE MIGHT HAVE ROSES IN DECEMBER.

J. M. BARRIE, *author*

I see life as like being attacked by a bear. You can run, you can pretend to be dead, or you can make yourself bigger.

AMY POEHLER, *comedian*

A man who procrastinates in his choosing will inevitably have his choice made for him.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON, *journalist*



Would you believe in what you believe in if you were the only one who believed it?

KANYE WEST, *musician*



If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?

JOHN WOODEN, *former UCLA basketball coach*

Reader's Digest (ISSN 0034-0375) (USPS 865-820), (CPM Agreement# 40031457), Vol. 186, No. 1116, December 2015/January 2016. © 2015. Published monthly, except bimonthly in July/August and December/January (subject to change without notice), by Trusted Media Brands, Inc., 44 South Broadway, White Plains, New York 10601. Periodicals postage paid at White Plains, New York, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595. Send undeliverable Canadian addresses to ca.postal.affairs@rd.com. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction, in any manner, is prohibited. Reader's Digest and The Digest are registered trademarks of Trusted Media Brands, Inc. Marca Registrada. Printed in U.S.A. You may cancel your subscription at any time and receive a refund for copies not previously addressed. Your subscription will expire with the issue identified above your name on the address label. **SUBSCRIBERS:** If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. A special Reader's Digest Large Print with selected articles from Reader's Digest is published by Trusted Media Brands, Inc. For details, write to: Reader's Digest Large Print, PO Box 6097, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1597. **CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Trusted Media Brands, Inc., may share information about you with reputable companies in order for them to offer you products and services of interest to you. If you would rather we not share information, please write to Reader's Digest Customer Care, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.

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Memories of the Heart

Yvonne Woolfolk Britton
www.xlibris.com

\$24.99 hc | \$15.99 sc | \$3.99 eb

As she looks back, author chose to recall and share memories filled with extreme gratitude to all the people who had shown her kindness, and contributed, in one way or the other, for her to become what she is today.



Our Beguine *The Dance of Life*

Joel M. Levin, MD
www.authorhouse.com

\$28.99 hc | \$19.95 sc | \$3.99 eb

Our Beguine is an inspirational memoir that serves not only to tell the story of Donna's and Joel M. Levin's life together in music, prose, and poetry but also explores the latest concepts regarding the mystery of the soul.



An Eventful Life

Will Parker
www.xlibris.com.au

\$40.31 hc | \$24.19 sc | \$4.99 eb

An Eventful Life is a portrait of a young man's life detailing the conflicts and struggles that make it uniquely remarkable. From tales in the sea to stories about film, engineering and farming, it captures the beauty of human experience.



Brightfire *A Tale of Sutton Hoo*

P.M. Sabin Moore
www.authorhouse.co.uk

\$12.99sc | \$2.99 eb

Covering important events during and after the reign of King Raedwald of Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, East Anglia, UK, *Brightfire* is an enthralling story following Christianity's struggle to take hold on the eastern side of Britain from 608-633 AD.



Saints and Heroes

Andrew Schultz
www.iuniverse.com

\$14.95 sc | \$3.99 eb

This book follows Anselm from his boyhood on the Isle of Iona through a course of study at Glastonbury and ultimately through his association with King Malcolm Caenmore, a ruthless despot who begins a 300-year dynasty of a united Scotland.

STAND TALLSM

See how a less than 1-inch incision can give you relief from chronic neck or back pain.



Peter Miller
Professional Fisherman and TV Host
and Laser Spine Institute Patient

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